Seeing Ourselves on Stage:

Revealing Ideas about Pākehā Cultural Identity through Theatrical Performance

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Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

University of Otago
2010
Acknowledgements

Thanks to my Kaitiaki Rangimoana Taylor

My Supervisors:
Henry Johnson, Jerry Jaffe, Erich Kolig (2004-July 2006),
Martin Tolich (July 2007 onwards)

Thanks to my children Ruth Kathryne Cook and Madeline Anne Hinehauone Cook for supporting me in this work.

Thanks also to Hilary Halba and Alison East for their help, encouragement and invigorating discussion; to friend and poet Roma Potiki who offered the title for this thesis and also engaged in spirited discussion about its contents; to Monika Smith, Adrienne Jansen, Geesina Zimmermann, Annie Hay Mackenzie and to all of my friends who have supported this project; Thanks to Louise Kewene, Trevor Deaker, Martyn Roberts and Morag Anne Baillie for technical support during this project.

Thanks to all of the artists who have made this work possible:
Christopher Blake, Gary Henderson, Lyne Pringle, Kilda Northcott, Andrew London and to Hilary Norris, Hilary Halba, Alison East and Lisa Warrington who contributed their time, experience and passion for the work of Aotearoa/New Zealand to this endeavour.
Abstract

This is the first detailed study of New Zealand theatrical performance that has investigated the concepts of a Pākehā worldview. It thus contributes to the growing body of critical analysis of the theatre Aotearoa/New Zealand, and to an overall picture of Pākehā New Zealander cultural identity. The researcher’s experience of being Pākehā has formed the lens through which these performance works are viewed.

The argument underpinning the research is that theatrical performance does not represent a literal recreation of a culture, but rather is a representation of its mythical aspects. Accordingly, what is placed on the stage are images, visual, aural, and kinetic, of what a culture most aspires to be, and what it fears it might become. Therefore this work requires a discussion of the nature of theatrical performance and its reception by an audience.

The research is centred on the play Home Land by Gary Henderson; the opera Bitter Calm by Christopher Blake and Stuart Hoar; the dance theatre work Fishnet by Lyne Pringle and Kilda Northcott; and the jazz songs of Andrew London of Hot Club Sandwich. The performance texts are analysed to establish the way in which they create meaning. The methods used are performance analysis and close reading of the text and the method of phenomenology. This analytical work has been expanded by interviews with writers and performers in the respective performance fields and by a small audience survey. The result of this analysis is a detailed discussion of selected theatrical representation of Pākehā cultural identity focusing on the three performance elements: irony, the performance of emotion, and the scenographic iconography of the-land-on-the-stage.

The research looks particularly at ideas and attributes that can be represented in performance. The thesis covers concepts of Pākehā cultural identity and biculturalism, considers the idea that the particular environmental conditions of the land have imprinted themselves onto the nation’s theatrical expression, and seeks to uncover how a Pākehā cosmology is represented in theatrical performance.

The question of cultural identity in the literature, visual art and music of Aotearoa/New Zealand has been an important one for many decades. The country’s distance from its nearest large neighbour, its colonial past, Pākehā relationships with the tāngāta whenua of Aotearoa/New Zealand, the Māori, and the fact that Pākehā are descended from the settler culture of Aotearoa/New Zealand have contributed to an awareness of cultural identity. The expressions of local, Pākehā, cultural identity, considered in the selected performances, therefore reflect an identity which has been formed as a result of the colonisation process. As a consequence, many of the themes and iconographies discussed are not unique to Pākehā, but draw on their heritage of European culture, with the infusion of local experience.
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Preface

It was Friday 5th March 2004, the opening night for the Wellington Fringe Festival show ‘Fishnet’. I was running the lighting board. I dimmed the house lights. The chatter subsided, the audience of about eighty settled and I took house lights to black. The audience waited in the dark. I pushed ‘play’ on the CD player and brought up the stage lights. The music started. Three pools of light appeared on the stage, one in the middle and one on each side. The two dancers (two middle-aged women) came on stage. They were wearing tight fitting costumes, black dresses with tight bodices and short uneven skirts which came to mid-thigh. Their legs were bare, they had bare feet and one of them had her hair flowing loose, the other had it tied up in a ponytail. They were carrying the tops of cabbage trees, the full floret of leaves, which they held above their heads and which they moved gently around as they stepped slowly one after the other into the light. In their step they were dancing in a way that was reminiscent of a wero, that birdlike step that you get in the challenge on a marae but they were dancing to a piece of Baroque music. That action - the wero - is the challenge that’s presented by a warrior to manuhiri, to guests on a marae. In this context the walk is an imitation of a bird. And when the dancers came on the stage they were approximating that walk. That was such a strange and yet okay mix.
The lighting was very specific; it was at a very low level so it was very atmospheric. You can light the stage brightly so you can see well or you can light the stage to be something that has a particular mood and when you have a lighting state with defined pools of light and you have dark areas so that your dancers or your actors are moving between light and dark, you have a particular quality which I think is very emotionally intense. I’d seen this work in rehearsal without the lighting or the costume, but this was the first time I’d seen it in full performance and I felt an excitement that was more than the apprehension about getting the next lighting cue right. I went ‘wow’. I knew, this was us; this was me, seeing this on the stage was seeing Pākehā.

It was truly one of those ‘aha’ moments. I thought this is being in this country; this is a moment of Pākehā theatre, because of the combination of light and music, because of the indigenous plant, because of the familiar movement form, the wero.

We can take things that are from here and things from somewhere else that are from where we or rather our ancestors, come from, that we know about perhaps from family stories, and from books and put them together in a very particular way and then that makes an image of here. That’s how it seemed to me that night. That dancing moment was an absolute image of this country Aotearoa, right there in front of me on the stage and it was present in the body of those dancers, in the plant ti kouka - the cabbage tree leaves, in the Baroque music, in the wero movement that was taken from the marae challenge movement and I thought yes there’s something here. There’s something here, that isn’t anywhere else and that’s what it means. It means that we, Pākehā who are here, are different.
Even the moody lighting, I believe, creates a particular atmosphere that does have to do with this country. I think about that, the dark moody lighting, in terms of the dark strand that often lies in New Zealand writing, and New Zealand film. It reminds me of being in the bush and the movement between light and dark, light and dark that you get as you walk through the trees. So out of dark and out of light. If you are somebody who knows the New Zealand landscape and I know those dancers do, that’s an image that’s in their brains. It’s not necessarily conscious but when you’re called on to create an image on stage, that knowledge of light and dark you have from being in the bush is something that you can use to create an image. I focused my attention on the lighting cues for the rest of the performance but that first moment still remains evocative for me. The image was of me the Pākehā in this place and I wondered if other people in the audience saw it too.
Chapter One

Seeing Ourselves on Stage – Four Case Studies of Pākehā Performance - Introduction

This thesis is an analysis of the cultural ideas that lie behind the syncretic theatrical vision of light and dark recounted in the Preface. The thesis is a detailed performance analysis of four selected works by Pākehā performance artists who are expressly interested in their own culture and so seek to reveal it through their work. The task of the thesis is to discover the strategies these artists have employed to fashion European performance structures into expressions of local representation. Therefore, this thesis is primarily about the work of artists, what is revealed in their work, and the way these works examine the expression of Pākehā culture in theatrical performance. It is concerned with performance, but in a specific context, that of Aotearoa/New Zealand and from a Pākehā perspective. Its primary methodology is interpretative and this interpretation is based in the discipline of phenomenology however the thesis also draws on the sociological methods of the interview and the performance survey in its questioning of the creators of the performance works about the way the social climate in which they operate informs their practice.

The propelling moment which initiated my research into the representation of Pākehā cultural identity in artistic space was the experience of seeing myself, a Pākehā New Zealander, culturally represented in a work of dance theatre. This experience led me to look for other performance works which specifically dealt with what it meant to be of European descent and of this place, Aotearoa/New Zealand. It was important that these works were not simply polemical recitations of cultural experience but unselfconscious representations of culture which reached to the heart of the experience of being Pākehā. The

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1 The use of Māori words in this thesis, including the word Pākehā, even though it is still the site of controversy, are those words which are in common use in New Zealand English e.g. kōwhai. Other words such as wairua are used when illustrating the point about language shift, or naming a particular Māori concept and are italicised. The word iwi is used when the work refers to Māori characters and so is the appropriate terminology and is not italicised. The use of the term tāngata whenua throughout the thesis is an acknowledgement on my part of the First Nation status of Māori and is not italicised. As a concept that I as Pākehā have absorbed into my identity, I wish to use it in a way that does not make it exceptional.
experience of direct connection was to be repeated as I listened to Andrew London ² perform his satirical works with the Hot Club Sandwich jazz group (2005). I also looked back to 1994 and Chris Blake and Stuart Hoars’ opera Bitter Calm (1993). This is a work that deals straightforwardly with the clash of the settler culture with that of the Māori. Finally, I chose Gary Henderson’s play Home Land (2005) which deals with the Pākehā sense of belonging and their relationship to the land.

Recent works such as John Andrew’s work No Other Home Than This: A History of European New Zealanders (2009) and Patrick Evans’ The Long Forgetting: Post-colonial Literary Culture in New Zealand (2007) both consider the post-colonial European New Zealand identity (the identity I call Pākehā) in art, especially painting and literature, but neither explores this representation on the stage. Glenda Ruth Keam’s doctoral thesis ‘Exploring Notions of National Style: New Zealand Orchestral Music in the Late Twentieth Century’ (2006) considers the landscape in painting and music but does not consider theatrical performance. This thesis does not consider the concept of bicultural theatre in Aotearoa/New Zealand. This is a theatre which Hilary Halba defines as “a territory occupied by two forces – theatre practice and Māori (sic) cultural enactments, protocols and ceremonies” (Halba 2006 10). Neither does it consider transcultural theatre which Erika Fischer-Lichte (2009) defines as the interweaving of “texts, acting styles, artistic devices and artists” who come together to form a multicultural theatre which may then “travel from country to country, continent to continent, from one international festival to the next” (2009 397). It considers the idea of a Pākehā theatre which, like bicultural theatre, stems from two sources, the forms of the European theatre tradition, and the Pākehā experience of being a post-colonial people rooted in Aotearoa/New Zealand. This examination of Pākehā cultural identity from the perspective of theatrical performance is a new approach. In discussing the works I am considering the idea of Pākehā as a people changed by living in Aotearoa/New Zealand making the journey towards a sense of belonging in this place, their adopted land.

² A decision has been made to use both the given names and surnames of the people interviewed and writers quoted in the text. I believe that masculinist convention of referring to people by their surnames alone is a dehumanising device.
The initial research question was; do Pākehā represent themselves in theatrical performance? While this question is simple, its naïvety is important for if, as I suspected before I began this investigation, the answer is yes then the next question is, “what are some of the elements that Pākehā performance artists use to make this representation?” These questions led to other questions: How can Pākehā identity be defined? How can the elements of performance be interpreted in this Pākehā context? The attempt to answer the third question quickly encountered the hybrid nature of Pākehā cultural identity and became: how can Pākehā identity which is composed of elements from the country of origin and local elements from Aotearoa/New Zealand be defined? This expansion modified the fourth question to: How can the elements of European performance genres be reformed to interpret a Pākehā cosmology?

Outline of the works

It will be useful to provide a brief plot summary of each of the works at this point. Bitter Calm deals with a love affair and a murder. John Roberton, who drowns early in the opera, has taken Matiu, his son by a Māori woman, to live at his farm. Matiu and Catherine, John and Elizabeth Roberton’s daughter, fall in love, not knowing that they are half brother and sister. The hired hand Thomas Bull becomes jealous and kills Catherine. Matiu is accused and a confrontation occurs between Matiu and Thomas Bull, who confesses to the murder. However Elizabeth refuses to believe that Matiu is innocent. The prospect of a further confrontation between Matiu supported by his iwi, and the Pākehā settlers, ends the opera.

The play Home Land centres on the last two days that Ken Taylor spends on the farm which has been his life. At 80 Ken is too frail to look after himself. The family - son Graeme and his wife Trish, daughter Denise with her husband Paul and daughter Sophie - have assembled at the farm to take him to a retirement home. Ken does not want to go. During the weekend family tensions surface and sometimes explode. The core of the play is about an old man who is reluctant to leave his farm, the place which, as home, is the basis of his power.

Fishnet is a dance work which explores what it means to be female, middle-aged, and all but invisible in society. The two dancers play two sides of
one woman and use various personae and scenarios: the tongue-tied goddess, the housewife, the “old chook”, the intellectual, the rage-filled menopausal woman, the sex-goddess, the vamp and the shaman.

The songs of Andrew London deal in an ironic manner with love, money, rugby, the roles of men and women and middle class Pākehā angst. Though Andrew London’s songs are the exception be representative of the full body of his work, which is ironic and satirical in nature, generally these chosen works are not particularly typical examples of these authors body of works. Home Land is the only play Gary Henderson has written in the naturalistic style to date; Bitter Calm is a collaboration between Christopher Blake and Stuart Hoar, both of whom usually work independently; and Fishnet is the result of the first collaboration between Lyne Pringle and Kilda Northcott.

Each work is a serious work of performance, in the sense that it seeks to challenge rather than to simply entertain the audience. This was an important factor in my selection. The second factor was my wish to consider cultural representation across a range of genres which include several of the performing art disciplines. The third influence was my active participation in the works either as an audience member or as one of the crew. This placed me in the position of being able to speak personally about creative interaction between performer and audience. The artists, perhaps apart from Hot Club Sandwich, a local R’nB jazz group with an international reputation, are working in an area that is often termed high culture. However they use elements of popular culture, for example, melodrama, burlesque, film noir and R’nB to achieve artistic results ranging from gentle satire to ‘shock value’ reconstructions.

Performance space

Though I will not give a detailed examination of the effect each particular type of theatre has on the performances it is useful to set the scene for each work by giving a description of the type and size of each venue. Bitter Calm was performed in the St. James Theatre in Wellington. This is a former vaudeville theatre and its plaster interior is multi-coloured, decorated with swaths of flowers and caryatids, and has an elaborate proscenium arch and stage curtain. It seats around 1,500 people in its three levels. BATS Theatre, where Fishnet was
performed, is a stripped down black-box theatre. It is an intimate theatre seating 60 people with one tier of seats and no physical space between the seats and the stage area. However there is a clear demarcation between stage and auditorium spaces. The Fortune Theatre in Dunedin, where Home Land was first performed, is a converted church, with the stage a raised platform along what would have been one side of the nave. The heavy gothic style stone-work beams and windows are still visible, giving the building a resonance of its former use. It has no actual proscenium arch but the raised stage is separated from the audience by a space in front of the seats. It has one large bank of seats and accommodates 227 people. The Hot Club Sandwich jazz group plays in Old St Paul’s, Wellington, an old wooden neo- gothic church which seats 480. It is no longer the church of its parish but, as well as being a concert venue, it is still used as a functioning church on occasions and so still has full church fittings and the standard pew seating. This too adds a certain resonance of past and present, sacred and profane to any performances in this space.

In all of these venues the architecture affects the audience. The audience members are restricted to the seats or at times the aisles. The work is framed by end-on placement and in the St James Theatre by raising and lowering of the curtain. Architectural features define the building, setting up ideas of grandness or simplicity with which the production has to play. The opera used the building space by having the ghost of Roberton appear in the boxes, while Home Land worked against the building by focusing the action strictly onto the stage. The buildings create interesting resonances, for all have had other uses. BATS is housed downstairs in the lodge of the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes and was originally one of the lodge’s rooms, and the St James Wellington was a picture theatre for many years. These multiple uses bring elements of the everyday into the world of performance, creating a connection that is part of the total experience.

Structure of the thesis

This work is constructed in three parts. Part one, chapters two through to four, establishes the background to the examination of the performance works. Part two, chapters five through to seven, consists of the three analytical chapters
and lastly part three, chapters eight to ten, examine the processes of staging a world view.

Chapter Two Methodology – Accessing the Data outlines the approach to analysing the works and to interviewing their creators. It also outlines the performance survey. Though the performances exist of themselves and can be considered as discrete works of art, ultimately divorced from the people who made them, they sit in a social context. The creative artists were willing to participate in a series of semi-structured interviews which gave an insight into the way they saw their work, not only as personal creative endeavours, but also as reflections of their culture. The transcribed interviews reproduced in the text give a first-hand account of, to borrow a metaphor from Patrice Pavis (1992 4), the hourglass of creativity, that process by which cultural and personal ideas are transformed from source ideas into works of performance. The ethnographic approach of the interviews complements the analysis of the works by providing a linkage between the artistic artefact and the living members of the culture who produced it. However my concern is to focus on the action of the stage and to discuss what is presented there not to present a fully extended discussion of the debates of the performances as they occur in wider society.

A traditional means of unpicking performance is to concentrate on the storyline and themes of the work, methods which continue to be valid. The systematic discussion of the sign available in semiotic theory is also often applied to theatre. It is a modified version of this, drawn from Patrice Pavis’ list of theatre texts in the article ‘Theatre Analysis: Some Questions and a Questionnaire” (Pavis 1985 160) that I used to create a matrix for a detailed textural analysis of the performance works. This considers the signs of the movement, music, costumes and scenography, as well as the spoken or sung text. Having created that matrix I then moved to a consideration of the theatre performance experience by using the discipline of phenomenology.

This methodology is discussed in Chapter Three Methodology – Unpicking Performance which considers the process of accessing performance. The consideration is based on the premise that truth is not an objective entity (Sokolowski 2000) that is waiting to be discovered, but is an interpretation
Chapter One

derived from adopting a particular perspective. The chapter attempts a definition of performance by reviewing the ideas of Augusto Boal (1995, 2000) Peter Brook (1968, 1988, 2000) Stuart Hoar (1988) Mike Pearson and Michael Shanks (2001) Richard Schechner (1985, 1988, 1990, 1993, 2002) and Michael Taussig (1993). However it accepts Richard Schechner’s view that ultimately performance is undefinable because while it is easily recognisable, “at the descriptive level there is no detail of performance that occurs everywhere under all circumstances” (1990 19). The discussion includes a brief consideration of what differentiates theatrical performance from the ordinary performance of everyday life and draws on the approach to ritual and performance of anthropologist Victor Turner (1982, 1986, 1990). As there is no ‘true’ interpretation of the hybrid and liminal art of theatre, there is no one specific method for examining performance. Therefore encounter with the mise-en-scène (Pavis 1992, 1985) is expanded through the concept of “sensorium” and the metaphor of performance analysis as an archaeological dig (Pearson and Shanks 2001). However, as neither theatre archaeology nor semiotic theory leaves the intangible elements of performance undiscussed, phenomenology is the primary research method. The works of Edmund Husserl (1931), Robert Sokolowski (2000), Rob Baum (2003) and Bert O. States (1985) provide a method for considering the manner in which performance ‘opens up’ time and space, creating thematic connections into the psychic spaces surrounding performance and “bounding the boundless” (Wilshire 1982 201). This ordering of the universe is discussed in relation to the works of critic of English literature Peter Brooks (1995) and performance theorist Michael Taussig (1993). The chapter also argues that though a work of theatre may present explicit political and social issues that can be empirically examined, it is the process of the merging of actor and audience that creates an encounter with the experience which takes place beyond analytical thinking that is the most important engagement with the performance event.

The analyses use the phenomenological tool Edmund Husserl describes as the transcendental reduction (1931 44), a naïve consideration of the works, free from preconceptions, in order to see what is actually there rather that what one might expect to see (a difficult task in practice). Phenomenology also offers an understanding of perception through the ideas of filled and empty intentions.
which are methods are of explaining the perceptions of both tangible and intangible things. As performance consists of both absences and presences, each of which is equally important to the total reception of the performance work and exists in in fluid time and space between the ‘real’ of the everyday and the ‘not real’ of the imaginary an understanding of filled and empty intentions helps to explain this liminal state.

Chapter Four Characterising Pākehā, examines some of the ideas and issues surrounding the concept of Pākehā cultural identity and briefly outlines the idea of biculturalism. In the period during which the selected works were developed there was much debate about the nature of biculturalism in Aotearoa/New Zealand, and, while this debate does not appear directly in the selected works, it is part of the background which informs them. The interrelated nature of Pākehā and Māori culture in Aotearoa/New Zealand is considered, as is the loosening of ties to the countries of origins, in terms of the cultural and the psychic other. There is some discussion of the fractured nature of modern cultural identity. This discussion draws on the work of Stuart Hall (1996), Lawrence Grossberg (1996), Michael Keith (1993) and Steve Pile (1993). Fractured identity is pertinent to the question of Pākehā cultural identity which is an identity drawn from many sources and is still in the process of becoming. The chapter canvasses the discussion of the idea ‘Pākehā’ by theorists and researchers, Avril Bell (1995, 1996, 2006), Claudia Bell (1996), David Pearson (1995, 2004), Paul Spoonley (1995; 2004), Martin Tolich (2002), Stephen Turner (2000), Joanne Rachel Pellow (1995), Rosanne M. Black (1997,) Alan Howard (1990), and John Bluck (2001).

As this thesis is concerned with the exploration of the expression of Pākehā culture in theatrical performance, the discussion of the development of a general Pākehā culture in Aotearoa/New Zealand is necessarily brief. It focuses on particular aspects of identifiable Pākehā characteristics such as stoicism, the changes this land has wrought in the post-colonial psyche, the pull between the lands of origin and the new land, the interaction of the settlers with this new land and the concept of biculturalism in a multicultural world. The place of Pākehā as the dominant cultural identity in Aotearoa is discussed in terms of its position as a default identity and this raises questions about self-reflection and self-
representation. The idea of representation is the link with the primary concern of this thesis which seeks to demonstrate the development of a local Pākehā form of artistic self-representation through examining a selection of theatrical works which explore aspects of Pākehā.

Chapters five, six and seven examine the works through three major ideas: irony, emotion and the representation of the land-on-the-stage. While none of the topics is specific to Aotearoa/New Zealand in itself, they cover the significant areas of cultural representation as can be seen in cultural representations which draw on local iconic imagery for an immediate response, for example television advertising, which contain these three elements. The chapter titles headings are used as a basis for teasing out the exploration of local themes in the performances. The material is discussed in relation to the concept of audience participation in the works, and is particularly related to my personal experience of taking part in the performance of these works.

Chapter Five *Irony: Cynicism in Belief* discusses the role of irony as a cultural and theatrical device which, by counterbalancing the cultural imperative of self-deprecation, allows for a distancing of perspective. The chapter draws on the work of Gayle Austin (1998), Rob Baum (2003), John Bluck (2001), Renata Casertano (2000), Sue-Ellen Case (1998), Jill Dolan (1998), Terry Eagleton (1990), Myra Gatens (1996), Luce Irigaray (1997, 1985, 1985) Catherine Porter (1977), and Mary Russo (1997). The chapter theorises that the compensating mechanism of irony enables performance to satirise the cultural requirement of emotional and sexual repression. This interpretation is drawn from the concept of a dark comedy as explained by John Louis Styan (1968) in his examination of the plays of Anton Chekhov. Chapter five examines the ironic presentation of self-deprecation in *Home Land, Fishnet, Bitter Calm* and Andrew London’s songs and discusses the place of mockery, parody, and satire, as well as dramatic irony in the works in relation to the idea of black humour, a concept which is related to dark comedy. Like dark comedy, black humour, in making light of the serious, provokes an uncertain laughter. The chapter examines the dramatic irony of the racial discrimination and cultural clash in *Bitter Calm* and the racism evident in some scenes of *Home Land*. *Fishnet* examines the cultural limitations of women’s power, presenting a Pākehā feminist perspective through a satiric critique of the
treatment of women in New Zealand society. Issues of deviance are considered in
the treatment of homosexuality in *Home Land* where discussion is repressed, and
in *Fishnet*, which candidly explores the possibility of female deviance by
presenting a parodic contrast between women making a spectacle of themselves
(Russo 1997) and female respectability.

Chapter Six *Emotion* presents an opposing aspect to chapter five as it
reflects the ways repressed and expressed emotions are presented on stage. This
chapter draws on Peta Tait’s (2000) work on performing emotion in Chekhov and
Maxine Sheet-Johnstone’s (2009) idea of the kinaesthetic nature of emotion. It
considers the contrast between the subtle emotional manifestations of the
naturalistic theatre and the overblown emotional presentation of the operatic
form. The depiction of emotion on stage offers a direct appeal to the senses, but
in so doing works between conventional literal experience and layers of symbolic
meaning associated with a certain emotional state. The ghosts of the “other
world” are examined in relation to ideas about the cultural representation of
emotion and the notion of moral responsibilities.

Chapter Seven, *The Land: The Character Who Does Not Make an
Entrance*, deals with the way the landscape, which has deep iconic significance in
Aotearoa/New Zealand, can be conceptually brought to the stage. The chapter
initially refers to the work of ecologist Tim Flannery (1994), who provides a
paradigm for understanding the attitudinal change in a settler people as they move
from being new arrivals to becoming permanent residents. It draws on Michèle
Dominy’s (2001) study of South Island High Country farmers particularly in
relation to the characters of *Home Land*. The land is examined as a site of conflict
in *Bitter Calm*, as a place of connectedness in *Home Land*, and as an embedded
psychic idea in *Fishnet* and in Andrew London’s songs. The chapter discusses the
scenographic elements which are employed to give the land some tangible
presence on the stage through the performance analysis of the mise-en-scène of
*Bitter Calm*, *Home Land* and *Fishnet*. The artists Chris Blake (1993, 2005), Gary
their understandings about the relationship of the land which surrounds them to
the works of performance which they make.
Chapter Eight, *Staging a World-View*, discusses the process of presenting a cosmology in theatrical performance. It returns to the work of phenomenologists of the theatre Bruce Wilshire (1982) and Bert O. States (1985) and reviews the concept of ‘other’ from a theatre perspective. It includes further discussion of the relationships of the characters to the roles of mythological archetypes. In using this framework I am drawing on my understanding of the manner in which the figures of myth: the hero, the heroine and the villain inform the basic character types of theatrical performance.


Chapter Ten, *Conclusion*, reviews the process of calling identity into presence on stage, offers a perspective on the nature of Pākehā sensibility, and considers the importance of Pākehā seeing themselves on the stage.

Appendix One contains a video *To, For, By, With and From Performance*, linked to Chapter Nine. This track relates my personal experience of attending performances of the selected works from a phenomenological perspective and is illustrated with extracts from the works themselves.
Chapter Two

Methodology- Accessing the Raw Data

This study of four works of Pākehā theatre work is focused on unpacking the world the stage creates from the everyday world. The principle research paradigm is performance analysis and the prime data on which this work is based is drawn from the performances. This is supported by a series of interviews of the performance artists which bring a sociological perspective to the works and support the performance analysis. The final method for obtaining the base data is a small performance survey which was designed to gain qualitative data from four audiences who attended the work Fishnet. The discipline of phenomenology, particularly the theoretical perspectives of phenomenologists Bruce Wilshire (1982) and Bert O. States (States 1985, 1992) is the main theoretical source and is used as the primary method for interpreting the data uncovered in the performance works.

As the selected works are new there is no background of critical analysis on which I could draw for interpretations. Nor is there any extensive material on the artists themselves. My information was primarily derived from closely examining the works themselves but additional information about the context in which they were produced comes from the interviews with the artists.

I will first discuss the qualitative data derived from the interviews which describes the process of making the performances. This will be followed by a review of the audience survey which offered insights into the audience response to Fishnet. I will review the process of making the video chapter which covered my own position as participant in the performance. Finally I will outline the processes of the performance analyses.

The interviews

While the selected performance works exist of themselves and as works of art can be considered as discrete entities, they sit within a social context. The blurred edges between the everyday world and the world of the stage mean that in this project the interviews both provide a valid source of knowledge about the everyday world of the artists and give information about the raw materials which the artists used as creative
resources. The everyday world is the source from which the artists draw the material for their works therefore my objective in the interviews was to get detailed accounts and anecdotes about the experiences the artists use in their work to add to my own analyses of the performances. The precise descriptions they gave of the triggers for their creative processes and the means by which they translated the ideas into the words, actions and settings of theatrical performance enhance the detailed descriptions of the performances themselves. I was particularly interested in ideas and anecdotes which indicated a Pākehā sensibility.

I interviewed eight performance artists. The group included those people who made or directed works and also an actor and a dancer who have a commitment to creating works that reflect the ‘localness’ of Aotearoa/New Zealand. Conversations with these artists revealed the depth of their personal reflection on, and experience of, the making of local works. (The availability of these artists to be interviewed and my friendship with some of them were also deciding factors in who was interviewed.)

The artists were interviewed in three groups, Chris Blake, Lyne Pringle and Andrew London first and approximately three months later Hilary Norris, Gary Henderson and Kilda Northcott. Finally, at the end of one year, I interviewed Hilary Halba and Ali East. The sequence of these interviews was not deliberately planned, however in retrospect the delay between the interviews was fortuitous. By the time I interviewed Hilary Halba and Ali East I had gathered much information about the representation of local issues in performance so I was able to put more general questions to these two artists about making and performing Pākehā works. Both were aware of the qualitative difference in local performance as opposed to international works, and were able to comment on the way local knowledge influences their art.

My goal was to build a picture about the development of the performance works so I based the procedural structure of my interviews on seven points:

1. The development of the piece
2. The main intention of the performance
3. Images and motifs
4. Creative processes
5. Personal meanings attached to motifs
6. The experience of performing that particular work
7. The question of cultural significance
The insights and stories that the artists shared provided a rich source of data about making and staging the works. They ranged from Hilary Norris’ information that staging *Home Land* presented a series of technical challenges because it was “set in real time including the whole preparation and eating and washing up of a meal” to Kilda Nothcott’s complex statement about the relative cultural value of art and sport signified by the use of the rugby outfits in *Fishnet*.

**Conducting semi-structured interviews**

Qualitative interviews are shaped by the prejudices and purposes of interviewee and interviewer so there are many approaches to interviewing technique. For Tim Rapley interviewing is simply, “asking questions and following up on various things that interviewees raise and allowing them the space to talk,” (2004:25). Interviews are about connecting with the interviewee - they do not require any extraordinary skill (ibid.). Steinar Kvale on the other hand considers interviewing a craft which, if well honed, can reach the level of an art. He offers two metaphorical descriptions of the role of the interviewer as either “a miner or as a traveller” (1996:3), suggesting that the miner seeks either “objective facts to be quantified” or “essential meaning,” while the travelling interviewer “wanders through the landscape and enters into conversations with the people encountered” (ibid.). I worked mainly as the traveller interviewer alert to the idea of promising diversion and interesting anecdotes.

The interviews were friendly but searching conversations. Conversation is a “basic mode of knowing” (Kvale 1996:37) through which human beings understand their world, “provide a way of understanding both one’s own and another’s reality” (1996:37). A written form of friendly but searching interview, with a theatre artist, is the Peter Brook interview *Between Two Silences – Talking With Peter Brook* (2000). I kept the pre-talk brief because in my experience in a long pre-talk the interviewees tend to talk themselves out and have very little to say on tape. The opening questions varied from “could you begin by telling me how it all started?” to questions which depended my previous knowledge of the performing artists’ work.

I memorised my questions and used them in an ad-lib form as a springboard for the interview. This kept me, as interviewer, firmly focused on the interviewee. I allowed them to answer each question fully and without interruption following their line of thought to its conclusion. I was both encouraging the interviewees to tell the
stories of their creative methods, and seeking information about the representation of Pākehā cultural identity in theatrical performance. At times I asked a direct question about this. For example I wanted Gary Henderson to talk about his work as a Pākehā theatre artist but he began to talk about other things, so I put a direct question to him. “What interests me, I have to ask you the question. Are you Pākehā?” In general I would ask a more indirect question about cultural identification but as I knew he had a commitment to creating Pākehā works I wanted to establish the background quickly and then move on. This question prompted Gary to make a statement about his artistic stance.

Yeah. Well, there was one point where I actually consciously made the decision that that’s what I would write about […] I actually wanted to write about what it was like being a Pākehā in this country and, the things that you went through and wasn’t necessarily celebrating Pākehā culture, just putting it up there and saying this is what it’s like.

I also asked questions which lead the interview in a particular direction such as:

Q I see particular things to me that say ‘I belong here’ ah particular, little items, like the use of the lovely piece of driftwood, like the idea that you would use cow pelvises [um] the kind of rural thing that’s [um] coming into the work. And also particular attitudes towards women that I think spring out of the experience of living in Aotearoa [um] do you have comments about that?

LP Yeah well the whole work is a comment on that, ...

I interviewed each artist formally only once, though there were several informal discussions with some artists prior to setting a time to record. The interviews varied in length between 30 minutes and an hour and a half. This variation was a function of time constraint in the case of Andrew London, but also had to do with the level of reflection the artists had given their work.

Ethical considerations

Ethical approval was gained for the interviews and audience survey from the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. Five of the interviews are between
people with whom I have an established friendship and who share my passion for theatrical performance. Prior to conducting the interviews I had observed them perform and had conversations with some of them about theatrical performance and a local Pākehā approach. One of the other interviewees was a person with whom I had a professional acquaintance and the other two were strangers to me. Regardless of whether they were strangers, acquaintances or firm friends, all interviewees were approached in the same manner. Those who were strangers had the project outlined to them and were then asked if they would be prepared to be interviewed about their work and to have that interview recorded on video. Others who were familiar with the project were asked the same question prior to recording. They were all in agreement with these conditions.

In their roles as performance artists these interviewees are public figures, and are talking about the influences on their finished and publicly presented work. Therefore the conversations are not confidential. The role of the interviewer therefore is to treat the interviewee with respect and to set limits on the range of the interview. Restricting the conversation to professional matters meant that interviews had tight parameters and were restricted to the artists’ work, the influences that affected that work and its relationship to a local Pākehā culture. Sometimes the interviewees chose to talk about other works they had made as illustrations of local or international influences on their works. There can be a problem with interviewing close friends as they may feel that they cannot refuse the request. In the case of this project, almost all the interviewees indicated that they were very happy to talk about their own work and to speak more broadly on a topic that interested them. They saw the interviews as opportunities to explore ideas about what local Pākehā works of theatre might be.

Transcriptions

Transcribing the interviews is not a neutral process. At their best transcripts are translations from “an oral to a written mode of communication,” (Kvale 1996 163). Like the research process and interviewing, the transcriptions and subsequent analysis are “always inextricably linked to […] specific theoretical interests” (Rapley 2004 27). I decided to transcribe my interviews myself as this enabled me to positively re-engage with what my interviewees had said. These artists are eloquent speakers and they were talking on a topic of great interest to them, their own work. So though I recorded
everything in the transcriptions, repeats, hesitations, stumbles, stammers, mispronunciations, the filled and unfilled pauses, the transcriptions look very clean. However noting everything gave me the option of including repetitions in the written text where they added emphasis and removing them where they obscured meaning. I have not usually retained these stumbles and repeats in the main body of this thesis because generally they did not improve the meaning of the speakers’ statements.

Having interviewed the artists I transcribed them, making notes in text boxes in the margins of transcripts of ideas and anecdotes which related to the selected works. The subjects of these notes can be described under the series of headings below.

**Concepts of Pākehā society directly related to making Pākehā theatre**

- Concepts of place including the land
- Pākehā characteristics
- Local understandings
- The relationship with Māori
- The real and the imagined
- Performing ourselves

The interviews provide a broad outline of the artists’ creative processes and contextualise the results obtained from the primary research method, performance analysis. For example, the artists acknowledge the international influences and pressures on their work while being clear that, being Pākehā artists living in Aotearoa/New Zealand, also shapes them. Material from the sections of the interviews marked by the notes supports the textual analysis of the works presented in the data chapters. However I have not used the particular headings listed above in the data chapters as they are merely guides to the type of material found in the interviews.
Chapter Two Methodology - Accessing the Raw Data

Audience Survey

A second method for obtaining qualitative data outside the performance analyses was the survey that was administered to the audiences of the four Fishnet performances during the Dunedin Fringe Festival between 4 and 8 October 2006. This audience survey was carried out about eighteen months into the research and provided an immediate response to a particular work of Pākehā theatre.

Two hundred and sixty survey forms were distributed to audience members who were asked to make anonymous responses. No codes of any kind were attached to the survey forms so it would be impossible to trace the responses to any particular person. The respondents were given the option of either filling in the survey after the performance and returning it at the door or taking it away and returning it in the stamped addressed envelope provided. Most took the option of taking the survey away and posting it back. One hundred and thirteen survey forms were returned by both methods. The audience survey sought to discover whether or not people related to Fishnet as a work that expressed a sense of Aotearoa/New Zealand and of Pākehā cultural identity in particular. Accordingly participants were asked closed questions which sought a yes/no response and other open questions which required a longer written answer.

Below is an example of both one of the closed and one of the open questions

Were there local objects or movements which you recognised as representative of Aotearoa/New Zealand? □ □

Can you name some of these?

It was not possible to conduct audience surveys of the works Home Land and Bitter Calm, as they were already historical by the time this research began. It was also not possible to survey the audience at the Hot Club Sandwich concert. I was both
interviewer and camera operator for the recording session and I could not also conduct a survey without extra support, which was not available.

As the object of the survey was to collect opinions rather than statistics, the open questions sought subjective responses from the interviewees. For example when asked about the performance, “were there local objects or movements which you recognised as representative of Aotearoa/New Zealand,” the following items were recalled:

Rugby the theme - images and stances - the clowning in the rugby scene were seen as a skit by one respondent, other respondents also commented on the humour as a Pākehā characteristic. Total comments 35
Harakeke flax. Total comments 83

An additional objective was to ascertain whether the audience perceived themselves as Pākehā. A more difficult objective was to discover whether or not the work was perceived as local. The survey results must be considered in the light of the possibility that, given the degree of self-selection that takes place among any group of people who choose to attend a particular theatrical event, this group may have been more than ordinarily willing to call themselves Pākehā. Seventy–five per cent of the respondents did so. Thirty-eight per cent of that group thought that the work Fishnet dealt with issues which particularly belonged to Aotearoa/New Zealand and referred to the use of local plants, to the representation of rugby, and to the way the work dealt with issues in a humorous, almost off-hand manner as adding a sense of localness to the work. Additional comments made by many of the respondents showed a strong interest in the aspects of the work that were specific to Aotearoa/New Zealand and to Pākehā cultural identity. Fifty-six per cent of those who identified as Pākehā described the work as directly expressing an idea of Pākehā identity, even if the issues it addressed did not belong specifically to this country. Though the survey did not indicate that a majority thought the work dealt specifically with issues that belonged only in this country, the general opinion, expressed in the additional comments, was that the work is a piece of Pākehā theatre. Some respondents expressed a strong feeling that the work
was Pākehā but added that it was difficult to say just what Pākehā is, although “one can know it when one sees it”.

**Video chapter**

Visual research takes its place alongside the other methods as “an integrated aspect of the experience of interviewing or interacting with informants” (Pink 2004 395) The interviews were recorded on video because from the start of the research I intended to combine artists’ comments about their work with excerpts from the works themselves. I recorded and edited the videos myself. Being both the camera operator, recordist and interviewer provided flexibility in setting up the interview and produced only a minimum of distraction for the subject but restricted the range of camera shots.

In theatrical performance the visual is vital so the raw interview videos, and the source videos of the performances, are used to analyse the works and to provide illustrative material for the video essay *To For By With and From Performance* – the narrative of my experiences of being present at the performances. Attending the performances is the fundamental experience on which I have based my performance analyses and the video explains my privileged dual position as both participant and observer. I edited the raw video into a narrative of blocks of script as used in the silent movies. These are mainly quotes from phenomenologists Robert Sokolowski and Andrew Quick. I illustrated the key points by overlaying my words with video sections of the works. Through reflecting on what I saw, heard, thought, and felt while I was watching the performances I am able to link my personal perceptual experience to the experiences recorded by those people who filled in the audience survey.

**Performance analysis - investigating a text of a culture**

Any performance, which is a form of ‘writing’ of a culture, like ethnography creates its own particular point of view. Likewise any ethnography is written from the perspective of the ethnographer (van Maanen 1988). Through analysing the selected works I have sought to access their point of view, but what is true for ethnographer is also true for the performance analyst, they carry their own ideas with them even as they attempt to dissect the works. The process of analysis involves a breakdown of the works into the elements and then a re-assembling of them into the interpretative text; and works of performance are open to unlimited interpretations, depending on the point of view of the observer. My concern was to uncover a particular form of theatre that
stems from two sources, the forms of the European theatre tradition and the Pākehā experience of being a post-colonial people rooted in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Martin Tolich and Carl Davidson stress the need for “anthropological strangeness” towards fieldwork when a researcher is studying their own culture. If they achieve this they can attempt to “record something as though […] seeing it for the first time” (1999:7). This is also necessary when one analyses a performance. Performance, even those Brechtian performances which work within the Verfremdungseffekt, engages the emotions of those who watch them. Each person watching a performance unavoidably sees an aspect of themself represented in the character (Wilshire 1982). Therefore, like the ethnographer, the performance analyst must attempt an “anthropological distance” towards the works, viewing them as unknown, strange, foreign even. The initial engagement with the performance is as a gestalt and only later do the details of each theatrical performance unfold. It is the detail that gives performance its unique quality. One movement, gesture, word or speech will not adequately substitute for another. It is through engaging with the discrete detail, which creates each distinct text of the performance, that helps to create an analytical disengagement with the emotional content (Pavis 1985).

In this particular study the ‘ethnography’ is built on data taken from the moments of the performance themselves, supplemented by information obtained in the interviews. The inclusion of many excerpts, textural or visual from the works is designed to present examples of the reality of the characters and the use of interview quotes broadens this to include the reality of the artists. Theatrical performance is an event which is larger than the actions taking place on the stage. In the diagram below, taken from his book *Performance Theory*, Richard Schechner (1988:72) sets out what he sees as the relationship between the stage drama and the broader concept of theatrical performance.
It clearly shows that, while the events on the stage are the focal point of interest, the greater part of any performance takes place between the performers and the spectators. Like John van Maanen’s impressionist tale, (1988 103) works of performance express a view of a culture. They repackage the everyday world, presenting it from a different vantage point, to reflect upon the nature of the society they represent. In this condensed form they can then be re-read by an audience, and like the ethnographer of the impressionist tale the creator of a performance work is saying “[H]ere is this world, make of it what you will”(ibid.).

**Accessing the ‘hard’ data**

Theatrical performance can be analysed by examining and interpreting the meaning of the various texts alone. A performance analysis, like literary criticism and analysis, unpicks the tightly constructed works in order to reveal the ideas that lie beneath their surfaces. My approach has been to both describe what occurs on the stage - the ‘hard’ data - and interpret the meaning inherent in the actions and artefacts - the ‘soft’ data of analysis. This is similar to “thick description” which is “description-plus-interpretation” (Mitchell 2007 61). I began the process of accessing the meanings of the works by obtaining video copies to refresh my experience of attending the works. All of these records were used as an aid to my own personal memories. Professionally recorded and edited copies of the works *Bitter Calm* and *Fishnet* were available but in the case of *Hot Club Sandwich* I recorded the video myself. This recording included the interview with Andrew London and the full concert including ‘cover’ songs as well as original works. Cutaway shots of sections of the audience were recorded in case they...
should be needed for editing purposes. In the case of *Home Land*, which was never recorded, I used the script of the play and photos of the performance.

The physical mechanisms of theatrical performance are ‘real’ and external to the observer and capable of being measured. For example one can ask: what are the light settings, how many items of scenery are there, of what kind are they, of what are they made and how are they placed, what are the texts, what do the performers say and do and in what manner do they do it. The physical mechanisms are important ways in which the performance conveys meaning to the audience. Patrice Pavis terms this totality of the stage experience the mise-en-scène. In order to see how that meaning is made present on the stage, what occurs on the stage must first be described. I subjected the mise-en-scène of the selected works to detailed examination using Patrice Pavis’ list of theatrical texts from his article ‘Theatre Analysis: Some Questions and a Questionnaire’ (1985 160) as a basis. He suggests that there are at least six kinds of texts used in theatre and audience and actors alike may need to consider all of these. The following chart based on his ideas was used to analyse the visible and thematic elements of the performance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Costume</th>
<th>Props</th>
<th>Lighting</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Sound Effects (SFX used)</th>
<th>Music</th>
<th>Set</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The works for which there is a video copy, *Fishnet, Bitter Calm*, and the jazz works of *Hot Club Sandwich*, were examined in roughly one-minute segments and the results written into a table based on the text listed above. The play *Home Land*, for which there is no video copy, was analysed using the text copy of the script and supplemented with photographs.

The arbitrary division of the works into various texts provides a way of viewing the action as a series of discrete entities and is a way of looking clearly at particular sections of the action of the stage. Taken together these create a matrix in which aspects

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3 I have analysed the music as it relates to text and action but have offered no formal musical analysis as this is outside the scope of this work – and my competence.
of what is an essentially unified whole can be examined both singly and together, and the way in which various combinations of elements work together to make meaning can be uncovered. This matrix of observations provided the basis from which the scenes discussed in detail in the data chapters were drawn. See a section of the analysis of *Bitter Calm*, next page:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Costume</th>
<th>Props</th>
<th>Lighting</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Space</th>
<th>SFX</th>
<th>Music</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Set</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 Pure white for the women, Roberton white with light grey shirt</td>
<td>Whisky flask</td>
<td>Lighting is brighter, the blue platform has prominence</td>
<td>Conflict between domesticity and the freedom and adventure promised by the sea.</td>
<td>Roberton crosses between Thomas Bull and Matiu in confrontation and turns to look at them as he does so. Suggests to Thomas Bull to move away. Both men do so. Robertson moves upstage to join the two women on the platform. Takes off his coat sits and pulls out a whisky flask. Argue about his setting out in rough weather ensures.</td>
<td>The blue of the platform and the white back lighting make the space seem expansive, the mist (dry ice) on stage adds to a sense of space.</td>
<td>A tempestuous sound becomes expansive as Robertson sings ‘I know the sea’</td>
<td>Elizabeth ‘Must you go out today the sea is wild?’ Robertson ‘I’ve been out in worse than this.’ Catherine ‘Father you don’t need to sail today.’ Elizabeth ‘Work must be done.’ …. Robertson ‘I’m to stay and rot I’m a free man who loves to sail… I know the sea as I know you.’</td>
<td>Three bare trees, fishnet hangs behind set over plain canvas backdrop. Columns painted in a Renaissance manner stand in the front of the stage. Now aware of side cloths, trees in mist melting into the distance.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Accessing ‘soft’ data in performance analysis

While the ‘hard’ data was accessed by a form of semiotic analysis, the ‘soft’ data was obtained through my personal interpretation of the meaning of these individual performance texts augmented by the interpretative methods of close reading and phenomenology. Performance is the territory of illusion and the sign and is built on the ideas of liminality and hybridity. Because of its complex nature, Richard Schechner suggests that a multiplicity of perspectives is necessary in approaching performance as there is no one particular way in which it can be understood (1985 40). While performance analysis is influenced by social context and current ideas about performance, it is an essentially personal and subjective act. The source of the ‘soft’ data in this thesis is the interpretation of the works by one audience member – me. This interpretation is expanded and informed by the interviews with the artists. I bring to them my personal experiences and my idiosyncratic processes of observation combined with what others tell me about their encounters with the works. Like the audience for John van Maanen’s impressionist tale, the audience for my reflections “cannot know it if it is correct” (1988 105). If they were present at the performance they may however dispute my findings.

However, as my principal approach to accessing the ‘soft’ data was phenomenological, I attempted as far as possible to maintain a naïve stance. Performance requires understanding both the significance of the objects and events on the stage and an understanding of their essential phenomenality. As Bert O. States explains, their phenomenality exists because what is on the stage is ‘truly’ itself while at the same time being imbued with many possible meanings (1985 6-13). He labels this ability to see a work both in its significant aspects and its phenomenal ones “a kind of binocular vision” (1985 8). Just as the shared understandings of an interview arise during its conversation so the shared understandings of performance arise in its conversation. Performance conversation, like the interview, is based on our communications of understandings of different but shared worlds (Kvale 1996 296). Performances take from the everyday world, translating and heightening it to the interpretative world of the theatre, where dialogue occurs, not only between the characters on the stage, but also between them and the audience. In the process the spectator “appropriates” the “mise-en-scène” (Pavis 1992 34), the total matrix of the
Performance requires empathy and intuition to gain an understanding of its import and it is never possible to conclusively state the meaning of any performance. The analysis of the works has been backgrounded by interviews with the creators and where possible, the directors of the works, supplemented by some interviews with artists in the field. The qualitative work was also supplemented by quantitative data collected in an audience survey of the work *Fishnet*. The final analysis was overlaid by the experience of the author as an audience member for all of these performances. In order to understand a performance it needs to be both appreciated as a whole structured event, taken apart scene by scene and examined across the performance elements which include sound, space, light, text and performance style. Its allusions, verbal, visual, aural, kinetic, or cerebral, form the ‘soft’ data of performance. They can be discovered in the particular use a performance makes of the sites of hard data, for example costume, props, lighting, action, sound effects, music, set and choice of performance space. This thesis therefore employs both sets of data, hard and soft, in its discussion of the selected works. Accordingly, all detailed analysis of the selected performance works for this research has been conducted by using a combination of the technique of a close reading (Spurlin 1995 365) and ideas of performance analysis based on the work of Patrice Pavis (1985).

The research, a voyage of discovery of ever increasing depth and complexity that was neither linear nor straightforward, began with my experience of seeing the works performed. This kindled my desire to interpret them in the light of my own society, Pākehā New Zealand and to explore routes of meaning and experience which lay behind their making. It was a journey which took me to literature that addressed the topics of identity and performance, to the lived experience of the artists, their reflections on that experience and to the immediate responses of some audiences. These investigations all took place in the context of exploring the works.

The aim has been to consider cultural identity as presented in and through theatrical performance. These works provide the midden for this archaeological dig into Pākehā culture, providing the basis for a discussion of the meaning of the role of the works as carriers of identity. The interpretation of any performance varies from person to person and changes through time as society itself changes. There can be no one perfect
analysis and categorical interpretation of a work of theatre which is complete for all time. A theatrical work may however remain relevant for generations or even millennia, as have the works of Sophocles, Euripides and Aristophanes.
Chapter Three

Methodology - Unpicking Performance

This chapter considers the concepts of “imagined communities”, (Anderson 1991) the concepts of thridspace, and of myth in relation to performance and discusses the role of mimesis in representing imagined communities. The method of phenomenology, a means of explaining the perception of presence and absence on the stage, is considered and the chapter canvasses the relationships of performance and society. The analytical tools of Patrice Pavis (1985, 1992) and Mike Pearson and Michael Shanks (2001) are reviewed as approaches for analysing the performance works and pinpointing the way performance concretises meaning, thus revealing the subtext(s) of a work.


Performance: a definition

A basic problem associated with providing a complete definition of performance is identified by Richard Schechner: “at the descriptive level there is no detail of performance that occurs everywhere under all circumstances. Nor is it easy to specify limitations on what is, or could be treated as performance” (1990 19). Various performance theorists approach it from their own particular perspective. Peter Brook is certain that “[t]heater (sic) is about life” and he asks “[w]hat else could it be about?” (2000 6). He notes that theatre is about life lived more fully and wonders if it is “possible in the short time that one spends in a theatre to enter into a living situation truly in a different way, and a more intense way, than if one encountered exactly the same situation in any other part of one’s ordinary day” (ibid.). Peter Brook does not answer that question, or the question of whether the theatre experience is deeper than the deepest experiences of life itself. However he posits the idea of theatre as a deep and intense experience, but one which is about the conflict between the two sides of
human nature and therefore “is made up of the unbroken conflict between impressions and judgements - illusion and disillusion [which] cohabit painfully and are inseparable.” (2000 47) Moreover Peter Brook notes that like life, theatre may not provide the expected outcome. Plans are thwarted, expectations denied and hopes dashed in theatrical performance, as in life itself. It is possible that this theatrical collision of hopes and dreams with challenges and disappointment can create changes in the perceptions and the thinking of audience members. He suggests that the primary purpose of theatrical performance is to lead “out of loneliness to a perception that is heightened because it is shared. A strong presence of actors and a strong presence of spectators can produce a circle of unique intensity in which barriers can be broken and the invisible become real” [emphasis added] (1988 48). This melding together of variable truths is possible because at its most intense theatre can produce “the supreme moment of communication – the moment when people normally divided from one another by every sort of natural human barrier suddenly find themselves truly together” (Brook 2000 5-6).

Phenomenologist Bruce Wilshire has a similar view. For him the purpose of theatre is to manifest what is hidden and so assist the person watching, and also those acting or backstage, to come to truly know themselves. He suggests that the question is the same for everyone: “[h]ow does one-engulfed-in-the-other – get born psychically as an individual self?” He maintains in a play, “the plot is this single “movement of soul” towards differentiation and clarification of the selves involved” (1982 204).

For Augusto Boal theatrical activity is both more basic and more profound. He simply says “the being becomes human when it invents theatre” (2000 14). The psychic birth of humanity has to do with the self-awareness of those who take part.

When a man hunts a bison, he sees himself in the act of hunting; which is why he can paint a picture of the hunter – himself – hunting the bison. He can invent paint because he has invented theatre: he has seen himself in the act of seeing. An actor, acting taking action, he has learnt to be his own spectator.

(Boal 1995 13)

Though it is not possible to give a final definition of performance I suggest that theatrical performance is betwixt and between, neither ‘real’ life nor ‘not real’ life but a
specific period of exploration in which events that are random in everyday life are linked on the stage. Through their embodied presentation ideas are made available for reception by an audience. Thus, through performance, ordinary events are enhanced; intransigence is imbued with significance; love becomes an expectation denied; hope is encountered only in the distant horizon of tomorrow; and heedlessness can destroy a world.

Looking at the mechanics of performance Richard Schechner calls it “restored behaviour” (Schechner 1985 36) or “twice behaved behaviour” (1990 43) which is a set of actions that, rather than being spontaneous, has been prepared and rehearsed before being performed. He writes of creating live performance by manipulating items from real life “as a film director treats a strip of film. These strips of behaviour can be rearranged or reconstructed; they are independent of causal systems” (1985 35). Scene B follows scene A because the director or the playwright decides that it should.

In this sense the primary tools of theatre are time and space. Through presenting the body on stage theatre achieves the corporeal occupation of the performance space, and through scenography, including the technological play of light and shade, the illusory occupation. Performance gives significance to aspects of time by holding time still so that the sense of “all life falling haphazardly through time into accident and repetition” (States 1985 48) is arrested in shaping a series of selected moments into a coherent form. What may be random in everyday life is now structured. What may be loosely connected is tightly packed, creating some sense of order. This is psychically important. The focusing of time occurs within two frames: the progression of ordinary time for the fixed duration of the event and the expanded or contracted sense of time within the performance. Within the context of the theatre, creating another complete world with its own structure of space and time is taken as ordinary. Yet it is, in fact, remarkable. Outside events do not disturb the facts of the performances. As Bruce Wilshire writes “no member of the audience is allowed to interfere with this unrolling of artistic events” (1982 207). Even if the play is disrupted, broken into by an interval

The play can recommence some time later with no break in, and no time added to its “world” time. This is what makes possible the supreme ideality of theatrical presencing: its ability to call into presence things completely removed in fact from the immediate setting of the theatre house.
Theatrical performance then has the power to refocus the minds of the participants taking them from the ‘real’ time and space to imaginary time and space. For Arnold Aronson the space of the stage is like the mirror on the wall, and like the mirror, it “is a real place, but unlike the mirror, the space seen on the other side of the curtain or footlights […] is not virtual but real. And yet, on another level, it is no more real than the image in a mirror” (2005 103). For him “the world depicted on the stage possesses its power – its reality – only so long as I cannot touch it, cannot enter into it. It is a world of the gaze, of the voyeur: touching is forbidden” (2005 103). Yet as an insubstantial world performance relies on the shared agreement of the suspension of disbelief to allow the ‘other world’ of the stage to exist at the same time as the real world of the audience. This mix of reality and unreality creates the power of the theatrical illusion (Hoar 1988 8). It is through the fragile glass of unreality, that will shatter if touched, that the theatre conducts the audience by a safe passage to the other mythical, and yet in some way more real, because heightened, world of the stage.

The shifts and compressions of time and space lead the participants to set the outside world aside and to surrender to the processes in hand. In this way theatre contains important similarities to a liminal ritual event for such a surrender allows both the conscious and the unconscious processes of participation to create the potential for the audience to psychically move towards a performance, and in that movement take it over as a community event. The exact response of audience to performer and of performer to audience differs from performance to performance. This is a phenomenon well known to performers. The difference occurs because the performer integrates the ‘other’ of the audience into their performance. The audience in turn has the experience of observing the characters, internalising their qualities, and then integrating aspects of that performed other into themselves. It is a similar process to the integration of the other in everyday life. As Bruce Wilshire writes, theatre and life have the same activity as their base; for in each “one is mimetically in the other’s presence and is authorized in one’s being by others” (1982 209). This integrative process was one of the original purposes of theatre, writes Victor Turner. It was concerned with resolving the “crises affecting everyone and assigning meaning to the apparently arbitrary and often cruel-

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4 Where the word other is used to express a different group of people against whom a culture measures and compares itself it will take the capitalised form of Other. Where it is used generally to denote other people or the psychological other it will remain uncapitalised.
seeming sequence of events following personal or social conflicts” (1982 114). By removing the participants from the world of the everyday, to the world of illusion theatrical performance places them in a situation where they are given the opportunity to see things from a different perspective. They agree to engage in what occurs on the stage. It is the agreement to participate in the events of in-between space of liminal suspension created by performance which offers the audience members a possibility for transformation. Therefore as a symbolic mode, theatre is able to shape the experiences of the community.

**Imagined communities, “Third space” and performance**

As David Pearson writes “culture relates to the material and symbolic modes of life that shapes everyone’s existence” (Pearson 1995 10), and considering Pākehā cultural identity in performance means looking at the symbolic expression of an imagined community (Anderson 1991). As tangible expressions of identity, works of theatre give this imagined cultural community the ability to create a tangible expression of its existence and to speak of aspects of itself both for members of the community and for outsiders. Benedict Anderson’s premise of nations as imagined communities: “all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined” (1991 6) is based on the fact that while people have concepts of themselves as a nation “most members of any nation will only ever know a small proportion of that nation’s population” (1991 4). He writes that imagined aspects of communities are created through the communication media of newspapers, radio and T.V. Such media bind people, who do not know each other, together in a common conception of who they are. It is in the nature of being human to “live reality as really made-up” writes Michael Taussig (1993 255), so it is unsurprising that nations are imaginary communities of people held together by communication media. Performance is one of these communication media and it not only describes a community but also envisions it, representing it in performance space. As “communities are to be distinguished […] by the style in which they are imagined” (Anderson 1991 6), different communities express their imaginings in different theatrical and social forms which represent the constitution of that community’s world-view.

Within the scientific paradigm individuality is a prime value and “only what is present and actual, moment by moment is real” (Wilshire 1982 48). This position
encourages a view of the world that does not allow for legend, fantasy and myth, leaving no place for communal memory, and “timeless” cyclical time. Human life is however actually communal and in its stories about its own origins and purposes “timeless mythical and fantastic” (ibid.). The human ability to remember and to look forward to future events means that we all carry past, present and future with us as we go about our daily lives. Art, particularly the medium of theatrical performance, can recall these pasts into presents and can spin the thread of the future before our eyes. At the same time we are concurrently in the present bringing these times into existence before us. It is through this process that we “engage artistically in myths in order to come to grips with the myths we live unthematically every day. To be is to exist in the presence of the absent” (Wilshire 1982 48). In participating in the absent we learn more about who we are now in the present. By drawing on the past we consider what we might become in the future.

However within the scientific world geographers Edward Soja (1996) and Yi-Fu Tuan (1977) also consider that a world which lies beyond the surface of experience is as real as the world which is immediately accessible to the senses. Yi-Fu Tuan notes that all countries “have their factual and their mythological geographies” (Tuan 1977 98). For Edward Soja, rejecting the world of the imagination is “the realistic illusion” (1996 64) and he suggests that such a rejection propels people’s thinking about the world into “a naturalistic or mechanistic materialism or empiricism, in which objective “things” have more reality than “thoughts” ” (ibid.). In this realistic illusion the ‘real’ “is reduced to material or natural objects […] the “imagined” is unseen, unmeasurable and therefore unknowable” (Soja 1996 64). Edward Soja considers the blending of the tangible and the imagined produce a site which he names “Thirdspace” (1996 6). This space “builds on a Firstspace perspective that is focused on the “real” material world and a Secondspace perspective that interprets this reality through “‘imagined” representations of spatiality” (1996 6) and is an intermediate space between the tangible and the intangible.

Edward Soja suggests that “Thirdspace”, where the “real” and the “imagined” intersect simultaneously, exists as an opportunity to expand understanding of the world we inhabit. Here he is describing an essential quality of a liminal space. The term “Thirdspace” he writes, attempts to “capture what is a constantly shifting and changing milieu of ideas, events, appearances, and meanings. […] [W]hether […] interpreting a
momentous event or simply dealing with our everyday lives, the closely associated historical (or temporal) and social (or sociological) imaginations have always been at the forefront of making practical and informative sense of the subject at hand” (Soja 1996 2). “Thirdspace” occurs in the everyday world, for example, when, in the geographical mode, the ‘real’ world is imaginatively represented through maps and drawings. These rekindle ideas about the spaces inscribed on the paper in the minds of the persons viewing them. The tangible artefact produces the intangible imagining and taken together with the maps, produces a “Thirdspace” in which all impressions both tangible and intangible exist at once.

Mythical space (Tuan 1977), has also been a concern of the scientific world. Mythical space can be seen as yet another understanding of a ‘thirdspace’ 5, for mythical space is also a place where contradictions can co-exist without privileging any one perspective. According to Yi-Fu Tuan, though the creation of an imagined mythical space is “an intellectual construct” it is also a “response of feeling and imagination to fundamental human needs.” Tangible space he notes needs an accumulation of all its parts to be comprehensible but mythical space behaves differently because, although, “logically the whole is made up of parts, each with its characteristic locations, structure, and function. [...] [i]n mythical thought the part can symbolize the whole and have its full potency” (1977 98). The world of performance, like mythical space, is also created from discrete elements which have the potential to represent the total complexity of a world. This ‘as if’ world can be created as effectively by simple sparse settings, in which a single element of scenery or item of stage furniture can suggest the idea of larger spaces, as effectively as can be done by complex representational schemes. Conceptually both Edward Soja’s description of “Thirdspace” and Yo-Fu Tuan’s mythic space align with performance theorist Michael Taussig’s idea of the performatively imagined space created by the “magic in mimesis” (1993 xv), where the performatively imagined combined with the ‘real’ produces the “place between the real and the really made-up” (1993 xvii). Michael Taussig suggests that this place between the ‘real’ and the ‘imaginary ’ is actually the place which “appears to be where most of us spend most of our time” (1993 xvii).

5 I am using this spelling of thirdspace where I have transferred the concept to an idea that is similar to but not the same as either Edward Soja’s or Homi Bhabha’s uses of the term.
Homi K. Bhabha’s use of the term “Third Space” (1994 36-38) has a slightly different meaning. He uses it to encompass an idea of cultural meeting and also includes the idea of a space in-between two entities, a space of hybridity, boundary and an imagined space. The connecting links between these two types of thirdspace are the ideas of hybridity and flexibility. As Edward Soja writes, his idea of “Thirdspace” is the moment between imagined and real, a concept of place that is both tangible and intangible at one and the same time, “a space of extraordinary openness, [...] a space where issues of race, class, and gender can be addressed simultaneously without privileging one over the other” (1996 5). In their qualities of hybridity these thirdspaces are very similar to the liminal spaces of ritual and theatrical performance. The terms in which Edward Soja writes of Thirdspace, as being a place where a range of issues can be addressed concurrently without one being more important than the other (1996 5), also apply to the intersection of the real and the imaged of performance space. Actor Hilary Halba notes, that in performance, “the actual, and the imagined, [are] points of intersection in our work as actors. We bring both to our work. We bring the actuality of me being here in a scene with you, but I also bring the imagined” (2007).

As .a simulacrum, the “representation of a fiction” (Pavis 1992 34), performance creates a bridge between the imagined and the everyday world. It uses the imagined to represent the everyday world drawing its information and inspiration from that real world. Taking from the everyday and restructuring it in theatrical performance creates a formed and heightened event which takes place in a designated playing space. However, performance, (unlike documentary work), deliberately plays with the artifice of representation by intensely focusing on selected “real” (Hoar 1998) moments, then enhancing these moments to critique the everyday world through imaginary scenarios. The mythology of the culture underlies the plots and themes of these works. Its virtues and vices are given flesh through the characters of the stories. Important community issues are repackaged in the imagined scenarios both critiquing that society and revealing dominant aspects of its cultural identity. This critiquing function is an important purpose of all serious works of theatre which as more than “mere entertainment” (Wilshire 5) are designed to shock the audience into a new way of seeing the world.

This revealing occurs as the audience takes from the illusion of the mise-en-scène and characters to remake a world in their own minds. Each character calls to an
element within each member of the audience and that audience member responds in a way that is meaningful for them. The greater, the more powerful the work, the greater and more powerful is the performance. “It is art which is most obviously art that puts us in closest and most revealing contact with the heart of our reality: our ability to give presence to the absent or to the nonexistent” (Wilshire 1982 202-203). Yet, with all performances, on some level the audience remains itself while participating in the creation of the performance work and by this, in the lives of the characters. This work done by the audience is complementary to the work being done on the stage by the actors who also simultaneously are both themselves and the characters they are playing. In this sense, both actors and audience can be said to be in two minds. Additionally, the actors are participating in the audience’s experiences. They receive the response that the audience projects and then respond to this. The character “is in large part a responsiveness” writes Bruce Wilshire connecting the experience of the audience involvement in an ‘other’ to an experience familiar to many people when he notes that “sometimes a person feels as if he were some-body else” (1982 205).

The kind of character the actor creates, naturalistic, stylised, or abstract, is determined by the total world of the play, and according to Bruce Wilshire is analogous to the creations of social roles where “the individual’s dominant persona emerges from within the style and mood of the dominant group or […] Role onstage illuminates “role” off; style and mood onstage illuminate style and mood off” (1982 205). If this is the case, the personae presented on stage are directly related to the culture which produces them. The communication medium of theatre has a great range producing such forms for example as ritual dance, shadow puppets, Noh theatre, and the Western form of tragedy.

Myth and performance

Cultures make sense of their relationship to others and to the world around them through art and story-telling. The stories, which are handed down through generations, being reshaped as they are retold, contain the myths of the culture (Turner 1986 41). They become the “superstories” (Lauri 1990) of a people. A superstory is a timeless “composite creation of oral tradition, folk poetry and ritual” containing “simultaneously the worldview and the religion of a culture” (1990 3). Superstories are not literal recitations of events, but deeply symbolic works. They represent the way cultures see
their origins, aspirations, strengths and weaknesses. Their ultimate meaning lies beyond their factual interpretation. As Karl Jaspers states “they cannot be interpreted rationally; they are interpreted only by new myths, by being transformed” (1962 144). For Carolyn L. Vash, “the function of myths and sacred stories may be less to convey information than to evoke recognition of levels or aspects of reality that cannot be put into words. Often, such cognisance is accompanied by deep emotion” (Vash 1994 81-82).

The imagined aspect of the world, which is unseen and therefore logically thought to be unknowable, is an important aspect of these mythical stories. Karl Jaspers argues that myth “expresses intuitive insights” which are not better expressed in intellectual discourse. Carolyn Vash notes that “folk tales” include both myths and fairy tales” and she defines myths as those stories that relate humans and gods, and fairy tales as stories dealing with human-to-human interactions.

Human-god relationships symbolize interactions between aspects of our ordinary, body-based, smart-animal consciousness and aspects of our transcendent, spiritually based “higher” consciousness. Human-human relationships may reflect interpersonal interactions; they may symbolize intrapersonal interaction among aspects of an individual’s personality or consciousness.

(Vash 1994 89)

Karl Jaspers states that the figures of myth are symbols which “are accessible only in the mythical element, they are irreplaceable, unique” (1962 144) and as Otto Rank (2004 48) observes, modern mythic heroes are still symbolic even when divorced from historical and religious context. Neither the development, nor the wider social role of myth is being considered in this thesis, but it is important to note that concepts of gods and heroes, devils and villains persist in modern story-telling, particularly in film and theatre. Current godlike mythical figures tend to be embodied in film as fictional figures with names like Superman or Luke Skywalker (a truly mythic name). Ien Ang notes that the ability of soap opera characters to attract audiences stems from the fact that they draw on “myths and fantasies which endows them with a strongly emotional appeal” (1985 64). While heroes of today’s sagas seldom have godlike qualities, but are fallible human beings, like the ancient heroes they too ‘stand in’ for each and every human. According to Charles H. Long, “we would find it difficult to believe that
anyone in our culture lives entirely in a world of literal meanings. [...] Myth is a symbolic ordering which makes clear how the world is present for man” (1963 13-14) and Karl Jaspers affirms that, “mythical thinking is not a thing of the past, but characterises man in any epoch” (1962 144).

The myths of the culture hero tell stories of a figure from the past who is responsible for the discovery of something of great value to the culture (Jensen 1990). Having a hero to give form and shape to an ideal gives the cultural or racial group an image of its own worth and of its distinctiveness. For Cecil Maurice Bowra, heroes are “the champions of man’s ambition to pass beyond the oppressive limits of human frailty to a fuller and more vivid life” (1952 4). The hero does not balk at difficulty and even if he does not achieve his aims is “content even in failure, provided that it has made every effort of which it is capable” (1952 4). While Pākehā culture does not have a long enough history in Aotearoa/New Zealand to endow it with mythic figures shrouded in a distance past, some local heroes like Sir Edmund Hillary have approached mythical status. The perfections, or imperfections, of mythical heroes do not depend on realistic strengths or weakness, which could conceivably belong to an ordinary human being, but are developed from the needs of the culture for which the myths exist. Honko Lauri questions how anything else could be possible “where the narrative derives its strength from group identity or the social context” (1990 16).

Culture heroes are therefore endowed in every retelling of mythical stories with the qualities that the culture currently values. As these heroes are imperfect humans they can embody qualities that the culture rejects. Victor Turner observes that the flaws of these heroes inject “entertainment, dubiety choice, into [the] plots” (1986 41) of mythic stories. Carolyn L. Vash notes of mythic stories “evoke emotions and illumination from readers rather than [attempt] to pour information or knowledge into them” (1994 82).

**Representing the ‘Other’**

Defining oneself against a foreign culture is a common idea in myth. Placing boundaries around cultures, the mythic story draws a distinction between the world of the story teller and the world outside of this. The classic epic narrative “is normally concerned with heroic deeds executed among foreign enemies and perhaps in distant countries. There is great potential for underlining what separates the audience and its ancestors from those not belonging to their common culture” (Jensen 1990 36). It is also important in theatre where the Other is often characterised as a foreign villain. The
foreign Other is viewed as unfamiliar, possibly dangerous, simultaneously attractive and repellent. Yet without the other to provide a comparison the sense of self is incomplete. The ‘exotic Other’, an imaginative representation of a group that was (is) different, was important in the post-Enlightenment creation of an expanded cosmology for Europe. As Stephen Turner puts it, “the origin of anthropology is entangled in the European relationship with other peoples” (1999a 414). The European cosmology was imaginatively envisaged in opposition to what were perceived as the repressive and backward systems of other regimes. Such cultures “live over there and back then, while we are here and now” (Pearson and Shanks 2001 35). This idea of an ‘Other’ served the same purpose as the strange people of mythic stories. The theatre of eighteen-century London characterised the Other as Persian or African. Mita Choudhury, who made a study of that theatre, suggests that for the eighteenth century London audience, the sense of being who one was and where one was (English in England) “could never be fully understood without an instinctive knowledge of physical and metaphorical, real and imagined borders” (2000 132). This ‘other’ is part of a world-view, a cosmology which “is a people’s more or less systematic attempt to make sense of environment” (Tuan 1977 88). The cosmology explains the world not only in empirical but also mythic or imaginative terms. As Yi-Fu Tuan notes,

[i]t is not always easy to tell [these factual and mythological geographies] apart, nor even to say which is more important, because the way people act depends on their comprehension of reality, and that comprehension since it can never be complete, is necessarily imbued with myths.

(Tuan 1977 98)

Mythical stories are rich in symbolic imagery. As the symbol points to a level of reality which otherwise is inaccessible, as Owe Wikström notes, it opens up dimensions within the human psyche, “a symbol conveys not only more than a thousand words, it conveys something different than a thousand words” (1990 65). The appeal of mythic stories endures because they access the human unconscious tapping into “a psychic reality which, though not conscious, does exert a great influence upon our experiences and expression” (Long 1963 9). Through their use of symbols, mythic stories are a way of expressing an intuitive knowledge of the nature of being that is not “evident on the
level of immediate experience” (ibid.). The use of symbol in performance replicates its use in myth. For instance, the utilization of a bundle of flax as a prop and the representation of the goddess figure in Fishnet are examples of symbolic ideas carrying resonances of place, history and belief into the performance work.

“Geetz has spoken of myths and rites as “imaginative works built out of social materials” ” (quoted in Turner 1986 42). They are directly comparable to works of theatre which are also imaginative work built out of social materials. In the same way that myth does not present ‘real’ people, theatrical performance presents people and events that are based on the stories a society tells itself about its identity. These representations are, like those of myth, portraits of human attributes that the society admires as well as those that it fears and repudiates (Jensen 1990 64; Turner 1986). Through its flawed central character Ken, the play Home Land examines intergenerational Pākehā ties to the land and exposes the pressures put on family relationships in an emotionally deprived environment. As mythic representations of identity, theatrical works, like myth, can stand outside the ordinary temporal and spatial constrictions of everyday life. They can be simultaneously in the past and present and, while being located in one place, can also encompass a whole country, a whole world and a whole universe.

Myth exists, and theatre takes place, in what Victor Turner (1986 41) and Richard Schechner (1985 38) call the subjunctive mood of a culture, the mood which is opposite to the indicative empirical state. The indicative state, the mood of everyday life “presents itself as consisting of acts, states, occurrences, that are factual” (Turner 1986 41). The subjunctive mood, as used in ritual and theatre is the mood which, writes Victor Turner, quoting the Webster Dictionary “expresses supposition, desire, hypothesis, possibility,” rather than “states an actual fact, as the mood of were in “if I were you” ” (Turner 1986 41). Within this subjunctive mood a culture can create worlds that never were on land or sea but that might be, could be, maybe, and bringing in all the tropes, metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, etc., to endow these alternative worlds with magical, festive, or sacred power, suspending disbelief and remodelling the terms of belief.

( Turner 1986 26-27)

A subjective presentation of reality is concerned with questions of how humans
can or should live. Performances, which recreate the ‘may be’, ‘might be’ even ‘should be’ moods (the ‘as ifness’ of a culture) allow an opportunity to examine the dominant cultural ideals and to reassess their continuing currency. The common myths are no longer central to the culture of the Western World and do not offer guidance about living. Theatrical performance however provides a place where “individual, personal” (Brooks 1995 16) exploration of myth can take place. Victor Turner suggests that people flee to the subjunctive world to consider the problems of their lives because “a problem […] staged in liminal surrounds “entertains” rather than threatens” (Turner 1986 26-27). In Western society, activities such as theatre are set in “the liminoid time of leisure between the role-playing times of ‘work’ ” (Turner 1982 114).

**Phenomenology: absence and presence**

As method for discussing the process of perception defined by, among others, Edmund Husserl (1931), Robert Sokolowski (2000), Maurice Merleau-Ponty (2004), and applied to theatre by Bruce Wilshire (1981), Bert O. States (1985), Rob Baum (2003), phenomenology which studies things as they are perceived, as opposed to the concrete study of the nature of things as they are, provides a method to systematically describe all conscious experience. Phenomenology has no need to question whether what is experienced is or is not objectively real. Bruce Wilshire labels phenomenology “the systematic attempt to unmask the obvious” (1982 11), Edmund Husserl stresses “phenomenology has to do with “consciousness”” (1931 42) and deals with entities, things which by having a separate existence ‘are’, whether they are tangible or not. Maurice Merleau-Ponty affirms that what is perceived, though it may be physically absent, can be considered to actually exist. “It has often been said that consciousness, by definition, admits of no separation of appearance and reality, […] if I think I see or feel, I indubitably see or feel, whatever may be true of the external object” (Merleau-Ponty 2004 343).

Edmund Husserl defines “pure or transcendental Phenomenology as the science of essential Being” (1931 44) and “a science which aims exclusively at establishing “knowledge of essences”” (1931 44). For Maurice Merleau-Ponty, phenomenology is “a philosophy for which the world is always ‘already there’ before reflection begins” (2004 vii) and that the aim of phenomenology is to achieve “a direct and primitive contact with the world” (ibid.). The core essences of all entities, described by thirteen-century
philosopher and theologian Thomas Aquinas as the ‘isness’ of things, is the quality named by Aristotle “what-it-is-to-be-that” that which makes something what it is” (1993 92). Maurice Merleau-Ponty in noting the ‘isness’ of poetry writes,

it is well known that a poem, though it has a superficial meaning translatable into prose, leads in the reader’s mind, a further existence which makes it a poem. […] Its meaning is not arbitrary […] it is locked in the words printed on some perishable page. In that sense, like every work of art, the poem exists as a thing.

(Merleau-Ponty 2004 174-175)

Phenomenology deals with how the world is manifest to people, and the way in which “beingness” is made conscious to them. It unpicks the processes by which human beings make sense of the world; especially the parts of it that they know are ‘there’ even though they cannot be experienced by the senses. When a person describes the aspects of an object that they can see, it does not mean that the sides of an object that can be seen and described are the totality of the object. The surface which can be objectively measured and described is perceived through the philosophical mechanism of a “filled intention” (Sokolowski 2000 33), while aspects which cannot, but which are as much a part of an element’s reality as its surface appearance, are perceived through what phenomenology labels an “empty intention” (ibid.).

Therefore in its examination of the manifestation of the world phenomenology deals with “the problem of appearances” (Sokolowski 2000 3), for the knowledge of essences includes concepts of experience which extend beyond surface knowledge of people, places and things. It explains the way in which the mimetic faculty of the human brain (the ability the brain has to imitate), is able to internally construct aspects of an object or event not available to the senses, and thus make the absent present through imaginative construction. Thomas Aquinas (1993 92) pointed out that it is possible to speak positively about negative categories of being. He cites the example of blindness – a lack of sight – which can be spoken about positively as occurring in the eye. Because it can be spoken of, blindness has an existence. It is real, but it also lacks what he terms a presence or an “isness”. The human ability to perceive something that is actually always absent, such as blindness or the shared memories of an event which is in the past, goes unnoticed in everyday life. It does not appear as something odd. Conditions such as
blindness or things that are either wished for, looked forward to, (but are not yet present) or are present but unperceived - like the back of an object - or that can never be made present in and of themselves are empty intentions.

This form of perception, which deals with the hidden aspects of an entity, cannot measure any of its aspects. However a lack of measurement does not necessarily negate the existence of the essence of an entity. Phenomenologist Robert Sokolowski explains this succinctly.

Presence and absence are the objective correlates to filled and empty intentions. An empty intention is an intention that targets something that is not there, something absent, something not present to the one who intends. A filled intention is one that targets something that is there, in its bodily presence, before the one who intends.

(Sokolowski 2000 33)

Robert Sokolowski suggests that in paying attention to the perception of absence, phenomenology sees the human mind as geared towards evidence, toward manifesting the way things are. Furthermore, it validates this vision of reason and the mind by describing in convincing detail, the activities by which the mind achieves truth, [...] phenomenology [...] examines the interplay of presence and absence in all our experiences.

(Sokolowski 2000 202-203)

Phenomenology carefully considers two particular forms of empty intentions: the memories and the imaginings of people (Sokolowski 2000 68). Things imagined, in the sense that one is looking forward to them, can eventually become filled intentions. Those that are remembered once were filled intentions. They did occur and it is that occurrence that is remembered. They can be recalled, making the experience ‘present’ in the mind of the person recalling them. It is these abilities to look forward, to imagine and to remember which makes human beings human. Things that are simply imaginary however can never truly be made ‘present’ in the world in the manner in which things which are looked forward to can become present. However, they can be conjured up by theatrical means, both psychological and mechanical. In some societies, when a person assumes the
costume of a god, those watching the event may believe that the god is really present among them. For Michael Taussig the “spirit” which is created through the performance is a “presence” (1993 34) which takes possession of the performance space (1993 34). It is this essence of a presence that Michael Taussig terms “sympathetic magic” (1993 xiii). In a more mundane exploration of absences and presences, a magician may convince an audience that they do see him perform ‘magic’. In the world of film and video, many things can be made to appear to occur by means of special effects. An actor developing a character uses absences, memories, imaginings and previously observed behaviours to create a presence. Actor Hilary Halba describes the way she used memories to make a particular piece of theatre in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

I was in a New Zealand play […] *Wednesday To Come* […] and suddenly I knew so much because I’d listened to my mother, and my aunties, my grandmother talk about the ‘30s. […] there was a sense of familiarity, […] my auntie had a stove like the coal range that we were using on the set in her house, and they were made here in Dunedin, at the Shacklock factory. Suddenly it became extremely proximal to me.

( Halba 2007)

It is precisely because phenomenology has a workable method for objectively considering absent imagined or remembered world of daily life that it can be appropriately applied to the ‘as if’ worlds of performance which deal largely in memory and imagination. Emotions which can never be directly expressed; cultural ideas about such abstract notions as right and wrong, good and bad, and attitudes towards people who are different, racially, culturally or sexually, are the most obvious absences in performance. Theatrical absences also include the spaces beyond the set, the rooms beyond the one on stage, and the world outside the door or beyond the curtain. These spaces can be mentioned or implied in the spoken text or glimpsed at through windows in the set. The themes of the works are also absences for they are only implied by the words and actions of the characters, and by the realisation of the set, costume and props. The ongoing lives of the characters when they leave the stage are another set of absences. These lives are hinted at but never concretised before the audience. In some instances entities that would be absences in everyday life become present on the stage. In *Bitter Calm* the absent is made present in a concretisation [to make (an idea or
concept) real (Oxford Dictionary on Line)] of the ghost of John Roberton on the stage. This is a manifestation that can be seen only by his son Matiu and not by the other characters, and so is received by the audience as a character that is essentially invisible and therefore present in absence. As the audience is used to accepting that negative conditions such as blindness, which are aspects of life that can be felt rather tangibly perceived, do exist, they accept the representation of entities which are not tangible, such as ghosts. The crucial difference between the mechanics of the stage and its total representational power is that, unlike the hollow flats often used to create scenery which are not objectively ‘real’, of the representation of ghosts, the cultural and personal understandings that an audience brings to the world of the stage are, in phenomenological terms, as real as those actual objects and actions presented on the stage itself (Merleau-Ponty 2004 343). Behind the concretised images are the empty intentions of the memory and imaginations of the audience.

Phenomenological enquiry requires the perceiver to take a naïve view of any person, place or thing ridding their mind of any previous ideas. This allows them to see the object afresh as it ‘really is’. This naïve approach is also required of an audience when they observe actors or indeed props and scenery representing ideas and people. In theatre this gestalt of representation “stands in” for our very selves (Wilshire 1982 43). Arnold Aronson suggest that “to look into the stage is to look into a world of mystery” (2005 101). This mystery exists in the space between the audience and the stage; the space across which the actors must reach the audience and the audience must project itself “onto the ideal world of the stage.” Bert O. States (1985 123) depicts the actor working as “a kind of storyteller” with a difference. In acting, the story is not merely repeated or even repeated with variations. It is recreated in the body of the person doing the acting, and in that way the story is embodied. Through this process the narrative voice in the story disappears and “we hear only the fictitious first-personal voice […] rather, we overhear it since the voice is no longer speaking to us.” (States 1985 123) The character is a reproduction of a person who never existed but who now, nevertheless, exists on stage and is able to reveal something about the personal or social self to a society.

Recreating the characters in the space between them, actors and audience together create a world-view, an imaginative version of their own particular “imagined community” (Anderson 1991). Adopting a naïve approach enables the audience to see
what may be ‘hidden’ behind the obvious exterior of the person of the actor. The willing suspension of disbelief on the part of the audience allows the imaginative illusion to have a reality for the duration of the event enabling performance to “unmask” (States 1985 154) everyday life. Through illusion, theatre holds the mundane world up for consideration, for the performance holds the audience in “a real world and the illusion of an unreal world” (ibid.) simultaneously. Behind both commonplace moments and intensely dramatic moments presented on the stage lie other moments, unseen, but perceived and understood nevertheless. The stage presents the front wall of the house and the audience fills in the rest, as they do in real life.

Phenomenology enables us to understand illusion, and allusion, perceiving the metaphorical ideas that underlie our accounts of life. It is in this way, as a tool for explaining interpretation, that phenomenology is the key methodology used in this work. It explains how the willing suspension of disbelief on the part of the audience enables them to create ‘real’ worlds out of people pretending to be other people within sets of wood, canvas and lights. A phenomenological understanding of Pākehā cultural identity on the stage is grounded in the understanding that what is presented there are the selected and heightened aspects of human life supported by the memories and imaginings of both the actors and the audience.

The mimetic faculty

The mimetic faculty is the ability to make copies of things that are tangible and also of things that are thought or felt, the “empty intentions” (Sokolowski 2000) of the invisible worlds. Aristotle first described mimesis as “an imitation” or a representation of life, in the sense that the performance of “[e]pic tragedy, comedy and dithyramb, […] is the imitation (Mimesis) of reality” (1999 4). This imitative process describes the creation of a “new” form, drawn as a copy from the original. Aristotle too points to the fact that the copy has its own power “since dramatists are creating imitations, and what they are imitating is action. […] Even if they imitate what has actually happened, they are still creating it” (1999 14). However this new form still bears a relationship to the original form from which it was derived. Arnold Aronson suggests that it is the likenesses to the world we know that enables us to use the stage as mirror. In this way we recognize the characters as being ourselves, for the stage, like a mirror
reflects back to us a known world. […] The one unidentifiable image in
the reflection is the person staring back at me. If everything else in the
mirror can be identified as corresponding to the physical space around,
then the one unrecognizable figure, the one situated in the physical
locale equivalent to my own, must be me. […] everything on the stage is
carefully constructed or arranged to create the metaphoric illusion of a
reflection.

(Aronson 2005 104)

Victor Turner also deals with this idea of reflection when he writes that “Genres
of cultural performance are not simple mirrors but magical mirrors of social reality:
they exaggerate, invert, re-form, magnify, minimize, dis-color, re-color, even
deliberately falsify, chronicled events” (1986 42). He suggests that, like myth, the stage
drama “when it is meant to do more than entertain – […] is a metacommentary “explicit
or implicit”, witting or unwitting on the major social drama of its social context”
(Turner 1990 16-17). Through the theatrical performance of its myths, a society
expresses its desires, hopes, fears, loves and passions, thus ‘making present’ intangible
aspects of a culture. The practice of re-creating troubling aspects of human nature and
representing them on the stage, in order to prevent their occurrence in society, is
possibly what Aristotle meant by catharsis. He urges playwrights to have scenarios
which are considered socially destructive because

[s]ince the author’s task is to arouse, by imitation, the satisfaction of
feeling pity and terror, the ability to do this must be inherent in the
incidents of the play. […] Authors should work for situations where
terrible things happen between intimates: for example, where sibling
murders sibling

(Aristotle 1999 18-19)

While pure emotions such as love and hate cannot be embodied, their
consequences can be manifest in performance. At the same time it is possible that such
concretisation of negative emotion relieves the audience of the burden of guilt that
admitting to having that emotion might create. The ethical meaning of what a cathartic
event might mean is unclear in Aristotelian terms. Christian authors have however
suggested that it produced a “moral improvement from […] seeing vice punished and virtue rewarded” (Cave 2003 201) and this idea has persisted.

However the appearance of reality is important when considering how a society portrays itself in theatrical form. What is presented on the stage are selected and heightened attributes that a society values or despises. The characters embody desired or repudiated characteristics in different proportions. English art critic Herbert Read suggests that all art is “an expression of our deepest instinct and emotion; it is a serious activity whose end is not so much to divert as to vitalize” (2002 171). This concern for the lasting effects of art is behind the demand of critics and theorists such as Peter Brook, Antonin Artaud and Jerzy Grotowski for theatre to be concerned with its effects on its audiences and its attempts to lead them towards a ‘truth’. Michael Taussig writes that the origin of artistic creation lies in the human need to create and express social life (1993 83) and Raymond Williams notes that art is “literally a way of seeing new things and new relationships” (1961 24). By imposing a pattern on what would otherwise be a random experience, art extends human understanding. Herbert Read maintains that, when it achieves truth, art “does not leave us without affecting us, and affecting us, according to some scale of value, for the better” (2002 171). For Victor Turner the art of subjunctive performance contains the dialectical, that is, the notion that an idea or event generates its opposite. […] We escape from it [the indicative] into liminal narrative, which makes meaningful our events.

(Turner 1986 41)

**Mise-en-scène - what the senses perceive**

Related to process of drawing out absences and making the invisible is the role of the mise-en-scène. The mise-en-scène needs defining here: while traditionally the term covered only the scenery, props, lighting and sound used to create the setting of a play, Patrice Pavis extends its meaning to include such elements as the form of the theatre, the seating of the audience and their relationship to the performers. Patrice Pavis is concerned with how what he terms the various texts of the performance come together to create the overview or main idea of the work, the metatext. He notes the way performance creates “the confrontation of […] two fictions, textual and stage” (1992 34). The fiction contained within the written text or the choreography of a performance is the
primary fiction. The second fiction constructed from that first fiction is produced through the mise-en-scène and represented upon the stage. Patrice Pavis argues in that order to understand a dramatic text one must move beyond the written text to the metatext (1992 34), which exists across a range of theatrical elements and is “disseminated in the choice of acting style, scenography, rhythm” (Pavis 1992 34). He writes that “[m]ore than a text existing side by side with the dramatic text, a metatext is what organizes, from within, the scenic concretization” (Pavis 1992 34), shaping the ways in which the performer and audience interact and make meaning from all texts.

In the article “Theatre Analysis: Some Questions and a Questionnaire” (Pavis 1985) he suggests that there are at least six kinds of texts used in theatre to create a performance and audience and actors alike may need to consider all of these. The abbreviated list which is the basis of performance matrix used in this thesis follows:

- Dramatic text: the text composed by the author that the director is responsible for staging
- Theatrical text: the text [presented] […] before an audience
- Performance: the ensemble of stage systems used, including the text, considered prior to the examination of the production of meaning through their interrelationships
- Mise-en-scène: the interrelationship of the systems of performance, particularly […] the link between text and performance
- Theatre event: the totality of the unfolding production of the mise-en-scène and of its reception by the public and the exchanges between the two
- Performance text: the mise-en-scène of a reading and any possible account made of this reading by the spectator

(Pavis 1985 160)

A performance work is essentially a simulacrum, a copy of a world that never was. Patrice Pavis queries how this fictional world of the performance, which has only a “pretense of a referent” (1992 34), because it does not relate to any actual world, is created in the mind of the audience. The mise-en-scène, the link between the text and its performance, is always a discourse parallel to the written text and without performance
would remain “unuttered” (Pavis 1992 34). In its ability to enhance or alter the written and/or spoken text, the mise-en-scène can be “marginal and parodic” (Pavis 1992 34), acting against what is said and drawing out the inherent contradictions. In this way a mise-en-scène can be powerful in revealing the subtext. An example of the parodic tension occurs in the play Home Land; Ken speaks of his love of the land yet the land is presented as a perhaps hostile force, outside the house.

Referring as it does to a fictional world masquerading as a representation of the real world, the mise-en-scène is a concretisation of the initial fiction, the script or the choreography of the work. The mise-en-scène is what gives the audience access to the metatext and so to a meaning of a performance. Because performance is a representation of a fiction (the script for example is another fictional representation of life), Patrice Pavis suggests that it is important that the spectator questions the way the dramatic text is given a visible form, i.e. how the mise-en-scène is produced. Each new mise-en-scène, which is constructed from an already existing performance, text or script, creates a new fictional world. No two productions of a work are the same. Each time a mise-en-scène is created its relationship to the fictional world which it represents will be different.

The tangible mise-en-scène is a container for the metatext, but exactly what metatext a performer gives (and audience receives) depends both literally and metaphorically on where they sit as each actor and spectator brings their own experience to the performance. Patrice Pavis is adamant that

The mise-en-scène can no longer ignore the spectators and must include them as the receptive pole in the circuit comprising the mise-en-scène produced by the artists and the mise-en-scène produced by the spectators.

(Pavis 1992 38)

Given this operational circuit, the mise-en-scène exists not only as its physical manifestation on the stage but rather “when the spectator appropriates it, when it becomes the creative projection of the spectator” (Pavis 1992 34). For Stuart Hoar as well the interpretation of a work is “up to the audience, it cannot be made by another on its behalf” (1988 9). Patrice Pavis also notes that any performance is embedded in its culture: “the dramatic and the performance texts must be considered in relation to the Social Context, i.e. other texts and discourses about reality produced by a society” (1992 34), so a performance text does not stand on its own but is linked
with history via the unbroken chain of other texts. Mise-en-scène can thus also be understood as a social practice, as an ideological mechanism capable of deciphering as much as reflecting historical reality (even if fiction claims precisely to negate reality).

(Pavis 1992 34)

Though there are links between what is written and what is said, and links between what is absent from the performance and what is present, “the confrontation in performance of the two texts the written and the performed” (Pavis 1992 34) can uncover ‘holes’ in the written text. The role of performance is “to make opaque on stage what was clear in the text or to clarify what was opaque” (ibid.).

Performing an archaeological dig

Mike Pearson and Michael Shanks offer a different method of unpicking performance, presenting the metaphor of performance analysis as an archaeological dig. Like Patrice Pavis they posit that any understanding of a theatrical performance can be achieved only by contemplating its “stratigraphy of layers: of text, physical action music and/or soundtrack, scenography and/or architecture” (2001 24). They suggest that, because performance is moderated by the conditions under which it occurs, all elements should be documented, perhaps by videoing the performance, so that not only is there a record of the spoken text, but also of the lighting states, sound effects, music cues and scenery, as well as the audience response. Such documentation preserves a copy of many of the strata of a performance, giving the performance archaeologist information about the total effect of the performance on both performers and audience so they are able to note how one element interacts with another, (Pearson and Shanks 2001 54).

They present the key concept of “sensorium - culturally and historical located arrays of the senses and sensibility” (Pearson and Shanks 2001 54) in relation to this idea of a total performance, and they introduce it as “a way of working against the dualism of mind and body”. As used by Mike Pearson and Michael Shanks, the word “sensorium”, technically “the seat of sensation in the brain of man and other animals” (Fowler and Fowler 1951 1133), includes the idea that social and cultural events are not just intellectually experienced but rather exist in “a locus of experiences – spatial, physical and emotional – preserved in the bodies and memories of the varying orders of
participants: [through] touch, proximity, texture” (Pearson and Shanks 2001 54). Sight, hearing, and perhaps even taste and smell could be added to this list. Events occur and are transmitted and received in bodily form, perceived through the senses and responded to by discoveries made during the course of the event or by the evocation of a memory. The impression made by a performance on participants is received as much through emotional responses of the body as it is by intellectual appreciation and stored as a memory in the body (Pearson and Shanks 2001 55). Performers and even spectators can recall the event by recreating the movements which were used during the event.

Performance survives as a cluster of narratives, those of the watcher and of the watched, and of all those who facilitate their interaction […] The same event is experienced, remembered, characterised in a multitude of different ways, none of which appropriates singular authority.

(Pearson and Shanks 2001 57)

Performance sites themselves contain information about the event. As a sensorium, performance, like other social and cultural events, is a mix of objective and subjective experiences, which leave their residue at the performance site as well as within the performers and spectators. The Performance events are embedded in items used in performance, such as props and stage furniture and in incidental items such as programmes which may be left behind in the venue after the event concludes (Pearson and Shanks 2001 57). The impressions which people can recall and the objects which remain after it is finished constitute the archaeological evidence of a performance. To fully re-member a performance, in the sense of putting it back together, the documenter must have access to any maps, plans, timelines, librettos, images, graphs, diagrams, drawings, photographs and videos that were used to construct the performance. It is also possible to research reviews of performances and to elicit audience responses through surveys. Though such memories and imaginative recall do not equate with the experience of attending the actual event, for the documenter, they are nevertheless useful in obtaining a full picture of what occurred.

The multiplicity of perspectives means there is no one ‘true’ experience of a performance. Pearson and Shanks suggest focusing on fragments and assemblages “to define the objects of retrieval of performance around notions of site, time, structure, and detail” (Pearson and Shanks 2001 58). It is then possible to construct an analytical chart
which covers a range of elements experienced in performance. It is all these layers taken together which produce the final product – the performance. It is aspects of the archaeological evidence of the four performance works which will be examined in chapters five, six and seven. The analysis of the works has been enlarged by interviews with the creators, and where possible, the directors of the works and supplemented by some interviews with artists in the field. The qualitative work has been supplemented with some quantitative data collected in an audience survey of the work *Fishnet* and the final analysis has been overlaid by my experience as a participating member of all these performances.

The next chapter discusses the everyday aspect of *Characterising Pākehā* before moving to a discussion of Pākehā themes and characteristics which can be represented on the stage.
Chapter Four

Characterising Pākehā

Although this thesis is concerned with the representation of Pākehā cultural identity on the stage as this representation is drawn from everyday aspects of Pākehā cultural identity, this chapter will canvass some of those aspects: hybridity, biculturalism, the problem of expressing the difference between Pākehā cultural identity and other Western cultural identities, distance and its relationship to Pākehā sensibility, and some of the most recognisable Pākehā characteristics.

Pākehā cultural identity is a modern cultural identity. Stuart Hall (1996), writing of the fluid nature of modern cultural identities which develop in the border zone between older identities, labels their construction a self-reflective process, which takes place only in the context of difference. It is “a process never completed – always ‘in process’. It is not determined in the sense that it can always be ‘won’ or ‘lost’, sustained or abandoned” (1996 2) [emphasis added]. Identity can therefore be described as arising not only from where, and who, one is at any given moment, but also from the place one has come from and from influences that stream back towards it, as well as from the destination towards which one is travelling. Modern cultural identities are transitory and are “increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic discourses, practices and positions” (Hall 1996 4) [emphasis added]. Therefore ongoing conceptions of cultural identity are acquired subjectively and experientially in encounters with people and places. Lawrence Grossberg illustrates the fluidity of modern identities by referring to the complex subdominant ethnic mix of multicultural Los Angeles. Drawing on the example of the transitory identities which result from the movement of groups round the city, meeting at places which are “temporary points of belonging and identification” (1996 102), he suggests that identity is, “how one behaves at any stopping point along one’s journey, in interaction with all the other behaviours that one finds in this location” (1996 101) [emphasis added].

Lawrence Grossberg labels these new Los Angeles’ identities as “subaltern”, “post-colonial” and as “neither colonizer nor precolonial subject, [but] the post-colonial subject [which] exists as a unique hybrid which may, by definition, constitute the other
two as well” (Grossberg 1996 91). However new “subaltern” identities are linked to the new dominant identities, as Lawrence Grossberg suggests in his observation that while investigations into identity are often centred on the subaltern identity, the dominant and subdominant identities are not “studied together, as the theory would seem to dictate, as mutually constitutive” (1996 90) [emphasis added]. It is likely that such studies would demonstrate that not only are subdominant identities affected by dominant identities, but that the reverse is also true; suggesting that new identities produced as a result of kaleidoscopic shifts of people do not just occur among minority or “subaltern” groups but can also apply to the numerically and culturally dominant as well. Paul Spoonley notes that in the Western world the dominant identity has often been characterised as, the oppressor, as essentially ‘bad’, who is often responsible for […] exclusionary racisms. The question both theoretically and politically, is whether there is room for alternative conceptualisations of dominant group identity.

(Spoonley 1995 54)

It may be the “bad” ideas surrounding dominant identities have deterred study of their relationship to and interdependence with the subdominant identities. This chapter will now briefly consider the relationship between Pākehā and Māori, suggesting that it is that very relationship, which is always one of mutual, if not equal, exchange, that constitutes the modern cultural identity Pākehā.

Aotearoa/New Zealand – ‘many cultures’ but only two peoples (Pearson 1995 20)

The first recorded use of Pākehā is in the Treaty of Waitangi. The definition of Pākehā in The Dictionary of New Zealand English (1997 567) notes that Governor William Hobson used it in the preamble to the Māori version of Te Treaty O Waitangi; “ki te tangata Maaori ki te Pakeha: the Māori people and the Europeans” (sic) and it is taken there to mean other, that is, opposite to Māori who are ordinary. In The Treaty of Waitangi the word Pākehā seems to apply to all people who were immigrating to Aotearoa, whether from Europe or Australia, thus including all other cultures that are not Māori. In this sense they were all tauiwi (Turner 2001 75), (Macalister 2005), the strange tribe. More recently the word Pākehā has been used mainly for that group of others which is not tāngāta whenua, but which is that group of people who have resided in Aotearoa/New Zealand over several generations. Pākehā now generally refers to
New Zealanders of European descent (Matthewman and Hoey 2007) and is used in that context in central and local government documents (Bell 2006 257), and in educational and scholarly works.

The question does remain unanswered as to who exactly Pākehā are and Paul Spoonley (2004) and Avril Bell (1995) have argued that, as there is no ethnic group which can claim the name Pākehā, the cultural identity Pākehā must be defined by other factors. In the late 1990s Rosanne Black surveyed a group of New Zealanders of European origin about their perceptions of themselves and her survey revealed that “the extensive exploration of cultural markers with participants supports the notion that Pakeha do indeed have a culture” (1997 94). Joanne Rachel Pellow, who also investigated Pākehā cultural identity, states that a similar group of New Zealanders of European origin who choose to label themselves Pākehā have a sense of their own cultural identity which was revealed in

a strong sense of ‘something’ […] difficult to pinpoint and articulate. […] many of the people interviewed could see a clear difference between themselves, other European/Pakeha New Zealanders and those ‘others’ in New Zealand who were not the same as them.

(Pellow 1995 133)

Historian Michael King (1999 10) applies the term Pākehā to those of European and not just British lineage and Rosanne Black’s survey revealed “Pakeha was used by all participants in a cultural sense to mean people of Northern European descent who now live in Aotearoa New Zealand” (1997 90). The relationship Pākehā have with the place of Aotearoa/New Zealand and with the tāngāta whenua is an important aspect this particular modern identity. Avril Bell suggests that though there are, and will continue to be, many and varied strands to the idea of Pākehā, in order to come to a valid understanding of who and what they are the Pākehā population of Aotearoa/New Zealand need to grapple with the legacy of the colonial treatment of Māori (1995 1). Paul Spoonley (2004) and Steve Matthewman (2007) also think that Pākehā identity can only be secure about itself if the post-settler community does come to understand its past relations with the tāngāta whenua. It is this understanding about the need to acknowledge place and history that lies beneath actor Hilary Halba’s statement that living and working as Pākehā in Aotearoa/New Zealand under the mandate of the
Treaty, “isn’t to do with making a little Britain here, it’s actually finding a way to integrate oneself into what really, really is here” (2007). For Māori cultural advisor and actor Rangimoana Taylor,

[t]he word Pākehā can be applied to people who are willing to make a commitment to live here, the idea of bones of the ancestors does come into it, there must be no other place that they call home.

(Taylor 2008)

John Bluck points out that there is an obligation inherent in the word Pākehā which is “a gift given by Maori born out of a relationship with them bound by some promises of partnership” as well as a word for “describing a people unlike any other who exist nowhere else” (2001 87-88). Therefore being Pākehā is not politically neutral. In 1995 Paul Spoonley was raising the question of how Aotearoa/New Zealand might construct an alternative identity and politics for the majority group in a way that then positions them as a contributor to debates about what constitutes post-colonialism. […] as we reclaim an identity and recast it in terms of an indigenous agenda, we come to understand New Zealand/Aotearoa in Maori terms. The ‘post’ of post-colonialism refers to a ‘continuous engagement with the effects of colonial occupation.’

(Spoonley 1995 52-53)

Stephen Turner (2001 84) suggests that calling oneself simply a New Zealander wipes away the memory of being a colonist, and reduces the need to take responsibility for the actions ensuing from this process. Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, calling oneself a Pākehā became associated with accepting the rights of Maori as a Treaty partner, and of the duties the post-colonial people have towards them (Matthewman and Hoey 2007). Roseanne Black summarised the ideas contained in the word Pākehā as:

- a cultural identity for people of Northern European origin and a sense of uniquely belonging to Aotearoa New Zealand. The implications of saying “I call myself Pakeha” are that:
- […] I live in Aotearoa in relationship with Māori
Chapter Four Characterising Pākehā

- I have a culture that has uniquely developed from the experiences of being in Aotearoa
- no other name describes my cultural identity and sense of belonging more clearly.

(Black 1997 96)

Paul Spoonley considers that the name Pākehā represents a way of marking those who are prepared to consider biculturalism as a policy option, who are willing to concede that retrospective and reparative justice with regard to tangata whenua (sic) concerns is a priority, and who want to explore what the specifics of tino rangatiratanga might entail. The affirmation of these options does signal a willingness to privilege cultural considerations in the distribution of resources and recognises the rights of Māori (sic) as tangata whenua.

(Spoonley 1995 55)

Rosanne Black (1997 93) writes that her survey revealed that respondents felt calling themselves Pākehā acknowledged that their cultural identity stood in relation to another, the Māori people. It meant that the relationship was one of equals, and some respondents found that idea controversial. The word Pākehā is certainly still not accepted as a name for themselves by all New Zealanders of European descent. Two respondents to the audience survey of *Fishnet* stated that they were reluctant to apply the word Pākehā to themselves because it originated in a language that was not their own, and that there was a possibility that the word had an insulting meaning. Many prefer such labels as Caucasian and New Zealand European, [Department of Statistics ethnic categories (2006)]. However that solution is not very satisfactory. The term ‘Caucasian’ covers a very wide group of peoples and though it is used by the Department of Statistics in its sense of “a member of the ‘white race,’” it does not indicate a person of Aotearoa/New Zealand. The ethnic category for people of Anglo-

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6 A member of the 'Caucasian' family, an Indo-European; spec. a member of the 'white race', opp. one of other ethnic descent. dictionary.oed.com 25/05/08
Celtic descent provided in official surveys by the Statistics Department at level one is New Zealand European, sometimes with the accompanying word Pākehā, thus New Zealand European/Pākehā. At the higher levels the number of categories increases, but the word Pākehā by itself is still not used. 8 9 The term New Zealand European also has difficulties. It is inaccurate to describe the third and fourth generation descendants in Aotearoa/New Zealand of the European settlers as ‘European’ themselves.

Under the Treaty all people who are not Māori are called Pākehā, which raises the question: are others who are not Māori, such as Asians, Indians, or Pacific Islanders Pākehā? Another difficult question is how soon after immigration to this country do persons become Pākehā? Is it immediate, or is some long-term residence, for example a span of two or three generations, required? This is unclear at time of writing and as Pākehā identity continues to evolve as part of a living culture its meaning may further change in the future. Like all peoples who, like Pākehā, have come from diverse origins, Pākehā are still “in processes” (Hall 1996 2) and have a range of identities which they employ in different circumstances. In suggesting that people who term themselves culturally Pākehā are of European, predominantly Anglo-Celtic origin and more than second-generation residents, this work acknowledges that the idea of Pākehātāngā (Michael King 2007) is not stable. The boundaries around Pākehā identity are flexible, fluid and permeable like the Pacific identities described by anthropologist Alan Howard (1990 265-267). Like these Pacific cultural identities, Pākehā identity develops not actually by lineage, but by living in the land and acting in the place where one lives. It would be difficult and misleading to assemble a complete set of attitudes and behaviours into a completely separate code labelled Pākehā. However for many people the term Pākehā is useful, as there is no other term which so clearly describes them and their status in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Pakeha culture, which belongs to New Zealanders whose families go back generations, comprises a distinctive white New Zealand.

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7 Level one is the first level with the smallest number of categories. There are seven categories in total each becoming more detailed in its breakdown of ethnic groups.

8 When a department employee was asked where people who termed themselves Pākehā under the category ‘other’ were placed he responded that they were aggregated with the section under New Zealand European (Statistics 2006)

9 The debate is ongoing. See: Peace Movement Aotearoa webpage www.converge.org.nz/pma/cens0509.htm
Zealand culture that is significantly different from its European roots. As Michael King wrote,

to be Pākehā on the cusp of the twenty-first century is not to be European; it is not to be an alien or a stranger in my own country. It is to be a non-Māori (sic) New Zealander who is aware of and proud of my antecedents, but who identifies as intimately with this land, as intensively and as strongly as anybody Maori. It is to be, as I have already argued, another kind of indigenous New Zealander.

(King 1999 239)

He believed that some Pākehā characteristics owe much to generations of interaction with Māori and that knowledge of history was important for Pākehā to understand themselves because “[y]ou can’t understand your country and your culture unless you know its history” (Michael King 2007). This did not mean ignoring the conflict between Māori and Pākehā but rather advocating that it be faced along with acknowledging the positive aspects of the Māori Pākehā interaction. Paul Spoonley suggests contact with Māori values and practices along with what has been received from Europe represents, “the cultural content of Pakeha (sic) ethnicity although there have been relatively few explorations of this content and the naming and self-claiming as Pakeha lacks […] an acceptance or a consciousness that being Pakeha (sic) might constitute an ethnic identity in its own right” (Spoonley 1995 55). The question is where else do Pākehā belong? Where else do they have to go? A strong sense that Aotearoa/New Zealand is home is one attribute which defines Pākehā. J. E. (Jim) Traue, the former Chief Librarian of the Alexander Turnbull Library, defines this idea clearly when he writes “by birth, by domicile, by loyalty I am a New Zealander. I have no other home” (1990 4). This is a point equally acknowledged by Māori. Kuia (female elder) and activist Eva Rickard once observed to me “you Pākehā are here now, we’ll just have to put up with you” (1984).

Biculturalism

Pākehā exist in a place where there are two predominant peoples, Māori and Pākehā. In that context James Ritchie defined Aotearoa/New Zealand as follows:
Pākehā culture (about which we know surprisingly little anthropologically speaking) is dominant by power, history and majority. Māori culture is dominant by a longer history, by legacy and by its strength of survival and the passionate commitment of its people.

(Ritchie 1992 6)

The concept of biculturalism is the basis of the interaction between the two peoples and the idea is traced back to Te Tiriti O Waitangi. The Treaty, which was signed in 1840 between members of some Māori iwi of Aotearoa and the representative of the British Government, is considered to be the founding document of Aotearoa/New Zealand. 10 It was this joining together of two nations, each originally composed of different peoples, which ultimately created Aotearoa/New Zealand. The Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975, which established the Waitangi Tribunal, was the first modern enactment that made reference to The Treaty and the stipulation to uphold the provisions of the Treaty has been incorporated into much legislation. This is the basis of the concept of a bicultural nation.

However Avril Bell (2006) labels biculturalism the state response to Māori political aspirations and expresses doubts about its value. Her argument is that while the concept of Treaty partnership has restored the status of the Treaty of Waitangi, its subsequent enshrinement in legislation has created a story of origin for Pākehā as the second indigenous people. This has created the idea that Pākehā have a moral justification for their presence in Aotearoa New Zealand. Granted, this partnership has been broken repeatedly during the process of colonization, but, the rhetoric goes, if Pakeha (sic) recognize and do their best to repair these wrongs, the Treaty guarantees their right to belong — Pakeha are tangata (sic) tiriti, the people of the Treaty.

(Bell 257)

Her argument is that while Pākehā become legitimised by biculturalism, because New Zealand now has two equally valid legal cultures, the cultures in fact remain unequal and the fact

10 There is ongoing debate about the status of The Treaty for those Māori iwi who did not sign, but that is outside the scope of this thesis.
[t]hat Māori (sic) remain disadvantaged across a wide range of economic and social indicators suggests that the recognition given to the Treaty partnership over the last three decades has yet to deliver much substantive equality.

(Bell 2006 257).

Avril Bell suggests that while forgetting the trauma of the past may enable Māori to heal, for Pākehā to forget is to avoid “challenges to their ongoing dominance within New Zealand society” (200 259). Stephen Turner (2001) writes that must Pākehā acknowledge their colonial past, the legacy of their oppression of Māori, and the continuing ties, however weak, to elsewhere. This means Pākehā must accept what the colonisation process has meant for the tāngāta whenua and also for themselves (Turner 2001 84). He suggests that in general the Pākehā population lacks commitment to their relationship with Māori as a Treaty partner, and to their responsibility to implement the Treaty of Waitangi in their daily lives. Avril Bell also argues that biculturalism “problematically works to keep the two peoples apart and paradoxically perpetuates the lacuna constituting Pakeha identity” (2006 254). The lacuna consists of Pākehā blindness to the effect their institutions have had on Māori. Citing Edward Said, Avril Bell writes that the biggest problem with biculturalism is its “neglect of the colonial history of Maori and Pakeha (sic) ‘entanglement’” (2006 254). She explains Edward Said’s idea of “entanglement” as “the overlapping and intertwined nature of those cultures and their histories” and notes that he “calls instead for the contrapuntal study of the cultures and histories of the colonial relation. This musical term refers to the way in which two (or more) melodies exist in counterpoint to each other. Contrapuntal melodies exist both in opposition and in conjunction with each other” (ibid. 258). In Aotearoa/New Zealand this entanglement includes personal ancestry. Many of those who identify as Māori have Pākehā ancestors.

An additional complication to the bicultural framework of Aotearoa/New Zealand is that while the Treaty specifies only Māori and Pākehā, everyday observation of faces in the street reveals that this country is in fact multi-racial and therefore a multicultural country. In the mid-1990s David Pearson noted the “tensions between multi-and bi-cultural possibilities, particularly concerning the question of the symbolic place of non-Maori(sic) and non-Pakeha(sic) ethnic groups in a bicultural nation” (1995
and he added that the idea of biculturalism “rests on a dichotomous, often essentialist Maori/Pakeha axis, that has difficulty accommodating ‘others’ in ethnic terms” (1995 24). More recently Mervin Singham (2006) has also argued for a greater understanding of the issues around multiculturalism. However the argument against the use of the term multicultural as a defining cultural paradigm in Aotearoa/New Zealand is that it downgrades the status of the tāngāta whenua, relegating them just one culture among many. This point is made clearly by the Waitangi Tribunal:

We do not accept that the Māori is just another one of a number of ethnic groups in our community. It must be remembered that of all minority groups the Māori alone is party to a solemn treaty made with the Crown. None of the other migrant groups who have come to live in this country in recent years can claim the rights that were given to the Māori people by the Treaty of Waitangi.

Because of the Treaty Māori New Zealanders stand on a special footing reinforcing, if reinforcement be needed, their historical position as the original inhabitants, the tangata whenua of New Zealand.

(Report Of The Waitangi Tribunal On The Te Reo Maori Claim (Wai 11) 1986 37)

However biculturalism is not just based on legal definition. Pākehā understanding of the Māori worldview is slowly improving, a change that can be demonstrated by such occurrences as the broadcast of the funeral of the Māori Queen Te Arikinui Dame Te Atairangikaahu of Tainui, on the 21st of August 2006, in its entirety on TV One, a mainstream Pākehā channel. Political journalist and analyst Colin James, writing his column for the New Zealand Herald on the 22nd August 2006, used the funeral as an opportunity to note the political and social change that had occurred during her forty-year reign. He detailed the shift from assimilation politics to the period of Māori Renaissance when Māori “emerged from anthropological curiosity to be tāngāta whenua again, real actors in a real, if still uncertain, nation, with a vibrant and developing culture and injecting vitality into music, dance and the arts” (James 2006). The debate on the Foreshore and Seabed 11 legislation is another instance of a

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11 The foreshore and seabed is the area between the line of mean high water springs and the outer limits of the territorial sea (12 nautical miles from shore). The foreshore and seabed includes the air space and water
growing understanding of the importance of Māoritāngā and *mana whenua* (territorial rights, power from the land - power associated with possession and occupation of tribal land). The ownership of the foreshore had been under debate for some time (Mason 2003) and the New Zealand Parliament passed legislation on November 18th 2004, establishing that title to the foreshore and seabed is held by the Crown. This ownership is contested by many Māori, who claim they have customary rights which are upheld by Te Tiriti O Waitangi, to give it its Māori title. Those who support this prior claim of customary rights include many who are not necessarily Māori. The decision was made to replace the 2004 Foreshore and Seabed Act and restore Māori customary title and customary rights by the end of 2010.

The substantive part of this work is not concerned with the social and political aspects of biculturalism or with discussion about the advisability or otherwise of a multicultural framework for Aotearoa/New Zealand but it is important to acknowledge the ongoing relationship between Māori and Pākehā, and its difficulties. It is also important to acknowledge that people of Pacific and Asian origin wish to have their perspective acknowledged. However as a series of case studies of Pākehā theatre, this work is concerned with the presentation of Pākehātāngā in theatrical performance and will therefore consider what Pākehātāngā might mean.

**Pākehā, a people changed by their environment**

Though it is unlikely that in 2010 there are many cultural identities that do not contain some degree of hybridity, hybridity is central to Pākehā who have had to establish their relationship to both who they are and where they are. Stephen Turner quotes John Greville Agard Pocock’s statement that, “Pakeha (sic)may be from Europe but they are not of it. Their cultural identity, and cultural authority, is dependent on a history which does not coincide with that of Europe. Pakeha, in Maori fashion, seek a genealogy which would account for their own origins” (1999 a 412). He writes that “[i]t is becoming increasingly apparent to Pakeha that to […] some extent their sense of identity has been shaped by the Polynesian presence, not just by European activity […][w]ithin New Zealand, for instance, the very word *Pakeha* is the only term that distinguishes white from Māori(sic) New Zealanders” (1999 a 412). Stephen Matthewman and Douglas Hoey (2007) suggest that Pākehā are challenged to take on space above the land, and the subsoil, bedrock and other matters below. In practical terms, it is the seabed and ‘wet’ part of the beach that is covered by the ebb and flow of the tide. (See the Ministry of Justice Website (2009))
some of the attributes of the tāngāta whenua. For Paul Spoonley the word Pākehā “denotes those dominant group members who are of European descent but whose values and practices are a product of their New Zealand location” (1995 55). This absorption of the attributes of a different group is a characteristic of modern cultural identity which “operates across difference” […] and] requires what is left outside, its constitutive outside, to consolidate the process” of attaining its sense of itself, writes Stuart Hall (1996 3). This means that modern cultural identities must recognise that it is only through the relation to the Other, the relation to what it is not, to precisely what it lacks, […] [that identity] can be constructed […] Every identity has at its ‘margin’, an excess, something more.

(Hall 1996 4-5)

Lawrence Grossberg terms this other, against which one defines oneself, the “supplement” (1996 90). He refers to Edward Said’s concept of the “exotic Other, particularly Edward Said’s idea that in the interaction of dominant and subdominant culture the dominant constructs the subdominant Other as both a “repressed and desired difference” (1996 90). Lawrence Grossberg suggests this occurs because an “exotic Other” has both mysterious and outlandish attributes that the dominant group lacks and which it therefore simultaneously desires for itself and represses, both in itself and in the Other. These desired and repressed attributers of the Other are necessary to the dominant group, for they make up a deficiency in the identity of that group. Therefore by embodying the “extra” set of cultural norms, those outside “normal” everyday interaction, the Other completes the dominant identity.

The idea of the Other is an ancient one central to many mythical stories. “The wandering of Odysseus brings him to distant and strange peoples, […] thus defining by contrast what it is to be […] Greek as opposed to foreigners” (Jensen 1990 36).

In the nineteenth and certainly for the first half of the twentieth century Māori were thought of as the exotic Other against whom Pākehā defined themselves. This idea is evident in representations similar to the one shown below.

12 […] there was a Near Orient and a Far Orient, a familiar orient, […] and a novel orient. The orient therefore alternated in the mind’s geography between being an Old World to which one returned, as to Eden or Paradise, there to set up a new version of the old, and being a wholly new place to which one came as Columbus came to America, in order to set up a New World […]. Certainly neither of these Orients was purely one thing or the other: it is their vacillations, their tempting suggestiveness, their capacity for entertaining and confusing the mind that are interesting (Said 1978 58)
Chapter Four Characterising Pākehā

Figure 1 Film images of the indigene: the exotic Other in the South Pacific. (Sheffield 2000)

Each group, Māori and Pākehā, consisted of separate entities before they came into contact (Matthewman and Hoey 2007). However by the twenty-first century Pākehā cannot be described in an imaginative sense, without reference to Māori because Pākehā cannot conceptually exist without Māori. As John Andrews writes, “understanding Maori (sic), their culture and world view, and a shared sense of belonging to this country, are now part of being Pakeha (sic) […] resulting in] a state of mind including Maori and the land in the sense of place and identity” (2009 14).

Pākehā therefore define themselves both in terms of the present Other, the tāngāta whenua, and also in terms of a distant other, those peoples of Europe from whom they have descended. There have been earlier peoples placed in the same situation. Edward Braithwaite (1971) notes that living in the West Indies engendered a marked change in the thinking, attitudes and customs of a people who resided, generation after generation, away from their original homelands. These people who were “mainly from Britain and West Africa, who settled, lived, worked and were born in Jamaica, contributed to the formation of a society which developed, […] its own distinctive character or culture which, in so far as it was neither British nor West African, is called “creole” ” (Braithwaite 1971 xii). It is that concept, of a people changed by migration, which applies to Pākehā New Zealanders. Like earlier people changed by their new environment, Pākehā have been formed by the mutual responses of two groups of people who were initially “cultural strangers to each other” (Braithwaite 1971 296). The relative isolation of Aotearoa/New Zealand which has made it a frontier, an in-
between place, also makes it fertile ground for creating different ways of looking at the world. Stephen Turner suggests to Pākehā that they regard their distance from the old cultures of Europe as a positive. “You need,” he writes “a feeling for non-metropolitan space, an outside space” (2001 69). If, as Lawrence Grossberg (1996 101) writes, identity is the changing phenomenon of particular behaviours at any individual stopping place, Pākehā, like all industrialised peoples in the post-modern environment, are constantly subjected to the modifying influences of international communication, yet at the same time have been moulded by their past locations and journeys, as well as their present locality.

The fact that Aotearoa/New Zealand is geographically a long way from everywhere is an important element of Pākehā sensibility and the pull between connections and displacement is a central element of Pākehā cultural representation. Europe has become familiarly-strange. It is a place known through literature or family stories, but not necessarily personally experienced. Because the people of Europe are now physically and personally distant from Aotearoa/New Zealand, they have become an Other against whom Pākehā can measure themselves. This European other presents ideas of like, and different from, at one and same time. Pākehā identity has been shaped by origins in Europe and continuing ties to those countries and also by the Pacific. Pākehā cultural identity has to negotiate its way between the demands of a modern globalised nation, a local concept of cultural origins and histories, and a relationship to the tāngāta whenua.

In the twenty-first century, while Pākehā are the dominant identity in Aotearoa/New Zealand, Māori are no longer a distant ‘exotic Other’. Many Māori words and rituals have become familiar to Pākehā, as Pākehā rituals have become typical for Māori. For example, the concept of wairua, a spiritual presence in the world, is accepted as an important aspect of protocol, even if it is not held as an actual belief. New buildings, especially government buildings, are often opened with a dawn ceremony to lift the tapu (sacredness) associated with the building process. The inaugural meeting of new organisations are often blessed with appropriate karakia (invocation/prayer). Stephen Turner is doubtful that this is necessarily a good thing. He writes that though Pākehā have moved away from the high culture of British civilisation, because Pākehā do not understand this history and culture of the Pacific after many years of land grabbing, they
are now appropriating Māori(sic) culture in an effort to indigenize themselves – to establish their own cultural authority. Ironically Maori culture has become a new high culture in ceremonial displays of New Zealand nationalism.

(Turner 1999 a 418)

This question of whether of the use of Māori culture in New Zealand ceremony is appropriate is difficult and will not be addressed here. However, what is interesting to note is that this incorporation of elements which were not part of the world of their ancestors into public ceremony reveals a hybridising change in the culture of post-settler people. Living on a daily basis alongside another and completely different culture, has permeated the received European worldview of Pakeha. It is a particular change at the “stopping point” (Grossberg 1996 101) [emphasis added] that this group of migratory people is making.

Language

Some everyday areas of difference between Pākehā and other Western cultures can be found in the ethos of distance that informs Pākehā understandings of themselves and in Pākehā use of language. Pākehā speak English a language common to around 322,000,000 people worldwide (Gordon 2005). However Pākehā New Zealanders overcome a lack of local content in English by borrowing words from Māori. In a panui (newsletter) on Maori Activities within the Bay of Plenty Regional Council in 2004 Waaka Vercoe wrote, “We all speak Pakeha (sic) English a version of English that has borrowed at least 4000 words from Maori (sic) thereby making it unique to the people of this country.”

The everyday use of Māori naming words like kōwhai and tui is part of the everyday exchange (Potiki 2010) of ideas from Māori to Pākehā. For example the following words are common:

- *ariki* – paramount chief,
- *aroha* – love,
- *hapū* – sub-tribe,
- *hīkoi* – protest march, long walk,
- *hongi* – greeting,
- *iwi* – tribe,
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- *kai* – food
- *whānau* – family

(Macalister 2005)

(See the glossary for a longer list of Māori words used in this thesis.)

Ideas of *wairua* (spirit), *tapu* (sacred), and *noa* (ordinary or profane), are also widely understood and there is also the adoption by some Pākehā of more complex ideas drawn from the Māori world such as the concepts associated with words like *mana*, and *kotahitanga* (partnership). The Māori term *mana*, used generally by Pākehā to mean status and authority, for Māori also contains the idea of being effective, influential, and granting permission. Roma Potiki (2008), suggests that it is a way of being, encompassing attitudes, actions, acts of leadership and contributions that strengthen a person or a community. Mana is accorded to a person or group by others and is not something that one bestows on oneself. In her article ‘Words Escape Us’ Joan Metge writes that

[s]ince 1980 in particular a significant number of words for Maori(sic) cultural concepts and practices have come into English as Maori have fought related campaigns to save their language from extinction and to assert their status as the ‘people of the land’ and partners to the Treaty of Waitangi.

(Metge 2009)

She canvasses the idea of whether or not Māori have lost control of some of their language, whether it has ‘got away’ through this incorporation into English, but in support of the use of Māori words cites “the Chairman of the Maori Language Commission, ‘the Commission’s guiding aim (is) that Maori becomes a language of common use for all, not just for Maori ... We’re only kaitiaki ... The language belongs to New Zealand and all New Zealanders.’” She explains the borrowing in a succinct manner
The reasons why non-Maori accept certain Maori words are varied: filling the gaps in existing vocabulary, ease of pronunciation, potential for word play, empathy for Maori values and aspirations, increasing participation in Maori cultural contexts, and an emerging national identity to which a Maori presence is integral. Their acceptance, however flawed, fulfils the ultimate purpose of gift exchange, the reinforcement of social and political relations. The overall result is highly unusual in the Pacific and possibly in the world, the language of a politically dominant majority made distinctive by the incorporation of words from the language of the indigenous minority.

(Metge 2000)

John Macalister, editor of *A Dictionary of Maori (sic) Words In New Zealand English*, writes that often no other word will suffice to express a concept, or that the brevity of the Māori word, pa instead of fortified village for example, makes it attractive to speakers of English. He suggests the desire for a unique New Zealand identity may be inherent in the borrowing and that closely related is the “use of loanwords to express an empathy with Maoridom (sic), its values and aspirations” (2005 xix). This use of Māori words is evidence of change in the Pākehā population who are now unselfconsciously using words that would have been foreign to their ancestors. This sign of everyday contact with “Māori things” (King 1986 18-19) is one of attributes that distinguish Pākehā from their European forbears and suggests that the adoption of Māori words into New Zealand English is part of the process of Pākehā adjustment to living in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

In this context of change as a result of re-location and contact, Michael King’s works on being Pākehā (King 1986, 1991, 1999) are important. He considers that living in Aotearoa/New Zealand alongside, even if often in conflict with Māori, has had a moderating effect on the post-settler population. The interwoven relationship between Māori and Pākehā is so much a background to living in Aotearoa/New Zealand that it is in the region of the taken-for-granted. Dancer and choreographer Kilda Northcott, who remembers growing up side by side with Māori, explains how fascination with the *Kuia* on the local marae contributed to her sense of herself as Pākehā:
I always used to say to myself when I grow up […] I want to be like those women. As well as being really staunchly proud in just who I am, as an individual a white, Celtic Scottish, English [woman]

(Northcott 2007)

**Speaking of ourselves - Expressing the difference that is Pākehā**

Cultural identity encompasses both a sense of belonging, and an acknowledgement that one has a particular way of seeing the world, an idea that Raymond Williams encapsulates in his definition of culture as “a structure of feeling” (1961 48). This understanding of the “structure of feeling” which surrounds the recognition of one’s culture is particularly relevant to the process of recognising one’s culture encapsulated in an image - be it a visual, musical or theatrical one. In order to consider how Pākehā might see themselves represented in performance it is necessary first to consider the change which has occurred for Māori over the last few decades.

Historically, in the face of the alienation of their land, the loss of their primacy, and the loss of their language and culture 13 14 Māori have struggled for their rights, and for the recognition of their place as the first nation, the tāngāta whenua. 15 This struggle eventually led to what is now called the 1980s Māori Renaissance in Māori language, art and culture. The Māori Renaissance not only caused Māori to revaluate Māori culture, it also prompted the awareness on the part of the Pākehā population that they

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13 The arrival of Pakeha had enormous impacts on Maori society, both positive and negative. Disease and the musket made deep inroads into the Maori population, while the pig and the potato provided major new food sources. [www.doc.govt.nz/templates/page.aspx?id=34016 accessed 28/08/08](www.doc.govt.nz/templates/page.aspx?id=34016)

14 Total Māori population in 1857-58 was 56,049. By 1896 it had dropped to 39,854 and did not reach over 50,000 again until 1921 when it was recorded as 52,751. European population on the other hand was rising. The statistics for comparative Table Showing the Population (of European descent) in the Several Electoral Districts of the Colony of New Zealand December 1861 and December 1864 show a settler population of 48,463 in 1861and 62,199 in 1864. New Zealand, a handbook of historical statistics Gerald T Bloomfield. 1984.

15 The effect of European institutions, customs and disease on Māori life and culture has been well discussed, beginning in the nineteenth century with works by George William Rusden (1883, 1888). The influence of Māori institutions and culture on the European settlers has been less considered. As this research is about performing Pākehā cultural identity on stage it is not necessary to consider in great detail all the areas where Māori concepts have interpenetrated a predominantly European worldview, creating the culture which can now be referred to as Pākehārangā. Equally Pākehā concepts have been taken over by Māori in governance and religion as well as in lifestyle. Though interpenetration of European culture into Māori culture has been significant there has been some movement of ideas from Māori culture into Pākehā culture.
too had a distinct culture, different from their European forebears. The question of just how that culture differed from its original was, and still is, not easy to answer.

Stephen Turner, grappling with the difficulty of speaking clearly about the ‘local’, which is often something that is simply “known” (2001 83), offers as a defining moment of the localness of Aotearoa/New Zealand, the experience of attending a pōwhiri to welcome Jacques Derrida. In experiencing the strange juxtapositioning of a Frenchman, being welcomed in Māori – and having his support group sing their responding waiata ‘Gentile Alouette’ in French – he became aware of a strangeness that was “a familiar strangeness to Māori and Pākehā, something recurrent yet never predictable, a local knowing they differently share” (Turner 2001 76). He suggests that for a Pākehā “instincts are all you have that are truly yours” (2001 83), for the ideas of local or “native knowing” cannot be theoretically explained but “can only be the object of performance, or observance” (2001 84). This distinctiveness does not belong to the world outside Aotearoa/New Zealand and is part of the tension in Pākehā culture between the presence of Māori ideas, knowledge and artistic insights, and the European-derived framework in which Pākehā exist. It is a tension that can be a source of artistic impetus, though a major problem in expressing Pākehā difference from other Western cultures lies in the fact that the forms of many artistic works are European in origin. However, they are, nevertheless, imbued with a localness that matters. In performance works, as in social events, it is often a localness that is instinctual, one that is felt rather than presented in a structure that is radically different from the performance of the rest of the Western World. Pākehā playwright Garry Henderson, in an interview with drama lecturer Lisa Warrington, explains why being Pākehā is evident in his work:

I regard myself as an indigenous New Zealander in the sense that I don’t have another home. […] I know where I belong, I belong right here, this is my home. And even then I try to phrase it as “this is the land I belong to,” not “this is the land I own.” I don’t own it, I don’t think anyone does. But this is where I belong and I want my plays to reflect that.

(Warrington 2007)

It is this local understanding of, at least in part, what is going on in a different but yet familiar culture, that of the Māori, that differentiates Pākehā from their
European ancestors. This difference may be expressed as a hybridity, a liminality between two cultures, a border (Grossberg 1996 91) or an estuary which is a “Third Space” in Homi K Bhabha’s terms (1994 36-38). Rather than being seen as a negative concept of a “no-man’s land” between two cultures, this border may be seen positively as a place of syncretism.

However it is true that, as Pākehā cultural identity is often taken to be the default identity of Aotearoa/New Zealand, it can be unreflective about how it came to be what it is. When Pākehā fail to fully consider how they have become what they are, they fail to acknowledge the fully nature of their own cultural distinctness. Writing of ‘The Missing Pakeha at Te Papa’ in the exhibitions at Te Papa Tongarewa, The National Museum of New Zealand, Avril Bell notes that the museum “has done an admirable job of including all waves of non-Maori migrants in its ‘Passports’ exhibition, […] However, ‘Pakeha’ as such are invisible at Te Papa” (2006 260-264). Film theorist David Callahan (1999) has also complained that the concept of Pākehā is conspicuously missing from New Zealand film (1999-59). He suggests that Pākehā have difficulty discussing themselves because of their anxieties about their unresolved relationship to Māori. To this end he castigates Ian Mune’s critically acclaimed film version of Bruce Mason’s play The End of the Golden Weather, complaining that:

[T]he only trace of Maori lies in the name of the settlement - Te Parenga - […] Growing up in New Zealand apparently means having to cope with all sorts of difference, […] but not the principal difference upon which the country is founded.

(Callahan 1999 50-59)

However if we look more carefully at the subtexts of the play it becomes clear that the Māori name of the settlement in The End of the Golden Weather signifies a background Māori presence, a shadow, against which the play takes place. Artistically the tension between what is revealed and what is hidden in theatre is a powerful creative force. A shadow can have a very strong presence indicating many things about its source. The background of Māori presence in everyday society is an important artistic influence. Pakeha choreographer Ali East is clear that “being raised in a community of people that was fifty per cent Māori and [...] going to a school that was fifty per cent Māori, and hearing Māori spoken all around me” and then later mixing
with people in the Pacific community are “powerful as a source of inspiration” (2007). Such experiences are some of the influences that contribute to a sense of a local difference.

The realisation that what makes the local qualitatively different is difficult to explain to outsiders (Turner 2001 76), is paralleled by another long-term problem experienced by the settler-descended inhabitants of Aotearoa/New Zealand. It is “the idea that British, or more specifically, English, culture constitutes a high culture” which lingers as “the cultural inferiority complex of the colonial New Zealander” (Turner 1999 a 417). It is a problem expressed colloquially by the epithet the “cultural cringe” (The Reed Dictionary of New Zealand English 1979 275) For over a century those who live here have believed that things of value, art, culture and knowledge, are to be found elsewhere, beyond these islands. This “metropolitan effect” (Turner 2001) of looking towards more established cultures, which was such a problem for the settlers struggling to gain a sense of place (where was home located?) continues through the global communication networks to be a problem in the twenty-first century. Markers of identity have become increasingly fluid, and this fact is picked up, for example, by a television advertisement for insurance, which cautions ‘Kwis, people are always pinching our stuff’. It goes on to identify several icons that have been supposedly ‘taken’. If cultural iconography can be used anywhere, by anyone, at any time, how can a sense of localness be maintained?

Within the tensions of distance and connections, of race relations, location, and local modes of expression, artistic modes are important as a way of understanding what Pākehā cultural identity might be. Documentary maker John Irwin is clear that “we need to tell our own history. We have a very interesting history, the history of this country is as interesting as anywhere,” (2005) and James Belich’s series for Television New Zealand on the New Zealand Wars (1988) is an example of Pākehā reappraisal of their history, which helps Pākehā discover how they have acted in Aotearoa. Though the popular idea of Pākehā may be expressed through the remnant idea of the rugged independent ‘man alone’ (Man Alone is the title of a novel by New Zealand author John Mulgan 1939) it becomes clear that, as Pākehā begin to tell their own stories, they have never actually been a people isolated in their mountains and nor have they ever wanted to be. Since the beginning of European settlement ‘new’ ideas have been arriving with each wave of settlers and each new communication medium. Stevan Eldred-Grigg’s
study of the nineteenth century ‘southern gentry’ (1980) revealed a world concerned with money, fashion and luxury; a world that was consistently connected with the wider sphere of Europe. In the twentieth century the ideas of feminism, black consciousness, and gay liberation, have come to this island country, which is aware that it continues to have ties to the ‘main’ of Europe and America.

**Pākehā attributes**

Pākehā culture has a belief in the intrinsic virtue of the practical. Stephen Turner who describes Aotearoa/New Zealand as essentially pragmatic (2001 69), also notes that abstract thinking goes “against the grain” (2001 71). This can be assumed to be the legacy of the pioneer days when qualities of toughness and independence were required in order to survive in an often hostile land. In tough and often lonely environments where the weather was a real burden (Phillips 1987 20-21), the settler, particularly the settler male, quickly learnt to live rough. The women had to work hard as well.

The boisterous and changeable climate made housework a strenuous round of keeping wood fires under control, shoring up doors and floors against the inroads of excess water and mud, and maintaining some semblance of order and cleanliness within a household and among its inhabitants.

(Macdonald 1990 103)

The rugged masculinity of this environment created a culture in which, as Jock Phillips expresses it,

[t]he colonial male held intellectual skills and book learning in low regard. His own masculinity was bound up with physical prowess. […] men who earned their keep through sitting at a desk, were treated with suspicion as ‘paper collared swell’ while the educated and literate Englishman who did make it to the colonial frontier often found little respect for his training.

(1987 24)

Domestic work was the most available option for women. Women who had educational skills but who were prepared to “to help with household work as well as instruct children could find positions relatively easily” (Macdonald 1990 111) and those
“who had been employed in non-domestic work before they emigrated needed to combine their skill with general household work” (ibid.). That the anti-intellectual attitude of the pioneer days is still a strand of Pākehā identity is epitomised by the icon of the “Southern Man” and satirised in the Speight’s beer advertisements which have been running on New Zealand television since 1987 and feature two high country shepherds in various iconic South Island High Country landscapes. This setting harmonises with the love of the outdoors Pākehā express, even if the majority do not venture into the mountains or the bush. There still seems to be cultural pride in the concept of the independent Southern Man, the Speight’s campaign is popular and the phrase “she’s a hard road …” from the advertisement has become widely used, suggesting a conscious pride in the rejection of city culture and ‘airy fairy’ ideas and a preference for what is practically obtainable. Understanding the comedy of these advertisements depends on a familiarity with what is being satirised and also a connection with the strong sense of Pākehā irony they display. 16 As representations of the ‘Southern Man’ the characters are emotionally withdrawn and laconic. They are at home only out on the hills with their horses and dogs, or in the pub with their mates, are reluctant to commit to marriage and home, and are dedicated to beer. The hotel bar has traditionally been an important place in establishing the manhood of the young male Pākehā. Drinking in the pioneer days was a:

defining ritual of the male community. A man who drank alone was cause for suspicion and the importance of drink in establishing the communal bond among men was represented by the tradition of ‘shouting’. As for the man who did not drink, he, as [George] Chamier 17 tells us ‘was no man, only a thing,’ he was called ‘proud’.

(Phillips 1987 35)

The Speights’ advertisements play on the “man alone” (Mulgan 1949) cultural iconography, a concept which glorifies rugged male independence. Even in the early

16 That this satire of Pākehā is intrinsically local can be gauged by the experience of the writer who, on asking an English-speaking exchange student if she found the Speights advertisements funny, received the reply “No, I don’t understand them”.

17 George Chamier was a nineteenth century New Zealand novelist’
days of settlement the idealised stoic pioneer acquired the physical characteristics of a hero. Jock Phillips gives this description:

He was tall – over six feet – wiry and strong, with a broad forehead showing intelligence, and eyes that were honest and manly. Manliness, indeed, was frequently noted as a special quality of the pioneers.

(Phillips 1987 39)

The characteristics of toughness and determination are greatly valued in Pākehā society and have been honoured in persons like the disabled archer Neroli Fairhall and mountaineer Sir Edmund Hillary.

While there are other advertisements that draw on the iconography of rugged farmers, but perhaps the only one of these to feature working women is the Toyota “bugger” ad in which a country wife, complete with gumboots, has her clean washing splashed with mud from the wheels of the departing ute. The lack of archetypical Pākehā female characters in television advertising probably says more about the demand of the medium than about Pākehā 18. The women who came to New Zealand, the “dairymaids, seamstresses, domestic servants, country girls, […] from the labouring classes of England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland” on the other hand, were “women of good character” whose “lives were indistinguishable from those of thousands of poor girls who grew up in households where everyone worked, where there was little privacy or comfort, and where good health and adequate food were celebrated rather than expected” (Macdonald 1990 41). The female settlers who came out as single women were already used to hard work, many leaving home to go to work as young as ten years of age. For them,

[e]migrating to New Zealand was for some simply the culmination of several moves away from where they were born. For others, it was virtually the only alternative to a future which promised little more than a marginal subsistence. This was especially true for girls growing up in the poorer rural districts of Ireland.

(Macdonald 1990 42)

18 The television advertisements are being used as a means to demonstrate the popularity of this type of imagery not to discuss television advertising itself.
Given this history, it is perhaps understandable why toughness and determination are attributes to be admired. The seeds of these attitudes were sown in the rough world of pioneer New Zealand, where for men at least, it simply did not pay to have too sophisticated a sensitivity. Men had to master their fears and revulsions and struggle on. [...] Men thought of their feelings as a weakness, and they were not going to display emotions before their peers.

(Phillips 1987-37)

This tough pioneer culture developed, according to Jock Phillips, because in the early days of settlement, men vastly outnumbered women. 19 Deprived of female company the men spent most of their time in the company of other men and so the

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19 At the first colony-wide census in 1851 New Zealand contained a small number of Europeans – a mere 26,707. But already there was a considerable surplus of men to women; 15,035 males and only 11,672 European females, or in other terms there were only 776 Pakeha women for every 1,000 Pakeha men in the colony [...] there was a preponderance of males in the population until the First World War. Thereafter, the number of women for every 1,000 males rose substantially above 900.

These statistics may seem lifeless and abstract but they are central to our story. Where there are more men than women in a society, men are less exposed to the female influence and more likely to find themselves in all male situations. More important, they are much less likely to find themselves settling down into a permanent married state with a woman. To some extent the simple sex ratio of the whole population disguises the full possibilities of the male culture in nineteenth century Pakeha New Zealand. The statistics for the whole population include children, where the sex ratio is always nearly even, so that if we look simply at the adult sex ratio, we find that the imbalance between men and women remains even more extreme and for a longer period. In 1881, for example, there were 817 women to 1,000 men in the total white population, but only 656 adult women to 1,000 adult men. The effect of this continued imbalance among adults can be seen even more dramatically in the proportion of men who were married, [...]. As late as 1874 there were more unmarried than married men, and for the next 40 years until the First World War there were only marginally more married men than bachelors. One in every two men did not face family responsibilities. This was an unusual situation. In England in the second half of the nineteenth century about two out of every three adult males were married. At the 1981 census in New Zealand three men in every five were married and less than one in every five had never been married.

It does not require a great imagination to see what a difference such an imbalance must have made to colonial society or to the experience of Pakeha males in particular. Here was a large male population with no married obligations and relatively footloose. They naturally looked to other men for support and company. Here was the demographic basis for a rich male culture, fertile soil for the growth of all-male institutions. Many men in the nineteenth century New Zealand spent most of their time in the exclusive company of their own sex. [...] Not surprisingly, the preponderance of males was more likely to be found on the frontier and in the rural districts.

(Phillips 1987 7-10)
stereotype of emotionally unavailable men arose out of the necessity of having to cope without the comforts of a stable home. This lead men to distrust the emotion and gentle feelings which “had come to be associated with women. […] colonial males quite clearly did try to hold their feelings in check – to master them rather than, in their own terms, be mastered by emotion” (Phillips 1987 36-37). Lack of female company also led men to look “to other men for support and company. Here was the demographic basis for a rich male culture, fertile soil for the growth of all-male institutions” (1987 7-8). Once gold was discovered in Otago in 1861 it became a matter of urgency to attract women to the colony because “[s]ettler communities were taking on a more prosperous and more permanent shape, heightening the demand for a continuous supply of female labour” (Macdonald 1990 23).

However, although young women did come seeking work, many did not chose to marry early and “in the decades 1840 to around 1890 [there was] a marked difference in the proportion of women and men married (three quarters of adult women were or had been married once compared with less than half the adult male population)” (Macdonald 1990 138). The age at which young women married was later in New Zealand than was generally true in Europe. Charlotte Macdonald suggests the women were cautious about entering into marriage because they had come to New Zealand to better their position and

were unlikely to jeopardise those aspirations by a hasty or youthful marriage. As young, unmarried adults they were independent and mobile […] while full economic independence was beyond the reach of most young women, marriage was certainly not the only route toward, […] economic security.

(Macdonald 1990 138)

The background of hard work and stringent conditions are probably the factors that John Bluck sees as key to a Pākehā sense of themselves as people with a distaste for self-pity, a dry sense of humour derived from their ironic perceptions of themselves, a belief in fair play, equality of opportunity and modesty.
It is culturally inappropriate among Pakeha (sic) (and Maori, but in a quite different way) to make too much of oneself. That’s for someone else to do and when praise does come, the receiver needs to accept the gift with hesitation and reluctance.

(Bluck 2001 22)

The idea that one should not seek to “blow one’s own trumpet” goes back to the early days of settlement where being proud “was considered a mortal sin – the one offence that could not be forgiven” (Phillips 1987 35). However reluctance to indulge in self-praise does not extend to sport. It is acceptable to show pride in sporting achievement, especially in prowess on the rugby field, although until recently that display had to be a restrained acknowledgement of success. Rugby is important in Pākehā male culture [though at the time of writing soccer is certainly a significant part of the national psyche], and is referenced in both the play Home Land and the dance work Fishnet. Jock Phillips suggests that rugby plays an important role in New Zealand life, because of its perceived ability to instil “moral values”:

Around the turn of the [20th] century […] [t]he game was recommended as affording young [male] New Zealanders important lessons ‘for the conflict and competition of life’. […]   The importance of battling on determinedly against life’s difficulties was one lesson of rugby repeated ad nauseum for the next 80 years.

(Phillips 1987 101-102)

**Men, Mateship and women of ‘bad’ character**

The hard conditions and lack of female company gave rise to the development of the Pākehā mateship system. Men wrote back from the battle-front in World War I of their love for their mates. “Sometimes the diaries and letters display a reticence in describing the friendships formed, in others the descriptions are abundant and glowing.” (Phillips 1987 179) Jock Philips calls the mateship system in pioneer Aotearoa/New Zealand “the only consolation for the desolation and daily tragedy” (1987 179) of a tough environment and a society largely deprived of female companionship. He suggests that from the beginning of European settlement New Zealand was thought of as a man’s country. “In 1857 Charles Hursthouse published a
two–volume guide for emigrants to New Zealand. [...] For Hursthouse, to emigrate to New Zealand was to throw off effeminate chains and become a man” (Phillips 1987 4).

Coupled with this desire for manliness was an abhorrence of deviancy. For the largely male cultures of pioneer New Zealand mateship was sacred, and lead to a repression of any expression of homosexual desire. The idea that the repression of sexual expression is desirable lasted until well into the middle of the twentieth century. In 1869 the introduction of the Contagious Diseases and Vagrant Amendment Bill (Macdonald 1990 184), was preceded by a debate about women of ‘bad character’ and venereal disease. In a debate that in its prejudice paralleled the previous debate in its focus on moral righteousness, the Parliamentary debate of July 1975, which introduced a private member’s bill to repeal the relevant sections of the Crimes Act and legalise homosexual acts between consenting adult males over the age of 20, also dwelt on the moral character of the country. The bill was opposed by many MPs on the grounds that its acceptance would encourage the ‘permissive’ society and undermine the nation’s ‘moral fibre’; and [...] that a nation depended upon sound family life which was allegedly threatened by homosexuality. The most common reason, however, was that homosexuality was abnormal, an “unnatural perversion” in Sir John Marshall’s words. [...] Homosexual men disturbed the natural separation and function of the two sexes. (Phillips 1987 281)

The relevant section of the Crimes Act was not repealed for a further eleven years. This fear of male deviancy echoed the settler attitude to young single women who were required to be of good character; a requirement that was hard to enforce. One of the fears of the early colony was the shortage of young marriageable women which lead men to seek out prostitutes. From the early 1860s the arrival of more young single women in Otago in particular, increased the concern that the presence of these young women would lead to an explosion of ‘the social evils of prostitution’. Young women who [...] showed a disinclination to go into service were regarded as ‘suspect.’ [...] Women were expected to behave according to certain standards and those who did not were roundly condemned as ‘abandoned’ or ‘bad characters’.
Typically, little was said about the men “who drank, swore and slept with them” (ibid.). The passing of the Contagious Diseases and Vagrant Amendment Bill did not curb the trade it was designed to suppress. However, although some women did practice prostitution, it was “a small and highly marginal section of the community. For some, prostitution appears to have been a temporary or intermittent activity” (Macdonald 183) and once married the women abandoned it. “For others it was part of a more permanent way of life. And once a reputation was established it was difficult – in the outlines of the small colonial community – to find other ways of earning a living” (ibid.).

**Theatrically performing Pākehā cultural identity**

The main task of this thesis is to consider the representation of Pākehā cultural identity as it is expressed in theatrical performance. There are two ways in which cultures can “be regarded as distinctive” these are in the “*phenomena* that they bring together or they may be thought distinctive in respect of *the way* in which they bring them together” (Novitz 1989 287). The examination of selected works considers both the phenomena of Pākehā sensibility as displayed in the works and the forms in which these phenomena have been brought together. Though the works come from the 1993-2004, that time succeeding the Māori Renaissance when the post-settler people of Aotearoa/New Zealand began to examine what being Pākehā might mean (Bell 1995), the imaginative scope of the works traverses representational territory from the lives of the settler community in 1841 to representations of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. The next three chapters examine the works as performance in their articulation of a Pākehā form of expression. The examination of four different performance genres is clustered under three headings irony, a distinctive Pākehā characteristic, the expression and repression of emotion in a Pākehā context, and the representation of Pākehā people’s changing relationship to this place in its depiction of the land-on-the-stage.
Chapter Five

Irony: Cynicism in Belief

While each of the selected works approaches it from a different perspective, irony is an important foundation of the four works examined in this thesis. The dance work *Fishnet* is grounded on parody and satire. It questions the expectations and representations of women that are “taken for granted” (Austin 1998 136), and the irony lies in the difference between the way women are perceived, and the way women know themselves to be (Baum 2003 20; Case 1998 143). Gary Henderson’s play *Home Land* has irony deeply embedded in its structure. This irony relates to the cultural landscape of emotional repression. Therefore emotion is ironically referenced through its subjugation throughout the play. Andrew London, with his light-hearted mocking of middle-class Pākehā culture, takes a consciously ironic stance in his songs and while there is nothing consciously parodic about *Bitter Calm*, which is built on the fictional recreation of a segment of Pākehā history, the opera rests on dramatic irony.

Irony

It is no accident that irony, the dissonance between what is expected and what occurs, is a central aspect of Pākehā cultural expression in theatrical performance, film and literature. Terry Eagleton states of irony that it “can be said to provide a threshold between the aesthetic and the ethical” (1990 176). Demanding that a person not simply indulge in the abstract contemplation of the ‘beautiful’, an ironic approach “enables the subject to effect its passage from the decentred immediacy of the aesthetic ‘imaginary’ to the unified differentiated state of the ethical ‘symbolic order’ ” (1990 176). “If metonymy and synecdoche are means of reducing and transporting whole worlds by substituting parts for wholes,” writes Bert O. States, “irony is a means of expanding our perspective beyond the part-whole entity” (1995 75), taking us beyond the concern with the particular to a contemplation of the general. Renata Casertano writes of irony that it “implies distance which is always a distance from, from the self in relation to the non-self and vice versa” (2000 102). As an awareness of a gap – that break in the harmony between what is hoped for and what is achieved, or what is said and what is intended – irony creates an emotional and intellectual distance. When the self and the world become uncoupled, the self reflects on the world and finds the world reflective of the self, not in the sense of a reflective surface which blinds the eye to the depths beneath,
but rather in the sense of providing a commentary on the self. In an uncoupled state the self is aware of dissonance and this enables the self to make judgements. These judgements may show the self as wanting in relation to the ideal to which it aspires, and such a sense of incompleteness or failure highlights the awareness of the gap between the idea and the reality.

Ironic can take several forms, from quizzical humorous response which turns aside from, or downplays, important events to a dark uncertain view of the worlds. The irony present in the works of Pākehā New Zealanders is related to the English sense of irony from which it no doubt derives. Peter Ackroyd relates English irony to English melancholy, of which he writes

There is a word in Old English which belongs wholly to that civilisation – ‘dustsceaving’, meaning contemplation of dust. It is a true image of the Anglo-Saxon mind, or at least an echo of that consciousness which considered transience and loss to be part of the human estate; it was a world in which life was uncertain and the principal deity was fate or destiny or ‘wryd’.

(Ackroyd 2002 54)

He goes on to say that the melancholy of England has always been there. It is derived from an Anglo-Saxon sensibility infused with Celtic gloom. Such dark sensibilities also pervade the Pākehā view of life. In order to be ironic a society needs “some kind of collective experience which shadows any individual statement, and [...] certain shared sentiments which need only to be intimated rather than expressed” (Ackroyd 2002 391). A particular Pākehā mind-set explored by John Bluck is the idea in Pākehā culture that people not seek praise (2001 22), but must be self-deprecating. It is this cultural requirement to remain humble which is, perhaps, the seedbed for the local sense of the ironic. Success, particularly intellectual success, must be downplayed so as not to elevate anyone above their equals. In what might be a reaction to any possible suspicion of bragging, Pākehā irony is often expressed in a laconic remark that seeks to deflect praise and as such its motivation can be incomprehensible to those outside the culture, for the full import of the comment often remains under the surface. In its under statement such a remark notes and expresses the incongruities of life and the transience, or perhaps irrelevance, of achievement. This caveat against self-praise can
be seen in what is perhaps the most famous example of Pākehā Kiwi ironic understatement. Mountaineer Edmund Hillary on reaching the summit of Mt Everest simply observed “We knocked the bastard off.” Such an observation embodies the cultural concept that that it is important not to take ourselves too seriously.

However the ironic response also arises because of the limiting effect of the cultural injunction of modesty. While it can create a sense of equality, the stigma against ‘blowing one’s own trumpet’ also assists in the maintenance of existing power structures. This negative use of control, known locally as ‘the tall poppy syndrome,’ involves rebuking anyone who is talking about their achievement, or indeed simply standing taller than their peers. According to John Bluck, this “tall poppy syndrome” restrains “New Zealanders from dreaming too boldly or reaching too far” (2001 22). This cultural requirement to be modest, not to seek praise, and not to express emotional needs, can result in bitterness and emotional repression. It is entirely possible to suggest that, within this cultural context which requires ambition to be muted, irony is the only available response.

Each of the four works examined in this thesis approaches irony from a different perspective including dramatic irony, ironical situations and verbal responses, parody and satire. Gary Henderson’s play *Home Land* which has irony deeply embedded in its structure, explores emotional repression. In the context of such repression, and downplaying of achievement, dark irony has become an important element in the way Pākehā New Zealanders express themselves. How can this quality be described? There is a relationship between Pākehā irony and the form of irony used by Anton Chekhov. John Louis Styan, writing of what he terms the “dark comedy” of Chekhov, considers this comedy a mixture of comic and tragic elements so intermingled that the spectator has no option but to laugh and cry in turn as in ‘real life’. John Louis Styan states that Chekhovian comedy forces “the spectator forward by stimulus [...] then distracts him [...] so that time and time again he must review his own activity in watching the play” (1968 262). The mixing of the comic and the tragic, the deeply serious with the trivial, creates an ironical interpretation of life which is at once both funny and black. John Louis Styan goes on to state that the driving force of dark comedy is not the personal discoveries of the protagonist, or even the moment of crisis, but rather “the place where the tensions are so unbearable that we crave relief from our embarrassment” (1968 263). This embarrassment arises from producing a desire in the audience that the
character make the ‘right’ decision securing happiness, then thwarting it by making it clear that that they will make the wrong decision.

The awareness of the inevitable disappointment of life is also a feature of Pākehā humour, which seeks to make light of human perversity. Such irony can be called black, for its focus is on the failures and miscomprehensions of life. Those involved in the action are often oblivious to their misunderstandings of the situation, but these misunderstandings are obvious to the observer. The ironic, and iconic, Speights’ advertisement previously discussed in chapter four, is an easily readable example of this dark irony. The beer advertisement features the iconic Southern Man who is a personification of such stereotypical Pākehā characteristics as a laconic style of expression, self-reliance and fear of emotional involvement. The original version of “She’s a hard road to find…” ended with “the perfect woman”. The irony in this scenario is that the pursuit of the “perfect woman” had just been abandoned in favour of beer. The phrase has now been absorbed into the vernacular, with any ending that the speaker chooses, and indicates an ability to be aware of and to laugh at folly. Viewers for these advertisements laugh, not because the characters and situations are so far-fetched as to seem unbelievable but, rather, because they are close enough to reality to be seen as portraying a heightened version of the real. Interestingly, John Bluck proposes the idea that this ironic self-deprecation at the heart of Pākehā culture “may prove to be a hidden treasure and the most durable of all our cultural assets” (2001 22-23), suggesting in that comment that a self-aware sense of human relativity could prove to be a long lasting personal and cultural survival strategy.

**Bitter Calm dramatic irony**

A contrast between the characters’ hopes and aspirations, and the audience’s knowledge of the outcome of events, the fundamental structure of dramatic irony, underpins the form of *Bitter Calm*. The distance between expectations and outcomes is reinforced by the double temporal structure of the work. Stuart Hoar and Chris Blake took the story of a murder on Motuarohia Island 20 and refashioned it to throw the

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20 Motuarohia (or Roberton) Island gained its European name after one notable collapse of interracial relations in November 1841. Maketu Wharetotara, the 17-year-old son of the Nga Puhi chief Ruhe of Waimate went on a vicious killing spree, slaughtering five people, including a woman and three children, with an axe. In a celebrated and precarious case, Maketu’s was the first legal hanging in New Zealand and the island adopted the name of the widow and mother he killed, Mrs. Roberton. [www.travography.com/blog/2007/06/bays-at-leisure.html](http://www.travography.com/blog/2007/06/bays-at-leisure.html) accessed 16/07/08
concerns of late twentieth century Aotearoa/New Zealand into focus. *Bitter Calm* was written during the 1970s and 80s and while the story of *Bitter Calm* depicts events in the lives of the settlers in the Bay of Islands in the North Island of Aotearoa/New Zealand in 1841, it is not an historical documentary. The opera carries the social concerns of the late twentieth century, in both its music and performance texts. The music of the opera is not the substance of this analysis, but it is important to note that it is deliberately twentieth century in structure, and makes no use either of settler music or Māori music of the 1840s, nor is it based on the nineteenth century concert hall mode of Romanticism. The composer of *Bitter Calm*, Chris Blake says:

> I studied Stockhausen, Messian and so they were the sounds. They weren’t the sounds of waiata, haka or ritual sounds of Māori. […] I didn’t want to antique the opera musically […] I wanted to use the sounds that were available to me in a large modern orchestra

(Blake 2005)

By choosing a mid-twentieth century orchestral soundscape, with a limited interpenetration of local sound – a log drum, and vocalisations from the Māori chorus - the music of the opera adds to the sense of dissonance between the world of the story, and the world of the audience. The vocalisations, which are spoken not sung or chanted, are unscripted and have varied subtly between performances. If the work were to be produced again in its original form, any response from Māori would still be improvised. Though there was no intention to create a hierarchy of importance in the soundscape, Chris Blake is at pains to stress that, as Pākehā, neither he nor Stuart Hoar felt qualified to write about things Māori. However, the fact that the Māori voice has to sneak into the opera implicitly underscores the loss of primacy for the tāngāta whenua.

While the music is based on the twentieth century music of Europe, the story is rooted in Aotearoa, creating various artistic tensions. The cultural experiences of the audience would be largely Pākehā; as an audience at an opera they could/would have expectations of twentieth century music. The actual music of the opera hides an absence, the speculation about what music in Aotearoa/New Zealand would have sounded like in 1841.

The story of Roberton Island has its basis in fact, but writer Stuart Hoar and composer Chris Blake changed the emphasis and focused on the interplays between
revealed and concealed knowledge. This structural change provoked some criticism from those who would have liked the story to remain true to history (see critical reviews in the appendices). The killing spree of Maketu becomes three separate deaths which heighten the ‘tragic’ and destructive relations between the characters, and allows for the maintenance of an on-going tension within the work. The ages of all the characters are altered, creating the opportunities for a love interest, and the relationship between Maketu and the family are changed. Maketu becomes Matiu, and Catherine has no siblings except Matiu himself, her half-brother. The three deaths are carefully plotted to occur at the beginning of the work, the halfway point of the opera and at the final climax. Those who die during the course of the opera are: the older male lead, John Roberton, the young heroine, his daughter Catherine, and Thomas Bull, who is the villain in the story. The ultimate fate of the young male lead Matiu is suggested at the end of the opera. The only survivor from the family is Elizabeth Roberton who faces a future without all that she has lived and worked for.

Irony in characterisation

The accidental drowning of John Roberton early in the first act enables him to return to the stage as a ghost. Symbolically, as this drowned ghost figure, he is synonymous with the land he has made his own. In his death he is literally absorbed by it, drowned in the sea and eaten by fishes. Performatively, the ghost of John Roberton as an absence made present, is deeply ironical. He can be seen only by Matiu and the audience and is ‘actually’ absent to all the other characters. In his ghost role, he is able to point out the contradictions and mistakes that are occurring, but is unable to be seen or heard by anyone except his son Matiu, who has matakite (second sight). Matiu has experienced John Roberton as being like a father, but Matiu does not know that John Roberton is indeed his biological father. In keeping with Māori fear of atua (the ghost or ancestor with ongoing influence) and also with a theatrical expectation about ghosts, Matiu refuses to listen. Because Matiu will not act on the ghostly advice both characters are place in an ironic vice of inaction. As an outsider now himself, it is significant that John Roberton can be seen only by the other outsider – the person who can never be fully present in the lives of the family – his son Matiu. Matiu may belong by birth in the Roberton family but he is alienated by his skin colour and his culture. John Roberton, the only one who knows the ‘truth’, is powerless to speak it to the community, so effectively his voice too is silent.
## Performance Text

Roberton  Matiu the sea returns me, only you can hear me, listen to me.

Matiu  No, no I can’t hear you, you don’t exist.

Roberton  I don’t exist yet you hear me, listen to me.

Matiu  No you do not exist, I will not hear you

Roberton  Leave, leave and run, leave his island, go back to your people. Leave this place, leave this place, leave this place.

Matiu  You don’t exist, you are dead.

Roberton  The sea returns me to land to speak to be heard by you.

Matiu  No no no.

Roberton  Leave this land leave this island, go back to your people, leave this place.

*Matiu repeats through above*  No. You don’t exist.

(Hoar 1994; Blake 1994)

## Performance Action

Matiu slowly looks around the bush. Suddenly the apparition of John Roberton again appears in projection on the back screen. Matiu sees the ‘ghost’. John Roberton advances towards Matiu holding out his hand. He walks past Matiu. Matiu turns to run away but John Roberton follows him. Matiu backs into the far left hand corner upstage. John Roberton walks toward Matiu in this duet then away from him and off stage.

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Though the most obvious reason for Matiu’s ability to see his father’s ghost would be that he has *matakite*, within the world of the opera the unacknowledged blood relationship and the love bond between John Roberton and Matiu would cause this manifestation. The appearance of the ghost heightens dramatic tension and allows the
complications of the plot to succeed. There is a wrong that needs putting to rights. John Roberton failed to publicly acknowledge Matiu as his son for reasons that are not clear, but it can be assumed that he remains unacknowledged because, though he is completely accepted by his iwi as the son of a Māori mother and a settler father, he would not be accepted as his father’s legitimate heir by the settlers. John Roberton may have been protecting Matiu from stigmatisation; however this failure now puts his whole family at risk. His death has altered the power balance. The local iwi want their land back. The trouble might have been averted if John Roberton had acknowledged Matiu. A modern audience would be likely to know of the permeable boundary of Māori kin groups. The permeable nature of this boundary means and that if Matiu had received the status as owner of the farm, through both his settler and his Māori connections, Elizabeth and Catherine would have come under the mantle of his mana. The understanding of the power of this connection is not available to the settler culture as depicted in Bitter Calm.

John Roberton’s ghost strives to prevent Elizabeth from revealing what she knows about Matiu to Catherine, for reasons that are also not clear but perhaps out of concern for both his children, and a fear of upsetting the balance in the community. He is ineffectual for Elizabeth can neither see nor hear him. It is Elizabeth’s crucial failure of perception, both in her in ability to be aware of the ghost of her husband and in her discrimination against Matiu and the other Māori, that enables the audience’s desire for a happy ending to be denied. The dramatic irony in this is that Matiu, as her husband’s son, is a link with the land and its people, and in this position a tie to the local iwi that could offer Elizabeth protection. A New Zealand audience is likely to understand the importance of affiliation to the local iwi. Elizabeth refuses to accept the reality of the land and her need to have a relationship with its people. Her comparison of Scotland to Aotearoa is also ironic. She thinks of Scotland as a ‘civilised’ place as opposed to the wildness of the New Zealand bush and the ‘primitiveness’ of the Māori. It is true that Scotland was a centre of learning in the eighteenth century, but it was also one of the areas of Great Britain which was perceived as wild and romantic, attributes which were also applied to the Pacific, – a fact that could also resonate with a local audience. The sodden temperate rain forest is the reality of the Pacific to which Elizabeth has come, and its difficulties are only too clearly presented in the representation of the damp bush on the stage. It is not a Pacific of palm trees and balmy days, but a dark and often
forbidding place. The resonances between Scotland and the reality of this Pacific suggest to the audience that wild Scotland, with its own harsh climate, may be an equally difficult place in which to live, and its mention may caution against exotic dreams. The longing for what was, compared to acceptance of what is, is accentuated by the undertone in the script, which suggests that it may never be possible to truly go ‘home’ again. In 1841 the journey is physically long, arduous and expensive. Psychologically, any journey back will carry the traces of time spent in Aotearoa, and these perceptions will alter the perceptions of the land of origin. Elizabeth is the representation of the immigrant who is caught between two worlds and it is she who gives voice to the reality that, for the settlers, home becomes not the place from which they have come, but rather the place “where you die” (Blake 1994; Hoar 1994).

Matiu’s dramatic role is as the lover of Catherine. He is the hero and so set against the manic malevolence of Thomas Bull the farm hand. Thomas Bull murders Catherine, by this act representing the evil lurking in the community. Matiu is also the representative of change. At the beginning of the opera he appears as a person who has been favoured, though not acknowledged, by John Robertson, and as a person of some standing in his own community. Able to negotiate the difficult situation which has arisen over the ownership of the land, Matiu initially brings about peace, if not satisfaction, to both parties. However, as the son of a Māori mother and a Pākehā father, Matiu is the embodiment of cultural contradictions. Though initially he assists Elizabeth and Catherine to hold onto their farm, rejecting Catherine’s complaint that he has betrayed his own people with the words, “This is my culture now” (Hoar 1994) and aligning himself with the settlers and with Catherine, they will never accept him as one of their own.

As the script later reveals, in the words “This is my culture now,” Matiu speaks more truth than even he knows, for his bloodline holds him between two worlds. Through history and his bloodlines Matiu is aligned with Pākehā culture, and his fate is inextricably tied up with the fate of the settlers. Of all the characters, Matiu is the most aware of the gap between what actually is, and what appears to be, and of his precarious position between the two worlds, Māori and settler. Unlike either the iwi or the settlers, he is aware of the need for change but, when Catherine rejects him, he spurns all Pākehā, saying “To trust the Pākehā is to trust nothing.” Though he has abandoned his iwi for the world of the settlers, in the end that change, which saw him
rejecting half his birth right, is worthless. In keeping with this sense that a completely honourable society is an illusion, Matiu presents justice as a variable idea, which depends on the culture. He declaims in act three when he is faced with the accusation that he has killed Catherine.

For Matiu, true justice is contained in Māori customary law, which demanded utu for wrongs done. The person offended had the right to carry out that utu (Baragwanath 2001). When Matiu acts to execute Thomas Bull, he is acting correctly according to Māori judicial code. However, even in though this action is correct for Matiu’s Māori side, there is a dissonance because, as Matiu had been living with John Robertson since he was a boy, he would also have understood about Pākehā law. The local audience are likely to be aware of the tensions between the two legal codes. Matiu’s actions are not entirely naïve; he sets himself against the settlers by killing Thomas Bull. In creating a character that does not belong in either world, the opera is raising questions about what the bicultural nature of Aotearoa/New Zealand might be.

Matiu is cleft in his role as a representative of aspects of society, and also in the personal, individual, aspect of his character. He is characterised as a virtuous just man and initially chooses to be blind to the danger that Thomas Bull represents to him, trusting in his own superior strength and his moral and social advantages. When after John Robertson’s death he realises the danger, the two men are pitted against one another, in what literally becomes a struggle to the death, Matiu kills Thomas Bull. However this is his doom. Beyond the script of the opera, Matiu may be hanged for murder – an outcome which is not shown onstage. The opera finishes with John Robertson’s ghost suggesting to the audience that the struggle between Matiu and

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21 Utu is often understood to mean revenge for wrongdoing. However, the term has a much wider and richer meaning. [...] as Metge puts it: ‘utu’ refers to the return of whatever is received: the return of ‘good’ gifts (taonga and services) for good gifts, and the return of ‘bad’ gifts (insults, injuries, wrongs) for bad gifts. (Baragwanath 2001 38)
Thomas Bull will be fatal for Matiu and the whole community. John Roberton’s final words, which end the opera, are:

Roberton  Matiu, Matiu, Matiu

    Bitter calm. Bitter silence no wind, no wave, no sound.
    Just the calm and bitter silence. There is nothing I can
do.

(Hoar 1994)

The audience for Bitter Calm knew the end of the story, and however much the opera offered glimpses of an alternative solution, the audience was aware that the characters were essentially doomed. This created an ironical tension in the audience itself as the opera stirred empathetic feelings, pleasure in love, hope for good relations between the iwi and the settlers, and a hope that the murders might not happen. These were feelings which must be thwarted, because the historical events had a murderous outcome and the story did not deviate from its tragic ending. In a way, the historical restriction is more complex for an audience than simply knowing the plot of a work that is entirely fictional. As Bitter Calm is based on events that are grounded in the past history of Aotearoa/New Zealand, the irony is present in the existence of the two realities, both fatal in their outcome. One of these is manipulated by the structure of the opera to offer moments of hope to the audience, which are then snatched away. The toying with alternative possibilities reinforces the tension between what was, and what could have been.

Bitter Calm considers love, jealousy, blood ties and race relations. It presents the audience with a story whose ending is known and asks them to consider the implications of the events. By exposing racial discrimination on the stage, Stuart Hoar and Chris Blake are not just establishing one of the dramatic conflicts of the opera, they are also exposing current tensions that underlie twentieth century Aotearoa/New Zealand. This exposure requires the audience to confront their own position on race relations. The audience is privy to John Roberton’s and Thomas Bull’s inner thoughts – a form of revelation which creates yet another tension. Knowing what the characters are
thinking makes the work relentless in its refusal to allow the audience to lapse into anything more comfortable than a flickering moment of hope. The opera never allows the audience the relief of laughter. As Bert O. States puts it, while watching any performance it seems that the audience live a second life (1985 152). In the original production of *Bitter Calm* in the St James Theatre in Wellington several filmed modern dress scenes were inserted into the live performance. Those additions emphasised gap between the *then* and the *now*, allowing the audience to make the transition between the two states, and to contemplate the ironies inherent in the implied question, ‘so what has changed,’ are Pākehā attitudes different from the settler attitude of 1841?

**Mockery**

In contrast to the dark dramatic irony of *Bitter Calm*, the work of Andrew London of the jazz/rhythm and blues group *Hot Club Sandwich* presents an affectionate but well-defined mockery of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century middle-class Pākehā existence. Inserted into their repertoire of jazz standard pieces, Andrew London’s songs take a sly and ironic look at what it means to be a contemporary middle-class Pākehā. Within the performance Andrew London, as actor in his mini dramas built on the foibles of middle-class Pākehā culture, plays the licensed fool. He is freed by his position to poke fun at, and also to castigate his masters, who in this case are the audience. The mockery of these songs depends on the audience recognising that they are the ones being satirised. Andrew London often employs direct address to the audience, suggesting that while they enjoy listening to his stories, he knows that they know that he is making them laugh at themselves. This mockery takes the audience with it and the irony is contained in the understanding that the audience, as an audience, is standing outside itself, recognising and laughing at the aspects of its culture which are being satirised. The constructed performance persona is different from, but not separate from, the person of Andrew London. Like the actors in *Bitter Calm* and *Home Land* and the dancers in *Fishnet* Andrew London is playing a part, in that through his singing persona of the social commentator he is the “kind of story teller whose speciality is that he is the story he is telling” (States 1985 123). It is the persona that the audience experience and whom they expect to see. This acknowledgement of the distinction enables them to participate in and enjoy, being mocked without feeling personally affronted. The targets of his satire are middle-class obsessions, the attributes
of material prosperity: houses, cars, clothes, and the petty angst of conventional middle-class relationships.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>She’s never happy with her makeup,</th>
<th>The song ‘New Friends’ satirises the conscious consumerism of the 21st century, through observing a female fashion victim.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>She’s never happy with her hair</td>
<td>(London 2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She’s got a room or two devoted to Versace</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But she doesn’t have a thing to wear.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(London 2005)</td>
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Though Andrew London’s approach is an affectionate assessment of his culture, and his songs are little more than pinpricks in the skin of middle-class comfort, this does not stop him putting a barb in the tail of his songs. His particular approach is to select a subject of topical interest and exploit it and, though there is nothing bitter or sardonic about his work, his songs nevertheless are grounded in the Pākehā cultural imperative not to take ourselves too seriously. By maintaining an ironic detachment rather than employing the technique of emotive involvement, Andrew London encourages his audience to reflect on the issues in the songs as they enjoy his performance. He says of his work that it “must appeal by its nature to people like me, [...] middle-class white Pākehā people I guess. I just write from my experience and I guess people with a similar experience can relate to what I’ve written. I suppose” (London 2005). There is no deeply felt suffering fore-grounded in his work. The pain that could be part of some of the situations he observes is buried beneath amused observations of people and their behaviour. Though the darker tones are there to be extracted, they are kept as subtexts. He says:

I like to have an element of social comment ‘cause I think it’s important [...] if you’re concerned about something then you’re likely to write about it, but at the same time I have to temper it with bita humour

(London 2005).
While the surface of the song ‘Middle Class White Boy Blues’ looks at the difficulties of being a well-fed blues player, it both enshrines and satirises the good life. The propelling idea of the song is the notion of ‘Godzone’ a name New Zealanders give their country. It suggests a land of continuous plenty where life is easy for all. To live in such a place is a Pakeha cultural aspiration. In reality, though the country has provided great opportunity for some, the idea of a ‘Godzone’ has never applied equally to all citizens of Aotearoa/New Zealand. From the earliest days of European settlement the poor did not experience this country as a land of plenty, and Māori might well say they have been completely left out of the equation. Andrew London says, he chose to be ironical about the Blues because, when you delve back into the history of it, and you’re here getting your three square meals a day, and your private school education in the leafy suburbs of Wanganui, it’s hard not to see the comparison between the John Lee Hookers and Robert Johnsons; and even the great white musicians, Blues musicians, the Eric Claptons and the Stevie Ray Vaughans.

(London 2005)

The ironic contrast between the world of the birth of the blues, with its poverty, violence and drug abuse, and the detached, complacent and comfortable life-style of middle-class life, mocks the audience. The storyteller of ‘Middle Class White Boy Blues’ is aware of riding the crest of a wave of affluence that could break, leaving him also without possessions. His list of possessions is not so much a celebration of success as a critique of material culture.

22 God’s Own Country, often abbreviated to Godzone, is a phrase that has been used for more than 120 years by New Zealanders to describe their homeland. […] The earliest recorded use of the phrase was as the title of a poem about New Zealand written by Thomas Bracken sometime in the 1880s. It was published in a book of his poems in 1890, and then again in 1893 in a book containing a selection of his works, entitled Lays and Lyrics: God’s Own Country and Other Poems. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/God's_Own_Country 27/04/07
Hey I got a five bedroom house in Brooklyn
A double garage for the Porsche
Got a weekend bach in Taupo
And a jet-powered motor launch.
(Play some middle class white boy blues chaps)
(London 2005)

In terms of traditional middle-class expectations this is ‘conspicuous consumption’. The fact that the statement is hyperbolic shows that material comfort is not being lauded.

By setting up this list of possessions in a Blues song, Andrew London notes the gap between himself, as storyteller, and the rest of society. The verse concludes with this parody of domestic violence:

Well I woke up late this evening
To find nobody been gone and done me wrong
I had to ask my wife to hit me
Just so as I could write this song
Think I’m gonna lay me down and die
(London 2005)

The audience laugh at the improbability of the events; the second verse has his wife leaving on cue, as in a hyperbolic statement the next event has to be worse than the first, yet beneath the laughter is an uncomfortable acknowledgement that domestic violence is an all-too-real problem even in the middle-class in Aotearoa/New Zealand. (see appendices www.stuff.co.nz/print/4617031a11.html 7/08/08)

As befits a rhythm and blues lineage, several of Andrew London’s songs deal with relationships with women. But these songs are neither traditional romantic ballads,
songs of unrequited love, nor misogynous attacks on the perfidy of women. Andrew London’s love songs deliberately subvert the love song genre to portray women as both unattainable and in charge without rebuking them for their power. Andrew London’s persona in performance of ‘Can’t Stand the Heat’ is of an ineffectual lover. This gives the appearance that the man is not, and will never be in control of this woman, nor will she never ‘be his’ in the manner of the romantic ballad. What he deals with is the engagement of these couples in a dance composed equally of desire and aversion. These love songs suggest compromise rather than a future of ‘happily ever after’. The women in these songs are to be wooed with caution.

The song ‘Appliances’ explores dysfunctional marriage through the scenario of a couple who buy home appliances in order to have something in common. Andrew London takes a mocking swipe at the SNAG (sensitive new age guy) in ‘I Used to Be Your Rooster (But I’m Your Feather Duster Now)’. Its flippant attitude to rejection and its depiction of the man as a passive and doting suitor can be read within a Pākehā context as an ironic contrast to the Southern Man type who is depicted in the song ‘Wake Up’. Here a self-seeking husband of ‘Wake Up’ wakes up his wife for various trivial reasons, in order to avoid household chores, so he is not interrupted while he is watching the rugby game. This coarse self-seeking troglodyte is mocked through hyperbole:

I got to watch the All Blacks for at least another hour,
God I’ll be glad when the rugby season is over,
So I don’t mind if you rest a little longer,
Shift that piano when you feel a little stronger,
After that you can take it easy for the rest of the day.

(London 2005)

The ‘feather duster’ type is on the other hand is mocked with bathos:
Once upon a time I was the man of your dreams
Now I’m just the guy that comes around and cooks and cleans
I used to be your rooster but I’m just your feather duster now.

(London 2005)

The “feather duster” type of man is no more ‘ideal’ than the brute. In depicting the shifting ground between the two extremes, Andrew London is mocking the idea of any simplistic definition of Pākehā masculinity. He says of his work, “I can only write about what I know, and what I know is about Kiwi stuff, and it’s a middle-class Pākehā Kiwi experience.” He adds “I’m really proud to be a Kiwi and I want to write about being a Kiwi” (London 2005 July).

Dramatic and structural irony

The device irony, which is built on the Pākehā characteristic of stoical repression, reveals the strains inherent in a culture where men and women are expected to cover their emotions with laconic responses. In Home Land, Ken is constructed as a character with an ironical and self-deprecating manner, a stance which is typical of the iconic Southern Man. The entrenched stubbornness in Ken and in his daughter Denise is also one of the deep ironies of the play. They have fallen out during Denise’s teenage years, and she has run away from rural Southland to urban Auckland where she has made a success of her life. The shifts of power between Ken and Denise demonstrate a complex interrelationship between the sexes, creating an ironic dissonance between the expectations of love and the reality of its expression. Each craves the other’s affection and recognition but stubborn pride prevents them acknowledging this truth. Ken’s only acknowledged attachment is to the land. His continual refusal to express affection to Denise deprives her of the security that comes from knowing her father loves her, and also deprives him of her love in return. The audience knows that such behaviour is damaging and can predict unsatisfactory outcomes arising from it. The gap between what the audience would like to see, Ken loving and acknowledging Denise, and the ‘truth’ of Ken’s character, a person incapable of expressing what he feels, frustrates the audience’s emotional expectations for closure.
A related cultural irony to the intractability of Ken can be found in the application of the ‘tall poppy syndrome’ to Denise in particular. John Bluck (2001) notes that in New Zealand people are disparaged for being successful, except at sport, and that this “has acted as a brake on ambition and goal-setting” (2001 22). The damaging effect of this cultural imperative is revealed through Ken and Denise’s relationship. When Denise tries to talk about how well she is doing Ken pretends to know nothing about it. Denise’s husband Paul tries to support her but to no effect.

| Denise | The big contract with Telecom. |
| Paul | Saved the company. |
| Denise | Oh, I don’t know about that. |
| [... ]保罗 (to Ken) | She saved the company. |
| Ken | Aw well … |
| Silence | What’s Graeme been up to, Ken? Busy? |
| Paul | Aw, no. Not too busy right now. Mostly feeding out. Bit of fencing. Few other bits and pieces round the place. |

(Henderson 2004 34)

Drawing attention to success is culturally unacceptable. Ken’s response to Denise suggests some personal animosity, and reveals his fear that acknowledging Denise’s achievements outside the familiar community would let in the values of the wider world, disturbing the power structure of the microcosm of the farm. By deliberately ignoring Denise’s achievements, Ken cuts the ‘tall poppy’ down to size. Equally, Denise is unable to see him as a man of his culture and time, and forgive him for being this way. Ken’s line about fencing draws a small laugh as a release of tension, and an acknowledgement of the cultural ‘truth’ of the family. In this way the playwright structurally enhances the point that Denise’s success is not relevant to Ken, and his world. Complaining is equally discouraged. When Sophie asks Ken how he climbed a hillside in the freezing dark, Ken replies “Aw, I know my way round” (Henderson 2004 34).
90). He will not dwell on the difficulties and the effort that it cost him as a frail eighty-year-old man, to get up the hill.

There is another current of cultural irony in *Home Land* which exists between what is said, and the manner in which it is said. The actors deliver their lines according to the cultural nuances that underlie the work, creating the black humour of the script. An example of this play between action and cultural expectation occurs in act one. Ken has fallen over, dragged himself to a chair, and crawled into it in the process accidentally turning on the TV which blares out over the sound of radio, which is also on. His son Graeme comes into the room and asks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graeme</th>
<th>Ya deaf?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ken</td>
<td><em>Ya deaf?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graeme</td>
<td><em>Doesn’t reply.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ken</td>
<td>Eh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graeme</td>
<td>I said a ya deaf?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ken</td>
<td>Aww, I don’t know. Probably.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graeme</td>
<td>Well if you’re not, you soon will be if you have everything going like that.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Henderson 2004 4)

The audience laugh as a response to the tension of seeing Ken fall, and of having that tension relieved by his lack of self-pity, and the throwaway line, “Aww, I don’t know. Probably.” This is not slapstick humour where falls are part of the joke, but an ironic humour where the response is based on the cultural imperative of not taking oneself too seriously. Ken’s response enables the scene to continue in an unemotive fashion. This type of response occurs several times during the play. It underlies Ken’s laconic description of the harm caused to the farm by a great storm when they “Lost most of our lambs. […] Came right after a few years, more or less” (Henderson 2004 34). Later Ken describes the night he spent on the freezing hill as “a wee bit nippy”
(Henderson 2004 90). The appropriate response to that piece of understatement is, in current parlance, “Yeah right.” 23

Ken’s daughter Denise also responds to challenges in a manner which negates difficulty. When her daughter Sophie complains that it’s too cold to go for a walk, Denise responds, “Oh don’t be a sook.” (Henderson 2004 32). These laconic lines all draw laughs from the local audience, because they recognise the deception and admire the characters for taking those stances. The irony for all the characters arises from the tensions between pain and loss of home, love and dignity, and the cultural demand to put on a brave face and ‘get on with it’ no matter what happens. The audience would be aware that in witnessing something that is not trivial being treated in such an off-hand manner they are being confronted by their own attitudes. The irony of the distance between the reality of the experience and its expression in speech is akin to Andrew London’s mockery. However it promotes not the laughter of acknowledgement, but the laughter of embarrassment which occurs because the audience know the lines are lies. In the compact the audience have with the play their sympathy for the characters’ misfortunes is not allowed to build. However the audience experience tension at the characters’ predicaments and obviously untrue responses and their response to the pain and deception is embarrassed laughter.

**Going soft**

There is a consistent aversion to any form of softness in *Home Land*. The softness can be physical weakness, emotional vulnerability, or placing a value on ambitions, occupations and lifestyles that are outside the ideal handed down from the pioneers. Gary Henderson uses Sophie to present Aotearoa/New Zealand’s changing social attitudes. She is characterised as the type of young woman who has strong opinions about how the world should be. Hers is the voice that challenges the rugged Southern Man ideal. Her youth gives her freedom to speak because, within this family, and the wider culture, her adolescence means that others can choose not to take her opinions too seriously. Therefore she can give voice to attitudes which oppose the family culture and traditional values without being silenced. She produces a book with a pink cow on the cover. Ken asks her what it is and she replies, “‘Fifty ways of saying fabulous.’ It’s written by a guy from Central” and explains that it is about “This

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23 This phrase is currently appearing in another advertising campaign for beer, this time Tui. The phrase continues the Speights theme of downplaying by understatement.
homosexual boy growing up on a farm,” Ken is shocked. “Where’d you get a book like that” (Henderson 2005 41). Gary Henderson says “I specified in the text that it has to be that particular volume because its got a pink cow on the cover, and it looks gay” (2007 Interview).

Ken later challenges Sophie’s mother Denise about the book, calling it “Dirty stuff”, and suggesting that Denise should censor her daughter’s reading.

Denise I’m sure Sophie can cope with it. Anyway, it’s for school. It’s a school library book
Ken What’s she gonna learn from this rubbish?
Denise (more to herself) I dunno … tolerance? Respect?
Ken We wouldn’t let you read something like this.

(Henderson 2005 46)
This scene is which is directly challenging, while maintaining a degree of distance is achieved through Gary Henderson’s technique of not taking the dialogue either into the issue of homosexual desire or equality, but allowing it to be framed by a ‘child’, thus leaving the audience to ponder the issues. At sixteen, Sophie could be expected to be forming her own views, and Denise’s comment shows that she expects her daughter to be able to discriminate. For Gary Henderson the dissonance is in “the idea that the old man says its filth, […] and the idea that she got it from her school library” (2007). At the same time the play allows her grandfather to deal with the challenge by dismissing her attitude to homosexuality as naïve. Therefore he does not respond negatively, though hers is an attitude he would not accept from any older member of the family. There is no suggestion that any of the characters in the play is gay, the incident simply touches the issue of prejudice and moves on. Gary Henderson explains that

It [the book] gave rise to a comment where her mother says ‘What’s it about?’ ‘Oh its about a gay guy who lived in Otago.’ ‘Where’s he from?’ ‘Lived in Otago but he lives in Oz now’ and her mother goes ‘Hum wonder why he left?’ […] that’s what I’m trying to do all the way through that play […] pull the triggers that will evoke something for people.

(Henderson 2007 Interview)

Changed attitudes about what is generally acceptable, both on and off the stage, can be gauged from the fact that depictions of homosexuality appear in several recent New Zealand plays. For example, in The Learner’s Stand by David Geary (1995), the character Dawn is both transsexual and Māori, crossing boundaries of both race and sexual orientation. However the scene raises what is still a contentious social issue for some sections of the society of Aotearoa/New Zealand. Again this aversion to difference and softness is ironical because it limits the characters’ personal options. In pointing this out Gary Henderson is reflecting on the wider Pākehā society.

**Staying staunch**

As previously noted, the fundamental irony of Home Land exists in the dramatic structure of resolution denied. Denise wants her father to acknowledge her success, and towards the end of the play she struggles to get him to say that he loves her. Ken is obdurate and refuses to forgive Denise for leaving home. “You buggered off,” is how
he puts it. (Henderson 103). Nothing will change. Throughout the play the situation will not get either worse or better as examples of intractability follow each other. The family situation is tense, and the situation has a bleakness about it that is caused by more than the bad winter weather outside. There is dramatic irony in the dissonance between the plot’s twists and turns and the final outcome for Ken contributing to the overall sense of bleakness. The audience know Ken will have to leave the farm eventually, no matter what alternatives are proposed. In the end, Ken’s final line, “I can do it,” as he walks from his home for the last time, is simply a statement neither brave nor sentimental. The only relief at the end of the play is that it has stopped. With the ending, the ongoing tension of watching the emotional struggles of this family is also over for the audience. There is a coda which brings Sophie and her mother Denise together in mourning the loss of the farm. This is a moment which offers some release for the audience. It shows that the characters have gained some insight into who they are and where they might belong from the weekend’s event. However there is no sure promise of future happiness.

In fact, near the end of the play the ironic gap between desire and outcome is turned on the audience itself. Paul the son-in-law has been berating Graeme for being willing to send his father to a rest home. Paul suggests that, once there, Ken will probably “turn into a vegetable and die.” Graeme challenges Paul to provide a solution and Paul admits he has none. Paul then tries to slide away from the issue by saying that he is “talking about society.” Graeme scorns this response,

Graeme Oh. Society. Well you work on it, Paul, and when you’ve fixed it, sing out. Make a bloody documentary or something. I’ve gotta buy some fence posts.

_Graeme exits to the exterior. The ute roars off._

(Henderson 2004 98)

During this exchange the audience experiences the tension of knowing that if it were possible for each character to say what they were feeling, the result could be different. At the same time the audience knows that if that were to happen they, the audience, would feel cheated of a ‘true’ depiction of some of the underlying values of Pākehā culture.
Irony and a feminist perspective

For feminist phenomenologist Rob Baum (2003 20), the traditional female role in theatre, and in life, has been created as a metaphorical opposite to men. Therefore the female character “has been [...] circumscribed by its relationship to both male roles/identity and social possibilities” (2003 28), so that it is not “woman” who is presented on stage but “woman as man conceives and desires her to be”. Rob Baum thus reveals an ironic absence in the theatre; an irony arising from the fundamental dissonance between what ‘real woman’ is, and the way ‘theatrical woman’ represents her. The two selected works that deal most particularly with the way women are represented on stage are *Fishnet* and *Home Land*. Our language, stock of images and social practice constitute an unconscious dimension of our cultural heritage, writes Moria Gatens (1996 x-xi). Socially, women are viewed only as the complementary aspect of men, a fact which is revealed in social and cultural institutions (ibid.). This has repercussions for women’s political status and participation, and for their legal, ethical and social existence. Such an unconscious heritage can reasonably be expected to appear on the stage in depictions of women. *Home Land* presents the farmers’ daughters, Denise, daughter, and Trish, daughter-in-law, as contrasting female types.

In *Home Land* Trish, who represents the archetype of the solid reliable, emotionally contained woman who ‘sorts things out’, is a complement to the Pākehā male. In the context of a pioneer culture, she is the type of woman who is needed to maintain stability and family unity. Director Hilary Norris says of Trish

> she does her duty enormously. She really cares for him [Ken] but [...] she can’t ruin her own life for the sake of the duty that she’s been doing. Whereas Denise feels it’s her duty to trot down as the old guy is [failing] and stick her oar in, but I’m not sure that she’d be doing an awful lot of duty really.

(Norris 2006)

As a ‘liberated woman’ who has left the farm to make a life for herself, Denise is the antithesis to Trish, and is perhaps closer to the ‘real’ woman Rob Baum seeks to see on the stage. However within the world of the play both women are constrained by their backgrounds. This constraint is particularly explored in the mise-en-scène where a dramatic irony, present in the relationship between Ken, the dominant male, and the women is revealed. The play is set in the part of the farm that is usually the domain of
the women, the farmhouse kitchen. This is an area of food preparation and of eating, yet the entire house, including the kitchen area, is dominated by the presence of Ken. This pushes the women out of the space which, in its classical relationship to the goddesses of the hearth, fire and food is associated with the primordial idea of women, bringing the Southern Man inside to dominate this centre of the house. The possibility for women gaining full control of their lives exists in this play only for the teenage girls, Trish’s daughter Elaine and Denise’s daughter Sophie. Sophie particularly is a metaphor for the new world and the new woman. A sign of her freedom is that she is able to escape the farmhouse to the hayshed at the back of farm, where she finds the farm’s Pākehā history carved on the hayshed’s wooden posts. Her promise of a new future for women is shown in her maturation during the course of the play, “from being a rebellious grumpy young teenager, into somebody who also belonged to the land and belonged to the history and the ownership of that place” (Norris 2006).

Sue Ellen Case, also considering the problem of the way women are portrayed on stage, observes that though the roles women normally play “appear” to conform to the way that women behave off stage, they actually have everything to do with the rules which society imposes on her, and nothing to do with what is “natural” to woman (1998 143). Social conventions about women mean that female performers may be required to act in ways that “exploit the role of woman as sexual object” (ibid.) rather than having any other function. Until the last thirty or so years of the twentieth century, most roles for women have indeed been created by men, so the only roles acceptable for women to play are the roles already permitted women in the off-stage worlds of men (Case 2003 23). Thus writes Rob Baum, on stage “female identity is a reflective surface, the magician’s box containing other women never seen” (2003 20), and ‘real woman’ is an empty intention hidden behind the false figure created by men.

Sue Ellen Case notes that examining performance through a feminist lens would “deconstruct the traditional systems of representation and perception of women” (1998 143), leading to a feminine/feminist representation. The dance theatre work *Fishnet* was created by women specifically for a female audience: “the biggest demographic for theatre audiences in New Zealand is women over forty-five” (Pringle 2005), and interestingly employs the devices of parody and satire. It is built on the social construct that is often used to hide ‘real’ women, their sexuality, in order to conduct an ironic questioning of the social expectations of women. Sue Ellen Case notes that “the
composition of the audience is an element in the co-production of the play’s meaning, [so] the gender of the audience members is crucial in determining what the feminist play might mean” (1998 143). The central question in Fishnet, and the one which underlies Rob Baum’s thesis on the absence of women from the stage, is what is a woman? Judith Butler, referring to Simone De Beauvoir, stresses that socially “to be female, […] is to have become a woman, to compel the body to conform to an historical idea of “woman,” ” (1997 405).

**Confronting convention –parody in a feminist mode**

Antonin Artaud writes that, when theatre does not keep its sense of humour, it becomes moribund (1958 42). He states that theatre needs a sense of humour to stay alive, both to remain playful and to be dangerous. In choosing to be satirical rather than confrontational in their challenge to societal norms, Lyne Pringle and Kilda Northcott are using a mode of witty banter that, according to Rob Baum, has been favoured by women because their access to a public voice has been historically denied. “[I]t seems that the comic mode is the easiest way to get the message ‘across’ the barrier of silence and suppression” (Baum 2003 23). Mary Russo writes of women deliberately misbehaving and thus “making a spectacle out of themselves” (1997 318), and the work Fishnet set out to present such a spectacle, achieving its local ethos through a broadly-based parody of cultural expectations about who women are, and how they should behave. In keeping with Antonin Artaud’s (1958) charge to be both humorous and dangerous, Fishnet explores danger playfully. The press release reads: “Psst!! Wanna see some sexy chicks in their Fishnets […] roll on up for a slow Strip […] Tease down to the underbelly of the mature dancing body” Pringle 2006). Writing in the Capital Times on September 7th 2005, dance reviewer Deirdre Tarrant described the work as, “[a]t times hilarious – at times deeply moving – Fishnet is a rapturous exploration of the expressive body by two of New Zealand’s celebrated senior contemporary dancers” (2005).

Through putting two sexually provocative older female dancers on stage Fishnet challenges the traditional expectations and representations of women that are, as Gayle Austin notes, “taken for granted” (1998 136). It asks what it means to be an active, energetic and still sexual/sensual middle-aged woman, 24 in Aotearoa/New Zealand at

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24 A difficult age to define exactly but spanning the years forty to sixty-five approximately
the beginning of the twenty-first century. Choreographer Lyne Pringle asks, “how do middle-aged people express their sexuality? We don’t. [...] It’s one of the things we have in our culture. We don’t have a sexual kind of way to be.” (2005). *Fishnet* is modern, urban and feminist. Stylistically montage in form, *Fishnet* deals with its issues through a series of impressions. It is not a work of plotted scenes or storylines but, as a work in the abstract medium of Contemporary Dance Theatre, its messages about society are often implied in the juxtapositions of movements and words, though, this said, some sections of the work are linear and explicit. It is Pākehā in its use of modern Western dance forms interwoven with local motifs and iconography. It employs a recognisably Pākehā mode of communication in its use of parodic irony. It seeks to interrogate the visibility of middle-aged women and explore women’s power, the heritage of women’s learning and female strength and adaptability.

The rigid code of prescribed female behaviour has its origins in the codes the settlers brought with them. As Charlotte Macdonald writes, through most of the pioneer period, settler communities “were highly critical of the kinds of women they welcomed as settlers and the behaviour and demeanour of those who landed in their midst” (1990 190). It is an attitude towards women which persists even into the twenty-first century. There is a group of New Zealand plays, those of Roger Hall and Alison Quigan for example, which deal with the lives of the ‘solid middle-class’- that group which, at least outwardly, adheres to conventional ways of behaving. Though the work challenges the conventional ‘norms’ of middle-aged female behaviour, the depiction of Pākehā women within this is framed within, and limited by, the constrictions which beset the depiction of women throughout Western theatre. The deviancy of *Fishnet*, which is concerned with foregrounding unconscious social and theatrical conceptions of women, must be set against this background of social and theatrical expectations that middle-aged women will behave in conventional if not ‘straight-laced’ ways.

*Fishnet* begins with the presentation of a tongue-tied goddess and progresses through practical, homely and sexual incarnations of women, to the finale of the shamanists’ articulation of primitive female energy. The work touches many areas of female life, from the dividing cells of the foetus in utero, through the sophisticated woman, embodied as a foreign lecturer, to woman as te whaea (mother), shaman, and crone. In this final manifestation woman is presented as timeless and wise. In displaying this “underbelly of the mature dancing body”, the work reveals the
underbelly of the role assigned to women in Pākehā society. In all these articulations Fishnet offers a challenge to the accepted role of women in society, concerning itself with woman being misunderstood, misrepresented, and uncomprehended. Kilda Northcott says that fundamentally the work is about self-acceptance, “it’s all right, I can be like am, and I can be who I am. I don’t have to be anything else. […] I am an intelligent woman, I do have something to say” (2007).

In Aotearoa/New Zealand, there are some generalised social images which display the attributes deemed typical of the Pākehā female, and these can be found, for example, in the cartoons of Neville Lodge or Murray Ball (see appendices). Interestingly there are some characteristics in those works which the Pākehā female shares with her male counterpart, particularly the traits of resourcefulness and tough behaviour. Focusing on the Aunt Dolly character of Footrot Flats, Bev James and Kay Saville-Smith observe that “she imposes a feminine order on the masculine disorder” (James and Saville-Smith 1989 8). In this she is like the formidable Nana of Home Land. Though these qualities are generally admired, there is also a comparison, articulated or not, with other ideas about what woman should be, ideas of softness and muteness. Yet the strong aspect of woman is as authentic as the receptive aspect, but because of a general prejudice against the strong aspect of woman’s nature, presenting women as strong and powerful and yet showing them clearly as ‘real’ women has long been a problem for the stage. Rob Baum suggests that historically whenever strong women have appeared on stage they have been perceived as being “imbued with a masculine dimension that was to overshadow their female presence” (Baum 2003 157).
Jill Dolan notes that a feminist agenda is a site of difference which enables “a
critique of prevailing social conditions that formulate women’s positions as outside of
dominant male discourse” (1998 3). The dancers of Fishnet present women as
incongruous, outrageous, and explicitly sexual, playing with images of the split female
image, the vamp and cross-dressing, inverting what Rob Baum (2003 19-20), describes
as an essentially masculine pleasure, the sight of the cross dressed female body to a
feminist use. The dancers are obviously flirtatious and provocatively dressed, even
though they are middle-aged, making the way women are perceived as sexual objects
more explicit, and challenging assumptions about what middle-aged women should be,
by openly displaying actions of ‘deviancy’ which confront the accepted and acceptable
image of submissive sexuality.

![Figure 3 Lyne as man on a ‘lonely street’. From video - permission John Irwin.](image)

A section which specifically uses cross dressing to critique the image of woman
as sex object and ‘femme fatale’ is the section which replicated images which could
have come from classic Film Noir. This was a film genre which played with received
conventional notions of sexuality by pushing the meaning of sexuality into darker areas
concerned with danger and death. The atmospheric saxophone music, an important part
of the iconography of Film Noir, aurally evokes the idea of a forties thriller film. Lyne
Pringle enters the stage dressed to ‘play’ a man, thus satirically espousing a male role,
and Kilda Northcott enters dressed to ‘play’ the ‘femme fatale’. The scene involves
many of the clichés from Film Noir such as the saxophone player performing above the
empty street, the top-hatted (wo)man walking alone in search of a meaning to life, and the vamp in fishnet stockings and ultra-high heels. The low but strongly contrasted lighting and the open ‘upstairs’ window (an important position on a Film Noir set) create the filmic mise-en-scène. These images still resonate as models of male and female power. Stan Krutnik explores the image of ‘the lonely street’ as a metaphor for tough men and ‘femmes fatale’ noting that:

Generally in the 1940’s ‘tough’ thriller, women are excluded from any position of power within economic, social and legal institutions. [...] Women are generally represented as inherently dangerous and contaminating, unless they are domestic, [...] Male criminal figures [...] pose a far less drastic threat in comparison with the erotic femme fatale who has far less at stake in maintaining the patriarchal order.

(1991 139-140)

The parodic film iconography is both reinforced and reflected upon by a film clip of a disembodied leg in fishnet stockings and strappy high-heeled shoes. This is an iconic, fetishised, re-membered image of the ‘femme fatale’. Such parody then makes the dancers the key players in control of the space and the situation (unlike the ‘femme fatale’ who was usually disposed of by the end of film). The juxtaposition of the iconic ‘masculine lonely street detective’ and the fetishised female leg reinforces the dancer’s parody of conventional ideas about women’s roles and sexuality.

Figure 4 Projection of leg in fishnet stocking. From video - permission John Irwin.

Film Noir exists only as a film genre and its depiction of ‘real life’ is highly mannered. Commenting parodically on the emptiness of the conventional female life and the flimsy constructions of shocking women on the screen and the stage, this burlesque revisiting of the danger of the ‘femme fatale’ and the ‘lonely street’
The camera is particularly associated with the idea of forbidden viewing. In the ‘sexy chicks’ video the dancers also appear as projected images - burlesque chorus girls or strippers - a form of entertainment traditionally controlled by men. In both these projected sections the dancers provide a moment of recognisable screen pleasure and then retract it by cutting between the screen and the ‘real’ action present on the stage.

Performing in front of their projected conventionally sexy images undercuts the power of the images. Martin Jay (1993 116-117) notes that the static eye of the camera reduced the reality of three dimensional bodies to a flat manipulated and manipulable image, which in film is consumed by the viewer in a type of psychological cannibalism. Gaylyn Studlar suggests that the connotations of forbidden activity are what make film particularly pleasurable, because film has an ability to insinuate that it could slip “from harmless publicly sanctioned escapism into the realm of forbidden pleasure, of pure, unbridled sexual looking” (1992 1). The static eye of the film allows a closeness to images that cannot be created by a viewing on the stage.

By controlling the relationship between themselves as live female bodies and the film clip, the dancers control the reception of the image by the audience. Through the exposition of filmic convention the dancers play with conventional notions of sex, sexiness and sexuality, and question what is ‘suitable’ for women. The involvement of the audience in this ironic filmic reconstruction is a crucial and an essential difference between the pleasure of film and that of the theatre. In the theatre, because the audience
is participating in the work, they cannot remain passive spectators. The projected satirical critique of the burlesque conventions in the ‘sexy chicks’ section is followed immediately by a live strip-tease show, which the dancers subvert through a parody (Russo 1997). The abrupt movement of the action away from the screen image to the live action draws the audience’s attention away from the defined elements of the screen fetish, where the female is the passive object of the shot, to an active engagement with the dancers. This female perspective undercuts the titillating imagery, making it a reflective comment on the conventional exploitation of sexuality. It affirms women’s right to present the female body, which conventionally is hidden away, except when used by men in burlesque. Subverting the masculine perspective, this blatant striptease questions the ideas about who owns female sexuality and about the nature of sexuality itself. It raises questions about what is sexy, the arse, the face, the body, and why do women need to be sexy? If women choose deliberately to accentuate their sexuality, do they own their own sexuality? Can this sexuality be free from patriarchal restraint? Can sexuality and morality be categorised on the basis of display?

Figure 6 Kilda at the start of the vulva dance. From video - permission John Irwin.

Questioning the assumption that middle-aged women have ‘disappeared’ because they have no sex appeal is a primary enquiry in *Fishnet*. Though the striptease-like Vulva Dance exposes the dancers’ vulnerabilities by presenting themselves as sexual middle-aged women when society does not accept the sexuality of women of their age, its bold execution makes it the statement of a woman powerfully in charge of her own sexuality.
It seems to me that you get to a certain age and [...] you’re not quite right if you put that out there. But the fact is, we don’t stop being sexual, do we? [...] we’ve deliberately branded ourselves in that provocative sexy way, asking the big questions like “Well is this sexy?” I mean we know damn well it’s sexy but society doesn’t really say, [...] you’re only beautiful and sexy if you’re up to about, especially for women, thirty-five, and then after that? [...] So we’re playing with that definitely, and enjoying it immensely. (laugh) And our audiences are enjoying it immensely as well yeah (laugh). (Pringle 2005)

The work is set against a general Pākehā morality which states that it is not considered seemly for women to present themselves as powerful and sexual. Older women do not, can not, and should not flaunt themselves on the stage. Fishnet questions the nature of scopic economy and the control of the gaze. It maintains that the manifestation of desire displays true female sexuality, and that its repression contributes to a sense that women have of being separated from themselves.

Jill Dolan writes that those who investigate sexuality and desire on stage run the risk of being considered obscene, of being aligned with pornographers because of the male desire to control the desire of women, but desire is not “necessarily a fixed, male-owned commodity” (1998 80). It belongs equally to women and to men. The minuet section of the work trades on the idea of subdued undifferentiated desire. The controlled baroque dance covers the current of female sexual energy which still exists underneath the formal choreography.
It’s the man worshiping the woman […] it’s a very flirty dance the minuet. There’s eye contact and so there was an element of flirtation, titillation, romance, support […] and then the tantric [female appeared] lots of legs lots of arms coming out from behind the [screen and then] the very earthy witch bitch woman that came out of that subduedness.
Luce Irigaray suggests that the scopic economy which is foreign to women has reduced women from active partner to a “beautiful object of contemplation” (1997 250). By freely presenting themselves as sexually vibrant middle-aged women, the dancers are questioning the very idea of an economy that is built on looking at women. Luce Irigaray notes that while the scopic economy demands that woman be both alluring and reserved, the classical woman is actually constructed from an absence because, “her sexual organ represents the horror of nothing to see. [...] It is already evident in Greek statuary that [...] Women’s genitals are simply absent, masked, sewn back up inside their “crack”” (Irigaray 1997 250). Represented as simply a lack, women become reduced to nothing. The nothingness of women in Greek statuary is very different from representations available in Aotearoa/New Zealand. In Māori, carvings of tekoteko whakapakoko, (ancestor figures), the genitals of women and men are clearly displayed and in this world the classical site of absence is redefined as the seat of power. Lyne Pringle, turning the idea of this particular form of invisibility on its head, maintains that indeed, “there is a crack, a crack where the light gets in” (2004). Fishnet proposes that this crack in the dark is the unused power of women.

Two–faced women

The idea that women are divided from themselves is an important idea in Fishnet. In order to embody this sense of division, the dancers theatrically mirror the Western notion of duality through playing both the strong and the weak, the vulnerable and confident aspects of one person, appearing together on the stage as two lecturers, two energies, even as two lovers. Through this device of splitting, as the vocal and the silenced, the dancing, and the danced bodies of women, they attack the Cartesian dualities of speech and silence, visibility and invisibility, presence and absence, fame and obscurity, comprehensibility and incomprehensibility, acceptability and unacceptability, graceful and dis-graceful performance. The Janus-like construction of the dance is designed to manifest an essential problem that women face, that of being unable to present their true selves to the world, a problem related to the suppression of their true sexuality. Each dancer constitutes the other, within the framework of this theatrical performance, as each is both herself and one half of one whole. “Even though at times we’re very much two different people that are on the stage, it’s also about being one person, one woman” (Northcott 2007). In this way, the divided structure of
the performance also questions whether dancers and audience are contained each within
the other, as yet another set of two halves of one whole.

Figure 9 Lyne lectures confidently while Kilda cowers in her plinth. From video - permission John
Irwin.
However, when Kilda emerges from the plinth, she too lectures forcefully about invisibility and visibility revealing that the forceful Lyne is merely another aspect of herself. Simultaneously the image of the two in one references the folk story figure of the tricky twin where each twin may possess a different persona, as do Lyne and Kilda, and fool those who cannot tell them apart, or each member of the twins may alternate personae at will. This tricky twin references shape-changing earth spirits, like Puck, who play tricks on humanity. These mirrored representations are a concrete expression of the duality of women’s experience, says Lyne Pringle: “Constantly as an artist there’s this puzzle to figure out what exactly we are, what we’re experiencing. […] it’s like an intuition and this work feels like it’s coming out of that sort of intuition” (2005).

The meta question of Fishnet is: what are the social ideas that keep women confined? The work explores this sense of confinement by examining the concept of ‘the frame’. The audience laugh, suggesting that they know the implications of the questions surrounding invisibility. The scenario asks questions about the limitations of social framing. Is it possible to capture any one person, any one woman within the mannered space of the frame? Within which frame are these women themselves framed? Are both the audience and the dancers spect-actors (Boal 1995 13)? Who is looking at this frame - is it the audience, the performers, the wider world? Is it particularly the world of men with their way of looking at and seeing or not seeing older women? What are men seeing when they look? What do the audience see? The investigation of incarceration within multiple frames is concretised as Kilda Northcott assumes the persona of a foreign expert. She adopts an ‘exotic’ accent and begins with the statement that,
the body is er captured er framed er by the er extremities, margins, marginality, the borders, borderline in its boundaries, the liminality of the space.

As Kilda stands in the frame of the flat accentuated by the spotlight upon her she continues

I move away, I move far away, now I return and I er I put myself back in the picture. Well no I always try to put myself back in the picture. Voila and what is one grey hairbreadth of time I am voila invisible [angrily] fantastic no. [laugh] And here I am visible, no? And here again I am invisible, completely, incredibly invisible. Fantastic now how is it possible? Don’t ask me. [emphasis added]

(Northcott 2004)

Lyne Pringle says the questions about appearing and disappearing within the frame have to do with the “sense of becoming an older woman and this sense of disappearing, as an older woman that you, you no longer have a validity or a place” (2005). Bert O. States suggests that the drama must bring to the stage “things outside it and to make visible things that are invisible” (States 1985 48). The notion of the disappearance of older women is itself invisible, as it is not commented on by society and is symbolised by Kilda moving in and out of the ‘frame’ of the lit area she speaks. Though she moves out of the light, she does not disappear from the stage but is lit only by the spill from the spotlight, a reflection of her reduced status in society. Lyne Pringle voices the implied question of that section when she asks,
“Where do you go? (laugh) ‘cause our experience is that we don’t disappear there’s this incredible beauty, incredible sexuality that’s just gorgeous, but how often do we get to see that?”

(Pringle 2005)

Suppressed speech and the comic challenge

It is not only woman’s visual representation that is repressed, her words are also gagged. Luce Irigaray writes that women’s speech is “flowing, fluctuating. Blurring” (1985 113), comprehensible to women, but frustrating to men because it is not logical, not easily comprehended, and so not to be taken seriously. She suggests that women need a language related to the female body, otherwise “[w]e shall […] leave our desires unexpressed, unrealised. […] we shall fall back upon the words of men - […] we shall remain paralysed. Deprived of our movements” (Irigaray 1985 214).

The stifling of women’s voices is a major theme in Fishnet. The initial ‘character’ is tongue-tied. The dancers’ speech is repeatedly broken, distorted and fragmented. This distortion is especially evident in the ‘old chooks’ scene where Kilda and Lyne use the metaphor of birds to tackle the issue of the female incomprehensibility. The ‘old chooks’ personae suggests an idea of women as fussy and motherly with a limited range of expression and the primary question is: Are these women gagged by society for no longer being young? A few minutes into the scene Kilda gags and vomits the broken sounds which appear to force the dancers to cover their mouths, as if they have said too much. Luce Irigaray observes that women are dumb because they cannot speak their truth or, if they do, they cannot be understood. Therefore they become “a woman. Zone of silence” (Irigaray 1985 112-113).
Chook like pops and clucks. The timbre of the clucks implies a familiar conversation.

Throughout *Fishnet* the costumes reflect, and thus critique, some traditional expectations of what women should be. The shirt-waisted housewife dress and flowered apron, similar to those fashionable in the 1950s, which Lyne Pringle wears in several sections presents an image of comfortable domesticity. A typical New Zealand audience would recognise the image encapsulated in this costume. It speaks of a desirable dream, that of a clean, pretty-perfect homemaker. This “Cult of Domesticity” is a means of imposing order (James and Saville-Smith 1989 32). It is directly challenged by the slinky black dress worn by Kilda Northcott in the persona of the
archetypical sexy woman. The housewife dream is also contrasted with the behaviour of the ‘chook’ characters who create a kinaesthetic representation of the boundedness of the life of a couple of ‘old chooks’, who, ironically in this context, may have started out as pretty housewives. The housewife imagery familiar from advertising and film is reconfigured as a parody of itself. These ‘old chooks’ are representative of devaluing of the middle-age women of Pākehā society, who are perceived as clucking and popping away with little of importance to be discerned in their conversation. The audience appreciated the comedy.

There was something about that little section that people really responded to. […] We were being really serious with our work but there was a lot of it, [that] on first appearances has a sense of comedy or release about it. That was a section that we found people responded to by laughing with or acknowledging.

(Northcott 2007)

The absent ‘figure’ in the section is the cultural imperative which degrees that ‘old chooks’ have little value. The section suggests that, because of their incomprehensible speech these women have been set up as pretty ‘toys’ and so have not been allowed a full participation in adult life. In order to take up that challenge, and portray women as fully developed adults, the dancers undercut the role of the ‘old chook’ through modulating from this section into the next. This is in a different key. This section displays the overtly sexual actions of touching as Lyne and Kilda examine and ‘comment on’ each other’s aging body. The audience also responds to this scene by laughing and clapping supportively.

Kilda’s ‘academic’ sections also parody the inflated speech of men and the blurring of women’s voices. Through portraying an academic, Kilda is employing the logical speech of the masculine academy. Logical speech is dominating, writes Catherine Porter, while women’s illogical speech is “cast outside of what resists it [that is logical reflection]: as madness” (1977 77). The implicit suggestion is that if men insist on defining women only in terms of logic, women may retreat into madness which will break through the tyranny of the logical expert. Lyne Pringle and Kilda Northcott theatrically portray this possibility through the frenzied incursion of violence into the lecture of the expert. Kilda begins:
“Now let me talk about theory. I speak with a foreign accent because er when it comes to theory, a foreign accent is er how can you er put it, a foreign accent is so much more ‘croyable’? Here I am visible. Good you see visible.

And again in the same position, just checking, I am invisible, fantastic no!

She then walks into the black and then reappears taking up the pose once again, and once again checking that her pose is correct.

You can see the difference? (The audience laughs) No, really oh! Well then I will do it again, perhaps it is not as obvious as I think so!”

(Pringle 2000)

As Kilda expounds her exposition on the frame, the ‘lecture’ is interrupted by the appearance of Lyne holding a dagger. The scene moves beyond rational thought, to the language of the body, as Lyne becomes the ‘Mad’ scarlet woman, out of control, dangerous and angry. The scene depicts the mad blood frenzy of the Maenad, a frenzy which can possess all women. The red and dangerous light enhances the dagger and suggests symbols of death, birth, menstruation, menopause, murder, madness and witchcraft. Lyne Pringle says that in this scene she is Kilda’s alter ego, playing both the pursuer and the pursued. Rob Baum stresses that often “female absence is written into the play by writing women off” (2003 57) as strong women either die or go mad. Is madness the price of invisibility or the price the society pays for making women
invisible? By appropriating the device of madness, this character will write off her social image, the means by which she is oppressed.

**Connection to the spirit**

*Fishnet* also explores the idea of a female language particularly by focusing on the female powers which exist beyond the power of the word and considers the idea that there are powers which connect the body to things of the spirit. Kilda Northcott, who first appears as a tongue-tied rugby player, transforms into the persona of a tongue-tied goddess with “a voice that has been suppressed” (Pringle 2005), so that she has been perceived as lacking power. The representation draws on classical ideas and uses locally symbolic items. The goddess on a plinth which stems from the Graeco-Roman tradition, could represent the old traditions and she is challenged by Lyne, who rushes onto the stage with a local iconic item, a bundle of flax, which she uses as a taiaha (a symbol of war and victory) and as a broom (recalling the classic mother goddesses such as Demeter). However this isolated classical goddess is not knocked off her plinth but is handed down to participate in both domestic and warlike activities, symbolising a union of the imported and the local. The dancers’ song questions female incomprehensibility through asking what kind of voice Kilda has and offering for an answer a mystic voice which evokes feminine wisdom. As both an evocation of suppression and an oracle proclaiming the truth the tongue-tied deity is an incarnation of the feminine principle.

> She has a voice that pauses, a voice that hides in silence stillness; she has a voice that speaks from knowing, a voice that listens to other voices, unheard of words and sounds. (Northcott 2004; Pringle 2004)

The concept of woman as Wicca woman and shaman is allied to the concept of woman as goddess. As Wicca shaman women the dancers represent the dark female power of women who are in touch with the spirits and the ancestors. Such representation examines the idea of the body as the repository of past knowledge which is an aspect of any living/lived body. Knowledge which resides in the body, particularly the old body, enlightens the life of the body and informs the life of the mind. Traditionally, in story, the shaman woman is wise in sexual, reproductive and healing knowledge. But with the power over life and possibly death such a woman is to be
feared but also valued by men. In the Western/Christian tradition a woman in touch with the power of her sexuality is, writes Rob Baum,

in Barbara Creed’s words, “archaic mother, monstrous womb vampire, possessed monster, femme castratrice, witch, castrating mother” (Creed 152). In the dramas as in the cinema, the horrific female present must be eradicated in order for balance (perceived in masculine terms) to be restored. Lady Macbeth’s voracious sexuality leads irresistibly to madness and death: this negative portrayal is one of the greatest female roles in Shakespeare.

(Baum 2003 158)

In the shamanism section, the dancers offer an alternative ending to death or madness as they explore the positive earthiness of being a woman. The concern of this section is the life force of women and the power of prophecy. With its focus on middle age, whaea (mother) and crone energy, and ideas about woman being and becoming, the shaman section of Fishnet has a connection with the idea of matakite (divination or second sight) (Williams 1975 188). Kilda Northcott says that “shamanism relates to the feminine energy that we all have as woman. Using that innate intuition and energy […] to live and work and to play to create. […] It transcends cultural limitations of our identity” (2007). The lighting, the black costumes, the use of the plinth lying on its side and the position of the dancers create the impression of two disembodied heads floating in space. These floating heads create a sense of moving into a different dimension.
The women gasp then speak these words, “Women stirring repetitive fashion, conjuring ages past, the passing of time culmination of wisdom the incessant stirring of the universe. Dancing of the spheres, turning of the earth, crone energy, the weaving of the Fates, Detritus of storm. A one legged nymph diving into the earth and spinning on her axis. Here they come the flesh sonata moving in a ‘pretty way’ wearing the garlands of their technique asking to be taken seriously. Masking the face in a mysterious way. Exploiting the natural world to bring an aliveness into the sterile black space. The flax lives and reflects but it will soon die a theatrical death on the heads of these two wanna-be shamans, sniffing around shamanism shamanism.

(Fishnet 2005).

Fishnet questions the nature of theatrical performance itself and asks how each person constructs not just a theatrical performance, but also their own lives through image and feeling. Part of Lyne Pringle’s slightly jumbled spoken text asks:

How can the abstracted and the conventional narrative intersect for some kind of story? […] Performance constructs an […] umbilical relationship with an audience.

(Pringle 2004)
The work deals with many feminist issues that are common to the Western World. It sets these in the local context through its structure of representation, its sense of humour, (the respondents to the audience survey recognised that as particularly Pākehā), and its use of recognisably local props such as flax, *ti kouka*, cow bones, and driftwood. Ultimately, it is ironically detached from itself. Throughout the performance the dancers stand aside from themselves, offering the audience the opportunity to be aware that they are saying, ‘look at me, see how daring, clever and sexy I am, and know that I know that you are noticing.’

**Satirising rugby**

While the ironic consideration of sport is not central to any of these works, rugby, an important icon of maleness and ‘Kiwi’ identity (Bell 1996 160), receives satirical and ironical comment in three of the four selected works. The world of provincial rugby was the subject of the play *Foreskin’s Lament* (McGee 1980), and this play is considered to be one of the first depictions of the complexities of New Zealand society on the New Zealand stage. Though Geoff Fougere has suggested that rugby “no longer serves as a mirror, reflecting its particular image of New Zealand society” (1989 120), because the society it reflected has radically changed, its use on stage in contemporary works of performance suggests it still has symbolic power. Though it may no longer represent only ideas of unity and desirable masculine qualities of courage, comradeship, and healthy exercise, the national rugby team, the All Blacks, are still heroes. However, theatrically rugby is a symbol which also has a dark side. It speaks of the pain of injury, which is sometimes literally crippling, and the psychological pain inherent in the need to conform. This is explored in *Foreskin’s Lament*.

Rugby features in the play *Home Land*, the work *Fishnet* and the songs of Andrew London. He introduces his song ‘Wake Up’ as “Just especially for the women folk of New Zealand in the rugby season” and the lyrics are both a satire of traditional Kiwi male values and a lightly disguised exposition of domestic abuse. The critique is of a culture which accepts that men can disregard their domestic responsibilities, and abuse their wives, in the name of supporting the ‘national pastime’.
The ‘girls’ in Fishnet also interrogate rugby. The opening scenario reveals Kilda Northcott, dressed in rugby gear; her speech distorted by a mouth guard speaking into a small tape recorder. On each side wall of the black box set there is one half of a cow pelvis bone and these are lit with a soft spot light. A white skirt hangs on a line at the back, also lit by low-level light. The other images on the set play against the rugby iconography. These items expand the total image to encompass female iconography as well as male. The impression is of competing world-views playing one against the other. The dancers, both dressed in rugby outfits, work across this tension dealing with the themes of restricted speech and movement. It is clear that Kilda, dressed in a rugby outfit, speaking distortedly into a tape recorder, is appropriating a masculine dress and pastime, but not without cost to her. Her broken, muted, and disconnected speech shows that being ‘one of the boys’ costs, and she is thrust back into the incomprehensible speech of women by the experience. This is a speech that is simultaneously serious and comic.

There was a play on us being women and this distortion which takes place when you wear the helmets and the mouth guard. […] So there was this play on ugliness and beauty and form, […] as I began to rehearse more and more with it, […] this clown character came out when I wore the mouthguard.
While rugby was once a game for turning boys into men, it is unclear in this image if it is being shown as a game which is for also for girls, or condemned. The rugby player, Kilda Northcott, holds not a rugby ball but a tape recorder, into which she pours her distorted voice. The totality of the image, the rugby gear, the clown character, the tape-recorder, the female symbols and the broken distorted speech, asks if rugby, a metaphor for the physical and pragmatic side of Pākehā cultural identity, has effectively, artistically and emotionally tied the tongues of many young women and of young men as well. The distortion of speech critiques the distortions that the cultural focus on physicality can cause. Kilda is an ironic representation of femaleness, yet the slight woman in the rugby gear, who is rendered “dumb” (Irigaray 1985 113), but who strikes aggressive poses, suggests that the traditional representation of women is incomplete. Kilda Northcott explains this interrogation in terms not only of the disparity between the status accorded to men as opposed to women but also to illustrate the poor support given to artists as opposed to sporting heroes.

This fascination we have with the All Blacks as a team because they’re the team, but also that idolising and the men in the rugby team being sort of put up on pedestals, and also just the very practical thing of being, now being given the opportunity to devote all their time to their game and their training. [...] I started dancing when I was six so I’ve devoted all my time learning and developing my skill and I don’t get paid hardly anything for it and then there’s these young men worshiped on a pedestal they’re earning huge amounts of money for doing what they love for a short period of time, getting paid millions.

The question about whether or not the bounded masculine world, which the performative use of ‘rugby’ references, can cripple emotional and social development is asked in a different way in Home Land. Paul, who is a television director, wants to give away the glory of directing sport for the ‘soft’ world of television drama. His father-in-law, Ken, cannot comprehend this desire. Paul attempts to explain that in fact he has learnt about drama from watching the play on the rugby field and now he wants to expand his outlook. But the parallels are lost on Ken.
Paul  [...] it’s all about capturing the drama. It's about — look at that, see? Close-up on Umaga. It’s dramatic, he’s making a decision. And just before the ball comes out they’ll cut wide – Perfect. Tells the story.

If

that’s not drama then I don’t know what is.

Ken  It’s rugby.

*Paul knows a losing battle when he sees one. They watch TV.*

(Henderson 2005 20)

The scene presents traditional male values and then questions their continued currency. Paul, the philosophical thinker, is acceptable to Ken only as a director of televised rugby games. Paul’s work does not involve physical strength and toughness but he has been grudgingly accepted by Ken because he directs sport, a suitable male occupation. However Paul’s desire to make rugby into drama makes him a ‘wimp’ in Ken’s eyes. Through presenting Ken as a man who cannot recognise a metaphor Gary Henderson focuses the scene on the anti-intellectualism and the ‘anti-soft’ stance of the New Zealand ‘fair dinkum Kiwi’. In saying “it’s rugby” so therefore not drama, Ken is saying that it’s not anything more than it appears to be. For Ken, the world is sufficient as it is, and he sees no need to examine it deeply. It is this refusal to look beyond the surface which makes Stephen Turner refer to Aotearoa/New Zealand as a pragmatic and anti-intellectual culture (2001 69). By suggesting that rugby is as much a game of make-believe as television drama, Gary Henderson is voicing a social heresy. The comparison both expands and diminishes the game at the same time. The scene takes rugby beyond a simple game or even the theatre in which young men learn “important lessons ‘for the conflict and competition of life’ ” (Phillips 1987 101-102) into a deeply metaphorical space. A game of rugby, like theatre, reflects a set of values back to the viewer. If rugby is drama, through the comparison Gary Henderson suggests the deeply metaphorical nature of life and posits it as a place in which we all construct our own particular point of view. This is a comparison that, in the context of a matter–of–fact culture, is an irony not lost on the audience.
Chapter Six

Emotion

This chapter examines the theatrical presentation of emotion in the four selected works. Emotion in everyday life is described as a “mental feeling or affection, e.g. pleasure or pain […] hope or fear” (Oxford Dictionary On Line 2007), and is considered to be separate from the rational or thinking process. While it is not possible to directly know the love, joy or sorrow of another person, these emotional ideas can be encountered through the visible signs, presented in the bodies of those experiencing them. Maxine Sheets-Johnson observes that we recognise emotion, she instances fear, “on the basis of our own kinetic/tactile-kinesthetic bodily experiences” (2009 212). The evolutionary purpose of emotion, she observes, is to “motivate action”, for there is social value in “letting others know how one feels and of knowing how others feel”, and this expression of emotion is “tied to movement” (ibid.). She explains that the strength of this connection of emotion and movement means that not only does emotion produce movement but itself can produce the emotion which is attached to the movement in the person who moves. The significance of this for theatrical performance is that the actions of the performers call out to the emotional responses in the audience and, since “emotional behaviours are essentially kinetic bodily happenings” (2009 212), produce responsive movements in them. When so moved by emotion, an audience will laugh and cry clap and cheer all bodily movements. The particular movements that an audience will respond to and the movement they will make in return are a product of their culture. Thomas Schwinn writes that “[e]ven very strongly emotional reaction patterns are socially shaped. This is shown, for example, by cultural comparisons which document the substantial variability in forms of expression of rage” (2007). He notes that everyday emotional states give human beings the power to gain a simultaneous form of construction of the world, [which means …] grasping the world as a gestalt, in which the details are grasped, not in a differentiated way one after another, but simultaneously and figuratively. […] Thanks to their simultaneous character emotions permit a rapid grasp of a situation, whereas a cognitive assessment would take longer.

(Schwinn 2007 307)
This brief consideration of everyday emotion reveals that it is a powerful tool and one that, along with the manipulation of space and time, is a primary instrument of theatre. Pure emotions belong only to the person experiencing them and like everyday emotions must be transmitted in order to be perceived by another. On stage, performers reproduce the gestures of love and hate. Because these emotions do not spring directly as a response to an event, but are crafted, as Peta Tait (2002) discusses, in theatre the performance of emotion is under the control of the thinking process. Though it is revealed through the same responses which occur in everyday life, performed emotions are not the random responses of individual actors nor are they unmediated responses of everyday life. Yet, because they operate in the same way as everyday emotions, that is, they move the audience to respond, they are as socially meaningful as ‘natural’ emotions. Therefore, as fashioned responses representing raw impulses theatrical emotions are powerful mechanisms for presenting society to itself.

As Peta Tait notes, if emotions are socially meaningful “only as natural, this locates them as opposite to culture and camouflages their immense social power” (2002 5). The powerful charge in emotion-on-stage comes from the fact that a crude reaction has been crafted into a culturally familiar sign, for the explicit purpose of eliciting a response. Each emotional display in theatrical performance is a carefully thought out action designed to produce an effect and is drawn from the repertoire of culturally specific expressions and gestures which indicate an emotional state. Theatrical performances display characters who can remind members of the audience of themselves and of other people that they know. In naturalistic, and some traditional performance modes, persons who are recognisably ‘like life’ are held up for close scrutiny. The subjective experience of humanity is thus concretised for the audience, through such seemingly everyday characters. Concretisation of emotional impulse allows the audience to reflect about the way society expresses its emotions. It can also provoke the audience to consider the power that the expression or repression of emotion has within the social community. One of the most important aspects of the interchange of emotion between the characters and the audience is that, by enabling the audience to understand the world through engaging their emotional capacity, performance empowers with the ability to instantaneously grasp complex ideas. These ideas can be both about the world of the performance, and about their own social environment. They may later reflect upon and cognitively process these emotional understandings.
However while “cognitions enable analytical dissection of reality and hence enormous multiplicity and great flexibility, the resultant complexity is limited and bound by emotions: they set limits to analysis” (Schwinn 2007 308).

Emotions both provide the means for gestalt understandings of complex situations and control speculation by keeping it focused. Again, the value of this double function to theatre is that it keeps the audience present to the action on the stage, while enabling them to understand the action taking place there at an intuitive level. This is a crucial role of emotion in theatrical performance, for it is, notes Bert O. States, the basis of catharsis, a term which “is too often reserved for tragedy. However catharsis is our best word for what takes place at large in the theatre. It is precisely a purging” (1985 48) Whether the work is tragic or comic, the participants have a deeper experience of life in theatre and emerge changed. It is emotion that enables theatre to ‘work the plot' in this manner, drawing the spect-actor into the web of the performance and a ‘whole’ experience.

This chapter now considers the use of various emotional types in the selected performances and relates the presentation of emotional expression, or repression, to ideas of Pākehā cultural identity. The societies of Aotearoa/New Zealand, both in the past and in the present, are represented on the stage by characters who appear as individuals, yet, like all theatrical characters, are aspects of the wider society. Of the selected works, the play Home Land and the opera Bitter Calm are the two examples which most clearly manifest the direct expression of emotion in performance. The songs of Andrew London and the dance work Fishnet confine the theatrical expression of emotions inside their ironical structures, (previously discussed in chapter five), so it is the opera and the play which will be discussed in this chapter.

**Bitter Calm: passion displayed**

*Bitter Calm* addresses issues of belonging to Aotearoa and occupation of this land by revisiting old conflicts through theatrical representation. As an opera, *Bitter Calm* can be large in scope and deal on stage with both the storms of the natural world, and the stormy grand passions of the characters. Through their actions, the characters represent, embodied, abstract qualities such as adventurousness and pride as well as basic human emotions like insecurity, jealousy, fear, anger, sadness and despair. The
affective structure of opera is close to that of the classic melodrama, about which Peter Brooks writes

\[e\]motions are given a full acting-out, a full representation before our eyes. We come to expect and await the moment at which characters will name the wellsprings of their being, their motives and relations.

(Brooks 1995 41)

For the composer Chris Blake, this display of “large emotions” (2005) shows the way people are transformed by their interactions, and an intensely heightened transformation is possible in opera “because opera lends itself to that” (2005). The structure of the work is one of ever-increasing conflict, as different perceptions of truth and conflicted feelings about love, loyalty, and belonging accumulate throughout the action – which hurtles from crisis to crisis. There is violent storm, drowning, threats, murder, disinheriance, madness, and finally retribution, all portrayed on the stage. The only lull in the sequence of crises is during the love duet between Catherine and Matiu towards the end of act one. Apart from this scene, the opera pushes relentlessly towards the final confrontation of Elizabeth and the settlers, against Matiu and his iwi. Each crisis in the action compounds the difficulties, raises the stakes for the characters, and re-enforces the mood of disasters. The crisis events provoke questions about the rights, wrongs, and consequences of each situation. As a result of this accumulation of crises, by the end of the opera, all the main characters have either been killed or psychologically destroyed.

The characters of Bitter Calm are not ‘realistic’ in the way that the characters in a naturalistic work can be considered to be realistic. Instead, Bitter Calm is based on the traditional theatrical structure of male rivalry. John Roberton is a heedlessly heroic protagonist, and dies early in the opera as a result of his reckless behaviour. Structurally, his death leaves a power vacuum which enables the two lesser male characters to compete for dominance. The typology of the characters follows an outline consistent with opera plots, with a lover (Matiu,) a beloved (Catherine,) and a villain (Thomas Bull). In addition, there are two other major characters, Elizabeth and John Roberton, who represent supplementary aspects of the hero and the heroine. All these character types present an opportunity for the direct display of heightened emotion, and indeed, throughout Bitter Calm, the particular manifestations of the type do display
passions in a manner which is reminiscent of nineteenth-century theatre. Their overflowing emotions particularly replicate the emotional displays of female characters of that era.

As well as crisis heaped on crisis, and heightened emotional display, the structure of *Bitter Calm* plays with a greatly expanded psychic time. The work reflects back to the heydays in the Bay of Islands, prior to the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, a wild time before Aotearoa/New Zealand came under the rule of British law. It was during these pre-treaty days, when the Pākehā population of Aotearoa was not bound by any rule of law, that John Roberton lived with his Māori wife and fathered his son Matiu. During his time with his mother, Matiu would have been raised to understand Māori Customary Law, a world-view very different to the one that Elizabeth brings to the stage. It is a view that she repudiates. Elizabeth’s attitude is clear as she recalls the story of John Roberton’s past.

Elizabeth    Years ago he came to this place and slept with a native woman.

Returning much later with me as his wife, he went back to the woman

and took from her a boy, he was convinced Matiu was his son.

(Hoar 1994)

For the audience, who may, or may not, be able to distance themselves from Elizabeth’s attitude, the psychic time of these events is greater that the twenty or so year stretch of the opera time or even the time frame between 1841 and 1994. The emotional gestalt of the scene connects the audience to an archetypal story of a lost Eden-like paradise in this story. Matiu’s mother as tāngāta whenua was native to this land, until her place was taken by the ‘civilised’ Elizabeth. This idea keys into generalised concepts about the paradise of the Pacific, but also touches a wide-ranging disquiet surrounding the fact of the expelling of the tāngāta whenua from their key position in Aotearoa. Other devices for expanding the perceptual reach of the opera are the use of temporally ambivalent costumes and the changing filmed cyclorama behind the set scenery which re-enforce the idea that the opera is also about the present day. The recollections of the characters reveal areas of their lives which exist off stage. On stage, those lives are heightened and condensed to a running time of just over two hours, but the events depicted in this work occur over several weeks, perhaps even
months. The characters remember what has gone before and speculate on what is yet to come, taking themselves and the audience beyond the frame of the now. Throughout its length, the opera triggers, through a series of crisis events, memories and responses for the characters within the work and for the audience watching it. In this way it brings empty intentions onto the stage either through giving them direct shape or through the process of triggering responses.

**Women and emotion**

As the men in *Bitter Calm* battle each other in physical conflict, and in both *Bitter Calm* and *Home Land* pit themselves against the elemental forces of the weather, parallel conflicts centred on perception and feeling take place amongst the female character. As noted in the chapter on irony, this division of the expression and repression of emotion and action highlights a theatrical tradition of male and female roles (Baum 2003 28). Generally, the males are heroic and bold while the females are passive and/or filled with feelings such as hope or sadness. Within this division women are either emotionally open, or repressed and repressive, but never played as emotionally self-contained and balanced and to a certain extent these traditional female roles hold true for both works. *Bitter Calm*, unlike *Home Land*, does not deal with the subtler psychologies of the characters; however, there are distinct emotional contrasts between the emotionally available daughter (Catherine) and her repressed mother (Elizabeth). In the broadest sense, the characters of Elizabeth and Catherine represent the traditional roles of young innocent heroine and disillusioned older woman.

Elizabeth is an embodiment of the ‘suffering woman’, experiencing emotional pain firstly as a consequence of her husband’s recklessness and then her daughter’s death. Catherine, the innocent heroine, is placed in a position where she cannot act as she would wish. In this sense she is as much a victim as any traditional heroine of the melodrama. She is at the mercy of the wishes of her mother, her society, and the loves and jealousies of the men around her. The love theme develops early in the opera between Matiu and Catherine, but, in the tradition of opera, blossoms only to be cut short. The first difficulty placed in the way of this love is the opposition of Elizabeth, who cannot countenance a union between her daughter and a local Māori, especially because the young man was a favourite of her late husband. The second complication of this love is the jealousy of Thomas Bull who wants Catherine for himself. A third obstacle is Catherine’s own attitude towards Matiu. She is afraid that if her relationship
with Matiu is exposed she will be ostracised, and she is also afraid that she may possess powerful emotions, which she may express. To continue the relationship would risk the greatest social and emotional cost, the exposure of her ‘self’. The fear of emotional expression stems in part from her own nature, she is afraid of the consequences of feeling deeply, and partly from the repression of the settler society in which she lives. An added impediment structured into the plot is the possibility that Matiu could be her brother. At this point Catherine becomes the traditional mute heroine who is unable to act. She is overcome by conflicting emotions that she cannot voice to anyone, and she resolves to leave the settlement. But, before she can go, Thomas Bull kills her. Though she is a more complex heroine than a melodrama heroine would be, her fate is similar to theirs. In her inability to speak the ‘truth’ which could set her free she has become ‘virtue imprisoned’, and in her death the opera presents the darkest consequence that can befall a traditional heroine, that of being overcome by a hostile fate, and murdered.

Catherine’s death signifies the intensity of the conflicts surrounding the issues of race and social status in this settlement. These major themes underlie the action of the opera. In order to turn her from Matiu, Thomas Bull threatens Catherine that if she marries a Māori, she will be ostracised by the white settlers. Elizabeth, in the meantime, warns Catherine against Thomas Bull “Catherine you are my daughter even in a savage country, standards must be kept. Bull is a common worker, never, never let him ever touch you. Do you understand me?” (Hoar 1994). Catherine, for her part, despises Thomas Bull as a person, but is aware of the change in the status of people in a new country, and so is also aware that in these new circumstances he may consider himself a suitable partner for her. Catherine is caught between competing value systems: those of her mother, those of the new settlement, and the values that Matiu brings from his Māori heritage. Her entrapment in this net of conflicting systems is clarified when Thomas Bull breaks in upon her tryst with Matiu and threatens to expose them. Because he has already threatened Catherine with social disgrace for associating with Matiu, Catherine, to protect them both, denies that anything is going on between them. However Matiu is hurt at her actions and accuses her of cowardice.
Matiu: So ashamed to be seen with me.
Catherine: I’m not.
Matiu: So afraid of being discovered.
Catherine: I’m not ashamed.

(Blake 1994; Hoar 1994)

A traditional aspect of the heroine role requires that Catherine be innocent, unstained by the greed and prejudice which surround her. However virtue must be imprisoned in some way and Catherine, as the innocent personification of virtue, is imprisoned by her being uncertain of how to act. Her love for Matiu feels natural and right. Though it is likely that siblings could be attracted to each other, another source of the attraction (apart from their romantic feelings) is the fact that they both belong to Aotearoa. Unlike her mother and Thomas Bull, Catherine has no problem with the cultural and racial difference between herself and Matiu. She rebukes Matiu when he convinces the iwi that the land is sold and cannot be returned. “You have deserted your own people, your own culture” (Hoar 1994). Unlike her mother Catherine does not need to recreate Scotland in Aotearoa; she loves this land. As Matiu “stands in” (Wilshire 1982 43) for the essence of the uncolonised land, as well as responding to him personally. Catherine responds to him the embodiment of the place of Aotearoa. The death of Catherine is the symbolic death of the possibility of an equal relationship between the settlers and the tāngātā whenua. It also removes the embodiment of the expression of gentle emotions such as love and trust from the opera.

Elizabeth is the most emotionally repressed character in the opera, and as such is the foil for much of the wild and adventurous action undertaken by the men. She is also the counterbalance to the romantic feelings of Matiu and Catherine. Her character is complex. She has negative traits; she displays a sense of racial superiority, and a desire for personal isolation. She is concerned with the desire to keep order. Yet Elizabeth also embodies the concepts of courage and determination. She tries to prevent her husband from going sailing, because there is a storm coming and he is putting himself in danger, and for the practical reason that the land needs attention. “Work must be done. Fences need mending, sheep must be shorn, you should stay.” (Blake 1994; Hoar 1994). When her husband dies she falls ill, but still she does not abandon
the farm which she is determined to preserve for her daughter. In the end even that hope is taken from her and at the end of the opera Elizabeth’s emotional and physical isolation is complete.

One of her major difficulties is that, from the outset of the opera, she has shown that she can neither connect to the new land in which she finds herself, nor can she return to the old. The opera states that John Roberton went back to Scotland, met Elizabeth, and married her there, so she has left behind family and friends. Her only securities in the new land are her immediate family and her land. As a container for these ideas of isolation Elizabeth is the embodiment of settler determination to uphold the values of civilisation in the strange and alien land. Her rebuke to Catherine for talking to Thomas Bull demonstrates her wish to maintain order and correctness. Elizabeth is also wary of the loss of status through emotional entanglement and cannot countenance the idea of a love relationship with a Māori. Her husband’s behaviour before he married her is shameful to her. She warns Catherine against having anything to do with Thomas Bull because he is a social inferior. Elizabeth’s emotional repression and her tendency to cling to old values blind her to many of the possibilities of the new land. For example, because she has such a pressing need to hold on to another time and place, she cannot allow herself to notice what goes on between Catherine and Matiu and so misses the vital information that the two are in love. Her problem with Matiu begins with his alien origins. Though he is her husband’s son; her husband believed this to be true, and he had no reason to lie, Matiu’s parentage disgusts her. The idea that John Roberton has acknowledged paternity of Matiu and named him as his heir is anathema to her. Elizabeth is determined that Matiu will not take possession of her daughter’s inheritance:

Elizabeth Of course there’s no proof, only your father’s belief and that is nothing in law. I contest this will. Matiu will not have the land.

(Hoar 1994)

Elizabeth’s rejection of Matiu is occasioned by what she considers his barbarous origins and is also connected to fear of the loss of her land. This fear of loss is exacerbated by John Roberton’s drowning and is directly connected to Matiu, because
it is his iwi who wish to claim the land back after John Roberton dies. The existence of Matiu himself as John Roberton’s heir is a further threat. Under these emotional pressures for which she can find no outward release, Elizabeth begins to crack. After her husband’s partly decomposed body is found she becomes psychologically and physically ill making her the full embodiment of suffering woman. This is one of the ways in which strong women in theatre are “written off” (Baum 2003 57). Though she is an emotionally repressed and repressive character, the operatic form enables Elizabeth to sing passionately of her grief and the music reinforces the emotion.

Figure 16 Elizabeth, Wendy Dixon mourns John Roberton. From video - permission Gibbson Group. (Sharp and Beaumont 1994)
Elizabeth is the complex concretisation of the process of settlement. She doesn’t really want to stay, she cannot return, her values are questioned, her ways of life disturbed, she is subject to strangers both from within her community and from without and she is uncertain of how to act. In desperation she clings to what she knows, even if it is not an appropriate response. Like Matiu, Elizabeth is a site of cultural contradictions and is torn between being ‘here’ and looking back to ‘there’.

After Catherine is murdered, Elizabeth’s grief is too much for her to bear. When she is faced with the loss of all she has to live for, Elizabeth gives full vent to her feelings, threatening to kill Matiu whom she sees as the cause of all her distress. Her reaction to Catherine’s death appears to spring both from hatred of Matiu and also from a loss of the sense of reality. What began as psychological illness after her husband’s death progresses and she becomes a fully insane character, a fate Rob Baum (2003 57) notes is often assigned to strong women in theatre. With the madness, Elizabeth becomes caught in her own revenge cycle as she seeks to find who will pay for her loss of both her husband and her daughter. Focusing all her hatred and despair on Matiu she refuses to acknowledge Thomas Bull’s confession that he has killed Catherine and cannot accept that Matiu is innocent. As a character she is, as Bert O. States notes, “the unique creature who passes through a whole lifetime in a few hours” (1985 43).
By the finale Elizabeth has witnessed the deaths of her husband and child. It is
the loss of her future and the loss of any innocence about the state of the world that may
have remained in her. Events have caused a change in her emotional representations;
she no longer presents repressed middle-class stoicism but has become an embodiment
of impassioned anger and grief. The change in the character Elizabeth represents the
uncovering of elements of the Pākehā psyche that is usually repressed. Dancer Ali East
relates this aspect of Pākehā to the ground on which they live. In Aotearoa/New
Zealand

the earth’s crust is very thin and there’s this tumultuous fiery stuff going
on underneath, waiting to try to break through. Somehow or other this has
affected both the psyche of New Zealand and […] we’re a bit […]
restrained or contained but underneath we have a lot of anger and fire
waiting to break through.

(East 2007)
Naturalism and muted emotional expression

Like *Bitter Calm*, *Home Land* is concerned with the disintegration of one worldview and its replacement by another. Though no one dies during the course of the play, most of the characters are challenged and changed by the events of the plot. For example, when Ken has gone from the farm, there will be no childhood home for Denise to revisit. The profound alternation that this change will bring to the lives of the characters underlies all the tension and bickering that occurs during the weekend timeframe in which the play is set. *Home Land* is written within the naturalistic tradition and the function of naturalism is to examine the inner world experience of the characters. Peta Tait writes that naturalism is a style of life-like staging which is perceived to have been most effectively realised through the innovations of Stanislavski’s early MAT [Moscow Art Theatre] productions. These reproduced a visual appearance of life on stage and initiated the development of styles of action realistically, combining life-like movements often called “natural” with psychological inquiry about the characters.

(Tait 2002 5)

In naturalism the interplay of deep, and often complex, emotions is given expression through subtle shifts of emphasis, pointed responses and small, but telling, outbursts on the part of the characters. This low key representation of emotion is a major aspect of the naturalist theatre. Peta Tait notes that “the culturally specific Western belief that emotions are private is indicative of a need to explain power relations and social alienation in an individual’s experiences” (2002 152). The dynamic of Western World power relations played out in naturalistic theatre means that characters rarely give full expression to what they feel. The theatrical outcome of this muted expression means that as in life the other characters have to guess at the characters’ emotional states. This condition applies to the audience as well, meaning that in the naturalistic mode, unlike in the melodramatic mode, emotions are not “given a full acting-out, a full representation” (Brooks 1995 41). As naturalistic creations, the characters of *Home Land* are not capable of displaying the intensely articulated grief portrayed in *Bitter Calm*. As representations of the Pākehā sensibility of social restraint, acting according to local mores, they would not give in to such feelings, even if they did feel them. So the repression of emotion in *Home Land* occurs both because the
work adopts a naturalistic style and because it is the culturally appropriate way to act. However what is interesting for the audience is that within the constraints of the world they are enacting, all the characters of *Home Land* struggle to express feelings, only to find that when they do manage to bring them to the surface they and their feelings are promptly ignored or discounted.

**Emotional repression**

A source of tension in both *Bitter Calm* and *Home Land*, the concept of emotional repression is most clearly expressed in *Home Land* through the character of Ken. The most striking traits eighty-year-old Ken possesses are his preference for practical solutions and his almost complete inability to express feelings of love for his immediate family. In these aspects of his character he is modelled on the traditional Southern Man. His son Graeme is characterised as having a strong bond with his father but though the two appear to have a good relationship in the Pākehā tradition of stoical, taciturn masculinity, neither Ken nor Graeme ever speak of this. Ken’s relationship with his daughter Denise on the other hand is both fractured and fractious and his discontent with her surfaces either through silence or by abrupt, or insulting, remarks. He can criticise her but cannot tell her that he loves her. In fact Ken stubbornly refuses to express any positive emotions towards her and, perhaps because of this refusal, she has become the one member of his family who particularly needs the reassurance of his love. The only love Ken is able to express freely is the love connected with the land. The striking contrast between his repressed emotions where people are concerned and his intense feeling for the land is conveyed in the following scene. Denise has complained that Ken has never told her that he loves her. He first of all responds with silence, then:
Ken I shouldn’t need to say it.
Denise I need to hear it.
Silence
Denise I love you.
[…]
Long silence.
Finally Denise turns and continues choosing photos.
Denise What about this one of the Taylors?
Ken The only thing I understand is out that window.
Denise Well … I hope it comes to visit you.
(Henderson 2004 103)

Ken sits slumped in his chair while Denise busies herself with selecting items to be packed.

Denise demands a vocal expression of love, but Ken insists that he has shown her love in his actions “You never went hungry. […] Nothing’s good enough for you, is it?” (Henderson 2004 103). Denise struggles continually with the emotional intractability of her father. Her crime, the act that cannot be forgiven her, is that at sixteen she left the family and moved away from Southland to Auckland, removing herself from the emotional climate of the farm and rejecting its mores. When Denise’s husband Paul tries to interest Ken in Denise’s success Ken maintains a deliberate silence. It is hard to interpret this exactly; whether he doesn’t care or feels that she should not be ‘blowing her own trumpet’ is not clear. What is clear from the scene is that emotionally Denise is dismissed. She left the farm and Ken will continue to punish her for this by refusing her the praise and recognition that she craves. Denise’s position within the play Home Land reflects a reality that exists outside the text. As will be discussed further in chapter seven there are patterns of inheritance relating to land which restrict the options for daughters. Michèle Dominy notes that there are expectations that, “[m]ost sisters, and some brothers, [will] sacrifice their own claims as
stakeholders to ensure […] continuity. While daughters are schooled in values that disenfranchise them, sons are bound to their birth patch” (2001 125).

The expectations of a sacrifice in favour of the sons are played out on the stage in the attitude of the family towards Denise. She has refused to do what is culturally expected of her. Instead of sacrificing her claims to the farm but remaining in the area, perhaps to marry a local lad, Denise has stepped outside that paradigm. She has left behind the rural values of the farm, which require her to put the family above her own needs. In terms of emotional support she has paid a high price, for her move has taken her out to the edge of the family circle. She is now effectively a stranger who no longer knows how to respond to the emotional or cultural language of home, and so cannot be nourished by returning to her childhood home. However, she does not wish to sacrifice any of her claims to live a fulfilling life, and now expects a degree of responsiveness from the people that she interacts with, a responsiveness which is outside the local culture. Though Denise craves emotional support she will never get it from her father Ken. The script suggests that she left home because there was no love for her there, and no interest in what she wanted to do, and that she has found emotional support and success in the north. Auckland, where she now lives, is a place with a physically warmer climate and can also be construed as a place with greater emotional warmth as well. Playwright Gary Henderson says, exactly why Denise and her father fell out is not all that important; fathers and daughters do fall out, but he does suggest she was reacting against her home environment.

Maybe she didn’t want to be a farmer’s wife, she wanted an education, she wanted to go to university, maybe she didn’t behave the way women are supposed to behave, and she was doing other stuff and had other interests and left home.

(Henderson 2007)

Performance and cultural commentator Una Chaudhuri suggests that in the naturalistic theatre,

the figure of home lends itself to one of the basic impulses of realism – the attempt to locate a space of personal experimentation; experimentation with the definition of person, and with selfhood. […] home is space of obligatory self-fashioning.
Ken’s daughter-in-law Trish expresses this idea of self-fashioning when she says “Sometimes I think that’s where your true nature come out” (Henderson 2004 75). But for Denise home is not a place where she can be herself. Denise’s responsibility and skills are not valued at home, a fact that causes Ken’s whole relationship with his daughter to be bitter. Nor is this home one in which Ken can change. Ken is being forced to leave and the strain of his own feelings means he is unable to change his old pattern. He rejects Denise’s overtures and she rejects him in turn. There will be no possible emotional reconciliation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Denise</th>
<th>Stop pretending that you don’t understand.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No response from Ken.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denise (deliberately)</td>
<td>You are a nasty old man.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[...]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ken</td>
<td>You buggered off.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denise</td>
<td>And now you know why.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Henderson 2004 102)

“You buggered off” is Ken’s ultimate rejection of Denise. With this rebuff Ken accuses Denise of letting the family down through being different. The only character who is able to draw affection from Ken is his grandchild Sophie. He is able to call her “tuppence” (Henderson 2004 9) – a term of endearment. He is more tolerant of her ideas than he is of anyone else’s.
The cultural imperative to be stoical and to show love through actions, not words, has also prevented Ken from making his own needs clear to his family. The result is an uncertain emotional climate where people are expected to anticipate others’ emotional needs, without being told what they are. Ken is afraid that asking for what he needs will make him vulnerable and, after being the top dog in the family for most of his life, it is impossible for him at eighty to accept any diminution of that position. When he suggests that instead of leaving the farm he might go and stay with Graeme and Trish, his son and daughter-in-law, Denise asks, “Have you asked?” Ken then reveals that he has not, confirming that he believes that people should just know what is needed.

Ken          I shouldn’t have to ask!

Denise considers a moment.

Denise      You want me to ask?

Ken          No! They’re probably sick of me.

Denise      Oh for god’s sake, Dad. They’re not mind readers! You can’t keep blaming everyone else if you never speak up.

(Henderson 2004 52)
Acting like a man

In both *Bitter Calm* and *Home Land* the dominant male characters demonstrate a tough manliness in their actions. These actions are reflections of a cultural imperative which links independence, emotional repression, and stoicism. This need to maintain manly autonomy causes Ken to go out into the freezing winter night and make a slow and painful climb up the hill to the top fence to view the farm in the morning sunrise. As Director Hilary Norris says, though “he’s almost frozen to death, […] he’s actually out there to prove his toughness” (Norris 2006). The climb is partly motivated by nostalgia and self-pity, and partly by the need to assert that, though he has lost his former strength, his determination remains as strong as ever. Yet the audience can see that, in the face of his failed relationship with his daughter, there is a desperate quality to this action. In his stubbornness and his failures with his daughters, Gary Henderson likens Ken to King Lear:

Lear goes mad on the heath. Ken hauls himself up to the fence line […] it is his going mad on the heath in a way. […] I don’t know if he could physically have done that, but I thought by that stage of the play, if I’ve done the job well, people will be so with him, that they will say, yeah I can see why he would do that.

(Henderson 2007)

The constraint imposed on Ken by manly independence means that he is unable to admit to anyone, not even to Sophie his beloved granddaughter that he was freezing on that hillside and that walking up the hill was difficult.
Manliness is established by bold deeds, and by asserting authority for the male characters of *Bitter Calm* also. While he is alive, John Roberton has command over his farm and his servants, a control which Thomas Bull grudgingly accepts, but with such resentment that when John Roberton is dead, Thomas Bull’s reaction is to say, “serves the bugger right.” As John Roberton is free to be master over his men, he is determined not to be constrained by the ties of domesticity, represented by Elizabeth, his wife. He demonstrates his freedom to do as he pleases by testing himself against the forces of nature and going sailing in the face of an oncoming storm.
Roberton: I’ve been out in worse than this.
Catherine: Father you don’t need to sail today.
Elizabeth: Work must be done.
Roberton: I’m to stay and rot. I’m a free man who loves to sail […] I feel like an immortal soul free of cares […] finally free of the taint of the land.

(Hoar 1994; Blake 1994)

He tells Elizabeth, “I know the sea as I know you”. Concepts of love, sexuality and eternity are contained within the image of the sea, so John Roberton’s statement is a boast that his love is all encompassing, including the forces of nature as well as his wife. It is a statement that through this love he is master of all. Setting himself against the forces of nature is classic hubris. John Roberton does not truly know either his wife or the sea, and drowns as a result of his bravado.

In his own smaller way, Ken also sets himself against the forces of nature. The pride and stubbornness of these men mean that they both deny the obvious difficulties that confront them. Ken denies his age and his reduced abilities, both deny the weather, John Roberton challenges the force of the storm. These refusals are the result of their concept of masculinity. It is a concept which requires men to be always strong and independent, able to pit themselves against the elements, no matter what their age is, or what the conditions are like. But the reality of such behaviour is that Ken is overcome by the cold and almost dies, and John Roberton is drowned.
Ken Taylor’s and John Roberton’s wish to pit themselves against adverse weather and difficult terrain does not appear unusual in the New Zealand context. Toughness is part of traditional “Kiwi” culture. In her book *Blackberry Winter My Earlier Years*, anthropologist Margaret Mead remarked on the tough upbringing of New Zealand children, especially boys. Writing of her husband, New Zealand anthropologist Reo Fortune, she said, “his way of treating illness in himself was to go out and climb a mountain, however raging his fever, in order to fight the sickness out of his system” (Mead 1972 206). While Margaret Mead’s comments relate to a particular individual, her husband, his attitudes about the acceptable way to meet misfortune are indicative of the widely held “Kiwi” attitudes. Ken displays a similar attitude to Reo Fortune in his ideas of what it means to be manly, testing himself physically, displaying tough attitudes towards distress in members of his family. He is no ‘sook’\(^2\). He does not believe in the expression of soft feelings. The toughness in Ken’s family does not just apply to the physical conditions. Gary Henderson elaborates

> I had a line for the daughter-in-law, who has been looking after the father and when she and the daughter run into each other the daughter says, “How are you?” and she says “oh, you know, busy” and they go on to talk about other things. […]

> I guess if I go back and analyse it now, she actually answer[s] the question for a start, how are you? Well, I’ll tell you how I am, I’m busy. You know it’s a hard life down here.

(Henderson 2007)

\(^2\) A weak or cowardly person.
The difficulties that make life hard are never stated, only implied. There is the suggestion that the farming life is harsh, and/or that looking after older parents is difficult. In Pākehā culture it is important not to elaborate on the difficulties. That would be ‘whinging’, and self-pity in times of difficulty is not an acceptable option. Emotions need to be kept in check when there is work to be done. Gary Henderson says, “the physical side of life and the emotional are [not] separate. […] you have to have an emotional toughness to get up before dawn to start working” (Henderson 2007).

Toughness is one aspect of the Pākehā cultural/emotional system that prevents emotionally honest communication between individuals. Ironically, the other cultural system that prevents adequate communication is the mateship system. Though mateship creates intense bonds between men it also constrains sharing. The low-key, almost monosyllabic relationship that exists between Ken and his son Graeme is based on the model of mateship, a system which provides a level of emotional support but also demands a level of emotional withdrawal. As Home Land demonstrates, keeping intense emotions shut down leaves the men fragile. They are unable to express their true feelings and so draw emotional sustenance from the people around them. This means that the women who could provide emotional nurture are marginalised, the development of their own feelings and empathetic qualities neglected. The toughness and emotional containment that are part of male Pākehā culture are considered admirable attributes for women as well. Like her father, Denise is ultimately intolerant of any softness, and this is made explicit in the following dialogue between her and her daughter Sophie.

Denise        I might go for my walk in the morning. Up to the top fence. You should come too.
Sophie       There’ll be like a million degrees of frost.
Denise       Oh don’t be a sook. You just get all bundled up. It’s lovely.

(Henderson 2004 32)

Breakthrough moments of emotion
While the culture of Home Land supports the suppression of emotion, the characters do sometimes portray some powerful feelings. Ken expresses two powerful
emotions as he recovers from his night on the hill. The first is his deep sense of belonging to the farm, and the second – as a result of the first – is his grief at leaving home. “I won’t be seeing this place again” (Henderson 2005 37). However, in keeping with the dominant cultural ethos, his family find it impossible to deal directly with his grief. As they have trouble coping with any expression of the need for emotional warmth and understanding, they revert to the cultural default emotional state – emotional repression. They divert the focus of the conversation away from his psychological needs to his physical state. The fact that he is severely chilled gives the family a focus for action, and they can deal with the need to get him warm. 26 Ken’s frail state makes it impossible for him to stay on the farm, but his emotions about this are never acknowledged. Each time he expresses his desire to remain on the land he loves, in order to stem any possible outpouring of grief at his loss, what Ken says is either downplayed, diminished or diverted.

Ken         I won’t be coming home.
Denise     Oh, you’ll have lots of visits. […] I bet once you get used to it you’ll love it there.
Ken        I don’t want to go. I want to stay here.
Denise     You’re not able to stay here, Dad.
            You’re not able.

Ken rests his forehead in one hand, hiding his eyes.

(Henderson 2005 37)

The responses of the other characters are matter of fact, but there is a physical distance between Ken and the family. He sits slumped at the table through this exchange head down shielding himself from the emotions of the others.

26 This also has a theatrical purpose as it gives the actors a physical action to play.
An emotional breakthrough of a different kind comes when Paul offer Ken a beer. The ritual of drinking alcohol is still important (Phillips 1987 35) and the point of this moment is to show that even though Ken is eighty years old he is still a ‘real man’. Gary Henderson points out that it is important to be able to “drink with the boys”, so when Paul offers Ken a beer he is treating him as still one of the boys. He adds, “I find myself doing that to [my elderly] dad” (Henderson 2007)

Though strong emotions can come to the surface, it is not culturally appropriate to dwell on these. However, it is interesting to note that from time to time there is a sudden flash of emotion. The sense of rivalry between Trish and Denise is particularly strong. It seems that Trish, the daughter-in-law, has displaced Denise, the daughter in the nest. Maybe, just like a cuckoo, she has gained her place by some form of trickery. This trickery is never spelt out, but maybe Trish had to marry Denise’s brother Graeme because she was pregnant to him. Marrying Graeme has certainly given her a stake in the future of the farm, and a position in the rural community. Leaving the farm and going to Auckland, on the other hand, has irrevocably undermined Denise’s status. Hilary Norris notes that while Ken is set against his daughter he is able to feel some affection for his daughter-in-law Trish. As she puts it, “the old man feels very much that Trish has become his daughter, and he can give her the love that he never gave to Denise” (Norris 2006). The situation between Denise and Trish is filled with tension, for Trish resents the fact that she is the one caring for Ken while Denise has come down
at the last minute to have a say in what happens. However, even in this flash point situation, the play once again demonstrates the inability to be emotionally honest. The following exchange takes place between Trish and Denise towards the end of the first act.

---

Trish         Well let’s be honest. We hardly ever see you, then you turn up here and
start demanding all ---[kinds of ...]

Denise       We all make our choices, Trish. Don’t blame me for yours.

Trish glares at her stung.

Trish         This was hardly a choice.

(Henderson 2004 79)

The choices being discussed are obviously wider than the immediate choice about what to do about Ken. They have to do with historic events, which are never stated.

**Social freedom and female characters**

Some aspects of Denise’s character reveal the new idea of the autonomous woman freed from traditional family restraints. Given that she probably had the kind of rural upbringing which trained her only to focus on the farm (Dominy 2001 123), her achievement in holding a ‘top job’ is a tribute to the personal qualities, such as toughness and determination, qualities that she shares with her father. However, though Denise is presented as a ‘liberated woman’ who has left the farm to make a life for herself, once back there both Denise and her sister-in-law Trish lack personal power. Returning to the farm places Denise back in the subordinate position.

While the primary characters in *Home Land*, Ken, Denise and Trish are constrained by rigid social attitudes, the secondary female characters present attitudes which contrast with the prevailing social mores of the world of the play. These characters are free of the cultural constrictions that require them to keep their emotions damped down. Interestingly only one of these secondary female characters is actually presented on the stage. The other characters, Elaine and Nana, a ghost character, who lives only in the memory of the characters, never appear. Trish and Graeme’s daughter
Elaine, like Nana, is present only as she is referred to by the other characters, who report on her activities and her attitudes. Elaine is away studying. She is characterised as a young woman expanding her horizons and taking opportunities as they come along. In the play she has gone off with her friends for the weekend. In her role as ‘self-determining-nature’, Elaine does not feel compelled to be present at a major family event, regardless of the wishes of her family. In ‘doing her own thing’ she is working against the ethos of duty which haunts the older female characters. This deliberately absent (both from the story and the stage) character represents an idea of personal freedom. Interestingly, in terms of cultural ethos, this self-determining character is never embodied by an actor on the stage, but is present only through Elaine’s imagined and absent person. This seems to suggest that, as a cultural ideal, complete personal freedom is neither acceptable nor is it often possible.

The restriction that Denise experienced as a child growing up on the farm is also experienced during her weekend at the farm by her daughter Sophie. Sophie finds that her movements are confined by the weather, by her lack of transport, and her ability to communicate with the outside world. She is limited to the farmhouse, confined indoors by the cold and rain, and her cell phone works in only one place, up by the hayshed. Her weekend experience is an embodiment of the kind of life her mother Denise may have had when she was growing up on the farm.

Sophie and Elaine represent non-traditional twenty-first century Pākehā female types. They are harbingers of change, especially for women, both within the wider cultural community and within the family. As an absent character, Elaine represents the idea of change, while through the enacted character Sophie the play embodies cultural change. Even though the cultural requirement to be staunch has blocked the emotional development of the older characters, the presence of Sophie shows that this is not a world completely without hope for the emotional future. In Sophie the values of toughness and emotional withdrawal are replaced by a warmer set of responses. Even Ken himself is affected by this change, as a scene towards the end of the play reveals. Sophie is going through a box of old photos and showing some to Ken. She discovers and shows Ken a photo of himself as a young man. Then she comes across a photo of her grandmother as a young woman. Nana is wearing the pretty dress that Sophie herself has just found in a cupboard. It is seeing the photograph of her grandmother as a
young woman, wearing this very dress, which is the emotional trigger which unites Ken and his granddaughter.

Sophie    Look. The dress!
Ken       Eh?
Sophie    That’s Nana, and she’s wearing the dress.
Ken       What dress
Sophie    This one.

(Henderson 2004 92)

Sophie puts on the dress Nana wore to the dance the night she met Ken, and persuades Ken to dance with her. In that moment time stands still, as past, present and future fuse. Ken once again becomes the young man in love. The stage directions read

_They slowly rotate, shuffling around until we can see Ken’s face, but not Sophie’s. He starts to weep. She takes a few moments to realise._

Sophie    Grampop?

_He can’t answer. She stares. (Hugs him?) The sound of Graeme’s ute pulling up. Sophie quickly helps Ken back into his chair._

Sophie    There you go. You want the paper?

(Henderson 2004 95)

Figure 21 Sophie and Ken dancing. Sophie, Anna Nicholas, Ken, Simon O’Connor. _Home Land_ Fortune Theatre October 2005. Photo Reg Graham.
The scene reveals much about Ken. Just as he still loves the land so he loved Nana. His profound sadness at her loss mirrors his sadness at his impending loss of the farm. This brief moment of vulnerability shows that in spite of his actions towards his daughter Denise, he is capable of love. Though it is soon over, it is significant that in that moment it is Sophie, the granddaughter and the person who is no longer tied to the physical home land, who is able to put her faith and energy into an emotional home land. Her access to emotional expression has enabled Ken to express his deep feelings.

In the end it’s that young girl’s realisation that goes with us, [...] that there is this vast tract of land and time before she even became aware, and that most of this old guy’s life was there. Triggered by that photograph of these young guys in that such a long ago time, that old black and white photo, [...] to suddenly realise that, her life is just the last bit, it’s just the icing on the cake really.

(Henderson 2007)

The old stoical values are being replaced by an alternative vision, enacted through the affectionate relationship between Sophie and Ken. Sophie is the means of breaking through Ken’s toughness. This split is shown in the last scene of the play when he’s sitting there all in his suit, [...] and he just says “Please don’t let me, please don’t make me go” and suddenly that toughness is broken through and it’s so sad.

(Norris 2006)

**Ghosts**

Another theatrical device used in both *Bitter Calm* and *Home Land* to unmask ideas and emotions is the use of ghost character. The ghost is a visible embodiment of another world. Ghosts both articulate the problem areas of this world and present the concerns of other worlds, so they can articulate both the concerns of world of the contemporary world, that is the time in which the script was written, and confront the characters with the concerns of the world of the play itself.

The remembered presence of Nana in *Home Land* persists throughout the play. Though she is a ghost who never manifests on the stage, her presence in the lives of the two families casts her shadow over the attitudes and actions of her extended family.
This gives her a strong psychological presence. From what her family say about her she appears to have been a similar type of woman to Trish, reliable and strong-minded. Certainly she is remembered for her stern attitudes. Gary Henderson agrees that her spirits is dominant within the family – “they still talk about her, I think there’s a line ‘you know what she was like. We couldn’t do that, you know what she was like,’ so in a sense she is still running the family” (Henderson 2007). Nana’s first manifestation occurs in act one when Sophie remembers chipping the special Royal Doulton “bunny”27 plate which had belonged to her mother.

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sophie</th>
<th>Hey, look. The bunny plate. With the chip out of it.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>eh?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophie</td>
<td>From me dropping my glass of milk on it that time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[...]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sophie</th>
<th>I was covered in porridge! And Mum gave me a telling off because it had lasted all through her childhood without getting a mark on it.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>I bet it did. God, it would’ve been more than her life was worth. You know what your Nana was like.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Henderson 2004 44)

This memory of the stern older woman persists until the end of the play, but then it is modified. The spirit of Nana there is presented as a young woman who possesses a touch of coquettishness. As with her manifestation as a stern woman, the ‘girlie’ expression of her character is also revealed by her granddaughter Sophie, when she finds and puts on Nana’s dancing dress. Seeing Sophie in the dress enables a “moment of a channelling back into his past” (Norris 2006), which allows both the emotional truth about Ken’s life and about the homeland itself to be spoken.

In Bitter Calm, the ghost of John Roberton is, like Nana, a continuing presence in the life of his family. Structurally his ghost comes, like the ghost of Hamlet’s father, to warn but in Bitter Calm the warning of evil is not of a murder done, but of that danger lies ahead for the settlement. In life John Roberton had been absorbed in his own desires but in his manifestation as a ghost, he shows he is not only physically changed, but ethically as well. As a ghost, John Roberton is able to see the consequences of his omissions. He recognises his responsibilities. His ghost

27 The Peter Rabbit design
acknowledges his faults as he sings, “In life I was indifferent, I sailed on indifferent, uncar ing and bold, free of cares and responsibilities I sailed drowned and am dead” (Hoar 1994). This ability of a ghost character to see things more clearly is a traditional dramatic construction. Like Nana, John Robertson’s ghost is the repository for unexpressed emotions and is the means of giving them voice. As he is capable of seeing beyond the present, both back to the past and on towards the future, like Nana, he creates moments of temporal fusion on stage. In revealing his story he can also raise questions about race relations which also apply to the world of the audience. However, though all can remember him, only Matiu can see him. This limits his effectiveness so unlike Nana, he is not effective in healing rifts or in preventing harm.

**Emotional men**

Pakeha men are capable of displaying emotion if pushed hard enough, and the secondary male characters in *Home Land* and *Bitter Calm* are used to portray the possibility of emotional vulnerability. In this they contrast to the main characters who display physical and emotional toughness as their primary characteristics. The character of Graeme, Ken’s son, is characterised as physically a strong farmer like his father, but is given more to introspection than Ken. Graeme presents alternative visions to the prevailing iconic images of the Southern Man. However he is a character who is still caught between the old and the new worlds. For example, Graeme’s sympathy for his father’s age and increasing frailty is tempered by pride in the fact that his father is still tough. Though Graeme is sad at his father’s weakened state he must still keep a check on his emotions, and states his distress in muted tones.

Graeme Hung on to the fence. End of each paddock he just pulled himself across to the gate and carried on. Poor old bugger. Woulda run up there in ten minutes once.

(Henderson 2005 92)

Paul, Ken’s son-in-law, is represented as a sensitive intellectual. From Auckland, the north of the country, he is a Jafa28 to those down south. As Auckland is presented as a softer place, where the old values of stoicism have lapsed, Paul’s origins

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28 Jafa - Just Another Fucking Aucklander
in that city make Ken suspicious of him and his ‘namby-pamby’ ideas. Paul certainly has different, more philosophical ideas than either Ken or Graeme. As previously explained, Paul wants to direct drama. Although he is not like Andrew London’s “feather duster” in his general softness, he is closer to what Gary Henderson describes as a “metrosexual” (Henderson 2007) a man who values the new urban ideas. For example, Paul feels that it is important to preserve the local flavour to the language. He is aware that culture is directly expressed through people’s speech.

Graeme    Musta flogged off a few burgers and chips to afford this.
Sophie    Burgers and fries.

*Paul is putting his cold-weather gear on.*

Paul    In New Zealand we call them chips.
Sophie    Well at work we have to call them fries. […]
Paul    They can’t make you.
Sophie    Well one guy refused and he stopped getting shifts.
Paul    What … you mean he was fired.
Sophie    No, he just stopped getting shifts so he quit. […]
Paul    Yeah, and I know the difference between quitting and being bullied out of your job for speaking your own language too. […]
Sophie    Jeez, Dad, chill out, it’s just a word.

(Henderson 2004 85)

Paul also has political ideas that run contrary to Ken’s experience of the world, making Paul a radical. When Ken suggests that the Iraqis can’t run their own country because “these people over there… they’re backward, they’ve got no idea …” Paul rejects the statement with: “It’s their country” (Henderson 2004 42). But, like the other males in the play, even Paul lacks full emotional honesty. Gary Henderson uses this to finally trigger an emotional response from Graeme. Paul bluntly suggests that Ken has every right to feel upset at being sent away from his home, adding that Ken is being “shoved into an institution where he’ll probably turn into a vegetable then die” (Henderson 2004 98), completely ignoring any feelings Graeme might have about the
situation. Graeme, finally overwrought, lashes out at Paul, “maybe you should just shut up. This is bloody hard enough,” but Paul persists in ignoring Graeme’s feelings. He continues with a vague general statement that as a society we put our old people into institutions. Graeme finally challenges him, “Are you telling me I don’t want my own father?” Paul denies this “No, I’m not talking about you.” Graeme has had enough and finally his emotions break through.

Graeme    You think it’s easy watching this happen to him? Watching him - - Christ - -- he used to carry me on his shoulders - - -

Graeme gestures mutely to the land beyond the window, unable to speak. Is that emotion? [underlining in text]

(Henderson, 2005 98)


Telling Paul what he can do with his weak generalisations, Graeme storms off to buy fence posts. The difficulty for both these men is that though they may admit to having emotions, they are not skilled at expressing them. The idea of emotional honesty underlies the scene. What do Paul and Graeme feel? What do they really want? They seem incapable of saying. Paul has a struggle expressing the complicated emotions he has about Ken leaving the farm. Graeme is not capable of articulating his grief at seeing his father so reduced in stature. By refusing to dig down to their feelings, and to clearly
express them, both men are following the time-honoured Pākehā approach. But the necessity of repressing emotions, in order to cope with the rigors of loneliness and the physical difficulties of a pioneer landscape, has largely gone. This country is now urban, rather than rural, yet in Aotearoa/New Zealand people still speak approvingly of repressing feelings. The way this is expressed is to say ‘they got on with it’, meaning that the person ignored hardship, sadness, loneliness and isolation and did what had to be done. It aligns with the widespread cultural belief that displays of feelings are a weakness. The modern audience watching *Home Land* knows that if Graeme could say what he feels, if Paul could move away from generalisations, the outcome could be different. Perhaps Paul could share Graeme’s distress; perhaps he could offer to help, because there are more possibilities for action if people are emotionally honest.

For a Pākehā audience this scene is an uncomfortable but also a truthful representation. It is not culturally appropriate to break down into emotional expressions of grief and confusion. Stamping off into the cold to buy fence posts is the culturally acceptable Pākehā response. Thematically, this particular moment also places the problem of how to care for elderly parents before the audience and questions the institution of the rest home. The audience are likely to know of the honour accorded to elders in Māori society. Structurally, wrapping things up neatly would weaken the power of play for, even though the audience may have an emotional wish for resolution, resulting in some form of happy ending, culturally such a change would mean that ‘typical Pākehā Kiwis’ cease to be typical. If they do, what do they become?

**Grand emotional expression**

The way the repression of emotion is expressed in *Bitter Calm* is different in quality to the way the repression of emotions is portrayed in *Home Land*. Opera is played in a rhetorical style which allows characters to give full vent to emotion; the responses are on a big scale. Opera’s strongly oppositional form also lends itself to big events like lust and murder. Many opera plots are entirely melodramatic in structure, that is, the evil that occurs to the hero is caused by events outside of the character, not by a flaw in his personality. In some respects *Bitter Calm* is closer to tragedy than melodrama, for in tragedy the destruction of the protagonist is caused by a fundamental flaw in their makeup. In *Bitter Calm*, John Roberton is destroyed by his own heedlessness and failure to make the truth known, Thomas Bull’s and Elizabeth’s jealousy and racial hatred fuel the move towards their own and general destruction, and
Catherine’s inability to ‘speak the truth’ and tell Matiu that he may be her brother means that the tension in their relationship cannot be resolved. This lack of truth-speaking deprives Catherine of a protector, because they force Matiu from her, contributing to her murder. The distancing effect of the heightened form means full-bodied expressions of destructive emotions can be expressed in their most graphic theatrical manifestations without unduly disturbing the audience. They are constantly made aware, by the artificiality of the structure, that they are watching a theatrical performance.

As a result of the expectation that opera will deal in large emotions, there is a generally more expressive landscape in *Bitter Calm* than in *Home Land*. In contrast to the mythical ideas about the tight-lipped stoicism of the pioneer era, the pioneer characters in *Bitter Calm* constantly vent strong emotions. In part this may simply be because opera is constructed around such vehement expression, but unlike John Roberton, the other lead male characters Thomas Bull and Matiu do not display a rugged determination to test themselves against the elements. Nor are they taciturn characters, each gives full voice to both either love or hate. Matiu sings eloquently of his love for Catherine:

![Figure 23 Love Duet Catherine, Jenny Wollerman, Matiu, Iosefa Enari. From video - permission Gibson Group. (Sharp and Beaumont 1994)](image)
Matiu is the only bi-cultural figure in this opera and his character fulfils three major roles. He is the lover of Catherine, the hero against the manic evil of Thomas Bull, and the representative of change. Though he is a particularly emotional and sympathetic character – a kind man, loving to Catherine and supportive of Elizabeth after John Roberton’s death – at heart Matiu is the Māori warrior, skilful, strong and proud. Though the iwi who own the land that John Roberton farmed, may be aware of Matiu’s parentage, on the settler farm Matiu’s status is that of servant, not son. Yet Matiu mourns John Roberton, calling him father-like: “John Roberton a white man, but a good man. I mourn you. You were like a father to me, now your spirit is free while we remain trapped on land. I mourn you. I can’t do more” (Hoar 1994). Ignorant of his paternity, because of his blood and his upbringing, Matiu is caught between two emotional states, servant or son, and two cultures. His love for Catherine and John Roberton and his relationship to his iwi are ultimately incompatible at that stage in the history of Aotearoa/New Zealand. For the audience Matiu represents an idealised lover; he is romantic, sufficiently different to be interesting, yet familiar. For the settlers the converse is true. Matiu is the embodiment of the strange Other against which they must define themselves. As a cultural representation, Matiu is the post-European-settlement Māori, negotiating a way between both worlds, and for a modern Pākehā audience he is the embodiment of that familiar Other - the different culture alongside which Pākehā culture has developed.
As the villain, Thomas Bull’s role is to be the opposing force to Matiu, and as such he is the embodiment of the virulent negative emotions of the opera. The man is characterised as older, less skilled, and less highly regarded by the family than Matiu, and he bitterly resents his inferior position. As in many legends, the family is safe from harm, from the ‘evil’ influence in the house while the household is stable, but as soon as any instability occurs, evil gets its chance to work. Once John Roberton drowns, Thomas Bull, as the only white man on the property, sees his rightful place as being at the top of the ‘pecking order’ and he attempts to bring this about. When he sees Catherine preferring Matiu to himself he is enraged, as her preference reinforces the fact that he is not the dominant male. His rage is fuelled equally by jealousy of Matiu, and by lust for Catherine. His attitudes embody white supremacist idea and he directly threatens Matiu on racial grounds after John Roberton’s death, “now he’s dead things will change, you were always his special nigger but he can’t protect you now.” Thomas Bull cannot bear the thought that Matiu could be Catherine’s husband. “They all treat me worse than dirt, they treat me worse than Matiu, they can’t do that, it’s not right, it’s not right” (Hoar 1994).

![Figure 24 “It's not right” Thomas Bull, Roger Howell. From video - permission Gibson Group. (Sharp and Beaumont 1994)](image)

Chris Blake says “there was some suggestion that the […] murderer […] was mentally unstable” (Blake 2005), and in the opera this instability is embodied in the character of Thomas Bull who displays his racism and his instability to the audience through his frenzied accusations about Matiu.
Bull: Unnatural to trust a savage and let him into a white house. It’s unnatural. It’s wrong. […] Elizabeth Roberton is a fool she doesn’t know what’s going on. But I know, I know. I’ve seen her daughter. Something must be done about Matiu, it’s not right, it’s not right, it’s not right at all.

(Hoar 1994; Blake 1994)

Though he struggles with Matiu to be the alpha male, Thomas Bull is unable to assert any authority over Elizabeth. In the hierarchy of the farm she is dominant, and this rankles with him, making him embittered and more dangerous to those around him. It is this sense of being “down the pecking order” plus his racially-fuelled rage which leads him to kill Catherine in a violent attempt to make her see that she rightfully belongs to him.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Music</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
<td>Wild high strings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who killed her?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bull</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was an accident she wouldn’t listen to me. That’s all I wanted was her to listen to me. But she fell down and died. I didn’t mean to kill her.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Hoar 1994)

While the large scale of the emotions presented in Bitter Calm generally has a distancing effect, there are moments when a discomforting truth, which demands a personal response, is presented to the audience. Matiu rebukes Catherine for denying her relationship with him because she fears the exposure. Her rejection exposes an underlying racism developing in her. Catherine is torn by conflicting loyalties to her lover and to her mother. As the heroine, Catherine has so far completely accepted Matiu as an equal. In keeping with the traditional expectations of the role of heroine, she must appear blameless, so she should not shrink from admitting her love for him. However, the expression of a fault adds complexity to the situation and more depth to
her character. The scene in which Catherine rejects Matiu also raises questions for the audience about expression versus repression of true feelings. It poses questions about the nature of racism within a personal context. It challenges the audience to have a personal, and emotional, response to the situation. It is obvious that Matiu is upset by the denial and he states that clearly. This open expression of emotional pain is not a response in keeping with the Pākehā ethic of manliness, which would require Matiu to say nothing and to just walk away. However, Matiu is not characterised as Pākehā but as Māori, which is the response of the other characters towards him. His response to rejections raises questions about difference, and how each group may be affected by the other. For example, is it possible for tight-lipped Pākehā to show more emotion when confronted with emotional and/or physical pain?

Songwriter Andrew London, reflecting on a changing cultural climate, suggests that the response given to the character Matiu might be the culturally correct one for Māori. “Māori’ve never been afraid to show emotions to the same extent that we have been” (2005). Andrew London also suggests that the effect of living alongside Māori has changed Pākehā attitudes, and that the repressed emotions and excessive manliness portrayed by Pākehā in both Home Land and Bitter Calm may no longer be the acceptable norm. Interestingly, Andrew London locates the clear expression of the traditional manly response, and its change, within the game of rugby. “It’s the All Black thing isn’t it, you score a try and you drop back to the halfway line with a scowl on your face, […] God forbid that you might show any emotion and enjoyment like the Europeans do and start jumping all over the [place]. Ah well of course they do it now […] so maybe that’s as good a sign as anything of how, of how Pākehā culture has changed a bit, we’re not as afraid to show emotion as we were” (London 2005). The toughness and emotional restraint portrayed by Ken in Home Land may no longer be such an important part of Pākehā male culture. The expression of love, and the sorrow and distress, which Ken is finally able to display, mirror the emotions of Pākehā society. Near the end of Home Land Denise breaks free of emotional restriction. Like Matiu in Bitter Calm, she expresses her emotions, clearly stating that her feelings are important. She evokes the idea of a new kind of homeland, dependent not on a connection to place but on relationships alone.
Denise I know where I want to be.
Paul Where
Denise Home.
Paul Ah … but where’s that?
Denise In the right place with the right people.

(Henderson 2005 104)

In performing emotions in the Western performance tradition, the performer is not supposed to be experiencing the accompanying feelings but representing the signs of emotion only. However, as noted earlier, movements that portray emotions can induce an emotional state (Sheets-Johnson 2009 212). But, whether the performers feel the emotions or not, the actions in which they portray emotion on the stage are able to elicit emotional responses from the audience. As Bruce Wilshire observes, “people can participate in those around them to the extent that they feel they have become somebody else” (1982 204). Home Land and Bitter Calm therefore represent the emotional need of the post-settler population to belong, to have a sense of place.

Emotional ideas about belonging are embedded in the compressions and expansions of time and space, which generate concepts of cultural history and belonging, through triggering the emotional responses of imagining and remembering for members of the audience. The ‘real’ space of the lounge and kitchen of the house in Home Land suggests the wider spaces of the land outside. The mention of place names in the script takes the play from the open rural space of Gore in Southland to the crowded city space of Auckland in the North. In so doing, it encompasses the whole country in-between. Home Land covers a psychic time which is greater than the dramatic time of the work. The play compresses the life, loves, hopes, fears, fundamental rifts and reconciliations of three generations of Southland farmers into a single weekend. The two hours of running time cover a weekend of dramatic time, in which are embedded the last 56 years of the lives of this family. The breadth of this temporal scheme is brought to the stage as the characters recount lifetimes of personal and shared memories. In the course of the play Ken relives his adult life and Sophie returns to childhood memories. Thus, in psychic time, the play reaches from Ken’s courtship of Nana in rural Southland in the late 1940s to Sophie’s future as she plans to
leave home and become part of the independent world of the young flatting population of Auckland in the early twenty-first century. As an instance of the power of drama to compress big issues into a single moment fusing psychic time, dramatic time and the ongoing running time of the play itself, in the scene where Sophie is viewing the photographs of the young Ken, she asks, “Feb 1944. Whoo, who’s the hot guy?” and Ken replies “That’s me.” At that instant the young woman and the old man are united in Ken’s memory. The two psyches, that of Ken and that of Sophie, become one. As Sophie connects with the youthful world her of grandfather, through the photograph, the fusion of the two perceptions, hers and Ken’s, manifests an essential conception of the idea of Pākehā youth in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The stage directions add:

Sophie suddenly senses the stretch of years before she was born. The history of this piece of land.

Sophie       (softly) Wow.

(Henderson 2004 92)

Sophie realises that the farm existed before she was born, and that her knowledge of it is only one moment of its journey, and of her journey as well. The past, present and future of the farm are fused in a moment of intense emotional understanding. Sophie’s sudden sense of the history of the farm is a metaphor for Pākehā settlement in Aotearoa.

Through textual references Bitter Calm also spreads to other places, moving beyond the confines of the settlement to take in the whole Western world, represented by the thematic idea of Scotland. The opera also expands spatially in a factual sense as it employs the total theatre-space by moving beyond the frame of the proscenium into the boxes of the auditorium of the St James Theatre, Wellington. This is where both the ghost and the chorus were situated during the live theatre performances. The parallels between the issues of the era depicted in the events of the opera and the issues of the time in which the audience lives work to re-enforce the idea that this is a national story which is told through a personal tale. Through their emotional triggering of multiple temporalities both works reflect on the changes occurring within Pākehā society - a society that is re-evaluating its right to feel that Aotearoa/New Zealand belongs unequivocally to them. Acknowledgement on the part of Pākehā of their past
relationship with the tāngāta whenua means that a beginning can be made to deal with old wrongs. At the same time, this is a society that is trying to incorporate an influx of new people.

Peta Tait, noting that, “emotions are experienced through the body”, goes on to state that they are given expression “in mental imagery and language formations. They are embodied consciousness. Emotions are made socially meaningful in cultural languages” (Tait 2002 171). It is these cultural languages that take what exists in everyday life as unremarkable and give it significance. Within the context of Pākehā society, the problems of communication, failure to give and receive love, indifference and prejudice, which may be small and mean in their everyday expression, are given a heightened significance on the stage before an audience. A performance “plucks human experience from time and offers an aesthetic completion to a process we know to be endless. […] it imitates the timely in order to move it from time, to give time a shape” (States 1985 48). Presenting such attitudes on the stage brings to the forefront of consciousness facts that may be uncomfortable, but it also enables a culture to examine its fears, failures and successes.
Chapter Seven

Land: The Character Who Does Not Come On

This chapter considers the position of the land as a presence implied on the stage through metonymic representation, a character which exists off stage, and as a thematic idea. This examination of the-land-on-stage is not couched in terms of scenographic theories. It is centred on the use that performance artists have made of the iconographic potential of elements of the land. The comments from the artists about their use of the land in performance are combined with my analyses of the representations of the-land-on-the-stage as the basis for this discussion.

Land is an important item in Pākehā iconography and pervades the artworks of Aotearoa/New Zealand. There is a strong tradition of landscape painting: Rita Angus, Colin McCahon, Toss Woollaston, Petrus van der Velden and Nugent Welsh, are all well known as landscape painters. There are musical compositions with titles relating to the land including such works as Douglas Lilburn’s ‘Aotearoa’, ‘Aotearoa’ by Mike Nock, ‘Timeless Land’ by Anthony Ritchie, ‘Taonga Gift Of The Land’ By David Hamilton, ‘Matarangi 1’ by Helen Fisher and ‘Landscape Prelude’ by Jenny McLeod. The creative presence of the land is a source of artistic inspiration. As actor Hilary Halba observes, “if you just sit down and shut up the land will tell you its stories, and we make stories there as well” (2007). Choreographer Ali East says the idea of land has been a central theme in her work. “The sounds and landscape of this country, whether I like it or not, have influenced the rhythms that I achieve with the movement, the way I structure the choreography, the kinds of themes that I want to talk about with my dance” (2007).

Three of the four selected works directly represent the land in some fashion. Bitter Calm deals with the land in the early days of settlement. Home Land deals with the post settler stage of adjustment and, in its integration of the land, Fishnet looks forward to a new relationship. Two of the selected works, Home Land and Fishnet, incorporate metaphors of the land into their titles so, before they enter the theatre, the audience has been cued that the land will play some part in the performance. However the physical nature of the stage makes representing the land there a specific problem. Playwright Gary Henderson states the obvious when he says,
you can’t put the land literally on stage; you have to represent it in some metaphorical way. I did it through language. I think in that production there was a good sense of a farm being outside the house, you know just by them going out and coming in dressed up in cold [weather gear]. (Henderson 2007)

Though the land itself can never be ‘brought onto’ the stage, spoken and scenographic text can represent it. It is represented on the stage through stylised iconography in Bitter Calm, continually referred to by the characters in Home Land, and symbolically represented in Fishnet, where the use of the natural symbols of flax and bleached cow bones ‘bring on’ the land, presenting it as a psychic backdrop to the feminist themes of the work. In this way, ideas of the land become part of the thought-scape for the audience infusing the work with a specific locatedness/localness.

**Early responses to the land**

One of the first ways of establishing a cultural identity within a new territory is to lay claim to the landscape, because turning ‘space’ into ‘place’ gives a people a tangible form of ownership to an area. For Edward Soja (1989; 1996) physical space and cultural identity are intertwined, and Yi-Fu Tuan writes “[s]pace is transformed into place as it acquires definition and meaning,” (1977 136). As a result of the nineteenth century migrations, the settlers from Europe created newly defined spaces (Grossberg 1996 91) in Aotearoa/New Zealand, laying claim to the landscape and turning what was for them ‘space’ into their ‘place’. Unlike space, place is “no longer undialectical” (Keith and Pile 1993 5) but full of meaning both for the new occupiers and those they have displaced. While the Pākehā displacement of Māori was often bitter and bloody, particularly during the Land Wars of the 1860s (Belich 1988), this conflict continued a theme in the history and the human geography of Aotearoa which had been defined by acts of conquest and alienation over several centuries, as tāngāta whenua fought one iwi against another (Ballara 1973), long before the arrival of the European (Fox 1976). Both the colonisation of the European settlers and even the earlier Polynesian settlement before them in Aotearoa/New Zealand, took a toll on the land (Eldred-Grigg 1980 111-112). Each group of settlers both the Polynesian and they European, initially saw Aotearoa/New Zealand simply as a land full of opportunity
The initial approach to the new country was based on a misunderstanding, a deception (as Tim Flannery calls it). This deception which was:

experienced by each wave of human immigration into the ‘new’ lands is one of the great constants of human experience in the region. […] To the Maori, the moa must have appeared as a limitless resource. European agriculturalists saw what they imagined were endless expanses of agricultural land of finest quality. […] In short, all have seen a cornucopia where there is in fact very little.

(Flannery 1994 144)

But this initial opportunity for enrichment has hugely influenced the development of the country, for the European settlers felt a need to tame this foreign land as quickly as possible. Tussock was grazed, and then fired and sown with English grasses. Trees from Europe were imported and planted in their thousands. No thought was given to preserving the existing ecosystem. In fact, the opposite was true; the ecosystem of Aotearoa had to be converted into an ecosystem reminiscent of Europe as soon as possible (Eldred-Grigg 1980 18). The reference land, from which the settlers had come, was perceived as more complete than this rough, half-finished country. The first European settlers would have considered themselves strangers in a strange land as they dealt with the steep slopes and dark bush. Jock Phillips writes that, “the New Zealand weather became the colonists’ great curse. On the west coasts of both islands, the real burden was the rain, which brought mud and a penetrating damp” (1987-21).

In Bitter Calm the land is presented as a dark and hostile entity waiting to be ‘tamed’. The metonymic devices of bare branches, torn panels and a fishnet are used to “stand in” for the land. The representations of the bush and of the elements, particularly the wind and rain, bring an aspect of dank hardship to the stage. This representation of the land symbolically recalls experiences which were very real for the settlers who found Aotearoa an alien land. In the South Island were forbidding (though majestic) mountains scored by swift and (as novelist Mona Anderson writes) “dreaded” rivers (1963 13). In the North Island, deep impenetrable bush covered most of the country. Everywhere the plants and the birds were strange. The set embodies opposing ideas: safety and exposure, wilderness and civilisation.
The action takes place on a farm cleared from the bush. In the production I attended, the stage settings did not try to reproduce this dank bush literally. The setting is symbolic rather than naturalistic. The land was represented by the symbols of bare trees, which in some scenes can be read as the stumps left from the settlers’ firing of the bush and in other scenes as the living bush itself. The setting presents a land which is primeval, therefore unknown, perhaps unknowable and unpredictable, but which has already been penetrated by the forces of civilisation. It is a world that seems familiar but ominous. The ‘bush’ lours and the ‘sky’ deluges the characters. The stage floor representing the ground is covered in wet mud and it rains, again and again, throughout the action (an effect created by sprinklers positioned about the set). The bare branches, mud and rain represent a flexible, fecund, and perhaps magic changing world on the stage, a world moved by the seasons, by the weather, and responsive to the changing needs of the tāngāta whenua.

The projections onto the cyclorama behind the flat suggest a bush that stretches out forever, and evoke, for a New Zealand audience, images of places where people a metre or so away can neither be seen nor heard. This is a land which is primeval, therefore unknown, perhaps unknowable and unpredictable. There are also indications that there are other places which are part of the drama, for example the houses of the other settlers and the whare of the Māori iwi, which exist in imaginative projection beyond the wings. Though part of the Māori world is manifest in the people of the iwi, as are the worlds of Europe which are concretised by the settlers, the projections of endless bush suggests that there are whole other worlds and world-views off stage. The trees, lying across part of the front of the stage, create a physical barrier between the world of the audience and the world of the opera, suggesting a sense of looking in on something that is now beyond the reach of the audience. While the wider landscape has changed since settler times, for people to whom the bush is a familiar milieu, the darkness, the density of the trees, the mud underfoot and the rain are recognisable images.
The set also consisted of columns and a raised platform, tilted slightly up to one side and lit from underneath, in the middle of the stage. The short columns, painted in a baroque classical style, stood in various positions downstage and to the right and left of the main acting area. Creating a deliberate post-modern effect, where elements which do not seem to bear any relation to one another are assembled in the same space the eclectic columns and the platform appeared to me to generate a feeling about time and place which is both located in the past, and simultaneously in the present, rather than to present an historically accurate impression. The incongruousness of Renaissance columns in the setting of the bush indicate that the psychic time of the work is sometime in the late twentieth century.

Yet, as they reference the rise of rationalism, the neo-classical revival of the eighteenth century and the conscious classicism of the nineteenth, they carry resonances of another supposedly more civilised world. At times the columns are moved to new positions, but always there is the sense that these elements of ‘civilisation’ are merely part of an island in the wilderness.

The clearly defined platform is obviously a modern construction and is never disguised as anything other than itself. While it serves the practical purpose of being a dry lit space on which the action can take place, it is also reminiscent of a European civilisation, suggesting a town square, symbolic of an island of civilisation. The artificial white platform and the flat behind it with its rigid squares suggest the mathematical world of Europe and the logocentric thinking of the post-Enlightenment culture. Scotland, the part of Europe which is thematic in the text, brings to mind such mixed images as a cold climate, repressed attitudes, a love for education and the flowering of culture in eighteenth-century Edinburgh. The platform is a world that is
ordered, contained and final. It suggests that the land is to be surveyed, sized up, measured, and parcelled out to the highest bidder. However there is a sense of unease about the platform, as if an alien object has been dropped in the middle of a primeval landscape which highlights the strange juxtaposition of civilisation and wildness in which the Pākehā characters find themselves. By its presence the platform creates a tension between the Māori world of the bush and the world of the settlers. As a cleared space, the platform also serves to show just how small the occupied space in the middle of overwhelming growth is at this stage of Aotearoa/New Zealand’s history. However its definitive shape suggests that there will be no return to any fluid state, idealised by European culture that could be imaginatively conceived to have existed under Māori occupation.

The platform is backed with a flat made of translucent white panels. Again, this has a practical function of providing a surface which will reflect light and so enable the characters to be properly backlit. It is capable of being lit in such a way that it changes colour - denoting a change of time of day. It also serves the purpose of providing a screen against which the filmed sections of the opera can be projected. Projecting these modern dress love scenes between Catherine and Matiu strengthens the double presentation of time and contributes to the tension engendered in the audience between the then and the now. Like the platform, the flat adds to the sense of creating an enclosure against the bush. A fishnet hangs down over the top of this flat, symbolising the connection of the settlement to the sea. Late in Act One, the panels of the flat will be torn by the storm and remain hanging from their framework like rags, symbolising the destructiveness of humans and nature alike.

**Bitter Calm as a site of cultural conflict**

The calm of the title is multivocal and applies to the natural world and to interpersonal and intercultural relationships. The struggle to wrest the land from its indigenous state, and from its indigenous owners, is a prominent theme in the work *Bitter Calm* and the plot centres on conflict over land and status. The calm weather after the storm in the structure of the opera is only the interval between the tragedy of the past and the bitterness ahead, as interpersonal and intercultural relationships simultaneously disintegrate. The work is set on Motuarohia (Roberton) Island in the Bay of Islands in 1841. This was the site of an historical killing of a settler family by a
young Māori man named Maketu. The crisis of the action in the opera arises from both the conflict over land ownership and from personal rivalry. The land is the focus of the cultural conflict between the tāngāta whenua and the settlers, and before the relationships between Māori and settlers disintegrate into overt hostility, the scene where Matiu’s parentage and his subsequent right to inherit the land demonstrates the problems the settlers have with their relationship with the Māori. A central focus of this conflict is the settler’s concern to establish and legitimising their ownership of the new land. Under Māori land title the land cannot be alienated through being sold (FoMA 2009) as it does not belong to one person, but to the tribe. In the following scene the local iwi want Elizabeth to return the land to them now that her husband John Robertson, the person who bought the land, is dead. What he has paid for is the right to occupy the land but Elizabeth insists that they cannot claim the land back for it is sold and therefore no longer belongs to the iwi. It is a complete misunderstanding on both sides of the different nature of the land tenure.

The differences between the two groups are established through the order of their arrival on stage, and the distinction in their costume which mark the status of each group. Costume also clearly demonstrates similar ideas about wildness and civilisation to those shown through the set. The settlers are almost all dressed in crisp white costumes; the Māori wear uniformly earth coloured clothing. This difference in colour concretises the idea of two different worlds with different sets of values. The Māori are wearing an assortment of old clothes and blankets, some wearing pounamu ornaments, some with moko. They are eclectic, ‘disordered’ even in their clothing. The characters’ responses to the rain also show their relationship to the land. The Maori stand bareheaded in the rain, letting it run across their bodies and onto their clothes symbolising their unity with the land. The rain pours down, soaking the hair and clothes of the Māori and running off the umbrellas of the settlers.
Elizabeth (sings) Speak to your people Matiu.

Matiu (sings) My brothers and sisters you have no right to this land (Audible protest from Māori.) It was legally sold for a fair price:

Two horses
60 pounds of cash
one cloak
one silver watch
one silk umbrella
three suits of new clothes
a sum worth two hundred and thirty pounds.

A fair price for a whole island, see here is the witness deed.

Audible dissent distress cries of Auē and Ai

Matiu (sings) My people the land has gone and I grieve for its loss, but I celebrate the change where …it adds meaning to our lives. The world has changed and we must change with it (noises of dissent) Brothers and sisters, will you join me will you?

(Hoar 1994)

Performance Elements

The platform is brightly lit and it glows white. In front of it are the dark branches of the bush and at the sides projected slides of dark coloured bush.

The scene takes place in a set crowded with people, which is symbolic of the way cultural concerns are crowding in on the characters. The order of appearance on stage is also significant. Māori, warriors, and then the women, children and old people move silently into the platform space occupying the centre stage. The settlers then enter and surround the Māori, and then move onto the platform displacing the Māori. Matiu, and Catherine, Elizabeth’s daughter, follow together in the rear of the settler group.

Matiu moves towards the group to speak, and then he turns away and walks back to Catherine. They look at each other and smile. Matiu goes back to address his people who listen attentively. The settlers watch impassively but Māori shake their heads at Matiu’s offer. After Matiu finishes speaking they turn and walk away.

The music for this section is of high, agitated, disjointed sounds, mainly from the strings; there are many downward scales which create a negative disturbed, distrustful effect.

(Blake 1994)

Matiu as the child of both Māori and Pākehā (settler) ancestors is an embodiment of the hybrid position. His love for John Roberton and his willingness to work for his family is based on his response to the man, not knowledge of his birthright. Thus he can be seen by Catherine as betraying his culture when in strict fact that is not true. The object of the scene is to further the drama but the subtext contains a question about belonging. Many Māori have Pākehā blood, giving them a stake in the Pākehā world.
This scene highlights the inequity of the land transaction through which John Robertson purchased Motuarohia Island. Even though 230 pounds in the Bay of Islands in 1841 would be worth many times its value in today's money, the price is obviously unfair, and the production elements highlight the tension of the scene. Restrained in their clothes, sheltering under umbrellas, the settlers resist the weather. The umbrellas are a very visible symbol of “civilisation” and Western culture and of the settlers’ discomfort in this alien environment. For the first time Matiu, the site of cultural conflict, is seen also carrying one of these umbrellas. It indicates his changing status throughout the scene. He enters sheltered under an umbrella and leaves bareheaded in the rain. Civilisation will not accept him. In this highly charged moment the rain is ambivalent for both groups and creates an ambivalent symbol for the audience. In Māori culture rain is a good sign in the sense that the rain can mirror the feelings of a people. Rain at a funeral adds to the expression of grief - rain is the heavens weeping, uniting those on earth with the gods; in the settler culture rain is welcome only when it is. As an element of this meeting of two peoples, the rain can be read as tangi (funeral tears) mourning for the land that is lost.
The choices of costume do not reflect historical accuracy, but in part depend on choices about colour and style, and production fashions at the time the opera was staged – 1993. The effect is to present a double play on time for while the general appearance of the costumes has a nineteenth century feel they are not specific to 1841, so, like the set, they suggest any time between then and now. The main theme of this section is the settlers’ displacement of the Māori from the land. The scene is concerned with the nature of transitions, the losses and gains for each group, and poses the question of where Māori and settlers belong now that the circumstances of the land have changed. The subtext questions their new relationship to one another. As the scene continues, Catherine accuses Matiu:
Text

Catherine (sings) You have deserted your own people, your own culture.

Matiu, tapping her arm (sings) This is my culture now.

Bull (sings) Still a savage in our eyes, but a tame one now.

Matiu (sings) If I was a savage I would kill you, but I am more civilised than you, you try to provoke me.

Bull (sings) Still, still a savage.

Elizabeth (sings) I have won.

Settlers (sing) You have won they can do nothing.

Elizabeth (sings) What Matiu says is true. This calls for a celebration.

(Hoar 1994)

Performance Elements

Elizabeth and the settlers move away from the centre of the platform. Catherine, who is in love with Matiu, comes up to Matiu and stands beside him.

Matiu reaches out to hold Catherine’s arm but she turns away from him. At this point the music becomes yet more agitated.

Thomas Bull moves forward to confront Matiu.

The settlers are crowded together on the side of the platform while this interchange takes place. The umbrellas make an almost solid roof above them. The lighting state is one of bright day making the platform appear bright white. The areas around the platform are still muddy and full of ‘trees’ (bare branches), and the bottom of the settlers’ long crisp white clothing is mired by mud, perhaps a practical result of a muddy floor, but also symbolic of ‘dirty dealings’.

Elizabeth comes back over to Matiu. Matiu stands away from the settlers and addresses them.

On the word celebration the settlers move forward to shake Matiu’s and Elizabeth’s hands. Matiu looks down at his hand after everyone has shaken it. The look contains the idea of Judas Iscariot’s kiss.

(Blake 1994)
The moment portrays the dishonest victory of the settlers and underlying this victory is the fragility of the relationship between the two peoples. Matiu and Thomas Bull, as representatives of Māori and Pākehā, have already ‘squared off’. It later emerges that John Roberton has named Matiu as his legal heir, but Elizabeth will not accept his right to inherit the land. Neither Matiu, who ‘stands in’ for land in its changing state, nor the land itself can be accepted as an equal partner in the deal. The difficulties in their relationship spring from the misunderstanding about land ownership and the scene foreshadows more trouble between these groups and between individual characters. Chris Blake was inspired by the conflict in the relationship between the two peoples, and also the relationship between the settler people and the land. It is these two conflicts which make Bitter Calm “a uniquely New Zealand drama […] it involved Māori, it involved settlers, […] and it involved the imposition of one code of behaviour on others that didn’t understand it” (2005).

**The characters as aspects of the land**

Elizabeth represents an outpost of civilisation on the stage. She stands against the land, which is wild, and peopled by ‘the Other,’ whose way of life and values are different. However Elizabeth is also an embodiment of displacement. She struggles to recreate the past in her “home” in the new land, but at the end of the story, she is a lone woman in an alien land. The finale of the opera sees her dispossessed of her hopes and bereft of her family. She is ruined. In this ruin she represents the destructive changes that the land will undergo.

Catherine is the first generation of European settlement. A child of settlers, she is caught in a conflict about where she belongs and in this she also represents a land that is in transition. When she discovers that she can never be Matiu’s wife, she talks of going back to Scotland. But it is doubtful, as she was raised in Aotearoa that she would feel fully at home in Scotland either. She represents the border between the old and the new, and she can never truly belong in either one land or the other. Her love for Matiu symbolises the possibility of a union between Māori and Pākehā. As they are actually brother and sister, though they are unaware of the fact, the final outcome of their relationship, had it been positive, would have been to walk side by side as separate, yet related people, rather than be joined in marriage. An acceptance of Matiu’s position in the family would acknowledge the concept of accommodation between the two groups,
but the time is not yet ripe for this. This resolution would embody the ideal dual path, while the marriage that they both hoped for could be seen as symbolic of Māori assimilation into Pākehā ways. But Catherine is murdered, as the land will be despoiled. However, in her death, her spirit is also set free from any ties to one place. She represents an uncertain future for Aotearoa.

Matiu as an ‘Other’ is an embodiment of untouched land in the process of change. As such, he has a bigger role to play than simply being Catherine’s lover. (The sexual nature of the relationship is made clear in the filmed sections.) Matiu may be John Roberton’s son, and the farmland has been left to him as his inheritance. For Elizabeth, the recognition that a son of Māori blood now has the right to inherit land which she has just acquired has implications that cannot be contemplated. Such an inheritance would mean accepting a member of the other group as one’s own family, but neither she nor the settlers are willing to take that step. As the legal heir to the farm, the character of Matiu and the land are united under Pākehā as well as Māori law, intimating a future path for land claims in Aotearoa/New Zealand. This possibility is reinforced in the figure of Matiu himself both Māori and settler.

However the historical situation in 1841 is that the settlers are new in the country. The land to them is rough, wild and in need of taming. Their hold on it is precarious. They are in the minority, they wish to establish European title to land, and they have no understanding nor wish to learn about Māori land tenure. Neither Matiu nor the land can be accepted as an equal partner in the deal. In this context, Matiu, as a concretisation of the land, must be subdued and submit to the greater authority of the settlers, like the land itself. The relationship of the settlers towards the land and the tāngāta whenua means that Matiu and Catherine can neither be joined in love or marriage, nor can Matiu be accepted as John Roberton’s legal heir to the land. The situation of land ownership, property rights and inheritance highlights the difficulties in the interactions between a people with different codes and understanding of land tenure and use. The impossibility of accepting changed relationships with Matiu is played out in the following scene. Elizabeth is overwhelmed with the thought that John Roberton would leave his land to his child by an alien mother and not to his child by one of his own people. The primary state of the land, symbolised by Matiu’s Māori parent, is to be put aside, its integrity reduced, and there is to be no possibility of accommodation.
Text

Elizabeth (sings) Very well I will tell you,
   It is a painful thing to admit and
   you will blame your father for it.

Catherine (sings) Tell me. (This is loud
   and insistent)

Roberton (sings) No. No more Elizabeth
   No No No (Flees)

Elizabeth (sings) Your father thought
   Matiu was his son. Years ago he
   came to this place and slept with
   a native woman. Returning much
   later with me as his wife, he went
   back to the woman and took from
   her a boy, he was convinced
   Matiu was his son, and now he’s
   left our land to him. Of course
   there’s no proof only your
   father’s belief and that is nothing
   in law. I contest this will. Matiu
   will not have the land. (Roberton
   returns)

Catherine (sings) He could be my brother

Elizabeth (sings) There is no proof

Roberton (sings) He is my child

Catherine (sings) My brother my brother
   he can’t be he can’t be.
   [Catherine is in love with Matiu]

Catherine stands dumbstruck at
   Elizabeth’s words.

(Hoar 1994)

Performance Elements

The scene takes place in the night, and the
   prop of the lantern and the costuming of the
   characters suggest that it is inside Elizabeth’s
   house. Elizabeth’s hair is loose. She is
   wearing a white night robe. Catherine is
   disrobed, wearing a bodice and underskirt.

The scene presents disordered thoughts and
   susceptibility to invisible influences.

Traditionally the night is the time of ghosts
   so theatrically the night-time setting makes
   the ghostly presence of John Roberton who
   is present at the start of this scene, more
   likely.

At the beginning of the scene the space
   between the women is tight, they stand close
   together in the vast darkness, but as the scene
   progresses and the information upsets them
   both, the space between the women
   broadens. When Elizabeth shows Catherine
   John Roberton’s will Elizabeth moves away
   from her daughter, creating a physical gulf
   between them on the stage. This symbolises
   the way issues of blood relationships are
   tearing their relationship apart.

There are swirling sea sounds underneath
   Roberton’s words, and the music rises to a
   climax of strings and brass. Roberton’s ghost
   flees at the clamour of the brass. As the quiet
   returns so does Roberton’s ghost.

The strings and brass die down to flute and
   strings, which underlie Elizabeth’s text.

The music quietens to one long note held on
   strings and woodwinds.

(Blake 1994)
Chapter Seven Land – The Character Who Does Not Come On

John Roberton had loved the largely untouched land of pre-European occupation, symbolised by the absent person of Matiu’s mother. He rejected its domestication and ‘civilisation’, preferring to go sailing rather than farm. Elizabeth wishes to tame the land, to introduce the civilised rules that prevent Catherine from loving the land, in the person of Matiu, either as a lover or as a brother. This refusal to accept the nature of the land means that in the end the possibility of any resolution is gone. Catherine will be murdered. Matiu will stand trial for killing Thomas Bull and ultimately will be hanged. For the settlers this new land, an unknown force which must be conquered can never been the peaceful civilised place of origin. It is not homeland, the country from which they come. Aotearoa is only the land to which they have come but in which they do not really belong. So for the settlers the land can only be accepted as a last resting place.

Elizabeth    My husband brought me here. ‘This will be our home,’ I said but it was never a home to him.
Chorus    Ah
Elizabeth    ‘Home is where you were born’ he said. I say home is where you die.

(How 1994; Blake 1994)

While for Elizabeth death in a strange land is a terrible fate, for subsequent post-settler generations the fact that their ancestors are buried in this land contributes to the sense of place they feel for this country.

Home Land – being rooted in the landscape

The new settlers had to gradually adjust to strange landforms, unfamiliar soils, new plants and animals. While the first response was a sense of alienation from the new landscape and attempts to make the new land look like the old land, the immigrants from Europe also quickly realised that this was not the fertile land they had come from. (Flannery 1994). Tim Flannery observes that as the colonists faced the reality of the new land their initial optimism turned to “bitter disillusion”. However as they stayed and worked the land they adjusted to its limits. This process was a “long and hard period of conciliation, during which the land increasingly shapes its new inhabitants” (Flannery 1994 145) [emphasis added]. The close day-by-day contact gave the settlers a
sense of place and of identity and in reshaping its inhabitants the land became an important source of physical and spiritual sustenance for the settlers.

The question of the legitimacy of Pākehā settlement is explored in the text of Bitter Calm but Home Land asks two other questions about the settler occupation of Aotearoa/New Zealand. They are: how long does it take to call a place ‘home’; and does a home land have to be on the land itself? Set in 2004, over 160 years later than Bitter Calm, the landscape of Home Land is the postcolonial landscape. Home Land depicts a Pākehā family who have farmed their block of land for at least three generations and feel that it ‘belongs’ to them both by title and through emotional attachment. The title of the play indicates that the entity of the land will have a role in the play equal in importance to the human characters. Hilary Norris, the director of the first production of Home Land, says that the overarching theme of the play is investment in the land as the place of belonging, “I thought [it] was really important, how we all view our homes” (2006). This investment is particularly evident in the character of Ken, who ‘speaks for’ the farmers and the farmland of Aotearoa/New Zealand. Through dealing with the place of land in the lives of one farming family, the play poses questions about the continued post-settler occupation. It manifests the change in the post-settler people through the character of Ken who ‘speaks for’ the farmers and the farmland of Aotearoa/New Zealand.

The first thing that is apparent to the audience of a play called Home Land is that the land itself is absent from the stage. There is no proscenium curtain in the Fortune Theatre and what is presented to the audience, as they walk in, is a painted box set of the kitchen and lounge of a farmhouse. The door at the back of the lounge suggests other rooms in the house and a door in the back wall of the kitchen suggests egress to the outside. For those sitting on the far left hand side of the auditorium, a glimpse of a painted hill is just visible through the painted and curtained window. This small sight of the land beyond the house highlights the difficult love/hate relationship the characters have with it. However as the terrain of a hill country farm is a familiar concept in Aotearoa/New Zealand and this representation is of an form that is iconic it is easy to imagine that many of the audience will have walked across farmland like this and so will identify with Ken when he says “Yep, it looks pretty good when the sun comes up on the farm. All that frost” (Henderson 2004 90).
Yet it is also clear that the land a loved yet potentially hostile force is present outside the set, and so outside the house. The impression in the play is that the characters are, in fact, besieged by the land. The farm is distant from any settlement. It is at the end of a long rural road, has poor cell phone reception, and is now isolated by the weather. The characters comment on cold outside. It seems they have been forced to take refuge inside the painted set of the house. Both the literal set, and the house which it represents, are only a thin wall between the characters and the outside world. During the play the characters make short forays outside onto the land, but the cold forces them back to the shelter of the house. The isolation of the farm is major element in the play. The only place where Sophie, Ken’s granddaughter, can get cell phone coverage is up the hill “by the old hay barn” (Henderson 2007). There is a fundamental tension between what is ‘out there’, the rolling hill-country of the farm with its open spaces, and the claustrophobia of what is ‘in here’. The family inside is subjected to emotional pressures and clashes that buffet them with a force that is as strong as the cold weather outside, which, as a straightforward force of the natural world, is easier to deal with than are the tricky negotiations of family relationships. This living room, both a protective shield against the world and simultaneously a prison from experience, is an attempt to reveal how this “world was the primary causal factor in experience” (States 1985 66) for the characters of the play, and in its ‘standing in’ quality for the restricted and repressed aspects of Pākehā society.
Hilary Norris, director of the first production of *Home Land*, stresses that, for the family of the play, the farm “is their stake, this is their little piece of it just here and they ain’t going to give it up no matter what” (2006). Such an identity with the land springs from a love of it, and this love comes from knowing the place that one occupies ‘like the back of one’s hand’. It is this love, based on knowledge, that Ken expresses when he says, “The only thing I understand is out that window” (Henderson 2004 103). In this he is speaking for himself as a character and also for the land as an entity. Gary Henderson says:

The little tag line that I wrote for *Home Land* was about how the old guy Ken Taylor has farmed this land for forty years, knows every gully, every creek, you know, raised a family here, and […] there is a connection with it. […] I just wanted to give that sense of antiquity, that these people feel that they’ve been there a long time.

(Henderson 2007)

It is this sense of identity connected with place, which is particularly important in *Home Land*. The hope of the settlers is for a place of nurture and belonging, but the land in *Home Land* is an ambivalent force, both an object of love, and a demanding lover who can be capricious, demanding eternal vigilance and constant work. This land does provide nurture but at a personal cost.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ken</th>
<th>You get everything done</th>
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<tr>
<td>Paul</td>
<td><em>(sits)</em> Yeah. Well Graeme did […]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graeme</td>
<td>I’ve still got some work to do on the far fence. […] I gotta go into Gore for the posts.</td>
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(Henderson 2004 96-97)

The play characterises Ken as a man whose only emotional attachment in his old age is to the land. He states his reluctance to leave the farm many times. As this old man, worn out from hard work, he is an embodiment of the land, which, like Ken, is after a 150 years of intense farming no longer in its prime. Like the land, Ken too is harsh, demanding and cantankerous, needing constant unspoken, yet unconditional, love. He may be typical of a type of Pākehā: hard working, stern, taciturn and emotionally repressed. Many hill country farms were established when numerous large
estates (also called stations) were broken up after the election of the Liberal government in 1890. Subsequently, the settlers of these smaller blocks became the majority of farmers in Aotearoa/New Zealand (Eldred-Grigg 1980 131-150). They used to be called the “backbone of the country”, and are still proud of an ethic of hard work, independence and at times sheer stubbornness. When times are hard, they will wrest a living from the land, struggling because they lack the resources of the large station owners.

The scene in *Home Land* where Denise remembers a big storm, (Henderson 2004 34) references this small farm tradition of weathering a difficult time. Ken’s laconic understatement about the disaster belies the severity of the event. Paul, the city dweller from Auckland can only dimly understand this hardship associated with farming. Even Denise has difficulty coming to terms with the magnitude of the problem, yet such a storm would have meant a huge loss of income for the farm. Gary Henderson says of the scene,

> What I was intending to convey was that the financial hit that they took at that time, because she [Denise] was a child, she didn’t know, she just liked the idea that everything was iced up and yet everything was dead, and it looked so weird. […] But to a farmer, you know, if everything dies, you’re stuffed. It’s bad news.

AS I saw it as a sense of her separation, of her having moved away.

GH: Well yeah, all those things are in there.

(Henderson 2007)

Though she feels some attachment to the land, Denise regards it from a distance and her question “Years?” when told how long it took the farm to recover from the loss of the lambs in the great storm, shows the breaking of ties to the land. She represents the general move away from the land over the last half century. Aotearoa/New Zealand is now an urban, not a rural, culture. Later in the play, Ken directly accuses Denise of not understanding of how difficult farming is for the average farmer, “Bones of our arse, half the time, but you never went hungry” (Henderson 2004 103). It is another sign of her lack of connection to the land. Gary Henderson says that he “equated the
working the land to the raising of a family. [...] you know when the crops are doing well and when they’re not, and when the animals need feeding, and when they can look after themselves” (2007).

The reluctance Ken feels about leaving his land is based on the fear that he will lose status and identity. Uprooting him will destroy Ken in the same way that it will destroy a crop. He says of his farm, “Bit of mist in the trees. I won’t be seeing that again” (Henderson 2004 90). Michèle Dominy, who made a study of high country farmers, writes that the attachment they have to the land, “illustrates a generalized pattern, an exaggeration of feelings that may hold true in the down country too, in which identity is linked to place” (Dominy 2001 41-42). The stability of the family is tied to the ownership of the land. This ownership gives the family a place in the community, so nurturing the family is not just about personal attachment but also about continued presence on the land. The familial relationship of community family and land is implied in Ken’s statement, “You never went hungry.” This challenge to Denise’s understanding of how difficult farming is for the average farmer (Henderson 2004 103) reflects the importance of family, and of the family’s relationship to the land. Ken’s relationship with his daughter Denise is bitter, and perhaps the reason for that bitterness is that she has opted out of this family system. He accuses Denise of letting the family down, when she “buggered off”, making the future of the farm a little more uncertain. It is clear that he cannot understand why anyone should wish to move away from home and the land. When his granddaughter Sophie talks about going flatting, Ken asks

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Ken  What d’ you want to leave home for, anyway?
Sophie  Well I can’t live with Mum and Dad all my life.
Ken    I don’t see why you need to leave.
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(Henderson 2004 26)

To which Sophie replies, “Everyone does.” The family is a system, so the children provide the source of a continuing attachment to the land. When Sophie, Ken’s granddaughter, goes up to the old hay barn to make a cell phone call, she discovers some of the history of the farm. This is one place where four generations of Pākehā owners are tangibly inscribed on the land.

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29 Down country, used (chiefly by people in the hills) to describe the localities near town or on the plains. dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50069255 27/04/078
Sophie  I found where we carved our initials. I found Mum’s and Uncle Graeme’s, too. That hayshed must’ve been there forever.

Ken  Aw, yeah. We built it for Nana’s father when he had the farm.

(Henderson 2004 91)

However Sophie is not tied to the land. She can come and go at will, taking what the land offers her and leaving when she desires. At the end of the play she understands that, while the land has been sustaining for her grandfather and even for her mother, it will not be there for her; but this also means that she is free from the ties that the land imposes. Michèle Dominy notes that those farmers who have had a university education are much less attached to the land than their forebears (2001 116). As Ken nears the end of his life he is more prepared to accept that in a changing economic and social climate, attitudes to land and place also change, and the children may let go their ties to the land. Ken’s grandson Tim has gone to Lincoln University to study farming. If Tim doesn’t want to come back, Graeme says he will sell.

Getting some good prices round here at the moment. Lot of people from up north wanting to get away from the rat race. […] Yeah, sell the whole works. Course what they do with it after that’s up to them. Farm it, chop it up … whatever. Won’t be my problem anymore.

(Henderson 2004 82-83)

Denise, however, is horrified by the idea that the land may change hands. “The idea’s upsetting enough for me” (Henderson 2004 83), she says when Graeme suggests selling. In spite of moving away at sixteen, and living in Auckland for thirty years, her attachment to the land is one that she has been unable to break. The land is embedded in her psyche. She has a love/hate relationship with it and, just as she has been unable to completely reject her father, she has been unable to turn her back on the land.

Denise  I don’t know. Just the idea of it not being here to come home to any more.

Graeme  It hasn’t been your home for thirty years.

Denise  It’s always been here, though.

Graeme  Thanks to us bustin’ our guts over it.

(Henderson 2004 82-83)
The land has a claim on Denise which she can neither break nor resolve, but because she no longer belongs on the farm she is marginalised in the family system. When Graeme accuses her of sentimental indulgence, she responds, “You’ve got a choice about what happens to it. I’ve just got to stand by and watch it disappear from under me. “To which Graeme joins in his father’s sentiment and replies, “Whose fault is that? You buggered off” (Henderson, 2004 82-83). Denise has a nostalgic view of the farm, while Graeme’s stance is practical; the land is hard and needs constant work to maintain it. However, in regretting the loss of the farm, Denise is echoing the lost relationship with her father, one that - like her childhood on the farm - she can never regain. Michèle Dominy writes that children of high country farmers find being forced to leave the land traumatic. One informant told her that it creates a, “feeling of devastation [that] is totally emotional; I can’t explain it.” (2001 119-120). When Graeme is challenged that he has not really decided to sell, because he has not told his father about it, he backtracks. “Christ, it’s just an idea. Might never happen. No need for him to go getting all worked up about it.” (Henderson, 2004 83), Like Denise’s, Graeme’s identity is intertwined with the land.

The concept of “legitimate ownership” of the land is important in Home Land. Gary Henderson says that

[i]n the play Home Land, […] it is two words, it’s not homeland, your homeland is the country you come from, your home land is the land that you belong to, it’s that patch of land within the country; and the family in my play regard that as their home. But obviously once it wasn’t, once it had other owners, and the so-called traditional owners of the land are never mentioned in the play. And that was a conscious decision, because I want to talk about what those people felt about it.

(Henderson 2007)

But ownership of the land is essentially conditional; social, political and climatic changes can all affect its continuing occupation. Graeme’s attack on Denise is unfair, as she would have been unlikely to have inherited the farm. Michèle Dominy writes of patterns of inheritance among run holders that “ensure male-focused intergenerational continuity […] Inheritance is about [male] ownership of land […] but it is also about opportunity to take up occupations, and mostly about family continuity
on the land’ (2001 125). That is why Graeme’s jibe, “Well if you’re that bloody keen on it, make an offer. You and Paul can come down and run the place. That’d be something to see” (Henderson 2004 38), was spiteful, since the option was not practical. Denise would have not been able to take on the farm herself because, as a daughter, the opportunity to learn farming would not be offered to her. Gary Henderson, drawing from the experience of his own farming family, says that the farm is a male place.

GH In my family there are three generations of males, it went from one to the next to the next. The daughters of each family they went off and did other things. So it was the men that got the farms and the women were to marry farmers.

AS And Denise doesn’t.

GH: No Denise didn’t.

(Henderson 2007)

The tensions around the inheritance of farmland are societal, but in the play they are expressed as a clash of personal values. Denise’s position as the daughter is not an uncommon one. The land and her identity may be still linked, but, practically, Denise had few options for remaining in the district except, perhaps, to marry a farmer. She cannot explain why the idea of selling the farm is so painful, but in her decision to leave Denise exercised a common choice; a choice which was often the only one available to the marginalised daughter, as Michèle Dominy relates:

“Another high-country sister […] having realized as a girl that there was no place for her […] “sorted out other directions” for herself. Atypically, she went to university.”

(2001 123-124)

In Home Land as in Bitter Calm, land inheritance is complex. As Michèle Dominy observes, the ideal is to pass the farm on to the son. There is a suggestion, which Ken’s line, about building the hayshed for Nana’s father (Henderson 2004 91) reveals, that Ken was not the son of the farm he now owns but had married into the land. According to Michèle Dominy (Dominy 2001 113), Ken would have been
absorbed into the existing family. As the son-in-law who is able to work the land he would have become, as he has in the play, the “legitimate” male heir. This struggle to gain a place would reinforce his need to hold on to what he had worked for. Gary Henderson parallels the story line of the play with the situation in his own family.

[M]y uncle worked the farm and my mother and her sister married other people. It was my grandmother[‘s] farm … but it was her husband that did the work, […] there was a strong male line down through that farming thing, so […] the two girls are doing other stuff and the two brothers are working on the land still.

(Henderson 2007)

In the play, the problems of inheritance and the relationship of the daughters to the land are explored through Ken’s grandchildren. Graeme and Trish’s daughter Elaine has, like her aunt Denise, left the farm. Though the preferred option for Elaine is to marry one of the local lads, times have changed and she has more possibilities ahead of her. In reality the family does not expect her to come back to the farm, a change of attitude that is voiced when Trish avoids committing herself about Elaine’s future.

Denise What about Elaine?
Graeme Dunno. She had a bit of a thing going with Jeff Marshall’s oldest boy last year. They seemed pretty … you know … (to Trish) … didn’t they?
Trish Mmm, off and on.
Graeme So you never know. She might end up back in the area.
Trish See how she feels in three years, eh? Once she’s seen what else is out there.
Graeme Yeah, yeah, of course. Can’t make people do what they don’t want to.

(Henderson 2004 82)

The irony here is that though Trish’s life is connected to the land it is she who realises that the land no longer has the emotional claim on the family members that it once had. Denise on the other hand, in spite of her strong ties to the family farm, is conceptually the embodiment of the city, of Auckland on the stage. In bringing the concept of the big city into the play through the characters of Paul, Denise and Sophie, Home Land tackles the question of what the impingement of the city society world
might mean for the old rurally based culture of Aotearoa/New Zealand - a culture which was based on a rural economy. This North/South Jafa banter raises this issue of difference.

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Graeme  Early! Bloody jafas wouldn’t know early if it bit ya on the bum, would ya?

Trish  Graeme

Sophie  Ha! Funny.

(Henderson 2004 59)

The exchange is shorthand for saying that there are the old solid values, not really specified, but understood to be things like hard work, lack of self-pity, reliability and a sense of responsibility, which are characterised by the people on the farm. These values are implicitly compared with those of the smart, slick, money-hungry people, who cannot be trusted, and who live in Auckland. Hilary Norris, who was not born and bred in Aotearoa/New Zealand, sees the contrast between the old and the new as an important issue in the play:

I think that [the old] is still epitomised […] in the south, as opposed to the new New Zealand, if you like, that is probably epitomised by Auckland. […] I think that the clash of the old and the new came across extremely strongly.

(Norris 2006)

Gary Henderson explains the character’s antipathy to Auckland in terms of it being a bastard city, a term he takes from Tom Wolfe’s Bonfire of the Vanities:

It’s the loud brash moneymaking place that people love to hate, and Auckland’s like that for New Zealand. […] I don’t want to be an Aucklander […] because you’re seen by the rest of the country as a bunch of wankers.\(^{30}\)

(Henderson 2007)

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\(^{30}\) Wankers – people who make much of themselves when they have no real achievements to support their claims of importance. A worthless fellow. (Collins English Dictionary 1979)
In spite of all the social changes that are taking place both within the play, and within the real world, land is still an important marker of what it means to be Pākehā. The play explores the idea that this holds true even though in the Aotearoa/New Zealand of the twenty-first century the sense of what it means to be Pākehā is shifting. While it has demanded hard work and dedication the farm, in *Home Land* has also been a place of refuge for Ken, a refuge which is about to be taken away from him. As Hilary Norris says,

> his feet have always stood on his piece of land and he perceived that the family, in particular the Auckland branch, were invading his space and demanding that he leave it. It was of enormous heartbreak having to leave that land because it meant everything to him. And it would continue to mean everything to him.

(Norris 2006)

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ken</td>
<td>I don’t want to go.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trish</td>
<td>Don’t be silly Grampop. You’ve got a lovely sunny room waiting for you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ken</td>
<td><em>(to Trish and Graeme)</em> Don’t make me go.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graeme</td>
<td>You have to go Dad.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Henderson 2004 106)

In a significant piece of staging all the characters leave the house at the end of the play. They walk outside, away from its shelter, but also away from its conflicts, onto the land where they all stand together before going their separate ways. It is a moment of consolidation and affirmation of place. The changes that were foreshadowed at the beginning of the play have taken place. The inter-generational tie to the land is broken with Ken’s departure. But he is not dead, and so the land lives on. For now, the farm remains in the hands of the family, but the issues about what will happen to this home land are unresolved. For Denise, the farm remains the place, as Hilary Norris explains, “where her roots are […] You cannot actually escape where you were born, how you were brought up, the people that influenced you culturally” (2006). However there is now no guarantee of how long she will be able to return to that home. Like her father, she is being forced to move on, and to consider what a future home land might be.
In the process of turning space into place, cultural identities articulate themselves “through appeals to the spatial – whether real spaces, imaginary spaces, or symbolic spaces” (Keith and Pile 1993 35). *Home Land*, like *Bitter Calm*, articulates all three spaces, real, imaginary and symbolic, on the stage. For Hilary Norris this articulation is what makes the play ground-breaking because, as far as she was aware, this is the first play where a Pākehā playwright deals with the Pākehā “view of their land and their home and everything that belongs to it and is part of that culture.” *Home Land* was the first to deal “with the issue of what home and the land meant to a particular group of Pākehā both urban and rural. […] It] raised all sorts of interesting issues about how we view where we are.” The play has examined the attachment to home “even though we leave, there’s always a pull, always a draw that you cannot escape” (Norris 2006). For Ken the farm is the love of his life but in the end he has to leave and that foreshadows changes for New Zealand society in general. Though the work accepts that Ken belongs in that place it questions that continuing relationship in the characters of Denise and Sophie. Sophie, Denise’s daughter, represents the option of the integration of past and present. Denise expresses a sense of a new kind of homeland, one dependent on relationships alone, but perhaps for that very reason even more fragile.

The Pākehā relationship to Māori, and their relationship and rights to the land, is not examined in the play. David Livingstone, whose concern is the geographical representation of space, observes that maps and place name have political power because, in imaging and naming space, and the relationship of one space to another, we imagine whole cultures and assign them a relative importance (Livingstone 1998 18). Representations of culture in names and spaces contain more than just factual information. Place names are imaginative constructions indicating identities, and Aotearoa/New Zealand contains a mixture of European and Māori place names.
representing two different yet interpenetrated communities. The distribution of the names for example is particularly telling. The major centres have British names, usually English, while the Māori names mark the smaller centres. Representations of world on the stage have greater evocative potential than place names. A dramatic representation of the world in the playing space creates what Bert O. States calls “destiny, the visual proof that order lurks in human affairs” (1995 69). It can of course also be proof of disorder. Gary Henderson, who very properly says his work is his own opinion, says the Māori relationship to the land was not included because

the only place it would arise would be off some external influence like something on TV or the Auckland guy saying something, about Māori or talking about the ownership of the land and I felt that would have been forced because it wasn’t what the play was about. (Henderson 2007)

This lack of concrete discussion does not mean a lack of presence. The cultural knowledge of the audience would mean that they would be aware that the land on which the farm sits had “other owners”” (Henderson 2007), Māori. This knowledge is part of Pākehā understanding of the land and creates various tensions depending on individual attitudes and experience. For some Pākehā the tensions are negative, for other the understanding of the connection is positive, an attitude that is one of the influences in Fishnet.

Fishnet: Land in the subconscious

While the Pākehā relationship with the land is clearly based on practical use it is also informed by two sensibilities: the settler encounter with the Māori attitude to te whenua (the land), which is, broadly speaking, that of the land as a sacred entity (Smith 1987), and the European (English) landscape sensibility that Peter Ackroyd describes as the “recognition of landscape as an organic being with its own laws, growth and change” (2002 70). In the process of making a physical adaptation to place, Pākehā have irrevocably changed the land but also reoriented themselves towards the local environment. As they refocused away from Europe towards Aotearoa/New Zealand, Pākehā began to re-evaluate the worth of the indigenous landscape.

The formation of the conservation movement has promoted the concept of the uniqueness of the landscape of Aotearoa for over a hundred years. The first conservation society, the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of New Zealand,
was founded in 1923. Yet the process of understanding and revaluing the landscape has been slow. “How long does it take to be embedded in the landscape […] to have a sense of place?” asks choreographer of Fishnet Lyne Pringle, how long to understand “the changes in the climate, maybe after five generations then you really are starting to understand that, but it probably takes that long” (2005). However, as the desire to preserve the local landscape has grown, some local plants, for example flax, kauri, rata and pohutukawa, have acquired an iconic status. Philip Simpson’s book Dancing Leaves, which is about ti kouka (the cabbage tree), details some of the post-settler revaluing of local plants. For example he writes that ti kouka has gained “value as a symbol or image of particular regions or of New Zealand as a nation” (2000 170). Used as synecdoche in works of art, local plants represent the idea of the landscape of Aotearoa/New Zealand.

![Figure 28 Video image of Ti Kouka leaves used in Fishnet version one. Permission Jan Bolwell.](image)

It is this understanding of the place of the land in Pākehā consciousness that is explored in Fishnet, which employs local symbols both as a sign of localness/locality, and as a way to express the importance of seeking a new vision in the new land. The landscape of Aotearoa/New Zealand is embedded in this work to such a degree that ideas which come from the land are displayed without any sense of disruption to the major themes of the work. For example, the title of the work conjures up images of food-gathering, as well as the more overt sexual ideas. The dancers bring iconographic elements such as harakeke (flax leaves) and the dried bleached cow bones to the stage creating a metonymic idea of land. While both flax and bones are concrete objects on the stage the items also demand a response to a series of other values that lie beneath
their surface. *Ti Kouka* speaks of the specific location, of Aotearoa/New Zealand, of uniqueness and of history.

The choice of *harakeke* is significant as this common local wetland plant is an important cultural symbol for Māori and carries with it traces of the Māori cosmology. It is also a plant which played a significant part in the early rural and industrial Pākehā economy of Aotearoa/New Zealand. *Harakeke* and *ti kouka* are common to an audience familiar with the landscape of Aotearoa/New Zealand and the bleached bones of sheep and cattle are to be found in the rural landscape, especially where it borders on country that is not farmed. This impression of the land, which is stamped on the work, has to do with the lived experiences of the Pākehā choreographers of the work. Lyne Pringle says,

> even if you live in a city you’re surrounded by this extraordinary land, [...] If I go back to my own roots [...] over the back fence there were paddocks, and there were extraordinary landscapes, and they are embedded in me. [...] We come back to those natural objects, [...] It’s a starting point for the piece and the work’s also about that coming back to that sort of natural environment.

*(Pringle 2005)*

Kilda Northcott also feels the landscape of her childhood is reflected in their work.

> I grew up in the Bay of Plenty in a small town, near a river and a lake and a mountain and the sea, [...] we are here in New Zealand, and really wanting to bring those things into our work, and we are surrounded by the flaxes and the [landscape].

*(Northcott 2007)*

The dancers use particular plants *harakeke*, or *ti kouka*, because they are easily obtainable and because of the meanings these plants create when on the stage. Lyne Pringle suggests the flax creates complex metaphors in the way that they work with it. They require themselves to consciously “inhabit it [...] so that it brings them] back to that connection to the environment, that you’re really making an effort to bring that natural world into the theatre, that’s not just unconscious” (2005). While cabbage trees
and flax are common, they are also the symbols of a lost land, of the primal time, before anyone settled in this country. In that sense harakeke and ti kouka represent, for Pākehā New Zealanders, an antiquity in this country that they, the Pākehā, do not share. They tell of a history that is not Pākehā, but yet permeates Pākehā consciousness.

In the section illustrated below, Lyne Pringle and Kilda Northcott demonstrate this complex metaphor created by using the flax in combination with images drawn from neo-classical European ideas and also images from advertising and film. Kilda, who has already been described as a tongue-tied goddess earlier in the work, stands goddess-like on her plinth. Mythically, whether Greek (e.g. Demeter), Celtic (e.g. Ernmas), Māori (Papa-tu-a-nuku31) or from other mythologies, goddesses are associated with the land, life, death and harvest. As a Pākehā dancer, Kilda is closer to a Greek image of a goddess than to a Māori one, so she also evokes the idea of the Western tradition of classical goddess statues. Lyne Pringle reinterprets this goddess image. By using the bundle of harakeke leaves to sweep around the floor, Lyne Pringle is imitating domestic, and other settler, uses of this plant. She presents an image of a home-maker, a woman who might venerate the goddess. Sweeping in a circle carries resonances of earliest times, of the ritual dances of hunter-gatherer societies and the gathering and threshing of grain. The circle dance was perhaps the earliest form of theatre. Bert O. States notes that, “Our feeling is that there is a connection between theatre as ritual, and the symbolism of food” (1985 39). But instead of bearing flowers, or baking, to lay at the goddess’s feet, Lyne uses her bundle of harakeke as a weapon. In this action in one image she combines both the domestic nurturing goddess and the warrior goddess – a protector of her land and resources. As she turns, Lyne moves and twists this bundle as if it were a taiaha. In this movement she is employing a form approximating the wero, the challenge of greeting given on a marae. This challenge, familiar both through exposure to pōwhiri (welcome) on marae and/or through being seen on TV, can be interpreted as both a ritual of greeting, a statement of possible hostility, an opportunity for connection and understanding and, most importantly, as an indigenous ritual. The harakeke, doubling as a broom and a taiaha, gives the plant an artistic re-usage in a Pākehā context which in its combination of the beating flax and the mute classical statue of a goddess also contains suggestions about the use and abuse of the land.

31 Earth mother and wife of Rangi-nui. All living things originate from them. (Te Māhuri Study Guide (Ed. 1): 39-42;) accessed 20/08/08
Figure 29 Lynne using the flax as a taiaha. From video - permission John Irwin.
Chapter Seven Land – The Character Who Does Not Come On

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Performance Elements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lyne enters through the door at the back of the set in a blaze of light. She carries a bundle of flax leaves which she sweeps around the floor and then turns and twists it as if it were a taiaha. She circles around the “goddess” Kilda who is standing on her plinth. Lyne’s swirling movements expand to fill up the stage.</td>
<td>A bright light streams through the open door in the wall back left of the stage. Lyne, like the goddess on the plinth, appears to be a mythic woman evoking images of matriarchy, goddess worship, and witches. General lighting fills the stage and the performance space is expanded. The door at the back of the stage remains open to the “outside” letting in another source of light. The soundscape is made up of percussive sounds, with some voices. As Lyne moves the flax, the tempo increases, and the soundscape becomes high pitched. These sounds are made up of legato sliding sounds with a percussive element. There is the sound of the flax hitting the floor but there are no words. While there are no words the visual text references European and Maori mythology.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Northcott 2004; Pringle 2004)

The local usage of language and symbol creates a structure of cultural experience32 (after Raymond Williams “structure of feeling”) (1961 48). “Theatre is the one place where society collects in order to look in upon itself as a third personal other” writes Bert O. States (1985 39). When the audience survey of the performance asked, “Were there local objects or movements which you recognised as representative of Aotearoa/New Zealand?” eighty-three out of one hundred and thirteen people

32 I am indebted to Dr Suzanne Little for this succinct definition
Chapter Seven Land – The Character Who Does Not Come On

mentioned the flax as a representative icon that made the work seen local in its intent. Certainly the flax combined with Lyne’s ‘housewife’ dress costume from the 1950s effectively blends in one image the culture from the settlers’ origins and culture from twentieth century Aotearoa/New Zealand.

The scene not only presents immediate images of the natural world, the open door at the back of the stage suggests an entry to another world as well. From this other world Lyne the sweeper and gatherer emerges born from the dark of the black back wall. This dark space is a configuration of the earth mother herself and in emerging from that place of darkness Lyne is the personification of that mother in her crop-bearing aspect. This role is a fusion of Papa-tu-a-nuku and Demeter, the Greek goddess of crops and fertility. It is a representation of the now – the flax is cut ready for a practical use – and a mythic representation of the past and the future. Later, in the Shaman Section, the dancers explicitly state that they are

the passing of time culmination of wisdom [...] Dancing of the spheres, turning of the earth, crone energy, the weaving of the fate, and detritus of storm. [...] Exploiting the natural world to bring an aliveness into the sterile black space. The flax lives and reflects but it will soon die a theatrical death on the heads of these two wanna-be shamans.

(Pringle 2004; Northcott 2004)

In the shaman section too the flax will be used also beat the ground until the dancers fade into the blackout at the end of the piece – a combination of ancient and Christian ideas of death and rebirth as well as a practical end to the performance.

If the flax speaks of a synchronic adaptation to the new environment, the cow bones remind the audience that the wave of settlers from Europe has wrought enormous changes in the process of adaptation. The sight of bleached bones evokes not only the rural landscape but also the death of the animals, plants and people that such adaptation involves. Like the flax, the cow bones are a multivocal symbol which can evoke a different set of responses in town or country dwellers. They are symbolic of colonisation, the conversion of the bush to pasture, and the replacement of birds with stock. The pelvic circle is bleached and dry, and in this stage symbolises both life and death, the cycles of sowing and reaping. Audience members who completed the survey at the Dunedin performances of Fishnet in 2006 also specifically mentioned the cow
bones as being evocative of Pākehā culture. Lyne Pringle notes that while “it’s easy to be clichéd and say, that where you are pervades what you do, I feel more and more strongly this sense of place defines what I create” (2005).

Figure 30 Cow Pelvis, symbol of birth and of farming. From video - permission John Irwin.

Mike Pearson and Michael Shanks consider that, just as the significance of a landscape is unfolded through all the elements of that site, the effects of time, human marking, and stories told about the place, so scenography is understood by a complex process. When we are part of a performance we bring “the multidimensional temporality of memory, event and narrative” (2001 55) the interweaving of various time systems, to the work. As Arnold Aronson states, just as we read a book “so too must we recognize that a particular arrangement of space is a stage and that somehow, when looking at that arrangement of space, we are seeing our world” (2005 104). Though the Pākehā relationship to the land is important in all the works, the land itself can never be a tangible performance experience but must remain an idea in the minds of the audience. In Bitter Calm, the main issue for the settlers of Motuarohia Island is the conquest of the land. It has been acquired through unfair sale, bloodshed, and conquest and murder. But though the ideas of the violence may linger in the Pākehā psyche, the settlers did build a sense of place on personal ownership of the land. Home Land reflects on the nature of that place. The dwellers on the Southland farm are not dealing with issues of wresting the land from its original owners or even of breaking in the farm, but of considering how the characters might find a place to belong and, in so
doing, asking: where is the place any modern citizen of Aotearoa/New Zealand might truly call home? The question is how the more recent arrivals, arrivals in Aotearoa/New Zealand who are not tāngāta whenua, can come to know themselves. The events which have shaped the land remain in the consciousness of all the people connected to any particular piece of land. As cultural theorist Steve Pile writes, “the importance of experience cannot be denied, but it relies on a strong sense of who you are and where you are” (Keith, Pile 1993 224). The difficulty is in knowing exactly who and where you are. In this respect of knowing who and where you are, *Fishnet* deals with a land represented by symbols, one that is a concept embedded the Pākehā psyche. The artists draw on their consciousness of the land and seek to draw an instinctive response from their audiences. Māori have a centuries-long history in this land.
Chapter Eight

Discussion: Staging a World-view

This work is concerned with the way the selected performance works present a cosmology of Pākehā cultural identity and how in so doing they make the absent, missing or repudiated aspects of Pākehā cultural identity, as well as the positive, applauded ones, present within the multilayered and interactive medium of theatrical performance. A cosmology or world-view, which consists both of contemplation of the world and a view of the way life is lived in the world (Oxford Dictionary On Line 2007), is constructed from the way that a culture sees itself, as itself, and in relation to those who are not part of it. The theatrical version of a world-view presented in this work, though not solipsistic, is subjectively created as the ‘imaginary’ worlds of performance, which are only concretised on the stage when they are interpreted by performers and received by audiences (Pavis 1992 38). The selected works explore the local social interactions of Pākehā in Aotearoa/New Zealand, and in so doing make the Pākehā “imagined community” (Anderson 1991) of Aotearoa/New Zealand present on the stage, and thus reflect a Pākehā world-view in the imaged world of theatrical performance.

Theatre, an aesthetic detachment from daily living, and an imitative art, reveals our involvement in daily life through making the imitation of daily life explicit. By this means theatre reveals how each one of us is involved in the other person(s) who reveal us back to ourselves (Wilshire 1982 ix). Through representing to themselves what they wish they might be, and what they hope to become, cultures attempt to present the fundamental truths about themselves; fundamental in the sense that they strip themselves bare to gaze on the most honest reflection that they are able to construct without being able to take a step outside of themselves to take a long view of ‘the way things are’.

Understanding the world through imitation

Pākehā theatre performance artists use the basic theatrical ideas about character and representation to place cultural identity on the stage. The construction of a particular point of view, whether it is that of actor or spect-actor (Boal 1995 13), is at the heart of all theatrical performance, which takes reality to “transform it” in order to reveal “its potential” (Schechner 1988 229-230). Through the mimetic (imitative)
faculty characters portray idiosyncrasies which are common to particular human beings, and at the same time present the worldview of the particular group to which the actors belong. At a third level characters disclose concepts about humanness that are so widely prevailing as to be archetypal, these are ideas related to the traditional mythic representations, and are conveyed through heroes and villains.

In an older world such imitations created through mimesis had supernatural power but even in a world where everything is “socially constructed” (Kvale 1996 41) the ability to create imitations, that is carefully delimited copies of aspects of the ceaseless stream of life, enables human beings to create a vision of order in the essential chaos of time and space. It is through the action of mimesis, writes Michael Taussig that “we nevertheless get on with living, pretending – thanks to the mimetic faculty – that we live facts, not fictions” (1993 xv) [emphasis added].

The gift of the mimetic faculty, writes Michael Taussig, is “the exuberance with which it permits the freedom to live reality as really made-up” (1993 255). In part in performance this exuberance arises from the fact that, as both actors and audience engage in “trying on Otherness” (Taussig 1993 33) empty intentions become partially filled in the co-created entity of the character (Boal 1995). Reflecting on this capacity which human beings possess to mirror and copy the world, Michael Taussig suggests that the importance of the mimetic faculty lies in its ability to allow human beings to gain control over its mysterious or threatening aspects of life. As

the nature that culture uses to create second nature, the faculty to copy, imitate, make models, explore difference, yield into and become Other [...] [t]he wonder of mimesis lies in the copy drawing on the character and power of the original, to the point whereby the representation may even assume that character and that power. In an older language, this is “sympathetic magic”.

(Taussig 1993 xiii)

Bert O. States also describes the theatre as centred on the creation of a form of magic presence, manifest in the character which the actor creates in performance. The audience ‘know’ that the character is not the actor but separate.
the I of the actor is not at all the I of the character he is playing, the voice that keeps saying, “I, I, I” throughout the play. The actor […] is visible in the effortless hard work that produces on the actor’s brow beads of perspiration that do not belong to the character.

(States 1985 124)

The audience is thus able to project their own construction onto the character and psychically “stand in” for character as the character “stands in” for the audience (Wilshire 1982 43). This ‘standing in’ for society is a key aspect of both drama and ritual. Victor Turner, describing the processes of social drama (1974 33) which underlie the development of ritual, notes that a key facet of ritual is this fact that a person, animal or thing “stands in” for the community (1969, 1986). The substitute acts, or is acted upon, for the good outcome for the group. Victor Turner (1982 114), suggests that theatre, like ritual, is a process of physical substitution where the body of the actor “stands in” for the audience. In the performance process a group of particular bodies (actors,) expresses aspects of the wider body of the community. It is, writes Bert O. States,

the true source of the sacrificial depth of playing: the actor is someone like us who consents to serve as the channel through which the poet’s art can be brought out of the realm of imitation and briefly detained, for our narcissistic pleasure, in the realm of being.

(States 1985 128-129)

The actor alone acts and bears the brunt of the proceedings in the performance, thus enabling the audience, through the actor’s body, to kinetically participate in the emotion of the theatre event. Therefore, although the audience are spectators, they are also what Augusto Boal calls spect-actors (1995 13), participants in the events and in their response they contribute towards the creation of the character on the stage, though they are not themselves, literally, on the stage. In this way the audience are participants in a conversation between themselves and the characters, between the world of the auditorium and the world of the stage whether that world is presented in the form of naturalism or couched in abstract terms.

The magical ordering of the world described by Michael Taussig (1993 xiii) is similar to that outlined by Peter Brooks (1995) in his analysis of melodramatic literature. Writing about the power of the melodramatic novels of Honoré de Balzac
and Henry James, Peter Brooks suggest that by focusing on the social conflicts and dark desires of human interaction, literature and drama make present in the world [...] forces we sense within ourselves. We both want to believe, and yet cannot wholly credit, that we live on the brink of the abyss, the domain of occult forces which, for "bliss or bale," infuse an intenser meaning into the life we lead in everyday reality.

(Brooks 1995 205)

It is the mimetic faculty which creates tame images of the hostile forces that threaten human existence. By co-inhabiting with those dark forces, and re-presenting them to themselves in a form that human beings control, it is possible to gain some control over them. Elemental forces such as fire, earthquake, flood, drought, and human forces such as anger, hate, despair and greed, that can neither be controlled nor understood, are made bearable, through the actions of naming and storytelling. As was discussed in chapter three, theatre works with time and space. The psychic awareness that they exist in an environment of both space and time, which are both constantly changing, makes people shrink away from the vastness of these conceptions. Benjamin Hunningher observes that play “creates order to bring a certain part of the chaotic world under control” (1968 54) and theatre performs a similar function, creating a space in existence in which, although it is only an ‘as if’ space, both the audience and the actors are given the illusion of control through the ordered presentation of the space. By capturing the ideas of vastness and the totality of human existence theatre creates an ordered psychic place out of unmeasurable space. As with play, with its security of time and space, so with theatre, in these imaginary spaces people take, (temporarily at least,)

that part of space to which we can have access and so isolate it and so set up reverberations within it that we can get some sense of the totality and of our place within it. We must try – and fail – to bound the boundless if we would reveal it. [The enclosure created by theatrical space means that] “a place of geography is transformed to become a place for presenting” [emphasis added].

(Wilshire 1982 201)
The fencing in of the world by theatrical means is both literal and psychological. Literally placing these powerful stories within the confines of the story circle, or of the theatre, renders them less powerful. While the situations and set in a naturalistic play such as *Home Land* may appear ‘real’, because they may provoke the audience’s recall of similar physical or emotional circumstances in their own lives, in fact they are manifestly false. The audience’s ability to audit psychic processes taking place in front of them and within themselves (Wilshire 1982 198) prevents their total absorption in the performance. An audience member can admire the skill of the actor who is being the character. At the same time the actor’s non-acting self remains present. This double presence helps to preserve a distance for the actor from the being of the character. This is important for the audience. At the same time as the audience become involved in the events of the play they can also know that it is just a play, and that at the end Ken will take off his makeup and the actor will walk into the street. If, however, the character and the actor were one and the same the audience could, and maybe would, object to the actions that ‘hurt’ the character. As Stuart Hoar observes “[a]n accident on stage, real human pain, means the play must be stopped and the victim helped” (1988 10), thus breaking the ‘magic’ power of the drama. 

Psychologically, because the actor and the character are not one and the same person though they inhabit the same body, both audience and actors are able to ‘pretend’ the unthinkable, the murder of one’s parents for example, or the destruction of the world, and in that process of pretence (potentially) render the event harmless.

Michael Taussig suggests that the ability to make the intangible present is an attribute that the modern Western world does not sufficiently value. Reflecting on the spirit world of the Cuna Indians he wonders “what’s it like to live in the world we have lost, a mimetic world when things had spirit-copies” (1993 100). Maurice Merleau-Ponty also observes of such a world that

> [t]he daemon of rain is present in every drop which falls after the incantation, as the soul is present in each part of the body. [...] because things are taken for the incarnation of what they express, [...] their human significance is compressed into them and presents itself literally as what they mean.

(Taussig 2004 388)
Melodrama is a theatrical form which highlights the attempt to control hostile forces, particularly destructive human urges. This form deals with a black and white, essentially hostile universe (Brooks 1995). The melodramatic mode is utilised by the heightened world of opera. “[M]imetic excess provides access to understanding the unbearable truths of make-believe as foundation of an all-too-seriously serious reality, manipulated but also manipulatable” (Taussig 1993 255).

For a society to know facts about itself through the medium of performance is to know them in two ways. It knows them both through a whole larger than that of the individual, and to know them in a way that is capable of stretching across time and space. As works of performance engage representationally with the idea that, “the “substance” of human life is worldly and communal [... and] past and present are given presence simultaneously in the self” (Wilshire 1982 48), constructed and transformed theatrical representations of Pākehā society make all the participants in performance aware of their relationship to world revealed on the stage. The simultaneous presence of past, present and future is designed to produce a reaction that means their relationship to the ‘real’ world can no longer be unreflective. Through participating in theatrical performance “one becomes aware that one is a being in the world. One becomes aware of oneself as aware, interpreting and free” (Wilshire 1982 xii). Performance practitioners understand that in the re-creation of the world, which is theatrical performance, the potential of the world is uncovered. It is the ““as if,” quality which is at the heart of the theatrical process” (Schechner 1988 230) which causes this revelation as “[p]eople make what isn’t there, combine elements from fantasy, actualise situations that occur only as art or performance” (ibid.).

The questions now arise, can Pākehā theatre adopt forms which are more closely aligned to the styles of performance originating in this land, without simply appropriating Māori cultural capital or, on the other hand, if Pākehā theatre remains within the forms it inherits from Western theatre can it speak truly about itself? Stephen Turner expresses very similar concerns about difference, and speaking about ourselves differently, when he describes the problems that beset critical discussion targeted at audiences beyond the local. He labels this problem the metropolitan effect which “does not seem located, does not seem to come from anywhere” (Turner 2001 69). His conceptual description of this effect is of it as emanating not from a place but from a force-field (2001 90), which both radiates ideas and draws local expression of
difference into its midst. He suggests that if you live at the border, as New Zealanders do, then your ideas about yourself are always related to the ideas about being that radiate from that ‘metropolitan’ force-field. They so invade local thinking that “everything is subject to this projection, as if there is no difference between here and there, you and me” (2001 69). Therefore, to speak authoritatively about who one is, one needs to use terms that have come from there, and the problem inherent in this is that one’s localness may simply disappear, becoming “a universal local, a universal margin? A margin like any other margin, just another other” (ibid.). Stephen Turner also suggests that the problem is not only that a society cannot speak of itself beyond its own borders in its local terms, but that once a society begins trying to speak of itself in more than national terms it also loses its own sense of its own localness. Auckland for example “may be just another metropolis” (2001 69), a situation which makes it very hard to suggest then that New Zealand can reflect upon itself as a “non-metropolitan space” (ibid.). The question behind this consideration is: if the borderland is a site of creativity, will becoming “metropolitan” destroy the ability to seeing the world in a new way?

It is true that discussion about local Pākehā identity, about what Stephen Turner terms local knowing and “a feeling for non- metropolitan space, an outside space” (2001 69), cannot be phrased in purely local ways. As suggested in chapter four, the lack of a local Pākehā language is part of the problem, as is working with imported concepts. Certainly, performatively Pākehā theatre can take concerns which are local and reconfigure them inside the forms received from Europe. In the case of the dance theatre work *Fishnet* it is possible to see the physical as well as the thematic blending of two performance traditions. However, maybe the ultimate performance expression of local Pākehā knowledge may be built on the understanding that while we continue to be in constant communication with the force-field of the Western world we are also truly “marginal, peripheral, perhaps far-away” (2001 69) and use that to advantage. In this way, rather than discussing who we are in terms of “ metropolitan imaginary” (ibid.), we may be able to present ourselves to ourselves as “local, a place or neighbourhood that is already the object of greater understanding” (Turner 2001 69), because it has some understandings about itself. It is these understandings revealed in the selected works that are the central concern of this thesis.
Chapter Eight Discussion: Staging a World-view

Pākehā, their ‘Other’ and theatrical performance

Though the ‘other’ has often been characterized as the negative elements of the self, in fact the concept is neutral. The ‘other’ is an important element of mythic stories and is the means for distinguishing between the ‘us’ and the ‘not us,’ those outside the group. It may be that the other does contain repressed and desired elements, but it may also be the Other is simply different, strange not quite understood. The Other is that which is not ‘I’ or ‘us’ but is an acknowledged and important aspect of the self (Andrews 2009 14).

This thesis therefore deals with different forms of othering. Pākehā, a hybrid people define themselves in terms of Māori, the indigenous ‘Other’, and also in terms of those European peoples from whom they have descended. For Pākehā the idea of Europe contains a consciously imitated difference which is valued, rather than a repressed difference which is feared (Choudhury 2000 132-160). A third form of everyday other is found in those who are not ‘me’ and whom ‘I’ define ‘myself’ against on a daily basis. Finally this thesis deals with two types of theatrical other; the dramatic other, often characterised in opposites, man – woman, bad – good, likeable – repugnant and the othering of the theatrical engagement between performers and audience.

Contained within the idea of other is the notion of a divide. One of the tasks of theatre is to work through the difficulties of the divided self and of the divided society as it, theatre, struggles with the questions of whether or not the individual can authorise themselves (Wilshire 1982 135). An essential divide in Aotearoa/New Zealand is the division between Māori and Pākehā. Yet a unity also exists within that division for Pākehātāngā exists only in relation to Māoritāngā; the two amalgamated cultural identities being mutually dependent. Among the selected works only Bitter Calm explicitly deals with the relationship between Māori and Pākehā on stage but, as has been discussed, this relationship lies in the background of the works Home Land, and Fishnet.

These selected performance works therefore demonstrate ideas of Pākehā cultural identity as an identity which contains aspects of both the Other, and the other. The idea of relationship with Māori as Other in set out chapter four was developed from the work of Stuart Hall (1996) and Lawrence Grossberg (1996). The discussion there
considered the idea that cultural identity always contains an ‘Other’ which Laurence Grossberg terms the “supplement” (1996 90), and this “supplement” carries a set of characteristics which an existing cultural identity negotiates, either incorporating them, or relegating them to the outside. *Bitter Calm* reveals ideas about the way living in Aotearoa/New Zealand alongside Māori has affected the post-European settlers manifesting ideas of a cultural other in the ‘exotic Māori Other’ of the character of Matiu the young Māori hero and the ‘lover’ who is classically both desired and repudiated by the settlers. *Bitter Calm* also provides a personal border against which the central (settler) characters define themselves. This border is presented through the character of Thomas Bull who has many of the traits of a classic melodrama villain a role which reveals feared attributes of the self, embodied in a personal, other thus making the dark side of human nature present on the stage. In terms of catharsis, containing both the traits of the Other and the villainous traits within the characters makes it safe to consider how these attributes affect daily life and are part of the essential self. As the task of the opera is to consider the nature of the society which produces it, the characters in the opera, though settlers from 1841, reflect modern concerns. As the work moves to a presentation of Aotearoa as not ‘home’ but the “place where you die” (Blake 1994) it reveals a fracture in the relationship of Pākehā and Europe, for this society has a likeness to its place of origin that has become unalike.

Interestingly, as discussed in chapter four, one of the objections to the use of the word Pākehā is that it is a word which comes from the Other. This response entails the rejection of the Other who is an intrinsic part of the culture of this land, the Other against which Pākehā are conscious or unconsciously represented both in the world and in the ‘worlds’ of theatre. The rejection of the name Pākehā also reflects the manner in which the Other of Europe is inextricably woven into the conscious of the post-colonial occupants of Aotearoa/New Zealand. This dual nature of the cultural others is expressed in all the selected works. It appears both in the European performance forms which they employ, and their use of local, and at times, Māori imagery. It is the use of local themes and iconography which anchors the works in Aotearoa/New Zealand. However the use of imported forms is not without its own problems as Hilary Halba notes in relation to bi-cultural theatre:
Given that the authorising voices in theatre up to the late twentieth
century have been mainly euro-centric, it is useful to question whether
bicultural theatre provides yet another form of oppression whereby
Māori (sic) culture might only ‘speak through’ the Pākehā (sic) (theatre)
forum, and self-articulate only as that forum articulates (2006).

Though at first it may not seem obvious, Pākehā theatre is in a similar bind. The
form and forums of Europe have long dictated the shape and matter of theatre works
produced by Pākehā theatre artists in Aotearoa/New Zealand so in that sense Pākehā
theatre may be seen as ‘speaking through’ Europe. However, while modern cultural
identities are unstable hybrids, it is not necessary to construe such instability and
hybridity as negative. Hybridity, which results from the coming together of mixed,
heterogeneous and/or incongruous elements, is a powerful creative impetus. Just as the
elements of light and dark meet on stage, and in that meeting produce the lighting
‘mood’ of Fishnet, so in the borderland of Aotearoa, settler contact with the tāngāta
whenua and their culture, combined with the physical translocation to a new land,
influenced the European world-view of the post-settler generations to produce a hybrid
culture, Pākehā. The hybridity is also evident in the worlds of performance. The forms
which are essentially European remain substantially unaltered in their use in Pākehā
theatre, making Pākehā theatre structurally unlike bicultural or Māori theatre which has
developed new forms such as Theatre Marae. Bicultural theatre is one “in which
tikanga Māori (sic) is audibly, visibly and spatially given primacy” (Halba 2006 52).

However what does differentiate a Pākehā theatrical performance from a
European one is the thematic material. One of the themes in three of the selected works is
an examination of the relationship of Pākehā to the land and the tāngāta whenua. The
progression from rejecting them as totally alien to integrating some of the Otherness of
Māori and a coming to terms with the ‘other’ quality of the land itself can be seen in
Bitter Calm, Home Land and Fishnet. In terms of the land the settler relationship to it and
its indigenous people are the main issues in Bitter Calm, an ambivalent love-hate
relationship with the land is central to Home Land, while in Fishnet integrates the land
and the tāngāta whenua as part of the consciousness of the Pākehā performance artists.
While these three performance works use various means to make visible the relationship
of the characters/personae to the society they represent, the work of Andrew London is
less self-aware in this sense. He speaks from an embeddedness in Pākehā society and
though he critiques that world, unlike the characters of *Bitter Calm* he does not question his place in it. His role is different. As the licensed fool his job is to critique this society from within its world-view. His stance can be seen as a (temporary) end position for he is not considering the process of adjustment to a new place, but unselfconsciously satirising the world he sees around him. Aotearoa/New Zealand is the world in which he lives his everyday life. His work proceeds from the perspective of the post-settler occupant of this country, revealing that a section at least of Pākehā New Zealand has come of age and is no longer afraid to talk critically about itself (2005). His ridicule of its faults, like his focus on excessive consumption, applies to all New Zealanders. For him the other is the other of everyday difference. These understandings, along with the heritage of the Western performance idiom and thematic concerns, are the wellsprings from which a Pākehā performance language and focus springs, and from which Pākehā performance artists can draw artistic inspiration and sustenance.

**The triangle nature of otherness in theatre**

Within theatrical performance itself the other is the third part of the movement between the ‘I’ of the performer and the ‘not-I’ of the character. It is the ‘you’ of the audience which is necessary to complete the circle. Theatre allows the audience to enjoy the double-edged pleasure of watching the performer being simultaneously I and not-I without the danger of being completely engulfed in the world created on the stage. Bert O States articulates the actuality of our involvement in the world of theatre when he writes that art is neither an imitation of reality nor an activity which bears no relation to reality at all. When mimetic theory tries to find out exactly what art is representing by going back to its source material which may be a set of abstract ideas or truths, or in some field of essences of archetypes, the theory is looking in the wrong place. The most important sentence ever written about drama, Aristotle’s definition of tragedy, as the imitation of an action, contains the whole range of mimetic theory’s frustrations and ambiguity.

(States 1985 5)

An imitation means that something outside the performance is being imitated but in a very real way, when performance draws on the ‘real’ world performance is essentially creating itself. Therefore the action of the drama refers to “something inside
the play, an “indwelling form,” a “soul” an “order of event,” etc., and so the term imitation takes on a second character as “the medium in which the work presents its representation” (States 1985 5).

Bruce Wilshire (1982) suggests that our fascination with performance comes from our fascination with ourselves, and with our relationship to others in our world. The actions which we perform in life are based on imitation; we learn how to be in the world by copying the actions first performed before by others. This mimetic function of life continues to occur concurrently when we are audience members with the mimetic function taking place in performance. Theatre which is concerned both with the audience becoming involved in the event, and with the characters standing in for the audience, draws us into itself. As it represents us to ourselves, it contemplates one of the basic questions of human individuation, ‘where do I stop and where do others begin’; questions which, as Bruce Wilshire writes, “are enduring aspects of our existence as human beings” (1982 43). He expands on this idea as follows, “one is mimetically in the other’s presence and is authorized in one’s being by others” (Wilshire 1982 209).

In imitating life, theatrical performance presents itself as a separate entity with a life of its own. It is in a world within this world that both the actors and the audience participate. This double mimetic event is not only true for the audience it is also true for the actor who is engaged in the action of “mimetically-participating-in-the-other” (1982 204), while at the same time performing themselves. One of the purposes of this engagement is to enable those in the audience to consider how they themselves are being mimetically portrayed by the performer while they, as audience, also perform themselves mimetically in ‘real’ life. It is the combination of consideration and mimetic ability which enables the audience to empathise with the characters, to ‘stand in’ for them, as the character ‘stands in’ for each member of the audience.

As Peter Brook says as soon as the actor enters the empty space something happens (1968 11). The event that takes place is not just found in the words and gestures of the performers, it also exists in the mimetic engagement of the audience. This becomes so intense that at the end of the play the other life it creates has been, “peculiarly inserted into our own here and how, which has produced the effect of an entelechial completion, dimly like the effect of an out-of-body experience in which we are presumably able to see themselves from an impossible distance” (States 1985 152).
Thus through their active engagement across the space between them both audience and actor learn more about themselves as they “engage in an incarnated imaginative variation on the meaning of human being and doing. Together they experiment on the nature and extent of mimetic involvement, identification, and sympathy – and on how these relate to an individual’s identity” (Wilshire 1982 24). By using the same mimetic process while watching performance that we use in real life, we, as audience, are able to think of the character who leaves the stage

as going elsewhere in the same world. In the wings, he continues to live in the dotted-line realm of etcetera behavior, moving (if we happen to think of him at all) more or less at that same momentum that took him out of the play.

(States 1985 151)

It is this sense of continuance which the audience gives to the performers, that they also give to themselves, experiencing as Bruce Wilshire (1982) writes, past and present, memory and anticipation as part of a total being, thus experiencing their lives as a continuum. Each member of the audience is the main actor in their own life, which is, through the faculties of memory, lodged within them. The continued presence of memory and anticipation contains “the whole mystery of time and memory” (States 1985 152). This natural human state is utilised in theatre as a whole life “is condensed, miraculously, into the two hour traffic of a play. The thing we call our self – the “I” that is always speaking, the eye that is always perceiving – has its analogue in the drama in the fact that Hamlet is always Hamlet” (States 1985 152). Even though at a deep psychological level we may be concerned with the problem of how much our identity is involved with the existence and identities of others, one of the great pleasures and reliefs (in both the senses of assistance and release) of performance is that even when it is enacted in the midst of spectacularly faithful illusion, even when willing suspension of disbelief is considered, it is hard escape the notion that this is a performance. As the ability to audit psychic processes and be aware of observing fictions being presented as facts comes into play the audience ‘know’ that the character is not the actor, so they are watching a meaningful but an illusionary world.
Chapter Eight Discussion: Staging a World-view

Using illusion to present a cultural world

The illusion on which works of theatre of depend takes two forms: that created by the practical the use of theatre technology, lights, costumes and flats, which can create a range of theatre ‘worlds’ from the naturalistic to the entirely abstract, and the illusion created by a willing suspension of disbelief on the part of the audience. “One witnesses a play as an event in the real world as well as an illusion of an unreal world” (States 1985 154), so the two hours of running time do pass. Events occur. The audience and the performers in a live performance space are ‘really present’ to each other and engaged in the ‘real’ moment of performance. Peter Brook’s famous definition of theatre as a man, an empty stage and a watcher encapsulates this concept of presence (1968 11). However when it is not being performed, the illusionary world ceases to exist, becoming an absence to be imagined or remembered. The willing suspension of disbelief is the mechanism in Western theatre that allows performance to unmask much what is behind the surface of everyday life, for while the real world goes on existing the illusory performance is ‘standing in’ for the real world. As performance creates the space of another world, the illusion is that it is this other created world which is the ‘real’ world, and that is what gains the attention of audience and performers. Bruce Wilshire writes of the way modern society experiences the world as according to a model that allows no room for serious consideration of legend, communal memory, fantasy, and mythical time “timeless” time. It is an ideation “world” built around us by the demands of our cultural works – particularly by technology and by the demands of the nation state. […] only what is present and actual, moment by moment is real. (Wilshire 1982 48)

As people engage in the ritual of performance they become intensely involved. In this way the illusionary world of theatre as an aspect of “timeless” time is an important way a society makes itself present to itself.

An artistic representation of culture

The search for cultural distinctiveness and identity is, in the broadest sense, a political, but not a scientific quest” writes David Novitz, “it sets its own criteria of success” (1989 286). John Bluck suggests the clearest expression of constantly evolving identity, Pākehā is found in the arts. He writes,
the more confident our artists, poets, writers, dancers, musicians, filmmakers grow, the harder it is to compose any reliable checklist of features for those who are not Māori but belong here before anywhere else. [...] it is always rooted in the legacy of those early nineteenth-century settlers from Western Europe (largely Britain) [...] who tried] to stay connected with Europe through war and peace, and slowly took hold of their own destiny.

(Bluck 2001 88-89)

As one of the communication media, which holds modern, largely “imagined communities” together, theatre works by creating an event that is woven from practical performance elements but made accessible by appeal to the imagination. This thesis considers a particular way of telling local stories, the representation of Pākehā through theatrical performance. The Pacific nature of Pākehā means that Māori who appeared in the opera *Bitter Calm* were discussed in the analyses as they, Māori related to the settler characters as part of the settler world. As Chris Blake explains, *Bitter Calm* required Māori performers as

there was a role for the whanau and around Maketu, Matiu, [and] that was really problematical to know how to deal with it, because the Māori chorus people felt that they should be doing waiata and of course that wasn’t part of the plan, [...] so there was no Māori voice in the opera, that was one of the criticism of it, but of course there wasn’t one because I didn’t think I had any validity in putting one into it. So we ended up then with a quite a large Māori presence in the opera, that was [largely] silent (2005).

What is important in terms of the discussion of Pakeha cultural identity is that though largely silent, the whanau were a visible presence in the opera, as group which could not be ignored, a fact that the use of close-up shots in the television video of the performance emphasised. How Pākehā might ultimately express themselves and their relationship to Māori in theatrical performance is unclear. For instance, while songwriter Andrew London expresses frustration that as yet “there’s not a lot of Pākehā culture in song, maybe because we’re just too young” (2005), composer Chris Blake suggests that the integration of local Māori and traditional European elements occurs in
his own work in an unselfconscious way, simply because it is an intrinsic part of being Pākehā.

I can remember, an early wind quartet called *Sound* uses things like Haka rhythms […] bedded into the music but that particular little piece starts with the rhythm of the Allegretto from Beethoven’s Seventh Symphony, […] that rhythm transformed then into a fairly common Haka rhythm, that we all know. I guess there’s a process of transformation which is actually bringing those other parts of our early culture [together]. (Blake 2005)

For Chris Blake, the fact that his music is part of the wider Western tradition is a defining element. He says of *Bitter Calm*, that as “a Pākehā New Zealand composer trained in Canterbury University under an English tradition” he has not used Māori sounds but […] there were some sounds that maybe more uniquely sound […] New Zealand. There is a log drum that’s used occasionally, […] so that was an interesting artistic decision. (Blake 2005). A music based on the tradition of Western Music but subtly infiltrated with Southern Pacific resonances, is an expression of the mix of Europe and Aotearoa which makes up that cultural identity, Pākehā. It draws together threads from two distinct traditions to make a new whole and in that process is able to reach back to the origins of both traditions and speak with some degree of intelligibility to the peoples who still have ties to each tradition. It is also able to connect with the new group, the Pākehā of Aotearoa/New Zealand. “There’s all these experiments being tried on a scale and blending things in a way that didn’t happen ten years ago or twenty years ago” (Blake 2005). He recalls his own heritage ‘I’m descended from English settlers’ (2005) and notes that the making of a Pākehā music where European roots and elements from Māori culture combine is a process in which,

[y]ou’ll slowly incorporate more and more Polynesian and Māori elements into these bigger inherited forms, until you end up with something that might be uniquely New Zealand. […] it might be a couple of generations down the track when all of those things fuse into some larger form. (2005)

Andrew London also notes that while “songwriters have always been looking internationally, particularly to England, historically up until quite recently I suppose,”
this is now changing and “we’re talking the eighties on, which, of course, is only […] the blink of an eye ago” (2005) as the start of this change, and choreographer Lyne Pringle is excited by the possibilities inherent in Pākehā history and experience, feeling that “there’s all the stories that haven’t even been told yet” (2005).

**Performance as an agent for change**

The purpose of the interpretation of reality in theatrical performance is to question how human beings can or should live. Theatre, which, while it transcends the limitations of any one person, creating its ‘truth’ from the multiple attentions and imaginations in the space between the performer and the audience, is nevertheless at a very real level concerned with the nature of identity, both personal and cultural. As the art of involvement and standing in, theatre “suggests that we stand in most profoundly with problems of standing in, that this problem interests us so much because it is the problem *par excellence* of our own identity as selves” (Wilshire 1982 43). Therefore while no art is an instruction manual for life theatre that is more than mere entertainment has as its intention the vitalisation of its participants (Read 2002 171). As art affects us most profoundly in our senses, it is through such effects that it is capable of affecting our actions in daily life.

Raymond Williams stress that art is a vital way in which society communicates with itself but adds that the artist must be able to live the experience in order to reproduce it. “Since the meaning and the means cannot be separated, it is on the artist’s actual ability to live the experience that successful communication depends” (1961 34). This experience, which is embedded in the personality, and which is at the heart of human development, is the experience that is drawn upon to create art. It is this representing of the self in art which enables human beings to advance in the knowledge of ourselves as human, and equally it is the embedding of experience which enables the artist to create from that experience a form of personal reality which can then be embodied, that is, recreated in some form. Once recreated, this form can be transmitted to, and thus once again be re-created by, another. Therefore in standing in for the Pākehā at an everyday level the works almost of necessity deal with the problem of Pākehā cultural identity. How can we Pākehā become ourselves except through seeing others, the actors, as they stand in as the characters for the character types of Pākehā society, standing in for us the audience? In the authorisation that we Pākehā as members of the audience give to that standing in, and the agreement that we undertake
to become an aspect of that standing in through our participation in the character, we authorise ourselves as ourselves (Wilshire 1982 23), and are authorised by those other audience members around us, and by the characters, as Pākehā.

Because of its immediacy theatre is a particularly powerful means of presenting identity and this thesis considers the proposition that what is represented in theatrical performances are not everyday recreations of Pākehā identity. It suggests that theatrical performance, through the embodiment of the characters on the stage, recreates mythical worlds in which the idealised archetypes and ideas a culture holds about itself, its ideas of greatness and failure, are set forth. In writing of myth I am not writing of it in the sense of a distorted perception of the world used to present a particular point of view and to manipulate others to have that point of view as well. This is the use of myth which Claudia Bell is invoking when she notes television perpetuates the

New Zealand Pakeha (sic) myth: the middle-class, happy, financially comfortable nuclear family, the good society, the sporting heroes and sport-loving culture, nostalgically linked to the land, racially harmonious, surrounded by the unique flora and fauna. If we behave properly and don’t make a fuss over political issues we will all live happily ever after. […] The shallow identity we are presented with probably benefits us if we are Pakeha.

(Bell 1996 162)

I am not taking issue with her statement about television. Rather I would argue that this view of Pākehā society, which lulls the viewer into complacency, is equivalent to “deadly theatre”. This is the term Peter Brook (1968 11) applies to performances that require no mental or psychological effort on the part of the audience and simply confirm us in our way of thinking. Such performances leave the audience unchanged so that they exit the theatre in the same state in which they entered. It is a state of mind that Avril Bell alludes to when, citing Michael Billing, she states “nationalism is a powerful influence precisely because of its ‘banality’ in the everyday practice of politicians and governments, the mass media, sporting sub-cultures and consequently its role as a major shaper of lives” (Bell 1995 3). The “deadly theatre” of which Peter Brook writes does not contribute to or develop a sense of identity. It does not ask the audience to rise to the new challenges in a new way, but leaves them confirmed in their
old prejudices. The works I have studied are not in that category. Each in its own way presents the problems that face the Pākehā members of the community of Aotearoa/New Zealand. While the works present problems, they do not offer solutions, they present challenges to idea, traditions and modes of thinking. They question old expectations and leave it up to the audience to determine the answers to the questions. However each of the selected works challenges received notions of Pākehā society through their questioning of interracial and interpersonal relationships making them examples of ‘living theatre’. Therefore the mythology they embody is, like ancient mythology, a complex mix of good and bad.

Myths are the means by which a society expresses its desires, hopes, fears, loves and passions. Elements of the “psyche” of any society, which it may not wish to express in everyday life, can be portrayed in myth. Myths are also the expression of the absences or gaps in a society, the ideals which it perceives itself not to have achieved, and which it would like to reach. This thesis has considered the proposition that what is represented in theatrical performances are the mythical ideas a culture holds about itself, its ideas of greatness and failure, as embodied in the actions of the performers and mise-en-scène. Theatre analyst Bruce Wilshire proposes that “theatre […] is the theory of acting and identity […] to recreate the world in a “world” of theatrical imagination [which] makes us aware of conditions of the world’s being and meaningfulness that had before lain in the obscurity of the “taken for granted.” ‖ (Wilshire 1982 91) Or as Bert O. States puts it, through its creation of a catharsis in the spectator (and the performer), serious theatre offers a purging of “the menace of successiveness” (1985 49), stopping the action to uplift it “to the view” (1985 37).

Does having a local theatre strengthen a sense of identity? Of course, as Bert O. States notes,

the theater tells only marvellous lies. Here there is absolute certainty of a beginning, a middle and an end, an orderly arrangement of parts, […] the concentrated destiny of those who are marked out for good or bad fortune, brought about [quoting Aristotle] “contrary to expectation, yet logically.” This much, at least, is far from life, which is lived in the mean regions of high probability: normal events, unevents, subliminally (even) disappointments.
But if in fact nearly all boundaries are arbitrary, and if concepts of people as a people are more imagined than factual communities, and if people identify as who they are not only in the presence of another but also by incorporating or rejecting aspects of that other as parts of themselves, then their concept of a community known as Pākehā can be clearly represented in theatrical performance. Through the examination of four selected works I have considered the role of theatrical performance as a vehicle for Pākehā identity from 1992 to 2006. During those fourteen years, ideas of what it means to be Pākehā, ideas of the relationship of the people of Anglo-Celtic descent to the tāngāta whenua have changed. New influences have come and are coming to bear on the racial mix and racial and cultural identities of Aotearoa/New Zealand. As was discussed in chapter two, many of the audience members at Fishnet felt that they were participants in something which spoke to them in a very particular way about living in Aotearoa and about being Pākehā. I maintain that like members of those other groups who make up the cultural mix of Aotearoa/New Zealand, I as a Pākehā of Anglo-Celtic descent need to see myself articulated on the stage, for seeing myself on stage is one of the ways in which I can know what I am, and what I might be.

The creation of art is inherent in the way humans think. Art and the ability to be artists, is a necessary attribute for all humans. Bruce Wilshire, Bert O. States, Rob Baum, Raymond Williams and Michael Taussig deal with the particular ability to construct images as a feature of this mechanism for human survival and Michael Taussig writes that the origin of artistic creation lies in the human need to create, because it is through artistic means that we express a “social life” (1993 83). This fundamental aspect of being human is particularly to be seen in “the life of the imagination as expressed by the art, ritual and mythology of “primitive societies”” (ibid.). An artist’s restatement of the world around them can produce work that Raymond Williams describes as embodying the “common meaning of the society” (1961 30).

Telling our own stories is important whether we do this in books, poetry, film, documentary or theatre. But I believe that telling our own stories in the theatre is particularly important because of the events that happen in that ‘empty space’. It is the charge across the gap, the complex process of presenting, embodiment and re-embodiment which take place during a theatrical performance which make it a more profound experience than the other forms of communication. Rob Baum writes “[t]he
very method and meaning of metaphor and its study is perceived as poetics rather than politics. [...] to the degree that they are used or thought metaphors exist in culture; one might say that metaphors define culture. (Baum 2003 18-19)

What is important for performance then is to consider the psychic and social effect of the type of construction that is being employed. In the world of theatre we encounter the greatness and the problems of becoming ourselves. Theatre is “the domain of tragic freedom, self-deception, and engulfment in others and the world. It is the mission of art – particularly the theatre – to reveal this offstage reality” (Wilshire 1982 24). Within theatrical genres the melodrama most clearly articulates the split aspects of the self. In these melodrama works the world is divided into good and evil, and evil temporarily overpowers the good. This division of the world is the basis of much film, television fiction and of television current affairs items (Smith 1998). In looking at the value of performance it is possible to ask what role this activity plays in society. Whether or not performance is only a ‘social construction’, an event created by a particular perspective on life for those who engage in it, it is an important aspect of being, and of being-in-the-world. For Bruce Wilshire the ultimate role of art is to reveal the extent to which all of us are mimetically involved in other people. John Law, working from the social science paradigm, suggests that in fact there may be more than one reality:

Most Euro-American metaphysics works on the assumption that there is a single reality. Different perspectives but a single reality. I suspect that even the social literatures work that way. The assumption is that while we may live in multiple ‘social worlds’ we live in a single natural or material reality. But [...] it does not have to be that way.

(Law 2007 600)

It is an intriguing question and one that the worlds of theatre, film and the plastic arts continually attempt to address. This work is concerned with the representation of Pākehā cultural identity in theatrical performance and so, like the works it has examined it is stepping into a world in which the possibility of multiple realities, in the sense of the existence of a spirit or ghostly world for example, is a fact. The performance data uncovered the existence of ghosts, both bodily manifest as in
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*Bitter Calm* and present as a remembered presence in the lives of the characters in *Home Land*. Such a world is summed up in Hamlet’s words to Horatio

> There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
> Than are dreamt of in your philosophy

(Shakespeare Hamlet Act 1, scene 5, 159–167)

**Difference**

An important question for Pākehā is: how do they differ from other cultures, including their ancestral cultures? Paul Spoonley suggests that while Pākehā are happy to “explore their cultural heritage and how it might have been shaped by its New Zealand location, an important element has been the way in which the label has come to signify a particular position within debates about biculturalism” (1995 55), and he wonders how willing Pākehā New Zealanders are in general to explore their relationship with Maori. This is not directly addressed in these works, but the suggestion is made (particularly by the work *Bitter Calm*) that living alongside a different people has affected the post–settler population. In the early twenty first century attitudes towards the land and the tāngāta whenua are no longer those of 1841. Though much of the country is in private ownership and that ownership is Pākehā, some Pākehā New Zealanders are prepared to acknowledge the rights of the tāngāta whenua.

In the selected works Pākehā look at their similarity and their difference from much of the Western world. The people of Aotearoa/New Zealand are an island nation. They perceive themselves as being a long way from anywhere else. They inhabit a space that in terms of Western iconography is the-end-of-the-earth, a site that has long been considered mythical. Pākehā live alongside a people that much of the world considers exotic and who have a relationship with a land that may have ‘magic’ properties. Much of the land mass was still covered in virgin bush when settlers arrived, so it was a land that retained its primeval aspects. *Bitter Calm* is set in a world that has the characteristics of a potential Eden. A sense of awe and enchantment can be associated with such a place and the idea of mystery is evident in the opera where the trees, lying across part of the front of the stage, create a physical barrier between the
world of the audience and the world of the opera, suggesting a sense of looking in on something beyond the reach of the audience.

The ideas of relationship to the landscape and a strong relationship with the sea are core ideas in the concept of Pākehā as a people moulded by being islanders. The Pākehā relationship with the land means that it is treated both as a love object, something to bond with, and something also to be fought against. The climate of Aotearoa/New Zealand can be harsh and unpredictable, and much of the farmland requires a lot of attention to keep it in production. The statement that Peter Ackroyd makes of the English relationship to the land “we owe much to the ground on which we dwell. It is the landscape and the dreamscape” (2002 449) is equally as true for Pākehā as it is for the English, and it is the ideas of the Pākehā dreamscape built upon the reality of Aotearoa/New Zealand the next chapter will explore as it examines the way that theatrical performance reveals characteristics that make up the identity Pākehā.
Chapter Nine

Identification and Representation

Revealing Ideas About Pākehā Through Theatrical Performance

This chapter looks at the way the four selected works of theatre represent the mythic elements of the “imagined community” Pākehā. Pākehā cultural identity in theatrical performance is built from ideas about everyday Pākehā cultural identity. These ideas have been selected and heightened to be reproduced in performance. Chapter Four Characterising Pākehā sought to uncover some aspects of the everyday hybrid nature of Pākehā cultural identity and to discuss some of the issues that Pākehā face in knowing who they are. The rest of the work has been concerned with demonstrating the diverse ways in which this hybridity is revealed in theatrical performance. The hybridity derives from the multiple origins of Pākehā and their continuing relationship to their countries of origin and also from their transition from an immigrant status to a settled relationship to this new place. The ongoing relationship, often difficult and unsatisfactory for both parties, with the tāngāta whenua is also an aspect of this hybridity.

The chapter acknowledged that Pākehā, an identity drawn from multiple sources lacked, in Stuart Hall’s words, “that stable core of the self, unfolding from beginning to end through all the vicissitudes of history without change” (Hall 1996 3). It suggested that Pākehā cultural identity is a construction fashioned from the post-settler population’s engagement with Aotearoa and pointed towards a degree of blending and absorption, both of diverse European cultural identities on the one hand, and ideas from the world view of the tāngāta whenua on the other, to create the identity labelled Pākehātāngā. In the end it is less important that modern identities are “increasingly fragmented and fractured; […] multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions. […] constantly in the process of change and transformation” (Hall 1996 4), than that an identity recognises itself as being an identity in spite of its disparate origins. Stuart Hall succinctly covering the process of blending notes that
identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming, rather than being: not ‘who we are’ or ‘where we came from’ so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves. Identities are therefore constituted within, not outside representation.

(1996 4)

While I take that last sentence to mean everyday representation for example in reports, books, news items and common speech, I would suggest that it is also an appropriate statement in regard to theatrical representation. It is through creating works of performance that identities most accurately represent themselves and their actual (often unconsciously perceived and realised) relationship to others or the Other. I use the word unconscious here to mean that, while the process of structuring an Other for dramatic purposes, whether that Other be personal or cultural, is a conscious exercise, its delineation often contains elements which may be only partially recognised or even not recognised at all by its original creator. Once an identity can articulate itself in an artistic form, it is aware of both its connection to other identities similar and dissimilar, and its difference from them. These unconscious elements made conscious may be further developed in rehearsal and completely uncovered in performance where they are revealed through the audience-actor dialogue. It is the process that Patrice Pavis describes when he notes; “the dramatic text is able to eliminate ambiguities in the performance, or, conversely, to introduce new ones” (Pavis 1992 34). In this way the performance artists uncover the holes in the text to reveal the whole of the text.

Stuart Hall writes of identity as the “meeting point, the point of suture” (1996 5) between the many discourses that inform the ideas of a particular cultural (or personal) identity and the processes, internal and external, which make us accept ourselves as the subjects named in the sentence. In everyday life the name is powerful. What we call ourselves is truly who and what we are, for we become what we are called. A change of name does not just signal a change of identity, it is a change of identity. Within the world of theatre, (and rite and magic) the name is almost all-powerful, becoming our name, as we, the audience, identify with the characters, taking their attributes and attitudes as our own (Wilshire 1982 63). We can see here a division
between the processes of modern social identification in which identities are “points of temporary attachment to the subject positions which discursive practices construct for us” (Hall 1996 6) and the possibility of identification across the ages with the characters in great works of theatre. While the general everyday work of identities is to express themselves through “using the resources of history, language and culture”, and, by examining “who we are”, discover “what we might become” (Hall 1996 4), the particular work of theatrical performance is to allow us to clearly state who we are. Theatrical performance exposes our relationship with our everyday world and I suggest, along with Bruce Wilshire, “that we compose our art in response to our deepest need to compose ourselves“ (1982 101).

**Performance as a mirror of Aotearoa/New Zealand**

One of the premises of this work is that when a community sees itself honestly presented on the stage, members of the community gain a stronger sense of themselves. The performance works demonstrate a willingness by Pākehā to deal with several aspects of Pākehā identity and mythology, and to represent their particular versions of flawed humanity, both the positives and the negatives to themselves. The understandings generated by these performance works depend in part on the understandings brought to the works by the audience. Local audiences can easily read the significance of words and iconography, for example the word rugby and the images associated with the game rugby. As the composer Chris Blake notes, while his works are written in the international idiom, they have certain sound qualities which locate them as belonging to this country and the titles of his compositions refer to stories and concepts which are uniquely of Aotearoa/New Zealand. This resonates with a local audience and creates an extra dimension to the works’ reception, for a local audience brings a “whole range of experience and knowledge to add to the work” (Blake 2005). The work *Fishnet* illustrates that this knowledge can be applied even when the works deal with themes that are of international concern. Though it does not refer directly to local events, through the localness of the artists, their particular strong ways of moving and the ironic manner in which they deal with their subject, the work speaks to the localness of the audience. The positive critical reception *Fishnet* received (Smythe 2005), (Tarrant 2005), indicates its relevance to the dance community of Aotearoa/New Zealand.
In these works such familiarity does not lull the audience into any false form of security. *Bitter Calm, Home Land, Fishnet* and the songs of Andrew London draw the audiences towards familiar ideas and iconography but challenge them, both through their content and their performance modes. Such challenges work to change the audience’s consciousness from a state of total absorption in the action to one in which they engage in the performance and reflect on the issues and cultural types presented on the stage. It is not necessary for the performance to employ the Brechtian technique of alienation to achieve this contemplative process; it simply requires that the performance challenge the audience in some way whether by style, location, or content.

Pākehā representations are concerned with the relationship between their origins and their new location and the works retain strong traces of the original lands of Europe. The modes of thought informing them are European and the lifestyles presented in these works are European in origin, as are the forms that Pākehā use to express themselves on stage. These facts demonstrate Pākehā connectedness to a culture and to modes of expression that come from elsewhere. In their subject matter the works consider who Pākehā are now and there is some representation of the dual heritage in form as well. *Bitter Calm* employs style of composition which is derived from the forms of Western Music, but which was interpenetrated by the spontaneous interjections from the Maori cast members, creating a blend that was unique to Aotearoa/New Zealand. *Fishnet* uses an international dance medium to express local themes and employs local iconography to root the work in the landscape of Aotearoa/New Zealand. *Home Land* uses the European form of the naturalistic play to examine local themes. Likewise, though Andrew London’s songs are written in a traditional rhythm and blues style, the lyrics deal with local content. However it is mainly the attitudes about emotions, expressiveness and connectedness, which infuse the selected works, creating the representation of Pākehā cultural identity on stage and considering what it might mean to be Pākehā in Aotearoa/New Zealand in the twenty-first century.

**Identity embodied in character types**

The representation of Pākehā identity can be examined under the areas of origins and adjustments, social roles, and character types. In discussing character types I am drawing particularly on my understanding of the roles of the characters of classic
melodrama, a form which draws most directly on the mythic archetypes for its characterisations.

The protagonist or hero is the person in myth who ‘stands in’ for a society and is endowed with qualities that the society values, strength, the ability to judge wisely, and perhaps cunning. Cecil Maurice Bowra sees the hero of myth as the expression of the human desire to overcome the limitations of the human condition. As a super person who is more powerful than others he acts for humanity. The hero can have personal faults and can fail, but must struggle against the odds (Bowra 1952 4). Traditionally he is the one who overcomes all the odds. In mythical stories the high status and extraordinary powers of the hero assures the listener or the spectator that there are certainties. There are role models who can be emulated, and by such emulation, the certainty of the power of the ‘good,’ the world can be made safe. The hero of the melodrama assured the audience “that the universe is in fact morally legible, that it possesses an ethical identity and significance” (Brooks 1995 43).

While the hero of myth wins victory over personal pain and suffering, and sometimes over death, the heroes of the selected works do not have such superhuman qualities. In Bitter Calm, John Roberton is more complex than a stock melodrama character in being essentially fallible. In this he is closer to the traditional mythic hero. He is foolishly brave; a flawed hero who has the skills of the adventurer but lacks the wisdom to temper his impulses. He sails his boat into a fierce storm and dies. Yet in undertaking this tussle with nature the character is referencing the traditional hero who will survive the storm. Through coming back from the dead, even as a ghost rather than as a living figure, John Roberton recalls concepts of the semi-divine origin associated with the traditional hero, who is able to bring messages from the gods. He represents the brave but foolhardy pioneer, and the local hero who builds a relationship with the ‘Other’. Through journeying into strange countries John Roberton acquires skills that enable him to succeed in the new land, while he takes on the overwhelming power of the natural world even if he fails.

Pākehā society is described by Stephen Turner as pragmatic and anti-intellectual (2001 69), and by Jock Phillips as practical and stoical (1987 24). These qualities are embodied in the character of Ken Taylor. As a character in a naturalistic drama Ken moves in a more limited sphere than John Roberton and must undertake smaller actions. His is the human path, and his victory is over life itself. He has survived and
lived a life which has contained hardships, symbolised by the story of the storm. Though his is the heroism of everyday life, he makes one grand heroic gesture when he climbs up to the top fence in the icy dark. John Bluck suggests that Pākehā see themselves as having a distaste for self-pity, with a dry sense of humour derived from their ironic perceptions of themselves, and a belief in fair play, equality of opportunity and modesty (Bluck 2001 22). Ken Taylor represents the ordinary person in the ordinary struggle. Laconic and stoic, he displays the determination to keep going whatever the odds and to build an ongoing relationship with a land that, though harsh and difficult, has become home. In fact all the male characters of Home Land are economical of phrase and repressed emotionally. When the character Graeme does display emotion, Gary Henderson’s stage directions underline the word “Is that emotion” (2005 98), suggesting that such expression is unusual. Ken as the major representative of the ordinary hero is strong, reliable, skilled and determined. He is also emotionally repressed and often prejudiced with a narrow view of the world and these qualities are shown in his comments about homosexuality and the war in Iraq. Though the character of Ken is drawn as realistically as possible to meet the demands of the form, the character is in fact a selective mix, embodying the qualities that Pākehā culture both values and dislikes.

A more human example of an heroic figure, who like John Roberton is a ghostly presence, is the stern figure of Nana. She is an influence in the minds of the characters who never appears on the stage but exercises her authority nevertheless, from beyond the grave. Though she is not a traditional dramatic hero, as a woman of good character, (Macdonald 1990), a type caricatured by Neville Lodge (see appendix) whose cartoons often represent the stern, principled, moralistic and repressed aspects of the Pākehā woman, Nana represents the heroic qualities of the pioneer woman. Staunch, brave, unflinching in the face of disaster she is an ancestor to be admired if feared. Nana undergoes a transformation later in the play revealing the warm, sensual aspects of her nature, her traditional feminine loving and healing aspect, when she ‘speaks through’ her granddaughter Sophie. This is one of the important and ‘magical’ aspects of theatre. Not only can the actor stand in for the character, but the same actor in the same role can also stand in for a different character, making this other character present though they are strictly speaking absent, and thus embodying a different aspect of the present character for the audience.
The character of the son appears in both *Bitter Calm* and *Home Land*. While the roles are imbued with the complexities of the father-son relationship, in both these works the son or son-in-law characters also represent other aspects of the hero. They are softer, more emotionally open, and receptive to change. These qualities are valued in post-settler Aotearoa/New Zealand. As younger men, Matiu, Graeme and Paul carry the hopes for the future. Like the older heroes, these younger versions also have flaws, they can be blind to emotional needs, for example Paul fails to understand Graeme’s feelings about his father Ken, and to danger. Matiu fails to recognise the threat that Thomas Bull represents. Graeme and Matiu both contain resonances of the warrior hero within their characters; Matiu is directly related through his culture to a warrior past and Graeme battles the land and the weather. The sports hero is an important figure in the modern word. A sportsman is often thought of as larger than life in his winning ability. As previously noted, sport, especially rugby, plays a key role in Pākehā culture and has been traditionally endowed with the ability to create strong and morally superior men. Paul is acceptable as a director of sports television, for sport is a tough job. It is his link to moral acceptability, a link that may be broken by his desire to be a director of drama. Nevertheless Paul can relate to Ken as they watch a game of rugby together. Paul is an important element in the mythical representation of Pākehā culture, for his role is related to the idea of winning in battle. Though he may only film the contest on the rugby ground, not take part in it, this link to the warriors gives him his credibility as the companion of the hero. Interestingly his desire to direct drama is related to another aspect of the traditional hero who was able to sing the epic songs of his adventures. In filming drama, Paul is a bard of his people and their stories.

Traditionally the main female character, the heroine, was the embodiment of virtue. In the mythic stories this representation of virtue did not need to be passive, waiting for rescue, (which became the role of the heroine in the nineteenth century melodrama) but could perform bold deeds. In the melodrama the heroine role is one in which the woman, as the embodiment of virtue, is rendered mute by circumstances and thus prevented from acting. This virtuous heroine is the embodiment of ‘good.’ She suffers for the community and, in the classical melodrama as the personification of virtue, the heroine must continue to protest her innocence even though she may appear to have been corrupted.
In the selected works most of the female characters reference the idea of the active heroine as depicted in stories of warrior leaders and wise women. Though they are bound by their social circumstances, Elizabeth Roberton in *Bitter Calm* and Denise Taylor in *Home Land* display a high level of personal power. Elizabeth manages a farm and Denise is an executive in a major business. While women are the object, rather than the subject, in Andrew London’s love songs, even there the women are not passive recipients of love but powerful women who direct their own lives. The dancers of *Fishnet* also embody many powerful female roles, from warrior goddess to attractive, sexually aware older woman, from academic to shaman. In this work the aspect of Pākehā woman that is normally absent in representation, her sensual, sexual side is made present on the stage.

The only role which references a classical melodrama type is the role of Catherine in *Bitter Calm*. Catherine is presented as the innocent young woman who loves Matiu with a pure love. Her virtue is threatened, in the manner of melodrama, when her status is subtly corrupted by the advances of Thomas Bull. He undermines Catherine’s sense of the rightness of her love for Matiu, and thus lowers her moral status. When she rejects his advances, Catherine is murdered by Thomas Bull, and this is in keeping with the fate of many heroines. It is the ultimate silencing of the voice of virtue. However, in *Bitter Calm* Catherine’s death is not the redemptive act of the mythic melodrama heroine. Her death is the catalyst which reveals the evil in the midst of the community, destroying her mother Elizabeth, and plunging the whole community into chaos by bringing the strife, which had been festering between the settlers and the local Māori iwi, to a head.

A third character type, the villain, represents the forces of destruction. In classic melodrama the death of the villain ends the nightmare. With his death comes “an awakening brought about by confrontation and expulsion of the villain, the person in whom all evil is seen to be concentrated, and a reaffirmation of the society of “decent people” ” (Brooks 1995 204). Though Thomas Bull does meet the requirements of a melodrama villain, in that his evil seems to have little cause, his death does not set the world to rights. For the characters of *Bitter Calm* the struggle for good has no easy solution. The other works do not have any personification of a villain. The troubled aspects of society represented in *Home Land* are spread across all the adult characters, each of whom has their own fault. Ken is emotionally repressed and intransigent,
Denise bossy and stubborn, Paul is overly theoretical and can be ineffectual, and Trish is not inclined to look beyond the obvious practical needs of day-to-day life. None of these are great faults; rather they are the signs of humanity, manifest for consideration by the audience. As they see the everyday aspects of themselves presented in this naturalistic drama, they can reflect upon them. The threat to the dancers of *Fishnet* is entirely external; it is ‘society’, an abstract concept, which is making middle-aged women invisible. It can be represented only by the effect is has on them, but it renders them mute, in the manner of the suffering heroines of melodrama. The ‘middle-aged woman’ cannot proclaim her innocence. The threat is rebuffed in *Fishnet* through moving beyond it, and becoming a woman of power in the women-centred world of shamanism. In this world, age is an asset for it brings wisdom and with wisdom, power.

**Depicting a women’s world**

The social roles depicted for the female characters in the selected works, even in the abstracted scenarios of *Fishnet*, are derived from European lifestyles. While drawing on local ideas and images *Fishnet* displays its European lineage by working within the wider discourse of Western feminist thought as it challenges the invisibility, and the lack of political power of women. In all the works the primary roles for women are as housewives and mothers of nuclear families. (The Pacific option of being matriarch of a hapu, a sub-tribe, is not presented.) While *Fishnet* and *Home Land* question the validity of these roles as the only options, they are still present as the reference points from which the works have developed. The women of *Fishnet* embody the idea of goddesses and shaman women in their representation, but these are variations, presented in contrast to the housewife and mother roles played on the stage. In the context of these domestic representations, the sensibilities of Elizabeth Roberton in *Bitter Calm* and the Taylor family in *Home Land* are the sensibilities of a people originating in Europe.

*Fishnet* and *Home Land*, and to a lesser extent *Bitter Calm*, consider the ideal of the stoic and laconic female, whose role is to support her husband. Though this role of helpmate, like that of the laconic man, is found wanting, strong stoical women are still admired. In *Bitter Calm* the lead female character Elizabeth Roberton manages a farm. In *Home Land* Denise is a corporate high-flyer who will not brook physical softness from her daughter Sophie. Trish, Denise’s sister-in-law, helps her husband Graeme to run the farm, and the ghost character Nana is categorised as formidable. The women
too are expected to be physically and emotionally strong. Elizabeth is faced with multiple losses which batter her. As she says “Roberton is found but he is partly eaten by fish. The sight threw me into this illness from which I have not recovered” (Hoar 1994; Blake 1994). Yet she is expected to continue working her farm. In the end her grief drives her to madness but it takes the death of her daughter, as well as that of her husband, to finally break her.

*Fishnet* directly addresses the silencing and banishing of women. The women of *Fishnet* represent themselves as tough and strong; firstly through their dance form and then through demonstrating survival techniques in the face of social neglect. The intense physicality of the dancers’ routines demonstrates that they are mentally and physically resilient. However though it uses an ideal of toughness, *Fishnet* sets out to burst through the restraints of this model to reveal the complex nature of woman as a sensuous and adventurous being, whatever her age. By reclaiming female sexuality *Fishnet* critiques the reduction of women to mere sex objects. Questioning the way how each person projects their image of themselves onto others, *Fishnet*, through its discourse on visibility and invisibility, also asks how the person, who meets and returns the gaze, is in turn re-constructed by the gazer. The work promulgates the idea that all women, of whatever age, have a lively sexuality which is essential to them, is valid, and moreover does not exist only within the male gaze. Working in a mode and context that has international application, *Fishnet* is grounded in Aotearoa/New Zealand through its use of image and theme and particularly its ironic style. The “invisible” middle-aged woman uses irony to challenge the power of the intellectual world, turning its own language on its head as she explores her own disappearance. The tongue-tied child becomes a goddess. The housewife and mother becomes a powerful shaman woman. In ironic play with a range of alternative female images *Fishnet* presents ‘optional extra’ aspects of Pākehā womanhood. There are no men in the work, except as played in travesty by the two female dancers. This absence indirectly raises questions about the importance of men to women’s lives.

_Stoicism, physicality and masculinity_

Harking back to an ideal of the ‘man/woman alone’ (Mulgan 1939), the Pākehā imagination responds to the independent strong man portrayed on the stage. In *Bitter Calm* and *Home Land*, Pākehā offer, as one clearly defined aspect of their characters, a picture of a people who are tough, value humility, resourceful (they come to terms with
an alien landscape) independent. Though John Roberton foolishly sails to his death in a storm and 80-year-old Ken Taylor walks out into the freezing night to view the farm at sunrise and nearly dies as a result, these men are tacitly admired for their toughness and independence and are sympathetically portrayed even if their flaws are obvious. Historically Pākehā culture has been based on physical prowess and though most people in Aotearoa/New Zealand now live in the town rather than the country physical toughness and rugged individuality is still prized. The attitudes expressed towards hardship and duty are puritanical. Elizabeth’s complaint when John Roberton wants to go sailing is that there is work to be done. Other characters, Matiu, Thomas Bull and Ken’s son Graeme, work hard on the land. What is mourned in Ken’s old age is this loss of strength, “Christ he used to carry me on his shoulders” (Henderson 2005 98), which will make him dependent. The lead male characters particularly of Home Land and Bitter Calm are indicative of the ideal of independence central to the culture and have female parallels in Nana and Elizabeth in her strong moments. Even though he is a flawed ideal, the tough man image is still infused with cultural power, hence his revival in advertising iconography. There is no strong case made in any of the works to entirely eliminate the independent type from the role models.

Yet Home Land, Bitter Calm, and the songs of Andrew London do question the soundness of the ideal of the laconic, self-reliant, and physically strong and emotionally contained man. Stoicism in emotional relationships is questioned in Home Land. Ken is adamant that he shouldn’t have to say he loves his daughter Denise. By feeding and clothing Denise he is doing his duty towards her and showing her that he has loved her. Her duty is to love him back and be grateful for what she has been given, without anything needing to be said. But the implied question is: ‘is that enough?’ Graeme deals with emotional challenge by storming off to buy fence posts, suppressing any feelings he might have about what is going to happen to his father, and that response also raises questions about ignoring emotional reality. On the physical side the heedless actions of John Roberton rob his family of his protective presence. This, like Ken’s trip up the hill, raises questions about masculine bravado. Andrew London’s work explicitly rejects sports-ridden hyper-masculinised culture in favour of a soft, more amenable man who relates to his female partner as an interesting equal. Ultimately the works reveal a split love/loathing for the tough male type which is admired with all its faults, though its faults can be acknowledged. In this context sport is used performatively in
Home Land and Fishnet to invoke images of strength, courage and dependability. Jock Phillips suggests that rugby has a perceived ability to instil ‘moral values’ (1987 101-102). New Zealand has sports awards such as the Halberg Sports Awards. These occasions reward endurance and stoicism. Yet sport in theatrical performance is a multivariate symbol. As used in Home Land, sport, particularly the game of rugby, is a source of solace for the old man Ken, a creative opportunity to examine the nature of drama for his son-in-law Paul and the means for the playwright, Gary Henderson, to critique unthinking attitudes and stereotypical images of masculinity. Sport is also used in this critiquing function by the dance work Fishnet, where it implicitly pits sport against art, and by the songwriter Andrew London who uses it to question the soundness of the prevailing social roles for men and women and the underlying values in Pākehā male-female relationships.

The focus on the primacy of masculinity is a subtext in the discussion of inheritance in both Bitter Calm and Home Land. These two works both examine it from the perspective of European ideas about marriage and property. Bitter Calm suggests that marriage across cultures is not acceptable to a “woman of good character” (Macdonald 1990), for Elizabeth’s fundamental rejection of Matiu is based on his dual Māori and European parentage. Because John Roberton did not enter into a European marriage to Matiu’s mother, Elizabeth has no qualms in denying Matiu his inheritance, though as the (only) son of a Pākehā father, even without John Roberton’s will, he would be the logical (and with the will legal) heir. Before the work reveals that Catherine and Matiu are brother and sister, Catherine has privately admitted to Matiu that she loves him but shrinks from the idea of declaring this publicly. She is very aware that Thomas Bull’s threats of social disgrace if she marries a Māori have their basis in fact. Even if they had not been siblings she might not have been prepared to be his wife, once again depriving Matiu of the chance to legally inherit what was rightfully his.

The events of the plot devolve from the personal conflict which causes the ultimate destruction of the settler family. This conflict threatens to spread to the wider society, and is triggered by the loss of the strong male leader of the family. The importance of this strong masculine leadership is an underlying theme in the work. The linking of marriage with land is crucial and it is a linkage that sees the coloniser wish to remain separate from the indigenous inhabitants. This choice is made even at the cost of
losing the protection Matiu’s mana would have afforded the family, whether he was the husband or brother of Catherine. In *Home Land* too, marriage is seen as the link which connects people to lineage and location. Elaine Taylor’s possible interest in Jeff Marshall’s boy is discussed in terms of attachment to place as well as to people. “So you never know. She might end up back in the area” (Henderson 2004 82). If Elaine comes back to the area and marries Jeff Marshall’s boy she will keep the property in the family and she will also repair the ‘damage’ Denise has done to the integrity of the family by moving away to Auckland. Both these works raise the possibility of the young man being, like Ken, the acceptable substitute for the son and carrying on the work of the family farm. *Bitter Calm* rejects the opportunity and *Home Land* leaves it unanswered, yet in neither work is it suggested that the farms would flourish equally well in the hands of the women.

**Humour**

Humour is one of the key elements in the Pākehā portrayal of themselves on stage and is present in *Home Land*, *Fishnet* and Andrew London’s songs. This is a humour based in an ironical view of the world which initially sprang as a response to a tough and repressed environment. As songwriter Andrew London puts it, the ‘toughness’ of Pākehā culture has to do with it origins in the pioneer culture carving “a living out of a piece of bush, out in the ‘wopwops’, with a shovel and a toothpick, […] we’re a pretty hard nation, pretty hard culture I suppose” (2005 Interview). Humour is ironically expressed in *Home Land* where the everyday ‘man alone’ on the land, dealing effectively with the loneliness of his job, the terrain and the weather, is shown to be inadequate in today’s world. This background to the work also gives it an embedded irony as a structural device in the play. Andrew London’s heroes are also ordinary, complex and flawed people. His romantic heroes, for example, ‘Can’t Stand the Heat’, are softer types ineffectual in love, making them objects of parody.
I just haven’t got enough to moan about
Got the middle-class white boy blues
You know what I’m talking about yeah
Haven’t got enough to moan about
I got the middle-class young upwardly mobile urban professional, come to Wellington for the Lion’s test weekend white boy blues.

(London 2005)

His main object is satire, and he achieves this aim by obliquely referring to the ideal hero who is strong and reliable, not the ‘feather duster’ type. The idea hero that he references has faced genuine suffering, battled the odds and overcome them. The mockery of Andrew London’s songs therefor draws on this ideal of tough independence as it critiques middle-class society. The generation that Andrew London addresses is the generation that protested against the flooding of Lake Manapouri to create a lake for a hydro-electric power station, marched against New Zealand’s involvement in the Vietnam War, that was outraged at the injustice of the attempt to take the Ngāti Whatua Māori land at Bastion Point for a housing development, and cheered those who invaded the football field at Hamilton during the 1981 Springbok tour of New Zealand. Underneath an affable exterior his work critiques the shallowness of many current middle-class concerns such as the prevailing values of comfort and consumption. This criticism questions the loss of social concern that in the 1960s and 1970s was part of the everyday New Zealand background for the type of people who now make up his audience. Like his heroes, Andrew London’s villains are essentially comic, which sets them to one side of ordinary society and robs them of any ability to be a threat. Nevertheless, the bully of ‘Wake Up Baby’ and the self-satisfied singer of ‘Middle Class White Boy Blues’ still represent traits that Pākehā society find undesirable and he is not advocating them as alternatives. Through depicting attitudes that make the audience squirm, Andrew London is performing one of the roles of the traditional storyteller. He places the attributes of Pākehā society that make the audience laugh, clearly view on the stage. As this presentation calls attention to undesirable aspects of the Pākehā value system, through performing this service Andrew London, the storyteller, provides an opportunity for Pākehā society to consider its current direction. In his

comic villains Andrew London makes the dark side of the culture powerfully present to the audience, even when their first response is laughter.

The clowning parody of *Fishnet* strikes a different chord with its audience. While the droll presentation of the dance theatre parodies concepts of femaleness and femininity, making the audience laugh at itself, it has a deeply serious agenda. The comic play with surface foolishness and deep concerns creates an incongruity which expresses some of the conflicting aspects of what it means to be Pākehā and female in Aotearoa/New Zealand in the twenty-first century. The appeal of success based on youth, visibility and academic achievement is contrasted with the traditional female virtues of homemaker and mother. Underneath feminist critique of the way society treats older women the work also questions the values of the new urban society, wondering about the merits of living a traditional life of ‘rural’ stability in a culture where older women are valued.

**Conflicting point of view**

*Bitter Calm* is the one work which most obviously concerns itself with the conflict and injustice that surround Pākehā origin in Aotearoa/New Zealand. As a fictional representation of a portion of Pākehā cultural history the work looks back to an earlier time in Pākehā culture, the era of the settler culture, and the division between settler and tāngāta whenua provides the thematic underpinning for the opera. The land is viewed as oppressive and needs to be tamed, and in personal relations lust and greed overrule the characters’ finer instincts. The conflict between Māori and Pākehā, which is so heightened in the opera, displays in a microcosmic way the kind of conflicts that were already taking place by 1841, the time in which the opera is set. They were to take place for the next sixty years either as land wars, or battles fought through the courts. To look back on such a conflict in the late twentieth century raises questions about the current relationship Pākehā have with the Māori. The social conflicts are set alongside the personal racial bigotry of Elizabeth Robertson and Thomas Bull. *Bitter Calm* demonstrates that Pākehā are not as liberal and free from prejudice as they might like to think. By presenting a history that Pākehā may prefer to forget, and representing the changing relationships of settler and tāngāta whenua, the work presents a story which is an important and often bloody strand in the string of the events that have culturally shaped Pākehā. Though the opera is set in the nineteenth century, the points it makes about human relations and inter-racial tension still apply. The prejudice against people
who are different also surfaces in *Home Land*, particularly in the scenes which deal with the war in Iraq. Ken, seeing footage of the war, refers to the Iraqis as backward, suggesting, “they don’t know what’s good for them” (Henderson 2004 42). This is an attitude that his son-in-law rejects. Prejudice about difference is not limited to racial intolerance. The question of homosexuality is touched on, and while Denise advocates tolerance, Ken is adamant that any discussion of sexual difference is forbidden (Henderson 2004 46). The possibility that Pākehā can be loving, kind and open to different ways of seeing the world is presented in the contrasts between Ken’s attitudes and those of his grand-daughter Sophie and his-son-in-law Paul.

**Location**

The works examine the struggle to come to terms with a new environment and remake a culture in the light of a day-to-day interaction with another culture. *Bitter Calm* presents an environment on stage that would be familiar in general terms to the audience but which is wilder and therefore more exotic than most of the landscape in Aotearoa/New Zealand in the twenty-first century. Many Pākehā will recognise the images of the bush in *Bitter Calm*, the darkness, the density of the trees, mud underfoot and the rain. Though substantially altered, some areas of untouched primal forest remain and the land itself is important marker of what it means. The conflicting perspectives of land are explored in *Bitter Calm*, which addresses the settler relationship with the indigenous people, and directly addresses the problem of the displacement of the Māori. The opera also acknowledges that the Pākehā relationship with the tāngāta whenua has been fraught in the past, and is still uneasy.

The audience which saw *Bitter Calm* at the St James Theatre Wellington in 1992, and later on television, would have been mainly middle-class Pākehā. The cultural knowledge of Aotearoa/New Zealand would have given those audiences a different set of understandings of the relationships presented than the understandings possessed by the characters of the opera. Sixteen years after its first performance, it seems clear that the Pākehā perspective, and memories of events, do need to be presented to an audience, even if they show negative aspects of the culture. The role of European land tenure as an aspect of Pākehā colonisation is a principal element in both *Bitter Calm* and *Home Land*. The resonance of past displacement remains with the

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34 This is a supposition on my part but the general composition for opera audiences tends to be middle-class and mainly Pākehā.
place though it is not directly mentioned. However a local audience would know that displacement affects the current relationship between Pākehā and Māori and overshadows the Pākehā occupation of Aotearoa/New Zealand. This shadowy presence of former occupiers is just one aspect of Pākehā culture and identity that is suggested as an absence both from the land and from the stage.

Home Land also examines the idea of location and identity in the internal division between the rural south and the urban north of Aotearoa/New Zealand. Graeme calls Sophie a “Jafa”, a not too friendly description for people who live in Auckland. In itself this is a small moment, but one which encapsulates the larger question of the nature of Pākehā: are they now an urban or a rural people? The images used to portray Aotearoa/New Zealand in advertising are largely rural, yet most people in this country are urban. If Pākehā are now urban, does the return visit of the Auckland family to their home land on a Southland farm mean a reconnection with Pākehā roots or a farewell to the past? The breaking of the intergenerational tie to the land is examined in Home Land through the characters of Denise, Paul and Sophie who embody the essence of city dwellers. Ken, who represents the bond with the land, cannot understand why anyone should ever wish to move away. But in a changing economic and social climate, attitudes to land also change. The idea of the land as a place held in trust for the future has been replaced by the idea of the land as a commodity. Yet selling the farm will not be easy, for, as Denise says, though she hasn’t lived there for thirty years, “It’s always been here, though” (Henderson 2004 82-83). This “always” does not just mean it has always been there for her in her lifetime, the land always being there is also sign of belonging in this country. It is this rootedness in the landscape which creates Graeme’s ambivalence about selling (Henderson 2004 83).

The play also touches on the importance of local expression as an important aspect in demarcating culture. Pākehā culture has no definite local Pākehā language, but the scene in Home Land over the use of the word “fries” (Henderson 2004 85) deals explicitly with the importance of preserving a local way of speaking. The subtext takes the issue to a deeper level, obliquely recalling the decline of the number of Māori native speakers. The question of language is not answered, but the issue of how we Pākehā express ourselves is central to how we acknowledge who we are.

Unlike Bitter Calm, Home Land, through its examination of the farm as a place to belong, offers a vision of hope for the positive relationship of Pākehā to the place of
Aotearoa. The end of the play suggests a good-bye to the intense connection to the land but is not conclusive. While these alternative visions are more fragile than the old concept of identity-linked-to-land, they seem to offer a path along which Pākehā culture can travel. The relationship of tāngāta whenua to settler has changed in the past and continues to change. The relationship of the people of Aotearoa/New Zealand to the land that supports them is also continually changing. *Bitter Calm* and *Home Land* examine these evolving concepts of belonging and suggest that being rooted in the land of Aotearoa/new Zealand may have as much to do with engagement in its future, through re-examining its past, as it does with physical location. For the settlers of Roberton Island in *Bitter Calm*, the main issue is the conquest and control of the land. For the children of *Home Land* the issue is the future of the family and the farm, and the task of making a place of hospitality in the modern western world. The question is the nature of this place of belonging, and *Home Land* offers the idea of one no longer linked solely to a place as the definite site of nurture, but extended to the concept of emotional support.
Chapter Ten

Conclusion

The initial question which sparked the research for this work is: do Pākehā represent themselves in theatrical performance? The questions which then followed from that are: how can Pākehā identity be defined, what are some of the elements that Pākehā performance artists use to make a Pākehā representation, and how can the elements of European performance genres be reformed to interpret a Pākehā cosmology? In order to answer the questions about Pākehā identity in performance, the works, Bitter Calm, Home Land, Fishnet and the songs of Andrew London were selected for study. These works were created and performed by Pākehā (with or without Māori inclusion) in Aotearoa/New Zealand between the years 1994 and 2005 and the works all deal in some way with the concept of Pākehā identity.

The central idea of this thesis is a study of a presentation of Pākehātāngā (Michael King 2007) on stage. Though the idea of Pākehātāngā is elusive, in chapter four I attempted a definition which is used as a base point in this thesis. The definition is as follows: Pākehātāngā is the culture of New Zealanders whose people, whose families go back generations and comprise a distinctive white New Zealand culture that is significantly different from its European roots. It is a culture which has been influenced as a result of generations of interaction with Māori. Chapter four also considered the idea that Pākehātāngā exists in direct relationship to Māoritāngā for the two are interdependent. Pākehā sensibility is affected by other forces such as the fact of being an island nation which makes its people conscious of being bounded by sea and distant from other large land-masses. This makes Aotearoa/New Zealand similar to, yet different from, the other islands of the Pacific. This country shares some characteristics with them yet is distinguished by differences in size and climate from the other Pacific nations. Being an island nation means that for New Zealanders there are no Others across an immediate land border with whom they can compare themselves, but equally there are no other places to which it is easy to escape. However, there is a border for Pākehā that exists within Aotearoa/New Zealand.

The thesis has considered the idea that people identify as who they are, not only in the presence of an Other, but also through incorporating or rejecting aspects of that
other as parts of themselves. As a culture which has been shaped by the physical and emotional aspects of living in Aotearoa/New Zealand, Pākehā cultural identity, Pākehātāngā, is a creolised culture, that is, an older culture which has been redefined by its translocation and its development in the presence of another. The Pākehā journey (Grossberg 1996 101) so far has involved two sets of encounters. There have been the meetings of groups of people from Europe who share similar cultures and also the encounter of these groups with the previously unknown group from Aotearoa/New Zealand, the Maori. Though these meetings have not been without conflict and disillusionment, the hope is that if Pākehā can come to understand their past they will be able to complete a stage in their journeying. As well as providing a definition of Pākehātāngā chapter four Characterising Pākehā presented the idea that there are certain ideas and attitudes which reveal the nature of Pākehātāngā. This thesis has sought to discuss these through the traits and characteristics which can be artistically reproduced in theatrical performance and it has been the work of the data chapters to reveal these traits as are they are displayed in the selected works.

**Actors, audience and artistic understandings of cultural identity**

The primary theoretical interest of this thesis has been an examination of the way the constructive interplay between the actors and the audience, an aspect of the “peculiar detachment” of theatre, “reveals our involvement” (Wilshire 1982 xiv) in the world whether that is the everyday world or the world of the theatre. One of the tasks of theatrical performance is to make explicit that which may normally be implicit. “Together the audience and the actors engage in an incarnated imaginative variation on the meaning of human being and doing” (Wilshire 1982 24). This co-created meaning is not only derived from what is directly seen and heard on the stage but also from ideas that are obliquely revealed by the text and mise-en-scène such as life’s intangibles, emotions such as love, hate, fear, and social attitudes such as sexism, racism, and classism. Theatrical performance uses small moments to depict larger issues. One devious land transaction evokes ideas, and in some cases memories, of all the other doubtful land deals that have been and could be done in Aotearoa/New Zealand in the future. One farmer speaking of “mist in the trees” (Henderson 2004 90), and mourning the loss of his farm, reveals aspects of the complex attachment Pākehā have to the land; an attachment compounded both of love and nurture and of submission of the land to greater productivity. The mimetic on-stage ‘worlds’ mirror the worlds off stage. In this
mirroring the performance reflects the everyday world and offers some easily recognisable elements which enable the participants to engage with the world of the stage. This engagement may not always be pleasant. Performance can offer difficult questions which may cause both actors and spect-actors (Boal 1995 13) to re-examine their view of life (Aronson 2005 104).

This work has been concerned to explain why selected works display what might be called the enduring characteristics of Pākehā, toughness, resourcefulness, tenacity, practicality and emotional repression. Both Pākehā humour, especially the cultural vein of irony, and Pākehā connectedness to the land, which are used on the stage as vehicles for questioning the taken-for-granted attitudes of Pākehā society, have been discussed in the chapters on irony, emotions and land. As an immigrant people, Pākehā have a dialogue with the external and ancestral world of Europe which is recalled in Bitter Calm through the thematic references to Scotland. Underlying surface concerns about how they live now is that fact that Pākehā both came from, and continue to live in, a globalised world. The works therefore examine the struggle to come to terms with a new environment and remake a culture in the light of a day-to-day interaction with another culture against the background of these global connections.

The problematic Pākehā relationship with the land and the tāngāta whenua are dramatically explored in the opera Bitter Calm. In this work the staged presence of Māori reveals some of the complexities of the settler - Māori relationship. It hints at the future for the characters through recalling the events which are now in the past for the audience. As composer Chris Blake explains, the tragic theme of the opera is

built out of a whole lot of interactions which are to do with the early settlement history of New Zealand. People that come out to find a better life, in a paradise that isn’t a paradise, and fail to interact, or operate, in a way where there can be some mutual appreciation, understanding, of two cultures.

(Blake 2005)

Paul Spoonley states that one of the challenges for dominant cultures in the post-colonial world is to “offer substantive critiques of the institutions of which we are a part. Dominant group members have been invited to form alliances with groups whose very basis of being is a critique of who we are as dominant groups” (1995 56).
The results of clashes like the one depicted in the opera have been engraved on the map of consciousness both for tāngāta whenua and settler. Through its dramatic juxtaposition of the Māori and the settler worlds, *Bitter Calm*, a fictional recreation of history, indirectly explores some of the issues of post-colonialism. The work has Matiu repudiating Pākehā justice as no justice at all, and the resonances of unresolved conflicts in the opera continue to ring after the performance is concluded. Through a complex interweaving of motives and personalities the opera presents the ‘reality’ of race relations in Aotearoa/New Zealand and a major theme of the work is that we are inextricably linked together in our society and in ourselves. This linking occurs even though we may not understand each other very well. For example, Chris Blake acknowledges that, as Pākehā, both he and writer Stuart Hoar, approached the story from a Pākehā perspective (2005) and yet the Māori presence is vital to the work. Though in terms of the story the outcome is disastrous, the work contains within its conflict the theatrical possibility for encounter and change. This proposes the possibility of a different future for Aotearoa/New Zealand through evoking imaginings in the mind of the audience. In *Home Land*, Māori are never explicitly acknowledged, Gary Henderson actually says the “traditional owners of the land are never mentioned in the play and I’m very aware of that and that was a conscious decision because I want to talk about what those people [the Pākehā characters] felt about it” (2007). This is where the play focuses, and *Home Land* deals with cultural conflict only obliquely in the scene which deals with the war in Iraq. However the question of Māori traditional rights in the area which can exist as an imagining for Pākehā and a memory for Māori audience members is present as a disturbing absence.

Claudia Bell, writing of popular media, suggests that these media present images and values to the nation of “middle-class Pakeha (sic) […] with the assumption that these are universal values, and to the benefit of us all” (1996 162). The Pākehā cultural identity presented by these selected performance works is not such a comfortable vision. The stage identities are subject to fracture, confusion, and failure. They are identities for whom the world is ambivalent, often at odds with their environment and with other people; they are identities who repeatedly fail to know themselves. They are presented through traditional character types, who live amongst thwarted hopes and conflicting ideas and aspirations. For example, the struggle to give a suppressed feminine world-view a powerful voice is central to *Fishnet. Home Land*
also examines the repression of the feminine, a suppression which is linked to fundamental inhibitions about displays of emotion. The play is permeated with the conflict between the residual pioneer cultural ethos, expressed as the ‘man alone’ concept, and the fact that most Pākehā now live in increasingly multi-cultural cities. Andrew London’s songs make wry observations about the desire Pākehā have to be different from the larger Western world while still being culturally linked to it. However, although theatre can present a brutally frank assessment of the situation, at the same time it can offer the hope that all is not lost. As Una Chaudhuri, writing of the play Nuit Blanche, suggests, however bad the circumstances, there are “possibilities for survival. [For] Identities survive the ruin of their cultural environment. They move on” (Chaudhuri 1995 248) and in their own way each of these works offers a possibility for change if not for the characters for the audience. Though both the opera and the play end with question marks hanging over the future, their ambiguity offers the possibility for identities to move on.

Much of what is drawn from performance is more intuitively felt than consciously reasoned. Through theatrical performance Pākehā articulate their belonging in a series of spaces “real spaces, imaginary spaces, or symbolic spaces” (Keith and Pile 1993, 35) which reveal both positive and negative aspects of Pākehā society. In discussing the mythic elements of theatrical performance in this work, I look at a psychological process that performance uses to discover ‘who we are’ and to represent that to ourselves. As John van Maanen writes “[c]ulture is not strictly speaking a scientific object, but is created, [...] by the active construction of a text” (1988 7). As the concern of this thesis is the Pākehā occupation of real, symbolic, imaginary and imaginative textual spaces created through theatrical performance complex issues such as Pākehā love of the land can be revealed. At the same time the works can refuse to openly discuss the underlying discomfort of knowing that the Māori, the people who used to live on that land, are now displaced by European settlement. This displacement lurks like a shadow over any discussion of land in Aotearoa/New Zealand and as a palpable absence makes itself obliquely felt in theatrical performance. Repressive attitudes towards sexuality can be exposed by works like Fishnet, a work which specifically targets sexual repression. Home Land also has muted references to sexual preferences that society finds troubling. The playing out of a subtext of prejudice and desires can reveal the fear of unbridled lust and a return to ‘savagery’, while those ideas
remain masked in the conscious worlds of the characters. Therefore Pākehā identity on
stage does not reside only in the particular selection of symbolic items, the rugby outfit,
or the flax leaves, but also in the manner in which these symbols are used, and a study
of works of Pākehā theatre can reveal much about the psychic structure of Pākehā
culture.

While a work like this thesis can never be exhaustive it can consider the
“fantastic” (Wilshire 1982 48) power theatre has to reveal the ‘truths’ of our society.
Rob Baum suggests that it is difficult to put into words (2003 17) that which is present
but not at the centre of our focus, whether because it is absent or on the periphery (2003
12). Bitter Calm is obviously critical of our history. Home Land presents some aspects
of present social and cultural unease, as in its own way does Fishnet. Andrew London’s
songs are satirical of his culture. In this way the works offer a contemporary set of
Pākehā identities, each presenting a different set of local attributes. They are tangible
and intangible “points of suture” (Hall 1996 6) between the society that Pākehā
recognise as being on a daily basis and the society to which they aspire. As serious
works of theatre they aim to remember the past and re-member it performatively in the
present.

The question could be asked, why is local work so important, will not any great
work of Western Theatre present aspects of Pākehā society to itself? The answer is, of
course, yes it will, and it does so. The great works of theatre continue to be relevant to
society because they speak of universals. The audience, through the process of
participation, reinterprets the work and applies its own meanings to what it sees and
hears. The works are constantly re-interpreted by the performers in the light of local,
current concerns. Even “historically faithful” recreations of a production cannot escape
being located in, and influenced by, the times in which they are performed. There is no
way in which an audience of today can see Shakespeare’s plays from the perspective of
Shakespeare’s audience. However it is important to note, that for nearly a century after
Pākehā settlement, most of the theatre works produced in Aotearoa/New Zealand came
from somewhere else. They originated “over there”, in the lands of origin, Europe,
America and Australia. Local performers have had to refashion these performances to
make them accessible to New Zealand audiences, while at the same time taking those
audiences, imaginatively, to some other place. While this is an experience in which
theatre specialises, there is an added element of participation for an audience when the
works belong to Aotearoa/New Zealand. The local audience is then participating in an event which takes place in a familiar cultural context which is established through what the works state directly and also revealed in the subtext and mise-en-scène.

As Pākehā is a hybrid identity, there is no one complete set of traits related to it. There are multiple modes of Pākehā identity made from many origins, and the selected works cannot present all of these. What they do present through the characters and personae they place on the stage is a selection of typical traits: the laconic tough farmer and his equally stoic wife, the rebellious daughter, the women seeking success, the feminist, the traditional homemaker, the matriarch who also represents the Pākehā version of the belief in the ancestors, the urbanites and the country people, the hopeful settlers and their fear of the natural world, lovers of the land, rash men, strong courageous women, discontented farmhands who represent an idea about social equality, displaced persons who belong to neither one cultural state nor the other, the social critics and the intellectual critics, racially and culturally prejudiced persons and those who are culturally aware, lovers, friends, enemies, cynics and visionaries.

A culture holds up to itself for contemplation through presentation and reflection on local stories that examine its ideas of failure and greatness and the cultural concepts that make it unique. This thesis has considered the idea that a community of people, larger than a few hundred people, may have imagined aspect as its basis. Given this concept about the nature of cultural identity, it seems clear that seeing their own community presented on the stage gives members of the Pākehā community a stronger sense of themselves. As a detached aesthetic critique of a society, theatre reveals the strains and fissures of a society and also its hopes and dreams, and in this way deals with what Stephen Turner describes as the “problem of living in the present, or living without history […] so that] the will to forget the trauma of the dislocation and unsettlement has taken a form of psychic structure” (Turner 1999 b 21.) Theatrical performance can offer glimpses into the journey of the developing and changing cultural identity of Pākehātāngā, but practically speaking, because the ways of its conceptualising and/or theatrically performing this identity have come from elsewhere, it is difficult to establish a definitive idea of its local theatrical performance.

However while, because of their heritage of Western theatre, all these works can go offshore, be received as performance, and be appraised by international criteria, their presentation on the New Zealand stage gives them a relationship with their audience.
which is constructed by the two-way process of local knowledge. On the surface, apart from some small linguistic differences, a local accent and some local words, there is little to choose between Pākehā representations and other Western performance works (if these are performed in English). However, within the broader traditions of Western Theatre performance, it is the small and subtle differences that separate one cultural performance tradition from another. Beneath the surface of the Western theatrical tradition lie some characteristics which delineate the Pākehā performance tradition of Aotearoa/New Zealand. There is an emphasis on local modes and characteristics of speech. There is the effect of cultural imperatives such as emotional repression, self-deprecation, and staunchness on the presentation of the characters. There are the particular representations of the land. There is a consciousness of the fragility of belonging in and to this country, exemplified by an understanding of the precarious grasp Pākehā have of the land. There is a sense of a determination to stay. These aspects of Pākehā character and experience influence the shape of local performance works.

In theatrical re-membering of cultural stories, an imaginary or mythical cultural identity, based on the everyday imagined community (Anderson 1991), is presented, for art, like politics, “is necessarily territorial […] and] these territories are simultaneously real, imaginary and symbolic” (Keith, Pile 1993 224). Local works are grounded in the land and the “thoughtscape” in which they originate. Hilary Halba (2007), Gary Henderson (2007), Ali East (2007), Kilda Northcott (2007), Lynne Pringle (2005) and Andrew London (2000) have all spoken about the positive aspects of creating and performing works which have their origins here in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Hillary Halba observes that there is a particular form of knowing associated with the performance of a local work. For the actor, the background to the character can be visited, remembered and reconstructed from personal experience. A performer can know, experientially, what it is like to walk those particular streets and to be in that landscape. The same accessibility is also available to some members of the audience. Such knowing, firstly on the part of the performer and then on the part of the audience, is an important aspect of a wider knowing of who one is. In 1992 James Ritchie wrote “we are in a new place and must make new maps for ourselves” (1992 10). The presentation of Pākehā cultural identity, with all its faults, in theatrical performance is a new form of cultural map.
Calling identity into presence on stage

As they sit in the audience, each person will bring a different experience to the selected works. Each will see different things being manifest and will note different absences. In the interplay between actors and audience, writes Arnold Aronson, “we are watching ourselves being watched, which really means that we are watching ourselves watching” (2005 99). I have been in the audience or, in the case of Fishnet, at the lighting desk, for all of these performances. In this way I have been part of each event and am able to recall the experience of participating in these performances.

I have described some of the ideas about Pākehā cultural identity which I noticed when watching Fishnet. Another time I had a sight of what it means to be Pākehā when I saw the opera Bitter Calm. Looking at the set with the mud, the rain, the bush, the sea, I felt at home. I know what it feels like to walk in the bush in the rain and feel that dripping from dark trees and squelch in the mud with little rivers running down the track. This conflict between settler and tāngāta whenua is part of my past. This did take place here, it is based on a true story and I felt that in some way I shared it.

In a different way, when I heard Andrew London sing his own compositions with the Hot Club Sandwich group I thought, that’s so Pākehā, that quirkiness, that self-deprecating irony. That’s us, mocking ourselves and taking ourselves seriously at the same time.

The experience of Home Land was similar. I walked into the Fortune Theatre in Dunedin; it doesn’t use a curtain, and so the set is open to the audience from the moment they come into the theatre, and there in front of me was a kitchen and a lounge that I recognised, the sky blue walls, the cream cupboards, the red Formica bench top, and the patterned lounge carpet, that sort of mottled autumn toned pattern that was so common in the seventies, and the old dark panels on the walls.
I’d seen that kitchen and lounge before. I’d been in ones like it. Now if you asked me if someone from somewhere else, not from Aotearoa was looking at that set, would they have seen what I saw? I can’t honestly say. I can’t speak for them. They would have seen something no doubt, we always do, and they would have made sense of the image from their own experience. But I didn’t just make sense of it, I knew it, in a purely local way I knew it, I recognised it, like I recognise a place from my own life.

And throughout the play I kept thinking yes. The kitchen, the cold outside, the land covered in frost under a morning mist, the hill behind the farm, the back paddock, the top paddock, feeding out. As a kid I’ve been up the hills at five in the morning for the muster. I’ve tramped my feet through deep dewy grass, I know those paddocks. I’ve seen the gold light on the grass. I know what that feels like. And also again I sort of know this story. This story is a fiction but I know these characters, I’ve met people like them, I’ve heard those lines, those sayings, and I recognise this emotional conflict, this stubbornness, this refusal to talk about love.

The video, To, For, By, With and From Performance continues my personal observations about the process of seeing Pākehā cultural identity on stage. It is a personal archaeological dig into the performance sites as I experienced them, which was my phenomenological experience of being in the audience.

Telling our own stories is important for Aotearoa/New Zealand, whether through books, poetry, film, documentary or theatre. However, telling our own stories in the theatre is particularly important because of the events that happen in that ‘empty space’. The relational charge across the gap, the complex process of presenting, embodiment and re-embodiment which takes place during a theatrical performance makes it a more ‘present’, and thus possibly a more profound experience, than the other forms of communication. Because of its immediacy, theatre is a particularly powerful means of presenting identity and its role as a vehicle for Pākehā identity between 1992 and 2006 has been considered through the examination of four selected works. During those fourteen years, ideas of what it means to be Pākehā, ideas of the relationship that the people of European, largely Anglo-Celtic, descent have to the tāngata whenua, have
changed. New influences have come, and are coming to bear on the racial mix and racial and cultural identities of Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Like members of those other groups who make up the cultural mix of Aotearoa/New Zealand, as a Pākehā of Anglo-Celtic descent, when the I see myself articulated on the stage, I understand more thoroughly what my culture is and what it might be. Each one of the works presents the problems that face the Pākehā members of the community of Aotearoa/New Zealand by thematically and performatively challenging their audiences without offering easy solutions. They challenge ideas, traditions and modes of thinking, questioning old expectations and leaving it up to the audience to determine the answers.

When it comes to live performance, Pākehā not only clearly have a very definite identity, but they are constantly theorising this identity on the stage and asking both for an explanation of themselves and of the world in which they find themselves embedded. Over the last twenty-five years the telling of Pākehā stories and the development of local modes of performance has become more confident. These are stories of living here, as a transplanted group or groups of people in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The stories draw on both the heritage of the Māori, the tāngata whenua, and on the heritage of those settlers from Europe, especially from the lands of Scotland, Ireland, Wales and England. Pākehātāngā is but one strand in the imaginative representations of the cultures which make up Aotearoa. The relationship between Māori Theatre, bicultural theatre and Pākehā theatre can continue to be investigated. Another area of study which is adding to understanding about the cultural identity of Aotearoa/New Zealand is the study of the performance works of Chinese, Indian and Pacific Island New Zealanders and the relationship between their view of Aotearoa/New Zealand and the Pākehā view. This thesis has merely scratched the surface of what it means for the people of Aotearoa/New Zealand to see themselves on stage.

Rob Baum’ s evocative statement that “metaphors define culture” (Baum 2003:19), also applies to the works of performance, for theatre itself is an extended metaphor for life; lifelike, yet unlike the actual process of living. Therefore it is useful to think metaphorically about it. A theatrical performance is like a bottle of wine which one person gives to another. There are the tangible items of the bottle and the wine, and contained within the wine itself are all the subtleties of colour, smell and taste. These
things can be measured, but there is more to the wine. There is the intention of the
giver, the attitude of the receiver, the history of the vineyard and the vintage, and the
cultural ideas associated with the idea of wine. So with a theatrical performance – what
is seen or heard is only half the story. What a person brings to the performance and
what the performance brings to itself is equally important.

In keeping with the idea of metaphorical understandings of the world, I would
also like to offer a metaphorical description of Pākehā identity itself:

Imagine a stretch of calm blue water fringed by raupo.35 Hidden in the
raupo, safe from prying eyes, are birds’ nests; in the shallows are
numerous fingerlings, the spawn of many ocean-going fish. Wading birds
stalk the tidal flats probing the mud for the rich mixture of aquatic life,
which are an abundant source of food. Further out, sea birds dive for the
catch of juvenile fish.

On the landward side of the estuary, the river oozes in through wetlands
of raupo and ti kouka; on the seaward side, the water runs out through a
break in the sand dunes to the ocean. Twice each day the ocean rises,
spilling salt water into the estuary and diluting the rivers’ fresh water to
create the salinity that the inhabitants of this brackish stretch of habitat
require. Once common around the New Zealand coasts, estuary wetlands
have become threatened habitats, but these areas of in-between, of neither
land nor sea, are the nurseries of many fish and the food basket of many
birds. The inhabitants of the estuary are special: neither fresh nor salt,
they inhabit a merging world of possibilities.

Pākehā cultural identity in performance takes the form of a flowing, ebbing
body in which different elements mix and remix, constantly changing, yet continually
occupying a third space, the place of hybridity. Pākehā draw their strength from the
place of their origins, and the place of their transformation. Each location continues to
influence the form and content of Pākehā expression, creating works that, like Pākehā
themselves, are mixed products. This is appropriate for a people of mixed heritage, who
are also influenced by the culture that is the culture of their closest neighbour.

35 Bulrush
Pākehā are a practical and pragmatic group of people, who take what they need from the environment in which they find themselves, and fashion workable solutions to new problems. In the area of performance, Pākehā are wrestling with the problem of being local, and yet part of the distant Western World. In representing the imagined communities of everyday life through the fictional representations of theatrical performance, society is able to reflect on itself, and decide if it likes what it sees. The performance works examined in this thesis consider many of the strands that go to make up the merging state that is the cultural identity: Pākehā. What is presented on the stage is the theatrically performative cultural identity Pākehā. The characters and personae stand in for all possible aspects of Pākehā cultural identity in the past and the future, compressing into the compacting time and space of performance the absences and presences of our life here in this place Aotearoa/New Zealand. In form and subject matter there are continuities with Europe, with local additions represented through scenography, iconography and attitude. There is a territorial imperative in the selected works, a sense of having created a place in the South Pacific, and of belonging to it. This sense of place locates the universal theme to local expositions revealing that, performatively at least, Pākehā in Aotearoa/New Zealand are at home.
### List of Māori Words

For Māori Definitions See *A Dictionary of Maori Words in New Zealand English* or *A Dictionary of Māori Language*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aotearoa</td>
<td>Land of the long white cloud, New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ariki</td>
<td>Paramount chief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aroha</td>
<td>Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auē</td>
<td>Cry of distress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atua</td>
<td>Ghost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harakeke</td>
<td>Flax usually (<em>Phormium tenax</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iwi</td>
<td>Tribe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiwi</td>
<td>Any of four species of flightless nocturnal birds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kōrero</td>
<td>A talk a discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kōwhai</td>
<td>native tree with yellow flowers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koru</td>
<td>Stylised fern-scroll pattern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuia</td>
<td>Old or senior woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mana</td>
<td>Status, prestige, lineage, honour, charisma – a way of being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manawhenua</td>
<td>Authority of the local people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manaakitanga</td>
<td>the offering of hospitality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Māori</td>
<td>Person of the Polynesian race of Aotearoa/New Zealand, language of that race</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maoritāngā</td>
<td>Cultural beliefs and practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marae</td>
<td>Area in front of the meeting house, the centre of tribal life, now often used to mean the complex of buildings around the open area as well the areas itself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matakite</td>
<td>Power of second sight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Māui</td>
<td>A central figure in Māori legends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moana</td>
<td>Sea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moko</td>
<td>Tattooing on face or body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngā</td>
<td>A tribal prefix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngāi</td>
<td>A tribal prefix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngāti</td>
<td>A tribal prefix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nikau</td>
<td>Iconic native palm (<em>Phophalostylis sapida</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noa</td>
<td>Ordinary or profane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pākehā</td>
<td>Non Māori, New Zealander of European descent often Anglo-Celtic (usage still subject to debate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pākehātanga</td>
<td>Pākehā culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parihaka</td>
<td>Home of Māori passive resistance to land alienation in Taranki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patupaiarehe</td>
<td>Fairy-like supernatural being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pōwhiri</td>
<td>A ceremonial welcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rangatira</td>
<td>A chief, a person of importance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raupō</td>
<td>Tall summer-green plant of swampy places</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Maori Words

(Typha orientalis)

Taiaha

Long wooden weapon

tanga

Suffix signifying culture

Tāngāta

People

Tāngāta tiriti

Non Māori people present in New Zealand as a result of The Treaty of Waitangi

Tāngāta whenua

People of the Land

Tapu

Sacred, divine, holy, inviolate, sacrosanct

Taranaki

Province in west central North Island

Tauiwi

Foreigner non Māori – strange tribe

Te

The

Tekoteko whakapakoko

Ancestral figures

Te Reo (Māori)

Māori language

Te Tiriti O Waitangi

The Treaty of Waitangi

Tikanga

Culture (usually Māori)

Tūpuna

Ancestor or grandparent also Tipuna

Waiata

A song

Wairua

Spirit, soul

Wero

Challenge, usually as part of a marae ceremony

Whaea

Mother

Whānau

Family

Whenua

Land
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Appendix One

*Video To, For, By, With and From Performance*
Appendix Two

Survey Results

Statistics

Statistical Standard for Ethnicity 2005 NZ Department of Statistics

Cartoons

Neville Lodge (2)
Murray Ball (2)

Paper

‘Partnering Creation’ Lyne Pringle and Kilda Northcott

DANZ Quarterly • December 2006 p.18

List of works for Stuart Hoar
List of works for Lyne Pringle
List of selected works for Chris Blake
List of works for Andrew London Hot Club Sandwich
List of News Paper and Magazine Articles
Survey Results

The dance work *Fishnet* was surveyed during its season at the Dunedin Fringe Festival 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> October 2006.

260 survey forms were distributed to audience members who were given the option of either filling in the survey after the performance and returning it at the door or taking it away and returning it in the stamped addressed envelop provided. Most took the option of taking the survey away and posting it back.

113 survey forms were returned by both methods.

The survey sought to discover whether or not people related to the work *Fishnet* as a work that expressed a version of the cultural identity of Aotearoa/New Zealand and of Pākehā cultural identity in particular.

Accordingly participants were asked both questions which sought a yes/no response, and others which required a longer written answer. The object of the survey was more to collect opinion that to collect statistics.

Two survey forms were returned uncompleted but with accompanying documents which are reproduced at the end of these results along with some additional comments also attached to the forms.

The results of this survey are detailed below. Not all the questions present on the form have been collated and the results are displayed in a different sequence from the way they were placed on the form in order to bring all the responses relating to Pākehā identity together. The additional comments have been recorded as they were written by the respondents. Unless the comments were essentially identical all the comments have been recorded even though many are similar.

The results to the key questions are as follows:
1. Would you describe yourself as Pākehā?  

| Yes 85 | No 28 |

It is possible that the group surveyed, as part of the Fringe Festival audience, had a greater than average willingness to call themselves Pākehā.

Those who did not identify as Pākehā

| Canadian | 1 |
| NZ/European | 2 |
| Kiwi | 1 |
| NZ & Swiss | 1 |
| North American (Lesbian) | 1 |
| Finnish | 1 |
| Chinese New Zealander | 1 |
| Scottish | 1 |
| New Zealander | 1 |
| NZ/Aotearoa | 1 |
| Mid European | 1 |
| Pacific Island | 1 |
| White | 1 |
| Māori and European | 1 |
| Not specified | 13 |

Two of the respondents stated they would not use the word because ‘I feel that it is a derogatory term and ‘I don’t use the work Pākehā to describe myself because it’s from a language that is not my mother tongue. I think the show reflected NZ European identity because it was constructed and performed by two NZ Europeans.’

Two crossed out the word Pākehā to replace it with European and New Zealander specifically

2. Do you think of this as a work belonging to Aotearoa/New Zealand?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Those who identified as Pākehā</th>
<th>Yes 67</th>
<th>No 16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Those who did not identify as Pākehā</td>
<td>Yes 19</td>
<td>No 11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. When asked, in relation to the performance, ‘were there local objects or movements which you recognised as representative of Aotearoa/New Zealand?’ The following were named

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rugby jerseys, also seen as the Highlander’s colours</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rugby (theme. images and stances -the clowning in the piece also seen as a skit by one respondent, other respondents commented on the humour as a Pākehā characteristic also interpreted as ‘the ‘drunken’ movements at the beginning of the dance)</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harakeke flax</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweeping and beating movements in flax dance</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smell of flax in the theatre</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bleached pelvis bones (also seen as a whale skull)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishnet (stockings?)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrying plants</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bird (one survey respondent stated bellbird) sounds</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cicada sounds</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal sounds</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental sounds</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haka stance/Māori dance movements and the dancers’ imitation of water/sea birds in bird dance (Māori movements)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ‘chicken’ scene</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The conversations and personalities of the dancers, strong women</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The video background (white motif also seen as koru motif)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The evocation of a ‘rural atmosphere’ by the dancers ‘in the landscape’</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Landscape’ and other shapes made by the dancers</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Dancing free expression of pure enjoyment -that’s a kiwi thing!’</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of red black and white colours (labelled Māori and Spanish)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Country ‘walk’ movements’</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturer/speechmaking (parodying this)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Rowing a boat’</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Masks’</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Bare feet’</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dancers’ accents when they spoke including the use of local words and idioms, (both words and images) use of local place names  6

The lighting  1

‘New Zealand humour in the choreography’ (e.g. flax on head, rugby skit)  2

‘Bogan-type costumes in the ‘sexy part’’  1

Music  1

‘Dancers’ use of their hair’  1

‘Film design elements’  1

‘Pulpit’  1
4. When asked 'Did *Fishnet* look at any issues which you think particularly belong to Aotearoa/New Zealand?'

Those who identified as Pākehā

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Those who did not identify as Pākehā

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Those issues listed as belonging to Aotearoa/New Zealand were as follows:

- Place of rugby, the love of rugby, the dominance of Rugby ‘as expressing personal and national identity,’(1) as ‘having the most value and the biggest voice’. (1) 9
- Macho men 1
- ‘The difficulties that A/NZ women have in the “blokes” society’ 1
- [Though feminist issues are international] ‘The performance seemed to be of this place and was 2 NZ women’s take on feminist issues’. 1
- Visibility of Ageing – ‘this is a “white” issue, ethnic cultures value age and align it with knowledge’ ‘Older woman do not have a voice in A/NZ’ 10
- Integration 1
- Acceptance of and attitudes to women within the A/NZ context 3
- ‘Gender stereotypes e.g. the inarticulate Rugby mole’ [moll?], [may refer to ‘sexy’ scene or to the segment where the women wear rugby outfits -un clear] 2
- ‘The effect that being a Pākehā woman in a colonised country has on her right to be herself’ 1
- ‘Body shape and sexuality, older women shouldn’t (should) be sexual beings’. 3
- ‘Portraying A/NZ women as artists and feminists 1
- ‘Subculture of A/NZ dance’ 1
- ‘Being a mature dancer in A/NZ.’ The identity of the mature dancer in A/NZ’ 2
- ‘Geographical and political references to local places’ 1
- ‘The patriarchy’ 1
- ‘Misogyny’ 1
- ‘Universal issues but treated from NZ perspective especially in the humour’ 1
‘Being unapologetic and rough’ 1
‘Beauty of older women’ 1
‘‘Tall Poppy” syndrome’ 1

Universal issues listed by those who did not think the work dealt with issues of Aotearoa/New Zealand were:

‘Issues around femininity, ageing and dance are universal and important’ 1
‘Issues of women trying to find an exciting identity as mature women’ 1
‘Issues of the ‘de-sexualisation and the ostracisation’ of older women - ‘we wear an invisible burqua!’’ 1
‘Invisibility and aging have general applicability to Western women’ 2
‘Universal themes of women, and feelings and perceptions about self’ 1
Those who described themselves as Pākehā were asked

‗If yes, would you describe the work as expressing an idea of Pākehā identity?‘

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The supplementary question was: If yes, what did you see that showed Pākehā identity?

Of those who described themselves as Pākehā, some of those who thought the work expressed an idea of Pākehā identity responded to the supplementary question as follows:

‗Ideas associated with women in middle age. The adoption by NZ women of these “western” ideas and challenging them.‘ 2

‗It was in English of the NZ type. It was done without many props – background music and sound seemed to have the “spookiness” of the NZ wilderness.‘ 1

‗Claim for NZ identity beginning and ending with ‘earth’, harakeke, etc., physicality. Concern about ‘invisibility of older women, though this may be a post-war generation concern’ [not sure exactly what is meant but respondent may have been born pre the second World War] 1

‗Aging, and at times this not being celebrated or respected [unclear] last five years full of opportunity and freedom‘ [exact quote from survey] 2

‗The form of the dance and exposure of the female body was very “white”. Māori performers would, I think, interpret the messages quite differently.‘ 1

‗Older women in Pākehā society often consider themselves marginalised/ invisible, compared with the media and cultural emphasis on youth. However, as the two women portrayed ages and years can give strength to an individual‘; ‘ethnic [Māori] cultures value age and align it with knowledge’ 4

‗As compared to Māori culture, it was individualistic not family oriented - standing, speaking on the podium quite feminist‘. 1

Attitudes to ages and menopause, etc. 2

The modern dance scene 1

‗Women celebrating together despite the efforts of hegemonic masculinity to keep us separate and therefore weaker. I was left quite speechless after the dance. It was very powerful –the dance and the music cut through what we do to who we are.’ 1

‗Role of women seeking empowerment and a voice, seeking new roles as they get older, active participation in arts of all ages, use of black, white, and red as iconic colours‘ 1

Fishnet stockings clothing 2

‗The role of women and the place of women in Pākehā society, how women are seen by others and how women see themselves.‘ 1
‘Special kind of humour, rough edges, interconnectedness of landscape and identity, poking fun at academics’  

‘Role identity as able and capable women despite age and appearance. I think this is uniquely NZ not European in the strong territory of NZ home second wave feminist viewing’.

‘Women as child bearers’, ‘woman as nurturer, mother, silent’

‘Using Pākehā dancers while still maintaining NZ heritage’

‘Drama queens, aging princess, murderess, birth’

‘The audience responding to the humour [word not clear] Pākehā’

‘Pākehā women’s identity’

‘Aspects of sexualised, white, female representation; reference to academic theory’

‘PPākehā performers; dance used English language, clothing, music played, baring the body, sexual images/references’

‘A rather outdated feminist polemic – reinventing the wheel. Any female who still beats the tired old drum of “invisibility” in NZ surely need to look within – the problem is with her not society’.

‘I could relate to their whole story’

I find the central idea of the tongue-tied goddess – the invisible … [not clear] older woman relevant but I am sure it is not exclusive to Pākehā identity. I would say it is probably an issue for Australians and English women at least.’

‘Objectification of women; their struggle to be seen and heard’

‘An identity with it roots in European ideas/art forms/influence, yet also aware of the local landscape and influenced by it pressures and/or forms. Usually I’d say Pākehā identity is also influenced by ideas/beliefs formed by Māori and other Pacific Island and Asian people … but I couldn’t say that any of the Polynesian or Asian influences were evident in this show.’

‘Not exclusively Pākehā - probably could have related to other culture of European origin – sexual value of slim, young body’.

‘Notions of sexuality, artistic expression as post-modern, intellectualism, dislocation, independence’

‘Pākehā female identity – what it means to be a Pākehā 50-something women in contemporary NZ’

‘Clothes, blonde hair, 2 Pākehā women, childbirth, meaningful work opportunities for older women.’

One respondent who did not identify as Pākehā thought that the work did express an idea of Pākehā identity.

The above respondent wrote in answer to the supplementary question: ‘The fact that the women see themselves as silenced.’

Of those who described themselves as Pākehā, some of those who did not think the work expressed an idea of Pākehā identity responded to the supplementary question as follows:
‘It is steeped in NZ but transcends one culture,’ ‘could easily see this on the stage in London or NY or Sydney’

‘Not exclusively Pākehā; it was ‘culturally’ ‘Western’, especially the references to female spirituality’

‘Enjoyed the movement but was puzzled much of the time re a message (if indeed there always was one).’

‘The work was about being female and the identity with gender – that transcended other cultural issues though I’m sure they worked to be inclusive’

‘The work looked at women’s issues as a whole which are more universal rather than issues pertaining to a particular cultural group

‘Feminine identity’

‘The work is not specifically a New Zealand piece’; ‘it felt like something that would apply to some women’s points of view regardless of country or culture’

‘Basically any themes seemed multicultural, e.g. aging’

‘The work spoke to me as a mature woman rather than any specific cultural identity, it was about perceptions and challenging ideas of what older women are and can do’

‘Feminism is essentially a Western (i.e. European) sociological construct’.

One respondent, who could not decide, wrote: ‘It did not particularly show Pākehā identity; it’s universal, burlesque dancing perhaps. This work could have come from another white western or European country, but not from, say, the Middle East Asia or Africa, although people from those places could probably identify with much of it. In that way the themes are universal, but the expression of them is Western or even Pākehā.’

Some things which could be seen to be Pākehā about the work are:

- ‘The way the two women make fun of themselves, eg. in the fishnet stocking scene + visible/invisible scene and several other scenes. (Self-deprecation is common in Pākehā humour).’
- ‘The “chook” scene, though I imagine this coming from white Australia or Britain also.’
- ‘The putting on of a French accent to describe the “visible/invisible theory” – we still sometimes think of ourselves (Pākehā) as lacking some sophistication and perhaps also intellect.’
- ‘The list of achievements/CV that Lyne recites rapidly signifies the Pākehā notion of having to succeed, to achieve, to be recognised by authorities for one’s work, to “make it” in the world through constant hard work and endeavour. Likewise Kilda’s exhaustion evident during this recital shows how weary we become by all this striving to achieve.’
- ‘Feminism – this bit is feminist too – showing how hard women have to work to achieve recognition in their fields – harder, possibly, than men do. Also the terms of success are invented by men. This is not spelt out here but implied.’
Additional Comments re survey from respondents:

1 ‘Lectern and proclamations in association. More focus on appreciating dancing bodies/light, sound. While noticing cultural/feminist theme directed enjoyment to dance moves ‘other’ content could have been interpreted in multiple ways so gave up didactic response’

2. We are so bound in our culture but I think women from other places would have related also. We relate to it because of who we are, but I think the subculture of dance was impinging.

People of the world

Subcultures

the richness

that helps

us read

the work.

What ones do

we belong to?

The more we belong
to all these sub cultures
that Lyne and Kilda do, the
more of their culture we have to
relate to.

New Zealand

New Zealand Pākehā

New Zealand Pākehā Women

New Zealand Pākehā Women over 40

New Zealand Pākehā Women over 40 Dancers
3. ‘As I suspected, it is impossible to answer your survey – rather like trying to fit an elephant into a shoebox.

No really excellent theatre experience is a simple matter if yes and no and a minute space to comment.

Sorry

I suppose that everyone brings some “cultural identity” to every art work (see Grombrecht “Art and Illusion”) but to define it too closely is to excise.’

4. I wanted to respond to your questionnaire but instead I want to say that I just so loved the performance and a week later have thought about it endlessly. It is difficult for me to express in words, as it affected me emotionally. A powerful piece, certainly, expressing how it is for women in our culture and probably women in other cultures. It made me laugh, it made me consider but mostly I was just moved by the powerful performance. I like the combination of media it was kind of ‘a piece’ of stunning work. The carrying of the flax at the beginning and the beating at the end I felt so much power but to analyse just isn’t what I feel able to do.

It was FANTASTIC!!

And it had lots + lots to make you think.
6. Would you describe the work as feminist?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>83</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both those who did and those who did not describe themselves as Pākehā responded to this question.

Some of those who thought the work was not feminist chose to offer the following reasons:

- ‘The work had a female viewpoint but was not feminist’ 2
- ‘Female (feminine) issues of independence, aging’ 2
- ‘The issues were just as relevant to men’ 2

Some of those who thought the work was feminist chose to offer the following reasons:

- ‘Feminism is positively liberating, empowering females’ 7
- ‘Strong female personalities, and viewpoints’ 6
- The style of the dance emphasised and celebrated the female body (beauty) 6
- ‘Focusing on the feminine viewpoint and sexuality in maturity’ 8
- ‘Celebrates women, images of women, characterisation of women & how it is abused, stereotyped, the voice and no voice of women, invisible, visible woman and woman through the ages’ 6
- ‘Women’s status as aging human being, issues around aging- shows their strength’ 7
- ‘Women’s experiences and perceptions of each other and how women are perceived by others’ 1
- ‘Focus on women’s bodies, childbirth, and on aging, the mature female body’ 3
- Challenges perceptions of age and sexuality and sensuality and celebrates women 2
- ‘The work was presented by women, as an expression of womanhood’ 6
- What it is like to be taken seriously as two mature contemporary female dancers 4
- ‘Sexuality being related to age and body shape. The need to be masculine in order to be feminine’ 1
- ‘Very affirming and empowering women (and not at the expense of men); enjoyed the humour of the work’ 1
- ‘About women as sex objects’ and ‘about the strength of women’ [not as sex objects] 3
- The growth and transformation of women 1
- ‘I am the same age as the performers, and the show mirrored early experiences at a different time of my life’ 1
- ‘Show argued that women’s experience is distinct from men’s; [unclear could be affected] by social expectations and pressures; shaped by historical roles’ 1
- ‘Mature women exploring their roles, the invisibility of women over 40’ 5
Women asserting their power and their voice

‘Challenging imagery, mocking concept of female friendship, and communication, also about “The Change”’.

‘Females cringing instead of getting on with life’

‘Show raised issues of female identity and equality’

‘Highlighted roles versus desires’

‘Analysis of womanhood as situated in a patriarchal world questions status quo’

‘A critique of traditional ballet in its form, the roles and the age of the dancers’

‘Suggestions of lesbianism in the show’

‘Looks at the effect of patriarchal capitalism which subordinates women’

One respondent turned the page to write: ‘‘Feminist’ sounds often negative and exclusive, wanting a matriarch. Feminist means for me the ‘female side’ of a whole that includes men as well. When I talk about feminism I’m often worried that people understand that this means matriarchal women dominating the world.’
Some Conclusions

It is possible that the group surveyed had a greater than average willingness to call themselves Pākehā. The audience was largely middle-aged but many were either followers of modern in Aotearoa/New Zealand or personally known, as relatives and friends, to the performers. It is likely that a group which concerns itself with experimental works of art may be more willing to adopt the term Pākehā to describe their status as New Zealander of European descent.

In answer to the first set of questions about objects or movements recognised as representative of Aotearoa/New Zealand, the most commonly recognised object was the use of the flax, either simply named (83), or described in its various usages (5), (6), followed by the rugby section images and stances (33), the jersey (11), Highlanders’ colours (8). Respondents also picked up on a variety of other elements, the curving design of the video projection which reminded them of a koru, the ‘landscape’ shapes made by the dancers, and the drawing upon Māori ritual movements, the music and sound scape which seemed to evoke ‘local’ sound, e.g. bird sounds and cicadas, the sounds made by the dancers themselves and the use of local idiom and place names and the dancers’ local accents. An interesting element that some respondents commented on was the use of New Zealand humour in the choreography either as direct clowning, the ‘flax on head’ sequence and the rugby sequence (1) (2), or as parody in the lecturer sequence (3).

In answer to the second section which dealt with ‘Did Fishnet look at any issues which you think particularly belong to Aotearoa/New Zealand?’, the most common issue identified was the invisibility of aging women, and this was expressed as a ‘white’ issue, the feeling being that other cultures valued age and aligned it with knowledge.

The second most common theme was rugby, and then a variety of issues to do with women and how they are perceived. Once again a respondent made mention of the NZ sense of humour.

On the question of whether or not the work showed Pākehā identity, there were 32 answers given, many only slightly different from each other, but only answers which were essentially the same have been grouped together. The most common response with question 4 was once again the invisibility of older women, with two other slightly different variants on this theme. This is was the subject of the work, but it was also perceived as a marker for Pākehātāngā. The response that it is not exclusively Pākehā has been included with this group as it leaned towards a concept of Pākehātāngā.

Once again a respondent noted the humour and placed that as a Pākehā attribute.

79% of the respondents did consider themselves to be Pākehā and of that group 38% thought that the work dealt with issues which particularly belonged to Aotearoa/New Zealand. While 56% of those who identified as Pākehā would describe the work as expressing an idea of Pākehā identity, it seems that overall the feeling is that the work could be Pākehā. The difficulty here seems to be that there are no clear guidelines as to what is or is not Pākehā. This is the territory that this survey is seeking to explore. Some respondents indeed did express a strong feeling that it was Pākehā, but also that it was difficult to say just what Pākehā is, though ‘one can know it when one sees it’. References to local plants and to local sports, dealt with in a humorous, almost off-hand manner were seen to add a feeling of localness to the work. The “chook” scene, for example, was singled out by one respondent as an example of the local, but the respondent then went on to write ‘I imagine this coming from white Australia or Britain also.’ Certainly the particular characteristics of “chooks” and their references to women as used in this work are known in the Anglo world, but the question remains as to whether or not their use in this particular way is in fact Pākehā.

It was interesting to note a strong bias against issues which could have international application as being Pākehā. 42% of those who identified as Pākehā expressed some reservations of this nature. This raises the question of whether or not this also is a Pākehā trait - to disregard as local things which can be/are also global?
Statistical Standard for Ethnicity 2005

Definition

Rationale for Standard

This standard was developed because Ethnicity is a key social factor used with other topics in describing the New Zealand population. Information collected on ethnicity is used to inform, plan, and evaluate services and policies by a wide range of organisations, local authorities and government agencies.

Major uses of ethnicity data are:

• to monitor and report changes and disparities in outcomes among ethnic groups over time
• to monitor the changing ethnic diversity of New Zealand's population at national, regional and local levels, so that appropriate services may be delivered
• to estimate future trends through population estimates and projections for Māori, European, Pacific and Asian populations
• to monitor the demographic, social and economic progress of, and outcomes for, ethnic groups
• to evaluate the impact of central and local government policies on the economic and social well-being of ethnic groups
• to model the impacts and costs of policy changes, and to forecast expenditure on services for particular groups
• to assist in the delivery of services in a culturally appropriate way and to plan social services which meet the special needs of ethnic groups, and
• to identify significant communities of interest for liaison and development purposes.

The Statistical Standard for Ethnicity was developed to ensure that ethnicity is collected consistently for all surveys and administrative collections. Data from a large number of collections is combined with other sources, such as the population census, to produce official measures in a range of areas such as education, health, employment and unemployment, income, housing and crime. Unless consistent ethnicity data is available, valid and reliable measures cannot be produced. Lack of consistency across different collections means data may not be comparable.

For all of these considerations the Statistical Standard for Ethnicity 2005 encourages the use of a standardised concept, definition, collection, coding method, and output, as given in this standard, to promote data consistency and comparability in all official statistics.

This Statistical Standard has been developed from the recommendations in the Report of the Review of the Measurement of Ethnicity released in June 2004. This report established the continued need for collection of detailed ethnicity data and the need to measure ethnicity in a consistent way across all official statistics.

Key recommendations from the Report of the Review of the Measurement of Ethnicity:

• The 2006 Census will use the same ethnicity question that was used in the 2001 Census.
• Statistics New Zealand will continue to educate respondents, users and producers of ethnicity data about the concept of ethnicity.
• A comprehensive programme of research into the measurement of ethnicity in official statistics will be completed by the end of 2009.
• All collections of official statistics measuring ethnicity should have the capacity to record and report six ethnicity responses for each individual, or the minimum of three responses when six cannot be implemented immediately.

• The method of reporting ethnicity in all collections of official statistics should be self-identification.

• Responses of 'New Zealander' and 'Kiwi' and similar responses will be classified separately from New Zealand European responses.

• The practice of prioritising ethnic group responses to one per individual will be discontinued.

Definition

Ethnicity is the ethnic group or groups that people identify with or feel they belong to. Ethnicity is a measure of cultural affiliation, as opposed to race, ancestry, nationality or citizenship. Ethnicity is self perceived and people can belong to more than one ethnic group.

An ethnic group is made up of people who have some or all of the following characteristics:

• a common proper name

• one or more elements of common culture which need not be specified, but may include religion, customs, or language

• unique community of interests, feelings and actions

• a shared sense of common origins or ancestry, and

• a common geographic origin.

This definition is based on the work of Smith (1986).

Operational Issues

Collection

Collection of ethnicity presents some difficulties. People report a range of aspects of their identities such as cultural affiliation, ancestry, nationality and race when asked for ethnic group identification. Evidence suggests that people may answer the question easily but not understand the ethnicity concept being asked for. Another difficulty is that some may report one ethnic group but identify with more than one, or report more but in fact identify with fewer groups. Finally, a number of people object to answering an ethnicity question and may refuse to answer or may answer facetiously.

When collecting ethnicity information, people need to be able to state their specific ethnic groups without being forced to identify themselves in a more general category. Detailed ethnic group information is to be collected in order to allow categorisation at the most detailed level of the Standard Classification of Ethnicity, level four. Data can be aggregated into a smaller number of categories as users require.

Where it is not possible to collect data at level four of the classification, for instance in administrative data collections where written responses are not able to be coded, ethnic group information should be collected at level two of the classification which is less detailed.
All collections of official statistics measuring ethnicity should have the capacity to capture six ethnicity responses per person. Where this cannot be implemented immediately, it is recommended that a minimum of three ethnicity responses be collected.

*Ethnic group changing over time (ethnic mobility)*

The ethnic group or groups that someone identifies with may change over time. It is necessary to allow for ethnic mobility in longitudinal surveys and administrative databases. Ethnic mobility also affects the integration of different data sets as the same person may have given different ethnic group answers in different collections. Rather than using both data sets' responses, the decision on what is appropriate to use needs to be decided on a case by case basis.

*Ethnic group changing with context*

A difficulty that is not easily overcome when collecting ethnic group information is the possibility that a person may give a different response depending on the context. For example, when filling in a self-administered form a person may respond differently from when asked his/her ethnic group by an interviewer. Also, the social or cultural setting may affect the ethnicity response reported. A decision on what is appropriate to use for integrated data sets needs to be decided on a case by case basis.

*Legal age*

Ethnicity is self-defined. While no legal or recommended age has been set at which a child can respond on their own behalf, the expectation is that teenagers will self-identify their ethnicity.

*Ethnicity collection by proxy*

Statistics New Zealand collects a self-identified concept of ethnicity. In some circumstances a person may be unable to answer this question and the next-of-kin, parent, spouse or partner needs to respond on their behalf, for example, in the case of birth or death, or incapacity because of disability, injury or sickness. Also parents, caregivers or guardians of a child may complete an ethnicity question on behalf of their child.

*Multiple ethnicity*

People may identify with more than one ethnic group so when collecting ethnicity data there needs to be provision to collect multiple ethnic groups for each individual. It is recommended that six ethnic group responses per person be collected where possible. The ability to collect three responses is the minimum requirement to meet the standard. See Coding Process for more detail.

**Explanatory Notes**

*Race/Ancestry/Citizenship/Ethnic origin*

Ethnicity should not be confused with other related terms. Race is a biological indicator and an ascribed attribute. Ancestry is a biological and historical concept and refers to a person's blood descent. Citizenship is a legal status. These terms contrast with ethnicity which is self-perceived and a cultural concept. Ethnic origin is a person's historical relationship to an ethnic group, or a person's ancestors' affiliation to an ethnic group, whereas ethnicity is a person's present-day affiliation.

*Business, family and household*

Ethnicity is a personal attribute and therefore it is not valid to attribute an ethnicity to a business, family or household based on the ethnicity of an individual within that business, family or household.

*New Zealander responses*
Prior to the introduction of this Statistical Standard, a New Zealander response was included in the New Zealand European category. In the Standard Classification of Ethnicity, New Zealander and similar responses like Kiwi are classified to a separate ethnic group category at the most detailed level, level four. This category is called ‘New Zealander’. For time series purposes, the counts of the New Zealander category can be added to the counts of the New Zealand European category to recreate a count for the New Zealand European category which will be comparable to those from previous data collections.

Classification and Coding Process

Classification Criteria

The criterion for classification of ethnic groups is self-identification with one or more ethnicities. Detailed ethnic group information is collected so that responses can be classified to specific ethnic group categories at the most detailed level of the classification, level four. Where this is not possible, information may be classified to less detailed levels, level two or level three. Level one is used solely for output.

Individual ethnic groups are aggregated into progressively broader ethnic groups from level three up to level one, according to geographical location or origin, or cultural similarities. The classification reflects responses received and is made up of geographic, nationality and ethnic group terms.

The Standard Classification of Ethnicity has been developed from the recommendations in the Report of the Review of the Measurement of Ethnicity released in June 2004.

Classification

The Standard Classification of Ethnicity is a hierarchical classification of four levels. Level one of the classification has seven categories, including one residual category, and is used solely for output. Level two of the classification has 27 categories, including six residual categories. Level three of the classification has 42 categories, including six residual categories. Level four of the classification has 239 categories, including six residual categories. Levels two, three and four are used for collection without the 'not further defined' (nfd) categories and for output with the nfd categories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coding pattern</th>
<th>6 Other Ethnicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level Digits Code Descriptor</td>
<td>9 Not Elsewhere Included</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One one 3 Pacific Peoples</td>
<td>Level two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two two 32 Cook Islands Maori</td>
<td>10 European nfd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three three 321 Cook Islands Maori</td>
<td>11 New Zealand European</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four five 32121 Rarotongan</td>
<td>12 Other European</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level one</td>
<td>21 Māori</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 European</td>
<td>30 Pacific Peoples nfd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Māori</td>
<td>31 Samoan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Pacific Peoples</td>
<td>32 Cook Islands Maori</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Asian</td>
<td>33 Tongan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Middle Eastern/Latin American/African</td>
<td>34 Niuean</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note: Nfd categories and residual categories are not used for collection. They are used for coding and output purposes. Residual categories may be aggregated to one category, Not Elsewhere Included, for output.

**Level three and level four**

Levels three and four of the classification can be found in Appendix 1. The residual categories 'Don't Know', 'Refused to Answer', 'Repeated Value', 'Response Unidentifiable', 'Response Outside Scope' and 'Not Stated' are defined under the heading 'Glossary and References'. The Statistical Standard for Ethnicity and the Standard Classification of Ethnicity can be downloaded from the Statistics New Zealand website: www.stats.govt.nz.

Within Statistics New Zealand, the classification is stored in the Classifications and Related Standards System (CARS) under the subject 'Ethnic' and the topic 'Ethnicity'.

**Coding Process**

The ethnicity question allows for multiple responses from each individual as described by the definition in this Standard. Ethnicity is self-perceived and some people identify with more than one ethnicity.

In the Census of Population and Dwellings and large surveys up to six responses per person are recorded for the ethnicity question. For administrative collections and other surveys, three may be the maximum number of responses recorded per person. When more responses are given than can be recorded, a random method for reducing the number of responses selects the ethnicities to be retained (see Appendix 2 for the description of a manual methodology for reducing multiple ethnicity responses; see Appendix 3 for a link to a technical paper for software developers).

**Codefile**

Statistics NZ maintains a codefile which is updated with responses that occur in the Census of Population and Dwellings. A codefile is used to classify ethnic group responses. It is a list of probable survey responses and the classification categories to which they are coded. For example, the codefile for ethnicity contains the names of countries, similar terms used by ethnic groups to describe themselves, such as Slav and Slavic, abbreviations, and some common misspellings. Collectors of ethnicity information who wish to use the codefile may obtain it from Classifications and Standards, Statistics New Zealand.

**Coding multiple-worded responses**

These coding guidelines are given to ensure consistency between collections. There are a number of ethnic groups that are multiple-worded responses but are one ethnic group. Some common examples are given here:
Appendices

Fijian Indian

Turkish Cypriot

Cook Islands Maori

French Canadian

There are responses that may be hyphenated or linked in some way, or written without linkage, that need to be classified as two responses. For example:

Polish-Hungarian

Tongan-Māori

French/Austrian

Coding responses

Iwi

An iwi response to an ethnicity question is coded to Māori.

Country

A country response is coded to an appropriate ethnic group term, for example, Korea is coded to Korean.

Religion

Religious responses to the ethnicity question indicating an ethnic group are coded to the specific category in the classification. For example, Jewish and Sikh have separate categories at the most detailed level.

Religious responses which are not an ethnic group, for example, Muslim, are not coded to an ethnic group, but to 'response outside scope'.

New Zealander

A New Zealander response and like responses such as 'Kiwi' or 'NZer' are coded to a separate category, 'New Zealander', at level four in the Other Ethnicity group.

Questionnaire Module

Requirements

The questionnaire module needs to collect ethnicity information in keeping with the ethnic group concept contained in this Statistical Standard. The ethnic concept used is self-identification. In recognition that some people belong to more than one ethnic group, provision for multiple responses per individual is required. Also, people need to be able to state their specific ethnic groups without being forced to identify themselves in a more general category. To meet these requirements the question needs to provide for collection of detailed information to allow classification at level four. This will mean that a write-in area for responses is mandatory.

Data collected at the most detailed level of the classification can be aggregated into a smaller number of broader categories for output as users require.

It is recognised that some collections of ethnicity data, and in particular administrative data collections, may be unable to collect information at this level of detail. In these cases collection should use level two of the classification. Multiple responses for each individual need to be collected.
Note: Level two collection. Analysis of data may be compromised by those people who choose to write a response when a valid tick box is available. For example, people who answered Rarotongan rather than ticking Cook Islands Maori cannot be accurately coded unless write-in responses are processed. Another issue with level two collection is that it may not be comparable with data collected at level four if those who identify as New Zealander do not mark the ‘other’ tick box. These issues need to be taken into consideration when deciding to collect at level two of the classification.

Example

Below are examples of questionnaire modules by mode. Other questionnaire modules may vary in format but should conform to the requirements contained in this standard.

1. Self-administered forms

This is the ethnicity question for the 2001 and 2006 Censuses:

2. Internet

There is a button to click on for each option below.

Which ethnic group do you belong to?

Mark the space or spaces which apply to you.

* New Zealand European
* Māori
* Samoan
* Cook Islands Maori
* Tongan
* Niuean
* Chinese
* Indian
* Other (Please state: eg Dutch, Japanese, Tokelauan)

(Another box opens to write in when ‘Other’ is clicked)

3. Interviewer administered

The interviewer states: please use this card to tell me which ethnic group or groups you belong to.

Showcard

- New Zealand European
- Māori
- Samoan
- Cook Islands Maori
- Tongan
- Niuean
- Chinese
- Indian
- Other (such as Dutch, Japanese, Tokelauan). Please state.

The interviewer ticks all that apply. Asking the question in this way allows for more than one ethnicity to be selected. It also allows reporting of all other ethnic groups chosen by the person in the open ended ‘other’ category. It facilitates self-identification and allows the person to pick one or a number of categories that they identify with. This method reduces interviewer bias.

4. Telephone interviewing

The interviewer states: I am going to read out a list of ethnic groups. Can you tell me which ethnic group or groups you belong to:

New Zealand European? Māori?
Samoan?  Chinese?
Cook Islands Maori?  Indian?
Tongan?  Another ethnic group such as Dutch, Japanese or Tokelauan? Please say what it is.
Niuean?

The interviewer should read out each of the categories and wait for a yes/no answer to each. When a yes answer is given, the interviewer continues asking the rest of the list until it is completed. Asking the question in this way allows for more than one ethnicity to be selected. It also allows reporting of all other ethnic groups chosen by the person in the open ended ‘Another ethnic group’ category. It facilitates self-identification and allows the person to pick one or a number of categories that they identify with. This method reduces interviewer bias.

5. Administrative and other collections without write-in coding

facilities for ‘Other’

Which ethnic group do you belong to?

Mark the space or spaces which apply to you.

New Zealand European  Other Pacific Peoples
English  Filipino
Australian  Chinese
Dutch  Indian
Other European  Japanese
Māori  Korean
Samoan  Cambodian
Cook Islands Māori  Other Asian
Tongan  Middle Eastern
Niuean  Latin American
Tokelauan  African
Fijian  Other

Note: Responses to Other are output as Other Ethnicity.

A coding tool is available from Classifications and Standards, Statistics New Zealand, to enable coding of responses to the correct category in level two of the classification, if people are unsure where to mark their response(s).

Output

Standard Output

Ethnicity Total Response Standard Output
Total response output shows the counts of all responses given for each ethnic group (see glossary). Output tables need to state how many ethnicities are output per person as the number of ethnic groups recorded may differ between collections.

Standard footnote for total response ethnicity output People who reported more than one ethnic group are counted once in each group reported. This means that the total number of responses for all ethnic groups can be greater than the total number of people who stated their ethnicities.

Note: Where output is for explicit ethnic groups then the footnote should state the names of those groups. For example, “People who reported more than one ethnic group within the Pacific Peoples ethnic group are counted once in each group reported”.

**Total response standard output: Level one**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Total response standard output: Level one</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>European</td>
<td>Middle Eastern/Latin American/African*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Māori</td>
<td>Other Ethnicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Peoples</td>
<td>Not Elsewhere Included</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Middle Eastern/Latin American/African may be abbreviated to MELAA with a note explaining its composition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total response standard output: Level two**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Total response standard output: Level two</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>European nfd*</td>
<td>Latin American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand European</td>
<td>African</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other European</td>
<td>Other Ethnicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Māori</td>
<td>Not Elsewhere Included</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Peoples nfd*</td>
<td>* not further defined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoan</td>
<td><strong>Total response standard output: Level three</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook Islands Maori</td>
<td>European nfd*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tongan</td>
<td>New Zealand European</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niuean</td>
<td>Other European nfd*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokelauan</td>
<td>British and Irish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fijian</td>
<td>Dutch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Pacific Peoples</td>
<td>Greek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian nfd*</td>
<td>Polish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast Asian</td>
<td>South Slav</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Italian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>German</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Asian</td>
<td>Australian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Eastern</td>
<td>Other European</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* not further defined
### Appendix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Other Ethnicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Māori</td>
<td>Other Southeast Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Peoples nfd*</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoan</td>
<td>Indian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook Islands Māori</td>
<td>Sri Lankan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tongan</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niuean</td>
<td>Korean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokelauan</td>
<td>Other Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fijian</td>
<td>Middle Eastern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Pacific Peoples</td>
<td>Latin American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian nfd*</td>
<td>African</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast Asian nfd*</td>
<td>Other Ethnicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td>Not Elsewhere Included</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodian</td>
<td>* not further defined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total response standard output: Level four**

The classification categories with counts of 1,000 or more may be output separately.

**Single/Combination Output**

Single/combination output places each person into only one category (see glossary).

**Standard footnote for single and combination output**

People are counted just once according to the ethnic group or combination of ethnic groups they have reported. This means that the total number of responses equals the total number of people who stated an ethnicity.

Total response output shows the counts of all responses given for each ethnic group (see glossary). Output tables need to state how many ethnicities are output per person as the number of ethnic groups recorded may differ between collections.

Examples of single/combination outputs are given below. The amount of detail supplied in single/combination output will depend on individual surveys and collections.

Level one single/combination output can be used for large collections where there is sufficient data. This comprises 14 groups and a residual category. For sample surveys and small collections seven groups and a residual category may be used. The detailed single/combination output is for the use of population surveys, such as the census. It is important when using single/combination output that level one total response output is also shown. This enables the counts of a level one ethnic grouping to be calculated (for example, Māori) and is necessary because some of the combination categories do not name all of the ethnic groups contained within them. For example, ‘Four to Six Groups’ may contain people from any of the level one categories.

**Single/combination output (15 Groups)**

- Pacific Peoples Only
- Asian Only
- Māori Only
- MELAA* Only
Appendices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Ethnicity Only</th>
<th>Māori/Pacific Peoples/European</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Māori/European</td>
<td>Three Groups Not Elsewhere Included</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Māori/Pacific Peoples</td>
<td>Four to Six Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Peoples/European</td>
<td>Not Elsewhere Included</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/European</td>
<td>* MELAA refers to Middle Eastern/Latin American/African</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Two Groups Not Elsewhere Included**

Note: It is essential that total response counts (Grouped Total Responses) are reported with single/combination data so that the counts of each level one group are available.

**Single/combination output (8 Groups)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>European Only</th>
<th>Other Ethnicity Only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Māori Only</td>
<td>Two or More Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Peoples Only</td>
<td>Not Elsewhere Included</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Only</td>
<td>* MELAA refers to Middle Eastern/Latin American/African</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MELAA* Only</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: It is essential that total response counts (Grouped Total Responses) are reported with single/combination data so that the counts of each level one group are available.

**Detailed single/combination output**

**Single Ethnic Group**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asian Only</th>
<th>MELAA* Only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Māori Only</td>
<td>Other Ethnicity Only</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Two Ethnic Groups**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>European/Māori</th>
<th>Pacific Peoples/Other Ethnicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>European/Pacific Peoples</td>
<td>Asian/MELAA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European/Asian</td>
<td>Asian/Other Ethnicity</td>
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Pacific Peoples/European/Other Ethnicity  Māori/MELAA/Other Ethnicity
Asian/MELAA/European  Pacific Peoples/Māori/Other Ethnicity
Asian/European/Other Ethnicity  Pacific Peoples/MELAA/Other Ethnicity
Māori/Pacific Peoples/Asian  Asian/Pacific Peoples/MELAA
Māori/Pacific Peoples/MELAA  Asian/Pacific Peoples/Other Ethnicity
Māori/Asian/MELAA  Asian/MELAA/Other Ethnicity

Four Ethnic Groups
Five Ethnic Groups
Six Ethnic Groups
Not Elsewhere Included

* MELAA refers to Middle Eastern/Latin American/African

Standard footnote for single and combination output

People are counted just once according to the ethnic group or combination of ethnic groups they have reported. This means that the total number of responses equals the total number of people who stated an ethnicity.

Residual Categories for Output

94 Don't Know
95 Refused to Answer
97 Response Unidentifiable
98 Response Outside Scope
99 Not Stated

The residual categories may be output separately or combined. Where a combination item of residuals is to be used in output, this item should be labelled ‘Not Elsewhere Included’ and should have a footnote indicating its composition. ‘Repeated Value’ should not be used in any official output.

The output category sets are stored in the Classifications and Related Standards System (CARS), Statistics New Zealand, under the subject ‘Ethnicity’ and the topic ‘Ethnicity’.

Data Comparability

If three ethnicities per person are collected, any data comparisons with other collections should be made with a similar method and the same number of ethnicities per person. For example, comparing a survey and census data: if three ethnicities are collected by the survey then data collected by census must be reduced to three ethnicities per person using the same methodology before comparison takes place.

Output at level one and two may be affected if collection at level two fails to collect New Zealander responses with the 'Other' tick box.
Comparability may also be affected if people do not choose a valid tick box from the list and mark the 'Other' tick box instead. See the paper *Understanding and Working with Ethnicity Data* (details in Appendix 4) for more details.

**Time Series**

A concordance that links the categories from the previous classification ETHNIC to ETHNIC05 will be available from Classifications and Standards.

Statistics New Zealand.

Level one data is not comparable to previous level one data with the introduction of the level one groups, MELAA and Other Ethnicity. For time series purposes, the counts of the New Zealander category can be added to the counts of the New Zealand European category (except where people have given both New Zealander and NZ European responses). This will recreate a count for the New Zealand European category which will be comparable to those from previous data collections. See the paper *Understanding and Working with Ethnicity Data* (details in Appendix 4) for more details.

Time series of level two data may be affected if collection at level two does not produce similar data (see data comparability and questionnaire module requirements).

**Related Classifications and Standards**

**New Zealand**

*Ethnicity*

The ETHNIC classification used prior to this standard will be concorded to the revised ETHNIC05 classification.

*Māori descent*

This classification records whether a person is descended from a Māori. It is a biological indicator and not an ethnic group indicator. A person may have Māori descent but not indicate that they belong to the Māori ethnic group. Also, some people indicate that they belong to the Māori ethnic group but do not have Māori ancestry.

*Iwi*

This is a classification of iwi and is used to record iwi affiliation for those descended from Māori.

**International**

There are currently no other countries measuring ethnicity in the same way as New Zealand. Other countries collect statistics on one or more of these related variables: nationality, ethnic origin, race, citizenship, immigrant status, country of birth, language, religion and ancestry.

Definitions of these variables may differ from New Zealand use and will make data incomparable. For example, the United Kingdom uses the term ethnic group in its 2001 Census but asks respondents to give an answer based on colour. Fiji collects what appears to be ethnic group but it is described as ethnic origin and also as a person's racial origin.

**Glossary and References**

**Glossary**

*Classifications and Related Standards System (CARS)*
The Classifications and Related Standards System (CARS) is a computer system for the storage of all economic, social and geographic classifications data used in Statistics New Zealand. The data stored includes standard classifications, historical classifications required for the analysis of historical data, and survey specific classifications which are not standard.

Cultural affiliation

Cultural affiliation is the social, historical, geographical, linguistic, behavioural, religious, and self-perceived affinity between a person and an ethnic group.

Detailed output for counts of 1,000 or more

The detailed ethnic group categories at level four are output when the total number of responses to an ethnic group is 1,000 or more. All the remaining ethnic group responses are counted in the category 'Other Ethnic Groups'.

People who do not report their ethnicity are counted in the 'Not Stated' category or 'Not Elsewhere Included' group.

Single and combination ethnicity output

People are counted just once according to the ethnic group or combination of ethnic groups they have reported. A person reporting just one ethnic group is counted once in the relevant 'only' group (that is, single ethnic group). People reporting two or more ethnic groups are counted once in the relevant 'combination' group. This means that the total number of responses equals the total number of people who stated their ethnicity.

When someone reports two or more ethnic groups within the same level one group the person would be counted once in the single group. For example, a person who reported 'English' and 'Scottish' ethnic groups would be counted once in the 'European Only' output group.

People who do not report their ethnicity are counted in the 'Not Stated' category or 'Not Elsewhere Included' group.

Level one output groups are European, Māori, Pacific Peoples, Asian, MELAA (Middle Eastern, Latin American, African) and Other Ethnicity.

Level four is a list of individual ethnic groups which are grouped together to make up the level one output groups.

Residual Categories

Not elsewhere classified (nec)

A 'not elsewhere classified' (nec) ethnic group category contains ethnicity responses that are infrequent or unanticipated. For example, Asian nec contains ethnic groups with small counts such as Bhutanese.

Not further defined (nfd)

A 'not further defined' (nfd) ethnic group category contains responses that are not specific ethnic group responses but are able to be placed in a broader category in the ethnicity classification. For example, Continental European, African.

Don’t Know

The use of this category is necessary when the person is unsure of their ethnic group in an interviewer administered survey or writes this in as a response.

Refused to Answer
This category is only used when it is known that the respondent has purposefully chosen not to respond to the question. Use of this residual category in processing is optional. Its use is most applicable in face-to-face or telephone interviews, but may be used in self-completed questionnaires if the respondent has clearly indicated they refuse or object to answering the question.

*Repeated Value*

It is used when a respondent has given two responses that have the same code. This may be two written responses, or one tick box response and one written response. For example, someone may tick the NZ European tick box and write in NZ European.

*Response Unidentifiable*

This category is used when there is a response given, but the response is illegible, or it is unclear what the meaning or intent of the response is – this most commonly occurs when the response being classified contains insufficient detail, is ambiguous or is vague.

*Response Outside Scope*

This category is used for responses that are positively identified, that is, the meaning and the intent are clear but clearly fall outside the scope of the classification/topic as defined in the standard. For example, a response of vegetarian falls outside the scope of the ethnicity classification.

*Not Stated*

This category is only used where a respondent has not given any response to the question asked in a self-administered questionnaire, that is, it is solely for non-response.

**References**


**Appendix 1**

**Standard Classification of Ethnicity (ETHNIC05)**

*Level one*

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*Level two*

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33 Tongan
34 Niuean
35 Tokelauan
36 Fijian
37 Other Pacific Peoples
38 Asian nfd
39 Southeast Asian
40 Chinese
41 Indian
42 Other Asian

Level three
100 European nfd
111 New Zealand European
121 British and Irish
122 Dutch
123 Greek
124 Polish
125 South Slav
126 Italian
127 German
128 Australian
129 Other European
211 Māori
300 Pacific Peoples nfd
311 Samoan
321 Cook Islands Maori
331 Tongan
341 Niuean
351 Tokelauan
361 Fijian
371 Other Pacific Peoples
400 Asian nfd
410 Southeast Asian nfd
411 Filipino
412 Cambodian
413 Vietnamese
414 Other Southeast Asian
421 Chinese
431 Indian
441 Sri Lankan
442 Japanese
443 Korean
444 Other Asian
511 Middle Eastern
521 Latin American
531 African
611 Other Ethnicity
944 Don't Know
955 Refused to Answer
966 Repeated Value
977 Response Unidentifiable
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Appendix 2

Reducing multiple ethnic responses - manual methodology

Method for recording six ethnicities responses

If there are more than six responses per individual, then a random method for reducing the number of responses selects the six ethnicities to be retained. This manual method mirrors the software application method in Appendix 3.

To make your selection random, use a random number chart and methodically assign a number by either choosing a column or row to follow. After assigning the random numbers choose the lowest number as the response to be removed. This is explained fully in the method below.

Every level one ethnic group category that is represented by an individual’s ethnicities must be represented in the final selection of responses. All level one ethnicity categories will be retained when the number of responses is reduced to six, as there are six categories at level one.

Responses which would be coded to a residual category are removed first. For example, a response of vegetarian would be coded to the residual category 98888 Response Outside Scope and would be the first response removed. If there are still more than six ethnicities then identify the level one categories they belong to.

Retain the responses from the level one categories that have just one ethnicity response belonging to them. All responses with the same first digit belong in the same level one category.

The level one categories that are represented by more than one ethnicity response are selected to reduce the number of responses through a random method. At least one ethnicity response representing each level one category is retained. Randomly select a level one category with more than one response. Do this by assigning each level one category a random number from a chart and select the lowest random number. This is the category from which an ethnicity will be selected to be removed. Next, randomly remove one response from the level one category selected. Do this by assigning each ethnicity in this category a random number and then remove the ethnicity with the lowest random number.

If this reduces the number of ethnicities to six then the random selection procedure can stop as the maximum number of responses has been retained. Otherwise, repeat this process until six responses remain. The final selection must meet the requirement of no more than six ethnicities for processing and also retain information at level one of the classification for ethnicity.

Example of reducing to six responses

An individual’s responses are French, Niuean, Cambodian, Vietnamese, English, Algerian and New Zealander. There are no residual categories to remove. Classifying each ethnicity to their respective level one category has the following result: French and English are classified within the level one European category. Niuean is classified within the level one Pacific Peoples category. Cambodian and Vietnamese are classified within the level one Asian category. Algerian is classified within the level one Middle Eastern/Latin American/African (MELAA) category. New Zealander is classified within the level one Other Ethnicity category.

For three of the level one categories there is only one response given and these responses must be retained. They are Niuean, Algerian and New Zealander. That leaves two level one categories with more than one response from which to select the remaining responses to be retained.

Assign each level one category a random number. In this example, European is assigned 393 and Asian is assigned 214. The Asian category has the lowest random number and is the category from which an ethnicity will be selected to be removed. Assign each ethnicity in the Asian category a random number: Cambodian is assigned 149 and Vietnamese is assigned 613. Cambodian has the lowest random number and so this response is removed.
The six ethnicities to be retained from the given responses are: French and English within the level one European category. Niuean within the level one Pacific category. Vietnamese within the level one Asian category. Algerian within the level one MELAA category. New Zealander within the level one Other Ethnicity category.

This selection meets the requirement of six ethnicities for processing and retains all the level one ethnicity information given by the individual.

Method for recording three ethnicity responses

If a maximum of three responses is retained for a collection and more than three ethnicity responses are given, a random method is used to select the three responses. Where possible each level one category must be represented from the responses retained. This manual method mirrors the software method. (see Appendix 3 for the software application methodology and a more detailed explanation) To make your selection random, use a random number chart and methodically assign a number by either choosing a column or row to follow. After assigning the random numbers choose the lowest number as the response to be removed. This is explained fully in the method below.

Responses which would be coded to a residual category are excluded first. For example, a response of vegetarian would be coded to the residual category 98888 Response Outside Scope and would be removed first. If there are still more than three ethnicities then identify which level one categories the ethnicities belong to. All responses with the same first digit belong in the same Level one category. If a person has given more than three responses, but these are all classified within one, two or three level one categories, assign each ethnicity response a random number and remove the response with the lowest random number. If this reduces the responses to three then the random selection procedure can stop as the maximum number of responses has been retained. Otherwise, repeat the process for the remaining level one categories with more than one response. Avoid removing responses from a level one category when it is represented by only one ethnicity. Repeat this process until three responses have been selected. In this situation, all level one ethnicity information has been retained.

If a person's responses are classified to more than three level one categories, a random selection is made to remove responses, one at a time, from the level one categories with more than one response. This will result in one response only in each level one category but at this point there will still be more than three responses. Start by assigning each category a random number. Select the category with the lowest random number and then assign each ethnicity in that category a random number. Remove the ethnicity with the lowest random number. Repeat this process until each level one category is represented by one ethnicity. Although each level one category is represented up to this point, there will still be too many responses to retain. To reduce the number of level one categories to three, assign a random number to the remaining ethnicities and select the lowest random number to remove. Repeat this process until three ethnicity responses remain. The final selection must meet the requirement of no more than three ethnicities for processing and also retain information at level one of the classification for ethnicity as far as possible.

Example of more than three responses and less than three level one categories

An individual's responses are French, German, Swiss, Dutch, Amhara and Tigrean. There are no residual categories to remove. Classifying each ethnicity to their respective level one category has the following result:

French, German, Swiss, and Dutch are classified within the level one European category. Amhara and Tigrean are classified within the level one Middle Eastern/Latin American/African (MELAA) category. Assigning each ethnicity response a random number results in: French 641, German 239, Swiss 873, Dutch 458, Amhara 210 and Tigrean 632. The lowest random number is Amhara and that response is removed. The MELAA level one category is represented by the Tigrean response only and so this ethnicity is retained. This leaves four responses from the European level one category. The lowest random number of the European responses is German 239 and this is
removed. One more response needs to be removed so selecting the next lowest random number removes Dutch 458.

The three ethnic groups to be retained from the given responses are: French and Swiss within the level one European category, and Tigrean within the level one MELAA category. This selection meets the requirement of three ethnicities for processing and retains all the level one ethnicity information given by the individual.

_example of more than three responses and more than three level one categories_

An individual's responses are French, Niuean, Cambodian, Vietnamese, New Zealander and English. There are no residual categories to remove.

Classifying each ethnicity to their respective level one category has the following result:

French and English are classified within the level one European category. Niuean is classified within the level one Pacific Peoples category. Cambodian and Vietnamese are classified within the level one Asian category. New Zealander is classified within the level one Other Ethnicity category. As there are more than three level one categories represented, a random selection is made to remove responses, one at a time, from the level one categories with more than one response. This will result in one response only in each level one category.

The European and Asian categories are represented by more than one ethnicity. Assign each ethnicity in the European and Asian categories a random number and select the lowest random number to remove from each category. French is assigned 987 and English is assigned 109 so English is removed from the European category. Cambodian is assigned 291 and Vietnamese is assigned 312 so Cambodian is removed from the Asian category. This reduces our total number of responses to four: French, Niuean, Vietnamese and New Zealander and represents each level one category up to this point.

To reduce the number of level one categories to three, assign a random number to the remaining ethnicities and select the lowest random number to remove. French is assigned 367, Niuean 183, Vietnamese 671 and New Zealander 948. Niuean with the lowest random number is removed. The three ethnic groups to be retained from the given responses are: French within the level one European category, Vietnamese within the level one Asian category. New Zealander within the level one Other Ethnicity category. This selection meets the requirement of three ethnicities for processing and retains as far as possible, all the level one ethnicity information given by the individual.
In the early 1980s the Housewives' Association, which had its beginnings as far back as 1913, kept a careful watch on prices in the scores of small suburban supermarkets. Today cut-throat competition among the mega-chains does the same job just as effectively.

"It's the local branch of the Housewives' Association policing reports of unjustified price rises."

Evening Post, 1982
Alexander Turnbull Library ref: B-136-036

“It’s the local branch of the Housewives’ Association policing reports of unjustified price rises.”
MR FOOTROT, THIS LAMB'S MOTHER IS DEAD!

POOR OLD GIRL—STILL SHE GAVE THE LITTLE BLOKE A FEED BEFORE SHE DIED...

MR FOOTROT, DO SHEEP GO TO HEAVEN?

I DUNNO KID, I RECKON SO...

EVEN IF THEY ARE UNMARRIED MOTHERS!
Appendices

**Partnering Creation**

by Lyne Pringle and Kilda Northcott of Bipeds Productions, New Zealand.

This paper/presentation will offer an insight into the creative process behind the dance work *Fishnet* and the structure of Bipeds Productions, which supports the creativity of co-directors Lyne Pringle and Kilda Northcott.

In the development of Fishnet there was a deliberate choice to work collaboratively in order to find a way for two creative voices to be accommodated equally – this led to a highly charged rehearsal period and an intriguing dance work that has been widely praised in New Zealand.

In choosing to work in partnership these two senior contemporary dancers seek to challenge the hierarchical (male) model of the sole choreographer/director taking charge and ownership of the creative process and the resulting work.

They will offer a presentation /paper that will open the space for question and debate around performance, research, and the possibilities for disrupting the passivity embedded in being audience and performer.

**Introduction**

In the spirit of true partnership this paper is written with two authors; Lyne Pringle’s writing appears in normal font and Kilda Northcott’s in italics.

In one of the key scenes in the dance work *Fishnet*, Kilda Northcott shuffles backwards towards the audience bent double so all they can see are her legs crossed and straight in fishnet stockings, disembodied, shuffling with pink panties peeking, meanwhile I walk away from the audience on the opposite side of the stage in a black mini and fishnets with a red box on my head, beheaded, the word Sexy? written in gold where my face would be – all the while rock music pumps. This sequence marks the beginning of the second act. How we arrived at these images is an interesting story.

We began our careers together but separately in the late 1970s in New Zealand, and are recognised as members of the first generation of professional contemporary dancers in our country.

Recently in DANZ Quarterly - the magazine of Dance Aotearoa New Zealand – I described this lineage;

- “We were/are the forefront of the wave for this kind of madness. Before Limbs Dance Company and Impulse Dance Theatre, where we began our careers, there was no modern dance profession in New Zealand.
Now all of us pioneers are pushing fifty or over. Pushing uphill - sometimes panting - endeavouring to make sense of dancing/creating in middle age. No map – making it up as we go along. On our knees toiling away as carpet layers of a tradition or alternatively mad surfers clinging to the crest of a gigantic wave that never seems to break.”

Research has shown that woman over 40 constitute the most substantial demographic for live theatre in New Zealand, however we believe the patriarchy is alive and well in this sector. In our current project we seek to defy the invisibility that overtakes ‘mature’ women in our youth obsessed culture, by affording the opportunity to reflect the experiences of this age and gender group back upon itself.

- Personal History

- Descended from Scottish Immigrants, Kilda second generation and myself fifth generation: we have like others endeavoured to find a pakeha (the Maori word for European) culture in this grand colonial experiment in the South Pacific. New Zealand/Aotearoa was originally peopled by the Maori, they had exclusive domain for hundreds if not thousands of years – there is conjecture around this - until the 19th Century when the influx of Europeans began. Kilda spent her early years in the North Island in a small milling town, Kawerau, in the Captain Cook named Bay of Plenty and I grew up in the South Island (Te Wai Pounamu) in Dunedin, known as the Edinburgh of the South seas. We have inherited the trappings of Scottish and English culture and as little girls we stepped into our ballet shoes and began studying with the Royal Academy of Dancing – one of the last bastions of colonialism in our isolated land. This year New Zealand celebrates becoming a Dominion 100 years ago - most inhabitants are not even sure what this means - and are now embracing the fervour of multi-culturalism as the negotiation between Maori (Tangata [people] whenua [land]) and European, Pacific Islanders, Asians and Africans et al (Manuhiri [visitors]) continues in a most dynamic way. Like a lot of people as we grew up we drifted north towards the bigger cities.

- It is the body that is the word - the body that is the face.

- Hit by a car when I was little – hair breadth fracture at the base of the skull, burst ear drum and a limp. Now I am instinctual. My throats throbbing – I have a story.

- I’m thinking on my feet and they are usually dirty
I grew up under the eye of the mountain, Putauaki, having first climbed it while still in my mother’s womb. She and I got to the top - Mum on top and me inside viewing the landscapes beyond, around and far away to come.

A black haired child I was born, running, swimming, eating, dancing, feasting, getting older, taller, more grown up by the day, playing my way through my sunshine and earthquake filled childhood occasionally interrupted with the violent moods and humorous swings of father who we left behind for the big bright training filled days of young womanhood, ensconced safely with my younger sister Arran and Mum in a state flat in inner - city Auckland.

As our years in the industry progressed we worked with many leading dance and theatre practitioners (I choreographed critically acclaimed works on the way and Kilda becoming the ‘Doyenne of NZ modern dance’); between us our bodies contain over fifty years of being seen and contributing to the canon of contemporary New Zealand dance. Commonalities include; years spent dancing and studying New York and raising a son each. We tossed around the notion of working together; this took a while, but eventually we found ourselves performing a co-devised work to celebrate the life of renowned New Zealand poet Alan Brunton; using these words a source of inspiration;

“My message is to get out of unattractive situations, take your own space, don’t be pushed around, despise power that perpetuates itself, eradicate violence against others, and don’t be afraid to dance, or shout. In other words, create your own reality… Physics tells us that rhythm is the structure of the universe, strings hanging down; play that harp. There is a music of the spheres. I wanted the sort of music Sufi dancers spin to.”

Thus our creative journey began.

The Creative Process for Fishnet

To find our first full length work together we went through a long, thorough and personally rich process. A sense of invisibility had begun to overtake us and we really seriously asked each other “What happens now? Do we give up? Is dancing only for the young and athletic? What happens to all the wisdom and deep feminine power that courses through these well used bodies with their knowledgeable bones, wise organs and kinaesthetic blood and breath!

Initially we created a short work, Te Kouka: (cabbage tree) Improvisation, quickly by instinct and performed it in a very raw form. Images and ideas were thrown together without discussing too much the themes or purpose of the work. Before Ti Kouka: Improvisation we decided to dance at a friend’s 40th birthday. After marking Alan Brunton’s departure with a dance we started thinking perhaps it was our role as dancers in our community to be marking important
events – modern day shamanists. When we thought about the kind of dance we would like to do and the kind of training we had had we realized that the deconstructed almost non-dance oeuvre of contemporary dance was denying us some pleasure. That is, amongst other ways of moving the pleasure of putting on some fishnets and dancing in a most playful and sexy way to Frank Sinatra albeit a mature slightly witch-like interpretation.

This dance was inserted into Ti Kouka. As we donned our fishnets on stage we called for a male volunteer from the audience to come and sit on a bar stool so that we could watch him watching us watching the audience watching him watching us etc; tumbling ‘The Gaze’ around as we danced our ‘sexy’ number. This was a revelation and very popular.

*Woman stirring repetitive action conjuring ages past …the passing of time the culmination of wisdom …the incessant stirring of the universe the dancing of the spheres the turning of the earth …the crone energy … the weaving of the Fates. Detritus. A one legged nymph diving into the earth and spinning on her access.*

*Here they come the flesh sonata moving in a ‘pretty way’ wearing the garlands of their technique asking to be taken seriously. Masking the face in a mysterious way exploiting the natural world to bring an aliveness into the stale black space.*

*opening up the memory, feminine, in ritual -framing time, environment with elemental connections to space, body, relationship, growth, conjuring.*

*washing wiping the way the space – partnership*

*sexuality reality age aging power.*

*fiber, wood, flesh, in the inside places, in the gaps, cracks, divides, cloth, wetness, sexy.*

*the other half our other half their other half the other side*

*wallowing enjoying visibility story initiating fun horny presentation celebration exhibiting crones wenches women willows willowing woman*

*●

● After funding was secured from Creative New Zealand we proceeded to unpack the kernel of this short work in order to discover what our collective subconscious had thrown up. Many artists talk about sourcing the unknown non-rational part of the mind and body to create their art. Geddy Aniksdale muses on her creative process as a devising actor;*
• “It is as if I myself do not even know fully what the actor/me is
going to do, before she is in the process of doing it. Doing adds danger,
risk, it fills the material and the score, the acting with new life, literally”

• As artists we have very different ways of working; Kilda, as she is often described,
is instinctive and intuitive, I am more rational and pragmatic. Kilda’s
modern/contemporary training was in the technique of Hose Limon, my training was a
combination of Erick Hawkins, Butoh through the techniques of Min Tanaka and
partnering techniques devised by Michael Parmenter. Considerable negotiation was
required to discover a symbiotic movement vocabulary along with an appropriate form of
expressivity for our mature bodies. The scene described above was built from random
images discovered by chance but which seemed to provide some traction and resonance
for the themes and ideas we were forming. They offered some allure and satisfaction –
Kilda was struck by an advertisement from the newspaper for the film The Secretary and for
me the idea for a small box on the head of the performer came from a chance occurrence
during a devising session for another project. These images, which appeared in Ti Kouka
then Fishnet, were then melded, wrestled together with much negotiation and debate to
form an agreed upon scene. This required us to surrender ideas and expectations to the
greater good.

The next step was to write a paper/presentation for the Australasian Drama Studies Conference in
Wellington in 2004. The theme for this event was Listening to the Image we took this as a great
provocation for giving voice to the usually silent dancer – the opportunity to explore text at a deeper level, to
facilitate a discussion about the context of the work, its wider political stance and it’s standing in the field
of current dance/theatre practice.

Already a series of research questions were brewing:

How to diversify our skills by working with voice and text? How to explore text and sound at a deeper
level …how are these elements used to tell a story …how can abstraction and conventional narrative
intersect …how can the medium of dance be used to tell a story?

What is the appropriate use of the mature body …can this body still ‘dance’?

How to explore the relationship with an audience by breaking down the conventional 4th wall performance
construct?
As we wrote about the work, we also held a photo shoot in order to set the tone of our ongoing investigation, to provide a visual framework and a series of provocations.

In order to generate memory and stimulate the imagination by returning to a childhood places, we held a week long workshop in Dunedin my home town: the sharing of personal history deepened the working relationship.

We allow our bodies to be, to explore, to experience our minds and bodies moving, being with one another, warming up, reflecting on what we have already gathered and gathering, in ideas, words, showings, performances, experimenting with new movement — our knowledge and experience of movement, body, physicality, stillness, in the background and forefront of our knowing. Letting the unfolding of what was wanting to come, come and not come — accepting stillness and emptiness as a valid, potent place to be. Taking ourselves outside of the studio, visiting the old settlers museum in Dunedin, letting the past be in our present and our future — people of a past era.

Not wanting the natural, outside environment to be unvisited by our mind and bodies…we next ventured outside. One of our days in Dunedin we walked all day outside, winter! A cold, clear day, from the back of Lyne’s childhood home and still home of 50 years to Lyne’s parents, Betty and Neville Pringle, home! Green Island to Tunnel Beach - letting the land, sky, sea, air, wind, shapes, trees, grass, hills, rises and fallings, gate and metal road feed, feel, absorb our bodies, ideas, minds and inspirations…………and using this day of walking and discovery and of the days in the studio and museum feed a writing down of, poetic / story based observance and documentation.

A conscious choice was made to engage with the ‘world’ outside the studio, shunning the model of the ‘isolated’ ‘tortured’ artist working away in [his] precious solitary garret. As well as spending time in dynamic natural environments and visiting historic sites and museums, we held some public improvisatory performance events using some of the motifs and themes that were emerging.

The final phase of this work-shopping process was to present our research thus far to an invited audience comprising colleagues in the industry and women over 40. This provided the spring board for an extraordinary two week period of research with radical young theatre practitioner Jo Randerson as dramaturge/director/provocateur.
Back to the drawing board to once again unpick, unravel, find meaning in the spaces, risk, jump about, find absurdity, find a voice.

Douglas [Wright] says:

“Kilda's feeling is sort of um both incredibly distant & reserved & cool & also incredibly vivid & sensuous at the same time which is very rare......... I think of her as a kind of goddess really...... the way she intuits.......”

But what sort of voice does a tongue tied goddess have?

The voice I was born with

A voice that relished, a voice that
also hid in the spaces of silence
& stillness.

A voice that spoke
From an / the intuitive knowing - the voice
that listened to other voices - unheard of
words & sounds &

A voice that gets me through the practicalities
of a normal living day - a day of negotiation, avoidance,
of doing.

A voice arisen out of mythology, history, handwork, creativity,
battles, hardship, boredom, stupidity, brazenness,
loneliness, community.

I have nothing to say !!!

I have everything to say!!!

Suddenly it was obvious to us both, not only has Kilda never exercised her vocal potential, she had surrendered to being a silent instrument, defined largely by the gay male gaze and the definition had painted her into a corner.

The themes were exposed and ready to be manipulated into movement and poetry.
Generally I wrote the script for *Fishnet*, Kilda usually coming with ideas and offers that generate a series of scenes or images that are startlingly affective in communicating the overall ideas of the work to an audience. The ‘visible/Invisible’ scene which ends the first act is another example of the intuitive/improvisatory presence that Kilda brings to the work and the outside eye rational aspect that I bring. The scene begins with me ranting about the Kilda’s fantastical exploits and fierce intellectual proclivities while Kilda is comatose beneath me, this segues into Kilda donning a foreign accent and launching into a nonsensical yet poignant monologue about finding herself suddenly invisible. With help from dramaturge Madeline McNamara we shaped our raw material into the completed show.

*sometimes a flow - sometimes not - an idea concept gushing staggering emptying forth from one or others mind brain one at times more up front the other accepting flowing with and in and out saying yes being clear waiting for the inspiration making ourselves go with what we had not knowing but knowing being clear concepts formed and unformed - our writing directing the moves juxtapose clear direction the germ of an idea allowing ourselves to trust but not knowing and the not knowing manifesting an order a flow a reality*

**Discoveries**

*The use of personal narrative and poetic imagery allowed for an interweaving of own history and fictional characters. We placed ourselves historically, socially and politically in order to question the role that dance plays in people’s lives. This led us to an investigation of ‘transformative’ performance and the role of the ‘dance shaman’ in contemporary society: a challenge to reinvigorate ritual by cultivating a strong and sincere connection with an audience.*

We explored – amongst other things - how to relate to an audience in different ways. Dialoguing with the audience …talking about politics in the most practical way.

*Initially there was an idea to explore a conventional narrative (as outlined in a proposed synopsis for the workshop). In part this is driven by a desire to be ‘understood’. It seems contemporary dance always struggles in this society which generally is unaccustomed to viewing abstract or image based theatre/dance.  

Any sense of narrative played hide and seek with us …snippets of characters and stories kept flooding through as if there were too many women striving to find expression in our imaginations. Kilda seemed to play a woman in search of a more fitting definition for herself. Douglas Wright’s description of her as an ‘instinctual goddess’ no longer fitting and something rotten appearing in her psyche as she strived to move beyond being a tongue-tied woman and find visibility.

I provoke and cajole her as a Shaman in training; on a quest myself for something more meaningful in the way I use my body.

The interplay between inertia and absurdity provides an infectious tension as these two [characters] struggle their way towards a dynamic, poignant and highly visible finale as the ugly
bitch, the sexy crone and everything/anything in between. We began to feel like conduits, and discovered a desire to explore some kind of shamanistic practice in our dance.

We realized that the narrative is us – our story – the commitment to placing ourselves side by our performance/presentation to colleagues. This is what gives the work meaning and this realisation frees us to explore the myriad of women we can inhabit. The old crone, the crazy film noir anti heroine, the frenzied kuia, the elegant chanteuse dancing a minuet, the sexy beast, the bitchy antagonist; anything and everything in between. The task is to catch them in our fishnets and bring them to life on stage and create a richly imagistic world.

At this time we also formed Bipeds Productions as an umbrella organisation to the support and present our art to an audience. We called ourselves Bipeds because it is so very – pedestrian, we like this, nothing fancy – putting one foot in front the other. It is very – human, we are two footed and dancing expands our possibilities by transferring weight from one foot to the other. And there are two of us aiming to move other humans and to be humans moving. This is the manifesto to remain visible as mature dance artists to integrate life and art with humour to keep the romance alive [Viva Red Mole] to challenge conventional performance paradigms to invest dance practice with a whole range of social, political and psychological issues to dare to entertain!!!!

The Bipeds website www.bipeds.co.nz acts as both an archive and a conduit for getting our work to as wide an audience as possible nationally and internationally.

In conclusion

The title of this paper Partnering Creation whilst primarily referring to the central partnership between myself and Kilda, also includes;

- a partnership with our community: we interviewed many of our colleagues in order to find the text/context for the performance, as well as opening up our creative process every step of the way to facilitate dialogue and debate, in this sense Fishnet was formed in partnership with that community;
- a partnership with the landscape, particularly Otago where Lyne grew up. The great New Zealand painter Colin McCahon said; “It’s a painful love - the love of the land – it takes time”, he also said he couldn’t paint any landscape he hadn’t walked upon.

As we age it becomes more and more apparent how the land shapes us physically, emotionally and spiritually: our ancestors were displaced here and we feel that as each generation progresses there is a greater understanding and somatic sympathy with the land. Fishnet provides a great forum for us to present our beliefs, challenges and political debate about the many issues around dance, age, what to do with a wealth of wisdom, the invisibility of the older woman and the politics of seniority in the arts in New Zealand.
The standing ovations, full houses, numerous awards, laughter, tears and fan mail let us know we are on the right track.

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1Pringle, Lyne. “Making it up as we go Along.” DANZ Quarterly. Issue No 7, March 2007. pp.?


4Haunting Douglas (Documentary Film) Leanne Pooley ,Producer, Director . Auckland, Spacific Films 2003

Authors Profile

Under the umbrella of Bipeds Productions renowned New Zealand dance artists Kilda Northcott and Lyne Pringle present powerful and unique dance works; integrating the combined wisdom of over 50 years in the professional dance industry. Fishnet their latest work - where life in the entertainment world is unraveled from a feminist perspective - contains a manifesto for their ongoing project:
Fishnet was an inspiring, moving and powerful dance-theatre duet by veteran NZ dancers Kilda Northcott and Lyne Pringle (Bipeds Productions) and the highlight of Tempo this year. Years of investigation created a lively, highly developed, skillfully crafted and performed deconstruction of both female stereotypes as experienced by two stunning and feisty aging dancers and a patriarchal NZ dance culture which has seen them 'invisible' and without voice for years. More importantly it reclaimed power; visibility and voice through the embodiment of women's wisdom, courage, integrity, intelligence and sexuality. Though subversive in content it was delivered in such cleverly constructed and inviting theatrical ways that it completely charmed its audience, entertained them and often moved them to tears.
bodies that literally sing as they move. There was generosity and deeply felt opinion, tension, and peace and a generosity that came from the heart. It was an honour to be caught in this Fishnet…” Capital Times

"Pringle and Northcott have had careers as celebrated dancers, but now middle-aged, they have a point to prove. Contemporary dance is not just for the young, and for them there will be no graceful withdrawal to their knitting.” New Zealand Listener

"Dance-ability flows though their veins to every extremity, along with a healthy sense of humour and an infectious sense of delight in their work. Catch Fishnet if you can.” National Business Review

"Fishnet, the joint creation of Kilda Northcott and Lyne Pringle under the direction of Madeline McNamara, is a bold and unabashed celebration of womanhood, encompassing a minute examination of the female form, alongside a broadly humorous take on life as a woman.” The Dominion Post

"Over 5 nights Fishnet played to full houses, we were delighted that our target audience (women in their 40s) attended and thoroughly enjoyed the show - that enjoyment was also shared by a wide cross section of people; including young men and women as well as men in the 40s age bracket. We are confident that the show has very wide appeal.

PRESS RELEASE

CRITICAL RESPONSE TO Fishnet

This Dancing Life New Zealand Listener by Francesca Horsley "While posing in front of a large whiteboard and impersonating a Russian dancer, Kilda Northcott played with notions of visibility. "Vun minute you are visible," she screamed, then striking another pose, "and poof, you're INVISIBLE! You see?"

Well, no. Northcott and fellow choreographer and dancer Lyne Pringle were thankfully never invisible in their show Fishnet – in fact, just the opposite. At times they were – well, a little exposed. In a very funny, representational and occasionally serious show, the pair presented a mix of parody, mischievous routines and lyrical sequences. The array of sketches and dances included scenes of domestic chaos, silly and sincere commentaries on growing up and contemporary dance, and sexy cabaret dancing. Pringle and Northcott have had careers as celebrated dancers, but now middle-aged, they have a point to prove. Contemporary dance is not just for the young, and for them there will be no graceful withdrawal to their knitting. They masked vulnerability with wit and bravado; banished the youth body-ethos with sinuous, evocative movement; lampooned notions of sexuality with a sedate strip-tease; and celebrated motherhood with images of a growing baby projected on their stomachs. Clever use was made of their flowing hair – pulled upward like weird dolls, then grabbed by the other dancer, spinning each other around the floor. In a dramatic finale, long flax strands were defiantly whacked on the stage floor."

Fishnet Capital Times By Deirdre Tarrant

"The programme notes for Fishnet quote Shirley McLaine: "The older you get the more invisible you become." This concept of visible and invisible colours is the substance of an intriguing hour of dance that demands to be seen.
Kilda Northcott and Lyne Pringle have real substance as contributors to contemporary dance in Aotearoa. In *Fishnet* they open doors to both their personal stories and their collective experiences. Physical realities include a mouthguard that transforms voice, a lectern used both to support and to distance, minutiae on fascinating videos by Steven Bain, stockings, high heels, lacy underwear and a silk slip, flax and pelvic bones that collectively contain the ephemeral glimpses of longing, patience, tribute, containment and euphoria in being two women in bodies that literally sing as they move. There was humour and deeply felt opinion, tension and peace and a generosity that came from the heart. It was an honour to be caught in this *Fishnet* and to be held both by the strands of rope that bind these two women and to share in the spaces that they make their own."
List of works for Stuart Hoar

Stuart Hoar is an experienced playwright, screenplay writer, radio dramatist and novelist. His first stage play was Squatter (1987), and his most recent plays include Rutherford, The Face Maker... bookshop/order_a_script/_author/id_1096/hoar_stuart.html - 100%

**Squatter** It's 1894 and Bilstrode's 84,000 Canterbury acres are heavily overtaxed. Everyone has a plot to capitalise or syndicalise or socialise or otherwise own it. Every plot gives rise to another murder

**Bitter Calm** Motuarohia Island, 1840. A young Maori farm worker, Matiu, falls in love with the farmer

**The Boat** In 169 AD, Calvus and Verus arrive in China & are persuaded to row Princess Ts'ai and her slave Tu to Australia. Back in Rome, Emperor Marcus Aurelius is fighting a losing war against invading Northern tribes

**Gung Ho** China, 1939. Li-Na is her parents' only daughter and is taken away by a government official for the use of the army. Her mother, Ai-Ling, sets off in search of her. She meets eccentric New Zealander.

**American Girl** A Woman offers a man a lift but she takes him for a ride. A Bonny & Clyde scenario.

**Scott Of The Antarctic** A radio play of a play of a play of a play discusses drama versus exploitation versus audience expectations against the backdrop of a feminist treatment of Scott's heroics.

**Folie a Deux** Sassafras and Sappho are very unusual sisters living in Auckland. When Sassafras brings home Mr Ed (a wooden horse) and Sappho gets involved with Alby (an intellectual) curious events start to occur...

**Rutherford** 'I have broken the machine and touched the ghost of matter'. An examination of the life of Sir Ernest Rutherford.

**Alice In Cyberspace** Alice and Vinnie are zapped into the future 1000 years forward from now. Escaping Mad Queens, insects, androids and time itself they must find a way to get home.

**The Face Maker** Archibald MacIndoe, an expatriate New Zealand surgeon, restored the faces of many of pilots burned in fighter planes in WW2. The Face Maker examines MacIndoe's love/hate relationship with one of his patients

**Bright Star** Ground-breaking cosmologist Beatrice Tinsley was British-born, but grew up in New Plymouth. She pursued her science in America, and died from melanoma at 40, her work unrecognised.

**Backwards in High Heels** “Dancing is dangerous, it has the power to disturb, subvert and confront, and it puts us in touch with the very rhythms of life.”
List of works for Lyne Pringle

**Lily** Previeved in Dunedin in April at the Fortune Theatre and is available for touring in 2010.

**THE CREATIVE TEAM**

Choreography/Script Lyne Pringle  
Dancers Kilda Northcott MNZM, Lyne Pringle  
Producer Paul Forrest Co-Choreographer Megan Adams  
Guest Choreographer Invited private sector teacher  
Set Design Paul Forrest Lighting  
Design/Operation Jen Lal  
Videographer /Dramaturg Stephen Bain

"This dance is about the imagination and Lily Stevens who ignited the creative potential of so many Dunedin dancers, including my first teachers. They in turn switched on the light in my imagination. I want to acknowledge this heritage and also my grandmother Linda McDonald who danced with Lily. At its heart this new work celebrates the generous and wildly inventive soul of Lily Stevens and the rich legacy of private sector dance teachers. Lyne Pringle “

**Fishnet**  2002-2004

**Kilda Northcott** Choreographer/Dancer  “Kilda's feeling is sort of um both incredibly distant & reserved & cool & also incredibly vivid & sensuous at the same time which is very rare......... I think of her as a kind of goddess really...... the way she intuits....... ”

**Douglas Wright; quote from Haunting Douglas** Kilda has been contributing to the canon of New Zealand contemporary dance since 1977. She holds an iconic place in the industry and has served as muse and collaborator with many leading choreographers. In Fishnet she takes her place as co-collaborator in order to facilitate her creative voice and to give her ownership of the work.

**Lyne Pringle** Choreographer/Dancer  “I have been an avid admirer of her work, both as a dancer/performer and as a choreographer. She is intelligent, imaginative, and multi-skilled. As a dancer/performer she has always possessed a strong stage presence, great warmth and energy, and an unusual capacity for making genuine contact with audiences”.

**Ann Hunt** (Reviewer Sunday Star Times) Lyne is also recognised as one of the first generation contemporary dancers beginning her career in 1979. Since then she has choreographed many innovative and powerful works as well working with many of New Zealand’s leading theatre and dance practitioners. In Fishnet she marries her dual passions of dance and theatre and a long held desire to explore the use of text in dance.

**Paul Forrest** Set Designer/Producer/Publicist/Masseur Stunning self representing visual artist well known for his Artist in Residence projects at the Michael Fowler Centre during the International Arts Festivals. Also a highly successful producer of art events, proved his worth by drawing in full houses for the Wellington season of Fishnet .
Glenn Ashworth Technical Director/ Lighting Designer  Member of the recent tour party for Fishnet that won the Supreme Award for Best Production at the tempo festival in Auckland. He works in lighting for a living in Wellington. Recent work includes the award winning The Tutor at Circa and Vivek Kinra's latest dance work at the Wellington Opera House. He is also a song writer for a thrash metal band and poet.

Madeline McNamara Dramaturg/Director Award winning actor and innovative director MTA Toi Whakaari/NZ Drama School .Co-founder, with Sally Rodwell, of Magdalena Aotearoa, an affiliate of The Magdalena Project, an international network of Women in Contemporary Theatre. Past and treasured associations in theatre have been with Taki Rua Theatre, Red Mole, Toadlilies, Not Broadcast Quality, Hen's Teeth, and the early plays of Lorae Parry, most notably Eugenia. Last year she conceived and directed Demeter's Dark Ride which was a critically acclaimed offering to the Bats STAB season.

Janet Roddick/Plan 9 Composer/Vocal Coach Award winning composer performer 2004 Actor/singer Geographical Cure for NZ International Festival 2002 Miss Qwerty and trombonist in Underwatermelon Man for NZ International Festival

Jennifer Lal Lighting Designer  Three time recipient of the Chapman Tripp Lighting Designer of the Year

Stephen Bain Projections Award winning director of The Winners theatre company and Under Lily's Balcony, he renowned for his provocative and powerful productions and theatre scripts as well as innovative use of technology. He recently initiated the Luxemborg Gardens Performance Space Project in downtown Auckland. Specifications

2002-4

Choreography:

- The Underwater Melon Man  International Festival of the Arts, (also assistant director)
- The Garden of Eden  Wellington Fringe Theatre, Bats Theatre
- Mandlebrot Set  various locations, improvisational dance
- Lifelines, Circa Theatre
- Headland, Wellington Performing Arts Centre
- Dancing the Infinite Curve,  Alan Brunton Memorial concert
- Fishnet (2004), in collaboration with Kilda Northcott

Writing:

- Dancing the Infinite Curve,  a film script
- Fanny Fantham's Great Adventure,  a play script
- Inventory of a Self,  an autobiographical monologue

Performance:
Appendices

- The Mandlebrot Set, various locations chiefly The Space, Newtown and outdoor sites
- Black Body, STAB season Bats Theatre
- Dancing the Infinite Curve, Alan Brunton Memorial Concert
- Anima Mundi (2003) (working title) environmental film with Alison East, Dunedin
- Inventory of a Self (2003) Outdoor locations, Wellington, Auckland
- Fishnet (2004) Fringe Festival Wellington Performing Arts Centre

2000-2001

Choreography:

- the gathering (for Footnote Dance Company) National tour
- Aida (for the New Zealand Opera Company) Auckland, Wellington
- Debt (for 2nd year students UNITEC Performing Arts School) Auckland
- The Box (for Whitireia Performing Arts School) Porirua
- Cruel (for the 2001 Fringe season of Strident) Bats Theatre
- Meat works – The guts and the glory (for the 2001 Fringe season of Amalgam) The Space Newtown
- The Heart Collector (for Strident) Bats Theatre
- Are we God’s Canaries? (for Wellington Performing Arts Centre)

Direction:

- Nightingale Fever (for Michael Parmenter) National tour
- Twelfth Night (for Wellington Performing Arts Centre Stage and Screen School)
- Charity Cartwright’s Family Disunion Studio 77

Production:


Performance


Choreography:
The Minuet Maidment Theatre, UNITEC Graduation
Quartet & Druids Curve

Vinegar Tom Bats Theatre, Toi Whakaari Graduation Director Murray Lynch
Quartet & Druids Phoenix Theatre
Leaping Shemozzle Season, Fringe of the International Festival

Pt Arthur & Quartet  UNITEC School of Performing Arts

As You Like It  Civic Square, Summer Shakespeare  Directors Miranda Harcourt, Guy Boyce

Kilt  Taki Rua Theatre  1,129 Greenfinch Wings  State Opera House, NZ School of Dance

Trio  Memorial Theatre, Isadora’s Tribe

Kilt 2  Te Whaea Theatre,

Performance:

The Life and Times of Constance Flux  Downstage Theatre, Director Warwick Broadhead

Taki Toru  Downstage Theatre
Choreographers Sunny Amey, Jan Bolwell, Keri Kaa

Kilt  Taki Rua Theatre

1988 -1994

1988  Appointed Movement Tutor at The NZ Drama School/Toi Whakaari
     Performed in "Go" and "Insolent River - A Romance" with Michael Parmenter

1989  Became a Guest Tutor at the Auckland Performing Arts School
     Choreographed "Intimate Constellations" with Michael Parmenter

1990  Performed with Origins Dance Theatre
     Initiated the Bipeds experimental performance group

1991  Performed with Jordan & Present Company
     Choreographed two solo works including "Crone" for the Bats Fringe Festival

1992  Attended the Baroque dance course with Wendy Hilton
     Choreographed and performed "She", a solo performance
     Tutored at Whitireia Polytechnic
     Choreographed "Seedling" for the Auckland Performing Arts School and
     Elizabethan song and dances for students at Toi Whakaari/The Drama School
     Produced "The Arts of War & Peace" for the Asia Pacific Festival

1993  Attended a theatre workshop with Cristina Castrillo
     Choreographed and performed a solo dance for a video project with composer
     David Downes
     Danced in Sue Jordan's "Bone of Contention"
     Choreographed:
     "Druids - a May Day Celebration" for Auckland Performing Arts School and Isadora's Tribe
     "Peter Pan" for Northland Youth Theatre
     Dance excerpts for Theatre at Large's production of "Romeo and Juliet"
     "A Bach dance” for students at the New Zealand School of Dance and Body's Own Dance Collective
     "Legacy" (composers Sharon Thorburne) for the Women Composers Festival
     "The Singing Bus Queue" with Nicholas Carroll for the New Zealand School of Dance
     Helped to initiate the Wellington Performing Arts School’s Dance Foundation Course

1994  Attended the Australia/New Zealand Choreographic Course in Melbourne
     Choreographed Elizabethan songs and dances for Toi Whakaari/The Drama School
     Danced in Merenia Grey's 1V•E
     Choreographed "1,129 Greenfinch Wings" for the Auckland Performance School Graduation
     Choreographed “Duet” for Isadora's Tribe
Kilda Northcott

Born in Whakatane, raised in Kawerau, in The Bay of Plenty - Ruby Conway, Russell Kerr and Basil Pattison were three amazingly, influential teachers in my early, dance training.

Always an inspiration - the land I was born to - past and present family and colleagues, my son, Iharaira - my time dancing, living, studying and working overseas and my work tutoring contemporary dance, movement and yoga and my performing career, here in NZ.

Trained in classical ballet, to Intermediate level, Royal Academy of Dancing. Fulltime training in modern and jazz dance with Basil Pattison (resident choreographer at The Mercury Theatre, Auckland in the 60's and early 70's) classical ballet, classical repertoire & performance with Russell Kerr, at The NZ Dance Centre, Auckland.

Performed in community theatre, directed by Warwick Broadhead in the 70's and 90's. In the early 70's, I left NZ, to live and study dance, in Sydney, Australia at The Bodenweiser Dance Centre with Margaret Chapple, studying amongst other styles and techniques - Graham, Horton, improvisation and street theatre.

Lived, studied and taught dance in New York City, studying at, The Merce Cunningham Studio and The Limon Studio and performing with Kalina Cremona and Reka and Company.

I returned to NZ, in the late 70's. 1976 - I worked as a resident dancer on the TV series "Once More with Feeling" a 6 week showcase, of past and current (1976) music hits, in NZ, over 25 years. I was a founding dancer / tutor with, Movement Theatre in Education, Director, Sue Jordan. I was a founding dancer / performer & tutor of contemporary dance with Limbs Dance Company.

In the early 80's, I returned to Sydney to work with Chris Jannides (founder of Limbs) and his new company Darc Swan and to study yoga at the Bondi Junction, Yoga Centre with Martin Jackson and Shandor Remete. I also freelanced throughout Australia with choreographers such as Jacqui Carroll, Helen Herbertson, John Salisbury, Carl Morrow and performed in a season of works with One Extra, director Kai Tai Chan, in Sydney, with rehearsal director, Cheryl Stock.

I was a founding member of Darc Swan's, "Dance in Education Company" in 1988.

My son, Iharaira, was born in Sydney, in 1985.....

Returning to NZ in 1989, I become a founding member of, "The Douglas Wright Dance Co"

From this point on I based myself in Wellington, as a tutor of contemporary dance, yoga and as a performer, working and devising locally and nationally with choreographers such as Sue Jordon, Lyne Pringle, Mary - Jane O'Reilly, Michael Parmenter, Heidi Simmonds and director Alana Spraggs, with Body Cartography, directors, Olive Bieringa and Otto Ramstad, with Red Mole directors, performers, Sally Rodwell and Alan Brunton and working with director and performer, Madeline McNamara.

In the early 90's I took up academic study at Victoria University, Wellington.
2004 - brought initially, projects in film with emerging choreographer / filmmaker, Alyx Duncan in her film project "Pandora" and the co-devised, performance work "Fishnet" with colleague and friend Lyne Pringle.

My son, Iharaira, left home......the cat, Panda, stayed!! I moved to Dunedin, for 3 months over winter, and spent time, as artist in residence, at Otago University, took up further academic study at Otago and co-devised a student, movement based work, performed in the Westpac Bank, shop front window, on George St, as part of the 2004 Dunedin Fringe Festival.

2005 - I toured with Michael Parmenter's "Retrospective" national tour, performing, the role of "mother of the groom" in the work "Svadebka" Lyne and I performed our work "Fishnet" for the 2005 "Dance Your Socks Off Festival" to critical acclaim, at Bats Theatre, Wellington.

From 1989 I was a tutor and senior tutor of contemporary dance at The Wellington Performing Arts Centre, both on their tertiary and community courses. Under the umbrella of Wellington Performing Arts Centre and the mentoring of Jenny Stevenson, director of the centre, I was director and tutor of "The Kilda Northcott Youth Dance Company"

2006 - Panda and I relocated to Port Chalmers, Dunedin, on a quest to buy our first house, which I am pleased to say, we achieved with lots of support and help from family and friends and in early 2006, moving into a modest, 3 bedroomed, brick and tile, on the 1st May, 2006.

2006 - brought work with Daniel Belton's film / dance, project "Seismos" as a dancer/performer/devisor. I was involved as a co-performer/dancer/actor, with actor, Barbara Carey in Sarah Kane's play, "4.48 Psychosis," directed by Otago University, Theatre Studies, student director, Damien Bertanees (Barbara and I have made Damien promise to give us cameo roles when he makes his first film - we'll make millions!!! - yeah right - )

Lyne and I toured nationally with "Fishnet" to critical acclaim and several awards!!!
I taught contemporary dance at "Dance Theatre Arts - School of Ballet, St. Claire and a movement / yoga based class to parents/mothers.

2007 - sees me, still working part-time in a shop, The Dolls House - Dance Wear, in Dunedin town and working as a home support person for, Dunedin Home Support Services. I continue tutoring dance & yoga, here in Dunedin. I currently (2007) have an after school, dance class, for children, at Port Chalmers School and I hold, an open, contemporary dance class at, Otago University, Shona Bennet's, School of Dance and I am teaching the, New Zealand Association Of Modern Dance Limited - Contemporary Syllabus Level 4 - to dance students at Dance Theatre Arts - School of Ballet, St. Claire, director Caroline Claver.
List of Works for Chris Blake

Selected Works

A Viola on Skye for solo viola

Ancient Journeys 3 pieces for solo piano

Bitter Calm opera in two acts for soloists, chorus and orchestra

Black on White for piano

Clairmont Triptych for wind quintet and piano

Concerto Aoraki concerto for violin and orchestra

Echelles de Glace fanfare for orchestra

Little Dancings for flute and piano

Night Walking with the Great Salter for orchestra

Sounds - an Evocation of Tahuahua, Queen Charlotte Sound for wind quintet

Symphony - The Islands for orchestra

The Coming of Tane Mahuta concerto for piano and orchestra

Till Human Voices Wake Us for tenor voice and orchestra

Clairmont Triptych for wind quintet and piano

Concerto Aoraki concerto for violin and orchestra

Echelles de Glace fanfare for orchestra

Four Minutes to Midnight for string orchestra, string quartet and 1 percussionist

Leaving the Plains of C for chamber orchestra

Little Dancings for flute and piano

Melodium for brass band

Night Journey To Pawarenga for string orchestra

Night Walking with the Great Salter for orchestra

No. 3. Regions for wind quintet

Regions for wind quintet

Ribbonwood is Home (Series 1) 5 pieces for piano

Ribbonwood is Home (Series 2) three pieces for piano

Sounds - an Evocation of Tahuahua, Queen Charlotte Sound for wind quintet
Symphony - The Islands for orchestra

Te Karanga o te Putatara fanfare for orchestra

Te Tangi o te Tui me te Korimako fanfare for orchestra

The Coming of Tane Mahuta concerto for piano and orchestra

The Furnace of Pihanga for full orchestra

The Golden Five for organ

Works

The Lamentations of Motuarohia for chamber orchestra

Till Human Voices Wake Us for tenor voice and orchestra

Timmy springs on Hi! fanfare for orchestra

Towards Peace for solo clarinet

Tranquilla Sia L’onda for wind octet

We all fall down for full orchestra
Appendices

List of Works for Hot Club Sandwich.

Live At Old St Pauls.

Track List.
1] New Friends
2] For You My Love
3] Hit That Jive Jack
4] I Thought About You
5] Up A Lazy River
6] They Can’t Take That Away From Me
7] Hooked On You
8] Crawdad Hole/I Want You To Be My Baby
9] I Used To Be Your Rooster
10] Don’t Get Around Much Anymore
11] Tell Me What You're Looking For
12] Choo Choo Ch’Boogie
13] I'll Always Be In Love With You
14] Three Handed Woman

Hot Club Sandwich.

Toasted.

Track List.
1] Televangelise Me
2] It's Not Enough
3] Quintology
4] I'd Rather Be Here With You
5] Best Of Lovers
6] Coffee Song
7] Break It Up
8] Fair Go Theme
9] Don't Tell Me That You Have To Go
10] You're Nowhere If You Don't Know Where You're At
11] Someone's Been Pickin' On Me Blues
12] Too Late Baby
13] Fion's Dance No. 1
14] Soiree @ L'affare
15] Kirsten Anne

Hot Club Sandwich.

Live On The Verandah.

Track List.
1] Route 66
2] It's Almost Like Being In Love
3] You Gotta Dance With Who Brung You
4] Room With A View
5] Don't Let Go
6] Autumn Leaves
7] Feet Back On The Ground
8] Your Can Love Yourself
9] After You've Gone
10] Choo Choo Ch’Boogie
11] It Don't Mean A Thing If It Ain't Got That Swing
12] Blow Wind Blow
13] Jump Jive & Wail
14] Frankfurt Special

**Hot Club Sandwich. Enjoy Yourself or Get Out.**

Track List.
1] New Friends
2] Sittin'Rockin On Sunday
3] *Enjoy Yourself Or Get Out*
5] Morning Train
6] Can't Stand The Heat
7] Wake Up Baby
8] Feet Back On The Ground
9] Middle Class White Boy Blues
10] Laid Back Lizzie
11] Livin It Up
12] Marcelo
List of News Paper and Magazine Articles

Bitter Calm
Rod Bliss – Spectres and Shortcomings Bitter Calm and the International Festival of the Arts – 1994 – Music In New Zealand
William Dart – Conflict in the colony – 1994 – New Zealand Listener
Ruth Nichol – Slow Movement – 1994 – Quote Unquote
James Littlewood – A Bitter Opera – 1994 – Pavement
Donald Rae – Opera A Travesty – 1994 – Quote Unquote
Brian Rudman – Murderous opera – 1994 – Southern Skies
Tara Werner – Blake Philosophic About Critics – 1994 – New Zealand Herald

Fishnet
Catherine Pattison – Dance allows visibility with age – 2006 - The Star
Lyne Pringle – Fishnet Bats Web Page – Bats Theatre accessed 6/11/06
Charmain Smith – Dance wisdom born of age – 2006 – Otago Daily Times
Francesca Horsley – This Dancing Life - 2006 – New Zealand Listener

Home Land
Barbara Frame - Otago play fitting for theatre's birthday (Review) – 2004 – Otago Daily Times
Jane Smith - Founders and friends celebrate at the Fortune – 2004 – Otago Daily Times
Fortune turns 30

Pākehā and Race Relations
Findlay Macdonald – Racism Exposed – New Zealand Listener – Parihaka review
Waaka Vercoe – 2004 – Paniu "Newsletter on Maori Activities within the Bay of Plenty Regional Council

Springbok Tour
The legacy of the 1981 Springboks – 2001 – The Evening Post

Domestic Violence
Susan Pepperell – Talk but little action on domestic violence – 2008 – Sunday Star Times