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**“Telling the New Zealand Story”:  
National Narratives in Three Long-Term  
Exhibitions at The Museum of New  
Zealand, Te Papa Tongarewa.**

A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts  
in Media Studies

at Massey University (Palmerston North)

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2001

## Abstract

This thesis is an examination of the national narratives contained in three exhibits in The Museum of New Zealand, Te Papa Tongarewa. It examines the existence of the state and the nation, and their involvement in museum development, and applies this theory, and selected theories of Roland Barthes, Sergei Eisenstein, and Walter Benjamin, to the subsequent analysis. Broadly, the position taken is that museums are one of a number of institutions that perpetuate national narratives in order to bind nations together and discourage anti-state sentiment, and this position is validated in the analysis of three long-term Te Papa exhibits, *Exhibiting Ourselves*, *Parade*, and *Golden Days*.

“The national collection is very very strong...in telling the New Zealand story...”

Cheryll Sotheran, Te Papa CEO, quoted in Rudman, 1996b.

“Te Papa is only a straw in the cultural wind.”

Theodor Dalrymple, British critic, 1999.

## Acknowledgements

Often when people asked me how my thesis was going I rolled my eyes and said “it’s just interminable”. It now seems that this was not strictly true, because here it is in hardcover. To get it to here I received a lot of help.

First of all, I need to thank my supervisor, **Dr Mary Alemany-Galway**, who was an excellent supervisor. Other people around the School of English and Media Studies also gave me invaluable support, most notably **Graeme Slater**. Other supporters from the trenches, my fellow postgrads, have provided a stimulating environment to work in.

On a more personal note, my family has been great throughout this whole endless endeavor. Foremost are my **Mum** and **Dad** who made the ultimate sacrifice and let me move back to the family estate in the middle of this work. Thanks. Getting your names in print was worth it, I’m sure. Other family members need a mention – thanks to **Maxine** and **Robert** for putting me up and feeding me in Wellington, and for the support that can’t be quantified.

There’s more: **Ani** and **Tamarongo**, you put me up and gave lots to smile about so thank you. **Karen**, my Gisborne bay, thanks for giving me a ‘study holiday’ or two and being so positive that I would finish. **Jessie Jane**, thanks for all the phone conversations and the emails that didn’t make sense. And **Hirani**, thanks for coming home for that visit – but whatever, you’re still always here.

A lot of thanks to **Pete**, **Trish** and **Toby** for giving me, Willow and the girls a home. Absolutely.

But, most of all, **Kim**, thanks for believing in me, and in you.

Of course, the disclaimer: although these people helped me in various ways, every single mistake in here is my own fault. Absolutely.

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## Glossary

Aotearoa	The whole of New Zealand.
Hapu	Subtribe.
Harakeke	Flax leaf, <i>Phormium tenax</i> .
Hui	Gathering, meeting.
Huia	A bird, native to New Zealand, now extinct.
Iwi	Tribe, people, nation.
Kapa haka	Kapa: procession, team. Haka: fierce rythmical dance.
Kauri	A tree, <i>Agathis australis</i>
Kete	A bag or basket made of woven fibre, usually harakeke.
Kia ora	Hello! Thanks! May you have health.
Kiwi	An indigenous bird, often cited as New Zealand's national bird, <i>Apteryx</i> .
Kohanga Reo	Language nest, Maori language preschool.
Korowai	Tag cloak (chiefly).
Koru	Apostrophe, spiral pattern, intestinal.
Mamaku	Black tree fern, <i>Cyathea medullaris</i>
Mere	Short flat club.
Nikau	Palm, <i>Rhopalostylis sapida</i> .
Pa	Stockaded villlage.
Papatuanuku	Mother Earth.
Patu Onewa	Hand club
Pounamu	Greenstone.
Rimu	Red pine, <i>Dacrydium cupressinum</i> .
Te Papa Tongarewa	Container of treasures, also "Our Place".

Tangata Wheuna	Maori (literally: the people of the land)
Tangata Tiriti	Settlers to New Zealand, the people who live in New Zealand as a result of the Treaty of Waitangi (literally: the people of the Treaty)
Tangihanga	Mourning.
Taonga	Treasure, that which is treasured
Tikanga	Custom, obligations and conditions.
Tiki	Neck pendant.
Waka	Canoe.

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## Chapter One: Introduction

The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (Te Papa), the national museum of Aotearoa New Zealand, opened in February 1998 with the intention of representing the nation to its' citizens and visitors. This thesis arises out of an interest in the ways Te Papa seeks to achieve this representation, and from a desire to read Te Papa as a text, with the intention of uncovering any over-arching narrative. My initial investigation of Te Papa as a text found an almost collage-like mixing of 'high' and 'mass' culture, through the use of both artworks and everyday and commodity items to represent 'timeless' elements and truths of the nation. These two aspects of my interest – that of representing a 'nation' and of using both the sacred (art) and the profane (household items and commodities) to do so – form the basis of my study. This thesis attempts to uncover the narrative of Te Papa, and in doing so, seeks to unveil its inherent ideology, one which I suggest is closely linked with industrial production and the advancement of the New Zealand economy.

To provide a context for my work, Chapter Two reviews relevant museum-related literature. A brief historical background is provided, which signposts relevant moments in the evolution of the public museum moving from the rise of the public museum in western Europe, to the first appearance of museums in New Zealand in the mid-nineteenth century, through to the development and establishment of Te Papa in the 1980s and 1990s. In this endeavor, the work of Tony Bennett (1995) is particularly significant, specifically his identification of the public museum as a regulatory apparatus of the state, a governmental institution which uses culture for the purposes of governance. Aligned with Bennett's work is a discussion of nationalism, beginning with Benedict Anderson's key text, *Imagined Communities* (1991), which relies on the concept of the nation as a construct built on narrative, perpetuated by the state to ensure its' own continuation. The key purpose of this chapter is to draw together strands of thought and theory relevant to a discussion of a national museum, in order to provide a coherent background to my study.

Chapter Three provides discussion of the theory that informs the following analysis. Following the contention in the previous chapter that nations are narrative constructions, Roland Barthes' concept of myth, the idea that cultural codes become superimposed on objects and images so that the images become signs representing cultural myths, is key in this study. Walter Benjamin's work using Marx's concept of commodity fetishism, again involving the idea that values are superimposed onto objects, is also of significance here, as are Benjamin's theories concerning the nature of progress. The work of Sergei Eisenstein which is concerned with theories of montage serves as an important tool of analysis in this study, because of the use of montage techniques in exhibitions at Te Papa. The work of these three theorists – Barthes,

Benjamin and Eisenstein – provide the basic tools for my own analysis of some of Te Papa’s long-term exhibits, in the chapters which follow.

Chapters Four, Five and Six provide analysis of three of Te Papa’s long-term exhibits: *Exhibiting Ourselves*, *Parade*, and *Golden Days*. The first of these seeks to highlight some of the different ways New Zealand has been represented at world trade fairs, while *Parade* has the subheading “where there are people there is art” and juxtaposes New Zealand artwork with everyday items such as a forty year old refrigerator. The focus of Chapter Six, *Golden Days*, is a piece of ‘object theatre’ set in a mock junk shop, using a frenetic film montage that shows such ‘key’ moments in New Zealand’s recent history as the Tangiwai disaster, the visit of Queen Elizabeth and medal-winning sports performances. The work of the theorists as outlined above is applied, where relevant, in each analysis.

The conclusion is my attempt to bring together the ideas contained in the previous chapters. It outlines the conclusions of my study. Here I highlight the points uncovered in my analysis and argue that at present Te Papa’s brand of nationalism is very focussed on the national economy, and hence align nationalistic pride and identity with economic production.

While I have so far outlined the purpose of this thesis and the journey I have undertaken to achieve it, it is also important to recognise the limitations of this thesis. Although it is important, for practical reasons this thesis does not focus on the work Te Papa has undertaken to achieve its’ bicultural goals. Nor do I seek here to enter into the debate about the display of art in Te Papa, because although most areas and exhibits at Te Papa contain art, art is not a focus of this thesis. Another limit placed on this thesis is that there is not enough scope to more specifically cover the development of the public museum, again due to considerations of space and time.

## Chapter Two: Review of relevant literature

### Introduction – Museums

The intention of this chapter is to contextualise my subsequent analysis of The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, and as such the scope of this chapter is broad. In order to discuss the national, public museum – that is the form of the museum that is envisaged as speaking to and for the national public – the museum itself needs to be defined in its historical context, as does the nation and the role that the museum plays therein. Hence, this chapter is dedicated to highlighting major movements in the development of both the museum and the nation and, because the museum and nation are enmeshed via the state, of the state. Because this thesis focuses on Te Papa, it is also important to foreground the development of Te Papa, from its roots in the collections of the early European settler society to the present, and hence the latter part of this chapter focuses on this development.

Scholarship relating to museums is a burgeoning area, as curators, academics, governments and the public are increasingly negotiating the role of museums as the site of representation. Various aspects of the museum institution are herein investigated and considered, and broadly, the major functions of the public museum include the representation of history; the representation of local/national identity and values; the fostering of local and national pride; the conservation of culture, cultural artifacts and art, as well as of elements of the natural environment; and the storing of 'memory'. That museums serve a role as institutions focused at least partly on the preservation and representation of the past forms the basis of the majority of museum-related literature (see, for example, Zolberg 1996:70; Ambrose and Paine 1993; Alexander 1979:14-5). Consensus seems to be that museums form part of a series of public, civic, educative institutions, and that their role is to amass, preserve, arrange and display objects intended to be of a specific, representational value to their public. As such, the act of placing an object in a museum confers significance upon it, because of the intention of the museum to represent to the public its' own historical and contemporary culture.

It is important to understand that the representations found within museums are not neutral. If museums are seen to "map out geographies of taste and values" (Lumley 1988:1) towards a goal of "providing an understanding of identity and a sense of belonging to a place or community" (Ambrose and Paine 1993:3), then the items on display in the museum have intended resonance as symbols of identification for the museum audience. Placing an object in a public display, with an educative and representational focus, communicates to that public that this object has special significance to their identity and history, and as such, national museums

can be perceived as serving “as a storehouse of their nations’ qualities”, and are subsequently often sites of contention (Zolberg 1996:70).

Museums are also seen in an economic light, especially as tourist attractions and tools of economic revitalisation (Ambrose and Paine 1993). The diversification of museums into areas other than display and education, such as the showing of films or plays, and the development of other revenue-generating ventures, illustrates a movement away from the sole involvement of the state in the funding and maintaining of public museums. Increasingly, museums are also seen as potential training providers and employers (Ambrose and Paine 1993). The ‘commercialization’ of museums is seen as forcing museums to compete against other leisure sector activities (Lumley 1988:10-11), while commercial sponsorship is seen in both positive and negative terms, as a source of funding and as inviting issues of bias (in that the ‘truth’ in its entirety with regards to a particular industry or company may not be fully disclosed) (Kirby 1988:95-98).

Currently, debate occurs when the citizen museum user comes to demand participation in the representation process of museums, that is, in the production of meaning that the museum display involves (Ambrose and Paine 1993:16; Porter 1988:123; Macdonald 1996:9; Ames 1992). This can be seen in Aotearoa New Zealand, as Maori increasingly demand participatory and consultative roles in representations of their history and taonga (Ames 1992:147). These demands relate to the state support that museums often receive: “With changing political structures, facilities run or supported by the state are coming under intense public scrutiny in terms of their role in cultural transmission” (Ambrose and Paine 1993:16).

### *The Historical Development of Museums*

The relationship between the museum and the state is historical. Museums have played, and continue to play, a role in the preservation of state power through the assertion of unity and common history for those the museum claims to represent (Bennett 1995:46; Ambrose and Paine 1993:6-9). Ruling classes, monarchies and, subsequently, governments, have performed key functions in the historical development of the museum institution.

The historical developments of the public museum are perceived in different ways by different theorists. Some, such as Alexander (1979), are interested in the history of the museum as it relates to war and acquisition. Bennett (1995), on the other hand, is interested in the way the museum developed in the nineteenth century in relation to the changing conception of the task of government, as well as in the light of other related (and seemingly non-related) public attractions. Others concentrate on the museum’s roots in cabinets of curiosities,

while others still highlight the increasing occupation of the museum to encourage and foster nationalist glory. In accounts of museum history the effects of various developments in social philosophy and changes in social conditions, such as those brought about by such events as the industrial revolution, are considered (see, for example Alexander 1979; Ames 1992; Durrans 1988).

The Greek roots of the museum are often the starting point of much general history that has been written about museums. The earliest Greek museums, public collections of aesthetically pleasing objects, were dedicated to the Muses, often including, or comprising, the spoils of conquest. Although they share commonalities with modern public museums, such as sometimes serving as centres for study, these roots are generally seen as far-removed from the development of the modern public museum (Alexander 1979:6-8).

The museum played a somewhat active role in the Middle Ages in Western Europe, as religious institutions collected and preserved private collections of “alleged relics” of Biblical times (*ibid.* p. 8). The traditions of enshrining pillage continued and spread, adding to and creating private collections belonging to the ruling classes (*ibid.*).

When museum history is written, the cabinets of curiosities of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries are often primarily indicated as a beginning:

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries it is possible to discern the emergence of proto-museums. These largely took the form of private collections of cabinets of curiosities (Walsh 1992:18).

These collections were generally elite and not open to the public (Alexander 1979:8), or, as in the case of the collection of Francesco I de Medici, which was transferred to the public Uffizi Gallery in 1584, were used to illustrate the legitimacy of dynastic power (Bennett 1995:27). Natural history collections are another sixteenth century form of the museum, such as botanical gardens used for the study of science and medicine, that were established at universities (Alexander 1979:8; 42). It was also around this time that the history museum began to appear, growing in popularity throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (*ibid.*).

The word ‘museum’ first appeared in the English language in the seventeenth century and in the late seventeenth century private collections began to go public (Alexander 1979:8). It was the time of the advent of university museums, which were often collections gifted by deceased private owners and were comprised of varied material, such as art and archaeological objects (*ibid.* p. 22-3). Alexander links the rise of “nationalistic spirit” in Europe to public displays of collections of artworks depicting images of and the resulting plunder of ‘victories’ (*ibid.* p. 80-1).

The eighteenth century combination of colonial domination and the Enlightenment, the philosophical emphasis on the laws of nature and ordering of the universe, contributed to a major period of museum development, part of which was the development of the modern form of the ethnographic museum (Durrans 1988:147). In this context colonial exploration can be seen as part of a wider quest to reveal the world, a quest for knowledge which is in turn publically shared through public museums.

Colonial exploration, in the form of James Cook and others, furnished museums, such as the British Museum, with contributions from the colonial front (*ibid.* 46), while museums also began to appear within the new colonies (Alexander 1979:47). The development of the Louvre in Paris is the perfect example of the contribution colonial conquest made to the public museum, as Napoleon sent back bounty from the front to furnish the Louvre's collections (*ibid.* p. 24-5; Eyo 1994:330). The Louvre was originally created in the wake of the fall of the French monarchy, as democracy claimed artworks formally belonging to the aristocracy for the people, and made them available to the public for viewing three days of the week (Alexander 1979:23-5). The Louvre had an extensive and systematic programme aimed at amassing 'great' art and distributing it to satellite museums across the French empire, as part of a campaign of aimed at the public good and education, and may be considered the first national art museum (*ibid.* p. 23-6).

The eighteenth century saw the establishment of the British Museum, as well as the first appearance of a museum in a British colony, in South Carolina (*ibid.* pp. 47). At the end of that century the first public depository of technology and machines appeared, the *Conservatoire National des Arts et MÈtiers* in Paris, effectively the first public museum of science and technology (*ibid.* p. 64). The combinations of Enlightenment ethos, colonial expansion and the industrial revolution all contributed greatly to the eighteenth century rise of the public museum, and its diversification into forms with different focuses. However, it is fair to note that many of these museums "were not public museums in the modern sense" but had "practical restrictions" relating to the public's ability to access them, such as transport, and were owned by the crown, rather than the state (Bennett 1995:34-5).

The nineteenth century saw immense growth in the public museum. The fall of Napoleon in 1815 meant extensive repatriation of artworks from the Louvre. Napoleon's campaign had the lasting effect of making "great art and the museum symbols of national glory", and in its wake most countries of western Europe established national collections of their own (Alexander 1979:27). These collections began to diversify, moving towards displays of culture and history (*ibid.* 10), both meant to symbolise the nation, and displays of "primitive" cultures thought to be dying out, marking the rise of the ethnographic museum (Newton 1994:271). The exhibits of

ethnographic museums of the nineteenth century were organized hierarchically (Bennett 1995:33), displaying the 'other' to the public 'us', as did the 1889 World Exposition which arranged "non-white peoples into a 'sliding scale' of humanity" (*ibid.* p. 83).

The World Expositions of the nineteenth century, trade fairs which displayed the glory and wealth of nations through exhibits of technology, including weaponry and industrial innovations, as well as ethnographic exhibits, contributed to the growth of museums. The 1851 Great Exhibition in London contributed profits used to acquire land on which museums were built, housing some displays from the Exhibition itself, and there was a similar result from an Exhibition in France four years later (Alexander 1979:30). The Expositions, through new innovations and techniques of display, also had consequences for the exhibitionary aspects of museums (*ibid.* p.11).

While the nineteenth century saw the focus of the museum continue to move from scholarship to its exhibitionary aspects, the twentieth century saw "the democratization of Western society, which transformed museums into cultural and educational institutions serving the general public" (*ibid.* p.175). This shows a change in museum practice, as museums increasingly sought to serve and be responsive to their communities (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1994:1), with less public emphasis on their governmental aspects.

The role of the state in "cultural transmission" is currently being questioned, as the museum's portrayal of culture is increasingly being investigated by the public, who expect greater levels of participation in the museum display process (Ambrose and Paine 1993:16; Durrans 1988:167). Representation has become a crucial issue for the museum audiences, not only that of the indigenous 'other', but also of the female 'other' (Porter 1988:106-7). The political implications of such representations have become increasingly recognised (Riegel 1996:83; Karp 1991:15), as those represented seek participation in the representation process (Ames 1992:6; Macdonald 1996:9), and largely museums respond by welcoming this participation (Hooper-Greenhill 1988:215).

Museums are now being encouraged by their audiences and critics to engage in analysis of controversial subject matter, including that involving the museums themselves (Lumley 1988:13). Museums in the twentieth century became more self-reflexive in other ways too, seeking to investigate not only the past, but the traditions of historical and cultural display within their own walls (Kaplan 1994:9).

## Governance and the Nation in Museums

As Bennett points out, the link between culture and power is an historical one, through displays of power which aimed to benefit the elite, in which the popular classes played a role as spectators (Bennett 1995:21-2). Bennett sees the development of the public museum

in the light of a more general set of developments through which culture, in coming to be thought of as useful for governing, was fashioned as a vehicle for the exercise of new forms of power (*ibid.* p. 19).

He places heavy emphasis on the role of the state in the development of the public museum, and the state's use of culture for the purpose of regulating the behavior of the population.

In the example of the Louvre we see some of what Bennett calls:

The respects in which the public museum exemplified the development of a new 'governmental' relation to culture in which works of high culture were treated as instruments that could be enlisted in new ways for new tasks of social management (Bennett 1995:6).

The "enlistment of culture for the purpose of governing", according to Bennett, takes two forms, the second of which is:

The conception that the works, forms and institutions of high culture might be enlisted for this governmental task in being assigned the purpose of civilizing the population as a whole (*ibid.* p. 19).

This conception springs from the idea that the popular classes, once given the opportunity to imbibe upper class 'high' culture rather than lower class 'popular' culture would no longer *want* to partake in the latter. Rather it was hoped the masses would acquiesce to the value system of the upper classes, and that the civilizing process would become self-perpetuating (*ibid.* p. 20).

The late nineteenth century development of the museum occurred alongside that of public libraries, art galleries, lecture series' and the like, envisaged as a tool for ensuring the public's moral well-being in the same way that sanitation ensures physical health (*ibid.* pp. 17-19). In Britain, in 1834, James Silk Buckingham chaired the Select Committee on Drunkenness, bringing three bills to parliament that proposed local bodies "be empowered to levy rates to establish walks, paths, playgrounds, halls, theatres, libraries, museums and art galleries", with the aim of attracting the working classes towards social experiences alternative to those involving alcohol (*ibid.* pp. 19-20). Museums moved away from aiming to astonish the public, to aiming to inform them (*ibid.* p. 40), via historical and cultural education of the public (*ibid.* p. 44).

Bennett's description of governmental power focuses on *strategies* of achieving obedience rather than *laws* (*ibid.* pp. 22-3). While culture was earlier used in symbolic displays of power, in the nineteenth century it was used to more subtly exert governmental power, aimed at more enduring and lasting effects. The nineteenth century saw culture used as a resource through which those exposed to its influences would be led to ongoingly and progressively modify their thoughts, feelings and behavior (*ibid.* p. 24).

The intention of bringing the values of the masses into line with those of the upper classes can be read in ideological terms. Ideological theory, which centres on the belief "that our knowledge and understanding of the world is determined by political interests" (Edgar 1999:190) which propagate ideas via social institutions, such as educative ones, is implicated in Bennett's reading of the nineteenth century museums as an arbiter of values. Indeed, the use of museums for this purpose is a perfect example of the process of ideology. Here, the tastes and values accorded the most value by the ruling classes are made accessible to the masses, who are in turn encouraged to take these values on themselves. The central aim is to regulate the social behaviour of society, towards a result that is acceptable to those in power. The key point to Bennett's analysis is that he sees the museum as "primarily governmental" in purpose (*ibid.* p. 46).

## State and Nation

Within the nation, it is the state that has the responsibility of governance. The role of the state in the development and administration of the modern public museum needs to be seen in light of its role in the nation. Here the state is understood to be "apparatuses and practice of government" (A. Bell 1999:3), a "centralised authority" (Kaplan 1994a:3) that governs the nation. The nation is taken to be a "culturally based shared community" (A. Bell 1999:3), that is "comprised of heterogeneous ethnic groups [that have] a common identity imposed" by the state (Kaplan 1994a:3). The role that the state plays in the forging and fostering of the national community should not be understated:

The central belief of nationalism is that the two [nation and state] belong together: each nation should have its own state; and each state should govern one nation. (A. Bell 1999:3-4)

Colonialism has been important in the development of the idea of state and nation, as colonial powers exported traditions, economic and educational systems to arbitrarily demarcated territories, including the concept of the nation which overlaid indigenous traditions of fraternity and community. The state grew in size in mid-nineteenth century Europe (Anderson 1991:76) and by the late nineteenth century colonial infrastructure was supporting colonial state apparatuses, as the role of the state continued to expand in Europe and its territories (*ibid.*

p.139). The establishment of the League of Nations after the Second World War, made up of nation-members, had the effect of normalising the nation-state on the international stage (*ibid.* p.113). The “instilling of nationalist ideology” took place “through the mass media, the educational system, administrative regulations and so forth” (*ibid.* p.114).

The rise of the modern nation and its accompanying nationalisms has been linked by various theorists, such as Marx, to the development of modern capitalism (Smith 1998:12), to capitalist expansionism and the fulfilling of the capitalist aim of larger potential and real profits via encroachment upon larger territories. Indeed, the modern global economy was built through a collection of nations:

Two great forces have shaped the modern world, two forces that grew up side by side, that spread around the globe, and penetrated every aspect of contemporary life. These are the forces of capitalism and nationalism (*ibid.* p.47).

Smith sites Marx and Engels as marking the nation as “the necessary terrain for the establishment of market capitalism by the bourgeoisie” (Smith 1998:47) because

only a nationally unified territorial state could ensure the free and peaceful movement of the capital, goods and personnel necessary for large-scale production, market exchange and distribution of mass commodities. The creation of linguistically homogenous nations was therefore a prerequisite of market capitalism (*ibid.*).

However, Smith does assert, like other nation theorists, notably Benedict Anderson (1991), that capitalism isn't the only phenomena important in the formation of nation states, but that nationalism developed due to an amalgamation of forces, including capitalism.

It may be asserted that the rise of the global economy, and the subsequent rise of trans-national corporations who hold immense economic power, diminishes the economic importance of the nation. However, while the global economy is gaining strength, nations are still participating in economic policy and reform through international organisations and alliances, and still attempt to amass economic power and attain economic and political dominance. To be of influence in the current global political system, nations need to be able to assert economic strength, and in order to maintain a coherent national economy, state powers must bring together national citizens in a coherent national order.

The perpetuation, through the state, of the existence of a national community, is also one of the ways that the state maintains hegemonic power:

For the state the notion of a national community provides the basis for a sense of social integration which aids the practices of government (A. Bell 1999:214).

Creating and maintaining the sense that the nation is a fraternity legitimates the power of the state, and enables citizens to work together to maintain and uphold the common-sense nature of state power. States perpetuate the idea of the nation as a fraternity in order to govern (*ibid.* p.205). It is argued that “national consciousness is the product of state-sponsored engineering or education” (McClellan 1996:29), and that in Aotearoa New Zealand “any sense of New Zealand society being a national community only followed the establishment and centralisation of the state” (A. Bell 1999:219).

## The Nation

That the state goes to such lengths to maintain the legitimacy of the nation indicates that national distinctions are invented and somewhat arbitrary. The nation itself has been the subject of much theorising, not least that of Benedict Anderson, who famously claimed that the nation is an “imagined political community” (1991:6).

According to Anderson, nationalism developed towards the end of the eighteenth century (*ibid.* p.4; p.11), as a result of a complex mingling of social and cultural changes. The rise of nationalism was partly due to a perceived need to link people together, as communities comprised of members who did not have first-hand contact with other members of their community, began to develop. And, just as colonialism is important when tracing the development of the state, the assertion by colonised people of their own autonomy contributed to the development of subversive nationalisms (A. Bell 1999:234), as indigenous people resisted a nationalism that “obliterates or renders powerless pre-existing cultures, such as Maori” (C. Bell 1996:8).

Official nationalism, then, is highly political and in the words of Claudia Bell is “a form of collective egoism” that is “comprised only of what is in the best interests of certain social groups” and “doesn’t take into account that people are different” (*ibid.* pp.10-11). This is a view also taken by Avril Bell, who claims that the concept of a national community subsumes difference within it, so that “the emphasis of nationalist discourse is on social cohesion” (A. Bell 1999:4).

The achievement of this social cohesion is accomplished through the construction of a narrative about the nation, in which there is a “focus on generalisations and stereotypes” (*ibid.*) used to foster a national identity, within which “sameness’ within the group” is emphasized (*ibid.* p.96). The intention here is “to produce the idea of the nation as a continuous narrative of national progress” (Bhabha 1990:1). Hall asserts that “national culture is a *discourse*” (Hall 1992:292), partly formed by national narratives that are “told and retold in national histories, literature, the media and popular culture” (*ibid.* p.293). Anderson points out that

fiction was instrumental in initiating a view of the national community in which citizens held common social experiences and existed, unobserved by each other, simultaneously (Anderson 1991:26-8). This process asserts to the reader the sense of belonging to a community. Brennan (1990) strongly links fictive narratives of nation, particularly those contained in the novel form, saying that "The rise of the modern nation-state in Europe in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries is inseparable from the forms and subjects of imaginative literature" (Brennan 1990:46). Because national discourses are themselves fictive narratives, it is unsurprising that links between the two are observed, and that fiction is important in the hegemonic process of forging the nation.

As with any hegemonic process, in the national narratives circulated stereotypes must be constantly reasserted. Billig makes the point that:

The battle for nationhood is a battle for hegemony, by which a part claims to speak for the whole nation and to represent the national essence. (Billig 1995:27)

In the representation of this "essence" different strategies are employed. Two strategies identified by Hall are "the emphasis on *origins, continuity, tradition and timelessness*" and the use of "a *foundational myth*" (Hall 1992:294). In the first of these "national identity is represented as primordial" (*ibid.*), as having essential characteristics that remain unchanged by time. In the second strategy, a story is employed "which locates the origin of the nation, the people and their national character" in a fabricated past, the existence of which relies more on contemporary values than historical fact (*ibid.* pp.294-5). In this way national discourse "constructs identities which are ambiguously placed between past and future" (*ibid.* p.295). Past moments of national glory are held up to represent the might and natural progress inherent in the nation, as part of a larger strategy aimed at building narratives of national progress. In the construction of discursive nationalism, as with the earlier legitimization of dynastic power, displays of cultural artifacts play an important role.

### The Nation and the Museum

The demise of colonialism helped the spread of museums as emergent nations sought to publicly assert their identity through the circulation of their own narrative discourses (Kaplan 1994a:1; Appadurai and Beckenridge 1992:44). Kaplan illustrates this point with the example of museum development in Nigeria, which first arose out of British settlers wanting to preserve anthropological artifacts, but, following independence in 1960, museums in Nigeria began instead to be used "as a means of creating a vision of national identity, fostering unity through new museums" (Kaplan 1994b:45). The architect of the Nigerian museum development, Epko Eyo, says of emergent and 'new' African nations that:

for political independence to be meaningful, it has to be buttressed by a program of cultural identity. Hence, such programs were worked out, aimed at creating cultural awareness and the assertion of national identity (Eyo 1994:332).

Anderson remarks on “the immense influence that nationalism has exerted on the modern world” (Anderson 1991:3), indicating the close relationship between the rise of nationalism and the modern period, the same period during which the public museum developed towards its current form. Historically, too, nationalism has played a strong role in the rise of the museum. Indeed,

by the end of the nineteenth century, no self-respecting Western nation, with the notable exception of the United States, was complete without its own national museum. (McClellan 1996:29).

The transference of “culturally and historically significant collections and sites” from the elite to the state as “a national legacy” are intended to be used for the fostering of collective identity (Kaplan 1994a:1). Kaplan links museum development with “nation building” (*ibid.* p.10), while Newton says that the national museum “is a statement about the nation itself” (1994:273). This statement, like much about the nation, seeks “to create a narrative with a distinctive political resonance” (Wright 1996:12), inciting “national pride” (*ibid.* p.9). It is:

Through the choice of objects and didactic modes of exhibition, national collections have sought to glorify both real and mythic histories. (*ibid.* p.9)

Claudia Bell goes further when discussing the role the museum plays in the construction of a national identity, saying that “the inherent nationalistic and patriotic sentiment of museums invites individuals to have an historic sense of themselves as part of a wider collective”. She asserts that “through the museum the nation is covertly articulated” (1996:80). This, of course, underlines the role that the national museum plays in relation to the nation. By privileging certain narratives, sites and histories through their display, the national museum draws together that which is seen to define the nation, acting as a representation of the core values and defining moments and monuments of the nation.

### Nationalism in New Zealand

The national community in Aotearoa New Zealand didn't come to be imagined until the arrival of Europeans. Pre-contact Maori had no national communities, but rather had oral traditions and community affiliations based on geography and ancestry (A. Bell 1999:75), a situation that pre-contact Maori held in common with other pre-nationalised peoples throughout the world. Whereas pre-contact Maori did not see themselves as a homogenous group, but were made up of iwi (tribes) and hapu (sub-tribes), colonisation in New Zealand meant the envisaging of New

Zealand as *one* place, inhabited not by diverse peoples, but by *one* people. Hence Maori were denied primary affiliation by iwi hence ceasing to be defined primarily as, for example, Ngai Tahu, instead becoming part of the homogenous group “Maori”, a group which did not exist prior to colonisation.

It was during the mid- to late-nineteenth century that New Zealand began to be mapped out and catalogued fictionally, portrayed in novels as a “pastoral paradise” (Jones 1998:128). In these fictive accounts of New Zealand the nation, the land played a primary role, especially in relation to its capacity to be a resource for settlers to exploit (Jones 1998). Just as for Maori the land plays a decisive role in identity formation, for Pakeha the relationship between the nation and geography is an important one, and New Zealand’s national identity formation has been strongly linked to the natural landscape (C. Bell 1996:29). Indeed,

within the discourse of New Zealand nationhood there is also a strong thread linking a development of national character to the colonial relationship with the land. (A. Bell 1999:80)

Also often included in the fictive binding of Pakeha to the land is writing about Maori, the desired result of this being what Goldie has termed “indigenization” (Goldie 1989:13). Often attempted via writing about indigenous people, indigenization “suggests the impossible necessity of becoming indigenous” (*ibid.*), and its literary pattern generally involves narratives which assume an intimacy with nature and the indigenous people (*ibid.* pp. 46-7).

However, more than geographical mythology was at play in the establishment of nationalism in New Zealand. According to A. Bell, “processes of geographical and political unification” were at work in constructing ‘New Zealand’ (A. Bell 1999:75). This can be seen in the development of transport and communication systems, and of cultural infrastructures based on those already established in Britain (A. Bell 1999:77; C. Bell 1996). C. Bell explains that in New Zealand:

As the Pakeha population grew and new settlements sprouted up, the state engendered loyalty in its citizens by encouraging a sense of something in common, a national identity. Gradually the state became a large employer of the colonial population, further cementing its position as a primary influence on national identity (C. Bell 1996:5).

### State Assertion of Nationalism in New Zealand – Museums

In Anderson’s terms, the nation envisages itself as a “fraternity” (Anderson 1991:7), because “the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship” (*ibid.*). Because “the imagining of a national *community* depends on representations of the nation as a unified people” (A. Bell 1999:30), national museums have a pertinent role to play in the state construction and preservation of the nation. The forging and fostering of homogenising myths

within the museum was transported to New Zealand. Following visits to various provincial New Zealand museums, C. Bell notes that the 'realities' of life shown there were highly edited to show only "its public face", which is "a romanticised and nostalgic view of happy family life" that "demonstrates emphasis of those values as more important than representing the contentious information of history" (C. Bell 1996:59-60).

In New Zealand private collections of artifacts imported by individuals, along the same lines as their European prototypes, were the first 'museums' (*ibid.* p.55), but the first museums open to the public appeared in the 1840s (*ibid.*). In 1865 the state-funded Colonial Museum was completed and opened in Wellington behind Parliament Buildings (Dell 1965:29), and by 1936 this metamorphosed into the combined National Art Gallery, Dominion Museum and War Memorial, sited on Buckle Street (*ibid.* p.177).

This museum was originally a scientific endeavor, as the founding director, James Hector, articulates in the first annual report:

One of the most important duties in connection with the geological survey of a new country is the formation of a scientific museum, the principle object of which is to facilitate the classification and comparison of the specimens collected in different localities during the progress of the survey (Hector quoted in Dell 1965:31).

Obviously, this intention can be seen as closely aligned with the quest for knowledge and mapping out of territory that drive colonial explorations, explorations that also had as their purpose the control and subsequent exploitation of the new territory 'discovered' therein.

The museum was national in its intentions, with an aim "to assist the local typical museums" (Dell 1965:32) that were locally funded. Unlike these other museums, the role of the state in the establishment of the Colonial Museum is explicit:

There was a need for the government newly established in Wellington to sink its roots as quickly as possible to prevent the shifting of the centre of government and so it was sympathetic to the thought of a Colonial Museum building in Wellington. (*ibid.* p.33)

By 1965 these roots were firmly entrenched and the museum had "become a cultural storehouse for New Zealand" (*ibid.* p.1).

The nineteenth century development of the Colonial Museum began partly with the donation of exhibitions from the New Zealand Exhibition of 1865 (*ibid.* p.13). The collections progressed to the end of that century, with geological collections being the most prolific. During this period the museum became home to a scientific laboratory, the patent library, and also had a strong association with the Wellington Botanic Gardens (*ibid.* pp51-60). At the beginning of the

twentieth century, the museum began to establish collections of “coins, tokens, stamps and the fine arts” (*ibid.* p.101), meant to illuminate the human landscape in which the museum was sited. It was at this time also that the “collection of a representative series of specimens of Maori art and workmanship” was undertaken in earnest (*ibid.* p.100). The museum clearly originated as a scientific endeavour, later developing a more clearly defined social and anthropological focus. This development shows a privileging of scientific knowledge as the way to “know” Aotearoa New Zealand, before a twentieth century drive towards acknowledgement of the social basis of the nation.

It was collections of Maori artifacts that sparked moves in the 1980s to redevelop the national museum. The *Te Maori* exhibition, exhibited in the United States in 1984 (Newton 1994:271) was very successful, and generated “national euphoria” in New Zealand (Rudman 1996b:1). It was soon after this success that the New Zealand government launched plans for a new national museum and the earlier exhibition was a factor in this decision (Newton 1994:285; O’Regan 1997:6). The incoming Labour Government of that same year commissioned a report on the “Treasure of the Nation”, which was “aimed at resolving decades of dispute about the future of the ill-housed national museum and art gallery collection (Rudman 1996b:1; Lonsdale 1997:17). In 1992 the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa Act was passed in Parliament which set in place the “Principles and Goals of the Museum”. In 1996 government approval was given in principle for a \$179 million national museum to be built on Wellington’s waterfront (Rudman 1996b:1). In a similar organisation to that originally intended for the Dominion Museum, Te Papa was to

build upon the existing collections of the National Museum and national Art Gallery whilst supporting the work of other museums in the country through its National Services programmes (Bossley 1998c:2)

The new Museum of New Zealand initiated a competition for the design of the the building and the competition documents were published in 1989 (*ibid.* p. 8). The brief suggested a framework of Papatuanuku/land, Tangata Whenua, and Tangata Tiriti (*ibid.*) and stated that the museum needed to “powerfully express the total culture of New Zealand” (*ibid.*; Bossley 1998a:18).

The Museum of New Zealand cost \$317 million and took five years to build (Nicol 1997:6). It reached the projected numbers of visitors expected in the first year within the first three months (NZPA 1998:9), and in doing so achieved one of its goals, that of attracting the widest possible audience through its doors, including those identified as least likely to visit museums (Trotter quoted in Lane 1999:10). Te Papa also includes and displays the national art collection in both over 3000 square metres of art exhibition space, and by incorporating it into the general exhibition areas (Sotheran 1998:20). Billing itself as “Te Papa: Our Place”, the Museum appears

to seek to fulfill the aims of other national museums, those of fostering collective national identity through the collection and display of objects. Of the name “Our Place”, Dalrymple asserts that it is an attempt to link New Zealand citizens together by claiming shared values, and he says that:

It buttonholes you and precludes criticism: for if you are not entirely at home in Our Place, it means you are not one of us (Dalrymple 1999)

The integration of art in the general exhibition areas is indicative of the type of narrative the museum seeks to construct:

In the new museum the focus will be on the exhibitions being the supporting props in telling New Zealand’s story. The collections will be used as illustration. The collections will no longer be king. The stories will (Rudman 1996b:1).

This approach is most clearly articulated in the *Parade* exhibition. This permanent exhibition claims that “where there are people there is art” and illustrates this through a melange within which “high culture meets the stuff of everyday – the good, the bad, and the undecided – in a wonderful walk through New Zealand’s rich and quirky history” (Te Papa website). Combining the utterly profane (crockery and other consumer durables) and the sacred (works by such luminary New Zealand artists as Colin McCahon), and perhaps reflecting the common New Zealand identity myth of egalitarianism, *Parade* was conceived of as “a celebration of our creative genius, and a provocative look at how certain objects might come to stand for us” (Te Papa promotional material).

Joint-CEO of Te Papa, Cheryl Sotheran, said in 1996 “The national collection is very very strong in telling the New Zealand story” (quoted in Rudman 1996b:1), while head of the board of Te Papa, Sir Ron Trotter, has been reported as saying that the concept of Te Papa was one of “a museum for the people and a museum that tells stories” (quoted in Lane 1999:10). This is emphasised in promotional literature, which say Te Papa is “the first place to start when you want to explore the rich stories of New Zealand”, because “Te Papa sets out to portray the people of New Zealand” (Bossley 1998c:6), and in telling these stories, “Te Papa speaks with a Kiwi accent” (Te Papa website). The point of these stories is to transmit the national narrative, the “New Zealand story” (Sotheran quoted in Rudman 1996b:1) which in the case of Pakeha New Zealand is the story of migration “one aspect of national identity which all Pakeha settlers shared” (Jock Phillips, Chief Historian at Te Papa, quoted in *ibid.*).

This Pakeha originary myth is articulated at Te Papa in the *Passports* exhibition. With a strong emphasis on story-telling, and as one of the key permanent exhibitions, *Passports* concentrates on migration to New Zealand from the nineteenth century onwards. *Passports* “lets you meet the immigrants” (Te Papa promotional material), combining interactive installations, video, and a vast range of artifacts. The stories contained here, of people who

traveled overseas to live in Aotearoa New Zealand are brought to the visitor by sponsorship from Air New Zealand. What the colonial settlers did after their arrival here is partly celebrated in *Off the Sheep's Back*, "a loving homage to everything woolen" (*ibid.*).

The story-telling ethos is given a self-reflective spin in *Exhibiting Ourselves*, an exhibition which "reconstructs New Zealand's presentations at international expositions of the past 150 years" (Te Papa promotional material). Here, rather than constructing a national discourse using art and artifacts, the focus is on surveying the narratives of nationalism New Zealand has constructed in the past, at looking at the items presented in the past "to stand for our nation" (*ibid.*). This overt reliance on the construction of narrative again highlights the importance of storytelling in the construction of the nation, as Brennan (1990) discusses in relation to the strong links between the development of the novel and the narrative of the nation.

Critics, such as Canterbury University senior lecturer Denis Dutton, have been scathing in their critique of Te Papa's brand of 'storytelling' (Dutton 1998:7). Te Papa's use of a diverse range of objects, including artworks from the national collection as well as more everyday objects, has led to Dutton's labeling of Te Papa as "a national embarrassment", and a "\$300 million themepark". Dutton states that the central place "contemporary culture" holds at Te Papa is "a national disgrace" (*ibid.*). Theodore Dalrymple goes further, saying that "the first impression on entry is of a giant amusement arcade", and of *Parade*, of which he is particularly scathing, he says "we are flattered into supposing that, merely by virtue of living and consuming we are contributing greatly to civilisation" (Dalrymple 1999). Conversely, Charles Saumarez Smith, director of the National Portrait Gallery in Britain, reportedly feels Te Papa's attempts to attract a non-traditional museum audience, and the techniques used to do so, have been successful (Cathie Bell 2000:26), and a reviewer from *The Times* in London claims that Te Papa "is a spectacular national space" (quoted in Sotheran 1998:20).

In 'telling the stories of New Zealand', Te Papa aims to fulfill its' "Mission", which is that:

The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa is a forum for the nation to present, explore, and preserve the heritage of its cultures and knowledge of the natural environment in order to better understand and treasure the past, enrich the present and meet the challenges of the future.

Alongside this "Mission" is the "Corporate Principles" of Te Papa, which encompass biculturalism, understanding of tikanga and the exploration of cultural identity, but also dictate that Te Papa be "customer focussed" and "commercially positive" ("Statement of Intent: for the financial years 1998/99; 1999/00; 2000/01"). So Te Papa must both underline notions of New Zealand's national identity, and offer "a range of charged-for experiences and products designed to enhance the visitor experience and contribute to the financial viability of the Museum" (*ibid.*).

Part of the reason for a strong revenue-generating ethos is that “Te Papa was deliberately underfunded well before it opened” (Paul Brewer, general manager of marketing and communications, 31 Jan 2000). Because of this:

It was recognised from the beginning of the [Te Papa] project that overall, Te Papa needs to attract a broad cross-generational audience to generate the revenue necessary to keep it going (Robin Parkinson, Te Papa’s Head of Design, 1998:61).

Sponsorship is extensive at Te Papa. Corporations such as Ericsson, Telstra and Compaq provide funds and media and communications technology and equipment for the privilege of the publicity that Te Papa generates for them in the form of signage and naming rights. Sponsorship is critical at Te Papa, as government funding will not cover the funds the museum needs to achieve its goals. Other sources of revenue at the museum are not unlike those of a conference centre. Te Papa’s various public spaces, including seminar spaces and function rooms (Bossley 1998c:22), can be hired for corporate and private functions after-hours, including such events as weddings, performances and product launches. Te Papa will host birthday parties for children in its children’s area, and behind the scenes tours are conducted to groups at a cost. Te Papa Press publishes and markets books, and the website has been set up with an aim “to make virtual customers become physical customers” (Robson 1998). The website is also monitored to identify the interests of those who access it, and if a particular interest is shown by someone, they may have additional information on that topic sent to them (*ibid.*). The museum features an auditorium that seats 350 people, occasionally housing films and plays for the fee-paying public, and often used as a conference venue, as well as its seminar spaces and function rooms. Te Papa aims to entice a large share of international tourists to New Zealand and markets itself to travelers into the country. Additional revenue is generated through a series of interactive rides, which let the participant pretend to go backwards or forwards in time, ride a whale or shear a sheep. One particular way that revenue is not generated is through a door charge – the museum considers it important that there be as few barriers as possible to gaining entry to the waharoa, or gateway, to New Zealand that is Te Papa.

## Conclusion

A. Bell analysed the television advertising of the 1990 Commission, which like the board of Te Papa, was “a state-appointed body” (A. Bell 1990:1) set up with the aim of establishing and articulating a “state discourse on the nation” (*ibid.* p.12). Like Te Papa, these advertisements comprised a site of state articulation of nationhood (*ibid.* p.13). In this analysis A. Bell relies on hegemonic theory, seeing the advertising as “the state’s attempt to maintain hegemony”

through a discourse aimed at unification (*ibid.* p.31). I argue that the same can be said for Te Papa, which is just one form of the nationalist discourse of the New Zealand state.

Through Te Papa, the New Zealand state articulates the conventions of the New Zealand nation. My earlier assertion that museums are not neutral spaces and are related to state power are important to my contextualisation of Te Papa. Bennett's points about the governmental role of "cultural transmission" in institutions developed as tools of morality and social organisation are also important when considering the public role that Te Papa plays in New Zealand, as I will show in the latter part of this thesis. Te Papa, as an instrument of government, creates and conveys conventional discourses about the nation (such as the migratory narrative expressed in *Passports*), and its governmental role, as I have shown, is an historical one.

Te Papa, a museum built on reclaimed land (Bossley 1998c:17), is an attempt to re-articulate mythology that has the purpose of binding the nation together for the purposes of the state, that is, to regulate the notions of collective fraternity of the citizenry so that state governance may occur with as little resistance as possible. If individual desires may be superceded by collective ones, such as those of national economic growth, then the state will more easily be able to govern. Disruptions of national unity, such as demands made by Maori for Tino Rangitiratanga (sovereignty and self-determination), are hoped to be minimised through the circulation of discourses and notions such as that "we" as a nation are all working "together" for "our" collective good. Left to develop, these demands could accelerate into widespread discord resulting in civil unrest and uprisings – such as the recent uprising in Fiji. Hence the role of Te Papa, as a national museum, is instrumental in the defense of the national good.

The subsequent chapter draws together theoretical discourses used in my analysis of Te Papa. Aspects of the work of Roland Barthes, Sergei Eisenstein and Walter Benjamin are explored so as to provide this study with theoretical tools with which to inform my analysis.

## Chapter Three: Review of relevant theory

### Introduction

This chapter is comprised of a discussion of the theories that inform my analysis of some key permanent exhibitions at Te Papa. While the function of the previous chapter was to place Te Papa in the context the histories of museums and nations, this chapter provides the concepts and theories exploited in my subsequent analysis. As such, the two chapters taken together foreground my analysis in specific terms.

The theories that I explore in this chapter are the work of three theorists: Roland Barthes, Sergei Eisenstein, and Walter Benjamin. The aim is not to explore the body of their work, but to focus on aspects of their work that are pertinent to the current project, and as such I focus on specific elements of their work.

In the case of Barthes, these elements comprise his theory of mythology, which he developed in relation to exploring certain aspects of “French daily life” (Barthes 1973:11), which he referred to as “myths” (*ibid.*). Eisenstein’s theory of montage, which was focussed on the ideogram and developed through his work in theatre and his later film work, is also used here, although I concentrate on his formulation of associative montage, rather than the more widely known dialectical montage. Aspects of Benjamin’s prolific work examining life in nineteenth century Paris, including his ideas relating to history, the concept of progress and commodity fetishism are considered important to this thesis. All three theorists put their ideas to quite specific use, as I hope to apply their ideas to inform my own analysis. It is important to note that they were informed in their work by the theories of Marx, although this may or may not be considered a limitation of using their ideas.

When discussing these theorists, I indicate to some extent what specific import they have to this project, and this is discussed in more depth towards the end of the chapter when they are considered together. It is, however, in the chapters which follow this one that I seek to demonstrate the importance of these theories, and where I put them to use as tools of analysis.

### Barthes

#### *Introduction*

Barthes’ *Mythologies* was first published in 1957. It comprises a series of short essays that had appeared in *Les Lettres nouvelles*, once per month over the course of two years. Barthes wrote these essays as part of his reflection “on some myths of French daily life” (Barthes

1973:11). At the close of the book is a longer essay, "Myth Today", in which Barthes explores and explains his concept of myth.

In his work Barthes' starting point was the naturalisation of ideology in mass culture, which he posited was accomplished through the process of myth, in which images and objects that appeared neutral were actually imbued with ideological values. He described his intention as a quest to uncover

the 'naturalness' with which newspapers, art and common sense constantly dress up a reality which, even though it is the one we live in, is undoubtedly determined by history (*ibid.* p.11).

### *Myth*

In his endeavor to reveal "the ideological implications of what seems natural" (Culler 1983:33-4), using semiology, the science of signs Barthes posited that in language the sign is the combined result of a signifier (an acoustic image) and a signified (a concept) (Barthes 1973:121). Overlaying this first level of signification is myth, "a second order semiological system" (*ibid.* p.123). In myth the sign which is the end product of the first system becomes the signifier of a mythic concept. An example of this process can be seen in the description of cultural displays that Bennett offers as an early example of the use of culture in legitimating state power (Bennett 1995:19-21). The objects displayed are in the first instance just objects, but in the second order of signification they serve to attest to the glory of the state power displaying them – hence they function as a myth.

The semiological analysis implies speech, which Barthes takes in this instance "to mean any significant unit or synthesis, whether it is verbal or visual" (*ibid.* p.119). As such, the existence of myth can be found in "everything provided it is conveyed by a discourse" (*ibid.* p.117), which is why myth can be found in a collection of objects, such as those described above.

Part of the semiological premise of myth is that it exists through signification rather than through the existence of fact. Myth undertakes to make the historical appear natural, and "has the pretension of transcending itself into a factual system" (*ibid.*p.145). The implication that the mythic is factual, that the historical is eternal and natural, is the process of myth (*ibid.* p.140; 143; 155; 156), and is also the process of ideology (*ibid.* p.155). This can be seen in the example given above, as the cultural items displayed to legitimate power were often the plunder of conquering armies, used in this context to give the appearance of a natural superiority, and these displays also worked ideologically to naturalise power. Myth takes the historical fact and appropriates it as timeless truth (*ibid.* p.165).

Barthes saw myth as ideological in intention because myth privileges bourgeois values and views of history as universal (*ibid.* p.165-6). He asserts myth functions to mask contradictions in history giving a natural and common-sense appearance to the current social order. Myth works to support the historical order, and despite the universality of myth in diverse types of language, never works to undermine it (*ibid.* p.159).

The message is not what defines myth, despite its essentially bourgeois intention. Myth is defined by "the way in which it utters this message" (*ibid.* 117), by the process through which a first-order sign becomes the signifier of myth. In myth the original meaning is distorted by the mythic concept that is imposed upon it as the second order of signification (*ibid.* p.132). The original sign masks its own mythologising by its original function. Barthes gives an example of this as French toys, which mask their endorsement of the ideological order through the function they serve as toys (*ibid.* p.54). What this signals is that myth does not hide within the original sign, but distorts its meaning (*ibid.* p.131).

In the essays collected in *Mythologies*, Barthes examined the repetition of French national myths in everyday examples (*ibid.* p.11), to reveal "the values and attitudes implicit in the variety of messages with which our culture bombards us." (Moriarty 1991:19). He asserted that myths such as this one are repeated using many different forms, as he could "find a thousand images which signify to me French imperialism" (Barthes 1973:129-30). Myths such as these are simply and immediately communicated (*ibid.*p.141), and simplify the world in which they exist through their repetition (*ibid.* p.156).

One way that Barthes proposed myth was circulated was via a photographic exhibition shown in Paris, called "The Great Family of Man" (*ibid.* pp.100-102). Barthes asserted that the aim of this exhibition "was to show the universality of human actions in the daily life of all the countries of the world" (*ibid.* p.100). For Barthes, this exhibition mythologised the human condition, leading to the "ambiguous myth of the human community" (*ibid.*).

In earlier essays Barthes uncovers the mythology of the places of women and in French society ("Novels and Children" pp.50-2 and "Toys" pp.53-5). The first of these is shown in an article that appeared in *Elle* magazine, which Barthes shows naturalises the place of women in society as bearers of children, and this biological ability as the primary function that exists alongside any other acts that women perform. Barthes postulates that the role of children in society is regulated through myths perpetuated through childrens toys which mimic the norms of the bourgeois adult social world, preparing the child for an adult life which imitates those norms. These toys work as agents of socialisation, perpetuating the myth that the role of adults in society is to consume the products of capitalism.

In highlighting myths of consumption, Barthes investigated some French myths of the countryside ("The *Blue Guide*" pp.74-7). In the *Blue Guide*, a French travel-guide to Europe, the European countryside is mythologised into a landscape existing for the recreation of the traveler. People already living in this environment are of little consequence, and mountains and alpine areas provide the most authentic experience of the landscape.

Barthes also looked to the French diet for examples of myth, citing wine ("Wine and Milk" pp.58-61) and steak ("Steak and Chips" pp.62-4) as patriotic signifiers. Wine, Barthes asserts, is a "totem drink" deeply integrated into French society. The ability to drink wine, according to Barthes, is perceived to be the mark of the true French citizen. Its historical role in French life implicates it in the present, but what the myth does not admit is that the production of wine "is deeply involved in French capitalism". Steak is also mythologised as an important and natural fact of French life. Steak is "nationalised even more than socialised" so that to consume it is to participate in a patriotic ritual.

Barthes covered many more aspects of French life in these essays. I have mentioned the above ones because they seem to have particular resonance as myths of 'Frenchness', and show the way that "the function of myth in bourgeois culture is to obscure the manufactured nature of that very culture" (McGowan 1995:26). I think, too, that these examples illustrate Barthes' point that:

Myth does not deny things, on the contrary its function is to talk about them; simply it purifies them, it makes them a natural and eternal justification, it gives them a clarity which is not that of an explanation but that of a statement of fact (Barthes 1973:156)

This is one of the most important aspects of myth, that the mythic signified in myth is completely taken-for-granted in its apparent reasonableness, and masked by its openness.

### *Summary*

Barthes theory of myth is essentially semiotic in nature, and asserts an ideological function. It is fair to say that this function is the perpetuation of a certain order, focussed on the nation. In the previous chapter I outline Tony Bennett's conception of the museum as an agent of social governance, and certainly I am informed in this these by these ideas, which have much in common with Barthes' ideas regarding the function of myth as a tool of social regulation.

The way that Barthes asserts that certain habits or preferences are constructed as being good for the nation is of importance to my own reading of Te Papa. As in *Mythologies* where Barthes' intention was to uncover myth and examine how it was used, my intention in

subsequent chapters is the same. Myth functions by making the historical appear universal, and Barthes shows this process through an examination of a selection of objects which naturalise the national ideology of France. In using Barthes' ideas in my own analysis, I will be attempting to highlight the mythologising of the New Zealand nation, through an examination of some of the objects housed in the national museum in order to perpetuate the national narrative.

## Eisenstein

### *Introduction*

Sergei Eisenstein was a Russian filmmaker and theorist who worked in the years following the Revolution of 1917 after involvement with the workers' theatres in Moscow. Some of Eisenstein's first encounters with the technical side of film were through his association, beginning in 1924, with Esther Shub, a film-cutter who was employed by the Soviet regime. Shub "used montage effects to bring old newsreel footage to life, providing a striking, imaginative, and officially sanctioned view" of Russian history (Mast 1992:182).

Eisenstein wrote extensively about his film work, but for the purpose of this thesis I do not discuss his work in full, but rather focus on some of his ideas. In doing this I concentrate on his early theory, primarily the writings of the 1920s that discussed montage, which is the aspect of his work that is of the most importance to my own study of Te Papa, due to the montage techniques employed in the exhibits there.

### *Montage*

Eisenstein's experience with Esther Shub, combined with his knowledge of Japanese pictograms (Eisenstein 1929a) and formed a large part of the basis of his cinematic techniques. Eisenstein details the ways in which Japanese writing is formed by a series of pictographs, which though independent when singular, combine to create more complex messages. In this way, the communication of concepts is achieved through the combination of concrete images. In his work in the cinema, Japanese pictographs provided Eisenstein with a usable model with which to demonstrate his theories of montage. He asserted that in Japanese depictive writing "the principle of montage can be identified" (*ibid.* p.28), and that in film single shots can be combined in the same way, to depict abstract ideas or emotions (*ibid.* 1929b:141).

Japanese writing contributed to Eisenstein's systems of cinematography and editing, and the principles he identified in Japanese writing bear some resemblance to the Marxist theory of dialectics, which he engaged in much of his film work. The dialectical formulation involves a thesis, a contradictory antithesis, and a subsequent thesis that arises out of the juxtaposition of

them. The idea is that “the contradiction between the thesis and antithesis would...be resolved typically by a leap to a different way of looking” evoked by their placement together (Edgar 1999:113). Eisenstein saw this as “synthesis that *evolves* from the opposition between thesis and antithesis”, a synthesis arising from conflict (Eisenstein 1929b:161).

Opposition is at the heart of dialectical montage. This montage “is an idea that arises from the collision of independent shots – shots even opposite to one another” (*ibid.* p.49). However, in my subsequent analysis my focus is on Eisenstein’s associative montage, in which the associations evoked by the combination of two images are the third meaning (*ibid.* 1924:41). In this way the meaning that results from the combination of images is predicated on similarity rather than on collision and discord. The two types of montage hold in common that “by the combination of two “depictables” is achieved the representation of something that is graphically undepictable” (*ibid.* 1929a:30). However, in associative montage “each fragment is chosen to ‘provoke’ associations” (*ibid.* 1924:41) rather than differences, and in this type of montage difference and contradiction is smoothed over rather than highlighted, as in dialectical montage. An example of Eisenstein’s use of associations in montage can be seen in his 1928 film *October*, in which images of the Prime Minister of the Provisional Government are intercut “with shots of a mechanical peacock. The most obvious connection is the association of peacocks with preening” (Bordwell 1993:45).

Montage techniques were employed and designed by Eisenstein to arouse and engage the audience, as he hoped that “through a calculated structuring of attractions, [the film maker] could shape the mental process of the spectator” (Andrew 1976:44). The purpose here is “*influencing the audience in the desired direction*” (Eisenstein 1924:39). Eisenstein goes on to argue that in cinema an effect

Is made up of the juxtaposition and accumulation, the audience’s psyche, of associations that the film’s purpose requires, associations that are aroused by the separate elements of the stated (in practical terms, in ‘montage fragments’) fact, associations that produce, albeit tangentially, a similar (and often stronger) effect only when taken as a whole (*ibid.* 1924:41).

Central to his ideas concerning the place of the audience in relation to film is his notion of the “*ideological plot*” (*ibid.* 1925:61). For Eisenstein plot was not relevant in the ways that it is for classic or Hollywood cinema, rather the political impetus for the film was more important than classic conceptions of plot. Eisenstein says that theme is more important than script or plot: “The presence or absence of a written script is by no means all that important” (*ibid.* 1924:46). These ideas can be seen in his 1925 film *Strike*. In this film he used associations evoked by documentary footage of a bull thrashing around in the last throes of a bloody death, which he intended to “stir the spectator to a state of pity and terror which would be unconsciously and

automatically transferred to the shooting of the strikers” (Eisenstein quoted in Freeman 1930:222, cited in Bordwell 1993:61).

### *Summary*

The ideas I have discussed here, principally associative montage and the ideological plot, are of use in my analysis of Te Papa, because the objects there acquire meaning partly through their juxtaposition with other objects intended to project the same values. An example of this can be seen in the exhibit *Parade* whereby artworks, craft, household items and commodity items are displayed ecclectically together to create a narrative of “New Zealand’s visual history” (Te Papa website). These items bear little in common with each other in many instances, but they are collected together with the assumption that they are all important, perhaps pivotal, to this narrative. My analysis of this exhibit, in Chapter Five, discusses this use of montage, and how they contribute to an ideological plot. While *Parade* consists for the most part of objects, rather than film, I also use these ideas when analysing *Golden Days*, a Te Papa exhibit featuring a film, in Chapter Six.

In applying Eisenstein’s theories to my own work, I am taking from the what I deem to be applicable to my analysis. Hence, as I do not feel that Eisenstein’s focus on conflict and shock, while his best-known work, is pertinent to this thesis because I do not think the exhibits I focus on have been designed with for this purpose, it does not inform my analysis.

My analysis is informed by the idea that montage, the combination of certain images, can be used to point audiences in a certain direction. While Eisenstein arranged film shots together with the aim of creating in the audience the desired response, I will argue that in using certain objects and images, exhibits at Te Papa also seek to evoke in the viewer a certain response, based on a concept. Eisenstein arranged his films thematically (Andrew 1976:74), and in the same way, I argue that Te Papa is attempting to communicate concepts visually using associative montage to communicate underlying themes.

The use of montage at Te Papa is extensive, as exhibits are constructed from smaller pieces which taken together create a montage of concrete images. In my later analysis I argue that this use of montage at Te Papa creates a narrative of the nation that is designed to send a message of loyalty to New Zealand and to its visitors.

## Benjamin

### *Introduction*

Walter Benjamin was a German Jewish critic and scholar born in 1892. From 1927 until the time of his suicide in 1940 Benjamin worked on what is now known as the 'Arcades Project'<sup>1</sup>, in which he conceptualised the origins of his present moment, which he saw as harking back to the nineteenth century, but which he never finished. Hence Benjamin was interested in "the production of images of modernity in the nineteenth century" (Frisby 1985:237-8), which he called the "era of high capitalism" (Benjamin 1973a). This was the time of the great industrialism that predicated the rise of the commodity object, and the social experience engendered by consumer capitalism was a primary focus of the Arcades Project (McCole 1985:498). He focussed partly on the rise of the arcades in Paris, which achieved their greatest popularity in the nineteenth century and saw the rise of commodity production and consumption as in them leisurely shopping could now take place for luxury goods other than food (Friedburg 1993:58).

Work on the Project produced an abundance of notes (Gilloch 1996:3), and some completed work which consists of two 'exposés' plus a third essay which is an early draft of the first exposé. Benjamin outlines many of his ideas for the Arcades Project in the exposés, but they do not reflect the scope of the larger Project. However they do give some limited indication of the themes and intentions of the Arcades Project, and are seen by some as a guide to the larger work (Linder 1986:37; Caygill et al 1998:151; 154).

Although the bulk of Benjamin's work on the Arcades Project is not yet available in English, the exposés are, as is a series of notes known as *Konvolut "N"* (Benjamin 1989). This is the place Benjamin kept notes about the idea of periods of decline and rise, and the traditional historical view of 'progress', which provides the theoretical framework for the exposés. These are the sources that I have used in this section.

### *Commodity and Progress*

In the Arcades Project Benjamin focussed on the nineteenth century, as part of his examination of the forms that capitalism took in his own era comprised examining their earlier forms in the previous era. Benjamin's analysis of history included the idea that each epoch **dreams of the one to come**, mingling the positive of both past and present to create a vision of a future utopia (Benjamin 1989:159; 176). He believed **these utopias** "leave their traces in a thousand configurations of life, from permanent buildings to ephermeral fashions" (*ibid.* p.159).

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<sup>1</sup> I have chosen to refer to this body of work as the 'Arcades Project', although it is known by various other names, including *Das Passagen-Werk* and *Das Passagenarbitet*.

It was this belief that led to his investigation of “the earliest industrial products, the earliest industrial structures, the earliest machines, as well as the earliest department stores, advertisements etc” (Benjamin 1989:147), as found in the nineteenth century. One example of this examination can be seen in “Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century” (Benjamin 1973c), where Benjamin examines how commodity objects were worshipped at the World Exhibitions of the nineteenth century, only to be later discarded.

Benjamin saw, in the commodities of the nineteenth century, the juncture between hopes for a more equal, utopian society, which they represented to the public, and the way they masked the conditions of their manufacture, denying the class relations inherent in industrial production (McRobbie 1994:109). He saw technology as moving forward, but masking social conditions behind its progressive nature.

According to Friedburg Benjamin wanted to read commodities “as substructural symptoms of the flaws of the superstructure” (Friedburg 1993:50). The commodity is the most fundamental building block in Marx’s own critique of capitalism (Edgar 1999:71) and Benjamin, to some degree, engaged Marx’s theory of the commodity fetish, which “suggests that capitalism reproduces itself by concealing its essence beneath a deceptive appearance” (*ibid.* p.72). Benjamin believed that capitalism naturalised the process of its own production in just this way (McRobbie 1994:105), masking the forces of production and reducing them to the image of the commodity fetish which made invisible the traces of the labour involved in its own production (Gilloch 1996:118). In turn, human social relations are reduced to transactions of commodities and money in the marketplace. The commodity is valued against other objects in the marketplace, its fetish character relying on the value the market places on the dreams it appears to have the potential to fulfill (Friedburg 1993:53). According to Gilloch, Benjamin’s conception of commodity fetishism was threefold - was a myth, as an idol which masked the conditions of its own production, and as the object of desire (Gilloch 1996:118).

One new public space of the nineteenth century on which Benjamin focussed his attention, and which provide an excellent example of this, were the state- and industry-sponsored World Exhibitions (Benjamin 1973c). The first, ‘The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations’, took place in London in 1851, and subsequent ones occurred throughout the nineteenth century (Friedburg 1993:82). The World Exhibitions combined the latest fashions, especially of technology, “synthesised into one dazzling experience”(Buck-Morss 1989:85). They were “the ultimate loci of self-congratulations of modern industry and technology” (Gilloch 1996:127), and placed consumer items and innovations of industry “into a museum setting” (Belk 1995:12) as though they were “artworks” (Buck-Morss 1989:83).

An example of the elevation of the fetish commodity can be seen in the World Exhibitions. Like the arcades, the World Exhibitions were considered important by Benjamin because he considered them to be “places of pilgrimage to the fetish Commodity” (Benjamin 1973c:165). The commodities displayed at the Exhibitions Benjamin saw as a drug that induced a slumber that left the masses dreaming dreams fueled by visions of a future abundant utopia (Frisby 1985:231), in which the new industries were instrumental and in which there would be no class struggles. The working classes were actively encouraged to attend these “capitalist folk festivals”, positioned as customers but viewing products of their own labour that they could not afford (Buck-Morss 1989:86-7; Benjamin 1973c:165), and Benjamin asserts that it was hoped the result of this vision would prevent the working classes from potentially emancipatory political activity (Buck-Morss 1989:86-9). The Exhibitions were successively more spectacular, “to give visible ‘proof’ of historical progress towards the realisation of these utopian goals” (*ibid.*), because as well as their exaltation of the commodity they were a site where technological progress was displayed under the guise of social progress.

Benjamin maintained that it was capitalism that was the reason for this regression to a dream-state (McCole 1993:282). Benjamin “agreed with Marx that the laws believed to govern capitalist society had taken on the appearance of natural phenomena” (*ibid.*). While Benjamin recognised the progression of industry (Buck-Morss 1989:80), he believed that the idea of social progress is a myth, rejecting “the notion that progress was automatic” (Benjamin 1989:68). The concept of ultimate improvement of social conditions was followed by Marx, who believed that the end point of this cycle would be the abolishment of the class system. Benjamin’s rejection of this conception was not limited to the idea that society is always progressing, but encompassed the idea that in history catastrophe is followed by redemption in an endless cycle of rise and decline in which society will inevitably improve (Benjamin 1989:44; 47-8). Informed by Marxism, Benjamin’s Arcades Project was striving for an illumination of the ultimate futility of the capitalist system, a system in which the old is ritually renewed via progressing technology, and fashioned to give the appearance of historical ‘progress’ (*ibid.*).

### *Summary*

In the work that I have outlined here, my key interest lies with Benjamin’s theories of progress, and with his focus on dismantling the discourse of progressive history, and on the way this appearance of progress in historical narratives was created. Benjamin believed that this was achieved through the masking of social reality by the display of progress of industry, and disguised by fashion, itself held up as emblematic of progress. Capitalism, essentially, masked social conditions to its own ends, elevating commodities to fetish status, before their inevitable replacement with more commodity items.

For this thesis, these ideas are of importance because I believe that the notion of a national museum, a site where a narrative of the nation is constructed, is inherently relying on the notion of social progress. Further to this, Te Papa extensively uses commodity items in its displays.

While Buck-Morss claims that 'progress' became an often government-sponsored 'religion' in the nineteenth century, as seen in events such as the World Exhibitions (Buck-Morss 1989:89-90), I will investigate the notion of progress as Benjamin defined it, as well as its apparent masking in the guise of new technology and fashions, as they manifest in selected displays at Te Papa.

## Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the main theory that underpins the analysis that follows. While there are similarities in the three schools of thought that I have outlined above, each will contribute to my analysis in different ways.

There are obvious intersections between the work I have outlined above. As mentioned earlier, all three of these theorists are informed by Marx in their analysis. For example, Benjamin and Barthes are attempting to counter dominant ideology through a Marx-influenced analysis of their own current conditions. Both are interested in ways that history is constructed, although their approaches differ. While Barthes is interested in the universalisation of historical fact, Benjamin is interested in the construction of historical narratives to include an emphasis of the concept of 'progress'. Both these strands of thought are important for this thesis in their later application to Te Papa, and the construction of historical narratives contained there.

Eisenstein's theories of montage are important here, especially the use of montage to create associations intended to influence the audience. The idea that images can be combined to create or emphasise abstract concepts is important to my analysis. This is because Te Papa is essentially a collection of items arranged to represent a certain narrative which, using Bennett's analysis of the museum, has as its aim the perpetuation of the national narrative.

Benjamin's analysis of discarded commodities, and Barthes' analysis of the 'everyday' object inform my own reading of Te Papa. Te Papa, in its contemporary approach to display uses many such items – discarded consumer objects, objects from popular culture, mass produced items and the like. Hence I follow on from their ideas of the importance that such items have in the perpetuation of the dominant ideology.

The following three chapters contain my analysis of certain permanent exhibitions at Te Papa. I have reviewed relevant literature concerned with museums and the nation, and provided a historical overview of the establishment of Te Papa, and in this chapter I have provided the

theoretical frameworks that inform my analysis of Te Papa. In the following chapters I use the context that the previous work has supplied to engage in my own analysis.

## Chapter Four: *Exhibiting Ourselves*



4.1 The logo of the 1851 Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, London.



4.2 The logo of the 1906 New Zealand International Exhibition, Christchurch.



4.3 The logo of the 1940 New Zealand Centennial Exhibition, Wellington.



4.4 The logo of the New Zealand representation to the 1992 World Expo, Seville.

### Thesis Statement

This chapter is a discussion of one of Te Papa's long-term exhibits, *Exhibiting Ourselves*. This exhibit comprises items previously displayed as part of New Zealand's representations at four international trade fairs, which took place during the last one hundred and fifty years. Subtitled "who do we think we are?", *Exhibiting Ourselves* is "an exhibition about national confidence and expression" (Te Papa website). Its purpose is to explore "how New Zealanders have projected a sense of national identity to the rest of the world through major international trade expos" (*ibid.*). This chapter focuses on *Exhibiting Ourselves*, keeping in mind the trade fair context of the items displayed there with the intention of representing 'New Zealand' to 'the world'.

The economic aspect of the Exhibition is of fundamental importance to this analysis, as they are shown to have gathered together suitable signifiers 'New Zealand' for the purpose of participating in modern capitalism via the global economy. In the context of trade fairs, it is not surprising that much of the representation of New Zealand is constructed for economic benefit, or can be seen as having economic benefits as their outcomes. The point of displaying material at a World Exhibition is surely to attract investment to the national economy. The state generally supervises the coordination of the national exhibits, hence state control is asserted in the creation of an out-ward focuses national image. As such, *Exhibiting Ourselves* can be read as a display of some of the ways that New Zealand has been involved in the process of selling itself.

In the course of this analysis, I rely on the work of Benjamin, particularly on his critique of the notion of progressive history (Benjamin 1989:68), and of the commodity fetish (Benjamin 1973c). Barthes' analysis of the myth is also important here, especially with regard to his critique of the *Blue Guide* (Barthes 1972:74-77), and also keeping in mind the nationalist basis of much of his analysis (*ibid.* p.11). The relationships between nation and state, as discussed in Chapter Two, are relevant here, acknowledging attempts at consolidation of the nation by the state, including Bennett's discussion of the use of strategies of governance to achieve this consolidation (Bennett 1995:22-3).

## Introduction

World Exhibitions, as mentioned in Chapter Two in the context of the development of the public museum, are international trade fairs, first popularised in the nineteenth century. World Exhibitions involved individual nations showcasing their latest technological and industrial developments, although they also often included anthropological and nature exhibits. The first of these was the 1851 Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, held in London. Buck-Morss claims that:

Each successive [Exhibition] was called upon to give visible 'proof' of historical progress towards the realisation of...utopian goals, but being more monumental, more spectacular than the last. The original [Exhibition] was purely a business venture....But by 1900, governments had gotten involved....As part of the new imperialism, 'national' pavilions promoted national grandeur, transforming patriotism itself into commodity-on-display (Buck-Morss 1989:87-9).

The capitalist drive behind the advent and continuation of World Exhibitions is evident, as they were intended to help bolster the economic growth and development of the participating nations. They were first mounted when technological developments and new methods of production were burgeoning and thought to be the forerunners of a new, more abundant age. The "lavish spectacle" of the first Exhibition "helped nourish and appeal to the dreams of consumer abundance" (Belk 1995:13), and alongside other nations at the World Exhibitions, New Zealand became something to be consumed. This occurred at a basic level through consumption via the senses, by visitors experiencing 'New Zealand' through its representations. However, further to this, the aim of the Exhibitions as international marketplaces is to enable countries to 'sell themselves to the rest of the world. Hence nations become commodified as something to be consumed or bought.

The four World Exhibitions featured in *Exhibiting Ourselves* are: the 1851 Great Exhibition held in London; the International Exhibition held in Christchurch in 1906; the 1940 Dominion Exhibition in Wellington; and the World Expo of 1992 held in Seville, Spain. Items from these are arranged together according to when they were originally displayed, in separate, but linked

areas designed to emulate the architectural style in which they were originally displayed. These areas are organised sequentially, encouraging visitors to move through the exhibit starting at the section focussed on 1851, and ending with the 1992 section

At the most basic level, the exhibit's name, *Exhibiting Ourselves*, draws a link between the people who worked to represent New Zealand at the Exhibitions, and the people of New Zealand today. The title links these people together as citizens of the same nation, giving an impression of historical continuity and progression. The element of progress inherent in *Exhibiting Ourselves* is also imparted in the layout of the exhibit. *Exhibiting Ourselves* has only two points of entry, one of which is marked as an exit, so moving through the exhibit must be done through an historical progression, as the entry to each section can only be attained via the exit from the one historically previous.

Te Papa's information states that the purpose of *Exhibiting Ourselves* is to explore the representation of New Zealand at various world trade fairs, hence the question of how 'New Zealand' asserts national identity to the rest of the world is considered to be important. This exhibit shows to visitors of Te Papa the points of identification that previous New Zealanders have used to illustrate 'New Zealand' to an international audience, and it both investigates national representation and is a form of national representation itself.

Informing my analysis of Te Papa's exhibit is Barthes' formulation of myth (Barthes 1974). Both semiological and ideological in nature (*ibid.* p.142; 121), myth works by the naturalisation of a concept which privileges certain groups, through an already established sign (*ibid.* p.156; 165-6). In the case of France the privileged group was the bourgeoisie, but in New Zealand this group consists of the government and those with the most economic power, who are represented by business "leaders". Barthes asserted that myth was at work in establishing and maintaining the dominant ideology of France, through objects and images that became signs for the established order of French life. The ideological intent of the myth is of primary importance, as "myth is a type of speech defined by its intention" (*ibid.* p.134). These ideas are important in this analysis of *Exhibiting Ourselves*, because New Zealand's representation at World Exhibitions consisted of a series of signs - objects and images - which communicated to the viewer the myths of life in New Zealand. These were mythic not only because of their semiological basis, but also because of their ideological nature.

One such example of the communication of myth in *Exhibiting Ourselves*, is in relation to the landscape. In his discussion of the Blue Guide (*ibid.* pp.74-7), Barthes asserts that the European landscape is mythologised into a series of theatres which exist for the recreation of the bourgeois traveller, and in which nothing, including the people who live there, constitutes a threat. Indeed, the Blue Guide suggests that Spaniards "constitute a charming and fanciful décor" (Barthes 1974:75), a suggestion which Barthes asserts causes the reality of the

landscape to recede in the face of its description (*ibid.* p.76). These points are important to my examination of *Exhibiting Ourselves*, as the landscape of New Zealand is shown, especially in the two early Exhibitions, to have been mythologised similarly, as a non-threatening resource.

Also informing this analysis are some of Benjamin's ideas. For example, the reduction of the New Zealand landscape at the 1851 Exhibition to a representative series of commodities, mirrors Benjamin's analysis of the commodity fetish, and of the capitalist system which masks the realities of production (McRobbie 1994:105). Benjamin's analysis of the World Exhibitions as marketplaces, each forming a "universe of commodities" (Benjamin 1973a:166) that existed for the exchange of commodities (*ibid.* p.165) is important in my reading of this exhibit, in that I see the World Exhibitions in similar, economic terms.

Benjamin asserted that the World Exhibitions created a fantastic distraction from the present, focussing attention on the future, in which it was believed industry would create an abundant utopia (Benjamin 1973c). Implicit in this assertion was Benjamin's conception of the nature of history, which he felt did not break down into narratives which involved both the notions of automatic social progress (1989:160-5), and of "periods of decline" (*ibid.* p.44). This is important in my own analysis, as *Exhibiting Ourselves*, with its sequential layout and emphasis on social improvement, attempts to represent New Zealand as being in a state of constant social progress.

## The Exhibit

### *The Great Exhibition, London, 1851*

New Zealand's representation at the 1851 Great Exhibition in London was comparatively small, as shown on a map of the Exhibition included in the 1851 section of *Exhibiting Ourselves*. A sign on the wall in this section points out that while the New Zealand government provided transportation assistance, "everything which went to the Exhibition from New Zealand was sent by individual entrepreneurs". This points to the presentations there having been motivated by economic expansion, a desire for increased global trade links and profit.

In the main those items sent by New Zealanders to the Great Exhibition, as listed in *Exhibiting Ourselves*, consisted of samples of natural resources, including samples of pounamu, kauri gum, coal, harakeke, whale oil and iron sand. These made New Zealand "seem like the perfect source of raw materials for Britain's industrial revolution" (signage in *Exhibiting Ourselves*). There were also manufactured goods sent, and those shown in *Exhibiting Ourselves* are extensions of natural resources, such as wooden cabinets and boxes crafted from native timbers, displayed by a sign reading "forests of potential". Those things on display in 1851 show New Zealand to be the supplier of raw materials with which to produce the new and emergent technologies of the newly industrialized Europe of the nineteenth century.



4.5 Some of the natural resources displayed as part of the 1851 section of *Exhibiting Ourselves*.



4.6 Some of the natural resources displayed as part of the 1851 section of *Exhibiting Ourselves*.

Also included in *Exhibiting Ourselves* is a botanical painting, a pursuit that was popular in New Zealand at the time as both a pastime and as a method of cataloguing the natural environment. This taken with the display of New Zealand's natural resources can be related to James Hector's account of the establishment of the first national New Zealand museum as a scientific endeavor aimed at cataloguing the natural landscape (Hector quoted in Dell 1965:31). This, in turn, can be aligned with the colonial exploitation of new territories.

In *Exhibiting Ourselves* representation of 1851 New Zealand, this exploitation is shown to have taken the form of the commodification of nature. The importance of displaying New Zealand's natural resources in 1851 was related to the economic survival of individual entrepreneurs, who were supported by the New Zealand government. Nature was the primary commodity New Zealand displayed taking the forms of raw materials, scenic tourism and agricultural goods. As Miles Fairburn remarked in *The Ideal Society and Its Enemies*, "of the themes constituting the Arcadian conception of New Zealand, the most common one was the notion of New Zealand as a land of natural abundance" (Fairburn quoted in C. Bell 1996:35).

This use of samples of raw materials mythologised the natural landscape into ideals of abundant raw materials. The idea that natural resources are a series of opportunities for economic investment was a good one for landowners, and for a government wanting economic investment in the country. In 1851 nature was used as a key point of identification in the representation of New Zealand, and in this way, nature becomes fetishised. This occurred through the portrayal of the rugged New Zealand landscape as the harbinger of wealth and

prosperity, while the reality of the "frequently unpleasant and dangerous conditions" that this work involved (Watson 1998:17) were concealed in a celebration of its beauty and usefulness. Benjamin points out that commodities are often portrayed in such a way, with the evidence of the labour involved in producing them concealed (Gilloch 1996:118), and that they will later appear, to be outmoded objects from the past (Buck-Morss 1989:161), as the objects do in this instance.

The 1851 section of *Exhibiting Ourselves* shows an elevation of certain elements of New Zealand to a representative status, whereby they appear as signs for the nation while simultaneously elements of their own reality are ignored. In his essay "Wine and Milk" (1972:58-61), Barthes discusses wine as a "totem drink" of France, viewed as intrinsic to French life. However, in much the same way as realities of the New Zealand landscape were omitted in its representation in 1851, Barthes makes the point that despite the history of wine in France, "its production is deeply involved in French capitalism", a fact that is ignored in the elevation of French wine to myth status (*ibid.* p.61).

Also concealed at the Great Exhibition were the realities of Maori-Pakeha conflict, as amongst the raw materials exhibited were some Maori artifacts. The exhibit displays a collection of artifacts, such as mere and fish hooks, as well as a model of a Maori Pa intended to "give people in England some idea of the ingenuity and knowledge of engineering displayed by what is supposed in England to be a race of ignorant savages" (Lt Henry Colin Bulneavis, personal correspondence, cited in *Exhibiting Ourselves*). There also is a cotton souvenir from the Great Exhibition which reads in part: "Zealander, once a man eater, but now he raises flax and is quite a tame creature". This souvenir gives a strong image of New Zealand's social progress as a nation. The suggestion here seems to be that the apparently once-commonplace Maori practice of cannibalism had been wiped out by 1851, and that in the short space of time that European settlers had been in New Zealand a savage Maori race had been tamed to the point of being of no threat to the colonial society. Here Maori are aligned with the landscape, and mythologised and stereotyped into simplistic people.



4.7 Maori artefacts displayed as part of New Zealand's representation at the 1851 Exhibition, displayed in Te Papa.

Through the use of a sign at the entrance of the 1851 section of *Exhibiting Ourselves*, Te Papa highlights the 1851 labeling of Maori items included in the Great Exhibition as 'native curiosities', and states that "weapons, and a model of a fighting pa, served to strengthen the Victorian impression of Maori as a warlike people". The representation New Zealand seems to have been striving for at the 1851 Exhibition was that Maori were a once savage people (evidenced in the weaponry, and proof of the colonists' supposed moral superiority), but who are now tamed by European colonists – social progress, indeed. That Maori are depicted as having rejected their traditional values and embracing those of the colonizers indicates the beginning of the national narratives homogenising all inhabitants. The new culture is privileged and made to appear commonsense in this example of ideological nation-building.

Early Pakeha settlers conceptualised and hence represented Maori as a united entity, which was differently than they did themselves (A Bell 1999:75). Blythe discusses the representation of Maori in films and television, pointing out that these were for the most part, and certainly until the 1980s, orchestrated by Pakeha (Blythe 1994:34). By the late nineteenth century these images were used extensively for attracting tourists, through "the burgeoning postcard industry and early tourism films" (*ibid.* p.50). As shown in *Exhibiting Ourselves*, Pakeha-orchestrated representations showing Maori as a homogenous group, were the norm in 1851.

Sue Abel (1996) discusses the representation of Maori in 1990s television news in terms of ideological aims. Abel follows McCreanor, whose analysis has found that in the public forum, Maori are represented as falling "into two groups - good and bad. Good Maori fit without a fuss into Pakeha society. Bad Maori fight against it or otherwise refuse to fit in" (McCreanor 1989:91, cited in Abel 1996:33). Hence Abel divides representations of Maori in television news into a dichotomy of 'wild Maori' (bad) and 'tame Maori' (good). 'Wild Maori' are positioned as outside of mainstream New Zealand society, and hence are constructed as a deviant Other (Abel 1996:33-4). 'Tame Maori' are those who adhere to the ideological status quo and are shown in a positive light, their behavior vindicated and shown with approval (*ibid.*). In the Great Exhibition's representations of Maori, we can see that Maori are simultaneously constructed as 'wild' and 'tame', through emphasis on both traditional weaponry and their "ingenuity and knowledge of engineering". The Maori depicted in the Great Exhibition souvenir provides a good example of "good Maori", as they are bestowed a name derived from the name of the new New Zealand colony.

To further apply this analysis to the 1851 section of *Exhibiting Ourselves*, 'good' or 'tame' Maori are represented there as, in being unique to New Zealand, forming part of the New Zealand landscape and hence an important part of New Zealand's identity. In the representations of Maori at the Great Exhibition, it is only the 'good' Maori who are shown as contemporaneously existing, and their 'good'-ness lies in their having been tamed.

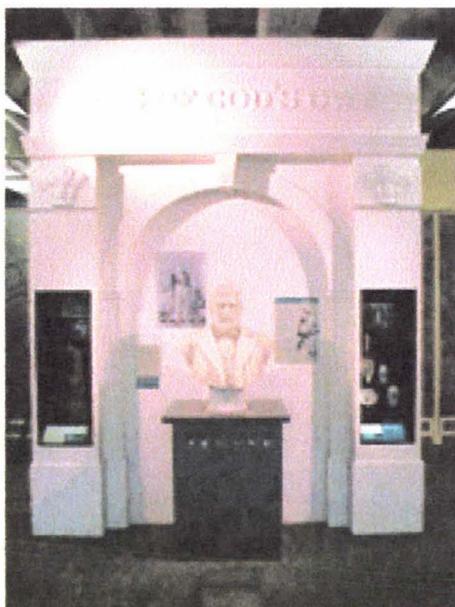
As Barthes points out in "The Blue Guide", 'nature' is often constructed in this way, such as in the example he gives of the Spanish countryside being constructed to appear an attractive tourist destination to the Blue Guide's audience (Barthes 1972:75). The Blue Guide, according to Barthes, reduces people in the landscapes it describes to 'types' (*ibid.*), and in the Great Exhibition we see that Maori were constructed as innocuous types for the purpose of tourism.

The impression of New Zealand given at the 1851 Great Exhibition was hinged on the natural environment. New Zealand was shown as a 'young' nation, able to participate in world industry through the exploitation of its abundant, tamed environment, part of which was the apparently tamed and hence non-threatening, agrarian Maori people. The harsh realities of producing the natural resources were overlooked, and the "savage" tendencies of Maori were placed firmly in the past, so as to create an unproblematic image to present to the rest of the world.

### *The New Zealand International Exhibition, Christchurch, 1906*

The 1906 Exhibition took place in New Zealand, hence the audience was primarily made up of New Zealand citizens. The Exhibition was intended to highlight New Zealand's social and industrial advancements in "a celebration of the progress made since the time of the pioneers" (signage in *Exhibiting Ourselves*). Government participation in this Exhibition is emphasised in *Exhibiting Ourselves*, and the International Exhibition sent out a message to New Zealanders that New Zealand was a wonderful place to live, through depictions of a beautiful and enjoyable natural environment, fair labour laws and a benevolent state. *Exhibiting Ourselves* uses three large archways in the 1906 section, stylised to reflect the period, to frame information about different aspects of this Exhibition.

One of these archways, emblazoned with the words "King of God's Own" contains information about then New Zealand Premier, Richard Seddon, who "wanted to 'win a measure of international notice' for the country" (*ibid.*). A bust of Seddon is featured, as well as vases, a bowl and a ceremonial trowel that commemorate him. Also included in the archway is a ceremonial adze from the Cook Islands, used to highlight the fact that in 1906 New Zealand already administered two Pacific nations, and "Pacific Island groups were paid by the New Zealand government to perform" at the Exhibition (*ibid.*). Signage tells of Seddon's wish that "New Zealand be like Britain and have an Empire" in the Pacific (*ibid.*), a vision that is mentioned in a derisive tone, suggestive of a more enlightened present.



4.8 "King of God's Own" archway, 1906 section of *Exhibiting Ourselves*, featuring a bust of Richard Seddon.

Another of the archways reads "Social Laboratory" and contains information about the Department of Labour's exhibit, explaining that "the New Zealand of the early 1900s was often talked of as a 'social laboratory'" because of "progressive social legislation", such as that granting workers accident compensation. In fact, New Zealand's social and labour reforms meant that in the 1860s and 1870s New Zealanders enjoyed a higher standard of living than those living in the United States, Britain or Australia (C. Bell 1996:5). Claudia Bell asserts that this image of New Zealand is an example of "the promotion of internal policies" designed "to show other nations things to impress them" (*ibid.* p.19), and this "social laboratory" attracted international visitors, who came to inspect it (Smith and Callen 1999:18). The Department of Labour used the 1906 Exhibition to highlight new factories and good working conditions which included workers' cottages, fair wages, high employment and the abolition of sweated labour, all of which presented New Zealand as a "workers' paradise" (*ibid.*). The other side of this archway displays photographs and information about a Military Tournament in which all branches of the armed forces participated, and which displayed for citizens the might and force available to the government.

New Zealand in 1906 appeared to be firmly clasped to the bosom of the state, through these representations of fair social legislation which suggested a fair and caring government, imagery of Richard Seddon as the upright statesman of the nation, and demonstrations of the military might of the nation. Taken together these proclaimed New Zealand to be a nation administered by a strong yet indulgent state, with Seddon performing the role of a strong paternal figure. The progressive social legislation of New Zealand at the turn of the century is

held up in *Exhibiting Ourselves*, much as it was in 1906, to evoke an image of New Zealand as 'Gods Own Country'.

As well as showcasing new labour laws, the government of 1906 was presenting New Zealand's natural resources in new ways. In 1906, nature was fetishised in a different way from in 1851. It was shown as a tamed environment of natural wonders, to be enjoyed at leisure. At the 1906 International Exhibition, the New Zealand landscape was depicted as another kind of economic resource, as "the newly formed Department of Tourist and Health Resorts presented 'the singularly beautiful and wonderful scenery of these Islands and the excellent sport in the form of trout fishing and deer-stalking' (*ibid.*). A selection of items displayed in 1906 to illustrate these claims is collected in *Exhibiting Ourselves*, and were aimed at both the overseas visitor the Exhibition hoped to attract and impress, and the local people who it drew together through the use of official nationalism. Items exhibited in this section of *Exhibiting Ourselves* include stuffed birds and animals, landscape paintings and photographs of natural attractions such as mudpools, as well as photographs of Maori showing that "New Zealand was also promoted as the home of exotic, picturesque natives" (*ibid.*).



4.9 and 4.10 Examples of the natural resources displayed at the 1906 Exhibition, shown in *Exhibiting Ourselves*.

The third archway reads "Haere Mai", and stands beside some traditional wooden Maori carvings used in the 1906 Exhibition, and contains some kete. Beside the archway is a photograph of the Pakeha exhibition organizers dressed in traditional Maori attire, borrowed for the occasion as an amusement, and signage here mocks this behavior, suggesting again that New Zealand has progressed to a more enlightened present.



4.11 "Haere Mai" archway, framing a photograph of Maori participants in the 1906 Exhibition, and containing kete in the side inserts.

The archway itself frames a large photograph of a group of Maori who participated in the 1906 Exhibition's on-site Pa, where paying visitors could see Maori demonstrating traditional skills, including cooking, domestic tasks, carving, weaving and performing kapa haka. Hence, in 1906 Maori were shown participating in those cultural customs and traditional settings that were not seen as having the potential to destroy the image of New Zealand as socially progressive and cohesive nation that was nurtured by government representations. However, while *Exhibiting Ourselves* demonstrates the emphasis of the Exhibition on traditional Maori skills, it also has photographs and information about two individuals, Te Rangihiroa (Peter Buck) and Makereti (Maggie) Papakura, who were considered in 1906 to be part of "the new generation of Maori leaders who were at home in Pakeha as well as Maori circles" (*ibid.*). It is unclear whether these photographs, or the people depicted in them appeared at the Exhibition, but like other images of Maori shown in *Exhibiting Ourselves* that were on display in 1906, they highlight myths of Maori as tamed, hence unthreatening to the social structures of New Zealand at the time. These representations again support Abel's work looking at television news, in that 'tame Maori are "included as part of the consensus and represented as supporting the status quo" (Abel 1996:33).

Depicting Maori as tamed worked in two ways, both to sustain the myth of European imperialism, and to position Maori in a non-threatening guise. These representations denied social inequities between Maori and Pakeha, and were part of what can be seen as a larger process of homogenizing New Zealand citizens at the 1906 Exhibition.. Indeed, the 1906 Exhibition "seemed to suggest that the landscape had been tamed, that civilisation and prosperity were just around the corner" (sign in *Exhibiting Ourselves*) for all New Zealanders. In *Exhibiting Ourselves*, Te Papa tries to illustrate the social progress made since the Exhibitions,

using signage which highlights assimilationist and blatantly racist treatment and views of Maori at that time to suggest a less racist, more egalitarian present in New Zealand.

The emphasis on the idea that New Zealand has left behind racist treatment of Maori is an attempt by Te Papa to intimate social progress in the years since 1906. As Te Papa looks back at the 1906 Exhibition, the theme of social progress is inherent in its own discourse as the displays it replicates are firmly positioned in the past, hence invoking the social progress that has occurred in the intervening years. The 1906 vision of a New Zealand Empire, and the emphasis on new, caring social legislation, points to a future of prosperity and safety for New Zealand citizens. Laws giving protection and rights to New Zealanders are especially underlined in *Exhibiting Ourselves*, which I read as Te Papa underlining the view that the 1906 New Zealand government was forward-thinking.

The aim of the 1906 International Exhibition, and the representations of New Zealand shown there, were different from those of 1851. The international trade fair of 1851 was designed to bring together the industrial accomplishments of all nations, while the 1906 Exhibition, though international in scope and conception, by virtue of its taking place in New Zealand, recounted national narratives to New Zealand citizens. In this way, and keeping in mind the representations of progressive and fair government, the 1906 Exhibition can be read in Bennett's terms (Bennett 1995:21-2). Bennett's analysis of nineteenth century displays of governmental power, exemplified in the cultural displays of public museums, as strategies of achieving the obedience of the populace (*ibid.* p.20), can be applied here. The 1906 Exhibition can be read as a state strategy aimed at bringing the nation together under the auspices of the state, in much the same way as do national museums, such as Te Papa. The "centralised authority" that is the state (Kaplan 1994a:3), is evident in 1906 demonstrating to the heterogeneous members of the New Zealand nation their progressive, and commonly-shared identity. Thus, there is a doubling here of the nationalist intent, as both Te Papa and the Exhibition share similar aims.

### *The Centennial Exhibition, Wellington, 1940*

The 1940 Centennial Exhibition in Wellington was staged to celebrate one hundred years since the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, and like the 1906 Exhibition, the Centennial Exhibition took place before a New Zealand audience. The Exhibition "used what was then very advanced technology to amuse and at the same time to educate people about New Zealand's achievements" (Bassett et al 1985:212).



4.12 The 1940 Centennial Exhibition motif.

The motif of the 1940 Exhibition was a circular design, dissected by a nikau palm, one side depicting a Maori figure wearing a korowai and holding a staff looking out to a sailing ship on the horizon, and the other showing two modern buildings alongside a crane and a truck, and a container ship on the horizon. This suggests that in 1940 the New Zealand government was promoting the view that New Zealand had been industrialised and had developed trade links with the rest of the world. Like the previous Exhibition in Christchurch, themes of progress and government interests were important. Te Papa relates that the government both underwrote the Exhibition and "set up a vast display celebrating its all-pervasive role in everyday life" (sign in *Exhibiting Ourselves*) through displays by twenty seven government departments (Bassett et al 1985:212). Te Papa also asserts that, as the motif suggests, "the Exhibition beamed out the message that the nation was modern and up-to date" (sign in *Exhibiting Ourselves*), hence again this Exhibition was focused on creating the appearance of New Zealand as a nation of progress and social equality. The Centennial Exhibition section demonstrates that "the government was intimately involved in the day-to-day activities of every citizen", and "the 1940 Exhibition presented a perfect opportunity for the government departments to publicise their work" (*ibid.*).

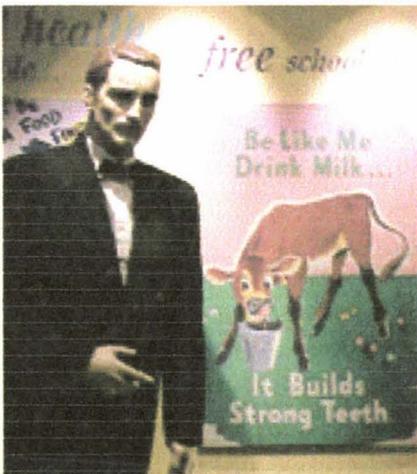
Included in the 1940 section of *Exhibiting Ourselves* are two three minute films. The first, "The Architects View" was made by Centennial Exhibition Architect Edmund Ascomb and is an upbeat silent film, showing cheerful scenes of the Exhibition. The second, titled "100 Crowded Years" was the official film screened during the Exhibition and its production involved "many years of preparation, a huge cast of Maori and Pakeha, and many expensive sets and costumes" (Blythe 1994:73). The film depicts a narrative of how the New Zealand environment was tamed and ordered by farming, transport systems and industry, and shows the health of the people being cared for by Public Health. The end of the film cites the Second World War with a rousing call to look to the past to gain strength to fortify New Zealand for the future - a call to arms. This film shows the patriotic tone that the Exhibition hoped to achieve, and also is a concrete example of how national narrative communicate homogenous experiences of the past. In its depiction of the experiences of the one hundred years between 1840 and 1940, the film

draws together images, such as of the development of infrastructure, that support the 1940s status quo.

A replica of the Health Department's main attraction at the Centennial Exhibition is included in *Exhibiting Ourselves*. This is a moving, talking mechanical public educator, named Dr Wellandstrong, who gave visitors to the Centennial Exhibition tours of the displays as well as lectures and advice about health, hygiene and physical well-being. He is situated behind a backdrop reading "From the Cradle to the Grave" that includes Health Department posters, circa 1940, advising readers to use handkerchiefs, to drink milk and kill rodents, not to finger food, and not to spit because "it's disgusting and dangerous". Dr Wellandstrong's vocal advice involves his "prescription" for health, and includes the following:

My message: good health is for everyone! In modern New Zealand everyone can afford to be well and strong - just like me. Now all you girls pay attention to Dr Wellandstrong - I know you all want to lead productive lives and of course that means babies!...Mother, don't be lazy and buy fish and chips....Wash hands before you eat, and absolutely everyone must be immunised.

Dr Wellandstrong's purpose was clearly public education, with an ideological underpinning as the aim was to publicise and promote a certain 'correct' way of living, which included gender-specific roles. This example shows how the Centennial Exhibition was partly an attempt to reinforce and perpetuate certain social norms and order.



4.13 Dr Wellandstrong. The poster in the background encourages the drinking of milk.



44.14 Dr Wellandstrong. The sign above his head reads "From the Cradle to the Grave" and the posters behind him encourage 'healthy' domestic practices.

Dr Wellandstrong kept women ideologically in the domestic realm through his admonishments and directives, as did the activities and displays offered in the Women's Section. The Women's Section included "things of interest to women" (sign in *Exhibiting Ourselves*), such as furniture and two recreated domestic scenes from early New Zealand, and involved a lecture series:

Lectures titled 'Solving Laundry Problems' and 'Simple Meals to Satisfy the Family' were a reflection of women's place in the scheme of things in 1940. But there were also other sessions on 'Women as Business Executives' and 'Unusual Occupations (Accountancy)' (*ibid.*).

This sign, in pointing out that women were socially supported in endeavors in new and unconventional spheres, intimates the beginnings of social progress for women at that time. It also highlights the present freedoms of women today, hence emphasising the social progress that has been made in the intervening years, a point that Te Papa itself is hoping to communicate.

A cover of the publication *Free Lance* is displayed here, dated January 26, 1940. It depicts cartoon figures of women from 1840 and 1940, the latter shocked by the modern guise of the former. The modern woman is depicted in comfortable, modern clothing, smiling and satisfied, and this again points to social progress, in relation to the restriction placed on women one hundred years earlier. We also see that women in 1940 were encouraged to buy, and *Exhibiting Ourselves* includes samples of "highly prized souvenirs" and a poster for the Iris Lingerie display at the Exhibition, emphasizing women's roles as consumers. This shows that by the 1940s, consumerism had become aligned with images of emancipation. The Women's Section appears to have masked the realities of women's lives, the realities of living in a post-Depression, pre-World War Two era, by its' cheerful advice and displays, a masking that is continued by Te Papa, as the discrepancies between the portrayal and the realities of women's lives in the 1940s are not commented upon.

However, the 1940 section of *Exhibiting Ourselves* highlights the Centennial Exhibition's masking of the situation of many Maori. This is achieved through the use of two quotes which accompany a large photograph of two men shaking hands. The men are the then Prime Minister, Michael Joseph Savage, and an unknown Maori man dressed in traditional Maori attire. This image illustrates a desire of the New Zealand government to create an image of an unproblematic relationship between Maori and the state in 1940, and a positive impression of the situation of Maori in New Zealand society at that time. This imagery is undercut by the two quotes juxtaposed beside it. One of these is from Governor Galway, in which he says that the Exhibition is a wonderful celebration of New Zealand, while the other is from Apirana Ngata which disagrees with Galway's view, and points out inequities suffered by Maori which had not been dealt with. This gives a clear impression of the disparities between the state-sanctioned view of race relations at that time, and the realities of life for many Maori, which did not match those espoused by Galway.

The benevolent state implied in 1906 was again prominent in 1940. The displays by government Departments sent the message that the government was looking after the interests of the citizenry. The public education of Dr Wellandstrong emphasised dominant ideas concerning health and hygiene, such as the necessity of immunisation, as well as encouraging

citizens to buy and own their own homes and produce offspring. The short film, "100 Crowded Years", which showed at the 1940 Exhibition, tells the preferred story of New Zealand's progress as a nation, using imagery of nation-building as a call to war. These two Exhibitions, sponsored by the state, certainly functioned on an ideological level in their support and perpetuation of its ideals and views, and both support Bennett's analysis of the governmental use of culture as an arbiter of values and morality (Bennett 1995:24).

*Exhibiting Ourselves* shows that the social conditions of women and Maori were masked at the Centennial Exhibition. In my view, this masking served an ideological purpose, giving an impression of the conditions in New Zealand desired by a state wanting to bring the national citizens together as a cohesive and unproblematic group. Through representations such as those at the Centennial Exhibition, the social world is explained to those who exist in it, using the values and examples of behaviours and ideas that are most sympathetic to the perpetuation of the existing social order and which are aimed at ensuring its continuation. Te Papa, in providing an almost unmediated view of the 1940 Exhibition, both supports its ideological underpinning, and further, shows New Zealand's progress since then.

### *The World Expo, Seville, 1992*

1992 was the 500th anniversary of Columbus's voyage, and this was taken into account in the New Zealand delegation to the 1992 World Expo in Seville, Spain, which was held at the same time as the Barcelona Olympics. The brief for the New Zealand display was:

To say in visual terms, 'This is our lifestyle, our culture, our business, our trading patterns. We're clean and green. We produce food that doesn't glow in the dark. We're an action-packed tourist destination and for a small place we achieve a high level of excellence over a wide field.'" (Expo 92 Commissioner, quoted in C. Bell 1996:96-7).

Creating this impression cost \$30 million (*ibid.*).

The New Zealand exhibit featured a collection of stoneware and ceramic pieces called Treasures of the Underworld, which told "the story of Columbus's first voyage to the Americas" (sign in *Exhibiting Ourselves*), although in images contained in *Exhibiting Ourselves*, mention of the subsequent genocide omitted. With the anniversary in mind, the themes of New Zealand's exhibition "were voyaging, discovery, and New Zealand's land and environment" (*ibid.*). The image that New Zealand was striving for at the Expo was one of a nation of active, sporting citizens who spent a lot of time in outdoor leisure pursuits (*ibid.*).

Like New Zealand's delegations to the 1851 Great Exhibition, New Zealand's exhibit at the 1992 World Expo in Seville was an attempt to put New Zealand on the world stage as a progressive nation alongside other nations, at a trade fair staged overseas. The *Exhibiting*

*Ourselves* section focusing on New Zealand's delegation to the Expo features a five minute sound and light show run every seven minutes, a modification of the sound and light show which featured in Seville. In this section, rather than a display of objects that the visitor can selectively give attention to, sound and light are used to draw attention to pre-selected objects in sequence. This sound and light show is an example of the way that nations at Exhibitions use "increasingly sophisticated display technology" in order to make "a statement of the nations nonchalant ability to accommodate whatever new technology the contemporary era can invent" (C. Bell 1996:99).

The sound and light show is narrated by three people - Annie Gallen (PA to the New Zealand Commissioner General at the Expo), Bob Sell (New Zealand's Catering and Commercial Director at the Expo) and Atawhai Tibble (a New Zealand performer at the Expo) - whose images light up as their recorded narrative plays. Each speaks about the highlights of being involved with New Zealand's representation to the Expo - the popularity of New Zealand-made goods, the pride they felt at the appreciative responses of the international audience - and about their own impressions. Tibble's narrative mentions the way that Maori at the Expo were the workers serving food while Pakeha were working upstairs in administration making decisions, which he describes as "a very accurate description of the current race relations situation"; while Sell talks about the kapa haka performed in Seville as something not seen every day in New Zealand, but as a display performed for the international audience. Clearly, Te Papa is careful here to put itself above the inferred racism that Tibble mentions, but the acknowledgement of such attitudes doesn't go very far to challenge or change them. The line between representing and condoning the New Zealand displays at the Exhibitions seems to be very narrow.

The area features a collection of artwork, much of it commissioned for the occasion. Featured in the sound and light show are three sculptures of the great navigators Captain James Cook, Ferdinand Magellan, and Kupe. While Magellan was already known to the majority of the Expo's European audience, Kupe and Cook, whom are credited by Maori and Pakeha, respectively, with 'discovering' the islands of New Zealand, were not. Sell explains that presenting these three historical figures together was to align Kupe and Cook - "New Zealand explorers" - with "great European explorers". While this aligns Maori skills with the world-recognised skills of other navigators, a dress worn by New Zealand opera singer Kiri Te Kanawa lights up to the sound of her singing, to make a similar point, showing New Zealanders to be comparable to other international figures. A sign next to this dress claims that Kiri Te Kanawa "fronted splendidly for her country in the film screened in the New Zealand pavilion at Expo....effortlessly suggesting that New Zealand was a nation of opera-loving sophisticates", demonstrating that the representations at Expo were largely based on image-making.



4.15 Some examples of the photographs by Brian Brake commissioned for the New Zealand representation at the 1992 Expo, as displayed in the 1992 section of *Exhibiting Ourselves*.

Displayed in this area is a selection of photographs of New Zealand nature by Brian Brake:

His dramatic pictures of New Zealand were the images of our country that European visitors to Expo took home with them. They showed a beautiful landscape that was largely empty of people (sign in *Exhibiting Ourselves*).

This emptiness, long considered a "luxury" by tourists (C. Bell 1996:40), was also evidenced in the impressions of the landscape promoted by New Zealand at the 1906 Exhibition. A filmed montage also features in the sound and light show, and it encourages a certain view of the way that New Zealanders use the landscape:

As this excerpt from an Expo audio-visual programme suggests, New Zealand was also presented as a nation of active all-rounders (*ibid.*).

These representations are similar to those of the natural environment promoted in 1906, and presents the New Zealand countryside as a place of leisure and enjoyment - this again can be compared to the representation of the European countryside Barthes sites in "The Blue Guide", which he says shows the landscape as comprised of a series of vistas to be enjoyed by the tourist. That the use of the landscape in the New Zealand representation to Seville in 1992 mirrors earlier representations, in 1906 and 1851, can also be seen in the examples of New Zealand business exhibits used in Seville, each of which are examples of the produce that comes from New Zealand's climate and landscape: fruit, cheese and wine. However, here signs question the actual gains made by these displays, as the European markets were heavily protected and subsequent exports of these products from New Zealand were no greater than previously. These signs suggest a futility to the Expo display, and this is also suggested in Annie Gallen's narrative as she asks whether the audience "would have missed us if we weren't there - that's a hard question to answer".

In these representations of the landscape, Benjamin's assertion that the World Exhibitions were predicated on the belief that industry would create an abundant utopia (Benjamin 1973c), is born out. In New Zealand's representation to the Seville Expo, the landscape becomes fetishized, existing as a series of commodified opportunities to enjoy it, with this image culminating in the packaged commodities that are the product of the natural environment. The landscape here becomes fetishised as a commodity which exists in the market place only to be valued against other commodities and commodified experiences.

The representation of New Zealand in 1992 is similar to those at the earlier 1906 and 1851 Exhibitions in both evoking abundant landscape, and presenting New Zealand as a worthy participant on the global stage. Te Papa's portrayal of New Zealand's participation in the Expo is shown as somewhat more self-reflexive, as the narratives of Tibble, Sell, and Gallen point to an awareness of the constructed and somewhat arbitrary nature of such representations. However, for the most part it is fair to say that the methods employed and myths promoted in New Zealand's delegation to the first World Exhibition were employed again one hundred and forty years later in 1992, and by Te Papa in the present.

The World Exhibitions were essentially marketplaces, in which commodities competed for the attention of buyers and investors. World Exhibitions supported the concept of nations, as can be seen in the title of the first Exhibition, and they also demonstrate the symbiotic relationship between capitalism and nationalism. The commodities displayed at the Exhibitions relied on their potential in the eyes of the consumers to fulfill their dreams, and so each country displayed the 'best' they had to offer. Te Papa doesn't assume that these displays were automatically successful. Signs in *Exhibiting Ourselves* assert that the displaying of kiwifruit, cheese and wine at the Expo did not result in "any measurable increase in sales", partly because of a "European market tightly restricted by quotas" and "the chauvinism of European tastebuds" (signs in *Exhibiting Ourselves*). However, international exhibits such as Exhibitions involve masking the problematic, such as racial discord and disputes over land ownership. This is not examined in any meaningful way by Te Papa in *Exhibiting Ourselves*.

## Summary

New Zealand is shown in *Exhibiting Ourselves* as a nation where the landscape is the primary commodity, and it may be consumed in a range of ways. In 1851 this consumption primarily involved the stripping of natural resources, such as kauri gum and timber samples, from the land so that they could be taken from New Zealand and used elsewhere. By 1906, artistic renditions and tourism had become the legitimate ways of consuming New Zealand, taking in the beautiful landscape. The *Exhibiting Ourselves* section dedicated to the 1940 Exhibition shows that little emphasis was placed on the outdoors, but by 1992 the focus on

nature as a drawcard for international tourism and a provider of produce again appeared. This tourism can be compared to the France that Barthes deconstructs in his article "The Blue Guide" (Barthes 1972:74-77) in its emphasis on a landscape which seemingly exists only for the leisure tourist. The treatment of the landscape mythologises its existence.

These representations of the natural environment of New Zealand, create images which in turn have become signs for New Zealand and its mythology. As Barthes explains them, the myths are those which the ruling classes believe, or which would benefit them. For example, the idea that natural resources are a series of opportunities for economic investment is a good one for landowners, and for the government wanting economic investment in the country. These images fit the image that the New Zealand state wants to transmit globally – hence they are featured in the Exhibitions – and these are signs of New Zealand as clean, green and abundant. These images become naturalized, despite the fact that more New Zealanders live in the city now, and there is very little New Zealand virgin forest left, and the environmental problems (colonization brought with it to New Zealand, such as possums, deer and pastoral farming) are overlooked as the European presence in New Zealand is presented as unproblematic.

The use of landscape imagery in evoking and underlining notions of nationhood began in the eighteenth century (Anderson 1991:11). At that time images of the landscape replaced religious iconography, as religious communities went through a demise, necessitating a need for iconography to help bind populations together, although it is simplistic to suggest that religion's demise led to national communities (*ibid.* p.22). Landscape painting was one example of how images of the landscape were used in this way: "Since the eighteenth century painters and poets have helped narrate and depict national identity, or have had their work commandeered to do so" (Daniels 1993:5). This can be seen in England, in the use of rural scenes to portray national values, as repeated conventions in rural landscape paintings of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries implied "more powerful, comprehensive organization principles, permitting the use of landscapes to represent abstractions like the nation-state" (Helsing 1997:20). In examples taken from *Exhibiting Ourselves*, such as the images of the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts display of 1906, the use of the landscape to evoke the nation is prevalent, suggesting that the landscape is an important point of identification in nation-building strategies. By not attempting to unveil these representations as constructs which support the image of the nation for the perpetuation of state power, Te Papa also supports and perpetuates this construct of the New Zealand nation.

The depiction of Maori as a people embedded in history through representations which generally involve those cultural customs that are not seen as having the potential to destroy the image of New Zealand created there, is emphasised in displays shown in *Exhibiting Ourselves*. For example, in 1851 and 1906, Maori are shown cooking, carrying out household tasks,

carving and weaving, performing kapa haka, and in the natural setting, usually dressed traditionally. The performance aspects of this representation are again shown in the 1992 section. Essentially, the representations of Maori at World Exhibitions mythologised their existence into being unproblematic to the existence of the state and the harmony of the nation. This representation is clearly a construction, in which the historical appears to be contemporary, which masks the reality of the present role of Maori as participants in Pakeha society, as well as Maori-Pakeha conflict. This is done for the purpose of creating an image of New Zealand that is attractive to the investment and tourism of bourgeois Europeans. Te Papa supports these images by largely leaving them unquestioned. However, it is unfair to suggest that the curators of *Exhibiting Ourselves* have not addressed the ways that Maori were represented at the Exhibitions, as can be seen in Atawhai and Sell's narratives in the 1992 section. This can also be seen in a quote from Sir Apirana Ngata used in the 1940 section which questions the legitimacy of the Centennial celebrations in the light of inequitable treatment of Maori and their taonga.

While the above analysis is common across all four of the Exhibitions depicted in *Exhibiting Ourselves*, there are marked differences in the portrayal of New Zealand at those Exhibitions staged in New Zealand, as opposed to those which took place overseas. Although in both audiences there would have been international tourists and dignitaries, the visitors to the Exhibitions held in New Zealand would have been almost exclusively from New Zealand. Hence the depictions of New Zealand were different according to the anticipated audiences.

The main impetus behind the World Exhibitions was the promotion of economic growth. At the Exhibitions held overseas, coupled with a lack of emphasis on the New Zealand government, the promotion of economic growth occurred through the encouragement of investment. At the Great Exhibition of 1851, New Zealand's new nationhood meant that there wasn't an abundance of manufactured commodities being produced to display in the "universe of commodities" that formed the Exhibitions (Benjamin 1973a:166). Instead, New Zealand is shown as seeking economic investment by the promotion of the countrysides' ability to provide the materials to make manufactured commodities possible. By the time of the latest Exhibition, New Zealand was striving to be seen as globally competitive, and as having packaged commodities such as wine and fruit to offer in the world marketplace. Both Exhibitions show a desire to attract financial investment in New Zealand, and to foster New Zealand exports.

At the Exhibitions held in New Zealand this mainly occurred via the promotion of nation-building, which in turn assists economic growth by encouraging the continued development of national industries. The World Exhibitions were considered important by Benjamin due to their status as "places of pilgrimage to the fetish Commodity" (Benjamin 1973c:165). This can be seen in the examples provided in *Exhibiting Ourselves*, in, for example, the selling of the New Zealand landscape in the Exhibitions of 1851, 1906 and 1992.

In the Exhibitions staged in New Zealand, the government is shown as having played a large part in the creation of a vision of New Zealand as a utopia. New labour laws and government-sponsored housing projects for workers were presented in 1906, while in 1940, "the spotlight was on the government, which...set up a vast display celebrating its all-pervasive role in everyday life" (sign in *Exhibiting Ourselves*.). The government is shown as having promoted itself as a benevolent state, fostering the well-being of the national citizens. This government participation in assembling the representations of New Zealand which appeared at the various Exhibitions, and their subsequent appearance at Te Papa, is ideological in nature. Dr Wellandstrong and the Women's Section of 1940 provide excellent examples of this, as does the strong government participation at both the Exhibitions which took place in New Zealand. These representations gave an impression of New Zealand as a consolidated nation.

Consolidating citizens together as one nation, under a state which supposedly worked for the benefit and good of all citizens, helps maintain the ideological order and ensures the continuation of state power. Bennett's discussion of the ways in which the state focuses on strategies of achieving obedience rather than laws (Bennett 1995:22-3) can be seen in those Exhibitions held in New Zealand, as they represented an ordered society with everything in its place - women in the home, Maori tamed and in the natural environment, New Zealand on the world stage - clearly a strategy through which the state hoped to order the nation. Both of these Exhibitions represented New Zealand to its citizens, highlighting desirable qualities of the nation. Each sent strong messages to its audience, as the postcards and stamps depicting flattering views of the 1906 Exhibition show. This effect combined with favorable views of the New Zealand workplace and natural environment (which included Maori), to hopefully produce a populace who would believe the ideological views of the state, and support its choices and legislation. Important to this analysis is the point that New Zealand is shown to have been constantly progressing socially. This assertion of progress, which permeates both the Exhibitions and *Exhibiting Ourselves*, encourages New Zealanders to ensure the perpetuation of the nation-state.

The use of illusion of progress to naturalise the capitalist system and create an appearance of society moving forward towards social equality was one element of Benjamin's work on the Arcades Project (Benjamin 1989:68). *Exhibiting Ourselves'* assertion of social progress is twofold. In the first instance, *Exhibiting Ourselves* shows how this progress was promoted at each of the Exhibitions included there, as, for example, in the 1906 display, which emphasised New Zealand's reputation as a "Social Laboratory". Further, Te Papa creates a narrative of social progress, inherent in the way that it encourages visitors to view the different areas of the exhibit sequentially. This historical construction is a construction, as Benjamin would have asserted, and it denies any aspect of history that broke with this narrative (Benjamin 1989:68). Narratives of progress such as this assume that society will inevitably improve (Benjamin

1989:44; 47-8), an assumption which discourages the population from breaking the current system by promising future improvement and abundance..

What can be seen in *Exhibiting Ourselves* is a collection of images focused towards establishing New Zealand's place in the global marketplace, the attempt to attract economic investment and encourage export trade. Ideologically, the Exhibitions worked towards consolidating the nation and the state, perpetuating mythology which supposed a collective will and path for the citizens of New Zealand. In its depiction of these representations, Te Papa does little to mediate the ideological messages promoted in the past, hence the points of identification inherent in the displays of the past - the natural environment, the benevolent state, the tamed natives and the narrative of progress - are supported rather than criticised by Te Papa in *Exhibiting Ourselves*.

## Chapter Five: *Parade*



5.1 One of the entrances to *Parade*.

### Thesis Statement

This chapter analyses and discusses another of Te Papa's long-term exhibits, *Parade*. This exhibit displays over one hundred and fifty individual objects. As such, this chapter does not provide a detailed account of them all, but rather gives a general outline of the contents of the exhibit, highlighting and focusing on certain objects and arrangements.

Of all the exhibits at Te Papa, *Parade* has attracted substantial media attention because of its unorthodox (for a museum) mixing of esteemed New Zealand art with items from New Zealand's popular culture and everyday life. The intention of this mixture is to "create a wonderful walk through New Zealand's visual history" (Te Papa website), and to encourage debate among visitors as to the comparative worth of the objects displayed. Te Papa's website claims that *Parade* is:

On one level, a celebration of the things that have made us known in the world; on another, an inquiry into how we come to value certain objects over others; and how certain achievements from the past continue to play a vital role in our understanding of ourselves.

As can be seen from the above quote, *Parade* has an emphasis on bringing together the collective "us", New Zealanders, through a display of objects. This point is important in my analysis, as I feel that this is an excellent example of nation-building, and of reinforcing feelings of national identity. *Parade* makes the assumption that a New Zealand national community exists partly through valuing certain key objects. Importantly, too, the quote above shows that the commonality of "our" is taken for granted, and the focus is on the "understanding" of this "our", rather than on the way in which it is constructed.

My reading of *Parade* takes the assumption of commonality to be one form of official nationalism, the view of the nation which is officially sanctioned and downplays difference within the national community, instead emphasizing "social cohesion" (A. Bell 1999:4). The achievement of this is generally accomplished through the construction and use of narratives about the nation (*ibid.*; Bhabha 1990; Hall 1993:293), which are intended to assert to the reader

or viewer the sense of belonging to a community. Often this is accomplished partly through underscoring past moments of national glory. In the construction of discursive nationalism, as with the earlier legitimization of dynastic power, displays of cultural artefacts play an important role.

My analysis is informed by the work of the three theorists discussed in Chapter Three. Eisenstein's theory of associative montage and of the ideological plot (Eisenstein 1925:61), as constructed through montage, foregrounds my analysis. Benjamin's work regarding the use of industrial items to create the impression of progressive history (1989:68) is of use in this analysis, and again, too, are his Marx-influenced theories of the fetish commodity (1973c). *Parade* also features some excellent examples of Barthes' formulation of myth, that which he saw as "the falsely obvious" (Barthes 1974:11), that is the attempt to inscribe certain ideologically-based values onto events and objects.

Another idea that I apply in this study is Goldie's theory of indigenization (Goldie (1989:13). Although generally applied to literature, this is the term Goldie gives to the process of European colonisers attempting to "become 'native', to belong" in their new environment. Goldie gives as an example of this Canadian poets "who used vaguely 'Indian' words and phrases to make poems appear more rooted in the Canadian experience" (*ibid.* p.50), and I believe this is applicable to my analysis because such tendencies are also expressed in *Parade*.

## Introduction

*Parade* is host to a huge range of objects - highly-regarded paintings, design-award-winning prototypes for kitchen appliances, information about competition-winning yachts, and plastic replicas of rugby players. The sub-heading of *Parade* is "Where there are people there is art". In the context of telling a narrative about New Zealand, this asserts that the creation of 'art' is not limited to an 'artist', but is rather the domain of all people - in this case, New Zealanders. It also implicates everything in *Parade* as art.

Like *Exhibiting Ourselves*, *Parade* is arranged chronologically, with objects positioned near other objects from roughly the same period. Unlike *Exhibiting Ourselves*, this arrangement is not strictly organised into walled sections, but a sense of moving through time is still achieved by groupings of objects which share origins in time periods and artistic movements. There are two entrances, one by the most recently-dated objects, and the other by the oldest, so a sense of moving 'forwards' of 'backwards' in time is conveyed.

Putting such diverse objects together is similar to Eisenstein's associative montage strategies. This is the selection and placement side-by-side of objects (or in Eisenstein's formulation, film images), to highlight their likeness (Eisenstein 1924:40-1). This selection is

based on similarities and intended to smooth over contradictions as the "associational comparison" (*ibid.* p.43) evoked should effectively convey the idea of sameness and shared values between the objects. An example of this in *Parade* can be seen in the placement of Colin McCahon's painting "A Grain of Wheat" beside a collection of New Zealand-made mass produced ceramic crockery pieces. Bearing in mind that McCahon is one of New Zealand's most well-known artists, this placement creates an association of the 'high art' values of "A Grain of Wheat" and confers these values onto the crockery, and in the context of a national museum assumes that they share national attributes in common.

Many of the objects displayed in *Parade* are consumer items, such as crockery and kitchen appliances. Displaying such objects next to famous works of art in a national museum promotes the association that these commodities are important to New Zealand's visual history in the same way as the artworks. The perceived importance of the art is associated with the commodity items and hence these items become fetishised as objects and the realities of their production are masked by their apparently timeless national qualities. Benjamin's ideas about commodity fetishism, in this respect are easily applied to *Parade*. Benjamin believed that the commodity, so important in the perpetuation of capitalism, became fetishised in this way, its fetish character relying on the value the market places on the dreams it appears to have the potential to fulfill (Friedburg 1993:53). *Parade's* exhibit is comparable to the elevation of the fetish commodity Benjamin saw in the World Exhibitions of the nineteenth century (Benjamin 1973c). Benjamin posited that the Exhibitions partly aimed to prevent the working classes from potentially emancipatory political activity (Buck Morss 1989:86). This effect was achieved by masking the conditions of the commodities there, effectively transforming the role of the audience members from workers to consumers. The national narrative that *Parade* constructs also masks social inequities in this way.

The narrative of *Parade* seems to be predicated on artistic endeavor in New Zealand, dating from pre-contact examples of Maori artistic expression to the late 1990s. This narrative, which progresses through time and, as I will show, implies that through the use of introduced new technologies New Zealand is a nation of social progress, and is a perfect example of Benjamin's ideas concerning the construction of progressive history. Benjamin's analysis in this instance had an economic base in much the same way as Barthes' formulation of myth, as both asserted that capitalism was naturalised: Benjamin asserted that this occurred through the false construction of progressive history (Benjamin 1989:68); while Barthes contended that this occurred through the construction of myth (Barthes 1972:56).

As with the previous chapter, my analysis of *Parade* uses Barthes' identification of everyday objects of French life as implicated in the promotion of a certain ideological perspective, through a mythic order of signification (*ibid.* p.132). Examples of the objects that Barthes used to demonstrate these ideas are childrens' toys (*ibid.* pp.53-5), wine (*ibid.* pp.56-8), and steak (*ibid.*

pp.62-4). In the latter example Barthes asserts that through the mythic order of signification, steak is both "nostalgic and patriotic" (*ibid.* p.63). The idea that a mythic value can be ascribed to an object is important in my analysis because *Parade* uses objects to evoke patriotism. An example of this can be seen is a display depicting New Zealand success at international yachting regattas. Using such by-lines as "Kiwi Magic" alongside images of victory, the yachts become inscribed with values associated with New Zealand national identity - ingenuity, perseverance, and triumph. Taken together, these ideas bring to mind Eisenstein's construction of the "ideological plot", in which the themes of the film were of primary importance over concerns about storyline (Eisenstein 1925:60-1). The ideological plot was calculated to derive certain reactions from the audience (*ibid.*), which I assert *Parade's* collection of items has as its' aim.

Through the repeated use of the collective noun "we" in signs throughout *Parade* the notion that New Zealanders are a collective group is asserted. This group is at the core of the narratives of *Parade*. Rather than characters, the plot created by *Parade* is one of imported art movements, consumer appliances and cultural ritual, and of how these were integrated into the lives of the New Zealand population. Examples of this integration of ritual can be seen in the inclusion of such items as collectible toys, mourning accessories and tea services. The narrative is one of a nation strongly affected by outside influences, influences that have been integrated into daily life, and hence integration is an important theme in *Parade*. The viewer is encouraged to be self-reflexive and participate in the plot, through the use of signs at each entrance which emphasise ingenuity and reads:

Is it art?

Planting a garden, painting a picture, designing a boat - we come up with solutions. Then what we make takes on a life of its own.

Is it treasure or junk? Everyone has an opinion.

Is it art? Join the *Parade* and decide for yourself.

I believe that by the placement of those objects in Te Papa, the national museum, *Parade* essentially answers this question itself. Of these signs, and other similar signs in *Parade* which ask "Is it treasure or junk?" and assert that "Everyone has an opinion", critic Theodor Dalrymple suggests that:

since what is treasure to one person may be junk to another, the museum authorities are exonerated in advance for their choice of exhibit. They cannot be criticised because there is not fixed standard by which to make a judgment. After all, one man's opinion is as good as another's (Dalrymple 1999).

## The Exhibit

### *1. The period to about 1890*

At the entrance to *Parade* which harbors the earliest-dating objects, there are also three stands, two of which contain Maori artefacts from the pre-colonial period, a slate knife and a

pendant. This can be considered the 'beginning' of the movement through time that *Parade* creates. We can see from these items that the progressive construction of *Parade* includes objects created by Maori in the pre-colonial era, hence asserting that the "we" of New Zealand is a timeless universal, not limited to beginning with the colonial era. Timelessness is identified by Hall as a discursive strategy employed in the perpetuation of national identity (Hall 1992:294). Hall asserts that this strategy is intended to give the impression that "the essentials of the national character remain unchanged through all the vicissitudes of history. It is there from birth, unified and continuous" (*ibid.*)

Moving through *Parade* from this point, there is a collection of art and artefacts, from both New Zealand and Europe. These include paintings from Europe, items of European clothing such as a man's waistcoat, and an embroidery sampler stitched by a child in England. Situated near the pre-colonial Maori artefacts, these emphasise the belief that establishment of New Zealand is the result of the blending of the two cultures - Maori and British. These also further evidence the use of the idea that 'New Zealand' is timeless, as these items were created in Europe and some pre-date the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi by almost a century.



5.2 Mens waistcoat displayed in the 1880s section of *Parade*.



5.3 Examples of lacework and a painting in the 1880s section of *Parade*, a good example of the juxtaposition of everyday objects and art in the exhibit.

Nearby is a collection of early documentary-style paintings of New Zealand. One of these is "Wellington", painted by John Wharltton Bunney in 1865, a watercolour of the early settlement at Whanganui-a-tara. A sign next to the painting explains that it "was commissioned by colonising interests to encourage emigration", and that it is believed Bunney based this painting on similar works by other artists, as he probably did not work in New Zealand himself, a suggestion that supports the conception of New Zealand as constructed. Also here is a photograph of gold mining at Otago in the 1870s, taken by a man brought to New Zealand by the government to record development, and a pen on paper sketch by "the first Surveyor-General for the New Zealand Company, which acquired land for settlement"

(sign in *Parade*). Using the traditions of European painting in the New Zealand environment is another example of the mapping out of new colonial territories, as a sign explains that:

Many of the earliest pictures of New Zealand were made by soldiers, architects, and surveyors...who came to establish and defend European settlements.

As these paintings show, early European-style painting in New Zealand focused largely on the landscape, as "with roots in nineteenth century European traditions it [New Zealand art] took as its native idiom the landscape" (Bett 1986:6). During the period to about the 1870s, depictions of New Zealand were primarily focused on the picturesque, rather than the realities of working the landscape or the land wars (Simpson 1964:4). Paintings by another New Zealand Company surveyor are described as "weapons of cultural conquest, soft missiles in the imposition of a powerful colonising vision (Pitts 1992:88), as European depictions of New Zealand were "the beginning of the invention of New Zealand (as distinct from Aotearoa, the land described by Maori culture)" (*ibid.*).

Two artworks in this area of *Parade* show images of Maori. One is a watercolour showing two Maori figures overlooking the Karapiro Stream and Waikato River junction after the battle at Orakau. One figure is a man, hand raised in a fist, with a rifle under his other arm, while a woman sits nearby with her head in her hands in a pose of despair. The other image of Maori here shows a group of women, men and children bathing nude in some hot mineral pools at Whakarewarewa, while another smaller group looks on. Leonard Bell points out that "representations of Maori [by Pakeha] were never unproblematic" but were inscribed with cultural bias (L. Bell 1992:2). These firmly position Maori in nature, and bear out Abel's assertion of the dichotomy of "wild Maori" (bad and threatening Maori, as in the painting) and "tame Maori" (good and non-threatening Maori, as shown in the photograph) (Abel 1996:33-4). These images point to the simultaneous constructions of Maori in the ways that Abel asserts (*ibid.*), and in the second image the naked bathers are especially tamed and vulnerable in their nudity.

In this area there is a large collection of objects, including a goblet set fashioned of silver and pounamu which is accompanied by the sign:

Maori have always prided pounamu for its beauty, strength and trade value.  
Add it to traditional European silverware and you have instant Kiwi treasure!

Explicitly, this sets out what is at the core of *Parade's* values – the uniting of cultures to create another, superior, and instantly identifiable New Zealand culture. This constructs a narrative of New Zealand as a mixture of cultures, each contributing to an ingenious and harmonious culture which is greater than the sum of all its parts. This is an example of what Barthes identified as myth, in which a collection of silver and pounamu goblets becomes a signifier of myth (Barthes 1972:123), in this example the myth of social cohesion. Myth works to give the

to give the historical the appearance of perpetual truth (*ibid.* pp.165-6), attributing to the original signs seeming universal values that are actually ideological in nature, and represent the needs or wants of the dominant group in that society (*ibid.* p.155). In the example of Te Papa, this group is represented by the government and the corporate sponsors that support the institution, and it is in the interests of both these groups that New Zealand citizens - and workers - believe myths of New Zealand nationalism to be fact, because this encourages both support of the state and the desire to be gainfully employed, supported by the belief that this is for 'the good of the nation'.

Nearby is one of *Parade's* Activity Stations. These are free-standing cabinets featuring pull-out drawers that contain various objects, and each features a sign on one side that highlights some historical information about the introduction of new ideas to New Zealand. Items here include a photograph album from the late 1860s, a sheet of half-penny stamps, and some Christmas cards from 1900 illustrated with scenes of New Zealand with titles such as "Maori Greeting" and "Colonial Progress". The album reflects the Pakeha desire to document life in the 'new' country, a desire also seen in the landscape paintings displayed nearby. The Christmas cards demonstrate the importation to New Zealand of other European values, and show one way that Christian tradition was integrated into New Zealand culture, using signifiers of New Zealand to naturalise its place here. This is a good example of the indigenisation process, as defined by Goldie (1989:13), the attempt by colonisers to make their place in a new nation appear legitimate by the use of signifiers of that which is indigenous to the new environment, which are integrated into literature or, in this case, greeting cards. There are other examples of indigenisation included in the Activity Station, such as a sterling silver table centrepiece dated about 1900 and fashioned to resemble mamaku, a plate with a Kiwi motif made in London in 1872, and a brooch which reads "Kia ora". Considering that these items were created early in the development of 'New Zealand', they are reflective to the desire of new migrants to be seen as conversant with elements of the new environment, and to have developed some level of understanding and affinity with the New Zealand landscape. All of these items also hold in common their status as consumer items, so that part of the narrative they combine to create is economic in nature, hence not only is European presence naturalised, but also the European economic system.

The sign on the side of this Discovery Station reads:

#### New Ideas Change Our Lives

1835 - William Colenso sets up a printing press in Paihia, and prints part of the New Testament in Maori. It is New Zealand's first book.

1848 - Photography arrives. But going to town to get your picture taken isn't cheap. It can cost a third of your week' pay.

1859 - New settlers bring radiata pine. It's a Californian tree, but it grows better and faster here than in its native country.

Ideas and materials are like people - when they arrive in a new place they create ripples of change. And are in turn often changed themselves.

The primary message contained here is again one of the melding of cultures, to form a "New Zealand" culture. The technology of print and photography has been imported into the new country and will affect change and be changed themselves. These technologies will be melded into new forms and innovations by their arrival in New Zealand, and so become symbols of integration in this context. The inclusion of radiata pine on this sign is a good example of this, as the imported tree species has been so integrated into New Zealand that it has become one of New Zealand's most successful commercial exports, hence a mixture of the foreign and the local creates success. This linking of importation and the idea of a successful nation here validate colonisation in New Zealand, which essentially involves importation of technology, values and societal structures.

## 2. Whakaoratia - Maori innovations 1870 - 1930s



5.5 Whakaoratia.

Whakaoratia is a walled section of *Parade*, and the introductory sign on the wall reads:

Europeans flooded into the country bringing with them new technology, materials, and ideas. Many Maori were quick to pick up aspects of the new culture and blend them with their own.

In what can be seen as a deliberate creative strategy, Maori used European technology and ideas to meet Maori needs. At first these things brought changes to everyday activities - wool for weaving, steel tools for carving. Later, the introduced ideas were applied more profoundly and were used to protect, strengthen, and reaffirm Maori values in a fast-changing world.

This section consists of a collection of items which show ways that Maori have used some of the skills and materials brought to New Zealand by Europeans. These items demonstrate what Panooho describes as "a whole under-exposed history of innovative and aggressive Maori adaptations of Pakeha forms, design, technology and materials" (Panooho 1992:124). These he traces and cites as reference points for contemporary Maori artists (*ibid.* p.125) and, he asserts that "these borrowings and appropriations have become part of our culture, our identity" (*ibid.* p.123).

Shown in Whakaoratia are some traditional Maori artefacts, such as kete and patu onewa, crafted using imported European techniques or materials. There are also European objects which incorporate Maori design features and traditional materials, such as a tea cosy woven from harakeke, a muff made from Kiwi feathers, and a carved tinder box. There is also an installation about Maori use of European architectural innovations and methods at the Parihaka Pa and Rangiatea Christian Church.

The examples above express an unproblematic melding of cultures as the result of the colonisation of New Zealand. Through the use of objects which are a result of this amalgamation of cultures, Whakaoratia symbolically shows Maori and Pakeha brought together by progress, the superior technology brought to New Zealand by Europeans making traditional Maori forms easier to create. Parallel to this is the use of Maori techniques on European items, which suggests that Maori were becoming assimilated, or 'civilised', at that time.

The melding of cultures shown in Whakaoratia shows the European presence in New Zealand in a positive light, suggesting that it was highly advantageous. The Maori-Pakeha conflict which occurred during that period is masked by the symbolic assertion of unity contained in the artifacts there. The European presence is again indigenised through the use of Maori ornamentation on European goods. These items contribute to New Zealand's myth, as Barthes would have described it, by encapsulating an ideology of togetherness, and making the simultaneous existence of Maori and European cultures in New Zealand appear desirable.

### 3. 1880s to World War II

The 1880s in New Zealand are described thus:

End of the pioneering era

By the end of the 1880s, New Zealand's pioneering days were nearly over. Farms were established and tourism was developing - signs of progress eagerly recorded by photographers (sign in *Parade*).

This sign points to Te Papa's assumption that the changes outlined above are "progress", and maintains that their occurrence was positive.

Included here are some scientific studies of plants and some landscape paintings. One of these is an oil painting depicting two kauri gumdiggers as tiny figures amongst towering kauri trees and tree ferns. The extractive industry and the beginnings of tamed nature are shown by a path cut through the thick bush. Another of the paintings here depicts the harbor at Wellington and was painted by James McLachlan Nairn in 1894. Painters such as Nairn, who arrived here in the late 1800s, are often emphasised in New Zealand art histories as having made substantial contribution to the development of New Zealand art due to the skills they brought with them from overseas (Mackle 1984:9), hence the inclusion of Nairn's work in *Parade* underlines *Parades'* narrative of cultural melding. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century many New Zealand artists traveled to Europe to train and create (*ibid.* p.10), one notable example being Frances Hodgkins. Mackle emphasises "that by 1920 constant stimulation from overseas was essential to the visual arts" (*ibid.*), either through the travels to Europe of New Zealand artists, or the influence of European artists who came to New Zealand to work or live. Aligning the development of European-originating art with social developments in *Parade* hence naturalises a narrative predicated on outside influence and mixture in New Zealand.

Across from these paintings are two oil portraits of Maori women painted by Charles Goldie in 1903. In both these paintings the women depicted look away and downwards with sad expressions, indicative of Goldie's belief, and the widespread belief of that time, that the Maori people would 'die out' in the face of continued colonisation. This is another clear example of Abel's assertion that "tame" Maori are depicted as good, and are often portrayed sympathetically (Abel 1996:33-4). These portraits demonstrate the way in which even the seemingly "real" or "raw" representations of Maori by Pakeha "are invariably loaded with social and cultural significance" (L. Bell 1992:3).

Nearby is a collection of metal household items imported from Germany and London, such as candlesticks, an inkwell, and a hot water jug, as well as an elaborate stained glass window and a selection of furniture fashioned from native timbers. These support the view, asserted in the sign cited earlier, of a progressing nation, as signs of 'civilisation' from

overseas were beginning to be used in New Zealand daily life. The fashioning of native timbers into contemporary furniture shows that New Zealand was becoming a producing nation, and raw materials such as trees were beginning to be used commercially, signifying a taming and ordering of the landscape.

There is a sign in this area which reads:

**New Ideas Change Our World**

- 1886 - Margaret Matilda White arrives in Auckland from Ireland. She becomes one of our important early photographers.
- 1889 - Artists from overseas have brought a new painting style - impressionism. Their paintings of fields and harbors glitter with light and colour.
- 1898 - William McLean imports the country's first car.
- 1904 - The Tuhoe tribe have had much of their land taken unjustly. A prophet rises up to lead them - Rua Kenana.

The first three items describe innovative imports from overseas being successfully used in New Zealand. The first two again underline the importance to the development of European-style art in New Zealand of overseas influences. The third item is also a 'new' import, and is like the household objects noted above, in that it involved the ordering of life along European lines.

The inclusion of Rua Kenana on this sign is somewhat ambiguous. Rua Kenana (translated as "Second Christ") likened the conditions of his contemporary Maori to that of the Jews in the Bible, and established a Maori settlement in the Ureweras. He disapproved of Pakeha and the way they lived, and prophesied the end of Pakeha rule and the return of Maori land. His discouragement of Maori participation in World War I aroused suspicion the suspicion of the Pakeha government and he was arrested and imprisoned, and the settlement he established was subsequently weakened (Bowen 2000:136). In light of his rejection of Pakeha values (with the exception of parts of the Bible), the inclusion of Rua Kenana on this list of "New Ideas" seems to be degraded when included on an equal basis with the other items on the sign. Possibly the "New Idea" could be the taking of land in the name of the Crown, or it could be the peaceful protest of this. As Rua Kenana was following another Maori leader, Te Kooti (*ibid.*), his ideas were not entirely new.

Further on in this section, *Parade* includes the floor plans for 10 Partick St, Petone, a bungalow built as part of an early state housing scheme, an inclusion that intimates nation-building and presents 1930s New Zealand as socially progressive. This display does not include any information regarding the negative effects of state housing schemes, for example the ghettos that were created as a result (Sanders 1996:49). The state housing scheme hence becomes in this context another symbol for progress, and for a government that cared for the working people of New Zealand.

This area also features an Activity Station containing objects made in New Zealand in the first half of the century, including a ceramic ashtray in the form of a tiki, and some cake decorations from the 1950s. The ashtray is another symbol of the assertion of harmonious melding of Maori and Pakeha cultures.

The sign on the Station reads:

**New Ideas Change Our World**

- 1926 - School of Maori Arts and crafts is established at Rotorua to help keep traditional arts and crafts alive.
- 1932 - the first New Zealand plastics factory is opened. From this new 'miracle' substance, the factory makes everything from telephone ear pieces to picnic sets.
- 1934 - Mickey Mouse makes his New Zealand cinema debut in *Plane Crazy*. He looks different from the Mickey Mouse that future generations will see.
- 1938 - Fleets of streamlined appliances are invading New Zealand homes. Our new irons, kettles and toaster look fast and powerful.

The Maori Arts and Craft School, perhaps influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement of Britain, was intended to train "artists in traditional forms so they can support marae-building in their tribal areas and supply the tourist market" (Beatson et al 1992:207). The sign does not make the link that this was occurring in the face of both mass production in such locations as plastic factories, and the importation of European art forms and practices. The other items listed on the sign are a mixture of imported technology. If the suggestion throughout *Parade* is that the new elements brought into New Zealand contributed to a new 'New Zealand' culture, this sign underlines this idea, as it shows an unproblematic co-existence of Maori tradition and imported design elements, icons and technology. The contradictions in the items listed on the sign seem to be smoothed over as ruptures between them are not highlighted. The tone here is one of abundance and fortune, for workers, consumers and Maori. The last items on the sign also emphasises "our" common heritage, again bringing the New Zealand audience together into one homogenous group.

Situated near the Activity Station are some paintings, mostly dated during the 1930s. The paintings include "No bus shelter here" by A. Lois White, which depicts a group of people huddled in the rain on a suburban street corner waiting for a bus, "Decorative motif" by Frances Hodgkins, which features a rust hued collection of objects, and "Party, Christmas Eve" by Harry Linley Richardson, which is a large bright portrait of the artist's family. These paintings hold in common that they are not focused on the landscape, but rather are images of people and objects created by people, and perhaps signaling a movement away from depicting the New Zealand landscape in art, and towards using images of the urban inhabitants of New Zealand.

Amongst these paintings are a collection of household items - chairs and a table made from rimu, a carpet with motifs of New Zealand native flowers, and a collection of ceramic pieces designed for Wedgwood, England. The first two items here show an enshrining of nature in household forms, as the New Zealand environment moved indoors. There is also a collection of photographs used in advertising for such products as women's hosiery and a petrol station, used between 1930 and the 1960s. This mixture also creates an associative montage (Eisenstein 1924:41), as the artistic value placed on the paintings by their placement near more profane household items, is conferred onto those items, due to the associations created by that placement. This mixture of 'art' and advertising can be read in terms of associative montage, making the assumptions that these items have been placed together to highlight their commonalities. Engaging this assumption, the inference here is that all these items are of equal importance and hold certain values – in this case relating to the development of 'New Zealand' – in common.

#### 4. *Te Aupouri Iwi - People of Smoke and Flame*

The Te Aupouri iwi are the current focus of Te Papa's series of Iwi Exhibitions. These are a series of exhibitions which focus on different iwi, integrated into various permanent exhibits within the museum, and hence there is a walled section of *Parade* which focuses on some artworks by people of the Te Aupouri iwi. This section of *Parade* is intended to:

Represent different periods in Te Aupouri's history and how we [Te Aupouri] have asserted who we are and retained what is ours (sign in *Parade*).

The works here directly address New Zealand politics and ideology. This sign positions Te Aupouri as a collective group separate from other groups in New Zealand, groups which *Parade* usually attempts to draw together via a discursive nationalism. The sign also situates the Te Aupouri Exhibition as speaking collectively for Te Aupouri.

One of the paintings here, "A Union Jack?" by Ralph Hotere, is a large black line drawing of a Union Jack on a white background. Hotere is considered to be "one of New Zealand's senior contemporary artists" and he expresses social and environmental concerns in much of his work (Caughey and Gow 1997:8). This painting asks "A Union Jack?" twice, once in block capitals, and once written backwards in untidy cursive handwriting, and a sign next to the work suggests that "this work seems to challenge the role of the British Crown in the affairs of Maori". This questioning of the apparent unity of Maori and colonising British contradicts much of the other imagery of *Parade*.

Also displayed in the Te Aupouri exhibit and offering a different narrative of New Zealand to that largely expressed in *Parade* are some works of Duncan Kapa, in his "Palisades" series

of installations. The series moves from the past to the future. The first work, "Palisades: One" consists of lengths of wood fashioned to resemble the sharpened palisades of a fortified pa. This "represents the immense value Te Paupouri placed on the protection of their mana, land, and treasures" against any ill-wishers, "including Queen Victoria and her representatives" (sign in *Parade*).

The second work in the series, "Palisades: Two" is a timber cross and an iron fence, and has a focus on the Treaty of Waitangi claim made by Te Aupouri. The work questions the legacy of the Treaty, giving an alternative view of Maori-Pakeha relationships. The themes in the work are described thus:

In this artwork iron - a material introduced by Pakeha – symbolically represents the values and structures of the new settlers, and the demolition of the structures of Maori (sign in *Parade*).



5.6 "Palisades: Three" by Duncan Kapa.

The third work in the series also highlights the imposition of structures on Maori by Pakeha, in this instance by the state. "Palisades: Three" is an upright black cross with a Union Jack made from twisted steel hanging from it. In front is a curved steel frame, hung with blue, black, yellow and red squares, some printed with the words "urban drift". This work is explained:

The materials used here reflect the state-made housing that Maori lived in after World War II, when many Maori in rural areas began moving to the cities. These new city dwellers had already suffered the suppression of their culture. Their children, too, would suffer - often losing links to their marae and language" (*ibid.*).

State housing, which was intended to be "a leg up for decent working-class families" on the road to home ownership (Sanders 1996:48). It has been claimed to have amounted to social

engineering by government, predicated as it was on assumptions of certain social norms, "primarily the nuclear family" (Leonard 1992:162), which is in opposition to traditional Maori family structures (Bowen 2000:36-7). Integration of Maori into Pakeha society was "official policy" by the early 1960s, and was "exemplified in state house 'pepper-potting', by which Maori are interspersed throughout Pakeha communities and thus prevented from maintaining their own networks" (Beatson et al 1992:206). The results of these policies for Maori included urban poverty and confusion of identity, as for Maori to continue to observe culture practices such as tangi and hui often meant loss of jobs because of Pakeha bosses who did not understand their significance, and hence Maori whanau structures were often lost (Bowen 2000:36-7). By the late-1960s, "state housing areas had become low-income ghettos, heavily populated by Maori and Pacific Island communities" (Sanders 1996:49). "Palisades: Three" invokes the losses experience by Maori who moved to the city and were housed there by the state.

The last of the works in Kapa's series looks to a more equitable future, in which "the Crown will acknowledge the wrongs that have been committed against Te Aupouri and publicly seek to right these" (sign in *Parade*). The work is made from aluminum and acrylic plastic, the transparent plastic intimating more clear and open processes between Maori and the state (*ibid.*).

Unlike the imagery of an unproblematic melding of cultures that is prevalent in much of *Parade*, Hotere's work questions the legitimacy of such narratives, while Kapa advocates a view of a harsh, overbearing British colonisation of Maori. This exhibition is an attempt by some Te Aupouri people to construct a different view of the colonisation of their forebears. This narrative is markedly different to the examples of official, state-driven nationalism displayed in the main area of *Parade*. The themes and intention of "Palisades: Three" are particularly interesting in light of the images of post-war Maori migration offered in the post-war section of *Parade*, which are markedly different to that which Kapa offers the viewer.

## 5. *Post-World War II*

Post-World War II New Zealand is explained in *Parade* by an arrangement of objects and a three-sided stand. One side of this stand displays covers from music records and the Maori magazine *Te Ao Hou*, published in the 1950s by the Department of Maori Affairs to give "a voice to Maori interest" (Beatson et al 1992:205). Here there is a large sign which discusses some of the effects of the post-war movement of Maori from rural areas into cities:

### Going to Town

At the end of WW II, Maori servicemen returned home from overseas with a much wider view of the world. At the same time, new factories were springing

up in New Zealand cities, and a new labour force was needed. These events saw an 'urban drift' of Maori from the country into the cities. From the cities, a new generation of Maori performers emerged. These artists experimented in different musical styles including jazz, opera, and pop. While these forms may not have been a new departure, their recordings had an unmistakable Maori flavor, with the performers injecting their own flair, interpretation, and style.

Offering a very different view from that of Duncan Kapa, this sign shows the movement of Maori into cities as a progressive merger of imported musical styles with indigenous ones. 'Urban drift' is here shown in terms of Maori contribution to already-established musical styles. The resulting musical forms are portrayed here in terms of their commodity-value, which is shown in the accompanying record covers. These take the second order of signification that Barthes discusses (Barthes 1972:132), as they become overlaid with mythic value, becoming in this context a celebration of Maori urban migration, and presenting it as unproblematic. The records displayed in this context are a perfect example of Barthes' myth, as myth "deprives the object of which it speaks of all History" (Barthes 1972:165), overlaying it with values that support the dominant ideology - in this case these deny the existence of racial disharmony in New Zealand. The reality of this migration is that when from 1939 to 1966 the urban Maori population rose from less than 10% to nearly 50% (Sanders 1996:49), ending the traditional separation of Maori and Pakeha "by town and country" (Smith and Callan 1999:256). The racist treatment many Maori encountered in large urban areas, as well as the resulting loss of whakapapa for many Maori (Bowen 2000:36-7), is ignored in this section of *Parade*.

Another side of this stand is called "Opening our eyes", and features a video of artist Janet Paul talking about the development of the post-war art scene in New Zealand. Paul highlights support for the arts from the Labour government of the 1930s and 1940s, but focuses largely on the Europeans who came to New Zealand fleeing fascism, bringing with them "food, traditions and design". Art in New Zealand hence began to be more influenced by America and the Pacific, and by Maori, more than the traditional influence of Europe. Paul sees that period as a beginning of a realisation of a "New Zealand way of seeing things" in relation to the creation of art. Her monologue has an emphasis on European art forms, and their implementation in New Zealand - another example of symbolic cultural melding in *Parade*, as the assumption is that these forms found a 'home' in New Zealand. It also asserts the existence of an art scene in New Zealand, and of an accompanying artistic canon, which in turn asserts an equality with the rest of the 'developed' world, and the art scenes found there.

The third side of the stand reads:

Europe vs. America – the Battle for New Zealanders' Taste

WWII is over but New Zealand is now a battleground of a different kind as American and European styles compete for followers. The USA's economy is booming. They send us floods of bright fancy products - cheap enough for almost everyone. In comparison, expensive European goods aim for simple elegance, making them popular with artists and academics.

#### High Drama vs. High Jinks

More and more New Zealanders pay to giggle and scream in front of the latest Hollywood movies. European theatre is often serious and introspective, reflecting important themes and issues.

#### Connoisseurs vs. Consumers

American corporations design goods to date fast so we'll keep buying the latest look. European wares are built to last so we can treasure them forever.

This places New Zealand at the centre of competitive international capital markets. Here, capitalism is shown as instrumental in the development of New Zealand tastes, as New Zealand is shown at the centre of a challenge to the traditional European style by the advent of heavy American industrialisation. This naturalises capitalism in the development of New Zealand on the one hand, while the abundance and choice of available commodities in New Zealand at that time is shown positively, demonstrating Benjamin's assertion of the use of commodities to promote visions of utopia (Benjamin 1973c:159; 176). Following Benjamin, Frisby argues that it is the advent of mass production, and the mass advertising and sales that accompany it, that cause the need for ever new commodities (Frisby 1985:256), and this display shows that by the late-1940s New Zealand was integrated into the global capitalist system.

Taken together, the three sides of this stand convey strong messages about New Zealand after World War Two. It depicts a society in which Maori and Pakeha have integrated well, and in which European artistic traditions are being furthered, while the population has become consumers of a wide variety of goods offered by the international market place. These are all signs of successful nationhood, and of progress, and their depiction here forms part of *Parade's* creation of discursive nationalism.

A partition behind this stand displays two negatives of photographs taken of geothermal areas and four paintings. One of these paintings, by Theo Schoon, is a series of stylised koru in white, red, black and yellow, as Schoon studied Maori art forms, which he recognised "as an often-ignored indigenous tradition" (sign in *Parade*). Another is a portrait by Rita Angus of Helen Histching, who opened one of New Zealand's first commercial art galleries in 1950s Wellington, and a third is a stylised landscape depicting the Hokianga River. Clearly some of these works were inspired by New Zealand's natural environment, though others were not, and this suggests that the land was no longer the only source of identity for New Zealand artists and citizens, probably due to increasing urbanization.

The suggestion that can be taken from a nearby collection of consumer items, is that New Zealanders were finding and asserting national identity in a new way - through consumer

choice and producing consumer durables. Included in this collection are, a scale model of a 1959 Cadillac Eldorado Biarritz car, a 1957 'Princess' foodmixer, a poster for the 1962 American film 'The Courtship of Eddie's Father', and a 1959 Kelvinator 'Foodarama 7' refrigerator, which is accompanied by copy from its original advertising campaign proclaiming its design to be far superior to that which it follows. Like other arrangements of consumer items mentioned earlier, these show the integration of capitalist values and the accompanying passing of fashions, and serve to elevate the commodities to the status of art. Here, too, is the suggestion that commercial design elements are equal to art, although the results and intention of design as differing from that of art is not mentioned. In terms of the implications of the influx of commodity goods in the post-war period for national identity in New Zealand, C. Bell asserts that displays of commodities suggest an equal opportunity to purchase, highlighting "the favoured ideological myth" in New Zealand at that time as "that of egalitarianism", a myth that had its origins in the colonial era (C. Bell 1996:12). It is important to note here that the manufacturers of the refrigerator paid a substantial amount of sponsorship money to Te Papa for the inclusion of this item in *Parade* (Preston 1999).

A painting by eminent New Zealand painter Colin McCahon, 'A Grain of Wheat', hangs along from the collection of consumer goods. The painting is of yellow and white words on a smudged black background, which read:

IN TRUTH in very truth a grain of wheat I tell you remains a solitary grain unless  
it falls into the ground and DIES but if it dies it becomes a rich harvest

Situated at a 90° angle to this is a collection of ceramic tableware made by Crown Lynn Potteries between 1952 and 1973. This tableware includes some plates and beakers featuring Maori design motifs made for Air New Zealand, and a centrepiece, also featuring Maori design motifs, commissioned for a World Exhibition. Along from these ceramic pieces is an early black and white television set, which plays a three minute video every eight minutes titled "You're Soaking in it: Kiwi television in the Sixties". This video features images from early television broadcasts in New Zealand, including clips of people criticising and praising television.

This area sees earlier themes again repeated. Examples of these are indigenisation through the use of Maori motifs on tableware, the elevation of the everyday mass produced tableware and television to the status of art, the emphasis of the impact and subsequent integration of a new innovation (television) on New Zealand.

## 6. 1970s to 1990s

Included in this section is a collection of four photographs taken during Maori protest campaigns of the 1980s. These are some of the only acknowledgements of Maori dissatisfaction in the main *Parade* area, although this is placed in the past, and the black and white images seem to share little with other images of Maori discussed above. There are also a collection of photographs of Maori taken by Ans Westra in 1964, depicting one day in the life of an East Coast Maori settlement. These photographs sparked much controversy at the time of their publication, as they were thought to have cast Maori as primitive, uncivilised and as having poor living conditions (sign in *Parade*) - perhaps a reference to earlier denials of the realities of Maori life.

Along the wall by the television set is a range of artworks, mostly oil paintings and one sculpture formed of brightly coloured fibre. Some of these paintings, such as Don Binney's "Puketotara, twice shy", an oil painting depicting a huge indigenous bird above a smaller hill, are obviously inspired by the New Zealand landscape. Others, such as Smither's painting of children eating breakfast, seem more influenced by people or constructed environments. One such example of the latter is Helen Brown's "State housing", which depicts the almost-identical state houses in geometric lines and muted colours. Brown often looked to the urban landscape in her work (sign in *Parade*), and this emphasises the influence of the realisation of the post-war suburban dream of stability and safety, which saw a change from the prevalence of 'man alone' iconography in painting to the use of suburban imagery (Leonard 1992:164).

Across from these artworks are two prototype kitchen appliances, which won a design award in 1996, and which "reflect innovative responses to changing lifestyles in New Zealand" (sign in *Parade*). These responsive innovations are also evident in the art mentioned above, and this juxtaposition repeats the earlier assertion that commercial design appears in *Parade* under the guise of art, implicated through the inclusion of design prototypes amongst a display of artworks. This is also asserted through the associative montage achieved by the placing of such objects in close proximity. The result of this association is an invocation New Zealand's egalitarian myth (C. Bell 1996:12), which in this example confers equal value on to both the art and the commodities.



5.6 The refrigerator displayed in *Parade*.

In the centre of this area is a free-standing static display which explains the history of boat building in New Zealand up until the winning of the America's Cup by a New Zealand-built yacht. The narrative here builds on the "Kiwi style" of boat building to a conclusion which announces "World domination". A video that runs every six minutes in this display discusses New Zealander Bruce Farr, whose yachting designs have won many international competitions. Farr explains success by New Zealanders in boat design through the isolation of New Zealand from 'the rest of the world', and New Zealand's natural environment. This display is another example of the way outside influences are appropriated and used in the New Zealand context. This example takes that formulation to its nationalistic conclusion, showing how New Zealanders have taken international technology and furthered it to become world leaders in that field. The narrative here is one of 'Kiwi ingenuity', with the yachts serving a function as mythic objects, inscribed with patriotic values.



5.7 "Kiwi Magicians" – the boat-building display in *Parade*.

In this area is another Activity Station. It is home to a collection of plastic All Black figurines, made for the Caltex petrol station chain in 1995, a sampling of New Zealand music releases from the early 1980s, a collection of memorabilia from the long-running television drama *Shortland Street*, and a handbag and headpiece designed for and worn at New Zealand gay and lesbian celebrations. For the most part, these are New Zealand-made

disposable items from popular culture, with the first three being shop-bought items. There is a ritual value ascribed to them - to the ritualistic celebration of gay culture, to the children's collection of All Black figurines, and to the popular nightly television soap opera. The latter two are good examples of myth, as they are nationally-identified objects which have an underlying ideological nature - encouraging a certain, accepted masculinity, encouraging certain behaviors, values and ways of living as fictionalised and ascribed on state television. Although the handbag and head piece show signs of subversions of the dominant ideology that these items promote, they still intimate that subcultures in New Zealand have a definite place. Of the inclusion of the all Black figurines, which were part of a petrol station sales promotion, Dalrymple claims that: "We are flattered into supposing that, merely by virtue of living and consuming, we are contributing greatly to civilization" (Dalrymple 1999).

The sign on this Activity Station reads:

**New Ideas Change Our World**

- 1972 - The first issue of *Broadsheet* is our. Two decades later it'll be one of the longest-running feminist magazines in the world.
- 1976 - Ronald McDonald says "giddyay!" as New Zealand's first McDonalds restaurant opens. In 20 years we'll have 100, serving over 55 million meals a year.
- 1981 - Maori open the first of many kohanga reo - early childhood centers where the Maori language can grow strong and healthy.
- 1986 - For years we loved the cartoon strip. Now *Footrot Flats* is New Zealand's first animated feature film.

The first, third and fourth of these are New Zealand assertions of something - the women's rights movements, the indigenous language, a popular cartoon expression of rural New Zealand life. Taking into account the rest of *Parade*, the assertion here is that New Zealand can now create traditions of its own. Although the importation of McDonalds is a curious inclusion in this light, it does emphasise that New Zealand is a participant in the global capital market, able to boast Americana along with nearly every other country in the world. This inclusion suggests that that consumer consumption of American products (symbolised by McDonalds) is a sign of success in the same way that consumerism was shown in the post-war section. Ironically, one of the consequences global marketplace that results in the availability of such products is that:

As national cultures become more exposed to outside influences [such as these] it is difficult to preserve cultural identities intact, or to prevent them from becoming weakened through cultural bombardment and infiltration (Hall 1992:302).

Therefore, it does seem that in the image-building project that Te Papa is engaged in there is a contradiction between the impetus to be involved in, and to be seen to be involved in, the global economy, and the desire to create and maintain the image of a unique New Zealand national identity.

## Summary

*Parade* creates a narrative of people of different cultures coming together to contribute new traditions to a new collective New Zealand culture. This national mythology, encapsulated in such items as the silver and pounamu goblets exhibited in *Parade*, is suggestive of a new, egalitarian culture and an unproblematic melding of cultures. When viewed in light of the migration that followed the colonial period, it is important to note that:

While New Zealand is a nation of immigrants....Much of New Zealand's history has included resistance to newcomers, for instance to the Chinese miners and merchants in the 1880s and more recently in the 1990s (C. Bell 1996:7).

The imagery of unproblematic melding of Maori and Pakeha cultures that is prevalent in much of *Parade* is also denied in the Te Aupouri exhibit. The "New Ideas" signs attached to the Activity Stations show a definite view of a melding of new, imported innovations, into the developing New Zealand identity.

The use of collective nouns in signs throughout *Parade* has the same result as the use of associative montage in the exhibit. Eisenstein used such montage to highlight likeness (Eisenstein 1924:40-1), and in *Parade* the effect is used to assert a commonality between the objects displayed there, which is in turn used to construct a national narrative in which these objects are important to all New Zealanders. The effects of this are varied. One is the assumption that the experiences involved in the advent, production and aftermath of the objects and movements described in *Parade* is the same for all New Zealanders - again, this is evidenced in the signs that emphasise the New Zealand population as a collective. This constructs what Eisenstein referred to as an "ideological plot" (*ibid.* 1925:60-1), a production with no identifiable hero or storyline, but with definite themes, and this is designed to encourage certain audience reactions. In the example of *Parade*, the themes are of national unity, a collective national population with similar experiences. This creates the "social cohesion" that A. Bell asserts is necessary in the continuation of the nation. Another effect of the associative montage of *Parade* is that mass produced items, some produced offshore, are shown as being just as important to New Zealand nationalism as artworks. The result that this has is that it encourages the audience to perceive the same importance in the creation of both artworks and industry-produced items. My analysis here is economic, as I believe that this encourages New Zealanders to create, or be involved in the creation of, mass-produced items, and gives the impression that this participation is part of being a 'New Zealander', of being involved in the nation. This supports the dominant ideology of New Zealand, which is inherently capitalist.

The encouragement of the New Zealand audience to participate in the economy is also apparent in the commodities displayed in *Parade*, particularly in the post-World War II section. Like the use of products of industry to create images of a utopic future at the World

Exhibitions (Benjamin 1973c), *Parade* fetishises commodity items, placing them in the national museum, with the inference that being involved in the production or consumption of such items is for the national good. This partly results in a theme of the commodity-as-symbol-of-national-identity, which can be seen in the carpet patterned with motifs of native flowers.

Commodities displayed in *Parade* are used to create a progressive history of New Zealand. This is underlined in the original advertising which accompanies the refrigerator, which depicts a life-sized woman smiling hugely, while the copy claims that new design elements incorporated into the product will ensure an easier life ahead for the consumer. These items point to a history aided by industry, in which New Zealanders had access to an abundance of up-to-date conveniences, a view supported elsewhere in *Parade*, which shows the availability in New Zealand of American hamburgers in a similar light. The record covers displayed on the "Going to Town" sign have a similar effect, as they intimate social progress as a result of post-war urban migration of Maori, which was often a means of economic survival.

Part of theme of national unity in *Parade* seen in the repeated use of collective nouns can also be seen in the clear narrative of Maori and Pakeha harmoniously brought together via technology, as shown in *Whakaoratia*. Technology, in this instance, is portrayed as aiding and enabling the unproblematic and agreeable melding of cultures. In this construction, the mixing of cultures is shown without reference to the unequal power balance that any colonisation inherently involves.

The symbolic melding of Maori and Pakeha partly involves indigenisation - the 'New Zealand' flavor added to imported international traditions, ideas and forms. Examples of this can be found throughout *Parade*, in items such as a tiki-shaped ashtray, the 'New Zealand'-flavoured Christmas cards, and ceramic ware and household items featuring Maori motifs. What this neglects is the inclusion of art forms that are indigenous to New Zealand, which in turn intimates that many, if not all, of the 'important' aspects of New Zealand's visual history are basically limited to the post-contact introduction and re-shaping of outside traditions. Although traditional Maori forms appear in abundance in Te Papa in its Maori exhibit, *Mana Whenua* they only briefly appear in *Parade*, the "walk through New Zealand's visual history", and largely appear there where they have been super-imposed onto European forms.

The indigenisation that can be seen in objects in *Parade* provide a good example of Barthes assertion of the use of everyday objects to support and perpetuate ideology (Barthes 1972). The objects mentioned above support the idea that European colonisers had a place in Aotearoa, and that Pakeha continue to have a place in New Zealand. These items serve as myth-objects, with a second order of signification that supports the status quo. Other items

in *Parade* serve to do the same, such as the plastic All Black figurines, the greeting cards, and some of the crockery, which construct myth which naturalise capitalism (Barthes 1972:56). The myth in these examples is that by buying mass-produced objects such as these, New Zealanders can further participate in the national collective. These goods provide access to a national identity that can be bought.

*Parade* attempts to draw New Zealanders together, often smoothing over contradictions and encouraging a view of the nation that is cohesive and without rupture. Contradictions are positioned firmly in the past, and the principle narrative it underlines is one of togetherness and shared experiences. Economic concerns play a substantial part in the narrative *Parade* seeks to establish, and participation in the global economy by New Zealanders is depicted in patriotic terms.

## Chapter Six: *Golden Days*



6.1 The *Golden Days* exhibit. (Image taken from Te Papa website).

### Thesis Statement

This chapter is the final analysis chapter in this thesis, and it focuses on another of Te Papa's long term exhibits, *Golden Days*. This is a small movie theatre with a wide screen and seating for approximately twenty people. The theatre has been designed to resemble a second-hand store, and is crammed with old tins, pieces of machinery, ornament and bric-a-brac. The film runs three times an hour and consists of a frenetic montage of single shots and longer sequences, the majority of which were generally 'big' new stories at the time they originally screened. Parallel to the film images the set also features in the action, as parts of it light up and become animated at certain times during the screening.

Te Papa calls the result "a startling piece of 'walk-in-theatre'" (Te Papa website) and describes the film as "a magical drama" featuring "the key moments in the life of our country" (*ibid.*). These "key moments" are arranged thematically, and from a narrative of New Zealand's development. Te Papa's Communications Coordinator, Georgina Stephenson claims that *Golden Days* "celebrates our pioneer spirit, from the sowing of the land, the development of our international exports, to the harnessing of our enormous energy resources" (Stephenson quoted in Mason 1998). This reflects the thematic narrative that the film creates.

The idea that the footage in *Golden Days* depicts a narrative through the use of images arranged together is fundamental to this analysis. The film takes the form of a plot with not individualised characters, which is close to the film work of Eisenstein, as seen in films such as *Strike* (1924). As such, Eisenstein's theories are used in this analysis, as are ideas about the way that the 'nation' is constructed using narrative, following such theorists as Bhabha (1990) and Hall (1992). This analysis also asserts that the narrative of *Golden Days* is progressive and highlights the economic development of New Zealand, therefore Benjamin's theories concerning the assumption of progressive history and commodity fetishism are also important (Benjamin 1989). Finally, Te Papa's assertion that *Golden Days* uses images of the reflect essential characteristics and moments in New Zealand history is linked in this analysis to the examination of myths in French daily life undertaken by Barthes in *Mythologies* (1972).

## Introduction

*Golden Days* curator, film and television director Steven La Hood, was given a brief to create “an exhibition that promoted Kiwi identity in a celebratory way” (Courtney 1998). Of *Golden Days* La Hood says: “I certainly don’t have a problem with reflecting that New Zealand is a young country that does things really well” (La Hood quoted in *ibid.*). Te Papa describes the film as “a speeded-up collage of memories and events, glorious achievements, dark days, and finest hours” (Te Papa 1998). Considering this assertion in light of the name of the exhibit, it is clear that *Golden Days* has been conceived to look back at the ‘golden days’ of New Zealand’s past. The past is considered here to be “Golden”, and the connotations of this naming are that the past moments presented in the film are eternally precious and timeless.

The ‘set’ of the exhibit is entered through a short corridor. This entrance-way and the main area of *Golden Days* are arranged to appear as a New Zealand second-hand store, strewn with the type of merchandise found in such places. Included amongst these items are birdcages, old lawnmowers, advertising signs, commemorative memorabilia, household items, and childrens’ toys. There are about twenty-five assorted old chairs for the viewers to watch the film from, while the screen at the beginning of the film shows a street scene taken from inside the window of a Wellington second-hand shop, Chas Goodman and Son.

While the set firmly positions *Golden Days* as looking to the past, so too does the range of images included in the film. The film shows New Zealand sportspeople and performers, as well as New Zealand workers and industries such as agriculture and building, among other. These images are largely taken from film and television archives, with the bulk of the images originating in the era of colour television, hence the history *Golden Days* highlights is limited to the last seventy years. This restricts this “celebration of what makes us tick” (Te Papa website) largely to events that have occurred in the twentieth century, and have been considered, mostly by news-makers, to have been worthy of filming. The result of this is that the images are easily recognisable to people who have lived in New Zealand, especially those who have watched the news or kept up with ‘current events’, as *Golden Days* largely emphasises moments and events that have been previously highlighted as important by the mainstream media. The role of this media in the underpinning of ideology has been examined by theorists such as Abel (1997), who investigated the New Zealand television news coverage of the 1990 Treaty of Waitangi commemorations. She found that in these representations, “the dominant discourse, the ‘one people’ ideology, was treated as ‘commonsense’, while the oppositional discourse was scarcely heard” (Abel 1997:41). Hence the use of news footage in *Golden Days* can be considered an ideological bias, one which skews the representation of New Zealand found there towards certain themes, such as that of a unified nation, as underlined by Abel.

As already mentioned, I perceive the film to be arranged to form a narrative, and my analysis follows the sections of this narrative. The images, largely, are arranged sequentially in thematic clusters, with, for example, images of sporting victories appearing simultaneously on the screen, or one after the other. My perception of the film is in the context of the way that such narratives are constructed in order to help distinguish nations from one another, and create “social cohesion” within those nations (A Bell 1999:4). National narratives are intended to foster unity within the nation and often involve the use of stereotypes. The use of discursive nationalism in Te Papa is official in nature and support.

In the cinema of Sergei Eisenstein, montage was often used in the way that it is in *Golden Days*, to create an “ideological plot” (Eisenstein 1925:61), as can be seen in *Strike*, in which a group of people, the working class, is the collective hero (*ibid.* p.59), and the film is specifically calculated to elicit certain reactions from the intended audience (*ibid.* pp.60-1). The *Golden Days* film casts New Zealand citizens as the collective hero of the narrative, and is designed to evoke from the audience identification with images of that collective hero. The montage used in *Golden Days*, however, is not the dialectical montage Eisenstein often favoured, which was based on “the collision between two shots that are independent of one another” (Eisenstein 1929b:163). In this way meaning was constructed using conflicts in the juxtaposition of opposed signs, and the meanings arising from this dialectic pointed to contradictions in an ideological system. Eisenstein cites an example of this as occurring in *October* (1928) through a montage of images of religious idols which followed a reconstruction of “Kornilov’s march on Petrograd...under the banner “In the Name of God and Country”. Eisenstein states that “the images increasingly disagree with our concept of God, inevitably leading to individual conclusions about the true nature of all deities”, which he sees as false and arbitrary (Eisenstein 1929b:154). *Golden Days* relies on the less-utilised associative montage, which instead is based on similarities which can smooth over contradictions, such as those between images of workers ‘building’ New Zealand and images of protesters. In this example the association between the sets of images is the positive nature of both sets of actions, despite negative public feeling towards those protesting at the time. Associational montage was used by Eisenstein “to create graphic similarities” (Bordwell 1993:46), such as in *Strike* (1924), where

the montage of the killing of the workers is actually a cross montage of this carnage with the butchering a bull in an abattoir. Though the subjects are different, ‘butchering’ is the associative link (*ibid.* p.147).

In the cinema of Eisenstein, as in the film used in *Golden Days*, independent units combine to create a greater meaning or a meaning greater than the sum of its parts (Eisenstein 1926b:141). The thematic linking Eisenstein used in both associative and dialectic montage (Eisenstein 1924:46) is important to the creation of the national narrative *Golden Days* purports and

perpetuates, as the association created in *Golden Days* assumes a fundamental similarity in all the images, one which involves the nation.

Parts of the film in *Golden Days* focus on images of agriculture, forestry and other New Zealand industries, which in producing commodities, such as wool and timber, are shown as part of the building of a New Zealand utopia. This can be analysed using Benjamin's theories regarding the use of commodities to evoke in their consumers a utopic vision of the future (Benjamin 1989:159; 176). The New Zealand economy, via these images, is heavily implicated in the "golden days" of New Zealand's past, supporting the perpetuation of the capitalist economy in New Zealand, in a similar way to how Benjamin saw commodities naturalising capitalism (McRobbie 1994:105). Although the methods are different, the naturalisation of capitalism is the same. Just as Benjamin saw the World Exhibitions as depicting a future, which, with the aid of the products of capitalism, would progress towards abundance and equality (Buck-Morss 1989:86-9), so too does *Golden Days* progress, partly through the use of images of nation-building, to present images of an abundant nation. Here, the link between the nation and the state, through representations such as those which appear at World Exhibitions and national museums, is clear, as the state creates and maintains images of the nation (A Bell 1999:205). The images in the *Golden Days* film follow a progression to a celebratory conclusion, and this progression is also evocative of Benjamin's rejection of the idea of social progress (Benjamin 1989:68). The pattern in which history is usually recounted, that of a cycle of rise and decline (Benjamin 1989:44; 47-8), is implicit in the narrative of the film, as images of disaster are followed by images of triumph, with the overall effect being one of progressing towards a utopia.

The images used in *Golden Days* are also examples of what Barthes terms "the materials of mythic speech" (Barthes 1973:123). The purpose of myth is that "it transforms history into nature" (*ibid.* p.140), and in *Golden Days*, the historic (the building of New Zealand, sporting wins, coping with disasters) is shown to be part of the nature of the New Zealand citizen. In this myth we can again we can see the hand of the state in the symbolic unification of the nation, as a unified nation is the goal of official nationalism (A. Bell 1999).

When Barthes analysed the photography exhibition, "The Great Family of Man", he asserted it assumed that the people from all over the world depicted in it shared "a universal human nature" (*ibid.* p.101). *Golden Days*, which also engages a range of seemingly unrelated images, supports the notion of a universal New Zealand nature. Examining another myth, Barthes maintains that the production of wine "is deeply involved in French capitalism" parallel to its use as a mythic signifier of French-ness (*ibid.* p.61). Images of agriculture and forestry are used in *Golden Days* to define something apparently important and intrinsic about the use of the New Zealand landscape and the nature of the New Zealand people, making the assumption that landscape is implicated in the national character. Images of different uses of that landscape also

promote the continuation of the New Zealand economy. Indeed, the point that “The function of myth in bourgeois culture is to obscure the manufactured nature of that very culture” (McGowan 1995:26), can be applied to the use of myth by Te Papa, representing the state, in *Golden Days*, whereby the manufactured signifiers of “New Zealand” appear natural and unconstructed, and where part of their function is to support the continuation of the New Zealand economy.

### The Exhibit

Upon entering the main area of the exhibit and sitting in one of the arranged chairs, the viewer is facing the screen, with the foreground covered in a variety of old objects, such as household items and children’s toys. The screen shows a street scene of people on their way home from work at the end of the day, taken from inside a shop window. A man appears on screen, and pulls some bars down over the window, as the set simultaneously dims. A clock standing among the second-hand items lights up and strikes five, then winds back, which positions in the past the images in the film which follow.

### *Infancy*

After the lights dim an old radio in the set lights up while the soundtrack plays snippets from the radio as though the stations were being changed, and a voice announces the National Radio birdcall before a Warehouse store advertising jingle plays. The viewer then hears an exchange between a talkback radio host and a caller, with the host (well known New Zealander and ex-Member of Parliament Pam Corkery) telling the caller “don’t give me that ‘young nation’ crap”. At these words the screen changes from the darkened street scene to a shot which pans over the sea, while a ship in the set lights up, perhaps to signify Pakeha migration to New Zealand, and the soundtrack plays the sound of a baby crying. The screen changes again to a sequence featuring a woman pushing a baby in a push-chair while a man runs ahead of them to take a video of the baby. The shot pulls in tight on the video camera the man is holding and the screen changes again. A bassinet in the set lights up and rocks, while the soundtrack plays a lullaby tune, then a photograph album in the set is spotlighted and opens by itself; these seem to symbolise youth and recent history, respectively.

It is at this point that the film montage begins. While the lullaby soundtrack plays, snapshots and shots taken from home videos of babies and children, as well as film shots featuring nurses from the Plunket Society, formed by government to improve the care of mothers and babies (Homer 1990:145), stream across the screen. The different ethnicities of the babies reflect the different places that settlers to New Zealand traveled from, and their youth mirrors the “young country” that La Hood mentions, asserting a nation with little past. They also reflect the assertion that by 1900 “when people talked about the [New Zealand] nation they often talked about

children, who were to become the nation” (Bassett et al 1998:152). This was perhaps because at that time New Zealand had little ‘past’ for European inhabitants, but also can be seen as utopian in the focus on the future.

Images of babies are replaced by sequences taken from school playground, fairground, and beach scenes. Here, too, are images of other leisure pursuits, including table tennis and darts, as well as picnics and parties, and while some of these are shown some mechanical toys in the set, fashioned to resemble fairground attractions, light up and spin. Following all of this are some shots of Queen Elizabeth during her 1953 tour of New Zealand, which are shown as ‘God Save the Queen’ plays on the audio track. The final shot of Queen Elizabeth shows her waving from the back of a train carriage, which leads into a series of shots of trains and holiday images which are shown while up-tempo fairground music plays. Included here are shots of the beach, caravans and bungee jumping, as well as shots of rural school Calf Days, indicating the early prevalence of rural-based communities in New Zealand (Homer 1990:139).

Generally this movement of the film represents early New Zealand. The shot taken across the water and the ship indicate the movement by successive migrating people to New Zealand, although the ship which simultaneously lights up resembles a nineteenth century passenger vessel, which is reflective only of Pakeha settlers and omits the earlier migration by Maori. The images of the Queen demonstrate the now-diminished close relationship that the New Zealand state held with the British monarchy in the earlier years of New Zealand. The scenes that feature children playing, holidays and fairgrounds, and the images of babies, suggest a naiveté and optimism in New Zealand’s early years. There is a definite link between the “young nation” quote featured in the soundtrack and the youthful New Zealand shown in this sequence, and the cheerful fairground music points to an optimism and vitality.

This section is the first indication of the way that montage will be used in the film, and of the effect that the montage associations provoke. In Eisenstein’s use of montage, a message which “is graphically undepictable” is calculated to arise out of the juxtaposition of images (Eisenstein 1929a:30). In this section of the film, the conclusion I draw is that the images are used to create the beginning of the narrative, and give the impression of youth and optimism. The images of babies combine with other images of New Zealand, to result in an impression of a young country, literally with it’s whole life ahead of it – an impression which denies the reality of the first people to settle in this country, Maori, who had already established traditions and ways of living in the ‘new’ country. The Queen appears in this sequence as an older family member whose care, the audience knows, has been outgrown, so we can see the way that the messages of the film rely in part on the knowledge that the audience brings.

### *Transport and the environment*

Consistent with the previous shots of a 'young' New Zealand, the next images of transport in the film are of an early mode of transport, the horse and cart. This is followed by shots of cars, boats, a train, a bicyclist, and a group of people tramping. These images all show people travelling through the New Zealand countryside and reflect the importance of the development of transport infrastructure for New Zealand's national development (A. Bell 1999:77; C. Bell 1996). In New Zealand the period of major railway building between 1870 and 1890 (Dalziel 1990:108) meant that "New Zealanders could travel through the country more easily" (Bassett et al 1998:115), as the film reflects. The development of roads and railways to remote areas of New Zealand meant increased settlements (Dalziel 1990:107), as the landscape came under increasing Pakeha control.

The transport imagery indicates a taming of the landscape, and increased accessibility to it, which in turn led to increased opportunity for outdoor leisure pursuits. These shots of travelling through the landscape are followed by some of fishing, geysers and mountains, aspects of the New Zealand outdoors which are used for leisure activities by local people and tourists both from New Zealand and overseas. This is a similar use of the New Zealand landscape as that shown to have been used at the 1906 Exhibition in Chapter Four, which was designed to both impress the overseas visitor, and to encourage collective nationalism among New Zealand citizens by reinforcing the already-established identification of the landscape as intrinsic to New Zealand's national identity. The use of the land here also symbolises 'progress', the process through which the land is no longer a primary commodity but a scene of enjoyment.

As this sequence suggests, transport was pivotal to the development of tourism in New Zealand, as tourism in New Zealand began to develop after 1900, due to difficulties in reaching and travelling through New Zealand prior to that time (Watson 1998:19). Watson draws a link between the development of transport and the development of tourism in New Zealand, and states that "tourism grew as settled society and new transport technology provided improving access to New Zealand's attractions" (*ibid.* p.25). *Exhibiting Ourselves* show a similar view, as the depictions of the landscape in 1906 and 1992 were predicated on the images designed to encourage tourism.

That the landscape is linked with the pursuit of leisure in *Golden Days* signals the integration of the economy in the narrative *Golden Days* creates. This is similar to the promotion of the landscape as a key component in the leisure industry at the 1906 Exhibition. In both examples, the landscape becomes commodified, taking on the appearance of a series of paid-for experiences.

Barthes discusses the way that the landscape 'becomes' myth as certain images of it are used to promote certain experiences, for example images of mountains in the *Blue Guide* are used to promote a more 'authentic' experience when travelling through the landscape of Europe (Barthes 1973:74-5). In the same way, in this section of the film the landscape becomes something ordered through the implementation of efficient transport routes, and subsequently enjoyed through leisure pursuits. This section also signals the way in which the landscape is a key in the imagery of national identity in New Zealand, despite the fact that the bulk of New Zealanders live in the city.

Linking this section to the next is a sequence featuring the man, woman and baby who appeared earlier in the film. They are outdoors and the man is pitching a tent, when the woman looks to the horizon and points, saying "look, look at this". The screen fills with dark storm clouds, and the next section of the film begins.

### *Death and disaster*

Following the looming clouds on the screen are a series of images of storms, including trees bending in gale-force winds and flooded streets, and simultaneously a curtain which hangs from a rod in the set is lit up and rustles as though in the wind. The screen and set then go momentarily black before a television that is part of the exhibit comes to life, showing archive footage of a news reader conveying news of the Wahine ferry disaster of 1968. The film screen then shows images of the ferry wreck and rescue, followed by shots of the train derailment at Tangiwai in 1953 which via the soundtrack is announced by Queen Elizabeth while a biscuit tin featuring her image lights up in the set. Footage on the screen at this point includes shots of the Erebus plane crash of 1979, the 1947 fire in Christchurch department store Ballantynes, as well as of floods, erupting volcanoes, fires and the aftermath of various natural disasters.

Images of disaster are followed by images of human death, including some of a huge funeral cortege and a sequence showing a series of coffins, including some of well-known New Zealanders such as childhood AIDS victim Eve Van Graffhorst and poet James K Baxter. While these are shown, the background on the screen is of umbrellas being blown by rain and wind across the screen, while a rain effect makes it seem as though rain is puddling onto the images themselves. The music in the background is male voices, slowly singing "There'll be blue birds over the white cliffs of Dover, tomorrow, just wait and see".

All of this depicts disaster and tragedy, and a loss of innocence. The optimistic shots of children, transport and the environment are here replaced by a shattering of calm optimism. The human results of the disasters depicted, that is the rescue or death and subsequent mourning of survivors and victims, show people coming together as equals and peers – exactly what New

Zealand national narratives aim to reflect and create (A. Bell 1999). This sequence can also be interpreted as a rebellion of the land against the ordering imposed by transport systems and settlement. When viewed in this way, later shots regarding the development of farming and forestry show that New Zealanders can overcome the forces of nature.

The images of transport which directly precede this section combine with these images to create an impression of a rebellious landscape that is ultimately tamed. Following the earlier images this section of the film evidences a cycle of rise and decline, which at the close of the film, ends in triumph. Benjamin saw the depiction of history in this way, and the accompanying expectation of ultimate improvement of social conditions, as false (Benjamin 1989:44; 47-8), however this is the pattern that the narrative of the film is taking.

Shifting the emphasis of this section towards a series of different images is a change in the music, which becomes more up-tempo as the performers, popular early 1960s performers The Howard Morrison Quartet, appear on screen cheerfully singing “and there’ll be love, love and laughter, peace ever after, tomorrow, when the world is free...and the valley will bloom again...”. This is one of the only images of Maori in the film, and is very similar to the “Going to Town” image of Maori in the *Parade* exhibit. Like that depiction, in this case the realities of life for Maori at that time, such as poor housing conditions and a denigration of Maori culture by the wider society (Bowen 2000:36-7), are not addressed or mentioned, and Maori are shown primarily as entertainers.

### *Building the nation: the land*

As the Quartet sing “and the valley will bloom again” the screen fills with an image of a cow eating grass, and then Ches ‘n Dale, the cartoon character mascots of Chesdale Cheese, appear on the screen, singing the Chesdale jingle: “We are the boys from down on the farm...”. This leads into a series of sequences showing the agricultural industry in New Zealand. Included here are shots of sheep shearing, freezing works, milking, the New Zealand Beef logo, animal carcasses, and meat being loaded onto container ships. Following the disaster imagery, these shots depict an element of building in the face of adversity, and of overcoming the elements, and of making productive use of nature.

In terms of the narrative *Golden Days* is developing, and as pointed out in *Parade*, farming was beginning to become predominant in the New Zealand economy in the 1880s, and this gradually replaced the extractive industries prominent in New Zealand’s display at the Great Exhibition of 1851. The invention of refrigerated ships in the early 1880s furthered New Zealand’s agricultural exports and industries (Gardner 1992:57; Basset et al 1998:104).

Farming, supported by stronger transport links, and paralleling the development of the tourism industry in New Zealand, gained particular strength in the early years of the twentieth century (Brooking 1992:422). In light of these links, it is clear that a key component of *Golden Days* is focused on the ordering of the natural environment and its subsequent use, particularly with regard to its role in the development of the New Zealand economy.

As already established, the film is following a cycle of decline and rise, a convention of historical storytelling identified by Benjamin (Benjamin 1989). The landscape in this instance is being conquered, following depictions of its disorderly and unpredictable nature, hence creating a narrative of decline and subsequent rise. Benjamin's work concerning commodity fetishism can also be applied here, as the landscape is shown as an integral part of an abundant future in which the abundance is predicated on the landscape. This occurs in a similar way to the representation of the landscape in the New Zealand display at the 1851 Exhibition, which demonstrates the historical convention behind this type of representation of New Zealand.

Following the agricultural sequence is a series of images focussing on the forestry industry, which during the post-war era joined traditional agricultural products to become an important export industry for New Zealand (Hawke 1992:416). Here there are shots of pine seedlings while the audio states that these "must be planted now for the future", followed by a pan shot of mature forest. Again, this imagery is about the development of the nation, and the economy, and is similar to the images of children used earlier in the film, as in the imagery of both babies and seedlings, both of which will grow, the suggestion of an abundant future is evoked.

The use of seedlings – commodities of the future – also implicates the economy this abundant future. The economic basis of New Zealand's economy was from early on based in the land. The sequences focussing on farming and forestry, as well as the subsequent one depicting technology, highlight the development and growth of the New Zealand economy. These images of progress show that there is an economic impetus behind the development of the nation, and that the national narrative *Golden Days* is building is partly predicated on the development of industry and the economy.

### *Building the nation: technology*

This sequence is linked to the previous one as the end product of forestry, logs, are shown being used as building materials. The first shots here are of the building of suburban New Zealand, symbolising the making of a home by migrant New Zealanders, and are followed by shots of finished houses, gardens, lawnmowing and other domestic chores – the outdoors shots showing the tendency at that time to build houses on quite large sections. In his book on life in New Zealand in the early 1970s, Austin Mitchell commented that New Zealand homes are

large when compared to those overseas (Mitchell 1972), and he also noted the prevalence in New Zealand of domestic activity, including gardening and building projects. The images used in this section reflect the “suburban sprawl” of the post-war era in New Zealand (Gustafson 1990:266), when extraordinarily high numbers of houses were built (Basset et al 1998:171). What these don’t depict is “the depressing everyday reality” that many women encountered in such environments during the 1950s and beyond, due to a lack of public transport, social networks, and sometimes even basic amenities (Smith and Callan 1999:185).

The screen then shows a series of images of the building industry in New Zealand, including the construction of urban buildings. The soundtrack at this point mentions “New Zealand engineers and New Zealand workers”, as the screen shows shots of New Zealand cities. These fuse into a series of shots of hydro-electric dams, mechanised cow milking, power cables, electrical fences, and batteries, and then progress into shots of a New Zealand-designed Britten motorcycle and images of the first moon landing, with the flag altered to resemble the New Zealand flag. An animated image of New Zealand scientist Ernest Rutherford speaking is shown while some test tubes in the exhibits’ set light up. Rutherford, who was awarded a Nobel Prize in 1908 for his contribution to the field of nuclear physics (Smith and Callan 1999:72), features on the New Zealand \$100 note and is both one of New Zealand’s best-known people, and one of only a few individuals featured in the film to this point.

These images show the establishment of the building industry in New Zealand, which has an early basis in the forestry industry, hence the commodification of the land depicted earlier is continued. However, unlike the earlier depiction of this commodification, *Golden Days* does not hide the conditions of production but holds them up as part of the utopian dream, in which employment is also abundant. What is hidden in this representation is “the systematic exploitation of workers that is inherent to the capitalist system (Edgar 1999:53), and the fact that it is not workers who control this system. Instead, the film shows the workers in control of the production, denying the reality of economics in which the workers have very little control of fundamental aspects of their own employment.

The ‘building’ aspect of this sequence shows increased development of the New Zealand landscape, and the beginnings of suburban sprawl. People are shown here working together and as becoming more settled in concrete suburban areas. The aspect of *Golden Days*’ national narrative emphasises working together and living in certain communities, ideologically supporting development and certain ways of living.

### *Protest*

This section of the film begins with a comedy skit featuring well-known New Zealand comedian Billy T James. It depicts some Maori chiefs talking to some English men circa the early 1800s. One Englishman says "I want to bring my ship into your bay" but the Maori chief shakes his head. The Englishman asks "You say no to the greatest power in the world? – why?" and the chief turns around his staff to reveal a nuclear-free logo on the other side. This sketch is intercut with images of the Rainbow Warrior ship, a Greenpeace protest vessel bombed by French agents in the 1980s, nuclear power protesters and mushroom clouds, while the skit itself gives the impression of New Zealand as a small nation which will stand up against far stronger nations in order to do what is 'right'.

This use of comedy has several effects. In the first instance, it emphasises the colonisation of New Zealand, suggesting that Britain was at the time "the greatest power in the world", however the images of the men on the beach are peaceful, despite the conflict between the two groups, which downplays the violence involved in colonisation. Intercutting footage of angry protesters with the comedy sketch makes a link between the colonisation of Maori and French nuclear testing in the Pacific, implying that the latter is another form of colonisation. The New Zealand viewer of the comedy sketch is encouraged to identify with the Maori, rather than the British, hence the Pakeha New Zealand viewers are encouraged to view themselves as indignised, and ultimately the use of comedy in the film diffuses the effect of colonisation of Maori.

The images of anti-nuclear protest are followed by a series of shots of other protests: Maori land rights protests, including the 1975 march from Northland to Wellington "to protest not just the failure to return confiscated land but is continued confiscation" by government (Smith and Callen 1999:212); anti Vietnam war peace marches; and protests demanding better rights and conditions for women. Shots are shown of bloodied protesters and violent clashes between police and protesters, as well as of the 1981 protests against the tour of New Zealand by the South African rugby team, which protesters argued communicated support for South African apartheid.

From being divisive issues in New Zealand – the best example of this being the 1981 tour – many of the issues depicted here are no longer contentious, and the results of many of these protests are now accepted as part of the official history of this nation. One example of this is the anti-nuclear protests that had a high media profile in the 1980s, while now New Zealand's nuclear-free status is largely accepted, and is now seen in quite idealistic terms – "nuclear free New Zealand" is often also seen as "clean, green New Zealand". The association of the protest movement with others focussed on the rights of Maori and women gives the impression that those issues, like the nuclear issue, have also been resolved and have contributed to a peaceful contemporary New Zealand.

While the film touches on these protests, they are all positioned firmly in the past. More recent large protests, such as those against global capital and free trade policies including those at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Auckland in 1995 and the APEC Meeting in 1999, the nation-wide protests and effigy burnings against the 1990 cuts to Welfare benefits, or student protests against user-pays models in education, are omitted from the *Golden Days* narrative. In this way, the impression is given that New Zealanders protested in the past, but that these issues are largely resolved, and protest is no longer a part of New Zealand culture, perhaps with the intimation that there is no longer a need for it. Again, this part of the narrative suggests a decline and rise progression, and the following section depicts a subsequent rise.

### *Sport*

Footage from the 1981 protests link to a series of shots depicting sport. These include a sequence depicting the last moments of a rugby world cup final in extra time which the New Zealand team won, and these end with shots of an ecstatic crowd. There is then an extensive sequence showing New Zealand sportspeople winning medals at Olympic and Commonwealth Games, during which the screen splits and simultaneously shows dozens of images of New Zealand medal-winners. Included here are athletes such as Susan Devoy, Peter Snell and Danyon Loader, as well as shots of New Zealand sports teams, including the team who won the Americas Cup, which are shown while an audio track plays the New Zealand national anthem.

These images are generally of international sporting successes, showing New Zealand teams competing against the rest of the world. Claudia Bell discusses the use of sport, especially by television, “as a venue for the promotion of national unity” (1996:18). Bell asserts that the America’s Cup win in 1995 by a New Zealand team was made to appear as a key moment in New Zealand’s national culture and identity (*ibid.* pp.13-7). Bell also posits that television turns sporting events into “part of a far wider ideological process” in which sport appears “as symbolic representation of New Zealand culture” (*ibid.* p.13).

Sport in New Zealand is often thought to be important in national identity formation, as can be seen in the aim of New Zealand Sports Foundation, which is to “put New Zealand’s top athletes into a position from which they can succeed and bring pride to themselves, their sport and the nation” (New Zealand Sports Foundation 1996 quoted in McConnell and Edwards 2000:115). McConnell and Edwards discuss sport and identity in New Zealand and they say that:

Nationally, images of trophies held aloft by elite sportspersons, the television coverage of world championships, and media focus upon Olympic gold medals

illustrate the country's collective expectations and role creation (McConnell and Edwards 2000:117-8).

The appearance of sport as culture is ideological in the same way that Barthes' asserts myth is ideological (Barthes 1972). The use of sport in the perpetuation of national identity is the mythologising of historical fact for ideological purposes. In the example of *Golden Days*, the meaning of sport is distorted to become a series of images reflective of "Kiwi identity" (La Hood quoted in Courtney 1998). These images serve to bring together the members of the collective nation, represented by the sportspeople shown whose success becomes mythologised into the success of all members of that nation as New Zealanders can participate in this myth as spectators, participation which asserts both national unity and collective purpose. This also links to the depiction of New Zealanders "as a nation of active all-rounders" (sign in *Exhibiting Ourselves*) at the 1992 Expo,. These points underline my argument, which is that sporting images are used in the *Golden Days* film to promote the impression of national unity, as part of the films construction of a narrative designed for that purpose.

## War

Images of sporting victory in *Golden Days* give way to portrayals of war. An image of athlete Jack Lovelock on the medal dais at the Berlin Olympics is followed by a shot of the crowd at that event, as their arms raise and they utter "sieg heil". This image gives way to shots of soldiers marching through New Zealand streets on their way to war overseas, as well as scenes showing soldiers boarding ships to leave for war. Soldiers are then shown fighting, firing guns, in trenches, and wounded. Armory is shown, including large guns and tanks, as well as bombs and war planes. A shot is also included from the film *Utū* depicting Maori-Pakeha fighting during the end of the nineteenth century, although this shot is fleeting and doesn't appear in the context of Maori-Pakeha conflict or discord, and is not actual footage like the images surrounding it. While these images are shown, various parts of the set are activated. Toy soldiers light up and march across a table, a cupboard opens and a fake machine gun appears while the lights' strobe and the soundtrack plays the sound of a machine gun firing off rounds, and a torso dressed in an old military uniform lights up and then falls forward as though shot.

C. Bell asserts that similar to the use of sport in national imagery, "war has been a sphere in which New Zealand men could measure their prowess against those of different nations" (C. Bell 1996:18). Like the 1905 tour of England by the All Black rugby team (Smith and Callen 1999:24-6), the South African War fought between 1899 and 1902 "was in fact a major stimulus to New Zealand national pride" (Homer 1990:147). Of sport and war in New Zealand it has been said that: "Each, nationally, has provided a focus for public cohesion, concerted interest and recognition of singular achievement" (McConnell and Edwards 2000:120). Both sport and war played important roles in the early assertion of the national identity of New Zealand. The role of

war in New Zealand's national identity, then, was fundamental and *Golden Days*, in using this imagery, is supporting already dominant national narratives.

After the shots of fighting, the screen shows images of cemeteries, war memorials and monuments, while the audio track plays the Last Post. A few short images taken from traffic safety television advertising, including shots of Police at accident sites and the roadside crosses used to commemorate road fatalities. This links the 'killing fields' imagery of war to the roads of New Zealand, where there are a high number of deaths each year. The images are taken from government-sponsored media campaigns that aim to educate the public about road safety and hence reduce the road toll. This sequence, placed after images of war, provides more contemporary images of death than the war sequence that precedes it. This provides a link to the images of celebration in the next, and final, section of the film, which are also contemporary, and brings the cycle of rise and decline that the film relies upon into the present.

### *Celebration*

Celebration is the tone of the last part of the film, beginning with a series of romantic shots showing the weddings of famous New Zealanders including a rugby player and a fashion model, followed by shots of film and television characters kissing. There are a number of different images on the screen simultaneously at this point, and this continues until the final few shots. While these images are shown, bunches of artificial flowers arise from behind various items in the *Golden Days* set, each lit by spotlights as they appear.

The theme of celebration is furthered by a frenetic series of images, beginning with some shots from the New Zealand film *Heavenly Creatures*, which show the two main characters jumping from a pier in the height of summer, the most optimistic sequence in a film about two school girls who killed one of their mothers. As they leap the screen changes and there are images of New Zealand fashion, people dancing in different traditional and modern styles, images of large concert crowds, a shot of the New Zealand Americas Cup winners bringing the cup to New Zealand, and shots of the celebrations at the close of World War II - these last shots link the earlier war sequence to the images of celebration. Famous New Zealand performers are shown, such as opera singer Kiri Te Kanawa, rock band Crowded House, and the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra. While these are shown on-screen, the different parts of the set which were lit during the film are lit again, as bright spotlights circle around the set.

The final shots of this section begin with a close up of the name painted on the side of a yacht, "The Spirit of New Zealand". These words fill the screen, before the film shows people on the deck of the same yacht dancing and waving at the camera, before the camera pans around and away, back across the water. This "spirit", as depicted in the film, is certainly the myth of New

Zealand national identity, as the historical images shown in the film combine to communicate a myth of unity, working together, and shared history. This section of the film is the final, triumphant part of the progressive narrative that *Golden Days* constructs. It intimates that all the things shown to this point have contributed to make 'us' who 'we' are, and that this needs to be celebrated, because implicitly who 'we' are is a good thing.

The set then goes silent and the clock strikes eight, while the screen again shows the same street from the beginning of the film. The man appears on screen again, this time opening the shop, then the exhibit is lit up and the show is over. The audience then find themselves again sitting in a mock secondhand goods store, amongst the commodities of the past, produced in the golden era of New Zealand's past.

### *Summary*

The use of associational montage in the *Golden Days* film is clear. As the *Golden Days* curator explains, their combination has been mediated to promote "Kiwi identity in a celebratory way" (La Hood quoted in Courtney 1998), so the film certainly has underlying ideological intentions. It is part of the "Kiwi identity", as the film demonstrates it, that dissatisfaction is in the past, and that certain, key images, such as those of sporting victory, serve to link New Zealanders together.

As pointed out in Chapter Two, the linking together of citizens is a concern of the state because creating and maintaining the impression that the nation is a fraternity legitimates the power of the state, and encourages citizens to work together to maintain that power. The prevalent imagery of the film is of New Zealanders working together, as soldiers, sportspeople and workers, which demonstrates an attempt by Te Papa to maintain social cohesion within New Zealand. The film also draws New Zealanders together by the use of a singular narrative of New Zealand's past, providing no alternative reading of that history. Within this narrative, even contradictory moments, such as those of police violence in the protest sequence which show state power violently asserted over citizens, are smoothed over by their positioning in the past. Therefore the film works ideologically in its attempt to depict, and hence maintain, the status quo.

The film constructs an ideological plot, one in which New Zealand has a 'spirit' of unity. Official nationalism of this type is according to Claudia Bell "a form of collective egoism" that does not acknowledge different experiences (C. Bell 1996:10-11), but instead emphasises commonality. The impression created by *Golden Days* is of people who simultaneously share experiences, unobserved by each other, which is similar to the early models of nationalism

identified by Anderson (Anderson 1991:26-8), and has the result of asserting a sense of belonging to the community depicted. The purpose of such depictions is ideological in intent, because the creation and maintenance of the sense that the nation is a collective legitimates state power, encouraging citizens to work collectively to maintain and uphold the common-sense nature of state power. In *Te Papa*, a state institution, this process is quite clear.

Barthes asserts that in the process of myth:

Myth does not deny things, on the contrary, its function is to talk about them; simply, it purifies them, it makes them a natural and eternal justification, it gives them a clarity which is not that of an expectation but that of a statement of fact (Barthes 1972:156).

This process is clear in *Golden Days*, as the signifiers of the myth of 'New Zealand' are openly shown, their arbitrary nature on display, yet their very openness evades a questioning of them. As such, the winning of an elite yachting cup by a small group of Pakeha men backed by a consortium of big business becomes a symbol of national identity and pride, although the reality of the Americas Cup challenge of 1995 is that a tiny proportion of New Zealanders were involved in it. Events in the distant past, too, such as the establishment of railway lines or the South African War, are shown as part of a historical mythology which links the past to the present to create a narrative of the nation intended to evoke pride in citizens.

The cycle of decline and rise in the film is clear, and results in what Bhabha identifies as "the idea of the nation as a continuous narrative of national progress" (Bhabha 1990:1), whereby past symbols of national problems are overcome by images of glory held up to represent the might and natural progress inherent in the nation. The film uses sequences alternately depicting affluence and disaster to draw viewers together into a collective that has shared national experiences. The negative experiences depicted in the film serve to help create a nation of individuals who have collectively shared both good and bad experiences, and the togetherness of these shared experiences is especially emphasised in the narrative, as well as the message that New Zealanders have overcome the bad experiences together.

## Chapter Seven: Conclusion

This thesis set out to investigate ways in which New Zealand's national museum, Te Papa, represents New Zealand to its audience. This investigation was contextualised in Chapter Two, where I traced the advent of both museums and the nation, and linked their existence to state power. The Review of Relevant Literature found that the perpetuation of state power relies on official nationalisms that downplay difference and emphasise social cohesion in the nation, and that national museums are implicated in the perpetuation of this official nationalism. I traced the existence of both national narratives and the national museum in New Zealand and concluded that Te Papa is a state articulation of nationhood.

How Te Papa articulates nationhood was the focus of Chapters Four, Five and Six, which comprised the analysis of three of Te Papa's long-term exhibits. This analysis used theory taken from the work of Barthes, Benjamin and Eisenstein, which focussed on, respectively, the perpetuation of myth, the construction of narratives of progress and the commodity fetish, and associative montage and its use in the construction of the ideological plot. These strands of theory were applied to my readings of *Exhibiting Ourselves*, a survey of some of New Zealand representations at World Exhibitions; *Parade*, an exhibit that sets out to represent "New Zealand's visual history" through a mixture of art and popular culture commodity items; and *Golden Days*, an exhibit which features a 15-minute film of some of the "key moments" in New Zealand's history.

In my analysis I found several themes consistent in each exhibit, the most prevalent being an over-arching narrative of national unity, achieved through the repeated use of collective nouns such as "we" and "us" in the exhibits signage and publicity material. These nouns were used when talking about New Zealand citizens of both past and present, and hence were used to link New Zealanders of the present to those of the past, and to underline the concept of New Zealand as a cohesive national community. This impression was also created through the use of signs and imagery that suggested New Zealanders collectively working to achieve the same goals. The repetition of key themes and images in each of the exhibits indicates the repetitive nature of national narratives, and the need for national identity to be constantly underlined and reasserted. In its official role as a state cultural institution, Te Papa reinforces and perpetuates New Zealand nationalism in ways that support and maintain social cohesion and hence social order.

Narrative is a key component of the exhibits examined, as they construct narratives about the New Zealand nation through the use of objects, artworks, and film. Each of the exhibits

constructed slightly different narratives about New Zealand, although each narrative indicated a cohesive New Zealand national community. The narrative constructed in *Exhibiting Ourselves* is one of progress, most basically expressed through the layout of the exhibit. Using signage and juxtaposition *Exhibiting Ourselves* repeatedly asserts social and technological progress in New Zealand. The narratives expressed in *Golden Days* are largely ones of common history and citizens working together, while *Parade* expresses an unproblematic melding of cultures in New Zealand, especially of Maori and Pakeha, and this is partly symbolised in certain objects such as those contained in the Whakaraotia section.

Progress is an important component of each of the exhibits. *Parade* emphasises progress by highlighting “New Ideas” and the arrival and use of new commodities and technologies in New Zealand. *Parade*'s sequential layout also intimates progress, as well as creating the impression that New Zealand is timeless. *Golden Days* uses a cycle of rise and decline in its construction of history, which progresses towards a utopian conclusion, and uses imagery of citizens working together to suggest that progress in New Zealand is largely in the control of New Zealand workers.

Images of the New Zealand landscape are used in each of the exhibits I examined, often in similar ways. The landscape appears as a commodity in both *Exhibiting Ourselves*, and *Golden Days*, and some of the earliest images of the New Zealand landscape in *Parade* are in paintings and sketches by surveyors who viewed the land in terms of its economic usefulness. The key role of the landscape in New Zealand nationalism was set out in Chapter Two, and the points made there regarding the land's decisive role in New Zealand's national identity formation are born out in each of the Te Papa exhibits discussed.

Chapter Two mentioned of the importance of economic development to the success of the nation, and the economy is an important element in each of the exhibits subsequently examined. *Exhibiting Ourselves* highlights ways that New Zealand has sought economic growth in the global context, specifically through the encouragement of tourism and international trade. *Parade* encourages economic growth by showcasing new commodities and placing them beside art in a juxtaposition that both privileges the place of commodities in New Zealand and encourages their continued production. *Golden Days* highlights the place of agriculture, forestry, industry and tourism in the building of the New Zealand economy, placing these activities in the ‘golden’ period of New Zealand's development, hence encouraging their continuation.

Despite each of the exhibits establishment of strong national narratives, there are subversive elements to *Exhibiting Ourselves* and *Parade*. *Exhibiting Ourselves* questions the

legitimacy of World Exhibitions in establishing international trade links for New Zealand, hence subverting the economic thrust of the narrative through the use of self-reflexivity. In the 1992 section, *Exhibiting Ourselves* also makes clear the constructed nature of the New Zealand representations at the Seville Expo. The Te Aupouri exhibition contained in the centre of *Parade* partly focusses on inequalities between Maori and Pakeha, undercutting *Parade's* main narrative of unproblematic social cohesion in New Zealand. Despite these subversions of the main narratives, the overall effect of these exhibits is of social cohesion and unity. The subversive elements are recuperated by their incorporation within the larger narrative.

Barthes' assertion that the openness of myth, such as those contained in national narratives, disguises its own constructed nature (Barthes 1973:156) is clearly illustrated in my analysis. Te Papa, in its construction of nation narratives in the three exhibits analysed, disguises the arbitrary nature of national mythology, and the purpose that this mythology serves, through the very openness of the display of symbols of this mythology.

Consistent throughout the analysis of Te Papa in this thesis is the place of economy in the narratives constructed there. In each of these, the economy is an integral part, which means that Te Papa is supporting further growth of New Zealand's economy. In Chapter Two I outlined the close involvement of nationalism and capitalism, specifically in regard to the development of the current global economic system. Despite Hall's assertion that the global can supersede local and national identities (1992:294), Te Papa attempts to promote both strong and cohesive national ideologies, and asserts that participation in capitalism and the global economy is imperative in these ideologies.

While it is natural to have found national narratives in Te Papa, narratives that attempt to bind New Zealand citizens together and assume common values and morality, the economic thrust of many of the representations found there is more blatant than I had imagined. Hence, I conclude that this is the most important element of the representation of 'New Zealand' that Te Papa undertakes.

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