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***LOOKING TO BELONG: THE ADAPTATION OF PACIFIC ISLAND MIGRANTS
TO NEW ZEALAND AS DEPICTED IN SELECTED WORKS BY
OSCAR KIGHTLEY, JOHN PULE, AND
ALBERT WENDT***

*A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of*

**Master of Arts
in
English**

*at Massey University, Palmerston North,
New Zealand*

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2000

ABSTRACT

In Oscar Kightley's *A Frigate Bird Sings*, *Dawn Raids* and *Fresh Off the Boat*, John Pule's *Burn My Head in Heaven* and *The Shark the Ate the Sun*, and Albert Wendt's *Sons for the Return Home*, *Ola* and *Black Rainbow*, the main characters have in common the fact that they are all part of a Pacific diaspora, and they have all dispersed to the same country -- New Zealand. They have left lands that have had a colonial history to come to a land with a colonial history of its own, and one that has involved the permanent settlement of non-indigenous settlers who far outnumber the descendants of the original inhabitants. The new Pacific Island migrants thus face the prospect of being both coloniser and colonised. What is examined here is which, if either, of these two possible roles the characters see themselves as playing, or if they rather take the opportunity to reinvent themselves.

What is concluded is that though the change of place does seem to offer the chance of breaking from the conventions and attitudes of the homelands, and from colonial stereotypes relating to sexuality, gender and race, the authors do not offer either a consistent view of the nature of the responses to the chance thus offered, or any unanimity with regard to the essential question of whether the migrants relate more strongly to the host cultures or the culture they have left behind, or whether they find a new space for themselves -- one that presents the possibility of breaking completely from the 'othering' pressures of the colonial past.

Acknowledgement

I am indebted to Dr John Muirhead of Massey University's English Department for his patient guidance during the writing of this thesis.

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INTRODUCTION

If, as they say, all the world is a stage and we are the actors upon it, then perhaps the simplest way we can give ourselves the opportunity to change the role we are playing is to arrange for a change of scenery. In Oscar Kightley and David Fane's *A Frigate Bird Sings*, Oscar Kightley's *Dawn Raids* and Oscar Kightley and Simon Small's *Fresh off the Boat* (all of which are hereafter referred to as Kightley's), John Pule's *Burn My Heart in Heaven* and *The Shark that Ate the Sun*, and Albert Wendt's *Sons for the Return Home*, *Ola* and *Black Rainbow*, the characters do indeed upheave themselves to a place where the scenery is different. Each of these texts has in common the fact that their characters are part of a South Pacific diaspora, and that they have dispersed to the same country: New Zealand. Fleeing lands where they were the subjects of colonisation to inhabit a land with its own colonial history, these characters now face the prospect of being both coloniser and colonised. What is examined here is which, if either, of these two possible roles the characters see themselves as playing. Do they rather take the opportunity to reinvent themselves? Is there a uniformity of response amongst them? What is it that they would wish to leave behind in their land of origin, and what is it that they in fact leave behind? Is the new scenery a significant factor in these adaptations, or is it merely a backdrop?

What will become evident is that the change of scenery does indeed amount to a new space in which the Pacific Islander is more or less freed from the conventions and attitudes of his/her homeland -- he/she is no longer bound by its colonial stereotypes regarding sexuality,

gender and race, and is able to claim new linguistic territory -- but the authors referred to do not define this new space in any consistent or clear-cut way.

Chapter One deals with the language used in these texts, examining both the use of translations and whether it is English language rather than English language that is used. Taking Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin's definition of what constitutes an English language, what will be seen is that the language of Pule, Kightley and Wendt's characters remains well within the linguistic territory of the coloniser. In Chapter Two, sexuality and gender issues are discussed. Here it will be seen that many of the stereotypical colonialist views of the indigene identified by Fanon, Goldie, Said and others are carried by the protagonists into the new environment (becoming a source of pride, in some cases), while in one instance, the experiences of a fa'afafine seem to be used as a metaphor for the possibility of developing a completely new set of parameters. Finally, Chapter Three looks at depictions of race and the issue of the relationship between race and space, both physical and metaphorical. Here certain patterns that again relate to the concepts of the 'other' and of nativism can be identified, along with a generally critical (but variably forceful) attitude towards the approaches to land and other cultural practices in the new homeland. It is argued that here the authors identify a range of responses on the part of their characters, with some degraded by the new culture (through drunkenness, for example), some identifying with already-established liminal figures (such as artists), while others (particularly in Wendt) merge with Maori to become a 'new' indigene. In each, stereotypes are reinforced and the 'new space' that could have been claimed in the new location remains unoccupied.

I

Worlds exist by means of languages, their horizons extending as far as the processes of neologism, innovation, tropes, and imaginative usage generally will allow the horizons of the language itself to be extended. Therefore the english language becomes a tool with which a 'world' can be textually constructed. The most interesting feature of its use in post-colonial literature may be the way in which it also constructs difference, separation, and absence from the metropolitan norm. (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 44)

In *The Empire Writes Back*, Ashcroft et al. discuss how the English language, "the language of the erstwhile imperial centre" (8), has become, in the hands of the colonised nations, "english". This english, with its neologisms, innovations, tropes, and imaginative usage, is the linguistic code they see post-colonial writers using to build representations of themselves and the world in which they live; a code "which has been transformed and subverted into several distinctive varieties throughout the world" (8). Although each of the varieties shares a common origin in the English of the colonial period, they have clearly become separate from it. This chapter examines the language used in each of the texts studied to see if it conforms with the definition of "english" -- that is, if it "constructs difference, separation, and absence from the metropolitan norm" (44). It is shown that, despite the presence of translated and untranslated passages in languages other than English, dialect, and neologisms, the 'world' which is textually constructed is a world that affirms the metropolitan norm, rather than subverts it. It is argued that the linguistic code assumed by the writers under consideration is not one that can be defined as "english", but, rather, is one that is still very much English -- the code of the coloniser.

All three authors, then, opt for the use of English as the predominant informing

language in their descriptions of the perceived uniqueness of their individual characters' personal experiences of the South Pacific diaspora. What is missing in these texts is the construction of "difference, separation and absence" from the metropolitan norm by the claiming of any new linguistic territory -- by the use of a variety of "english". Where there are apparent attempts to do so, the methods used tend, if anything, to reinforce the dominance of the "metropolitan norm."

One of the strongest ways to inscribe difference in texts would seem to be to use untranslated words. Such untranslated words, Ashcroft et al. state, stand as synecdoches, carrying much more by their presence than the implication that they have no English equivalent: "They signify a certain cultural experience which they cannot hope to reproduce but whose difference is validated by the new situation" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 53). However, as the texts now considered illustrate, untranslated and translated passages in a language other than English do not necessarily work to subvert English. They can point to a difference -- but when, as in most of the present cases, the translated or untranslated words are few and far between, they stand out as interlopers in a field of English. Their difference is obvious -- but so is their rarity. English is thus not subverted but strengthened, as it is demonstrated to be the language that engulfs or appropriates 'foreign' words without there even being a need for them to be truly understood.

Although untranslated words are present in each of the texts studied, nowhere else are they as powerful as in the plays written or co-written by Kightley, for it should be kept in mind that those experiencing the texts as performed drama rather than as the printed word are solely reliant on what they hear. The potential for subverting English would thus appear to be greater. Yet, in Kightley's plays, even when translations are absent, the information that those who do not understand Samoan are denied does not appear to be pivotal to the plot. The bilingual nature of some of the characters is important to the over-all effect of the drama, but those in the audience who are bilingual are only slightly privileged:

STEVE. Oka, oa mai oe?

MOSE. I'm good thanks mate. How are you?

STEVE. Manuia lava, fa'afetai.

MOSE. Is your family good?

STEVE. Ioe. O lae manuia uma lava, le aiga fa'afetai. Sole, ua leva ta te le'e
feilua'i.

MOSE. Yeah, hey mate, speak English, the Palagi's[sic] are staring at us.

(*Dawn Raids* 22)

While English and Samoan are here freely mixed, much of the meaning of the Samoan is made contextually clear to those who understand only English. The important point to note here is that no attempt is made to present a Samoan "english".

Kightley, like Pule and Wendt, also presents Samoan that is translated in-script by the use of various devices. For example:

SIONE. ...What's to eat?

FUAROSA. Pisupo ma kapisi.

SIONE. Again? Man, I bet John Rowles never had to eat corned beef and
cabbage. (*Dawn Raids* 6)

In *Fresh Off the Boat*, Samoan words are sometimes translated in brackets, leaving it unclear whether or not the actor is to read the translation:

ELIZABETH. Ua taunu'u mai lou malaga? (So you have arrived).

CHARLES. Ua ou taunu'u male manuia. (I have arrived safely).

ELIZABETH. Lelei (good). (16)

In *A Frigate Bird Sings*, not only are there untranslated words in the script, but there are stage directions stating the English words that are to be said in Samoan. For example:

VILI. I love it when you sing Dad.

DAD. (Samoan) I'm singing away the pain and sorrow you feel.

VILI. It hurts Dad, it really hurts.

DAD. (Samoan) Shh my sons. Don't cry. Be strong for your mother. Be strong for me. Be strong for our family. (2)

Providing only the English when the stage direction states that the words are spoken in Samoan not only leaves it to the presenters to provide the translation, it implies that the decision about whether or not to translate is also theirs. What is particularly interesting is that the words cover a pivotal moment that establishes the father's feelings of loss -- and these feelings are expressed in English, not in Samoan or in the broken English that the father uses at less crucial stages in the drama. Thus English has been chosen to convey the play's key emotions, while leaving the possibility of privileging a bilingual audience, should the occasion arise.

Pule, like Kightley, deals with the problem of language translation in a variety of ways. The acknowledgements at the beginning of *Burn My Head in Heaven* are in a mixture of Niuean and English, the Lika song chorus before the first chapter has its English translation beside it in italics, and some chapter headings that are in Niuean have an English translation in brackets underneath them; however, most of the Niuean words in the novel are untranslated. These words are mostly placed in the middle of sentences written in English ("And to add more matematekelea to their history, a family feud turned against them" (15)), though sometimes there are full sentences in Niuean: "Every morning the people would pause when great-grandma, sitting cross-legged under the tree, suddenly let out a cry. -- Hako, hako a Talagi, ko Talagi ka leveki e tama haaku" (10). The sentences that are in Niuean are, more often than not, direct speech; though some direct speech given in English only is a translation of what is said in Niuean. It is not until page 64 that a speech given in Niuean is accompanied by a translation: "No ono la e tau palagi ne fia kumi ika (look at all those palagi looking for fish)." Having some direct speech solely in Niuean up until this point is "a clear signifier of the fact that the language which actually informs the novel is an/Other language" (Ashcroft,

Griffiths, and Tiffin 64). This removes a certain amount of informing ability from English, the language the novel is predominantly written in, and, while acknowledging the ‘otherness’ of Niuean, gives the language power by momentarily alienating the English reader. However, although the Niuean language is given power, it is not at the expense of the texts’ predominant English language. As with Kightley’s plays, what is presented here are certain characters who are most at home in the language of their island of origin, and to them the language that predominantly informs the novel is an/Other language; but the relative rarity with which their language is presented reinforces the choice of English as the overwhelmingly dominant informer.

In *The Shark that Ate the Sun* there are even fewer instances of Niuean words being used. As with *Burn My Head in Heaven*, untranslated words are most frequently placed in sentences written in English (“Lila was poking the talo with a tafikaniu” (80)), and given as direct speech: “My name was called and echoed down the whole damn street, because my mother when she called me was loud, sharp and echoed, -- Fisipa! hau ki kaina!” (105). Unlike *Burn My Head in Heaven*, however, Pule relates songs and poems not just in English, but also in Niuean, or in a mixture of the two. An example of the last can be seen in the epilogue poem, which is given first in English, then in Niuean (292-293).

At first sight it might seem that Pule’s mix of translated and untranslated words, woven into the texts, points to a language at an intermediate stage between English and “english”. It certainly illustrates the dynamic nature of languages generally. Where untranslated Niuean words are used in English sentences (just as with English words unfamiliar to the reader), their meaning may be hinted at by the context of the sentence. If the words are used often enough, they could become assimilated into the English of the reader. This is, of course, an on-going process. Two examples of foreign words that have relatively recently been so assimilated into English are ‘en masse’ and ‘kindergarten’. The process makes small fragments of an/Other language familiar to the English speaker, though the actual

meaning of the fragment *as English* depends on his/her perception of it. And that is the point -- in so far as the context (or the translation) allows the English reader to assign meanings to the words, they become, not “english”, but English.

Interestingly, the words in Pule’s novels that are given in-text translations tend to be ones that have either earthy or spiritual connotations: “To point at someone is to invent a road directly to the soul, the agaaga” (*Burn My Head in Heaven* 57); “Guardians, tupuas, polealeauli” (*The Shark that Ate the Sun* 104). Words that are translated in brackets, however, tend to be crass or shocking: “--Goagoa a ko e ma ule (You dumb fucking cock)” (*Burn My Head in Heaven* 94), “-- Ko e mate toa he ha? Ko e mate toa he kai fakaamu (Why did the warrior die? the warrior died because they ate him bit by bit)” (*Burn My Head in Heaven* 125). By the trouble taken to explain the earthy or spiritual words in-text, it is implied that a high place is given to such matters within Niuean culture. On the other hand, the bracketed translations, with no narratorial intervention, give full impact to the crass or shocking nature of the words so translated. The implication here would appear to be that rude and crass words are universally understandable, and (unlike the spiritual and earthy) not a defining part of Niuean culture. So both the choice of words and the method of their translation are of significance, with the greater care taken in translating certain words a perfect tool to emphasise the special importance of identified cultural differences. In later chapters, this matter of methods of translation and the way they can highlight in particular the island cultures’ perceived spiritual nature, authenticating previous colonial perceptions of ‘otherness’ and giving them the weight of the ‘native’ voice, will be discussed in greater detail.

In Wendt’s writing, although there is the occasional song or whole untranslated sentence (“Malo tau!” (*Ola* 122)), the Samoan language is more often presented as reported speech, with in-text translation:

Half closing his eyes, he recited in Samoan: *O Tagaloa le atua e nofo i le vanimonimo; ua no faia mea uma, ua na o ia e leai se Lagi, e leai se Nu’u...*

Caught up in his power, Ola found herself translating aloud each of his lines:

Tagaloa builder of lands is His name... (*Ola* 215)

The odd translation in brackets can also be found: “O le kaugaka ia! (Boy, the cost of living is impossible!)” (*Ola* 257), producing much the same effect as in Pule’s novels. In *Black Rainbow* there are few untranslated words, and, of those present, more are Maori than Samoan. Although the presence of Maori words is closely linked to the politics of *Black Rainbow*, they are also to be found, along with Samoan words, in the other two of Wendt’s works studied. By the use of Maori and Samoan words, a link is established between the two languages, and, by implication, between the two groups who use these languages. Both groups have experienced the coloniser -- they have been ‘othered’ -- and this, along with similarities in culture and language, gives them a shared identity. This notion, which is explored in more detail in later chapters, is constantly reinforced by the texts. In *Sons for the Return Home*, connections are made between the Samoan family and the Maori; in *Black Rainbow*, Pacific Islanders and Maori are painted as one, and in *Ola*, Samoan and Maori words are both used frequently in English sentences: “I can see him... in the kitchen fale, boiling the kettle to make koko, and cooking a fa’alifu” (163), “Over the next four years, Nanny took her to meet their other tribal kaumatua and keepers of the fire...” (92). A later chapter details this novel’s identification of a common struggle against oppression that has bound together the Maori and Samoan (and even, in a more narrow sense, the Jewish) cultures. The use of Maori and Samoan words in sentences written in English emphasises the common origin of that oppression, although it does not make those sentences “english”, as opposed to English. Where it was argued earlier that translated and untranslated words stand not as synecdoches of the culture from which they come, but as representative simply of that which is ‘not-English’, the use of words from two different Pacific languages groups two examples of ‘non-English’ together, and seems to be in agreement with previous colonial attitudes regarding the collective nature of ‘them’. This linguistic strategy thus serves to appropriate and even

strengthen the colonial attitude towards the 'othered'.

Another method of translation is the glossary. Ashcroft et al. state:

The post-colonial writer, whose gaze is turned in two directions, stands already in that position which will come to be occupied by an interpretation, for he/she is not the object of an interpretation, but the first interpreter. Editorial intrusions, such as the footnote, the glossary, and the explanatory preface, where these are made by the author, are a good example of this. Situated outside the text, they represent a reading rather than a writing, primordial sorties into that interpretative territory in which the Other (as reader) stands. (61)

Of the works studied, only *Sons for the Return Home* provides a glossary. These translations come either in simple definitions; for example, "umu; stone oven", or in more detailed explanations, something like those Pule's narrator gives in-text; for example: "fa'a Samoa; the Samoan way of doing things, the Samoan way of life" (*Sons for the Return Home* 218). However, the dictionary-style glossary makes definitions seem more impersonal than the in-text interpretations given by the narrator, even though some of them are quite lengthy. The longer the definition, the stronger the 'othering' effect (or 'selfing' effect, if looked at from the point of view of one who is familiar with the language), as it implies that there is no equivalent word in the English language. Wrapped up in the idea that there is no real English equivalent for the word defined at such length is the notion that there can be no real understanding, for the English-reader, of that which the text represents. Again, this has the paradoxical effect of reaffirming the dominance of English, as that language is used to suggest definitions that readers can adapt to their own perceptions.

In addressing the question of authorial construction, Ashcroft et al. state:

Although language does not embody culture, and therefore proposes no inherent obstacles to the communication of meaning, the notion of difference,

of an indecipherable juncture between cultural realities, is often just as diligently *constructed* in the text as that of identity. (57)

This implies that writers choosing to place non-English words in their texts may well have other reasons for doing so than that of being unable to find an English equivalent. Whatever the motive, the fact remains that a translation of the word or words used into English is an implicit reaffirmation of the primacy of English, even though the length of such definitions may hint at differences too profound for English-readers' understanding.

George Steiner calls foreign words that are not absorbed into the host language "alien intrusions" (117). In cases where the writing is in English and deals with English-speaking characters who live predominantly in Anglo-Saxon cultures, foreign words that have not been assimilated into the English language would, indeed, seem to be "alien intrusions." In the case of the writing considered here, the term is much less useful. The main characters in these works do not speak English as their first language, and, in some cases at least, are living in a kind of ghetto culture within the broader pakeha (still largely Anglo-Saxon) culture. Thus it is not surprising that the writers pepper their characters' speech with non-English words that are taken from their mother-language. They are hardly "alien intrusions" to the characters themselves; though, undefined, they may seem so to the English-reader who has no familiarity with the language. Nevertheless, the use of such words, even undefined, within a structure and vocabulary that is otherwise firmly English, does not equate to the writing of a variety of "english".

Interestingly, the stage directions in Kightley's plays often make use of apparently assimilated foreign words (e.g., "People preparing the evening tona'i which is to be held in his benefit" *Fresh Off the Boat* 3), indicating that the author aligns himself with the characters who use a blend of Samoan and English words. To this extent, the author seems to be suggesting that as far as both he and his principal characters are concerned, certain Samoan words have been assimilated into English. In doing so he gives weight to the idea that English

can no longer be seen as belonging to a specific race or culture, any more than “english” can. By using ‘foreign’ words that cannot be immediately understood by the majority of English-speakers, he is making those readers aware of his (as well as his characters’) ‘otherness’, but he is still essentially using the English language to do so. The structures are those of traditional English, as are the vast majority of the words used to convey the experiences.

Ashcroft et al. write:

The crucial function of language as a medium of power demands that post-colonial writing define itself by seizing the language of the centre and re-placing it in a discourse fully adapted to the colonized place. There are two distinct processes by which it does this. The first, the abrogation or denial of the privilege of ‘English’ involves a rejection of the metropolitan power over the means of communication. The second, the appropriation and reconstitution of the language of the centre, the process of capturing and remoulding the language to new usages, marks a separation from the site of colonial privilege.

(38)

In the texts studied, there has not been an abrogation of the privilege of English. Certainly there is nothing in any of the texts that remotely compares with, for example, Sistren’s “Rebel Pickney”, which is a work that is deemed to have been written in a variety of “english”. It contains such sentences as, “After we finish walk and pick up di breadfruit fi cook di hog feeding, me siddung and settle down...” (123). It is clear from this example that “english” is not defined only, or even chiefly, by its use of texts that might require translation, but rather more significantly by differences in syntax and peculiarities of vocabulary. The quotation from Ashcroft et al. that opens this chapter states that worlds created by language extend “as far as the processes of neologisms, innovations, tropes, and imaginative usage generally allow the horizons of the language itself to be extended”, and goes on to say that these processes aid in the creation of “difference, separation, and absence from the

metropolitan norm" (44). Devices other than translated and untranslated texts have been used by all three of the writers under consideration in their attempts to suggest the 'otherness' of their protagonists. These include neologisms, and the portrayal of dialects and colloquial speech. What is now considered is the question of whether these devices have led any way towards the employment of an "english", rather than of English.

Of the texts discussed, only Wendt's *Black Rainbow* introduces neologisms. These include: "history/herstory" (20), "reordinarination" (27), and "Dehistorying" (33). But while these words can be said to make a statement about 'otherness', they get their strength from their similarity to (in the case of 'history', by a not particularly original redefinition of) existing English words. The title of chapter two of *Black Rainbow* is "No History/Herstory" (20), and there follows an account of how the protagonist awakes to find his wife has disappeared. He is provided with a substitute companion, and his trips to the controlling 'Tribunal' continue. The slant Wendt puts on the word 'history' now becomes apparent. What is important here is the 'story' element -- the story being personalised as his and hers. "I have no history. She has no herstory. Our children's history began with us but that's all -- there is no time before that. History is a curse, the Tribunal has ruled. We must be free of it to be" (21). While this redefinition accords with the *Concise Oxford Dictionary's* definition of history as meaning a "total accumulation of past events", its application is purely at a personal level. This is made clear by the equation of 'history' with 'herstory'. History thus becomes a tale of a person's life, closer to the French 'l'histoire'. How this relates to Wendt's 'othering' discourse becomes clearer later in the chapter, when the protagonist and his new companion go for a walk through mid-city Auckland and come across a group of young Polynesians.

'No one can reform them. They get rounded up periodically and put into reordinarination centres, but they come right back to the streets. Must be in their blood.'

‘What is?’

‘Their refusal to be like us, be law-abiding citizens.’

‘A passive rebellion?’ I tried joking.

‘Yeah, with all their lice and dirt and stench!’

I didn’t say anything. I was glad to be lost in the crowd. ‘What’s their story?’

I asked her.

‘Whose story?’

‘Theirs, the Polynesian kids?’

She looked at me surprised. ‘No one has a history: we have no histories,’ she reminded me. (27-28)

Hence history is a synonym for story, and though the Tribunal (read ‘system’) does not allow anyone to have a personal history, it is implied that those most affected by this proscription are those who refuse to follow the rules of the system: “the Polynesian kids.” Where did they come from? What are they rebelling against? What has led them to the streets? None of these questions can even be asked, for to query someone’s past is to place an importance on something other than the here and now -- something which the Tribunal has outlawed. Thus, the only person who can be held accountable for an individual’s situation in life is that individual. There is no room for the concept of social responsibility, as blame cannot be laid away from the individual. Therefore, the ‘have-nots’ can be and should be ignored, except in so far as they might pose a law and order problem for the Tribunal. What Wendt has created in this Orwellian atmosphere is a group that is different because they rebel, and they rebel because (we learn later) they are Polynesian, and, therefore, *essentially* different. In doing this, an ‘othering’ of the type familiar to the colonial period and adopted in the other works being considered becomes an essentialist argument similar to that behind Senghor’s concept of negritude.

Beyond the basic meaning of the words history and herstory, as Wendt uses them, is

their connection to a neo-colonising force which pursues a policy of uniformity, but which is unable to incorporate one group of people, racially defined, into its world. They are thus marginalised, living on the edge of society. Here Wendt evokes the language of chronopolitics (which Goldie characterises as "... a subtly comforting astigmatism" (169)), which works to remove the indigene from history. Despite this use of neologisms to give extra power to the notion of inescapable alienation, the words used remain English. It can be argued that "english" words are often sourced from English, though given new meanings and used in different ways (as Ashcroft et al. point out in their discussion of the use of the word 'insides' in Gabriel Okara's *The Voice* (42)). While these arguments can be applied to the use of 'history' in *Black Rainbow* (as the English meaning of the word is changed to a metaphor for 'personal narration'), its use in the novel, along with the use of 'herstory', is purely political. It is for the sake of the text, rather than the need to evoke some kind of different cultural perspective through a new language, that these words have been given new meanings. They are closer in their synecdochic function to Orwell's 'Newspeak' in *1984* than Okara's 'insides'.

Associated with 'history' and 'herstory' in *Black Rainbow* is another neologism: 'dehistorying'. This carries with it the same connections to colonialism/neo-colonialism and racial separatism. It is the process that those living in New Zealand must go through in order to be relieved of 'history/herstory'. Similarly, 'reordinarination' and 'ordinarination' are terms coined to describe the process that individuals must go through to make them more like everybody else. 'Reordinarination' implies that some groups are resistant to this process -- and in fact these are identified as being, particularly, young 'delinquent' Polynesians. Clearly, then, it is this group that is outside the ordinary, so strongly resistant to the processes that it is stated that it "[m]ust be in their blood" (27).

Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin write: "... post-colonial writing abrogates the privileged centrality of 'English' by using language to signify difference while employing a

sameness which allows it to be understood" (51). In *Black Rainbow*, the privileged centrality of English isn't abrogated, but enhanced, by the use of these neologisms. Not only are the new words English in that they have Latin-derived English roots -- they are associated with the Tribunal, the colonising force. Through indirect links in-text, Wendt has created words that work to enhance the divisions in his novel's 'them and us' society. What is important here, though, is that his neologisms do not belong to those who are the supposed heroes of the novel; they are words associated with the Tribunal's attempts to create a new kind of cultural space which will not be available to those heroes. This space is intended not to stand between the colonisers and the colonised, but to be where a new and united colonised world will stand. The folly of the attempt is proved by the continued resistance of the Polynesians. The message here is that a society which encourages a kind of universal culture while denying the legitimacy of indigenous myths, legends and histories, is doomed from the start, as there are certain racial groups whose innate propensity to resistance will continually force them to rebel against it.

Furthermore, the neologisms used are hardly original in their form. The 'sameness' (that is, the similarities with existing English) that Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin write of as allowing "english" to be understood is obvious in Wendt's neologisms. In fact, he uses existing English words ('history', 'story', 'ordinary') and alters them by, at most, using common English prefixes 'de-' and 're-'. In the case of 'dehistorying', he has employed an established English convention in turning the word 'history' into a verb. This certainly gives it added vibrancy and power -- making it a 'doing' word -- but in the novel, the word is closely linked to the colonising force, the Tribunal. Similar comments could be made about the neologisms 'ordinarination' and 'reordinarination'. Clearly these are based on the English word 'ordinary', which does not lose its English meaning. 'Ordinarination' is the aim of the Tribunal, and is thus linked to the colonisers. None of the neologisms are linked to the Polynesian or Maori characters in the text. If they are symbols of a culture, that culture is

that of the colonising force, and in this sense they are not part of a process that could be described as constructing “difference, separation, and absence from the metropolitan norm.”

Though neologisms are found only in *Black Rainbow*, there are examples of other language devices in all the texts studied. On writing to serve a dialectic form, Ashcroft et al. state:

Writers in this continuum employ highly developed strategies of code-switching and vernacular transcription, which achieve the dual result of abrogating the Standard English and appropriating an english as a culturally significant discourse. (46)

Although all three of the writers studied do indeed employ strategies to convey a sense of the actual spoken language of their characters, depicting speech patterns that to some extent defy traditional English constructions, the language, grammatical errors notwithstanding, is still recognisably English rather than “english”.

Though each of the texts deals with Polynesians for whom English is a second language, it is only in those of Kightley that there is a consistent attempt to convey dialect -- unsurprising, given that his texts are plays. In *Dawn Raids*, Mose, the head of the family, and his wife To’aga, constantly speak in incomplete sentences, dropping auxiliary verbs. “You know you not supposed to go anywhere” (3), “A’e! How you think we going to pay the bills if you lose your job?” (7), “You got time to sing song with the band but you haven’t got time for your family uh” (8), “You been studying a lot lately... You probably get 200% in your next exam eh” (10). He also conveys problems with agreement: “I’m just having a jokes” (7), and “Is the black animals from America gonna put money in the collection for us!” (12). In *A Frigate Bird Sings*, the same conventions are employed: “How many tries you say you score yesterday?” (22), “He just want to laugh at me” (22), “He sound like a woman” (24), “What you say?” (31). Another method Kightley uses to convey dialect in *A Frigate Bird Sings* is the change of tenses mid-sentence by the father: “When I was your age, I was

the best player in the whole village no one can catch me..." (22) This practice has the effect of emphasising a growing gap between the Samoan-bred father and his New Zealand-raised sons.

Sione and Vili, the father's sons, are shown to be more at ease with New Zealand English, and, by implication, with New Zealand. "What's the diff?" asks Sione, when talking to his friend Hugh (15), and he goes on to talk about how his Dad "would load [him] into this bugger every Saturday... and go for a drive," and how, by playing his tapes loud, he would "piss Mum off" (16). Vili mentions how his drunk Dad is "away with the fairies" (24), and observes that the "blokes" at the club rooms dress badly (36). By having the sons speak New Zealand colloquialisms, Kightley shows how comparatively thoroughly they have been assimilated.

The speech of Kightley's characters shows that either their speech is typical of those attempting to speak standard English, but as a second language (and thus with some auxiliary verbs missing or problems with agreement), or that the characters commonly deliver to the reader/auditor a version of their own colloquial speech. Conspicuous by their absence are the contracted, phonetic words which signify the vernacular in such works as George Lamming's *The Emigrants* (quoted by Ashcroft et al.): "Some people say them have no hope for people who doan' know exactly w'at them want or who them is, but that is a lot of rass-clot talk" (46). Such constructions could be considered to be close to "english" rather than English, but the speech reported by Kightley remains firmly English, albeit with certain deviations from the sanitised standard variety which few use with consistency anyway. Hence, rather than presenting characters who use a culturally significant discourse signified by the use of what Ashcroft et al. term "highly developed strategies of code-switching and vernacular transcription", Kightley's characters are shown to have, at most, a degree of linguistic inadequacy when their speech is measured against an anyway rarely-used conversational 'standard'.

Kightley's use of dialect to show the degree of assimilation of the younger generation into New Zealand society is present with some interesting variations in *Fresh Off the Boat*. There is again a strong contrast between the speech of Charles, newly arrived from Samoa, and his nieces who have grown up in New Zealand. Charles hands over a necklace to his sister's boyfriend, saying, "They give it to me when I leave" (21); and he talks about the jobs he has looked at, saying "They all silly jobs... I thought they look all right, but my mate telling me they no good..." (23). His nieces, Evotia and Ula, use a colloquial English:

ULA. Just joking Sis, chill out. Man you're getting stressed easily lately why don't you come down to the gym.

EVOTIA. Yeah right -- straighto! (27)

Ula and Evotia, like the younger characters in the other plays, use prevailing New Zealand colloquialisms. A variation on this dialect is displayed by the character of the young Samoa:

SAMOA. Oh that's cool -- I've gotta go to the library, do some in depth research on the motherland.

EVOTIA. What are you reading about the Islands for?

SAMOA. No Africa -- the motherland that the otherman raped and pillaged.

(14)

The jargon of African-American politics peppers his speech. Steve, the police officer in *Dawn Raids*, provides an example of one who comfortably speaks Samoan, but who, when speaking English, uses well-constructed sentences with some police jargon thrown in: "You know, last week they got me out of bed to interpret for a situation in Kingsland" (24).

Kightley's plays depict a uniform way of speaking English in the generation that has come from Samoa after spending most of their lives there; however, Kightley shows the next generation of young Islanders as having absorbed not only regular New Zealand colloquialisms, but, in some instances, colloquialisms originating from certain other English-speaking cultures to which they have been exposed.

Although an aspect of this variation in dialects is that it highlights separation, it is not the separation of “english” from English. The older people are separated from the country of their birth, and their dialect also tends to separate them from the core culture of their adopted homeland. The younger characters, too, suffer from a feeling of separation, but in their case it is a growing separation from the older generation, demonstrated by their ability to speak like ‘locals’, and their awareness of the ‘mistakes’ that the older people make in their speaking of English.

In the texts of the other writers studied, there are fewer instances of strategies being developed to convey dialect. “*Yo fucken yo!*” the narrator proclaims at the end of the prologue in Pule’s *The Shark That Ate the Sun* (14). Though this is certainly dialect, it is a sort of universal English street dialect, one which seems to have stemmed from television and movie depictions of African-American idiom, rather than one generated by Pacific Islanders in New Zealand. Unlike the dialogue of the character Samoa in *Fresh Off the Boat*, this street dialogue is not shown to have any political purpose. It is not until page 187 in *The Shark That Ate the Sun* that a dialect different from that demonstrated in the prologue is displayed. Here, the young protagonist, Fisi, calls his neighbour a bitch, and his mother assures the neighbour that “Father soon come home” (187). Her speech is missing a pronoun, and, in a fashion similar to Kightley’s older characters, she has dropped a verb. Later, Fisi goes to visit a friend and is offered smoked eel: “Ask that boy, he taste smoke eel yet?” (220). Again, a verb has been dropped, and an incorrect tense is employed; but, again, the speech remains English, albeit slightly grammatically incorrect.

It is not often that Pule’s dialogue shows dialect traits. A few examples from *Burn My Head in Heaven* are “... where you come from?” (18), “Can’t come to meetings, no food in house. But please, leave curfew alone...” (63), “Yes. That me. That me all right” (149), and “He fish from one of my vaka from this high young man to old man” (149). Again, the same strategies employed by Kightley are used here; yet the instances of dialect are few and far

between. Because of their infrequency, they become a sharp reminder to the reader that the characters have difficulties with English (it not being their first language); but, it *is* English they are speaking.

By implication, much of the dialogue that Pule provides is author-translated from Niuean. Hence, it is given as 'normal' English. In doing this, Pule is showing that he is chiefly interested in displaying the daily lives of a group of people who happen to be Polynesian. Any perceived results of language differences are incidental until the characters come into contact with those who do not speak their mother tongue. In the comical exchange between Potau, the Resident, and his translator, the dialogue between the translator and Potau is given in perfect, albeit colourful and sometimes colloquial, English: "The prick is getting bad. He demands that you, Potau, attend the council meeting. He also says that the Liku council is not abiding to the laws of a decent society. Why don't we rip his carcass apart?" (*Burn My Head in Heaven* 62). No difference in language use is hinted at in the exchange until the sentence "Togia turned to the Resident and in his best broken English explained" (62-63), which introduces: "They work hard. Can't come to meetings, no food in house..." (63). It is not until characters who do not speak English as their first language are put into contact with those who do that any difference with regard to language is highlighted. Thus, the appearance of dialect is reliant on the presence of English-as-first-language speakers. Because the Niuean characters are shown to have good language control at all other times, this strategy highlights a power structure that is closely linked to language. In the presence of English speakers, the speaker for whom English is not a first language assumes a subordinate role which, while most obvious in their choice of words, is emphasised by the mistakes they make. Their English, however, remains perfectly understandable to the English-reader who may see it merely as slightly grammatically inaccurate English; the lilt and contractions that may be peculiar to their accent are absent.

Though Pule, unlike Kightley, does not emphasise in his use of dialogue the gap

between the older generation of Pacific Islanders and their children, he does show that the youth who have spent a long time in New Zealand speak that street dialect mentioned earlier: "If ya still on the road I'll pick ya up again" (*Burn My Head in Heaven* 235), or "You will be put on drugs and they will fuck up your head" (240). In doing so, Pule demonstrates that the young, once part of a culture that is different from that experienced in New Zealand, are now, significantly, becoming distanced from the older generation whose closest ties are still with Niue. This new, street-wise way of talking is filled with slang and colloquialisms -- informal and careless of grammatical correctness -- but they are English colloquialisms and slang.

In Wendt's *Black Rainbow*, the protagonist speaks with no dialect traits, and this seems to be important as it is significant in his quest for his identity. Contrasted with the relatively dialect-less protagonist are many of Wendt's secondary characters, who seem to fall into either one of two dialect categories: "cow-cocky-cum-good-keen-man" (66), or street. Again, however, both these dialects, though featuring slang and colloquialisms, remain within the boundaries of English. "Sorry but I can't help ya. No one's bin here all week. Wouldn't've minded those sheilas you mentioned visitin', though. Haven't dipped me wick in ages!" says the unsubtly-named Jake Crump, farmer (66). He sounds much like John, the protagonist's minder provided by the Tribunal: "Ah need lotsa red meat, as a rugby player. Lots of it. Don' ya get sicka vegies?" (22). Both these characters display the good-keen-man dialect, with consonants left off the end of words, and corrupted vowels. The characters who are shown to be able to use non-English words, the Tangata Moni, speak most often in street dialect, and have more rounded vowels than the good-keen-men, but their speech is littered with swear words and colloquialisms, particularly 'eh'. "Why should we give a stuff about that, eh. Why? He's one of them. And they've fucked us up for centuries... Let him find out what the fucking Tribunal and all its sick bullshit is like..." (128). Though the speech patterns of the street kids are different from the protagonist's, the difference is only slight and relates particularly to the use of swear words. It is significant that the protagonist is less

differentiated in his speech from the street kids, who are Tangata Moni, as it is revealed later in the novel that he, too, is Tangata Moni.

In-text it is indicated that the street kids speak another language, one which, by its description, would seem to be a variety of “english”; however, no example of it is given: “It was then that they spoke to one another in a language I understood only in bits and pieces -- the English bits and a few Polynesian pieces, the rest was street pidgin, their coinage” (123). Wendt increases the power of these characters by attributing to them an ability to shut out those who do not understand their own language yet also giving them a good control of English. But it is only their English that we are exposed to, and throughout the novel, the informing language remains English, despite the variations in dialect, and despite the clear indication that the true heroes, the essential rebels, have developed an “english” all of their own. Despite ascribing difference and shifting power to those who have been, in colonial literature, powerless, this power is undermined by the choice of English as the informing language.

A similar device is used in *Sons for the Return Home*, where it is indicated that the protagonist’s family speak Samoan, though the only Samoan in the text is incorporated into sentences given in English: “... he realised that she was the first girl -- the first papalagi girl -- he had ever really enjoyed being with...” (9). When Samoan characters speak to each other, the speech is invariably given in English, and, although Wendt makes it clear that the protagonist’s parents speak English only very poorly, their efforts are never displayed. By this means, Wendt reduces the ability to ‘other’ that English spoken as a second language has. In the passage where the protagonist’s girlfriend meets his parents for the first time, no speech is given until after the encounter; though in the line, “[h]e introduced her to his father who took her to his mother and introduced her in broken English” (66), he acknowledges the potential for awkwardness. But the protagonist’s fears in this sense were allayed, as the parties were soon “chattering and laughing,” and he “wasn’t embarrassed any more by the

way his mother spoke English” (67). In effect, the passage suggests that an incomplete skill in the use of language need not be a barrier to communication -- that our common humanity will find a way past any difficulties.

Yet *Sons for the Return Home* engages in comment on the politics of language which indicates that New Zealand society places too much emphasis on the ability to speak English well, and that competence or otherwise in the dominant language is used as a measure of worth and a justification for perceiving differences.

‘I’ve just been telling your parents that our school is very proud of you,’ the Principal said. ‘But I don’t think they understood me. Do -- do they speak English?’

‘Not very much, sir,’ he mumbled.

‘Well, tell them that I’m really proud of you. You’re the first Samoan to pass School Certificate in this school.’

He told his parents hurriedly. They thanked the Principal in Samoan oratory.

‘What did they say’ the Principal asked him. He told him. ‘Your whole race should be proud of this boy,’ the Principal said to his parents just before they left. (13)

Many points are made in this exchange, not the least being the implicit condescension of the Principal’s statement that the “whole race” of Samoans should be proud of the protagonist’s success in passing School Certificate. It is the assumption of a native English-speaker of the over-riding importance of being able to function successfully in an English-dominated world. The Principal seems to be hardly concerned at all that he cannot understand the Samoan that is directed at him. It is the English language that empowers. The inability to speak English is what ‘others’. Wendt develops this point further later, after the family has returned home and the protagonist gets into a heated argument with his parents over his request that they never visit the school again:

‘Because they humiliate you,’ he said to his mother.

‘We’ve been here for nearly thirteen years and they still treat us as strangers.

As inferiors.’

‘But they don’t treat you that way,’ his father said. ‘Look at how they’ve helped you to get where you are!’

‘Only because they can’t do anything else, Papa. I’m better than them at that stupid game they worship so much. I can compete with the best of them in class as well. I speak their language, their peculiar brand of English, as well as any of them. They have to pretend I’m their equal, that I’m a New Zealander, because they can’t do anything else.’ (13)

The protagonist has been congratulated in mastering the language -- on overcoming the difficulties associated with being different. The key to being a member of the group is seen to be the ability to speak the language well. The protagonist can; his parents cannot. His anger lies in the fact that the ability to speak English is valued above all else, and it is this, rather than the amount of time spent in New Zealand, that is the signifier of continuing difference. The groupings are clearly defined by language: there are those who speak English, and those who do not. No middle ground is available for a Pacific Island “english”. Of interest here, too, is the use of the phrase “their peculiar brand of English” (meaning the pakeha New Zealand variety). This implies that the protagonist has a full working knowledge of the ‘real’ English from which “their peculiar brand” is derived, and is therefore better equipped (or possibly more effectively colonised) than the pakeha New Zealander in the matter of their own language. There is also more than a suggestion that the narrator, at least, perceives anything that is not standard English to be lesser English, thus eliminating the chance of any sympathy for the development of a variety of “english”.

Interestingly, though no examples are given of the parents’ broken English, the English of the European man the boys save in the dump is illustrated, complete with contractions.

“Don’ please!”, and “Leave me alon’, please!” (28), he cries. In never giving examples of the parents’ English, yet showing this man’s (as well as making the protagonist and his brother come to the man’s rescue), Wendt is effectively softening the ‘othering’ of the family in relation to the Europeans. When the protagonist tells his teacher about the man, adding “He can’t speak English properly” (29), and the teacher observes that the man is “Probably a foreigner” (29), the protagonist not only learns that it is language that makes foreigners, but that he is now considered to be a part of the group that allows the definition to be applied.

In *Ola*, as in *Black Rainbow* and *Sons for the Return Home*, those speeches that betray dialect are given only by certain secondary characters. When Matiu/Grace, Shona’s uncle, speaks, his/her speech is often rife with slang and swear words: “One day, kiddo...” (80), “Best fucking diver this side of Reinga...” (81). From the reported incidents of Grace at school, we learn that a teacher pronounced Maori, “Meoree” (82), that the boys were expected to “be men in the ‘good ol’ Kiwi tradition” (83), and that Waka Graham, her friend, liked “saying ‘Geez’, ‘Cheesed off’ and ‘Fuck you too with a broom” (84). Later, when Ola imagines what kind of suicide note an old school friend would have left, it is related in the “good-keen-man” dialect displayed in *Black Rainbow*:

Ya see mate, I couldn’t get the frigging cows and the dogs and those bleeding hills (as empty as a dead pig’s bladder) and that bald-headed mountain (which reminds me of a fat mongrel’s fart) to listen to my stupid jokes any more... Ya understand, mate, I didn’ exist anymore, not for them. And what good is a comic without an original joke or an audience, eh? ‘ (145)

Although contracted words are present, along with slang and colloquialisms, these are only in the speeches of the English-speaking characters. If there is any hint of the possibility of an “english” language in these texts, it seems to be more readily in reach of the native English-speakers rather than of those who speak English as a second language. Though the reader is given the dialect of some characters, Ola’s father, a man who plays a significant part in the

novel and who is revealed early on not to be fluent in English (43), is never shown talking with any dialect traits. When his speech is given, it is either in perfect English, or is labelled as translated from Samoan. “‘What is this memorial?’ he asks in Samoan” (31), and, when at a party in Tel Aviv, he tells those present, “‘This person is an uneducated person... I had little schooling; this is my first trip away from home. Ola can tell you more about our country and our way of life’” (214). Ashcroft et al. state:

The articulation of two quite opposed possibilities of speaking and therefore of political and cultural identification outlines a cultural space between them which is left unfulfilled, and which, indeed, locates a major signifying difference in the post-colonial text. (54)

As in *Sons for the Return Home*, by not articulating “quite opposed possibilities of speaking” between the protagonists and most of those they encounter -- or, rather, by giving prominence to the non-standard English used by the English-as-first-language speakers and leaving the speech of the protagonists relatively dialect-free -- Wendt has lessened the ‘othering’ effect of language as far as the Pacific Island characters are concerned, and even tended to ‘other’ the English-as-first-language speakers, or at least to make some of them seem rather boorish. While this could be seen to create a “cultural space”, it places the protagonists clearly as speakers of English, and thus as upholders of one of the features of the colonial power system.

Yet dialect use in Wendt’s novels implies relationships that are more complex than this. Of the dialects portrayed, the protagonist comes closer to using that of the street rather than the good-keen-man’s. The rationale behind this becomes clear in *Black Rainbow*, where the users of the street dialect are the Tangata Moni -- those who are of Maori or Pacific Island descent. They are the heroes, and the protagonist, it becomes clear, is one of them. The good-keen-man dialect, on the other hand, is associated with pakeha, particularly provincial or working-class pakeha. The significant point here is that it is not those who use English as a

second language who are othered, it is, rather, the good-keen-men dialect speakers, the very ones who are often lionised in traditional New Zealand literature, who are. Through this strategy, Wendt appears to be staking a claim to English on the part of those who would classically be termed 'other'. The broader significance of this will be examined in Chapter Three. It is essentially a nativist strategy, a fighting back with the tools of the oppressor, which has the effect of investing the indigene with the power once wielded by the coloniser -- but which also places the indigene in the same stereotypical straightjacket.

Wendt's *Black Rainbow*, in its announcement of a language used by the street kids that is fully intelligible only to them, comes closest to identifying an "english" language; but this language remains hidden to the reader. The strongest dialects in the novel are not spoken by those who might be expected to speak the most 'different' English, but by native English speakers. It is apparent that the politics of the novel have superseded any perceived need for a new linguistic territory that will inhabit the space between English and the languages of the Pacific Islands. English maintains its power as the informing language, the language of power; but, those with the best control over it are the heroes of the novel, the ones in the right, the ones who have an understanding of things that other characters are unaware of.

The "neologisms, innovations, tropes and imaginative usage" (44) of language that Ashcroft et al. write about as being tools for the construction of an "english" language are present in all of the texts considered, but they stand as anomalies rather than as the norm. In the case of the neologisms looked at, they are clearly derived from the culture of the coloniser, and they, along with untranslated texts and representations of dialect, work not towards the creation of new linguistic territory but rather to emphasise different ways of using English. The South Pacific diaspora, which involves a new experience for those from the South Pacific, is in each case illustrated by the language of the coloniser, and new linguistic territory, like the 'new space', remains hypothetical and unclaimed.

II

Foreign lands and peoples certainly spelt the possibility of new sexual experiences, which is why they became both exciting and monstrous for the European imagination. Sexual relations in non-European cultures were certainly different and sometimes less repressive than in Christian Europe. For most European travellers and colonialists, however, the promise of sexual pleasure rested on the assumption that the darker races or non-Europeans were immoral, promiscuous, libidinous and always desired white people.

(Loomba 158)

While much has been written on colonial writers' linguistic strategies that enforce and perpetuate a stereotyping of the sexuality of the indigene, comparatively little appears to have been written on the treatment of sexuality and gender by the postcolonial/decolonised writer. For the postcolonial writer writing from within an adopted homeland, in this case New Zealand, are the people of the host culture seen as different? Is there an identifiable difference in the portrayal of the sexuality of Maori and pakeha? And what of the sexuality of those within the writers' own culture? This chapter examines the depiction of sexuality and gender of both Pacific Island and non-Pacific Island characters in the works studied, and concludes that, as with language, representations of sexuality and gender within the texts remain closely tied to metropolitan notions of 'other' and to the politics of nativism. With only one significant exception, the writers' portrayals of the diaspora, which would seem to provide an opportunity to define new grounds, shows it embracing many of the colonial period's prejudices and assumptions. The exception is in the representation of the fa'afafine in Kightley's *A Frigate Bird Sings*. The fa'afafine, a character who defies classification within

metropolitan norms, redefines sexuality and gender, and in doing so suggests at least the possibility of Pacific Islanders in New Zealand defining for themselves a whole new cultural space.

Although issues relating to sexuality and gender are closely tied together in the texts, initially they are dealt with separately here. The perceived sexuality of the characters is shown to be bound up in imperial stereotypes, limiting the chance for the identification of new roles. Pacific Island women are shown to have distinctive sexual roles, depending on the one whose gaze is turned upon them. With regard to gender, the roles of women become even more claustrophobic, harking back to Victorian ideals of the woman at the hearth. Men, however, have the world at their feet -- and it is a world that appears to allow them a chance to create for themselves a new space. Possibilities here are suggested, but the whole question remains clouded by the continued presence of certain colonial attitudes. The clearest delineation of possibilities comes, in fact, through the character of the fa'afafine, a kind of hybrid whose space in the host country, if he/she is to have one, must be new.

Although both men and women are depicted in these texts as sexual beings, their sexuality seems based, in part, on imperial stereotypes of the potent, animalistic powers that purportedly go hand in hand with dark skin. By an obvious extension, white skin tends to equate with repressed sexuality and even impotence. In the writings that directly address the issue of sexuality, namely those of Pule and Wendt, by far the majority of the sexual encounters are in fact interracial. This means that sexuality is depicted in binary terms, and the act often as an encounter between opposites -- passion and dispassion, potency and weakness, calculation and instinct. Distinctions in this regard are drawn not only along race lines, but gender lines, too, and the actions of one partner often illustrate not only their own sexuality, but help define that of their partner as well.

Wendt's *Sons for the Return Home*, despite the author's apparent acknowledgement and refutation of the sort of sexual stereotyping that was a feature of the colonial period,

actually seems to reinforce some of those myths. Roger Robinson states “[t]he main character of *Sons for the Return Home* is an impatient rebuttal of all Polynesian stereotypes, the cuddly as well as the hostile ones” (163). Impatient, certainly; but a rebuttal? Certainly not. While references to colonial stereotypes within the text ridicule those who would ever be foolish enough to believe them, the characters and their actions frequently seem to hold true to those very stereotypes.

It was all so familiar (and ridiculous), he thought. The type of New Zealand man he’d always disliked, attempting to prove his masculinity in public; the rugby player and surfer who, suffering from fear of his own inadequacies as a male, believed the racist myth of black virility, and who was trying to convince himself (and his friends) that the myth wasn’t true. The whole history of the pakeha had been cursed with this fear, and the Maoris and other minority groups had to pay for it. All pakeha women who went out with Polynesians and blacks were considered nymphomaniacs after the super-sized whang. Conversely, all pakeha men who took out Polynesian women were after the expert fuck. (*Sons for the Return Home* 125)

Presumably the most effective way of rebutting such stereotypes concerning black virility, pakeha nymphomaniacs, and Polynesian expert ‘fucks’ would be to portray the lives of characters who are black but not virile, female and pakeha but not sex-addicted, and Polynesian and female but not expert in sexual activities. *Sons for the Return Home* features two main characters who fit quite well the first two of these stereotypes. The protagonist is Polynesian and clearly virile. His girlfriend is pakeha and a sexual predator, at least as far as this particular Polynesian male is concerned. The protagonist attracts her effortlessly, although he remains, for a time, aloof or even rude:

‘Do you mind me sitting here?’ she asked. He shook his head without looking at her. ‘You don’t talk much, do you?’ He continued to ignore her.

She sat very quietly for a while, gazing at the window and tapping the pen she was holding in her left hand on the cover of the pad in front of her; then, more uncertain, she asked if he was studying at university. He maintained his silence. 'Is there something wrong with me?' she asked.

'No,' he said, still not looking at her.

'You want to be left alone, is that it?' she asked. He nodded.

(*Sons for the Return Home* 2-3)

While the protagonist continues to be cold towards her for some time, she remains determined to elicit the response she wants. She is persistent and eventually successful.

This detachment on the part of the Pacific Island male is echoed in Pule's writing. In *Burn My Head in Heaven*, the Niuean man is depicted as being emotionally detached from the sexual activity he is involved in -- though this appears to be linked to the fact that he is only ever shown to be involved with non-Niuean women. The only time a male Niuean figure is shown to be keen on sleeping with a female is when the god Fao wants to sleep with a shark. In all the other sexual encounters, the Niuean man is simply there, seemingly instinctively managing to satisfy normally inhibited white women. When Potau fondles one of the female visitors to his village, bringing her to orgasm, she "could not believe the willingness of her heart as she parted her legs", while Potau "paused to watch the small flames in the dark forest cut up by the speed of the truck" (64). Although it has to be assumed that the men in question do feel some sense of arousal in these episodes, there is no description of any emotional response on their part at all. In the case of the fondled woman, her awakening was, apparently, nothing more than a way for the Niuean man to kill some time. While the god Fao 'wanted' the female shark, the white woman was simply there at an opportune time. She, on the other hand, cannot resist her attraction to the dark, potent, powerful man:

Potau had seduced Sarah in the forest, in the plantation field. She was attracted to him. His silent way of walking into the gardens, his indifference to her

inquiries. Every time she wanted to know about something, she would ask Potau who did not even answer. He just looked at her, as if to say what the hell are you trying to communicate to me, and walked away.

(*Burn My Head in Heaven* 179)

He is shown to be unaffected by his liaisons with her, but the same can never be said for her: “Sarah waited for his return. He walked right past. For the rest of her stay she could not get Potau’s attention, even when her manava swelled and nipples hardened” (179). When the protagonist (Potau’s son) is described in sexual activity, although he appears to be little more involved than Potau, he is still able to ensure that the girl is “trembling in ecstasy” (218), without it having any effect on him, or him having to do very much. Here again is the image of the innately sexually powerful dark man encountering the naive white woman -- a survival from those colonial texts that viewed white women as being in need of protection from forces too base for their understanding. His sexual power is so strong that the repressed white woman is herself surprised at how easily she succumbs. He, however, has done little or nothing to elicit this response.

As in *Burn My Head in Heaven*, the descriptions in *The Shark that Ate the Sun* of sexual encounters between the Niuean man and a white woman imply that the woman is not used to the powerful sexuality of the man, and enjoys an intense new experience. The dark man, however, is somehow detached from the whole business:

I’ll just buy a bottle of gin and orange take it home that is it, easy, the new people and the white woman hitting it back as hard as the men, she willingly opens her legs, gasping at being taken from behind against the cyclone both staring at the stone wall, what a magnificent view, the stars are falling in my mouth fucking this island man throbbing canoe carved enormously with the chisel’s sweat, driving violently till the wind dies down and the wall takes on the image of the waves, my God don’t stop never stop is that it...

(The Shark that Ate the Sun 56)

By the device of changing the narrator midway through this description, from the man to the woman, Pule has avoided putting the man in a position where he might himself appear to be desiring sexual gratification. It is the white woman who desires the Island man. He is her sexual liberator.

Fanon neatly sums up the colonial view of the dangers to which white women are exposed in their contacts with black men: "The women among the whites, by a genuine process of induction, invariably view the Negro as the keeper of the impalpable gate that opens into the realm of orgies, of bacchanals, of delirious sexual sensations' (*Black Skin, White Masks* 177). He goes on to add: "... We have shown that reality destroys all these beliefs" (*Black Skin, White Masks* 177). In the case of the Pule novels, such beliefs seem to be reinscribed rather than destroyed. A single encounter with a Niuean man has the white woman experiencing things never experienced before, and, in doing so, becoming painfully aware of what she has been missing in her relationships with white men.

As the man was sweeping the bigness of his dream with one hand, it included Potau. One of the women looked at his body. The man who was dreaming of building hotels noticed how she stared at Potau. The thoughts in his head hated the idea of a native making love to a white woman. In her thoughts she compared his dark ligneous body to the overt sensual jaws of the shark. And she felt uneasy about herself as a white woman wanting to touch Potau. The sun was beating down causing anxiety in her limbs, fingers, lips, hips and finally she had an incredible sensation like cold water through her mouth. Later in her room she realised she had had an orgasm. She didn't know how to cope with the thought. She spread her fingers out and using the palm as a guide followed the softness of her belly to her lips and with two fingers acting like scissors, rubbed her clitoris. She was amazed to feel how wet she was, she was

swollen there and everywhere else was loneliness.

(*Burn My Head in Heaven* 61)

In talking about the colonially-perceived sexual role of the indigene, Goldie states:

“... throughout the indigene remains the same commodity, the same object of white desire and fear” (84). In *Burn My Head In Heaven*, the notion of the indigene as object of “white desire and fear” has been reinforced, but it is not just the indigene who is shown to be a commodity. ‘Other’ as a reflection of self works both ways in Pule’s treatment of the sexual encounters between Niuean men and white women. The Niuean man might well be the object of “white desire and fear”, but the white woman is the object of Niuean power-play and detachment. For both parties, the encounters reflect more on the self than the ‘other’. Power is reversed while the stereotype is reinforced.

There is a similar approach in Wendt’s *Sons for the Return Home*; however, unlike the male characters in Pule’s novels, the hero here, while he is a virile black man, feels an emotional attachment to his white woman -- albeit reluctantly. Despite this, there is still a certain amount of detachment. It is as if the protagonist is going through the motions, as though he is waiting for the time he knows is coming -- the time when the relationship deteriorates. An example of this can be seen when he takes her to a Samoan church dance, sees beforehand that she is inappropriately dressed, but doesn’t warn her: “she had to find out for herself” (60). She is visibly shaken by the experience and uncomfortable, yet he “pretended not to notice” (60). Finally, when they leave, she confronts him, but he feigns ignorance: “[h]e yearned to comfort her but he had to know if she had learnt” (63). It is as if his relationship with her is an experiment, and this particular incident a test. Although he does have feelings for her, he can control them -- when he is of a mind to. She can’t.

In the protagonist from *Sons for the Return Home*, the reader is shown not only the virile black man, but the violent black man as well:

He hit her. She spun away from him and slammed into the wall behind her. She

stood there, hands clutching her bleeding mouth, watching him as he moved towards her. He hit her again. Her head thumped against the wall.

(*Sons* 116)

This passage gives an insight into the desperate need the two main characters have for each other. His violence against her is excused because she drove him to it with her taunting, and she is the first to apologise afterwards. His desperate need to know she loves him apparently justifies his lack of self-control. But, beyond this, this passage is about ownership.

Uncomfortable with the thought that his girlfriend had a sexual past, and, worse, one with white men, the protagonist finally lashes out, with a deep resentment. The second time he hits her, his violence is more menacing. His reaction could be a model for the 'brutish' stereotype.

In *Black Rainbow*, the character Supremo Jones is another example of the dark man's attraction to the opposite (and, in this case, sometimes the same) sex. As with the protagonist from *Sons for the Return Home*, he is also shown to have the capacity to become emotionally involved. When he is with the storyteller, for instance, he is gentle and understanding, amazed by her physique and at peace with her. His capacity for empathy, though, is limited to those who have some connection with the Tangata Moni (the storyteller's connection being her ability to tell stories). Supremo Jones is, indeed, a supreme character -- successful both in and out of the dominant culture, giving to those who are downtrodden, and truly sexually powerful. He is, in a sense, the ultimate stereotype -- potent, potentially dangerous and self-assured. He seems to be the very model of the colonial indigenous man. But there is no self-conscious acknowledgement of stereotypes by protagonist or secondary characters here, as to do so would make obvious the extent to which this text has appropriated the colonial stereotype of 'native' sexuality. The protagonist is a powerful figure who carries the torch for all Tangata Moni, and to admit that his potency and sexuality are based on a colonial stereotype would be to weaken the political message of the novel, or even destroy it. Indeed,

if nativism is taken to be an “angry endorsement” (Loomba 23) of the conceptual distance between ‘dark’ and ‘light’ and pre-established colonial stereotypes of the indigene based on essentialist beliefs, then it can be seen that what is being presented here as truth is the idea that the dark man is innately virile, violent and rebellious -- a nativist argument that avoids acknowledging its colonial birthplace.

Just as the protagonist in *Sons* fits the stereotype of the dark man, so do many of the white characters, in turn, conform to their stereotypes. “My ancestors (and most of their illustrious descendants) were scared of the third hand, the one that can inject life to give birth to all mankind”, says the girlfriend (*Sons* 91), indicating a frigidity that can be seen in her mother. Like the white women in Pule’s novels, it seems her mother is in need of sexual awakening -- the sort of awakening that her daughter receives from a black man. Furthermore, sexual relationships between white characters are shown as being either deviant (as in the scene between the two men on the boat), or virtually or actually non-existent, as with the girl’s parents.

This idea of repressed white sexuality compared with pure and vigorous black sexuality is continued in *Ola*. Although the protagonist here is female, the novel thus departing a little from the norm, the stereotypes remain much the same. In this case it is Ola who closely fits the sexuality of her male counterparts in Wendt’s other novels, though it has not been easy for her. She herself writes, in *Ola*:

Females are *fed* to believe they mustn’t use four-letter words, write/talk about sexual matters openly/frankly. For me this has been one of the most difficult taboos to break free of -- it’s like trying to be free of my very breath (my ‘stereotyped’ self) and to learn new ways of breathing and speaking.

(*Ola* 39)

Nevertheless, she is portrayed throughout the book as a very sexually aware being, completely free of the taboos she sees herself burdened with here. Much like the male

stereotype already described, she approaches sex with a certain detachment. She is aware of her power over men, particularly white men, but she seems not to get emotionally involved. With one exception, the men she sleeps with (all white) she appears to view as laughable. The exception is the American who gains her sympathy through his personal campaign to right the wrongs of colonialism.

In *Ola*, pakeha men are portrayed as sexually and socially repressed:

But within a month of having broken audible wind in his presence, I concluded I was married to a 'leaker in everything', and a puritanically mean leaker at that. In money, laughter, joy, sadness, sorrow, conversation, and most frustrating of all... [he] was most frugal with his Thing (his description). He was, so he argued, not to be ruled by his 'passions' -- meaning, in my book, he was ashamed of Thing and the inexplicable upsets, inspired by my enticing presence, Thing kept plaguing him with. (*Ola* 47)

The puritanical fear of the 'third hand', mentioned in *Sons*, is also part of the stereotype in *Ola*, where white men are shown to be either closeted in their sexuality, or unwarrantedly proud of it. Where *Sons* had the protagonist showing an awareness of certain stereotypes, in *Ola* this awareness comes through Gill:

He said, 'Think of what an illegitimate child would do to your mother's memory and her good name.' Meaning Pakehas would say I was still a Maori like my mother. Once a Maori, always a Maori! (*Ola* 67)

The image of the highly sexually active dark woman (or "voracious succubus", to use Goldie's term (84)) is implicit in this passage, but the stereotype is made more obvious by *Ola*:

Mental masturbation is certainly no substitute for actual masturbation.
Actual masturbation is certainly no substitute for a real fuck (some of the time, that is, because a lot of fucks ain't worth it).
For me that's the reality right now.

Poor Pita, he's always trying to help me rise above myself.

Wonder if Einstein was a good lover? Was he able to raise it, in his old age,
beyond Relativity? (*Ola* 50)

However, Ola, the highly sexually active and sexually blunt Island woman is just one of two types of Island women presented in the texts. The sexuality of Island women is shown to be either sacred and therefore not discussed, or bubbling close to the surface, openly acknowledged and unfettered. This definition of two basic sexual roles is really just as confining as the sexual role allotted to white women.

In *Black Rainbow*, the primary female Tangata Moni figure, Fantail, is not discussed at all in terms of her sexuality. This aspect of her is not revealed. In *Sons*, the sexuality of the protagonist's mother, is likewise not discussed at all -- but that of the Samoan woman hotel receptionist is:

She exuded a rich aura of sexuality; her body was full and lush. This was her real truth. He suddenly felt a strong need to touch that truth, shatter the flimsy facade of sophistication, and, for a complete moment, live in the truth of her flesh, stripped clean of that artificial, tragic mimicry. (*Sons* 198)

It appears that the criterion that decides if an Island woman is to be portrayed as a sexual being is whether or not her relationship to the central male figure is one built on familiarity and respect.

In Pule's *Burn My Head in Heaven*, the Niuean women are likewise not depicted as sexual creatures. They are treated rather as sacred figures -- those for whom the love of the Niuean man is reserved. While white women appear and disappear in the novel, easily forgotten figures filled with sexual desires, the Niuean women are a constant but subdued presence, involved in intimate but sainted relationships with the men, the land, and the community. Their sexuality is not a matter to be discussed, whereas sex with white women is because it is without love, respect or attachment. By implication these things are reserved for

Niuean women. This does not mean that the Niuean woman's role is not confining -- it is simply a different cage she inhabits. She is the being who provides the Niuean man with those things he does not get from his relationships with white women.

In Pule's other novel, *The Shark that Ate the Sun*, Niuean women are allowed their sexuality -- or some of them are. They are like the Niuean men in *Burn My Head in Heaven* in that their sexuality is a powerful force, often described as dark, and frantic, and in other slightly menacing terms:

A savage girl, lips shining in the dark, leans against the shadows, calls out, 'Is that all you can do, preach?'

Peniamina crushes her against Jesus on her neck, wounding her, drawing blood.

Birds scatter the warm leaves, the earth scratches their delirious bodies. He leaves her there buried in the moonlight. (*The Shark that Ate the Sun* 49)

In the same book, there is a distinct difference between the depiction of sexuality in those with dark skin and those with light skin. It is not only the Niueans who are shown to be instinctively sexual, it is all those with dark skin -- women in particular, unless they are mad. In fact, the image of darkness is closely linked to a kind of base sexuality throughout the novel, as if the colonial discourse which assumed that an animal sexuality is the preserve of the darker races has become internalised. In comparison, 'white' sexuality, yet again, is characterised as repressed, cloaked or non-existent, only released by contact with the potent 'dark' sexuality. The vibrancy of the "dark daughter" of the Greek dairy owner, who "stared at you, her earthly perfume, like the vapour from the limestone in the new morning's call" is contrasted with an "old white lady" with "layer after layer of pink powder masking her face, bent over to accept a penny for a *Star*" (63). Later, when the young protagonist enters the playhouse of "a little white girl" who lives not far from him, the description of his encounter with the dolls inside works not only to highlight a class and culture difference, but, when compared to his description of a Samoan girl he encounters soon after, serves to imply an

unnaturalness, almost a deviancy, that is nurtured in white girls from an early age.

Standing there was a shock shift into my heart, as surrounding my body row by row from the brown wooden floor to the white ceiling were dolls, hundreds, every single doll dressed better than most. Blue eyes, green; all stared at me. Intruder, islander, recently arrived to fill in factory jobs, along with commoners to do dirty work; here, an example of wealth. (*The Shark that Ate the Sun* 94)

Three houses down the hill lived a Samoan girl. She took my hand and we both made our way across the field and the horses were going crazy; up through a clearing into a bamboo forest, we stopped. She helped pull my pants down and she herself lay down and spread her legs until I saw a tiny lip part, she stroked my penis until I felt the pulse that is strong and weak combined. She guided me in, and I felt earth cut my knees. It was over, said the ants crawling over my hands. We stood up and she would not give my pants back. I cried and after more protest she flung them at me. (*The Shark That Ate the Sun* 95)

In the encounter with the Samoan girl the two of them are surrounded by nature, and the episode is described as if it were an example of children experimenting with sex, curious and self-willed. In the dolls' house, by contrast, everything is artificial, clinical and unwelcoming. Although he does not appear to have any meaningful interaction with the dolls' owner, the dolls themselves seem to be a representation of the world she lives in, and the absence of any interaction makes her seem as inanimate as the dolls. The episodes seem to consider the question of child sexuality, with the white child's being repressed and diverted, and the Samoan child being allowed what is assumed to be natural expression. Here the innate sexuality of the dark person is shown to be present even at a relatively young age.

However, despite being allowed sexual expression, the Niuean women in *The Shark That Ate the Sun* still retain the aura of sanctity they possess in *Burn My Head in Heaven*.

One of the ways this is maintained is by the author avoiding portrayals of sexual relations between Niuean women and non-Niuean men. But another way the idea of the special sanctity of the Niuean is reinforced is, rather oddly, by the depiction of one such woman suffering rape.

In fact there are two scenes of sexual violation in the novel. The first is the violation of a palagi girl by the protagonist. To him, it is retribution for being caught by her father stealing plums from their tree. He “was determined to feel between her legs the way [he] felt the plum tree, and did”. While they are playing Spin the Bottle he jumps on her, and, with the help of his friends, who initially look on, laughing, he “buried [his] fingers down into her pants” (191). Juxtaposed with descriptions of the girl struggling enough to require that she be held down, are the words “she did not scream” and a description of how she left the scene blushing. The potent, irresistible sexuality of the protagonist is seemingly sufficient to turn a truly distressing moment for the victim into one of secret pleasure.

The other violation is the rape of a Niuean woman by an Island man. Here we are given descriptions of what the victim, Puhia, sees and thinks while the rape is taking place. She is detached from it all, well on the way to madness, and truly a victim. She does not blush with secret pleasure, and the man is simply mechanically satisfying his need. The protagonist, previously himself an abuser, now looks on deeply disturbed. Afterwards, he symbolically tramples his father’s highly valued talo crop before going up to his room where “[the] muffled noise below sunk into Hell” (198). While the violation of the white girl is depicted as being not a true violation, because she (it is intimated) received pleasure rather than pain and humiliation from the experience, the rape of the Niuean woman is shown to be profoundly disturbing -- less for the woman herself than for the young Niuean man who witnessed the event. The protagonist sees Puhia as a sacred figure, and her rape upsets him deeply. In both cases, the response of the protagonist is ultimately a reflection of the role he perceives the women as playing in his life.

It is clear from the treatment of the sexuality of the various characters in all the works studied that the authors have effectively entrenched many of the stereotypes of the colonial era, particularly with regard to the black man's (and, to a lesser extent, woman's) baser yet more vigorous and exciting sexual powers, and to the (supposedly repressed) white woman's susceptibility to those powers. In doing so, the writers have, in a sense, turned the negative 'othering' of the colonial period into something positive, as there can be no doubt that the sexual characteristics so ascribed are deemed superior to those of the supposedly repressed whites -- and it is shown to give them *power* over whites. Wendt, particularly in *Black Rainbow*, pushes this idea further -- into the realms of the sort of essentialism that Senghor identifies in his notion of negritude (Said, *Culture and Imperialism* 275-277). None of this represents the creation of 'new space', but, rather, tends to reaffirm the strength of some of the imperial ideas that seem doomed to influence attitudes well into the future. In concluding this consideration of the issue of sexuality, it is worth pointing out that the attitudes expressed concerning the Island women's sexuality in the various texts are much more ambivalent, and that while Wendt's Ola would seem to represent the perception of a new sexual 'space' for Island women, in the eponymous heroine of *Ola* the author seems to have invented a woman protagonist/heroine who bears an uncanny resemblance to the male protagonists/heroes in his other books.

When looking at how gender is dealt with in these texts, a familiar pattern with regard to women emerges. The paternalism of the colonial period, which subordinated the role of women, seems in these works to be combined with certain traditional Island attitudes that modify the basic approach only slightly. The roles of the women in these texts are essentially defined by men, and they seem to fall into two categories -- women are either tradition carriers (and hugely restricted by those very traditions), or they are 'fallen' and therefore more free but less respected by the males. For the men of these novels, there is a broader range of possibilities, with some seemingly standing on the threshold of a 'new space'.

Generally speaking, though, that new space remains undefined, and in some cases (particularly in Wendt) the men depicted seem to represent rather an affirmation of colonial stereotypes of the intuitive, spiritual, environmentally-aware black man.

The perceived role of women in Pule's works is hinted at early in *The Shark that Ate the Sun*:

The black god tore my chest open like lovers do, and the first thing he grabbed hold of was the state house he tore from the earth, and blew the windows out, opened the door and sucked out the sad mothers of Polynesia, the sad men, the sad children.

(*The Shark that Ate the Sun* 9)

With the exception of the occasional one who has fallen prey to madness or to alcohol, the Pacific Island women in Pule's novels are consistently pictured as being the "mothers of Polynesia". He shows them as nurturers of tradition who carry with them the culture of the island left behind. Some achieve a higher status in this role than others, but those who remain strong in the face of the hardships encountered in the new country do so *because* they follow the traditional rules. They remain pure in a country of temptation. That is not to say that New Zealand is depicted as a den of iniquity, and Niue a Garden of Eden, but Pule makes it clear that those who migrate to New Zealand to escape hardships on the island do not find here the Shangri La they might have expected. This is why the role of women as the guardians of the old culture is given such prominence. The men must find a place for themselves in the New Zealand of the dominant culture -- to find a job at the very least -- but the women's role is to keep alive the memory of the homeland, if necessary adapting their cultural practices to the new environment. It is the difficulty attached to doing this that makes the mothers sad, for the traditions are under threat from the complex demands involved in the migrants' efforts to make a place for themselves in their new land. While both the men and the women contribute to this effort, the men are more concerned with the interface between Niuean culture and the dominant New Zealand culture, while the women are the driving force in the

preservation, revival and adaptation of what was left behind.

In *The Shark that Ate the Sun*, Mocca Laginogi plays a pivotal part in Niuean gatherings in New Zealand, and is influential in helping the narrator to take his first steps towards personal salvation. While other female characters play a supporting role in the preservation of Niuean traditions, it is Mocca who is the matriarch. From the beginning of the novel she is firm in her belief in her role -- she is in New Zealand to make the lives of her various family members easier by fulfilling her obligations to her church and the wider Niuean community. She is the embodiment of the remembered Niuean way of life. "I liked having Mocca around," says the narrator, "she was a figure of authority and strength. When she spoke people listened, and no one dared to answer back" (198).

In *Burn My Head in Heaven*, the role of New Zealand Niuean matriarch is allotted to the character Nogi, who, like Mocca, arrived in New Zealand, got a job, set up a kind of safe-haven for other Niueans, was pivotal in Niuean gatherings, helped others to come to New Zealand and, apparently without help from a husband, worked hard for the deposit on a house (and won enough through gambling to pay it all off). Of Nogi, the narrator says:

I was visiting Auntie Nogi at least once a week. I could rely on her magical ways of story-telling, especially her directness in explaining and placing people into a familiar sphere. I pushed questions concerning the welfare of trees, who planted them and what year. These were important to me for the bilingual source generated by both. One day Nogi recited the family whaka-papa back to the seventeenth century.

After a few months of talking I realised how her mana had increased over the greater part of this century. She was seen and used by her own people as a sanctuary, the same way as her house was used as a haven for those Niueans arriving on the boats. (Burn My Head in Heaven 260-261)

While these are the two strongest New Zealand-based female characters in Pule's

novels, other women, in various ways, are shown to have in some degree the same kind of potential to bring salvation through their knowledge of tradition and their genuine concern for the Niuean community. Though Lamahina, the mother of the protagonist in *Burn My Head in Heaven*, refers to her life in Niue as “the dark days” (249), she is the one who is constantly ringing her son when there is a death or some other vital news to report from within the community, reminding him of his obligations. Despite Lamahina’s reluctance to talk about magical incantations with her son, her adherence to the transposed traditions, and her wish that her son were more loyal to them, still define her as a tradition carrier.

Apart from their concern with tradition, women seem to be at the forefront in dealing with the practical, day-to-day problems facing their families. While the men are left to ponder the deeper questions of life, the women are depicted as concerned with such things as earning money for a house, organising dance practices, and sending funds and provisions to relations in Niue. These activities are sometimes related to their function as tradition carriers. However, not all of Pule’s New Zealand-dwelling Niuean women are comfortable with the role they are clearly expected to play. Those that shirk their responsibilities in this regard are portrayed either as drunkards, like Lila, who with her partner Kau is famous for hosting drinking parties, or like Pele, whose jealousy and passions leads her to madness. While it seems to be acceptable for men to become ‘soul-searchers’ like Aifa, Thomas, and the protagonists, this option appears not to be open to women. They must either conform as best they can to the the ascribed role of tradition carrier and community organiser, or become degraded.

Pule’s matriarchal women are strong figures whose activities appear to offer security and continuity to the Niuean community as a whole -- but it is security based on separatism. Transposed traditions must be followed, with little acknowledgement of that which is outside the community. For the male protagonist, however, growth can only come from the achievement of some new place, and he must find strength and purpose from within himself. The women, then, are limited to their perceived role of tradition-bearers, while the men have

greater freedom as they seek new futures in the new environment. The implication is that it is men who have the ability, the imagination, and the angry determination to do this. The women draw their strength *from* the role they play -- the male Niuean in New Zealand has the option of self-definition and self-determination. These options are available to him because he is in a place that is not Niue, a place where he is able to escape the entrapment of tradition, but he still needs to be grounded by the women's domesticity.

For the protagonist in *The Shark that Ate the Sun*, it is Mocca who gave him that grounding:

She did not, at that time, or any time, seem to weave any trouble or worry like most of my family did in the world. I felt for the first time I had a home which generated happiness.

I received lots of love from Aunt Mocca. She looked after me.

(*The Shark that Ate the Sun* 281)

However, it was the words of George, "the Englishman, who was like a father to me" that made him think about his future:

He said, -- Have you thought about what you're going to do in the future, about your life?

-- What do you mean?

-- About working here. He looked over the yard, then pointed at the workers laying tarpaulins over the wagons eight hours a day.

-- They have been doing that for over five years. You would end up doing that. You should find something else. My advice is leave the job.

-- You mean I look for another job? I never saw myself doing anything special. I never thought of my future.

-- You will end up like them, like me in the same job for years when there is something else waiting for you in life. George put his hand on my shoulder.

(*The Shark that Ate the Sun* 288)

After these few words from George, the narrator leaves his job to take up sketching, and appears to find a degree of the peace that previously eluded him.

For the protagonist in *Burn My Head in Heaven*, the changing point seems to come when he reads the poems of his dead half-brother, Aifai. After doing so he takes up poetry himself and finds in it the beginnings of a resolution to the uncertainties in his life. It is not enough in itself, but it is the catalyst that leads him to decide to find out more about his Niuean heritage. For this he turns, of course, to a woman -- to Nogi. After preparing himself by his talks with her, he returns to Niue, the place that seems to him to offer him the possibility of spiritual fulfilment. The woman helped by imparting the knowledge she had when asked, but she was a passive participant -- a reference book, so to speak.

In comparison, Aifai, the part-Niuean son of Potau, seeks out his own place in the New Zealand Niuean community, but his origins are shrouded in secrets and he never quite obtains a feeling of belonging. Certain answers concerning Aifai's background are provided by Nogi, but it is not enough for him. Unlike the protagonist, though, Aifai cannot visit the place that could provide him with the full story as it is a place in past time (when his parents first met) that torments him. The feelings lead him eventually to the writing of the poetry that inspires the protagonist, but his inability to fully resolve the issues that grieve him leads him to suicide. His son, Thomas, on the other hand, learns to release his aggressions in the boxing ring, and, in handing over his father's poems to the protagonist, he seems deliberately to be relinquishing any further responsibilities he might feel towards the Niuean community. He, too, has found his own path.

While in New Zealand it is the women who are expected to be tradition carriers, leaving the men the freedom of self-definition, in Niue itself, the role of tradition carrier appears to be decided by age, not gender. When in Niue, the Niuean man has no need to seek new paths, and he is certainly not encouraged to find a new identity for himself. He can rely

on the generations before him to point out the path he must follow, and, it seems, he himself can, and should, in due course point out this path to the succeeding generations. Thus in the scenes set in Niue, while there are still matriarchal figures who are the repositories of vast traditional knowledge --

Now another man is here, wanting to seek out the matriarch of Ulumango; the one who knows all the stories, the one whose family map cascades with the water down the deep lines of her face to end at the mouth where a voice waits to translate their story. (*Burn My Head in Heaven* 20),

men are also shown to be preservers of these links to the past:

I was given the name Fati by my father. It was the name of one of my grandfathers. Two days before he died he walked round the island, and whoever was nearby heard him reciting his whakapapa. It was at the ancient settlement of Fasiau that he touched every rock which to him implied that here was the stone the gods moved to prove they exist. He went down a track that stopped at the sea, and with those brown sad orbs the universe changed again to accommodate the visions of his ancestors, dying of hunger and thirst, the sun half-way in their chests, clamouring against the cruel reefs to reach the jagged cliffs, exhausted after months at sea. My grandfather Fati Potautaha dug up the earth and pulled up roots that smelled of a thousand years.

(*Burn My Head in Heaven* 21)

A reason for the men's withdrawal from the role of tradition carrier upon reaching New Zealand is hinted at by the inclusion of certain Niuean legends in the text of *Burn My Head in Heaven*. Those concerning the goddess Hina seem to imply that she not only played the role of tradition carrier, but imparted it to women (35), while legends concerning male gods and mortals are chiefly concerned with battle, heroic deeds, or curious sexual appetites. Hence the role of men, as given by the gods, appears to be to go forth and conquer new ground -- which

is precisely what the protagonists in both Pule novels are depicted as doing. Thus the gender-based roles of Niueans in New Zealand seem in part to stem from legendary Niuean precedent. However, in the New Zealand setting, the Niuean male's boldness is rather more cerebral than physical. They seek new 'space' for themselves by attempting to redefine themselves in their new environment. It is far from clear from the novels, though, exactly what sort of space this is to be. They are seen still as being liminal figures, such as artists and poets, caught between the old and the new.

In Niue, history and traditions are integral to everyone's daily life. In New Zealand, women are designated the guardians of those traditions in the face of pressure from the dominant culture. The men have greater freedom to seek new space, and they are, generally speaking, depicted as the ones who are actively involved in coming to terms with the host culture. Neither male nor female, it is intimated, have actually managed to claim 'new space', though the men have the freedom to attempt to do so.

The bold, complex, self-aware male and the more conservative and passive female tradition carrier (who is in constant danger of falling), are also to be found in Wendt's writings. The relationships between the genders are also similar. However, Wendt gives emphasis to a kind of spirituality that is linked to land, something beyond tradition, that his male Island figures seem to be questing for or seeking to understand. The major Island women characters (with the exception of Ola in *Ola*), remain more passive and confined in their roles. The Wendt male protagonist in *Sons* is a Camus-like existential character, almost brutally seeking his identity in the new land. By *Black Rainbow* the protagonist is much more clearly aware of and influenced by a strong innate, essentialist, spiritual understanding of his links as Tangata Moni with the land, and of the rebellious, warrior-like nature he shares with other Tangata Moni.

In *Sons*, the protagonist, like the protagonists in Pule's novel, is threshing about, exploring his new territories, experimenting and fretting, and soliciting (deliberately or not) the

attentions of women (71). For him, there are constant challenges and frustrations. He ponders questions of belonging, of heritage, and power. His behaviour is cold and calculating one minute, passionate and unreasoning the next. It could be argued that this is the mark of a well-written character, but that point is not taken up here. What seems significant in the complexities of the protagonist is that they are not found in any of the other main characters. There is a certain depth to the character of the girlfriend, but she is essentially predictable. To her, things are black or white; they either stand in the way of her relationship with the protagonist, or they don't. Robinson states: "[t]he New Zealand girl is confused and decadent, but dynamic, too, taking the initiative and making the decisions at every stage of their relationship (a fact which makes it curious to see the film branded as sexist)" (163). For the detached, intelligent, angry protagonist, who has easily attained success within the New Zealand educational and sporting culture, it is not surprising that the woman who soothes his anger towards his adopted homeland and the people in it should be from the privileged elite. Through his excellence in all fields, he has gained rights, in this case sexual rights, to the very best the country has to offer. The woman is herself superior; thus, they are natural partners. Her "decadence" aligns her with the amoral and elitist world she comes from. Her confusion springs from her awareness of the flaws in her world and her inability to dissociate herself from them. This makes her unhappy, and doomed. She is the equivalent of the unfulfilled and doomed white women of Pule's novels. In this case, though, the black man is shown to have genuine feelings for her -- feelings which could in part stem from the fact that the woman has links with the land. This is something the protagonist instinctively understands and wants to share. Her frenzied sexual desire for him is reciprocated partly because he sees it as a mechanism by which he can assert his own claims to 'belong' in his adopted homeland.

Getting, as Wendt says, to know the girl, and through her his country [of] exile, the protagonist is baptised in a Kiwi river. Making love to the girl in that river is not only an act of love towards his adopted landscape, but is, as is

much of the assertive sexuality in the novel, a deliberately anti-colonial gesture.

(Tiffin, "You can't go home again" 123)

The fact that a critic labelled the movie version of this novel sexist is understandable, as the girl's every move, every function, revolves around the protagonist; it appears she exists for him. Although she is a New Zealander, it is the protagonist who, after conquering her, is depicted as having the deeper spiritual understanding of New Zealand and its people. He gains this partly because he is a man, with the capacity to seek out and redefine. The river passage referred to in the above quotation is an anti-colonial gesture (transposing the colonial act of penetration), in that the white woman is the static object which reflects the gaze of the dark observer, and the colonial power structures are thus reversed. Goldie writes of colonial texts: "She [the female indigene] represents the attractions of the land but in a form which seems to request domination..." (65). In the Wendt episode, it is a female coloniser who "represents the attractions of the land" and who is "request[ing] domination". Unlike the female indigenes, however, it is hinted that the white girl, with her paucity of spiritual awareness (which is emphasised in her treatment of the hawk, discussed later), does not anyway make a true representative of the land. He, who now dominates her, is more fit for this role, because he is spiritually (and by skin colour) akin to the Tangata Whenua, the true people of the land. This theme is developed further in Wendt's other novels, particularly *Black Rainbow*, where the Pacific indigenes generally have been absorbed in the super group referred to as the Tangata Moni, for whom the protagonist becomes the spokesperson.

The beginning of the end of the protagonist's relationship with the girl comes, not when she starts to have her own inner conflicts after having the abortion, but when she shoots the hawk. It is at this point that the protagonist, previously unsure about the landscape around him and in need of the girl's guidance, sees that he has outgrown this need for her and that he has a more intuitive understanding of the land than she could ever have. "Your lily-white ancestors ate everything else that was worth anything in this fucken area. Now you

even want to kill the bloody scavengers you brought with you!"; he says (*Sons* 95). By thus assuming the role of defender of the wild and the natural, the protagonist appears to be aligning himself with Maori. This indigenising strategy echoes those colonial texts where certain male characters stake a claim to the land by assuming the traits and behavioural patterns they believe they see in the indigene. This strategy not only purported to justify colonisation, it enabled the characters to criticise, from their new vantage point, certain aspects of the world from which they came. In *Sons*, the protagonist's assumption of what he sees as a special empathy with Maori apparently allows him to understand things he previously did not. He feels he shares the struggle against the coloniser, now clearly identified with the girl. She herself is further degraded, further removed from the 'natural', by her decision to abort the baby. She has destroyed those fragile links she had to nature and the land, the links that had seemed for a time to make her in some ways a possible equivalent to Pule's female tradition carriers.

The protagonist's mother in *Sons for the Return Home* revels in her role in New Zealand as matriarch and tradition carrier. While her husband experiences New Zealand without the restriction of a romanticised view of the Samoan homeland, her thinking is always coloured by her attachment to what has been left behind. This uncritical enthusiasm contributes to the protagonist's disillusionment when the family returns to Samoa.

The attempt at returning 'home' is thus itself aborted for the protagonist who is now entirely unable to relate to the Samoan way of life. Self-consciously he sees it as a seductive facade too long fostered in his imagination by his parents.... Not only is the landscape now a Hollywood construct (he sees his home through white, western eyes), but even the promised communal reunion is denied. The protagonist cannot now uncritically and unselfconsciously bask in the sunshine of his relatives' eternal present.

(Tiffin, "You can't go home again" 124)

Though Tiffin here refers to the false facade as having been fostered by the protagonist's parents, it is really the mother who has contributed most to the rosy picture, talking of Samoa as an ideal land inhabited by ideal people (183). The father speaks to his son mainly of the responsibilities attached to being a Samoan man in a new country (74-77). After their arrival in Samoa, the role that the mother plays in her son's disillusionment is again emphasised. In effect, she is demonstrated to be deficient as a carrier of tradition, and her son is forced to seek his own understanding of his homeland and its people. This is significant, as before this disappointment the protagonist shows nothing but respect towards his mother. Her flawed performance in her role as tradition carrier leads him to show anger against her. His reverence for her sanctity is weakened. Just as happened in New Zealand, the protagonist becomes critical and self-conscious, with a mother he feels has misled him, and a girlfriend who has "betrayed him" (167). He is left, though, with an intellect which has enabled him to see flaws in both countries -- he is able to continue his quest to discover a new space to occupy, using his own abilities and instincts. The women in the book remain locked into more static roles.

In *Ola* -- chronologically the next of the three Wendt novels studied -- this pattern changes a little, as the mantle of tradition carrier is taken up by both the male and female characters. Although the role is thus shared, it is depicted as coming more naturally to men, with the women (excluding *Ola* herself, and the women who are living in Samoa) leading lives that appear to be more lost and lonely than those of the men until they embrace their histories and traditions (323). Essentially, though, women are still seen to have one of two roles -- either as tradition carriers or aimless self-loathers, with the latter having the option of becoming tradition carriers in training. Additionally, in *Ola* Wendt depicts several Maori characters whose struggle to retain and nurture their histories and traditions echoes the struggle of the Samoan characters to do the same, thus strengthening the Maori/Pacific Islander correlation that is suggested in *Sons*.

Ola's best friend from her schooldays, Gill, is one who both strengthens the idea of an indigenous sisterhood, and illustrates the possibility of transformation of role from self-loather to tradition carrier. Initially, Gill is shown to be deeply unhappy, despite living in luxury. Admittedly, her husband is superficial and domineering, but the source of her unhappiness clearly comes from within herself, in particular from her own unwillingness to accept and acknowledge to others her Maori heritage. Once she embraces this heritage, she experiences the sort of freedom and fulfilment that has eluded her. It comes from a new-found sense of belonging, which gives her unsuspected strength and happiness -- and this despite the fact that her marriage breaks up and there are bitter fights over the custody of her children.

So, Ola, I've got a lot to do to correct the course of my life. Thank you for being here for me to admit to the truth of my ancestry. I hope you don't mind my using your shoulder, over the next decade, to cry on occasionally. I know it's not going to be easy for me in Kiwiland, colonial empire of racists, bigots, male-chauvinist rams and rugby players who love South Africa and apartheid.

(*Ola* 68)

Gill's daughter, Shona, is perhaps the strongest of all the secondary characters. She is strong because she is nurtured by two powerful tradition carriers and is sure of her role in the world.

... Shona described the battle over her attention between Nanny (and the forces of growing) and Doctor Gravet (and the voices of threatening sanity), clicking out of the sanctuary of fertile darkness into the hygienic light of Nurse Franklin and back again, continuously, until she awoke one morning and *knew* she was in the north, near Ahipara, clothed in sunshine that felt like fresh green leaves. She could feel herself melting into the spirit of the land, into the flow and sweep of the hills and the amniotic darkness of the cave inhabited by her ancestors, and her new guardians, Grace, Johnny and Tohunga Paki. (*Ola* 107)

Strength comes to these women only after they embrace their heritage. For Ola, the plight is different; for she has strong tradition carriers around her, is aware of her heritage, and functions well in the western world. In other words, she is faced with the sort of bigger problems that in the other texts are the faced by men. Her role is played out somewhere between the metropolitan and village worlds, and, in her, Wendt has created a character that breaks the stereotypes of women to be found in his other novels. She is intelligent, has succeeded in the western world, is strongly sexual, arrogant and of a problem-solving bent -- and she is a woman. In her mixture of turmoil, self-consciousness and self-confidence there is a strong echo of the protagonist in *Sons for the Return Home*. To anticipate, Eric Malei Foster/Supremo Jones/Patimaori, the protagonist of *Black Rainbow*, is also arrogant, self-confident, self-conscious and in turmoil. Ola, though, is unique in Wendt's oeuvre, and she cannot really be seen as a revisioning of the female gender role. She is, rather, the epitome of a Wendt hero -- in all but gender.

By *Black Rainbow*, a novel that depicts a kind of hyper-colonised future New Zealand, traditions have been driven underground, and the traditional gender distinctions in this regard have vanished. While there are characters who are shown to carry fragmented knowledge of certain traditions, their role in this is not defined by gender. The first and only glimpse of a tradition carrier truly worthy of the designation is in the form of the carver from Rotorua, who, in his description, is linked to nature and the land: "... he appeared squat, solid, as if carved out of lava... wall to wall and across the floor was an army of wood carvings. 'My whanau,' he smiled. He was totally of it, among it" (39). He stands alone; although Manu, Aeto, and Fantail, the street kids, appear to be to some extent aware of their ancestry and its traditions (certainly more so than the protagonist), what they know is fragmented, showing that they are in need of a tradition carrier rather than being tradition carriers themselves.

'Aunt Hena died eight years ago, worn out, a mindless shell the Centres couldn't refill with another identity... We stole her body from the Home

they'd put her in. We gave her a tangi, or our version of one, the little we knew.'

(*Black Rainbow* 144)

Despite an absence of traditions here, the women do not escape being assigned set roles. These appear to be of three types: homebodies whose primary purpose is to provide for the comfort of men; pawns of the Tribunal, who follow the instructions issued to them; or warrior-like and highly sexual beings who either protect or destroy. All these roles seem to be equivalents, in various forms, of Pule's fallen or degraded women, as even the apparently strong, such as Sister Honey and Big Nurse, have obvious abnormalities. Big sister, for example, is "... larger than Arthur Masashi Schwegger, Mr Universe.." (101). It is only Fantail, young and far from physically intimidating, who comes across as being truly strong and worthy. She is not shown as a sexual being, and she knows what she is fighting for -- she knows she has ancestors and a history that she would like to see avenged. In this sense, she is as close as it is possible to get, given the circumstances of the setting, to the female tradition carrier of the other novels.

In both Pule's and Wendt's novels, men are depicted as having greater freedom in the new environment than do women. Their roles are less clearly defined, and they generally are seen to have, at least potentially (and with the exception of Ola), more self-confidence, imagination, and even intelligence. It is thus men who would seem to have the opportunity and the ability to establish new space in the new homeland -- to challenge both the metropolitan norms and the restrictive traditions of the homeland. In Wendt, however, we see a transition from the male protagonist who does indeed seem on the threshold of a new space in *Sons*, through male characters in *Ola* who seem to retreat into a new appreciation of tradition, to the clarion call from the ultimate warrior-protagonist in *Black Rainbow* whose innate indigeneity compels him to champion almost-lost traditions against the devastating inroads of a hyper-coloniser. It seems, chronologically, the Wendt novels drift away from the assignment of new gender roles to meet the demands of a new environment towards a sort of

despairing nativist reaction to the continuing remnants of the imperial past.

It is Kightley's play, *A Frigate Bird Sings*, that offers the most original possibility with regard to the creation of new gender roles and 'space', but it also sounds the most poignant warning. The crucial character in this play is the fa'afafine, Vili Atafa. In his Samoan homeland, the fa'afafine is accepted, but in New Zealand, Vili becomes to certain members of his family "the role model and embarrassment [sic]" (1). He is a tradition carrier, much in the way Pule's Mocca and Nogi are, but he is not given the respect they are. In response to this rejection by some of his own community, he tries to seek a place within the dominant culture. But he remains a man in woman's clothing, and as such he is even further from being able to find a place within the mainstream than he was amongst his own fellow-migrants. He cannot or does not want to separate what he feels he intrinsically *is*, sexually, from his perceived role as tradition carrier; but, because of the embarrassment his being a fa'afafine causes to those of his relatives and friends who wish to be acceptable to the dominant mainstream culture, he cannot be both and remain part of the family. He is without a 'place'. The climax is reached when Vili is beaten up by his brother, Sione, who is angry not just because he considers Vili has failed in his domestic duties, but also because of the troubles Vili's identity has caused: "Who ran around and stopped guys laughing and calling you a queer, who smacked them over?... Who sat there and got hassled by his mates but stayed to defend the family honour?" (52). It is the ultimate betrayal. Vili's brother has completely accepted the value judgements of his friends within the dominant palagi culture, and, by beating up Vili, has symbolically turned his back on the old. But Vili is not daunted. He has made the decision to be 'himself'. This is his new space, and he is quite content to leave those around him to deal with his decision as they think best. In this sense, he is liberated from the roles that either the old culture or the dominant culture would wish to force upon him.

Vili bears strong similarities to Auntie, the male Maori cross-dresser in *Ola*; but Auntie is fully accepted by those around him and valued for his knowledge of tradition. He is

what Vili could have been had the 'colonised' of his close family not rejected him. The impression is that Vili may well find such a space for himself somewhere within his adopted homeland -- and this is the positive side of the message here. Vili could well be seen as a metaphor for the Pacific Island experience in New Zealand -- their communities in constant danger of either a sort of re-colonisation or of self-conscious ghetto-isation. Vili rejects both possibilities and strides forth to redefine his place in this new society on his own terms. He feels he cannot escape the fact of what he is -- he has no wish to do so -- and neither does he wish to have his behaviour constrained by what he sees as restrictive attitudes in either the dominant host culture or the culture of his birth. Although the play leaves Vili at the threshold, faced still with the task of redefining himself, it is clear that it will have to be a genuinely new space that he inhabits.

In all of the works studied, the Pacific Islanders in New Zealand are seen to face essentially the same inescapable facts -- of being part of a minority culture, having a relatively recent colonial history they share with the indigenous people, and bringing with them strong traditions that will tend to both give them strength and to separate them from the host culture. The treatment of gender issues in these works illustrates a variety of ways in which these facts are responded to, but, still, leaves untouched the elusive 'middle ground' which could enable the breaking free from stereotypes.

III

Having moved from their colonised homelands to New Zealand, itself a colonised country, how do the characters in these works see themselves; as a new breed of coloniser, or still the colonised? What are their perceptions of New Zealand, of their homeland, and of their own and other cultures in the new environment? Do they see themselves as having their identity threatened, or do they accept the chance to establish a new identity?

This chapter examines how the writers expose a middle space that their characters seem to inhabit. It is concluded that this space is not new, but is rather an amalgam of old traditions and colonial stereotypes. In order to evaluate the nature of this middle space, some key issues, such as the relative importance of the attachments to the island homes and the demands of the new culture, are explored in some depth. What becomes clear is that New Zealand is seen as either a neutral or a hostile place, and that the homeland, if it is depicted at all, is seen as either degraded or flawless.

In the treatment of the Island cultures and peoples within the New Zealand setting, in each of these works certain patterns emerge; though these are sometimes contradictory. Kightley's characters, for example, are often in the centre of clashes between the home and the host culture, but the Samoan culture is shown to be malleable, and in the end it is concluded that it is up to each individual to mould it to suit their own particular life. In Pule's novels, Niuean culture is seen to be rather more rigid and demanding, and therefore potentially a negative factor in the lives of the New Zealand Niueans. Niuean New Zealanders are shown to be caught in a destructive tug of war between the strong impulse towards conformity to transplanted traditions and the realities of living within a foreign dominant culture. Unless the characters are particularly strong or adventurous, they seem to be faced with a choice of

wholesale rejection or acceptance of one culture or the other.

While the views of Pule and Kightley in this matter seem to be constant, a chronologically changing view can be detected in Wendt's writings. In *Sons for the Return Home*, the attitudes are similar in some ways to those implicit in Pule. Here Wendt is critical of Samoan culture, its Christian-based practices in particular, and he seems to suggest that Christianity is making Samoans puppets of the old colonising forces. He is also critical of the homeland itself -- his descriptions of the dust, squalor and annoying insects tie in with the jaundiced view of Samoan values. Indeed, *Sons for the Return Home* is the only one of the works studied that has overwhelmingly negative things to say about the Island homeland. This negative perception vanishes almost completely by the time of *Ola*, however. While the author is here still critical of certain aspects of post-colonial Samoa, the culture is not portrayed in a significantly unfavourable light, and the land is shown to have beautiful, mystical and mythical elements. By *Black Rainbow*, the island homeland is superseded by the communal 'homeland' of the Tangata Moni -- which is beautiful, mystical, mythical, and New Zealand. In this book, cultural boundaries are specifically also racial boundaries: the culture of the Tribunal (essentially a futuristic colonial culture) and its followers, who are predominantly pakeha, is set against the culture of the Tangata Moni (essentially a pre-colonial Pacific Island culture), who are Maori and Pacific Islanders. Although might is with the Tribunal, right is clearly on the side of the Tangata Moni; the oppressed, yet strong, minority who survive using inherent street-wisdom.

Despite the considerable climatic differences between New Zealand and the homelands of the Islanders, as well as its much greater land area and variation of landform, these physical differences do not seem to affect the perceptions of the various characters in the works of Pule and Kightley. On the other hand, many of Wendt's characters, particularly the protagonists, seem very sensitive to New Zealand's physical features, descriptions of which are woven into the texts. This scenery, where its glory is still unmistakable, is spiritually

linked to those termed *Tangata Moni* in *Black Rainbow*, while the pillaged and concreted areas are clearly linked to the colonisers. In Wendt's writing, it seems important that the land's spiritual as well as its physical qualities are recognised -- only then will it be truly welcoming. In *Sons*, the protagonist goes through this process of recognition with regard to New Zealand, but he does not feel a similar spiritual attachment when he returns to Samoa. By *Ola*, the Samoan landscape has regained its spiritual significance for the protagonist -- it is specifically demonstrated to be as spiritually important to the Samoans as the physical landscape of Israel is to the Jews, or Aotearoa is to the Maori. By *Black Rainbow*, the Island home is no longer mentioned, but New Zealand has become the spiritual land of the *Tangata Moni* generally. By this means, Wendt has established a right for the Island people to dwell on the land of New Zealand that is equal to the Maori's and greater than those who are seen to be the colonisers. In Pule's novels, New Zealand's physical aspects are largely ignored, although it is depicted in the minds of the new arrivals as a sort of ill-defined paradise where life will be easy. In contrast, Pule depicts Niue in some detail, where landforms, trees, animals and villages all have myths and histories woven around them. New Zealand just *is*, while Niue is so intimately remembered that it almost seems like a part of the characters themselves. In Kightley's plays, neither New Zealand nor the Island physical environment is mentioned with any frequency or in any detail, if at all. What is shown to be important are the stories of the people. In the last analysis, it is really only Wendt who presents the actual physical landscape of New Zealand as being significant to the establishment of a sense of belonging, and his most recent treatment of this issue, in *Black Rainbow*, ties in with the essentialism implicit in the treatment of all the other issues in that work that have so far been discussed.

In *Burn My Head in Heaven*, it is stated, of Potau: "He knew all right, ever since the last trip to New Zealand had welded its whole world on to his eyes" (80). However, the vision that is now a permanent part of this Island man's outlook is not that of a lush or picturesque landscape with an idyllic climate; rather, it is a world of fiscal transactions, mass

produced goods, and opportunity. For the characters in both Pule's and Kightley's works, New Zealand is less a place defined by its physical and climatic characteristics, and more a place defined by its abundance of consumer products and the relative ease with which they can be obtained. "I been working in Samoa for the last twenty years, while you've been living in paradise. You get away and have had your fun all this time. Don't have to do what the [sic] anybody else say, have money to spend and places to go" says Charles in Kightley's *Fresh Off the Boat* (62), voicing an opinion of New Zealand shared by many of the characters who have come to New Zealand as adults. For these characters, home is a "prison" (*Fresh Off the Boat* 62), where the only way to get away from "the incessant racket of insects scraping their legs together" is by "thinking of ... [the] streets [of New Zealand]," which are "bordered with shops selling clothes, ships, cartons, bottles. That life was easy, work, get paid. What could be better?" (*Burn My Head in Heaven* 81). Despite the odd comment concerning the weather ("I'm sorry I brought you here to this cold place" (*A Frigate Bird Sings* 3)), the working conditions, or, as Pule mentions, the "ordered" nature of life ("Such stories, Potau thought, did not fit the image of life in New Zealand where people lived in order like the roads and buildings" (*Burn My Head in Heaven* 156)), there is little description of New Zealand in these writers' works, and the vague image of a country with streets paved with gold remains pervasive even when dreams of riches dissolve in the reality of unemployment, low wages and limited disposable wealth. For these characters, New Zealand is not so much a physical entity to be 'claimed' as a stage on which they act out their lives.

The difference in Wendt's approach to the significance of the New Zealand landscape has already been pointed out, but a closer analysis is required for a clear understanding of the implications. In *Sons for the Return Home*, the mother's perception of New Zealand as a degraded, unpleasant place to live, and her contrasting opinion of Samoa initially works to distance her son from his New Zealand surroundings:

In Samoa, she continued, the villages are clean and tidy and widely scattered

round the coast -- one has a lot of room to live in. New Zealand is crowded, noisy, and unhealthy. Families are crowded together but they don't care what happens through the walls, rooms, and hedges which separate them... Samoa is lush green with tropical forests. New Zealand is made up of over-crowded cities rife with crime, especially murder. (74)

How the land is perceived is shown to be symbolic of the ties the protagonist has to those around him. One example of this can be seen when eventually, on their return to Samoa, the son perceives Samoa as being degraded, and, in turn, the hold his mother has over him begins to loosen. As far as the New Zealand landscape is concerned, it is through his girlfriend that the protagonist begins to feel comfortable in his surroundings: "As he watched how sure she was in the bush, which was completely strange to him, he felt a deeper need to know her and through her his country of exile" (83). And, in the moment when she kills the hawk, when it becomes apparent to him that his spiritual understanding of the land is greater than hers, it is the beginning of the end of his relationship with the girl.

The moment with the hawk is also symbolic of a divide that is present in all three of the Wendt novels: land is either developed and unwelcoming --

I miss that ugly, cruel city, with its insatiable roots stabbed into the earth, choking it; breathing all its poisons into the sky; its blood contaminating the people and turning them against one another in perpetual combat which no one ever wins. (*Sons* 209)

-- or wild and full of hidden depths --

Afterwards we scrambled to the top of the dunes... [t]hat height enabled us to see unimpeded in all directions, and as I stood and sank into that space, that Va, of burning sky and earth and sea and the eternal humming silence that weaves all things together, I felt insignificant yet at peace. (*Ola* 93)

The girlfriend in *Sons*, Gill's husband in *Ola*, and the Tribunal in *Black Rainbow* are all linked

to the developed, unwelcoming aspects of the land. Either colonisers or the descendants of colonisers, they are depicted as lacking the spirituality necessary for an empathy with the land, while those such as the Tangata Moni in *Black Rainbow* or the protagonist in *Sons* have the quality of indigenuity and are thus shown to be the land's natural caretakers.

It is through a spiritual understanding of the land that Wendt's characters claim a right to inhabit it. In *Ola* and *Black Rainbow* the prior claims to the land of New Zealand by the Maori are freely admitted, and the pakeha are characterised as lacking the innate spiritual links that might have qualified them for the role of land caretakers: "[The Pakehas] don't understand the Land either. They're newcomers; they're not rooted in Aotearoa" (*Ola* 72). However, people from the Pacific Islands do not appear to be considered "newcomers". Indeed, in *Black Rainbow* the distinction between Maori and Pacific Islander has all but disappeared, and they are all Tangata Moni: "We merged with our sisters and brothers from the Islands who were also being reordinarised, and became the Tangata Moni, the True People..." (158). Through a two step process where first it is asserted that Maori and Pacific Islanders share a certain kind of spirituality, then this spirituality is shown as being necessary for a legitimate claim to the land, these Pacific Island "newcomers" assert their right to inhabit New Zealand.

Beginning an examination of the attitudes to the Island homeland in the texts with a look at Kightley's plays, it should first be iterated that there is very little description given of either New Zealand or Samoa; but when Samoa is mentioned the description is usually without emotion or judgement: "In Samoa everyone lives in villages, a lot of people now have Palagi houses but out in the bush they still have the fale" (*Fresh Off the Boat* 33). In the absence of emotion (except when it comes to money matters), there is little more than a sort of matter-of-fact respect: Samoa is the undisputed homeland, and no more needs to be said. This is in contrast to Pule's texts, where the homeland plays an integral part in the characters' perceptions of life, and where there are stark differences between the view of the homeland

and the view of New Zealand. As has been noted, New Zealand is depicted as a land of economic opportunity and little else, whereas Niue's physical and spiritual characteristics are described in detail, interwoven with stories and legends, as in the following passage, already quoted more fully:

It was at the ancient settlement of Fasiau that he touched every rock which to him implied that here was the stone the gods moved to prove they exist. He went down a track that stopped at the sea, and with those brown sad orbs the universe changed again to accommodate the visions of his ancestors, dying of hunger and thirst, the sun half-way in their chests, clamouring against the cruel reefs to reach the jagged cliffs, exhausted after months at sea.

(*Burn My Head in Heaven* 21)

The Island home, familiar and welcoming, holds a position of high regard in the minds of the characters in both Pule's and Kightley's works in all respects except the economic. While New Zealand is the country they live in, their spiritual home is shown to be the island they left behind. New Zealand is left unclaimed by these characters because they have neither seen any spiritual ties between New Zealand and their homeland, nor exiled from their minds the place from whence they came.

In Wendt's texts, by *Black Rainbow* the position of homeland has been usurped by New Zealand, the new, collective homeland. As early as *Sons*, Apia is described as "more an overgrown obese village than a city, incestuously feeding on its inhabitants and turning them into shadows of its own image" (201), and descriptions of the village are peppered with images of attacking flies and "incessant throbbing" cicadas (175), and "rudimentary standards of sanitation" (177). The paradise-like Apia of the protagonist's mother's imagination is exposed. This discovery, coupled with his new-found spiritual understanding of New Zealand, paves the way for the protagonist's return to New Zealand. It is only after this exposure of Samoa as being unworthy of being described as the spiritual homeland (in the

protagonist's eyes) that the return to New Zealand is justified. The political view expressed here is one that is continued in *Ola* and *Black Rainbow* -- that is, that one must truly have a spiritual link to, and an emotional appreciation of, the land before a legitimate claim may be made to it.

The tenuous spiritual links to New Zealand have become stronger by *Ola*, where they are acknowledged by Maori (as can be seen when Grace says: "Perhaps the odds are against *us* " (95) -- my emphasis -- when Ola talks about the fading of a traditional Samoan spirituality). Through this 'group spirituality', it is possible to claim more than one space, and the old homeland may now be venerated. No longer are the descriptions of Samoa unsympathetic. Instead, the images are much more pleasant: "Dew covered the neat playing fields" (282), and

[t]he light of the setting sun was swimming through the palms on the sandbar and lighting up the whole house and everyone there... the light drawing me out into the inlet, whose surface was rippling, like feathers, under the caressing flow of the breeze. (287)

In *Black Rainbow*, the invention of the Tangata Moni displays not only an acknowledgement of Pacific Islanders' perceived spiritual links with New Zealand, but, through Patimaori Jones, an assertion that these links are as strong as those possessed by Maori. New Zealand has become a collective homeland, representative of all the homelands of the Tangata Moni, and, as such, it is venerated by all of them. Strongly recalling the politics of nativism, or at least the early stages of it that Said describes as being "combative [and] assertive" and characterised by "emotional self-indulgence" (277), these Wendt texts taken together display a growing assertion of a common Pacific Island/Polynesian/Maori identity -- some innate quality that binds the Tangata Moni together as a race. The clear implication is that this grouping is quite capable, perhaps uniquely capable, of resisting the forces of imperialism that still exist and that (it is posited in *Black Rainbow*) could become even

stronger in the future.

Just as with representations of the land, the works studied display a variety of approaches to the question of attitudes to traditions and cultures. While Kightley's plays focus on the lives of characters who are faced with problems arising from the transplantation of certain cultural practices into a new land, they also show that even though a character is a member of a definable cultural group, not all members of that group will follow, or try to break from, the same path. Underlying the plays is a common theme -- that the solutions to an individual's perceived problems, even though he/she may be a member of an immigrant group tempted to collectively resist inroads by the dominant culture, ultimately can only be provided by that individual her- or himself.

Sione's musical group is a significant feature in *Dawn Raids*, and the manner in which Sione introduces his band, and the name change it is given, shows how particular events help the characters establish their identities in the new land. Even the band itself is a symbol of Sione's intention to find a place for himself. The name chosen for the band, the "Noble Hawaiian Sabretooth [sic] Tigers" is possibly an attempt to appeal to the broader culture, but after the growing racial problems triggered by dawn raids by police seeking illegal migrants, the band becomes the "Noble Samoan Sabretooth Tigers". It is a public assertion by the members that they are Samoan, even though Sione's behaviour in other ways suggests that there are some elements of Samoan culture that he would rather do without. In *Fresh Off the Boat*, Evotia, the troubled and misunderstood daughter, does not find peace within herself until she learns from her uncle the Samoan traditions her mother was reluctant to teach her. While these traditions are not shown to offer any universal solutions to life's problems, in the particular case of Evotia they gave her a sense of belonging that she did not have before. But as a balance to this, the uncle, Charles, who insists right from his first arrival in New Zealand that things should always be done the Samoan way, effectively ostracises himself from his sister and her boyfriend in his staunch adherence to certain patriarchal traditions. Rather than

strengthening his position in the family and the community, he makes himself something of an outsider -- albeit an outsider who was able to teach Evotia something she found of value.

In these plays, how individuals tailor traditions to suit their lives is shown to be more important than the traditions themselves. Vili, in *A Frigate Bird Sings*, is the most powerful example of this. The death of Vili's mother leads his family to rely more heavily on him, depending on him to continue the traditional duties of the fa'afafine. Their reliance on him is contrasted, though, with their growing unease with the thought that his being fa'afafine is bringing ridicule on his family from those who do not understand the traditions. He must continue to do his duty to the family, they demand, but he must not be so obviously fa'afafine. When Vili breaks out from the closeted life he leads at home, he sets out to redefine his fa'afafine role, gaining strength from the other fa'afafine he meets. The change in him can be gauged by comparing his definition of himself at the beginning of the play: "I am Vili Atafa, son of Tapili and Siana Atafa, brother of Sione. I am the provider and the oppressed. I am the caretaker and the teacher. I am the role model and embarrassment [sic]" (1), with that given by him at the end: "I am Vili Atafa, son and daughter of Tapili and Siaea [sic] Atafa, brother and sister of Sione. I am fa'afafine" (53). Vili has accepted himself for what he defines himself as being, despite pressures for him to change. He has rejected hypocrisy. He is fa'afafine, and he will decide for himself what that role entails.

The focus in these plays is on the individuals. How well each character functions in the adopted homeland depends not on how strictly he or she adheres to transposed traditions, nor on how readily he or she assumes the practices of the host culture. In Evotia's case, security and a sense of self are strengthened by an increased knowledge of tradition; in Vili's, strength comes only when certain traditions are turned away from. Although traditions remain important, adherence to them must be tailored to the needs of the individual.

In Pule's novels, traditions are viewed differently. To avoid self-destruction in the New Zealand setting the Pacific Islander has only two choices of action: strict adherence to

tradition, or a liminal position that will make him aware of the flaws in both the host and the transposed cultures. Through the experiences of his characters it is made clear that strict adherence to traditions will provide a life restricted in its nature, especially in that it will allow the individual very little meaningful contact with the host culture. On the other hand, although it is shown that a life that denies the individual the constant support of his or her own Island community has its dangers, and there is a constant threat that he or she might join the ranks of the violent drunkards who have failed the challenge, their sensitive, artistic natures allow certain of those who have chosen the second option to succeed in finding a place where they can grow and develop as individuals. Traditions, though redemptive, are shown to be a recipe for stagnation, as they belong not to the new land, but to the land that was left behind.

When describing life in Niue, the narrators in Pule's novels weave legends and myths around everyday events. Even family histories take on an almost fairy-tale nature. For those no longer living there, Niue is depicted as a powerful force of nature which, if misunderstood, can be profoundly disturbing:

-- And when that person comes back to New Zealand, they die. Why? Because what the hell were they doing, flying to Niue after years of living here? Families end up fighting. Years not knowing the feel of the limestone in the breath, and claiming it. It's always been like this. Niueans here going up to Niue, fighting over who has right. They come back, then suddenly die.

(*Burn My Head in Heaven* 263)

When the protagonist of *Burn My Head in Heaven* returns to Niue, the experience is deeply moving for him:

I cannot sleep. It must be early morning, I go out, stand under the stars. A stream of images passes over: reality is not my strongest weapon, I am sleepy. I see spirits standing some distance away, asking me, -- Why are you back

here? Where you were born is down that way. A spirit points where Malia pointed with her eyes that afternoon. (269)

The protagonist's return to Niue at the end of the novel indicates an acknowledgement of the importance of those myths/legends/histories to him; while his eventual return to New Zealand shows that the traditions and legends are not to be lived by, but to be remembered, visited, and treated in the same way one might treat an antique. Those who adhere strictly to traditions become antiques themselves; those who misuse tradition become debauched, while those who understand the spiritual nature of those traditions can be made stronger, with a strength that will help them to find a place for themselves in their adopted homeland. Such, anyway, is the experience of the protagonist in *Burn My Head in Heaven*.

Unlike the view of traditions offered in Kightley's plays, traditions in Pule's novels are seen as powerful forces for either degradation or redemption. Adhered to strictly, as in the case of the matriarchs, they at least offer a protection against the aggression of the host culture; but paid only token respect, they can become a vehicle for destruction. They can hinder a quest for a place within the host culture, or they can help provide the self-confidence that is necessary for the establishment of a space for the individual to inhabit. Making or renewing contact with the Island home and its inhabitants can help to focus the individual's mind on the real problems of survival in the new home. The protagonist in *Burn My Head in Heaven* recounts his experience in this regard when he returns to New Zealand after a visit to Niue, saying he has "been back inside the whenua", and that there will be "[n]o more tempting fate no more causing grief", as he has "returned to stay, to look for the voice I lost, to touch the tragedies that are real" (279).

Pule's heroes and Wendt's heroes have in common their ability to move successfully within both the New Zealand culture and the culture of the Island home. The similarities continue with the stories of those who return to the islands: they all share a feeling of not quite belonging, or not being fully accepted. However, unlike in Pule's writing, in *Sons for the*

Return Home little use is made of the myths and legends of the protagonist's homeland. Also, it appears that at first the protagonist has no option but the one his mother clearly wishes him to follow -- to adhere to Samoan tradition and use it as a buffer against the temptations of the dominant culture. He himself is contemptuous of Samoans who deny their culture:

There was something about the man he didn't like, so he scrutinised him more closely. Then, as he looked at the other members of the group, he realised what it was. Except for the colour of his skin, the man blended perfectly into the group and was very proud of it: he had become assimilated. He had met Samoans like this before, and even when he wanted to pity them he despised them. *(Sons for the Return Home 151-152)*

Although the protagonist is quick to realise why this man's way of life does not appeal to him, it is not until his return to Samoa that he feels compelled to question the values of those around him, and, in turn, the path he has been expected to follow. Once in Samoa it becomes clear that the hard work that has been put in in New Zealand was done more to incite the envy of others and to boost the family's social standing in Samoa than for any other reason. The protagonist is now clear in his criticism of certain Samoan traditions -- particularly of those stemming from Christianity and other features introduced in colonial times. On the other hand, he is almost poetic in his descriptions of habits and traditions he sees as having nothing to do with the western world.

...he sensed that they were secretly ashamed of their gluttony for things of the flesh. But why feel ashamed, he thought. It was a sign of spiritual and emotional health that they hadn't yet stopped living through the flesh; that, unlike Westerners (and Samoans like himself), they hadn't learnt to spurn things of the flesh; that good living was eating, drinking, laughing, screaming, weeping, fucking, dying: an orchestra of emotions transmitted through the flesh, communicated through the pores; knowing but not really caring that the

flesh was mortal. His people lived in the present and it was good.

(Sons for the Return Home 178)

In Samoa, the mother quickly becomes the domineering dictator of the house, seemingly representing all that the protagonist grows to loathe about his country of birth. His disillusionment with Samoa and what he sees it becoming, coupled with the revelation that it was his mother who advised his girlfriend to get an abortion, is the catalyst that leads him to disown his mother and, essentially, all the traditions she holds dear, and return to New Zealand to make his own way. Samoa, “real only in myth or fairy tale or dream” (171), from the very start was going to prove nothing but disappointing to him when compared to the “reality” (172) of New Zealand.

It is not until he stumbles upon his grandfather’s grave that the protagonist is shown to be at ease and to feel some sense of belonging in Samoa: “... he worked as though he was trying to uncover an important mystery which he buried within himself” (185). However, this sense of ease is only short lived, as he equates his own lost love with the woman his grandfather gave up his pagan ways for and married in a church: “Now the two women were one; he couldn’t escape” (190). In Samoa, a land that holds no memories of his lost love, the protagonist had been largely able to escape being reminded of her, until he feels himself connected to his grandfather and his grandfather’s history. Now he is constantly reminded of his grandfather’s lost love, and it reminds him of his own. His feelings of empathy for his grandfather are nurtured when he, too, feels a certain amount of ostracism from the Christian rituals his family takes part in. An outsider, like his grandfather, the protagonist feels that the real Samoa, the one his grandfather would have felt comfortable in, was the pre-colonial, pre-Christian one.

However, the protagonist’s discomfort in Samoa is shown to be not entirely the fault of Christianity and colonialism. The criticisms he has of Samoa are guardedly aimed at the people who have chosen to revere either the church or the Western world generally. As W. D.

Ashcroft puts it: "While the barrenness of the adopted values is clear, Wendt shows that the intrusion of western materialism is not uninvited" ("The Place of the Spirit" 31). The only living person, other than the protagonist, who is shown to at least be aware of the faults in the lives of those around them, and to recognise some of the torment the protagonist is going through, is his father. The youngest son of a youngest son himself, it is implied that, though he has tried, the father cannot escape at least one of the mystic gifts his own father has handed down to him: that of clear sight. Thus it is implied also that if it were not for the fact that the father is a "spineless descendant" (203), he, too, would be unsatisfied with his life in Samoa. As it is, it is only the protagonist who, with his innate mysticism, can remain unaffected by the Christian/colonial values of those around him and have the courage to leave Samoa. Speaking of the protagonist's grandfather, the father says:

'You look like him too. You've always reminded me of him. Even more so now that I've watched you trying to live in Samoa.... True, I wanted you to be a doctor, a healer, like him. But I didn't want you to be like him as a man.... Because he saw too clearly, too honestly.... Like him you see too clearly.... And, because of that, like him you will never be happy with things as they are. Like him you will always be in permanent exile. You will never belong anywhere.

(*Sons for the Return Home* 204-205)

As is discussed more fully later in this chapter, although the protagonist is predicted to become a "permanent exile," and "never belong anywhere," he has chosen the country in which to spend this supposed exile -- despite assertions that "[t]he novel ends on the returning aeroplane; neither here nor there, neither Samoa nor New Zealand -- ambivalent, but independent, balanced, free..." (Ashcroft, "The Place of the Spirit" 32).

The plane trip must, at some stage, end, and where it does end is the country which the far from ambivalent protagonist has chosen over Samoa. It is here that he is able to be independent; independent of the cultural demands placed on him, of family responsibilities,

and of romantic ties. However, he has not escaped from the clarity and honesty of sight that he has inherited from his grandfather: the thing that makes him stronger, freer, and “... separate from us weaker, more human, human beings” (*Sons* 204). It seems not all he has gained from Samoa and its people has been detrimental. The things that he has felt an affinity with, and that have given him a sense of belonging in Samoa, are things that are innate in him. In recognising this, and placing value in it, the protagonist asserts his Samoan-ness -- but he concludes it is preferable to live in this different country and be a pure Samoan than to live in a tainted Samoa and run the risk of compromising his indigenous purity. He is heavily critical of the modern Samoa, which he sees as a place and people forever tainted by the stain of colonialism. However, he has affinity with the Samoa he feels his grandfather would have wished to inhabit, a Samoa of the mind. The physical Samoa has proved a disappointment, and it is, to him, an unimportant place. What he admires and relates to in the pre-colonial Samoa he carries within himself. He is the real Samoa, the real Samoan, because he has not lost his way.

In *Ola*, the same distinct criticism of the effects of colonialism in Samoa, and of those who blindly accept the values that have grown from it, is present; though it is not as pointed, and the descriptions of the land are not as harsh as those in *Sons for the Return Home*. There is a sense of empowerment, freedom and right when Ola's father begins to adopt a more liberal Christianity while his regard for the myths and legends of the old Samoa grows. The trip to the Holy Land is important not just for the bonding and spiritual development that proceeds between Ola and her father; it focuses on the importance of the indigenous faith, a faith that is intertwined with the people of the land and the land itself. As the trip progresses and other story-lines are woven through the main plot, it becomes clear that a strong point is being made about traditional beliefs, and it is a point that is closely linked to race. The experience of the Jews in Israel is compared in their minds to the position of the indigenous peoples of the Pacific. Being in Israel and feeling the religious history of the land

makes Ola's father, once staunch and unquestioning of his Christianity, begin to feel that it is important to respect the religion that grew from the land of one's racial origin.

'That solo -- poetry -- was part of our biology before Christianity came,' he told them, with his head bowed. 'We now refer to that time as the Time of Darkness before the Light. One hundred and fifty years of Christianity has erased that Genesis. Most of my generation and our children and their children don't know a single line from it. (We know *your* genesis Genesis, as recorded in the Bible.) Before I came here I considered our ancient religion and beliefs as superstitions, as Darkness. This person you see before you is considered an ideal Christian.' It was difficult for him to go on. 'To think that we gave up thousands of years of knowledge about ourselves, our world, our planet. To give up a whole way of seeing,' he murmured. 'The loss, the loss, it is immense. It is the size of God's wisdom...' (*Ola* 215)

Though in *Ola*, as in *Sons*, Christianity is questioned, the criticism now acknowledges it as an important religion; though the implication is that it should have stayed in the lands from which it originated. By the use of the word 'biology', the religion of Samoa before the arrival of Christianity is implied to be innate, emphasising the idea that certain religions belong purely to certain races, although understanding of them can be gained by others. It is through Grace, Gill and Shona that the strongest points regarding the restoration of the indigenous beliefs of the Pacific are made. Without a nurturing sense of family and community, and people who are dedicated to passing knowledge on, indigenous beliefs are in danger of becoming relics, and are already portrayed by the new culture as being backward. The message that can be taken from the actions of Grace, Shona, Gill, and, eventually, Ola and her father, is that in order for the traditions of the land to be maintained, the individual must first accept their Pacific Island heritage, and then be willing to not just learn from those with knowledge, but to pass it on as well. In accepting both Christianity and the ancient religion of

Samoa, Ola's father shows that the religions can be successfully combined, without detriment to either, and without fundamentally changing.

... I had expected Dad to trace Christ's footsteps, along the Stations of the Cross, with proper Christian awe, respect and sorrow, and arrive at a firmer faith. I had expected it even more after watching him change during our pilgrimage. True, some of the changes could be called pagan, e.g., his drinking of alcohol (and enjoying it), and his conning of the jewellery at Bethlehem... but not once have I felt that he had become less Christian. In fact, he is now more tolerant, more questioning. (*Ola* 301)

Perhaps the change in view towards Christianity from *Sons* to *Ola* can be explained by looking at what Albert Wendt himself had to say in an interview with J. B. Beston and R. M. Beston, four years after *Sons* was first published, and fourteen years before the publication of *Ola*:

I wouldn't want to destroy the influence of the Church in Samoan life even though I think I'm radical politically. If you destroy the Church you have damaging consequences. The traditional system in Samoa was a far more autocratic one than that introduced by the Church. It's easy to divert attention from something wrong within the traditional system by blaming it on something else. (153)

By *Black Rainbow*, issues related to Christianity have been overtaken by the all-engulfing force that is the Tribunal. Portrayed as a futuristic colonising force, the Tribunal provokes rallying cries against its system of control which sound much like the protests against colonialism found in the earlier works. Most significantly, the Tribunal is seen as the single cause of the woes that afflict the Tangata Moni. Where previously Wendt presented characters who were as much to blame for the degradation of traditional values as was the process of colonialism, here all blame is placed squarely on the depersonalised Tribunal. Even

when Tangata Moni opt for the easy life the Tribunal offers, they are depicted as having succumbed, as if the pull of the Tribunal overwhelms any remnant of free will they may have:

... the more I became of that whakapapa, the more profoundly I missed (and loved) my Tangata Moni aiga who'd been reordinarised into otherworlders. I wanted to descend into the depths of the Palace and see how they were, but I knew I wouldn't be able to alter them. (*Black Rainbow* 245)

The Polynesians and Maori of the land, the Tangata Moni, are depicted as falling into one or other of two groups: those who have been unable to resist the Tribunal, and those who continue to live outside the boundaries of the world created by the Tribunal (but who call those inside, "otherworlders"). "Have you ever thought that your three brave companions and the other Tangata Moni rebels have been built into the Game, the System, to make sure the Game stays honest, open to self-renewal?" (*Black Rainbow* 238-239) asks the master computer of Supremo Jones, the Ultimate Tangata Moni warrior, implying that the Tangata Moni are not only part of the system, but have something that those within the Tribunal don't. This 'x factor' the Tangata Moni possess is shown to be an inherent, defiant, fighting quality, something racially significant.

'You're a fucking hardy lot,' he whispered. 'Tough bastards, We've not been able to tame you. Ten percent of you refuse to be tamed.' He explained what I already knew, that the Tangata Moni were descendants of ancient Maori rebels and urbanised Polynesians from the islands, and rebel Pakeha. A mongrel brew which didn't succeed in erasing the defiant Maori-Polynesian ingredient in the mix. No degree of reordinarisation worked with them. (223)

In claiming defiance is a racial trait linked to Polynesians and Maori, not only are the Tangata Moni cast as warriors for the greater good, but as puppets, unable to do anything other than what they are programmed to do: fight the system. Thus, Tangata Moni remain completely blameless, because whatever actions they take against the Tribunal are actions dictated by

their inherently defiant natures. Furthermore, because the Tribunal and its followers are shown to have created a completely superficial society, those who are the “True People”, who have roots in the land, no matter what they do, are more real, and more natural:

‘... Anyway, we kids started early on a life of deviance, crime, sin, call it what you like. We took an educational route very different from your kids... instead of attending nice, white middle-class otherworlder schools, we took to the streets, the labyrinth, the borstals and welfare homes, then graduated to the reordinarination centres. Yeah, man, we’re the graduates of the best education system for survival on this fucking planet...’

‘Why didn’t you let the centres help you?’ I heard myself asking.

‘Help? You mean, domesticate us, cut out who we are, turn us into mindless otherworlders?’ (*Black Rainbow* 143)

These defiant Tangata Moni are destined to live lives determined by the rebellious force inherent in them -- lives that follow the same path unless the defiance can be “reordinarinated” out: “Aunt Hena’s story, her survival and ours, is not unique: it’s true of most Tangata Maori mothers I know” (*Black Rainbow* 143).

A similar essentialist notion can be found in *Ola*, where Gill, the part-Maori, is so deeply affected by her Maori heritage that she feels she has to completely embrace Maori culture after trying, unsuccessfully, to ignore it.

I still haven’t said much about my father, have I? And I won’t. He deserves no history from me. He is the Pakeha New Zealand that continues to run away from its true history, that is rooted in blood and piracy and plunder and racism. Do you know how Dad finally persuaded me to marry Julian? He said, ‘Think of what an illegitimate child would do to your mother’s memory and her good name.’ Meaning Pakehas would say I was still a Maori like my mother. Once a Maori, always a Maori! I fell for it. After all, I *was* a Pakeha.

Now I've worked out what I must do, to put back into myself and my children that side which my parents left out deliberately. (*Ola* 67)

Like the defiance inherent in the Tangata Moni, the need to acknowledge her Maori heritage is too strong for Gill to subdue. If she continues to ignore it, she feels, as she has done for so long, her life would be destined to be unfulfilled and meaningless. The effects of these innate, racially-based traits are shown to be profound, and to be misunderstood by most of the white characters in both novels. But, whereas in *Ola*, Jews, Maori and Samoans are shown to be different, although fighting similar battles against oppressive forces, in *Black Rainbow* the Island races meld into one force fighting for right: the Tangata Moni. With the exception of the odd atypical Pakeha, the Tangata Moni are dark-skinned, and the assertion seems to be that it is this shared racial characteristic that makes them rebellious.

Just as the several works studied show differing views of the Islands and their cultures and peoples, so they express various views on the New Zealand way of life and the two distinctive New Zealand ethnic groups. The observations specifically of New Zealand and New Zealanders in both of the Pule novels are clearly of minor importance to the stories of the Niuean characters. Maori or pakeha, New Zealand or anywhere else, the land and its people barely register in the lives of Pule's characters. What is shown to be important is that New Zealand is not Niue -- the implication being that the characters would go through the similar experiences regardless of location, as long as that location is not Niue. The culture, history and landscape of New Zealand is important only in that it is alien. While both Maori and pakeha people are described in the novels, no great distinction is made between them, nor is any difference noted in their relative socio-economic standing, or the relative standing between them and the Island groups. For example, although other Island families are depicted as living in conditions similar to that of the protagonist and his family, those living standards are not seen as peculiar to those families. Maori or pakeha, immigrant or not, poverty is shown to affect them all.

In Kightley's *Dawn Raids*, a play which deals with a time in New Zealand history when fear of the other was nurtured for political purposes, it would not have been surprising to find at least one character who not only agreed with the raids, but who actively displayed his or her approval of them; but there is no such character. Apart from one incident, all of the occasions where Samoans encounter problems with New Zealanders (namely the police) are reported second hand by one of the characters in the play. The one first-hand incident has a police officer, for no apparent reason, stopping Bene and Teresa and wanting proof that they didn't steal the food they are carrying with them -- and then asking to see their I.D.s proving that they are New Zealand citizens. Once one of them gives the officer an I.D., they are free to leave: "All right. I'll let you off with a warning but can recommend that since you both don't look like Kiwi's [sic], that you get passports and carry them around for when this happens again" (*Dawn Raids* 51). Behind the police officer's words and actions lies a naive judgement concerning what a New Zealander should look like, but he doesn't come across as nasty in his racism. He stops the two, it is implied, because they have the physical appearance of people he would expect to steal food -- that is, they are dark skinned. Yet he doesn't chase up a proof of purchase for the food, and once an I.D. is given, he offers advice and leaves. The race of the officer himself is not given in the script. He could even be dark-skinned himself, like the Samoan policeman, Steve. The point made here is that the raids have heightened the importance of race in people's minds, in a sense, institutionalising it. But even when Fuarosa is picked up by the police, the audience does not see it. Instead, they see interaction between the Samoan police officer, Steve, and To'aga and her family (69). The racism implicit in the dawn raids is not attributed to any particular New Zealand ethnic group. The terror and indignation that accompanies the raids is reflected in the speech and actions of the Samoan characters, and there is resentment shown against the system that has brought about the terror, but it is not directed against any defined race:

Steve: Teresa, we're just doing our jobs. Islanders are among the people who

always get into trouble.

Teresa: How can you work for the government who invites us over to do all the dirty jobs and then kicks us out when the going gets tough?

Steve: What are you talking about?

Teresa: The police being used by the Labour Department on dawn raids.

Steve: We're only there in case there's trouble.

Teresa: You provoke the trouble... You're Samoan. You should be changing the way things are done, not support them.

Steve: I'm doing a job...

Teresa: Why do you think they let you into the police force. They're using you to help keep our people down! (*Dawn Raids* 28)

The oppressor is "the government" and the resentment is reserved for this nebulous institution. Palagi and Maori are spoken of, but not as being actively involved in the raids. Throughout Kightley's plays, there is a reluctance to blame the hardships the Samoan characters experience on the New Zealand people. Any ill-treatment is blamed on the "government": "For too long my people have been oppressed, we were welcomed into New Zealand because the government at the time needed cheap labour, now they're not interested in us..." (*Fresh Off the Boat* 3). In *A Frigate Bird Sings*, Hugh, a Palagi, voices his opinion about "the immigration problem" in New Zealand; an opinion that is not entirely unsympathetic to the stand of the government, but he doesn't lose his Samoan friends because of it:

Hugh: The trouble with this country isn't the immigration problem it's the quality of the immigrants, you get the unskilled workers as well that's a waste of time.

DV: I was unskilled when I arrived.

Hugh: I'm not talking about you lot, you guys are part of this country now,

you're all Kiwis now, nah I'm talking about the others. (27)

Hugh is typical of the New Zealanders that are depicted in Kightley's plays. Like the Samoan characters, they are shown to be individuals who make free choices and do not follow any specific, culturally-determined path. The character Hugh comes closest to anyone depicted in Kightley's plays to the stereotypical 'good-keen-man' found in Wendt's *Black Rainbow*, but here the homophobic, rugby-playing stereotype is shown to also have the capacity to understand and accept Vili.

However, while Kightley's Samoan characters seem to be highly aware of their home culture and its traditions, the New Zealand characters are shown to live in a culture in which tradition and history are rarely mentioned -- the implication being that this means it is also a more flexible culture. As in Wendt's novels, a distinction is made between Maori and Pakeha. When Maori are mentioned, it is either in a derogatory way, which highlights the racism some of the Samoan characters evince, or in speeches that show an awareness of African-American politics and that link oppression to skin colour:

Mose: Never mind the dogs. Teresa, how come you are spending your time with trouble makers and Maoris when you should be studying?

To'aga: Don't be racist Dad. We are all oppressed indigenous peoples. Now it's time to fight back. Mum, there's groups all over the world. Apart from the Black Panthers in America, there's the Brown Berets in Israel... (Dawn Raids 12)

And again:

Samoa: Now back to *Crimewatch*. Another example of the media whitewashing the community into putting down the indigenous peoples of the Pacific.

Mervyn: Right, of course.

Samoa: They try and make such a big thing of it everytime one of the

brothers gets in trouble. Look there you are, exactly what I'm talking about. "The offender was described as a Polynesian male." ... how are we ever going to get out of the ghetto. (*Fresh Off the Boat* 28)

There is a suggestion here of a theme developed much more obviously in Wendt's works, of a basic battle between the colonising forces (white) and those who refuse to be colonised (dark). In the above exchange, the character, Samoa, universalises the "putting down" of the New Zealand Island communities, relating it to what is seen virtually as a race war. But while there is more than a touch of humour in To'aga's and Samoa's extreme reactions, the racial politics in Wendt's works take on a much more serious tone.

In *Sons for the Return Home*, pakeha New Zealand life is contrasted with the life of Samoans both in Samoa and New Zealand. Reference is also made to Maori, with the protagonist's attitude going from disdain towards a feeling of understanding of them and their history as a colonised people with strong links to the land. By *Ola*, it is not just Maori that the hero is shown to empathise with, it is all oppressed peoples, with pakeha New Zealanders shown as being largely on the side of the oppressors. Finally, in *Black Rainbow*, the division between Maori/Pacific Islanders and the white colonising force is very clearly defined.

As noted in chapter two, the girlfriend of the protagonist in *Sons for the Return Home* provides him with an initial link with the land; but her link is not depicted as a very strong one. The reason for this appears to be that she is pakeha, and therefore a representative of the group which, throughout the novel, seems incapable of understanding the mystic qualities of land. She introduces him to the land, but her action in killing the hawk indicates to him that she can do no more than this; if he wants further knowledge, he must look elsewhere. The girl, though a rebel of sorts, represents the world of the coloniser. Her rebelliousness, such as it is, lies mainly in the fact that she is flouting the norms of her society by having a sexual relationship with a Samoan. Through her, a picture of the pakeha is built up: "I didn't mean

to sound so clinical. I suppose it's my very pakeha way of trying to tell you I feel a lot for you" (21), "'You're supposed to be Polynesian, fellow. Not a pure white puritan'" (115),

After being away from them for so long, I wanted to go back to them; find out if I was still like them. Or whether being with you had changed me for the better. I found out tonight: they're a useless, heartless, bigoted bunch. Too many empty pretensions, too much money. (126)

The adjectives used to describe the pakeha -- "bigoted", "puritan", "clinical" -- seem to carry more weight because they are used by one who is herself a pakeha. There is a hope for a time that she might be able to overcome her limitations as a pakeha and establish a lasting relationship with the protagonist. She tries, but in the end she fails. This failure makes the protagonist's return, alone, to New Zealand after his disillusioning trip to Samoa all the more poignant, as the one person from his New Zealand past who might have been able help him redefine himself in the light of his new discoveries, is no longer available to him.

In order for the protagonist to maintain and develop his superior feel for the land and myths of New Zealand, a bond must be built between himself and those he sees as the spiritual, rightful inhabitants of the country: the Maori. Early on in the novel, the physical similarity he shares with them is noted:

'I'm Samoan,' he said. He watched her closely.

'I thought you were a Maori.'

'There's very little difference,' he said.

'Suppose not,' she replied. (*Sons* 9)

Racist remarks group Maori and Islanders together: "... the post office had had enough of irresponsible Islanders and Maoris..." (50), and, eventually, the protagonist, despite feeling disappointed at a Maori woman's stereotyping of Maori, concludes the woman "was one of his kind" (105). Although the protagonist's parents are described as having instilled in him racist views of Maori, after the killing of the hawk he goes through a kind of confessional,

cleansing period, where he not only acknowledges the absurd nature of his racism, but notes that it is sad that “because Maoris and Islanders are at the bottom of the social and economic ladder here,” they are not “brothers” (98). His knowledge of the Maui legends makes it easy for him to understand the spiritual links between Maori and the land, and he himself feels that he shares in that relationship in a way the girlfriend never could. Even his mother, despite her generally negative attitude towards Maori, contributed to his identification of a shared history and destiny: “We Samoans, she concluded one night, must stand together, with God as our guide. If we don’t, we shall be destroyed as the papalagi have destroyed the Maoris and Hawaiians” (76). The protagonist’s alignment with Maori in the novel is important, as when he finally returns to New Zealand, no longer claiming any bond with the Samoa that has so disappointed him, his anger with the processes of colonialism must be on behalf of the Maori. In a sense, he is reindigenised.

In *Ola*, this relationship between the hero, Maori, and the land is developed further. There is an increase in the vigour with which the politics of land rights and cultural recognition are portrayed, and the same message comes through: Maori have a more natural affinity with and claim to the land, and Samoans (represented by Ola) have a special empathy with Maori claims in this respect. A more telling development in this book is that of the notion that Maori and Samoans (and, to some extent, Jews) are part of the same battle -- the defence of what is mystic and natural and indigenous against the incursions of the coloniser. The indigenes find common ground by sharing stories of their past:

‘Most of our people don’t believe in Hawaiki anymore,’ Grace sennetted our silence. ‘For them, our atua are dead. Consequently they have no protection against the illnesses of the invaders. They’re lost in the cities of the Pakeha, with no compasses to find Hawaiki, the Source. The city is poisoning them -- they have no immunity.’ (*Ola* 94)

And:

I told them that the Fafa, at Falealupo, Savai'i, was our Reinga pointing towards Pulumotu, our spirit world, but no Samoans now believed in our ancient religion. Since the missionary conversion most of our people knew nothing about our pre-Christian atua -- or cared... Without them we were exposed, without mana, to the maladies of the Pakeha. (95)

Although it is acknowledged that there are those who choose not to adhere to traditional beliefs, all of those who are mentioned in the novel either go through an intensely emotional time (like Ola's father and Gill), where they ultimately accept their heritage, or, like Gill's son, George, appear destined never to be completely happy. Through the actions of Gill and her daughters, what is demonstrated is that only a total acceptance of Maori traditions can soothe the souls of those who genetically have a Maori heritage. This nativist argument posits that there is no middle ground available for these characters; they must be either Maori or pakeha. The preferred decision is made obvious by the nature of the words used in the novel to describe pakehas: "[p]retentious," "conservative," "status-conscious" (100), for example, and "addicted to material comfort, privacy, [and] private property" (98).

I had to be a hori as cast by the Pakeha who ran, controlled and financed it; a pond which had been established by bastards who'd ripped off our land and made fortunes out of our misery and who saw their final victory in converting us into house niggers. In that bourgeois pond I had to be a "gentl'man", loyal, enthusiastic arse-licker of God, Queen and country. And for some time I was fucking happy in those roles because I didn't know any better. Yeah, I was a model Maori... (83)

It seems that to "know better" is to reject as much as possible of everything associated with the coloniser, and to reclaim what was lost during colonisation. Hence, the acceptance of Maori heritage implies the rejection of the pervasive culture that works to subdue it. For those who have claims to the heritage of both the oppressor and the oppressed, the message

seems to be that it is the indigenous heritage that has the stronger voice -- that it is carried in the genes and cannot be bred out. This opposition of the heritages seems related to what Said terms "the first principle", viz:

... that a clear-cut and absolute hierarchical distinction should remain constant between ruler and ruled, whether or not the latter is white. Nativism, alas, reinforces the distinction even while revaluating the weaker or subservient partner. (*Culture and Imperialism* 275)

There is a certain binarism that underlies all this, in that while this rejection is part of nativist strategy, it is also primitivist in its assumptions concerning the indigene; the indigene, ruled by innate "natural" predispositions from which they cannot escape, are sentenced to be eternally oppressed.

It is not only the "bourgeois" New Zealand pakehas who are described in negative terms in *Ola*. The working class pakeha, "... men in the 'good ol' Kiwi tradition... weren't sissies, homos, shit-stirrers, commies, long-haired intellectuals, soccer or hockey players, non-conformists and pikers" (83). White New Zealand culture generally is depicted in *Ola* as being a blend of all the crassness and vigour of the "good-keen-man", mixed with a nouveau-riche ignorance; a blend which spawns a breed who "don't understand the Land" (72), and are "not rooted in Aotearoa" (72).

By *Black Rainbow*, the division on basically racial lines is total: the "true ones" (123), against everyone else. "We merged with our sisters and brothers from the Islands... and became the Tangata Moni, the True People. A tough breed, the toughest" (158), states Manu, explaining how the Pacific indigenes melded into one to fight the Tribunal -- the "sisters and brothers" from New Zealand and the Islands, easily identified by the colour of their skins:

'Hell, the bastid's the same tan as us!' she exclaimed.

'Another Tangata Maori, eh?' he said. 'Where you from, mate?' I told them.

'Are you Tangata Maori?' she asked.

'I don't know,' I had to reply.

'Jesus, they've fucked you up good too, eh. Like they've done to most of our people!' she said. I didn't understand. 'They've left you brown on the outside and filled you full of white, other-worlder bullshit.'

The other youth, who remained silent, looked up into the rear-view mirror and said, 'We're the only true ones left, eh.' (*Black Rainbow* 123)

The sense of common purpose that binds the Tangata Moni is increased by their innate rebellious natures; the "savageness" that cannot be subdued (77). Where the protagonist of *Sons For the Return Home* was the ultimate Samoan and, in his abandonment of his homeland, an existential hero who used his supreme awareness of flaws in both Samoan and New Zealand culture to carve a new path for himself, Supremo Jones is the ultimate indigenous warrior, taking on the system from within with the help of innate qualities that cannot be suppressed. Maori and Pacific Islanders blend into one, all sharing the same oppression, and having the same need to return to a more traditional way of life. The protagonist's position as leader of all Tangata Moni is strengthened by the frequent implications that he, and his quest, share common ground with the legends of Maui: "I got out the Hotere and the weapons, went up and stood under the Memorial and faced the east, as Maui must have waited to trap Ra with his flax snares..." (242). Even the Tribunal, in their files concerning him, describe him using terms often used to describe Maui: "... we know he's an incorrigible confidence trickster" (225). His links to the land itself are made irrefutable by passages that point out that he has an ability to sense the history, people, and legends of the land: "The original inhabitants of Maungakiekie were still here. I felt them through my skin, in the stinging air" (31), "As I drove I felt as if I was entering the magic forests of mythology.... I couldn't escape the atua, gigantic warrior figures, who rose up out of the lake like genie..." (187). Maori and Islanders alike are shown to share the same ancestors. The question of whether Islanders resident in New Zealand can themselves be classified as colonisers is negated by the

grouping together of the histories, mythologies, and ancestors of all who fall under the banner of Tangata Moani. By blurring the distinctions between Maori and the various Pacific Islanders and assimilating all into the Tangata Moani, the very colonising practice that the grouping reputedly rebels against is re-validated. Also, the thorny problem of the rights of indigenes from one place muscling in on the rights of the indigenes in another place is neatly sidestepped. This, then, is not new ground; it is, in fact, very familiar. As Said states:

... to accept nativism is to accept the consequences of imperialism, the racial, religious, and political divisions imposed by imperialism itself. To leave the historical world for the metaphysics of essences like *negritude*, Irishness, Islam, or Catholicism is to abandon history for essentializations that have the power to turn human beings against each other; often this abandonment of the secular world has led to... an unthinking acceptance of stereotypes, myths, animosities, and traditions encouraged by imperialism.

(*Culture and Imperialism* 276)

The injustices that are spoken of take on a very topical character when actual contemporary activists are quoted in-text:

I became more addicted to the work of Tangata Maori writers, my ancestors, finding in them the identity and past I'd been denied. A past which spoke of Tangata Maori resistance to otherworlder occupation, racism and arrogance. A past of enormous loss and anger. And which gave me a voice and a gafa:

Who I am and my relationship to everyone else depends on my whakapapa, on my lineage, on those from whom I am descended. One needs one's ancestors therefore to define one's present. Relationships with one's tipuna are thus intimate and causal. It is easy to feel the humiliation, anger and sense of loss which our tipuna felt. And take up the kaupapa they had.

--- Donna Awatere, *Maori Sovereignty*

(*Black Rainbow* 244)

The effect of this post-modern device is to make *Black Rainbow*, the science fiction thriller, a warning to contemporary New Zealand society: if the voices of today's activists are not heeded, then the New Zealand of the future will be very bleak. Juniper Ellis writes of *Black Rainbow*: "Without celebrating or idealizing imperial or indigenous forces, [Wendt] depicts how the two interact" (102). Although both the forces at work in *Black Rainbow* are described with apparent objectivity some of the time, clear over-all impressions are left that the Tangata Moni have heroic natures, and, as "true ones", are the repository of ancient wisdom, while the Tribunal is a coldly manipulative controlling force whose aim it is to establish conformity on the population. There would seem to be a considerable amount of celebrating and idealizing intended here. The contemporary relevance of all this is emphasised by the naming of contemporary artists and their works -- in particular, Ralph Hotere, to whom the novel is dedicated and whose work of art gives the novel its name.

While the Tribunal works to eliminate difference, with a kind of morbid fascination it also exalts the one man who has the ability to subvert the Utopian world it has created: Supremo Jones. In a *Catch 22* situation, Supremo Jones is their ultimate citizen -- yet he is of Tangata Moni heritage, and Tangata Moni equates with difference. He is a constant danger because of his innate rebelliousness. If the Tribunal were the Romans, Supremo would be Jesus. The Tribunal cannot make him into the person they wish him to be, despite the attempts they make to do so through 'reordinarination'.

Juniper Ellis says of Wendt's writing, and in particular of *Black Rainbow*: "A crucial extension of his ideas is the concept that there is no cultural purity or isolation, but instead collisions of admittedly asymmetrical cultures that modify one another in unpredictable ways" (108). However, what is depicted in *Black Rainbow* is one culture trying to absorb all others, rather than modify them, and that culture (the Tribunal) is seen to be made up

virtually entirely of one racial group. In opposition to the Tribunal is the Tangata Moni, itself a culture comprised of essentially one racial group (though an amalgamation of similar cultures), that is said to share an ineradicable trait of rebelliousness. The lines here seem to be very clearly drawn.

In each of the works studied, a colonising force (or at least a dominant culture) is a constant presence. Sometimes, as is the case of Pule's novels, it is in the background, but still influences the characters' actions and thoughts. In Wendt's works, the imperial past and its legacy is always the major issue. The devastating effect of this past on the indigenous populations and the attempts of the various characters to come to terms with it are the central struggles portrayed. The most significant point concerning this, as far as Wendt's work is concerned, is that he melds Maori and Pacific Islander together and thus makes Pacific Islanders into New Zealand indigenes. Their experiences are those of the colonised, of being 'othered,' and the racially-defined essentialist approach suggests that the future will see the same basic pattern of white colonisers struggling to impose their will on the innately rebellious, dark-skinned colonised.

Closely associated with this sense of being perpetually the 'other', is the Island identity. Each of the characters is highly conscious of being an Islander, or, in the case of *Black Rainbow*, of belonging to a group whose collective origins are made obvious by the colour of their skin -- they have linked with the indigenous 'other'. In the works of Pule and Kightley, New Zealand and its people, both Maori and pakeha, remain more or less separate, and the Islanders retain their own identities. Most exist in a kind of 'squeezed' middle space, affected by the dominant culture but not under serious threat of being absorbed by it, nor in constant conflict with it.

Of all the characters in all the works studied, it is Vili from *A Frigate Bird Sings*, who comes closest to defining a new space; not confined by close association with either the dominant host culture nor the 'othered' Island culture. By the play's end he is neither female

nor male, neither a tradition-bound Samoan nor a 'sell-out' to the host culture -- he is simply what he is. Although this points to a new way of being, a new space, the audience is not told exactly what this might entail. For Pule's protagonists, the key to finding their place in New Zealand lies in their rediscovery, acceptance, and understanding of their Island heritage.

Wendt's main Island characters trace a path from ultimate rejection of modern Samoan culture simultaneous with the adoption of a personalised Samoa of the mind and a nascent feeling of affinity with Maori culture (in *Sons*), through a broadening feeling of affinity with the Maori along with an increased understanding of modern Samoan culture (in *Ola*), to the discovery of a unity of race, history and purpose amongst all Pacific Islanders and Maori in New Zealand - a 'new' indigenous race which must ever remain in conflict with pakeha in a sort of essentialist, perpetual struggle of coloniser against colonised (in *Black Rainbow*).

What is key in the texts that show identity as racially defined is that as long as race is constant, identity will remain unchanged, and that the middle ground, where acceptance of self does not necessarily mean opposition to others, will forever remain elusive.

CONCLUSION

The Pacific Island homelands of the main characters depicted in the works studied were subject to colonial rule for at least eighty years during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. That period saw great changes to the pre-contact structures, behaviours and traditions, but each homeland emerged from colonial rule with their distinctive identities and cultures intact and their populations still overwhelmingly descended from the pre-colonial inhabitants. The individual characters of these stories migrate to another group of much larger islands which underwent colonisation *and* large scale and permanent European settlement, and in which the descendants of the pre-colonial inhabitants are vastly outnumbered. It is the stories of the individual islanders and their attempts to find a place for themselves in this complex new environment that is the general theme of all the texts.

The writers all acknowledge that the lives of their characters are deeply influenced by the carry-over from the colonial past, and that the struggle to find a place for themselves in their new homeland is a difficult one. The major issues -- how much of the homeland traditions should be retained, how much of the dominant culture should be adopted, how to deal with aspects of the new life that offend or that are a challenge to the familiar ways of doing things, whether to draw strength from the group or to venture out to establish individual space, and so on -- are given varying prominence and dealt with in very different ways by the three writers. While certain patterns have been identified in their use of language and their representation of sexuality and gender, the authors clearly do not show the problems relating to the establishment of a new identity by the migrants as having any agreed solution. Wendt's works are the most distinctly political and his texts display a pessimistic viewpoint when it comes to the question of whether or not the relationship between the Pacific peoples and the descendants of the white settlers can ever be an equal one. Pule seems to suggest that

the best chance for settlers to define their own space is to draw on their own traditions.

Kightley emphasises the individual rather than the group, and he seems to suggest that each individual should resist the temptation to accept the dictates of any group, and come up with his or her own solutions. It is therefore only Kightley's texts that move away from the imperial stereotyping to give a picture of individuals standing on the threshold of a new and equal 'space'. Though the exact nature of that space is not defined, the view shown here would seem to be an optimistic one -- namely that a tolerant attitude on the part of individuals to questions of culture and difference, rather than a chauvinistic one that implies conflict and dominance, offers the chance to break from the 'othering' pressures of the colonial past. This is surely a matter of profound importance to all New Zealanders, whatever their origins.

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