# Remembering and Belonging:
## *Colonial Settlers in New Zealand Museums*

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## *Abstract*

This study approaches museums as socially constructed signifiers of group identities. Focusing specifically on museological representations of colonial settlers at museums and historical sites in New Zealand, I analyse how this group is constructed in terms of its association with colonialism, empire, and other historical and contemporary groups in New Zealand. In my results chapters, *Pride and Shame* and *Parts of a Whole*, I investigate different ways in which colonial settlers are represented in terms of their relationship to Empire, the nation, and other groups within New Zealand. Representations which position settlers within colonial discourses and portray them as heroic pioneers work to justify their presence in New Zealand on the basis that they earned their place through suffering and hard work. This assertion of place and belonging is then questioned by representations which situate colonial settlers within post-colonial discourses that highly criticise the actions of settlers and the institution of colonialism. Representations of colonial settlers can also construct them as related to a cultural group, usually referred to as 'Pakeha', and part of New Zealand's bicultural and multicultural identities. I examine how biculturalism is represented in different ways and use the concepts of separate biculturalism and blended biculturalism to explore these differences. These different political identities reflect a strong sense of ambiguity and ambivalence over New Zealand's political identity, and emphasise how stories from the past can be used in different ways to justify different perspectives of contemporary social and political relationships.

## *Acknowledgements*

*This thesis has been a labour of love, duty and frustration and I am certain that it would not be in existence if not for the support – intellectual, financial, and emotional – provided by the following individuals, departments and institutions:*

## *Dedication*

*This thesis is dedicated in honour of the memory of my grandfather, Allen B. Crabtree, or 'Pappy' to me. He was always pleased to see his granddaughters excel in their academic lives and careers and he did all that he could to support and encourage us to this end. His belief in the capabilities of his granddaughters has enabled all of us, I believe, to pursue our passions in life, and this thesis is one small example of that.*

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*All photographs were taken by the author throughout the course of fieldwork.*

There is fiction in the space between
The lines on your page of memories
Write it down but it doesn't mean
You're not just telling stories

There is fiction in the space between
You and reality
You will do and say anything
To make your everyday life
Seem less mundane
There is fiction in the space between
You and me

...

Leave the pity and the blame
For the ones who do not speak
You write the words to get respect and compassion
And for posterity
You write the words and make believe
There is truth in the space between

There is fiction in the space between
You and everybody
Give us all what we need
Give us one more sad sordid story
But in the fiction of the space between
Sometimes a lie is the best thing
Sometimes a lie is the best thing

- *Telling Stories*, Song by Tracy Chapman

# Remembering and Belonging:
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## Chapter One:

## Introduction

[T]he past is always practiced [*sic*] in the present, not because the past imposes itself, but because subjects in the present fashion the past in the practice of their social identity (Friedman, 1992, p. 853).

[T]o know what we were confirms that we are (Lowenthal, 1985, p. 197).

The various ways in which the past is practised, constructed and represented have important influences on contemporary politics and identities. It is through different understandings and constructions of the past that group identities – especially cultural, ethnic, and national identities – are created and the criteria for membership within the group are established. And it is through narrative and story-telling that these biographical constructions of group identities are imagined and shared. But being social constructions relating to group inclusion and exclusion, biographical representations of group identities are also highly political, negotiated, dynamic, and contested even though they are often represented as

timeless, constant and given. It is through the collective remembering of a group's past that the rules for belonging within that group are established. At the same time, this type of collective remembering also often establishes the group as legitimately, rightfully and morally belonging to a particular place. In this way, stories from the past become appropriated by a particular group and through the collective remembering not only of the past but of *their* past, a group is able to assert its longevity, character, and place.

As social and political institutions, ethnographic and social history museums and heritage sites are places where cultural and political identities – nationalities and ethnicities in particular – are constructed and represented. This process often involves references to events, people and places in the past which are used to construct a contemporary group, explain its inherited characteristics, and justify its place within a geographical space. In New Zealand, these sites – where place and identity are constructed and remembered through representations of the past – range from the high-profile National Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa to small regional museums such as Petone Settlers Museum, and also include heritage sites such as The Waitangi Treaty Grounds and restored villages such as Howick Historical Village. I visited these sites and more throughout the course of my research in order to investigate how historical representations of colonial settlers in New Zealand connect to constructions and imaginings of national identities.

Examinations of the construction of national identities expose the nation as less like Turner's (1995, p. 145) *communitas*, which is marked by homogeneity, sameness and unity, and more like Pratt's (1992) contact zone, which is marked by encounters with difference and otherness. Thus, while there has been an "unpredicted 'return' of nationalism" (Hall, 1999, p. 35) as global interconnectedness has increased national self-awareness, nations themselves are experiencing fragmentation and threats to unity from within. Contact zones and encounters with difference can occur as much within nations as they occur between them. Confrontations with difference facilitate constructions of otherness, increase identity and group consciousness, and heighten the need for boundary-

making and the identification of insiders and outsiders (Robbins, 1999). Yet, despite the reality that nations are inherently heterogeneous and internally fragmented, nations are often idealised and imagined as hegemonic communities. Nationalist discourses often construct the nation as possessing a certain degree of internal homogeneity which makes it externally unique and different, and which binds members within the nation in "deep, horizontal comradeship" (B. Anderson, 1991, p. 7).

Often discourses of homogeneity attempt to use the concept of a shared ethnicity or culture to define the nation. As Edward Said (1985) argues, nations do not necessarily need to be defined by homogeneous ethnic or cultural identities, but often fear and prejudice dictate that different cultural and ethnic groups should be kept separate and divided. In a similar vein, Hall (1999, p. 38) notes that while the nation has never actually been ethnically or culturally homogeneous, the *idea* of it certainly has. The idea of a homogeneous national ethnic and/or cultural identity is a morally positioned concept that argues that ethnic groups rightfully deserve a nation to call their own and that nations deserve their own ethnic group. In practice, this is certainly a difficult concept to apply to nations with any minority population but it is especially problematic in nations with histories of colonisation and substantial settler-descendant, indigenous, and multicultural populations.

As Friedman (1992; 2003) discusses, claims to indigenous status are particularly resistant to nationalising efforts – where nationalism is seen as a homogenising process – because they fragment the national population and place indigenous identity as primal; preceding the nation in time and importance. Claims to indigenous status are inherently political and have become increasingly so as new claims to indigeneity and indigenous rights emerge, particularly where claims to land and resources are concerned. Friedman notes that the emergence of identities associated with indigenousness is a particularly common global phenomenon, which he calls *indigenization*: "This process is marked by the rapid increase in indigenous movements throughout the world and a tendency for individuals of mixed parentage to reidentify as members of an indigenous population" (Friedman, 2003, p. 746). According to Friedman, indigenization is a

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global occurrence that is marked by the proliferation and assertion of indigenous identities in which contemporary people claim descent – through genetic, familiar or cultural connections – from people in the past. The justification of indigenous comes from the implication that these people from the past, with which people in the present claim kinship, continuously occupied a particular territory and/or were the 'original' inhabitants of the land and, therefore, have a special status as the first people.

In New Zealand, a curious type of indigenisation has surprisingly emerged among some members of a group of New Zealanders, those descended from British and European settlers, or Pakeha[1] New Zealanders as they are often called. In his book *Being Pakeha Now*, Michael King (2004), a popular and controversial New Zealand historian, calls himself an 'indigenous Pakeha New Zealander' and a 'white native'. He justifies this by claiming that because the ancestors of Maori and Pakeha alike both *arrived* at New Zealand, the difference between the two in terms of period of occupation should not be used to determine which group has more entitlement or moral claim to the land. King (2004, p. 235) argues that indigenous New Zealanders should be determined not on the basis of how long their ancestors have lived in the territory, but by their faithfulness to the nation: "People who live in New Zealand by choice as distinct from an accident of birth, and who are committed to this land and its people and steeped in their knowledge of both, are no less 'indigenous' than Maori". Not only does this passage present an unusual definition of 'indigenous', it also implies that a status of 'indigenous' equal to that claimed by Maori can be claimed by any New Zealander or anyone who lives in New Zealand by choice. A similar logic can be seen in the rhetoric of settlers in Hawaii from the late nineteenth century:

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[1] The term 'Pakeha' has a number of meanings and connotations associated with it and has been used variously to refer to British descendants, non-Maori, colonisers, or European New Zealanders (Bell, 2004). For purposes of clarity, I have avoided using the term 'Pakeha' – referring instead to British, European settlers or settler-descendants where appropriate – but do employ the term when discussing literature by other authors who use the term.

> A wrong impression has obtained that only those born here of the aboriginal Hawaiian stock are the true Hawaiians. A man born here of white parents who spends his talents and energies for the benefit of Hawai'i is as true a Hawaiian as if his parents were all red, or one red and the other white. Those who benefit this country by their own good character and example and life are the true Hawaiians. A. F. Judd, *Saturday Post*, Oct. 2, 1880 (as quoted in Friedman, 1992, p. 842).

An examination of the assumptions and challenges inherent in these claims reveals them as indicators of a struggle over power, authority and authenticity that might well be expected during periods of colonisation and decolonisation when established paradigms and powers are threatened and marked for change. These discourses represent an attempt by settlers and settler-descendants to define 'indigenous' in such a way as to be able to be included within the category. When 'indigenous' status is perceived as an ideal and is claimed by settlers and particularly by descendants of colonial settlers, this marks a shift in colonial hierarchies and indicates that indigenous status bears with it perceived powers and privileges.

An example of the powers, politics, and privileges involved with settler-descendant claims to indigeneity is given by Dominy (1995; 2001) who describes how white runholders in New Zealand's South Island high country asserted a type of native status based on generations of continued occupation of and a deep spiritual connection to the land. The latter claim challenges the indigenous/settler, spiritual/material dichotomy that asserts that indigenous peoples have deeper spiritual – and, by implication, moral – connections to the land, while colonial settlers only exploit the land for material gain. The claims to spiritual and cultural connections to the land occurred at a time when the Crown land leased to the runholders became part of a Waitangi Tribunal land claim made by Ngai Tahu. Threatened by the possible loss of their leases, land, and way of life, a group of non-Maori runholders became involved in the tribunal to convey how the loss of such lands would affect them. Their argument was that a loss of the land would not just result in material losses, but spiritual and cultural losses as well. One runholder testified:

After 25 years working in the back country as a shepherd and then after a lucky break, as a lessee, I still look every day with a feeling of awe on the mountains, the rivers and the bush that make up our high country lands. My hope is that this awe, felt no doubt by many men and women, will transcend so called cultural differences and unite us, so we go into the next decade as one, with the best management of our fragile resources as a collective goal (Morris, 1988 as quoted in Dominy, 2001, p. 221).

These reflections imply that an indigenous-like (i.e. spiritual and emotional) connection to the land can be felt by colonial settlers and their descendants. The runholders do not claim to be Maori, but they certainly claim that their spiritual connection to, cultural dependence on and continuous generational occupation of the land entitles them to a type of native status.

Clearly, it is not a coincidence that the runholders' re-examination of their identity came at a time when another group asserted a moral and legal right to the land on which the runholders lived and worked. In fact, I would argue that attempts to challenge or redefine indigenous status are reactions to perceived threats, particularly where moral, political and spiritual power resides with indigenous groups. As Michael King (2004, p. 9) admits, he wrote *Being Pakeha Now* because he felt that he needed to explain that Pakeha had a right "to live in this country, practice their values and culture and be themselves".

The need for settler descendants to assert their belonging in New Zealand arose out of a post-colonial discourse that positioned Maori as the first inhabitants of New Zealand and the colonial settlers as agents of oppression and colonisation. Thus, when descendants of colonial settlers claim to have indigenous status, they obscure the association between them and agents of colonisation and assert a moral right to belong in New Zealand as people who are 'indigenous' to the land (Bell, 1996).

The assertion of settler descendant indigeneity is clearly related to politics, economics, and power, but there is also a more emotional dimension to these claims. Patrick Snedden's book *Pakeha and the Treaty* (2005) addresses the re-evaluation of Pakeha identity that has arisen in light of legal land claims made by Maori as well as a postcolonial rhetoric which favours indigenous moral rights to land. Snedden notes that these ideas have created a sense of uncertainty among

Pakeha about their legal and moral rights to live in New Zealand, which has the potential to turn into more severe responses:

> Faced with Maori claims to indigenous status, many [Pakeha] have felt like strangers in their own land. An alternative response to this Maori self-assertion is to retaliate, to assert our own form of Pakeha sovereignty. The need to claim our own legitimate sense of belonging in this country is close to the surface of our cultural sensitivities. Scratch too hard, and the reaction can be fierce (Snedden, 2005, p. 57).

This anxiety over place and belonging is reflected in the sentiments expressed by Denise Irving (1998) of *The Waikato Times*. In an emotionally-driven piece, she expresses her ties – genealogical and spiritual – to New Zealand and her ambivalence over how she, as a descendant of British settlers, feels a legitimate sense of belonging in the country.

> Several weeks ago, at the launch of his new party Mauri Pacific, Tau Henare said he wanted all New Zealanders to be tangata whenua, people of the land, a title used only by Maori. Titiwhai Harawira, who chairs the Auckland District Maori Council, won't have a bar of this.
>
> Henare wants to be inclusive, Harawira exclusive. Henare argues for cultural unity, Harawira says only Maori can be tangata whenua.
>
> Harawira also does not believe Maori arrived here from somewhere else. In a radio interview last week she said Maori were "made from this earth to be the guardians of this earth, Aotearoa. Pakeha settlers and their families would always have their beginnings back in England," she said, . . . "not here, no matter how long you live here. A kitten in the banana box will never be a banana".
>
> What do I want to be? Well, first I want to define myself rather than have others do it for me.
>
> I have neither known nor sought any other home, but it would be false to say I am tangata whenua. Although my family origins lie on the other side of the world, I do not call myself European or that quaint word caucasian, and Harawira's "kitten in the banana box" analogy doesn't sit well either.
>
> I am pakeha, a New Zealander, and my passion for my country is deeply personal, part of my soul.

> It is a rich gift bestowed on me by my forebears. I take it with me wherever I go, and when I fly home the first sight of Northland makes me tearful and thankful. Many other images can do this: the haka before a rugby test, the brilliant blue seascapes of the Bay of Plenty and East Cape, the scarlet flash of pohutukawa at Christmas, lazy summer barbecues with friends, Kiwi humour, the stories of Katherine Mansfield and Patricia Grace (Irvine, 1998, p. 8).

I quote Irvine at length, because I believe the passage demonstrates that these questions are not just political – they also reveal a deep anxiety, particularly on the part of European-settler-descendants, over their rightful place as New Zealanders, as well as a longing for justification of that place.

Discourse relating to indigenous status and legitimate belonging in New Zealand has developed into a national, political, social and academic debate over the place of ethnicity and culture in the state, particularly with respect to bicultural policies. Both a philosophical and a practical approach, biculturalism was intended as a governmental strategy to recognise the cultural autonomy and rights of Maori along with New Zealanders descended from those who settled in New Zealand under British colonial rule in accordance with the partnership established by the Treaty of Waitangi. Biculturalism is a contested and negotiated social and political perspective in which the Treaty of Waitangi plays a central role as the legal, moral and historical justification for such a partnership. James Ritchie (1992, p. 6) describes biculturalism in terms of the recognition of different types of dominance held by two different cultures sharing the same land:

> [T]here are two predominant cultures here, not one. Pakeha culture (about which we know surprisingly little, anthropologically speaking) is dominant by power, history and majority. Maori culture is dominant by a longer history, by legacy and by its strength of survival and the passionate commitment of its people.

This definition refers to Pakeha as a cultural group unique to New Zealand. The use of the term 'Pakeha' is often used within a discourse of biculturalism where Pakeha are paired with Maori as the other half of biculturalism. Because of this dualism, the term signifies a relationship to and interdependence with Maori and positions Maori as indigenous and Pakeha as being related to later settlers and

colonisers (Bell, 1996). Thus, the term Pakeha is politically loaded and has been both embraced as well as vehemently rejected by those New Zealanders to whom the term could be applied. Even the label 'European' has been rejected by some who deny having any ethnic identity other than New Zealander. The 2006 New Zealand census accounted for this, and added a 'New Zealander' category as its own ethnic category (previously it had been included within the European ethnic category). The rejection of the label 'Pakeha' is a symbolic action as "those who reject being called Pakeha are also rejecting a particular form of interdependent relationship to Maori (Bell, 1996). This symbolic rejection of biculturalism is occurring at a time when bicultural policies and decisions made by the Waitangi Tribunal have resulted in favourable economic and social outcomes for Maori.

I unexpectedly encountered the tensions surrounding these issues when I attended an *Anatomy of Power* symposium at the University of Auckland in November 2006. The topic of the symposium was the Global Politics of Ethnicity and Culture and I attended because Jonathan Friedman was one of the speakers. At the symposium I sat next to a kind elderly gentleman who shared with me his reasons for attending the symposium. He was not an academic, but he had read an article in the *New Zealand Herald* and felt the need to attend the symposium as it addressed issues he himself had felt for a while but which had been shied-away from in the public forum because they were politically incorrect. He was referring to the sentiment that governmental policies of biculturalism which favoured Maori undermined the principles of democracy. This argument has been brought into the academic sphere with Elizabeth Rata's work on ethnic boundaries and social policy. And it was Rata, her book *Public Policy and Ethnicity* (Rata & Openshaw, 2006), and her controversial views that were at the centre of the symposium debate. Rata is strongly opposed to bicultural policies or any governmental policies which are based on race or ethnicity as they create division and undermine principles of democracy.

As I witnessed at the symposium, Rata is not alone in her opposition to race-based policies, but sentiments like hers are not often expressed in a public forum as they are perceived as politically incorrect. Opposition to bicultural and 'race-

based' policies are highly controversial as they challenge moral justifications for policies which favour or are meant to specifically benefit Maori people, cultural beliefs or practices. The atmosphere of the symposium became tense and emotionally-charged during question period when members of the audience were invited to ask questions. The man who had been speaking to me earlier used the opportunity to thank Rata for her courageous work – for talking about things a lot of New Zealanders were feeling but were afraid to talk about. His brief speech was met with vigorous applause by some and outrage by others.

It is in this climate of emotional, contested and politicised national identities that I situate my research study. The ideology of post-colonialism, which first emerged in the 1970s and has since remained a very powerful and influential critical perspective, influenced academics and politicians to recognise, realise and redress indigenous rights. Post-colonialism dramatically unsettled perceptions of place and identity in New Zealand, stirring up questions of the place of Maori, settler-descendants, recent immigrants and other groups within New Zealand, and whether there can be a singular national identity.

One way in which different ideas about national identities are justified is through reference to past events, people and conditions. While debates over and efforts to define New Zealander identities remain important contemporary issues, stories about and understandings of the past play a central role in how such identities are understood, justified and narrated. I became interested in how different understandings of the past can influence perceptions of the present while I was completing my honours degree in Ontario, Canada. I explored these issues in a paper I wrote which examined the concepts of collective memory and official history with reference to different and conflicting ideas about how justice should be served after the fatal shooting of an indigenous man who was protesting over a land claim issue. I was interested in how the collective memory of those involved pursuing the land claim differed from the 'official history' and how the two conflicting versions of the past were negotiated and renegotiated before and after the fatal shooting of the protestor. As someone who identifies as a descendant of European settlers in North America – both sides of my family are descendants of

early European settlers in the United States – I am personally interested in how descendants of colonial settlers establish a sense of belonging to a particular geo-political region, when such assertions are often criticised or rejected by post-colonial perspectives. I decided to come to New Zealand, a country with a very different history of colonisation and settler-indigenous relationships in order to explore some of these issues in a different setting. I was also interested in understanding a bit about New Zealander identities and particularly how settlers and their descendants fit into construction of those identities.

References to the arrival and settlement of immigrants from the British Isles and other parts of Europe are particularly common in definitions of New Zealand's national history and of some New Zealander identities. These stories are used to explain the emergence of New Zealand as a nation while the settlers themselves are used to explain certain inherited characteristics and personality traits present in contemporary New Zealanders: "[New Zealand's] colonial history is not easily discarded having given shape to our lives, language, cultural forms and our institutions, and these identity debates draw on a series of past contested positions that are as old as our settlements" (Morris, 2005, p. 247). As a break-away settler colony[2], New Zealand faces the challenge of defining its national identity in terms of both its large population whose ancestry can be traced back to the British Isles and its strong indigenous population. The nation also contains within it descendants of early settlers not from Britain – such as the Dalmatians, Chinese, and French – as well as more recent immigrants from places all over the world and these many minority groups challenge a bicultural national model.

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[2] I borrowed this term from McClintock (1992, p. 89), who writes: "*Break-away settler colonies* can, moreover, be distinguished by their formal independence from the founding metropolitan country, along with continued control over the appropriated colony (thus displacing colonial control from the metropolis to the colony itself). The United States, South Africa, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, remain, in my view, break-away settler colonies that have not undergone decolonization, nor, with the exception of South Africa, are they likely to in the near future".

Negotiations over the place of biculturalism in New Zealand politics often involves references to the Treaty of Waitangi, the establishment of an imperial presence in New Zealand and the arrival of colonial settlers. As a result, representations of the period of British and European settlement are political and controversial because of their association with colonisation, colonialism, and imperialism. Post-colonialism has demanded a critical examination of how the period of colonial settlement is taught, represented and discussed in New Zealand. It has cast a highly critical eye on museological representations, particularly with respect to how they reproduced colonial hierarchies and imperial discourses. As Williams (2004, p. 749) notes, "[i]n the late 1980s New Zealand undertook a major effort of cultural and social revaluation in order to distance itself from its colonial past". At some museums, curators and those in charge of presenting these histories chose to rethink and recreate these representations in ways which more accurately agreed with the post-colonial paradigm. This was in response to pressures from indigenous groups who challenged museums' ownership of their cultural material and narratives and pushed for greater control over such ownership and representations. Being accused of celebrating or at least morally justifying colonialism, supporting discourses of colonial domination and indigenous subjugation, and excluding indigenous participation, many museums sought to re-evaluate their content, narratives, and display techniques.

I chose to seek out New Zealander identities at museums, because I believe that "...the intensive analysis of museum objects and their contexts, can provide timely and substantive insights into issues of more general – indeed of global – interest" (Barringer & Flynn, 1998, p. 2). I believe that the ways in which people understand and construct the past directly relates to their values, beliefs, and assumptions about political decisions and socio-cultural conditions. Therefore, I have chosen to research the construction of these identities, as they relate to New

Zealanders who are descended from colonial settlers[3] and to focus specifically on those representations used to support ideas about how they fit into the constructions of national identities. I focused specifically on museological representations of colonial settlers for a number of reasons. First, I deliberately wanted to resist the "fashionable dismissal of settler-descendant cultures" (Trigger, 2003, p. 405). As anthropologists tend to focus on indigenous, minority or marginalised groups – particularly in post-colonial museum studies – I assert that it is important to also study the 'coloniser' not only to balance the topic of inquiry, but also because a dismissal of so-called dominant groups contributes to *exnomination*, whereby the character and nature of the dominant group is assumed and taken for granted. As Avril Bell (1996, p. 149) describes, the 'culture' of the majority is not normally regarded as such, nor is it normally studied in the same way in which minority cultures are studied:

> [T]he culture that dominates the public life of society – the political and legal institutions, the schools, the media, etc. – is so common sense as to lie beneath the level of consciousness. It is taken-for-granted in its normality and not recognised as 'culture' in the way that the traditions and values of minorities are.

I believe that my research on representations of colonial settlers is not only a study of a 'dominant' group, but is also a study of contemporary representations of people from the past who have been glorified, vilified, and ancestorised in national and regional imaginings of group identities. By focusing on the colonial settlers

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[3] I had a difficult time deciding how to name the group on which my research was focused. I wanted to focus on representations of early non-Maori settlers in New Zealand who came to New Zealand through a system of colonisation and who could be seen as 'pioneers'. I found the term 'settlers' to be too generic, as it could be applied to anyone who settled in New Zealand. I originally used the term 'early European settlers' but found that the term was most often used to describe settlers from the British Isles. I have instead used the term 'colonial settlers' in order to emphasise that the group I am investigating arrived and settled under a system of early British colonial rule in New Zealand. This term is also politically loaded and problematic, as British colonial rule continued – and arguably still continues – long after pioneers disappeared, but I believe it is the best label to use considering the focus of my inquiry.

specifically I am also able to access important questions relating to colonialism, power, identity and representation and to relate these to constructions of contemporary New Zealand identities. I ask: What are the stories, narratives and/or myths told about colonial settlers at museums in New Zealand? Do these myths relate to contemporary ideas about New Zealander identities and, if so, in what ways? Do museological representations of the colonial period as an unsettling period of time that has numerous interpretations and political implications? How can New Zealanders who are descended from settlers who came to New Zealand under a system of British colonial rule celebrate their heritage when colonialism is often constructed as something of which to be ashamed?

To carry out my research, I visited eighteen museums, most of which were located in the North Island. I elected to work with a broad definition of museums, as I visited more than just 'traditional' museums. For the purposes of my inquiry, I was interested in including sites that can be visited by the public where the colonial settler past is researched and represented through visual displays, narratives, and/or other teaching techniques. These sites included traditional museums, historical villages, and heritage sites. While at the sites, I took field notes and photographs, where permitted, and spent time experiencing the site, paying attention to the displays as well as to the atmosphere. I also collected materials such as brochures and maps and analysed promotional material and websites. In addition to this, I conducted three semi-structured interviews and had a number of informal conversations with people working at the sites. The bulk of the data upon which I performed a content analysis consisted of my field notes, photographs, supplementary materials, and interview notes and transcripts.

My research was limited by transportation and time constraints. I chose to visit a large number of museums in New Zealand because my research questions related to national identities and, therefore, it seemed appropriate to obtain a national sampling of the different museums. However, I decided to restrict my primary area of interest to the North Island, and visited only a few museums in the South Island, for comparison purposes. Therefore, I sacrificed depth for breadth,

and spread my time out amongst a number of museums, instead of focusing on one in particular.

My research identified five different aspects of New Zealander identities conveyed by museological displays, narratives and stories told about early colonial settlers: (1) Colonial Pride; (2) Colonial Shame; (3) Separate Bicultural; (4) Blended Bicultural; and (5) Multicultural. In Chapter Four, *Pride and Shame*, I examine Colonial Pride and Colonial Shame and in Chapter Five *Parts of a Whole*, I examine Separate Bicultural, Blended Bicultural and Multicultural.

In *Pride and Shame*, I present evidence that supports the idea of New Zealand as a colonial nation through narratives of celebration and condemnation. 'Colonial pride' celebrates early colonial settlement in New Zealand and associates it with new hope and beginnings in a harsh and hostile environment which must be controlled and civilised. Colonial settlers are portrayed as hard-working, honest pioneers. Maori are featured only in relation to Europeans and are portrayed as hostile – like the environment which must be tamed – or as helpful and friendly. 'Colonial shame' is directly related to 'colonial pride' because it is a rejection of the colonial ideology. It, thus, appears as an inversion of the colonial identity; settlers are portrayed as misguided in their ethnocentrism, as degraders of the environment and Maori, who are portrayed as wise and unjustly treated.

In *Parts of a Whole*, I discuss the different identities associated with 'culturalisms' that are reflected in the displays. I have divided 'biculturalism' into two identities, 'separate bicultural' and 'blended bicultural', in order to account for different ways in which a so-called 'bicultural' national identity was portrayed in representations that included colonial settlers. The 'separate bicultural' category includes Maori and Pakeha as two separate and distinct groups and it is these two separate and unique, but equal, groups that make up New Zealand. The 'blended bicultural' category tells a story of two groups coming together to form a new nation where the best qualities of each group were blended into 'one people', to form a unique New Zealander identity. The final culturalism is 'multiculturalism', which portrays New Zealand as a place where people from all over the world have come, and have contributed in their own way to the unique national identity. The

multicultural identity – perhaps because it levels all ethnic and cultural identities including Maori and Pakeha – has not been widely accepted in New Zealand, and was also not very common at the museums I visited. However, I have included an exploration of this identity because I believe it points to some important political aspects of the bicultural identity.

These different identities connect, to a large degree, to questions that arose with the emergence of post-colonial theory and relate particularly to how New Zealanders are imagined to belong in light of the nation's colonial past and present realities: Should different ethnic and cultural groups within New Zealand be obscured in light of a common "New Zealand-ness"? Is New Zealand primarily a nation of its first people, Maori, with Pakeha and others understood as less morally and spiritually connected to the land? Is New Zealand a place where Pakeha are dominant? Is New Zealand a nation founded on an agreement between two groups, Maori and Pakeha, who are separate, but equal members of it? Is New Zealand the unique result of mixing – genetically, socially, culturally – of Maori and Pakeha, so that Maori and Pakeha cultural elements remain, but less extricable from one another? Is New Zealand a multicultural nation, made up of people from all corners of the world? Some answers to these questions appear in museological representations of the European settler period in New Zealand. Thus, studying representations of the European settler period elicits insights into some aspects of contemporary New Zealander identities and reveals them as variable, political, and contested social constructions.

# Chapter Two:

# Literature Review

It was as if, some time in the middle of the 1980s, a light bulb went on in people's heads: "Eureka," they said, "museums represent culture! They collect and preserve artifacts [*sic*] that objectify collective identities. No wonder they are contested terrains, contact zones. If we want to study the politics of cultural identity, where better to do it than in the museum?" (Gable & Handler, 2006, p. 5)

Museums and their historical antecedents have long been associated with representing identities: the *studiolo* of the Medici Palace signified the Medici family's prestige and wealth (Walsh, 1992), curiosity cabinets represented the collectors' world view (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992), and museums in imperial centres represented empires' conquests, wealth and proliferation (B. Anderson, 1991). However, it was not until the late 1970s and onward, with the influence of post-colonialism, post-modernism, feminism and civil rights movements, that the representation of group identities at museums became a highly politicised and contested terrain. Museums came to be expected to be democratic 'forums' instead of elitist 'temples' (Cameron, 1971) and this dramatically affected the representational and curatorial strategies practised at many museums, and put pressure on professionals to make museums more dynamic, responsive, and egalitarian social resources, rather than entrenched, elite, academic institutions (Whitcomb, 2003).

The emergence of academic critiques of museums is closely connected to the politicisation of museological representations and to the deconstruction of the academic authority of museums. Post-colonialism strongly influenced a large body of the critical literature on museums, which focused largely on critiques of displays on indigenous material culture, and particularly with issues concerning objectification, domination and cultural ownership. And while post-colonialism has become an influential and popular paradigm both academically and politically, more recent critiques have recognised its limitations and the problematics of a morally positioned paradigm. This had led some academics to examine the place of colonial settlers and their descendants and how they might be represented at museums and historical sites in light of the pervasiveness of post-colonialism which morally implicates settlers in the legacy of harm and destruction of colonialism.

This investigation also relates to how nations which are embroiled in the processes and discourses of decolonisation (re)construct and (re)imagine their history and their people at museums. I also explore the concept of heritage as a way to connect people from the past to people in the present. These topics will set the stage for my results section which will describe the different New Zealander identities, personality traits and myths that emerged from my research project.

## *The Emergence of Academic Critiques of Museums*

One of the first critical perspectives on museums came from French sociologists Pierre Bourdieu and Alain Darbel, whose *L'Amour de L'Art* (The Love of Art) published in 1969 (Bourdieu & Darbel, 1991) presented a pessimistic critique of Art Museums, arguing that they functioned within a system that reinforced class divisions and social elitism. Their research revealed that the population demographics of museum visitors were the inverse of social demographics so that the majority of visitors were university educated and the minority were from the working classes. While museums have an outward appearance of fairness and equality - because certain classes are not explicitly excluded – they argued that exclusion occurs on a more subtle level, as the museum mechanisms appeal to

those with specialised knowledge and education. This concept of intellectual exclusion was to become a major criticism of museums in the decade to come.

The 1970s saw a slight increase in academic examinations of museums, most notably with Dean MacCannell's (1989) *The Tourist* (originally published in 1976), Kenneth Hudson's (1975) *The Social History of Museums*, and with Duncan Cameron's (1971) "The Museum, a Temple or the Forum". MacCannell proposed that his study of tourism was an attempt to extend ethnography beyond the study of the 'primitive' and towards an ethnography of modernity. He persuaded academics to think critically about touristic institutions and how they relate to contemporary beliefs and ideologies. MacCannell addresses museums on a number of occasions, identifying them as places where the 'premodern' is co-opted by the modern with the effect that the premodern becomes part of a distant and remote past (MacCannell, 1989). MacCannell also recognised that tourist sites could act as both signifiers and signified and proposed that such symbolic production was intricately connected to the processes of national and social myth-making.

Hudson's perspective on museums had a pessimistic tone concerning class hierarchies and power at museums echoing that of Bourdieu. He argued that museums, because of their connections to social and academic elites, alienated and distanced the general public. This was based on an idea that most academics who worked in museums felt a sense of superiority and resented the presence of the uneducated, ordinary public in the museum. The belief that the masses do not belong in museums "is rooted in an old-established belief, the product of an aristocratic and hierarchical society – that art and scholarship are for a closed circle" (1975, p. 3). Hudson's work thus supported critiques of museums which positioned them as elitist and publicly irrelevant institutions.

Cameron's (1971) article "The Museum, a Temple or the Forum" explores how public alienation from and dissatisfaction with museums affected the perception of them, particularly with regard to the duty of museums to engage the public and their authority on truth. He recognises an emerging expectation that museums should be more in-touch with and responsive to the general public's

interests, wishes and perspectives, and touches upon questions which continue to be poignant and relevant in the study of museums today: To what degree can/should museums be considered authorities on the topics which they seek to represent? How realistic is it to believe that an institution can be representative of an economically, socially and culturally stratified group? Is it possible for museums to not only be subject to but to also represent and be a place for public scrutiny and debate? These issues continued to be problematised, as more critiques of museums from academics and the public emerged.

It was not really until the late eighties and early nineties that a coherent body of critical museum literature developed. Perhaps most influential to this end was Peter Vergo's (1989) *The New Museology*, which argued for a discipline that would critically examine "museums, their history and underlying philosophy, the various ways in which they have, in the course of time, been established and developed, their avowed or unspoken aims and policies, their educative or political or social rôle" (p.1). While this discipline includes museum professionals as well as 'outsider' academics, its intent is not so much to develop strategies for better, more educationally effective museums, but to take a more analytical, critical, and reflexive perspective that emphasises the role of the museum within society.

Postmodernism and social constructivism played important roles in the emergence of critical perspectives on museums because they deconstructed the taken-for-granted truth value attributed to museums. Postmodernism allowed for the possibility of multiple truths and multiple perspectives on history, culture, and the interpretation of objects, while social constructivism emphasised the processes and the human action involved in history and culture. The work by historians Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger (1992) on the relatively recent inventions of what are perceived as long-standing traditions was especially influential on museological perspectives as it demonstrated the important role that social construction and consensus play in sustaining ideas about the past. Another social constructivist historian, David Lowenthal (1985; 1996), argued against absolutist versions of history and emphasised how ideas about the past are always understood and

constructed in terms of the present. These paradigms influenced the development of academic inquiries that examined the historical social construction of museums.

Perhaps the most thorough and influential of these came from Eilean Hooper-Greenhill (1992) who applies Foucault's concept of *epistemes* by identifying epistemological frameworks which supported the development of museums. Hooper-Greenhill argues that a continuing feature of museums is that they have always been places where rational knowledge is presented. Change within the museum – relating to what is collected and how collections are displayed, studied and organised – is the result of changes in the epistemological framework which guides how ideas about knowledge and rational thought are conceptualised.

Also influenced by Foucault, Tony Bennett (1995) focuses on the historical functions of museums and how changing ideas about social controls influenced the public role of museums. Bennett looks beyond museums to examine how they relate to the development of other cultural institutions and how those institutions function in relation to the public. In one example, Bennett illustrates the civilising mission of the museums of the late nineteenth century which were perceived as places for cultural improvement and 'rational recreation' for the common man (Bennett, 1995). His examination takes into consideration the changing uses of museums as mechanisms of paternalistic control, socialisation, or entertainment, according to the perception of how cultural institutions should relate to the public.

The emergence of these critical academic perspectives on museums is very closely affiliated with the deconstruction of museums as 'temples of Truth', which was enabled by postmodernism. Before post-modernism, critiques of museums – from academics and from the public – were disabled by modernist interpretations of museums, because museums operated on logics which were congruent with that of modernism: scientific rationality, order, progress, and civilisation. From a modernist perspective, the museum is a repository of Truth, knowledge, and scientific research; it is a Temple (Cameron, 1971), a sacred repository of knowledge. In this heuristic framework, the only way to criticise museums is on the

basis of how diligent and thorough their research standards are and the accuracy of their representations.

It was the emergence of postmodernism which allowed for critical examinations of the truth value of museums, as the postmodern precepts of multiple truths and disorder are set in direct opposition to the tenets of rationality, order and essential truth upon which modern museums were based. At the same time, a shift – influenced by public demands for civil rights and democracy – in the conceptualisation of what it meant to be a *public* museum put pressure on museums to be more inclusive, fair, representative and relevant to all members of the public. More pressure to change came from postcolonial critiques, many of which focused on how museums reproduced imperialist and colonial discourses. Together, postmodernism and post-colonialism presented strong challenges to modernist museums to change.

The emergence of these critical academic perspectives on museums resulted in a number of shifts in museum practices, content, and orientations. These shifts involve the democratisation, decolonisation and de-objectification of museums and are key developments to be explored in order to contextualise the connections between contemporary museums and the representations of nations, group identities and the past. In order to explore these shifts, it is necessary to undertake a brief examination of the emergence of public museums as well as their guiding principles and functions.

## *The Emergence of Museums*

### Proto-Museums

The belief that knowledge can be acquired from the systematic collection and investigation of objects has been associated with early Humanism of fourteenth century Europe (Prösler, 1996). By the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, this perspective began to be applied to the development of privately owned collections of unique, curious, and exotic material objects within specially designated buildings and rooms. These 'proto-museums' (Walsh, 1992) used collections of material objects to signify meaning on two levels. First, they represented their collectors'

ideas about the organisation, condition and content of the cosmos, universe or world in the ways in which the objects were presented and categorised (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992). In addition, the collection also signified the character, prestige or wealth of its owner:

> The collections may have said, "Look how curious I am and how meticulous and how thorough. Here is my scientific collection, which reaffirms my belief in the order of the universe and the laws of nature." The collection may have said, "See how rich I am," or, "Look at this. Look at how I surround myself with beautiful things. See what good taste I have, how civilized and cultivated I am." It may have said, "Oh! I am a man of the world who has traveled [sic] much. Look at the places I have been. Look at all the mysterious things I have brought back from my adventures. Yes! I am an adventurer." (Cameron, 1971, pp. 15-16).

The size and quality of the collection reflected upon the wealth and prestige of the collector, while the way in which the collection was organised represented knowledge about the world.

Two sixteenth-century examples of these 'proto-museums' can be seen in the *studiolo* of the Medici Palace, the German *Wunderkammer*, and Giulio Camillo's 'Memory Theatre'. The Medici Palace was an elaborate building built in the fifteenth-century by the Medici family of Florence. The *studiolo,* located within the palace, displayed the family's collection of treasures in a highly categorised and systematic manner, which reflected both the hierarchy of the cosmos and the wealth and prestige of the family (Prösler, 1996). The *Wunderkammer* from Germany, known as the "archetypal 'cabinet of curiosity'" (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992, p. 79) served two functions: [1] It provided a setting wherein material objects could be assigned meaning and became signifiers of different aspects of reality or the world; and [2] the organisation and ordering of the various symbolically significant material objects together represented the world and/or cosmos as a whole (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992, p. 82).

These proto-museums are evidence of a school of thought that positions objects as a source of knowledge. Objects can be collected, investigated, organised and displayed in such ways as to signify knowledge that is about more

than just the objects. It is through the coalescence of the objects and of their symbolic meanings that knowledge about a particular whole – the world, the universe, or the cosmos – can be evoked. Yet, this knowledge is privileged; it is restricted to the private owner of the collection and those invited to share in it. The knowledge is also restricted to those of a particular class, to the elite and ruling classes.

### Public Museums

Public museums retained a number of characteristics of proto-museums. They remained object-oriented and functioned on the premise that the collection, study, organisation and display of objects could elicit knowledge about the world. They also functioned to project identities; but unlike the proto-museums that were intended to reflect the identity of individuals, public museums reflected the identities of national, cultural and ethnic groups either by directly representing that group or by standing as a symbol of that group's wealth, prestige, or character.

The emergence of public museums – as collections of material objects available for the public to view and enjoy – necessitated a shift in ownership of collections from private to public and resulted in the institutionalisation and professionalisation of the collecting habit. The benefit of changing ownership from private to public was that it meant that collections could survive beyond their collector's individual lifetime (Saumarez Smith, 1991; Walsh, 1992). The institutionalisation of collections first emerged with the establishment of social societies; corporate bodies which were entrusted with the care and continuation of collections. These societies brought the museological collections into the semi-public realm, but the collections were still owned and controlled by academic and social elites.

The emergence of the public museum is closely associated with the emergence of modern nations and both are related to the ideology of modernity which professes rationality, progress, perpetual growth, and endless discovery (Smith, 1999). The museum presented an inventory of the nation (B. Anderson, 1991), drawing its boundaries by defining what was included and representative of

it in terms of its physical, geographic, historic and ethnographic composition. In terms of its representations of history, the past became something appropriated in the name of national identity[4] and "an important resource or requirement of modern society" (Walsh, 1992, p. 24). As places where the past is constructed and represented, museums became ideal places to locate a nation in the past and to construct a nation's timeless quality (B. Anderson, 1991).

For a time, public museums were perceived as presenting authoritative representations of truth and reality. This perspective experienced a critical shift, beginning in the late 1960s, and continuing more strongly into the 1970s. The paradigm shift relates to the deconstruction of museums as temples of Truth, the questioning of the ownership and control of museum objects and narratives and an emerging idea that a public museum should be a "democratic museum" (Cameron, 1971, p. 16).

## *Democratic Museums*

The late 1960s and early 1970s was a period for the reclamation and realisation of civil rights and public space, and museums – as public institutions – were not excluded from this scrutiny. A new idea of the museum developed that asserted that "the public had a right to expect that the collections presented and interpreted would in some way be consistent with the values of its society and with its collective perceptions of the environment or, if you wish, reality" (Cameron, 1971, p. 16). Museums came to be idealised as democratic public forums and as spaces for confrontation, experimentation, and debate.

The concept of the 'democratic' museum is closely connected to academic critiques of museums, which concentrated mainly on two interrelated criticisms. The first argued that the public museum should use the principles of democracy – equality, inclusion and participation – to 'de-elitise' its collections and representational strategies so that, regardless of one's class, gender, or cultural

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[4] In 1793, the collection of Louis XV was 'nationalised' and incorporated into the publicly accessible museum, the Grande Galerie of the Louvre, marking one of the first nationalist museums (Prösler, 1996, p. 32).

background, members of the group the museum purports to represent will be equally and fairly included in the museum. The second critique argues that the museum's association with colonialism and imperialism means that it should be 'decolonised'; that celebrations of colonialism and objectifications of indigenous culture should be sought out and removed from museums. Both these critiques have put pressures on museums to change, but the process of change has been challenging, political and highly contested.

Museums at this time experienced a major paradigm shift embodied in the "general movement of dismantling the museum as an ivory tower of exclusivity and toward the construction of a more socially responsive cultural institution in service to the public" – the "reinvented museum" (G. Anderson, 2004, p. 1). The reinvented museum, in comparison with traditional museums, was conceived of as: equitable and non-elitist; inclusive rather than exclusive; proactive instead of reactive; multicultural as opposed to ethnocentric; relevant and forward-looking rather than focused on the past; and knowledgeable and responsive to its audience.

Not only were museums expected to engage with and entertain visitors of any age, background or level of education, they were also held accountable for how they represented their public, and especially for how they represented indigenous cultures. The role of museums in objectifying and *Othering* indigenous populations, in justifying imperial and colonial hierarchies and powers, and in perpetuating imperial hegemony was most strongly recognised and challenged by post-colonial theorists and academics. The emergence of post-colonial perspectives is closely associated with Edward Said's (1979) *Orientalism*, which examined imperialist representations of Eastern societies and cultures made by Western scholars and artists. *Orientalism* sparked a critique of imperialism and colonialism, and is seen as the basis of post-colonial theory. Said himself associates his theory of orientalism with struggles over self-representation and definition:

> In these methodological and moral re-considerations of Orientalism, I shall quite
> consciously be alluding to similar issues raised by the experiences of feminism or

Said's perspective focuses on issues of (mis)representation, power, domination
and othering, particularly as they relate to oppressed and minority groups.  This
approach was easily applied to the critiques of museological representations of
other cultures, and particularly of indigenous cultures and emphasised how
museums, "born during the Age of Imperialism, often served and benefited
capitalism, and continue to be instruments of the ruling class and corporate
powers" (Ames, 1992, p. 3).  This approach saw in everyday representations and
discourses the symbolic oppression of indigenous groups, exploitation of the land,
and justification for such acts.

Post-colonialism disrupted the common-sense definition of colonialism as
imperial expansion and settlement of colonials by calling attention to the negative
aspects of colonialism so that colonialism came to be seen as the "direct territorial
appropriation of another geo-political entity, combined with forthright exploitation of
its resources and labor, and systematic interference in the capacity of the
appropriated culture (itself not necessarily a homogeneous entity) to organize its
dispensations of power" (McClintock, 1992, p. 88).  This perspective provided
academic and moral support for decolonisation and the dismantling of signifiers of
colonial and imperial powers, structures, discourses and hierarchies.  In this way,
post-colonial perspectives came to be applied to the study of the decolonisation of
nations, which involved not only the removal of imperial powers and the
establishment of independence, but also the 'decolonisation' social structures and
institutions such as museums.

In response to the post-colonial criticism that museums reproduced imperial
discourses which objectified and appropriated indigenous culture, many museums
tried to find new strategies of representation that would "reflect the representational
strategies of those whose 'culture' [was] on display" (Fairweather, 2004, p. 3).  The
1984 *Te Maori* exhibit organised by Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City

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involved consultation and negotiation with Maori elders in order to gain consent for the exhibition and travel of Maori taonga. Even though most of the Maori taonga included in the exhibit was legally owned by other museums, the inclusion of Maori participation indicated institutional recognition of Maori cultural ownership over such items (Karp & Lavine, 1991). It also increased pressures on museums in New Zealand to develop policies and procedures which would recognise the moral right Maori had to (re)define their own material and cultural heritage.

## Revisiting Post-Colonialism

Towards the end of the twentieth century, the 'hype' of post-colonialism somewhat dissipated and academics began to examine the paradigm from a more critical perspective, demonstrating that it is as much an academic and political trope as it is a useful paradigm and that it had its usefulness as well as its limitations. A common critique of post-colonialism is that it implies that colonialism has past, and thus obscures the persistence of colonial discourses and hierarchies. As McClintock (McClintock, 1992, p. 85) explains:

> [T]he *term* "post-colonial," ... is haunted by the very figure of linear "development" that it sets out to dismantle. Metaphorically, the term "post-colonialism" marks history as a series of stages along an epochal road from "the pre-colonial," to "the colonial," to "the post-colonial" – an unbidden, if disavowed, commitment to linear time and the idea of "development".

This positioning of colonialism in the past is hard to accept when colonies and colonising discourses still exist and when new forms of imperialism are emerging.

Some academics have attempted to reconcile this major criticism by relying on postmodern/poststructuralist precedents, which use the term 'post' not to imply the end of a particular era/condition/paradigm, but an opposition to a particular paradigm. As de Alva (de Alva, 1995, p. 245) writes:

> The dismissal of the modernist view of history as a linear (teleological) process, the undermining of the foundational assumptions of linear historical narratives, and the rejection of essentialized identities for corporate units lead to a multiplicity of often conflicting and frequently parallel narratives within which postcoloniality can signify not

so much subjectivity "after" the colonial experience as a subjectivity of oppositionality to imperializing/colonizing (read: subordinating/subjectivizing) discourses and practices. That is, we can remove postcoloniality from a dependence on an antecedent colonial condition if we tether the term to the poststructuralist stake that marks its appearance.

From this perspective, post-colonialism becomes a paradigm which is morally positioned to seek out and to dismantle imperial and colonial discourses, structures, and hierarchies[5].

Kahn (2000) presents a more applied critique of post-colonialism, by critically evaluating museum efforts to 'decolonise'. Examining the practice whereby museums consult and collaborate with indigenous and ethnic minority groups in the exhibit making process, Kahn (2000, p. 70) asks: "Does the shift from curatorial authority to community involvement, and the addition of diverse, multiple, indigenous voices, address and resolve the issues of representation that were raised by the museum critiques?" Kahn argues that by simply included other groups in the representational process, museums are not necessarily correcting past problems of representation or creating a more equal relationship between community members and museum professionals because the entire 'collaborative' process takes place within the museum, and therefore, those involved must conform to the museum's logic, discourse and hierarchies. Instead, radical changes must be made to the museum institution itself – including changes to its moral claims to beauty, truth and authenticity – in order to enable true collaboration and participation. Seen from a post-colonial perspective, the inclusion of multiple perspectives and ethnic community members in the production of museum exhibits about their groups, sounds like an ideal step towards decolonising the museum. However, as Kahn demonstrates, the intent may not be congruent with the result

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[5] It is important to recognize that criticisms of colonialism were not first inspired by Said's *Orientalism*. Critical analyses of colonialism can be seen in the writings of indigenous authors and some authors who worked closely with indigenous people (see Janiewski 1998). It was the popularity and eloquence of Said's work that allowed for such sentiments to be expressed in the academic realm and which provided a theoretical basis for this endeavour.

and, therefore, it is important to critically examine museological attempts to "decolonise".

The moral positioning of the post-colonial perspective also presents another problem: how to represent the colonisers. If post-colonialism takes a moral stance *against* colonialism and colonisation, the settlers and colonisers are also implicated. Does the post-colonial perspective shift power and moral authority away from the colonisers and place it with the colonised? Can museological representations of colonial settlers and colonisers – when 'read' from a post-colonial perspective – be seen as anything other than attempts to cling to colonial discourses and imperialist nostalgia? Rose (2006) explores these issues in her analysis of settler narratives along the Oregon Trail and at the National Museum of Australia. She writes:

> "[It] is a matter of urgency to ask how we 'new world' settler peoples come to imagine that we belong to our beloved homelands. We cannot help but know that we are here through dispossession and death. What are some of the stories we tell to help us inscribe a moral presence in places we have come to through violence?" (Rose, 2006, p. 228) [6]

How are settler-descendants supposed to claim a moral right to the land when the process by which their ancestors acquired and arrived at the land has been, at best, problematised, and at worst, vilified, by the post-colonial critique? Literature which explores the issue of how to represent colonial settlers in light of the post-colonial critique is quite limited and perhaps this is due to *exnomination*, or to anthropology's tendency to focus on marginalised groups. Nevertheless, the perception of place and belonging for settlers and their descendants within the national community has become an important academic and political issue in decolonising nations.

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[6] Rose's use of the first person plural 'we' to refer to new world settler peoples indicates that she self identifies as part of that group. In doing so, she positions herself as a stakeholder in the expressions of place and belonging.

## Museums and Identity

Benedict Anderson (1991) argues that communities such as nations and ethnic groups are imagined social constructions and that museums are places where the identities of such communities can be constructed and collectively imagined. Thinking of a nation in this way – not as a physical entity, but as "an imagined political community" (B. Anderson, 1991, p. 6) – emphasises the constructed, contested, dynamic and fluid nature of collective identities. The nation is also a fragile concept, as its very existence is dependant upon group members to share – to a certain degree – a mutual belief that they are united in some sort of common bond and, though they may not ever meet, they are still imagined to be part of the same community. Halbwachs' (1992, p. 183) reflections on collective memory are particularly illustrative on this point:

> [S]ociety can live only if there is a sufficient unity of outlooks among the individuals and groups comprising it... It remains nevertheless true that the necessity by which people must enclose themselves in limited groups... is opposed to the social need for unity, in the same way that the latter may be opposed to the social need for continuity. This is why society tends to erase from its memory all that might separate individuals, or that might distance groups from each other.

Shared memories allow for the imagining of a particular community and that imagining emphasises united and shared bonds.

Nations, according to Anderson's model, are imagined as bounded sovereign communities. He uses the term *community* with reference to Victor Turner's (1995) concept of *communitas*, which is a model for human interrelations set in opposition to structured, hierarchical and differentiated social relations. *Communitas* refers to the construction of groups as egalitarian, fraternalistic and unstructured which occurs during liminal periods. Anderson (1991, p. 7) recognises the same discourse of "deep, horizontal comradeship" present in how members of the same national community are imagined to be socially related, and so nationalist discourse is one of shared identity, shared history, and fraternity.

Thus, nationalist narratives often construct relationships between members of the national community in terms of kinship and familial relationships, with

particular reference to patrimony and inheritance. With heritage, the national family is constructed as inheriting legacies, lessons, and characteristics from national ancestors. Heritage and museums are closely interrelated because heritage is the conceptual mechanism that appropriates events from the past in the construction of contemporary identities and seeks to preserve not only material evidence from the past, but also the narratives that link that evidence to the present. Sentiments associated with heritage often arise after periods of abrupt change and dislocation. Lowenthal (1985) notes a rise in awareness of and efforts to preserve heritage occurred in the nineteenth century as a reaction to the dislocation and dramatic changes caused by industrialisation and urbanisation. Similarly, Hewison (1999) notes a rise in heritage consciousness in post World War II Britain in response to the destruction of buildings. Pre-war buildings came to be seen as rare, vulnerable and precious, while the development of new 'modernist' buildings created a sense of alienation and disconnection from the pre-war era. Thus, the past became associated with pre-destruction, pre-modernisation and pre-alienation and was seen as a better place, a lost place, a place to be longed-for.

This longing for the past, and projection of it as a better, more desirable place than the present, can be understood as nostalgia[7]. Today, nostalgia is usually used to refer to a longing for the past, where the past is constructed as ideal in comparison with present conditions. Playing on the medical use of the term, Urry (1999, p. 209) argues that "[t]he seventeenth-century disease of nostalgia seems to have become an epidemic". This implies that nostalgia as we know it today, is pathological, contagious and should, in some way, be treated. Such indignation against nostalgia is not useful to understanding the role of nostalgia and impedes the investigation into its proliferation. It is perhaps more instructive to see nostalgia less as a pathological disease or disorder and more in terms of a symptom or as a coping mechanism whereby past events are

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[7] The etymology of the word is from the Greek *nosos* meaning 'return to native land', and *algos* meaning 'suffering' or 'grief'. The concept of nostalgia comes from a 17th century medical condition called 'nostalgic affliction' – a physical affliction caused by leaving home (Lowenthal, 1985, p. 10).

remembered as more desirable in comparison to the uncertainty of the present and the speed at which things are changing: "For the individual, nostalgia filters out unpleasant aspects of the past, and our former selves, creating a self-esteem that helps us to rise above the anxieties of the present" (Hewison, 1999, p. 160).

While nostalgia and heritage have their points of intersection, not all that is heritage is nostalgic and not all that is nostalgic is heritage. Heritage can also refer to times, places or events that cannot be remembered as more positive or ideal than present conditions. The importance of Gallipoli to New Zealand and Australian national heritage clearly illustrates that "[d]efeat can be as potent a heritage as victory; misery forges lasting bonds" (Lowenthal, 1996, p. 74). Legacies of loss and affliction are often common in narratives relating to heritage.

Heritage has some commonalities with history as both involve stories from the past, but the two are not exactly the same, and have important points of departure. David Lowenthal (1996:2) associates heritage with inheritance and identity and the "suppression of history's impartial complexity", and is adamant that heritage is not history:

> In domesticating the past we enlist it for present causes. Legends of origin and endurance, of victory or calamity, project the present back, the past forward; they align us with forebearers whose virtues we share and whose vices we shun. We are apt to call such communion history, but it is actually heritage. The distinction is vital. History explores and explains pasts grown ever more opaque over time; heritage clarifies pasts so as to infuse them with present purposes (Lowenthal, 1996, p. xi).

While Lowenthal expresses what I would identify as nostalgia for 'true' history, he does emphasise the important aspect of heritage; it involves the use of the past in the achievement of present day purposes.

Heritage is a version of the past that is particularly concerned with the present; it is less complex than history because stories about the past are only used to explain the emergence, character and identity of a contemporary group of people. Heritage involves the construction and consumption of the past by people who claim to be related to personas of that past:

> The symbolic exchange of heritage is about sacrifice and consumption (of the past) rather than accumulation and the hoarding of new knowledge. In this heritage logic the meaning of the past does not lie in the dusty cellars of a museum. The meaning is what the past can do for the present (Pearson & Shanks, 2001, p. 115).

Thus, heritage requires that the past be sacrificed and consumed or "taken within the self" (Pearson & Shanks, 2001, p. 115) and therefore links constructions of the past with constructions of identity via the concept of ancestry. At historical sites and museums, material objects testify to the existence of ancestors and are used to support narratives about the character and actions of ancestors; they act as 'heirlooms', devices for interweaving generations together and "lengthening and strengthening" identities (Lowenthal, 1996, p. 33).

Heritage is supported by national myths which function as autobiographies for nations; they provide a narrative framework which uses events, encounters and characters from the past to describe and explain present-day conditions and characteristics. The 'mythic' aspect of national myths is best understood in terms of its association with meta-narratives, simplified storytelling, origins, and heroes. One prominent type of national myth which has emerged in break away settler societies is the 'Frontier' myth. Derived from Frederick Jackson Turner's writing on the American Frontier, the concept of the frontier has figured prominently in national myths as well as academic – particularly post-colonial – critiques of national myths.

According to Furniss (2006, p. 173), frontier myths are stories that are set in the past that have four characteristic features: (1) They are portrayed in terms of heroic struggles between good and evil where conflict and violence are naturalised and history adheres to the discourses of progress and development; (2) They conform to a simple binary narrative structure that positions man against nature, civilisation against savagery, and European settler against hostile native; (3) They are marked by 'Epitomising Events' which condense, simply and draw attention away from complex historical processes; (4) They contain images, symbols and metaphors that can be used as touchstones that may condone or condemn colonialism or other hierarchical structures of power.

The literature on national myths at museums indicates that the process of creating such representations in decolonising nations is highly political, often difficult and often outright impossible. The development of museums in post-apartheid South Africa, for example, has been closely followed by academics[8] who note that incorporating multiple identities and presenting a tumultuous past have challenged museum professionals to go beyond the singular narratives and sanitized pasts that often characterise museums. Rankin and Hamilton (1999) describe how different museums in South Africa were changed, revised or completely restructured to account for a changed post-apartheid South African national identity. The pressure for museums to adapt to a new national identity requires them to commit to the national ideologies of democracy, multiculturalism, and equality. These are conscious efforts to imagine national myths which support idealised notions of the nation. In this way, national post-colonial myths do not vary greatly from Turner's frontier – in that they both appeal to idealised, simplified versions of the nation – except that the discourse of colonialism has been replaced with post-colonialism.

Museums today face constant scrutiny from the public and from academics. And while postmodernism and post-colonialism strongly influenced expectations and perceptions of museums, it cannot be assumed that all museums had equal opportunity or motivation to respond to such changing paradigms. There are certainly examples of museums which have been very strongly influenced by postmodernism and post-colonialism – mostly because they were planned and constructed during a time when such ideologies were dominant. But it cannot be assumed that such ideologies strongly influenced already established museum representations to change dramatically. As I explore in the chapter to follow, my approach to the study of museums and historical sites in New Zealand examined them as they exist in the present. And while this leads to interesting conclusions about the different ways in which colonial settlers are currently presented at museums, it also obscures the different histories and politics behind such

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[8] *See* Butler, 2000; McEachern 1998; Nanda, 2004; Rankin & Hamilton, 1999.

representations. This problematises the perception that museums are meant to represent the community, as the community is an every-changing concept to which the museum has difficulty responding, and adds an additional layer of complexity to the investigation of identities at museums.

# Chapter Three:

# Methodology and Introduction to Field Sites

In all three societies I have studied intensively, Javanese, Balinese, and Moroccan, I have been concerned... with attempting to determine how the people who live there define themselves as persons, what goes into the idea they have... of what a self, Javanese, Balinese, or Moroccan style, is. And in each case, I have tried to get at this most intimate of notions not by imagining myself someone else, a rice peasant or a tribal sheikh, and then seeing what I thought, but by searching out and analyzing the symbolic forms – words, images, institutions, behaviours – in terms of which, in each place, people actually represented themselves to themselves and one another.

- Clifford Geertz (1973, p. 58)

Geertz probably did not have Javanese, Balinese, or Moroccan museums in mind when he composed the above passage, but I believe museums match well with his description above as they are places where people define notions of what a 'self' is and where they represent "themselves to themselves and to one another" through the use of various symbolic forms. The purpose of this chapter is to describe the process whereby I "searched out and analysed" those symbolic forms at museums and historical sites which pertain to colonial settlers and their descendants. My focus was primarily on the symbolic forms of words and images, and less on institutions and behaviours, as my analysis dealt mostly with a textual analysis of museological representations.

In this chapter, I will outline some different academic approaches to the study of museums and justify my own approach as the best fit for the research questions I planned to address. I also detail the process by which I conducted the research, including the research design, selection of sites, collection of data, and data analysis. Because I visited a large number and variety of sites, I have also included summaries of the different sites I visited. Finally, I discuss the personal side of my research, including my personal positioning and bias.

## *Research Design*

The idea for this research project originally came from reading Edward Bruner's article *Abraham Lincoln as Authentic Reproduction: A Critique of Postmodernism* (Bruner, 1994). Bruner conducted fieldwork at New Salem, an American historical site that is meant to recreate Abraham Lincoln's home town. The focus of Bruner's article is on the different ways in which 'authenticity' is understood to be achieved at such a site. Taking a constructionist perspective, Bruner argues that the perspectives of the prominent postmodernists Jean Baudrillard and Umberto Eco on *simulacra* and copies implicitly assumes an original and appeals to essentialist binaries of real/hyperreal, authentic/inauthentic and original/copy. Bruner attempts to go beyond such dichotomised thinking by analysing how truth and authenticity are constructed and essentialised and how such ideas are played out at a national – and nationalistic – historical site. The article appealed to me because of the way in which it explored a place that used historical figures and time periods to construct, support and elaborate upon national myths. Having recently returned from a trip to Turkey – where the efforts of the state to construct nationalist sentiments are remarkably both obvious and effective – I became keenly interested in how historical figures, events and eras are used to construct and unify large collective identities of geo-political communities.

Bruner's approach to the study of New Salem was essentially ethnographic. His data came from participant observation – spending time at the site and taking notes – and from interviews with visitors as well as museum professionals. This approach is similar to that of Handler and Gable's (1997) approach to the study of

Colonial Williamsburg. Both studies focus less on museum texts and more on the social interaction within the sites and on individual responses to the displays. This type of in-depth approach takes a large amount of time and resources, directed at the analysis of one site in particular. The benefit of it is that it is a holistic approach that examines not only the symbolic nature of what is on display, but also the dynamic processes of construction, reconstruction, interpretation and reinterpretation related to such representations as well as the social interaction and hierarchical relationships that occur within the 'social arena' of the museum. While I appreciate the complexity of this approach, I chose a less narrowly-focused course of action, in order to access specific questions that involve broader questions of national identity.

**Methodological and Theoretical Orientation**

I chose a primarily "semiotic approach", as I sought to interpret and critically analyse the symbolic forms at museums and historical sites (Whitcomb, 2003, p. 11). The semiotic approach treats museological representations as symbolic "text", which can be "read", interpreted and criticised. This approach is often applied to museological representations to expose subtle underlying narratives which appeal to hegemonic, colonial, or ethnocentric discourses. The problem with this approach is that it can ignore the subjective nature of semiotic interpretations and tends to essentialise symbolic meaning.

Gable and Handler (2006, p. 6) criticise the semiotic approach to museum analysis on the basis that anthropologists cannot offer any insights or perspectives that would differ from those that could be offered by museum professionals (insiders) and other academics (outsiders):

> Indeed, the critical literature on museums has reached a point, we think, where insiders and outsiders speak the same language. Everyone knows how to argue about cultural representations, and although the terrain of such representations may be contested, everyone agrees to the same rules of engagement.

Setting their research on museums apart from that which is concerned with semiotic interpretations of museological text, Gable and Handler (2006; 1997)

conduct ethnographic research at museums, paying attention to human activities and interactions, with the specific goal of understanding how museums function as social institutions. They are not concerned to interpret museological displays and representations, but focus on the meaning-making created by human activity and interaction – particularly around issues concerning power and hierarchies – at such sites. In this way, Handler and Gable see museums "… as arenas for the significant convergence of political and cultural forces" (1997, p. 8). They analyse museums as institutions characterised not by static texts, but by dynamic, highly symbolic, and stratified social interactions.

Despite Handler and Gable's criticism of semiotic approaches, I maintain that it is the approach best suited to my research questions and limitations. Ethnography requires a large investment of time and resources, usually only directed at one site. Because I am interested in accessing questions relating to New Zealander identities, and because I wish to incorporate a comparative approach to analysing the different ways New Zealander and colonial settler identities are presented, I believe that for the purposes of my study a broad-based approach is more appropriate. I believe that, as cultural productions, museological representations do contain important symbolic meaning that is well suited to anthropological inquiry. And even if, as Handler and Gable assert, museum insiders and outsiders speak the same language of critique, this does not mean that insiders and outsiders necessarily share the same perspectives. I believe that an anthropological perspective on museum representations – one that sees them as signifiers of social, political and cultural values and beliefs – is a valuable perspective, and all the more effective if 'insiders' understand such academic critiques.

While my research method was primarily content analysis, I supplemented this approach with casual conversations and more formal interviews with individuals involved with the museums and historical sites. At Howick Historical Village I had an informal interview with Debra Kane, the collections manager, and a taped interviewed Alan La Roche, the former director and current historian. I also conducted a taped interview with Ian Johnson, the project director at Shantytown.

While my information sheet for the sites included an open invitation to those who worked at the sites to participate in an interview, it did not generate any interest. I chose to not actively pursue recruiting more participants for interviews primarily to keep the content of my data collection within the constraints of a master's thesis. My research was focused first and foremost on the museums' representations and did not use a great deal of information from the interviews in my analyses. I do believe that a great deal of relevant information could be reaped from carefully planned extensive interviews, but with my time, content, and travel constraints, I was not able to include this strategy in my own research.

The benefit of the talks and interviews that I did conduct was that they added a 'human' dimension to my content analysis and kept me cognisant of the fact that the representations I examined were the result of complex social, political, and bureaucratic processes of symbolic production. What I did not do was speak to museum visitors and, therefore, the only supplement to my own interpretations of the museum 'texts' is other academic work which is largely concerned with The National Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, and essentially ignores other museums in New Zealand[9].

My analysis is limited by my synchronic approach to data collection whereby I examined the sites as they existed within the small time frame that I visited them and then compared them with one another. By focusing on the representations themselves, I am examining the product and not the processes. Therefore, my analysis is based on static data – it only includes those representations which I encountered when I visited the sites and does not take into consideration – to any great depth – the complex and possibly contested processes that were involved in the production of the representations. Not only does this only give a small glimpse, a snapshot, of the displays, it also obscures the very different histories and

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[9] There is certainly a need for more academic research on the less high-profile museums in New Zealand. I found that the politics, economics, social significance and practices of small regional museums in particular differ greatly from those of the large, more professionalised museums. Having been largely overlooked in the academic literature, these would be interesting sites for future research.

processes relating to the production of them. All of the sites I visited are contemporaries as they all exist at the same time, but this does not mean that all of the sites and their representations are contemporaneous. The processes involved in the development of or changes to representations and narratives at museums and historical sites is much like those involved in developing and changing laws; They require a large amount of time and resources and involve extensive consultation, planning, debate, and negotiation.

In this way, museological representations, unless they are dramatically revised, are often codified signifiers of the dominant ideologies operant at the time in which they were developed or revised. Built in the 1920s, Auckland Museum, for example, with its focus on objects, its treatment of indigenous material culture as part of 'ethnographic' displays which is set in opposition to its categorisation of post-European arrival material as 'social history' retains to some degree a traditional modernist museum feel. Te Papa, on the other hand, a product of the 1990s, strongly reflects the post-colonial and postmodern ideologies of the times in which it was conceived. Therefore, while my examination seems to assume that all representations have had equal influence from and exposure to contemporary ideologies, particularly with respect to post-colonialism, it cannot be assumed that all sites have equal resources, time or motivation to respond to such critiques.

I also recognise that my interpretations are academic interpretations with an eye on the political and that these readings are not universal. And while I take into account the intended meanings of certain representations, I do not take them for granted, and in many instances critically examine the extent to which the intended representations match my own interpretations. What I offer are my interpretations, based in an academic understanding of museological representations and accounting for the social and political context in within which such representations exist.

My approach is similar to that employed by Rose (2006) in her analysis of the National Museum of Australia and at visitors' centres along the Oregon Trail in the U.S. Her method is text-oriented, and her data collection process involved visits to the different sites where she observed their representations, displays, and

promotional material. In her analysis, Rose's concern is with how settler narratives told at the sites connect to conceptions of place and identity in places where colonisation involved the displacement and deaths of indigenous people. Rose uses the narratives to examine how people come to understand how they belong in their 'new' homelands.

In a similar vein, I am interested in the ways in which historical sites and museums, through symbolism and narrative, contribute to the construction of colonial settler identities and the justification of their place – and that of their descendants – within New Zealand. Because of our common analytical goals, I chose to structure my methods after those employed by Rose, such that I visited historical sites and analyzed the narratives of European settlers told at these sites. However, because I also wanted to examine how such settler narratives are used in the construction of national identities and I specifically wanted to draw my analysis into contemporary constructions of New Zealand's national identities, I decided it would be fitting to survey a large sampling of museums in New Zealand.

I originally designed the data collection process to involve visits to what I termed "primary" and "secondary" sites. The "primary" sites were museums and historical sites where I anticipated there being a large amount of European settler-related content and it was at these sites where I planned on spending the most amount of time and analytical energy. I identified Auckland Museum, Te Papa Tongarewa, the Kauri Museum at Matakohe, the Waitangi Treaty Grounds, Rotorua Museum, and Howick Historical Village as primary sites. My planned secondary sites included: Whangarei Museum and Heritage Park, Russell Museum, Pompallier, Kerikeri Kemp House and Stone Store, Far North Regional Museum, Dargaville Regional Museum, Gumdiggers Park, Kaikohe Pioneer Village, Petone Settlers Museum, Shantytown, and Taranaki Pioneer Village. These original plans changed as I began my visits and learned more about the

different sites.  I excluded Rotorua Museum[10] from my analysis because of its lack of European settler-related content.  Because my travel capacities were limited by time and funding, I was not able to visit Kaikohe Pioneer Village or Taranaki Pioneer Village.  I also ended up visiting Nelson Provincial Museum and Museum of Wellington City and Sea on recommendations by individuals involved with museums and included Canterbury Museum after making plans to visit Christchurch as part of my visit to the South Island.  In the end, there was not a lot of difference between the way I treated my "primary" and "secondary" sites, in terms of the amount of time I spent observing and analysing the different sites.

I am glad that I distributed my time evenly between the different sites, considering I was originally going to concentrate my energies on the larger, more popular sites.  This is because I have noticed that small museums and heritage sites are usually overlooked in the academic literature.  Te Papa dominates the academic literature and the other larger museums are more often drawn into the political and academic spotlights, but I think it is essential not to discount the importance or presence of small regional museums and heritage sites which often contrast sharply with the larger ones.  Thus, I visited a total of seventeen different sites, clustered mostly in the North Island and particularly in Northland[11].  Outside of Northland, I visited two sites in the Auckland area, three in the Wellington region, and three in the South Island.  Thus, it is difficult for me to assert that my sampling of sites is in any way representative of the nation.  Instead, I hope that my analysis will be illustrative of representations of European settlers across the nation, with a strong bias for the North.

After consulting with my supervisors, peers and the research ethics guidelines, I decided that my research project was low risk and I therefore

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[10] Rotorua Museum is a very Maori-oriented museum, a reflection of the strength – in terms of economics, population and political presence – of the Te Arawa, the original inhabitants of the region.  So, while Rotorua Museum presented an interesting case study and example of reversed colonial hierarchies, it did not meet my inclusion criteria.  However, it remains a prime place for future studies.

[11] See Appendix 1 "Sites Included in Research", pg. 108.

submitted a Low Risk Notification for my research project to the Massey Univerisity Human Ethics committee and it was filed as such. In keeping with the guidelines I set out in the Low Risk Notification, I made contact with each site to notify those in charge of my intention to include the site in my research. I also sent them Information Sheets, outlining the plan and purpose of the study, and asked those participants with whom I conducted interviews to sign consent forms[12].

**Collection of Data**

My primary method of collecting data was through prolonged visits to my chosen sites where I photographed displays (where permitted), sketched the spatial planning of the site, and took detailed field notes of the displays as well as of my impressions, thoughts and experiences relating to them. I collected promotional material from the site such as maps, guides, and pamphlets to include in my content analysis. I also made 'virtual' visits to websites, and included material from them in my content analysis.

While at the sites, my data collection was guided by a number of key questions, relating to the signification of the displays. I was primarily focused on the question of how museums and historical sites contribute to constructions of Colonial settlers as part of New Zealand. This involved questions relating to the post-colonial politics of representation and to the construction of meaning. The questions relating to politics and power were:

- Who has power and control over the displays?
- What or whose stories are being told and/or neglected?
- How might these displays work to subtly justify, legitimize, celebrate, condemn or at least problematise European settlement in New Zealand?
- Do the museums attempt to present a settler history that is sensitive to imperialist hegemonies?

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[12] See Appendix 2 "General Information Sheet", pg. 110; Appendix 3 "Interview Information Sheet" pg. 112, and Appendix 4 "Consent Form", pg. 113.

- Is there an awareness of the cultural and political tensions present in representing the colonial past?
- In what ways do the museums support or reject imperialist nostalgia?

The questions I asked which related to the construction of meaning were:

- How do the representations contribute to constructions of meaning about group identity and affiliation?
- What do the texts signify?
- How are the symbols connected to collective myths and concepts of identity?
- What are the different narratives presented, and what are the key signifiers in these narratives?

These questions guided my data collection and analysis to a certain extent. I also tried to incorporate a certain degree of flexibility into what I focused on during my visits, letting the content also contribute to the foci of my analyses. However, the research questions proved to be extremely valuable, as they helped guide me not only through the data collection process, but also as I analysed the data and planned the thesis.

## *Summary of Sites Included in Research*

I have organised my results chapters by theme and not by museum, and use examples from many different museums to illustrate each theme. Therefore, in this section, I provide brief summaries of the sites in order to contextualise the examples used in my results sections. I have not included summaries of Kerikeri Mission House and Stone Store, Pompallier, and Gumdiggers Park, as I do not use examples from these sites in the thesis. Even though these sites did contribute to my analysis, I exclude them for practical reasons, as I do not wish to burden the reader.

I have divided the site summaries into categories, based mainly on their size (both the size of the site and the the region the site represents) and type (museum, historical village, heritage site). These categories include: National Museums, Large City Museums, Regional Museums, Historical Villages, and Heritage Sites.

The only National Museum is Te Papa Tongarewa (Te Papa), which I have placed in its own category not only because it is the only museum which explicitly asserts itself to be representative of the nation, but also because it has received, by far, the most popular and academic attention and – after some consternation[13] – I have chosen not to group Te Papa with other museums, mostly because I believe I need to discuss it on its own terms.

## The National Museum

### Te Papa Tongarewa

Located in the heart of Wellington, New Zealand's capital, is The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. The museum is most often referred to as 'Te Papa' – both colloquially and in museum signage, publications and promotional materials and, in keeping with this, I will also refer to it as Te Papa throughout the rest of this thesis[14]. The conceptual framework of the museum centres on the theme of identities, specifically those identities – past, present, and future – which are of and within New Zealand. This is emphasised by the museum's logo, a fingerprint, which is displayed prominently on the museum's signage, promotional documents and website (*see* Figure 1 - Te Papa Logo). The approach taken by the museum in its design, management organisation and collections is strongly influenced by biculturalism. This has to do with the museum's history and ties to government,

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[13] I was concerned about the amount of attention I was giving to Te Papa. The museum has already received a large amount of attention in the academic literature (Henare, 2004; MacDonald, 1999; Tramposch, 1998; P. Williams, 2005 are just a few examples) and I wanted to avoid it dominating my thesis. However, it is quite an enigmatic museum and being New Zealand's only National Museum, I found it appropriate that it should have its own category.

[14] The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa is the name used in the museum's founding Act of Parliament. The part of the name that is in te Reo Maori, 'Te Papa Tongarewa' was gifted to the museum by Maori representatives. The predominant use of 'Te Papa' – the dropping of 'Tongarewa' – in signage, publications and promotional materials has been met with some controversy (Henare, 2004). While I acknowledge the politics inherent in this dispute over the museum's name, I have chosen to refer to it hereon out as 'Te Papa', to maintain consistency with how the museum itself is most often named in museum related material.

being developed in the late 1980s and early 1990s when biculturalism was prominent in governmental policies and national discourse.

Admission to Te Papa is free to the public, which is true also for the large city museums. This policy of free admission to museums can be connected with the sentiment that museums not only represent but also belong to the public and that access to the museum should not be restricted by a fee. However, visitors to Te Papa are likely to spend money, whether on the $3.00 *Te Papa Explorer* guide, an essential purchase for new visitors who will most likely be confused by, if not lost in, the museum's postmodern layout; or at one of the two gift shops, a children's gift shop and a large boutique-style shop; at the museum café; or on the coin-operated rides.



Figure 1 - Te Papa Logo

The museum's emphasis on narratives instead of objects and use of technological and interactive displays is an attempt to entertain and engage all kinds of visitor and has been met with both praise and harsh criticism. Some see it as the future of museums, which cater to the needs, desires and wishes of visitors, while others see it as a digression from serious academic institutions and a waste of tax-payer money. In any event, the museum

remains a popular attraction for New Zealanders and international visitors, and is also a contentious site for 'official' representations of the nation.

## Large City Museums

While all three museums are markedly different, both in terms of their content and display techniques, they are all very city-focused and seek to reflect the history and character of their respective cities.

### Auckland Museum

Originally named Auckland War Memorial Museum, Auckland Museum is located a small distance away from the city core, but is visible from it, being situated on top of a large hill in an impressive Greco-Roman temple-inspired building (*see* Figure 2 - Auckland Museum). The museum's human history spaces are divided into five different categories: applied and decorative arts, archaeology, ethnology (including Maori and Pacific history), social history (which includes exhibits on war and New Zealand's colonial past) and pictorial. Displays on European settlers in New Zealand are not part of ethnographic displays, but are included in the 'social history' exhibits on war and the colonial past. Its exhibits which most closely relate to European New Zealanders are *Auckland 1866*, *Wild Child* and *The New Zealand Wars*.

The *Auckland 1866* gallery is an indoor streetscape of constructed period-appropriate buildings – businesses and residences – situated together along a



**Figure 2 - Auckland Museum**

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street. The gallery was opened in 1966, marking a century of change and development in Auckland. Each building in it has an actual historical referent, which existed in 1866. *Wild Child* plays with the themes of restraint and freedom, giving a history of education and childhood in New Zealand over the past 150 years. The *Scars on the Heart* exhibit's display on the New Zealand Wars addresses a major consequence of European settlement in New Zealand – conflict over land and resources. In it, the New Zealand Wars are positioned as civil wars which deeply affected the way in which the nation was formed, and whose effects continue into the present.

The museum less than subtly positions itself in opposition to Te Papa, emphasising in its visitor pamphlet its straight-forward design and layout where visitors will never feel lost or overwhelmed. Auckland Museum's display practices – where objects and not narratives are central to the museum experience – contrast sharply with those of Te Papa.

### Museum of Wellington City and Sea

Located almost down the street from Te Papa, the Museum of Wellington City and Sea (Museum of Wellington) is starkly different from the national museum. It is housed in the Bond Store, an historic building from 1892 which was used as a cargo warehouse and head office for the Harbour Board. The Bond Store was converted into a small museum in 1972 and was called the Wellington Harbour Board Museum. It was not until 1999 that the museum as it is known today – the Museum of Wellington – was opened as the city's civic museum, with the purpose of promoting and preserving the city's history and heritage. Its main focus is on Wellington's ties to the sea and port as a basis for the telling of stories about the city.

The museum is divided into three floors; the ground level includes *The Bond Store* (*see* Figure 3) and a changing exhibition space; level one is about Maritime History and level two is Social History. Maori are treated separately in the *Tangata Whenua* display and in the audio-visual presentation, *A Millennium Ago* which brings two Maori legends to life. The majority of displays on the social history level

are concerned with Colonial settler and settler descendant-related history. These displays cover such topics as *Britain of the South Seas*, *Life and Leisure*, *Family Life*, *Education*, and *Social Welfare*.

### Canterbury Museum

Like the Museum of Wellington, Canterbury Museum in Christchurch is located in an historical building. Attempts are currently being made to revitalise the museum to make it more customer-focused, accountable and cost-efficient, but the process has been



Figure 3 - The Bond Store, Museum of Wellington

frustrated by controversy over plans and over funding. At present, the museum's collections are divided into six different categories: Our Land and Animals; Design in New Zealand; Antarctica; Windows on the World; Iwi Tawhito; and Peoples of Waitaha/Canterbury.

The journey through the museum starts at *Iwi tawhito – whenua hou/ Ancient peoples – new lands*, which is an exhibition dedicated to the first settlers of the land, the Maori, and to the extinct moa. This transitions into *Nga taonga tuku iho o nga tupuna/ Treasures left to us by the ancestors*, a display of Maori treasures with an emphasis on their aesthetic beauty and artistic qualities. After this exhibit is a brief 'contact' exhibit, which marks the beginning of European-related coverage in the museum. This section briefly touches on such topics as Tasman, Cook, whaling, and immigration, while there is a strong emphasis on the region's ties to Britain, both in the sentimental nostalgia that Colonial settlers felt
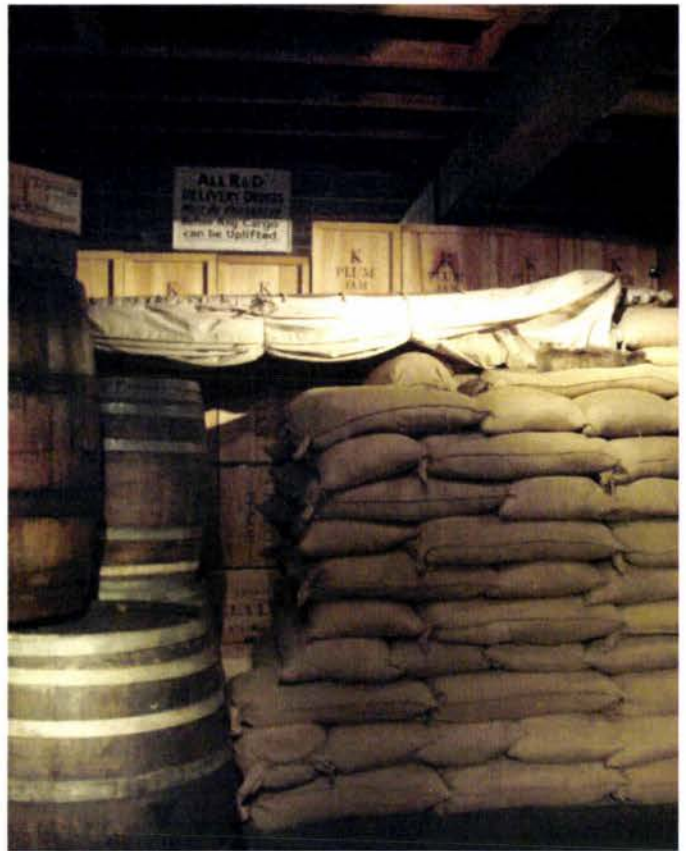
for the 'Old World' and in how Christchurch came to be seen as the "Britain of the South Seas". Colonial settlers and settler-descendant coverage can also be seen in the Peoples of the Waitaha/Canterbury section. Included in this section is *Christchurch Street*, which looks much like *Auckland 1866* but is meant to be a reconstruction of what a 'typical' street in Christchurch may have looked like toward the end of the nineteenth century, 1870 to 1901. There is also a transportation section, which includes examples of early methods of transportation used by Colonial settlers, such as bicycles and coaches.

## Regional Museums

Many of these museums are very similar to one another – being made up of local donations and run by volunteers and very few museum professionals. There are a couple museums – The Kauri Museum and Nelson Museum in particular – which have very distinct display techniques and atmospheres.

### Whangarei Museum

Whangarei Museum is a small part of the much larger heritage park complex which is located on the outskirts of Whangarei, Northland's largest city. The heritage complex includes a Kiwi House, a blacksmith's shop, a vintage car club, an 1859 chapel, the 1886 Clarke Homestead, a bird recovery centre, a miniature railway, a full-sized railway, and an early 1900s school room. The complex hosts Live Days once a month in the summer months, featuring costumed interpreters, bullocks' teams, and demonstrations. The museum itself is located on the highest point in the complex, and looks out over the region. It is a small museum, located within a warehouse-type building, with its exhibits displayed in one large room. The centre of the exhibit room features its changing exhibit, which at the time of my visit, was a historic photographic exhibit entitled *Focus on Whangarei: Images of Whangarei 1895- 1905.* Typical of most of the small regional museums I visited, the museum's collections – mostly donated by local residents – include stuffed birds, fossils, Maori material culture, colonial antiques, early colonial industry items, and war paraphernalia. One corner of the exhibition room is set up to recreate a

colonial-period room, complete with furnishings and household items (*see* Figure 4).



Figure 4 - Pioneer Corner, Whangarei Museum

## Russell Museum

Russell Museum is located in the small, 'tourist-friendly' town of Russell, in the Bay of Islands. One need not stay long in Russell to learn that it was once known as 'the Hellhole of the Pacific' as the town seems to cling to and promote its historical reputation for lawlessness and mischief, which contrasts sharply with its genteel and relaxed present. Russell Museum is collection oriented – with small but beautifully displayed collections of Maori material culture, whaling artefacts, and early European settlement artefacts – but it is also narrative oriented as it tells touchstone historical stories of the region of Russell. The 'signature' Russell stories relate to the lawless Russell, the missionaries, the Treaty of Waitangi and to Hone Heke, the Maori chief who chopped down the British flagpole three times in protest of British policies and rule. Visitors may also watch an audio-visual presentation about the history of the region or access digitally archived historical photographs.

## Far North Regional Museum

Located in a small residence-style building in Kaitaia, the Far North Regional Museum is a humble regional museum with big aspirations. Plans are currently underway to redevelop the museum into a 'heritage complex' that would combine the library, art gallery and museum in one public space. A multi-million dollar project, the redevelopment is dependent upon the attainment of government funding and grants, and would take a number of years to complete. At present, the museum's collections are divided into natural history, Maori material culture, war, antiques and early European settler artefacts. The museum also displays the first European object left in the region of New Zealand, which is the anchor from the French explorer de Surville's ship *Sainte Jean Baptiste*, which lost its anchor off the coast of New Zealand in 1769.

## Dargaville Museum

Located on a beautiful section of land, at the top of a large hill, with an outlook over the city, Dargaville Museum is one regional museum that started out small and continued to expand as the collections expanded. The building housing the extensive collections contains a number of differently themed rooms, including the Pioneer Hall, Kauri Gum Diggers Hall, Collections Hall, Maritime Hall, and a small Maori Canoe room. The Pioneer Hall contains displays which mostly related to later settler life, focusing on law enforcement, health care, dental care, washing, furniture and sports. The Gumdiggers Hall features a reconstructed gum washing plant and dioramas and murals depicting the lives of gum diggers. The unifying theme of the Collections Hall is anything collected – including model trains, dolls, and glass bottles. The Maritime Hall is the larges room, with displays on shipwrecks, the Rainbow Warrior and different ships. The only Maori-related content is at the end of the museum, located in a small, narrow hallway and includes canoes and a wooden carving.

## The Kauri Museum

The Kauri Museum started out much like the other regional museums but has become an extremely economically successful and popular regional museum. The museum is located in Matakohe, a small inland town in Northland. It uses the kauri tree and pioneers as its organisational themes. Because of the museum's focus on pioneers, Maori related coverage is minimal and includes a few Maori busts carved by gum diggers and collectors, some Maori warriors carved in wood, and a Maori sheep shearer in the farming section. This may soon change, as the museum has plans for a new pioneer display which will cover how Maori helped the new European settlers when they first arrived in New Zealand. Even with this proposed display, Maori are included in the museum only as they relate to the pioneers.



**Figure 5 - Wax Mannequin, Kauri Museum**

The museum employs primarily diorama-oriented display techniques, where wax figures animate life-like displays. The wax figures are modelled after casts done of living settler-descendants, in an effort to maintain an 'authentic' look in the figures (*see* Figure 5). The museum is also very technology-oriented, with an enormous "working" sawmill, a farming machinery display room, and a working tractor attesting to this. External to the main museum building, there are also a number of 'out-buildings'

which relate to pioneer history, including a schoolhouse, church and post/telegraph office.

## Petone Settlers Museum

Opened in 1977, Petone Settlers Museums was established within the Wellington Centennial Memorial Building, which was opened in January 1940 to commemorate the centennial of the landing of the first British settlers on Petone beach 22 January 1840 (*see* Figure 6). The museum underwent nine months of refurbishment in 1988, but remains a very Colonial settler-oriented museum. Maori are not excluded from the stories, but are discussed only in terms of their relationship to the settlers where they are often depicted as helpful Maori whose assistance greatly eased the settlement process for the new immigrants. The displays themselves refer to the

Figure 6 - Mural, Petone Settlers Museum

settlement schemes for settlers in the Petone area and the later establishment of the region as an industrial metropolis.

## Nelson Provincial Museum

New Zealand's newest museum, Nelson Provincial Museum was opened in October 2005. It is housed within the public building Town Acre 445, within which the region's art gallery can also be found. The museum is divided into four

sections: *Land and Sea, Landmarks, Tangata Whenua,* and *That's the Spirit. Land and Sea* is mainly focused on geological features of the region and the utilisation of such resources. Though this section is mainly concerned with geography and geology, it also includes human stories and material culture – both Maori and European New Zealander – in the displays so that land and people are presented as closely intertwined. The theme of *Landmarks* is quite similar to *Land and Sea* as it explores how humans have interacted with the land, with a stronger emphasis on the human component. In *Tangata Whenua,* six local iwi tell their stories using their taonga. Also included in this section are taonga described in the museum pamphlet as being "donated to the museum by the region's collectors". Presumably these are Maori cultural artefacts that were collected by non-Maori and then donated to the museum. *That's the Spirit* presents the entrepreneurial and inquisitive spirit of the people of the region, exploring both their successes and failures.

## Historical Parks

I encountered some difficulty in my attempts to find a suitable name for this category. Originally I called it 'Historical Villages', but this name can only be applied with certainty to Howick Historical Village – as Shantytown's executives do not wish it to be known as a Historical or Pioneer Village but as a historical visitors' attraction – and the Waitangi Treaty Grounds is not a village. Therefore, I chose to use the term 'Historical Parks' as it refers to the historical nature of the sites, as well as to their park-like qualities, being located within large areas of land and including open-air museum techniques.

In many ways, the historical parks blur distinctions between museums and amusement parks. They are similar to Bennett's (1995) fairs, which he describes in opposition to public museums, as they are often located on the fringes – rather in the centre – of cities, and the 'live' aspect of such sites, where costumed interpreters animate the buildings, adds an ephemeral quality to the site, similar to the temporary nature of the fair. Similar to amusement parks, historical parks often employ concepts of play, interaction and make-believe in the experiences offered

to visitors. However, like museums, these historical parks adhere strongly to the ideals of education, research and conservation.

### Howick Historical Village

Howick Historical Village is located in Pakuranga, an eastern suburb of Auckland. Over thirty historical buildings from the 1840 to 1880 period have been brought to or constructed at the site and streets, a pond, gardens and other landscaping have been added to 'set' the collection of historical buildings within a village-like environment (*see* Figure 7). Most of the buildings – churches, cottages, and schoolhouses – were brought from other locations to the site so as to save them from destruction or decay. Other buildings and dwellings – raupo cottages and a fencible tent – were constructed when originals were not available.



**Figure 7 - Howick Historical Village**

The village was the brainchild of Alan La Roche, a local dentist and amateur historian who became involved with the rescue, preservation and restoration of historical buildings in the area. In his view, the best way to accomplish this was to bring them together in a contained area that would be a place not only where they

would be protected, restored, cared for and conserved, but also where people could visit to learn about an aspect of the local history (personal interview, Alan La Roche, 18 October 2006).

The village is not just a collection of buildings, as many of the interiors of the buildings are decorated and filled with period items, so that both the outdoors and the indoors reflect the appropriate time period. Other buildings house differently themed displays – one building features display a on the Irish Potato Famine, another Maori and European history, and there is one on children's games. The village has live days on the third Sunday of every month when costumed interpreters can be found all over the village, cooking food, teaching crafts, and demonstrating trades.

## Shantytown

Shantytown is located about ten kilometres from Greymouth on the South Island's West Coast. On the surface, Shantytown looks like a typical historical village with its collection of historical buildings, residences, shops, schoolhouse and jail (*see* Figure 8). It also has some unique aspects that set it apart from most historical villages – visitors can participate in gold panning or ride a working steam engine train.

Plans are currently underway to completely redevelop Shantytown into *The New Shantytown Experience*, a narrative-based visitors' attraction



Figure 8 – Shantytown

that uses modern technology to tell the stories of the early settlers and gold miners of the West Coast in a way that is theatrical and engaging. The plans for *The New Shantytown Experience* will emphasise the theme of identity, as it is structured around the central theme of *"Coasters – a Character Born of Extremes"* (personal interview, Ian Johnson, 8 December 2006). The new plan is meant to be more appealing to visitors by changing Shantytown into a set or theatrical stage where the stories of the gold miners are told using special visual projections, lighting and narrative techniques. The project is a multi-million dollar plan, dependent upon governmental grants and funding, but the project manager, Ian Johnson, sees it as an opportunity to increase tourism for the whole region and as a way to keep Shantytown self-sustaining and relevant in the long run.

### Waitangi Treaty Grounds

The Waitangi Treaty Grounds are dedicated to one specific theme – the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi – and are site-specific, as they include the site where the Treaty was first signed on 6 February 1840. The land was gifted, in the form of a trust, to the people of New Zealand by Lord and Lady Bledisloe in 1932. Before this time, the historical significance of the grounds was not widely recognised. However, as the importance of the Treaty of Waitangi has grown nationally, so too has the profile of the Waitangi Treaty Grounds. The grounds have also, more recently become a site of contestation, as perspectives on the place of the Treaty in New Zealand politics and history has become an increasingly controversial topic.

The grounds are accessed by the Visitor Centre, at which visitors can purchase admission tickets, watch an audio-visual presentation about the signing of the Treaty, see Maori cultural performances, purchase items at the gift shop, and browse through displays on the Treaty. The rest of the grounds include the Treaty House, Canoe House, and Meeting House.

## *My Personal Positioning and Bias*

I found that because of my unusual positioning as a student, academic, tourist and foreigner, I could oscillate back and forth between different perspectives and

interpretations, one moment enjoying the entertaining value of a particular display, the next questioning its meaning. This became clear to me as I examined and analysed the photographs I took at the different sites. When I took some of the photographs I was "role playing" as a tourist: posing in front of a sign, capturing a beautiful scene to show to friends and family, or photographing certain displays I personally wanted to remember. At other times I played the role of the student anthropologist as I photographed displays which piqued my analytical critiques. What is interesting is that, as I examine my photographs, some of the "tourist" photographs cross over into the academic category, and some "academic" photographs become valuable to me as a tourist.

As I have been strongly influenced by post-colonial perspectives in my education, my default interpretation of representations of colonial settlers connects them to colonialism, imperialism and the domination, exploitation and destruction associated therewith. Carrying out this research project in New Zealand, I have still retained a certain degree of criticism for representations of colonial settlers, but because I am not so easily implicated as part of the group, I am less cautious about proposing that, perhaps, there is more to these representations than just hegemonic imperialist nostalgias.

While I retained this critical perspective, I began to develop an additional, more personal perspective, which can be attributed in many ways to my positioning as a student living in a foreign country, a far distance from my family and the comforts of familiarity. I began to see the displays about settler nostalgia for Britain and their efforts to turn New Zealand into 'Britain of the South Seas' – which read as imperialist nostalgia and civilising efforts from my 'critical' perspective – from the perspective of someone in an unfamiliar setting, who finds security in the familiar practices, landscapes, food, and beliefs from 'home'. British, colonial and imperial, began to signify not just domination, ethnocentrism, and exploitation, but also origins, familiarity, and security. I do not believe that one perspective cancels out the other, but there is a tension between the criticism of the post-colonial perspective and the sensitivity of the 'landed immigrant' perspective which can lead to ambiguous readings.

My sensitivity for such representations was also heightened when my grandfather passed away only two months after I arrived in New Zealand. It was the first time I was faced with the death of a close relative and I had a difficult time coming to terms with the loss, especially being so far away from my family. There was a point where I wanted to set my research aside and return home to grieve, but I decided that the best way to honour my grandfather – who, along with my grandmother, emotionally and financially supported all six of his granddaughters though university – was to continue with my research. I did not realise how deeply my grandfather's death had affected me, both personally and academically, until the next time I visited one of my research sites. I was in Auckland Museum's *Auckland 1866* gallery, a reconstructed street scene of nineteenth-century Auckland featuring reconstructions of actual buildings from the era.

My initial 'reading' of this particular section of the museum was quite cynical as I had noticed it had been sponsored by a local department store, whose historical antecedent happened to be one of the buildings featured in the gallery and I saw it also as supporting colonial discourses of civilisation and progress by celebrating the construction of cities and buildings. I was absorbed with these concepts as I wandered in and out of different buildings and not paying particular attention to the building signage, I suddenly found myself in a jewellery store. Immediately I was drawn out of my "researcher" role and, instead, became the grieving granddaughter of my recently passed-on grandfather. My grandfather owned a jewellery store in a small town in Pennsylvania, U.S.A. He and his brother had continued on the jewellery store business from their father, my great-grandfather. Not having any family living nearby onto whom he could pass the business, he had to sell it. All that remains of it now is a plaque marking the building in which the jewellery store used to be. As I stood in the reconstructed old jewellery shop in the museum, I thought about how I would feel if this was a tribute to my grandfather's business. It would be a place where future generations could come to learn about and 'remember' their ancestral past. As I reflected on this, I remembered that my grandfather had donated his army uniform to a local war museum. It comforted me to know that something that belonged to him, that was a

large part of his identity, was being preserved and cared for, which attested to the fact that he existed, he mattered and, to some degree, he will be remembered.

This experience reminded me that museums and social history displays in particular can involve personal ties and can evoke very personal responses. It made me more aware of the memorialising aspects of museums and it helped me to better understand the social role museums can play in preserving memories and in helping people feel connected to their past and to their community.

# Chapter Four:

# Pride and Shame

In March 2007 Prince Andrew, the Duke of York, made a visit to New Zealand. As the UK's special representative for international trade and investment, the primary purpose of his trip was to encourage New Zealand businesses to consider expanding into Britain. However, the Duke also made a number of public appearances, including one visit to the re-dedication ceremony for the cenotaph at Auckland Museum which had recently undergone the first stages in a long-term succession of restoration work.

It is both fitting and also somewhat surprising that a member of British royalty was present at a war memorial ceremony in Auckland, considering the historic ties between New Zealand, war and Empire. Much of New Zealand's enthusiastic involvement in the Boer War and World War I can be attributed to its support for Britain (King, 2003). Prince Andrew's honoured presence in New Zealand is one indication that New Zealand's ties to Britain are at times a source of pride, even despite critiques of colonialism, anti-colonial sentiments and the recognition of the injustices and exploitation brought by colonisation. The legacy of British colonialism in New Zealand continues to have a very strong and often conflicting presence, being associated with both pride and shame.

At museums, the tendency to dichotomise often positions colonial-related representations as either a source of pride or as something of which to be ashamed. Colonial pride celebrates British civilisation and temperance and portrays early European settlers as heroic figures who leave behind squalor and class inequality to forge a new life for themselves by changing an inhospitable land into something more civilised and productive. Colonial shame, on the other hand,

as the inverse of colonial pride, positions colonialism and colonisers as exploiters and invaders and Maori as the rightful stewards and occupiers of the land. Shame also often involves silence and attempts to forget and so representations of colonial shame are comparatively rare.

## *Colonial Pride*

### The Pioneers

I found that at many museums, settlers were portrayed within colonial discourses which celebrated conquest, progress and development as well as New Zealand's ties to empire and Britain. Often these settlers were depicted as heroic "pioneers" who suffered, toiled and forged a new home for themselves and, in doing so, ensured a better life for their descendants.

The stories of settlers in New Zealand have characteristics similar to some of the aspects of frontier myths (Furniss, 2006, p. 173), as they adhere to discourses of progress and development, conform to binary narratives of "man against nature and civilisation against savagery", feature 'Epitomising Events', and they contain "touchstones" – symbols and metaphors – of colonialism. These stories position settlers as archetypal pioneers who struggle against an inhospitable environment and civilise the landscape. Many of the narratives include the story of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi as an 'Epitomising Event', which is framed as the establishment of a legal partnership

Figure 9 - Wood Inlay, Kauri Museum

between Maori and the Crown and which legitimised British settlement of New Zealand.

One prominent narrative, not included in Furniss' description of frontier myths but which features as an important aspect of settler stories in New Zealand concerns the settlers' departure from their homeland and journey, by sailing ship, to a remote corner of the world. These narratives of arrival, clearing the land, and making a home, are clearly depicted in a three-panel inlay marquetry entitled 'The Kauri Story' (*see* Figure 9) from the Kauri Museum. The first panel, *Kauri Bush* shows a Kauri forest by the sea and a ship arriving in the background. The second panel, *Bush Working* shows three men and a bullocks' team bringing kauri timber out of the forest. The third panel, *A New Farm*, shows a barren landscape with a ranch style home, a dog and a horse. The three panels together tell of new arrivals to a lush land, from which they extracted timber and in doing so made a place for themselves and dramatically changed the landscape. The layout of the Kauri Museum and the way in which it is thematically organised reflects this narrative where farming machinery displays are preceded by displays on the kauri timber and gum industries and at the entrance to the farming displays is a sign which reads "The Landscape Changed", referring to how the Kauri timber industry changed the landscape and how the pioneers adjusted to this by clearing the bush further in order to make farms.

At Petone Settlers Museum, the story of the arrival of colonial settlers is closely aligned with the above narrative. The museum describes how settlers left squalor and unpromising conditions in Britain to come to New Zealand. This theme is emphasised in a visual display depicting *Here and There* and in the film presentation, *A New Land; A New Hope; A New People.* In the *Here and There* display (*see* Figure 11 , Figure 10 ), black and white enlarged photos of unhappy people and crowded slums of 'there' are contrasted with models of homes in which new settlers could live 'here'. The problem of overcrowding and overpopulation in Britain is emphasised in quotes and descriptors in the display. One such quotation reads:

*In 1844, 1,465 working class London families lived in 2,175 rooms, sometimes with only one bed per family. Housing was scarce, and overcrowding and poor diet led to illness and long term poverty. Many people resorted to crime as a means to survive.*

This suffering is juxtaposed with scale models of bigger and progressively better homes in which new settlers 'here' could live: on the bottom of the display is the settlers hut circa 1840; in the middle is the 1855 farm building; and, at the top, the ideal 1872 cottage. This positions 'there' as a place full of despair and suffering, a place that the settlers left in search of a



**Figure 10 - "There"**
**Petone Settlers Museum**

new, more promising and hopeful home.

The suffering narratives continue into stories about the settlers journeys to their new homes. Because the only way to reach New Zealand was via the sea, all settlers arrived by ship. Not surprisingly, settler ships have become essential components of 'pioneer' stories. At Petone Settlers Museum, *The Tory* is described as a "landmark" in European settlement in New Zealand and visitors are told in the audio-visual presentations that



**Figure 11 - "Here", Petone Settlers Museum**

reminders of important settler-bearing ships such as *The Tory* and *The Oriental* are memorialised, having had streets – Tory Street and Oriental Parade – named after them in Wellington City. In order to enter Te Papa's *Passports* exhibit, visitors must first walk through a ship 'deck' where they can look through a porthole, open cupboards to see what the settlers would have brought on the trip, try to fit in the passenger 'bunk' and listen to the sounds of the sea, seagulls and sailors. Many museum archives contain ship passenger lists, and one imagines many visitors feel a sense of pride in being able to trace their ancestry back to passengers listed on these ships.

The story told at Wellington Museum of City and Sea emphasises the arduous journey potential settlers had to embark upon in order to come to New Zealand. The following passage comes from a display card entitled *Settlement by Sail*:

> *The voyage from Britain was long, difficult and frequently traumatic. Having endured the ordeal of leaving family and friends, passengers were then confronted with an unappetising and restricted shipboard diet, cramped living space and the unappealing prospect of being confined below during bad weather. In addition there were the ever present threats of collision, fire or storms.*

> *Sickness was another danger. Ship's surgeons were often helpless in the face of the many maladies which could beset a voyage, from measles, fever, food poisoning, and sunstroke to tuberculosis. Young children seemed to suffer most, and few journeys ended without several infant deaths.*

The settlers' ship stories are framed as a trial through which potential settlers must pass before they can come to the new land. The journey presents travellers with obstacles – such as seasickness, malnutrition, cramped quarters, the unpredictable sea, communicable diseases, and cabin fever – which must be endured and survived in order to pass into New Zealand. Only those who are resilient, tough, strong, community-minded and healthy make it through. In this way, this ship becomes a crucible, a great test of character so that the new settlers who make their way to New Zealand are – by virtue of surviving the journey – resilient, tough, strong and community-minded. Perhaps not surprisingly, these

characteristics are reflected in how the settlers are depicted in stories of their new lives in New Zealand.

The themes of challenge and struggle continue into stories of settlers about their arrival to and settlement in New Zealand. At Te Papa's *Passports* exhibition, the display *Doom and Gloom* tells the story of the


Figure 12 - The Saxton Family, Te Papa

Saxton family (*see* Figure 12) who came to New Zealand in 1841 with his wife Priscilla and their five children:

> *After settling in Nelson, disaster after disaster beset John Saxton. His lack of farming experience didn't help.*
>
> *11 May 1842: '... learned my land was inaccessible...'*
>
> *21 May 1842: 'Was informed that my plank overlapping the roof would let in the rain...'*
>
> *Even when a landslide demolished half his house, John pressed on. After several years, life started improving, and he became involved in politics and the Anglican church. However, he continued to suffer from depression, and finally starved himself to death.*
>
> *Perhaps he'd be glad to know that his descendants are now doing well and living in the home he established near Nelson.*

At first reading, it may seem as though this story goes against the hardworking pioneer story because it depicts a man who is an inexperienced farmer who kills himself. However, the story also emphasises John's perseverance when, even after he finds his land is inaccessible, his roof leaks and a landslide destroys half of

his house, he persists. In the end, John is portrayed as a success, being the progenitor of a prosperous and still surviving family.

At the Kauri Museum, the displays emphasise how "life in the Kauri bush was tough on the early settlers" (Ell, 2005, p. 34). Displays using costumed mannequins and life-like scenery, such as *Gum Digger* and *Women Washing in the Bush* are used to convey to visitors how hard the settlers had to work. *Gum Digger* (*see* Figure 14) shows an elderly man on one knee digging for gum. An excerpt from



**Figure 14 – Gum Digger, Kauri Museum**

the display card reads: "Great perseverance, stamina, strength, fortitude and knowledge were needed to survive the harsh working conditions". The *Women Washing in the Bush* display (*see* Figure 13) is based on an old photograph and depicts a mother and her young daughter working hard to do the wash outside in the bush. These examples show that even children, women and the elderly were not excluded from working hard in the bush.



**Figure 13 – Women Washing, Kauri Museum**

At Shantytown, the business was gold and not Kauri trees, but the same 'suffering pioneer' narrative persists. This narrative can be seen in the description of Shantytown from its website:

> Shantytown is where New Zealand retells the inspirational stories of the hard, treasure seeking immigrants who battled through the harsh conditions of the most challenging of the 19th century great gold rushes to become West Coasters. A new breed of New Zealander who brought an invigorated pulse to the heart of the nation; a pulse that beats loudly in the character of today's New Zealander.
>
> [...]
>
> Shantytown is a faithfully restored replica of an 1860's West Coast gold mining town. A living monument to the hardy pioneers who forded the wildly exotic rivers and streams, and scrambled through the rugged subtropical rainforest in search of their fortunes.[15]

This passage emphasises the hostile environment and how it forged 'a new breed of New Zealander'. What is new in the above passage is the connection it draws between characteristics of the 'hardy pioneers' and those of contemporary New Zealanders. It asserts that the qualities acquired by the gold miners are also qualities that are projected onto contemporary New Zealanders, either as qualities which they are believed to have inherited, or as qualities which the stories of their ancestors should inspire them to acquire. Ian Johnson, the project manager for *The New Shantytown Experience* elaborated on this concept in his interview (8 December, 2006):

> [T]he social contract that New Zealand's taken on to the rest of the world came from the West Coast. Trade unions were formed on the West Coast of the South Island. New Zealand's first Prime Minister was from the West Coast, Richard John Seddon. The Labour Party was formed on the West Coast, which was essentially a socialist party. The genesis of the women's suffrage movement in New Zealand came from the West Coast. So, all of these great sort of social projects New Zealand sort of carried forward in its image that it takes forward to the rest of the world now all had their genesis here in this area.

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[15] www.shantytown.co.nz/www/home.htm

*[…]*

*We're not physically going to tell those stories about those organizations but we think that by telling the stories of those individuals and they're going through their hardship, their lives, their loves and their loss, all of those sort of things, that we're going to give insight into some of the different parts that make up this character that we call New Zealander today. And thereby giving visitors a chance to meet and engage in the culture of the country they're visiting.*

The above demonstrates a deliberate and conscious effort to use people and stories from the past to signify contemporary identities.

While there is continuity between the various museums in terms of the meta-narrative of the hard-working, suffering pioneer, there are distinctive characteristics of pioneers that are particular to specific regions. The gum digger, wearing gum boots and wading through the swamp is an iconic figure in Northland. The Bay of Islands region contrasts the lawless, unruly, and itinerant sailors, whalers and traders, with the later-to-arrive devoted, hard-working and disciplined missionaries and colonial settlers. The Wellington region emphasises the rational settlement schemes and the planned and deliberate immigration of British settlers. This is similar to the story told in the Christchurch region, which focuses on how new settlers quickly and deliberately transformed an unproductive, swampy area into a civilised English city. In contrast, the West Coast is presented as a formidable challenge to migrants who battled the harsh conditions to seek their fortune in the gold fields and changed the landscape as was required for this endeavour and not with the goal of settling permanently in the area. Thus, each region retains its own distinct and unique characteristics which are embedded in the environment and history of the area.

Stories of the settlers from the past are also connected to present conditions where settlers are cast as agents of change and evidence of the changes they made can be seen in the present. These stories often conform to modernist paradigms of progress and civilisation and tell of how the wild landscape was tamed by the pioneers through technology, innovation, development and hard work; and how British rule and missionaries brought temperance, stability, law and civil behaviour to New Zealand.

The progressive way in which settlers changed the landscape is a guiding theme at the Kauri Museum. The museum shows how the forests were cleared by the Kauri industry and that once the giant trees were felled, the bush was cleared and subsequently farming and industry were developed. A key aspect of this narrative of development and change is the technology and machinery that was used in the process of "breaking in the land" (Ell, 2005, p. 40). A large proportion of the displays at the Kauri Museum feature machinery and technology as a central theme. One enormous exhibit features an actual 'restored' steam sawmill with moving parts (*see* Figure 15), mannequin workers who, via audio recording, speak about their work at the mill, and background noises of wood being cut and water rushing. The museum also features a large farm machinery display and extensive displays on the tools and technology used in the kauri industries. The is one of increasing dominance over the land, as new tools and technologies are developed that use the land in ways that are more beneficial to settlers and, at the same time, that dramatically change the landscape.

At Shantytown, one of the new concepts planned for *The New Shantytown Experience* is called *The Recovering Land*, which focuses on how the landscape was changed by the miners and how it is recovering. A promotional booklet describing the plans for *The New Shantytown Experience* describes this concept in terms of changes to the landscape caused by "man" and also by nature:



*Shantytown sits within a landscape plundered by miners and millers to extract instant wealth. The land became a scared [sic] ruin of sluice channels, milled forests and abandoned artefacts of man's endeavours. But nature returns and one must now search within the*

**Figure 15- Saw Mill, Kauri Museum**

*regenerating bush for the remnants of this earlier life.*

This narrative is slightly different from the landscape narrative at the Kauri Museum because in this example, it is the land which persists, and not the settlers. The difference in narratives could be attributed to the fact that West Coast gold mining towns were not generally sites of continuous, permanent occupation. Miners were chasing fortunes on the West Coast and were not planning to settle permanently there. A few stayed, but it has been only within the last decade that the population of the West Coast has reached the same level that it was at during the height of the gold rush. By contrast, in other areas of New Zealand, particularly where the land and climate were more inviting – such as the Wellington area, Northland, Christchurch area – the establishment of settlements marked the beginning of continuous occupation of an area and, as a result, the continuous 'development' of the landscape involving logging, mining, clear-cutting, farming, industry and the development of cities.



**Figure 16 - Photographs, Whangarei Museum**

One way in which many of the museums I visited represented the changes to the landscape caused by settlers was through photographic exhibits. At the time when I visited Whangarei Regional Museum, it was hosting a temporary exhibit called *Focus on Whangarei: Photographs of*
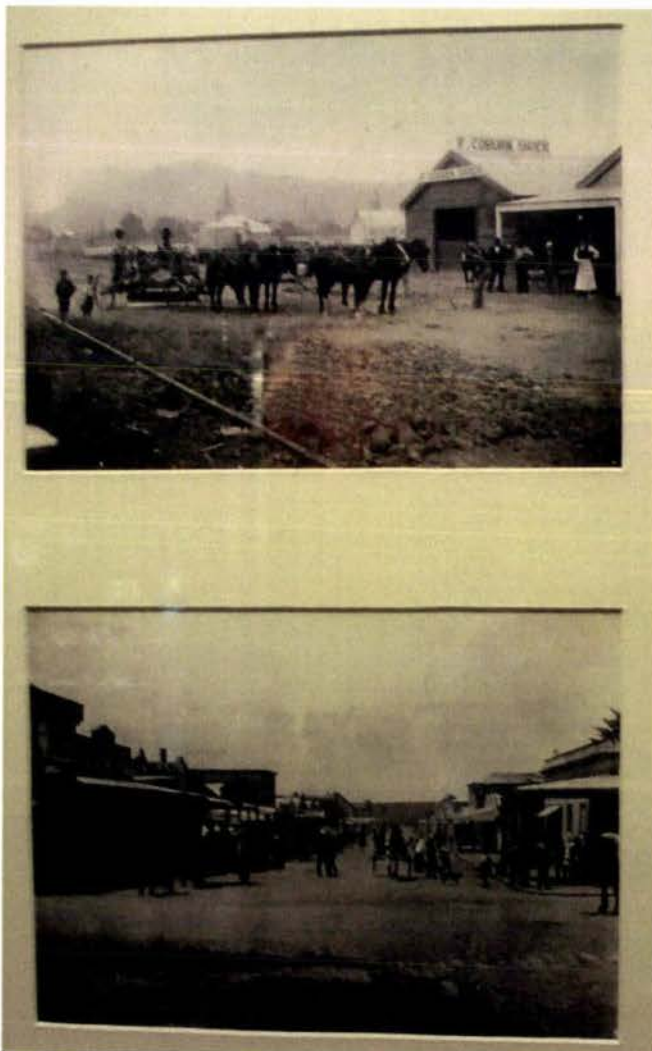
*Whangarei Region 1885-1916.* The museum newsletter describes the exhibition as featuring "many familiar, though now much changed, street and landscape scenes". Most of the photographs are of roads and local landmarks, and only a few contain people as a main focus. A central theme of the exhibition is the change the area has gone through over time as is made evident in the images presented. One example of this is a set of photographs which illustrate the theme of progress, development and changing the landscape. The photograph entitled *Cameron Street, looking east 1897* is displayed together with the photograph *Creating James Street 1903* (*see* Figure 16). In the centre of the Cameron Street photograph is a wide street with buildings on both sides of it as well as a few people and horse-drawn carriages. The photograph, with its emphasis on streets, buildings and people supports a productive perception of colonialism by emphasizing how the settlers who came to the area built, within only a few decades, roads, buildings, homes and infrastructure. This reading is underscored by the positioning of this particular photograph below the James Street photograph which shows the construction of a street. The caption of this photograph reads: "Picks and shovels and Whangarei's first grader were used to make the town streets". The juxtaposition of the street photograph beside the making-the-street photograph calls attention to the constructed nature of the region of Whangarei.
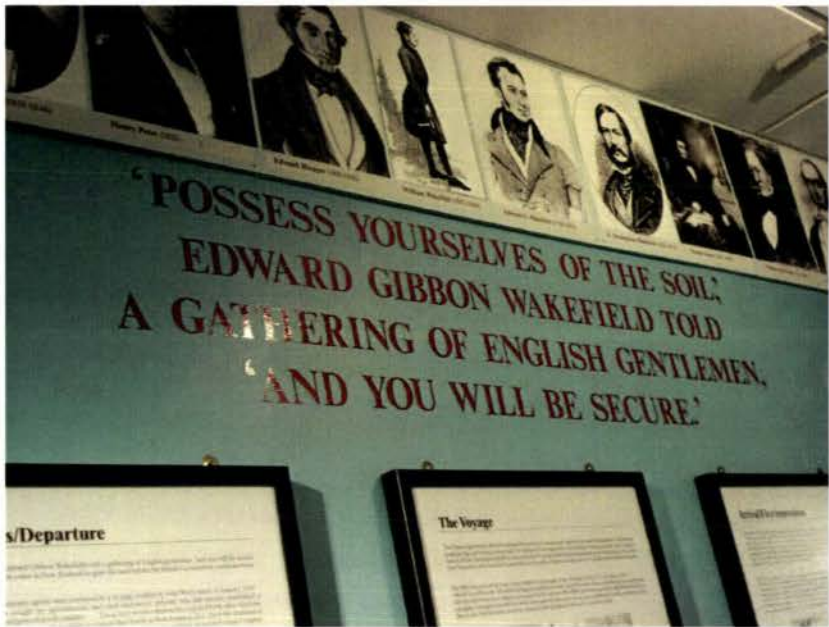


This emphasis on technology, production and construction echoes colonial narratives relating to progress, development, and civilisation.

At Petone Settlers Museum, where Edward

Figure 17 - Possess the Soil, Petone Settlers Museum

Gibbon Wakefield's quote "Possess yourselves of the soil and you will be secure" is written prominently on a wall (*see* Figure 17), the emphasis is less on how settlers changed the landscape, and more on how settlers came to own the land. As described at the museum, Wakefield – who had spent time in a British prison in 1826 for kidnapping an heiress in order to try to improve his own social standing – was moved by the poverty he saw while in prison which inspired him to envision a new colonisation scheme which he attempted to carry out in New Zealand. His colonisation scheme was not approved by the Colonial Office or the House of Commons, and he thus emphasised the urgent need to acquire land from Maori before the House of Commons could find a way to stop them. This is an important story for the Petone region, because some of the first settlers to the area came as part of Wakefield's immigration scheme.

If we follow the colonial landscape development paradigm from logging to clear-cutting to pastures and farming, the next 'stage' is the development of cities and industry. Canterbury Museum's pamphlet describes *Christchurch Street* in the context of European settlers' efforts to make New Zealand as English as possible:

> *See how the early European settlers lived and built the 'most English city, outside England' on the swampy, sandy ground of the Canterbury Plains. The Christchurch Street display is a replica of a Victorian Street complete with authentic shops crammed full of fantastic period items.*

The passage above emphasises how the streetscapes symbolise development and progress, how settlers changed the "swampy, sandy ground" into the "most English city, outside England". The passage also reflects a sentiment of pride in having a city that is considered to be very English, a theme which recurs throughout the museum and into the city itself, where Christchurch tourism emphasises its 'olde English charm' by marketing its Victorian architecture, town crier, and Avon punters.

**Figure 18 - Britain of the South Seas, Museum of Wellington**

New Zealand's fidelity towards Britain is also expressed at Wellington Museum's displays on war, empire and colonisation. The museum describes how New Zealand was the first British colony to send troops to the Boer War. The display *Britain of the South Seas* (*see* Figure 18) discusses how "many New Zealanders at the turn of the century saw themselves as 'Britons of the South Seas' who would one day preside over a great South Pacific Empire". One of these visionaries included Premier Seddon, who had a vision of New Zealand as only the first British colony in what he hoped would be a vast South Pacific Empire that was to include Tahiti, Fiji and Hawaii[16]. These displays demonstrate how settlers from Britain did not leave that aspect of their identity behind, but rather it became an important aspect of settler identities as they made a new place and a new life in New Zealand.

The examples discussed thus far position settlers within colonial narratives and their stories are framed in positive tones and are illustrative of the way in which most settler stories are presented at the museums I visited. I had expected to encounter more examples which presented a certain degree of self-consciousness or irony about the association between colonial settlers as agents of colonialism and the post-colonial critique of colonialism and colonial discourses. Where I did encounter examples of this, they usually inverted colonial hierarchies and framed the consequences of colonisation within a narrative of shame.

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[16] This is an interesting early association of New Zealand with other Pacific Islands as it has only been recently that New Zealand has become (re)identified as a part of this geo-political region.

## Colonial Shame

Colonial shame is set in direct opposition to colonial narratives and discourses and can be related to post-colonialism but also has deeper roots in romanticism and in narratives which predate post-colonialism. Colonial shame constructs highly critical representations of settlers in opposition to idealised representations of nature and indigenous populations. It is tied to romanticised notions of the 'noble savage' and nature, as well as to negative attitudes towards development and technology. It positions colonisers as invaders and indigenous groups as the rightful inhabitants of the land, thus inverting colonial discourses. Unlike the 'colonial' identity, I only found concentrated examples of clear critiques of colonialism at two museums, Te Papa and at the Waitangi Treaty Grounds[17]. The Waitangi Treaty grounds inverts colonial hierarchies by putting women and Maori first, and by focusing primarily on Maori in the telling of the story of the treaty. Te Papa includes the colonial inversion to a certain extent, but also has more direct anti-colonial representations which portray European settlers in a negative light or at least problematise some of the consequences of their actions.

At the Waitangi Treaty Grounds, self-consciousness about colonialism is represented through inversions of the colonial paradigm, so that Maori are positioned as superior, and their status as tangata whenua is emphasised. It is interesting that such a perspective is presented at such a place, as it is the historic site where the Treaty of Waitangi was signed, a document which led to the British government's claims to sovereignty in New Zealand. However, the site is not presented as a celebration of the establishment of that sovereignty, but as the 'birthplace of the nation' and it strongly emphasises the place of Maori in New Zealand and their role in and deep ambivalence around the signing of the Treaty.

Before visitors enter the Waitangi Treaty Grounds, they first pass through a covered walkway with outdoor speakers from which contemporary Maori music can

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[17] This is not to imply that critiques of colonialism do not appear at other museums. I use the examples from Te Papa and the Waitangi Treaty Grounds because they were the most clear examples I found.

be heard.  Upon entering the interpretive centre, the room leading to the grounds, portraits of some treaty signatories can be seen hanging from the wall.  The portraits are hung in the reverse of colonial hierarchies – female Maori signatories being first, with male Maori next, and the British last.  The audio-video presentation begins with a female Maori voice – or assumed to be Maori as she speaks in the inclusive when referring to Maori – who introduces the presentation as "the story of how our people came to share the land".  She speaks of the arrival of Polynesians and of how Maori were the first to the land.  She tells of the arrival of Europeans, how at first European visits were few, but that they "would not go away".  The film mentions European settlers and Britain's desire to establish a means whereby they could settle in New Zealand peacefully and securely, but these topics are not covered in any great detail, as the focus of the narrative is on Maori, while the British feature as secondary characters.  The end of the film describes how the Treaty of Waitangi established the beginning of a nation and "one people", and so acknowledges the coming together of Maori and Europeans, but the story of this coming together emphasises Maori over Europeans and the fraught nature of establishing and maintaining the relationship, in an inversion of colonial hierarchies.

This inversion occurs at Te Papa's *Blood, Earth, Fire* exhibit where the development and hard work of settlers is presented within a narrative that emphasises the



Figure 19 - Joy of Burning, Te Papa

destructive nature of these acts. According to the guidebook, *Blood, Earth, Fire* presents "the dramatic story of how people have transformed the land and made Aotearoa New Zealand their home". While the exhibit acknowledges that both Maori and Europeans played a part in transforming the landscape it does note that Maori used the land only to support their own basic living needs, while Europeans exploited the land for resources to sell abroad for profit. It also explains that, while Maori introduced foreign species to New Zealand (kumara and kuri), Europeans brought many more species which did a great deal of damage to the native ecosystem. In this way, the exhibits acknowledge that Maori are part of the transformations of the landscape while also emphasising that the arrival of Europeans brought far more destructive species and practices.

Perhaps the most dramatic illustration of this theme is the display entitled *The Exceeding Joy of Burning* (*see* Figure 19). This display includes a passage from a female settler's journal entry entitled "The Exceeding Joy of Burning". The entry talks about the positive results of burning the bush (for sheep pastures). It features a photograph of the woman who wrote the article, which is suspended over a background of what look like black tree stumps over orange-red back-lighting. The display is located in a section of the exhibit about the environmental degradation brought about by clearing the bush and changing it over to grasslands. In this way, the display emphasises how the practice of burning the bush, which may have been looked upon in a positive way by settlers, may not necessarily be seen from the same perspective today.

The entire *Blood, Earth, Fire* exhibit is underscored with a sense of regret over the transformation of the land and the loss of native flora and fauna. Indeed, loss and grief are common themes in many of the displays in the exhibit, with most of the blame being laid upon European settlers and their descendants. One display shows coloured maps of the islands of New Zealand, demonstrating how the land was systematically appropriated by Europeans and taken away from Maori. As the interpretive text about the South Island explains:

> In the South Island, the movement of land from Maori hands was even more striking and dramatic than in the North Island. By 1860, almost all of the South Island had

*been acquired by Pakeha (Europeans), and iwi (tribes) were left with reserves too*
*small to sustain them.*

The theme of loss is paralleled in *The Land That Was* display, which explores
the many birds that have become extinct since the arrival of humans. This is
enhanced in the *Memorial to the Fallen*, which presents a chance for visitors to
partake in the grieving process for those species of birds who have become extinct
since the arrival of Europeans. In the *Memorial to the Fallen*, the visitor enters into
an alcove where a voice recording of a waiata, which is described as a Maori
prayer, is playing. On the wall, the names of the "fallen" – the extinct species of
bird – are written. The memorial seems to mimic war memorials, where the extinct
bird species become like 'fallen' soldiers, or casualties of war. This is an
interesting parallel as it seems to imply that the extinctions were a regretful, but
necessary loss incurred in the process of achieving a particular goal. Perhaps the
goal in this instance is a particular standard of living that 'we' can enjoy today. This
narrative confuses the condemnation of colonisation and development. Is it
condemning the actions of the past that led to the extinction of the birds, or is it
expressing regret over inevitable sacrifices that had to be made so that New
Zealanders could live the way they do today? Thus, even while the *Blood, Earth,*
*Fire* display discusses the negative aspects of human activity in New Zealand –
particularly since the settlement of Europeans – the way in which the destruction of
the land and the extinction of species are framed adds an additional layer of
complexity to the narrative.

## *Summary*

Colonial settlers at museums have at least two layers of signification: they can
represent the ancestors of contemporary sub-national groups, the Pakeha or
European New Zealanders; and they can also symbolise the agents of
colonisation, where colonisation is seen from a post-colonial perspective, as a
system of domination and exploitation. Often when settlers are represented as
ancestors at museums it is with a tone of pride; the ancestor-settlers are portrayed
as courageous, brave, tough, hard-working pioneers with a celebrated British

heritage. When settlers signify colonialism from a post-colonial perspective, the emphasis is on destruction, ethnocentrism, and exploitation.

In this way, colonial settlers are portrayed in dichotomous ways – as either good, hard-working pioneers, or as destructive colonisers. It is difficult to see how these two extreme ways of representing settlers might be reconciled. Would it be possible for a display to present settlers more ambiguously; not just as good or bad, but as both, or even as neither? Would it be possible for displays to represent settlers in less dichotomous terms, and to reflect the problematic nature of such representations? This would be a difficult task indeed, as museum representations by nature have a tendency to simplify complex concepts. Binary opposites are simple concepts to portray and this is evident not only in the dichotomous way in which settlers are represented, but, as the following chapter demonstrates, is also evident in how museums represent different groups within the nation.

# Chapter Five:

# Parts of a Whole

As I demonstrated in the previous chapter, it is difficult to disassociate settlers from colonialism, as representations of them usually conform to colonial or post-colonial discourses, articulated within narratives of pride and shame. This conflation of settlers with colonisers – and all the pride and shame that is embroiled in such a loaded term – also locates settlers on the 'frontier' within a coloniser/colonised, settler/indigenous relationship that often involves contact and negotiation over power and identity (Pratt, 1992). Historically, the coloniser has been the 'dominant' group, but in the late twentieth century, many indigenous groups challenged this dominance, and sparked debates, conflicts and renegotiations over economics and power which have continued into the present.

In New Zealand, the 'Maori Renaissance' of the 1970s led to a stronger recognition of Maori rights under the Treaty of Waitangi and to the emergence of the concept of biculturalism. Biculturalism in New Zealand constructed settlers and settler-descendants as part of a unique 'Pakeha'[18] culture who became partners with Maori through the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in a bicultural national relationship.

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[18] In my discussions of biculturalisms, I will refer to British settlers and their descendants as 'Pakeha' because that is the term most often used in bicultural discourses. I recognise that Pakeha is an ambiguous term – can refer to, among others, British settlers, non-Maori settlers, or European settlers – and the meaning of it as I use it in this chapter is similarly ambiguous, as I use the term in the context it is used at museums and to also refer to British settlers.
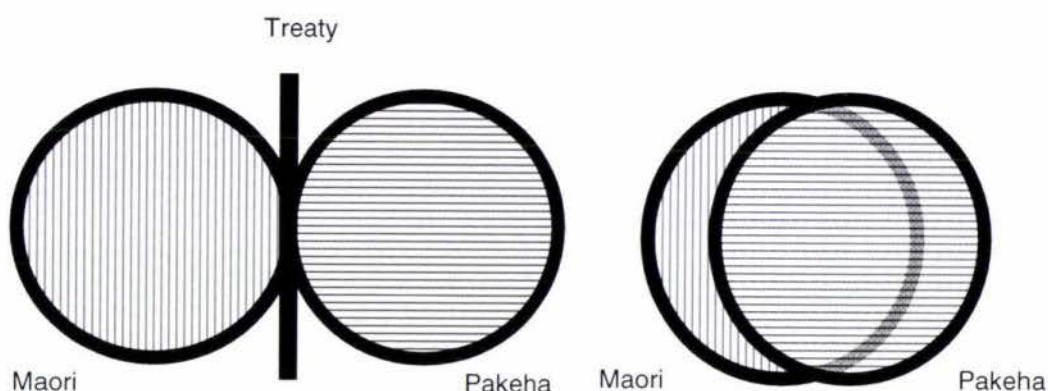
Treaty



Maori                          Pakeha     Maori                          Pakeha

**Figure 20 – Separate Biculturalism (left) and Blended Biculturalism (right)**

In order to better interpret the different ways that I saw biculturalism being reflected in museological displays, I developed two models of biculturalism, 'separate biculturalism' and 'blended biculturalism' – which are determined by the degree to which division is represented between Maori and Pakeha (*see* Figure 20). 'Separate biculturalism' constructs New Zealand as made up of two separate and distinct groups, Maori and Pakeha, who inhabit the same geo-political space, in an attempted condition of equality. In this sense, the separate bicultural identity is a corporate identity – where the nation of New Zealand has two sides and individuals within the nation belong within one group or the other. In practice, this is a difficult concept, as many people in New Zealand could claim both Maori and Pakeha ancestry, but when the two groups are conceptualised in opposition to one another, there is an implicit pressure to choose one identity over another. With 'blended biculturalism', Maori and Pakeha cultural characteristics and identities are represented as overlapping, producing a unique intermixing of the two. Maori and Pakeha are therefore less easily separated at sub-national levels, so that biculturalism can exist within regional as well as individual identities. Because the discourse of both bicultural models constructs the nation as made up of two 'cultures', those New Zealanders who do not identify as Maori or Pakeha are excluded from such conceptualisations of the national community. If the nation is to be defined on the basis of the different cultural 'parts' which make up the

national 'whole', then it is the multicultural model which recognises the presence and legitimate belonging of non-Maori and non-Pakeha in New Zealand.

### *Separate Bicultural*

Te Papa and Russell Museum were two places where I found a number of examples that presented a 'separate bicultural' identity. Both museums have made conscious efforts to represent their particular communities (the nation and the region of Russell, respectively) as bicultural and in both cases, the kind of biculturalism that is presented attempts to give Maori and Pakeha equal and separate space. Te Papa's separate biculturalism comes through in the symbolism of its architecture and layout as well as in its representations relating to the Treaty of Waitangi. The use of space and the ways in which stories are told at Russell Museum imply a separate bicultural identity.

As a nationalising governmental project, Te Papa is guided by the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, where the Treaty is conceptualised as a legal codification of biculturalism. Signifying its importance, the exhibit on the Treaty of Waitangi, *Signs of a Nation*, is located at the centre of the museum in an impressive cathedral-style gallery. Its importance to the museum is not only signified in its spatial centrality, but also in its size, as a giant reproduction of the original Treaty, complete with torn edges and faded ink and suspended in glass, is hung at the centre of the exhibit space,



Figure 21 - Signs of a Nation, Te Papa

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dominating the visitor's gaze (*see* Figure 21). On the two facing walls of the exhibit are two – equally enormous – typeset versions of the Treaty, one in te Reo Maori and the other in English. The exhibit also emphasises the politicised nature of the document, both historical and contemporary, by playing audio recordings of people stating different opinions about the document, and by outlining the contemporary importance of the Waitangi Tribunal.

The exhibit's design, as described on the museum's website,[19] is intended to encourage "quiet contemplation", with the positioning of couches in the middle of the space, low lighting and a "calm ambiance". And while the exhibit itself does acknowledge controversy over the document – particularly through the audio recordings of various and often conflicting historical and contemporary opinions – the 'moral' of the exhibit is that the Treaty is a fundamental and undeniable part of the nation. There is an interesting tension expressed in this exhibit, as it attempts to push a governmental agenda that emphasises the importance of the Treaty of Waitangi but at the same time, tries to acknowledge various sides of debates relating to it. Williams' (2005) examination of the same exhibit uses different examples – one includes a computer game no longer a part of the exhibit – but reaches a similar conclusion; that it "gestures" toward the inclusion of various public opinions, but that those opinions are filtered and framed within a narrative that assumes that the public will eventually come to embrace and accept the Treaty as a key part of New Zealand's national, political and cultural identity. Williams (2005) notes that the recent shift in public opinion away from support of bicultural policies has serious implications for a museum that purports to be both a disciple of biculturalism and a place for the expression of national identities. What this tension has produced are awkward attempts to acknowledge controversial perspectives that contradict the dominant narrative of the display, which itself not only reflects biculturalism, but also seems to advocate and support it. The result is an exhibit that acknowledges that 'other' opinions exist, but which normalises and

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[19] http://www.tepapa.govt.nz/TePapa/English/WhatsOn/LongTermExhibitions/SignsofaNation.htm

condones only the perspective that the Treaty is a central and founding national document that establishes biculturalism as an official national identity and agenda.

Te Papa's deliberate architectural layout is one example of symbolic 'separate biculturalism' presented by the museum. The layout of the museum, as described in the tour book, the *Te Papa Explorer* – sold for $3.00 at the visitor information centre – is intended to signify the following about the architecture and layout of the museum:

> *The building's north face, with its bluff-like walls, embraces nature – the sea, hills, and sky. Here, overlooking the harbour, sits Rongomaraeroa, Te Papa's marae (gathering place). The marae observes Maori customs and values. It welcomes visitors from New Zealand and around the world and leads them to the Maori exhibition areas.*

> *The south face, with its vibrantly coloured panels, greets the city. The area inside is oriented towards exhibitions with a Pakeha (European) focus. Its grid-like spaces reflect the patterns of European settlement.*

> *A central wedge slices through the building between the two spaces. It both divides and unites them – the natural and the urban, the Maori and the Pakeha. Here, the exhibition Signs of a Nation Nga Tohu Kotahitanga explores the Treaty of Waitangi – the nation's founding document.*

Through its architectural construction, Te Papa reinforces romanticised notions of 'natural' Maori who are contrasted with the urban and modern Pakeha. This observation is supported by Morris (2005) who notes that at Te Papa, Maori culture is presented as spiritual, permanent, and fixed versus Pakeha culture, which is represented as secular, changing and temporary. The divider/uniter terminology (used in the guide) emphasises how the two groups remain separate and distinct because of the Treaty, which acts as a border between the two, so that they are seen as essentially separate except where they are bound together in a formal, legal partnership. The Treaty of Waitangi exhibit emphasises a legal biculturalism, while the separation of Pakeha space from Maori space defines the type of

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biculturalism as a separate biculturalism, one where Maori and Pakeha are legally joined by the Treaty of Waitangi, but are otherwise distinct and separate groups[20].

The museum's separate bicultural approach not only determines decision-making about design and layout, it is also emerges in discourses about expectations for fairness and equality at the museum. This often translates into an expectation that each half, Maori and Pakeha be granted equal representation space. In this way, space at the museum becomes politicised, and the way in which it is divided up can signify equality or bias. At a separate bicultural museum, the implied expectation is that, if Maori and Pakeha are to be treated equally, each group should be allocated an equal amount of space that is their own. This rhetoric has been used by some to express a sense that Pakeha have not received equal treatment at Te Papa. One example of this comes from an article in the *Sunday Star Times* entitled "Pakeha History Squeezed out of Te Papa" (Laugesen & Maling, 2001). The article presents the results of an investigation into the museum's plan for the future, and reports that Te Papa "plans to cut exhibition space for Pakeha history by about a third for two years, despite concerns from historians that those displays are already inadequate". The tone of the article is subtly accusatory and by implying that certain historians believe that the Pakeha displays are already inadequate, the implication is that Pakeha are not being treated at the museum with the same respect that is given to Maori.

A similar logic relating to fairness, space and the politics of representation can be seen at Russell Museum, although in this instance it was Maori who were seen as under-represented. Beginning in 2003, Russell Museum underwent a number of dramatic renovations – which largely involved making more space for Maori-related content – in order to better reflect Russell's bicultural character. The resulting biculturalism at Russell Museum is a separate biculturalism, which is

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[20] While the guidebook frames a description of the layout in bicultural terms, the layout itself demonstrates an appeal to other groups within New Zealand besides just Maori and Pakeha. There is a section for the exhibition of Pacific culture, and a rotating exhibition space for different ethnic groups within New Zealand. This appeals to a multicultural identity, and will be explored in the multicultural section.

reflected in the layout of the museum, as well as in its narratives. Although sharing the same exhibition space, the room is essentially divided in half, with Maori-related material on one side and Pakeha and British-related material on the other side. Thus, when visitors enter the main exhibition room, which is also the first room in the museum, Maori material culture – flax mats, greenstone ornaments, and clubs – is displayed on the left hand side of the room, while items relating to European settlement – metal nails, glass, china, maps, and prints of the imperial court – are on the right. It is an accommodative type of change, where space is made within what was initially a Pakeha-biased museum. That new space was then filled with Maori-related content so that Maori and Pakeha are equally represented.

An attempt at equality can also be seen in how Russell museum refers to the region's name. The display board *What's in a Name? The Origins of Russell,* tells two stories about the naming of the region: one is about Kororareka, the Maori name for the area; and the other is about Russell, the name assigned by the British governor in 1844:

> *According to Maori legend, when a chief wounded in battle was given some broth made from the flesh of the bird he murmured: Ka reka korora! – "How sweet is the penguin!", hence the name, Kororareka.*

> *The korora, little blue penguin, which gave its name to Kororareka, the early European trading settlement that became known as Russell, is common around the coasts of New Zealand, and comes ashore to nest during August and September.*

> *When New Zealand became a colony of Britain in 1840, Lieutenant-Governor William Hobson established the country's first capital at Okiato, 7km south of Kororareka. He named it Russell, in honour of Lord John Russell (1792-1878), Secretary for the Colonies and later Prime Minister of Britain. But the seat of government was transferred to Auckland in 1841 and Okiato was destroyed in a fire the following year.*

> *In the early 1840's, prominent Ngapuhi chief Hone Heke Pokai had led Maori attempts to overthrow British rule in New Zealand. European settlers abandoned Kororareka in panic in 1845, when the township was attacked and burned, but returned after disturbances had died down. In January 1844, the Governor directed that "Kororareka*

*be henceforth included within the township of Russell and be officially designated by*
*the said name of Russell and be the Port of Entry at the Bay of Islands".*

The above story divides Maori and Pakeha in the same way the main exhibition room spatially divides the two. It begins with the story of how the region came to be called Kororareka by Maori, and then follows with how Russell came to be the 'official' name of the region. A similar narrative pattern can be seen in the museum's audio-visual presentation, which tells the history of the area. The video begins in the 'present' with the tall ships race, and uses the nautical theme to sequence into a description of the arrival of Polynesians to New Zealand who, after



**Figure 22 - Model of Cook's *Endeavour*, Russell Museum**

centuries of occupation, developed a unique Maori culture. This pre-European segment has a female narrator, while the narration switches to a male upon arrival of the Europeans. This not only marks a division between Maori and European, it also dichotomises the two, placing Maori on the female side and European on the male side. This echoes the dichotomisation at Te Papa, which places Maori on the side of nature, and Pakeha on the urban side.

Because 'biculturalism' at Russell Museum was attempted by increasing the Maori-related content, it means that Pakeha-related content did not require a dramatic revision of its narratives and underlying paradigms. Because of this,

Russell Museum retains some elements of colonial pride. The most prominent example of this is the scale model of Cook's *Endeavour* (*see* Figure 22). As the display explains, the model was built in 1969 to commemorate the bicentennial of Cook's first "visit" to New Zealand, and was displayed in ports and towns across New Zealand and Australia until it was subsequently presented to Russell Museum. A display case of glass, ceramics and nails is labelled "Our Past", and the display card describes the contents as evidence of the presence of European settlers and traders. The use of the word "our" to refer to what are identified as "European" items seems to imply that the museum itself identifies with Europeans, particularly as "our" is not used to refer to Maori displays. It might also indicate that Pakeha-related content was not revised to conform to bicultural or post-colonial discourses when space was made to include more Maori-related content. Thus, biculturalism at Russell Museum appears to be



Figure 23 - Tangata Whenua, Museum of Wellington

more about allocating equal amounts of display space to Maori and Pakeha as opposed to revisiting and revising narratives and discourses to be more in line with bicultural and post-colonial perspectives.

I encountered this kind of added-on separate biculturalism at the Museum of Wellington, which is overwhelmingly focused on the history of the region since the arrival of colonial settlers but does contain some Maori-related content. The main Maori-related display, *Tangata Whenua* (*see* Figure 23) features a contemporarily woven and carved piece that symbolises significant aspects of Maori belief about their place and belonging in the region. The area contains some descriptions

about Maori settlement of the area and contact with Europeans. The museum also has an audio-visual presentation called *A Millennium Ago*, featuring Maori creation legends told using dramatic special effects. The inclusion of Maori-related content in the museum represents an effort to demonstrate at the museum that Maori are part of the city's history and community. This inclusion represents Maori as separate and different as the Maori-related displays are set apart and stand out from the mainly settler and colonial-oriented museum.

These examples of separate biculturalism at museums relate to attempts to address issues of Pakeha bias in museums by including more Maori-related content in an effort to make the museums reflect the bicultural nature of the community. However, where the community is perceived to be only one or two 'cultures', the separate bicultural rhetoric can be used to justify the exclusion of the other group. This argument necessitates a belief that biculturalism can fragment below the national level; that communities themselves may not be bicultural, but may belong within a bicultural nation. I encountered this logic at Shantytown and at the Kauri Museum which both have very little, if any, Maori-related content, and justify this on the basis that it is not their place to tell other groups' stories. This came out in my interview with Ian Johnson (8 December, 2006), who explained to me that Shantytown is a place where a *part* of the New Zealander identity can be represented and that part does not include Maori:

> *[T]he ultimate goal of the attraction is to allow people to connect with the character of today's New Zealander by giving them a glimpse of the sort of people that came here and helped essentially forge the character, build the character. You know, we think New Zealand is a bit of a Petri Dish... It was the last place that received massive European immigration, and there's an identity called a New Zealander there and it's happened in a very short space of time. Who is this thing called a New Zealander? We can tell part of that story. Obviously we're not telling the indigenous cultural side of it because it's not our story to tell.*

At this level of reasoning, there is no argument with biculturalism, as it is seen as a national identity. But New Zealand's national bicultural identity is a separate

**Figure 24 - Maori and European sides of Transition Gateway, Kauri Museum**

biculturalism; one that can be fragmented at sub-national levels so that museums can represent one group or the other without being in opposition to it.

The Kauri Museum is non-apologetic in its adherence to its "pioneer" theme. As I noted in Chapter Four, the museum contains very little Maori-related content, and where Maori are included, they only feature in terms of their relationship to the pioneers, or are depicted in carvings done by pioneers. It was for this reason that I initially found a contemporary swamp kauri log sculpture featured at the museum to be quite enigmatic (*see* Figure 24). As the display card describes, the sculpture, entitled "Transition Gateway" signifies biculturalism and is meant to be a gateway into the new millennium:

> *One upright has Celtic patterned carving, portraying European settlement. The other upright shows copies of ancient Maori drawings depicting Maori culture. The lintel across the top is secured by mortise and tenon joints (like Stonehenge). It carries the words "Fare forward voyager". This gateway to travel, depicts the joining of the two cultures.*

It may seem as though such a tribute to the "joining of the two cultures" does not fit with the rest of the museum, which is focused primarily on the settlers. If the

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sculpture is a tribute to the joining of two cultures, why are the two cultures not joined throughout the rest of the museum? The Kauri Museum makes it very clear that it is a thematically-driven museum – its focus on the pioneers is emphasised on its website and in its brochures, maps and guides. The belief that colonial settlers, or pioneers, can be separated off and represented on their own is dependent on a belief that their stories and histories exist within a sphere that is separate from Maori. The Kauri Museum's 'Transition Gateway' recognises biculturalism, which may not necessarily go against what is presented at the rest of the museum, if it is seen as subscribing to the idea of a separate biculturalism where, below the national level, Maori and Pakeha are easily separated into their own spheres.

## Blended Bicultural

The 'blended bicultural' identity supports an idea of New Zealand as the coming together of Maori and Pakeha, where it is the joining of these two cultures that creates a unique New Zealander identity. This concept is similar to separate biculturalism, as both relate to the coming together of Maori and Pakeha, but the difference between the two relates to the level at which Maori can be separated from Pakeha. In separate biculturalism, the unity between Maori and Pakeha is a national, political and legal unity. Below the level of the nation, biculturalism fragments, and it is much easier to separate Maori from Pakeha. However, with blended biculturalism, it is harder to separate Maori from Pakeha, as both can be part of sub-national, regional and even individual identities. Maori and Pakeha each have distinguishing features, but these features are not easily separated, but are blended together. It is this unique overlapping of Maori and Pakeha characteristics that creates a unique New Zealander identity, where biculturalism is presented as not just a feature of the nation, but can also be part of regional and individual identities.

Blended biculturalism is expressed at museums where Maori and Pakeha are both included, but where division between the two is not emphasised. Rather, both Maori and Pakeha are included in the same space, in the same displays and

distinctions between the two are often not emphasised. In this way, blended biculturalism resists dichotomisation of Maori and Pakeha, one is not set in opposition to the other, but the two are integrated. The majority of the examples of blended biculturalism I found at Nelson Provincial Museum (Nelson Museum), New Zealand's newest museum. Opened in October 2005, Nelson Museum is located on the same plot of land where New Zealand's first museum – The Literary and Scientific Institute of Nelson, founded in 1842 – was once located. The museum is also referred to as Town Acre 445 – on the signage outside the building and on its website. This name is an attempt to do away with a restrictive 'museum' labelling, so that it can be understand more as a community resource.

The display and narrative techniques at Nelson Museum do not strictly adhere to conventional museological methods of organisation and classification. Traditionally, museums separate people groups, time periods, science and myth, and natural and social science. At Nelson Museum, these distinctions are not made so clearly: natural history components and myths are not distinguished as such and are mixed in together; displays are organized by region so that cultural and scientific elements from a variety of time periods appear together; and Maori and Pakeha are grouped together, with less obvious distinctions between the two.

The entrance to the museum is a small, self-contained room, called *Nga Kakano – The Seeds*, with sleek, automatic glass sliding doors through which one enters and exits. The room is small, with dark walls and dramatic low lighting. On the walls, the Maori creation story is written, though it is not referred to as such. Million year old fossils sit in glass display cases. This room emits a sense of deep time, using dramatic lighting and sounds, creation stories and fossils. It blends 'myth' (Maori creation stories) with 'science' (fossils) and does not make clear distinctions between the two. It uses both 'natural' objects (rocks) and technology (lighting and sound) to construct an atmosphere.

The blending of traditional modernist and museological dichotomies continues in the large exhibition room, in displays such as *Land and Sea*, *Mineral Resources*, and *Fishing Season*. In the *Land and Sea* display, a digging stick is positioned near wooden water skis, and the story of the Newman's Coach Lines

told alongside the Rakaihautu Legend. In *Mineral Resources*, visitors can enter into a limestone cave replica and explore the creatures that live inside, hear a legend relating to the cave, and learn about the resources extracted from such places in an interactive audio-visual presentation. In *Fishing Season* the story of Kahukura's net is positioned on glass panels over a large black and white photograph of men with fishing nets. Below this is a glass display case of hooks and sinkers. The display also includes an 'early colonial recipe' for eel pie and a work of art made in 2005 of eels.

Perhaps because the museum's displays resist dichotomising Maori and Pakeha, they more easily explore the subtleties and complexities of relations and interactions between the two. An example of this is the display on the wreck of the *Delaware*, which took place in September 1863. The display tells of how Huria, Hemi, Hohapata and other local Maori helped rescue people from the ship wreck and were rewarded with gifts and money at a special ceremony. It also describes how the money that was given to them came from Pakeha trusts which held funds that had been generated from Maori lands. This draws attention to the irony and injustice of how Maori were rewarded for saving Pakeha lives with money that had come from the appropriation of their own land. The display also mentions that the assistance from Maori helped to ease tensions that had been escalating been Maori and Pakeha as the Taranaki Land Wars progressed. These stories do not conform to a simple binary narrative – good versus evil, man versus nature, or Maori versus Pakeha – but rather, acknowledge the complicated nature and ironies of such a relationship. The Taranaki Wars – representing conflict between Maori and Pakeha – occur at the same time that a group of Maori rescue shipwrecked Pakeha, and are then rewarded with money that, by rights should have been theirs to begin with. It breaks with conflict/resolution narratives, and while it emphasises a difference between Maori and Pakeha, it also demonstrates how Maori and Pakeha lives were, even in the 1860s, intricately interconnected.

Two of the final displays in the Museum emphasise how Nelson Museum has consciously revisited and in many instances revised traditional museum paradigms. The displays call attention to museological practices and paradigms of

earlier times and use them to illustrate how things have changed. The first display shows a curiosity cabinet, and explains that the purpose of curiosity cabinets was to provoke a sense of wonder and awe and that the principles of classification and comparison which guided those who developed curiosity cabinets provided the basic principles for the disciplines of today's humanities and social sciences. It also notes that the curiosity cabinets were prequels to 18th century public museums. This display seems quite appropriate, given that many of the displays at Nelson Museum do not conform to these 'traditional' museum classification categories. The curiosity cabinet thus deconstructs assumptions that classification categories are fixed or 'rational', by showing how, from a contemporary perspective, the way in which objects are sorted in the curiosity cabinet may seem unusual. The other display is of Japanese Samurai Armour, with a note that it represents the types of objects – foreign, valuable, and exotic– that museums used to collect 'in earlier times'. The display implies that today's museums should not collect other group's items which calls attention to the self-representative strategy of the museum, and its goal to be a place where the community can reflect on and represent its own heritage.

## *Multicultural*

The separate and blended biculturalisms present two different ways of conceptualising biculturalism in New Zealand. Biculturalism is an exclusive way of imagining the nation as it leaves room for only two "cultures" and therefore excludes other cultural groups who have – both historically and more recently – migrated to New Zealand. The New Zealand government explored the idea of multiculturalism in the late 1970s, as a way to officially recognise the nation's ethnic and cultural diversity. In the 1980s, changes to immigration policies meant that preferential treatment was no longer given to British immigrants and that immigration decisions would be made on non-ethnic grounds. This lead to a dramatic increase in immigrants from non-European regions – particularly from Asia and the Pacific Islands – further contributing to the diversity of cultural and ethnic groups who identified as New Zealanders (Phillips, 2006). Multiculturalism

challenged the notion that all New Zealanders needed to assimilate to either Pakeha or Maori ways of life but could, instead, still be legitimate New Zealanders and retain their cultural beliefs and practices. The idea of multiculturalism challenges the use of any homogenous or even heterogeneous cultural identity to define the nation because it is an inclusive perspective, where cultural or ethnic identities do not determine true New Zealandness.

There is some limited evidence that museums are recognising New Zealand's multicultural composition, through exhibits dedicated to different cultural groups that may have a particularly strong presence in the museum's region. As my research was focused specifically on colonial settlers, I examined representations of other cultures only as they appeared in conjunction with those of colonial settlers. Therefore, there may be a great deal many more examples that I did not encounter on account of my research focus. As it was, I found very few examples that appealed to multicultural ideals. Where these did occur, they usually featured one 'token' cultural group which is both set apart from the community as different and also included as a unique member of the community. In all examples, the appeal to multiculturalism remains considerably ambiguous, as the representations tend to emphasise difference and separateness from the rest of New Zealand society, thus raising questions about the degree to which 'different' cultures are represented as truly part of a New Zealand identity and not just enigmatic appendages.

The Dalmatians are the major ethnic group represented at those museums in Northland which are associated with the Kauri industries. The Dalmatians came to New Zealand from the Dalmatian coast of the Adriatic Sea, part of present day Croatia, towards the end of the nineteenth century. A large number of Dalmatians left their homeland amid rising population levels in the 1880s, which made food and land scarce (Walrond, 2006). There were Dalmatians who went to prospect for gold in the South Island, but it is the Dalmatians of the Kauri gum fields of Northland who have been most strongly memorialised in museums. Most gold miners did not permanently settle in the South Island, whereas many gum diggers

**Figure 25 - Gum Washing Machine, Dargaville Museum**

settled in the North, and the ancestors of these settlers support their memorialisation at Northland museums.

There is a strong Dalmatian influence at Dargaville Regional Museum, which is made evident by the display entitled *The Dalmatians*, and by the restored gum washing machine display. *The Dalmatians*, sponsored by the Dalmatian Genealogical and Historical Society, tells "their story in their own voice", and uses examples weaving, the tamburica, costume, dance trophies and family portraits from 1907 to 1914 to tell these stories. The dedication of a specific display through which Dalmatian descendants can tell their stories demonstrates an acknowledgement of the Dalmatians as part of the region's identity (due in large part to the determination and energy of the descendants of Dalmatian settlers in the region to lobby for and organise such displays) while simultaneously constructing the group as different and separate from the other displays – dealing with such topics as cleaning, law enforcement, and health care – which supposedly refer to settlers of British heritage. In this way, Dalmatians are constructed as not quite fitting into dominant British displays, and deserving of their own space where they can represent themselves.

The gum washing plant exhibit is located in a large room and features an enormous restored gum washing machine, set up to display how it would have been used to wash gum (*see* Figure 25) and is decorated with murals depicting gum diggers at work (*see* Figure 26).  While the room is intended to teach about gum diggers in general, it was constructed by descendants of Dalmatian settlers, as a tribute to their "hard work and ingenuity".  The gum washing plant exhibit is not 'multicultural' in that it does not specifically set Dalmatians apart as a unique cultural group.  The exhibit does recognise that Dalmatians were one group which made up the gum diggers, but it presents gum digging and washing as the same across different cultural groups.  It is the exhibit on *The Dalmatians* which specifically recognises Dalmatians as a unique cultural group that is both part of and separate from the 'mainstream' society represented at the museum.  Far North Regional Museum treats Dalmatian gum diggers in the same manner – by recognising the large number of Dalmatian gum diggers who not only worked in the gum fields but ended up settling in the region and whose descendants continue to occupy the area.  And though the Dalmatians continue to have a strong presence in the region, they are represented at the museums as separate and different.

**Figure 26 - Gum Washing Mural, Dargaville Museum**

At Shantytown, the Chinese gold miners are represented in a separate reconstructed mining camp called 'Chinatown'.  Here, visitors walk through a mine shaft (*see* Figure 27) to enter the Chinese mining camp, which consists of a few tiny dwellings filled with Chinese cultural items.  This section also has a large

Figure 27 - Chinatown, Shanytown

number of display boards with detailed information on the Chinese gold miners, the reasons why they came to the West Coast and why they left China. One display board discusses the mixed reception the Chinese received from the "predominantly European mining community". It explains that Chinese were treated with suspicion and dislike, were blamed for economic decline and that in smaller mining communities, some Chinese were "jostled and abused" and one was stoned. The display board asks: "Imagine how you would feel if this happened to you in a strange land?" It engages the visitor to empathise with the Chinese miners, by encouraging them to imagine themselves as experiencing such discrimination.

## Summary

The different culturalisms represented at museums are projections of idealised visions which serve to recognise the existence of particular cultural groups within the nation, and to justify the nature of that group's inclusion. Separate biculturalism constructs New Zealand as made up of two 'dominant' halves consisting of Maori and Pakeha who are both different and separate but who share the same geo-political space. Blended biculturalism acknowledges the presence of Maori and Pakeha culture, but does not construct the two as so separate and distinct. Instead, the two cultures often appear together as overlapping and interrelated. The third culturalism, multiculturalism, constructs New Zealand as being made up of more than just Maori and Pakeha, so that other cultures are included as are part of the national identity as well. Often museums usually only include one or two token 'other' cultures where their inclusion signifies their place

as part of the community but the manner of their inclusion – which sets them apart as separate and different – also marks them as enigmatic and not fitting in completely.

These different ways of conceptualising national identities do not exist in a vacuum, but are connected to debates and negotiations over power, politics and group affiliation. The historical roots and contemporary implications of blended biculturalism are particularly illustrative of the politics surrounding these identities. Blended biculturalism presents an imagining of Maori-Pakeha relations, where the two groups not only share the same land in peace but also participate in cultural exchange and communal activities. This represents a dramatic (re)conceptualisation of Maori and Pakeha relations the two groups are not positioned in their own separate spheres, but where both share the same sphere but retain a certain degree of distinctiveness within that sphere.

The separate bicultural and blended bicultural models might best be understood as two ends of a bicultural spectrum, so that different imaginings of biculturalism might be closer to one model or the other, but need not fit precisely in either. They represent one way of analysing how biculturalism can be understood, represented and practised in very different ways – that there is not a singular universal definition of the concept. It is important to deconstruct different perspectives on biculturalism, particularly because it is such a political trope.

# Chapter Six:

# Conclusions

Cultural analysis is intrinsically incomplete. And, worse than that, the more deeply it goes the less complete it is. It is a strange science whose most telling assertions are its most tremulously based, in which to get somewhere with the matter at hand is to intensify the suspicion, both your own and that of others, that you are not quite getting it right. But that, along with plaguing subtle people with obtuse questions, is what being an ethnographer is like (Geertz, 1973, p. 29).

The academic literature on museums had led me to expect them to be sites for the playing out of highly politicised contestations over how the past is represented, who is included, and the nature of that inclusion. I had expected to encounter some of the post-colonial anxieties over settler belonging, decolonisation and renegotiation of geo-political communities. While this was most strongly present at Te Papa, I did not find that the representations at other museums reflected any strong self-awareness of the politics of their representations. I believe that this expectation comes from a bias in the literature to focus analyses on nationalist museums – which are by nature more embedded in political ideologies and processes – and to overlook smaller museums, which may not be so strongly influenced by national politics and ideologies.

While I did not find evidence at most sites of representations which were contemporarily and politically charged, I found that colonial settlers are represented in many different ways at the different sites. This variability does relate to some

degree to the politics and ideologies operant at the times the representations were produced, but also is a product of the diverse regions, histories and communities related to the sites.

The narratives which position colonial settlers in relation to the nation, Empire, Maori and other cultural groups in New Zealand are not fixed, consensual, and universal but are dynamic, contested and often contradictory. The constructions of colonial settlers which portray them as ancestral pioneers appeal to universal meta-narratives of suffering, struggle, and overcoming an inhospitable environment to create a civilised society. Yet, despite these thematic similarities, each region has its own particular variations on the theme, indicating that there may be a very general New Zealander pioneer meta-narrative, but there are also regional particularities and specificities.

More dramatic differences exist between the ways in which colonial settlers are presented in relation to Empire. In this respect, museum representations have a dichotomist tendency, appealing to narratives either of pride or shame. Some exhibits emphasise how colonial settlers brought with them British law, architecture and civility, while others focus on the destruction and harm caused to the land and indigenous people with the colonisation of New Zealand. These dichotomised perspectives are closely related to differences between those ideologies which influenced the creators of the representations and the time periods in which they were developed.

The ways in which colonial settlers are represented in relation to Maori and other cultural groups are also remarkably variable. Most museums subscribe to some form of biculturalism, and I developed the separate bicultural and blended bicultural models as a way of understanding the different ways in which biculturalism is represented at museums. Some museums are also experimenting with ways of including other cultural groups, to recognise their presence and contributions to the community the museum represents. The different cultures which are recognised depend largely upon the specific region and community in which a particular museum is embedded, and so multiculturalism is represented very differently from museum to museum.

The discontinuity and variability of representations of colonial settlers at museums is related to the nature of museum representations as social constructions with regional and historical specificities. Te Papa not only reflects the political atmosphere of the capital city in which it is located, it is also very much a product of the time period in which it was constructed. Not only were different museological representations developed at different times and in different regions, they were developed by a variety of people with very different educational backgrounds, political perspectives and motivations. Large city museums and national museums have the resources to hire highly trained specialists in all aspects of museum theory, planning, design, and management. Smaller regional museums rely more heavily on volunteers and may not have the resources or capability to hire specially trained museum professionals. As a result, the paradigms, orientations and motivations guiding those who create museum displays – even if they are contemporaries living in the same country – will be highly diverse, and will result in very different representations.

It is this historical, regional and individual specificity which the academic literature on museums struggles and frequently fails to acknowledge. The post-colonial literature in particular imposes universal ideals and obligations to which all museums are expected to aspire. These relate to expectations that museums be dynamic, relevant, responsive, inclusive and democratic institutions. Karp and Lavine (1991, p. 6), for example, argue that museums should be working to (1) strengthen opportunities for populations to exert control over how they are represented; (2) diversify methods for how non-Western and minority cultures are represented; and (3) incorporate narrative and display techniques which allow for multiple perspectives or at least which reveal the tendentious nature of representations. In a similar vein, Anderson argues that museums which do not make attempts to respond to the changing needs, desires and demands of the communities they represent run the risk of becoming anachronistic (G. Anderson, 2004).

It may be that the prevalence of such moral expectations for all museums in academic literature is closely connected to the bias in the literature toward critical

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examinations of national museums. As I noted in Chapter Two, there is very little critical academic literature examining small regional museums and this neglect may be related to the assumption that all museums can be held up to the same standards. National museums in settler nations have similar resources and degrees of politicisation of identities and representations. As governmental projects, what is represented and practised at national museums reflects upon the government's commitment to and positioning on certain agendas. And so, it may be reasonable to expect national museums to be sensitive and responsive to contemporary politics, values and beliefs. But small regional museums, heritage sites and even large city museums have agendas, resources, motivations, and orientations that are very different from national museums. The imposition of moralised expectations on such museums holds them up to ideals which are most likely not achievable and detracts from courses of inquiry which may be more appropriate to the investigation of the construction of identities.

Instead of imposing academic guidelines and expectations upon museums, would it not be more useful to step back from those guidelines, expectations, pressures and constraints to which museums are exposed and examine these pressures as socio-cultural products which are intricately connected to the institution of the museum? Does the 'imagining' of the museum belong to the academic critic, to the museum, or to the community? Why have museum academics claimed the authority to moralise about museum representations and to determine "good" and "bad" representations? At a time when academics are criticising museums for appealing to elitist notions of beauty and authenticity, are they also imposing elitist expectations for what is right and wrong in museums?

The application of universal expectations obscures the regional and historical variability of museums. It makes it difficult to take into consideration the unique and creative ways in which those involved with each museum work to preserve, represent and promote the history, heritage and identity of a particular community. In my examination of the different ways that museums in New Zealand represent and practice biculturalism, I could have held up separate biculturalism and blended biculturalism to the academic expectations and evaluated which way

of representing biculturalism better achieved the goals of inclusiveness, participation, and social relevancy. However, I believe this moralising draws attention away from more provocative questions revealed by the presence of multiple interpretations of biculturalism. Is blended biculturalism, being present in New Zealand's newest museum, a sign of changing conceptualisations of biculturalism which perhaps move away from the concept that biculturalism means division and separateness? To what degree is the variability in museum representations of biculturalism also present in how New Zealanders understand and practise the concept? More in-depth understandings of the different meanings of biculturalism could contribute to better dialogue concerning its place in national policies. In this way, museum representations can be used as a springboard for the deconstruction and analysis of important concepts, assumptions and definitions which have political and social implications.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1 - Sites Included in Research

| Name of Site | Type of Site | Location |
|---|---|---|
| Whangarei Museum | Regional Museum | Whangarei, Northland |
| Waitangi Treaty Grounds | Heritage Site | Paihia, Bay of Islands, Northland |
| Russell Museum | Regional Museum | Russell, Bay of Islands, Northland |
| Pompallier | Heritage Site | Russell, Bay of Islands, Northland |
| Kerikeri Mission Station and Stone Store | Heritage Site | Kerikeri, Northland |
| Far North Regional Museum | Regional Museum | Kaitaia, Northland |
| Gumdiggers Park | Historical Park | Waiharara, Northland |
| Dargaville Museum | Regional Museum | Dargaville, Northland |
| Kauri Museum | Regional Museum | Matakohe, Northland |
| Auckland Museum | Large City Museum | Auckland |
| Howick Historical Village | Historical Park | Auckland |
| Te Papa Tongarewa | National Museum | Wellington |
| Museum of Wellington City and Sea | Large City Museum | Wellington |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Petone Settlers Museum | Regional Museum | Petone, Wellington |
| Nelson Provincial Museum | Regional Museum | Nelson, South Island |
| Shantytown | Historical Park | Greymouth, West Coast, South Island |
| Canterbury Museum | Large City Museum | Christchurch |

## Appendix 2 - General Information Sheet

### *Colonial Narratives*

#### GENERAL INFORMATION SHEET

This information sheet is intended to be provided to museum officials and employees at museums selected to be included in my research project, *Colonial Narratives* (working title). It is meant to describe how I plan to conduct my research and how the museum itself will be involved.

#### Researcher Introduction

My name is Esther Wirick and I am an international student from Canada enrolled in the Master of Arts degree programme at Massey University, Albany. I am undertaking a research project as part of the requirements of my master's thesis.

My thesis will focus on similarities and disparities between European settler stories told at museums throughout the North Island of New Zealand. I am also interested in how the stories of European arrival and settlement in New Zealand are created, represented, changed and maintained in a museum setting.

#### Participants

The main "participants" in my research will be the museums I will be visiting. I have selected a number of museums to visit according to the following criteria:

- European settler history content
- Accessibility via car from Auckland
- Perceived local and national significance

No involvement on the part of the museum is necessary in order for me to conduct my research. This information sheet has been provided to museums as a courtesy so that they can be made aware of my intention to include them in my research.

#### Research Methods

I plan to make multiple visits to the museums in order to facilitate in-depth analysis of the content of the displays. My visits will be longer in duration than that of a typical visitor, but my actions and behaviour will be quite similar, as I plan to observe and photograph displays much in the same ways that a tourist would. My use of observation and photography is due to the fact that my research project is based in qualitative methods. In addition to observation and photography (where permitted), I will also be taking notes on what I see and experience at the museum.

Because my primary focus is on the European New Zealander settler history, most of my observation, photography and note-taking will be confined to areas within the museum which are relevant to this topic. Therefore, my research is not meant to include an analysis of the museum as a whole, but rather, it is meant to include an analysis of European New Zealander settler histories as they are presented at the different museums I visit.

#### Interviews with Museum Curators/Officials

Because I have an interest in the history of the museum and the processes through which the museum and its contents were and continue to be produced, I would very much appreciate speaking to individuals knowledgeable in these areas. If you are interested in participating in an interview, please contact me for more information and to set up an interview.

#### Project Procedures

The data I collect from the museums will be in the form of photographs, field notes, and museum-produced promotional and informational material such as brochures, maps or videos. This data will be used to compile a qualitative analysis of historic texts. In particular, I will be looking for

continuities and contradictions between museums in terms of the presentation styles, themes, narratives and histories of the displays.

My field notes and photographs (hard copies and electronic versions) will be kept storage for at least five years. When they are disposed of, they will be shredded and/or expunged in such a way as to maintain confidentiality.

Unless written consent is obtained, all identities of persons will be kept strictly confidential and will be presented anonymously in the research findings.

Upon completion of my data analysis, I will provide each museum included in the research with a summary of my project findings. A copy of my completed master's thesis may be provided upon request.

**Project Contacts**

*If you have any questions, comments or concerns regarding this research study, or if you wish to participate in an interview, please do not hesitate to contact me via the email or post addresses given below.*

Email:
Post:

Phone:

*If you feel you cannot discuss your concerns with me, my supervisor Dr. Kathryn Rountree may be contacted at:*

Email:
Post:

Phone:

**LOW RISK NOTIFICATION:**

*This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.*

*If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Professor Sylvia Rumball, Assistant to the Vice-Chancellor (Ethics & Equity), telephone 06 350 5249, e-mail humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz.*

## Appendix 3 – Interview Information Sheet

### *Colonial Narratives*

**INTERVIEW INFORMATION SHEET**
*A supplement to "Colonial Narratives General Information Sheet"*

#### Introduction to Researcher and to the Study
*Please see Colonial Narratives General Information Sheet for a background on the Colonial Narratives general research structure.*

#### Purpose of the Interviews
The primary goal of conducting the interviews is to gain a better understanding of the "behind-the-scenes" functioning of the museum. In particular, I am interested in learning the process by which the museum displays are constructed and how that process and the displays may have changed over time.
Some of the questions I have are:
- When was the museum established?
- What was the original goal of the museum? Has that goal changed? If so, when/why/how did it change?
- Who originally made decisions about the content of the museum? How is museum content determined and managed today?

#### Participant Recruitment
I wish to interview museum curators or officials who can describe to me the processes through which displays are constructed at the museums in which they work. Individuals willing to participate in an interview are asked to contact me to express their interest. The number of individuals involved in interviews will depend on the amount of responses received, but should not exceed ten individuals.

#### Project Procedures
With the participants consent, the interviews will be tape-recorded. Participants will be provided with a transcript of the interview and will be invited to comment-upon and/or edit the transcript. These transcripts will be securely stored for at least five years from the date of the interview. Disposal of the data will be completed in such a manner as to preserve confidentiality.
Upon completion of data analysis, participants will be provided with a summary of the research findings and, upon request, may be provided with a copy of the completed master's thesis.
The data collected from the interviews will be used to establish a process-oriented and historical understanding of how the displays at the museum are created and how the museum itself was established. Through comparison, the data will also be used in a qualitative cross-analysis of the different museums. In particular, I will be looking for consistencies and contradictions between the themes revealed at different museums.

#### Participant involvement
The interviews will be conducted at a time deemed most convenient to the participant and will be held in a location of the participant's choosing. I will have a list of questions prepared before beginning the interview and will provide this list of question to the participant before the interview. The structure of the interview will be based upon the list of questions, but is subject to take on new directions at the discretion of the participant. Interviews will conform to the participant's time constraints with no interview to exceed two hours.

**Participant's Rights**

*You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:*

- *decline to answer any particular question;*
- *withdraw from the interview at any time;*
- *ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;*
- *provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;*
- *be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded;*
- *ask for the audio tape to be turned off at any time during the interview.*

**Project Contacts**

*If you have any questions, comments or concerns regarding this research study, or if you wish to participate in an interview, please do not hesitate to contact me via the email or post addresses given below.*

Email:
Post:

Phone:

*If you feel you cannot discuss your concerns with me, my supervisor Dr. Kathryn Rountree may be contacted at:*

Email:
Post:

Phone:

**LOW RISK NOTIFICATION**

*This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.*

*If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Professor Sylvia Rumball, Assistant to the Vice-Chancellor (Ethics & Equity), telephone 06 350 5249, e-mail humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz".*

**Appendix 4 – Interview Consent Form**

# *Colonial Narratives*

## PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

### This consent form will be held for a period of five (5) years

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree/do not agree to the interview being audio taped.

I wish/do not wish to have my tapes returned to me.

I wish/do not wish to have my identity revealed in the research findings.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

| Signature: | | Date: | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Full Name - printed | | | |

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