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**Relating Maori and Pakeha:
the politics of indigenous and settler identities**

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Abstract

Settler colonisation produced particular colonial subjects: indigene and settler. The specificity of the relationship between these subjects lies in the act of settlement; an act of colonial violence by which the settler physically and symbolically displaces the indigene, but never totally. While indigenes may be physically displaced from their territories, they continue to occupy a marginal location within the settler nation-state. Symbolically, as settlers set out to distinguish themselves from the metropolitan ‘motherlands’, indigenous cultures become a rich, ‘native’ source of cultural authenticity to ground settler nationalisms. The result is a complex of conflictual and ambivalent relations between settler and indigene.

This thesis investigates the ongoing impact of this colonial relation on the contemporary identities and relations of Maori (indigene) and Pakeha (settlers) in Aotearoa New Zealand. It centres on the operation of discursive strategies used by both Maori and Pakeha in constructing their identities and the relationship between them. I analyse ‘found’ texts - non-fiction books, media and academic texts - to identify discourse ‘at work’, as New Zealanders make and reflect on their identity claims. This investigation has two aims. Firstly, I map the terrain of discursive strategies that bear the traces of colonial domination and resistance. Secondly, I seek to explore the possibilities for replacing colonial relations with non-dominating forms of relationship between Maori and Pakeha.

The thesis is in two parts. Part I focuses on theories of identity, centring on essentialism and hybridity. I argue that both modes of theorising bear the traces of colonial relations and neither offers the means to ‘escape’ colonial relations. Part II focuses on theories of

intersubjectivity, bringing relationality to the fore. I argue that epistemological relations (including identity relations) always involve a degree of violence and exclusion and that, consequently, these necessary relations must be held in tension with an awareness of the ethical dimension of intersubjective engagement. Utilising the ethics of Emmanuel Lévinas, I argue that a combination of an ethical orientation towards the other and a ‘disappointed’ orientation towards politics and epistemology, offers the means to developing non-dominating relations with the cultural other.

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