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# CAMERA ANTIPODE ANS WESTRA: Photography as a Form of Ethnographic & Historical Writing

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## ABSTRACT

*Camera Antipode: Ans Westra: Photography as a Form of Historical and Ethnographic Writing* is a study of the career of the New Zealand social documentary photographer Ans Westra. It covers the period from her arrival in New Zealand from the Netherlands in 1957 right up until her most recent projects. The emphasis throughout is on Westra as a cross-cultural photographer whose work is best understood within various historical contexts and as a form of ethnographic and historical representation in its own right. The dissertation has two parts.

Part One, *Isagogics*, consists of three chapters that deal with a range of general issues that have shaped Westra's work and contribute to an understanding of its character. All three serve to *situate* Westra within multifarious conceptual frameworks and institutional contexts and establish the historical, cultural and intellectual field from which her creative project has emerged.

The seven chapters of Part Two, *Exegesis*, provide detailed readings of Westra's photographic books, taking in both her large-scale projects aimed at a general readership and her *Bulletins* and photographic essays for use in schools. Part Two proceeds chronologically and is divided into the decades of the 1960s, the 1970s, and the 1980s and on up to the present.

A set of appendices follows Part Two. The first is a transcript of an interview with Ans Westra, the second a biographical chronology of her life and career, the third a list of her one-person and group exhibitions, and the fourth a set of photographs that are discussed in the text. Following the consolidated notes and references section is a bibliography in two parts: the first part is a complete list of Westra's published works, which constitutes the primary sources of the dissertation, followed by a fraction of the secondary sources – books, articles, and reviews of Westra's publications and exhibitions; the second part of the bibliography contains all non-Westra references cited.



## PREFACE / ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My interest in the work of Ans Westra goes back a long way, but it began to take a more serious and focused turn in the mid-1980s when I first conceived the idea of doing post-graduate study from an anthropological perspective on her career. In 1985, I presented two papers, one for the New Zealand Association of Social Anthropologists' annual conference, the other for the New Zealand Cultural Studies Working Group's annual conference. The first, "Toward an Understanding of Anthropological Photographs", was on a general topic but it made reference to several of Westra's works. The second, "Reading Photographs: Approaching Ans Westra's *Washday at the Pa*", was focused on the Bulletin for Schools, *Washday at the pa*. Over the next three years, I continued to research aspects of Westra's practice and conducted a lengthy interview with the photographer in 1987. In 1988, I contributed an essay on *Washday* ("Ragged House Photographs: Ans Westra's *Washday at the Pa*") to the "South Pacific" double issue of the Australian journal *Photofile*. Following this the idea of doing an in-depth study of Westra went into abeyance as I pursued other projects, including a Masters thesis on another topic. I returned in earnest to the topic in 2003 when I began work on the *Handboek* project, which was coordinated by Luit Bieringa of Blair Wakefield Exhibitions. I acted as exhibition researcher and editor of the book (*Handboek: Ans Westra Photographs*, 2004) that accompanied the large-scale retrospective exhibition, which toured throughout New Zealand and also went to Holland. I contributed two essays to the book (" 'P' is for pathways into Ans Westra's photographic practice: 'A' is for ANSwers to questions about the identity of our object of study"; and "From the Family of Man to the family of 'Ans': Ans Westra's photographic books for children") and prepared the documentation sections (chronology, bibliography, and list of exhibitions). Shortly after beginning work on this project, I enrolled in the doctoral programme in Social Anthropology of the School of People, Environment and Planning at Massey University, Palmerston North in order to realise my long-standing desire to write a dissertation on Ans Westra's complete career. The result is *Camera Antipode - Ans Westra: Photography as a Form of Ethnographic and Historical Writing*.

I wish to thank my supervisor Associate Professor Jeffrey Sluka for his prompt and careful reading of drafts of the dissertation and his detailed comments on all of its components. He did a wonderful job and kept me on track in maintaining the unity and coherence of such a large undertaking.

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Special thanks to my family: my wife, Virginia Callanan for supporting me throughout the protracted period of research and writing, especially during the final 12 months; and my sons Robin and Beck McDonald who have had to put up with piles of research material scattered around our communal living areas. And last but not least, my mother Joan McDonald and my father, the late Malcolm McDonald, without whose unstinting support and encouragement I would never have set out on the path that has led to this dissertation.

And, finally, I must thank Ans Westra for producing the prodigious body of work that is the subject of *Camera Antipode*, and for answering all the queries I put to her.

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## INTRODUCTION

The only way to think the visual ... is to grasp its historical coming into being.

—FREDRIC JAMESON <sup>1</sup>

*Camera Antipode: Ans Westra: photography as a form of ethnographic and historical writing* is a contribution to the branch of social anthropology known as visual anthropology. In specific terms it operates within the domain of “the study of visual systems and visible culture”.<sup>2</sup> Anna Grimshaw labels this domain “the anthropology of the visual” and contrasts it with “the visualization of anthropology”, which “takes anthropology itself as the object of visual enquiry”, but asks how the two domains might be related.<sup>3</sup> While this study is not directly concerned with “the visualization of anthropology”, it is hoped that it will show how the work of an individual practitioner working with social documentary photography has produced a form of anthropological and historical knowledge in visual terms.

*Camera Antipode* is also a contribution to the study of the wider field of visual culture studies, specifically of Aotearoa New Zealand in the second half of the 20th century. In addition to the broad fund of knowledge contained within the discipline of social anthropology itself, it draws upon the distinct but neighbouring disciplines of photographic, film, and media studies; cultural studies; art history; literary theory; philosophy; educational studies; and social history. This multi and inter-disciplinary perspective is useful and necessary when dealing with syncretic forms such as ethnographic and social documentary photography; and with a career as long and varied as Ans Westra’s, stretching as it does over a period rich in social and cultural change. The dissertation is divided into two parts, each of which is given a heading derived from the field of hermeneutics: part one has the title *isagogics* and the title of part two is *exegesis*.

## ISAGOGICS

The term Isagogics derives from biblical studies where it refers to matters preliminary to the interpretative exegesis that follows. I have chosen the term to cover the first three chapters of *Camera Antipode*, which constitute part one of the thesis. These three chapters provide a set of critical tools whose purpose is to orientate and guide the reader through

the detailed readings of specific works in part two, by elaborating the contextual frameworks within which the works were produced.

EXEGESIS

Having introduced the historical, cultural and theoretical parameters of the dissertation in part one, in part two, Exegesis, I proceed to detailed analyses of Ans Westra's work, providing in-depth readings of all her major publications. Reading here is understood as a complex process of textual interrogation, which cannot be reduced to the mechanical generation of knowledge by means of the procrustean imposition of *a priori* theories or models. "A theory", as J. Hillis Miller notes, "is all too easy to refute or deny, but a reading can be controverted only by going through the difficult task of rereading the work in question and proposing an alternative reading."<sup>4</sup> The interpretive movement involved in the kind of reading referred to here is captured in Roland Barthes's phrase "from work to text"<sup>5</sup>, which describes the process whereby the reader produces (writes) a text of her own as a result of an encounter (reading) with a particular work. The reading generated thus emerges within an intermediate space.

In part two, Exegesis, I read Westra's works in light of the historical and discursive contexts elaborated in part one and also throughout the seven chapters of part two, in an ongoing process. At one level, the aim of these readings is to reveal the complexity and richness of texture of each work, the moment of immanence, if you will. However, each work is located and read within a series of interlocking and informing contexts and histories, understood not as passive backdrops but as active discursive regimes: the event-horizons constituting the conditions for the works' very existence. Thus my readings all require the skillful accretion and alignment of multiple discursive registers in order that the problem of sociological discourse alluded to by Pierre Bourdieu – "one of the difficulties of sociological discourse lies in the fact that like all discourse, it unfolds in strictly linear fashion whereas, to escape over-simplification and one-sidedness one needs to be able to recall at every point the whole network of relationships found there"<sup>6</sup> – can be ameliorated if not completely overcome. Another way of putting this is in terms of Michel Foucault's concept of "eventalization": "As a procedure for lightening the weight of causality, 'eventalization' ... works by constructing around the singular event analyzed as a process a 'polygon' or rather a 'polyhedron' of intelligibility, the number of whose faces is not given in advance and can never properly be taken as finite."<sup>7</sup>

The readings of photo-works by Ans Westra contained in part two are offered as examples of 'strong reading', or "overreading"<sup>8</sup>, or "misreading"<sup>9</sup>. All these more or less comparable terms refer to a process in which careful attention is given to the rhetorical or figurative dimensions of a work, how it produces meaning, rather than its presumed ostensible reference. In short, they understand reading as a process that involves "a confrontation of the linguistic complexities of the texts discussed."<sup>10</sup> This is particularly important when the works in question are composed principally of documentary photographs, usually assumed to be highly transparent in meaning. Also, within the narrow

context of New Zealand photographic criticism, there has been little or no strong reading of photographic works. The kind of reading strategy outlined in the previous paragraph can be subsumed under the rubric of deconstruction, the most powerful form of immanent textual interrogation of recent years. I have found it particularly useful for dealing with the internal complexities of the 'Westra-text' and inter-text (see chapter one). But when it comes to the question of the place of the work within variously scaled discursive and historical frameworks and networks, I have turned to the following specific approaches for general guidance: work on discursive formations by Michel Foucault and those following his example<sup>11</sup>; the rhizomatics of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari<sup>12</sup>; and the concept of "reading formation" developed by Tony Bennett.<sup>13</sup> There are affinities and differences between these approaches and the aim is not to conflate them in an eclectic mix but to use them as indicators of an orientating direction. And even though each chapter in part two is devoted to particular works that bear the name Ans Westra, my overriding emphasis throughout the whole study is radically contextual and relational.

#### CAMERA ANTIPODE

The title *Camera Antipode* applies to the dissertation as a whole but it is especially relevant to the readings of part two. In the paragraphs that follow I will comment briefly on the significance for this thesis of the two key words which make up this composite phrase.

#### CAMERA

The cultural artefacts analysed in part two are books mostly composed of documentary photographs taken by Ans Westra with a Rolleiflex camera. What should we understand by the term camera in this context? We know that some kind of camera is a necessary but insufficient condition for the production of documentary photographs. This is the case because it was not until the early 19th century, and officially in 1839, that all the factors required for the generation of photographs, as we know them in analogue form, came together in a satisfactory configuration. I am referring here to the camera in the sense of a physical/mechanical device, a technology. But there is another sense for the term camera, a conceptual one of the camera as, in the words of Edward Branigan, "...a reading hypothesis about space – a *label* applied to the text by the viewer."<sup>14</sup> Branigan is writing about the cinematic camera but his comment above and the one below could just as easily be applied to the still camera: "Today, the camera seems less a worldly object with a privileged access to reality and more an aspect of a collective subjectivity – ... a name for how we look and know at a particular time ... Hence, the notion of camera seems to depend finally upon how the members of a particular society *agree* to confront the material objects of existence."<sup>15</sup> And, one might add, the social profile of an historical period and its actors.

It is this idea of the camera as a name for a form of collective visual subjectivity and as a kind of reading hypothesis that I'm particularly concerned with in part two of this

dissertation. However the results of my study demonstrate the difficulty of maintaining the idea of camera as the instrument of a unified we and of maintaining agreement over the significance of its depiction of “the material objects of existence”.

ANTIPODE

So much for the expanded notion of the camera, but what of the antipode in the phrase *Camera Antipode*? Well, on a literal level this is a dissertation upon a photographer and her camera work located in one part of the Antipodes, New Zealand. However, on closer inspection, it should be noted that the very term Antipodes is a Eurocentric formulation. New Zealand is the geographical reverse or antipodes of Western Europe. And Ans Westra is a Western European who came here and eventually discovered her new land by means of the camera. We might note, too, the interesting fact that the alleged ‘invention’ of photography in 1839 coincides almost exactly with the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, the moment in which the process of British colonisation of New Zealand was officially formalised. Westra’s own translation to New Zealand from the Netherlands began over one hundred years later, during an era which has come to be known as the post-colonial but which in its own way, within its own time-span, parallels an earlier period, such as the one (19th century) in which the Burton Brothers forged photographic careers in this country. What I’m hinting at here is the idea that by coming to New Zealand Westra has not simply encountered her geographical antipodes (New Zealand) but also her cultural ‘other’ (Maori), an experience unbeknownst to her in the relatively ethnically homogenous Netherlands of the 1940s and 1950s.

For, to state the obvious, Westra is a European (or surrogate Pakeha, if you will) photographer of mostly non-European subjects. And *Camera Antipode* is a study of her European way of seeing, also written from a Pakeha perspective. While it is true that something of a Maori perspective (e.g. on *Washday at the pa*) is incorporated into parts of the text, this is clearly not the same as a full-scale Maori perspective on Westra’s project as a whole. If and when a study informed by such a perspective is undertaken we can be sure it will be quite different from what is attempted and, hopefully achieved in *Camera Antipode*.<sup>16</sup>

ETHNOGRAPHY AND THE VISUAL

The subtitle of this dissertation asks whether Ans Westra’s photographic project is a form of ethnography, specifically visual ethnography. This is an important question because if it were to be answered in the negative it would serve in some way to diminish the value of Westra’s project. Whatever might be said to be the overriding purpose of her career as a photographer, it is unlikely that it has been principally dedicated to the production of art photography. It is true that many of her photographs have been made, exhibited and bought as works of art and this alone qualifies them for inclusion in the category of art. A perfectly valid and credible dissertation could be written about Ans Westra the artist and

about her photographs as works of art. But it would be a conventional Art History dissertation and quite different from what I attempt here. But at the same time I wish to do more than simply leap from one side of a binary opposition (art) to another (documentary) and view Westra as some kind of straightforward witness and recorder of her times. I'm interested as much in bringing forth the full signifiatory complexity of the forms she is working within, the structures she has produced and the discourses she connects with, as I am the subjects and events she has concentrated on, returned to, and, indeed, documented.

Ans Westra is a self-described documentary photographer working within the personal, expressive and humanist tradition epitomised by one of her mentors, Dorothea Lange. To consider her as an ethnographic photographer is to go beyond self-ascription and make claims for the works' wider quasi-anthropological significance. The grounds for doing so are essentially twofold. First, Westra can be seen as a kind of ethnographer because she has poured most of her energy into the visual description of a society and culture other than the one she was born into or the majority one she later adopted. In her own way she has been an area and cross-cultural specialist. Second, she has maintained a long-term interest in her chosen field, building up a huge archive of field-notes from which monographic statements can be fashioned and issued periodically. However, I should make it clear that it is not Ans Westra herself but this dissertation which reads her work as a form of visual ethnography or "para-ethnography", to employ the late Eric Michaels's useful term.<sup>17</sup>

I would also emphasise that even though all Westra's publications contain written texts, including some written by her, it goes without saying that her practice is fundamentally visual and based in the sequencing of images. And, as Anna Grimshaw points out, "The shift from a word-sentence to an image-sequence approach involves not the modification, but the transformation of one's ethnographic perspective... using a camera positions oneself differently in the world. It radically realigns the body and brings into view a new range of questions about ethnographic experience and knowledge."<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, the word writing in the subtitle of this dissertation – "photography as a form of ethnographic and historical writing" – should not be taken literally but more broadly and precisely as inscribing or fixing in visible form. Clifford Geertz notes: "Most ethnography is ... to be found in books and articles, rather than in films, records, museum displays, or whatever; but even in them there are, of course, photographs, drawings, diagrams, tables and so on. Self-consciousness about modes of representation (not to speak of experiments with them) has been very lacking in anthropology."<sup>19</sup>

However the application of an ethnographic framework to Westra's photography is not the only reading strategy to which I resort in *Camera Antipode*. In the case of *Washday at the pa* (chapter four) and the large body of school bulletins she has produced throughout her career (chapters six, eight, and ten), I bring to bear perspectives developed for the analysis of educational literature aimed specifically at young children. Coupled with this initiative I examine the broad range of discourses conceived by Pakeha agencies for the construction of knowledge about Maori society, because Westra's project can only be understood as yet another contribution to this massive and ceaseless enterprise. Westra may be Dutch born and bred, but she operates within New Zealand society essentially as

a Pakeha, a member of the economically and politically dominant ethnic majority. And as a Pakeha, to practise ethnography of the Maori in the 1960s, the 1970s and even more so in the 1980s and after is to enter a highly sensitive and politically charged situation. New Zealand no longer offers (if it ever did) any field scene where an ethnographer can go about her business in the classically Malinowskian manner of the fieldworker of, say, the period between 1920 and 1960. Moreover, rather than the Malinowskian method of immersion in the 'field' (which should not be equated with a fixed and circumscribed space) over one long stretch of time, Westra has maintained contact with the 'field' by means of an ongoing sequence of ventures within its flexible parameters, rarely remaining distant from it for very long. If Westra's photographic practice is to be compared with an anthropological fieldwork tradition then a more appropriate comparison is with that of Franz Boas in the USA. According to Sluka and Robben, "... Boas and his students did not customarily spend a great deal of their time in the field learning the native language and observing and taking part in native life. The kind of data they desired did not require this, and besides, their funds rarely permitted them a field trip of more than a few weeks or, at most, few [usually the summer] months."<sup>20</sup>

If Ans Westra has practised participant-observation – and I believe a case can be made that she has – then she has not done so on the basis of anything resembling "... the Malinowskian separation of anthropological professionalism from citizenship."<sup>21</sup> Within the New Zealand context she practises a form of 'sociological' fieldwork because, at some level and to various degrees, she shares social space with the subjects she photographs.

New Zealand is a post-colonial society, a modern liberal-democracy composed of two major, competing ethnic groups, which are in constant interaction with each other. There are no textual inscriptions or visual representations to be made of Maori by Pakeha that will not in some way enter a public realm where they will be assessed by a multitude of differing and often conflicting criteria employed by a variety of interested groups and individuals. From *Washday at the pa* to a 1990 *Dominion* newspaper billboard that announced, "American professor [Allan Hanson] says Maori culture invented"<sup>22</sup>, knowledge originally conceived as context specific or specialised has often been unable to remain so. It is literally bent out of or into shape by a plethora of readings which emerge from different reading communities. My chapter on *Washday at the pa* not only reads *Washday* the photo-text, but also reads the readings generated by the public debate which inexorably forms part of the work, both at the time of publication and subsequently. In sum, *Camera Antipode* should be seen as a contribution to the kind of "local anthropology" advocated by Anne Salmond 25 years ago: "A reflexive approach to anthropology suggests that as scholars of culture, anthropologists are not spectators: they are part of and contribute to cultural life itself. [...] In metropolitan countries anthropology shares with its subjects a colonial past; in New Zealand, Pakeha, Maori and Pacific Islander share a future that has yet to be worked out, and a past which goes in contradictory directions – on the one hand back to Europe and on the other westwards across the Pacific. This sets social anthropology in New Zealand in a context of unusual intimacy, and offers epistemological possibilities..."<sup>23</sup>

INTRODUCING WESTRA

Two questions that confront any consideration of a career as long and productive as Ans Westra's are firstly, how to characterise it, and secondly, how to identify just what is being studied in an exercise like this. In what follows, I will advance various answers to both these questions. My intention is to provide a set of pathways into what has been and continues to be a remarkable career.

P

After much thought about the first question, how to characterise Ans Westra's work, a succession of words all beginning with the letter p gradually came to mind. The first of these, for obvious reasons, is photography. Westra was trained as a craft-based artist, but she chose to become a photographer from a relatively early age and she has not deviated from her chosen path over a period of approximately fifty years. The next word beginning with P is professional because Westra has always tried to make her living from practising photography. She has pursued it as a long-term vocation and as a daily/weekly occupation. She may have begun as a member of the Wellington Camera Club, an amateur organisation, but she very quickly began to make links with institutions whose commissioning powers enabled her to forge a practice as a freelance professional. This is not to claim that she has ever found it easy to make a living this way but simply to emphasise the seriousness with which she takes her vocation. That seriousness is linked to another quality, the descriptive term for which is perseverance. As the very antithesis of a weekend photographer, Westra has always been willing to put in the hours, cover the necessary distance and clock up the mileage, or whatever other readymade phrases you might choose, in order to make sure she is in the right place at the right time in the event of a significant photo opportunity. Throughout her career she has embarked repeatedly on many lengthy field trips, principally within New Zealand but also outside it. Few, if any, have come close to this perseverance and the related quality of patience, in the history of New Zealand photographic production. The result is a body of work of staggering quantitative proportions, which covers carefully selected aspects of social life in New Zealand in the second half of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first.

Publications provide the most direct access to this body of work. The range of published vehicles for Westra's photographs includes: the small scale, tightly defined topic of the photographic essay, whether published in *Te ao hou*, the *School journal*, *Photographics New Zealand*, the *NZ Listener*, or *New Zealand geographic*; and the more ambitious thematic reach of the photographic book, Westra's most favoured vehicle for her work-in-progress. Her photography makes its greatest impact in structured sets and sequences, whether organised by narrative or thematic devices. She has made many arresting single images – and many of them have found their way onto the covers of books, journals, and magazines – but the bulk of her photography has been made with specific large-scale projects in mind and it's best seen in the context of these projects' published form. This is not to

downgrade the importance of public and dealer gallery exhibitions of her prints. The list in the appendices at the end of this dissertation reveals an impressive exhibition record, beginning with her inclusion in the first photography group show held in New Zealand and continuing to the present. However, exhibitions are not the preferred or ideal destination for her work, but simply a desirable extra site for their dissemination and sale.

The next term beginning with the letter p that I wish to introduce to the discussion may seem a little unusual in relation to how Westra's practice is normally conceived. The term is participant, but perhaps it will seem less unusual if it is presented as the first part of the hyphenated phrase participant-observer. Westra is known to many of the subjects of her photographic gaze as an outsider and she has been willing to accept ownership of this term as descriptively adequate to her practice. Furthermore, she has even advanced various justifications for why she considers it efficacious to her overarching photographic project. One of these is the stated need to catch people as if unobserved and therefore unselfconscious as they go about their business, the business the photographer is interested in capturing before it evaporates. Another is the 'non-aligned' argument. What this means, in the case of photographing Maori, is that her non-Maori status enables her to escape an investment in the details of tribal politics that might potentially divert her from the matters to be photographed. Or so the argument goes.

The term participant-observation refers to the central methodological orientation of the anthropological fieldworker, the ethnographer, who has been by definition an outsider. However, the adoption of a pure observational mode in ethnography or social documentary is neither possible nor desirable. Many of Westra's images of such phenomena as political demonstrations, hikoī, street parades and festivals have, of course, snatched 'decisive moments' from an exterior vantage point, on the assumption that permissions need not be sought directly, but can be signaled and received tacitly. Yet, these kinds of photographs, numerous as they are, represent only a part of her total output. The many narrative based books for children addressed in chapters four, six, eight, and ten, in contrast, depend for their production on the forging of a direct, cooperative relationship with her youthful subjects and no doubt their parents or caregivers.

In many of her interview responses, Westra has offered a rationale for the value of her work that conforms quite closely to the paradigm of salvage ethnography. Salvage ethnography is founded on the imperative to document elements of 'traditional' non-Western cultures before they 'disappear' or are corrupted by outside, 'alien' influences. However, there is often a manifest lack of fit between this kind of rationalisation and much of Westra's actual photographic practice and output. Her major work of the 1960s, *Maori* (1967), provides many examples of her interest in imaging contemporary Maori engagement with emerging popular and sub-cultural modes of dress, music and dance. This is evident to such a degree that the book belongs as much beside John O'Shea's musical feature film *Don't let it get you* (1966) – as a photographic compendium fairly bursting at the seams with signs of Maori youth's creative refashioning of 1960s pop culture – as it does with *The Maori people in the nineteen-sixties: a symposium*<sup>24</sup>, a synoptic volume on the changing shape of Maori society in the same period. We can be thankful that Westra was undeterred from her task of tracking the vital syncretic transformations performed by Maori in the face of the 1960s eruption of

popular culture (my p-phrase here) in Aotearoa New Zealand; an inescapable concomitant of modernity's migration to and 'naturalisation' on these shores around that period.

A

I want to shift now from a set of p-words pointing to pathways into Ans Westra's work to a smaller set of words or phrases all beginning with the letter A, which have been chosen to help clarify my object of investigation in relation to Ans Westra's photography. The first, oddly enough, is the proper name Ans Westra. A biological individual of that name exists, with a specific biography, currently residing in Belmont, Lower Hutt, New Zealand, who regularly uses a camera and a darkroom. (Fig. 1) She has made herself available for interviews on many occasions and I have conducted a substantial one myself, which can be found as an appendix to this dissertation. Although details of Westra's biography are only invoked intermittently throughout this study, the reader will gain some idea of the person who made the work. However, if we follow a move first made by Peter Wollen many years ago and place quotation marks around the proper name Ans Westra, then we can shift from the realm of biography to the realm of textual construction(s). 'Ans Westra', therefore, names not a tall woman of Dutch origin who has become one of New Zealand's most significant photographers, but rather a structure, or any number of potential structures that can be traced within her work.<sup>25</sup> In the terminology of Roland Barthes, as mentioned previously, this process can be described as a movement from work to text: "... the work is a fragment of substance, occupying a part of the space of books (in a library for example), the text is a methodological field... the one is displayed, the other demonstrated... the text is experienced only in an activity of production."<sup>26</sup>

Thus Ans Westra, herself the maker of various kinds of visual works, appears made over in this dissertation as 'Ans Westra', the result of active readings of the interactions between her works, their multiple contexts, and a variety of interpretative strategies. Although *Camera Antipode* might appear to simply document the actions of a 'real' Westra, it does so by means of the reconfiguration of memory as it interacts with present day re-envisionings of the past. Memory, writes John Berger, "works radially", and, "If we want to put a photograph back into the context of experience, social experience, social memory, we have to respect the laws of memory ... A radial system has to be constructed around the photograph so that it may be seen in terms which are simultaneously personal, political, economic, dramatic, everyday and historic."<sup>27</sup>

It is this active ongoing process which will ensure the continuing relevance of Westra's images and texts rather than some alleged transparency of documentary truth presumed to speak directly across different historical periods. 'Ans Westra' is dependent on the prior existence of Ans Westra but is not synonymous with her. The latter exists, no doubt, but the former must be produced. *Camera Antipode* contributes to that process, but it's highly unlikely that it will be the last word.

The use of the device of placing quotation marks around a proper name was first introduced within the context of the reformulation of theories of authorship in Film Studies. It's

fitting then that my next a-word is author because it has particular pertinence to Westra as a practitioner of photography. A statement by Eric Lee-Johnson indicates photography's low status within New Zealand art circles in the 1950s. "Among the fine arts", he wrote, "photography occupies a position about midway between doodling and washing the dishes. [...] Photography has no private patrons. The photo-print is not 'collected'. Generally photography is not included as a craft subject in the schools... still photography as an art form isn't taken too seriously, and the photographer, despite and perhaps because of the efforts of the photographic societies, has little standing as an artist..."<sup>28</sup> At around the same time in the United States, Jacques Barzun (see chapter three) was in no doubt that photography was at best a minor art.<sup>29</sup> Others may have been unwilling to see it as an art at all. However, then as now, discourse on photography cannot be limited by questions of art or its absence. Photography is too multifarious in form, use, and effect to be so constrained. The continuum of photographic production stretches from the police speed camera image to the most elaborately staged and subsequently manipulated print. It is a continuum that moves from the non-authored image to the weakly authored, and, finally, on to the full efflorescence of the author-effect. Westra's career began when photography in New Zealand was barely visible as an avenue for authored discourse. It continues today when the 'photographic' (as opposed to photography *per se* as an artistic enclave) spreads itself right across the spectrum of contemporary artistic production; and it is pervasive in everyday life with the proliferation of digital and cellphone cameras.

Westra is recognised as one of New Zealand's photographic auteurs whose body of work can be presumed to exhibit a degree of structural unity. However, when it comes to the readings of specific Westra texts in part two of *Camera Antipode*, exegesis cannot rest with biography or the reconstructed intentions of the photographer. As Paul Ricoeur argues, "... the text's career escapes the finite horizon of its author. What the texts says now matters more than what the author meant to say, and every exegesis unfolds its procedures within the circumference of a meaning that has broken its moorings to the psychology of its author."<sup>30</sup>

Although this dissertation might seem to suggest otherwise – dedicated as it is to the presentation of the work of a single practitioner in monographic form – Ans Westra's work problematises the notion of the photographer as originating author in yet another way. A very large proportion of her work is collaborative in nature. She has worked on a regular basis with writers (including adopting the writer's role herself) in the fashioning of her major books, her bulletins for School Publications and her children's books for commercial publishers. In collaborating with these writers (and editors) she has, in turn, made a contribution to the ongoing maintenance and variation of pre-existing textual genres that shape her material in a broader structural sense. In an equally fundamental way her relationships with key publishing enterprises – the Department of Maori Affairs' journal, *Te ao hou*; The School Publications Branch of the Department of Education; Alister Taylor Publishing – has expanded the potential historical significance of her work beyond the level of a single author's statement. For example, *Notes on the country I live in* is, on one level, simply part of Westra's photographic output. But on another, along with many other books she contributed photographs to, it's part of a cultural formation called Alister Taylor

Publishing, within which Taylor himself assumes authorial prominence; a prominence he, in turn and of necessity, relinquishes within the authorless network of the local and international counterculture.

The final a-word I wish to put forward is archive. Earlier in this introduction, I stated that printed publications have been the ideal vehicle for the delivery of Ans Westra's photographs. The seven chapters of part two, quite properly, focus on Westra's most important published texts. As preconceived, edited, and crafted statements, they have emerged from and then entered various historical contexts and made an impact therein. However, beneath this impressive body of published work, like the submerged part of an iceberg, is a huge archive of negatives and contact sheets, approximately 72,000 single images to be more precise; an image reservoir – the largest collection by an individual photographer held at The Alexander Turnbull Library, situated in The National Library of New Zealand in Wellington – which is still being filled. Within an archive such as this, as Allan Sekula puts it, "... meaning exists in a state that is both residual and potential. The suggestion of past uses coexists with a plenitude of possibilities. In functional terms, an active archive is like a toolshed, a dormant archive like an abandoned toolshed."<sup>31</sup> The Westra archive is very much an example of the former, an archive that has the potential to continue making statements within projects yet to be conceived.

#### OUTLINE OF CHAPTER STRUCTURE

As previously stated, *Camera Antipode* is a dissertation in two parts. There are three chapters in part one and seven in part two. The main purpose of the opening chapter is to examine the question of the relationship of theories of authorship to the writing of photographic history, and the relationship of Ans Westra to both these questions. This examination will take a general theoretical form before turning to the specific question of the place of authorship theory in the construction of New Zealand photographic history and criticism. Throughout the chapter I will make connections between general theoretical issues and the particular case of Ans Westra in order to determine how she fits within the ongoing writing of New Zealand photographic history. The chapter will conclude with some consideration of her critical reception to date, a matter that will also be addressed in chapter nine. I am not concerned here with general meditations on the essential characteristics of photography considered as a specific medium; nor with theoretical investigations into the nature of photography as a signifying practice, conducted by thinkers utilising semiotic, psychoanalytic, sociological, and discourse theory based perspectives. I have examined these perspectives in detail in previous work, both published and unpublished, and I will not revisit them here.<sup>32</sup>

The purpose of chapters two and three is to map all the relevant contexts within which Ans Westra's work has been made and from which it has emerged. Before embarking upon detailed readings of specific photographic texts by Westra it is necessary to delineate the genres, discourses and institutions that provide the ground from which these texts and her project in general has sprung, situating it in time and place by means of "...partial, locatable,

critical knowledges sustaining the possibility of webs of connections...”<sup>33</sup> The preliminary issues of general relevance to her project that I will discuss in chapter two are: the question of prior pictorial representations of Maori by Pakeha artists and photographers; post-war discourses on ethnic relations (Maori and Pakeha) encompassing official (government reports), formal academic (ethnographic studies), vernacular (popular media representations and stereotypes) and literary fictional statements; the question of the status of women photographers and photography by women, with particular reference to Dorothea Lange, an acknowledged inspiration to Westra; and questions of home and belonging, how Westra might be located in relation to local and expatriate intellectual communities.

In chapter three, I continue the work of re-inscribing the ‘Westra-text’ within a network of discursive affinities by looking at the following:

1. The institutional matrices and commissioning bodies from which this work emanated: that is to say, the Department of Maori Affairs (the journal *Te ao hou*) and the Department of Education (the School Publications Branch). The work emerges, therefore, at the interface of ethnic and educational initiatives.
2. The generic and intertextual relations these works enter into with anterior and contemporary New Zealand (and Australian) photo-texts of an ethnographic character.
3. Generic and intertextual links with *The family of man* and Dutch photography of the 1950s; the significance of Westra’s early membership of the Wellington Camera Club; the general question of literature for the child; specific examples of photographic books for children; and the specific question of ethnographic fabulation for the child.

In part two, I focus on Westra’s major published work and examine it within chronological decades and under thematic headings. Chapters four and five provide a detailed examination of the main contours of Westra’s published photographs of Maori subjects in the 1960s. Because of the exemplary manner in which it requires that the issues introduced in chapters one, two and three be invoked and because of its historical importance in New Zealand to questions of cross-cultural representation, all of chapter four is given over to a detailed analysis of *Washday at the pa*. And following that, chapter five is devoted to the large photographic book, *Maori*, Westra’s major publication of the 1960s. In chapter six, I continue exploring the theme of educational publications for children, begun with *Washday at the pa*, by discussing Westra’s first bulletin for the Department of Education’s School publications Branch, *Viliami of the Friendly Islands*, and then move on to her other school bulletins of the 1960s. In addition to her narrative photographic books, made for School Publications, I will also look at *Tamariki*, the instructional booklet she made for the Maori Education Foundation in 1965.

With chapters seven and eight, I shift from the 1960s to the 1970s and from mostly Maori-centred projects to projects dedicated to photographing New Zealanders as a whole. Chapter seven looks at Westra’s national level photographic book on New Zealand, *Notes on the country I live in*, and her study of its capital city, *Wellington city alive*. Chapter

eight deals with Westra's 1970s publications for children, made for both School Publications and commercial publishers.

The two remaining chapters cover the broad expanse of time from 1980 to the beginning of the second decade of the new millennium. Chapter nine begins by focusing on Westra's major book project of the 1980s, *Whaiora*, and then supplies details of her career since then. Chapter ten rounds off the dissertation by looking at Westra's 1990s educational books for children. The appendices that follow the conclusion consist of the full transcript of an interview with Westra, a biographical chronology of her life and work, a list of her one-person and group exhibitions, and a bibliography listing of all Westra's publications as well as books and articles about her work.

Apart from a formal interview conducted over two days and consolidated into one document in the appendix, I have carried out most of the research for this dissertation in libraries and archives. These include the following specialist research institutions: the Ans Westra photographic collection housed at The Alexander Turnbull Library in the National Library of New Zealand; the Ans Westra documents archive housed at Te Papa Archives in Te Papa Tongarewa The Museum of New Zealand in Wellington; and the archives of the Department of Education housed in the Ministry of Education in Wellington. The unpublished material located in these institutions is used to contextualise and throw light on Westra's published works, which are the main focus of the dissertation. In conclusion it could be said that the overall aim of *Camera Antipode* is in accord with Richard Fox's claim: "...one way to recapture authority is to return to culture history - a kind of anthropology that existed before ethnography exercised exclusive empire, that once had something important to say about the world, and that could be retooled to say something about the present."<sup>34</sup> In this case, however, I would emphasise that the type of history involved is one that is told in largely visual terms.



# PART ONE:

# Isagogics

*A theory is exactly like a box of tools. It has nothing to do with the signifier. It must be useful. It must function. And not for itself. If no one uses it, beginning with the theoretician himself (who then ceases to be a theoretician), then the theory is worthless or the moment is inappropriate.*

—MICHEL FOUCAULT AND GILLES DELEUZE<sup>1</sup>

*Should ethnography be so artificially confined within the more arrogant and narrow fictions of scientific investigation? Should it not recognise the flux in which all mankind lives, and countenance as a proper subject for ethnography a dynamic society – of which, of course, one in the contemporary world is the bi-racial [sic] society of New Zealand.*

—JOHN O'SHEA<sup>2</sup>

*We must do everything we can to give the teacher something of the anthropological field worker's eyes and ears, his openness to the lessons of the community he works with, his appreciation of its joys and sufferings, its real meanings for its members.*

—JAMES RITCHIE<sup>3</sup>

*... to study an art form is to explore a sensibility ... such a sensibility is essentially a collective formation, and ... the foundations of such a formation are as wide as social existence and as deep...*

—CLIFFORD GEERTZ<sup>4</sup>



## CHAPTER ONE

### AUTHORSHIP, THE WRITING OF PHOTOGRAPHIC HISTORY IN NEW ZEALAND, AND ANS WESTRA

If directors and other artists cannot be wrenched from their historical environments, aesthetics is reduced to a subordinate branch of ethnography.

—ANDREW SARRIS<sup>1</sup>

...When is Sarris going to discover that aesthetics is indeed a branch of ethnography; what does he think it is – a sphere of its own, separate from the study of man and his environment?

—PAULINE KAEEL<sup>2</sup>

#### I

#### AUTHORSHIP THEORY

When one approaches the study of a photographer such as Ans Westra, the situation at first appears to be quite simple: an interviewable person with a broadly known biography has produced a locatable and knowable body of published and unpublished work. One way to make sense of this body of photographic work would be to treat it as the expressive output of an originating and shaping sensibility. To take this position is to adopt, consciously or not, a version of authorship theory. Theories of authorship have varied considerably depending on the period in which they arose and the medium to which they were applied. But the majority of them have tended to regard novels, paintings, films, and photographs as the result of an encounter between a creative psyche and a fertile medium, malleable to that psyche's intentions. A typical narrative path for a literary criticism or an art history under the sway of authorship theory would begin by detailing the formative influences on the 'artist' in question, continue with her struggle to forge a distinctive style adequate to her unique vision and culminate in a celebration of the richness of her period of maturity and mastery. The literary theory of the Romantic period was preoccupied with the will and creative intentions of an expressive subject, the author. Whereas over the course of the 20th century, there has been a shift away from this preoccupation: first to the proper-

ties of the text itself, with the advent of New Criticism; and then to the role of the reader with the emergence of Reception Theory and Post-Structuralism.<sup>3</sup>

The centrality of the author in modern, 'Western' style societies is a relatively recent phenomenon. "Medieval scholars", writes Marshall McLuhan, "were indifferent to the precise identity of the 'books' they studied. In turn, they rarely signed even what was clearly their own. They were a humble service organization ... Many small texts were transmitted into volumes of miscellaneous content, very much like 'jottings' in a scrapbook, and, in this transmission authorship was often lost."<sup>4</sup> Likewise, the concept of authorship is equally foreign to twentieth century 'ethnographic' societies where, as Roland Barthes notes: "... the responsibility for a narrative is never assumed by a person but by a mediator, shaman or relator whose 'performance' – the mastery of the narrative code – may possibly be admired but never his 'genius' ".<sup>5</sup>

The rise of the author can be linked with a whole constellation of related movements in the overall formation of bourgeois society: the free market economic theory of Adam Smith<sup>6</sup>, the political theory of possessive individualism (Thomas Hobbes, John Locke)<sup>7</sup>, and German aesthetic theory (Immanuel Kant, Gotthold Lessing, Friedrich Schiller)<sup>8</sup>, to name only some of the most important. The location of the origins of economic activity in entrepreneurial initiative, political activity in the exercise of individual rights, and aesthetic production in personal expression and taste all conformed to a paradigm of romantic freedom characteristic of emergent capitalism. Within this paradigm, literature and the fine arts could be successfully (mis)recognised as primarily unmediated expressions of individual creators because that is how romantic aesthetics construed them and continues to do so today.

However, this situation was complicated by the rise of non-autographic, mechanical media such as photography and film. The distinction, already central to romantic aesthetics, between craftsmen producing directly for market consumption and artists, reliant on some form of patronage (individual or state based) to launch their 'challenges' to the existing order, intensified in the twentieth century.<sup>9</sup> Cinema, which began and to some extent still continues as a form of mass entertainment, quickly began to reproduce this division between art and craft (high and low culture) within its own output. An art cinema grew up alongside the commercial cinema and romantic notions of originality and creativity were brought to bear in its analysis.

However, appearances notwithstanding, the auteur theory in the cinema<sup>10</sup> has not amounted simply to the application of literary or art historical protocol to films but has had a strongly polemical edge. The *politique des auteurs* of *Cahiers du cinema*<sup>11</sup>, Andrew Sarris's American auteur theory<sup>12</sup>, and the *Movie* group in Great Britain<sup>13</sup> all shared an interest in opposing conventionally conceived notions of 'art' in cinema. The *Cahiers* group argued for the merits and vigour of Hollywood films over the debilitating good taste of French 'quality' cinema. *Movie* followed in their footsteps, but in their case the target was the British realist tradition. In the United States, Sarris directly celebrated the virtues of Hollywood cinema by constructing his ranked pantheon of great directors. Common to all three movements was the assertion that authors were to be found in what was hitherto regarded as a domain of anonymous industrial production. They demanded, in effect, that popular culture be taken seriously as a form and a repository of meanings. This

initiative, however, presented a major problem. By proclaiming the existence of authors in a domain previously considered resistant to them, authorship theory looked set to (and often did) colonise popular culture with notions derived from high culture.

Fortunately, at this point, continental ideas seeking to rethink the concept of authorship and the theory of the text intervened to push auteur theory from that path. The two contributions most relevant here are those of Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault. In his justly celebrated paper, “The death of the author”, Barthes elevated the productivity of language and writing (*écriture*) over the move to subordinate it to the consciousness of an author who is, in his view, a fiction, an effect of the text rather than the other way round. In terms that strongly echo Emile Benveniste’s work on pronouns, Barthes situates the ‘author’ as follows:

Linguistically, the author is never more than the instance writing, just as I is nothing more than the instance of saying I: language knows a ‘subject’, not a person, and the subject, empty outside of the very enunciation which defines it, suffices to make language ‘hold together’...<sup>14</sup>

Barthes’s conclusion is that study of writing and textuality is more profitably advanced by attending to readers and the process of reading rather than authors and authorship.<sup>15</sup>

Barthes’s poststructuralist ‘abolition’ of the author by dissolving her in the multi-vocal clash of competing writings has gained more attention than the apparently similar but really quite different position of Michel Foucault. Instead of a criticism of the author as an ideological fiction or bourgeois myth, which must be overcome in the interests of the free play of signifiers, Foucault offers the concept of ‘author-function’.<sup>16</sup> In this view, the name of the author is located at the conjunction of a number of discourses (literary critical, classificatory, etc.) and institutions (publishing houses, libraries, etc.). Foucault observes that in our type of society only certain texts are said to have an author (chiefly, literary or artistic ones) while others are not held to depend on the originating consciousness of this category (most forms of journalism, legal and scientific discourse, etc.). The attribution of authorship to some texts and not others is, as previously mentioned, dependent upon historically variable factors. For this reason, Foucault insists that:

We should suspend the typical questions: how does a free subject penetrate the density of things and endow them with meaning; how does it accomplish its design by animating the rules of discourse from within? Rather, we should ask: under what conditions and through what forms can an entity like the subject appear in the order of discourse; what position does it occupy; what functions does it exhibit; and what rules does it follow in each type of discourse? In short, the subject (and its substitutes) must be stripped of its creative role and analysed as a complex and variable function of discourse.<sup>17</sup>

It can be seen from this substantial quotation that Foucault does not so much abolish the author (here referred to in terms of the more general category of the subject) as point

to the need to situate her as an effect of discourse, which in turn produces material effects of its own.

*Authorship and Photographic History*

I want to turn now to the relationship between the notion of authorship and photographic history. Unlike cinema, which is inescapably a collaborative medium utilising a large array of technological specialists and devices, photography has proven more easily assimilable to traditional models of art historical explanation. The initial obstacle to a smooth incorporation of photography into romantic ideas of authorship and creativity was its apparently irremediably mechanical nature.<sup>18</sup> In his *Ownership of the image*, Bernard Edelman provides an interesting study of photography as a test case for these matters in nineteenth century French law.<sup>19</sup> The debate in France centred on whether photography was the product of a creative subject and hence his or her private property or whether it was an authorless replicating device of things produced and appropriated elsewhere. At first the French courts inclined in favour of the latter view and it was only towards the end of the century that the former view began to gain the upper hand. British law, which had recourse to the idea of copyright, didn't experience the same difficulty but it still took a very long time for the links between photography and authorship to be forged in law.

Photographic history and practice has come to be dominated by notions of authorship largely through its institutionalisation in art museums.<sup>20</sup> This process, which began in the USA between the wars and has accelerated throughout the last five decades, has produced fundamental changes in the way we see photographs. The major trend has been to constitute photography, by means of canon formation, as an art form that is available to us in the shape of lineages of certified masters. The development of the photography department of New York's Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) is instructive in this regard. MOMA was the first major art institution anywhere to establish a photography department. Its first director was Beaumont Newhall (1908–1993) who set about implementing a programme largely prefigured in his *History of photography*.<sup>21</sup> He proceeded to valorise a canon of great master photographers like Alfred Stieglitz, Paul Strand, Edward Weston, and his friend and colleague Ansel Adams. However, his tenure of the position was relatively short lived as the Museum's directors considered that he hadn't stimulated sufficient public interest in photography. He was replaced by the high profile photographer Edward Steichen (1879–1973), who chose to present photography to the public in a very different manner. Put simply, Steichen shifted from Newhall's emphasis on photography as high art to a mass culture discourse designed to inform, entertain and edify in the way the pictorial press, trade fairs and television networks operated at the time and since. Newhall's discretely framed prints vanished, to be replaced by vast installations of blown up photographs and stretches of printed information in the service of grand populist themes. *The family of man*<sup>22</sup> is undoubtedly the most famous of these: a central, humanist 'mythology'<sup>23</sup> of our time.

In the early 1960s, John Szarkowski (1925–2007) succeeded Steichen as director of the photography department of MOMA.<sup>24</sup> Szarkowski returned to Newhall's project of establishing photography as a fine art. But this time he gave it a late modernist twist by pressing

to isolate photographic means of expression as autonomous factors of style and vision. He didn't emphasize Newhall's more obvious masters but began to build a tradition from 'vernacular' sources such as the work of early American practitioners like Mathew Brady (Civil War photography), Timothy O'Sullivan (geological surveys) and European 'primitives' such as Eugene Atget. For Szarkowski, however, the importance of these photographers was their sharp use of the medium to express a uniquely photographic subjectivity. Everything else was relegated to the margins.

Something similar occurred at the New York Public Library in the mid-1970s. Under the aegis of Julia van Haften of the art and architecture division, a reclassification of photographs as autonomous expressions of an author's interiority meant their migration from specific archival locations to a purely photographic collection. Auguste Salzmann was now classified under his own name rather than with material on Jerusalem. The same thing happened to Francis Frith in relation to Egypt. Douglas Crimp concludes from this that:

Photography will hereafter be found in departments of photography ... thus ghettoised it will no longer primarily be useful to other discourses; it will no longer primarily serve as information, documentation, evidence, illustration, reportage.<sup>25</sup>

In sum, there can be little doubt that these mechanisms of photographic domestication represent an obstacle in any attempt to establish what John Tagg has referred to as "The currency of the photograph".<sup>26</sup>

From the foregoing it can be seen that authorship concerns have been the driving force behind photography's art institutionalisation, but at the cost of a loss of social and historical anchorage. "The problem with auteurism", writes Allan Sekula:

... lies in its frequent misunderstanding of actual photographic practice. In the wish-fulfilling isolation of the 'author', one loses sight of social institutions – corporation, school, family – that are speaking by means of the commercial photographer's craft. One can still respect the craft work of the photographer, the skill inherent in work within a set of formal conventions and economic constraints while refusing to indulge in romantic hyperbole.<sup>27</sup>

Yet the question raised at the beginning of this chapter – precisely what form a study of the photographic work of Ans Westra should take – still awaits an answer. It should be clear from what has been written so far that this study will not proceed along lines set out by established notions of authorship. This, in turn, entails the rejection of the concept 'artist', with its inbuilt idea of a progressive career unified by a series of conscious intentions, as a relevant term for the study. Indispensable to the concepts of 'author' and 'artist' is the related concept of 'oeuvre'<sup>28</sup>, the body of work linked to the author's name as so much artistic private property. What would or could the definitive study of Ans Westra's oeuvre do? Would it have something to say about every extant photograph she has taken or would it restrict itself to published work only? This work, both published and unpublished, in its very mode of presentation comes before the viewer pre-defined as the creative output of

an individual. There would appear to be no escape from this constraint on the manner in which it might be critically appropriated. I have already discussed a number of objections to author-centric interpretive strategies. Not, as I hope is made clear, in order to banish the author completely but rather, to severely qualify her importance. Norman King's monograph on the French film director, Abel Gance, contains the following timely caution:

However much the notion of authorial autonomy has been undermined by discourse theory, to go on from there to dismiss the author as merely a fiction constructed from traces or consistencies within the films is just another way of denying history. The author is not the primary source of meaning, but as subject is nevertheless constructed within a particular history as site of specific struggles.<sup>29</sup>

I consider that Foucault's concept of "author-function" avoids this problem and does indeed situate the author within a historically grounded discursive formation. And when it comes to identifying the status of the object that the critic isolates from an 'author's' corpus, Peter Wollen's marriage of critical, cinematic auteur theory and ideas of intertextuality is still useful. Wollen makes a distinction between actual directors, with their body of films, and the theoretical models constructed by the critic who reads the films as a structured group. "Auteur analysis", he states,

... consists of tracing a structure (not a message) within the work, which can then *post factum* be assigned to an individual, the director on empirical grounds. It is wrong, in the name of a denial of the traditional idea of creative subjectivity, to deny any status to individuals at all. But Fuller or Hawks or Hitchcock, the directors are quite separate from 'Fuller' or 'Hawks' or 'Hitchcock', the structures named after them and should not be methodologically confused.<sup>30</sup>

Likewise, I wish to stress that Ans Westra, an actual photographer is not to be equated to or confused with 'Ans Westra', a theoretical construct arising from this dissertation. Another way of putting this is to say that I am working here with what I will call the 'Westra-text'.<sup>31</sup> The 'Westra-text' may be defined as a delimited space marked out by an active reading of selected photo-projects from Westra's entire output. It is not, however, a self contained or complete universe in itself but is imbricated in other discursive practices which together form part of a larger regime of sense. I'll conclude my discussion of authorship theory and its place in photographic analysis with this pertinent advice from Roland Barthes's study of Racine:

... if one wants to write literary history, one must renounce the individual Racine and deliberately undertake the study of techniques, rules, rites, and collective mentalities; and if one wants to install oneself inside Racine ... if one wants to speak ... about the Racinian self one must expect to see the humblest scholarship suddenly become systematic, and the most prudent critic reveal himself as an utterly subjective, utterly historical being.<sup>32</sup>

II

JOHN SZARKOWSKI

Before moving on to an examination of the photographic scene in New Zealand, I want to return to the figure of John Szarkowski because of his influence on the establishment of photography as a fine art here. As previously mentioned, Szarkowski acceded to the directorship of the photography department of MOMA in 1962. During his tenure of the directorship (1962–1991), he was responsible for several major exhibitions and accompanying catalogues, the most important of which include the following: *The photographer's eye* (1966); *Looking at photographs: 100 pictures from the collection of the Museum of Modern Art* (1973); *William Eggleston's guide* (1976); *Mirrors and windows: American photography since 1960* (1978); and *Photography until now* (1989).

Szarkowski's project can be described succinctly as an attempt to provide a (late) modernist framework for photography following much the same path that Clement Greenberg's formalism opened up for painting.<sup>33</sup> This entails a subscription to the medium specificity thesis<sup>34</sup>, which insists that any art form should above all attend to its own intrinsic properties. Szarkowski puts it thus:

... it should be possible to consider the history of the medium in terms of photographers' progressive awareness of characteristics and problems that have seemed inherent in the medium.<sup>35</sup>

And, twelve years later, from an interview with Jerome Liebling:

... in photography the formalist approach is ... concerned with trying to explore the intrinsic or prejudicial capacities of the medium as it is understood at the moment.<sup>36</sup>

*The photographer's eye* sets out the following checklist of the salient features of 'straight photography'<sup>37</sup>: "the thing itself" (photography deals with the actual but the factuality of the 'thing' and of the photo are of a different order); "the detail" (photography deals with the fragment or as Peter Galassi would later put it – the analytic not the synthetic<sup>38</sup>; photography is not good at narrative); "the frame" ("the central act of photography, the act of choosing and eliminating, forces a concentration on the picture edge"); "time" ("... a photograph describes only that period of time in which it was made"); "vantage point" (photography has the ability to produce a huge variety of angles on a subject.)

From Szarkowski's position all photographs (both 'fine art' and 'functional') form part of a single, organically evolved history of photography. He placed equal, if not more, emphasis, on the functional category, also referred to as vernacular photography and taking in the work of amateurs (e.g. family snapshots), police photography, and technical record making of various kinds, on the grounds that it was especially revelatory of essential characteristics of the medium.<sup>39</sup> "The tradition", he says "... is the great genetic pool of possibilities out of which the next combinations can be made out of will, imagination, choice, etcetera."<sup>40</sup> Thus the stage is set for Szarkowski to carve out a succession

of photographers who demonstrate the requisite will to form; formalism merges seamlessly with auteurism in the precarious task of making a modernist photographic canon. Perhaps Szarkowski's most concise formulation of this doctrine is this passage from his essay on contemporary American photographer, William Eggleston:

Whatever else a photograph may be about, it is inevitably about photography, the container and the vehicle of all its meanings. Whatever a photographer's intuitions or intentions, they must be cut and shaped to fit the possibilities of his art. Thus if we see the pictures clearly as photographs, we will perhaps also see, or sense, something of their other, more private, willful, and anarchic meanings.<sup>41</sup>

This is a neat but ultimately unconvincing picture of photography. It is truer to say, rather, that the variety of photographic practices displays an anarchy that cannot be contained within such tidy borderlines.

In regard to American photography since 1960, the period in which Westra has been active as a photographer, a 1978 Szarkowski exhibition divided the work of photographers into the two broad categories of "mirrors" (governed by the private and romantic concerns of self-expression) and "windows" (governed by the public and realist concerns of exploration and analysis). At first glance, the "windows" category may seem close to the concept of social documentary but it must be remembered that it follows Szarkowski's subjective reformulation of this concept, which he made in his *New documents* (1967) exhibition, an exhibition showcasing the work of three photographers who developed the implications of Robert Frank's *The Americans* (1959) in various directions (see chapter nine for details of this exhibition and its import for notions of documentary). Therefore, the dichotomy between "windows" and "mirrors" practitioners (who, according to Szarkowski, descend from the school of *Aperture* magazine, founded by Minor White in 1952) may not be very pronounced. Both, to varying degrees, are skewed towards the exploration of private concerns.<sup>42</sup>

#### *Szarkowski-ism in New Zealand: John B. Turner*

John Szarkowski never visited New Zealand<sup>43</sup> but his work had a marked influence on the course and development of local photography in the 1970s. This began in 1967 with the arrival of the exhibition and catalogue *The photographer's eye*. John B. Turner has commented on the powerful effect of seeing original prints (rather than book reproductions) for the first time and of how he found the vocabulary outlined in the catalogue very useful for understanding photographs.<sup>44</sup> Turner appears to have taken a strong interest in the photographic department of MOMA – he admits to having written a piece on it without having made a visit – and corresponded with Szarkowski.<sup>45</sup> It is therefore not surprising that his estimation of Szarkowski is very high: "...Perhaps photography's most original and authoritative spokesman in this half of the twentieth century."<sup>46</sup> In his role as writer, editor and general propagandist, Turner has striven for the recognition of New

Zealand photography as an art form with its own expressive potential. His 1985 National Art Gallery lecture speaks of photography as: "...special because it's a medium which allows us as individuals to externalise what's inside in a profound way, in the deepest way that's possible humanly and that's what art is at best."<sup>47</sup> Turner concurs with his former colleague and mentor Tom Hutchins's expressive realist model of photographic practice which: "...spans between inner subjective self and external objective reality."<sup>48</sup> To this fusion of the 'personal' and the 'factual' (public), Turner adds the necessity of embracing the notion of authorship for the evaluation of photographs: "the more one knows about the photographer, the easier it is...to map...levels of personal as well as cultural symbolism...to distinguish personal signature from the stamp of society at large."<sup>49</sup> Allied to this is his insistence on "...the importance of the unique qualities of original prints..."<sup>50</sup>; or, in other words, the auratic quality of great art. It is significant here that whereas Walter Benjamin thought photography cut against that quality (and arguably it does), the accelerated post-WWII trend to make photography artistically 'respectable' has worked hard to restore, or rather install, the aura within it.<sup>51</sup>

Turner's work on the history of New Zealand photography has followed the Szarkowskian line of establishing a tradition of individual practitioners who both draw from and enrich the tradition. In the space of two articles, one from the early 1970s<sup>52</sup>, the other from the late 1970s<sup>53</sup>, he sketched in the post-war reaction to the Pictorialism of the amateur camera clubs and most commercial photography. He did this by detailing a chronological succession of individual photographers each of whom is regarded as grappling with and overcoming the limitations of the local scene. The end result is a biographically based chronology which extends from pioneering photojournalists George Silk and Brian Brake through to the publications of the documentary photographers (John Pascoe, Les Cleveland and Ans Westra), coming to rest with the sixties generation (Gary Baigent, Simon Buis, Max Oettli, John Fields, Richard Collins et al.). Turner was able to speak on behalf of this generation, consolidating its achievements and to some degree those of its successors, through his editorship of the journal *PhotoForum*, the house journal of the organization PhotoForum Inc., which he was instrumental in forming in Auckland in 1974.

*PhotoForum* emerged out of two preceding publications. Firstly, *Photographic art and history*, which was founded in Wellington in 1970 by Bruce Weatherall to further the following aims:

- 1 The preservation of early New Zealand photographs.
- 2 The appreciation of fine photography, not only for technical and aesthetic qualities but also for human and social relevance of content.
- 3 The collection of cameras and other vintage and classic photographic equipment and materials.
- 4 The history of photography.<sup>54</sup>

Secondly, *New Zealand photography*, also edited by Bruce Weatherall, which began publishing exactly one year later. Three years later, Under Turner's editorship, *PhotoForum* began publication. In its original printed form, it ran to 55 issues (plus six newspaper

tabloid style supplements), beginning in 1974 with an A4 format but changing to a smaller, square format in mid-1978. Although operating out of Auckland, it acted, in effect, as the voice of a national photographic organization. However, May 1976 saw the formation of PhotoForum/Wellington.

In late 1985, PhotoForum/Wellington launched an exhibition and substantial catalogue<sup>55</sup> devoted to three photographers whose book publications Turner had seen as pivotal in the turn from 'tourist' style Pictorialism to 'straight' documentary. I will devote considerable space to this exhibition/catalogue as it represents an important attempt to examine wartime and post-war (1940–1965) documentary photography in New Zealand. Of more particular relevance is the fact that it deals with the first phase of Ans Westra's photographic career.

### III

#### WITNESS TO CHANGE

Several months prior to the opening of the exhibition *Witness to change* in November 1985, the curators published a statement<sup>56</sup>, which clearly positioned its three chosen photographers (John Pascoe, Les Cleveland, and Ans Westra) as important transitional figures in the development of photography in New Zealand. Their work is seen to be a reaction against the image of New Zealand and New Zealanders found in the illustrated magazines and newspapers and to presage the rise of "expressive" photography after 1965. Moreover, the intention is announced to read the work of these photographers within a nationalist discourse, which labels the period in question – "the national adolescence". The introduction to the catalogue by the joint curators, Athol McCredie and Janet Bayly, makes it clear that for them documentary is a privileged mode of social investigation, amenable to the intentions of the gifted photographer. They begin by claiming: "Documentary photography...provides an easily accessible window onto the social environment of the past"<sup>57</sup>; but go on to castigate recent publications on the post-war period for encouraging "...viewers to see images as neutral windows displaying contents of 'hardfact'."<sup>58</sup> To save their own windows from the neutralist fallacy the curators seek to make manifest the presence of the photographer and his or her intentions; this is what is said to lie behind the photographs which are taken to be more than simply "dumb records".<sup>59</sup> The perspective underpinning the exhibition can therefore be described as expressive realist<sup>60</sup> as opposed to naive realist.

The catalogue's opening essay by Janet Bayly attempts a brief history of documentary photography in New Zealand, which usefully extends the concept by including some consideration of documentary filmmaking of the broad period.<sup>61</sup> After a sketch of nineteenth century photography, Bayly hints at the bad faith of the Pictorialist movement, which is equated to colonialist dependency on mother England and blindness to the ('real') New Zealand scene. The stage is then set for the appearance of documentary photography proper which, following William Stott, is divided into two sub-categories of "human documentary" and "social documentary."<sup>62</sup> The former, so it goes, deals with the necessary and unavoidable aspects of the human condition while the later deals with culturally and politically contingent situations, socially constructed and therefore amena-

ble to change. This is a useful distinction and despite its vagaries does help to separate out different emphases in documentary photographic practice.

Bayly then suggests that documentary films (shown here by film societies from the late 1930s onwards) and the wartime visit to New Zealand of John Grierson (the Godfather of British state sponsored documentary film, a genre he is considered to have first named in 1926) were decisive factors in the formation of a New Zealand documentary sensibility.<sup>63</sup> Without naming a single one or adequately defining the concept, she claims that: "...the filmmakers at the Film Unit in the 1940s were auteurs."<sup>64</sup> Unfortunately for this argument, it is difficult to determine authorship of New Zealand National Film Unit productions throughout the 1940s because it was the Unit's Director Stan Andrews's policy not to append credits to any of the films. At this point, Bayly's essay promptly becomes a series of potted biographies of the first photographic 'auteurs' of New Zealand's post-war documentary photography tradition: John Pascoe, George Silk, Brian Brake, Gary Blackman, Les Cleveland and Ans Westra. Silk and Brake worked within the dictates of photojournalism, contributing to the major illustrated magazines that thrived in the pre-television era – *Life*, *National Geographic*, and *Paris-Match*. They were also expatriates and had little discernable influence on local photography. Blackman's work is harder to categorise, drawing on documentary and architectural photography, and, anticipating later developments in 'expressive' photography.

The work of *Witness to change's* three chosen 'documentary auteurs' emerged (or is said to have emerged) in reaction to a tourist book genre of what I'll call 'beautiful Godzone' pictures. In this regard, the final paragraph of John Pascoe's programmatic essay, "Photography in New Zealand", is worth quoting in full:

New Zealand in the past has suckled men who have photographed barrels of lush pastureland dominated by posterish Egmont, trainloads of pseudo-Maori dances, while Mount Cook from the bathroom window of the Hermitage has sadly sunk through lots of lenses. Where are the documentary stories of the gold prospectors, the deer killers, the growth of a dairy factory, the monotony of wharf labour, the discomfort of a miner's calling, the adaptation of the Maori worker to city life and environment? In such subjects may lie the future of a valid contribution by photography to the course of our next decade.<sup>65</sup>

This statement appeared in the fourth number of *Landfall* (1947- ), a literary journal dedicated to a Pakeha nationalist project of forging a 'truer', high cultural response to New Zealand's raw 'alien' landscape, and, in the process forging what has more recently been referred to as the "South Island myth."<sup>66</sup> However, Pascoe's statement is better seen in relation to John Grierson's documentary philosophy, which he articulated in relation to New Zealand in a radio talk recorded during his wartime visit here to advise the government on the setting up of what became the National Film Unit. Grierson complained that "... nobody had shown me so that I would remember it the face of a New Zealander." And he made the plea, "...when you send us your films never send merely the scenic ones. Put in something about the real things you do. Do not be ashamed to describe your problems,

and what you are doing about your problems.”<sup>67</sup> The closest local analogues to Pascoe’s own wartime photographs are indeed the NFU’s war-related *Weekly reviews*, such as *Country lads* (1941); and in the United Kingdom, the films of Humphrey Jennings, one of the most accomplished filmmakers to emerge from the Grierson group.

*Witness to change*’s second ‘documentary auteur’, Les Cleveland, who shared an interest in mountaineering with Pascoe, has acknowledged the inspiration of his example, particularly in regard to the book, *Unclimbed New Zealand* (1939): “I think the prose work was quite an influential thing. I can remember being impressed by it as a statement of some kind of autonomous, indigenous energy ... that was not dependent on patronage from Britain or any of the other power sources.”<sup>68</sup> Nevertheless, Cleveland is a rather different kind of documentary photographer to Pascoe. His attraction to examples of vernacular architecture and his interest in registering the traces of the past etched on the surfaces of relics and ruins parallels the work of photographers such as Walker Evans in the USA, and, before him, Eugene Atget in France. During the 1950s he took photographs in both rural and urban settings, specifically Westland and Wellington. In *The silent land* (1966) he made a selection from the Westland photographs and worked them into a sequence with his own verse accompaniment as a kind of photographic equivalent to a documentary film voice-over commentary; in a manner quite similar to the American poet Archibald MacLeish’s marriage of FSA photographs to his own long poem in *Land of the free* (1938). Alongside images of the ghosts of the gold prospectors and deer cullers, which Pascoe called for in his 1947 essay, Cleveland set down verse passages such as the following:

The past has not been fully explained / By careful legend-makers, or trimmed / By  
naive enthusiasts of progress / Into conventional decorous subjection<sup>69</sup>

In spite of the fact that his book shares its title with an earlier poem by Charles Brasch<sup>70</sup>, I do not consider that *The silent land* or Cleveland’s work in general is a contribution to the cultural nationalist project of Brasch’s *Landfall* and related high cultural production of the period, even though some commentators persist in claiming so.<sup>71</sup>

#### IV

##### WESTRA’S CRITICAL RECEPTION SINCE WITNESS TO CHANGE AND HER WORKING METHODOLOGY

When we come to the backdrop to Ans Westra’s 1960s photography of Maori, the situation is similar but also a little different to that negotiated by the two other ‘auteurs’ of *Witness to change*. Where Pascoe and Cleveland offered a black and white documentary realist landscape in place of a tourist poster or Pictorialist one, Westra was faced with a plethora of images that represented Maori as exotic ‘other’. I examine examples of that type of imagery in the following chapter.

Since the opening of *Witness to change* and the publication of her book, *Whaiora* in the mid-1980s, Westra has received a good deal of media investigation as a photographer.

Prior to this she had achieved media notoriety (*Washday at the pa*) and received brief exhibition and book reviews in the popular press and specialised journals. But she had not been canonised as a photo-auteur; this did not come until the mid-1980s with the appearance of *Witness to change*. All the articles that appeared in this decade took the form of synoptic overviews of her career, incorporating large amounts of interview material. The titles of some of these articles are revealing of the perspectives articulated within them. Janet Bayly's "Finding a 'place' in New Zealand"<sup>72</sup>, based as it is on three unpublished interviews, traces Westra's photographic evolution up to 1965 in largely biographical terms. It endeavours and succeeds in showing how a young Dutch immigrant gradually found a vocation, which, so it goes, gave her a reason for remaining here. Bayly's was the first substantial essay on Westra and it remains the model for all the subsequent articles and interviews which have been published. Sally Swartz's *New Zealand outlook* profile adopts PhotoForum's exhibition title to present Westra as – "A witness to change". The epistemological impossibility of this title – change is not directly observable it can only be inferred by the comparison of two or more sequential situations, in a cognitive act – is hinted at by Westra herself in this reported comment: "...things are changing but you're not really aware of it when you're in the middle of it."<sup>73</sup>

Ironically, the upsurge of media attention paid to Westra as a photographer of the Maori came at a time when her prospects of continuing in this role had drastically diminished. In 1987 she told *PhotoForum/review* editor Michael Kopp: "Perhaps we've come to a point in history where cross-cultural photography is no longer possible or acceptable."<sup>74</sup>

Westra has always made a point of stressing that documentary photography should strive for a kind of invisible observation. This means that the photographer should move within a social scene so as to be virtually unnoticed by the participants who, it is alleged, will therefore go about their business in an unselfconscious manner. Any disruption of this situation is thought to lead to a loss of spontaneity in formalised poses. Westra considers the fact that she works with a waist level Rolleiflex camera rather than the usual eye level 35mm models to be an advantage because it helps to minimise the more obtrusive aspects of photography. Des Kelly has spoken of the quiet way in which she negotiates a photographic transaction as follows: "There would be an instant when they recognise her as a photographer, a pause for a fraction of a second, then they would go straight on with what they are doing. In that moment they've given her tacit acceptance, tacit approval for what she's doing."<sup>75</sup> Even though this statement would have to be qualified by reference to the kind of subject and the historical period in which he or she was photographed, it does suggest that Westra's form of naturalistic observation can allow for more interactive moments than purer forms of 'invisible' observation. If we were to construct a continuum stretching from 'invisible' observation on the left to 'transactional' observation on the right then we could place Westra somewhere near the middle.

Notice I haven't used the phrase participant-observation here. It is difficult to apply this term to a photographer who works at the level of individual assignments, which must be carried out on the spur of the moment, as it were. The practice of participant-observation requires an alternation of involvement in the two sides of the concept, a calibration of intensities which may lead in turn to the suspension of one or the other for an indefinite

period. Documentary photography can sometimes approximate to this pattern – though usually within a more compressed time span than we would find in ‘classic’ ethnographic fieldwork – for example, Walker Evans’s experience making photographs in Alabama for the *Let us now praise famous men* project.<sup>76</sup>

Ans Westra has tended to resist too deep an immersion in the participation side of the Participant-Observation couplet for fear that it will blunt her visual acuity. Photography, by definition, has a tendency to gravitate to a ‘visualist’ mode of representation as adumbrated by theorists such as Johannes Fabian.<sup>77</sup> Ethnographic film making, by contrast, can (but often hasn’t) admit oral, dialogic discourses into its signifying structure. It is, perhaps, the difficulty of combining observational documentary photography, which requires an ‘outsider’ position, with participatory dialogue, which draws the observer ‘inside’, which may account for the fact that Westra has not learnt to speak the Maori language. This, however, has not prevented her from gaining acceptance and a recognisable profile ‘in the field’; she has continued to return to the ‘field’ – revisiting former sites of photographic activity – where the field is much less circumscribed than is normally the case with ethnography. Because Westra’s ongoing project from *Maori* to *Whaiora* has been a totalising photographic account of the Maori people as a whole rather than of regional or kinship delimited tribal groupings, she has continued to argue the necessity and validity of an outsider’s viewpoint. As a corollary to this, she has spoken of the “difficulties” faced by the few practising Maori photographers (such as Bruce Stewart and John Miller) who “tend to get sidetracked by land and language.”<sup>78</sup>

### *New Zealand Photographic History and its Authors*

There have been only three single volume general histories of New Zealand photography. The first, written by Hardwicke Knight, came too early to engage with contemporary developments and is almost entirely devoted to the elucidation of early photographic processes and nineteenth century photographers.<sup>79</sup> The book’s early chapters deal with the Daguerreotype, Calotype, Collodion and Dry Plate Processes, while subsequent ones discuss, inter alia, “the first notables”, topographical and portrait photographers, and “the era of the post card”. The only twentieth century photographers included in the book are a small group of Pictorialists at work in the first half of that century (“some later notables”, especially George Chance, New Zealand’s most prolific and significant Pictorialist photographer). The second general history, published over 20 years later, is more a dictionary of notable photographers – listed, illustrated and annotated, but not in alphabetical or chronological order by age of photographer; and moving from 1852 to 1990 – than it is a piece of historical writing. Like Knight, its authors, William Main and John B. Turner, particularly the former, have concentrated much of their research on early New Zealand photography and photographic processes. Even so, PhotoForum published the book, and the choice of contemporary photographers reflects the agenda of that organisation, which has had Turner at its helm since inception. Almost invariably, the format allocates almost invariably, each photographer one reproduced photograph

and a brief biographical profile. However, sometimes two photographers are compressed onto one page or three onto a double page spread. Of the 19th century photographers, Joseph Zacharia is unusual in receiving four small reproductions on one page, George Pulman three spread over two pages and a few others get two reproductions each; of the 20th century photographers, only Brian Brake, Tom Hutchins and Ans Westra escape this pattern, each receiving two pages and more than one reproduction (three for Brake and Westra, two for Hutchins). This quantitative difference indicates the editors' qualitative estimation of these three photographers as the most important of the post-WWII era. They name Westra's *Maori* as "perhaps the finest New Zealand photographic book of the sixties" and claim that "More than any other photographer, Westra has captured the essence of New Zealanders going about their daily life."<sup>80</sup>

Unlike the two volumes discussed above, written by the pioneering researchers of local photographic history, David Eggleton – the writer of *Into the light* (2006), the most recent attempt at a history of New Zealand photography – was in a position to draw upon the increased volume of research and scholarship that has accumulated over the last fifteen years. However, even though there is an extensive selected bibliography at the end of the book that lists much of this previous work, *Into the light* appears to be largely untouched by the insights and debates introduced by this increased volume of research and scholarship. It proceeds by means of a set of thematic chapters ("the pioneers", "the colonialists", "the Pictorialists", "the nationalists", followed by four chapters with more abstract titles) within which Eggleton offers his personal responses to photographers and photographs along the lines of standard art critical practice. The book is historical only in the sense that its eight self-contained essays in art criticism follow each other, jump-cut fashion, in chronological order. Westra's photography is discussed in chapter six, under the title "New wave existentialists & revolutionaries", alongside a disparate group of other photographers who emerged in the 1960s and 1970s. Eggleton devotes approximately one and half pages to her work, incorporating two small reproductions and one full-page image. *Washday at the pa* receives four paragraphs of comment, *Notes on the country I live in* in three brief ones, and *Maori* and *Whaiora* are discussed in a single paragraph; the remaining paragraphs sketch in the background to Westra's photographic career. In the course of his survey of this career, Eggleton writes, "... she has gradually constructed one of the most remarkable bodies of work in modern New Zealand photography."<sup>81</sup>

The most important force behind the construction and consolidation of a canon of local photographic auteurs in recent years has not come from these one volume 'histories' but rather from the rise of the monograph devoted to the work of a single photographer, usually published in association with a large-scale retrospective exhibition. It is above all this mode that has advanced the understanding and raised the profile of photography in New Zealand over the last 25 years. Since 1985 – when *Witness to change* selected the work of John Pascoe, Les Cleveland and Ans Westra to advance its thesis about the importance of documentary forms in local photography during the period 1940 to 1965 – a number of local photographers have received large-scale retrospectives and lavish accompanying monographs. Within this 25-year period, since the mid-1980s to be specific, the following publications, listed in chronological order, have appeared:

*George Chance: photographs* (1985), with an essay by William Main;  
*Peter Peryer photographs* (1985), curated by Jim and Mary Barr;  
*Nature morte: 105 photographs 1971–1989* by Laurence Aberhart (1990), curated by Peter Ireland;  
Gregory Burke and Peter Weiermair (eds.), *Second nature: Peter Peryer, photographer, New Zealand* (1995);  
Lawrence McDonald (ed.), *Les Cleveland: six decades – message from the exterior* (1998);  
John B. Turner, *Eric-Le Johnson: artist with a camera* (1999);  
Ron Brownson (ed.), *Marti Friedlander Photographs* (2001);  
Justin Paton (ed.), *Ann Noble: states of grace* (2001);  
Gregory Burke (ed.), *Go girl: Fiona Clark* (2002);  
Justin Paton (ed.), *Gary Blackman: a survey* (2003);  
Lawrence McDonald (ed.), *Handboek: Ans Westra photographs* (2004);  
Janet Bayly (ed.), *Songs of innocence photographs of a New Zealand childhood by John Pascoe* (2005);  
Justin Paton and Gregory O’Brien (eds.), *Aberhart* (2007);  
*Peter Peryer photographer* (2008), with essays by Peter Simpson and Peter Peryer;  
Leonard Bell, *Marti Friedlander* (2009);  
Athol McCredie (ed.), *Brian Brake: lens on the world* (2010).

With two exhibitions, three monographs (1985, 1995, and 2008), and a documentary film (*Peter Peryer: portrait of a photographer*, directed by Greg Stitt, 1994) devoted to his work over a period of 23 years, as well as inclusion in the three most significant public art gallery photographic group shows of the last 30 years (*The active eye* – 1975; *Views/Exposures* – 1992; and *Imposing narratives* – 1999; see chapter nine for detailed comment on these three exhibitions), and inclusion in the 2005 book *Contemporary New Zealand photographers*<sup>82</sup>, Peter Peryer emerges as one of New Zealand’s preeminent art photographers. Another is Laurence Aberhart who has received two major retrospective exhibitions (1990, 2007) and is the subject of a bulky monograph (2007). And, along with Peryer, he is the only photographer to feature in the three aforementioned group shows and *Contemporary New Zealand photographers*.

The work of neither of these photographers can be qualified with the adjective documentary, although Aberhart could be said to have some connection to a broad conception of it. The two names on the list above that can be associated unequivocally with documentary photography are Marti Friedlander and Ans Westra, who have both been the subjects of documentary films since the millennium.<sup>83</sup> However, there are a few significant differences I wish to point out. Friedlander’s 2001 exhibition and monograph was staged and published by the Auckland Art Gallery, and the Professor of Art History at the University of Auckland wrote the 2009 monograph. *Handboek: Ans Westra photographs* (2004) was an independent curatorial and publishing project and the exhibition was first staged at the National Library Gallery, a space directly affiliated with the archival and scholarly mission of the Alexander Turnbull Library. Ans Westra’s photographic archive, consisting of negatives and contact sheets, is, of course, housed at the Alexander Turn-

bull Library, the National Library Gallery was a logical place to host a retrospective of her work; although, it should be noted that the exhibition subsequently toured to public art galleries throughout New Zealand and to a venue in the Netherlands. Both Westra and Friedlander were included in *The active eye*, the first of the landmark public gallery photographic group shows mentioned above, but not in the two that followed at intervals of seven years. However, Friedlander's inclusion (and Westra's absence) in the most recent photographic survey volume, *Contemporary New Zealand photographers*, indicates that her work is more easily assimilated to notions of documentary-as-art than is Westra's. I engage in a more detailed comparison between Friedlander and Westra in chapter seven.

Regardless of Westra's marginal status within contemporary notions of art photography, the *Handboek* project, particularly the monograph with its broad range of critical essays, consolidated her importance to the wider visual culture of Aotearoa/New Zealand since the 1960s. And it is her imbrication within this broad sphere that the remainder of this dissertation will investigate.

## CHAPTER TWO

### SITUATING WESTRA: N<sup>o</sup>. 1

#### I

#### EUROPEAN VISION AND MAORI<sup>1</sup>

Ans Westra is not, of course the first European to represent Maori in a visual medium. She comes after a long line of painters and photographers who have been engaged in this activity since the beginning of colonisation. Leonard Bell opens his study of *The Maori in European art* by observing that: “European stylistic and thematic conventions constantly came between the artist and any unvarnished recording of the physical and psychological ‘realities’ of the Maori, and thus played a fundamental role in determining how the Maori was represented.”<sup>2</sup> Throughout his chronological survey of this art Bell is attentive to the way in which style and genre not only relate to changes in art protocol but also point to a wider community of attitudes; in short, the question of how style interacts with and is shaped by and, in turn, helps to shape ideology. This is an important issue but it undoubtedly takes second place in the book to a more traditional art historical procedure. The basis of this evaluative schema is the binary opposition between stereotype (copy) and individual (original). While Bell acknowledges that historical styles are determining factors in how Maori subjects appear in paintings from 1840 to the present, there is an implicit but constant suggestion that, if only good enough, an artist can escape convention and achieve greater verisimilitude. Yet a survey of European representations of Maori that proceeds by means of the historical variability of style and genre must be strictly relativist to remain consistent. Any attempt to measure a representation against external subject matter which purportedly precedes it and to which it is or is not faithful privileges an essentialist notion of realism, which cannot be sustained.<sup>3</sup> This is so for the following reasons:

1. The degree of verisimilitude of a mimetic representation is determined by the degree to which it conforms to and reiterates the society in question’s “system of intelligibility” rather than by any absolute notion of correspondence with external phenomena.<sup>4</sup>

2. Realism as a style of painting and writing is itself an historical genre, which arose during the 19th century, albeit one open to modification, change, and recurrence.

3. However, in the wider sense of realism as a deeper truthfulness, Charles Fredrick Goldie (1870–1947, nineteenth and early twentieth century realist), Russell Clark (1905–1966, twentieth century social realist) and M.T Woollaston (1910–1998, modernist) can all claim to be realists, which qualifies the idea that a concept of realism can be confined to a finite historical period and complicates the notion of a single, universal criterion for verisimilitude.

These general points established, we might take note of Bell's point about the 1960s and 1970s, the period in which Westra was most active in photographing Maori: "the relative shift away from the depiction of the Maori parallels in general the shift by many artists from figurative and representational art to non-figurative, more abstract work."<sup>5</sup> This statement might appear to suggest that photography served to free painting from the naturalist documentation of surfaces because it (photography) was able to do it more efficiently. However, that would be misleading because painting and photography have enjoyed virtual co-existence since the advent of European colonisation and a number of artists have practised and been proficient in both (e.g. John Kinder (1819–1903) in the 19th century<sup>6</sup> and Eric Lee-Johnson (1908–1993) in the 20th century).<sup>7</sup> The history of European photography of Maori is, like that of painting, a history of changing styles and genres and should not be regarded as simply neutral documentation. It is, on the contrary, marked with the rhetorical figures which reveal its links with all forms of European representation of the 'other'.

It is a commonplace that the official recognition of the invention of photography (1839) coincided with the inauguration of the colony of New Zealand as enshrined in the Treaty of Waitangi (1840). However, this is not the place to conduct a full-scale history of Pakeha photography of Maori from the mid-19th century to the present, a task which still remains to be done.<sup>8</sup> Instead, I will simply discuss a few pertinent issues. Michael King has noted that photography of Maori began approximately in the late 1850s. He gives the following reason for the popularity of Maoridom as a subject for Pakeha photographers: "Because Maoris looked different from the non-Maori majority and because they often dressed and behaved differently, they remained a favourite target for photographers."<sup>9</sup> This situation is very much in keeping with the central impulse of documentary photography itself which has repeatedly been obsessed with 'exotic' minorities or social classes which fall below (and sometimes above) its implicitly bourgeois norm.

Given this fascination with the 'difference' of Maori subjects it is understandable that many early New Zealand photographers concentrated on the genre of the photographic Portrait. A half-decade before *The Maori in European art* exhibition opened in Auckland, the Dunedin Public Art Gallery organized the touring exhibition *Face value: a study in Maori portraiture* (1975). As a supplement to its 98 works made by autographic media, it included a selection of early photographic portraits. Fourteen are reproduced in the catalogue in passport size but there are no attributions. The exhibition focus is placed firmly on the traditional fine arts and photography is only mentioned as an aid to the

paintings of C.F. Goldie and Gottfried Lindauer and as an indicator of the “degeneration” of moko (Maori tattooing) in the 20th century.<sup>10</sup> The question of moko is particularly important because recording examples of it, especially moko on the chins of women, was frequently the principal purpose of the photographer and the focal point of the photographs. This particular branch of the photographic portraiture of Maori stretches from a major 19th century practitioner such as Samuel Carnell to its conclusion in 1972 with Marti Friedlander’s photographic portraits for Michael King’s book *Moko: Maori tattooing in the 20th century*. Also, it should be noted that the Burton Brothers and W.H.T Partington made major bodies of work that now constitute two of the most significant 19th century New Zealand photographic collections, containing portraiture of various kinds as well as diverse coverage of other aspects of Maori life.<sup>11</sup>

Returning now to more general issues, Michael King attributes an inherently humanising capacity to photography, making the claim: “...photographs emphasised that Maoris were human...capable of displaying...grace, beauty, dignity, courage, as well as the capacity to suffer pain and degradation.”<sup>12</sup> To make this claim he has recourse to that familiar but, as I have argued, untenable distinction between the (‘real’) individual and the (‘clichéd’) stereotype: “Photography gave Maoris real faces in the eyes of their adversaries at a time when they could have been reduced to mere stereotypes of enemies and ‘savages’.”<sup>13</sup> A further problem with this formulation is that it endows photographic images with an intrinsic signifying power, which is presumed to flow univocally from the image itself to a homogenous audience. It glosses over the complex and contradictory ways in which images were disseminated within and read by different (and divided?) Pakeha reading communities. There is, moreover, no reason to assume that photography is inherently a humanising medium or indeed a dehumanising one for that matter. The task should be rather to determine how it interacts or conflicts with various discourses that together comprise what Foucault has called a regime of truth. I will proceed now to an examination of four key discourses that have shaped the context within which Westra’s photographic practice has taken shape.

## II

### POST-WAR DISCOURSES ON ETHNIC ISSUES

#### *i. Official Representations*

The key official publication of the early 1960s on the position of the Maori people within New Zealand society is undoubtedly *Report on Department of Maori Affairs*, a document commonly known as the Hunn Report.<sup>14</sup> Commissioned by the second Labour Government (1957–1960) but not published until after their term of office, it bears the name of Jack Hunn, the deputy chairman of the Public Service Commission and acting Secretary of Maori Affairs.

The Report declares integration to be the most appropriate goal for future ‘race relations’ in New Zealand. Integration is defined as follows: “To combine (not fuse) the Maori

and Pakeha elements to form one nation wherein Maori culture remains distinct.”<sup>15</sup> At the same time, integration is distinguished from the related concepts of assimilation, segregation, and symbiosis.<sup>16</sup> However, it is clear from subsequent sections of the report that Hunn works with a crude evolutionary model of acculturation and holds a rather static view of Maori ‘culture’. For example, after stating that “...integration...implies some continuation of Maori culture”, he adds, “much of it...has already departed and only the fittest elements (worthiest of preservation) have survived the onset of civilization.”<sup>17</sup> Later in the same section he refers to language, arts, crafts and the institution of the marae as “relics”, “remnants” and “features of their ancient life”. Isolated aspects of an unchanging Maori ‘culture’ are thus seen to have survived as a residue from the past but it is implied that their presence will diminish with the years. After referring to the ‘assimilated’ nature of British society, Hunn concludes: “Signs are not wanting that that may be the destiny of the two races in New Zealand in the distant future.”<sup>18</sup>

Particularly relevant to an analysis of *Washday at the pa* is Hunn’s strong emphasis on the importance of housing and schooling patterns for the successful integration of Maori people. The report has this to say about the former:

...The most effective and fast working agent of economic and social advancement could...be the Maori housing act of 1935. Modern housing raises family status, social acceptability, educational and employment opportunities...health and happiness. It works for the good of the public in general as well as the Maori in particular because it is a strong force for integration.<sup>19</sup>

But Hunn’s desire to effect a redefinition of Turangawaewae in the direction of a reduced notion of home-ownership (as a “realistic gesture” and “practical”) betrays a serious misunderstanding of this concept. In an analysis of the report, the Maori Synod of the Presbyterian Church discretely phrased their objection to this suggested redefinition:

A good home secures the health and dignity of all its members in the community, but Turangawaewae is something far greater and more fundamental than these most desirable considerations.<sup>20</sup>

Hunn placed even greater stress on the importance of education for the long-term prospects of integration:

Modern housing may have a more immediate impact, but education will in the long run, do most for the cause of Maori advancement. It is the one thing more than any other, that will pave the way to further progress in housing, health, employment and acculturation.<sup>21</sup>

“School”, declared Hunn, “is the nursery of integration. Children mix naturally where their less adaptable elders stand apart.”<sup>22</sup> Yet, as we shall see in chapter four, the Minister of Education did not share this confidence in the integrating powers of the school in 1964.

An editorial in *Te ao hou* (see chapter three) reacted positively to the appearance of the Hunn Report; unsurprisingly, perhaps, given that the journal's publisher was the Department of Maori Affairs, whose acting secretary was then J.K. Hunn. The editorial writer asserted that the Report "...explicitly repudiates any imposed policy of integration, recognizing that evolution would take its course and pay scant attention to the statutory formulas", and concluded that it offered "a blueprint for the future of the Maori people, but the house built to this design will everywhere conform to the wishes of its tenants."<sup>23</sup> The current affairs magazine *Comment* published a considerably less positive article on the Report, beginning with a complaint about how the Report was initially made public by the Minister of Maori Affairs (J.R. Hannan) in the form of a New Zealand Press Association summary. The writer of the article, Richard Thompson, described the Report as "essentially a European document", with no evidence of any attempt at involving Maori in its drafting. And he considered the choice and use of the term integration as the adoption of "a more acceptable label" for policies that do not appear fundamentally different from those of the contrasted term of assimilation.<sup>24</sup>

Just three years after the Hunn Report was published, Westra recounted her early involvement with photographing Maori in a brief article for the British journal *Photography*. She wrote: "In a remarkably short time he (the Maori) has moved from a stone-age civilization to modern times ... nowadays we are in the last stages of adaptation. The Maori, as a race, is disappearing to make way for a new race of brown-skinned New Zealanders."<sup>25</sup> This passage is imbued with the assimilationist, evolutionary language which informed the reigning early 1960s policy of integration, most fully enshrined in the Hunn report discussed above. Westra, as it were, casts herself as a later day Edward S. Curtis (1868–1952), whose photographs documented the slow extinction through assimilation of the Native American "race".<sup>26</sup> The difference is that whereas Curtis, like the New Zealand painter Charles Frederick Goldie<sup>27</sup>, faced what he believed to be a dying "race", demoralised by White ethnocide, Westra, working in the wake of the Hunn report, imagined that she was documenting both "what was left over from olden times" (Hunn) and the gradual integration (read assimilation) of Maori people; their movement from a statically conceived 'traditional' culture to an equally statically conceived modern 'Western' culture. It is not surprising that the discourse of integration, which constituted the reigning paradigm or dominant ideology of early 1960s New Zealand 'race relations', should find its way into Westra's article. However, what a photographer writes in an article or says in an interview is not the same as what is embodied in her practice. It is the latter rather than the former that will be analysed in the second part of this dissertation.

## *ii. Ethnographic Representations*

Ans Westra's first decade in New Zealand (1957–1966), a decade in which she commenced and completed a large body of photographic work on Maori before returning to Europe for four years, was a period of rapid and continuous change for the society as a whole. David Pearson and David Thorns characterise the years between 1946 and 1970 as a time of transition "...from the small town capitalist, rural based social structure of the pastoralist period

to one in which the lines of a more urban based service economy were laid within which the manufacturing and government services became major employers and the population became more extensively urbanized.”<sup>28</sup> Whereas one third of the general population resided in the countryside in 1936, forty years later this figure was reduced to one sixth. Within the overall population, the micro population of Maori felt the change most keenly:

At the end of the war, three-quarters of the Maori population still lived in the country, in areas where there were relatively few Pakeha. By the mid-1970s three-quarters of the Maori population was urban...<sup>29</sup>

In an analysis of Maori population trends for the period from 1945 to 1966, the demographer Ian Pool concludes:

The great population movement ... was to have a tremendous impact on all aspects of Maori life ... This shifted the demographic and economic axis of Maori life from rural to urban New Zealand, creating a tension with cultural axes which largely remained centered on rural marae (communities). The social life became increasingly dichotomized between these two competing locations, and the resolution of the inherent contradictions this has created became a major task, not yet completed, for Maori decision-makers.<sup>30</sup>

It is thus in the wake of this vast wave of Maori migration from the country to the city that Westra's 1960s photo-texts began to appear. *Washday at the pa*, for instance, shares its year of publication with a major contribution to the post-war ethnography of Maori, Joan Metge's *A new Maori migration*. This study, a revision of the author's doctoral dissertation for the University of London, is based on research carried out in a small Northland community called Kotare throughout the period 1953–1954 and the first half of 1955. Metge's sketch of the immediate social backdrop to her study is worth quoting in its entirety:

When I began fieldwork in Auckland ... the life of urban Maoris was contrasted to its disadvantage with an idealised stereotype of Maori rural life. According to this stereotype, country Maoris lived in small settlements where community life was highly developed and Pakeha influence at a minimum. Kinship was the most important principle of social organization in such communities, though the precise nature of the kinship structure was not specified. The people relied on employment in primary production for their livelihood, and their level of technological achievement was low in comparison with that of the Pakeha. They disregarded the rational control of economic and cash income in favour of the observance of community and kinship obligations. Community life was centred on the marae (originally the village plaza) where all members of the community gathered frequently.<sup>31</sup>

In contrast to any “idealised stereotype of Maori rural life”, Metge's ethnography concentrates on the increasing incorporation of rural Maori into urban centres, facilitated

by the dissemination of city images through the mass media and by word of mouth. “The modern Maori”, she writes, “saw the city (as the sociologist does) as the centre, the focus, the source even, of civilization.”<sup>32</sup>

Metge’s ethnography differs significantly from the studies carried out during the same period by a team of psychologists directed by James Ritchie whose collective work goes by the title of the Rakau Maori Studies. In a lengthy and detailed review of the first four volumes, Metge herself points out that:

... the publications as they stand suffer from a lack of reference to a social frame...a failure to explore fully the nature and implications for personality development of group membership outside the elementary family, except in the case of the peer-group during childhood and adolescence.<sup>33</sup>

Metge goes on to name the important social groups omitted in the psychological orientation of the Rakau Studies as consisting of the following:

- 1 Local descent-groups;
- 2 “Families” (“...composed of all the descendants of a progenitor deceased within living memory...between 25 and 40 adults”) incorporating “family clubs” and “family maraes”;
- 3 “Native inhabitants” as opposed to “immigrants”;
- 4 Tribal membership linking “native inhabitants” with Maori of adjacent districts;
- 5 Maori as an ethnic minority within a larger society.<sup>34</sup>

When it comes to delineating the overall movement of change within Maori society, Metge prefers to see this as a dynamic process of forging a modern Maori pattern by drawing Pakeha elements into an expanding Maori framework. In this she differs from Ritchie who, in a later synoptic volume, doubted the psychological effectiveness of attempts at reconstructing “pride in the ethnic past” [sic] because: “...the people of Rakau have passed a point of no return in the recovery of a satisfying Maori cultural vitality.”<sup>35</sup>

But this conclusion may flow more from the misrecognition of Ritchie’s static binaries than the actual social transitions of Maori culture. Ritchie, as the anthropologist Ralph Piddington points out, “...thinks in terms of a unilinear, irreversible process of ‘acculturation’ rather than in terms of new progressively emergent institutions and behaviour patterns, deriving from elements of Maori or Pakeha culture or both.”<sup>36</sup>

### *iii. Vernacular Representations*

Popular discourses on Maori people, by contrast with official and ethnographic ones, are composed of informal representations, which, in another sense of the word informal, help to inform everyday perceptions of the ‘otherness’ of this group. Like the two discourses already discussed, in producing speech about the ‘other’ they inevitably speak about the

‘one’, the point of enunciation. The most commonly circulated Pakeha representations of Maori take the form of single images (e.g. tourist posters, newspaper and magazine photographs), image sequences (e.g. cartoons, photo-stories, popular photographic books, and television advertisements) and narrative fiction. Earlier in this chapter, I gave some consideration to painterly representations of Maori that mostly carry high cultural connotations. The formation of more broadly public images is arguably shaped less by these images than by their more popular counterparts. In an essay published during the 1960s, the period with which we are most concerned, John Forster wrote:

...during the last half of the present century there emerged a more or less standard view of the Maori; this is a presentation of the Maori as he [sic] was—with grass skirt, tattooed, twirling poi, a warrior, an artist, and a gentleman. New Zealand schools and textbooks discuss the Maori in this way, the tourist bureau publicises him thus, and many people, including New Zealanders, think of him, if at all, in such an image.<sup>37</sup>

A representative example from the early 1960s would be *The Maori in colour* by Kenneth and Jean Bigwood; one of a series of books by this pair of photographers, which together aspire to render the totality of New Zealand life, in colour.<sup>38</sup> “Colour” here signifies not merely film stock but greater vividness and spectrum fidelity to the qualities of New Zealand life. According to Harry Dansey’s introduction, this is particularly appropriate for Maori because, “The story of a colourful people is best told in colour.”<sup>39</sup> There may be something to this idea but in this case it is the colour of the tourist publicity brochure made in the studio, which serves to produce an air of contrived theatricality as museum displays give way to stiffly posed portraits and panoramas of tourist resorts peopled with guides and tourists. It is difficult to fathom how Bruce Palmer’s review could claim of the book that:

... it would help to remove a common stereotype among certain New Zealand children: that the Maori is someone happening in history who bears little relation to those seen in the streets and in some of our homes today.<sup>40</sup>

On the contrary, the majority of the photographs show Maori people posed in traditional dress while the few informal prints included can in no sense be described as examples of ‘street photography’. It is in contrast to books like this one that the full import of Westra’s break with pictorial orthodoxy first began to manifest itself.

This arrested image of the trappings of a theatricalised pre-contact ‘culture’, aimed at enticing tourists and edifying school pupils, finds its vulgar antithesis in the cartoon figure of Hori, “the fat, happy-go-lucky Maori hero” of a series of cheaply produced books. *The half-gallon jar* (1962), the first book featuring this character, had sold over 60,000 copies by 1964, the year in which *Washday at the pa* was also published. A note near the front of the book reads, “In real life Hori is a “Pakeha coot” – W. Norman McCallum of Remuera, Auckland.”<sup>41</sup> Thus when Hori opens his mouth it is not a Maori voice which speaks but rather, as Bill Pearson observes, “...the kerbside philosopher of journalism who is a

spokesman for the concerns of the Philistine urban Pakeha of several income groups.”<sup>42</sup> Further Hori books followed, all illustrated with the cartoons of Frank St Bruno, and all selling very well.<sup>43</sup> At the same time as these books were written, James Ritchie, in the Rakau Studies mentioned in the previous section of this chapter, presented a very different view of Maori personality: “After looking at child rearing and development in Rakau, I formulated the view that it was likely that Maori people there would show a great deal of evidence of conflict, insecurity, depression, anxiety, and stress. This contrasts strongly with the happy-go-lucky stereotype which Pakehas apply to Maoris...”<sup>44</sup>

Thus we have the survival of elevated portraits of the noble savage co-existing alongside the fallen image of the simple-minded but happy-go-lucky Hori; the two poles imperfectly straddled across a line dividing sacred from profane, but both sinking their roots into the quotidian. And yet, before leaving the matter there, it should be noted that another major New Zealand writer, Frank Sargeson, advanced a counter view of these stories. In the second part of a very long interview published in 1970 he said: “You know the resistance to, and contempt that has been poured on, the Hori stories. But Hori stories are going on all the time. It’s only that what is the basis of the Hori story is badly used or is a fatigued artistic form, not that it doesn’t exist.... We’re living in the day of the documentary, and social anthropology, and all the rest of it, and therefore the Maori inasmuch as he is the basis of the Hori stories, is supposed to be forgotten about. We are meant to pretend that he doesn’t exist.”<sup>45</sup> The Hori stories raise the question of the type and the stereotype, which I will address in detail in chapter four on *Washday at the pa*.

#### *iv. Literary Representations*

When we turn to the category of serious narrative fiction written by Pakeha on Maori themes, a more complex pattern obtains, as one would expect with the products of high culture. A major tendency of much of this writing is to cast Maori society as the preferred obverse of a Pakeha obsession with material advancement and respectability grounded in puritan values. Roderick Finlayson (1904–1992), the principal proponent of this tendency, which he pioneered from the 1930s onwards, puts the matter succinctly in a reflection upon the motivating impulses of his writing: “If, in later years, I formed a conscious aim, it was to warn the Pakeha, to show him, through Maori eyes, the danger of sacrificing completely the warm vivid life of the simple and naive to a system grown coldly and exclusively rational and greedy.”<sup>46</sup> Finlayson’s short stories were influenced by the Sicilian writers, Giovanni Verga and Luigi Pirandello, who wrote of the simple virtues of peasant life. Encouraged by his friend and mentor, the poet D’Arcy Cresswell, whose dislike of industrial civilization he shared, Finlayson began to produce stories of the rural Maori life he had first encountered in the Bay of Plenty during the 1920s. Bob Lowry of the Unicorn Press published his first collection of these stories of organic rural communities in 1938 under the title *Brown man’s burden*.<sup>47</sup> With *Sweet Beulah land* (1942), his second collection, Finlayson began to explore the dislocation experienced by the increasing number of Maori moving from the communal life of the countryside to the more individualist environment of the cities.

It is this transition that is addressed two decades later by Noel Hilliard (1929–1997), a younger writer, whose major work, like Westra's, began to appear in the 1960s. It is especially relevant to cite his name, as eventually he was to collaborate with Westra on the production of two books published in the 1970s – *We live by a lake* (1972) and *Wellington: city alive* (1976). *Maori girl*<sup>48</sup>, Hilliard's first novel, charts the passage of its protagonist, Netta Samuel, from her childhood in the country (Taranaki) to young womanhood in the city of Wellington. The novel is an indictment of the treatment Netta receives at the hands of urban Pakeha society, embodied above all in the inadequacies of her two successive lovers but also in the attitudes and actions of employers, landlords, etc. Yet after a fine evocation of Netta's childhood in part one, the following two parts rather tend towards over-schematization. Bill Pearson considers that Hilliard's stories of Maori children are amongst his best work and suggests that this indicates a recognition on the writer's part of the limitations of his understanding which best advances by careful observation and reporting rather than over-ambitious interpretation. Hilliard is not alone amongst Pakeha writers in successfully delineating aspects of Maori childhood through "third person sympathetic identification". Pearson offers the following reasons for their success in identifying with Maori children: "...the reason may be that children are easier to understand than adults, or that it is easier for a Maori child to succeed as a child on Pakeha terms than it is for a Maori adult to succeed as an adult on Pakeha terms."<sup>49</sup> I will address the question of writing on and for children in greater detail in chapter three.

### III

#### WOMEN PHOTOGRAPHERS

During the 1980s, several books appeared which brought to light a neglected history of women photographers in the English-speaking world. Val Williams, the writer of one of these books, wrote of her interest in discovering:

...why women entered photography, how they adjusted their work according to market and cultural forces, how they were able at times to subvert those forces and the ways in which their gender determined or influenced the relationships between photographer and photographed.<sup>50</sup>

Her book, *Women photographers: the other observers 1900 to the present*, uncovers a large number of important British women photographers, in a line stretching from Nora Smyth to Jo Spence. Williams's comment on Margaret Monck's photographic method could be applied equally to Ans Westra's:

...her photographs are not so much snatched as requested, she collaborates with her subjects without expressing any real need to get to know them. Her sympathy was active but did not prompt radical action.<sup>51</sup>

And Monck herself, in a television interview, after saying that: “...You’re just the eye behind the camera”, adds the qualification: “But it is possible that the fact that the eye is a woman’s does make the photographer’s presence less obtrusive, less threatening than it might otherwise be”, just a matter of, “...some foolish female taking a snap.”<sup>52</sup> It is instructive to compare this statement with the one which follows from Ans Westra:

The fact that I’m a woman with a camera has made me less of a threat, so I’ve been taken less seriously, but that was good in my case, because people took less notice of me. A lot of people would say ‘oh, she’s only practising, she’s only trying to learn how to operate her camera’.<sup>53</sup>

Thus, what might appear to be a major disadvantage (not being taken seriously) has in fact been used to wrest a kind of freedom in which to keep on working. Barbara Hall makes a related point in her (and Jenny Mather’s) study of Australian women photographers:

Women who embraced photography gained a unique and unacknowledged opportunity to play a significant role in depicting our social history. They found a freedom in pursuing images of the world through photography, a freedom denied them elsewhere.<sup>54</sup>

Other points raised by Hall are the eschewal of “patriarchal objectivity” and the absence of technophilia in photography by Australian women who are more attuned to the exploration of subject matter. This is also true of Westra whose pursuit of naturalistic documentary has not meant an embracing of detached, unsympathetic ‘official’ images.

These two books from England and Australia, while making important points and raising interesting questions, are very much exercises in revealing a line of women photographers who have been neglected because ‘hidden from history’. In essence, they attempt to balance the historical record by restoring to it a list of forgotten names. They don’t seek to question the mechanisms of exclusion or, in the case of better-known photographers, of incorporation that worked to position these women (as women) in this way. A book that does try to do this is Andrea Fisher’s study of *Women photographers for the US government 1935 to 1944*.<sup>55</sup> Fisher’s book, serving like Williams’s as an extended exhibition catalogue, deals with the work of seven women photographers who were attached to two American institutions: the 1930s Great Depression situated Farm Security Administration (FSA), and the 1940s wartime Office of War Information. Of the seven photographers, one is very well known (Dorothea Lange), another has gradually begun to receive more attention (Marion Post Wolcott), while the remaining five are relatively unknown (Esther Bublely, Marjory Collins, Martha McMillan Roberts, Ann Rosener and Louise Roskam). Fisher perceives a difference between the straightforward ‘classic’ documentary images of the 1930s (direct human (ist) pictures of the plight of rural America) and the ambiguous film noiresque images of the 1940s (“the drift of reverie” is the evocative title she gives to these pictures of women transported to urban settings for their new roles in the war effort).<sup>56</sup> In place of providing a reading of these images within the overall projects of the

institutions which commissioned them, Fisher opts for a 'subjectivist' perspective<sup>57</sup> that examines how the work of these women (especially Lange and Wolcott) posed a problem for gender positioning at the time. If from this perspective the photographs of the 1930s can be read for signs of "a crisis in the intimate", then their more artificial successors during the wartime 1940s can be taken as indicative of newly emergent desires with strong erotic undercurrents.<sup>58</sup>

The personae constructed for Lange and Wolcott in order to incorporate them as smoothly as possible into the FSA's agenda were, according to Fisher, the ready made identities of 'mother' and 'girl'. Lange as 'mother' of documentary was able to be mobilized on behalf of the caring and compassionate side of the FSA, working over and against its marked drive towards documentary mastery.<sup>59</sup> By contrast, the youthful and attractive Wolcott was provided with a public(ity) identity of the adventuring 'girl', fearlessly traveling alone into the field, transgressively going where few if any women had gone before; coming to FSA work much later than Lange, her brief was in part to celebrate the beauty of the American landscape and the quiet values of the small town.<sup>60</sup>

### *Dorothea Lange*

The photographer to whom Ans Westra feels the most affinity is Dorothea Lange (1895-1965).<sup>61</sup> Lange carried out her most well known work for, first, the California State Emergency Relief Administration and, following that, the Resettlement Administration (RA), which soon became the Farm Security Administration. She worked for these organisations in the period between 1935 and December 1939, a time span in which she photographed in 22 out of the USA's 48 states. It was during this period that she forged her notion of documentary photography<sup>62</sup> and her distinctive method of working in the field. Her response to the demands of the RA/FSA assignments was manifested in her very appearance which, according to Karin Becker Ohrn:

... had adapted to the rigours of fieldwork. Her hair was shorter and her body more angular. Foregoing a fashionable appearance that would have increased her social distance from the people she photographed, she preferred to wear pants or other clothing that would give her freedom of movement.<sup>63</sup>

Lange placed great importance on establishing an empathetic rapport with her field subjects so that they would freely co-operate with her; this is well caught in her short, simple statement that "one is a photographer second."<sup>64</sup>

Both in the field and in the making of reports and texts, Lange collaborated with her (second) husband, Paul Taylor, a former associate Professor of Economics at the University of California at Berkeley who became director of the California Rural Rehabilitation Administration in 1935. In this regard, it is interesting to note that Lange identified her work with Taylor as aligned with and parallel to the photo-ethnography concurrently being carried out by Margaret Mead and (her second husband) Gregory Bateson – a couple who also married

in 1935 and set out for the field shortly thereafter – in Bali.<sup>65</sup> Lange and Taylor's collaborative work reached its peak with the publication of *An American exodus*<sup>66</sup> in late 1939. The exodus of the title refers to the movement of peasant farmers from the land, displaced by drought and the accelerating mechanization of agriculture. It is thus a document of internal migration brought about by changes in a mode of production, and Taylor's writing throughout grounds this process in a socio-economic context. The captions to Lange's photographs came mostly from the words of the subjects themselves, recorded at the time of shooting in her detailed field notes. When choosing captions she preferred material that provided background and context without forcing a direct explanation of the image. She put it thus: "I don't like the kind of written material that tells a person what to look for or that explains the photograph... I like the kind of material that gives more background, that fortifies it without directing the person's mind..."<sup>67</sup> Lange and Taylor's foreword to the book clearly states what kind of documentary study *An American exodus* is meant to be:

This is neither a book of photographs nor an illustrated book, in the traditional sense. Its particular form is the result of our use of techniques in proportions and relations designed to convey understanding, clearly, and vividly. We use the camera as a tool of research. Upon a tripod of photographs, captions and text we rest themes evolved out of long observations in the field. We adhere to the standards of documentary as we have conceived them. Quotations which accompany photographs report what the persons photographed said, not what we think might be their unspoken thoughts.<sup>68</sup>

In this book and her subsequent photo-essays for magazines and agencies, Lange eschewed the 'bull's eye' technique in favour of groups of images with which she could make photographic statements capable of generating the visual equivalent of "relationships, equivalents, progressions, contradictions, positives and negatives".

The 1930s may have provided the occasion for Lange's most famous photographs but she nonetheless went on to produce a great deal of important work in subsequent decades. This included: a stint as chief photographer for the bureau of Agricultural Economics; a Guggenheim award to study three religious communities (the Amana colonies, the Shakers, The Hutterites); a study of the wartime Japanese internment camps at Manzanar; a period with the office of war information; and photo-essays for *Life* magazine on such subjects as three Mormon towns and County Clare, Ireland.<sup>69</sup>

Near the end of her life Lange made this observation:

...speaking of the difference between the role of the woman as artist and the man. There is a sharp difference, a gulf. The woman's position is immeasurably more complicated. There are not very many first class women producers...that is producers of outside things. They produce in other ways. Where they can do both it's a conflict...I'd like to take one year...when I would not have to take into account anything but my own inner demands.<sup>70</sup>

The principal subject of this dissertation, Ans Westra, photographer and mother, is likewise no stranger to this fundamental conflict. In the first part of the following chapter, I profile the two institutions that provided her main working contexts of the 1960s.

IV

HOME AND BELONGING; PARTICIPATION,  
DETACHMENT AND MARGINALITY

Before proceeding to the next chapter, I want to devote some discussion to the matter of Westra's position in relation to questions of national and group membership, or more specifically, local and expatriate intellectual communities; or, more abstractly, issues of home and belonging; and following that, issues of participation and detachment.

In recent years, a few writers have begun to research the question of the impact of European exiles and emigres on New Zealand high culture during the period of WWII and the immediate post-war period. On the one hand, this interest signals a move away from an inward focus on the development of an allegedly autochthonous cultural nationalism, and, on the other, a complication of it by looking at other sources of its inspiration, especially in relation to issues of modernism and modernisation. This new emphasis can be seen as a local response to earlier work done by Northern Hemisphere intellectuals such as Edward Said who claimed, "Modern Western culture is in large part the work of exiles, emigres, refugees."<sup>71</sup> Clearly, one couldn't make the same claim for modern New Zealand culture but it is beginning to become clear that the links between "an improvised community of cultural nationalists and exiles" were important in making "New Zealand modernism conceivable."<sup>72</sup> Interestingly, there were a considerable number of photographers amongst this group of European refugees from Nazism. Leonard Bell, who has written a number of linked essays on several of these photographers, has identified no less than seven, who all arrived in the late 1930s.<sup>73</sup>

Common to all these refugees, most of whom were Jewish, was a persisting sense of displacement from the riches of Central European high culture and a corresponding difficulty in adapting to the rudimentary nature of the local culture. But given the near invisibility of photography as a serious art form at this time in New Zealand, it would have been especially difficult for photographers conversant with the huge ferment of modernist photography that took place in Europe during the inter-war years. In another text, Bell discusses *The immigrant* (1945), a painting by Douglas MacDiarmid, a local artist who became a permanent expatriate. The figure in the painting is based on Otti Binswanger, a refugee from Germany who settled in Christchurch in the early 1940s. As part of his examination of general issues of "home and belonging", Bell follows his discussion of MacDiarmid's work with a consideration of the photographer Marti Friedlander. English born of Russian-Jewish descent, Friedlander came to New Zealand in 1958 with her New Zealand born husband. Although in no sense a refugee, Bell sees a similar kind of displacement and 'homelessness' in Friedlander's early experience of living in New Zealand as he does with the wartime emigres. "Friedlander is quoted as saying", he writes, "that

initially she felt very alienated in New Zealand, and unhappy... Initially a far-from-willing immigrant, she nevertheless stayed. Is she an expatriate or a New Zealander, or both?"<sup>74</sup>

These questions might also be addressed to the case of Ans Westra, who arrived in New Zealand in 1957, one year before Friedlander. To summarise some basic facts of Westra's biography: at the age of 21, she came to New Zealand from the Netherlands to visit her father and decided to stay; and apart from a number of lengthy return visits to Holland, has lived here ever since.<sup>75</sup> She is, therefore, a naturalised New Zealander of Dutch descent and by extension a Pakeha, in the wider sense of that term – the majority group of non-Maori New Zealanders of European descent. Given the voluntary nature of her decision to come to New Zealand, with the initial intention of only staying for a short period, the term exile is not appropriate. And while initially she was literally an émigré and an expatriate, after fifty-five years of near continuous residence in this country, these two more or less synonymous terms hold little relevance now.

Unlike the wartime emigres and Marti Friedlander, there is no evidence to suggest that Westra ever experienced a persisting sense of homelessness or alienation in her adopted country. This may be partly a matter of her age on arrival, considerably younger than the 1940s immigrants and nearly ten years younger than Friedlander. It may also have to do with her upbringing within a branch of the Dutch middle class less endowed with high cultural capital than the 1940s refugees, and her practical craft based education. Rather than reluctantly leaving something behind, with Westra there is the sense of a new start in a new medium in the New World. During his discussion of Frank Hofmann's modernist photograph of his New Zealand-born wife, *Helen Shaw* (1950), Leonard Bell writes that Shaw considered herself, along with a number of other local-born artists and writers, an "internal exile", a member of a group "in flight from mainstream middle-class New Zealand, which was Anglo-Celt in its ethnic and cultural origin."<sup>76</sup> Westra, too, could be said to have eschewed "mainstream middle-class New Zealand" but I don't think it would be accurate to say that she ever saw herself as an "internal exile" or identified with that segment of the local intelligentsia. Her embrace of Maori as the main subjects of her photographic practice began partly because of their difference and distance from the lifeworld (*lebenswelt*) of her Dutch upbringing. And this led her to collaborate with writers who had personal links and a professional involvement with the Maori world: James Ritchie, James K. Baxter, and Noel Hilliard. Although to varying degrees outside the norms of "mainstream middle-class New Zealand", none of these writers fits within a would-be modernist realm of "internal exiles". They were all engaged with the pressing concerns of local cross-cultural encounter and strove to become at home in a bi-cultural world. Like Roderick Finlayson before them and contemporaries such as Bill Pearson, all these writers looked to the Maori world for values alternative to the dominant Pakeha world that simultaneously they subjected to critique. Ans Westra's work, too, belongs with theirs. It exhibits a romantic way of seeing, which, as Anna Grimshaw argues, is linked to "experiential techniques" as opposed to the "classificatory method" of an enlightenment project or the "genealogical approach" of a modernist way of seeing.<sup>77</sup>

## CHAPTER THREE

### SITUATING WESTRA: N<sup>o</sup>. 2

#### I

#### INSTITUTIONAL MATRICES AND COMMISSIONING BODIES

##### *i. Te Ao Hou*

The meaning of the phrase *Te ao hou*, as the anthropologist Pat Hohepa explains, “...is more than a new dawn or day, it is the code for the new world, or the modern or twentieth century world.”<sup>1</sup> This phrase is also the name of an important and influential journal that was subtitled “The Maori Magazine”.

*Te ao hou* appeared quarterly from 1952 to 1975, its 76 issues published by the Department of Maori Affairs for the Maori Purposes Fund Board. It covered important events and developments in a changing Maori world (*hui*, *tangi*, political and educational matters, etc.) and featured the work of significant Maori writers and artists. The editors were all enlightened Pakeha who, in the words of one of them, saw their role as giving “Maori people the opportunity to hear their own voice.”<sup>2</sup> The inaugural editor was Erik Schwimmer, a Dutch born, Wellington based social anthropologist and writer who also edited the literary journal *Numbers*. He edited the first thirty issues of *Te ao hou* (1952–1960) before taking a year’s leave of absence. Upon returning from leave, he edited a further two issues (numbers 36 and 37) before departing to take up a position with the School Publications Branch of the Department of Education. During the time Schwimmer was on leave (1960–61), the playwright, critic and cultural commentator Bruce Mason (1921–1982) edited the journal. It was during his brief period as editor (issues 31–35) that Westra first contributed to the journal. When Schwimmer finally relinquished editorship of *Te ao hou* he was replaced in early 1962 by Margaret Orbell (1934–2006), a specialist in Maori culture. Under the editorship of Orbell, assisted by her artist husband Gordon Walters, who acted as designer and illustrator, *Te ao hou* took on a stronger visual component, printing reproductions of line drawings by Maori artists and carrying a large number of black and white photographs, including the regular cover image initiated with issue three. While *Te ao hou* may not have exactly the same structure as ‘classic’ photo-journals like

*Life* (USA) and *Picture post* (UK), with their successive suites of photo-stories, it is certainly comparable. It's especially interesting in being largely addressed to a particular ethnic group, covering topics of relevance to them in a plain style, free of the exoticism that tends to mark 'general' photo-journals when they venture into investigating the 'other'. Orbell remained as editor until early 1966 when she was succeeded by Joy Stevenson who edited the final 22 numbers of the journal (June 1966–June 1975).

As indicated above, Westra's involvement with the journal dates from issue 31 (June 1960) which displays her first published photograph on its cover. A note at the foot of the contents page reads: "A young Dutch photographer, Miss A. Westra, in New Zealand visiting relatives [sic], took the charming child study on the cover just outside Ohinemutu Church"<sup>3</sup>. Issue 32 (September 1960) also has a cover photograph by Westra, again taken outside the church at Ohinemutu, a big close-up of a small Maori girl. Inside this number of the journal are some photographic studies taken in Jerusalem (NZ) by Peter Campbell, and an essay on "The future place of Maori culture in New Zealand" by James Ritchie, the co-ordinator of the Rakau Studies who went on to write the text of Westra's *Maori. Te ao hou* number 39 carries Westra's first published photo and text combination – a brief profile of the singer Henare Gilbert<sup>4</sup> who had recently returned to New Zealand. It is a modest but competent piece of photojournalism. Interestingly enough in light of what was to occur at their annual conference in July 1964, pages 34 and 35 contain photos by Westra of a Maori Women's Welfare League garden party. Westra continues what was to amount to an occasional involvement with the portraiture of well-known Maori in number 41 (December 1962) with a cover close-up of All Black rugby footballer Mac Herewini.

*Te ao hou* provided Westra with reasonably regular employment as a photographer specialising in the coverage of Maori affairs during the first half of the 1960s. Under the auspices of Margaret Orbell, she was granted access to the public and not so public life of Maoridom, thereby facilitating her entry to such venues as marae and gatherings such as hui and arts festivals<sup>5</sup> because she was there in a kind of accredited capacity. Furthermore, while on assignments for *Te ao hou*, she was free to amass a pool of photographs from which would emerge her major work, *Maori*.

#### *ii. The New Zealand School Publications Branch of the Department of Education*

The New Zealand Department of Education began publishing the *School Journal* in 1907 and until the late 1950s provided it free to every child on a monthly basis. In 1939, upon the initiative of the then Deputy Director-General of Education, Dr C.E. Beeby, it took the unusual step of establishing a School Publications Branch charged with commissioning and producing educational materials to supplement or, in some cases, supplant textbooks from outside sources (both local and foreign). 1947 saw the appearance of the first numbers of the *Post-Primary School Bulletin* (ten 32 page issues a year) and shortly after that, in 1949, the *Primary School Bulletin* (five 32–48 page issues a year) was established to provide bulletins of nature and social studies for school children aged between 9 and 13 years. The provision of these School Bulletins continued until 1980. At the close of that decade, in 1989, "...the

School Publications Branch of the Department of Education was corporatised into Learning Media Ltd, which continues to produce the *Journal*...”<sup>6</sup>

The first Editor of the School Publications Branch, F.L. Tombs, “introduced the policy of inviting New Zealand artists and writers to contribute to the journals and bulletins” published by the Department of Education.<sup>7</sup> The writer and documentary photographer John Pascoe, introduced and discussed in chapter one, contributed three bulletins (photos and text) to the early period of the Post-Primary School Bulletin. His first, for junior forms, was *The high country run* (1947), a short study of a high country sheep station.<sup>8</sup> This was followed by *Adventure in New Zealand: a trumper’s diary* (1950), which covers a five day trip from Bealy to Hokitika by means of seven landscape photographs.<sup>9</sup> Eight years after its initial appearance, Pascoe issued a much-expanded version of *The high country run* with three times the number of photographs.<sup>10</sup>

Pascoe’s bulletin, aimed at Post-Primary school pupils, differs significantly from another on the same topic, *On the hill: a story of high country farming*, written by David McLeod with drawn illustrations by Juliet Peter, which is aimed at the Primary school.<sup>11</sup> Whereas *The high country run* ventures into abstraction in order to convey information in a ratiocinative manner, *On the hill* is rooted in sense impressions and its extensive narrative about a boy (Willie Macgregor) living in a country town doesn’t stray too far from concrete people and things. This is because the editor of The Primary School Bulletin: “...tries to present each bulletin in the form of a story, in which the particular topic being dealt with is seen through the eyes of fictional characters who are usually themselves children.”<sup>12</sup> By these means it is hoped that the children will identify with the central character(s) because, as Wells states it: “We must be the eyes and ears of the children, rather than their formal instructors.”<sup>13</sup>

When one considers the contribution made by Westra and other important photographers to the School Bulletins of the 1960s and 1970s, it is a little surprising to read that the Department considered that: “Except in nature study bulletins, vigorous representational line drawings seem preferable to photography. They enable significant details to be isolated and emphasized.”<sup>14</sup> Good examples of the use of clearly delineated representational drawings are provided by Russell Clark’s sets of illustrations for the *School Journal*: first in Ray Chapman-Taylor’s *Life in the Pa* (1948), to which he contributed a cover illustration and many of the 150 drawings<sup>15</sup>; and then in *Ruatahuna: a Maori village* (1950), a bulletin that provides a detailed multi-perspectival portrait of social and cultural life in a rural Maori community in the Urewera, built up in sections by a large group of writers, the majority of whom are Maori.<sup>16</sup> Another pertinent, Maori-related example, is Roderick Finlayson’s series of stories (see chapter two for background material on Finlayson) based on significant moments in the movement of Maori history, beginning with *The coming of the Maori* (1955), an account of the Great Migration, illustrated with Anne McCahon’s drawings of life in Hawaiki.<sup>17</sup> Finlayson followed this first bulletin with a further six bulletins, issued individually by School Publications between 1955 and 1959 all illustrated by Joan Smith: *The coming of the musket* (1955); *The coming of the Pakeha* (1956); *The Golden years* (1956); *The return of the fugitives* (1957); *Changes in the pa* (1958); and *The new harvest* (1960). All these separate volumes were later collected in book form under the title *The springing fern* (1965), and this republication by a commercial firm reprinted Joan Smith’s

line drawings.<sup>18</sup> Finally, in the 1970s, School Publications reissued the separate bulletins with new illustrations by Murray Grimsdale.

Seven years after their explicit statement of a preference for line drawings over photographs, quoted above, the Department of Education published a set of four booklets with the title *Suggestions for teaching social studies in the primary school*.<sup>19</sup> In the second volume a distinction is drawn between “foreground” and “background” books: “foreground books deal in personalities and in the details of the lives of small groups of people. ‘Background’ books have their value ... but they deal essentially in generalities ... a foreground book will tell about one family or one community.”<sup>20</sup> Further on it is argued, “the foreground book is scarce. It is harder to write because it demands accurate observation on the spot ... it does help a child to build vivid mental images of what it is like to be a Canadian, or a West Indian...”<sup>21</sup> *Suggestions for teaching* then goes on to identify two types of foreground book, “the fictional and the documentary or informative”: “The first is primarily a story written from the inside, and taking notice of things and places only as they effect [sic] the people in the story... the second ... is primarily an account of people, their ways of living, and the circumstances of their lives, written from the outside by a shrewd and well informed observer.”<sup>22</sup>

The booklet stresses, “documentary foreground books need plenty of photographic illustrations supported by occasional maps, diagrams, or drawings.”<sup>23</sup> Westra’s first bulletin for School Publications, *Viliami of the Friendly Islands*, is definitely an example of a “documentary foreground book”; and so, to some degree, is *Washday at the pa*, but it puts rather more emphasis on story elements than informative ones, even though its documentary basis is very evident. I discuss the former in chapter six and the latter receives extended treatment in chapter four. Here it is sufficient to note that whereas she did double duty as photographer and writer for these two works, her subsequent bulletins for the Department of Education throughout the 1960s and 1970s contain written contributions from well-known writers. School Publications was something of a haven for literary and visual artists who were often employed in an editorial capacity (for instance, the poets James K. Baxter, Alistair Campbell, and Louis Johnson and the prose fiction writer Jack Lasenby) as well as providing a large number of actual bulletins themselves. As Alistair Campbell recalls: “Professor H.A. Murray, my old classics teacher, once referred to School Pubs as a ‘nest of singing birds’. And he was right. Mentioning only the people who were there in my time, there were, to begin with, four poets – James K. Baxter, Louis Johnson, Peter Bland, and myself. But the Branch also attracted a variety of other gifted people, some of whom came with established reputations, or developed them later. Mentioning only people who were there in my time; Eric [sic] Schwimmer (anthropologist), Michael Turnbull (historian), Hugh Price (publisher), Roger Hall (playwright), Bob Brockie (political cartoonist), Pat Earle (playwright), Evelyn Clouston and Jill McDonald (artists), and Antony Alpers (biographer).”<sup>24</sup>

Westra worked with poet Louis Johnson on *The circus comes to town* (1965) and *Holiday in the capital* (1968), children’s fiction writer Jack Lasenby on *Lost and found* (1970) and with the specialist ‘transactional’ writers Josephine Horton (*On the way to reading*, 1968) and Ingeborg Brown (*Children of Holland*, 1969). School Publications provided Westra

with more than simply the possibility of ongoing if intermittent employment prospects. I would suggest that it encouraged and enabled her to develop the skill of forming narratives with photographs. Her assignments for *Te ao hou* were important in putting her in touch with the Maori world and subject matter that engaged her but, essentially, they amounted to the photo-journalistic provision of illustrative records. School Publications, on the other hand, required more than a few representative or striking photographs of an event or person. It required social studies themes to be presented in story form. Thus Westra was able to play with the fashioning of pictorial stories within a small, tightly bounded compass. The larger works which followed in the 1960s and early/mid 1970s benefited from this early discipline. For, striking as some of her individual compositions are, her work gains much of its power from the sequences (both linear and less obvious narrative) in which it appears.

## II

### INTERTEXTUAL AND GENERIC LINKS WITH OTHER WORKS

#### *The Family of Man*

On many occasions, Ans Westra has singled out the photographic exhibition, *The family of man* (1955), as a major inspiration behind her desire to practise photography. Her exposure to the exhibition when it toured to Holland was a founding moment in her transformation from general craft student to aspiring professional photographer, her origin myth if you like. In an interview, she told me that the exhibition, “really staggered me with the number of impressive photographs, how much of life had been captured and how much there was to photograph ... The prints were large and were all free standing and hanging panels. You had to be amongst them and walk around them. And then, of course, the book reinforced the whole thing and made the strong impression even more lasting ... It was the only photographic exhibition I saw in the early days.”<sup>25</sup> She was not alone in responding this way. A recent statement by Auckland-based photographer Marti Friedlander, who saw the exhibition at around the same time in the United Kingdom, is just one other instance of the impact of this exhibition on a certain generation: “Documentary photography has always been my preference, ever since I saw *The Family of Man* exhibition in London, the images of which were such a moving celebration of our humanity and diversity.”<sup>26</sup>

I imagine that sometime in the mid-1950s the young Westra would have traveled to Amsterdam to take in this huge exhibition of “503 pictures from 68 countries”, initially compiled by Edward Steichen for The Museum of Modern Art, New York, opening there in January 1955, and partially funded by Coca Cola in the tour of its three copies to venues outside New York and the USA. In his introduction to the book version of the exhibition, Steichen describes it as: “...the most ambitious and challenging project photography has ever attempted... it was conceived as a mirror of the universal elements and emotions in the everydayness of life—as a mirror of the essential oneness of mankind throughout the world.” He goes on to say that the exhibition is concerned with “...basic human conscious-

ness.”<sup>27</sup> And in an article published three years after the exhibition opened, Steichen wrote: “Over three and half million people have seen the exhibit; a million copies of the book...have gone all over the world. In Holland, a country where they rarely sell books not having a Dutch text, thirty-five thousand copies were sold in two weeks.”<sup>28</sup> No doubt one of those copies entered the Westra household in Leiden.

All the big production numbers and grand themes of ‘the human condition’ unfold within the exhibition and book: birth – motherhood – childhood – the family – the dignity of work – the art of recreation – disaster and death. The photographs are accompanied by brief quotations from the Bible, the Bhagavad-Gita, proverbs, poets, philosophers and, of course, the charter of the United Nations. It has been estimated that *The family of man* was seen by nine million people in 69 countries in 85 separate exhibitions. By 1978, the book alone had achieved around four million sales. In his autobiography, *A life in photography*, Steichen makes the claim:

Regardless of the place, the response was always the same...the people in the audience looked at the pictures and the people in the pictures looked at them. They recognised each other.<sup>29</sup>

This extravagant statement, as metaphysical as it is untenable, is perfectly in keeping with the globalising humanism of the project in the way it obliterates the very possibility of cultural difference at any level. Having described the exhibition as “the epitome of American cold war liberalism”<sup>30</sup>, Allan Sekula goes on to suggest that:

A close textual reading of *The Family of Man* would indicate that it moves from the celebration of patriarchal authority – which finds its highest embodiment in the United Nations – to the final construction of an imaginary utopia that resembles nothing so much as a protracted state of infantile, pre-oedipal bliss.<sup>31</sup>

However, something of the pressure of the political climate which impinged upon American intellectuals of the Cold War period, amongst whom Steichen must be counted, is implied in the following 1952 statement from anthropologist Clyde Kluckhohn:

We cannot hope to discharge satisfactorily to ourselves or to other peoples the leadership that history has forced upon us at this time unless we act upon reasoned and clearly stated standards of evaluation. Finally, all talk of an eventual peaceful and orderly world is but pious cant or sentimental fantasy unless there are, in fact, some simple but powerful beliefs to which all men hold, some codes that have or can obtain universal acceptance.<sup>32</sup>

I would contend that it is out of the Universalist ideology embodied in this statement, which arose as a response to the depredations of WWII, that Steichen’s *The family of man* exhibition springs. Even though a huge number of photographers and photographs were called upon to make up the exhibition – 503 photographs were chosen from an initial two

million – *The family of Man* shows a remarkable uniformity of style. In fact, it produces this effect by the force of its editorial agenda. All of the individual photographers involved were subordinated to the will of Steichen in his capacity as impresario of a mass cultural discourse. And this discourse works in a manner not dissimilar to certain forms of advertising photography, which, as Jonathan Green points out:

...stereotype(s) time as childhood or old age rather than seeing it as temporal flux: it is ahistorical rather than actual. This outlook is strikingly indifferent to the minute-by-minute and day-by-day temporal setting.<sup>33</sup>

Yet perhaps the most striking feature of the reception accorded to *The family of man*, both at the time of its exhibition and in subsequent ongoing commentary, is the huge discrepancy between its immense popularity with a large international public and its almost uniformly hostile treatment in subsequent years at the hands of cultural critics of various political persuasions. The latter begins not long after the exhibition's inaugural season at MOMA in New York, its mixed but generally favourable newspaper reviews, and its tour to certain parts of Europe. Arguably, the review that has exercised the greatest long-term influence on the perception of the exhibition and virtually defined how it was received within progressive photographic circles from the 1980s onwards is Roland Barthes's. Originally published in *Les lettres nouvelles* in 1955, "The great family of man" achieved much wider circulation as part of Barthes's landmark proto media and cultural studies volume *Mythologiques* (1957). Barthes launches his attack straight at the core "mythology" of a "human community" underpinning the exhibition: "Any classic humanism postulates that in scratching the history of men a little... one very quickly reaches the solid rock of a universal human nature." Against this myth making, his aim is "to establish nature itself as historical"<sup>34</sup>, by practical demonstration in this piece and the various other "mythologies", and theoretically in the long final section of the book, "myth today". Together with Allan Sekula's critique of Steichen's concept of a universal human community, argued in a more historically grounded essay published in 1981 and already cited, Barthes's article would make a considerable contribution to the postmodern critique of humanist social documentary advanced throughout the 1980s.

Yet this now standard anti-humanist view of the exhibition, which sees it as a tool of American cold war propaganda on behalf of the "free world", makes little attempt, as John Roberts notes, "to examine in any depth the political conjuncture that gives ideological shape to the show." He argues, "There is a sense ... in which the exhibition speaks out of a narrow ideological view of acceptable photographic practice, and at the same time resists it." And he cites Steichen's WW I and II experiences and his anti-fascist politics as indicating that, "His sense of global political crisis proceeded directly out of the realities of fascism and not just in response to an abstract notion of the 'soviet threat'." He concludes, "In the mid-1950s, when national populist sentiment was being channeled towards highly chauvinist ends, *The Family of Man* constructs a view of human identity that is remarkably heterodox. In these terms the show can actually be read as a covert attack on the Cold War."<sup>35</sup>

Another particularly noteworthy critique of *The family of man* is Jacques Barzun's selection of the exhibition/book as an "enemy of the intellect", an exemplar of intel-

lectual mediocrity, woolly-minded thinking, misplaced philanthropy and conformity to the “unspoken demands of public opinion.”<sup>36</sup> Barzun argues, “whatever is formed and constituted (the work seems to say) whatever is adult, whatever exerts power, whatever is characteristically Western, whatever is unique or has a name, or embodies the complexity of thought, is of less interest and worth than what is native, common, and sensual; what is weak and confused; what is unhappy, anonymous, and elemental.”<sup>37</sup>

Barzun’s comments are particularly pertinent because there is evidence that they were taken up by elite intellectuals here in New Zealand and used to critique the structure and emphasis of the Social Studies curriculum in the early 1960s.<sup>38</sup> A striking example of this is R.H. Lockstone’s critical demolition of the set of four Department of Education booklets discussed above (*Suggestions for teaching social studies in the Primary School*). The very title of Lockstone’s review, “The neglect of the mind”, echoes Barzun’s book, and it’s not very long before he states that “behind this sort of study lies the same woolly philanthropy which produces books like *The Family of Man*, so thoroughly pasted by Jacques Barzun”<sup>39</sup>; and he continues by applauding Barzun for exposing “the advocacy of the confirmed do-gooder”, and insisting that “intellect... has a clear and limited duty, cares little for happiness, and does not seek world peace.”<sup>40</sup> I quote these lines to indicate the likely hostile reception accorded to discourses that might have been seen to have something in common with *The family of man* and they point to the contests likely to have been operating around the educational context within which Westra’s work was made.

I would suggest that beneath all the flak directed against *The family of man*, whether from the left or the right, one can detect an undeclared hostility towards popular and populist discourses, because above all that is what the exhibition/book is and was. Edward Steichen broke with the proto-modernist/modernizing take on photography and its exhibition, initiated at MOMA by Beaumont Newhall (with assistance from Nancy Newhall and Ansel Adams). In its place, he staged exhibitions that resembled trade fairs, educational museum displays, and 3-D magazine page spreads more than they did the spare, clean, formalist vistas of uniformly framed prints on white walls. The latter was a strategy resumed, refined and extended by John Szarkowski who succeeded to the directorship after Steichen’s retirement in 1961.<sup>41</sup> The themes and content of Steichen’s major photographic exhibitions may have been contained safely within the borders of a liberal-humanist vision of one-world brotherhood, but the exhibition designs and delivery concepts were bold and innovative for the time. *The family of man* exhibition designer Paul Rudolph “... reinscribed the innovations of the international avant-gardes within a language of form mirroring the ‘common sense’ or dominant ideology then prevailing in the United States.”<sup>42</sup> Arguably the exhibition can be seen to have presaged the recent shift to populist and interactive strategies exemplified by museological spaces such as Te Papa in Wellington, New Zealand. Is it not probable, then, that this dimension of the exhibition was just as, if not more, responsible for hooking the vast numbers of visitors across the world than the Universalist themes and accessible subject matter of the images.

As stated at the beginning of this section, Ans Westra has said repeatedly in interviews that seeing *The family of man* was a pivotal moment in the formation of her desire to become a photographer. But has it been anything more than that? Has it in fact shaped

her photographic practice in a more direct way? The structuring and sequencing of photographs and the use of certain kinds of brief text in both *Maori* and *Whaiora* (see chapters five and eleven respectively) clearly owe something to *The family of man*, specifically the book version. But it is also evident that Westra's ongoing interest in photographing children as part of family groups, and in producing books for them and both their families and educators, also stems from the concerns of that work.

A short way into *The family of man*, immediately following a sequence of images depicting pregnancy, labour, the moment of birth itself, and the early days of infant care (pp.18–29), there is a large section dedicated to images of children within family situations (pp.309–359), including a layered montage on page 49. These pages constitute the book's major focus on families and children, but further photographs of this kind recur sporadically throughout the remainder of the book, which ends with five pages of small-scale pictures of children at play; and W. Eugene Smith's concluding full-page rear view of two young children walking down a wooded path, before the inside-back cover photograph returns us to the inchoate turbulence of natural forces. The final section acts as a kind of coda to the double-page photographic spread of the United Nations general Assembly and accompanying quotation from its charter.<sup>43</sup>

One of the photographs in the main section dedicated to family life (p.33) is by Wayne Miller, the assistant to Edward Steichen on *The family of man* project. Three years after the publication of the book version, a book of photographs and text, entirely composed by Wayne Miller, was published under the title, *The world is young*.<sup>44</sup> At the base of the cover is an endorsement by Steichen himself, who proclaims, "a beautiful exploration of childhood – a new landmark in photography." The back cover blurb introduces the book as "...the most ambitious exploration of childhood ever undertaken." Ambitious it may be, but not on the scale initially envisaged by Miller who "...seriously considered attempting a cross section of the world's children."<sup>45</sup> However, after passing on this and other overly ambitious options, Miller decided to focus his study of childhood on his own family of four children, all living in the town of Orinda, near San Francisco.

*The world is young* shares its format with *The family of man*. The size of the two publications is identical; while the number and type of photographs, the use of brief texts, and the page layouts are strikingly similar. However, the difference between these two books are just as striking. In comparison to Steichen's, Miller's book is a highly specific study, in the first instance, of a white middle-class American family, his own. After beginning with Steichen's trademark frontispiece photograph of the complete Miller family, and Miller's general introduction, the book gets underway with a kind of photographic prologue ("The world is young") featuring images of various combinations of Miller family members. Following this are individual sections devoted to each of the four Miller children, moving from the youngest (Peter) to the eldest (Jeanette). The book then addresses the matter of Peter's forthcoming move to school ("Next year"), and after that his actual arrival there.

Thereafter, the 'narrative' structure of the book shifts up to the general level of any Californian child's progression from kindergarten to school, while continuing to remain resolutely focused on white middle-class subjects. Miller works his way from the First Grade to the Seventh, selecting photographs of a large number of school children in a

variety of locations to fill the seven sections. At the point of completion of the Seventh Grade section, two pages of text (pp.138–39) set up the large final segment in which the theme is conveyed by the phrase, “the end of childhood is in sight”. In the course of his book, Miller moves his ‘narrative’ seamlessly from the micro level of his own family to the larger, wider context of the northern Californian education system. To do this he resorts periodically to the use of long passages of expository prose that enables him to provide the information necessary to link the discrete sections detailing progressive moments in an ongoing familial and educational cycle. This is another way in which the book differs from *The family of man*. If *The family of man* provided the founding moment that impelled Westra into the vocation of photography and helped shape large-scale projects such as *Maori* and *Whaiora*, *The world is young* has proven to be more directly influential on her actual ongoing and very specific attention to photographing children at play and in the classroom.

#### *Dutch Photography of the 1950s*

In the same year as *The family of man* began its exhibition itinerary in New York, a photographic book was published in Amsterdam that also made a major impact on the young Westra. The book is *Wij zijn 17* (We are 17) and Joan van der Keuken made its 30 black and white photographs. At the time van der Keuken (1938–2001) was 17 himself, which makes him a close contemporary of Westra who was then 18 or 19. The book captures the moment between childhood’s end and the onset of young adulthood within a set of studies of teenage students, mostly photographed sitting in their rooms. When I asked Westra what first stimulated her interest in photography while still at school, she replied:

I really took an interest because a book came out when I was at school ... It was done by a college boy who photographed his classmates. The photographs were very staged, dreamy interpretations of teenage life. It was the first photo-book I’d ever seen because there weren’t that many of them around. The book, which was mainly photos with only a little bit of writing, made quite an impression on me. That’s why I bought a Rolleiflex too, because he did them all with a Rolleicord and it gave good results. It’s called *We are 17* and it’s about growing up and the other people in his class. It made such an impression and it sold so well that he followed it up with a second book, *Achter glas* (Behind glass) in 1957. It said a lot about being a teenager. And I wanted to do something a bit like it, so I saved up for about a year and bought myself a Rolleiflex. I then did some photos of my own classmates but really... right from the start mine were much more about catching people as things happened, whereas his photographs were very set-up. I didn’t feel comfortable doing it that way. In those last three years at school we had a very close-knit class with about 11 people in it. We did a couple of little bound books that we left behind with our teachers as a goodbye present. So, that was my early beginnings.<sup>46</sup>

Although he may not have been a direct influence or inspiration, another Dutch photographer who would've appealed to the young Westra is Ed van der Elsken (1925–1990) because his work depicts an emerging youth culture. Like *We are 17*, but focusing on a slightly older demographic, van der Elsken's photonovel, *Een liefdesgeschiedenis in Saint Germain des Pres* (Love on the Left Bank, 1956) evokes a world of student bohemianism in the 'existentialist' quarter of Paris. Described by Martin Parr and Gerry Badger as "a stream-of-consciousness photographer on a par with William Klein"<sup>47</sup>, van der Elsken's portrayal of an emerging European Beatnik culture finds an echo, years later, in some of Westra's photographic studies of New Zealand's counterculture (see chapter seven).

### *Camera Club Years*

However, regardless of her enthusiasm for the work of van der Keuken, Westra's early training in Holland was not in photography but in the craft practice of artistic needlework, undertaken as a specific focus as part of her Diploma in Art and Craft teaching from the Industrieschool voor meisejes in Rotterdam. Her first serious engagement with the practice of photography began after she moved to New Zealand in the late 1950s; shortly after settling in Wellington, she began working as an assistant at various photographic businesses (Polyphoto Studio and Rembrandt Studios), carried out her first commissions for *Te ao hou*, and joined the Wellington Camera Club.

According to Robert Castel and Dominique Schnapper, "The camera club provides a means of moving from a naïve practice to a scholarly practice within a group which supplies formulas and tips in order to intensify photographic activity."<sup>48</sup> Westra joined the Wellington Camera Club in 1959 and left in 1963. Her time as a member enabled her to move from an initial engagement with photography at the level of the "primary group" of her family and peer circle in Holland to a milieu governed by the technical and aesthetic aspirations of a "secondary group", to use Castel and Schnapper's Bourdieuan terminology. Westra's reasons for joining the Camera Club were purely instrumental: "I saw it almost as a teaching school"; "I certainly went to the Camera Club to win competitions".<sup>49</sup> And she has made it clear that in order to achieve her goals she initially conformed to the standard camera club aesthetic ("tabletops, still lifes, and so on ... work which suited them")<sup>50</sup>, that is to say, in Castel and Schnapper's words, "pictures of flowers, monuments and landscapes" rather than the "committed' photographs" she preferred.<sup>51</sup> Amongst the many awards Westra won at the Camera Club are the following: first place B Grade Human Interest competition, second place B Grade Pattern/Texture competition, second place B Grade Portrait competition, all 1959; "accepted" places in B Grade Open and Natural History competitions, "honours" places in B Grade Child Study and Backlighting competitions, and the B Grade McGill Cup and B Grade Championship of 1961; and A Grade Monochrome Club Aggregate, Portrait, and A Grade McGill Cup, all for the year ended 31 August 1962. Westra won the 1962 Wellington Camera Club Portrait award with a close-up portrait of the face of a Samoan girl, and the McGill Cup ("champion of champions") with a photograph of two Maori boys reading a comic.<sup>52</sup> Both these studies have something in common with photographs by Fred Freeman,

the only Camera Club photographer whose work interested Westra. She has spoken of him as “a kindred soul” but noted, “he was still too much influenced by the Camera Club, which he took very seriously. He was trying to do arty photographs.”<sup>53</sup> However his interest in photographing in the streets and in youth clubs aligns his work with the ‘witness to the times’ approach to photography of the youth clubs studied by Castel and Schnapper who note: “In the aesthetic clubs, the emphasis is on the form of communication, the recognition of a style. In the youth clubs, it is the signified that is to be communicated: the density of the subject constitutes the ‘message’.”<sup>54</sup> In a later interview, Westra elaborated on Freeman’s approach:

He was the only person in the camera club who was doing semi-documentary work. He was doing similar work to me. But he would pose people more. He’d meet girls in town and then ask them to model for him. But he’d also go out into areas and photograph people on the streets; we did that together a couple of times. He influenced me a bit by steering me into photographing certain things that he was interested in.... He was very interested in the Island girls settling here, more in a documentary way rather than in just finding a pretty face and using it for a staged portrait. He was freer than that.<sup>55</sup>

Also during the period of her Camera Club membership, Westra entered and won a British competition, “Assignment No. 2”, organised by the journal *Photography*. The competition was announced in the November 1959 issue of the journal, which reached Westra early in January 1960, giving her less than a month to complete and send the results to the UK. The assignment asked entrants to compile a photographic alphabet. Westra wrote to the organisers, “... It took me on many a walk through Wellington, over the beaches, out in the hills and along the harbour to get this together.”<sup>56</sup> Westra’s grid displays some very imaginative responses to the search for photographic analogues to the letters of the alphabet. (Fig. 2) For instance, a pair of feet in jandals for the letter w; an elephant’s trunk for j; the side of a goat’s head with horn and ear parallel to form an f; and the raised legs of a man lying on a lawn make a clear m shape. Other, more conventional, examples of Westra’s photography of the Camera Club years can be found in the local magazine *Photographics New Zealand*.<sup>57</sup>

### III

#### LITERATURE FOR THE CHILD

One finds implicit recognition of an association between children and nature in many cultural practices.

—SHERRY B. ORTNER<sup>58</sup>

As a follow up to the discussion on the Education Department’s School Bulletins I will turn now to an investigation of the general question of writing for children. Contrary to the tenor of *The family of man*, which operated with popular beliefs that retain a force to

this very day, childhood is not an unchanging, universal state, free of cultural and historical divisions, that has always been with us.

Philippe Aries, in what remains the single most important historical study of the concept,

... suggests that childhood as we know it now is something largely invented in the last 300 years. Before that...adults and children were barely distinguishable; they shared similar leisure activities and frequently the same type of work.<sup>59</sup>

The evolution of childhood as a distinct phase in the life path of the individual has occurred at the interface of those institutions responsible for nurturing and education, namely the family and the school.<sup>60</sup> The child, presumed to be pre-social, is thus subject to and constituted by the systematic attentions of these two socialising bodies; the paradox is that childhood is always already a socio-cultural construction which then undergoes a series of modifications at the hands of parents and teachers. The modern idea of childhood can therefore be seen to have emerged from the interactions and clashes of these familial and educational practices rather than as a translation into practice from a founding idea or change in consciousness.

There is general agreement that both childhood as a literary theme and literature explicitly aimed at children first began to appear in England during the later half of the eighteenth century. Of particular significance were the philosophical writings of John Locke, especially his *Some thoughts concerning education*<sup>61</sup>, and, somewhat later, the generation of Romantic poets such as William Blake and William Wordsworth.<sup>62</sup> Locke conceived of the child's mind as a tabula rasa, which an education congruent with the idea of his or her direct access to unmediated sensations of the exterior world would impress itself upon.<sup>63</sup> In accordance with this belief he considered that the best way to teach children to read was by means of pictorial language, which he thought would overcome the 'limitations' of written language.

Apart from Locke, the other major eighteenth century philosopher to seriously concern himself with issues of childhood and education was, of course, Jean-Jacques Rousseau. "Nature", he asserted, "wants children to be children before they are men...childhood has ways of seeing, thinking and feeling peculiar to itself; nothing can be more foolish than to substitute our ways for them."<sup>64</sup> Rousseau, like Locke, subscribed to a hierarchical set of values which privileged visual signs over verbal (oral) ones, the latter in turn preferred to written language when it came to matters concerning the purity of communication. It was in his book *Emile* that Rousseau most clearly formulated his conception of the 'romantic child' governed by feeling and a 'cult of sensibility' – *je sens, donc je suis*; he identified the child, like the 'primitive' (or noble savage), with nature or as close to nature.

The 'educational' writings of Locke and Rousseau provided the philosophical foundations upon which a body of children's literature has gradually been erected. "Children's fiction", writes Jacqueline Rose, "emerges...out of a conception of...a primitive or lost state to which the child has special access. The child is...something of a pioneer who restores these worlds to us, and gives them back to us with a facility or directness which ensures

that our own relationship to them is finally safe.”<sup>65</sup> Rose regards children’s literature as more than just a literary genre which produces images of and for childhood; she sees it as powerfully implicated in the ways we (children and adults) form relationships with images and language itself. For we must remember that it is adults who write children’s literature.

IV

PHOTOGRAPHIC BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

Westra is not, of course, the first photographer either in New Zealand or elsewhere to produce photo-stories about and for children that combine ‘ethnographic’ and educative elements. Following a general discussion of the principal characteristics of the genre, I will pay detailed attention to several broadly contemporary examples from New Zealand and Australia.

From the 1950s and 1960s onwards, the children’s book composed of photographs and text gradually began to occupy an equal place with books composed of stories illustrated by line drawings or prints. This trend occurred throughout the English-speaking world, not least within Australia and New Zealand. As noted, Ans Westra has had a continuous involvement with this type of publication and to grasp the significance of her contribution an outline of the characteristics of this sub-genre is necessary. A good starting point is Edward Said’s methodological device called “strategic formation”. Said defines the term as “a way of analyzing texts, types of text, even textual genres”, discussing how they “acquire mass, density, and referential power among themselves and thereafter in the culture at large.”<sup>66</sup> The photo-based children’s book is a minor genre and definitely not of the same order as a discursive formation such as the body of Orientalist texts studied by Said. However, arguably, the decidedly more wiry body of these texts has acquired sufficient mass and density to be considered a discursive force productive of significant effects within various social contexts, specifically educational and familial ones.

The first thing to note about these books is that they are rarely, if ever, the result of one-off publishing ventures. Normally, they have formed part of ongoing series, systematically constructed according to geographical, social, and cultural objectives. A relatively early example of this kind of series is the handsomely produced “World Children Series”, published by Encyclopedia Britannica Press. Titles in the series deal with various regions and ethnic groups from the North and South American continents (Mexico, Brazil, French-Canadians, Inuit, and Navajo) and are centred on the life of a single child or a group of children. Other titles move outside of the Americas into broader areas such as China, Africa, and Europe. Amongst the latter is a book (number 10 in the series) with the title *Children on England’s canals*<sup>67</sup>, which forms part of Ans Westra’s library. The book’s photographic images are taken from a film, *The canals of England*, and the text is by Elizabeth K. Solem. Set as it is on a barge that weaves its way along canals and waterways, many of the black and white images emanate the kind of visual poetry found in Jean Vigo’s beautiful film *L’Atalante* (1934); others convey something of the look of a representative documentary from the school of John Grierson. Throughout the book, both the pictures and the written story are very much child-centred, with plenty of space given over to their play and educational activities (homework especially).

During the 1950s, Oxford University Press published more than ten titles in their series, “People of the world”. The wide geographical spread of the series extended to the antipodes, with books on *An Australian cattle station*, *Australian Aborigines*, and *The Maoris of New Zealand*, all published in 1958. The last named was written by Roderick Finlayson, with illustrations by Joan Smith who had already contributed her line drawings to Finlayson’s set of bulletins for School publications (see above). This 32-page booklet deals with both the Maori past and present, introducing the latter by way of “...a typical Maori family of today. We will call them the Hau family. This family belongs to the Ngapuhi tribe and lives in a scattered village in a valley in the north-east of the north island.”<sup>68</sup> Smith’s drawings take us to such places as, “Inside the Auckland community centre” and show us such things as young men playing table tennis. John Pascoe supplied a second book on New Zealand to the series, collaborating with illustrator Douglas Woodall on *A New Zealand sheep station* (1958), in a return to the Rakaia Valley and Manuka Point homestead of his earlier High Country bulletins for New Zealand School Publications. Another prime example of this kind of series is Chatto and Windus’s “Children’s life in other lands”, which circulated much closer to the time when Westra began working in this field. Writer and photographer Dominique Darbois contributed 12 titles to the series, covering regions as far apart as the Arctic Circle, Mexico, Bali, and Egypt.<sup>69</sup> In addition to this series of books, Chatto and Windus also ran another, “Around the World today”, where the photographs illustrated “a longer, fuller story.”<sup>70</sup>

*i. Kuma is a Maori Girl*

Locally, at around the same time in the early 1960s (a peak period for the genre), Hicks, Smith and Sons Ltd issued their “Children everywhere” series, which demonstrated a comparably wide geographical spread. Part of this series, and most relevant to my purposes, is *Kuma is a Maori girl* (1961), a photographic book by Dennis Hodgson, with text by Pat Lawson. The book gets underway in typical fashion with a portrait of the eight-year-old protagonist and an introductory greeting. What follows overleaf is particularly interesting in relation to the development of the genre of the photographic book for children. A pair of photographs on facing pages set up a contrast that anticipates one that will return in works by Westra. The left-hand page carries a photograph of five children, Kuma’s siblings absorbed in playing in front of their state house. The right-hand page shows Kuma standing in the doorway of “an old whare”<sup>71</sup> made of raupo. Compared to the informal documentary quality of the photograph of the children playing, the photo of Kuma in front of the whare has a staged (indeed almost stagy) quality. The whare seems detached from its background, almost as if it has been recently erected as part of a tourist village. Kuma’s pose, too, is redolent of the ‘make-believe’ experience she might have had inside it. Taken together, these two photographs are emblematic of two different emphases in photographic narrative of this period on Maori themes with Maori protagonists: an earlier touristic orientation based in the setting up of tableau-vivant compositions, which set contemporary subjects against metonyms of traditional culture; and an emerging documentary mode that excises all traces of the ‘studio’, in search of the informal within naturalistic locations. In *Kuma is a*

*Maori girl*, the former mode punctuates, somewhat uneasily, the flow of the latter's everyday narrative considerations with set pieces of undiluted touristic discourse, including Rotorua landscape shots, whose narrative justification is the standard trope of the holiday excursion.

ii. *Hey Boy!*

In 1962 Whitcombe and Tombs published *Hey boy!*, a black and white photo-story for children by Bernie and Jane Hill. Bernie (1930–1971) was a photojournalist who had worked freelance abroad before returning to New Zealand to become a staff photographer for the *Auckland star* and following that chief staff photographer of the *New Zealand woman's weekly*. His wife Jane was also a journalist who had been a junior reporter with the *New Zealand Herald* and at the time the book was made wrote a column for the *New Zealand woman's weekly*.

The text of *Hey boy!* is constituted through a first person narrative addressed to the reader in the 'voice' of Charlie (the boy of the title), one of eight children of a northern Maori family. Overall the book serves to affirm the warmth and strength of a suburban Maori family. Dad, originally from Tahiti, is an Auckland taxi-driver, and the boy's Uncle Henry is a bus-driver. The residential area in which the story is set would appear to be Orakei (Ngati Whatua tribal land)<sup>72</sup>, a neighbourhood which seems to have avoided any pressure to adopt "pepper-potting" housing<sup>73</sup>, as 'boy' explains: "Now most Maori live in the Pakeha way, in separate houses, and sometimes a long way from their relatives. That's why we're so lucky in our street because we all live together."<sup>74</sup>

The tone of *Hey boy!* is broadly humanist ("I asked Dad whether we're rich or poor, and he said we're poor to a rich man, and rich to a poor man"<sup>75</sup>) but it does point to pockets of ethnic conflict in its portrait of a racist butcher and its observation that: "It's funny how if Pakeha people are mad they say damn kids, but if they are very mad, they say damn Maori kids, as if Maori was a swearword."<sup>76</sup> This last extract is an adult interpolation that edges *Hey Boy!* a little away from its "overtone of exuberant quaintness".<sup>77</sup> The book is composed of some striking photographs taken by Bernie Hill with a Rolleiflex camera, the favoured instrument, it would seem, of the 'ethnographic' children's photographer.

iii. *Turi: the story of a little boy*

The eponymous protagonist of this story is a young boy from a large rurally based Maori family, who goes to live with his "granny" (actually his great grandmother). The text, written by Lesley Cameron Powell, is substantial and it is illustrated with 23 black and white photographs (and two further images on the front and back cover). The photographer is Pius Blank, also known as Peter Blanc, who was born in Switzerland and married to the Maori writer Arapera Blank.<sup>78</sup> Prior to Westra's involvement with *Te ao hou*, Blank (as Peter Blanc) contributed photographs and covers to the journal, beginning with the December 1956 issue in which his photographs accompanied the article "Spear fishing".<sup>79</sup>

According to a publisher's statement on the book's jacket, "the photographs by Pius Blank were taken on a farm and beach in the far north of New Zealand". They support a simple well told story of the strong bond between an 'old time' Maori kuia (female elder) and a boy about to enter a world in which, "It's all different now ... there are no real Maoris any more. You're all half pakehas and you forget the matauranga of the Maori. I do not forget though."<sup>80</sup> At the same time as it celebrates the warmth of this inter-generational relationship, it anticipates its passing in Granny's words ("Next summer I shall not be here", p.46) and the chapter titles, "Granny goes away" and "Afterwards".

*iv. Rebecca and the Maoris*

*Rebecca and the Maoris* begins with the statement, "My name is Rebecca and I am twenty-one".<sup>81</sup> Thus we are not reading a book in which the protagonist is a child, nor is the book addressed to a readership of children. Nevertheless it has the appearance of a conventional photographic story for children and was published during the same period as the books discussed above and in exactly the same year as *Viliami* and *Washday*. The photographer and writer of *Rebecca* is Gregory Reithmaier (1913–2004), who came to New Zealand from Germany in 1938 (20 years before *Westra*) and was working as a senior photographer with the National Publicity Studios, a part of the Tourist and Publicity Department, at the time the book was made. Reithmaier's day job provides the key to the kind of book *Rebecca* is. The photograph that accompanies the statement quoted above is a full-page image of Rebecca dressed in a piupiu (traditional Maori skirt), holding a strip of harakeke (flax), which she dips into a mud pool in Rotorua where she lives and works. Even though over the page this elaborately posed image is qualified with the statement, "I'm surprised ... at the number of overseas visitors to New Zealand who expect to see Maoris wearing piupius all the time", its invitation to the tourist gaze establishes an impression that is never really shaken throughout the book, despite the appearance of a considerable number of more down-home, naturalistic images, shot with a Rolleiflex camera rather than the tripod anchored Linhoff camera Reithmaier used in the National Publicity Studios. There is no narrative as such but rather a set of unfolding details about Rebecca's family and working life, revealed in the photographs and explanatory text. In this regard the book struggles to differentiate itself from the impression of a souvenir volume directed at a market of local and international tourists, providing an extended portrait of life in Rotorua, arguably New Zealand's most tourist-oriented location, centred in Rebecca's life. However, the book's title, which may not have been chosen by the author, sets up an odd and illusory disjunction between the protagonist and her community, given that there is a strong emphasis on Rebecca's relationships with her whanau (family).

In an essay that discusses *Westra's* early 1960s Rotorua photographs (14 of which were included in *Maori*) and Reithmaier's *Rebecca* images, Damian Skinner argues that both bodies of work "establish a difference to tourist representations".<sup>82</sup> This is certainly true of *Westra's* photographs and not just because they're free of the unsatisfactory text captions that compromise Reithmaier's book. Rotorua is a heavily overcoded site and

there are rather too many clichéd markers of its scenic splendours in Reithmaier's mix of photographs for Skinner's claim to be convincing.

v. *Axel Poignant*

Axel Poignant (1906–1986) was a Swedish born photographer who immigrated to Australia in July 1926, remaining there until his eventual return to London.<sup>83</sup> In 1957/8 he won an award for the best Australian children's book of the year as well as a UNESCO commendation for a children's book promoting understanding between peoples. The book thus celebrated is entitled *Piccaninny walkabout*<sup>84</sup> (republished as *Bush walkabout* in 1972) and was intended for a youthful readership of eight years and upwards. It is a story of two Aboriginal children (Nullagundi, a ten year old boy about to undergo initiation, and his nine year old sister, Rikili), set in Arnhem Land (the northern coast of Australia) over several months in 1952. In essence, *Bush walkabout* is about the survival skills of two Aboriginal children who are on walkabout. They catch and cook a goanna and obtain water from a tree, catching it in a paperbark cup. While he was in Millingimbi, Poignant was told the story, upon which his book is based, by Raiwalla, and it was translated for him by Beulah Lowe. In these circumstances, he writes in the book's preface: "In all honesty...I cannot claim to be the author of the tale told in this book."<sup>85</sup> The book has a similar look to Westra's *Viliami of the Friendly Islands* and *Washday at the pa*, with near full-page black and white photographs and print on white background at the foot of each page; likewise there is plenty of dialogue between the two central figures. All the photographs in the book were shot with a Rolleiflex camera, the type of camera which Westra also uses.

*Bush walkabout* was not the only 'ethnographic' children's book Poignant produced. In 1972 he published *Kaleku*<sup>86</sup>, a story set in Gumine, Chimbu, New Guinea, written in collaboration with his wife, anthropologist Roslyn Poignant. While they were working on *Kaleku* in 1969, the Poignants stayed in the house of a local Big Man, Kuman, the Vice-President of the District Council who appears in the story as the father of the two central characters, Kaleku and his sister Erita. This time the story is told in large colour photographs, supplemented with some smaller black and white ones. It conveys a considerable amount of ethnographic detail: market scenes, a cassowary hunt, game playing, a wedding ceremony (Kaleku's cousin, Gala marries gimbol), and shows the two protagonists engaged in the gender specific tasks of minding pigs (Kaleku) and weeding gardens and tending green leafy vegetables (Erita). At the close of the story when Kaleku prepares to leave Gumine in order to attend school, his father advises him thus: "Always remember Kaleku, the things I have taught you about the ways of the old people from the time before. Old and new ways must mix together."<sup>87</sup>

Alex and Rosalyn Poignant collaborated again on *Children of Oropuro* (1976)<sup>88</sup>, about the fishing village of Fetuna at the southern end of the Polynesian island of Raiatea. This story, like its predecessor, was "photographed with two Pentax spotomatic cameras..."<sup>89</sup>, and has the same mix of colour and (smaller) black and white photographs. It also has a similarly large cast but the centre of attention is once more a brother (Eti) and sister

(Sylvanie) pair. After we are shown the making of copra from coconuts and turtle hunting, the children set the narrative in motion by going out canoeing. The canoe capsizes and they are forced to swim ashore, finishing up stuck on an atoll. They make a shelter and find food and drink before finally being rescued. As with *Bush walkabout*, the story stresses the children's resourcefulness, which turns danger into a valuable learning experience.

On the back of the dust jacket to *Children of Oropiro* we read that the Poignants have in preparation another children's book, *Tama's quest*: "Tama, a Maori boy living in New Zealand today, makes a spiritual quest through the countryside of his ancestors."<sup>90</sup> This book never appeared; a pity because it would have been interesting to compare it with those of its genre published within New Zealand in the 1960s and 1970s, four of which are examined above.

V

ETHNOGRAPHIC FABULATION FOR THE CHILD

It is time now to name the literary genre to which *Kuma is a Maori girl*, *Hey boy!*, *Turi: the story of a little boy*, *Rebecca and the Maoris*, *Bush walkabout*, and Westra's *Washday at the pa* all belong. I shall call it ethnographic fabulation for the child. *Webster's new twentieth century dictionary* gives the meaning of fable (the verb) simply as "to write fiction" and more elaborately as "to feign; to invent; to devise and speak of (the) true or real"; as a noun its sense is given as "a feigned story or fable, intended to instruct or amuse; a fictitious narrative intended to enforce some useful truth or precept."<sup>91</sup> The English word fable derives from the Latin noun *fabula* meaning to speak. Earlier fables such as those of Aesop and La Fontaine have strong allegorical and fantastic elements to them that would appear to be severely attenuated if not altogether missing from works like those listed at the beginning of this section. I would maintain, however, that these books, although to a large degree the products of photographic realism, are still very much descendants of earlier fabulous literature. This is so largely because of their narrative structure (a fictional story made out of 'real' components) and their narrative address (to children yet often of interest to adults) and their subject matter (about children and their adventures), which set up kinds of identifications similar to those of the earlier literature.

If a case can be made for modern children's photo stories to be included in the category of educative 'fables' – and I think it can – then what of the claim that these stories are somehow ethnographic in character? Clearly these books are not ethnographic in the strict, social science, sense of the term; they have no scientific pretensions, no claim to comprehensiveness in dealing with cultural areas, no explicit theoretical topoi to organise their perceptions. They have been composed to entertain and inform children of Primary school age; they are designed for use in school social studies programmes of bi- and multi-cultural societies; or, less formally, as appropriate home reading material within the families of those same societies. But given that these societies are rarely if ever composed of harmoniously balanced ethnic groups – on the contrary they are almost invariably structured by relations of dominance and subordination – ethnographic questions cannot easily be dissociated from

hegemonic ones. The hegemony of ‘the West over the rest’ is reproduced internally at a national level when the concerns of the dominant ethnic group come to be subtly inscribed within the shape of the curriculum. The ethnographic gaze is, accordingly, directed from European (Pakeha) self to non-European (Maori) other. This gaze is dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge of difference, which proceeds within current power relations. There is symmetry between the producers of this knowledge (education departments and photo-ethnographers) and the principal audience for it (urban primary school children not themselves marked as ethnic). To sum up, we are talking here about ‘ethnographies’ which are located within educational and vernacular discourses rather than within anthropological discourse per se. This factor, coupled with their predominantly visual form, makes them doubly eccentric to the mainstream discipline. In essence they form part of a large, amorphous area of discourse on the ethnic that James Clifford and Eric Michaels have called “para-ethnography”<sup>92</sup>, to distinguish it from the ethnographic studies of academic anthropology.

Before leaving this subject, it is interesting to note that Rousseau (in *Emile*) was actively opposed to the use of fables in the teaching of children on the grounds that they promoted delight and pleasure at the expense of clarity and understanding as well as possessing the dangerous “...capacity to be of interest to children and grown men alike, to have something for almost everyone.”<sup>93</sup> As we shall see in the next chapter, *Washday at the pa* exhibited this broad-spectrum interest as it seized the attention of virtually the whole nation in 1964.

## VI

### (ETHNOGRAPHIC) PASTORAL

Pastoral is the “process of putting the complex into the simple.”

—WILLIAM EMPSON<sup>94</sup>.

In common with much Pakeha representation of the Maori and indeed much ethnography in general, *Washday at the pa* is a strongly pastoral work.<sup>95</sup> Classical or pre-modern pastoral typically presented images of shepherds in rural Arcadian settings. They were normally written or painted from within what were felt to be the confining restrictions of city or town, the urban antithesis of the open pasture. Yet these works were not essentially escapist because they possessed a critical edge founded upon the registration of a sense of loss. They thus evince a form of sophisticated nostalgia activated by their perspective of the ‘backward glance’.

When we turn to the modern pastoral the situation is similar but also a little different. The figure of the shepherd largely disappears to be replaced by either the worker<sup>96</sup> or the child; but, undoubtedly, the pastoral of childhood is the principal modern form of the genre.<sup>97</sup> Again its perspective is the backward glance, this time from adulthood (urban) back into an idealised childhood (rural); the paradigmatic modern literary work being William Wordsworth’s monumental *The prelude*.<sup>98</sup> In a commentary on the shape of the modern pastoral, Peter Marinelli observes: “The two main forms our modern pastorals of

innocence take, city and country pastorals of childhood, result in either naturalistic idylls in a rural setting or memoirs of a terrifying urban development of which the discovery of a sense of evil is the central focus.”<sup>99</sup> Within post-war New Zealand literature, *Washday at the pa* would be an example of the former, Noel Hilliard’s *Maori girl* an example of the latter.

I have said that much ethnography has been written in a pastoral mode. Here it is a matter of the ‘primitive’ or, latterly, the ‘other’ of Western discourse occupying the space formerly held by the shepherd or the child. But this is to oversimplify for often we find the fusion of the shepherd and the ‘primitive’ or, in the case of *Washday at the pa*, the child and the ‘other’. Recently Renato Rosaldo has referred to the “displaced modern pastoral”, located in “...interactions between town and country, middle class and working class, and colonizer and colonized.”<sup>100</sup> Modern pastoral could be said to be displaced by definition as it attempts to refigure the pre-occupations of the older forms. The split which has always existed between the makers of pastoral literature and the figures represented therein merges with that between the ethnographer as embodiment of Western reason and the informant as objectified ‘other’. Thus despite her less than perfect fit with the categories of urban/middle-class/colonizer, Ans Westra did come to fill them in her Ruatoria fieldwork encounter, just as did the ‘Weretas’ their polar opposites (see chapter four on *Washday at the Pa*).

However at the same time I should stress that these stark antinomies of cross-cultural encounter may be softened when the pastoral mode is involved. This is so because a particularly salient characteristic of the modern pastoral form, identified by Rosaldo, is its capacity to make “...possible a peculiar civility in relationships that cross social boundaries. It permits a polite tenderness that more direct ways of acknowledging inequality could inhibit.”<sup>101</sup> However, as we shall see in the next chapter, this property of the pastoral form, although it permitted Westra to make her work in favourable conditions, yet was unable to withstand the subsequent surfacing of powerful forces along the fault lines of New Zealand society.



# PART TWO:

## Exegesis

*The analysis of thought is always allegorical in relation to the discourse that it employs. Its question is unfailingly: what was being said in what was said? The analysis of the discursive field is orientated in a quite different way; we must grasp the statement in the exact specificity of its occurrence; determine its conditions of existence, fix at least its limits, establish its correlations with other statements that may be connected with it, and show what other forms of statement it excludes. We do not seek below what is manifest the half silent murmur of another discourse; we must show why it could not be other than it was, in what respect it is exclusive of any other, how it assumes, in the midst of others and in relation to them, a place that no other could occupy. The question proper to such an analysis might be formulated in this way: what is this specific existence that emerges from what is said and nowhere else?*

—MICHEL FOUCAULT<sup>1</sup>

*... History is not a text, not a narrative, master or otherwise, but ... as an absent cause, it is inaccessible to us except in textual form, and ... our approach to it and to the real itself necessarily passes through its prior textualization, its narrativization in the political unconscious.*

—FREDRIC JAMESON<sup>2</sup>

*Reading...includes not only written texts but all the signs that surround and penetrate us, all images visual and sonorous, the evidences of history that are always one form or another of signs to be read: documents, paintings, films, or 'material' artifacts.*

—J. HILLIS MILLER<sup>3</sup>

*... Reading must always aim at a certain relationship, unperceived by the writer, between what he commands and what he does not command of the patterns of the language that he uses. This relationship is not a certain quantitative distribution of shadow and light, of weakness or of force, but a signifying structure that critical reading should produce.*

—JACQUES DERRIDA<sup>4</sup>



THE 1960s:  
PHOTOGRAPHING  
MAORI & CHILDREN



## CHAPTER FOUR

### WASHDAY AT THE PA

How would New Zealand children get on if all their reading material were built from the life of African blacks? It's little enough to ask that a Maori child should begin his reading from a book of his own colour and culture.

—SYLVIA ASHTON-WARNER (1963)<sup>1</sup>

Ans Westra's first decade of residence in New Zealand was marked by an intense fascination with Maori people. This led to her desire to photograph them and to document their adjustment to a period of rapid social change. Westra's arrival in New Zealand in 1957 from her native Holland provided the occasion for her first encounter with a different (i.e. non-European) ethnic group.<sup>2</sup> She spent her first eight months here with her father in Glenn Eden, Auckland, living next door to a Maori family. She has remarked on how strongly the "free and easy" lifestyle of Maori contrasted with the stern moral code of Dutch family life.<sup>3</sup> What, I think, most impressed her about Maori people was not so much their different 'culture' (in both a material and an ideational sense) but rather their embodiment of a different way of being-in-the-world (Heidegger's *In-der-Welt-sein*), or habitus (Bourdieu), a different way of being human.<sup>4</sup> To her, their more open, responsive approach to life, which rendered their emotions more externally visible, made them more appealing photographic subjects than their blander Pakeha counterparts. Her commitment to photographing Maori people extends from her first exercises in the early 1960s right up until the recent present with her appearance in the grounds of Parliament to photograph the marchers on the foreshore hikoi. It is throughout the period of the early to mid-1960s, however, that her most intense involvement with this project occurred. The major artifact from this period is, of course, the large book of photographs entitled *Maori*, published in 1967 with a substantial essay by James Ritchie. This book contains her finest photographs of the period, many of which had previously appeared in other publications. All Westra's photographic endeavours throughout the 1960s were in some way directed towards the production of work for inclusion in this broadly conceived photographic mosaic of Maori people. However the investigation of Westra's Maori material begins with an in-depth analysis of *Washday at the pa*, her second bulletin for the School Publications Branch of the Department of Education.

WASHDAY AT THE PA

All of the houses were weatherboard buildings, but they did not look like the homes of the Pakehas in the nearby town, fresh with paint and sitting neatly amid lawns and flowers and hedges. In Waiora there were fewer babies dying now, and many more lively young children, but Maoris did not have enough money to build fine palaces.

—RODERICK FINLAYSON (1959)<sup>5</sup>

Residential buildings do indeed provide shelter; today's houses may even be well planned, easy to keep, attractively cheap, open to air, light, and sun, but do the houses in themselves hold any guarantee that *dwelling* occurs in them?

—MARTIN HEIDEGGER (1951)<sup>6</sup>

*Washday at the pa*<sup>7</sup> is Ans Westra's most well known work because of the controversy it generated at a national level shortly after its publication and release into Primary schools by the School Publications Branch of the Department of Education. It is an extraordinary work in that, unlike other bulletins from School Publications, it was never possible to give it an 'innocent' reading. Shortly after its appearance in May/June 1964 it was immediately caught up in a force field of competing and antagonistic readings. Ultimately, therefore, it cannot be separated as a discrete 'text' from the enveloping network of responses which it engendered. The 'meaning' of *Washday at the pa* – if indeed we can talk of such a singular thing – will be the seismographic figure traced by the shock waves it detonated within New Zealand society. Nevertheless there are a considerable number of gaps and silences within the contemporary debate on *Washday*, which a closer textual and contextual reading might interrogate.

The photographic sessions from which *Washday at the pa* emerged, arose out of a fortuitous re-encounter between Westra and some of the "Wereta" children she had first met while photographing at the Primary school in Ruatoria; one of several Primary schools on the East Coast of the North Island where she had been photographing groups of children, in search of a cover image for *Maori*. She came upon them again (they were off school sick) while walking on a country road near their home and they recognised her and invited her into their house. This chance factor in the genesis of what is still Westra's most well known work brings to mind the circumstances leading to the making of Dorothea Lange's "Migrant Mother". That photograph, not only Lange's but one of the world's most famous images, was the result of a ten-minute session of seemingly effortless precision, at a migrant labor camp in Nipomo, California, in early March 1936.<sup>8</sup> Westra, in contrast, spent a considerably longer period of time – one afternoon; a return session the following morning encountered continuity problems and its pictures were not used – making exposures for *Washday* that, coupled with the high degree of rapport attained with her subjects, enabled her to achieve images of comparable, perhaps greater, spontaneity. As she has described the nature of that afternoon, "It had to be just what I could shoot in those few hours because I couldn't really organise any of it."<sup>9</sup>

Upon returning to Wellington to prepare contact sheets from the exposures made on her East Coast trip, Westra saw the potential in her material for a children's photo-story. With this in mind she made some prints and drafted a written text to accompany their pictorial arrangement. She then approached John Melser of the School Publications Branch of the Department of Education with this uncommissioned work. He saw immediately its suitability for inclusion in a series of booklets being planned on different kinds of family in New Zealand society and began to circulate it within the department. School Publications had already published Westra's *Viliami of the Friendly Islands* and envisaged a similar format for *Washday at the pa*. In the *Kaleidoscope* interview already referred to, Westra states that the Branch wanted to publish bulletins on "perhaps a Chinese child in a market garden family, a Maori child in the town and a Maori child in the rural environment."

It is my contention that *Washday at the pa* is a work that has been more responded to as an undifferentiated unit than read for its text(ures). These responses have usually taken the form of capsule (but often very interesting) judgements of the nature and likely impact of a booklet in some respects largely unread. It is therefore important, before moving on to an investigation of the competing meanings generated by public responses to *Washday at the pa*, to pause and scrutinise this work in the detail required to move from simplified judgement to semiotic complexity.

#### THE TEXT

We Maoris in that place up north thought we were poor but we really had *everything*.

—RODERICK FINLAYSON (CA. 1960)<sup>10</sup>

*Washday at the pa* is a 32-page school bulletin containing 42 black and white photographs and 1345 words by Ans Westra. The photographs appearing in this publication were selected from the proceedings of a session which yielded approximately 200 separate images.<sup>11</sup> The final text was refined from an earlier draft containing 54 'scenes' rendered in straight descriptive prose<sup>12</sup>; the published version is the more effective for resorting to dialogue and direct speech to move the story along. There are a number of differences between the family Westra encountered and the one we meet in the story. Whereas the actual family, comprised of two parents and nine children, lived near Ruatoria, *Washday's* family is situated near Taihape. The family's real name was kept secret to protect their privacy, but it is interesting to note that the name they go by in *Washday*, that is to say Wereta, bears more than a slight similarity to the name of the author!<sup>13</sup> I will now proceed to a detailed textual analysis, moving between specific and general points as the need arises.

The cover of *Washday* displays an image of classic simplicity, nevertheless resonant with art historical reference. (Fig. 3) A mother (in fact a stand-in mother, for this is "Mrs Wereta's" eldest daughter, Ruia<sup>14</sup>), a 'Madonna of the countryside', and her four children are framed in the doorway of a wooden rural house.<sup>15</sup> The image is bisected by a ray of light which separates 'mother' and youngest child from the other three children. Rebecca and Mutu, the story's protagonists, occupy centre space, with Rebecca's gaze addressed

directly to the camera/spectator. The photograph is marked by a strong chiaroscuro effect, a quality which invests it with a certain density of texture and gravity of effect. To some degree it is reminiscent of social documentary studies by photographers such as Arthur Rothstein, Walker Evans and Ben Shahn<sup>16</sup>, which share Westra's focus on a threshold, thereby establishing a concern with the centrality of domestic habitation in a rural setting. But the photograph in question is also comparable with a study like Lewis Hine's "A Madonna of the tenements."<sup>17</sup> Both photographs share a quasi-religious iconography, which invests them with a kind of spiritual rhetoric. In the case of *Washday's* cover, the poverty of the Wereta family is clearly in evidence – the age and dilapidation of their house, the raggedness of their clothes – yet the radiance of their smiles and the dynamics of the composition do not suggest imprisonment within that condition. The photograph's gravid quality, of which I spoke earlier, gives it a painterly cast that, coupled with its iconography, links it to a line of religious imagery extending back as far as Bellini and Giotto. Indeed, the disposition of 'Mrs Wereta' within the frame has something in common with maternal studies by Bellini, of whom Julia Kristeva has written: "the faces of his Madonnas are turned away, intent on something else that draws their gaze to the side, up above, or nowhere in particular, but never centres it on the baby."<sup>18</sup>

In attempting to pin point the central quality of *Washday's* cover, I think it fair to conclude that there is a tension here between a realism of detail and texture which grounds the image in social documentary practice and an idealist rhetoric which would effect transcendence into a spiritual realm of joy and grace. Allegedly, however, there is a rather less spiritual, indeed carnal, dimension to the cover, which was the 'real' reason the bulletin was withdrawn. Such is the claim made in an article by Maurice Shadbolt not long after the controversy had died down. "...According to one reliable report", wrote Shadbolt, "the real – though officially unstated – objection to the book was that a Maori toddler appeared without trousers in a photograph: his sexual organ was only partially obscured."<sup>19</sup> With the aid of a magnifying glass it is possible to discern, through his partially open shorts, what looks like a very young boy's penis resting against his thigh. But this detail is not explicit and can hardly be said to leap out at the viewer in the manner of Roland Barthes's *punctum*.<sup>20</sup> However, it can be stated unequivocally that there is definitely no photograph in *Washday* where this child is "without trousers", as Shadbolt puts it. In response to a query about this issue, Westra stated – "Interesting point. I never noticed before." She recalled retouching/taking out a cigarette in the shearing photograph on page 13 of the School Publications edition of *Washday* because "smoking was something forbidden in Departmental publications". But she was able to include it in the Caxton Press edition.<sup>21</sup>

The titles printed over the cover image read: *Washday at the pa* (at the top in large type), by Ans Westra (underneath in small italics), a bulletin for schools (bottom right-hand corner). This striking cover image and title set in train an expectation for ... what exactly? A documentary account of a day in the life of a rural Maori family? A rural family romance for primary school children? On page one of the bulletin we read: "The Weretas live in a Maori pa – or village... Once there were many families living at the pa. But now most of them have shifted to find jobs in the city... Soon the Wereta family will be leaving the pa too..." (p. 1)

In pre- and early post-contact times, Maori residential settlements could be divided into two types: Kainga and Pa. The former with its attendant meanings of home and place of residence was an open village without fortifications and defensive works.<sup>22</sup> Pa, on the other hand, its verb form meaning to block up or obstruct, was a place to retreat to when the village or tribe was threatened with enemy attack.<sup>23</sup> Clearly, however, the fortified pa had entirely disappeared as a facet of Maori life by the time of the twentieth Century. Yet the name lived on, preferred perhaps by Pakeha because of its brevity, as the general designating term for (groups of) Maori rural residential houses. There is nothing in *Washday* to indicate that the Weretas live in a close cluster of houses which could be said to constitute a village of any kind. But in the 1950s and 1960s, rural Maori houses of the kind seen in *Washday* were referred to in popular usage as pa. Tony Simpson has written eloquently of his disillusionment in realising the gap between ‘academic’ and popular notions of a pa:

On a Sunday my parents and I sometimes drove to Rangiora to visit relatives and once driving home my father announced that we would take a new route through the pa at Tuahiwi. My interest quickened, and I looked out all alert to catch my first glimpse of the real thing I had heard so much about from nervous students taking ‘sections’ at the museum. Rarely can an eight year old have been so bitterly disappointed. Instead of a great palisade and systems of trench works crowning a hill, I saw a perfectly ordinary cluster of houses, each similar to the one in which we ourselves lived. I felt cheated. How could this possibly be a Maori pa? I now knew contempt for those earnest students who conducted us from display to display. They told us lies. Maori pa did not look like that.<sup>24</sup>

As regards kainga, the poet Hone Tuwhare wrote a personal letter of support to Westra during the period of the controversy over *Washday*. In this letter, he mentioned only one “fault” with *Washday* – “...the ‘kainga’ or ‘old place’ (with all the sentiment and values that old places have) is not clearly identified within the context of a pa.”<sup>25</sup> The following month, *Te ao hou* published his poem, “The old place”, which addresses the “sentiment and values” he refers to in the letter to Westra. The final verse of the poem reads: “On the cream lorry/Or morning paper van/No one comes/For no one will ever leave/The golden city on the fussy train;/And there will be no more waiting/On the hill beside the quiet tree/ Where the old place falters/Because no one comes any more/No one.”<sup>26</sup> As regards earlier School Bulletins, “the glossary of Maori words” in Ray Chapman-Taylor’s *Life in the pa* (1948) lists and differentiates four terms: kainga – “A village (not a fortified village)”; marae – “An enclosed space, usually in front of the chief’s house, where meetings were held. The space around which the village and the tribal life centred”); pa – “A fortified place, often a fortified village, also the people who lived in the village”; whare – “A house, hut, meeting house, any building.”<sup>27</sup> Another connotation of the word pa is included in the entry on the word in the glossary to the Auckland University Press collection of stories by Roderick Finlayson, *Brown man’s burden*. The full entry reads, “originally a terraced and fortified village on a hill-top; later, loosely, any Maori village. To get away from the pa, to make an effort to assimilate into pakeha society.”<sup>28</sup>

The inside cover image places *Washday's* central pair, Rebecca and Mutu, gazing out of the kitchen window, at the threshold of narrative adventure. Having chosen this photograph over two rather lifeless alternatives, Westra's tight left side cropping has strengthened the central viewing position of the young duo and rendered the 'view' through the window more abstract and thus suggestive.<sup>29</sup> The bulletin's first two (full page) images and the accompanying half page of dialogue and contextual exposition serve as 'establishing shots', setting up open narrative possibilities.

But no sooner has the story begun than its diegesis is broken by a photograph at the foot of page one, different in style from any other in the booklet. (Fig. 4) It is a photograph of the departmental house under construction on a suburban section, to which the Wereta family will soon move. As noted, this picture stands out from all the others in *Washday*. At a glance it would appear to be more at home in the files of a real estate agent. Later in 1964, when the Caxton Press republished *Washday* shortly after the controversy had abated, they not only added more photographs to their edition but also deliberately omitted this one on the grounds of its alleged ugliness. This decision is fully in line with Caxton's desire to save and celebrate the book's aesthetic qualities, which are strong, and worth highlighting. But the booklet is not simply a parade of beautiful pictures. The image of the new house is an indispensable part of *Washday's* narrative. In the context of the bulletin as a whole, it can be read in a variety of ways: straightforwardly as a sign of the 'inevitable' movement of Maori people from the countryside to the suburbs; positively as a movement from the privations of impoverished country life to the conveniences of town or city; or negatively as a kind of expulsion from the Edenic harmony of rural Maori life into the atomised world of Pete Seeger's song "Little Boxes".<sup>30</sup> The placement of the photograph near the beginning of the story prevents any one of these readings from assuming too much weight; placed at the end its effect may well have been bathetic, a banal shrinking from the plenitude evoked beforehand. But its omission altogether from the Caxton edition signifies a desire on the part of the publishers to make smooth *Washday's* passage from the classroom to the coffee table.<sup>31</sup>

*Washday at the pa*, as indicated in the previous chapter, is an example of ethnographic pastoral. And pastoral works, as William Empson points out, are 'about' but not 'by' or 'for' the people (whether named as the peasantry, the proletariat, or the poor), and this is certainly true of *Washday*.<sup>32</sup> The 'people' the bulletin is about are not the shepherds of the classical pastoral but, rather, members of the rural proletarian subsistence class. To be specific, father is a (seasonal) shearer and mother is a homemaker. In precise literary terms, they are subjects within an example of Realist pastoral, a variant descending from works such as John Gay's *Shepherd's week* (1714) and William Wordsworth's *The prelude* (1805); or, what Empson calls proletarian literature.<sup>33</sup> It is necessary to specify what kind of pastoral discourse *Washday* is in order not to allow any confusion between its documentary foundations and the kind of picturesque pastoral elements found in earlier New Zealand Pictorialist photography and tourist-oriented photo-books, two forms from which Westra's practice marked a sharp and decisive break.<sup>34</sup>

*Washday at the pa* is an entirely matrifocal work. It is centered on a rural Maori mother and her family of nine children, comprised of four girls (Rebecca, Mutu, Janie, and Ruia) and five boys (toddler Erua, the twins Hemi and Jimmy, Samuel, and Sonny), only a few

of whom play a large part in the story. Adult males are notable by their almost complete absence. An uncle Bill makes an appearance on Page ten, while page eleven carries an illustrative photograph of a sheep drover. In the two photographs of woolshed shearing on pages twelve and thirteen, only what would appear to be uncle Bill's face is at all recognisable. The figure most likely to be Mr Wereta has his back to the camera/viewer and after a brief reference to him in the accompanying text, he disappears completely from the story. From then on, as before, the story is composed of incidents which occur between mother and children or, most frequently, amongst the siblings themselves.

The photographs in the first half of the booklet are all exterior shots set in the pastoral surroundings outside the Wereta house. The washing process itself, referred to in the title, is represented concisely in three photographs which together with those devoted to the making of Maori bread demonstrate Mrs Wereta's work patterns with ethnographic precision; these patterns involve much labour, unrelieved, to put it mildly, by sophisticated technological assistance. An interesting comparison can be made between these 'washing' photographs and an earlier series of eight Westra images showing a Maori woman washing in a similar metal bathtub at the back of her house.<sup>35</sup> There is, too, a long tradition of earlier Pakeha photographers making pictures of Maori doing their washing in locations outside the house. For instance, the Turnbull Library has an image from around 1880 of Maori women making use of natural forces by washing clothes in the Ruapeka Lagoon in the thermal area of Ohinemutu. And lodged within the photographic collection of the Hocken Library are two similar images, undated but also from the late 19th century: a Muir and Moodie photograph, issued as a postcard, showing washing day at the village in Whakarewarewa, with Maori again taking advantage of naturally occurring hot water; and an unattributed picture, in pastoral mode, of a group of Maori women washing clothes in a river.<sup>36</sup> And near to the time of *Washday*, the cover of the May 1957 issue of *Te ao hou* carried an uncredited photograph showing a rotating clothes line full of washing hung out to dry. (Fig. 5) Standing in the bottom right corner of the image is a very young Maori child looking across at a hen and a cat positioned under the clothes. A metal washing tub sits in front of the child and an item of clothing hangs drying on a barbed wire fence in the background. A note on the contents page inside the magazine refers to the photograph in terms of "The new look on Maori farms."<sup>37</sup>

All the photographs in the second half of the bulletin with the exception of two are domestic interior shots. Here Westra might be said to have carried out her own version of something like Roy Stryker's advice to the FSA photographers<sup>38</sup>, as she conveys a good deal of information about the Weretas' dwelling. A particularly striking example is the picture on page 22, showing Mrs Wereta placing a pot in her wood-burning oven, situated below a mantelpiece covered with photographic spreads from the *Weekly news*.<sup>39</sup> This picture inaugurates the study of the making of Maori bread, an explicitly informative sequence of images and words with something of the style of the plates in Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson's *Balinese character*.<sup>40</sup> The final photograph of the sequence has Mrs Wereta directly addressing the camera/viewer at the moment of completing her baking, an atypical touch in a story otherwise kept within a strict intra-diegetic flow; it conveys a sense of pride in work well done. The photographs that follow on from this sequence show

a very close (in a spatial and emotional sense) matrifocal family, as the children play or read and their mother prepares and serves a meal "...from the pot of sausages, potatoes and kumara."<sup>41</sup> The character of these images is remarkably congruent with James and Jane Ritchie's observations on the rural Maori matrifocal world: "the world of the mother and baby is a very human centred world. Houses are plainly and simply furnished, for use rather than to satisfy pride. Meals are bulky and simple, often of one dish, easily and quickly prepared."<sup>42</sup> After the evening meal, the older children are shown washing and playing with the younger ones before they go to bed.

In a passage from this period, on Maori mothers of the "subsistence farming class", Bill Pearson wrote:

Such mothers are overworked and fatigued. As each new baby arrives, the one just older is consigned to the care of an older sister, and those over four are left to look after themselves. From the time they are confident on their feet, children are kept outside as much as possible, except when called to do jobs and are forced to become independent of adults at an early age, relying not on their parents but on their siblings and playmates for advice. Mothers at Turangawaewae and Whakataane complained that fathers do not take enough part in child-rearing.<sup>43</sup>

A close reading of *Washday* reveals a close conformity between its images and text and Pearson's observations. In this regard, its attention to the details of rural Maori life and child rearing patterns, however brief and seemingly casual, is consistent with the ethnographically informed literature of the period. Further commentary on *Washday's* imagery will appear in the next section of this chapter devoted to an analysis of the controversy surrounding it.

#### THE CONTROVERSY

By early May 1964, the Government Printer had printed 38,000 copies of *Washday at the pa* at a cost of 1,717 Pounds. And by June 5, apart from 2500 copies set aside for sale to the general public, they had been distributed to the majority of the nation's Primary school classrooms where they began to be read by seven to ten year olds in standards one (advanced), two and three as part of their social studies syllabus. *Washday* was intended to be the first of a series of bulletins on different kinds of family in New Zealand society.<sup>44</sup> The Director General of Education, A.E.Campbell, in a statement to the press, said of this projected series: "Using photographs and text the bulletins aim to show how families, both Maori and Pakeha, live in different parts of the country. Other bulletins in the series deal with the lives of a farming family in Cambridge, a family living in Dunedin, and a family living in a Wellington suburb. The Wellington family happens to be a Maori one."<sup>45</sup>

Prior to publication some reservations were expressed by staff in School Publications, specifically James K. Baxter and Alistair Campbell. They pointed out that the children were wearing their oldest clothes because their mother was doing the washing while they

were home from school. Also, because the family was expecting to move soon to a Maori Affairs house in Gisborne they weren't bothering to do any repairs to their current house. Westra was referred to the Department of Maori Affairs, whose Secretary, Jock McEwan, was very enthusiastic about the booklet and suggested an addition to it. In addition to these figures, the Maori leader Sir Eruera Tirikatene doubted the suitability of two photographs.<sup>46</sup> However, all these relatively mild objections were accommodated so that the bulletin was able to proceed to the printer and thence to the classroom.

The key event to trigger the *Washday* controversy was the annual conference of the Dominion Council of the Maori Women's Welfare League, held in Dunedin from 21 to 24 July 1964. The League had been formed in 1951 in order to promote "the preservation of Maori arts and crafts and the betterment of living conditions, education and health."<sup>47</sup> Its first Dominion President was Whina Cooper who held the position until 1957. In an unpublished study of the League, Beverley James adopts Raymond Firth's concept of "the dual frame of organisation" in order to show how this "voluntary association" "exhibits both 'pluralistic' and 'assimilationist' aims by separating out and honouring aspects of the Maori culture on the one hand and advocating integration into European political, educational, and social spheres on the other."<sup>48</sup> According to Ranginui Walker, "The first political success of the League derived from its survey of Maori housing needs in Auckland. It brought to the attention of the authorities the insanitary and overcrowded conditions in which migrant Maori were living."<sup>49</sup> The matter of Maori housing would resurface again in 1964 in relation to *Washday*. Bev James and Kay Saville-Smith argue that the MWWL's pursuit of its goals was conducted within "the cult of domesticity": "For the league, the adoption of Pakeha techniques of domestic labour was symbolic of Maori equality with Pakeha. Domesticity [homecraft and mothercraft] was more than an occupation, it reflected a moral status."<sup>50</sup>

By 1964 the MWWL was a well-established modern Maori pressure group with an annual conference and the means to effectively lobby government. At their 1964 conference, attended by 320 women, the League discussed *Washday* at length and a motion to withdraw the bulletin "...was brought by Mrs J. Heta, representing the Ngati Porou District Council, Ruatoria..."<sup>51</sup> The conference participants then passed the following resolution: "That this booklet (*Washday at the pa*) be completely and immediately withdrawn from publication and from issue to all schools, and that similar future publications be referred for approval to the Maori Education Foundation Board of Trustees." Jane F. Bell, the League's Dominion Secretary, listed six points critical of the bulletin in her letter to the Minister of Education, the Hon. A.E. Kinsella.<sup>52</sup> These six points will be raised for discussion throughout the remainder of this section, as they were pivotal factors in structuring the ensuing debate.

The first point concerns the misnomer of the word *pa* in relation to what is in fact a Maori family's private home. I have already covered the matter of the rather loose denotation the word *pa* had come to assume in general Pakeha usage earlier in the chapter. What should be added here is some comment on the negative connotations the word had picked up in phrases such as "as dirty as a Maori *pa*". The negative Pakeha stereotype attached to the word *pa* carried "...connotations of poverty, primitive conditions, materially and morally sub-standard living, happy-go-lucky communality - in short, of a way of living which is regarded as inferior, reprehensible (and ambivalently, quaint)."<sup>53</sup>

The second and fifth points raise the question of typicality in relation to the representation of rural Maori life contained in *Washday*. The second point makes the claim that the living conditions depicted in the booklet are not typical even for remote areas, while the fifth point finds the Wereta family itself neither especially typical nor average.<sup>54</sup> At virtually no time during the debate over *Washday* was any serious consideration given to what might be said to constitute a typical representation in this area of social life. The majority of participants who touched on the issue simply rushed to a yes or no decision on the matter. It is, however, a question which this study cannot avoid addressing.

A good place to begin a meditation on the notion of typicality in representation is the aesthetic theory of the Hungarian Marxist Georg Lukács. For Lukács, typicality is an important element in his conception of mimesis, central to his championing of a form of realism over and above both naturalism and modernism in artistic practice. In Lukács' aesthetic writings, mimesis "...does not mean a mechanical, photographic reproduction, a duplication of what is extant; what it does mean is an ideal transformation of the phenomenal world..."<sup>55</sup> The former is, of course, naturalism, which in the literary field was practised by the 'I am a camera' school of objective recorders, such as Emile Zola. Lukács's realism, by contrast, strived to represent the essentials of an historical epoch in a carefully constructed expressive totality. And this is where typicality comes into the picture. An earlier proponent of this kind of realist aesthetic was Friedrich Engels who wrote, "...by realism we understand, beside the truth of details, the reflection of typical characters in typical circumstances."<sup>56</sup> Lukács takes off from this point by positing the typical as a device capable of mediating between the individual (details of a particular historical situation) and the universal (the essence of a period, its representative quality) in a manner that rises above statistical notions of the mean, the average and the ordinary. Bela Kiralyfalvi summarises it thus: "In creating the typical the artist embodies in the destinies of concrete men the most important characteristics of some historical situation that best represents the specific age, nation, and class to which they belong."<sup>57</sup>

The above investigation of the Lukácsian concept of typicality leads on to the broader question of the nature of types and stereotypes in general. Richard Dyer defines a type as "...any character constructed through the use of a few immediately recognisable and defining traits that do not change or 'develop' through the course of the narrative and which point to general, recurrent features of the human world..."<sup>58</sup> The type, more prevalent in earlier (e.g. moral and allegorical) literature but still widely used, can be placed on a continuum the opposite pole of which is occupied by the novelistic character. The latter is governed by an emphasis on the individual whose unique personality contains a multiplicity of traits gradually revealed through the development of the narrative.<sup>59</sup> Dyer subdivides the overall category of types into three parts: social types, stereotypes and member types. Stereotyping is ultimately tied up with the maintenance of boundaries so that whereas social types refer to those who fit within the hegemonic contours granted to members of the dominant group, stereotypes work to fix certain others in positions outside the bounds of mainstream society.<sup>60</sup> Tessa Perkins's useful paper on "rethinking stereotypes" lists their most prominent characteristics as follows: they are employed by one group to describe another and are therefore fundamentally social not private

categorisations; they arrest the development of refined analytic judgments, blocking them with their catch-all judgments; they are essentially evaluative concepts that achieve a wide distribution throughout a given society; they are simple, immediately recognisable and assume consensus about certain aspects of social life.<sup>61</sup> Those groups about whom stereotypes are most commonly held include: “major structural groups” (defined across the variables of ‘race’, class, gender, and age); “structurally significant and salient groups” (e.g. ethnic groups); “isolated groups” (that is socially or geographically isolated); “pariah groups” (e.g. gays, junkies, bikies); “opponent groups” (‘communists’, ‘fascists’, etc.); and “socially/ideologically insignificant groups” (joggers, redheads, etc.)<sup>62</sup>

Common to all forms of typification is their propensity to condense “...a wealth of social knowledge into a few striking and vivid signs.”<sup>63</sup> All forms of representation must therefore rely upon typification to some degree in order that they may produce socially coherent discourse; there can be no escape into a purely private language of individual particularities. Let’s move now to a local manifestation of this question. In his pioneering cartographic article on the sociology of New Zealand literature, Robert Chapman pointed to “...the absence here of widely recognised psychological stereotypes”, with the consequence that “each character must be handwrought; the author cannot take character roughcast from the mould and file to taste.”<sup>64</sup> The article draws a strong contrast between the wide spectrum of class stratification in England and the much narrower one in New Zealand; an effect, in Chapman’s view, of a new society insufficiently demarcated by time and geographical variation into a stable pattern. This is not the place to enter into a full analysis or criticism of Chapman’s thesis, which assumes the objective existence of a social pattern that surely must be as fictive as the fiction supposedly responding to it. What is of salience to my concerns is Chapman’s point about the apparent absence of stereotypes here and the concomitant need for particularising realism. Consider, for example, the following passage: “...the writer here must as a first step achieve the illusion of realism; must detect and present what would be taken for a photograph of reality by an audience which has neither an album nor so much as a snap. But it is, after all, a composed engraving which must pass for a photograph of reality, for the details cannot be included in their temporal proportions.”<sup>65</sup>

This passage is of considerable interest as it touches on several important topics. To name just a few: the difference between autographic (engraving) and mechanical (photography) media, although the implication that engravings are composed while photographs are not is untenable; moreover, as it would be an extraordinarily comprehensive photograph that could approximate to a novel or even a short story, a sequence of photographs would be a more accurate analogue here; but perhaps the most suggestive point is the hint that the audience might be an important factor in the literary equation. Chapman, although he never directly addresses the question of reception, tends to see the audience as a homogenous body dominated by puritan values against which the equally homogeneously conceived humanist liberalism of the writers is directed. He pays scant attention – except for an aside on Roderick Finlayson – to the major ethnic and cultural divisions between Maori and Pakeha, which may strongly affect the way works are received.

By virtue of the fact that her story is predominantly told in photographs, Ans Westra achieves the “illusion of realism” (or should we say naturalism?) that is apparently

conferred by the agency of the indexical sign. To put it another way, the base line from which she works is founded in the fact of registration rather than the act of counterfeit. Be this as it may – and it neglects structural properties of the photographic apparatus and compositional moves of the camera operator – from that point on acts of choice (selection from a range of possibilities on the contact sheet, cropping, interpolation of material shot elsewhere, compatibility of images and words) indispensable to the creation of photographic narrative take over.

Finally in connection with the above we must invoke the distinction between naturalism and realism to clarify matters further. Naturalism claims the ability to capture ‘reality’ out there as it really is, raw and unprocessed. One of its favourite metaphors for this process is the action of the camera. It ignores the social and ideological preformation of the producer and the cultural form he or she uses as much as it ignores the preformation of the spectator or reader. Realism, on the other hand, in its Lukácsian form and as it pertains to all forms of typification, admits to the determining influence of form and synthetic *a priori* ideas. The passage from Chapman quoted earlier waivers between these two poles, at one moment affirming naturalism as a possible and necessary first step, at another casting doubt on that possibility.

It’s time now to bring these considerations to bear directly on the issue of typicality in relation to *Washday at the pa*. It should be clear from the foregoing that the typical, linked as it is to a realist aesthetic, cannot be simply plucked ready-made from ‘reality’. The impression of realism is achieved by the reiteration of sign groups that come to be recognised by an ideal spectator as tokens of the truth. Works are judged to be realistic or typical or not when measured against internalised conceptual models which vary with historical periods and imperatives. The circumstances leading to the making of *Washday at the pa* – unlike the long-term goals which gave rise to a book like *Maori* – precluded almost by definition the possibility of the booklet being typical in conception. *Washday’s* route to publication was marked by chance factors; as a result it stepped unwittingly, perhaps naively, into a cultural minefield.

From a straightforward empirical and statistical point of view, the League’s statement that the ‘living conditions’ depicted in *Washday* were not typical, even for Maori in remote areas, is demonstrably false. The Hunn Report, drawing upon the 1956 census, found that 14% (3,000) of all surveyed Maori houses were in some way sub-standard; a large number (2,750) had only one or two rooms while others were more like baches or huts than proper houses. The major problem, especially in the northern part of the North Island where it applied to 30% of the Maori population, was overcrowding wherein “...the average Maori house contained 3.9 rooms occupied by 5.6 people, whereas the average non-Maori house had 4.7 rooms occupied by 3.6 people.”<sup>66</sup> Surveying this situation from the vantage point of the later 1960s, Roger Oppenheim commented: “...Maori households in 1956 lacked many of the amenities that are expected by white New Zealanders... the proportion of houses built in relation to loan applications to the department of Maori Affairs had decreased from 37% in 1955 to 20% in 1959.”<sup>67</sup>

The League’s second objection to the booklet’s alleged lack of typicality simply asserts that “...a more typical, more average family background could have been chosen”, without even a hint as to what kinds of traits this family would have. Also it is not clear whether

their point is restricted to rural Maori families or includes urban ones as well. The gist of what would seem to be behind this objection can be economically phrased as follows: *Washday at the pa* did not provide a sufficiently positive image of Maori life. Indeed quite the reverse. It would simply serve to reinforce negative stereotypes held by many Pakeha New Zealanders about Maori people: that they were an overwhelmingly rural, impoverished people content to dwell in sub-standard accommodation, untroubled by the concerns of a developing consumer society. This, I think, is an accurate reconstruction of the League's largely implicit objection to *Washday* on the grounds of its a-typicality. Their letter does, of course, contain more explicit criticisms as do some members' comments reported in newspapers. I will deal with these in due course. But first we should note how points two and five link up with the letter's sixth and final point to produce a causal argument about the likely detrimental effect of *Washday* on "...the efforts of our people to establish themselves in better living conditions when it is considered that people who see the book will form an adverse opinion."<sup>68</sup>

Recall that in the space of ten years the percentage of Maori people living in the countryside had dropped by 15%, from 81% in 1951 to 66% in 1961; and whereas in 1926 only eight in every hundred Maori lived in urban areas, this proportion had increased to 30 in every hundred by 1961. In the wake of this long-term movement of a large proportion of the Maori population from rural to urban areas, the MWWL sought a rapprochement with the dominant Pakeha majority by means of an accommodation to the modernising forces of post World War Two New Zealand. Thus for them a main priority, appropriately, seems to have been to favour any representations that might facilitate this process and to oppose any that might impede it.

I suggest that, in Raymond Williams's terms, the MWWL saw *Washday at the pa* as a representation of a residual form of Maori family life when they wished to see representations of emergent forms.<sup>69</sup> Thus when they said *Washday* was not typical they did not just imply that it purveyed a dated and derogatory stereotype; they meant that it was not typical of an emerging tendency, one strongly shaped by the then dominant ideology of integration. This view was shared by the New Zealand Maori Council who supported the League's stance on *Washday* as a rejection of "...an idealised picture of those still living in the past". They continued thus: "The real Maori of the future is not the one living in an old shanty in some remote pa...the real Maori is the one who lives down the road and goes to work on the same bus as you, whose son is the local bandleader, whose daughter beat your girl at school last year. These are the Maori whom the Pakeha has to get to know, the people with whom race relations will be tested."<sup>70</sup> The Council ended their statement by praising the League as the "true realists" of the *Washday* controversy; and in a sense they were right.

Another prominent supporter of the League's position was the very Reverend P.E. Sutton, the Dean of Dunedin, who said that *Washday* gave the impression that Maori had a lower standard of housing than other New Zealanders (true overall), that it "formed part of the campaign to bring Maori into the cities" (it could be seen that way although this was certainly not part of Ans Westra's intention nor the Department of Education's), and that it was "hardly encouraging to the very real efforts of the Maori to improve the welfare of his race."<sup>71</sup> This last sentence echoes the final point made in the MWWL's letter to the

Minister of Education: "...the publication of the booklet will have a detrimental affect [sic] on the efforts of our people to establish themselves in better living conditions when it is considered that people who see the book will form an adverse opinion."

But what of Ans Westra's own position on the related matters of realism and typicality in relation to her representation of rural Maori life? She is quoted in a *Dominion* article on the fourth of August 1964 (Fig. 6) as saying: "The booklet was never intended to portray a typical Maori family. It is just a story of a happy family living in the country. It shows the warmth of family relationships. I want to show their true way of living. I want to defend the true values of the Maori way of life."<sup>72</sup> The first part of this statement implies the modest naturalistic documentary aim of showing the virtues of rural Maori life through one particular family. The second part, however, announces a much more ambitious intention which does lay Westra open to the charge that she is indeed striving for typicality. I have already established that *Washday* cannot be taken simply as neutral documentation because the lineaments of its 'text' are figured by antecedent representations of both Maori and childhood themes. But at the same time it does carry something of both the evidential quality of photography (stemming from the indexical status of its signs) and the authority derived from the ethnographic genesis of its material. It is important not to lose sight of either of these sides of *Washday* because doing photography like doing ethnography is not just an imaginative exercise that brings heterocosms into existence. To a large degree there are powerful professional ideologies constraining these enterprises to supply adequate knowledge of phenomena presumed to be external to them.

Westra's statement that *Washday* is "...just a story of a happy family living in the country" is very much in accord with an earlier one by John Melsor, Chief Editor of the Department of Education's School Publications Branch: "Our feeling is that it is an excellent collection of photos which display very well the warmth and intimacy of family relationships – just a group of very happy children living in the country. We were not aiming to *represent* Maori living conditions of these children (my emphasis). It would be most inappropriate to do so. It's what the children are doing that is important."<sup>73</sup> This statement is no doubt accurate about the intentions behind the publication of *Washday at the pa* but it appears remarkably innocent about the sensitive social context within which the booklet was received. Questions of the representativeness of a representation may be disavowed at the moment of the text's production but they cannot be eliminated or controlled at the moment of reception. At this point an examination of some of the public responses to *Washday's* withdrawal will bear out this claim.

On August the fourth 1964 a press statement announcing the withdrawal from schools of *Washday at the pa* quoted these words from Mr Ivan Kinsella, the Minister of Education:

Nobody has denied that the family relationships as portrayed in the bulletin are affectionate, good-humoured, and co-operative. The objections mainly refer to the family's living conditions which are said to be untypical. They were not intended to be regarded as completely typical, and in fact the bulletin includes a photograph of a new house into which the family is shortly to move. However, it is clear that the publication has given offence and I have therefore decided that it be withdrawn from the schools.<sup>74</sup>

Prior to the official decision to withdraw the bulletin, an internal memo from the Chief Inspector of Primary Schools (C.I.P.S.) to the Director General of Education had recommended:

... a decision to withdraw the bulletin from both public and private schools...immediately, as the inaccuracies in presentation will continue to be raised by various groups and the real purpose of the bulletin will be obscured and forgotten.

The memo ends with the recommendation to "...abandon the series of bulletins that endeavour to show family life in New Zealand through photographs."<sup>75</sup> The Director General himself, in a letter to the Minister dated 30 July 1964, had concluded, "if instructions were to be given to have the bulletin withdrawn, it would serve to increase the attention it is receiving."<sup>76</sup> Yet by the 21st of August he had appended a hand written note to the file copy of this letter detailing his route to an exactly opposite position: "...I particularly feared the damage that could result if the matter became one of party political controversy. The Minister was advised accordingly and said he had reached a similar conclusion. Before finally deciding to withdraw the bulletin he and I discussed the matter with the Minister of Maori Affairs."<sup>77</sup> The procedural moves leading to the booklet's rather swift removal from the nation's classrooms thus followed a familiar pattern for liberal democratic societies. They did not occur in response to something called public opinion but because of the action of an established political pressure group, the Maori Women's Welfare League. Pierre Bourdieu describes this political process with precision:

If the Minister of Education acted in function of an opinion poll (or even a superficial reading of a poll), he would not do what he does when he acts really as a politician, in response to the telephone calls, the visit from the Director of the Ecole Normale Superieure, or from a Dean, etc. In reality he acts much more in function of forces of actually formed opinion, which enter his field of vision only to the extent that they have power, because they have already been mobilized.<sup>78</sup>

#### EDUCATIONAL OPINION

We've pushed the Maori too quickly. [...] Most of the time he's perfectly content to live in a broken-down shack, grow a few kumaras, and buy his groceries off the family allowance. It doesn't do much good to build him a brand new house; within a few months it's not in much better shape than the shack he just moved out of.

—“WANGANUI TEACHER”, QUOTED IN DAVID P. AUSUBEL (1960)<sup>79</sup>

#### *i.Organisations*

Within the educational profession itself, opinion was divided over whether the booklet should have been withdrawn or not. A national body, the New Zealand Educational

Institute began by questioning the rationale of the Minister's decision. The President of the Wellington Branch, Mr J.L. Murray stated: "Perhaps after studying such a booklet the work of the Maori Affairs Department and the Maori Education Foundation mean something more to many New Zealand children."<sup>80</sup> It isn't clear exactly what inference should be taken from this statement. Does it credit *Washday* with a reforming documentary expose of the living conditions that the bodies mentioned above are dedicated to ameliorating? Or is there the implication that the bulletin goes against the grain of their endeavours? Whatever the case may be, Murray's citation of the social studies syllabus's aims – "...to help children understand the world they live in and to take their own place in it...to think clearly about social problems...to take an intelligent and sympathetic interest in the various peoples, communities and cultures of the world"<sup>81</sup> – suggests the former.

The Wellington Social Studies Advisory Committee's Chairman, Mr J.A. Taylor, conveyed to the Minister the Committee's regret that the bulletin had to be withdrawn. He continued: "The Committee appreciated the reasons for withdrawal of the bulletin, but feels that there is so much sincerity and such value in it for both children and teachers working on social studies that its withdrawal is a substantial loss to our New Zealand social studies documentation."<sup>82</sup> The Chairman of the Central Hawkes Bay branch of the New Zealand Educational Institute at Waipukurau, Mr A. Nola of Takapau, publicly objected to the Minister's action in the pages of Napier's *Daily telegraph*.<sup>83</sup> While the *Hawkes Bay herald tribune* carried his assessment of *Washday* as "...the best school bulletin the department has produced in years". And he added: "To me its theme is that happiness is possible in limited circumstances through family life. Maori children and older Maori people in this district have been thrilled with this book."<sup>84</sup> Yet when G.R. Ashbridge, National Secretary of the Institute, wrote to Mr Kinsella in late September, it was to express agreement with his action.<sup>85</sup>

#### ii. Individual Teachers' Views

A considerable number of schoolteachers did not confine their comments on the '*Washday at the pa* controversy' to the staff tearoom; many of them wrote to the newspapers on this issue. In the Hawkes Bay region, for example, points of view both for and against withdrawal were in evidence. The Headmaster of Hastings Central School, a Mr McMurray, agreed with the Minister's decision in words echoing strongly those of the MWWL: "It's a bit out of date. Most of our Maori people [sic] have made a lot of progress. The bulletin would apply to a very small minority of Maori people."<sup>86</sup> Unfortunately he rather undercuts any validity this view might have had by going on to say that if a tourist poster showing "the primitive conditions in New Zealand 170 years ago" was distributed overseas, the New Zealand public would be very angry.<sup>87</sup> I dare say, but this rather far-fetched analogy has no connection whatsoever with the very contemporary social documentary properties of *Washday at the pa*. For Mr McMurray, it seems there was nothing beyond the horizon of 'European standards'. An unnamed head teacher from an unnamed Hawkes Bay school, quoted in the same story, had a rather different view: "I understand the main objection is

that people may get the idea that it portrays the modern Maori way of living but we are all sensible enough to know it doesn't. We have been using it for six weeks and it has been very popular. I haven't heard any criticism from the Maoris."<sup>88</sup>

The head teacher of the school at Alfredton was high in his praise of *Washday*. He urged the MWWL to "...look past the rough veneer of a sub-standard house and weigh up instead the family portrayal...collectively these items constitute a most stimulating documentary on the particular excellences of the Maori character. I would congratulate Ans Westra for the finest of the school bulletins. I shall endeavour to keep my copy as a testament of prime human values."<sup>89</sup> A story in *The Christchurch star* told of a local teacher who gave his form II class copies of *Washday at the pa* and discovered that none of them were offended, not even a Maori girl who had spent her early years in an Auckland pa. This particular Maori girl was quoted thus:

Some people think that Maoris don't have a very clean way of living, but in some case Maoris are quite particular. Young Maori children sometimes grow up more healthy than white children because their lives run free. They don't worry at all about the itsy bitsy things. Their only difficulty is in speaking good English. In some Maori homes children are given washing to do at the age of eight. That I have seen very often. I think this bulletin has no reason to be criticised. After all the Maoris have lived in their way and the Europeans in theirs till this day. I think both races will never change their ways and beliefs. Some people think, 'Ooo, those Maori children went for a swim with no swim suit on. How disgusting!' But what's wrong with that? It's just straight from nature, and that is something that I think will never go from the Maori.<sup>90</sup>

The article also quoted these words from a "European girl", "the bulletin shows that Maoris are happy, hard working people and no one should be offended at that."<sup>91</sup>

On the 19th of August, *The Dominion* printed a letter from Mrs W. Durward of Otaki, described, along with her husband, as an ex-Maori schoolteacher. The letter contained this passage: "Here is evidence, in true pictures, of the ideal happiness that can be achieved from simplicity of living. Can many of us not look back 60 years to the same humble beginnings and trace with pride the steps up the ladder of achievement? That climb is now awaiting the Wereta family..."<sup>92</sup> Two days later, M.D. Nightingale, a Pakeha teacher working in a small East coast Maori area wrote: "One of the great problems of New Zealand education today is to help Maori children improve their language skills. A bulletin such as Miss Westra's provided teachers with a very useful tool. Namely, a simple, well-illustrated book of direct and pressing interest to our fine Maori youngsters."<sup>93</sup> However, around the same time, Wattie Wattling, a Maori teacher from Northland, congratulated the MWWL on their action because, "...the conditions are representative of a section only and do little to show what many of us are trying to achieve - Integration by equality."<sup>94</sup>

Sue Vaassen, in her "spotlight on education" column for the *New Zealand women's weekly*, praised the booklet's portrayal of childhood, stating that she'd "...rather read *Washday at the pa* with its accent on natural living than some of the tepid readers designed

for school use". She added: "...it's rather frightening that we are so wedded to a middle-class system; that we can study 'peasants' only when they work in Asia or old Europe; that we find it difficult to bring breadth and depth to our admittedly well-organised curriculum."<sup>95</sup> In contrast to Vaassen's views, (ex-teacher) Stella Jones's review of the Caxton Press edition strongly attacked the book in these terms:

... the text...is undistinguished. As material for social study it contains little not already known to our children; with a change from Maori names to European, it could as easily have described any large backblocks family, white or Maori.

She goes on to castigate "...this phoney representation of the old life of the pa" as "...the type of thinking which confuses this sub-standard housing...with that old community living."<sup>96</sup>

Jones's criticism is exclusively aimed at *Washday's* text, which she considers trite and lacking in educational value; she is, however, high in her praise of Westra's photographs. Yet from the perspective of the School Publications Department, whose aims, as I have already shown in chapter three, were to try "...to present each bulletin in the form of a story, in which the particular topic being dealt with is seen through the eyes of fictional characters who are usually themselves children"<sup>97</sup>, *Washday at the pa* is a model school bulletin. The Department's brief explicitly rules out formal instruction in favour of experientially grounded story telling. The implication of Jones's criticism is that the text should have carried the weight of a formal social studies lesson. It is not clear whether this could have taken the form of a commentary on the pictures or whether the pictures could have been relegated to illustrations of more abstract points elaborated in advance. But to operate with a separation of image and text in this way is highly problematic because Westra is working in a form which necessitates a seamless diegetic complementarity between word and image. Thus Jones's claim that with a name change the text could just as easily have described a Pakeha family is absurd because it attempts to perform a commutation test<sup>98</sup> on what is an inseparable part of an indivisible whole; a change in one register of the work must perforce mean a change in the other.

Perhaps Jones's unspoken but implied objection to the bulletin is that it fails to represent its Maori subjects as sufficiently different or 'other' to similarly large and impoverished rural Pakeha families. Viewed frontally through one lens, *Washday at the pa*, in keeping with its humanist framework gives us a celebration of human values not cultural ones. Yet, in spite of her repeated invocation of *The family of man*, Westra has not produced a simple example of abstract United Nations-style, humanist text; *Washday* is too much the product of a particular field encounter for that to be straightforwardly true. If anything, it is closer in spirit to the kind of socio-psychologically based fieldwork carried out in the late 1950s/early 1960s by James Ritchie and his colleagues than it is to the more conventional anthropologically orientated work of, for example, Joan Metge. The Weretas are not shown to be products of local descent groups with a particular tribal affiliation; there are no references to the local marae. But the almost complete absence of any criticism

on the grounds of its failure to represent the Weretas in terms of classic anthropological topics (kinship – social organisation – myth/religion etc.) points up the sheer dominance of the integration/assimilation paradigm in this historical conjuncture. Yet at the same time it would have been absurd to reprimand Westra for not representing what she did not find to be operative in her subjects' lives. *Washday at the pa* was condemned because it showed a 'culture of poverty' at a time when sections of educated Maori opinion sought to programme in their people a desire for upward mobility within Pakeha dominated New Zealand society. But in addition to this, measured against an ideal image of the health of Maoritanga, *Washday* signaled a 'poverty of culture', the nadir from which recovery into the revitalisations of the 1970s/1980s would take off. This is, of course, a retrospective judgement as it lies outside the paradigmatic concerns of the time.

However, while we are on this question, it is appropriate to consider the third point made in the MWWL's letter to the Minister of Education. It reads: "The photograph of the child warming her feet on the stove must, it is felt, have been specially posed, as such an action would not be allowed in a Maori home."<sup>99</sup> The photograph referred to can be found on page 30 of *Washday*. (Fig. 7) It shows Mutu standing on the lid which closes the small fireplace where burning wood heats a plate on the top of the stove. She is looking directly at the camera while older sister Janie, in profile, looks down at the stove. The text at the foot of the page reads, "no good going to bed with cold feet". The League does not spell out its objection to this image but it can only be on the grounds that by bringing the feet (noa) into contact with a place where food is prepared (tapu) it constitutes a violation of tapu. Several weeks after the letter in which this point appears was drafted, a Mrs R. Sage of the MWWL was quoted at length in a story titled "Author's knowledge of Maori doubted". Her comments make explicit what is only implicit in the letter to the Minister:

The body in relation to food utensils is tapu – that is something she will never understand. She is 28 – a recently naturalised New Zealander who has lived on the East Coast for five months amongst Maori. In that very short time she now considers herself an authority to write a booklet on our true way of life. To garnish her story, she emphasises the booklet as just a story of a happy family, full of warmth and family relationships. Instead of a Maori family why could not Miss Westra have taken a Dutch family, Pakeha, or any other nationality to suit her somewhat perverted sense of journalism.<sup>100</sup>

It is hardly surprising that Westra regarded the extremely acrimonious tone of these comments as bordering on the slanderous. She claims to have been well aware that the child's actions constituted a violation of tapu but says that what struck her most forcibly was that the child herself did not appear to be aware of this. She states emphatically that the photograph was not posed and the fact that it stands alone on her contact sheets bears out this claim<sup>101</sup>; a large number of the other photographs in *Washday* were selected from a range of options. Recently, Witi Ihimaera has made the following comment on this photograph: "Unwittingly, the child and Ans became agents in the production of the photograph... Ans's photograph appeared to be legitimising an otherwise profane act...We could forgive

the child its [sic] ignorance, but not the holder of the mirror.”<sup>102</sup> The phrase “holder of the mirror” clearly ascribes a transparently naturalist epistemology to photography, at the same time relegating the photographer herself to a rather passive role. And if we read this photograph through the codes of naturalist documentary it shows, in the words of Ihimaera himself, “...a strong discontinuity was occurring in the transmission of beliefs and customs.”<sup>103</sup> In these circumstances, the photographer is neither an unwitting agent nor necessarily legitimising a profane act but simply pointing to a hiatus in enculturation. However, it is probable that even if she was aware of the significance of Mutu’s act, it’s most unlikely that Westra included this image in the booklet in order to alert readers to gaps in the transmission of cultural practice. *Washday*’s lament for lost cultural (read human) values is directed exclusively to the Pakeha. Nevertheless, as Ihimaera’s essay makes clear, the implications of Westra’s photographic revelations, even if resented at the time, were not lost on sectors of Maoridom; subsequent developments very much bear this out.

#### FURTHER RESPONSES TO THE WASHDAY CONTROVERSY

##### *i. Public Figures*

John Pascoe, the photographer and former writer of bulletins for School Publications (see chapter three), wrote directly to the Minister of Education in defence of *Washday*:

I write in an unofficial capacity as an admirer of this illustrated bulletin. My own work for the Government has included periods as illustrations editor, official photographer, and secretary of the National Historic Places Trust; my personal and spare time activities have included the writing and illustrating of bulletins for School Publications at different levels.

I consider that Miss Westra did the Maori people a real service in writing and illustrating her documentary bulletin, that the happiness of the children, in spite of somewhat primitive conditions of living, is evident, and that the family thus recorded is a credit to New Zealand.

Respectfully I tender my regret that circumstances have lead you to withdraw this bulletin from circulation.<sup>104</sup>

Harry Dansey, the *Auckland star*’s Maori affairs reporter and a future race relations conciliator, described *Washday* as:

A delightful series of photographs accompanied by a simple and pleasing text in which I can find nothing offensive whatsoever. The bulletin brings out the affectionate and cooperative relationship between parents and children and among the children themselves. The family is scrupulously clean. They are all well fed, and

mother is a first-class cook. And all the children are obviously bouncing out of their skins with radiant good health. But I can appreciate what has made the MWWL members critical. They have, in my mind, confused the principles of good home management with the machines which can be used to achieve it.<sup>105</sup>

Erich Geiringer, outspoken Wellington doctor and author, after outlining his experiences with Maori patients, continued in this vein:

If *Washday at the pa* does not represent a brilliantly caught, typical slice of contemporary Maori life then I am both blind and mad. In fact, it is one of the most beautiful and true documents that has ever been put into the hands of New Zealand children. It will not teach much that is new to country children, but to the majority whose childhood is trapped in the barren waste of New Zealand suburbia, it gives a glimpse of human values unencumbered by dishwashers and washing machines...One thing which emerges from this sorry episode is the growing approximation between the two races. Surely there can be little to choose between the blind prejudice of the mother's union and the silly hypocrisy of the MWWL.<sup>106</sup>

Barry Crump (1935–1996), popular author of the bestselling novels *A good keen man* (1960) and *Hang on a minute mate* (1961), registered his objection "...to Mr Kinsella withdrawing Ans Westra's fine and typical book, *Washday at the pa*, on the strength of such flimsy criticisms as those of the MWWL. God save us!" [emphasis added]<sup>107</sup>

One of the most interesting and penetrating contributions to the 'Washday controversy' came from a former Department of Education editor of Primary School Bulletins, the major New Zealand poet James K. Baxter (1926–1972). After conceding the artistic merits of the photographs and the bulletin's accuracy as a representation of life in a rural Maori household, Baxter states that *Washday* should not have been issued by the Department of Education but by a private publishing house. He elaborates on this point by suggesting that had *Washday* come from a private publisher it would most likely have been accepted as "...a fine, if controversial, study of Maori rural family life." However, as this wasn't the case, he unwinds the full extent of his argument:

... in the current New Zealand education context...Miss Westra's fine photographs suggest not the earthly paradise but second-class citizenship...when a booklet is distributed to primary schools, from a government source, showing Maori in sub-standard housing, naturally they notice the housing and the very ragged clothes of the children, rather than the particular merits of the photography. The government cannot blow hot and cold with one breath; on the one hand urging rapid social change among Maori people, and on the other attempting to show a relatively primitive way of life as admirable. It simply will not work.<sup>108</sup>

Louis Johnson (1924–1988), another major New Zealand poet, who was also an editor at School Publications and collaborated on several projects with Westra in the 1960s,

returned to the matter of the *Washday* controversy in his final 1964 “Looking at books” column for *The Dominion*. He advanced a rather different view from Baxter’s, writing:

*Washday at the pa* was condemned because it did not give, in this age of public relations, time-payment and approved images, a self consoling or flattering picture of Maori life. Instead it concentrated on such human matters as fun, happiness, family warmth and general accord, in an environment that excluded proper washing facilities, multi-coloured cupboard units, and gleaming stainless steel bench tops.<sup>109</sup>

Johnson located his comments within a brief critique of “our suburban utopia”, which is not surprising given that many of his poems take a satirical look at the shortcomings of suburbia. But there can be no doubt that this issue is highly relevant to an analysis of the *Washday* controversy. In 1964, Westra’s bulletin touched a nerve situated within the space between the rural and the urban, the past and the present.

Johnson’s column compared the *Washday* controversy with another that occurred shortly after in relation to Lynne Owen’s *School at Cape Runaway* (1964), a book, by contrast, he considered to be of little value. Two months before Johnson’s column was published, yet another important New Zealand poet, Vincent O’Sullivan, also discussed the two books together but, in his case, found both of them to be marked by “patronage and sentimentality”. O’Sullivan refers to both the School Publications and Caxton Press editions of *Washday* but he does not appear to have read either very carefully. In an analogy to a fictitious bulletin “illustrating an English family in Liverpool or Manchester slums, closing, as did the *Washday* bulletin, on the dreary house in the antipodes that the government offered for a better life”, he does not seem to have noticed that the photograph of the “dreary house” comes at the beginning, not the end, of the School Publications edition and is not included in the Caxton Press edition at all. His assessment of *Washday* as “...a work that naturally will appeal to those adult New Zealanders who like their Maoris raw”, presumably because they take the “romantic” view that “poverty somehow becomes picturesque when it is native”, is quite problematic.<sup>110</sup> The question of Westra’s relationship to some form of Romanticism is a large and complex one that I will return to later. In the meantime, I would stress that Westra’s work, both in *Washday* and elsewhere, cannot be so easily dismissed in such a glib formulation, not least because its investment in a modern variant of ‘Romanticism’ continues, “...to be raised by colonized peoples as well as Europeans in protest against crass bourgeois pragmatism and the injustices of industrialization and capitalism.”<sup>111</sup>

The poet and peace activist, Barry Mitcalfe (1930–1986) – whose name is misspelt as Metcalfe – who had a strong interest in Maori poetry, wrote a letter to the editor of *Salient*, the Victoria University student newspaper, stating his support for the withdrawal of the booklet. He found *Washday* “...unsuitable for young children – in that it reinforces stereotypes...”, but he didn’t expand on how it does so. A pity because, in light of my lengthy discussion of the links between concepts of typicality, types and stereotypes earlier in this chapter, this is a complex matter which requires careful consideration. The only value the book had for Mitcalfe was to do with its depiction of Maori poverty, serving “to highlight inadequacies in the Maori situation”. However, he concluded by claiming, “...

the immediate cause of protest by the Maori Women's Welfare League was not the statistical truth or otherwise of the booklet, but its offensiveness to the family whose privacy was breached."<sup>112</sup> A strange claim because the League did not launch their protest on the basis of a complaint from the "Wereta" family and there is simply no evidence to support the notion that the family found the publication offensive, nor that they considered that their privacy had been breached. To the contrary, according to Westra, both at the time the photographs were made and during the time of the book's release into classrooms, the family were never less than happy with their experience, and remained largely oblivious to the controversy. In subsequent years members of the family have approached Westra on a number of occasions requesting prints of the photographs.

Printed alongside the Mitcalfe letter is another advocating against the withdrawal of the bulletin. The authors are two "future teachers", Steve O'Regan and John Nicholls. The former would in future years emerge as a Ngai Tahu tribal leader under the name of Tipene O'Regan.<sup>113</sup> Earlier two prominent Maori political figures had entered the debate with qualified judgments on the bulletin. Matiu Rata, MP for Northern Maori, praised the quality of the photographs but questioned their suitability for children. He said, "I think the Minister of Education made the right decision and I would like the assurance that the need for the withdrawal of a book will not arise again. The photographs could mislead a child, but I doubt whether there could be any objections to mature persons reading the book. But it was written for children."<sup>114</sup> Unfortunately, Mr Rata did not make it clear how the booklet could mislead Primary school children.

An older, retired Maori politician, Sir Eruera Tirikatene was fulsome in his praise of *Washday's* good qualities:

I see a complete home unit, exhibiting the joyous spirit of togetherness and satisfaction with their home life. I would not expect these humble children to become delinquent in adolescence. Indeed they show themselves as being susceptible to education and exhibit a healthy exploratory drive and purposefulness. The fathers [sic] and uncles [sic] are shown making their contribution to the country's economy, farming and shearing and earning their families' daily bread. To my mind these are positive values, and father has obviously saved some of his earnings towards a house deposit. This is progressive".

But at this point he pauses to note that there must have been sound reasons behind the MWWL's decision to press for the withdrawal of *Washday*: "I understand", he says, "that the Maori children shown in these pictures have been subjected to abuse from their Pakeha counterparts. This must have been cruel and hurtful. On behalf of those Maori children I would say: kua e hohoro ki te takahi kei taka ano ko koe, ki te he – do not be too anxious to condemn, for you yourself may be found wanting."<sup>115</sup>

Both Rata and Tirikatene attend to the issue raised in the fourth point of the MWWL's letter to the Minister, which reads, "in spite of the changed names, the family is easily recognisable as an East Coast family recently moved to Gisborne. Children can be cruel

and delegates felt that the children in the photographs would suffer when recognised as coming from such a home.”<sup>116</sup>

This leads us directly to the question of young children’s perceptions of ‘racial’ and ethnic divisions. Mary Ellen Goodman, an American cultural anthropologist, wrote in 1952, “white over brown is the most comprehensive idea to which children are exposed, the idea pervades like a creeping fog.”<sup>117</sup> A study carried out by a Victoria University of Wellington social psychologist, in the same year as *Washday* was published, examined the nature of ethnic awareness amongst both Maori and Pakeha schoolchildren. The author of the study found that up until the age of nine, Maori children often tended to identify with the Pakeha out-group, even to the extent of wanting to look like a Pakeha. But from the age of ten onwards they began to withdraw into the ethnic in-group and assume a defensive outlook. Amongst Pakeha children, on the other hand, he found “knowledge of ‘what makes a Maori a Maori’” to be “...relatively incomplete at six years of age”; even so, he did discern the expression of “...attitudes of an unfavourable nature concerning Maoris...”<sup>118</sup>

As part of his justification for having *Washday* removed from classrooms, Mr Kinsella claimed that there had been victimisation and teasing in some schools. He was not specific. Although he did stress that he “...wanted to avoid arguments among primary pupils about racial relationships”. He said he wished to see Maori and Pakeha taught side by side so that the former “could be encouraged to rise to a higher standard”. His principal fears about *Washday* were that it could promote dissension and inhibit the process of creating “one people.”<sup>119</sup>

I have not come across any reports of actual cases of victimisation directly attributable to exposure to *Washday at the pa*. If victimisation and teasing did occur in some schools it does not appear to have touched the lives of the “Wereta” family. According to Westra, before publication of the bulletin took place, she obtained the family’s permission and they were paid a small fee; and she maintains that they remained largely unaware of the nature and extent of the controversy.

But in the light of Vaughan’s study it’s more likely that the bulletin’s negative effects, if any, on Maori Primary school children would have been more subtle, more along the lines of an internalisation of a sense of inferiority than anything more dramatic. As Mrs J.K. Baxter, a delegate to the board of Trustees of the Maori Education Foundation, said in her report at this time: “If you threaten a person’s confidence you break his legs. If you threaten his self-respect you batter him about the head.”<sup>120</sup> Mrs. Baxter saw this problem of the reproduction of negative self-esteem as greater than the questions of land tenure, living conditions, health and education.

Professor Colin Bailey of Victoria University’s Department of Education supported the Minister’s decision to withdraw the booklet on the grounds that: “Children do tend to generalise from particulars, and it could be fairly argued that they might do so in this instance”. Clearly children here means Pakeha children for the majority of them would have been unlikely to have direct experience of Maori families. Bailey concludes by saying that only a set of bulletins showing Maori families “...in a broad range of living conditions...” could offset potentially misleading impressions.<sup>121</sup>

The comments of Professor Bailey and, particularly, Mrs Baxter, remind us of the mixed ethnic composition of the classroom situations within which *Washday* was likely

to have been read. In situations such as this, Maori children may experience whakamaa, a feeling of shame or shyness and a consequent withdrawal into themselves. Jane and James Ritchie define the term thus: “This term means shy, distressed, ashamed, and it is a feeling made more likely by the expectation of prejudiced judgement by Pakehas.”<sup>122</sup> In her major study of the concept, *In and out of touch*, Joan Metge lists “being put down” and “being singled out” amongst the causes of whakamaa and she draws upon the memory of a number of informants. Looking back to his schooldays in the late 1950s, here is how one Maori man (Rewiti Webster) describes the phenomenon:

I never knew the term whakamaa as young kid because I went to Maori school and we all spoke Maori there, but when I went to a public school where the teachers and the headmaster were Pakeha and there was a greater proportion of Pakeha children...I started to notice that the Maori children themselves had very whakamaa attitudes...It soon became very clear to me that things Maori were not things to be proud of...It's bad enough being Maori, but it's twice as bad when you're poor. The kind of system that was being foisted on us was that you had to wear shoes, which was quite impossible, your clothes had to be clean...the pakehafied Maori kids who were comparatively well-off, they'd have nice shiny shoes and their long socks, and they'd come from the main road, whereas us in the valley had to suffer with our cowshed gumboots, because we were all children of beginning farmers in the valley.<sup>123</sup>

It is the process of being singled out in front of the class as being in some way different that may induce whakamaa. One can only too readily imagine the opportunities *Washday* would have provided for insensitive teachers to do just that, particularly in certain urban schools where Maori children would have comprised a small minority. Although the concept of whakamaa was not invoked at any time during the *Washday* controversy, I consider it to be highly relevant to its analysis.

#### *ii. Light hearted responses*

As one might expect with a controversy that received national coverage and appeared in the correspondence pages of newspapers and magazines for months, *Washday* attracted the interest of cartoonists and satirists. Two cartoons mentioned Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* and *Washday* in the same space. *The Weekly news* included within the picture space of a cartoon the somewhat inaccurate text – “Education Department refuses to subsidise private publication of “Washday at the Pa” and bans it for school purchase.” And ran the caption, “ ‘Lolita’s out, ‘Another Country’s out – how about ‘Washday at the Pa?’ ” (Fig. 8) The Victoria University student newspaper, *Salient* (7th September 1964), showed two boys in dialogue, “Now they’ve banned “Washday at the Pa” they’ll probably give us “Lolita”!” The weekend newspaper, *8 o'clock* (10th October 1964), printed a photograph

of New Zealand swimming team manager Bryan Simpson and 10,000 metres runner Barry Magee hanging washing on the line at the Olympic village in Tokyo. Its caption read – “Washday at the pa”. But the most elaborate of these humorous responses came in the form of a satirical photo-story, “Pa’s day at the wash”, credited to Ans Orf, and carrying the warning – “A bullet in the brain for anyone distributing this to schools.” It appeared in the *Kaikorai Valley High School magazine*.<sup>124</sup>

#### OBSERVATIONS ON THE CONTROVERSY

A year before *Washday* was published, in an account of her efforts to get Maori children to write their own books, Sylvia Ashton-Warner wrote: “It was the temperament of the pa that had to be got into these books. The instinctive living, the drama, the communal sympathy and the violence. Life in the pa is so often a sequence of tears, tenderness, brawls, beer, love and song ... In the pa tears still hold the beauty and the importance that the European has long since disclaimed.”<sup>125</sup> *Washday* may not cover the full spectrum of “life in the pa”, tending, as much of Westra’s work does, to concentrate on the positive aspects of this way of life. However, it is highly unlikely that she could have unearthed anything ‘negative’ in the life of the Weretas, given the brevity of her stay. But, for the sake of the argument, had she done so and had she attempted to incorporate Ashton-Warner’s darker elements of “life in the pa” into *Washday*, it is more than likely that she would have attracted even more criticism than she did.

In a report written for a 1966 Unesco conference on ethnographic film, New Zealand film producer and director John O’Shea noted, “...the concept ‘Maori minority’ is so alien to New Zealand thinking that there are few films that rightly can be called ethnographic in any academic sense.”<sup>126</sup> He went on to add: “a literate and articulate ethnic minority does not take kindly to ethnographic disquisitions (or films) by a member of the ethnic majority, however academic or well intentioned they may be.”<sup>127</sup> Although his report does not mention it, he might have adduced *Washday at the pa* in support of his argument, because for Westra ‘ethnography’ at home proved to be an entirely different prospect from its equivalent in Tonga, where she had gone in 1962 and made the photographs that would be published in *Viliami of the Friendly Islands* (see chapter six) just prior to the appearance of *Washday*.

At the risk of putting too much weight on the slim frame of a single School Bulletin, it’s possible to argue that *Washday at the pa* represents the final moment of the widespread vernacular use of the term pa to describe rural Maori housing configurations. Of course it’s difficult to establish exactly when the word slipped from everyday use to the point where it’s now hard to imagine that it was once used regularly. Clearly the ongoing process of Maori urbanisation is the crucial factor here, so that when city-based Maori return ‘home’ it is not to pa but to marae linked to their iwi. In an unpublished paper, Peter Cleave has suggested that *Washday* – by which I take it he means the fallout from the controversy – is a key event in the shift from discourses of the pa to discourses of the marae as the focal point for media representations of Maori life-ways and aspirations.<sup>128</sup> The negative connotations of the word pa that had accumulated slowly in the inter- and

post-war period appeared to reach critical mass with the *Washday* controversy. And at that point it slipped into an irreversible process of declining use.

#### WASHDAY'S AFTERLIFE

Although *Washday* has been given central place in every general article and brief biographical sketch of Ans Westra published since 1964, it wasn't until the late 1980s that it began to receive retrospective assessment. The historian Michael King devoted two paragraphs of the introduction to his book, *Maori: a photographic and social history* to the *Washday* controversy, sticking to the standard explanation that: "It was, perhaps, a slightly sentimentalized picture of rural Maori life. But, as everybody agreed subsequently, the photographs were based on fact, they were artistically excellent, and they were characterised by warmth and intimacy."<sup>129</sup> Maori anthropologist Pat Hohepa, however, in a review of King's book, wastes no time in placing *Washday* on a list of "everything antithetical to Maori feeling."<sup>130</sup> Yet, another anthropologist, Steven Webster, also in a review of *Maori: a photographic and social history*, suggests that the reason the booklet gave offence has more to do with its unvarnished realism and "bare and innocent truth" than anything else."<sup>131</sup>

In 1988, the Australian photographic journal *Photofile* published a "South Pacific" issue within which appeared two essays on *Washday*. I wrote one of them and Neil Pardington and Robert Leonard wrote the other jointly.<sup>132</sup> Subsequently, from the vantage point of the new millennium, Christina Barton revisited this moment as exemplary of "the postmodern turn of the 1980s". She writes, correctly, of my essay that it "was not concerned with the 'truth' of Westra's photo-narrative" but, rather, with "the ways it performs within certain discursive formations" and "how meanings are produced in and by their context"; and she concluded by viewing the essay as "definitional of how postmodernism sees its subject."<sup>133</sup>

Barton also commented on Pardington and Leonard's essay, noting that the authors "...took issue with Westra's purported humanism, dismissing the notion that visual images have universal meanings; that they are culturally neutral; that their generalisations bear no consequences..."<sup>134</sup> Structured into a set of flippantly titled segments ("edited highlights" – a resume of the controversy by means of a patchwork of quotations; "realism and representation"; "tapu"; "opportunity knocks"; and "all in the family"), the article regards Westra as "...a kind of voyeur-tourist, a photographer in the tradition of *National geographic*, a sort of pseudo-anthropologist."<sup>135</sup> The moralistic rhetoric of this description would fit better the fictional character, Tom Sullivan (Terence Bayler), constructed by John O'Shea and Roger Mirams in their feature film *Broken barrier* (1952) than it would Ans Westra. Sullivan is a freelance journalist who travels around the Mahia Peninsula in search of lurid stories of Maori life to sell to international publications. At the time she shot the photographs for *Washday*, Westra was also working freelance but, crucially, with an eye to contributing a story about and for Primary school children to the School Publications Branch of the Department of Education. And, as detailed earlier, her initial encounter with the "Wereta" children came about through her search at the local school for a cover photograph for the

*Maori* project, a collaboration with the far from “pseudo-anthropologist” James Ritchie. To make their argument, Pardington and Leonard segue from a lengthy quotation from Allan Sekula about *The family of man’s* universalisation of the “bourgeois nuclear family” to the following curious set of assertions: “Similarly *Washday* presents Maori life as based around a Pakeha nuclear family model, neglecting to mention how Maori social structures involve extended families or the huge importance Maori place on genealogy. *Washday* contains little if any distinctly Maori content. It contains little about a specifically Maori culture.”<sup>136</sup> As much as anything, this statement may reflect a ‘postmodern’ disappointment in not finding the requisite degree of cultural ‘difference’ in the bulletin. Now it is not entirely inappropriate to ask for these kinds of anthropological attributes to be included in a school bulletin. Take, for example, the bulletin, *Village life in Western Samoa*, written by Sylvia Masterman and first published in 1966 (revised and reprinted 1977). Its 64 pages of text are structured into chapters that deal with the land and the people of Samoa, the Samoan family, women’s committees, village life, and practices such as fishing, weaving, and the making of Tapa cloth. The bulletin is dense with information about social life, imparted in expository prose, maps, diagrams and carefully captioned photographs. But it is a Post-Primary School Bulletin, aimed at pupils much older than the readers *Washday* was intended for. It is also set in a society remoter and less familiar to New Zealand school pupils, and this may explain why Westra’s earlier bulletin for Primary schools, *Viliami of the Friendly Islands*, has two pages of exposition about Tongan geography, history, society and economy at the back, after the story has concluded.<sup>137</sup>

*Washday* fulfills the School Publications’ brief for Primary School Bulletins of presenting “... each bulletin in the form of a story, in which the particular topic being dealt with is seen through the eyes of fictional characters who are usually themselves children.” It aims to be “the eyes and ears of the children, rather than their formal instructors.”<sup>138</sup> Furthermore, it is a “foreground” book that blends “fictional” with “documentary” elements in order to tell a story about one family.<sup>139</sup> Obviously, there is no place in a bulletin of this kind for disquisitions on Maori social structure or the importance of genealogy; they would simply serve to rupture the narrative diegesis. To conclude this discussion, *Washday at the pa* has nothing in common with a *National geographic* photo-essay, nor is it a pseudo-anthropological text. And in reply to the claim, clearly derived from Susan Sontag’s *On photography*, that Westra acted as a “voyeur-tourist”, one need only cite her ongoing relationships with various members of the “Wereta” family, who have not only continued to request copies of some of the photographs but also collaborated with Westra again on a rephotography project in the late 1990s (see below for details).<sup>140</sup>

Intent on pillorying Westra, Pardington and Leonard pay scant attention to the rationale underpinning the actions of the Maori Women’s Welfare League in the *Washday* controversy. However, in the late 1990s, Barbara Brookes, a historian writing in a journal of gender studies, published an analysis of the *Washday* controversy that provides the fullest account to date of the ramifications of the League’s position. In essence, Brookes regards the League’s demand for the removal of *Washday* from classrooms as a political act of self-determination, which aimed to resist the image of Maori presented by the bulletin and promote a different one. She argues, correctly, that the League’s position was

“necessarily contradictory” in that they claimed to be simultaneously “the upholders of both modernity and tradition.”<sup>141</sup> Within the context of post-Hunn “race relations” and the gender issues of the period, Brookes writes, “League members wanted equal access to the housing, educational and health status that pakeha enjoyed, but not at the cost of losing their distinctiveness, their Maoritanga.”<sup>142</sup> And she specifies the central “necessary contradiction” of their political stance as follows: “The League members’ assertion of sameness to the pakeha in disowning the housing conditions portrayed and their claiming of cultural difference in stressing language and custom was a crucial political act of resistance to assimilation into the undifferentiated suburban space of the pakeha world.”<sup>143</sup>

In 2003, *Red & green*, a “journal of Left alternatives”, published a reproduction of a photograph from *Washday* on its cover, with the words “Facing Poverty” superimposed over the face of Mutu. Inside the issue, opposite Liz Gordon’s article, “Inequality and poverty in contemporary Aotearoa”, is a reproduction of *Washday*’s cover. The caption underneath it reads, “*Washday*...shocked many with its honest and sympathetic portrayal of rural Maori life. The obvious poverty of the large family depicted is understated but unmistakable. The lack of electricity for cooking, lighting, or hot water heating belied the fact that these people were living in an advanced, modern country. How little has changed in 40 years.”<sup>144</sup> Gordon and *Red & green*’s view of *Washday* as a straightforward depiction of rural poverty implies that its original purpose was to do the same kind of job as, say, Tom Hutchins’s *Auckland star* photo-essay did on the state of urban Maori housing conditions in the 1950s.<sup>145</sup> However, it is very difficult to see how *Washday* could be construed as a documentary investigation of a social problem in the manner of Hutchins’s photojournalistic expose or, to take another example from a different period and national context, Edgar Anstey and Arthur Elton’s British documentary film *Housing problems* (1935).<sup>146</sup> Westra’s interest is in the daily life of a specific rural Maori family, in particular its children and their play activities. Having said that, however, and given that she is working in a hybrid-medium literary genre where the visual assumes a certain dominance, the state of the Weretas’ living conditions is rendered much more immediately and graphically than it would be in, say, a form of purely written ethnographic narrative. Thus, a record of the family’s material ‘poverty’ is there for those who choose to see and highlight it, for whatever reasons. To some extent, it could also be said that the MWWL saw *Washday* principally as a depiction of poverty. However, what the League criticised as an “untypical” representation in 1964, nearly 40 years later *Red & green* praises for its “honest and sympathetic” expose of the scandal of the persistence of poverty within a developing affluent society.

When “Mrs Wereta” (Animata Te Runa) died on the 30th of December 1980 at the age of 56, the family contacted Westra, via the Caxton Press, to request prints of photographs of their mother for her tangi. But it wasn’t until sometime in the late 1990s, that the Collections Manager of Photography at Te Papa Tongarewa Museum of New Zealand, Eymard Bradley, and his wife Jean Lomax, suggested to Westra that she should make contact with the “Wereta” family again and “see how they had changed”.<sup>147</sup> Interestingly, at the time of the controversy, Suzanne F. Young had written to the editor of *The Evening post* suggesting, “...could not the Education Department commission the author...to follow

up the family when in their new house... The life of newly re-housed families could be a valuable social studies lesson in its own right.”<sup>148</sup> This suggestion was not taken up by the Department, but in July 1997, Westra drafted and submitted an application to Creative New Zealand, seeking funding for a project that came to be known as *Washday at the pa revisited*. She announced her intention to make a photographic series “based around the family of the eldest son in Rotorua or the eldest daughter’s family in Murapara.”<sup>149</sup> She placed the project within the category of photographic redocumentation, exemplified by works such as Bill Ganzel’s *Dust bowl descent* (1984), which revisited the photography division of the 1930s Farm Security Administration enterprise and rephotographed some of its most well known subjects, notably the “migrant mother”, Florence Thompson and her family. In 1998, with the help of a Creative New Zealand grant, Westra traveled to locations in the central North Island to photograph the families of three of the children from *Washday*, two of whom were Rebecca and Mutu, the protagonists of the story. She arrived armed with her camera and two simple questions, “What is still the same, what has changed?” She found that the “main girl in the story still lives on the land, now with her husband. They’re very much back to the *Washday* roots.”<sup>150</sup> And she has summed up her experience of revisiting these now grown up children as follows: “They still had the very large families, which was interesting. The one daughter who was the key figure in the story, she still had no wallpaper on her walls and said, “that is what I remember from Mum. I don’t want carpet, I don’t want wallpaper, it’s not important. That’s not the childhood I remember, and I feel comfortable.”<sup>151</sup>

## CHAPTER FIVE

### MAORI

A major consequence of the protracted controversy recounted in the previous chapter is that, to this very day, Ans Westra is still best known as the author of *Washday at the pa*. Almost every interview and profile article on her – and there have been many since the mid-1980s – persists in giving it a (the?) prominent place in her photographic oeuvre. My study is no exception. This is because *Washday* is more than the name of a school bulletin; it is a flashpoint in the volatile post-war history of New Zealand ethnic relations. For this reason alone, it is worthy of an in-depth analysis. Yet the novelist Witi Ihimaera, for one, suspects that “Ans’s reputation has never fully recovered from the furore which greeted *Washday*.”<sup>1</sup> In contrast to the thunderous reception accorded this slim volume, three years later the much more substantial *Maori* (1967) was received very quietly. However, it remains the major achievement of Westra’s first phase as a photographer in New Zealand, and one of the most important photographic books ever produced in this country.

### THE PHOTOGRAPHIC BOOK

Ans Westra is a major local producer of the cultural form known as the photographic book, also known as the photographic essay, although I reserve this phrase for a briefer combination of words and photographs whose heyday began in the 1930s with the illustrated magazines, most notably *Life* (USA, 1936–1972) and *Picture post* (UK, 1938–1957), and achieved its high point with works such as W. Eugene Smith’s “Spanish village” (*Life*, 1951)<sup>2</sup> and Brian Brake’s “Monsoon” (*Life* and *Paris match*, 1961).<sup>3</sup> These types of photo-essay are synonymous with the practice of photojournalism. In an article on the “photographic essay”, W.J.T Mitchell discusses four examples of the form but they are all freestanding books and would be categorised more accurately as photographic books.<sup>4</sup>

A hybrid generic form, the photographic book exhibits a wide variety of image-text combinations, thematic concerns, and discursive registers. A common format is the uninterrupted and uncaptioned sequence of photographs preceded by an introductory essay. Robert Frank’s *The Americans* (see chapter seven), beginning with an essay by Jack

Kerouac, and Ans Westra's *Notes on the country I live in*, with introductory essays by James K. Baxter and Tim Shadbolt, are good examples of this format. *Maori* has a different format. It consists of thematic chapters containing text by James Ritchie and photographic sequences by Westra.

Martin Parr and Gerry Badger are unequivocal in their estimation of the importance of the photographic book in the history of the medium. "If the history of creative photography is considered as a whole", they write, "the publishing and dissemination of photographers' work in book form has been more crucial and far-reaching than the showing of photographs in galleries."<sup>5</sup> Unlike a group or even a one-person exhibition, both of which tend to highlight individual photographs, the photographic book demands to be understood as an integrated work in which the interrelation of images is more important than the individual photographs themselves. Although questions of quality clearly enter into the photographer's choice of images, and are frequently used by readers to evaluate them, they are not paramount in image selection. It is the flow and juxtaposition of photographs with each other and in broad relation to the text that matters most in the photographic book. These books are not compendia of a photographer's finest works of the period, although there may be many fine images within their pages.

Parr and Badger fashion the title of the introduction to their first volume on the photobook after the photographer Lewis Baltz's description of photography as "a narrow, deep area between the novel and film" in order to define the terrain of this important form.<sup>6</sup> This description does seem particularly appropriate to the photographic book, which can be seen to combine the narrative drive of the novel and the montage structure of film, especially documentary and avant-garde films. If the photographic essay resembles the short story or the short film, then the photobook finds its analogue in longer literary and cinematic forms. In a later article, Badger asserts, "A photograph ... is certainly synonymous with the single film frame", and, "... the thought processes involved in editing and sequencing a film are not so different from editing and sequencing a photobook."<sup>7</sup> It should be noted, too, that sets of single film frames when edited together create the possibility of narrative sequences and contribute to the construction of a diegetic world. Although quantitatively any feature film or documentary film contains vastly more frames than there are individual photographs in any given photographic book. Yet, the placing of still photographs in certain sequences and the metaphorical 'cutting' between ostensibly dissimilar pictures does work on the viewer in a manner analogous to watching a film. There is also an analogy to be made between the interrelation of the soundtrack and the image track in a film and the relationship between photos and words in the photographic book. It is these two features that enable the photographic book to overcome the limitations of the single photograph and its aggregation in exhibitions, both of which "lack the diegetic horizon".<sup>8</sup>

Parr and Badger also note that the photobook straddles an area situated between art and mass publishing, and "between the aesthetic and the contextual".<sup>9</sup> In the specific case of *Maori*, the publisher is a mainstream press, responsible for a large number of 1960s photobooks aimed at a mass market (see chapter seven). However, *Maori* has higher production values than, say, the *New Zealand in colour* books (see chapter seven). Its design benefits from the input of the modernist artist Gordon Walters and it contains

a large number of reproductions of works by Maori modernist artists. It is also predominantly a book of black and white photographs, which further distinguishes it from the mainstream pictorial publishing of the period. The text, too, is unusual in its quantity, its attention to the specifics of Maori life, and the way it presents an informed perspective while remaining accessible to a general audience

JAMES RITCHIE

Westra's collaborator on the making of *Maori* was James Ritchie (1929–2009). I have already provided some discussion of Ritchie's work in chapter two's section on post-war ethnographic discourses. I will expand on that here by sketching in more of the background to his work. Ritchie emerged from the Psychology Department of Wellington's Victoria University College where he studied and collaborated throughout the 1950s with Professor Ernest Beaglehole (1906–1965). Beaglehole received his first degree from Victoria where he was encouraged by Thomas Hunter to study mental and moral philosophy; and the ethnologist Ivan Sutherland was amongst his teachers. He was appointed eventually to the Chair of Psychology at the University in 1948. However, Beaglehole was no conventional psychologist but, rather, an ethno-psychologist who did fieldwork in and published studies on Hopi, Pukapuka (northern Cook Islands), Tongan, Hawaiian, and Maori culture, much of it done in collaboration with his American wife Pearl (Pam Maslin). His interests and theoretical orientation sit firmly within the "culture and personality" school of American anthropology associated with Edward Sapir (with whom he studied at Yale), Ruth Benedict, and Margaret Mead (with whom he enjoyed an enduring friendship). Both Beagleholes also studied Polynesian anthropology at Yale with Sir Peter Buck (Te Rangi Hiroa) who was teaching there at the time.<sup>10</sup>

The Beagleholes' major study of Maori culture, *Some modern Maoris*, centres on a community given the fictitious name of Kowhai, where the authors did fieldwork over two summers in 1941 and 1942 amongst the "Ngati-Totara" in the Otaki area. Described by the Ritchies as "the first modern ethnography of a Maori community"<sup>11</sup>, it brings to bear the concept of "character structure", articulated in a 1944 article in the journal *Psychiatry*, on the analysis of the field data. In the preface to their book, the authors define "character structure" as "...that organization of needs and emotions in the life of the Maori which provides the psychological basis for the adaptation of the individual to the demands of Maori social life."<sup>12</sup> During the 1950s, Ernest Beaglehole was the project director and supervisor of an even larger-scaled research project dedicated to investigating "the effects of technological change on four New Zealand Maori communities", subtitled "An area study of folk culture under the stress of technological change". As "Investigator", James Ritchie wrote two progress reports on this project, after conducting fieldwork in Area 1, Murupara, from November 1954 until August 1955.<sup>13</sup> He followed these reports by authoring the first monograph of a series on Maori social life and personality, published by the Department of Psychology at Victoria University College. Collectively, these volumes constitute the published research findings of what is known as the Rakau project, Rakau

being defined as “... a Maori community comprising 70 families (340 persons), organized around three marae.”<sup>14</sup>

The first volume is titled *Basic personality in Rakau*, and its research base was derived from 24 weeks fieldwork carried out over two summers in the Kaingaroa area of the central North Island, within which six weeks were dedicated to collecting Rorschach material from a random sample of 78 children aged between nine and seventeen years. Ritchie links his research explicitly to the prior work of the Beagleholes: “This study was begun as an attempt to check and correct if necessary child-rearing hypotheses of *Some modern Maoris*. Descriptively it has not been possible to depart from the main lines of the Beagleholes’ work, because essentially the descriptive record from Rakau is so very much the same. We can therefore now speak not merely of child-rearing in Kowhai or Rakau but in a class of communities like Kowhai and Rakau.”<sup>15</sup> A further four Rakau monographs, written by the four other researchers attached to the project, were published over the remaining years of the decade.<sup>16</sup> In addition to these specialised research monographs, James Ritchie published a “synoptic view of the results” of the Rakau project, written with both a professional and a wider readership in mind.<sup>17</sup> And a year later his Rakau colleague and spouse, Jane Ritchie published the results of her research into Maori urban living patterns in *Maori families*. In the foreword to the book, her father, Ernest Beaglehole, writes that Ritchie adds a psychological dimension and a Wellington focus to complement Joan Metge’s anthropological perspective and Auckland focus in her *A new Maori migration* of the same year.<sup>18</sup>

Looking back on all this earlier research from the vantage point of the late 1990s, the Ritchies state that *Some modern Maoris* did not take into account the colonial experience of its subjects nor inter-ethnic relations in Otaki; and they distinguish their findings from the Beagleholes’ in this way: “Where the Beagleholes wrote of rejection, we wrote of transition. With the arrival of another child, the next oldest passed into known and familiar hands ... the shift to greater independence ... was more gradual than the Beagleholes observed and was cushioned by the presence of a wider network of available care.”<sup>19</sup>

On the seventh of October 1965, James Ritchie gave his inaugural lecture as the first Professor of Psychology at the University of Waikato. Much of the lecture addressed the question of historical and contemporary intersections of the disciplines of psychology and anthropology, drawing attention to the contributions of Sigmund Freud, Edward Sapir, Ruth Benedict and Margaret Mead. Of his own work, Ritchie said: “My own research spans the last twelve years of the short history of cross cultural psychological studies. It began with a quite practical set of questions, how would a particular Maori community respond to a sudden encounter with modern technological industry and all that this implied?” He then summarised the deeper questions behind this research: “what kind of person is a Maori person, on what system of personal control does he operate, what sort of experience does his culture lead him to expect, on what does he base his satisfactions, how does he view basic psychological questions, life itself and death, what is the essential core to his stable identity as a person?”<sup>20</sup>

According to the author’s note on the inner sleeve of the book, “Preparing the text for *Maori* has provided him with the opportunity to write more simply and directly of the

emotional satisfactions, the ideals, the anxieties of Maori people he has known.” And Ritchie himself is quoted as follows: “Ans Westra’s photographs brought to my mind many experiences which I have had in many Maori situations ... My text is not a coldly objective report of professional research findings, but an attempt to celebrate the continued vitality of Maori life. I don’t imagine that any words of mine can do this as effectively as do Ans Westra’s pictures; but, as I looked at each photograph, it resonated in my experience to spark a phrase or catch an incident. It is from these snatches of recall and comment that I have prepared the text.” Looking back on the project, he said: “That’s the best writing I’ve ever done. It was spontaneous. It was done in about 12 or 14 nights... The pictures were talking to me and I was talking to the pictures.”<sup>21</sup>

#### THE STRUCTURE OF MAORI

The genesis of *Maori* began around 1961 when Ray Richards of A.H. & A.W. Reed approached Westra asking if she would be interested in working towards a photographic book on Maori to be published by his employers. By the time Westra had accumulated approximately 10,000 negatives, from which such a book might be assembled, Richards contacted James Ritchie, seeking his involvement in image selection and captioning. Ritchie, who had already met Westra in what he calls Wellington’s “social whirl”, agreed to the former but was opposed to the latter, suggesting instead that he might write some “linking text”. Eventually he joined Westra in her basement where together they stuck photos on pinex boards and worked productively on putting image sequences together. This process was completed in 1965 but it seems that the Reed family became ambivalent about the project and *Maori* was not published until 1967.<sup>22</sup>

*Maori* is a large format hardback book, measuring 29 cm (height) × 23 cm (width). It is credited to Ans Westra (photographs) and James Ritchie (text). Ritchie’s text is substantial, comprised of an introduction and eight chapters. The book contains 203 black and white photographs of various sizes and eight colour prints (including the cover image). In addition, there are reproductions of the work of several important Maori artists: Cliff Whiting (5), Para Matchitt (3) and Selwyn Muru (2). As well as James Ritchie’s extended essay, printed on light green paper, poems by Hone Tuwhare (2, one of which appears twice), Rowley Habib (2), Harry Dansey (1) and Susi Robinson Collins (1) are placed on white paper amongst the photos; so too are proverbs, haka and quotations from eminent Maori figures such as Sir Apirana Ngata, Hiri Moko, Dr Maharaia Winiata, plus other miscellaneous brief writings. Westra selected all this additional text. In the acknowledgements, the authors thank Gordon Walters for “help with the layout” (p.231). A major New Zealand artist, Walters was working as a designer at Government Print but it was for *Te ao hou*, under the editorship of his wife Margaret Orbell, that he did his best design work of the period.<sup>23</sup>

Westra’s photographs and Ritchie’s essay are designed to complement each other exactly. Each sequence of photos is wedged between parts of the chapter whose theme they match. The book begins with an introduction, followed by a chapter on “the changing heritage”, and ends with “Te Atatu Hou” (the new dawn). In between, six chapters

move through a linear life sequence from birth (2 – “Childhood”) to death (7 – “Tangi”). The use of a universal life path as a structural pattern to organise images of an entire people is clearly a variation on a pattern derived from *The family of man* (further comment on this to follow).

The verso of the dust jacket superimposes the book’s title across a patch of blue sky in the top left-hand corner of a colour photograph. (Fig. 9) The photograph is a low-angle, ‘worm’s eye’ view of six Maori children, one of a handful of studies shot at Ruatoria Primary school during Westra’s long stay on the East Coast of the North Island in 1963.<sup>24</sup> It was while taking these photographs that Westra first met some of the “Wereta” children of *Washday at the pa*. The photograph chosen is a cropped and therefore tightly framed composition showing the faces of the six children. The girl on the right-hand side gazes down at the viewer from a steeply vertical position, her head tilted at an angle. The girl on the left-hand side appears to be positioned further back from the surface of the picture plane and her gaze meets the viewer’s. In between these two figures, a somewhat younger girl, seemingly closer to the foreground, gazes leftwards, past the viewer. The faces of the three other children are all partially obscured and assume less visual weight in the overall composition of the picture. The content of this cover photograph indicates strongly that children will be a major focus of the pages inside; and the informed reader would know already that the two names printed on the spine of the dust jacket, Ans Westra and James Ritchie, had given children a prominent place in their previous work. This is reinforced by the fact that the first Westra photograph to appear inside the book is an extreme close-up portrait in colour of the face of a Maori child and it is placed within chapter two (“Childhood”) as the first image of a 27 page visual thematic sequence that interrupts Ritchie’s text.

Towards the close of his introduction, Ritchie writes, “...we have tried to give an account of the inner sense of being Maori, to show that on the ground plan of human development, the Maori individual grows in his own way within the experiences his culture provides.”<sup>25</sup> After the opening chapter on “The changing heritage”, the growth metaphor organising the book begins to unfold with the aforementioned chapter two (words and images) on “Childhood”. As noted, Westra’s first image in the sequence of 33 photographs wedged between the body of Ritchie’s text and its tail feather is a colour close-up of the face of a young Maori child. It recalls the very similar final back-cover image of *Washday at the pa* except, in this case, a smile replaces a slightly worried look. Excluding the dust jacket, this is the first of several colour photographs in the book. As a photographer who has consistently favoured a black and white format, Westra has never been happy with this editorial decision. She quite rightly feels that this concession to marketing considerations disturbs the aesthetic unity of the book. Nonetheless, its effects should not be overestimated.

Moving on, we find a full-page photograph of “Mrs Wereta” (p.31, one not used in the first edition of *Washday at the pa*, Fig. 10) hugging and kissing her youngest child, Erua. Her right hand is covered in flour because she has been making bread. But the picture has been cropped so that only a hint of the kitchen setting remains and the stress is firmly on the two figures embracing.<sup>26</sup> In common with all the photographs in this section it portrays

childhood as a time of aroha and joy; Ritchie comments aptly on Maori mothers' "...lack of self-consciousness in their relationship with their children and their frank enjoyment of them" (p.20). Apart from the photo just mentioned, there is no better example of this than the picture on page 28 of a smiling mother looking round to the small child wrapped in a blanket on her back; shot against the background of the sky, it has a strong elemental quality. But the photographer has not neglected pictures of fathers' involvement with their children (pp.29, 30, 32, top 34). If page 28 represents a quintessential Maori earth mother then page 32 depicts a father as a benign play adventure facilitator, his wheel barrow full of tools doing double duty as a child mover. (Fig. 11) Westra's choice of the published photograph over four other versions of this scene is understandable given the dynamic interplay of looks between the four foregrounded figures, capturing their sense of involvement in a way the alternatives do not.<sup>27</sup> Over half of the remaining "childhood" photographs show children at school or at play amongst themselves, complementing and fleshing out the emphasis Ritchie gives these topics in his writing. He concludes chapter two with a question that Westra could be said to have raised visually in *Washday at the pa*: "Will the little suburban three-room bungalow on a tidy fifth-of-an-acre section, flowers in front, veges behind, far away from family and kin, fail to nourish the roots of Maori child-rearing?" (p.54).

The book's following section on "Growing up" continues the emphasis on children and, now, adolescents at play and school, confirming Westra as an outstanding photographer of the young. These photographs range from those which could have been taken in the 1930s (pp.62-63), reminiscent as they are of Ben Shahn's studies of poor rural Blacks in America, to pictures of Maori pupils in modern educational settings. Amongst the former, the photograph reproduced at the bottom of page 63 in only slightly cropped form, which shows a boy leaning against a wooden strut on the rickety verandah of his wooden house with washing hanging above his head, was taken near Rangitukia, on the East Coast of the North Island in 1963<sup>28</sup>; it is reminiscent of FSA studies made in the Southern states of America thirty years earlier. Near the end of his text, Ritchie adopts a discursive, exhortatory mode of address to a generalised Maori youth facing the future ("How well prepared are you for this new world?", p.59). Then follow chapter four ("On the edge of maturity") and chapter five ("A new family"), both announcing with extraordinary vigour that this is the modern world of the Maori. Here more than anywhere else in the book, Westra provides a riposte to those who accuse her of peddling a romanticised image of a rural past. With a group of dynamic photographs she documents the creative appropriation of 1960s style (music, dance, dress) by Maori youth in what amounts to a visual sociology of a modern ethnic subculture.

"On the edge of maturity" begins in the countryside. Eight photographs convey the quiet, relaxed quality of rural life. The photograph of a group of youths outside the Gaiety Theatre in Te Kaha, an old wooden hall acting as a picture theatre, showing a film called "The great serious bank robbery", points to the availability of Hollywood film in even the remotest areas.<sup>29</sup> A brief statement from Meremere Penfold, printed in the bottom quarter of the page, draws attention to the "communal way of life" of the Maori village (p.87). The book's transition from town to country is marked then by Susi Robinson Collins' poem,

“Young Maoris come to town” – “They come with fear and caution trembling in their looks of appraisal” (p.90). The opposite page (91) is filled with a photograph that takes us up close to a young Maori lad lost in thought in the city, and seemingly oblivious to the presence of the photographer. Reflected in the glass against which he stands, traffic and buildings are registered as an out-of-focus blur. This photo, taken in Wellington’s Upper Cuba Street in 1962, has been cropped and enlarged so that the figure assumes more mass and visual prominence than in the original negative. When the whole negative is printed and not enlarged, as it is in plate 44 of *Handboek* (p.142), more of the figure of the boy and more of the urban setting is shown in somewhat sharper focus. (fig. 12) The *Maori* version of this image puts the stress on introspection and psychology whereas the *Handboek* one, while retaining the introspective mood, shifts the emphasis in the direction of urban sociology. However, it would be resorting too quickly to one of the stock themes of urban studies to claim this as an image of alienation. Better to say we haven’t seen this kind of look (of self-absorption, disconnection, or bewilderment?) from one of Westra’s subjects before nor have we seen this kind of composition with its complex reflections and refractions. In an article on “Urban Maori”, published during the *Washday* controversy, Westra wrote, “life in the big city throws people out on their own. The tribal structure is broken down, the Maori is forced to adopt the European concept of individualism.”<sup>30</sup> Yet the pictures following on from the one just discussed belie this as they reveal the plethora of associations forged by urban Maori youth.

Overleaf, a full-page image, shot in the main street of the small Hawkes Bay town of Wairoa in 1964, frames a space that makes manifest a gender divide which, it is implied, is yet to be crossed. Three young Maori males, in casual street clothes, lean against the concrete wall of a local public bar. The fourth member of the group, more formally dressed and wearing a tie, adopts a more erect stance but with hands in pockets. The gazes of this group of four are directed diagonally across the footpath at two pakeha girls engaged in conversation and seemingly unaware of the attention they are receiving. Westra made a rhyming cousin of this image in which two Maori girls replace the two Pakeha. Again, the girls do not engage the looks of the boys. The photographs are paired on the same page (122) of *Handboek* to interesting visual effect.

Six photographs on pages 94 and 98–100 (inclusive) show young Maori participating in cultural activities in clubrooms and a large hall: table tennis; a sing-along; and practising action songs. Pages 106–109 (inclusive) carry photos of wedding ceremonies in Maori settings; the marriages are between Maori and Pakeha partners. The most dynamic images in “On the edge of maturity”, however, can be found on pages 95–97. These five photographs convey the vitality of the Maori embrace of modern dance (the twist, etc.) and rock ‘n roll music. The photograph at the top of page 97 shows two young men doing the twist on a crowded dance floor. It was taken at the Maori Community Centre in Auckland in 1962 for one of Westra’s first assignments for *Te ao hou*. In the published article, featuring nine of Westra’s photographs, the manager of the Centre, a Mr. Kitchen, says, “We gave the kids the rock ‘n roll they wanted, and didn’t care if they did wear jeans.”<sup>31</sup> The image of these two dancers chosen for *Maori* differs from the one printed in *Te ao hou* (p.27), which is also reproduced as plate 31 of *Handboek*, above another of two young women

dancing together at the Centre (plate 32, both p.130). The photograph of a father (the dance organizer) dancing with his small daughter (p.124, "A new family") was taken at the same venue and included in the original article (p.23) and in full-page reproduction in *Handboek* (plate 33, p.131). But perhaps the outstanding dance photo in the book features a youth with a pompadour hairstyle swaying knowingly to the music while a younger boy checks out his moves. (Fig. 13) The kinesis, romance and narcissism of the dimly lit dance space reside in the lineaments of this image.<sup>32</sup>

Together with the pictures on pages 102, 103 and 105 (top), the Auckland Community Centre photographs represent a striking portrayal of 1960s Maori dress, music and dance styles. The stove-pipe trousers, desert boots, winklepickers, button-down collar shirts, pork pie hats, and mohair sweaters amount to a form of Maori 'cool', seemingly fashioned from elements of American hipster and British mod but distinctively local. Two photographs especially stand out in this regard: The full-page colour picture on page 102 and one at the top of page 105. The first foregrounds five stylish young men resting on, leaning against and standing near a stone railing. The image centres on the youth in the middle wearing sunglasses, whose oblique gaze is the only one that traverses more or less in the direction of the photographer/viewer. In the background, forming a contrast with the central and indeed all the youths is Rotorua's mock-Tudor building. The photograph sets up a connection between the artifice and exoticism of this building and the casual but studied style of the male group; its doubling effect dramatises the existence of a luxuriant and hybrid cultural growth, sprung up in a setting most famous for its natural wonders (geysers, hot thermal pools, boiling mud, etc.). The photograph at the top of page 105, taken in the amusement area of a fairground show, perfectly captures a young man casually posed against a refreshment cart; close by a woman looks imploringly into his eyes but his gaze moves past her; the epitome of self-possessed 'cool'.

What Westra succeeds in doing with these two central chapters of the book (four and five) is to demonstrate by the force of her imagery Maori youth's creative appropriation of the pop culture that flowered internationally in the 1960s (but began in the 1950s). It is probably true to say that it was the life affirming energy of this activity that appealed to her rather than its particular aesthetic, although we mustn't forget that these are the photographs of a young woman. How far their spirit is from the cultural pessimism to be found in this passage from a British cultural critic of the period, Richard Hoggart:

... at present the older, the more narrow but also more genuine class culture is being eroded in favour of the mass opinion, the mass recreational product and the generalised emotional response. The world of club-singing is being gradually replaced by that of typical radio dance-music and crooning, television cabaret and commercial-radio variety. The uniform national type which the popular papers help to produce is writ even larger in the uniform international type which the film studios of Hollywood present. The old forms of class culture are in danger of being replaced by a poorer kind of classless or by what I was led earlier to describe as a 'faceless', culture, and this is to be regretted.<sup>33</sup>

Hoggart was writing about what he saw as the erosion of an older working class culture by a rapidly developing post-war consumer society. His focus was on the fate of the culture of the British working class as one group within a changing capitalist society but this perspective could just as easily be applied to an ethnic group with a distinctive culture within a similar type of society. Just such a quality of critical, regretful nostalgia for a lost organic community (we might call it left Leavisite) is also to be found in Roger Oppenheim's review of *Maori*. In a review of another book, published two years after *Maori* was published, Oppenheim nominated *Maori* as a rare and outstanding contribution to the then sparsely populated sub-discipline of visual anthropology.<sup>34</sup> His earlier dedicated review of *Maori* is largely favourable but he is quick to point out that the photos reveal, "...high ceremonial alongside the tasteless vulgarities of Pakeha mass production..." He concludes an overview of the book by saying he came away from it with a "...sense of loss which comes to all those who have much to do with Maori rural communities, a sense of innocence gone, a culture struggling against odds, and an attitude to life largely irrelevant to the featureless society we are creating in New Zealand."<sup>35</sup> Oppenheim was not the first local cultural critic to voice this kind of sentiment. Five years earlier, Leo Fowler (like Oppenheim, a frequent contributor to *Te ao hou*) expressed his concern in a strongly paternalistic tone: "The Maori ... tends to be over-influenced by the tremendous output of second and third-rate mass produced material and cultural rubbish. Cheap comics, cheap films and bizarre fashions in clothes have found almost a special market among Maori but that is mainly because nobody has taken the trouble to introduce him to anything better."<sup>36</sup>

Although these comments are made in relation to Maori in general, it is surely to Maori youth that they are directed. Not very long before they were published, a visiting American educational psychologist, David P. Ausubel, carried out 11 months fieldwork (1957-58) in two North Island communities on a Fulbright research grant. He was attached to the Department of Psychology at Victoria University of Wellington and numbered amongst his colleagues there, Professor Ernest Beaglehole and James and Jane Ritchie.<sup>37</sup> The object of his research was Maori youth and the results were published in a book with that title. In the course of a chapter on 'Implications for vocational achievement', Ausubel turns his attention to the influence of "peer group influences" amongst adolescents in "Maori communities suffering from poor social morale", mentioning one urban and two rural pas [sic]. He writes: "In these latter communities... adolescent cultism (bodgieism) is extremely prevalent. Teddy boy types with gaudy dress, long hair and sideburns, flashy leather jackets, and motorcycles are much in evidence. Gangster films, horror comics, rock-'n'-roll music are in great vogue as well as slick talk, affected behaviour, inordinately late hours, brash drinking habits, sexual promiscuity, and sporadic hooliganism and delinquency."<sup>38</sup> Ausubel's words read like a passage from the Mazengarb Report, which was released in September 1954 by a special government committee charged with investigating "moral delinquency in children and adolescents". Or, perhaps even Arthur Edward Manning's *The Bodgie: a study in abnormal psychology*, which was published by A.H. & A.W. Reed in 1958. The lurid images fuelling these moral panic attacks seem far removed from the photographs contained in the central sections of *Maori*, which were made by a young woman of considerably calmer temperament.

Now cultural pessimist readings of *Maori*, such as Oppenheim's, and negative assessments of Maori engagement with mass culture, such as Fowler's, may be coherent and plausible but I do not agree with them. I have advanced a reading of *Maori's* middle chapter (4 – "On the edge of maturity") that stresses its exuberant representation of a Maori embrace of modern popular culture. This need not be seen as a manifestation of cultural loss, dilution or submergence because, as Joan Metge has pointed out: "It is no longer possible to see Maori culture as a discrete and separate entity: it exists in the context of a multi-racial society continually open to outside influences... As they have come out of cultural isolation into the mainstream of New Zealand life, the Maori people have become not less but more aware of their identity as a group."<sup>39</sup>

The two chapters that follow (6 – "Hui" and 7 – "Tangi") return us to two specifically Maori cultural institutions, albeit modified to meet the demands of the contemporary world. In a paper published seven years before *Maori*, James Ritchie made this claim concerning these institutions: "the tangi has a future just as other culturally derived mortuary rites persist; it will change as they changed. The hui can be integrated without strain into the social life of city Maoris."<sup>40</sup> Each photographic section of *Maori* seamlessly accretes photographs of particular age groups (chapters two and three: childhood; chapters four and five: youth and young adulthood). "Hui" contains photos of middle-aged and older people who have assumed responsibility for the maintenance of 'traditional' Maori cultural life. The first nine pictures in "Hui" deal with various activities enacted on the marae: haka (pp.157, 161), hongis (p.157), whaikorero (p.159), and poi dances (p.160). The picture on page 163 is an especially powerful marae study, shot at the Coronation hui on Turangawaewae marae in Ngaruawahia in October 1963, and distinguished by its strong composition. The stillness of the two women at centre (one standing at the microphone, the other seated behind) perfectly offsets the dynamic motion of the woman dancing and the (subtly) swaying motion of the priest. It conveys extremely well something of the intensity of a performance on the marae.<sup>41</sup> (Fig. 14)

A performance in a very different, informal register is spread over pages 164–5 in a remarkable group of shots arranged storyboard fashion. In a sequence of 14 small pictures (snapshots) and one large picture, Westra dramatises the stages of an intense but evidently good-humoured altercation between two men over some matter which, towards its end, attracts a number of on-lookers. The quasi-cinematic flow of these pages demonstrates Westra's flair for visual story telling as this string of 'decisive moments' was to some degree edited in the camera. Following on from this sequence, eight pictures capture informal moments of hui (conversations; preparations for a hangi – digging a pit, peeling kumara; eating kai). Overall, this wide-ranging section contains some of the most dynamic images in the book and certainly registers the ongoing importance of hui in Maori cultural life, bearing out Anne Salmond's point: "The hui is important to the study of contemporary Maori society, because it is in this context that Maoritanga is most deeply expressed [...] In the hui and on the marae Maoritanga comes into its sharpest focus."<sup>42</sup>

"Tangi" is the shortest photographic section in the book, containing just 21 photographs. Ritchie's text is based on his experience of a particular tangi and he rates his writing here highly: "Probably the most effective piece ... is the writing on tangi, because I go on that

journey and I take the reader back into Pine's [Taiapa] world. And then come back out of that, not saying what the future of tangi would be, but a pretty deep realization that so long as they hung onto that it's going to be alright."<sup>43</sup> In keeping with the subject matter of this section, Westra's photographs are low-key and subdued, almost all of them shot at a respectful distance. The spread of images tracks carefully and concisely the unfolding of the tangi ritual within the context of the marae.

MAORI AND THE FAMILY OF MAN

In chapter three I introduced *The family of man* and discussed its broad significance for Ans Westra's photographic project as a whole. I now want to examine it in relation to the structural properties of *Maori* as a specific text. But first it must be said that by constantly invoking her encounter with *TFOM* as the originating moment of her desire to practise photography, Westra may have unwittingly fashioned a rod for her own back. The unfashionable status of that work as "the epitome of cold war liberalism"<sup>44</sup> may be justified on political and methodological grounds, but is Westra's work simply a straightforward antipodean embodiment and continuation of the same Universalist humanist ideology found in *TFOM*? I think not. Humanist it undoubtedly is but it can be read in ways that disclose more than the obvious fact that Ans Westra, the self-proclaimed humanist, has indeed produced humanist work, which to a certain degree is modeled on *TFOM*. *Washday at the pa*, as I hope my analysis makes clear, is a photo-narrative which emerged from a very specific field encounter; at the same time it was judged for its typicality (or lack thereof) for all rural Maori families. As such it is very different from the work of the scores of photographers and photographs used by Edward Steichen in *TFOM*; these photographs are decontextualised and then reassembled into groups to illustrate universal themes, as global examples. *Washday at the pa*, by contrast, although it is very much open to and could be said to encourage a humanist reading, has a vocabulary which is site-specific not abstract.

*Maori*, however, is a rather different proposition. As I indicated earlier, its format has affinities with *TFOM*: The journey-through-life structure, the placing of brief, oracular quotations amongst the photographs, the absence of captions or any informational indexing to the photos. Even so, the differences between *TFOM* and *Maori* are as striking as the similarities. *Maori* contains the work of one photographer about one people compiled over a quite lengthy period. It carries a substantial essay written by a social scientist intended not to explain but to parallel the visual register with a linguistic one. Yet if *Maori* is many steps away from pure *TFOM* universalism, it is still quite a distance from a reflexive, site-specific photo-ethnography like *Let us now praise famous men*. The ideal object of the book's gaze is the macro-level of the contemporary Maori as an ethnic group. The structuring absence here would be a missing companion volume called Pakeha, which would do something similar for that group. But no such volume exists, although one can imagine its possible construction from elements within the Westra-archive.

In the first instance, Westra's encounter with *TFOM* was in the form of the three dimensional exhibition that she visited in Amsterdam. Her reference point in New Zealand,

however, was the two dimensional format of the book version of the exhibition. I will anatomise the structure of the book of the *TFOM* and then compare it to *Maori's* structure. The structural pattern of the *TFOM* as found in the book version is quite elaborate. It is possible to isolate 32 different sections of varying length within the seamless flow of its 192 untitled pages. The sequence goes as follows: courtship (pp.7-13, containing 13 photos); marriage (pp.14-17, eight photos); pregnancy and childbirth (pp.18-23, 12 photos); childrearing (pp.24-34, 29 photos); children at play (pp.35-49, 23 photos and one photomontage); fathers and sons (pp.50-53, nine photos); family portraits (pp.54-59, five photos); general work studies (pp.60-61, six photos); working the land (pp.62-67, 16 photos); transitional image (pp.68-69, one photo); rural work studies (pp.70-77, 25 photos); working by hand (pp.78-80, nine photos); transitional image (p.81, one photo); advanced urban work processes (pp.82-83, six photos); rural women at work (pp.84-89, eight photos); the 'human family' eating together (pp.90-93, 10 photos); human circle formations (pp.94-95, 18 photos); transitional images (pp.96-97, three photos); music making (pp.97-103, 18 photos); dancing (pp.104-07, 10 photos); socialising (pp.108-19, 30 photos); education (pp.120-26, 17 photos); transitional image (p.127, one photo); heterosexual couples (pp.128-31, 14 photos); miscellaneous social interaction (pp.132-37, 24 photos); death (pp.138-49, 23 photos); disasters and calamities (pp.150-53, 11 photos); dreamers and visionaries (pp.154-57, six photos); organised religion (pp.158-61, 12 photos); youth and adolescence (pp.162-65, 18 photos); oppression and the struggle against it (pp.166-173, 14 photos); political assembly and activity (pp.174-77, nine photos); and a final variegated section consisting of portraits of individuals, portraits of married couples, studies of children at play, and various other images, all of which act as a summation of the book (pp.178-192, 56 photos).

A prologue by the poet Carl Sandburg (Edward Steichen's brother-in-law) and a short introduction by Steichen precede the 32 sections of the *TFOM* listed above. The only text to appear subsequently in the book comes in the form of brief quotations from famous writers (James Joyce, Scriabin, Euripides, William Blake, Lilian Smith, John Masefield, St.-John Perse, Plato, Kabir, Thomas Paine, Lao-tse, Montaigne, Homer, Kobodaishi, Lui Chi, William Blake, Virgil, Kakuzo Okakura, Albert Einstein, Anne Frank, George Sand, Sir Thomas Noon Talfourd, Thomas Jefferson, Bertrand Russell, Sophocles, and William Shakespeare), texts (Genesis 1, Proverbs 3, Bhagavad-Gita, Deuteronomy 14, U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, Exodus 32, Genesis 37, II. Kings 9, Charter of the United Nations) and snippets of tribal wisdom from around the world (Pueblo, Kwakiutl, Sioux, Navajo, Maori, a Russian proverb, and a Baronga-African folk tale). Dorothy Norman chose all these quotations.

Turning now to *Maori*, we find a quite different structural pattern and deployment of written text. Seven of the titles of Ritchie's eight chapters also furnish the titles of Westra's six sections of photographs: "Childhood"; "Growing up"; "On the edge of maturity"; "A new family"; "Hui"; and "Tangi". Immediately it is clear that Westra is working within a much tighter framework than Steichen's. Three of her photographic sections are dedicated to childhood and adolescence, while the remaining three deal with parenthood, and two major cultural practices of the Maori world (hui and tangi). This emphasis is dictated by what Ritchie and Westra perceive to be central to Maori cultural life rather than by a Universalist schema of human development, even though the book exhibits a

broad movement from childhood to the concerns of adulthood (parenting and the public issues of “Hui”) followed, inevitably, by the ramifications of death (“Tangi”). Ritchie and Westra were logical collaborators because their respective bodies of work share a marked emphasis on the study of Polynesian childhood, as well as wider features of Maori culture. This emphasis is highly culturally specific and is not diffused by any comparative dimension. Whereas the *TFOM* is by definition an abstract concept that is illustrated by photographs derived from across the globe (“503 photographs from 68 countries”, made by 273 photographers), *Maori* is a book of photographs about one people made by one photographer within one country.

Each photograph in the *TFOM* is captioned with the name of the country depicted, the name of the photographer, and the name of the organisation under whose auspices it was taken (e.g. Magnum, Black Star, FSA) or the publication in which it was initially published (e.g. *Life*, *Vogue*), when pertinent. The photographs in *Maori* are not captioned, either on the pages themselves or in a list at the back of the book. Neither the specific places where these photographs were taken nor their individual Maori subjects are identified. The act of placing these photographs of individual Maori subjects beside each other serves to build a collective portrait of Maori society in general at a particular historical juncture – the 1960s. To a degree, this is a point of similarity with the *TFOM*, whose unidentified subjects, assembled from across the planet, are all representatives of a general humanity in its various guises. Even so, the level of generality present in the *TFOM* is far, far greater than that of *Maori*.

As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, *Maori* places brief quotations from notable texts throughout its pages, which constitutes another point of similarity with the *TFOM*. A poem by Hone Tuwhare (“Old man chanting in the dark”, p.12) prefaces the non-photographic section, “The changing heritage”. The “Childhood” section incorporates a creation myth (p.25), a verse from Te Rangitakoru, proverbs (pp.34, 38, 49), and a poem by 11 year-old “Rewi” (p.45). “Growing up” – an exhortation by Sir Apirana Ngata (p.65), and a haka (p.74). “On the edge of maturity” – a short text by Meremere Penfold (p.87), a poem by Susi Robinson Collins (“Young Maoris come to town”, p.90), a famous statement made by Captain Hobson (p.106), and a “Love song by a woman of Ngati Mutunga” (p.110). “A new family” – a poem by Harry Dansey (p.120), an anonymous statement in Maori and English translation (p.123), another quotation from a “Love song by a woman of Ngati Mutunga (p.127), a proverb (p.133), and a quotation from Dr Maharaiia Winiata (p.144).”Hui” – a haka (p.159), two poems by Rowley Habib (pp.161, 190), three quotations from Hirini Moko (pp.165, 170, 179), a poem by Hone Tuwhare (p.172), and a proverb (p.184). “Tangi”, a “Lament” from Nga moteata Part 1 (p.208), two proverbs (pp. 211, 223), a statement from “a Maori elder” (p.217), and a poem by Hone Tuwhare (p.221).

Although he contributes little text and no photographs to the *TFOM*, Steichen is undoubtedly its author, in an early instance of what we would now refer to as the curator-as-author. He speaks through the works of others and even though many of them are distinguished names in photographic history, their works blend together in a seamless whole. No one stands out or above anyone else. *Maori*, by contrast, is an evenly balanced collaborative work that is nevertheless part of the wider authorial configurations to be

found in the complete works of the individual authors Ans Westra and James Ritchie.

MAORI MODERNISM AND POPULAR CULTURE

Another point of difference between *Maori* and the *TFOM* is in the former's interpolation of non-photographic images within a predominantly photographic visual register. As noted earlier, these are reproductions of works made by a small group of contemporary Maori artists. "Childhood" contains reproductions of works by sculptors Para Matchitt (detail, p.25), and Cliff Whiting (p.36). "On the edge of maturity" – a reproduction of a painting by Cliff Whiting ("Hongi", p.101). "A new family" is prefaced by a full-page reproduction of a sculpture by Para Matchitt ("Kiwa", p.112) and towards the end of the chapter reproduces full-page another Matchitt sculpture, "Figure in protest" (p.136), two untitled/uncredited paintings (p.137), and a Cliff Whiting sculpture (p.148). "Hui" carries just two small reproductions of paintings by Cliff Whiting: "Stranded whale" (p.181) and "Tangi (detail)" (p.192). The final visual section, "Tangi", contains only Westra's photographs.

The inclusion of poems and artworks by contemporary Maori writers and artists serves to highlight the cultural and historical specificity of *Maori* and differentiates it further from the *TFOM*. The moment of *Maori*, a collection of photographs made over the course of the 1960s, is also the moment when these Maori writers and artists, alongside others whose works don't appear in the book, began to fashion an art comprised of a distinctive amalgam of 'traditional' and modernist features. Two of the poets featured in *Maori*, Hone Tuwhare and Rowley Habib, began writing in the early 1950s and much of their work was published in *Te ao hou* between the late 1950s and 1967. Westra first met Tuwhare in the early 1960s when she was engaged in a photographic assignment for the journal. One of her portraits of the poet, a close shot angled up at his smiling face, appeared on the cover of the September 1964 issue. Inside the journal, two of Tuwhare's poems appeared alongside a profile article, illustrated with another Westra photograph of the poet relaxed and reading at home.<sup>45</sup> Both of these poems, "Friend" and "The old place", were included in Tuwhare's first collection, *No ordinary sun*, also the first book of poems by a Maori poet to be published.<sup>46</sup> In his review of the book for the next number of *Te ao hou*, James K. Baxter wrote, "...Tuwhare is ploughing a new paddock, where Maori and Pakeha frontiers mingle, a steep stony paddock that needs the double-handled hillside plough ... he uses the English language with a new slant, a new emotional element, from a Maori point of view..."<sup>47</sup> Westra's full-page portrait of Tuwhare is placed within the "Hui" section of *Maori* (p.195) and depicts the poet at home, seated on an armchair in front of a window. He holds a Spanish guitar vertically, on the diagonal, nestling his head against the top right-hand corner of its body. He smiles as he picks at the strings. It is a lovely low-key study of the man. (Fig. 15)

The photographic section, "A new family", is quite variegated in subject matter. It begins with eleven photographs devoted to family life and young children, but follows these with a set of eight work studies, and ends with six miscellaneous images, the last

two of which prepare us for the next section, “Hui”, by portraying marae ritual. Before these miscellaneous images, however, there is a suite of images showing artists and popular musicians at work. It begins on page 136 with a study of a jazz musician playing upright double bass. On the opposite page is a reproduction of Para Matchitt’s vertically standing sculpture, “Figure in protest”. Over the page, there are colour reproductions of paintings by Selwyn Muru: a close-up study of a face in deeply etched marks; and a Paul Klee-like exercise in abstraction. The page next to these reproductions carries a full-scale photograph of Arnold Manaaki Wilson at work in his studio on a group of vertical wooden sculptures. Westra had contributed two photographs to a profile article on the artist published in *Te ao hou* in 1965, but this is a different and more striking image.<sup>48</sup> Above a block of white space, the top half of the following page has a photograph of Selwyn Muru at work within a domestic interior, Barry Crump’s house in Wellington, modeling a mask-like face. (Fig. 16) Westra contributed a cover photograph of Muru to the March 1964 issue of *Te ao hou* – the artist’s smiling face captured in front of a background expanse of one of his expressionist paintings. Another of her Muru photos accompanies an article on the artist in the same issue.<sup>49</sup> The image chosen for *Maori* is one of a number of studies showing Muru both painting and sculpting and they provide considerable insight into the artist’s working methods.<sup>50</sup>

On the page (141) facing the image of Selwyn Muru are two photographs that provoke a contrast which is very suggestive. They are both dynamic shots of Maori show bands engaged in what looks like a variation on a Black American Soul revue of the period. The landscape format photograph at the bottom of the page is of the Maori Hi-Fives in full cry. The cover of the June 1963 edition of *Te ao hou* features Westra’s posed portrait of the group and inside the issue two more of her photos illustrate the article, “The Hi-Five story”, one of which is the image printed in *Maori*.<sup>51</sup> The photo at the top of the page is of a different band. (Fig.17) It is shot from a low-angle upwards towards the group’s three vocalists performing in the foreground. And it is an image composed of strong verticals, with the beams on the ceiling echoing the two microphone stands below. The contrast I refer to above is generated by the juxtaposition of photos of representatives of Maori modernist art and Maori popular music, two phenomena that emerged simultaneously in an explosion of creativity in the mid-1960s. Around the time Westra photographed Muru at work, he appeared alongside Barry Crump and others, playing the role of Joe Wharewera in the local feature film, *Runaway* (1964), produced and directed by John O’Shea of Pacific Films. In a particularly dynamic scene, the vocalist Rim D. Paul, playing the part of Joe’s brother (under the stage name of Simon Rangī) and backed by his show band the Quin Tikis, returns to his hometown in the Hokianga to sing the film’s title song, in front of an excited audience amongst whom is Muru. Two years later, Pacific Films followed up on this scene by making a film that showcased the wide spectrum of talent thrown up by the efflorescence of Maori popular music in the mid-1960s, again featuring the Quin Tikis. *Don’t let it get you* (1966) can be seen as something of a companion piece to *Maori*, not only because of their shared emphasis on popular music but also because of their documentation of the range of Maori subcultural style in general.

The arrival of Maori modernist art in the 1960s was strongly linked to the prior initia-

tives of the Arts and Crafts Branch of the Department of Education and, especially, its national supervisor, Gordon Tovey, who was appointed to the position by Clarence Beeby in 1946. Most of the Maori modernist artists trained as Primary school art specialists under the Tovey scheme at teachers colleges. Amongst them: Ralph Hotere; Katerina Mataira; and Paratene Matchitt and Cliff Whiting whose works are reproduced in *Maori*. In 1961, the Department of Education published Tovey's book *The arts of the Maori*, intended for classroom use by school children, and prepared with the help of a Maori advisory committee. The artists who trained under Tovey's guidance gained not only an educational philosophy and method but also exposure to key developments in modern art. Katerina Mataira refers to the work of her fellow artists in terms of an "emerging New Zealand style."<sup>52</sup> And in the same volume, James Ritchie makes a link between Tovey's initiatives, the new Maori art, and work patterns: "The Arts and Crafts division of the Education Department has provided employment in the creative arts for a number of Maori. The individuals concerned have not been employed to teach Maori art, or art to Maori: but nevertheless their activities have produced a minor renaissance in sculpture, painting, and graphic arts, with perceptible Maori flavour and a new awareness of the modern vitality of an ancient artistic heritage."<sup>53</sup>

#### CRITICAL RESPONSES TO MAORI

According to James Ritchie, *Maori* "was not well received. It did not sell well. It was expensive. Reeds were unhappy that they'd produced it", but "Ray Richards was intensely proud of it and so was I."<sup>54</sup> The most informed local response to the book is Roger Oppenheim's review, published in *Landfall*, which I have discussed already and will return to near the end of the chapter. The only international review of which I'm aware is Margaret Mead's brief piece in the *American anthropologist*. Mead, of course, knew James Ritchie through her friendship with the Beagleholes and he studied with her briefly in the early 1960s at Columbia University on a Rockefeller Foundation post-doctoral fellowship.<sup>55</sup> In her review, she addresses him as "the leading student of culture and personality in New Zealand". But in addition to being herself a leading member of that school of anthropology, Mead was also a pioneer in the development of visual anthropology<sup>56</sup> and she pays more attention to Westra's photographs than she does Ritchie's "readable" text. She begins by noting Westra's "fresh and, if anything ... overappreciative eye" but then states, accurately, that "the principal emphasis remains on zest, warmth, and delight in bodily movement in the dance and in music." However, it is not especially clear which images she is referring to in the following comment: "...She has not scanted entirely the gaucheries and the poverty of life that are the consequences of contemporary attempts at urban adjustment."<sup>57</sup> She can only be referring to the section of "On the edge of maturity" that begins on page 90 and runs until its end, and most of "A new family". All the other sections have their roots in rural settings. The key phrase here is "poverty of life", which does suggest the kinds of criticisms made by Oppenheim, Fowler, and Ausubel cited earlier. Criticisms that indict modern consumer mass culture and lament the induction of Maori into modernity in

general. One of the principal issues in the debate over *Washday* was, of course, the depiction of Maori rural (material) poverty, which is quite different from the alleged cultural poverty entailed by the transition to city life. But it is difficult to find evidence of it in Westra's urban images, which, unlike much social documentary photography, are not preoccupied with investigating social problems.

Lets move now from the late 1960s to the new millennium. In a recent essay based around a comparison between *The family of man* and *Maori*, Kyla McFarlane categorises Westra's photographs as "generically specific". She elaborates thus: "Westra's photographs are specific in their focus on Maori and their lives, yet they are also generic in that they speak generally of them, eschewing identification of the individual subject or event for a general sense of mood, or feeling."<sup>58</sup> What are we to make of this oxymoronic phrase? It is true that the photographs have neither captions nor a list describing the people depicted and their locations at the back of the book, such as we find in *Notes on the country I live in*, and this is regrettable because a descriptive list noting the year and location of the photographs would have been useful. But does this lack of identification of a collection of undoubtedly specific photographs render them more general? In what way, say, would identifying all the individual children in the sections "childhood" and "Growing up" and the adolescents in "On the edge of maturity" enhance the ability of the photographs to further their purpose within the book as a whole? Quite apart from the difficulties involved in collecting all the names of those who appear in, for example, the photograph at the bottom of page 66, Westra's unobtrusive way of working goes against it. However, by the halfway point of "A new family" (p.136 onwards) we encounter notable figures from the world of Maori art and music that would have been recognisable to many readers of the book at the time of publication and are recognisable to informed readers today. Yet it is difficult to see how describing these individual and group portraits as "generic" tells us anything of significance about them.

All documentary photographs are specific of something, regardless of whether it is made explicit in a caption/descriptor or not. They can only suggest the general by means of the particular. By grouping a large number of specific and disparate photographs within a broad category, based on their shared subject matter, it is possible to reach a certain level of generality. The highest level of generality in Westra's project is the category of Maori itself. Most, if not all, of the individuals whose images appear in her book will have, and will be conscious of, their tribal affiliations. They will identify, say, as Ngati Porou as opposed to Tuhoe, and so on. They will also identify as Maori as opposed to Pakeha, a shift from the tribal level of classification to an (pan-tribal) ethnic one. At a national level, they may even identify as Maori New Zealanders. Westra and Ritchie's book operates at the pan-tribal level of the collective ethnic group. In Westra's next major book, *Notes on the country I live in*, Maori are positioned as a component of the national level. Her earlier *Washday at the pa* is a study of a specific Maori family, Ngati Porou but not identified as such, but was criticised for not being "typical" of Maori families in general; the use of the term "typical" here sounds not too dissimilar to McFarlane's use of "generic".

The "generically specific" concept seems to have arisen from the urge to find too close a parallel between *Maori* and *TFOM*, works that emerge from very different histori-

cal moments and cultural contexts. I have argued in chapter three that we need to read the *TFOM* against the grain of its own claims to timeless Universalism. Likewise, we should not make the mistake of assuming that *Maori* attempted to do the same thing for Maori. An alternative title for Westra's project might be the one Erik Schwimmer gave to the collection of essays he edited – *The Maori people in the 1960s*, published a year after *Maori*.<sup>59</sup> James Ritchie contributed two essays to the book and quite a number of Ans Westra's photographs are reprinted in it. Both books appeared towards the end of a decade that witnessed the culmination of the Maori exodus from country to city, in process since the 1940s. The closer proximity of Maori and Pakeha in an urban context is of course the backdrop to the Hunn Report's promotion of integration and also to the Maori imperative to forge new forms of political organisation and leadership during the 1960s. McFarlane's view of *Maori* as essentially a local version of the *TFOM* is mirrored in her comments on *Whaiora* (see chapter nine for an analysis of this work): "... common humanity and community is relegated to a subtext in *Whaiora*, against the recording of a particular moment in Maori history. *Whaiora* reflects the unease present in New Zealand in the 1980s – a decade of increased unemployment, racial tensions and dissent over issues like the Springbok rugby tour... There are images of conflict and boredom, of gang conventions and protests over land."<sup>60</sup> The implication that *Whaiora* is a historically specific work whereas *Maori* is given over to timeless universalism is simply untenable. Both works are historically specific. They just represent different historical moments in the evolution of contemporary Maori society. Intimations of historical change are not only to be found in dramatic images of overt political militancy but can also be found in quieter, more low key pictures.

As noted already, Roger Oppenheim criticised *Maori's* juxtaposition of aspects of Maoritanga (high culture) with components of modernity (low culture): "...high ceremonial alongside the tasteless vulgarities of Pakeha mass production..."<sup>61</sup> He cannot mean this literally because I have been unable to locate any instances of this on individual or facing pages, unless the placing of a wedding celebration photograph below one showing a farm worker filling a jug from a beer keg qualifies (p.109).<sup>62</sup> Clearly, he must mean within the book as a whole. The contrast invoked would be at its most marked in moving between "On the edge of maturity" and "A new family" and the "Hui" and "Tangi" sections.<sup>63</sup> This raises the question of the type of culture imaged in the book. In essence, there are three categories involved. The aspects of Maoritanga revealed by Westra's photographs are instances of 'traditional' culture that have survived into the present, albeit in renovated and rejuvenated form. Maoritanga can be defined as pride in 'Maoriness', "an idealised general conception of essential or traditional Maori culture surviving in contemporary Maori society", and current since "at least the 1950s".<sup>64</sup> Its major spokesman, Sir Apirana Ngata, defined it in 1940 as, "...an emphasis on the continuing individuality of the Maori people, the maintenance of such Maori characteristics and such features of Maori culture as present day circumstances will permit, the inculcation of pride in Maori history and traditions, the retention so far as possible of old-time ceremonial, the continuous attempt to interpret the Maori point of view to the pakeha in power."<sup>65</sup> It constitutes part of the High Culture represented in *Maori*. The other part consists of photographs of

Maori modernist artists at work and also of reproductions of their artworks. Their work refers but does not defer to Maoritanga because its modernism is engaged in an internal critique of the concept of Maori art, which problematises the uncritical use of 'traditional' representations.

Earlier in the chapter, I introduced the second category as popular culture, whereas Oppenheim uses the somewhat pejorative term mass culture.<sup>66</sup> The photographs of Maori showbands, youth club dancing, and subcultural street style all fall into this category. I have argued and I reiterate that *Maori* does not oppose Maori modernism to these developments in Maori appropriation of international popular culture but, like the work of Pacific Films at the same time, locates both in a common space of innovative vitality. Nor, I might add, does it oppose them to Maoritanga.

The third category of culture is much wider and is present at various points throughout the book. It is the anthropological concept which refers to the culture of everyday life within familial, work and leisure situations. The majority of photographs in *Maori* fall within this category. The section "A new family", for instance, doesn't just contain pictures of family life but also a long sequence of work studies that reveal a variety of occupations and work places. These photographs reveal Maori as predominantly members of the urban and rural working class. Others, such as the full-page image of a young family window shopping in a Rotorua street in 1963 (p.128), register an engagement with ordinary consumerism in a small town. The gulf between images such as these and the concept of Maoritanga would account for Oppenheim's dismay. "Total commitment to the Maoritanga theory", writes Roy Nash, "has made it impossible to accept as valid markers of ethnicity, patterns of culture which have emerged in response to the experiences of urban life as a relatively oppressed working-class ethnic minority."<sup>67</sup>

In *Maori*, Westra photographs Maori as she finds them, which is at a particular moment of historical transition, a moment when questions and definitions of Maori identity were undergoing change. The relative stability of rural communities had been unsettled by large-scale migration to the city, and an engagement with the forces of modernity, modernism, and international popular culture was well underway in urban locations. *Maori* shows us still vital aspects of 'traditional' Maori culture but it also shows us Maori engaging with new, syncretic ways of living. And it doesn't privilege one over the other, seeing no contradiction in their mutual coexistence.

## CHAPTER SIX

### VILIAMI OF THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS AND OTHER BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

By neglecting the use of signs which address the imagination, we have lost the most energetical of languages. The impression of speech is always weak, and we convey our sentiments to the heart far better by the eye than by the ear.

—JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU<sup>1</sup>

The innocence of the photograph as a record or document seems to vouch for the innocence of our pleasure in looking, and no more so perhaps than when what we are looking at is a child.

—JACQUELINE ROSE<sup>2</sup>

I began the analysis of Ans Westra's books for children in chapter four with a detailed study of her second, *Washday at the pa*, because of its historical importance. In this chapter, I will continue my examination of this area, beginning with her first book of this kind, *Viliami of the Friendly Islands* (1964). In addition to her narrative photographic books, made for School Publications, I will also look at the instructional booklet she made for the Maori Education Foundation in 1965, *Tamariki*.

### VILIAMI OF THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS

During the winter of 1962, Westra took a two and one half month holiday in the Pacific, visiting Tonga, Fiji and Samoa. Before departing, School Publications asked her to "... look out for something there..." and gave her "...some guidelines about what they wanted - how big a story, with a beginning, middle and end..."<sup>3</sup> From the pool of photographs made on this extended trip, Westra constructed two publications: a short and simple photographic essay for the *School journal*, "Children of Fiji"; and a 56 page Bulletin for schools, *Viliami of the Friendly Islands*. (Fig. 18) "Children of Fiji" consists of six photographs, three of indigenous Fijian children, and three of Indian Fijian children. In addition to these, the cover of this issue of the *School journal* carries Westra's photograph of a group of Fijian

boys climbing a breadfruit tree. The images all have detailed captions and they show such things as a game of draughts using square counters, a girl scraping taro with a shell, and another girl combing her hair with a heavy duty comb.<sup>4</sup>

In an article published a year prior to the appearance of “Children of Fiji” and *Viliami*, Westra wrote, “...in the Islands which I visited, Tonga, Fiji and Samoa, the Islanders were not as primitive as I had secretly hoped that they would be.”<sup>5</sup> This frank revelation reverberates with an unmistakable echo of Robert Flaherty’s romantic documentary impulse. The Flahertian overtones are even stronger when we consider that “she ‘was going to do this marvelous story and sell it to *National Geographic* – just do it off my own bat’. She had heard of an old, dying custom of a family that went whaling in longboats, and thought it might make a good story.”<sup>6</sup> Flaherty himself had gone even further in his *Man of Aran* (1934) when he persuaded the coastal Irish to revive for his camera the hunting of basking sharks, a practice already defunct for fifty years.

The earliest use in English of the term documentary to describe a particular kind of camera-generated image is widely held to be in John Grierson’s *New York Sun* review of Flaherty’s film *Moana* (1926). Whilst mostly taken with the beauty of its poetic imagery, Grierson asserted, “*Moana*, being a visual account of events in the daily life of a Polynesian youth and his family, has documentary value.”<sup>7</sup> If we were to drop the age of the Polynesian youth in this quotation, or, better yet, replace him with his little brother, as well as shift from Samoa to Tonga and from film to photography, then we would be remarkably close to a description of *Viliami of the Friendly Islands*. What Westra’s booklet shares with Flaherty’s film, apart from a general investment in a broadly humanist orientation, is a narrative based in the ordinary details of everyday life. Neither work has a tightly constructed narrative, their stories are episodic in character; and they both aim to reveal the rhythms underpinning village life in two adjacent Pacific Island communities. However the differences between film and booklet are equally striking. *Moana*’s subtitle is “a romance of the Golden Age” and, in common with Flaherty’s other major films, it is governed by an allochronic agenda that tempers its “documentary value.”<sup>8</sup> All signs of post-contact phenomena are screened out in order that life on Savaii can be displaced into a timeless present, marked by romantically conceived rituals and encounters.<sup>9</sup> Westra, like many Western travelers before her and since, as her statement quoted above reveals, may have started out by hoping to find a pristine ‘untouched’ Tonga, but she quickly adjusted to the quite different shape of life as actually lived there in the early 1960s. Therefore, *Viliami*, although also the product of a determinedly “innocent eye”<sup>10</sup>, is, by contrast, quite comfortable with representing a Tonga that is located implicitly within the context of the modern world. Even so, the story very much unfolds within what Ferdinand Toennies called *gemeinschaft* or Robert Redfield the “rural folk society.”<sup>11</sup> Thus, *Viliami* himself is embedded within a family, which is in turn part of a wider community that spreads across various village localities. In short, a world of intimate, face-to-face encounters. (Fig. 19)

The opening page of *Viliami* carries a photograph of the sea and sky surrounding Tonga. The particular island upon which the story will unfold is visible only as a tiny strip on the horizon. Underneath this ‘establishing shot’ is the sentence, “this story of a week in Tonga was recorded in words and pictures by Ans Westra.”<sup>12</sup> A sentence such as this gives

the impression that what will follow will be a descriptive account “in words and pictures” of a visitor’s travel experience (not exactly that of a tourist, an ethnographer, or a children’s author but perhaps something of all three). However, across from this orientating page is page one itself, upon which something rather different gets underway – a first-person narrative, narrated by the story’s protagonist, Viliami Vaka’utu, underneath his striking portrait, composed by Westra in a manner that will become quite typical of her future pictures of children. The following two-page spread introduces the other members of Viliami’s family, who live in Logoteme, Tongatapu, in words and images (three) of great economy. On pages four and five, the images gradually move out from the core family group to a focus on activities in the wider village. The accompanying text is plain and descriptive of the basic ‘content’ of the pictures, but frequently goes beyond the denotative level to impart wider contextual information not directly visible through the photographs. On page eleven, two photographs of a Tongan girl dancing a *hula* (above) and a *lakalaka* (below) anticipate the dynamic images of dance found in *Maori* and *Notes on the country I live in*. Westra’s ongoing interest in making images of dancers is, of course, a point of connection between her work and *The family of man*, which contains a whole section devoted to this activity.

Pages 12 to 13 carry a page spread given over to a text-heavy recounting of the details of a play, “The hunter and the Tiger”, the highlight of the performance by the concert party visiting the village. The story then abruptly switches to the sombre topic of a little girl’s funeral (she has died during the night) and the preparations for it. This “story of a week in Tonga”, which, like a number of Westra’s subsequent books for children, takes place within a holiday period, then proceeds by means of the accretion of small details of everyday activities within Viliami’s village setting: coconut cutting; digging for taro roots with an elderly man on his *api* (plot of land); cooking in an *umu* (earth oven) with Sione, an adult neighbour; a trip on the lagoon in an outrigger canoe; washing and cleaning up in the village; and “horse wrestling” with other boys. This long sequence is then broken, as with the funeral earlier, by a wedding preparation, ceremony and celebration. A young man from Viliami’s village marries a young woman from another. After this interlude, Viliami’s holiday is at an end and he returns to school “in Vaini, the next village”. Eventually, the narrative is closed off with the soon-to-be familiar trope of Viliami and siblings drifting off to sleep, also used to conclude Westra’s next bulletin, *Washday at the pa*. The bulletin itself is then rounded out by the inclusion of a social studies support section, “a closer look at the pictures”, which provides detailed annotations of many of the photographs; there is also a pronunciation guide for Tongan words. The final supplement to the story is an expository essay (“Tonga, or The friendly Islands”) briefly outlining aspects of Tongan geography, history, society, politics and economics.

Anna Grimshaw has written, “Flaherty’s conception of experiential knowledge is achieved through the return to a state similar to that of childhood and the innocence of childhood.”<sup>13</sup> In *Viliami*, by choosing to refract her own ‘first contact’ observations through the eyes of a child protagonist, Westra, too, “learns to ‘see’ again”. However, this did not happen without several phases of structuring intervention on her part, beginning with her own social interactions in the field (“...you also need to be an actor and show them how you want them to look and what they should be doing”)<sup>14</sup> and continuing in

the ‘post-production’ phase of the book’s narrative construction. The result is that *Viliami* is not a set of postcards from paradise and not just because of its monochrome appearance. There are many standout single images, but there are also many functional linking images necessary to a narrative of this kind. Yet what is most impressive about this first venture into shooting and writing a photographic book for children is the degree to which such seemingly disparate details are fashioned into a loose kind of unity.

In the same year as the two publications discussed above, School Publications also included Westra’s photo-essay, “Children at play” in another number of the *School journal*. A note attached to this piece reads, “Earlier this year, our photographer, Miss Ans Westra, packed her camera, got into her car, and drove over the North Island, often turning from the main roads into byways and visiting little known places. Her camera caught many of the children in these places at play. The boy climbing the tree on the front cover was taken at Porirua pa. The young Robin Hood, above, she found in Tikitiki.”<sup>15</sup> The photographs in this article were taken at several other locations in addition to the two already mentioned: Pipiriki and Parakino on the Whanganui River; Carterton in the Wairarapa; Orakei pa in Auckland; and Ngaruawahia. The photographs taken at Parakino (from the total shoot not just those reproduced in the *School journal*) have come to wider attention subsequently through the artwork of Michael Parekowhai and an essay by his sister Cushla. The Parekowhai parents were teachers at the school when Westra photographed there and Cushla’s essay is based on their memories of the school and the children depicted in the images. By putting names to the faces in the photographs and attempting to reconstruct the lives of those depicted, the essay acts as a critique of the way in which Westra presented them. Parekowhai’s father says, “The fact that none of us are identified and our life on the River is reduced to a single caption on the back of a proof-sheet ... I find a little disappointing and disrespectful. To my mind Ans’s images are less powerful and less enduring because she never bothered to record what it was she thought she was photographing. This is unfortunate because in some of her Parakino pictures so many years have gone by that even we really can’t be sure who is in them, where they are and what they are doing ... Where people are concerned artists, particularly photographers, should take much more care ... The children of Parakino deserved better.”<sup>16</sup> Michael Parekowhai’s response to some of these images is to ‘take them back’, appropriating them to his own ends by superimposing hand written text over them. For example, in “What’s the time Mr Woolf” (2004), which places that question over Westra’s 1963 photo of a boy drawing clocks with chalk on a blackboard in the classroom at Parakino. He also made a work for the cover of the art journal *Midwest*, using the photograph of the “young Robin Hood”, taken at Tikitiki, and a billboard work superimposing John Lennon’s statement, “Before Elvis ... there was nothing”, over “Students performing, Whatatutu primary school, near Waiora”, taken in the same year as the Parakino photographs.<sup>17</sup>

#### THE CIRCUS COMES TO TOWN

Although not a School Bulletin as such, in the manner of *Viliami* and *Washday*, *The circus comes to town* occupies all 32 pages of the second number of the *School journal* (*Part two*) in

1965. Westra's 30 black and white photographs accompany poet (and School Publications editor) Louis Johnson's story about Tommy Scott and his little sister, Susan, who are taken to visit a circus by their father. In the course of their visit, young readers learn about all the different acts (at "Sole Brothers and Wirths: the greatest show on earth") and clowns and other circus performers and staff are shown interacting with young visitors. This is a more literary exercise than Westra's two previous, specifically social studies Bulletins. There is a considerable amount of narrative text, which invariably appears below a single photograph on each page, all contained within the smaller format of the *School journal* (as compared with the School Bulletins). And at the conclusion of the story, there is a rhyming poem by Johnson ("Wrong way up"), placed beside another poem by Marchette Gaylord Chute ("Circus"). The rather striking cover image of this *Journal* shows two elephants walking from left to right through the streets of Wellington and, inside on the title page, a smaller photograph shows them walking in the opposite direction.

Westra collaborated with Johnson again the following year to produce the photo-story "What's Tommy doing?", which appears in the second number of the *School journal (Part one)* for 1966. This number is something of a photographic issue because it also features a second Westra essay (story and photographs), "Suzie's family", about an eponymous cat. And placed between these two Westra essays is Grieg Royle's photo-story, "Mountain holiday", with text by Joyce Royle. "What's Tommy doing?" tells a story about Tommy Triggs, narrated by another boy, a member of a family that lives along the street from him. In the space of seven portrait format photographs (pp.2-9), Westra tells skillfully and concisely the story sketched in Johnson's text. Tommy is a sharply dressed, confident looking Maori boy. He stands against a wall, under a fire alarm and beside a drinking fountain, holding a simple fishing line (a piece of string). The pictures track the stages in his fishing up of a Herring through a gap in the beams above the water on the Wellington waterfront where the story is set.

The second and longer visual essay, "Suzie's family" (pp.17-32, plus cover and contents page images) is a rare excursion for Westra into the animal world. The story begins with a portrait of Suzy the cat and her first person narrative: "I am Suzie. I am just a year old, and have a family of four." (p.18) Her family is then introduced with photographs of "Blackie" (up a tree), "Josie" (lying in a cardboard box), "David" (inside with a captured mouse), and 'Harvey' (off to another home, for a lonely little boy). The images that follow show these cats at play and they do so convincingly.

#### TAMARIKI

During the same year, Westra collaborated with writer Katerina Mataira (1932-) on *Tamariki: our children today*, a project for The Maori Education Foundation. In the foreword to the booklet we read: "This delightful book shows how easy it is to help our children learn about the world around them ... We feel that both Maori and Pakeha can profit from a study of these attractive photographs."<sup>18</sup> The writer of these words is none other than Mrs. R. Sage, Chair of the New Zealand Maori Council and President of the Maori Women's Welfare

League, who approximately a year earlier had written of *Washday at the pa*: “Instead of a Maori family why could not Miss Westra have taken a Dutch family, Pakeha, or any other nationality to suit her somewhat perverted sense of journalism.”<sup>19</sup>

*Tamariki* is a celebration of family life, especially the period of infancy (the line “Everyday a child is born” is placed above a photograph of a new-born infant at the beginning of the book). It moves through the developmental phases of pre-school children, tracking the “growth of the child’s mind” during the first five years of life. A large proportion of Westra’s 110 black and white photographs depict children at play (“all play is learning” and “play is hard work” says the text): dressing up, drawing, painting, feeding animals, exploring rock pools, visiting a zoo, looking in shop windows, even reading (“children love books”). The photographs are arranged in linked sequences and there are usually several per page. The text comprises brief descriptive statements followed below by further phrases in quotation marks. The text within quotation marks resembles speech bubbles containing ideas that the depicted parents might be thinking or saying. Twenty years on, Mataira would use this method of advancing what might be called a preferred reading of the images in *Whaiora*, her major collaboration with Westra. The developmental cycle catalogued in the book’s pictures ends with a photo of a boy holding his mother’s hand as he prepares for his first day at school. After that, an addendum addressed to parents, above all Maori parents, asserts, “There is no reason why children should not hear and learn to speak Maori at the same time as they learn to speak English.” The final words on the last page are, “As the twig is bent so grows the tree”, which also provides the title to a National Film Unit production of the same year, made for the Maori Education Foundation, with commentary by Katerina Mataira. This film centres on Marama, a pre-school Maori girl, as she moves from home to kindergarten and then to a playcentre. As with *Tamariki*, the theme of *As the twig is bent* is the importance of education for the “developing minds” of the very young, and the film also emphasises the benefits of play for learning.

#### HOLIDAY IN THE CAPITAL

Towards the close of the decade, after she had returned to the Netherlands for an extended stay, School Publications issued two Bulletins for Primary schools, based in Westra’s photographs. The first, *Holiday in the capital* (1968), featuring photographs she had shot in Wellington before her departure, is another collaboration with Louis Johnson. It is a story of two children (Mark and his older sister Ann) from a farm in the Hawkes Bay who come to Wellington for a two-week pre-Christmas holiday. Although it is clear from a sentence on page 16 (“Father thought Ann had fallen in...”) that the children are accompanied by their father and are staying with their Auntie, adults hardly figure at all in either the pictures or the text. This is very much a story of country kids discovering the delights of the big city (the cable car, the Botanical Gardens playground, the Zoo, the beach at Oriental Bay, and shopping at Kirkcaldie and Stains department store) as well as acting as conduits for conveying educational experiences (visiting the Wellington Children’s Library, the Dominion Museum, and the Mayoral Office to find out about the various functions of the City Council).

*Holiday in the capital* is a substantial Bulletin of 53 pages, containing 87 of Westra's black and white photographs, usually sitting beside blocks of text but sometimes placed on text free pages. While the photographs mostly serve the story, there are a number of images that stand out. For example, the cover photograph, which shows the two children playing beside a war memorial monument. Westra plays with scale so that the children are dwarfed by this large public sculpture. And this effect is carried over to the inside front page where the architectural setting has the effect of rendering the children as tiny figures on a pedestrian crossing. The Bulletin delivers something of an informal portrait of Wellington, a project that Westra would return to on a larger scale in the mid-1970s with *Wellington: City alive*. The final page is given over to a photograph shot from an elevated position, showing many of the places the protagonists have visited in the course of the story. Seven numbers are superimposed on selected areas of the photo to show precisely the places visited. One of the areas so marked is the historic wooden government building, which housed the Department of Education at the time.

#### CHILDREN OF HOLLAND

Westra's other School Bulletin published while she was back in the Netherlands is *Children of Holland* (1969). However it is unlikely that its genesis was prompted by Mrs. Sage's advice quoted earlier because the School Publications Branch initiated it. The Branch had already published social studies booklets about cultures outside New Zealand and the South Pacific region. A good example is *A Tokyo family* (1965), with text written by School Publications "from material supplied by Kokusai Bunka Shinkokai, Tokyo" and "photographs by Tadashi Kimura, Tokyo". But here was a project of their own made by one of their regular contributors.

*Children of Holland* is presented in a horizontal landscape format with a cover designed by Derek Ball incorporating his blue, red and white toned painting. The story, told by means of 61 Westra photographs and text by Ingeborg Brown, is set in rural Friesland, the part of the Netherlands where Westra herself is from. It begins when cousin Carla from the town of Haarlem arrives to stay with the Dijkstra family, which keeps 16 Friesan cows and tends 100 acres of crops. The Dijkstra family children are the two girls, Riemke and Pietje and two boys, Jauke and Foppe. At approximately the mid-point of the book, the story 'reverses' and Riemke goes off to stay with Carla in Haarlem, a stay that includes a day trip to Leiden, Westra's birthplace. As the story proceeds, it is interrupted from time to time with interpolations of factual material about Dutch geography and history.

Although Westra has said that she found the Dutch girls very difficult to work with, visually *Children of Holland* is a very fine looking publication. The photographs are printed well in high quality reproductions on glossy paper, with strong blacks to the fore. The following are some of the more outstanding compositions: the image on the title page of two horses pulling a cart; a family fishing expedition (p.7); a school classroom interior (p.10); the girls cycling down a country road (p.11); a spot of ditch jumping (pp.12-13); a full-page shot of a church interior (p.27); and an architectural study of people standing in front of a city building with a De Stijl-like façade (p.36). The remaining part of the story,

an extended sequence devoted to St Nicholas Day (pp.37-41), has points of comparison to moments in *The circus comes to town*. The Bulletin ends with a final section, "About Holland" (pp.42-8), that contains five photographs supplied by The Royal Netherlands Legation, which serve its informational purpose, as does the bibliography of further reading on the last page.<sup>20</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

When we consider the School Bulletins and photo-stories of the 1960s discussed in this chapter and chapter four (*Washday at the pa*), it is evident that there is more involved here than can be covered adequately by the term documentary. In these booklets, Westra works essentially as a children's author, a maker of pictorial narratives. The production of these books required collaboration: collaboration with children and their families in the making of the photographs; and collaboration with writers and editors in the combining of words and photos to fashion simple narratives. Their purpose is to educate the very young and to do so in an engaging and entertaining manner. With the exception of *Tamariki*, they all do this by telling stories. In chapter three I gave the name ethnographic fabulation for the child to the broad category to which these books belong. Not all of them of course. Only *Viliami*, *Washday*, and, arguably, *Children of Holland* fit this category. *Viliami* is the most obviously 'ethnographic' of the three in that it involved Westra doing some 'fieldwork' in a society relatively remote from her own. And its story includes a degree of ethnographic detail sufficient to ensure its usefulness to a Primary school social studies programme. *Washday*, as I've argued at length in chapter four, presented an altogether different proposition - 'ethnography' at home within a broad social space shared with her subjects and her readers - and the strength of the photo-documentary basis of its pastoral narrative was the very thing that opened it up to a set of conflicting readings in a society where the 'other' was not remote but relatively close at hand. *Children of Holland*, the kind of Bulletin Mrs. Sage of the MWWL suggested Westra should have made instead of *Washday*, might seem to be the least obviously 'ethnographic' of the three books. Westra, during a lengthy return visit to the land of her birth, delivers an 'insider' perspective on Dutch school children for use in New Zealand classrooms. Yet, the book feels almost as 'ethnographic' as *Viliami* because by now Westra is not simply Dutch but, like the ethnographic fieldworker, unmoored from attachment to any fixed national or cultural location.

THE 1970s:  
PHOTOGRAPHING  
“THE NEW ZEALANDERS”

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### NOTES ON THE COUNTRY I LIVE IN AND WELLINGTON: CITY ALIVE

In the field, outside the controlled confines of a studio, a photographer is confronted with a complex web of visual juxtapositions that realign themselves with each step the photographer takes. Take one step and something hidden comes into view; take another and an object in the front now presses up against one in the distance. Take one step and the description of deep space is clarified; take another and it is obscured.

—STEPHEN SHORE (2007)<sup>1</sup>

Long before the publication of *Maori* in 1967, Ans Westra left New Zealand for her native Holland in October 1965, traveling by ship, and she did not return until October 1969. She hasn't commented much about those years back on the European continent except to say that she did little serious photography there. However, she did complete one substantial assignment for School Publications during this period, *Children of Holland*, which is discussed in chapter six. But it was only on her way back to New Zealand that the seeds of an idea for another major book project were sown. Stopping off in Australia, she came across a photographic book called *The Australians*<sup>2</sup>, which inspired her with the idea of doing a similar visual study of New Zealanders. After some preliminary work, the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council awarded her a travel grant in 1971 to make photographs for a photographic essay with the working title of "The New Zealanders". Alister Taylor Publishing eventually published a substantial selection of prints from this project in 1972 under the title *Notes on the country I live in*, again with financial assistance from the Arts Council.<sup>3</sup> Before turning to a detailed examination of this book, I will sketch in the changed socio-historical circumstances of the New Zealand which emerged from the turbulent period of the late 1960s and early 1970s. For in many ways, Westra had returned to a somewhat different country, which presented her with new photographic challenges.

#### I

#### THE LEGACY OF THE 'SIXTIES'

It is a commonplace that the 1960s was a time of great upheaval and ferment in which the release of new social and political energies took place across the Western world. Throughout

the 1980s and beyond, in a strongly neo-conservative political climate, a particular image of the 1960s took quite a beating at the hands of both right and left wing forces. Here, it is necessary to break with these kinds of reductive and tendentious characterisations. Yet this can only be done by constructing a more nuanced image with greater depth of field. Something at once so seemingly clear-cut but actually quite nebulous as a chronological decade with all its prodigious unfoldings must be managed within carefully constructed conceptual parameters. Fortunately, a promising start has been made by the editors of *Social text* who, along with other contributors, mapped the field in a special themed issue of the journal. In their introduction to this volume they attach the following overall significance to the category of the '1960s': "the '60s' is merely the name we give to a disruption of late-capitalist ideological and political hegemony, to a disruption of the bourgeois dream of unproblematic production, of everyday life as the bureaucratic society of controlled consumption, of the end of history."<sup>4</sup> In the United States, the centre of *Social text's* attention, the counter-hegemonic forces were composed of the anti-war movement, the student movement, civil rights and black power activists, and the movement for women's liberation, to name only the most visible and important. The 'sixties' as a period could be said to begin around the time of the Cuban revolution and the rise of John F. Kennedy, and to carry on beyond December 1969 into the early part of the 1970s. "It seems appropriate", writes Fredric Jameson, "to mark the definitive end of the '60s' in the general area of 1972-1974... For 1973-4 is the moment of the onset of a worldwide economic crisis...which put a decisive fullstop to the economic expansion and prosperity characteristic of the post-war period generally and of the 60s in particular."<sup>5</sup> For the purposes of this chapter, this means that much of the photographic work carried out by Westra in the chronological decade of the 1970s is in fact preoccupied with '60s' themes. This is the case because: "for interpretive purposes, the 60s is not a chronological category which encompasses a decade, but rather a historical construct or heuristic rubric which renders noteworthy historical processes and events intelligible."<sup>6</sup>

Other commentators of a less academic persuasion than Jameson and the writers for the special issue of *Social text* have also advanced a conceptual and non-chronological definition of the '60s'. In a recent study of the decade, the novelist and critic Jenny Diski proposes a time span more or less similar to Jameson's: "The sixties ... were not the decade of the same name. They began in the mid-1960s with the rise of popular culture ... aided by a generation of people who did not have an urgent economic fear, nor (in Britain) a war to deal with, and it ended in the mid-1970s when all the open-ended possibilities we saw began to narrow, as disillusion, right-wing politicians, and the rest of our lives started to loom unexpectedly large."<sup>7</sup> The underground music producer Joe Boyd begins his memoir of the period with the bold statement: "The sixties began in the summer of 1956, ended in October of 1973 and peaked just before dawn on 1 July, 1967 during a set by Tomorrow at the UFO Club in London."<sup>8</sup> And a third of the way into his book, he adds a further qualification: "Anyone wishing to portray the history of the sixties as a journey from idealism to hedonism could place the hinge at around 9.30 on the night of 25 July, 1965."<sup>9</sup> He is, of course, referring to the Newport Folk Festival in which an electrified Bob Dylan outraged American folk purists, who were confused and angered by the turn of his songwriting from clear-cut political issues towards the complexities of an interior subjectivity.

Dylan has been cited as pivotal to countercultural developments within New Zealand, too. In an introductory essay to an anthology of 'countercultural' poems originally published in small journals between 1960 and 1975, Murray Edmond asserts: "It is perhaps difficult to exaggerate Dylan's importance to the poetry and poetics of *Big smoke*."<sup>10</sup> And he cites the recording session of *Another side of Bob Dylan* on June 9, 1964, quoting two stanzas from "Chimes of freedom", as the turning point for the "young New Zealand poets" who began to emerge in the later part of the decade. Interestingly enough, another and earlier point of departure for the anthology's poetry and poetics is Hone Tuwhare's anti-nuclear poem "No ordinary sun" (first published in 1958), which, alongside Rangi Harrison's "Waikato te Awa" (first published in *Te ao hou* in June 1962), opens the volume.

Dylan's turn towards the complexities of inner subjectivity is mirrored to some degree in the sixties radicals' stress on individualism and an emerging identity politics. As Tony Judt sees it from the vantage point of the second decade of the new millennium, "What united the '60s generation was not the interest of all, but the needs and rights of each. 'Individualism' – the assertion of every person's claim to maximum private freedom and the unrestrained liberty to express autonomous desires and have them respected and institutionalized by society at large – became the left-wing watchword of the hour."<sup>11</sup> Musicologist Ian MacDonald nominates John Lennon's song "Come together" as the anthem of this broad movement: "enthusiastically received in campus and underground circles, COME TOGETHER is *the* key song of the turn of the decade, embodying a pivotal moment when the free world's coming generation rejected established wisdom, knowledge, ethics, and behaviour for a drug-inspired relativism which has since undermined the intellectual foundations of Western culture."<sup>12</sup>

### *New Zealand In The '60s'*

New Zealand's experience of the '60s' parallels in a minor key some of the disturbances and experiments of northern hemisphere countries during that period. The historical construct that stands for the '60s' extends from the time of New Zealand's commencement of involvement in the Vietnam War (1965) up until the death of Norman Kirk on 31 August 1974 which effectively signaled the end of the third Labour government and its experiments in progressive liberal politics.

### *The Vietnam War*

Historian W.H. Oliver has (s)electd "the trauma of Vietnam" as "New Zealand's major shared experience of the 1960s."<sup>13</sup> The impact of the Vietnam conflict on the political life of New Zealand was out of all proportion to its actual military involvement. Only 3,500 New Zealand troops served in Vietnam between 1965 and 1972 and there were never more than 550 men in the field at any one time. The United States, by contrast, deployed a half million soldiers at the height of the war. New Zealand officially entered the war on May 27, 1965 when the then Prime Minister, Keith Holyoake decided to send a small artillery

unit, apparently in response to a request from the South Vietnamese government.

The cornerstone of New Zealand's defence policy at the time had been set in the early 1950s when it joined the ANZUS alliance (1951) and helped form the South East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) pact (1954). Prior to World War II, New Zealand had looked principally to Britain for guidance in matters of international conflict and defence. But with the decline of Britain and the simultaneous rise of the United States as a world power, New Zealand politicians from 1950 to 1967, a period now widely regarded as the most conservative in the country's entire history, began to take their cue from the latter when it came to questions of war, both hot and cold. A 1966 Review of Defence Policy stated the National government's goal as follows: "to establish a claim upon our major allies for consultations, a voice in important decisions, and in the last resort and most importantly, military assistance and protection in time of need. This requires New Zealand to demonstrate willingness and ability to assist our allies in matters affecting their national interests."<sup>14</sup>

The New Zealand government's decision to commit troops to Vietnam coincided with and indeed generated the first local demonstrations against that war. Shortly after that, the Wellington based Committee on Vietnam was formed to provide information about the war and coordinate protest activity. Its efforts flowered in late March 1968 when a Peace, Power and Politics in Asia Conference was held in Wellington to coincide with a SEATO council meeting. 1,400 delegates and several thousand subscribers attended the conference. Such distinguished international speakers as Conor Cruise O'Brien, V.K. Krishna Menon, William Pomeroy, C.P.Fitzgerald, J.F. Cairns, Jean Lacoutre and Felix Greene delivered papers and they were joined by several important local speakers. In his introduction to the published papers, conference organiser Alister Taylor asserted the principles of self-interest, non-alignment and independence as most appropriate for the future direction of New Zealand foreign policy. The final communique of the conference expressed strong antipathy to the SEATO alliance and demanded New Zealand's withdrawal from it for the following reasons: "SEATO is part of the Cold War alliance and is a real factor contributing to the present instability in Asia. SEATO is contrary to the United Nations Charter. Nothing in this charter gives any country the right to wage war...the involvement of the United States and her "allies" in Vietnam is an act of aggression."<sup>15</sup>

Mass mobilisation against the war continued on into the 1970s, reaching a peak in June 1971 when an estimated 1% of the total New Zealand population took to the streets in nationwide protest action. The country's military involvement in Vietnam finally came to an end after the election of the third Labour government in November 1972. This unpopular war, news of which reached New Zealanders on their recently introduced television network<sup>16</sup>, focused attention on the question of New Zealand's place in the outside world and the country's foreign policy; it also signaled a breaking up of the consensual attitudes which had given the first twenty years since World War II such a homogeneous character. A subsequent article by Alister Taylor which looks back at this period concludes with a statement that echoes the one by Oliver at the beginning of this section: "Vietnam was the central conflict of the 1960s, it, and the protest it evoked, shaped many lives...it was a time when people like me came alive to the issue confronting society and decided to do something about it."<sup>17</sup>

Westra took many memorable photographs of protest action against the war in Vietnam (see pages 70, 81, and 91 of *Notes*) and they form part of a large archive of 'protest' photography she has accumulated over her long career. (Fig. 20) Before moving on, I want to draw attention to a particularly interesting photograph published in *Notes*, which has only an oblique connection to this issue. On page 109, there is a full-page image of two young Maori men standing in front of a shop window displaying musical instruments. (Fig. 21) They both clutch bags of recently purchased merchandise. The youth on the right holds an indeterminate object; the one on the left carries a bag from His Lordship's, a fashionable clothing shop of the time. Their dress style combines casual and more formal elements in a sartorially distinctive manner. The photograph continues and updates for the early 1970s Westra's studies of Maori youth's engagement with contemporary style that is such a strong feature of *Maori*. The "Description and Location" of the picture is given simply as "Wellington" and we might rest content with seeing the photo as another fine contribution to the documentation of Maori urban street style. However, the diagonally directed gaze of the two young men has a focus and concentration that suggests they are not waiting for a bus but are looking at something of significance. An examination of the contact sheet of this particular photo shoot reveals what that something is.<sup>18</sup> It is a Vietnam War protest march winding its way through the Wellington street where the two men are standing. The photograph is not positioned with other protest or countercultural images; it is grouped with other miscellaneous pictures of everyday life. But it does complicate and raise questions about the (ethnic) composition of the youth and protest culture recorded and celebrated elsewhere throughout the book.

*The Counterculture: Tim Shadbolt And Alister Taylor Publishing*

If Vietnam was the central issue triggering New Zealand's entry into the international currents of the '60s' then it wasn't long before it was joined by others which were to prove of equal importance. What Vietnam spawned was 'the protest movement' and like its counterparts elsewhere it had strong roots in the student population, elements of which began to express a certain general dissatisfaction with the society they were being groomed for. Perhaps the most colourful of the 'student activists', although his commitment to the university was sporadic and always less than total, was Tim Shadbolt whose book *Bullshit and jellybeans* (1971) is a major countercultural artifact of the period. Something of the large, totalising claims of the 'protest movement' as a kind of prairie fire sweeping across society are contained in this lengthy passage from that book, couched in true 'Mai 68' style:

The protest movement is no longer one little isolated group but is spreading through the universities, high schools, churches, trade unions, political parties, government departments. The whole population is beginning to protest against the old trends and established patterns of life. Our generation isn't just kicking its heels against the establishment, we are preparing a whole new life style; we are almost a sub-culture with a new set of ideals. We don't want to be educated - we

want to know why we are being educated; we don't just want to work – we want to know what the ultimate purpose of our work is; we don't just want to fight, we want to know why we should fight. We want real answers. In challenging the basic values upon which our society is built, we want some changes and we want them fast.<sup>19</sup>

This all encompassing disaffection with the norms of New Zealand society appears in a book which belongs formally to a '60s' genre which mixed autobiographical accounts of a coming to political consciousness with spontaneist outbursts of idealist exhortation. In the United States, Jerry Rubin's *DO IT!: scenarios of the revolution* (1970) and Abbie Hoffman's *Revolution for the hell of it* (1968) and *Steal this book* (1971) are perhaps the two most prominent examples; while in the United Kingdom, *Playpower* (1970) by Richard Neville, an Australian who edited *Oz* magazine and stood trial for alleged obscenity, is a close equivalent.

But what Shadbolt attempts to conceive imaginatively within the pages of his book and practically by means of the protest activity it celebrates and hopes to inspire is a new utopian political community. One can agree with Michael Beveridge that there is something simple, naive and childlike about Shadbolt's book but surely this is as much to do with its genre and the period from which it springs as it is with his own rampant idealism. It is therefore important that he adds this qualification: "Shadbolt is speaking – affectively as much as logically – for a whole generation which, growing up in the fifties and sixties, confused, angered, moved at last to protest by what it found intolerable in its environment, has attempted to rediscover and maintain a few simple truths."<sup>20</sup>

These simple truths, however, potent as they may have been temporarily, were unleavened by the contribution of any comprehensive social theory which might have deepened and refined them into a critique relevant to a wider society. Nevertheless their power, as embodied in the three-dimensional form of protest action, to capture the attention of the electronic and photographic media as *spectacular* events was undeniable and seminal. Shadbolt concluded his book in a more cautious tone: "I don't know THE answer. I don't believe anyone knows the answer. Our goals are world peace and brotherhood of man. Protest is not THE answer. But it is a legitimate means of working one out." (p.198)

Westra was one among a number of photographers and graphic artists that contributed a strong visual dimension to *Bullshit and jellybeans*. Her dynamic photograph of a moment of anti-USA guerilla theatre on the steps of parliament fits perfectly within the "Guerilla festival" section of Shadbolt's book (p.69); as does another shot from that session on page 70 of *Notes on the country I live in*. And her portrait of the camera wielding veteran protester Freda Cook appears in both *Bullshit* (p.138), and *Notes* (p.91), where its Description and Location entry reads, "Protest demonstration against American base at Woodburne". Further Westra photographs of protest action against American military installations in New Zealand, organized by the Committee Against Foreign Military Activities in New Zealand (CAFMANZ), were included in a book published by Alister Taylor in February 1973.<sup>21</sup>

*Bullshit* and *Notes* were both published by Alister Taylor Publishing (ATP). Along with Tim Shadbolt and Chris Wheeler (the publisher and editor of the underground political magazine *Cock*; captured resplendent in braces and bush shirt in a Vietnam protest photo by Westra on page 81 of *Notes*, Fig. 22)<sup>22</sup>, Taylor made up a triumvirate of publicly

visible countercultural figures. This was recognized by the influential and provocative television interviewer Brian Edwards, who invited the three of them into the studios of the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation (NZBC) to take part in the pilot episode of his eponymous new show in the early 1970s. It was never broadcast.<sup>23</sup> Alister Taylor had studied Political Science at Victoria University of Wellington and had been President of the New Zealand University Students' Association; after leaving University he worked as a current affairs producer for the NZBC, until sometime in 1968. He would later work for the publishers A.H and A.W. Reed before devoting his time exclusively to his own publishing enterprises.

I have already discussed Taylor's role in organising the Peace, Power and Politics in Asia conference in the late 1960s. But it was as a publisher of alternative books in the early to mid 1970s that Taylor made his most important contribution to the shape and momentum of the local counterculture. Starting in late 1971 with what is virtually the movement's manifesto, *Bullshit*, Taylor continued with a steady stream of appropriately designed soft backed volumes aimed at countercultural readers. These included: Soren Hansen and Jesper Jensen's *The little red school book* (1972), translated from Danish by Berit Thornberry and "edited and revised for New Zealand conditions by a diverse group of teachers, University lecturers, students, doctors, journalists, editors and lawyers"; the Alternative Writing Group's *The Patricia Bartlett cookbook* (1972), a satirical view of the secretary of the conservative Society for the Promotion of Community Standards – "... not really a cookbook, nor is it by Patricia Bartlett ... a work of fantasy ... a light look at censorship in New Zealand 1972 style"; *Sexist society* (1972), edited by Susan Kedgley and Sharyn Cederman, with contributions by Toni Church, Professor John Werry, and Doctor Fraser McDonald (on "suburban neurosis"); *The first New Zealand whole earth catalogue* (1972); Sam Hunt's book of poems, *From Bottle Creek* (1972); *James K. Baxter 1926-1972: a memorial volume* (1972); and, of course, *Notes*, also published in the busy year of 1972; Felicity Tuohy and Michael Murphy's *Down under the plum trees* (1976), an illustrated sex education manual for the open minded parents of adolescents; and, finally, *The third New Zealand whole earth catalogue* (1977). By the time of the last two mentioned books, the '60s' had run its course, and the National party, under the hard line leadership of Robert Muldoon, was back in power. But in the early 1970s, arguably the high water mark of the '60s' in New Zealand, Alister Taylor's publications represented most of the main voices of the counterculture.

Another important part of Taylor's publishing enterprises was *Affairs* magazine, which began publication in February 1969 as "a magazine specifically for secondary school students."<sup>24</sup> Robert L. Andersen edited the first issue, which was published by News Communication Limited, whose Managing Director was Alister Taylor. By the following month and issue number two, "Editorial" of this monthly A4 size newsprint-stock magazine was credited to Taylor, his partner of the time Gillian McGregor, and various others. With issue number eight, in February 1970, Taylor assumed sole editorship of the magazine. In that number's editorial ("A message from the hay"), beneath a photograph showing him sitting amongst the overgrown grass of a field, he writes: "As you can see, I'm no 70 year old sitting in some plush Wellington office making money ... our aim is not

money, but a solidly established magazine which will supply students...”<sup>25</sup> Taylor operated as sole editor from this issue until issue number 22 (June 1971), and he co-edited issues 23 to 26 with Gillian McGregor. His final editorial contribution to *Affairs*, again as sole editor, came with issue number 27, which began with “Words from Alister Taylor”: “It has been put about – unfairly in my opinion – that *Affairs* is anti-teacher and anti-authority. THIS IS NOT SO ... *Affairs* is not anti-teacher; in fact the proof should be the fact that I edit the teachers’ own magazine – PPTA [Post Primary Teachers’ Association] Journal.”<sup>26</sup> While the magazine may not necessarily have promulgated an explicit “anti-authority” stance, it certainly could be seen as having promoted the questioning of authority. An accurate subtitle for *Affairs* might have been ‘counterculture for secondary students’. It had a strong current affairs orientation, running articles on Agriculture in China, Communism in Latin America, and Malcolm X, amongst items that covered topics and themes mostly within the humanities sector of the Secondary school curriculum (History, Geography, and English) but with some attention paid to science topics. It also devoted a considerable amount of space to youth culture, especially rock music. The cover of issue number 14 (August 1970) carried a photograph of Catherine Delahunty, a pupil at Johnsonville’s Onslow College and chairman [sic] of the Secondary School Students’ Association. Superimposed over the dot-screen rendition of her face, the question “How Revolutionary?” was printed in red. The answer to this question, which emerged from the interview with Delahunty inside the magazine, was probably too “revolutionary” for Principals from schools considerably less liberal than Onslow College.

Taylor’s “Words” in issue 27 were his last as editor. Three months later, in February 1972, issue 28 arrived in a new A3 format, a folded tabloid similar in appearance to the New Zealand edition of *Rolling stone* magazine. Publication of the revamped magazine was credited to Student Publications Limited, based at 194 Sydney Street West in Wellington, the editorial offices of Alister Taylor Publishing, and all its staff were associates of Taylor – editor Graham Culliford and associate editor Gillian McGregor. Taylor himself remained as consultant editor. An editorial note (“The old editor and the new”) informed readers: “Alister Taylor has resigned as editor but will advise on technical matters relating to *Affairs*. Alister continues as editor of the PPTA journal, as chief editor of Reed Education/division of A.H. & A.W. Reed Ltd., and with his own publishing programme. More than enough to keep him busy!”<sup>27</sup> And the new editor made it clear that there had been a major rethink of the magazine’s direction, stating, after a “full reassessment it was decided to increase the educational content of the magazine.”<sup>28</sup> This increased educational content appeared in a special centrally placed section and took the form of lengthy, detailed essays on topics from, particularly, the History and Geography curricula, written by specialist teachers. The magazine continued in this form until November 1973 (issue 45), with Stuart Spackman assuming editorship in February 1973, and Culliford remaining as contributing editor. In his first issue as editor (number 38), Spackman included a hitherto unpublished article by the then late James K. Baxter, “Militancy in the schools”, one of the last pieces he wrote. This article is a direct attack on what Baxter perceives as the shortcomings of the New Zealand educational system and it doesn’t bother with any of the niceties of careful argument. It’s not difficult to speculate about the likely effect that this article had on more conservative New

Zealand teachers. The editor prefaces the article with the naïve hope that its publication will lead to vigorous discussion and debate.<sup>29</sup> Eight months later, the editorial group composed “A few last words from *Affairs*”, claiming that the move to include more curriculum content had not proved to be particularly appealing to the students themselves, and reaching the conclusion: “*Affairs* will not start again next year ... we have decided it would be better to put our energies into publications that do not rely on distribution through the schools.”<sup>30</sup> Although this note definitely announced the end of the Alister Taylor affiliated *Affairs*, it did not form part of a final issue because when “next year” (1974) arrived so did yet another revamp of the magazine – “The new *Affairs* your magazine”. Now published by Praxis Publications LTD and reverting to the format of an A4 magazine, its general editors were Don Hill and Lauris Edmond (a poet and frequent contributor of articles and interviews on poetry to the Taylor *Affairs*). They announced the magazine’s new direction in their first editorial note: “We do not believe in taking any particular political stance. Our approach will be above all a humanitarian one.”<sup>31</sup> This most un-Taylor like intention resulted immediately in a magazine radically different from its previous incarnations. By issue number 47 (March 1974), the magazine had defined sections with regular writers assigned to them. The mix of Prose, Poetry Art, Motoring (!), Music, Fashion, Films, TV, and Careers sections now placed *Affairs* firmly within a conventional magazine format, albeit one nominally addressed to Secondary school students. Issues #49 to #51, all edited by Neil Rowe, took the magazine to November 1974. It did not return the following year, its life span thus falling neatly within the ‘60s’.

Ans Westra was a reasonably regular contributor to the Taylor era *Affairs*. Her photographs were published in six issues of the magazine, stretching from number 14 in August 1970 to number 36 of October 1972.<sup>32</sup> Of the books published by Alister Taylor, named in a paragraph above, the only one that did not contain photographs by Westra was *The little red school book* and that was because it contained no illustrations at all. In effect, Westra was the house photographer of ATP, even though she continued to work on a freelance basis. What this means is that during the first half of the 1970s, ATP provided a working context for Westra comparable to that provided by the Department of Maori Affairs’ journal *Te ao hou* and the Department of Education’s School Publications Branch in the 1960s. As with the two 1960s relationships, Westra’s involvement with ATP also entails the expansion of the potential historical significance of her work beyond the level of a single author’s statements. *Notes* is, on one level, simply part of Westra’s ongoing photographic output. But on another, along with the many other books she contributed photographs to, it’s part of a cultural formation called ATP, a local countercultural enterprise within which Taylor himself assumes authorial prominence; a prominence he, in turn and of necessity, relinquishes within the authorless network of the wider local and international counterculture.

### *James K. Baxter And Jerusalem*

James K. Baxter (1926–1972) remains one of New Zealand’s most distinguished poets and critics. His perceptive comments on the *Washday at the pa* controversy can be found in chapter four. As a former editor for School Publications (1956–1962) his views on this

contentious matter are especially interesting and informed. However, Baxter's particular relevance to this chapter, in addition to his contribution of an introductory text to *Notes on the country I live in*, stems from the '60s' persona he assumed from October 1968 until his premature death in October 1972. Immediately prior to this transfiguration in his appearance and public persona Baxter had spent three years in Dunedin, two of them as the Burns fellow in literature at Otago University and in his final year there he occupied himself with a mix of literary and religious activities. During this time he wrote a great deal of poetry, essays on religious topics (for the Catholic journal *The tablet*), and many plays for Patric and Rosalie Carey's Globe Theatre in Dunedin.

Towards the end of 1968, Baxter moved northwards from Dunedin to eventually surface publicly as the keeper of a house ("crash pad" in the parlance of the time) for junkies and dropouts at 7 Boyle Crescent in the Grafton area of Auckland. In place of the reasonably clean-cut and tidily dressed poet, a longhaired, heavily bearded and raggedly dressed (op shop style) figure began to take shape and surface in the media. The late Baxter, the 'prophet' or socio-religious martyr rather than the purely literary man, had arrived. He then founded his most well-known or notorious experiment in communal living outside the perimeters of 'straight' society in September 1969 at the aptly named rural retreat of Jerusalem, situated on the Whanganui River; and despite problems of organisation and much hostile press it continued to function without him for several years after his death. From around September 1971 until October 1972, Baxter did not reside permanently at Jerusalem. In his final year he resumed his role as an activist on behalf of the urban dispossessed by such acts as the setting up of an urban crash pad at 26 Macdonald Crescent in Wellington. Also, throughout this period he periodically traveled around the country, and at the time of his death he was back in Auckland. In his comprehensive study of the significance of Baxter's Jerusalem community, John Newton has written: "Jerusalem was Baxter's riposte to all those Pakeha institutions – the churches, the university, the nuclear family and so on – whose lack of heart and small-minded materialism were now failing Pakeha youth in the same way that Pakeha culture had always failed Maori. In looking for a remedy for the failings of Pakeha society, he found his prime inspiration in the communitarian virtues that he saw among Maori: aroha, mahi, korero, manuhiritanga."<sup>33</sup>

Baxter's importance to this chapter is manifold. He contributed an introductory essay to *Notes on the country I live in*, and three Baxter related photographs appear in the book: a head and shoulders portrait (cropped) taken at Horo Horo Students' camp (p.96); a study (also cropped) of Don Franks playing a violin on the verandah of a house at the Jerusalem commune (p.37); and a full page image of a commune couple swimming in the Whanganui River (p.115). These photographs make up just a small fraction of the Baxter photographs Westra took throughout the poet's Jerusalem period. Shortly after Baxter's death, many more were published in a special memorial volume of texts (poems by Baxter, critical appreciations and remembrances) and photographs (including 12 snapshots of the younger Baxter by Brian Bell, one John Miller photo, two from *The Dominion*, and two from *The evening post*) issued by Alister Taylor Publishing in December 1972. In his preface to the book, Taylor writes: "We publish here...unpublished photographs of Baxter in the 1970s and of his tangi at Jerusalem by Ans Westra... The idea started from seeing Ans

Westra's evocative and memorable collection of Baxter photographs..."<sup>34</sup> *James K. Baxter 1926-1972: a memorial volume* has a similar but not identical format to *Notes on the country I live in*. Design and layout is again by Jule Einhorn and the foldout front cover photograph is a Westra picture of the Jerusalem period Baxter, taken at Horo Horo students' camp. He is captured in a landscape view from behind as he walks across a field holding the hand of the teenage Anne Noble, a major New Zealand photographer of the future; the back cover carries a photograph of the younger Baxter taken by his friend Brian Bell in the 1950s. In addition to the cover there are 22 Westra photographs inside this memorial volume. In sum it amounts to a sizable visual record of Baxter's last years: cropped variants of informal head and shoulders portraits of the poet taken at Horo Horo, spread throughout the volume (6); his commune at Jerusalem (7); and his tangi (9).

I take Baxter's appeal as subject to Westra to lie in at least two things: his position as a major figure in the counterculture, an 'outsider', eccentric to and highly critical of the puritanical, materialist mainstream of New Zealand society; and secondly, an extension of the first point, his vigorous embrace of the community and aroha of Maori culture as a spiritual alternative to the vacuum in Pakeha society. After participating in a Hamilton march against the war in Vietnam, Baxter wrote: "the children of the affluent, suffering an inward death by depersonalization, at times amounting to an anguish of apathy fathered on them by the demon of obsessive materialism we tend to obey and worship, were joined to the dead children of the Vietnamese townsmen and mud farmers, collectively ruled and collectively killed, and the American servicemen dead through an enforced obedience to a collective military machine."<sup>35</sup>

My main discussion of *Notes on the country I live in* can be found in a later section of this chapter. However I will anticipate it here by continuing to look at the photographs of Baxter and Jerusalem in *Notes* and in another publication. On page 96 of *Notes* there is an open-air portrait of J.K. Baxter at Horo Horo Catholic students' camp, near Lake Karapiro, clearly taken around the same time (1971) as the six (seven if a group shot is counted) informal portraits contained in the memorial volume. To my mind, however, the most outstanding of these Jerusalem portraits was first published on the cover of the October 1971 issue of *Affairs* magazine.<sup>36</sup> (Fig. 23) It was preferred over two alternatives on contact sheet no.345 (frames 10 and 12), annotated by Westra as, "James K. Baxter with students and nuns". (Fig.24) The foreground of this photograph shows the top third of Baxter's body, set against an expanse of sky, with the leaves of surrounding trees acting as borders. Baxter's light and loose fitting coat is open, exposing his bare chest; a crucifix hangs from a chain around his neck. His head is tilted at a slight angle. The black and white source image has been altered in the magazine's production process so that the sky is rendered in a purple tone and the surrounding foliage in a painterly, artificial green. While not necessarily best described as psychedelic, it is certainly in line with '60s' graphic style, as were many of *Affairs*' covers. A further four of Westra's Baxter photos (from the Horo Horo shoot) are reproduced in this number of the magazine, as well as two articles on his Jerusalem commune, making it something of a Baxter issue.<sup>37</sup>

Exactly one year later, with its October 1972 edition, *Affairs* again featured Baxter on the cover. (Fig. 25) But this particular cover revealed that the photograph used on

the earlier cover had been severely cropped. The sourced photograph, printed from the complete negative and given a light blue tint by the designer, now showed Baxter's full figure. In the foreground of the image, the poet is captured standing in a field, beneath the densely foliated branches of a large tree. His left hand is raised slightly, with two of its fingers extended. His right hand hangs by his side, a lit cigarette wedged between two fingers and a cigarette packet clasped between his thumb and remaining fingers. Although seemingly detached and lost in thought, he is not alone. Behind him, on both sides, various people, including two nuns and a young boy, walk and talk. In front of him, seated on the grass below, the bowed heads of two young people (Anne Noble on the left) can be seen. Visually, the centered figure of Baxter is the still point of a relatively busy composition. It's as if he is both part of and separate from this human microcosm. This is a strong and visually interesting composition and stands up as a powerful and suggestive photograph in its own right. However, the preferred and persisting version of the image has proven to be the cropped one, although subsequently more of Baxter's upper body is shown than in the October 1971 *Affairs* version. A little more than a decade later it was reproduced in W.H. Oliver's *J.K. Baxter: a portrait* and twenty years after that a large, full-page, high quality reproduction was printed in the *Handboek* monograph.<sup>38</sup> (Fig. 26) The decontextualisation achieved by the cropping of the image, combined with full-page reproduction, removes Baxter from his worldly location, and thereby renders him a solitary figure preoccupied with his own thoughts. But its loss of suggestive context is more than compensated for by its gain in expressive power. In a manner similar to the uncropped version, but in a far more concentrated form, it manages to combine intimations of Baxter the prophet (or man of action) and Baxter the contemplative thinker (or man of poetry), i.e., the two main sides of the man in the one image. This is the only one of Westra's (or anyone else's) images of Baxter that does this. All the others, including the many shots of Baxter taken at Horo Horo as well as a study made in St Joseph's church, tend to picture him in a religious or martyr pose, often with a heavy and resigned downward gaze. This outstanding photograph, which emanates what Georg Simmel refers to as "the impression of its [the face's] spirituality"<sup>39</sup>, remains the definitive image of the late Baxter and one of the most striking plain air portraits Westra, or any other local photographer, has fashioned during the last fifty years. However, it is as much a product of the darkroom as it is of the open air.

On page 37 of *Notes* is a study of the young commune member, Don Franks playing a violin on the verandah of the Top House at Jerusalem. This is one of a number of pictures Westra made of commune members at Jerusalem in 1971. Another shows Franks picking a guitar that lies flat across his knees, jamming with a bespectacled and bearded man who strums his guitar. But it is the images on the facing pages of 114 and 115 that constitute Westra's strongest visual statement of what Baxter's Jerusalem meant to her. The Jerusalem photo shows a young couple enjoying a naked swim in the Whanganui River. (Fig. 27) It is a tranquil, pastoral image full of light and peace which even the distant presence of a caravan and a car cannot disturb – 'Woodstock' without the mud and the unmanageable crowds. The image facing it couldn't be more different. (Fig. 28) It shows a put-upon looking middle-aged woman reaching for a basket of washing to hang out on the rotary clothesline behind her stark and functional home-unit. This unit, bare and ugly as it is, is dwarfed

by a huge, hideous circular construction, dedicated to a purpose we can only guess at. This picture conveys a barren, sterile environment, completely bereft of any possibility of community (despite an outcrop of more hospitable houses in the background). On and between these two pages Westra makes a Baxterian, even Blakeian, contrast between a Ponsonby reduction of a “dark satanic mill” and the “green and pleasant land” – for Baxter and Westra the only possible soil in which to build Jerusalem.

### *The Women’s Liberation Movement*

The birth of ‘second-wave’ feminism in New Zealand coincides with the arrival of the chronological decade of the 1970s.<sup>40</sup> The Wellington Women’s Liberation Front was formed in 1970 with 12 women and six men at its first meeting. Prominent amongst the issues addressed by this group and the Women’s Liberation Front in Auckland were equal pay for women and the question of ‘liberating’ the male defined space of the public bar. From 1971, the concept of consciousness-raising began to assume importance within the existing and the six further WL groups formed that year. In the same year, issue number one of the first WL newspaper, *Up from under*, was published by the Wellington WLF; and in 1972, *Broadsheet*, New Zealand’s most enduring feminist magazine began publication out of Auckland and continued to do so until the late 1990s.<sup>41</sup> Also published in 1972 was a book which shared a publisher with Westra’s *Notes on the country I live in*, Kedgley and Cederman’s *Sexist society*. Beginning with the statement, “A sexist society is one which is sexually discriminating and results in immense pain and suffering for both sexes”<sup>42</sup>, the editors incorporate material from interviews with “ordinary New Zealanders”, as well as written contributions from ‘experts’ such as leading mental health specialist Dr Fraser McDonald, Psychiatry Professor John Werry, and Toni Church. Ans Westra and other photographers contributed rather poorly reproduced pictures to the book but the principal visual contribution comes in the form of Richard Gunther’s full-page graphics.

In an article published two years after the appearance of her book *Up from under*, Christine Dann summarised the rapid growth of the local feminist movement: “Within two years the Women’s Liberation Movement in Aotearoa grew from dozens to hundreds of women (who attended the first National Women’s Liberation conference held in Wellington in April 1972). By 1973 there were thousands involved (1500 came to the first United Women’s Convention, held in Auckland in September).”<sup>43</sup> The expanding numbers of women flocking to join feminist groups and the proliferating number of issues they began to address resulted in the greater visibility of women in public space. And that is where Westra’s camera found them as the decade unfolded.

In 1976, she contributed three photographs to the book *Fragments of a world*, which was subtitled, “a collection of photographs by New Zealand women photographers”. Prompted by an idea from PhotoForum and published with the help of a \$1000 grant from the International Women’s Year Committee (1975), the featured photographers – amongst them Marti Friedlander, Rhondda Bosworth, Anne Noble, and Gillian Chaplin – contributed a handful of photographs each. Dawn Kendall introduces the photographs as

“a survey of women’s work” and notes, “We advertised widely throughout New Zealand, asking women to send up to ten photographs each. The response was impressive – over 200 portfolios were submitted.”<sup>44</sup> One of Westra’s three photographs shows four Maori workers on a building site, another a Maori father standing in a kitchen with a child by his side; both are familiar Westra style images.

The third image is altogether different in content and mood, and is the most intriguing of the three. It was taken in Newtown, Wellington, following a photo session for the book *Down under the plum trees*. In the background, at the top of an overgrown path, two plainly dressed young women look down at a young man who occupies the foreground. The young man is wearing a fur coat and a beret but what is most noticeable about his attire is a pair of shiny knee-length boots with very high stacked heels. According to Westra, “The guy had just bought his bright red boots and was going to take them for a special walk.” It is clear from the studied pose of the subject and Westra’s comments (“I asked him to show them off for the camera and spent a lot of thought on how best to photograph him”) that this is not simply a straightforward documentary image. There is a high degree of constructedness and artifice behind it, arising from the transaction between photographer and subject, which differentiates it from much of Westra’s photography of the period. In many respects it is a post-‘60s’ image, coming as it does at the beginning of the conceptual ‘70s’, as I have framed the divide between the two decades at the beginning of this chapter. The young man, posed like a peacock, has an ambiguous air of ‘glam’ about him, which is thrown into greater relief by the plain, expression-free presence of the two female onlookers (Westra states, “I quite like its implications”, without specifying what they are).<sup>45</sup> Although different in subject matter and tone, for me it parallels another quintessential ‘70s’ photograph, Australian photographer Carol Jerrems’s “Vale Street 1975”, made at exactly the same time, when the ‘60s’ gave way to the ‘70s’, and a different kind of subjectivity began to surface, in the wake of social change.<sup>46</sup>

### *Maori Activism*

At the same time as the Women’s Liberation Movement began to take shape in Auckland, a group of young Maori activists formed the organization Nga Tamatoa (the warriors) in the same city. It was founded immediately after a conference held at the University of Auckland and, according to the conference organiser Dr Ranginui Walker, its membership consisted of “radicals” who were influenced by American Black Power models, and “conservatives” who were University educated and eventually assumed overall leadership of the group. Westra’s informal portrait of a key member of the latter group, Hannah Jackson, caught in a moment of great concentration, “At a conference on South Africa, Victoria University, Wellington, 1972”, was included in *Whaiora* (p.111) 13 years later. (Fig. 29) A product of the post-war urban migration of Maori, Nga Tamatoa, like the WLM, engaged in both consciousness raising and forms of direct political action and lobbying. Amongst their most notable achievements were: the introduction of “...a Maori language day, which was taken over by the education system and eventually extended to

one week”; and the initiation of protest action on Waitangi day or New Zealand day as the Kirk Labour government renamed it, “...declaring the celebration a day of mourning for the loss of 25.2 million hectares of Maori land.”<sup>47</sup>

A related emphasis on the retention of the remaining 1.2 million hectares of Maori land reached a peak in 1975 with the Maori Land March. At a hui held on the Mangere marae in early 1975, the distinguished elder Whina Cooper, a former president of the Maori Women’s Welfare League, formed the organisation Te Roopu o te Matakite, with the aim of organising a march from the far north to the grounds of parliament in Wellington. After much planning the march eventually set off from Te Hapua on the 14th of September and finally arrived in Wellington on the 13th of October. The Labour Prime Minister Bill Rowling and other members of his government were present to meet the marchers whose marching slogan was “not one more acre of Maori land.”<sup>48</sup> When the marchers reached the greater Wellington area, Westra was present with her camera. As she told me: “In 1975 when the land march came to Wellington, I photographed the marchers on Porirua marae, then on the way to Wellington, all quite happily during the meeting with the Prime Minister at parliament grounds when they were under Eve Rickard. But then they moved away and the activists stayed. Now they pretty soon started chasing the Pakeha photographers off...Because I had published work and had made some money out of the images they felt that I had exploited them.”

#### *The Anti-Apartheid Movement*

Protest within New Zealand against the Apartheid regime in South Africa focused particularly on the question of sporting contacts. In 1969, the organisation Halt All Racist Tours (HART) was formed in order to work towards the cancellation of the All Blacks rugby tour to South Africa scheduled for 1970. Protest against the 1960 tour, anchored by the slogan “No Maoris, no tour”, was not successful in preventing a segregated All Black team from touring the republic. In 1970, even though South Africa agreed to accept a ‘mixed race’ team, the departing All Blacks were met with a strong wave of protest over the course of three days. Ans Westra was again present with her camera at these protests in Wellington and 13 of her photos were included in a publication, written and co-edited by Alister Taylor, and published by co-editor Chris Wheeler’s Cockerel Print, which documents the events. Several of her photographs reveal instances of police brutality. For example, two photographs on page eight. The first shows a demonstrator in black face and a fist moving across the picture plane. The caption reads: “A leathered police fist coming at Ans Westra’s camera just before impact, Friday night. On Thursday night her camera and lenses were damaged by police...” The second has a hand spread right across it. The caption reads: “Another police hand over the camera to stop Ans Westra photographing an ugly incident. The hand a second later covered the whole lens.”<sup>49</sup>

Several photographers contributed to the volume but the most striking photographs are Westra’s, and the standout image amongst them can be found on the back cover, reproduced in full. The focal point is a young woman carrying a placard raised high above

her head and directly engaging the viewer. From the beholder's viewpoint, the right side of her face is covered in black paint, while the left side is unmarked. The words on the placard read, "If you could see their national sport, you might be less keen to play their rugby", and they are superimposed over an image of the kind of police brutality depicted in other Westra images in the book. Two other protesters, one to the left and one to the right of the central figure, give balance to this strongly composed photograph, which also displays the stark contrast of nighttime shooting. The final segment of the book is titled, "Sequel: Shadbolt in court", and gives details of the high profile activist's fate as a result of his participation in the protests. A text block on the last page concludes the account of the events described and photographed thus: "This series of demonstrations marked a turning point in New Zealand protest. The All Black tour was a good focus for protest, it was a moral and a political and a social issue which young people could recognise as important. It had local and international connotations." (p.36)

## II

### IMAG(IN)ING THE COUNTRY

The works I propose to discuss in this and the next section of the chapter raise the question of what it means to try to represent a collectivity as large as an entire country. What these books confront is analogous to what, say, any enterprise aiming to construct a national image faces if it is to achieve coherence: how to produce an image or rather a set of related images which, potentially at least, can promote unity and identification(s) among a group of spectators who could just as easily split apart as fuse at the level of the Imaginary. Not all of these books aim to provide self-consciously national images, which could be accepted comfortably by both the locals and interested foreign parties as true and valid. The greater their investment in an ethnographic perspective the more likely it is that they will complicate the notion of a straightforward set of national self-images rather than just confirm them.

According to Benedict Anderson, a nation such as New Zealand or the United States is "...an imagined political community..." and "...all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined. Communities are to be distinguished not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined."<sup>50</sup> It is in the field of public representations that images of the country or nation are constructed. Hence the importance of, firstly, 'print capitalism' and the daily newspaper and subsequently the other mass communications media (radio, television) in making possible this large scale and long distance imagining.

The mass-produced photographic book emerged as a form from within the development of 'print capitalism'. It has proved to be particularly well suited to providing portraits of nations. The majority of these studies have been aimed at a large, popular readership, principally local but also including expatriates and tourists. However, from time to time a small number of works with different aims and ambitions has appeared alongside the voluminous output of these populist works. In the United States, one of the most important of these

works is Walker Evans's *American photographs* (1938), a book comprised of 87 photographs that was first published to accompany an exhibition of 100 prints. *American photographs* is divided into two parts. The first deals with "people by photography", revealing in the process "the physiognomy of a nation."<sup>51</sup> The second concentrates on items of American vernacular culture such as public monuments, architecture, and views of (Eastern) street scenes, with not a single human figure present within the depictions. A large proportion of the photographs in both parts were taken under the auspices of the Farm Security Administration when Evans was attached to that project in the earlier part of the decade. A small number of those in Part One emerged from Evans's field sojourn in Alabama where he worked alongside James Agee on the project that would eventually be published as *Let us now praise famous men* (1941). Lincoln Kirstein's introduction to *American photographs* is lucid on Evans's photographic style: "The most characteristic single feature of Evans's work is its purity, or even its puritanism. It is "straight" photography not only in technique but in the rigorous directness of its way of looking. All through the pictures in this book you will look in vain for an angle-shot. Every object is regarded head-on with the unsparing frankness of a Russian ikon or a Flemish portrait. The facts pile up with the prints."<sup>52</sup>

*American photographs* is very much a photographic book of its time: the Great Depression of the 1930s and the Roosevelt Government's response to it in the form of various New Deal initiatives. However, even though many of its photographs were made when working for one of those initiatives (the FSA), Evans's book exhibits a more general kind of national imagining and constitutes a different kind of national imaginary than more historically specific works such as Archibald MacLeish's *Land of the free* (1938, incorporating some Evans photographs) or Dorothea Lange and Paul Taylor's *An American exodus* (1939, see chapter two), both of which are more closely tied to the FSA project. Twenty years after the appearance of *American photographs*, another photographic book, with a very similar title, was published, first in France, then in the United States – Robert Frank's *The Americans* (1959).

### *The Americans*

In 1955 Robert Frank received a Guggenheim fellowship – the first to be awarded to a European photographer – which enabled him to spend all of 1955 and some of 1956 traveling across the USA in a rented car making something in the vicinity of 1500 photographs. In his grant application to the Guggenheim Foundation, Frank stated his intention "...to produce an authentic contemporary document, the visual impact should be such as will nullify explanation..."<sup>53</sup> In a later statement which appeared in the same year as the first, French edition of his book *Les Americans* (1958), Frank declared: "...I have attempted to show a cross-section of the American population... The view is personal and, therefore various facets of American life and society have been ignored... It is important to see what is invisible to others...it is always the instantaneous reaction to oneself that produces a photograph."<sup>54</sup> Towards the end of the statement from which the above extract comes, Frank names the Englishman Bill Brandt and the American Walker Evans as the two

most important influences on his photography. And certainly if there is a precedent for *The Americans* it would be Evans's 1938 publication *American photographs* which contains approximately the same number of photos. Like Evans, Frank produced images of an "unsparing frankness" (Kirstein), if you'll forgive the pun, from within the field of 'straight' photography. But, above all, what *American photographs* provided for Frank, was a paradigm for an extended photographic exploration of something as vast and complex as American culture and society. In subsequent interviews, Frank has spoken of the impasse he had reached with his work in the early 1950s: "I always tried to come up with one picture that really said it all, that was a masterpiece. But I had used up the single, beautiful image. By the time I applied for a Guggenheim, I decided that that wasn't it either: it had to last longer, be a more sustained form of visual (expression)...there needed to be more pictures that would sustain an idea or a vision or something."<sup>55</sup>

The photographs contained within *The Americans* were consciously conceived in a spirit pitched against the grain of the established photojournalism of the time. They not only penetrated more deeply into the fabric of the mundanity of everyday life but also achieved their ultimate impact by means of their unorthodox (for the time) ordering in book form. Frank's earlier experience freelancing for *Harper's bazaar*, *Fortune*, *Look*, and *Life* had led to dissatisfaction with the limits of photojournalism, as he confided to Johnson and Cohen: "I developed a tremendous contempt of *Life* magazine ... and I hated those goddamned stories with a beginning and a middle and an end. Obviously I had to make an effort to produce something that could stand up to any of those stories but not be like it."<sup>56</sup>

#### *Robert Frank and Ans Westra: a Brief Comparison*

It is instructive to ponder the similarity of pattern in the early biographical trajectories of two important twentieth century photographers, Robert Frank and Ans Westra. Both were born in continental Europe (Frank in Zurich, Switzerland, 1924. Westra in Leiden, Holland, 1936.) Both immigrated to the 'new world' at a relatively early age (Frank to the U.S.A. in 1947, aged 23. Westra to New Zealand in 1957, aged 21.) Although both had tried their hands at the craft they would later make their own (especially Frank), it was only subsequent to arrival in the new land that they began to take steps to assemble the components of style, 'vision' and subject matter. Even so, the overall shape of their respective careers in photography is, in several ways, quite different: Frank largely abandoned photography for film making after the publication of his major work, *The Americans*, in the late 1950s; Westra spent her first decade in New Zealand photographing a specific ethnic group and has maintained an abiding interest in it while diversifying into other areas from the early 1970s onwards. Yet I would argue that both of them have photographed their adopted countries from a perspective infused with something of a European sensibility. Thus they have moved within their new environments as 'ethnologist-strangers' using their 'outsider' status and skewed vision to defamiliarise the commonplace rituals of another society. Although I should emphasise that these two photographers are stylistically very different; Westra rarely, if ever, produces the kind of dense, fractured images

that Frank first unleashed on a startled public. My purpose in comparing them is to highlight this notion of the ‘photographer-ethnologist’, particularly as it manifests itself in the two works which are, I consider, comparable in this way: Frank’s *The Americans* (1959) and Westra’s *Notes on the country I live in* (1972).

*The Americans* has an extremely complex visual structure and its complexity operates in several registers. The individual images themselves defy a simple reading as they are complicated by formal elements of “... self reflexivity, mise-en-abyme, decentering of the image...”<sup>57</sup> Although her photographic style is very different from Frank’s, I would argue that Westra’s *Notes on the country I live in*, which I will examine in detail further on, is quite atypical of the genre of national photographic portraits to which it ostensibly belongs. The unorthodox character of *Notes* will be made apparent not only in my reading but also by reference to the orthodoxy from which it departs. *American photographs*, *The Americans*, and *Notes* are all composed of photographs in black and white, historically the preferred format for documentary and art photography. The books discussed in the next section use only colour photography, which marks them as commercial products. Before moving on to them, I would note that in the same year as *Notes* was published, Stephen Shore embarked on a road trip across Middle America, armed with a Rolleiflex 35 camera and Kodak colour film, and compiled a kind of photo-diary of his experiences with vernacular and consumer culture. The resulting exhibition (1972) and subsequent book (2005) bear the name, *American surfaces*, which both echoes and establishes a distance from Evans and Frank’s projects of the 1930s and 1950s respectively. When first exhibited, Shore’s unassuming snapshots in colour were simply pinned to the wall in grids, unmated and unframed. They did not resemble commercial colour photography and did not represent a colour version of art photography. Instead they pointed to a form of photography that would gain in importance in subsequent decades and inform everyday photographic practice in the new millennium.

#### *Picturing New Zealand*

... of the books sold in any of the four main cities, about one-third are on New Zealand subjects and by New Zealand authors. At its simplest level, of course, this is an appetite for mirrors – especially for those expensive mirrors (*New Zealand in colour*, *New Zealand: gift of the sea*) which answer correctly to the question ‘who is the fairest of them all?’

—C.K. STEAD (1966)<sup>58</sup>

In “The spectacle of the landscape”, section three of an essay published in the late 1980s, Wystan Curnow wrote of a class of “high-minded photographic ‘coffee table’ books devoted wholly or in good part to the New Zealand landscape.” He then traced a “genealogical line” of such works, stretching from Brian Brake and Maurice Shadbolt’s *New Zealand: gift of the sea* (1963) to James Siers’s two books, *New Zealand: dramatic landscape* (1979) and *New Zealand: incredible landscape* (1984); and included within it

Les Cleveland's *The silent land* (1966), John Pascoe's *Of unknown New Zealand* (1972), and Eric Taylor's *This land of light* (1982).<sup>59</sup> In chapter one I quoted from John Pascoe's essay on "Photography in New Zealand", in which – echoing John Grierson's "The face of a New Zealander" – he called for "documentary stories" on the realities of New Zealand life to replace the plethora of touristic images of the past and present.<sup>60</sup> Clearly, Pascoe looked forward to a form of photography distinct from the landscape-dominated, tourist-orientated, 'coffee table' productions Curnow laments in the article referred to above. He would have been surprised and, no doubt, appalled to find himself included within a genre of photographic book he strived to distance himself from. The question is – do all the works cited above, and, by implication others from the same broad period, belong within Curnow's catchall category?

As outlined in chapter one, the *Witness to change* project aimed to rescue from obscurity some of Pascoe's wartime photographs, Les Cleveland's 1950s Westland (previously published in *The silent land*) and Wellington images, and Ans Westra's 1960s pictures of Maori (many previously published in *Maori*) and exhibit them, in effect, as a response to Pascoe's plea for documentary values over pictorialist or picturesque ones. In relation to the genre of the photographic book, the black and white images of these three photographers, and others who have followed them, such as Marti Friedlander, Gary Baigent, Glenn Busch, Julie Riley, and David Cook, constitute an alternative tradition to that which moves from Brake and Shadbolt's book to James Siers's two books named above. On the one hand, the Brake to Siers line works with an aesthetic of the spectacular single image, repeated in endless variations from North Cape to Bluff. Reading these books is not unlike viewing a slideshow of an ideal tourist's holiday recorded from mountaintop and helicopter cockpit. On the other hand, the line descending from John Pascoe, has given us photographic books that are not driven by the imperative to follow one static landscape panorama with another. Instead, these books are preoccupied with the social and historical dimension of New Zealand life. When they show us images of the land it is to examine its human habitation rather than as an end in itself. Whereas, what I'll call the beautiful Godzone book is always composed exclusively of colour photographs – with the exception of *Gift of the sea*, a more complex and variegated book than those that have followed – the New Zealand social documentary photographic book contains images that are invariably black and white.

### *The Bigwoods*

The beautiful New Zealand photographic book mostly served – and continues to do so in the present – to feed the "appetite for mirrors" referred to by C.K. Stead in the epigraph to this chapter. The most prolific contributors to this genre during Ans Westra's first decade as a photographer were Kenneth and June Bigwood who began a seemingly endless series of pictorial books on the splendours of the New Zealand landscape with *New Zealand in colour*, which first appeared in print in 1961, published by A.H. and A.W. Reed, as were all their subsequent books. Establishing a template for the books to follow, *Volume one* consists

of 55 colour photographs (52 full-page plates, one front and one back cover photograph, and a frontispiece photo), all taken by the Bigwoods over a seven-month period spent traveling around the country on the project. A note on the inside cover flap makes it clear that “this is a book of the countryside”. And this is borne out by the flow of the photographs, which begins in Northland with a shot of Hokianga Harbour and proceeds southwards down the length of both islands, coming to rest on Karitane Beach in the Deep South. Each plate (placed on the right) is accompanied by a text page that provides a gloss on each image (left side). James K. Baxter, then an assistant editor in the School Publications Branch of the Department of Education, wrote the text, even though, in his introduction, he writes, “let the photographs tell their own story”. In this spirit, his textual accompaniments to the photographs are relatively brief and are studded liberally with quotations from New Zealand poets, especially Denis Glover and also two of his co-editors at School Publications, Alistair Campbell and Louis Johnson. In his final textual entry (beside plate 52) Baxter writes: “Our photographic sequence now comes to an end. It began at Cape Reinga, the ancestral departing-place for the spirits of the Maori dead, traversed the North and South Islands of New Zealand, and closes at Karitane, where Maori and Pakeha have lived for many years at peace together. We hope we have revealed to you in some measure the contours of these islands, the human city and the natural wilderness.” In fact, his hope is only realized in relation to the “wilderness”. The city revealed is purely architectural and the images of the countryside are rarely visited by a human presence (only plate 18 with a group of children sitting on the grass in front of Te Takinga meeting-house; and plate 23 – “mustered...between Napier and Hastings”).

*New Zealand in colour Volume one* went through three New Zealand editions and was released in four international editions (London, Boston, Melbourne and Cape Town) in 1961, and it sold 40,000 copies in its first year of publication (there were several reprints). A second volume followed in 1962 with text by “mountaineer-author” John Pascoe; a strange coupling, given Pascoe’s negative assessment of this kind of photographic exercise 15 years earlier. Again the pattern is the same, a total of 55 photographs, moving downwards from Northland (plate one – Russell) to the bottom of the South Island (plate 52 – “the pilgrim trail of the colour camera ends for this volume on the southern coast of the South Island”). While the photographs in the two volumes are practically interchangeable, Pascoe’s text is more extensive and provides far more historical background to the places represented than does Baxter’s. Pascoe also strives to make a case for the wider significance of these landscape images: “There is more in photographs than the expression of composition, more than clouds or weather, more than beauty; studies of landscape in their own right have so many aspects that the rewards are not limited.” And he asks the philosophical question – “Does the landscape and the climate affect national character in the way Spain affects Spaniards or Norway affects Norwegians?” However, it is difficult to see how the Bigwoods’ photographs can suggest more than their appearance delivers or how they contribute to answering Pascoe’s question.

In his introduction to *Volume two*, Pascoe conceded: “New Zealanders, Maori and Pakeha, are shown in these pages by implication only. The book speaks for the land, touched or untouched by man; it is left to other books to speak for and of the people.” The

following year Reed publishing issued a volume simply titled *New Zealand*, containing an essay by M.H. Holcroft and colour plates (of course) by the Bigwoods. After this, the focus of the series shifted from a national to a regional level: *New Zealand's North Island in colour* (1966), with text by L.J. Wild; and *New Zealand's South Island in colour* (also 1966), with text by Jim Henderson. And following these two books, *New Zealand farming in colour* (1967), with Ralph Du Faur providing the text and *New Zealand from the air in colour* (1968), featuring career pilot and part time photographer, R.J. Griffith's images and John Pascoe's text.<sup>61</sup> There are, however, two books in the series that attempt to speak more of the people than of the land. The first is *The New Zealand Maori in colour* (1963), which I have discussed already in chapter two. The second is *The New Zealanders in colour* (1965), in which the Bigwoods collaborated with writer J.D. McDonald.<sup>62</sup> In the preface, McDonald writes: "The book is intended, deliberately, to show the 'ordinary' life of this country." Accordingly, his extensive text is based on reported speech from talks he had with a variety of 'average' New Zealanders, who speak for themselves in the authentic kiwi way of speech, with "... not a psychopath among them." All these "ordinary" kiwis, with the exception of two, are "composites" and they are introduced under some quirky headings: "a good keen householder"; "the young affluents"; "a museum down on the farm"; "old bushmen never die", and "before Doctor Kildaire". As regards the thematic grouping of the colour photographs, there is a strong emphasis on the depiction of agricultural activities (shearing, wool classing, sale day at the sale yards, pp.17-24); orchard and forestry work (pp.49-56); and mining and construction work (pp.65-72). Urban life get its turn towards the end of the book with plates showing "the six o'clock sip" (the restrictive drinking laws of the time), sport, visits to the races, and various recreational activities (pp.81-88). But this brief interlude is quickly followed by a return to the countryside in images of aerial topdressing, hunting and commercial fishing, and show day (pp.97-104). Removing the series descriptor "in colour" what we have here is the first of several photographic books with a title that promises to give us, in pictures and words, the folk who live in New Zealand (see below); the generic figures who dwell within the dominating landscape.

*Brian Brake*

Wystan Curnow's list of "high-minded photographic 'coffee table' books" did not include any of the Bigwoods' publications, perhaps because they do not exhibit sufficient high mindedness. His lineage begins with *New Zealand: gift of the sea*, a more ambitious and interesting attempt at a national portrait of this country. Photographer Brian Brake (1927-1988), who had established an international reputation as a photojournalist following his induction into the prestigious photo-agency Magnum in the mid-1950s, made the photographs for the book on a return visit to New Zealand in 1960. The novelist Maurice Shadbolt (1932-2004), who had worked with Brake at the National Film Unit in the 1950s, wrote the extensive accompanying text. Four years earlier he had published his first volume of short stories with the same title Ans Westra would choose for the photographic project from which *Notes on the country I live in* emerged - *The New Zealanders* (1959).

Brake and Shadbolt carried out a large proportion of their collaboration “... on an 11,000 kilometre road trip during October and November...” of 1960.<sup>63</sup>

The idea for the book emerged out of Brake’s dissatisfaction with the outcome of the *National geographic* project for which he had originally returned to New Zealand to take the photographs. When the article was published in the April 1962 edition of the magazine, it only contained 29 Brake photographs out of a total of 60. Seven other photographers supplied the larger proportion of the photographs, amongst them locals such as Kenneth Bigwood and internationals such as the Australian Robert Goodman (see the next section of this chapter).<sup>64</sup> The following year, Whitcombe and Tombs published a large format book containing 30 colour (and a wraparound cover image) and 67 black and white Brake photographs, accompanied by Shadbolt’s extended text. In a prefatory note, the authors write, “With word and picture we have tried to show the New Zealand that was and the New Zealand that is.” Brake’s photographs are the product of a sensibility formed by immersion in non-Western art forms, particularly of the Far East (see, for example, pp.36–7), and the art photojournalism of his mentor Henri Cartier-Bresson. On the surface, Brake’s book appears to fit comfortably with the Reed photographic books of the 1960s, a blend of *New Zealand in colour* and *The New Zealanders in colour*, perhaps. Certainly, the opening and closing photographic sections are landscape dominated and the middle sections cover similar thematic ground to *The New Zealanders in colour*. However, Brake does not construct a national imaginary in the celebratory mode of the Bigwoods and their successors (see below), and his work also falls outside the cultural nationalism of the *Landfall* endorsed artists of the period. Gwen Stacey rightly stresses Brake’s cosmopolitanism: “As an expatriate and a traveller with extensive experience of foreign cultures Brake was able to see New Zealand from an international perspective. His view of the country was optimistic, even flattering, but it was not clouded by the intensely nationalistic fervour that pervades New Zealand art of the sixties.”<sup>65</sup>

### *The Australians*

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, it was during a stopover in Australia en route back to New Zealand that Westra came across the book that gave her the idea of doing a similar study of this country. Given the relatively prolific outpouring of New Zealand photographic books in the first half of the 1960s, we might ask what inspirational qualities *The Australians* possessed that the work of the Bigwoods and Brian Brake did not. *The Australians* is a very text heavy book, crammed with anecdote and argument. There are ten chapters and many of them run George Johnston’s prose in long, image-free sets of pages. There are some full-page reproductions but, mostly, the photographs share page space with text blocks. Many black and white photographs are featured but in the end they are outnumbered by colour reproductions. Equally adept at photographing the landscape and the people, Robert Goodman’s photographs capture the variety and dynamism of the nation and are examples of high quality photojournalism.

In a note on the final page of the book, the authors reveal that the scope and ambition of their book is greater than that attempted by the New Zealand examples analysed earlier. “The simple objective we had in mind”, they state, is “the fair and unpropagandised presentation of the Australian in his [sic] unique and many-faceted setting. The essential image, if you like, of a race apart from others.”<sup>66</sup> The ‘face’ of Australia is represented quite literally in the cover photograph (repeated in black and white on page nine, immediately before chapter one begins), a close-up of the weathered face of a stockman, rendered in an earthy tone. The first two chapters (“The land” and “The land’s people”) assert the primacy of the sub-continent’s parched landscape in the shaping of the lives of the quintessential Australians who are located mostly in the outback. The closest analogue to this book amongst New Zealand photographic books of the period prior to the publication of *Notes* is probably *New Zealand: gift of the sea*. Goodman’s photograph, “Horse buyers at yearling sales, Melbourne, Victoria” (pp.66–7) can be compared profitably with Brian Brake’s “Sheep sale at Lake Tekapo” (p.91) or his “Dairy farmers at the Kumeu A & P show, near Auckland” (pp.88–9). Also comparable is Marti Friedlander’s “Sheep sales, Coromandel”, from her *Larks in a paradise* (1974, see the final section of Part three of this chapter for detailed comment on *Larks*); and her “‘Smoko’, sheep shearers, South Island” (p.48) is in a similar pen to Goodman’s “Shearing shed, Muloorina Station, eastern edge of Lake Eyre, South Australia” (p.172). In contrast, the two rural, farming-related photographs in *Notes* (both listed as “Lorneville saleyards, Invercargill”, p.25 and p.61) appear to have been selected for their fit within thematic sequences – working life in the case of the former (it is joined by “Sheep farmer, Otago” at the bottom of the next page); and studies of elderly New Zealanders in the case of the latter – rather than as iconic assertions of the primacy of the rural farmer to New Zealand life.

However, notwithstanding the comparisons above and the prior existence of the Bigwoods’ *The New Zealanders in colour*, a local photographic book bearing an exact equivalent of Goodman and Johnston’s title finally did arrive in 1975 with the publication of Robin Smith, Warren Jacobs, and Graham Billing’s *The New Zealanders*.<sup>67</sup> This book appears to be directly modeled on *The Australians* rather than simply resembling it. Five of its thematic chapters have exactly the same titles (“the landbuilders”, “the mixture”, “the economy”, “the sciences”, “the arts”), while the remaining three are very close (a single chapter, “the people of the land” [an English language equivalent of the Maori phrase *tangata whenua*] where *The Australians* has two, “the land” and “the land’s people”; “the towns and the cities” [NZ] against “the cities”; and “sports” [NZ] rather than “the sporting life”). The only thematic chapter *The New Zealanders* does not replicate from the Australian book is “Anzac”, which may be a reflection of its later publication period (a decade on) and the stronger emphasis on the Anzac tradition in Australian life. The similarities between the two books don’t end there. *The New Zealanders* has the same mix of black and white and colour photographs, again sharing page space with blocks of text; and that text is given as much weight as the images in both books. Even the cover photographs of the two books echo each other: the close-up of the stockman (*The Australians*) matched with a close shot of a pipe smoking “man of the land” (Owen Moriarty, whose portrait is also reproduced in a reduced black and white version on page 27) on the cover of *The New Zealanders*.

And, of course, there are many parallels between the two books in the photographs they feature. For example, Goodman's "Horse buyers at yearling sales, Melbourne, Victoria", mentioned above, finds its analogue in Robin Smith's "Saleyards, Eltham" (p.78).

Smith, Jacobs and Billing's *The New Zealanders* was not the only book with this title published in 1975. Also published in that year was photographer James Siers and writer Jim Henderson's *The New Zealanders*. However, although Henderson contributes the largest chapter ("The axe and the match"), four other writers also contribute texts to the book: John Rangihau ("The Maori"); Stephen O'Regan ("The 'best of both worlds'"); archaeologist David Simmons ("The settlement of the Maori in New Zealand"); and anthropologist Roger Green ("Who is a Maori?"). The book is extremely text heavy and, much more so than the other general photographic books on New Zealand discussed in this section of the chapter, puts a strong emphasis on the Maori dimension of the country (two of the writers, Rangihau and O'Regan, are Maori and a third, Sam Karetu, is also involved with the book; and their writing is complemented with Maori related pictures). Siers, born in Poland in the same year as Westra, used his Nikon F2 and Nikkormat cameras, loaded with Kodachrome II film, in pursuit of "...the therapy of photography to dispel stereotypes." (p.11) But he is not helped in this task by the book's overriding emphasis on rural New Zealand (cultivated land and farming activity), sport and outdoor recreational activity, and a long section devoted to the Royals on tour. The cover image, a head and shoulders shot of Colin Meads holding two sheep against a semi-cloudy light blue sky at his Te Kuiti farm, combines the book's two central preoccupations (farming and sport) at once.

Goodman and Johnston summed up the concept behind *The Australians* as an attempt, "... to try to define and express the Australians as a people, pictorially and textually..." (p.288). Westra may have taken such an aim as her inspiration and her starting point but her project eventually turned into something quite different from a straightforward mapping of the 'Heartland', such as we find in Smith, Jacobs, and Billing's or Siers and Henderson's *The New Zealanders*, the books that eventually appeared using the original title of her project. Just what her project turned into is the subject of the next part of the chapter.

### III

#### NOTES ON THE COUNTRY I LIVE IN

I don't claim my New Zealand to be it.

—ANS WESTRA<sup>68</sup>

Near the beginning of October 1970, Westra submitted an application to the QE II Arts Council of New Zealand for funding towards the production of: "...a comprehensive photographic essay on contemporary New Zealand life, depicting a personal response to the people and their environment. A selected number of these photographs will be presented in book form upon completion of the project. This would produce a historic social document of life in New Zealand in the 70s for future generations. As this time is a crucial one in New Zealand's development and our way of life is so rapidly changing ...

it is of vital importance to record it *now*.”<sup>69</sup> One of the three referees Westra listed in the application was D.W. Sinclair, Art Director of A.H. & A.W. Reed (the two other referees were Professor James Ritchie and Jack Lasenby of School Publications), publisher of *Maori* and her initial choice as publisher of the current project. However, six months after Westra sent her application to the Arts Council, Sinclair formalised by letter her verbal request that Reeds allow her “to make arrangements with Messrs Whitcombe and Tombs to publish the projected volume.”<sup>70</sup> The following month, Phoebe Meikle, the writer and Editorial Director of Longmans, who had heard about the project from James Ritchie, wrote to Westra expressing interest in publishing her photographic book “The New Zealanders”.<sup>71</sup> Nothing came of this interest. Exactly 12 months after the submission of her Arts Council funding application, Whitcombe and Tombs declined to publish “The New Zealanders”, citing economic reasons for the decision: “...in these rather difficult days of bookselling colour is a tremendously important factor.”<sup>72</sup> Despite her lack of a confirmed publisher, however, the Arts Council awarded a second grant of \$500 towards the project, for publication of the book, specifying that it would be made available “when you have completed arrangements for publication.”<sup>73</sup>

Even though Reeds had passed the project on to Whitcombe and Tombs for consideration, it appears to have been raised again with their publishing committee. Alister Taylor, in his role as Chief Editor of Reed Education, wrote to Westra in November 1971, informing her that the company “could not afford to publish 5,000 at \$2.95 and sell them.” He suggested another possible publisher (McIndoe of Dunedin), but added, crucially, the following possibility: “If you find no other publisher, I myself might be able to assist you, and publish the book in an edition of, say, 2,000 for the Christmas market 1972. This would depend on the success of my other books – e.g. Tim’s and so on, but I would be very keen to see your book published.”<sup>74</sup> With the success of *Bullshit and jellybeans*, this publishing possibility became a reality, and, by late October 1972 (two years after Westra first sought funding for the project) Taylor’s dispatch of a complimentary copy of *Notes on the country I live in* to the Prime Minister (Jack Marshall) resulted in a complimentary response: “I recognise ‘the Country I Live in’. Although I live in a different part of it I like to see and appreciate this part of it, too.”<sup>75</sup>

Unlike the large format and hardback *Maori*, *Notes on the country I live in* is a square, compact, softback volume, measuring 199mm × 16mm and designed by Jule Einhorn. It does not conform to the usual format for New Zealand picture books; it has, by contrast, a quite low key, monochrome appearance. Neither does it have any of the fine art qualities that have come to define the production of photographic books in recent decades. It is both typical of the books published by Alister Taylor Publications in the early 1970s and not dissimilar in appearance to Westra’s bulletins published by School Publications in the 1960s. The book’s low-key appearance is echoed in its title, which eschews the name of the larger photographic project (“The New Zealanders”) from which it is “a selection”. The word notes does not suggest the panoramic overview aspirations of the one volume New Zealand portrait book but, rather, something much more modest and small scale. But the most significant thing about the title is the distance established between the author and her nominal subject: notes on the country *I live in*, not “notes on my country”

(my emphasis). This dis-identification establishes a participant-observer's viewpoint for the book's project and hints at the critical detachment often accompanying an outsider perspective. The absence of the word(s) New Zealand in the title further removes the likelihood of the book being shelved with tourist-oriented and coffee-table volumes.

Following on from the two untitled essays at the beginning of the book, the first by James K. Baxter, the second by Tim Shadbolt, are 133 photographic images. The photographs are mostly arranged one per page, although in a number of instances there are two per page, and, on pages 88–89 there is a sequence of six small images spread across the double page in two horizontal bands. Several of the photographs are bled right to the edge of the page but when this is not the case there is invariably plenty of white space. In some instances, photographs have been cropped, in others the full area of the negative is printed.

The cover deploys a photograph whose "Description and Location" entry at the back of the book reads, "Watching a Miss New Zealand parade, Cuba Mall, Wellington" (p.122). As printed on page 50 (Fig. 30), this photograph is structured by the diagonal gazes of a varied group of spectators, with the exception of an older woman to the left of centre, whose slightly imperious gaze is directed straight at the camera. In the cover reproduction, however, the photograph is printed in a much larger version and is wrapped around the book, separating and reversing its left and right sides, bifurcating the face of the mid-point figure (a young Polynesian man) along the spine and the front and back covers' edges. In this format, the photograph now works largely as a pair of close ups, isolating, highlighting and contrasting the two foreground figures of the 'original' photo on page 50: an older and a much younger woman who are both more elaborately dressed and decorated (make up, earrings, hats, and glasses) than the other people depicted. Westra's interest in the visual representation of the "presentation of self" (Erving Goffman) in public space, the province of the street photographer, is strongly evident here.

Both the front and back inside cover carry a small, centrally placed photograph on a black background of the same very young Chinese-New Zealand child with her hair in pigtails. The childhood theme signaled by these bookend images is emphasised further when the body of photographs within begins on page 13 with a picture of a small child running through a shallow stream during summer at Fox glacier. The tiny figure of the child is located in the bottom left corner of the photo, dwarfed by the large, variegated patches of landscape above. However, within the book as a whole this photograph is almost alone in giving prominence to landscape in its visual field and its compositional volume mostly acts as a contrastive backdrop to the human figure, which draws the viewer's eye like a magnet.

The following page continues the theme of the freedom and play of children in a New Zealand summer; and an especially striking example of Westra's ability to evoke this mood in the conjunction of summer and children is found on page 31. The brief "Description and Location" note for this photo reads, "Catching crickets, Greymouth". It is not surprising that Westra begins the book with images of childhood given her admiration for *The family of man*, her previous work for School Publications and the precedent of *Maori* with its textual movement from youth to old age. Yet *Notes* has a much looser, freer structure than any of her earlier works. It is neither a photo-narrative like *Washday* or *Viliami* nor does

it move by means of the broad implied quasi-narrative sequential blocks of *Maori*. The book simply brings together photographs made all over the country and places them in no particular order. The most frequently represented subjects are the following: childhood (c.16), work (c.16), political demonstrations (c.7), ritualised public gatherings/ceremonies (Anzac Day celebrations, Miss New Zealand contests, A&P shows, school fairs, rock concerts), and specifically Maori gatherings. Sporting events (10) and landscape portraits (0) scarcely feature at all.

Westra's camera is overwhelmingly interested in people or, more precisely, people captured in certain social situations. In one way these social situations are the common currency of the sociologist: work, leisure, political processes, public ritual; and Westra departs from earlier New Zealand photography in placing these subjects at the heart of her project. But there is more to *Notes* than a desire simply to carry out a selective visual sociological survey of New Zealand society. The book conveys a strong, even if implicit, sense of the importance of its particular historical moment. Interleaved within the pages of *Notes* are photographs that can be seen to be generated by two contrasting kinds of sign-system; contrasting, that is, in terms of historical periodisation. One of these relates to an older, conservative New Zealand, characterised by rigid poses, formal attire and deference to (symbols of) authority. The other inverts this set of outward appearances and is indicative of a younger, newer and emergent force in New Zealand social life. I have already argued that Westra's four-year absence from New Zealand afforded her the opportunity of a fresh perspective on her adopted country upon her return. But just as important as the duration of this temporal hiatus was the nature of the change which occurred within it: the transition to the '60s' in the sense given to this term earlier in the chapter. Along with Tim Shadbolt's *Bullshit and jellybeans* and James K. Baxter's late poetry and prose (*Jerusalem sonnets*, *Jerusalem daybook*, *Autumn testament*), *Notes* is a key document of the '60s' in New Zealand.

In light of the general points made above, I will now give some detailed attention to both the essays and the photographs that make up *Notes on the country I live in*. I will begin with the essays.

### *The Essays*

There are two introductory essays in *Notes on the country I live in*, both of them untitled. The first is by James K. Baxter, the second by Tim Shadbolt. Originally, *Notes on the country I live in* was to contain only one essay and it was to be written by Baxter. However, upon reading a draft of Baxter's first attempt at the essay, Westra expressed dissatisfaction with it to Alister Taylor. She felt that the pessimistic tone of the writing was at variance with the photographs' registration of the new energies unleashed in New Zealand society. Accordingly, she requested that Baxter be asked to write a different text and she welcomed Taylor's suggestion that a younger writer also be approached for an essay. Tim Shadbolt, whose recent book for Taylor, *Bullshit and jellybeans*, was illustrated copiously with Westra photographs, was the logical choice.

A comparison of Baxter's first attempt at an introductory essay with his second confirms the soundness of Westra's judgment. Nevertheless, the first essay is an interesting document in its own right for a number of reasons. It differs from the first in having a title, "The country and the people", and also in commenting on individual Westra photographs and the qualities of her photographic style. Baxter begins by referring to "a Tourist Bureau tradition" that has predominated in New Zealand photographic history. It is clear what he means by this phrase – the lineage of books I have discussed above in the "picturing New Zealand" section of this chapter. Several pages into the essay, he returns to this theme with a personal anecdote: "There was a time when I myself worked for a while at constructing a script to accompany a book of scenic photographs produced by the kind of people who would sell their grandmother's bones to get a dollar. The labour left me sick at heart. And I thought – 'What a pity we have this bad commercial tradition!'"<sup>76</sup> He can only be referring to his involvement with the Bigwoods' *New Zealand in colour Volume one*, for which he wrote the text a full decade earlier. This decade can be measured by the distance between the poet and family man with a day job at its inception and the barefooted and bearded guru of the late 1960s and early 1970s at its end. But in Westra he finds the kind of photographer he once dreamed of collaborating with, a photographer who invites him "to meditate on the country I was born in." He then makes a number of perceptive and valid comments about the strengths of Westra's work. For example, "It is in her pictures of children and young people that her most vigorous studies of physical movement and action occur"; and he writes of her "rapport with the slow-burning revolution of the young". But perhaps his most insightful comment is: "Ans Westra selects the visual images that make a statement of a reality desired as well as of a reality perceived."

The untitled Baxter essay that was published in *Notes* consists of six sections: numbers one, three, and six are prose accounts of life in the Jerusalem commune; number four an account of Baxter's efforts to secure a crash pad for the dispossessed in Wellington (the unnamed 26 Macdonald crescent, called "Firetrap Castle" in section five's poem); and numbers two and five are poems, the former a "Jerusalem Sonnet", the latter written in the manner of his late polemical/satirical ballads. Given that two Jerusalem photographs and a portrait of the late Baxter are reproduced in *Notes*<sup>77</sup>, Baxter's decision to focus on his central concerns of the time by assembling fragments of personal narrative and mixing them with the inherently subjective literary form of poetry seems more appropriate to the book than the discursive first version. And even though he writes of listening on the telephone in Wellington to "the voices of the drowning" (p.5), and remarks, "when I think of my country, I think of the cloud of pain that presses down on the spirits of her people" (p.8), he concludes his text in a tone of cautious optimism.

Tim Shadbolt's essay consists of three segments. The first contrasts the straw figure of "John Warren", who receives parental approval, to Tim and Rod Shadbolt and the counter-cultural generation, which does not. Shadbolt uses the argot of the time (everyone is on a particular kind of "trip", going "higher and higher", and eventually "spacing out") in a brief sketch of his generation's flight to the city and eventual return "back to the land" (p.9). The second and longest segment of the essay is given over to an anecdotal account

of Shadbolt's flight to Tauranga to give a public talk, organised by "a local church-oriented youth group" (p.10). He recounts his in-flight dialogue with "a lovely old grandmother" (p.11), which reveals an unanticipated moment of human connection, but closes with the grandmother's affirmation of conservative values ("We like law and order in Tauranga", p.11). The final segment, the briefest, is a general meditation on the sorry state of the world and how it might be changed. "In a world filled with atom bombs, racism and exploitation", writes Shadbolt, "being a good joker just isn't good enough." (p.12) He likens these and other negative forces to "a large wall that casts a shadow over our whole society" and concludes by saying that we can oppose it (knock it down) or accommodate ourselves to its presence ("light up a candle", p.12).

In his review of *Notes*, the Political Scientist and photographer Les Cleveland dismissed Shadbolt's text as a piece of "undistinguished polemic", which to some degree it is.<sup>78</sup> The young Shadbolt was a charismatic public speaker and he still retains his verbal powers in the present as Mayor of Invercargill, the kind of small urban centre he lambasts in his essay. He is a serviceable writer in a conversational mode but does not approach the poetic level Baxter inhabits in both verse and prose. However, the literary merits of Shadbolt's text are not the issue. The very language it uses as much as the person who wrote it make it a statement of its time and also make explicit the affiliation of *Notes* to the counterculture.

### *The Photographs*

There is no obvious point at which to begin a textual analysis of the photographs that make up *Notes*. To work one's way through the book from cover to cover, commenting on each and every image, would be a lengthy and laborious exercise. Moreover, the book does not invite a cumulative, linear reading of this kind; on the contrary, it can be profitably entered at any point. I will begin by looking at two ways in which Westra's photographs produce meaning through juxtaposition. The first is through juxtaposition of elements internal to an individual photograph. The second is through the juxtaposition of two or more photographs on the same or accompanying pages.

#### 1. Internal juxtaposition of elements

Some of the most arresting photographs in *Notes* involve an examination of viewing itself, an examination of the gaze of the subjects recorded. Two excellent examples of this type of photograph can be found on page 104. The top picture, taken in Garden Place, Hamilton, contrasts three Maori street cleaners, seated on a park bench on the left-hand side of the image, with a young Pakeha couple, also seated on the park bench, but this time on the right hand side. The Pakeha man looks across at the cleaners, his gaze and the image itself bisected by the cleaners' trolley, containing rubbish bin and brooms. The cleaner on the far left addresses the camera/viewer. The central dividing line of the photograph, the cleaning apparatus, rather neatly divides the cleanly attired couple (white and middle

class in appearance) from the eccentrically uniformed cleaners (brown and working class). This bold division of the photo is capped off by the presence of the letters LTD, top centre.

Yet below this photograph is one containing an even more dramatic juxtaposition of opposites. Taken at Trentham racecourse, this picture frames the piercing gaze of a bespectacled, sharp-featured, thin-lipped, late middle-aged Pakeha male; his gaze and stiff body posture, clearly disapproving in nature, is directed at a bushy haired Maori youth, staring downwards, apparently lost in thought. Both men are dressed in an unusual fashion. The older man is wearing the official costume of a member of a highland pipe band, whereas the younger man is wearing a long, Air Force jacket. The former clasps some papers while the latter holds a half-full bottle of soft drink. The photograph is one of Westra's strongest depictions of the palpable contrast between, in this case, the formal codes of an older (Pakeha) identity and the informal, syncretic and bricolaged codes of a younger (Maori) play with identity.

Another rendering of the gaze that reveals a gulf of social and sub-cultural distance is the full-page image on page 112, taken at the Addington Racecourse, Christchurch. (Fig. 31) Here a group of casually dressed, 'mainstream' young New Zealanders (Pakeha) stares unabashedly at a very differently attired young woman (in a very long, full 'neo-Victorian' style dress; with very long, flowing hair, tied back), seemingly oblivious to their attentions. This photograph registers an evident 'shock of the new' as a formal version of hippie couture makes an unlikely appearance at the trotting.

Another photograph consisting of a row of non-aligned gazes, taken at a trade fair in Wellington is on page 19. (Fig. 32) The gazes belong to four young people: three young, hairy Maori males and a young Pakeha woman dressed in a uniform. The woman and two of the men are gazing to the left into an enclosed area, presumably at some activity going on therein. But the centrepiece of the image is occupied by the remaining youth who is gazing at the young woman; is his gaze informed by curiosity or desire? Whatever, it is a good example of Westra's adroitness at framing such enigmas of *arbitrary* social interaction.

And as a final example of this mode of internal juxtaposition, I'll consider the photograph on page 72; a simple example of Westra's interest in providing a harmonious framing of what might casually be taken as opposing forces. Outside the library building in Wellington, a young, longhaired Maori male and a police officer are sitting parallel to each other on an asphalt ridge, both staring straight ahead.

## 2. Juxtaposition of two or more photographs

*Notes on the country I live in* begins with the kind of thematic grouping of images familiar from Westra's earlier work in *Maori*. Thus after the opening image of 'childhood freedom' which follows on from Baxter and Shadbolt's essays, we get two further images of children at play on page 14. And turning over, page 16 and 17 carry contrasting images of childhood and old age in the universalizing manner of *The family of man* and *Maori*. But by pages 20 and 21, a different, harder-edged type of juxtaposition begins to emerge, which bespeaks

a tougher, more sociologically oriented kind of perception, critique even. Both pictures occupy the entire page; there is no white space. The left-side photo features a relatively close shot of a Polynesian racetrack punter, clasping a copy of *Best bets* and a Bic biro pen; he looks past the viewer, probably towards the track. The photograph on the right-hand side is of an altogether different character. In it, two lavishly dressed women (one of them the actor Pat Evison) are captured in conversation at a charity opening in Wellington's Embassy Theatre. Here, class-based disparities in leisure time cultural pursuits are strikingly highlighted.

Pages 22–39 inclusive return to the presentation of thematically unified material but on pages 40 and 41 Westra introduces a rather subtle pairing of images. Both could be said to be obviously pictures about aspects of Maoridom. However there are considerable differences between them. The right-hand photograph (like the one on page 43) was taken at Inia Te Wiata's tangi at Otaki pa. It is composed of a close, dynamic group shot of three politicians, two of whom are clearly identifiable as Duncan McIntyre, the then Minister of Maori affairs and Whetu Tirikatene-Sullivan, the Member for Southern Maori. The photograph is interesting both in terms of composition and as part of a record of an event in which a popular and internationally successful Maori artist was remembered in a Maori way. The image placed on the page opposite is located in the altogether more profane world of the public bar at the Trentham Racecourse, a site where Westra has made a considerable number of strong images (Fig. 33). In front of a group of men engaged in drinking and conversation, and behind a table cluttered with mostly empty beer jugs and glasses, sit two Maori women. Both are dressed in dark clothing (one even wears sun glasses). This is the milieu of the kind of (composite) Maori working class culture described by James Ritchie and others. The photograph is iconic of that culture.

#### *Critical Responses to Notes*

*Notes on the country I live in* did not receive many substantial reviews. One of the few notable ones, written by the photographer and Elam Art School lecturer Tom Hutchins, concentrated on matters such as the printing of the images, the grouping of related pictures, and differences between viewing the images in the book and the prior exhibition of some of them at the Barry Lett Galleries. But he began by rating *Notes* as “one of the best books ever on ourselves as a distinct people.”<sup>79</sup> Perhaps the most interesting review came from Les Cleveland who wrote more in the vein of his job as a Political Science lecturer than as a fellow photographer. He approaches the book as if it is an attempt to produce a fully rounded portrait of all aspects of life in New Zealand, which ostensibly it is. However, as I've argued at length, *Notes* does not aim for the grandiose overview of the standard New Zealand pictorial book. On the contrary, it is both modest in aim and subjective in viewpoint. It is also affiliated to the counterculture rather than the mainstream New Zealand addressed by conventional photographic books. Cleveland is well disposed towards the book (“probably the best collection that has yet been published in New Zealand”) but this comment is made in connection with his view of it as “...a quick, potted look at limited

aspects of public life...streets and workplaces...” Clearly there is much more to *Notes* than this. However, Cleveland does make an important point when he writes: “There is a marked bias away from suburbia – where most of us happen to live and dream our plastic, hire purchase dreams – and an avoidance of the rigidities of business and commerce (where most of us are enslaved).”<sup>80</sup> There is an implied criticism in this statement that Westra has neglected major aspects of our society. Yet, given that *Notes* is structured by an opposition between an older, conservative New Zealand, and a new, youthful counterculture, both groups based in the city and the countryside, the introduction of an additional focus on the intermediate category of suburban middle New Zealand would only have served to dilute and diffuse the power of the book. *Notes* is not intended to be a comprehensive sociological portrait of New Zealand in the early 1970s and it is all the better for that. And while one can agree with Cleveland’s assessment of Shadbolt’s text, quoted earlier, as to some degree a piece of “undistinguished polemic”, his slighting reference to Baxter’s text as a catalogue of “simplistic parables of the Arcadian pleasures of communal retreat”<sup>81</sup> fails to comprehend the importance of the Jerusalem moment and its connection to Westra’s concerns.

In recent years, several interesting, if tendentious, responses to *Notes* have come from the photographic artist, curator and writer Gavin Hipkins. In his curated exhibition, *Folklore: The New Zealanders* (1998), Hipkins assembled a group of black and white photographs, most of them made in the 1990s, but including several made in the late 1970s and early 1980s. These ‘private’ images – cryptic, enigmatic and resistant to reading, in the manner of “social landscape” (see chapter nine) and/or conceptual photography – constitute the good objects of the project. Contrasted with them in the text pages of the accompanying catalogue are the project’s bad objects: New Zealand pictorial books, stretching from the Bigwoods, through Brake and Shadbolt, Westra’s *Notes*, James Siers and Jim Henderson’s *The New Zealanders* (1975), Robin Morrison’s *Sense of place* (1984), and their audio-visual analogue, the television documentary series *Heartland* (1993–94).

Two thirds of the way into the catalogue for the exhibition, there is a page of comment on *Notes on the country I live in*. Amongst the dubious generalisations (e.g. “Art for the future is always romantic art”, followed by a contradictory non-sequitur ascribing empirical, “enlightenment ideals” to those self same romantic and “Quixotic photographers”), Hipkins interpolates a quotation in bold from Westra and the aforesaid comment. He begins by claiming, erroneously, “The images in ... *Notes*... initially toured as an exhibition, *The New Zealanders*.”<sup>82</sup> In fact, a small selection of prints later reproduced in *Notes* was included in a group exhibition, *Photographs*, at the Barry Lett Galleries, Auckland in July 1972. “The New Zealanders”, as I’ve pointed out already, was only ever the working title of a larger project from which *Notes* finally emerged as its only public outcome. Having categorised Westra as a street photographer, he then claims, oddly, “Public space becomes a socialist [sic] space, eliminating any chance of representing private space.”<sup>83</sup> Leaving aside the malapropism “socialist”, it is difficult to fathom how this project could have had anything much to do with “private space”. Westra has dealt with private space in some of her published and unpublished work but it was never part of the purpose of “The New Zealanders” or *Notes* to explore this type of space, however defined. This is not to say, of course, that *Notes* does not embody a subjective point of view. In addition to these off-kilter

remarks on *Notes*, the larger problem I have with *Folklore* is the way in which it collapses a wide spectrum of photographic books with “nationalist” aims into one homogenous box, in a manner not dissimilar to Wytan Curnow’s “genealogical line” critiqued earlier in this chapter. Hipkins seems overly swayed by the original title of Westra’s project, “The New Zealanders”, because he can fit it into a tidy sequence beginning with the Bigwoods’ *The New Zealanders in colour* and culminating with Siers and Henderson’s *The New Zealanders*. But as I have argued *Notes* does not belong there. Whatever the aims of “The New Zealanders” project might have been, *Notes* itself does not have a nationalist agenda.

By the time he came to write a commissioned essay on *Notes* for a monograph on Westra, Hipkins had modified considerably the rather simplistic and inaccurate view of the book presented in *Folklore*. He now conceded that Westra “wished to break away from” the standard New Zealand photographic book and contribute “perspectives alternative to the pile of calendar-colour publications used to sell New Zealand to tourists, both foreign and local...”<sup>84</sup> Yet he persisted in seeing Westra as a street photographer in search of dramatic events and decisive moments; and he faulted *Notes* for unwittingly suppressing “the uncanny quality of a familiar, empty social landscape” – his characterisation of the “quiet” nation of New Zealand.<sup>85</sup> A particular application of the Freudian notion of the *Unheimliche* (Uncanny) to the New Zealand landscape and its use within both a curated exhibition of local photographs and a photographic project of his own marked Hipkins’s work from the late 1990s and into the new millennium.<sup>86</sup> The detournement of historical photographs in *The Unhomely: images selected from the Alexander Turnbull Library photographic archive* (1997) and the thematic sequencing of 80 of his own C-Type prints, made between 1997 and 2000, in the artist’s project *The Homely* (2001) were both intellectually stimulating and, particularly in the case of the latter, visually arresting. But Hipkins’s concerns are not Westra’s and it is more than a little anachronistic to suggest that they could or should have been.<sup>87</sup>

Since the appearance of Hipkins’s three exhibitions and his essay on *Notes*, there has been a project by the expatriate New Zealand fashion photographer Derek Henderson which takes up several of the ideas developed by Hipkins around the issue of the New Zealand photographic book and the local landscape. In the first half of 2004, Henderson returned to New Zealand and over a period of four and a half months clocked up a traveling distance of 13,000 km.<sup>88</sup> Over 100 of the photographs he took on this journey were published in a book called *The terrible boredom of paradise* (2005). The book comes across as a conscious remarking and remodeling of one of Robin Morrison’s photographic books, especially *The South Island of New Zealand from the road* (1981) or *Sense of place* (1984), but replaces Morrison’s ‘drama’ with a flat blankness and substitutes a current cool colour palette for his saturated 1980s colours.<sup>89</sup> Needless to say there are no people in these photographs and certainly no ‘Heartland’ New Zealanders standing in front of their houses. In an essay at the beginning of the book, Hanna Scott explicitly links Henderson’s photographic project with Hipkins’s critique of the beautiful New Zealand photographic book in *Folklore*. “Henderson’s images”, she claims, “are anti-heroic, they don’t have the bombast of earlier generations of photographers interested to identify the essential ingredients of local identity, or to recover a past about to be lost.”<sup>90</sup> In her curiously skewed genealogy of the photographic line Henderson

is allegedly critiquing, Scott links, bizarrely, Les Cleveland's *The silent land to Notes*, in the context of a discussion of the photographic depiction of the town of Westport. She states that *Notes* "... documented the alienation and social anguish produced through the urbanization of that area." (p.6) Unfortunately for her argument, of the ten West Coast photographs that do appear in *Notes*, only one was taken in Westport, and it is a benign picture of three men (with a young girl) conversing on a footpath. The remaining nine West Coast photographs were taken in Greymouth (3), Hokitika (3), Reefton (1), and Barrytown (1); also included is a study of a "West Coaster" (p.51). Like the Westport picture, none of these photographs has anything remotely to do with "alienation and social anguish", a thematic completely absent from the pages of *Notes*.

*Coda: a pertinent comparison: Larks in a paradise*

In Part two of this chapter, I made a brief comparison between Ans Westra and Robert Frank as 'ethnologist-strangers', photographing a new land as 'outsiders'. Before moving on to consider Westra's other major published work from the 1970s, I wish to make another comparative juxtaposition of a similar kind, this time a local one. Two years after the publication of *Notes*, there appeared a book of black and white photographs with accompanying text called *Larks in a paradise* (1974). The photographer was Marti Friedlander. Her biographical details display a certain similarity to Westra's. Born in London in 1928, she moved to New Zealand with her New Zealand born husband Gerrard in 1958; she began freelancing as a photographer in 1964, like Westra using a Rolleiflex camera; and she collected material for *Larks* over a six-year period commencing in the late 1960s, the same period within which Westra was working towards *Notes*. Something else she has in common with Westra, as already noted in chapter three, is affection for *The family of man*. In an interview conducted four years after the publication of *Larks*, Friedlander cited Steichen's exhibition as "... probably... the greatest single influence" on her work!<sup>91</sup>

Before moving to a brief discussion of *Larks*, a few general comments on Friedlander's photographic style and its similarities and differences to Westra's are in order. Overall, Friedlander is more of a portrait photographer than is Westra, even though she has spent as much time in the street as the studio. Friedlander has written of her preference for "the studied portrait, one taken with plenty of time available", enabling "a rapport...and the easing of tension" between the photographer and her subject.<sup>92</sup> The majority of her photographic books are collections of portraits of significant people, *Moko: Maori tattooing in the 20th Century* (1972) and *Contemporary New Zealanders painters, volume one A-M* (1980) especially so; and we should note, too, that the subtitle of *Larks* is *New Zealand portraits*. The earlier book on Moko is particularly relevant here because of its subject matter and the circumstances of its making. Michael King, the author of *Moko*, was looking for a photographer to make the portraits of the kuia that are such an important part of the book. According to John Turner, "But for a misunderstanding about her availability at the time, Westra would have made the portraits of the Maori kuia for Michael King's *Moko*, which he did with Marti Friedlander, instead."<sup>93</sup> Leonard Bell's account of the genesis of

the book is rather different and makes no mention of Westra: “One of Marti’s photographs of Rauwha Tamaiparea impressed him [King] and, when they first met at the 1969 Labour Party conference, he proposed working together on a book, for which he would write the text.”<sup>94</sup> Westra was disappointed not to work on the book, which was published by Alister Taylor late in the same year that he published *Notes*. Recently, she told Bianca Zander, “He [Michael King] came to me and picked my brain on where these women were and I was going to go on the road with him. Then I hear that Marti had done the photos and I said to Michael, ‘But you were coming back to me!’ ‘Oh’, he said, ‘You told me you couldn’t come with me. You needed to find somebody to look after your child.’ ‘Yes’, I said, ‘I was just busy organizing it!’”<sup>95</sup> Although it is a matter of speculation, it is interesting to imagine what the book would have looked like had its photographer been Westra not Friedlander. She has suggested, “...if I’d gone to those women and taken their photos, I would have handled it very differently to Marti. I prefer to be less interfering. Less directing.”<sup>96</sup>

The blurb on the inside of *Lark’s* dust-jacket sleeve carries the following statement: “Marti Friedlander, like Cartier-Bresson, has the gift of seeing beyond the ordinary ... an extraordinary document – a mirror of the private face of New Zealand ... the first self-portrait attempted of a land and its people. *Larks in a paradise* shatters all preconceptions. No one who reads it will ever dare generalize about New Zealand again.”<sup>97</sup> Quite apart from the hyperbole of this passage (is Cartier-Bresson really the most appropriate comparison?), its most outrageous claim is that *Larks* is “the first self-portrait attempted of a land and its people.” This mistaken notion is repeated in James McNeish’s preface where he writes, “... her photographs...show something hidden...they dare – and it has not been done before – to make a statement...they correct the fallacy that we are a nation of stereotypes.”<sup>98</sup> Clearly, from reading this it is evident that *Notes* did not make as strong an impact as it might have in 1972. The difference in impact perhaps could be attributed partly to the discrepancies in publishing resources between Collins (*Larks*) and Alister Taylor (*Notes*).

These claims for the uniqueness of *Larks* are all the more surprising when we compare its overall format and some of its individual images with *Notes*. Like *Notes*, *Larks* “was intended to be something of a counter to the ‘beautiful New Zealand’ theme.”<sup>99</sup> The two books have a similar number of images, but *Larks* carries a far greater burden of written text. Whereas *Notes*, after the introductory essays of Baxter and Shadbolt, proceeds as a purely visual essay, the flow of images in *Larks* is interrupted by large chunks of McNeish’s interview-derived narratives.

Like Westra, Friedlander finds her most arresting subjects in either the main city centres or in outlying country areas. She too largely passes over suburban, middle-class, middle-aged, ‘middle’ New Zealand in favour of a general examination of an emergent, younger New Zealand, which is contrasted with an older social pattern. Compare, for example, the photograph of Tim Shadbolt on page 40 with the double page spread of an Auckland Anzac Day parade (p.41); or the picture of artists Pat and Gil Hanly (p.25) with the farming couple on page 32 and the retired couple on page 56.

Leonard Bell includes a brief comparison of *Larks* to *Notes* in a chapter on the former in his monograph on Friedlander. In Bell’s view, “Westra generally pursued a ‘fly-on-the-wall’ approach – as if the photograph’s subject was unaware of the photographer’s presence ...

both the texts and photographs in *Notes...* are very different from, and less unsettling than, James McNeish's and Marti Friedlander's respectively."<sup>100</sup> The key phrase in this statement is "as if the photograph's subject was unaware of the photographer's presence", and the most important part of this phrase is "as if". This is because only hidden surveillance cameras are capable of delivering the mythical "fly-on-the-wall" views that Bell attributes to Westra's photography. Only Westra's street photography, in particular her coverage of political demonstrations, could possibly fit this description, but even then invisibility within public space is scarcely possible. In relation to the final part of Bell's statement, it's not clear to me in what way Friedlander's work is more "unsettling" than Westra's. Although, it could be said that a certain disquiet does emerge from McNeish's narratives, fashioned as they are from stories of personal anguish, which isn't the case with Shadbolt's polemic or Baxter's pastoral paean.

IV

EXPOSING THE CITY

Many photographers identified as social documentarians have found the urban environment an especially attractive, stimulating and challenging place to work. This is particularly true of Jacob Riis, Lewis Hine, and Humphrey Spender, to name only a few photographers from the first half of the twentieth-century, whose work is of sociological importance. The overriding interest of social documentarians in photographing the poor, immigrants, and ethnic minorities, whether for the purpose of stimulating social reform from above or reinforcing social control, also from above, clearly found fertile ground in the often densely packed enclaves of the city. Also in the earlier part of the century, various cities became the subject of documentary films known as City Symphonies: the photographer Paul Strand and the painter/photographer Charles Sheeler made a study of New York titled *Manhatta* (1921); Alberto Cavalcanti did something comparable with Paris in *Rien que les heures* (1926); Walter Ruttmann's *Berlin: symphony of a city* (1927) followed closely; and, finally, this 1920s documentary form reached a peak with Dziga Vertov's Moscow situated *Man with a movie camera* (1929)

In the post-war period, several important American photographers made photographic books that delivered in-depth and idiosyncratic portraits of some of the world's great cities. First to publish was Weegee (Arthur Fellig), who took lurid flash-lit pictures after dark of New York's underbelly and combined them with hard-boiled prose to create the noir cityscape that is *The naked city* (1945); which, in turn, gave rise to Jules Dassin's film noir of the same name in 1948. In the 1950s, the edgy, paranoid mood of the United States, captured so powerfully in Robert Frank's *The Americans*, was anticipated in William Klein's *Life is good & good for you in New York* (1956), a project he worked on in the streets of New York during 1954-5 when he briefly returned to his home town from Paris. Three more city-focused photographic books followed quickly on from the first: *Rome* (1956), *Moscow* (1959-61), and *Tokyo* (1961).

The landscape-based photographic book has dominated New Zealand pictorial publishing. In comparison, there have been very few studies of New Zealand cities. In

1968, Gary Blackman combined his fine black and white studies of early buildings in Dunedin with E.J. McCoy's detailed captions in *Victorian city of New Zealand*. But it is a purely architectural study.<sup>101</sup> At around the same time Gary Baigent made quite an impact, both positive and negative, on the burgeoning local photographic scene with his unusual views of Auckland collected in *The unseen city* (1967). This book of "123 photographs of Auckland" appeared at a time when the emerging photographic community was striving to promote the fine art properties of photography and the poor quality of *The unseen city's* reproductions did not please it. Frank Hofmann, for instance, faulted the book for its lack of "a convincing basis of craftsmanship" and stated, "...the most important quality of the true documentary is lacking: the dramatic balance and inevitability of the decisive moment."<sup>102</sup> Even so, Baigent's post-Frank, post-Klein approach to urban subject matter pointed towards a new direction for New Zealand photographic publishing, which was still dominated by Reed's "in colour" series. The raw and more immediate street photography that would come to prominence in the 1970s and 1980s begins here.

V

WELLINGTON: CITY ALIVE

From the beginning of her photographic career, Ans Westra has taken many photographs in New Zealand cities, but throughout the 1960s her most well known images (enclosed in books) were taken in the countryside and in small towns. *Notes on the country I live in* tipped the balance strongly towards urban imagery with its large number of photographs of political demonstrations at Parliament grounds, Wellington, Cathedral square, Christchurch and Albert Park, Auckland. And given the strong political and cultural ferment of the '1960s' within New Zealand cities, it's not surprising that Westra soon decided to issue a photographic portrait of one of these cities, the one in which she has lived for most of her life and is most familiar with. When the Wellington City Art Gallery opened in 1980, Westra wrote in the commemorative catalogue, "[I] Find Wellington one of the more interesting places in New Zealand to live and work in because of the diversity of its population ... My entry to the 'Opening' exhibition for this much needed new City Art Gallery is a celebration of the people of Wellington."<sup>103</sup> However, Westra's most sustained exploration of the city of Wellington had been published four years earlier.

In the same year as *Notes on the country I live in* was published, Ans Westra collaborated with the novelist Noel Hilliard on the making of a children's book, *We live by a lake* (1972, see chapter eight). Four years later Whitcoulls published Westra and Hilliard's second collaborative project, *Wellington: city alive* (1976), a project she worked on for approximately two years. Westra spent the first half of that time accumulating a pool of Wellington photographs and the second working with Hilliard on image selection, layout and final production. According to Wellington writer Joe Musaphia, Hilliard conceived the idea for the book on a walk from Wellington railway station to his Oriental Bay office during a bus strike. He told Musaphia, "I found myself looking at people's faces and felt there was a book on the subject", a book which required "a photographer, not a camera-driver."<sup>104</sup>

Of all Westra's publications, this is the closest to the mainstream photography books discussed in the "picturing New Zealand" section of this chapter. The fact that more than a third of the photographs are in colour is indicative of this.<sup>105</sup> Westra rarely used colour during the period stretching from 1960 to 2000 and it is only relatively recently that she has begun to explore the possibilities afforded by the colour range of modern digital cameras. Having said that, it would be a mistake to assume that the book is simply "Wellington in colour" under another title. However, it is not quite "Notes on the city I live in" either. As I've demonstrated above, *Notes on the country I live in* is one of the principal texts of the counterculture and it was published by the leading countercultural publisher of the period. A mainstream company published *Wellington: city alive* and it is not a document of any particular moment or movement.

There are 138 Westra photographs reproduced inside *Wellington: city Alive*, 88 in black and white and 50 in colour. In addition to this, there are full size colour photographs on the front and back covers, and the front and back endpapers repeat the same black and white photograph of pedestrians waiting in the rain at the crossing on the corner of Bowen Street and Lambton Quay. The images are not captioned but often-detailed "commentaries on the photographs" are provided at the back of the book (pp.136-37), with a foldout extension to page 135 supplying a descriptive "list of photographs". This feature is an exact replication of the end matter format to be found at the back of *New Zealand: gift of the sea*, which shares the same publisher with *Wellington: city alive*.<sup>106</sup> The book is organised into five chapters: "Spirits modern and ancient"; "Weekday"; "Weeknight"; "Weekend"; "Haere ra". The title page of each chapter carries a small reproduction of a Westra photograph that chimes thematically with what is to come. Hilliard's text is concise and lively. Early on it becomes clear that he is not writing a piece of promotion and publicity for Wellington but, rather, a "warts 'n all" account of the ups and downs of the city – "Purchase of Wellington's site by the New Zealand Company remains the second biggest swindle in New Zealand's history. (The biggest was the Treaty of Waitangi.)" (p.19). In the three central chapters of the book ("Weekday", "Weeknight", "Weekend") he attempts to get inside what a variety of Wellingtonians in a multitude of locations might be doing, especially when "The crepuscular city begins to stir" (p.77).

Westra's photographs are grouped within the chapters in long text-free sequences. Only seven full-page photographs have a text page to their left or right. A number of thematic clusters – some familiar from *Notes*, others new to Westra's photographic books – shape the pattern of the book. Political protest in the form of public demonstrations again figures (pp. 20-23) but not as prominently as it did in *Notes*. By comparison, studies of people framed within public space – whether standing, sitting, relaxing, sleeping, dancing, or commuting between spaces – feature in much greater quantity (pp. 14, 33, 35, 37, 41, 47-53, 58, 63, 68, 76, 81, 119, 126-27, 128-29, 130-31). These two thematic groupings of quintessentially urban phenomena are grist to the mill of the roving street photographer. One of the recurring preoccupations of Westra's photography, children at play, is well represented (pp.14, 64-65, 95, 101, 104, 118, and 134). The photograph of two children playing in the shallows of a beach (p.101) is strongly reminiscent of the opening picture of *Notes*, a very young child running across a shallow stream near Fox Glacier. What's noticeably new amongst the photographs

interpolated throughout the book is a significant number of studies of people at work. Several of these photographs detail demolition and construction work on the fabric of the city (pp.36, 40–41, 44, 54). Others depict a wide variety of work (pp.45, 46, 56, 57, 60, 61, 62) and educational situations (pp. 66–67). These black and white photographs of everyday work scenes are complemented by a set of eight photographs spread over three pages that depict barroom scenes where ordinary working people relax, converse, play pool, and play and listen to music (pp.89–91). At the back of the book, Hilliard writes lengthy notes on some of these pictures, drawing on his knowledge and experience as a journalist.

Contrasting with these plain black and white images is a group of colour studies of nightlife and entertainers. These include discreet shots of respectable theatrical entertainment: Victorian Music Hall at the Cambridge Hotel; a programme-selling clown at Downstage Theatre; and the Wellington Operatic Society performing *My fair lady* (all p.85). On the flipside of these are full-page pictures of less respectable entertainment and entertainers: Carmen (Trevor Rupe) photographed in his International Coffee Lounge, resplendent with big hair and enormous earrings in the midst of over ripe décor (p.93); a trio of strippers in the dressing room of Carmen's other establishment, The Balcony (p.84); and, although not an image of entertainment as such and shot in black and white, the street photograph of an artist painting a lady of the night on the exterior of the Purple Onion striptease club, while a young boy looks on with interest (p.56). Wellington has long been known for the presence of a number of derelicts on its streets and there are two full-page photographs in *Wellington: city alive* that may feature two of them. The first, described simply as "Evening near the Basin Reserve", shows a man seated on a concrete step at the back of a dairy, his head bowed in resignation. (Fig. 34) Presided over by large metal plates advertising Coca-Cola and Leed lemonade, he appears to be defeated (p.80). The second, "A touch of human concern in Mercer Street", shows a young man leaning over an older one who is asleep on a bench in the inner city. Both of these images depict a perennial feature of Wellington street life but their close formal resemblance to 1930s documentary tropes of unemployment and homelessness is at variance with the overall style of the book's imagery.

Over the years, Westra has taken many memorable photographs at the Trentham races in Upper Hutt, beginning with a 1959 study of two Chinese New Zealanders consulting racing guides at the course.<sup>107</sup> And thirteen years later, *Notes* (p.40) has a strongly composed image of two Maori women seated in the public bar at Trentham, which I mentioned earlier in the chapter. (Fig. 33) The visual field of this photograph divides into thirds: at the top, four male figures stand around a table conversing; in the centre, one of the women places her arm on the shoulder of the other, who appears to need consoling; and at the bottom, a table of mostly empty beer jugs and glasses demands the beholder's attention. Westra returned to the outside area of the bar in 1974 for the Wellington project and composed a desolate portrait of a middle-aged women trapped between a bare concrete wall and a table full of empty beer cans and bottles; even the top of the wall is littered with cans and bottles. (Fig. 35) An undeniably powerful statement, it was not included in *Wellington: city alive*.<sup>108</sup> Of the three images that were, one is a relatively undistinguished picture of two women beneath a hand-held umbrella, another is a stronger image of punters waiting on a

result, and the third is a composition of very high quality. (Fig. 36) Taken from an elevated vantage point, the camera looks down on a large crowd of racegoers, some standing still, others caught in motion. The spaces between them are littered with scraps of paper. Bled right to the edges of the page, this photograph draws the viewer into the dynamic force field that holds these figures together momentarily.<sup>109</sup>

The juxtaposition of contrasting photographs on facing pages, used frequently throughout *Notes*, reappears to dramatic effect on pages 26 and 27 of *Wellington: city alive*. On the left side we find a three quarter portrait of “a member of the Wellington Black Power group”, wearing a fur hat and a sleeveless denim jacket, staring directly at the camera with hands in pockets. (Fig. 37) On the right side, the then Mayor, Sir Francis Kitts, introduces Santa Claus to a group of children assembled in central Wellington. (Fig.38) The pomp and ceremony of officially sanctioned ritual sits opposed to the theatre of the outlaw’s challenge. Finally, there is a Wellington photograph taken during this period which was not included in the book but by dint of its power demands to be discussed. (Fig.39) It was shot in Lambton Quay in 1974 and shows two figures in front of the old Public Trust building. A relaxed looking youngish Maori man wearing a grubby tee shirt and dirty jeans, overweight but unconcerned by it, occupies the foreground. His arms, wrapped in an open cardigan, are folded and he stares at something on the pavement below (not visible). In the background and in soft focus is a much older, Pakeha man, dressed formally and wearing a hat. Although it is difficult to determine his facial expression, it appears to be stern and of a piece with his rigid body posture. Standing as vertically as the column behind him, he holds his arms stiffly by his side and his fists are clenched. This photograph is perhaps the starkest example of Westra’s deployment of what I have called the internal juxtaposition of elements, marshaled in order to make manifest generational, ethnic and perhaps even class differences. The absence of traffic and other pedestrians in the street give the image a strange deserted quality, forcing all viewer attention onto the two figures, with the man in the foreground oblivious to the presence of the man behind him. There is a palpable tension to the picture that is entirely an effect of its composition. Had it been made earlier, it could have found a place in *Notes*, but its mood is perhaps too unsettling for *Wellington: city alive*.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### WE LIVE BY A LAKE AND OTHER BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

Westra was kept very busy throughout the 1970s producing photographs for books aimed at the needs of children. However, in contrast to the 1960s, the majority of these books were produced for private sector educational publishers rather than the School Publications Branch of the Department of Education. This chapter begins with a discussion of Westra's major children's photographic book of the decade, *We live by a lake*, and continues with her more functional booklets of the period, produced for both School Publications and independent publishers.

#### *WE LIVE BY A LAKE*

As early as June 1964, in a letter containing a warm appreciation of *Washday at the pa* as a highly effective classroom resource, written before the controversy erupted, Noel Hilliard asked Ans Westra if she would be interested in collaborating on a photographic story for children. Referring to the project as “We live by a lake”, the title under which it would eventually be published eight years later, Hilliard outlined what he had in mind:

the idea would be to put the children within the context of lake and pine-forest that we have here on the volcanic plateau. I've lots of tentative ideas mapped out, with probable good shots, but nothing hard-and-fast. The intention originally was to take the pictures myself, but I realize now that the job needs a photographer and not just somebody with a camera.<sup>1</sup>

By March 1966, Hilliard had informed Westra, who by then had returned to the Netherlands for an extended period, that he had “completed the first draft of *We live by a lake*.”<sup>2</sup> But over 18 months later, although “delighted to hear that you [Westra] intend to finish *We live by a lake* before November [1967]”, confessed that he had “been thinking of scrapping the project altogether” because “the children are nearly three years older now than when the pictures were taken and children change a lot in three years; publication if it ever comes could be a distinct embarrassment to them – the more so, the longer it is delayed.”<sup>3</sup>

Conceived from the beginning as a project for commercial publication rather than for the Department of Education's School Publications Branch, *We live by a lake* was eventually published in 1972 by William Heinemann. A large format, case-bound production that incorporates a colour cover and four full-page colour photographs into its flow of black and white pages, it stands out as the largest (in format, number of photographs and words) and most lavish publication within Westra's corpus of children's books.

Before the story gets underway, the lake of the title is introduced in the frontispiece with a full-page photograph of the bulrushes on its surface (the final image, too, is an inverted reflection of Moana, one of the story's children, amongst those same bulrushes on the lake). This image is followed by the dedication page carrying three passport size photographs of the dedicatees – Moana (8), Harvey (6) and Hinemoa (4), the protagonists of *We live by a lake*, and all children of the text's author, Noel Hilliard and his wife Kiriwai.

*We live by a lake* is a classic summer holiday story, set in rural Mangakino (where Hilliard worked as a school teacher) and centred on the daily play activities of the three children as a 'sibling set'. In the first section of the book, the children climb trees, make a fairy garden (the two girls), build roads and shops in a clay bank, sword fight with strips of bluegum, and swim in the lake. In the second, they visit the Maraetai dam and powerhouse on the Waikato River. Westra represents this location in a series of photographs that convey the huge dimensions of the dam's construction by positioning the children within it in long shots and aerial compositions. Upon completion of this segment, the story moves smoothly back to the children's play activities in Mangakino, beginning with the building of their own dam on a golf course near the lake; and continuing with them gathering materials from the lake itself, and devising further games around it. The final, and longest section of the story finds the children on a new day in an extended play session. The last two pages of the story constitute something of an epilogue in which the three children return to their home and show the fish they have caught to their friends Kiri and Tui.

The written story of *We live by a lake* is mostly delivered by means of a third person narrative, interspersed with snatches of the children's direct speech and occasional dialogue exchanges between them. The children's parents are referred to in the text (e.g. dad takes them to the Maraetai dam and power house) but they never appear in any of the photographs. The diegetic world constructed by both the images and the words is entirely child-centred. Like many children's stories of this kind, *We live by a lake* is propelled by pronounced homologies between play(ing) and narrative; and just as much of children's play and games are patterned along narrative lines, the narrative of this particular story is largely generated by the stringing together of the play activities devised by the three siblings in the 'free' space of a holiday period. The children's local environment provides a set of possibilities for the production of adventure, which results from the exercise of their imaginations as active agents of their own recreation. And Hilliard and Westra, in turn, act as directors and shapers of the micro-narratives that emerge from this set of basic scenarios.

In a discussion of Arthur Ransome's *Swallows and amazons* stories, Nicholas Thomas suggests, "a crucial element of adventure is the reconstitution of the landscape, certain things, and some social relations in new, imaginative terms."<sup>4</sup> Thomas's first two points, those concerning the landscape and certain things within it, are very pertinent to *We live by*

*a lake*, which is all about the animating power of the imagination to work wonders on the apparently familiar and mundane surroundings of the rurally-situated child. I would add here, too, that the social relations of the three siblings are not much marked by gender divisions. Harvey, the middle positioned child, mostly interacts cooperatively with his two sisters.

Appropriately, Westra's photographs complement the linguistic register of the adventure/play narrative that they graphically render, by remaining 'ordinary' and low key, never striving for effect but rather subordinating themselves to the demands of a simple story. Given Hilliard's experience of using children's books like this in the classroom (to teach 'slow' and other learners) and Westra's own commitment to supplying well crafted educational materials, it is surely the case that *We live by a lake* is an example of what Nicholas Thomas calls "story praxis", a general term he derives from the more specific concept of Maori "mytho-praxis", a "telling practice" that yields "situationally manipulated stories for use". "Texts", he concludes, "are not simply representations which stand for activity but are also elements of activity, to be enacted and used."<sup>5</sup> Such, I would maintain, is the purpose of *We live by a lake*, and no doubt many of the other comparable projects Ans Westra has had a major involvement in.

#### WORKS FOR SCHOOL PUBLICATIONS

##### *Lost and Found*

At the very beginning of the decade, the School Publications Branch (SPB) issued *Lost and found* (1970), Westra's only narrative School Bulletin of the 1970s. It is a collaboration with the children's writer and SPB editor, Jack Lasenby, and it is rather more text heavy than Westra's Bulletins of the 1960s. The main purpose of the story is to impart information to young readers about police work (an endnote reads: "The Department of Education is indebted to the New Zealand Police Department for their co-operation in producing this bulletin.") As with *Holiday in the capital* (see chapter six), the story is centred on two children, Peter and his sister Mary, from Christchurch but holidaying in Upper Hutt with their Uncle Jim and Aunty Pat. It begins with two policemen and their police dog searching for and finding Peter who was lost in the bush. The next section is devoted to the thoughts of his sister Mary. We then learn how photographs and radios are used in police work (pp.20-4). At the story's mid-point, the children go to Trentham to learn about police training, and police history; they also visit a dog training school (an unusual photograph on page 38 shows the two children looking at a deceased police dog's headstone). The final full-page image is of a jet rising above Wellington airport, taking the protagonists back to Christchurch, refreshed after a holiday with educational value.

Three years later, Westra worked with Lasenby again on a short piece for the *School Journal*, "The elephants from outer space". It is a story about Jimmy and Jenny who make masks that resemble elephants' heads from the big leaves of nikau palms. As a result, they become, in Jimmy's words, "... elephants from outer space. Our flying saucer crashed in the bush up on the hill."<sup>6</sup>

## Chapter Eight

### *Te Tautoko*

Westra was also the photographer for two Maori language books published by School Publications in the 1970s. The first, *Te tautoko 1: Te motopaika* (1971), was another collaboration with Katerina Mataira. The second, *Te tautoko 3: Te hararei* (1975), was written by Turoa Royal.<sup>7</sup> Set out on the page in verse form, the text of *Te motopaika* serves the purpose of instruction in Maori language, with Westra's photographs, shot in a small town set within a rural location, providing a visual context for the everyday activities of the featured Maori family. *Te Tautoko 3: Te hararei* is a 22-page booklet organized in ten sections. It intersperses small-scale photographs of Maori children within Maori language text set out in dialogue form. The bulk of these photographs show individual children tending or playing with animals, laying eel traps at the riverside, and picnicking at Kowhai Park in Whanganui. Westra does not receive a credit for these photographs, an indication perhaps of the relatively anonymous role they play as background illustrations.

#### WORKS FOR INDEPENDENT PUBLISHERS

### *People at Work*

Westra's next four booklets, all published in 1974, are collaborations with Peter Cape, well known as a songwriter and art critic as well as a writer for children. *Down at the garage*, *Brian helps at the shop*, *Brian and the bus*, and *Everyone collects rubbish* are all contributions to the publisher Price Milburn's series "Everyday stories: People at work", aimed at a readership aged between eight and nine and a half years. They are coded with "an average noun frequency level" based upon Dr Warwick Elley's noun frequency method.<sup>8</sup> There are 13 titles in the "People at work" series. Robin Robilliard wrote Numbers one to six, Walter Hirsh (text) and Gordon Burns (photographs) numbers seven and eight, Cape and Westra numbers nine to twelve, and Robin Watt number 13.<sup>9</sup>

The protagonist of all four of Westra and Cape's books is a boy called Brian McLean. In each story he has particular experiences that serve to educate him and, by extension, the youthful reader about a particular aspect of everyday life. In *Down at the garage* it is the concept of a warrant of fitness for a car. In *Brian helps at the shop*, it is how a small grocery business works and what shopping there entails. In *Brian and the bus*, it is how a local bus service operates and how it deals with lost property. And, finally, the purpose behind *Everyone collects rubbish* is to explain how a City Council works, by taking the reader through the operation of its rubbish disposal system. The average noun frequency level of the first book is 4.06, the second is 4.08, the third is 3.66, and the fourth is 3.96.

The layout of the books mostly follows a pattern of placing a single Westra photograph on the right-hand side of a double page spread, with Cape's text on the left. But from time to time the books depart from this template, especially so in the case of *Down at the garage*, which frequently combines text and image on the same page.

*Everyday Stories*

Westra went on to contribute to a second Price Milburn series, also called “Everyday stories”, which was divided into the two strands of shorter and longer stories and aimed at children with a reading age of seven and a half to nine years. She worked with children’s writer Barbara Murison on *Jane* (1975) and with educational researcher and former teacher Margery Renwick on *Richard* (1977). Both books are aimed at children aged 8 to 8 and a half years.

The eponymous protagonist of *Jane* is a seven-year-old girl confined to a wheelchair because of problems with her legs. Her 13-year-old sister, Sarah, is a member of a Girl Guide group and helps supervise a Brownie group. Although her mother doesn’t think it a good idea, she eventually agrees to Jane going on a Brownie picnic to Wilton’s Bush (Wellington). Jane enjoys her day out but goes on to have an even better day with a “Special Pack” of Brownies, several of whom are in wheelchairs. She is able to participate in more activities with this group and the following week she becomes a member. The book’s first photograph introduces Jane with a head and shoulders portrait of her sitting at a desk in a classroom at her special school. The final photograph, the only one with text below it, rhymes with the first by showing Jane in her Brownie uniform. In between, the sequence of well-composed and printed photographs supports the delivery of this story of an empowering transition by highlighting key moments in Jane’s journey.

*Richard*, Westra’s second book for the “Everyday Stories”, addresses the issue of adopting a child. The protagonists, Mary and David Thomas, are a young couple who lead fulfilling lives but long to have a family. The likely reason why they don’t have a child, infertility, is not specified and the story proceeds quickly to the question of adopting a baby. They make an appointment to see Mrs. Johns at the Child Welfare Office and are put on a waiting list. In the interim, they go shopping for materials to make baby clothes and David makes a wooden cradle. Eventually they receive news about a baby boy available for adoption and they go to the hospital to see him. They want to take him home, immediately but it is too early for him to leave the hospital just yet. They decide to name him Richard James after a grand parent. Finally, when Richard is allowed to go home wider family and friends visit him to celebrate his induction into the family. The story ends with David’s rhetorical question – “He’s a special baby, isn’t he?” And Mary’s affirmative answer – “A very special baby ... Ours.” (p.32)

*Richard* has exactly the same format as *Jane*: 32 pages of text and black and white photographs, enclosed within a cover carrying a photograph of the central character, framed by a green border. There are 17 photographs in each book, including the cover image. The internal layout is clean and simple: text on the left-hand page and a full-page photograph on the right-hand side.<sup>10</sup> The text follows a convention for books of this kind in adopting the past tense for the narration, but given that the ‘tense’ of the photographs is the arrested moment of their making, the text could just as appropriately be written in the present tense.

## Chapter Eight

### *John Goes to School*

This title, which combines Westra's photographs with text written by Margery Renwick, is a stand-alone booklet published by Reed in 1978. It tells the story of John's transition from Play Centre to Primary School. John is the son of the writer and the then Director-General of Education (1975-1988), William Renwick, although this is not made evident in the book. Margery and Bill Renwick simply play the roles of ordinary middle class parents. In the course of the story John has his last day at the Wadestown Play Centre and his first day at Wadestown Junior School. Following the cover image, which shows John at his desk on his first day at school, Westra tells his story visually in 65 photographs. We see him at home interacting with his parents; at the Play Centre engaging in a range of activities and marking his fifth birthday with a farewell party; arriving at school with his parents; meeting his first teacher; reconnecting with a friend from the Play Centre; and telling his older sisters all about his first school experiences when he gets home. The final photograph shows his school satchel sitting on a shelf with his name written above it. Westra's ability to establish a rapport with her subjects and then photograph them as they go about their business unselfconsciously is to the fore here. The result is a simple, effectively told story about an important day in the lives of all children.

### *Vim Books*

Westra and Renwick also worked together on a set of four books for Reed Education, which go under the title of Vim Books. All four were published in 1978 and they all focus on the Stevens family. The first volume, *The Stevens family*, introduces the family: Mum and Dad, Mary Ann (six), Hugh (four), and Michael (10 months). There is no story as such in this or the three other volumes, but, rather, a series of ordinary, everyday events are strung together. A descriptor on the back cover indicates that the books are "...suitable for interest reading and for integration in a Health and Social Studies programme" and that they "...complement the junior health programme as outlined in *Health education in the Primary School*." In addition to the points about health and safety made in relation to the Stevens family, the text and the images also make general points. For instance, on page three of the first volume, Westra uses a photograph from *Maori* (p.167, taken at Turangawaewae marae, Ngaruawahia in 1963) to expand the definition of the term family. *The Stevens family* ends with a montage of photos of family members from different generations and a set of questions at the foot of the page: "Who is in *your* family? What jobs do you do to help at home? What do other people in your family do to help you? What things around the home can be dangerous?" (p.24)

The purpose of the second volume, as its title *Keep healthy* makes clear, is to stress the importance of outdoor exercise, rest, good food, and keeping clean and tidy. Again, a montage of photos is used to emphasise most of these virtues (p.12). The third volume, *Safety first*, deals with the need for safety and the prevention of accidents at school and in the home. And the fourth, *The helpers*, is devoted to the socialising benefits that flow from children helping parents in the home. Throughout all four books, Westra's photographs are

plain and functional, serving as illustrations to the implicit concepts advanced by the text. Often several images are placed on each page and they blend seamlessly with the text.

### *On the Way to Reading*

This booklet was published jointly by the School Publications branch of the Department of Education and the Continuing Education Unit of Radio New Zealand. Written by Jo Horton, the Education Department's Advisor to Junior Classes, its purpose was to support a series of 12 radio programmes broadcast for the first time during the June/July period of 1978.<sup>11</sup> Towards the end of the book, Horton writes, "Enjoyment and independence are the main aims in the teaching of reading."<sup>12</sup> And throughout the text she stresses the importance of making reading a pleasurable, fun activity for children during both the preschool and entry-level years. It is clear, too, that she advocates a 'whole language' approach to reading with an emphasis on meaning; and at various points throughout the text she is critical of the competing 'phonics' approach, which is understandable given that the latter in many ways militates against enjoyment because of its analytical emphasis.

While many of Westra's photographs depict individual children engaged in solitary reading (e.g. the front cover colour image of a girl lying on a bean bag with a picture book resting on her knee), many more reveal the social context of reading, whether at home (the "bedtime story", pp.18-19), in the classroom (the back cover colour image shows a teacher demonstrating words at the top of a large format picture book to a group of attentive children) or at the public library (p.22). In addition to these direct illustrations of the activity of reading, there are a number of pictures that don't show reading at all but rather activities that generate spoken interchanges between adults and children (e.g. on page six, a boy helps mum cook in the kitchen; a grandparent tells his grandchild a story, p.8). Again, this is in keeping with the book's stress on the extra-alphabetic dimension of learning to read, involving both sound and vision: oral storytelling, pictures as aids to understanding, drawing and painting as precursors of learning to write. In addition to Westra's photographs (and five of Horton's), there are a number of reproductions of children's artworks that might have come from Gordon Tovey's book on the subject.<sup>13</sup>

### CONCLUSION

*We live by a lake* and *Lost and found* maintain continuity with Westra's narrative bulletins of the 1960s, although they do not have the para-ethnographic character of her children's books of the earlier decade. Their simple story structures create diegetic worlds involving the interaction of children engaged in play and the learning that flows from that. *We live by a lake* is a collaboration with a novelist who worked as a Primary school teacher and thus had direct experience of using material of this kind with children with varying degrees of reading competence. *Lost and found* is a collaboration with a children's writer who at the time was an editor at School Publications. The other publications discussed in this chapter,

included in the interests of a comprehensive treatment of Westra's work throughout the decade, are much more functional in character, fashioned to the requirements of publishers. They underline the fact that much of Westra's work serves the purposes of the New Zealand educational system, regardless of whether the books concerned were published by the Department of Education itself or independent publishers. With the exception of the Vim Books, which were made for use in Health and Social Studies programmes, most of the 1970s books are aimed at the English and Maori language curricula rather than the Social Studies curriculum and are tailored to the needs of young readers and language learners. Throughout the decade, this strand of Westra's photographic practice was dedicated to producing "stories for use" (Thomas) in Primary school classroom situations where the books' readers were to be found.

THE 1980s  
AND BEYOND.

*How to Continue?*  
*Carry on Representing?*



## CHAPTER NINE

### WHAIORA AND OTHER PROJECTS

...You cannot pretend that the world is great: *The Family of Man* is over. We have substantial problems but the rules of recording have changed.

—MARTIN PARR<sup>1</sup>

Ans Westra has been active as a photographer for over fifty years; *Washday at the Pa* appeared in classrooms forty-seven years ago, *Maori* was published forty-four years ago. This is a long time to have remained committed to the practice of social documentary photography as the chief source of earning a livelihood and of maintaining an artistic reputation. Long enough to make Westra one of the most senior surviving practitioners of the form in New Zealand.

During this period there have been some major changes both to the shape of the photographic community in New Zealand and to the way in which research on and representation of Maori can now be carried out or not as the case may be. In this chapter I will continue my analysis of the main peaks of Westra's career by examining the various difficulties she faced throughout the 1980s and 1990s in continuing to practise as a classical liberal humanist social documentary photographer.

#### I

##### ANS WESTRA'S CAREER IN RELATION TO RECENT DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN THE NEW ZEALAND PHOTOGRAPHIC SCENE

In chapter one I provided a sketch of the state of New Zealand photography immediately prior to and contemporaneous with Westra's emergence as a professional photographer in the early 1960s. The photographic scene then was overwhelmingly amateur and it had gained little or no acceptance within the admittedly limited number of institutions which made up the wider, public artistic community. This is no longer the case. Over the approximately fifty-year period of Westra's professional career there has been considerable change in the nature and status of serious photography in this country. Here, as elsewhere (see

chapter one for an account of the American example of MOMA), photography has been gradually absorbed into public and private galleries as a fine art in its own right. Within this shifting context, Westra's work has become unfashionable rather rapidly. At the time of the first major New Zealand group photography exhibition in a public art gallery, the Manawatu Art Gallery's *The active eye: contemporary New Zealand photography* in 1975, the most prominent form of 'serious' photography here was a local version of the American movement known as 'social landscape' photography.

The term 'social landscape' was coined by Nathan Lyons to describe a group of American photographers whose work he assembled in an exhibition at George Eastman House, Rochester in December 1966. The exhibition and accompanying publication, *Contemporary photographers: towards a social landscape* featured the work of five photographers: Bruce Davidson, Lee Friedlander, Gary Winogrand, Danny Lyon, and Duane Michals. It advanced an expanded concept of the 'documentation' of urban phenomena and aimed to register its difference from earlier humanist conceptions of social documentary photography. Shortly afterwards, John Szarkowski's (see chapter one) MOMA exhibition, *New documents* (1967), introduced the work of Diane Arbus, alongside that of two of the "social landscape" photographers – Lee Friedlander and Gary Winogrand. These three photographers can be seen to have followed the lead of Robert Frank and William Klein (see chapter seven) and ventured further into the darker recesses of the margins of American society, a society undergoing the doubts and transformations of the '1960s'. Although the word document appears in the exhibition title, the images of these three photographers are far removed from the classic documentary photography of the period stretching roughly from 1920 to 1955. In a press release for *New documents*, Szarkowski characterises the exhibition as follows: "In the past decade this new generation of photographers has redirected the technique and aesthetic of documentary photography to more personal ends. Their aim has been not to reform life but to know it, not to persuade but to understand. The world, in spite of its terrors, is approached as the ultimate source of wonder and fascination, no less precious for being irrational and incoherent."<sup>2</sup>

I have argued in chapter seven that after her return to New Zealand in 1970 Westra immediately began work on her own response to the advent of the '1960s' in the subtly altered style of *Notes on the country I live in*. Whether or not she consciously took on board some of the lessons of Frank and his successors, the 'social landscape' photographers, there can be little doubt that her work published in the 1970s does register a shift from the classically derived social documentary she produced in the chronological decade of the 1960s, even though she retained its humanist values. Her early to mid 1970s work to some degree can be incorporated into a 'social landscape' framework beside the work of more assiduous practitioners such as Max Oettli and Gary Baigent; and indeed we find that three of her photographs and a portrait of her by Trevor Ulyatt were included in *The active eye*.<sup>3</sup> However, although there is a "social landscape" or "new documents" strand to *The active eye*, there are also many photographs that don't fit either of these categories. For example, Murray Hedwig's fine studies in near abstraction, Justin Burroughs's photo-montages, the strong compositional design of Gary Blackman's two images, and the early work of Peter Peryer and Laurence Aberhart, two photographers at the beginning of what

will be long careers. The exhibition covers a wide spectrum of the broadly 'expressive photography' encouraged and stimulated by the initiatives of PhotoForum (see chapter one). And, indeed, this exhibition of "contemporary New Zealand photography" was organised "in conjunction with Photo-Forum Inc." (p.1)

Seven years later, however, the next major national touring exhibition of comparable significance, *Views/Exposures: 10 contemporary New Zealand photographers* (1982), at the National Art Gallery, advanced a quite different take on New Zealand photography. Instead of a large number of black and white photographs, most of which could be described as in some way documentary, we find a focus on a much smaller group of self-consciously art photographers. One of the curators speaks of "...the transcending sensibility of the committed photographer..." and of his or her "unmistakable ... signature", in his introductory essay.<sup>4</sup> Each of the ten photographers is represented by a thematic/formal set of prints and the main influence would appear to be *Aperture* magazine (USA) and *Photo-Forum* (NZ), publications which advanced an ideology of the fine print within an overall strategy designed to elevate photography onto the walls of the late modern art gallery's white cube. Needless to say, Westra's work, which does not fit well with projects designed for the advancement of photography as a self-contained Greenbergian-Szarkowskian art form, was not included. In effect, *Views/Exposures* served to consolidate the reputations of Peter Peryer, Laurence Aberhart, Fiona Clark, and Robin Morrison, four photographers who were first brought to wider public attention by *The active eye*.<sup>5</sup>

By the time we arrive at the third major public photographic exhibition of the last thirty years, *Imposing narratives: beyond the documentary in recent New Zealand photography: nine New Zealand photographers* (1989)<sup>6</sup>, the wide inclusive parameters of *The active eye* seem very remote indeed. The exhibition subtitle, *beyond the documentary in recent New Zealand photography*, and the essays in the substantial catalogue place the work of the nine featured photographers firmly within the debates of so-called postmodern photography (just as *The active eye* reflected the currents of modernist expressive 'straight' photography, and *Views/Exposures* those of late modernist art photography). All the photographers in *Imposing narratives* (with the exception of Peryer and Aberhart who would need to be characterised otherwise) work within "the directorial mode"<sup>7</sup>, that is to say they photograph objects or scenes intentionally fabricated for the camera. Six of the nine photographers featured are women and they bring to bear influences ranging from the 'post-feminist' avant-garde, 'appropriationist' art of the 1980s to reworkings of older romantic and symbolist currents.<sup>8</sup> Margaret Dawson<sup>9</sup> and Christine Webster<sup>10</sup> follow the lead of New York artist Cindy Sherman<sup>11</sup> and appear as models or 'actors' in their own photographs. Webster and Megan Jenkinson<sup>12</sup> incorporate language into their photo-constructions. During this period, Fiona Pardington<sup>13</sup> shows as much interest in the elaborate painted/ altered borders and frames that surround her photographic images as she does in the images themselves. The 'referents' of several photographs of Rhondda Bosworth<sup>14</sup> and Marie Shannon<sup>15</sup> are often personal constructions made up of objects or scraps culled from their everyday lives. All the photographers in *Imposing narratives*, but especially the women mentioned above, have no interest in using the camera to document 'reality' or to capture 'decisive moments' on the street or elsewhere. Rather, the central interest of their

work is signification itself and the codes by means of which it is produced or frustrated.

There has been much shifting of ground within the successive seven-year intervals between these three exhibitions. As a consequence, very few photographers have been able to make the transitions between them. Only Peter Peryer<sup>16</sup> and Laurence Aberhart<sup>17</sup>, the preeminent late modern art photographers in New Zealand, have gone the distance and appeared in all three. The durability of their work was confirmed in the new millennium with their appearance in the book *Contemporary New Zealand photographers* (2005), which could be said to position itself as the fourth entry in the line established by the three group exhibitions discussed above, even though it doesn't advance any particular agenda other than a vague notion of the 'contemporary' and seems to work mostly with the criterion of 'quality'.<sup>18</sup>

During this time there has been a progressive movement away from anything resembling conventional humanist documentary photography, indeed practically all forms of documentary, towards an ever more sophisticated and self-conscious type of image making. And by the time we reach *Imposing narratives*, the documentary mode is characterised, quite problematically, as a straightforward vehicle of transparent realism. The consequences of all this for Ans Westra's work is that for some time now it has not appeared to be contemporary or cutting edge. Within an art world context it has been overtaken by other styles and as a result even her work made in the late 1980s, the 1990s, and in the new millennium can be all too easily dismissed as dated. Faced with this situation, however, Westra has shown no interest in changing her style or in absorbing voguish influences, although there have been some new departures, which I'll discuss later. She simply wishes to carry on working within the same mode that she has always followed. Interestingly enough, this persistence, which could be seen as a weakness from the point of view of an art world obsessed with "the tradition of the new"<sup>19</sup>, can be seen as a virtue when viewed from an anthropological and historical perspective.

Having said this, I should add that the recent postmodernist turn in photography towards manipulated images is unlikely to appeal to Westra anyway. This is because, although otherwise quite different, postmodern photographic practice shares a taste for fabrication with the Pictorialism still widely prevalent in New Zealand camera clubs when Westra began her career in photography. And just as John Grierson founded the British documentary film movement on a strong reaction against the Hollywood narrative fiction film, so Westra's documentary photography is based on a reaction against Pictorialist and studio-based photography.

## II

### THE IMPLICATIONS OF CHANGED AND CHANGING RELATIONS BETWEEN MAORI AND PAKEHA FOR SOCIAL DOCUMENTARY AND ETHNOGRAPHIC PHOTOGRAPHY

The shifts in New Zealand photographic practice sketched above have problematised the very notion of fixed categories such as documentary 'truth'; or indeed, for that matter, photography as 'art'. Throughout the 1980s and beyond, artists trained in older, more tradi-

tional media have turned to photography precisely in order to escape from the confines of modernism's dead-ends, defining themselves as 'artists using photography', and thereby rendering the efforts of earlier photographers to become 'artists' all the more obsolete.

At more or less the same time as these changes have been occurring, there have been considerable changes in the position of Maori vis-à-vis the Pakeha majority. When *Washday at the pa* and *Maori* were published there was very little writing or photographic-based image making of Maori by Maori. However, a set of developments throughout the 1970s and the 1980s has changed this situation markedly. These developments would include: the rise of Maori 'activism', fashioned predominantly by young urban Maori along the lines of '1960s' 'black power' models<sup>20</sup>; the steady growth of a body of fictional writing by Maori, beginning with Witi Ihimaera<sup>21</sup> and continuing with Patricia Grace, Apirana Taylor, Keri Hulme, and others<sup>22</sup>; the emergence of a number of Maori film makers dedicated to 'reclaiming their own images' and forging a form of indigenous film making practice<sup>23</sup>; and the development of a whole set of action programmes based around the rehabilitation of the Treaty of Waitangi as the key document from which to derive a revived campaign for Maori sovereignty and tino rangitiratanga.<sup>24</sup>

The convergence of all these forces which have contributed to a renewed sense of Maori identity and have been described as part of a current, ongoing Maori renaissance has problematised the role of the Pakeha researcher, writer and documenter of Maori history and culture. It is no longer possible for Pakeha historians, anthropologists, photographers or film makers to undertake projects involving the representation of things Maori on Pakeha terms alone or solely according to the dictates of their particular disciplines. Those who have remained working in this field have done so only to the degree that they have managed to negotiate a new role or new terms for their studies.

To a large degree this is simply a local manifestation of a global predicament for the West, which confronts ethnographers, historians and social documentary photographers everywhere: the increasing untenability of maintaining a discipline or disciplines based on rigid self/other distinctions. In New Zealand it has been complicated by the fact that mapped onto this self (Pakeha) / other (Maori) distinction is another, that of coloniser/colonised. It is very hard to put forth arguments for the continuing value of 'disinterested' research and documentation on Maoridom when a protracted economic recession continues to exacerbate already existing inequalities between Maori and Pakeha.

Ans Westra's career in the 1980s and 1990s did not display the same quantity of output and confidence of tone that it did in the 1960s and 1970s. She only managed to produce one major book during this period and that, as I will demonstrate shortly, is compromised and flawed. What is perhaps most curious about Westra's work in the 1980s is her attempt to return to the themes, styles, and methods of her classic 1960s work, but this time round within a radically altered political climate. This is especially curious when one considers that the varied and 'multi-cultural' focus of the 1970s work seemed to indicate that she had moved on from an exclusive concern with Maori people alone. But, as my interview with her makes clear, like many anthropologists and the filmmaker Robert Flaherty before her, she can find little enthusiasm for the study of less exotic New Zealanders. Thus she has been left hurt, confused and uncertain as she faces a by now rather closed-

off, altered, and indeed shrinking field of operation. In the remainder of this chapter I will review the main lines of her 1980s work, concentrating mostly on *Whaiora*, and then look at how she has managed her career throughout the 1990s and into the new millennium.

III

WHAIORA

*Whaiora: the pursuit of life*, published in 1985 with text by Katerina Mataira and an introduction by Witi Ihimaera, is Westra's only major book publication of the 1980s.<sup>25</sup> It contains 143 black and white photographs reproduced in varying sizes on the page. 129 of the selected images were shot in the 1980s (1984 yielding the most, 39, with 1982 a close second, 33), but 14 images from the 1970s (1972–1979) are also included. Overall, however, the book is very much an attempt at a record of Maori life in the early 1980s.

*Whaiora*'s sequence of photographs moves seamlessly from images of childhood and adolescence to images of maturity and, finally, old age. In this it strives to replicate exactly the organizational structure of *Maori*, a structure itself derived, as I have shown, from the plan of *The family of man*. However, there are differences in the internal shape of the two books. *Maori* has a much larger component of text and it is written in a discursive, expository mode. Quantitatively there is much less writing in *Whaiora* and it takes the form of an introduction by Witi Ihimaera and brief, verse-like fragments from Katerina Mataira. Ihimaera's introduction is, in effect, an appreciative critical summary of Westra's career as a photographer of the iwi Maori from 1957–1985. Mataira's brief fragments of text, placed in white space beside or below the photographs, act as interpretive captions, which go beyond the plain descriptive captions (in smaller point-size typography) immediately beneath the photographs. In this they resemble Erskine Caldwell's written contributions to Margaret Bourke-White's book of photographs, *You have seen their faces* (1937). They would appear to be offered as transcriptions of a possible 'soundtrack' which Mataira 'heard' when she looked at Westra's photographs. Westra, who didn't want a scholarly, weighty text "because possibly people wouldn't read it", has said of Mataira's involvement: "Katerina really only did it as a favour for me. She found it very difficult to know what sort of text to do. She struggled over it, how to do it justice. She said the only way would be to add another dimension by putting in little things that people could have been thinking or saying. So when she came to children, in the ebb and flow of the book, the language essentially had to be a child's; and when she came to the old people she no longer felt she could speak for them because she hadn't reached that age herself. She felt it wouldn't have been acceptable if she had, so she tried to do it by getting a bit more factual."<sup>26</sup>

Another difference from *Maori* is the much greater amount of white space on each page, as no photograph is allowed to bleed to the edge and none occupies a whole page. In some instances (e.g. pp.72–73) one side of a double spread is completely blank except for a few lines from Mataira in the right-hand corner. This feature, together with the book's soft-cover and its square, lateral format, give it a quite different appearance from the 1960s photographic books (e.g. *New Zealand: gift of the sea*) of which *Maori* is perhaps

the finest example. The confident tone and wide address of those books was registered in their solid, monumental appearance, whereas *Whaiora* resembles nothing so much as an exhibition catalogue; and, in fact, the then National Art Gallery was a co-publisher. I might add, too, that exhibition catalogues rarely achieve the same distribution or capture the same-size audience as the more broadly pitched large-scale photographic book.

*Whaiora's* photographs are the least well reproduced and printed of any in Westra's books. This has resulted in images with a weak tonal range, lacking in her usual sharp chiaroscuro contrasts, and residing in a middling grey zone. The photographer Matheson Beaumont, a trustee of the New Zealand Centre for Photography, wrote to Bridget Williams, General Manager of Allen & Unwin (NZ), expressing his organisation's concern over the poor quality of the reproductions. He stressed that Westra's "...prints are always of superb quality and it seems quite tragic that this major work of NZ cultural history is presented with less than adequate quality control."<sup>27</sup> Westra herself had already written to the Chief Executive of Whitcoulls, declaring her "great disappointment" with the printing of the book at their Christchurch plant. She maintained, "Keeping the printing light has attacked the aesthetic value of my photographs. Their atmosphere and strength have been altered to such a degree that the essence of my work has been lost. [...] I am dismayed by your lack of understanding of the essence of my work, resulting in such a poor presentation of it."<sup>28</sup> And she made a list, classifying the reproductions into the categories of "horrendous" (pp.10, 13, 18, 32, 33, 39, 43, 47, 54, 59, 67, 73, 76, 93, 103, 108, 115, 133, 148), "sort of ok" (pp.28, 30, 56, 60, 61, 84, 98, 112, 121, 126, 154, and end section), and "mediocre" (the rest).<sup>29</sup>

In spite of this poor and disappointing rendering of the half tones, *Whaiora* is not short of strong individual photographs. The cover image (also reproduced much larger on page 37, opposite a totally white page 36) is a very striking example of Westra's skill in uniting youth and age within a tightly framed domestic interior, inside a white border. It forms part of what is probably the boldest and best cover design, by Lindsay Missen, of any of Westra's books: the main title is in huge red letters, with the subtitle and credits in smaller white type, all on a jet black background. The same cannot be said for the first photograph inside the book (also reproduced on page fifty), a rather facile image of a young man in spread-eagle flight near a swimming hole. As it is placed above her dedication note ("I wish to dedicate this book to the Maori people, who have become my friends and who, I hope, have understood what I was trying to do with these photographs") it is a pity that the publishers have chosen an image which Westra herself does not like.

Several photographs in *Whaiora* (e.g. pp.18, 37, 53, 154) look as if they could have been taken in the 1960s or at virtually any time in the twenty-five years prior to the book's publication. The photograph on page 18, for example, might have come from the photo-session for *Washday at the pa*, because, apart from the 1980s-style clothing, it resembles the cover image of that book. This occasional impression of déjà-vu is surely a result of Westra's persistent use of the 'Family of man' cluster of themes, directing her camera to the intimacies of the whanau, etc. Yet other pictures do indeed look as if they have come from the late 1970s/early 1980s period, wherein they were in fact made (e.g. the 1984 Otago and Gisborne video-game arcade photos on pages 32 and 48). There is thus

a tension or disjunction in the book between a ‘timeless’ quality in many of the images, making it difficult to place them in any one of the four decades up to its publication, and a quite contemporary quality, clearly placing them in the decade 1975–1985. 1975 was the year of the Maori land march from the far north to Parliament grounds and from that time onwards there was an intensification of Maori protest activity (e.g. Bastion Point, Raglan golf course, successive Waitangi Day celebrations) over land grievances, etc. In the early 1970s Westra had proved herself to be an excellent photographer of the ‘60s’ protest movement (the anti-Vietnam war marches, the student movement, the women’s movement, and the broader counterculture). Therefore it would seem that she was well placed to document the burgeoning and increasingly militant Maori protest movement of the decade 1975–1985. And, indeed, there are several fine studies of Maori protest action in the pages of *Whaiora* (e.g. pp.78, 81–85, 88, 96, 108). The formal composition of the photograph on page 81 (Fig. 40), “Outside the treaty house grounds, Waitangi, 1982”, highlights the strength and confidence of the protestors who occupy the left to centre region of the image, while the police on the right are dwarfed into insignificance. A 44-gallon drum in the right foreground stands in incongruous isolation. In sum, this photograph is as dynamic a study of protest activity as any Westra has made. The photograph on page 108 (Fig. 41), “The hikoi on the bridge, Waitangi 1984”, gives us a converse image of the calmness and dignity of treaty protest. In this photograph, Taipari Munro holds the Maori sovereignty flag, accompanied by activist Eva Rickard who walks with her head bowed. A very low-angle shot taken right inside the heart of the ritual action, with the folds of the flag forming a left-side border and the arm/trunk of a challenger forming the right-side border, this photograph achieves a highly concentrated stillness of great iconic power.

Within the following pages, Westra picks out anomalous elements at particular gatherings. For example, on page 84 gang members are photographed at a trade union demonstration in parliament grounds; on page 85 Black Power members gaze at a Mana Motuhake banner at a conference at Picton; and on page 10 we see gang members at Prince Charles’ visit to Waitangarua, the central figure absorbed in playing with his baby. The standout ‘gang’ photograph, however, was taken at one of their own events, a Mongrel mob convention in Porirua in 1982. (Fig. 42) This photograph occupies most of page 87, Mataira does not attempt one of her ‘poetic’ captions, and page 86 is left blank. Westra is especially fond of this striking photograph and has spoken of the delicate situation she negotiated in order to get it: “it was a tricky situation and I got out in one piece. I got them to tolerate me, even if just for the short while I needed.”<sup>30</sup> The photograph can be seen as a follow-up to a pair of pictures in *Notes on the country I live in* (on pages 73 and 75), particularly the portrait of four youths (three Maori, one Pakeha at a Te Horo rock concert). Although neither of these pictures features gang members as such, they both display Westra’s skill in capturing the rituals of subcultural dynamics in a spontaneous and revealing manner. One (Maori) reviewer has written of her uncertainty “...about the photos of the black power gang, I have a lot of negative feelings about that which come from the Pakeha side of my upbringing.”<sup>31</sup> Yet looking at this photograph (and even the others of gang members in the book) what stands out most is how benignly Westra’s camera has rendered these supposed scourges of society. As the aroha flows with the DB, they come across as almost cuddly, certainly playful.

Gangs are not the only Maori organisation Westra revisits in *Whaiora*. She also returns to the Maori Women's Welfare League conference that she covered for *Te ao hou* in the 1960s. There are two images of delegates and one of wardens at the 1983 conference, held at the Sheraton Hotel in Auckland (pp.140-141). However, the most arresting photograph of a female Maori political figure is the 1981 study of former League President and leader of the Maori land march, Dame Whina Cooper, on page 157. (Fig. 43) Cooper reclines in a chair inside a tent at Waitangi. Her imposing figure fully occupies the left foreground of the picture, offset by the head and shoulders of a Maori policewoman on the right side, who gazes obliquely across the picture plane. The row of stripes on the walls of the tent in the background is offset by the Jackson Pollock style patterns on Cooper's dress in the centre foreground. Clearly aware of the attentions of the photographer, Dame Whina has closed her eyes and her face registers if not disdain then at least indifference to the moment of being photographed. The photograph is so striking that it is perhaps not surprising that a newspaper decided to reproduce it in an article on Cooper without the approval of the photographer, thereby prompting legal action.

*Whaiora* has several excellent photographic studies of musicians, artists and art related settings. Westra's skill in this area goes back to the days of her involvement with *Te ao hou* when she often compiled photographs-with-text profiles of writers, artists and hui on art matters. A picture of a man playing bass guitar at Hawkes Bay Community College (p.90); a member of the band Herbs singing into a microphone at Whangarei (p.91); Matiu Rata strumming a guitar at a sing along during a Mana Motuhake conference in Picton (p.116); Dalvanius Prime taking time out from music to study Maori language at Wellington Polytechnic (p.118); Hone Tuwhare caught in concentrated conversation with a young woman at the Women's Gallery Wellington (p.117); Keri Kaa, framed in a rather awkward pose, looking intently at "Tane Mahuta", a sculpture by Arnold Wilson in an exhibition, "The art of the Maori in the 1980s" at Pipitea marae, Wellington (p.119). These are all excellent studies of people (not named in captions) important to the wider cultural life of Maori in the 1980s.

However, the outstanding photograph touching on Maori art in *Whaiora* is one which displays it in an expanded social context. This photograph, accompanied by the longest descriptive caption in the book, an atypical caption in that it names the three women depicted in the photo, can be found on page 151. (Fig. 44) Taken at the Dowse Gallery, Lower Hutt on the occasion of a Selwyn Muru exhibition on the subject of the historic events at Parihaka, this photo is of interest, at least to this viewer, for a number of reasons. Apart from the strength of its composition, it is remarkable in conveying the dialogue that appears to be going on between Muru's paintings (both narrative and portrait), an actual photograph of Te Whiti himself, and the unheard but sensed conversation between the three women (Netta Wharehoka, Ngahina Okeroa and Matarena Rau-Kupa) seated on beds and against the gallery wall. Here Westra has given us a record of the temporary conversion of the Western art gallery into a Maori space and a glimpse of a different, Maori way of relating to art works.

Despite the presence of strong and successful photographs like the ones I have examined, the publication process of *Whaiora* was not a happy experience for Ans Westra, and

she is unhappy with the finished product. She has commented thus on that experience: “I tried to make a positive statement on the Maori at this time of development. But I feel that in every way it is a compromise. [...] I think it was a stronger statement before it got chopped about but also I feel I was compromising myself because I couldn’t put all my energies into it. Now I feel almost that the book shouldn’t be in existence. I wish I could withdraw it and do it again.”

In contrast to her previous way of working – “I don’t normally ask people. I feel that if they allow me to photograph, that’s enough permission; and legally I don’t need to ask” – but in keeping with the changed political climate of the period, Westra made a commitment to seek the permission of everyone who appeared in the photographs selected for publication in the book. The downside of this for Westra is that as a result some photographs of importance to her had to be left out. In one instance, a girl photographed during a haka could not be contacted; in another instance, a woman in a group performing a haka on the steps of parliament vetoed a photo for purely personal reasons, according to Westra, probably because it presented her in an unflattering way.

Other photographs, important to Westra, were withheld from publication because of objections to them by her collaborator, Katerina Mataira, and/or the publishers. Mataira ruled out, with strong cultural reasons of her own for doing so, a photograph of an encounter between a flimsily attired Pakeha girl and some gang members in Cuba Mall, Wellington. Westra accepts Mataira’s point that the image could be construed in a negative light and “...could be used against Maori”, and, further, could impair her (Mataira’s) mana if she was to be associated with it. But at the same time she is unhappy about her lack of choice in the decision to veto one of her ‘decisive moment’ pictures and feels that “... my work should not be open to that kind of reasoning.” Another image rejected by Mataira was of an elderly gentleman at a Ringatu hui.

Westra’s dissatisfactions with the publishers extend more to their cavalier positioning of images within the book. One example I have already mentioned is their choice of dedication page photograph, a matter of putting an image disliked by the author in a dominant position. Needless to say, Westra fell out with them over decisions like this one.

### *Critical Reception of Whaiora*

As one might expect of a large book of photographs of the iwi Maori in the stormy decade 1975–1985 (‘the Muldoon years’), *Whaiora* has attracted a reasonably large amount of critical and journalistic attention. The latter has come mostly in the form of interview-based articles, the former in the form of critical reviews of varying length and depth. *Broadsheet*, unsurprisingly, given their early 1980s commitment to ‘black feminism’<sup>32</sup>, published two rather negative reviews, one of them, by a Pakeha writer, particularly so. The review to which I refer, by Peta Joyce, devotes over half of its brief space to the quotation of no less than four paragraphs from Witi Ihimaera’s introduction to the book. The remainder of the review consists of the reiteration of politically correct platitudes (“form of colonisation”, “patriarchal culture”, “expropriation of Maori culture” versus “inner spirituality and the

joy of living”.<sup>33</sup>) These abstract charges are not backed up with any examples, let alone any attempt to ‘read’ the images or comprehend the parameters of the project within the context of Westra’s or anyone else’s ongoing work on the representation of Maori.

The other *Broadsheet* review, by Shirley Tamihana, in contrast, has the virtue of imparting something more of a Maori viewpoint in its one and a half columns of type. She makes brief but perceptive comments on several of the photographs: for example, one on page 107 in which three Maori members of HMNZS Waikato look on ambivalently at the protest action at Waitangi; and, most interestingly, she even singles out for praise the dedication page photograph, as indicated disliked by the photographer herself, because “it has spiritual connotations – Rangi and papa and two of her sons – it is quite elemental.”<sup>34</sup> Overall, Tamihana tends to praise the ‘positive’ images in the book (especially of women), the photographs that convey the taha wairua of Maori life, and to deplore the ‘negative’ (the Black Power gang pictures; and a photo on page 62 of a youth in Aotea square on the grounds that “...an overseas visitor ... would... see an unemployed black youth just the same as in New York.”<sup>35</sup>) (Fig. 45) It seems that Tamihana’s objection to this photograph is that it does not tell us what the specific “pursuit of life” (the book’s subtitle) is in this instance (although Mataira has supplied a highly tendentious, directive, verse-caption). This makes her objection sound similar to Bertolt Brecht’s lament that a photograph of a Krupp factory cannot tell us much about capitalism.<sup>36</sup> Yet, ironically, the image’s lack of exoticism (true) or cultural specificity (debatable) may in fact be its strength in that it brings to light a local manifestation of a global process of ‘black’ youth unemployment and disaffection.

Tamihana likes Mataira’s text, praises it for its “earthy” and occasionally “tongue in cheek” qualities and writes: “...I could just imagine Katerina speaking.”<sup>37</sup> In this, her view differs strongly from those expressed in the two major reviews of *Whaiora* by Pakeha writers. Janet Bayly, in the first of three slightly different reviews for three different journals, and Peter Ireland in his *NZ Listener* review, write of the difficulties involved in the captioning of photographs. Relevant here are the concepts of anchorage and relay, formulated by Roland Barthes to deal with the role of language in the advertising photograph. The anchorage function of a verbal caption serves to limit the play of signifieds in the connoted message of the photograph. This does not apply to Westra’s own descriptive captions in *Whaiora* as they are related purely to the denoted level of the photographs. To some degree, though, it does apply to Mataira’s verse-captions but before specifying how I will gloss the concept of relay. Barthes allocates relay to photographic signifying forms larger than the individual photograph or photographs, like comics and pictorial stories which develop a narrative flow, to complement the images in a separate but linked register.<sup>38</sup> And as an extended photo-book with a childhood to old-age narrative trajectory, *Whaiora* does come into this category. Westra has told how Katerina Mataira: “...found it very difficult to know what sort of text to do. She struggled over it, how to do it justice. She said the only way would be to add another dimension by putting in little things that people could have been thinking or saying.” The publisher’s statement on the back of the book – accompanying words by writer Katerina Mataira use both Maori and English to set the photograph in context – most certainly does not apply to these words as they are interpretive and speculative, and not historically specific. If anything it is Westra’s own basic time and place captions that give the

sole contextual information to these pictures. Mataira's short texts do function as relay(s) in that their cumulative effect is to constitute a parallel linguistic running commentary on the photographs as the viewer moves through the book. But in many instances they also function strongly as anchorage by directing and limiting, or channeling the viewer to a preferred reading of Mataira's own, a reading which closes on a particular signified by arresting the possible play of the signifier(s). This process is quite evident, to return to a picture already discussed, in the case of the photo of the youth in Aotea square on page 62. (Fig. 45) The words – "City of lights/ City of stone/ I hate you/ I should go home/ to my Turangawaewae" – attempt to force a familiar, stock reading of the city as an alien/alienating place for Maori, in spite of the possibility that this youth may have no turangawaewae to go home to; and, like many of his contemporaries, his fundamental experiences probably have been shaped by urban life. It is also conceivable that the photographer has captured a moment of repose and contemplation rather than alienation or resignation.

The two lines accompanying page sixty-six's picture of a young man ascribe a possible narrative moment ("waiting for my mates/ been a long time gone") which adds little or nothing to an appreciation of this photograph but does act as a potential reducer of meaning. The interrogative lines beside the image of the youths (not necessarily gang members) in parliament grounds during a trade union demonstration are highly conjectural and tendentious, and again attempt to force an interpretation upon an open-ended photograph.

Janet Bayly's assessment of the overall effect of Mataira's text-captions is harsh but hard to disagree with: "...the final effect of the text in *Whaiora* is to limit, sentimentalise, and patronise the photographs, which is a great pity and I'm sure was not her intention."<sup>39</sup> In a later and final review Bayly suggests that one reason why this may have happened is because: "Katerina and the publishers are not necessarily versed in the language of Westra's medium, which is a visual one. By editing, explaining and conjecturing on her meaning, they have thwarted the power of the photograph as a document in itself."<sup>40</sup> Alan Taylor, the artist and historian of Maori folk art, was also critical of the captions and Ihimaera's introduction as well. In a letter to the publishers he writes: "I'm greatly impressed by *Whaiora* as a photographic [work]. However, Ihimaera's introduction and Mataira's text are remarkably at variance with Westra's achievement; the introduction is both malicious and naïve (*Washday*, for example, was an outstanding, *honest* photographic essay...) ... As for the text, the banality and obvious inappropriateness as captions is appalling. Ms Westra must have wept over text and introduction! She's certainly having to pay for her honesty over *Washday at the pa* ... Maori never forget, nor forgive!"<sup>41</sup>

James Agee and Walker Evans criticised Erskine Caldwell and Margaret Bourke-White's *You have seen their faces* for its "nice" and "right" "propaganda", and presented the photographs in their *Let us now praise famous men* completely without captions of any kind.<sup>42</sup> Likewise, and even more pertinently, Paul Taylor and Dorothea Lange surely had the Caldwell/Bourke-White book in mind when they wrote of their own *An American exodus* thus: "We adhere to the standards of documentary as we have conceived them. Quotations which accompany photographs report what the persons photographed said, not what we think might be their unspoken thoughts."<sup>43</sup> From both these points of view the kinds of text-captions featured throughout the pages of *Whaiora* would be anathema.

Peter Ireland's cavil at the captions echoes Taylor and Lange's: "The captions in the form of direct speech pose a particular difficulty where the content is contentious. In any culture people's beliefs are important, ought to be respected, and misrepresentation of them therefore avoided. Ascribing to people opinions they may not in fact hold seems to be, at best, an unwise practice and a doubtful liberty."<sup>44</sup>

And yet Bayly's, Ireland's and my doubts are those of Pakeha well versed in the history and theory of visual social documentary practice. One wonders how many Maori would share Shirley Tamihana's warm appreciation and positive valuation of the text. This might be difficult to gauge if her claim that "...they (Maori) would never buy a book like this" is true.<sup>45</sup> But still the question does remain whether Maori are less interested in these or any other images of 'themselves' as occasions for the free movement of interpretation or disinterested aesthetic contemplation, etc., than for quite other reasons. And these other reasons, stemming as they surely would from a Maori kaupapa/take, may not experience the text as an obstacle. To the contrary, perhaps it would be valued as a very positive component of the project.

Westra's dissatisfaction with *Whaiora* as a photographic book (as opposed to individual photographs within it) largely stems from a classically liberal-humanist objection to interference with and censorship of the artist's vision. As a practising embodiment of this position, Westra has consulted and collaborated with a representative of the 'culture' she is engaged in representing, and has been obliged to compromise when faced with an increasingly more confident cultural viewpoint, to a degree where she feels she has lost control of her own project.

The continued sustainability of that project in the 1980s and 1990s is a question inescapably posed by Westra's experience both in the field and in the editing/production process of *Whaiora*. In a letter to the editor of *PhotoForum review*, following the publication of Bayly and Ireland's reviews, Westra attempted to explain a little of the history of the book's genesis. Family circumstances, necessitating shorter bursts of work, meant that a period of twelve years elapsed from the initial desire (c.1973) to follow up on *Maori* and the publication of *Whaiora* (1985). The letter concludes with a group of questions addressed to photographers: "where do we stand at this point in time with documentary photography? Can we carry on observing other people through our cameras and reveal what we think is happening? Or are we never able to really know the other person enough to give a fair picture, especially when crossing cultural barriers, and is it no longer acceptable to try?"<sup>46</sup> Around the same time she told *Wellington city magazine*: "... I'd love to carry on photographing Maoris, but I have no purpose, or reason, or justification almost. I'd love somebody in the Maori community to come with a project for me, but otherwise I feel really not quite justified to go and carry on."<sup>47</sup>

That this crisis of confidence in representation is indeed deep is made clear in this passage from Peter Ireland's review of *Whaiora*: "...it is difficult not to conclude that Westra's approach has been overtaken by history...the 1930s ideologically-based documentary technique of photography is no longer a useful framework for interpreting cultural restructuring in the 1980s Pacific."<sup>48</sup> Ireland's valediction for Westra and 1930s liberal-humanist documentary in general goes beyond Bayly's criticisms which conclude by concurring with

Witi Ihimaera's claim that Westra "...continues to give us a pictorial whakapapa of our lives, a genealogy which charts the ever-changing destiny of the Maori."<sup>49</sup>

Yet, the changes both in New Zealand photographic practice and within Maori society that I outlined at the beginning of this chapter do indeed indicate major difficulties for Westra and social documentary's untroubled continuance. On the one hand, postmodern photographic practice has either moved "beyond the documentary" or, in the case of those few who still attempt cross-cultural photography, has moved from representation to a form of textual collaboration. On the other hand, an increasing Maori emphasis on self-determination (evident in some of *Whaiora's* pictures), the pursuit of politics rather than just life, has reduced if not eradicated the space from which an outsider, an omniscient representer of all things Maori, might work. What the times now appear to require are not photographic auteurs or any other kind of auteur, but ghost writers, invisible advocates with specialist knowledge for specific causes within an expanding, diversified, and no longer so unified Maori-controlled polity.<sup>50</sup>

Because of the long-term delay in its production, the publication of *Whaiora* had the effect of making Westra appear like those politicians who contest one too many elections, or those athletes who continue to compete long after their prime. Yet, like them, clearly she finds it very difficult to accept the implications of a radically changed field and retire gracefully. No other career options beckon her away, either. In the mid-1980s, her interests remained with social documentary photography; her desire, to keep on photographing Maori people. But how to keep on going, how to carry on representing? The remainder of this chapter will sketch Westra's more recent photographic activities, from 1985 to the close of the millenium, and sketch her response to the problem of the impasse of classic social documentary photography.

#### IV

#### WOMEN VIEW WOMEN

I devoted some attention to the question of women and photography in chapter two and sketched in the emergence of the women's liberation movement in chapter seven. Here I will address briefly an exhibition of four women photographers, one of whom was Ans Westra, which opened and then toured not long after the publication of *Whaiora*. *Women view women* was organised by Diane Quinn of the *Broadsheet* collective to mark the passing of the United Nations decade for women (1975-1985) and began its exhibition itinerary at Real Pictures Gallery in Auckland in December 1985, thereafter touring to five other New Zealand venues, concluding at Whanganui's Sarjeant Gallery in November 1987. The four photographers featured were Fiona Clark, Gil Hanly, Ans Westra, and Jane Zusters who contributed collectively a total of forty photographs. There is a broad division within the exhibition between Clark and Zusters's portraits and Hanly and Westra's emphasis on women's activities. Perhaps even more than Westra, Hanly has directed much of her attention to photographing protest activity in New Zealand and for the exhibition she chose several photographs depicting the prominence of Maori women in action at Wait-

angi (e.g. “Whina Cooper, Eva Rickard and Titiwhai Harawera at Waitangi hui, 5 February 1985”). And while Westra chose “Peace rally, Wellington, 1983” – reflecting her exhibition statement, “In my selection I have searched for portraits of women of obviously strong character; the photographs clearly defining their varied roles in today’s society. These women seem to me to be very sure of where they belong and what they are fighting for. I have tried to get to know these people a little by observing them through my camera.”<sup>51</sup> – most of her selections show quieter, more low-key moments (e.g. “Wellington summer festival 1984” a strong composition depicting a relaxed mother and daughter, who gaze intently and diagonally in opposite directions across the picture plane; and “festival of dreams, Wellington Art Centre 1984”, which shows face painting in action).

In a thoughtful review of the exhibition, Gwen Stacey claims that Hanly and Westra “... embody two fundamentally different approaches to documentary photography ... Westra is an exemplary exponent of the photographer as the detached and unobserved observer, while Gil Hanly’s photographs are clearly motivated by a political commitment and usually suggest the perspective of a participant observer.”<sup>52</sup> Stacey’s view of Westra’s practice is the standard one and the photographer would agree with the description “unobserved observer” but not the adjective “detached”. However, although in interviews she has disavowed strong “political commitment”, Westra’s large body of ‘protest’ photography, compiled over more than 40 years, tends to contradict that view. It would suggest, too, that she is very much a participant observer, although not as forthcoming about her commitments as Hanly.

Stacey goes on to comment on the Maori material Westra selected for the exhibition and, in relation to the discussion of *Whaiora* earlier in this chapter, her comments are of particular interest. After stating that Westra’s photographs of Maori in *Women view women* are “the least successful of her images”, she continues thus: “Her photographs of European New Zealanders are enlivened by a rich sense of irony, while her work on the Maori people generally appears clouded by a romanticism that sometimes borders on sentimentality ... in an era that is seeing the belated emergence of a heightened sensitivity to the issues of cross-cultural documentation, Ans Westra’s Maori photographs seem somewhat outdated.”<sup>53</sup> The first part of this statement is, again, at variance with Westra’s own views, which tend to stress the ease of photographing Maori and the relative difficulties involved in photographing Pakeha. However, the weight of evidence provided by *Notes* and, to a lesser degree, *Wellington: city alive*, suggests that there is much to this view and, also, that Westra has underestimated the strength of her non-Maori images. The second part of Stacey’s statement echoes Peter Ireland’s criticism, cited earlier, of *Whaiora* as “overtaken by history”. This claim presents itself as true in general of Westra’s more recent work, and there is some truth in it, but it needs to be qualified by reference to specific images. It’s true that overwhelmingly positive and sometimes soft-centred pictures of children and adolescents predominate in the long opening sequence of photographs in *Whaiora*. But just as Stacey is forced to make an exception of the photograph, “Waitangi Day religious rally”, we need to take into account different kinds of photograph positioned later in the book. I have already discussed in detail “Outside the treaty house grounds, Waitangi, 1982” and “The hikoi on the bridge, Waitangi, 1984” and drawn attention to other images of 1980s Maori protest action. There are also a number of quite unromantic images of people at work

(flax weavers, p.70; fisheries workers, p.94; a freezing worker on the chain, p.95; thermal bore workers, p.96; a road worker, p.99; nurses, p.101; and sewing machinists, p.100). It seems rather harsh to dismiss all of Westra's 1980s images of Maori on the basis of a small selection in *Women view women*.

However, Stacey's charge of a "romanticism that borders on sentimentality" requires closer interrogation. The title of Janet Bayly's *Art New Zealand* review of *Whaiora* is "A persistent aroha", a phrase derived from Witi Ihimaera's introduction to the book, which means love and compassion. The point being made is that Westra has brought this quality to her ongoing project and that this is evident in the images themselves. Stacey's binary distinction between the "irony" of the non-Maori images and the "sentimentality" of the Maori ones allows no space for aroha, which cannot be reduced to "sentimentality". Nor, for that matter, is it adequate to equate romanticism with sentimentality. The romantic tradition, which arguably includes Westra, harbours a critical dimension, as I've argued in relation to *Washday at the pa*, and its presence continues to be felt at various points throughout *Whaiora*.

V

THE COMMONWEALTH PHOTOGRAPHY AWARD

In the week of 10–16 March 1986, the week of Commonwealth Day, Ans Westra joined approximately one thousand other photographers from throughout the 49 member countries in taking and submitting six photographs on the theme of Life in the Commonwealth. The first phase of the competition – overall organisation was by the Commonwealth Institute, sponsorship by the Standard Chartered Bank – was adjudicated in the five main regional zones of the Commonwealth: Africa, Europe, the Caribbean and the Americas, South and South-East Asia, and the Pacific. The final adjudication – entrants consisted of the regional winners together with the best 25 portfolios from each region – took place in London and out of the decision an exhibition was fashioned at the Commonwealth Institute in March 1987. Westra emerged as the winner of the Pacific Region Award, "the unanimous choice of the international panel of judges at the regional selection ... in Adelaide on 26–27 May 1986."<sup>54</sup> Attached to the letter informing Westra of her award was a list of the 15 portfolios from the Pacific Region that the judges commended, ranked in order of merit: eight from Australia, five from New Zealand (including second place getter Richard Poole, Fiona Clark, and Natalie Robertson), and two from Papua New Guinea. All 15 portfolios were included in the exhibition, *Images: photographic expressions of the Commonwealth* (6 March–10 May 1987), held at the Art Gallery of the Commonwealth Institute in London. But only Westra's portfolio was included in the accompanying book, *Pictures of everyday life: the people, places and cultures of the Commonwealth* (1987).

To win an award of this kind is a very impressive achievement and it also had the effect of placing Westra's work in a contemporary and progressive context – photo-documentation, and the politics of representation in a post-colonial Commonwealth. In her response to the second of five questions put to the regional judges – "what are the dominant photographic

practice(s) which might have influenced the photographers entering the awards? – Pacific judge Helen Ennis, curator of photography at the Australian National Gallery, noted: “The entries for the Pacific region were dominated by a photodocumentary aesthetic... There was a lack of abstract work and manipulated work, and more black and white photographs than I had expected... most of the work did not address the contemporary art debate.”<sup>55</sup> This bias towards documentary modes in the submitted work is not altogether surprising because, as Stuart Hall states in the first of his two essays for the book: “...the award... wanted to privilege what might be called the ‘representational’ element: the way things, people, places, activities, landscapes look to those who actually live in those locations”; and, further on: “... the award was designed to operate on the terrain of the ‘cultural’. It invited the photographers to ‘see’ their subjects in context: not simply as elements in an aesthetically constructed space, but through the lens of culture.”<sup>56</sup>

Given these cultural and representational parameters of the award’s brief, Westra was well placed to produce a competitive portfolio of photographs. And looking at her six pictures (selected from a massive 600 photo shoot), we see a strong and well-balanced selection from what was obviously a very creative week, a week in which the Wellington International Arts Festival was on. There are pictures of New Zealanders ‘at play’, engaged in leisure activity (“Young family fishing off the wharves, Wellington” captures the relaxed outdoor flavour of a New Zealand family weekend); “Street musician and spectators at the street carnival, Cuba street, Wellington” shows Westra’s continuing skill in relating contrasting elements pictorially within the frame. The later photo is a fine example of the juxtaposition of two different styles of sartorial street wear (worn by Maori and Pakeha young men who, Westra informs me, turned out to know each other). These pictures are complemented by two detailed photos of New Zealanders at work: “Car upholstery business” shows a man stitching the underside of a car seat surface, with his Doberman resting nearby; “repairing the nets”, shot from a wharf across the deck of a fishing trawler, reveals the rhythm of maritime labour (ship welding, net repairing).

The sixth and final image from Westra’s portfolio could have come from the final pages of *Whaiora*. It is a portrait of an elderly Maori couple, both seated in armchairs at a rest home. Westra told Michael Kopp, “the man and his wife were stiff and formal when she arrived to photograph them”<sup>57</sup>, but gradually she overcame this and gained their trust by talking, smiling and getting on with photographing them. Although Westra considers this photograph to be the best she took during that very productive week, it was the only one of her portfolio of six not published in the book, *Pictures of everyday life*. According to Westra, it was regarded as “...too downbeat to be published in the celebratory book on life in the Commonwealth”; and she is reported as saying that “as with most of these sorts of competitions, it was less about photography and real life and more about public relations for the Commonwealth.”<sup>58</sup> This claim and Michael Kopp’s endorsement of it (“a look at the contest booklet confirms this, though there are many fine pictures”) does not seem to me to be borne out by looking at the photos and even less so by reading the essays and documents which make up a large part of the book.

Stuart Hall’s two essays, in particular, take great care to situate the award within current discourse about photographic representation/signification and questions of post-

colonial ethnicity, cultural and power differentials, etc. He insists that the competition was designed not to be "... yet another example of the 'North' attempting to focus the 'South' in its ethnographic gaze."<sup>59</sup> And neither Noelle Goldman ("we have looked at the way in which photographs are constructed within economic and social relations...and the photograph as analytical or symbolic object"<sup>60</sup>) nor the five regional judges, in their considered responses to the five questions, indulge in public relations exercises on behalf of a monolithic Commonwealth.

In her review of both the exhibition and the book, Liz Heron writes: "the thematic emphasis on communality of experience as well as diversity across 49 countries, could have resulted in a blandly celebratory echo of the fifties *Family of man* exhibition that was photography's paean to sentimental humanism. But where *The family of man* erased history's traces, *Images* attempts to replace the static emptiness of the familiar icons with a sense of movement, balancing positive images against stereotypes without losing sight of what they distantly refer to: poverty and underdevelopment."<sup>61</sup>

It is again ironic, given her undimmed admiration for *The family of man*, that Westra has contributed to a project which registers rather than erases the traces of history. But that is indeed what she has done in another instance of her actual practice going beyond the limitations of her consciously held beliefs about her photographic work; and, moreover, going beyond some of the limitations of classical liberal-humanist documentary which exhibitions like this suggest, contra Peter Ireland, may still be capable of revitalization.

Even so, it seems that the fine photographs and the judicious writings of Stuart Hall, Noelle Goldman and reviewer Liz Heron were not matched in the fora organized around the competition, exhibition and publication. Westra has commented on her experiences at a forum in London as follows: "when I went to England for this Commonwealth competition, there were all these different teachers talking about using documentary photography. There were people saying you really have no right to photograph outside your own family; you can only use the members of your own family." And in reply to my question about her thoughts and feelings on this position she said: "I feel that you are so totally restricted by it. I think there is value in observing through a camera. I try not to come to conclusions. I try to really get influenced by what's happening when I photograph. I am as open as I possibly can be." And so, true to her belief in the value of "observing through a camera", and against the view that the photographer should restrict herself to photographing her own family, Westra decided to use her 1000 pounds (NZ\$2,700) Commonwealth prize money to carry out an ethnographic photography project in the Philippines.

## VI

### PEOPLE POWER: "FREEDOM" IN THE PHILIPPINES

In September/October 1986, Westra spent 23 days photographing in the Philippines. The trip came about partly by accident as her Australian resident father paid for her to visit him in Brisbane, and, after a recommendation from her sister she decided to combine a photographic trip with the family visit. Looking for a country that qualified as 'different'

but didn't require a prolonged stay like, say, China or New Guinea, she settled for the Philippines. About this choice she has commented, characteristically, "I knew almost totally nothing re the Philippines before I went which is a good way to be in a way because you can soak it up, you're much more open minded in a way."<sup>62</sup>

She took 150 rolls of film, the largest single expense of the trip, and visited five main islands: Luzon (capital Manila), Cebu, Negros, Mindanao and Leyte. She visited two aid projects at the request of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs External Aid Division. A UNICEF project on Negros for malnourished children and Manila's Bukas Palad project for poor women and girls, run by Catholic women volunteers, both of which received financial assistance from NZMFA. Her longest field trip was five days in Leyte Island, mainly to visit the Agricultural College at the request of the New Zealand embassy.

Westra "was mostly interested in people's daily lives – how people live there and in what sort of conditions..."<sup>63</sup>, and returned to New Zealand after experiencing what she has described as a "humbling experience to see people's resilience and cheerful acceptance"<sup>64</sup> in the face of widespread poverty, exploitation and overpopulation. The end result of her photographic labours in the Philippines was an exhibition of thirty prints toured to university campuses in the later part of 1987 by the New Zealand Students' Arts Council under the title *People power: "freedom" in the Philippines*.

Many of the Filipino photographs I have seen fall comfortably within Westra's familiar orbit of matrifocal studies – for instance a picture of a mother and her two very young children in a public hospital at Bacolod, Negros's capital; a flax cutting mother and child near Cebu township; a mother delousing the hair of her child, with another child in the background, in Cebu, the second largest city in the Philippines – and as such can be seen as counterpoints to a multitude of earlier studies she has done of Maori mothers and their children. Yet others, in combination with lengthy and detailed information-based captions, go beyond these apparently 'timeless' portraits and provide historically specific information about Filipino work situations in the context of the global economy.

Westra has suggested that perhaps she "...needed a change of pace and the challenge to go to a totally strange place" and "...prove that I can do something else." The Philippines project, short lived as it was and without the possibility of a book publication to give it a less ephemeral public record, enabled her to hold onto her pursuit of 'difference' in subject matter; and to build on her experience of photography within a global framework. However, since her mid to later 1980s burst of photographic activity, the period of *Whaiora's* publication, the Commonwealth prize and the Philippines visit, Westra's career has been rather low key in character. Before closing off this penultimate chapter I will briefly summarise her photographic works from the late 1980s to the present.

## VII

### WORKING IN THE LATE 80S, THE 90S AND THE NEW MILLENNIUM

Throughout the years 1988-1991, Ans Westra did not produce a major, or, indeed, any book publication. Instead, she kept herself busy with smaller, shorter-term projects. She

was an artist in residence on two occasions. First, in 1988/9 at the Dowse Art Museum in Lower Hutt where, financed by the Lower Hutt City Council and the QE II Arts Council, she carried out a six-month documentary project on life in the Hutt Valley. Second, in 1993/4 at the Tylee cottage of the Sarjeant Art Gallery in Whanganui over a twelve-month period. She also participated in two documentary projects with other photographers. In chronological order these are: *The post office project* (1988), organized by the Alexander Turnbull Library to document a large number of rural and urban post offices to be closed by the government as an economy measure, and *Pictures from the big A* (1990), organised by the Auckland City Library to document the physical changes in a rapidly redeveloping inner city area of Auckland.

In 1988 Westra was elected president of PhotoForum/Wellington and subsequently gained re-election in 1989, 1990 and 1991. Also during this period she taught and lectured for the Workers Educational Association (WEA) in Lower Hutt and Wellington, Karori West School Adult Education, the Wainuiomata Community Institute, the Southern Arts School, Southland Polytechnic, Invercargill, and co-tutored a PhotoForum workshop with British photographer Fay Godwin. She appeared in several group exhibitions (Including *Cheap shots* (1988) at Real Pictures, Auckland, *Pictures from the big A* (1990) at the Auckland City Library, *PhotoForum 90* members touring show, *Art and organised labour* (1990) at the Wellington City Art Gallery, and *Land of milk and honey* (1991) at the Dowse Art Museum, Lower Hutt. In May/June 1991 her one-person exhibition, *Portrait of the Hutt* brought together the finest results of her recent residency at the Dowse Art Museum. Her presence as a finalist in several art awards [for instance, Montana-Lindauer (Auckland Society of the Arts), National Art Awards (Gisborne Museum and Arts Centre), United-Sarjeant Art Award (Sarjeant Art Gallery, Whanganui)], as the subject of several arts programmes (a *Kaleidoscope* documentary and an item on arts magazine programme, *Sunday*), and her nomination by PhotoForum/Wellington in 1991 for the Henri Cartier-Bresson prize (an international award based in Paris) – all these helped to maintain her profile during the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Yet in spite of all this, admittedly relatively low-key, activity and achievement, it was not altogether surprising in late 1993 to learn of Ans Westra's decision to leave New Zealand permanently. Although she had a strong personal reason for returning to her home town of Leiden – her mother was by then in her eighties – Westra also told a reporter: "I feel I have served my time here and I want to have new horizons, look at other people."<sup>65</sup> Amongst these new horizons she listed: "being able to hop into a car and see different cultures... to become a Gypsy", and a desire to produce an "outsider's view of Holland."<sup>66</sup> These new, positive aspirations for a renewed career in Europe contrasted with what she had told me at the end of 1987: "nowadays when I go to Holland I photograph it more than I used to because it's so steeped in history. And it would be interesting to photograph certain things the Dutch are doing; it's just that I think they'd be harder to get close to and photograph because they're more reserved and aware of what I do with images. I'd much rather go to the Philippines even though that was quite a sad experience as I was feeling sorry for the people." However during the six years which followed that statement, as I have just pointed out, Westra's career here was steady but unspectacular, and certainly

not at all financially lucrative. On the contrary, it was a struggle to continue barely making a living from what she has always regarded as her vocation. “I’ve not earned as much as I would have on the DPB [Domestic Purposes Benefit]” is how she quite accurately puts it.<sup>67</sup> Sometime soon after her 1994 two hundred print exhibition at the Serjeant Gallery in Whanganui, Ans Westra announced that she would depart finally for Holland, thereby bringing a thirty-seven year residency and a near thirty-year photographic career in New Zealand to a close. However she promised one more book, “Peaceful Islands”, as a parting gift to the country where she had done the major part of her life’s work.

*“Peaceful Islands”*

In 1987, Westra conceived the idea for a book that reflected and contributed to the strong anti-nuclear stand adopted by the Fourth Labour government and Prime Minister David Lange in particular. Early that year, she tried to interest Greenpeace Books (UK) in the idea by sending them some photographs of people in New Zealand going about their business. The reply stated, “The photos are good but the whole project is too vague”, and suggested, “A tighter collection of pictures with, perhaps, six essays by various others about the nuclear-free Pacific and an intro by David Lange...”<sup>68</sup> Near the end of the year she mailed out a proposal for a book with the title “Peaceful Islands” to “representatives of various aspects of the community”, asking if they would be interested in contributing short essays of 500 to 800 words to it. The list of potential contributors approached is very long. Amongst the 32 names are the following: Dr C.E. Beeby; Professor James Ritchie; Dame Joan Metge; writers Keri Hulme and Patricia Grace; Educationist Jack Shallcrass; businessman Hugh Fletcher; and politicians Geoffrey Palmer and Marilyn Waring. The animating question behind the project was, “What kind of a country do we want?”<sup>69</sup> Most of the potential contributors declined Westra’s offer to write an essay for the book. Race Relations conciliator Walter Hirsh, children’s writer Elsie Locke, Waipa MP Katherine O’Regan, philanthropic medical doctor Ian Prior, and economist Brian Easton agreed to contribute but only Locke and Prior delivered texts. ATI [Auckland Technical Institute] director John Hinchliff, dancer Faye Tohbyn, and Jack Shallcrass appear to have written texts but I have been unable to locate their drafts.

The only contribution received that I have been able to locate is an untitled essay from James Ritchie, in which he wrote: “I want to live in a country which is at peace with itself because it knows and understands its history and has moved beyond it to redress the grievances of the past.”<sup>70</sup> Over four years later, returning to the suggestions of Greenpeace’s John Main, Westra wrote to David Lange, enclosing “a proposal for a book, which I tried to get off the ground in the late eighties to celebrate New Zealand’s anti-nuclear stance.” She informed him, “The book floundered, mainly because not enough people seemed to have any vision”, but claimed, “There is a possibility of some financial support now”, and invited him to contribute “a short, sharp directive for a better society.”<sup>71</sup> Lange responded with a brief text that is worth quoting in full:

I look forward to New Zealand becoming a country which accepts its place in the Pacific, treasures its old world heritage and relishes its distinctive indigenous culture.

My country can become the pioneer of a new style of nation where people are honoured for their creativity and tolerance rather than their capacity to project or manipulate power.

This collection gives us a glimpse into a culture which will become more pervasive. One where there is contentment among people and empathy with the sea and landscape.<sup>72</sup>

Had the book been published, Lange's text would have preceded a purely pictorial study made up of black and white Westra photographs, selected with the help of John B. Turner, with design and picture editing assistance from Peter Turner and Michael Kopp. Looking back at a draft selection of images for the proposed book, several things are apparent. Lange's desire for a culture in which "there is contentment among people and empathy with the sea and landscape" is strongly evident across this selection of 40 photographs. In her funding application to the QE II Arts Council, submitted on the last day of 1992, Westra's project outline stated, "The project consists of a book of my photographs, which in their sequencing and content try to give emphasis to the positive qualities of life in New Zealand. The text needed from the contributing authors should give a directive for the future of this country."<sup>73</sup> It appears that Westra did not receive funding but proceeded anyway with her own "mortgage money freed up", even though she had only a fraction of the solicited texts. However, she did have a publisher, Daphne Brasell Associates Press. Unfortunately, Brassell eventually declined to publish the book on the grounds that she "could no longer undertake such expensive publications"<sup>74</sup> and the project remains unrealised. Looking back at it, even though there are many strong photographs in the draft selection, it is hard to disagree with John Main of Greenpeace and his comment about the overarching vagueness of the project. The celebration of "positive qualities", without lapsing into diffuseness, is a difficult thing to achieve in a documentary photographic book, and perhaps "Peaceful Islands" foundered on this dilemma as much as it did on the lack of will on the part of the publisher.

### *The Crescent Moon*

The gap between the publication of *Whaiora* and Westra's next and most recent book project would extend to almost 25 years. But, finally, in 2009, a new book, *The crescent moon: the Asian face of Islam in New Zealand* was published by the Asia New Zealand Foundation. The Foundation commissioned Westra to make photographic portraits for the book and she worked on the project over the course of two years. The project was also realised in the form of an exhibition that opened at the Pataka Museum of Arts and Cultures of Porirua in May 2009.

*The crescent moon* profiles 37 Asian New Zealanders of an Islamic persuasion by means of their own words and Westra's photographic portraits. The texts consist of edited transcripts from Adrienne Jansen's taped interviews with the subjects, while Westra's black and white portraits are printed on high gloss paper, mostly one per page.<sup>75</sup> The book is closer in format to, say, Glenn Busch's *Working men* (1984) than it is to any of Westra's other photographic books. It shares with *Working men* the pairing of interview-based text with portraits of the interviewed subjects but unlike Busch Westra does not adopt a uniform style of portraiture.<sup>76</sup> The historical context of the book is clearly post-9/11 and the perceived need for revealing the views, telling the stories, and showing the human face of the increasing number of Islamic Asians now living in New Zealand, whether born here or recent migrants. According to Anna M. Gade's introduction, the people represented in the book, "...express an emergent indigenous Islam in the Asia-Pacific region."<sup>77</sup> Of the 37 subjects, six are locally born, while 31 either emigrated here a long time ago or are recent arrivals. The largest numbers of subjects have come from Pakistan (7) and Fiji (5, all Indo-Fijians), followed by Afghanistan (4, plus a group of five young men), Malaysia (4), India (3), Indonesia (2), Bangladesh (2), The Maldives (1), Cambodia (1), and Japan (1, a former Buddhist, now converted to Islam following her marriage to a man from Pakistan).

The front cover photograph of a girl ("Shaystah Dean's daughter Hana Adam Shah, Christchurch"), who appears to be holding a dog lead, is another fine example of Westra's skill in photographing children. And amongst the wide and varied range of photographs throughout the book, I would draw attention to the following: Mohammad Amir, Iman of the mosque in Kilbirnie, Wellington, reading in the mosque's library – a man of learning at peace in his habitual surroundings; Ashraf Choudhary, former associate professor of agricultural engineering at Massey University Palmerston North, the first local Islamic MP (since 2002), faces the lens in a hall at parliament buildings; Fazilat Rashid, who works for the migrant service of the Auckland Regional Council, is shown about to release the ball in a wonderfully dynamic action shot at a 10-pin bowling alley; the appropriately named Mohammed Ali raises his gloved hands high in an Auckland boxing ring (Fig. 46); Enayat Sakhezade, formerly of Afghanistan, is shown working at his craft of rug restoration; a striking image of a small child playing with removed shoes outside the doorway of an Indonesian community centre (Fig. 47); Tayyaba Khan formerly of Pakistan, now of Auckland, watches her brother working at their father's tyre business; and Shegutfta Molla, formerly of Bangladesh is captured while home schooling her daughter. There are few straightforward static portraits of subjects posed for the camera. Most of the pictures show people at work or engaged in community activities of both a religious and non-religious nature.

To a large degree, *The crescent moon* is as much a study of multicultural migrants as it is of people who share a particular religion. Thirteen years earlier, Jenner Zimmermann co-ordinated a publishing project, *New Zealand – by the way*, which places three photographic essays on aspects of New Zealand life by immigrant photographers beside three photographic essays on immigrants by New Zealand born photographers. The former set comprises Arno Gasteiger's colour essay on the Black Power gang; Jenner Zimmermann's impressionistic black and white photo-diary of scenes and people encountered

while traveling around New Zealand; and Haru Sameshima's image-text assemblage on the theme of immigration (text) and the shopping mall (images). The latter (Part II) comprises Glenn Jowitt's colour studies of local rodeos and Irish and Scottish highland dancing; Gil Hanly's black and white photo-essay on a resettlement centre in Mangere catering for Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees; and Greg Semu's pictorial essay in colour dealing with various aspects of Samoan life in South Auckland.<sup>78</sup> *The crescent moon* could be said to elide these two contrasting perspectives. It combines the work of Jansen, described on the book's sleeve as a "long-time teacher of English to new migrants", with that of Westra, a former migrant herself. At the time of the book's release, Westra told a journalist that she had found the project amongst the most difficult she'd done, and that her subjects had been "much harder to approach and for me to get accepted... They had agreed to an interview and a portrait and they stood beside the project, but they had definite ideas of the way they wanted to look... there was the odd shot where people just gave me half an hour. I prefer to spend half a day."<sup>79</sup> Yet despite these difficulties and regardless of the fact that it was a commissioned rather than a self-generated project, it is evident that *The crescent moon* fully elicited Westra's interest and sympathy and the often striking results demonstrate that it did something similar for her subjects.

## CHAPTER TEN

### TENGA OF WAIKUTA AND OTHER BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

Contrary to the statement quoted towards the end of chapter nine, after the completion of her residency at the Sarjeant Art Gallery, Whanganui and the opening of her large-scale exhibition there, Ans Westra did not leave New Zealand permanently in June 1994. Instead, following her trip to the Netherlands, she returned again to New Zealand in August 1996, and continues to live here and make “notes” on this country. However, between the publication of *Whaiora* in 1985 and *The crescent moon: the Asian face of Islam in New Zealand* in 2009, she did not produce a major book publication. As outlined in the previous chapter, she kept herself busy with shorter-term and smaller scaled projects. In the twenty-year period between the publication of *We live by a lake* and the appearance of *Tenga of Waikuta* (1992), Westra continued to collaborate on the production of educational books for children. As noted in chapter eight, however, most of these projects were quite instrumental in purpose, and, therefore, there was little room for the photographer to move.

Westra’s only stand-alone book for School Publications during the 1980s was a collaboration with writer Judith Holloway and she did not provide all the photographs. Renowned sports photographer Peter Bush also contributed to the publication; appropriately because the subject matter of *No boots* (1986) concerns Primary school level rugby. The story is centred on David Downes, who lives in Wellington’s Owhiro Bay and plays half back for a local junior rugby team. Confined to his bedroom because he has a cold, David receives a visit from teammate Justin who comes to his window. He persuades David to get off his sick bed and play for the team against Island Bay. The problem is, though, his boots are in the kitchen with mum. He decides to go and play in bare feet. However, David’s father stops off to watch the game on the way home from working a nightshift. He witnesses an exciting game in which Owhiro Bay go from trailing four nil at half time to winning the game six to four by fulltime, with David converting the final try in bare feet. He then sneaks back home through his bedroom window in an attempt to fool his mum but is admonished by his dad. Published as the seventh installment of the School Journal’s “Story Library”, *No boots* is aimed at an individual reading age of eight and half to nine and a half years but is said to be of interest to 10 to 13 year old readers. All the photographs are in colour and they are not specifically credited to either of the two

photographers. It would, however, be safe to assume that Busch took the action shots of the rugby match, while Westra shot the sequences in the Downes' house and neighbourhood. In sum, *No boots* is a charming little story, told efficiently in words and photographs.

In regard to her other commissioned work of the 1980s, Westra performed her role like the consummate professional she is, but it was not until the 1990s, in a series of books for school children made with and published by editor and writer Kelvin Smythe of Developmental Publications in Hamilton that she returned to the kind of freer-ranging photo-narratives that she had produced throughout the 1960s. At the time these books were made, Smythe had recently left the New Zealand education system where he had worked as a Primary school teacher and principal, in order to become a critic of the New Right philosophy behind the 1989 National government's restructuring of formal education. Smythe is an advocate of the "feeling for" approach to Social Studies, which aims to develop "... a respect for cultural difference by leading children to recognize the underlying similarity in all human behaviour" and stresses, "... coming to terms with social difference is a major developmental task..."<sup>1</sup>

The main focus of this chapter is a discussion of three booklets, which formed part of a projected series dedicated to "Families in New Zealand".<sup>2</sup> The compact format, monochrome printing (with spot colour cover) and image-text combinations are strongly reminiscent of Westra's 1960s school bulletins. And so, too, at first glance, is the subject matter; unsurprisingly, given Smythe's philosophical approach to Social Studies. Except that now it has been shaped quite clearly by the major social shifts that occurred in the intervening period, in particular the ongoing progress of the Maori renaissance. I will discuss the first (*Tenga*) and the third, *Christmas at the Cape* (1994), of these booklets together as they are closely linked thematically. However, before doing that, I will begin the discussion with an analysis of the second booklet in the series, *Sarah of the valley* (1993).

#### SARAH OF THE VALLEY

*Sarah of the valley* is a study of a young Pakeha girl, Sarah Williams, and her family living in the Kauarapaoa valley, a country area 40 kilometres outside of Whanganui. A hand drawn map reproduced opposite the title page shows that the valley is not that far from Parakino, where Westra photographed in the 1960s. Sarah's family farms 300 acres in what is a remote, thinly populated valley. The book's title and cover photograph showing Sarah walking through long grass towards the reader make it clear that the story will be told from her viewpoint and this is confirmed by the immediate use of first person narration - "Hi! My name is Sarah. I live with my mum, dad, two sisters and a brother in a valley."<sup>3</sup> A total of 79 Westra photographs are reproduced in what is quite a substantial booklet of 67 pages. Mostly, several photographs per page are printed above or below text paragraphs but occasionally a single photo fills a whole page.

A major emphasis of the story is Sarah's home schooling. Her mother is her main teacher and we see her at work with Sarah in the home schoolhouse her father and a neighbour built for her and her brother David. But of necessity she is enrolled at the

Correspondence School and during the course of the story she receives a visit from a Correspondence School teacher called Hillary; and a letter from Sarah to Hillary occupies all of page 11 of the book. Four years earlier, Westra had collaborated with writer Raewyn McKenzie on a lengthy article about the Correspondence School. She contributed 35 colour photographs, taken at a large number of locations around New Zealand, which sit amongst text and three reproductions of artworks made by Correspondence School children. The article profiles the school (founded in 1922) and some of its students (e.g. the Scarrows of Whanganui who live in a similar area to Sarah), establishing that it is "... the largest school in New Zealand, with over 20,000 full- and part-time students."<sup>4</sup> By focusing on the experience of one family and one child in particular, Westra's black and white photographs and Smythe's words give us more of an inside perspective on this form of learning than is possible in a broad survey article.

*Sarah of the valley* takes place in what is very much a self-sustaining community where people must rely on themselves and their few neighbours to make their own entertainment.<sup>5</sup> After she has finished helping with such farm tasks as feeding the hens, milking the cows, and walking a bull back to its owners, Sarah is shown engaging in the pastimes of playing candlesticks, playing colours, piggy-in-the-middle, climbing a walnut tree, swimming in a home-made pool, flipping on a trampoline, and go-karting. The story ends with a photograph of Sarah swinging upside down and the line, "I think I'll just swing upside down for a while." (p.67) The book exemplifies Smythe's "feeling for" approach to Social Studies and does reveal the relative "social difference" of Sarah's upbringing. It can be seen to exemplify, too, the kind of "foreground" Social Studies book advocated by the Department of Education in the 1960s, a book that tells about "one family or one community" and "demands accurate observation on the spot."<sup>6</sup>

#### TENGA OF WAIKUTA AND CHRISTMAS AT THE CAPE

If *Sarah of the valley* is a little reminiscent of an earlier book like *Children of Holland*, then Westra's first book with Kelvin Smythe, *Tenga of Waikuta*, definitely harks back to the concerns of *Viliami of the Friendly Islands* and *Washday at the pa*. It is the only one of the three books to carry the title of the projected series, "Families of New Zealand, on its cover; and, unlike the two books that follow, it does not print a hand drawn map of the broad area in which it is set on the inside front and back covers.

After Matenga, the story's protagonist, is introduced in a manner similar to the opening of *Viliami* (informal portrait and greeting, Fig. 48), there follows a very interesting two-page spread. (Figs. 49 & 50) The left-page photograph reveals Tenga's family house, situated at the edge of Lake Rotorua. On the right-hand page is a larger photograph of the adjacent section. The foreground, occupying exactly half of the image space, is a tangle of wild, unkempt grass and weeds, which contrasts markedly with the tidy frontage of the family house's section. In the background of this image is an old run down and deserted house; in narrator Tenga's words, "... a special house with lots of memories... built by my grandfather with his own hands when he came back from the war".<sup>7</sup> This house is strikingly similar in

appearance to the Wereta residence featured on the cover and throughout *Washday at the pa*. However, thirty years on, a reversal has taken place. Whereas the analogue of *Washday's* occupied rural house is here empty and abandoned, the empty suburban house intended for the Wereta family and still under construction has now been completed and occupied, 28 years later, but on an altogether different scale than that envisaged by early 1960s suburban and subtopian planning.<sup>8</sup> The point I'm trying to make with this comparison is linked to the question of typicality, which undergirded the Maori Women's Welfare League's objection to *Washday*. From the League's point of view, *Washday's* depiction was not typical of the living conditions of Maori families in 1964.<sup>9</sup> However, an ethnic group cannot be assumed to be socially undifferentiated and non-fractionated. Drawing on Raymond Williams's concepts of dominant, residual and emergent cultures<sup>10</sup>, necessarily understood to be grounded in a shifting field of hegemonic relations, it's possible to find *Washday* simultaneously typical of residual rural living conditions (of the rural subsistence labouring class) and atypical in relation to emergent, urbanising, upwardly mobile Maori. As to which group was dominant at any given historical moment throughout this broad period, only precise social and statistical analysis would reveal.

Tenga's world is very different from Rebecca's and Mutu's in *Washday*. His father is a lawyer, his mother a teacher, the founder of the school at Ruamata and "on a lot of committees" (p.7). In his first person 'discourse' to the reader, Tenga locates himself in time and space in relation to: his local marae - Waikuta; the tribal affiliations of his forbears; his school marae - Raumata; and his commitment to speaking the Maori language at school and at home. A suggestive, if speculative, way of addressing the fundamental changes that separate the time of *Washday* from the time of *Tenga* is the notion of a shift from discourses of the pa to discourses of the marae. Peter Cleave has suggested that the moment of *Washday* marked the beginning of a steep decline in the everyday use of the term pa, which was then progressively replaced by a more widespread use of the term marae as the focal point for media representations of Maori life-ways and aspirations.<sup>11</sup> By the time of *Tenga*, the effects of this transformation are evident everywhere in a fully realised and confident manner. Near the beginning of the story, Tenga introduces himself thus: "I am Tenga of Waikuta because the Waikuta marae is nearby. It is also the place of my papakainga. Being Maori is important to me, because that's what I am. And in being Maori it is important to know my family past." (p.6) And Westra herself is equal to the task of engaging with the demands of this transformed social scene, even if her tools are still those of the unreconstructed social documentarian.

The third person narration of the 1960s bulletins is replaced in the Developmental Publications by a confident, conversational first person mode of address that strives to approximate further towards a more 'insider-directed' perspective than the classical 1960s 'outsider' Social Studies perspective. Tenga's story, like Viliami's 28 years earlier, is built from the routine details of daily life, much of which are taken up with time at school. The school, te kura o Raumata, is run from a Maori perspective (kaupapa and whanaungatanga), beginning each day with karakia, waiata, a daily hui and a topic theme for the day. However, learning here is not confined to the classroom, because "the whole marae is our classroom" (p.19). Having established what is going on in and around Tenga's class-

room, the narrative cuts to Tenga's dad's office, his brother Te Kapunga's place of work and two educational initiatives his mother has set up – a teacher training scheme and Maori language classes for adults. The photograph of the former discloses the presence of the current teacher, none other than the writer Katerina Mataira, Westra's erstwhile collaborator on a number of key projects.<sup>12</sup>

Two-thirds of the way into the book, the narrative is interrupted with a recounting of the story of Hinemoa and Tutanekai, positioned motivically as told by Tenga's mother, to start off each day. The story unfolds over six pages, each page also carrying a pencil sketch by Donn Ratana. Immediately following this interlude is an eight-page sequence devoted to a tangi for Nanny Heke on Tenga's marae. Westra's photos narrate all of this tangi, except for the hongis inside the whare nui, which is depicted in another Donn Ratana drawing. A little later, this day in the life of a young Maori boy of the late 20th century ends with a final image that echoes the first – Tenga reclining on a couch, but this time asleep. (Fig. 51)

*Tenga of Waikuta's* text concludes with his thought, "perhaps I'm down on the coast dreaming of Christmas at the Cape with granddad and the family" (p.56) Two years after *Tenga* was published, another addition to the "Families of New Zealand" series (the third) appeared, dedicated to telling a story about precisely this event. *Christmas at the Cape* is narrated by one of Tenga's sisters, Parekura, who made a fleeting appearance in the earlier book. (Fig. 52)

The story begins with Parekura's Christmas shopping, then a sequence of landscape shots (incidentally more prevalent in Westra's recent work, including her exhibitions) transport us to the whanau farm at the Cape. The family intend staying at the "Homestead", a house "with lots of wairua of the old people" that is now only used as a holiday home by the extended family.<sup>13</sup> Christmas day itself begins early with the younger children (tino nohinohi), including Tenga, investigating their Christmas stockings and trying to guess what's inside the wrapping of the presents under the Christmas tree on the verandah. (Fig. 53) Approaching the mid-point of the book, line drawings (uncredited) again replace photographs, over five pages devoted to describing the process of preparing a Christmas hangi. The book's final images are idyllic shots of the beach at the Cape, children swimming and two horses ambling across the sand. (Fig. 54) These images and the book as a whole are reminiscent of scenes in Barry Barclay's feature film *Ngati* (1987), the first feature film by a Maori director, which is set in broadly the same area, but in the immediate post-war period (1948).

*Christmas at the Cape* complements *Tenga of Waikuta* in a number of interesting ways. Firstly, it adopts a different gender perspective (but remember that both books are written by Kelvin Smythe); secondly, it shifts ground to Parekura's and Tenga's mother's tribal area (the Ngati Porou of the east coast of the North Island); thirdly, it moves from the town-centred world of the family's everyday working life to the rural ancestral homeland of Tenga and Parekura's mother's iwi. In every other respect, *Christmas* continues *Tenga's* project of fashioning a rounded portrait of a contemporary middle class Maori family, in touch with all aspects of their tribal culture but equally at home in the (post) modern world. The stark division posited by the MWWL and others between the residual rural enclave of *Washday* and its dissemination into classrooms containing still urbanising and modernising Maori is but a memory in these two books. They register the completion of a process of long duration.

## CONCLUSION

The set of ongoing publications contained within the thirty-year period traversed from the publication of *Viliami of the Friendly Islands* in 1964 to *Christmas at the cape* in 1994 makes it clear that the photographic book about and for children is one of the two main persisting strands in Ans Westra's career. The other, of course, is the representation of Maori. I gave the title, "From the Family of Man to the family of 'Ans'..." to a previous essay tracing, through an analysis of five key examples, Westra's engagement with the photographically based book for children.<sup>14</sup> In her review of the book in which that essay was published Janet Bayly writes, "As McDonald infers within his essay title, "The family of 'Ans'" could be extrapolated to include all children Westra has photographed. We could also include the counter-culture 'family', including Maori, which she felt "embraced me, I became part of them", in the early years at least." And she concludes by referring to "... a core to Westra's practice located in the territory of innocence associated with childhood."<sup>15</sup>

In earlier chapters I have demonstrated how *The family of man* constituted both a starting point and an ongoing touchstone for the shape and direction of Westra's projects. Yet, when we come to examine the contours of the work she has produced what is evident is how much it differs from Steichen's famous exhibition and book. The passage from *TFOM* to the 'family of Ans's' photographic books for children can be summed up as a movement from the treatment of big universal themes on a grand scale to the low-key treatment of little themes on a modest, local scale.<sup>16</sup> In the books for children, her goal is not the lofty and nebulous heights of 'the human condition'. Or, if it is, then it is approached by means of the local, the particular and the small-scale. The little books discussed here and in chapters four, six, and eight are modest publications, practical primers for the Sunday school, say, rather than biblical epics for sermons on the mount. But then even Westra's major photographic books resist the grand statement, *Notes on the country I live in* especially so. As noted in chapter one, when John Grierson visited this country in 1940, he lamented the lack of social content in our (moving) image making. In place of scenic vistas, he wanted to see "the face of a New Zealander".<sup>17</sup> Westra can be seen to have heeded his call and shown the faces of young New Zealanders, both Maori and Pakeha, and young people from outside New Zealand (Tonga, Holland, and so on) to other young New Zealanders, and their parents and teachers. The documentary roots of these little books ensure that they are grounded in observation of the realities of "growing up in New Zealand" and "growing up in Polynesia", and they, in turn, have fashioned "everyday stories" in order to play their part in helping that growing up to take place.<sup>18</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Ans Westra has been a participant, an observer, and a participant-observer in more than fifty years of New Zealand's history. Her published books have made an important contribution to the writing of that history in visual terms and her photographic archive constitutes an invaluable resource for anyone interested in life in New Zealand between 1960 and the present. We should note, however, that her photographic project is ongoing. At the time of writing she has not retired. Since the dawn of the millennium, Westra has developed a new strand to her practice, which involves the making and exhibiting of colour photography, utilising digital processes of reproduction rather than the dark room techniques that she employs so skillfully to make black and white prints. In Wellington she exhibits this work at the Bowen Galleries. The various exhibitions of these colour photographs – some with a landscape emphasis, others with a marked human presence – fall outside the scope of *Camera Antipode*. However, to take just one example, the pictures in the exhibition *As far north as you can possibly go* (2002) deploy with wit the holiday snapshot mode in a manner closer to some of British photographer Martin Parr's holiday resort studies than to Westra's black and white documentary photography.<sup>1</sup> (Fig. 55)

Westra's earlier work continues to remain compelling to the visual culture of Aotearoa New Zealand in the 21st century. The examples that follow are just two indications of this. In 2005, Dallas Tamaira of the reggae, dub, and soul band Fat Freddy's Drop looked at the photographs in *Maori* as a possible reference point for a promotional video for his solo song "Better than change". This led to a photographic session with Fat Freddy's Drop that was published as a photo essay in a local magazine because, in Westra's words, "As I was still around and photographing, they dragged me in to play myself."<sup>2</sup> My second example is a poster image for Taika Waititi's feature film *Boy* (2010), an extreme close up of the eponymous boy's smiling face. (Fig. 56) For me it brings to mind immediately the full-page colour photograph of a boy of similar age to be found on page 26 of *Maori*, which may have served as a reference point.<sup>3</sup> (Fig. 57) In the ten chapters that make up *Camera Antipode*, I have attempted an analysis of Westra's entire career to date<sup>4</sup> and it is in my close readings of her publications that the import of her work is analysed and elaborated. However, in the remaining paragraphs of the dissertation, I will make a few general points about the overall nature and significance of her work.

Westra began her photographic career not long after viewing *The family of man*, an exhibition that performed a “categorical blurring of documentary work and photojournalism”, as Lili Corbus Bezner puts it.<sup>5</sup> The high point of documentary as a form of social investigation in visual form came with inter-war enterprises such as the Historical Section of the Farm Security Administration and the Film and Photo League in the USA, and John Grierson’s documentary film groups (the Crown Film Unit, the Empire Marketing Board and the GPO Film Unit) and the Mass Observation movement in the UK. Westra chose to work as a social documentary photographer at a time when first photojournalism (Brian Brake’s *New Zealand: gift of the sea*, initially a photo-essay for *National geographic*, was published in 1963) and then expressive photography (the work of William Klein and Robert Frank signaled a new direction in the late 1950s, and those photographers who followed their lead, e.g. Gary Winogrand, Lee Friedlander, and Diane Arbus were promoted institutionally by John Szarkowski at MOMA in the 1960s and began to shape developments here from the end of that decade) defined the role of the ‘serious’ photographer. To a certain degree, Westra might be said to have practised both photojournalism and expressive photography. Taken at face value, her articles for *Te ao hou* can be seen as examples of the former and her involvement with PhotoForum and related group exhibitions can be seen as indicative of the latter. But like many of her assignments and associations they cannot define her project, which is greater than the sum of its parts, but has stronger affinities with a social documentary approach than it does with photojournalistic and expressive art photographic modes. However, throughout Westra’s career, there has been only one New Zealand institution with a documentary mission in the Griersonian sense – the National Film Unit (NFU, 1941–1990), established during WWII after an advisory visit by John Grierson in 1940 and closed during the period of neoliberal restructuring that began in the mid 1980s. The *Witness to change* project attempted to link the NFU to three “documentary” photographers working in the period 1940 to 1965: John Pascoe, Les Cleveland, and Ans Westra. But this link is difficult to sustain for two main reasons. Firstly, following the election of the National government and its restructuring of the NFU, the cessation of the *Weekly review* and the consequent departure of Producer Stanhope Andrews at the beginning of the 1950s, the Unit became less Griersonian and more directly the servant of the government’s Department of Tourist and Publicity.<sup>6</sup> Secondly, the three photographers in question are so very different and worked in isolation from each other. Only John Pascoe’s wartime photography has marked affinities with the wartime work of the NFU (for example, Andrews’s *Country Lads* of 1941) and at times brings to mind Mass Observation photography (Humphrey Spender) or the films of Humphrey Jennings. Cleveland, although inspired by Pascoe’s writings on mountaineering and exploration, as a photographer is something of a maverick in a manner comparable to a figure such as Eugene Atget. Thus, when Westra began working at the beginning of the 1960s, there was no local or international documentary ‘tradition’ or context to which she could turn.

One of the aims of this dissertation has been to show the network of relationships and associations that the individual Ans Westra has forged with governmental and non-governmental institutions in order to produce the body of work that goes by her name; a body of work that more properly belongs to the history of these institutions rather than

some autonomous realm of free floating photographic production. Westra may have always operated on a freelance basis but she was fortunate in beginning her career as a photographer of Maori people in the quasi-official role of house photographer for the Department of Maori Affairs' journal *Te ao hou*. And shortly after that she established a working relationship with the School Publications Branch of the Department of Education that persisted until the mid-1980s. Since then Westra has had to rely on shorter-term projects and arrangements, mostly entered into with private sector publishers. Although not on the scale of the northern hemisphere documentary work of the period from the mid 1920s to the mid 1950s, there was a place for social documentary photography in the New Zealand of the period stretching roughly from 1960 to 1984. This broad period encompasses the '60s' (1965–1974) and the '70s' (1975–1984), which saw the rise of the counterculture, new social movements, and the evolution of the Maori renaissance. It also represents the final phase of a general economic prosperity in this country, underpinned by a confident welfare state. Since the mid-1980s, however, in a climate governed by the rise of neoliberal economics and postmodern critiques of representation, the prospects for social documentary projects have diminished as considerably and rapidly as the public sphere itself. "Serious photojournalism and documentary photography", writes Julian Stallabrass, "seem unsuited to a neoliberal climate", and he notes of the recent present, "... the old documentary style came under attack from both business and the academy."<sup>7</sup>

Westra, as I've made clear in chapter five, has not focused her camera on a particular tribe or tribal region, but rather Maori as a pan-tribal entity. This is not to say that she hasn't regularly returned to certain regional sites over the course of her career. Like the Burton Brothers before her, the greater Whanganui area has been the object of her sustained attention. The East Coast of the central North Island, too, figures prominently in her work, as does the greater Wellington region, where she has spent the largest part of her life.

Westra is frequently described as an outsider to Maori society and she has on occasion applied this term to herself.<sup>8</sup> In the early 1960s, Westra was an outsider because she was still a relatively recent Dutch immigrant to New Zealand. And, regardless of her national origins, she was also an outsider as a fieldworker, interacting with and making photographs of Maori subjects, often in remote rural locations. In this circumstance, and in many other subsequent ones, she resembles the model social anthropologist, accurately described by Steven Webster as a "professional outsider".<sup>9</sup> Westra has avoided too deep an immersion in tribal or regional Maori politics and has resisted becoming "sidetracked by land and language" issues.<sup>10</sup> This position is close to Dennison Nash's characterisation of the anthropological field worker, "He [sic] seeks to belong in order to understand, but he must be an outsider if he is to remain an ethnologist."<sup>11</sup>

Westra may be an outsider in relation to Maori society, on whatever level it might be conceived. However, in the course of the second half of the 20th century, Maori have become less and less remote from the mainstream of New Zealand society as a whole. They are very much embedded within it. If Westra has been practising a form of ethnographic writing then it has been inescapably a form of historical ethnography. Her ongoing project began at the moment when policies of assimilation tried to reinvent themselves as

policies of integration, and when “a new Maori migration” began to make itself felt in the cities of New Zealand. It continued during the latter part of the 1970s and throughout the 1980s when the Maori renaissance entered a more militant and confrontational phase, manifested in events such as the Maori Land March of 1975, the occupation of Bastion Point in Auckland, and the fallout of the 1981 Springbok rugby tour protests. These kinds of protests, which Westra was on hand to record, were all signs of a militant ethnic and cultural nationalism that was often unsympathetic to Westra’s photographic project. As with *Washday* in the 1960s, but now for quite different reasons, her work again courted controversy. Yet Westra’s work should not be reduced to a simple matter of controversy. She has never courted controversy, but from time to time has been unable to avoid it because of her highly visible way of working and the widespread dissemination of her photographs through publications of various kinds.<sup>12</sup>

All of the factors adumbrated above presented increased difficulties for Westra’s mode of representation and her manner of deporting herself in culturally coded and public spaces. Her commitment to documenting Maori over a time span of more than half a century has not wavered but it has become increasingly difficult to work towards the kind of photographic book project represented by *Maori* in the 1960s and even *Whaiora* in the 1980s. In spite of this, Westra has indicated her intention to produce one more, “ultimate” book of photographs of Maori.<sup>13</sup>

In the first, unpublished, version of his essay for *Notes on the country I live in*, James K. Baxter wrote, “Ans Westra selects the visual images that make a statement of a reality desired as well as of a reality perceived.”<sup>14</sup> This perceptive comment asks us to view Westra’s project as something more than a matter of the straightforward documentation of the times. It points us to the possibility that a utopian dimension resides in her work, albeit one tempered by attention to the here and now of the historical world. It is the creative tension between a focus on the everyday and the suggestion of something beyond it that marks Westra’s oeuvre and distinguishes its contents from most of the photographic books published in New Zealand during the last 50 years. According to C.K. Stead, the mainstream New Zealand photographic book satisfies “an appetite for mirrors”.<sup>15</sup> While Witi Ihimaera gave the title “Ans Westra: holder of the mirror” to his introduction to *Whaiora*. Stead’s comment works with the metaphor of the mirror as a flattering device that offers an idealised image to a mass national audience hungry for validation, and a souvenir of the touristic experience for an international readership. Ihimaera, by contrast, works with a realist conception of the mirror as offering a true and faithful reflection of social phenomena. In John Szarkowki’s terms, Ihimaera’s mirror would resemble more closely a window, a window onto the external world.<sup>16</sup>

However, rather than seeing Westra’s photographs as returning faithful reflections back to the subjects and communities of her attention or, perish the thought, purveying idealised and flattering images of artificial perfection to insecure subjects, we should see them as unavoidably involved in the construction of imagined and imaginary worlds. In chapter seven, I introduced section two, “Imag(in)ing the Country”, with a discussion of Benedict Anderson’s concept of “imagined communities”. Anderson stresses the importance of ‘print capitalism’ and the subsequent development of mass communica-

tions media such as radio and television as active forces in the process of this widespread imagining, which helps to shape communities and nations.<sup>17</sup> The photographic essay and book, both products of ‘print capitalism’, can be added to this list of media that act as historical agents in the construction of social, cultural, and national imaginaries. Although Anderson’s concept does not derive from psychoanalysis, it can’t help bringing to mind Jacques Lacan’s concept of the Imaginary. And central to the Imaginary is the concept of the “mirror phase”, which refers to the moment when the child perceives/conceives an (mirror) image of herself that achieves an illusory sense of wholeness and coherence.<sup>18</sup> One of the few applications of the concept of the Imaginary to the political situation of a nation state is the Lacanian scholar Tony Wilden’s *The Imaginary Canadian*.<sup>19</sup> Canada, like New Zealand, is an ex-colony, and Wilden’s book is dedicated to interrogating the ideological dimensions of a persisting colonial mentality. Westra’s project does not present itself as explicitly post-colonial in orientation but it has unfolded within this broad era and has been unavoidably marked by its ramifications. She has produced imagined portraits of collectivities and communities at both the micro and the macro level throughout a period of great change. Her pan-tribal Maori studies are pitched at the macro level in relation to Maoridom but at the micro level in relation to New Zealand as a whole. *Notes on the country I live in* remains her only attempt at a national level study but like the majority of her work it was made at a moment of historical transition and it represents simultaneously a distanced, outsider perspective on established mainstream aspects of the country as a whole and an engaged, insider perspective on new, alternative forms of social and political practice that emerged from within the moment of the counterculture. It is thus as much a work of critique as it is a celebration of new, emerging forces.

Westra was, at the very least, a fellow traveler if not a card-carrying member of the ‘60s’ counterculture. In many ways she fitted with ease and was comfortably ‘at home’ in a counterculture whose resistance to mainstream Kiwi culture she had anticipated years before. As I argued in the concluding paragraphs of chapter two, like James K. Baxter and others, she had found her own way into a prototypical form of this broad cultural movement before its full flowering in the literal late 1960s and early 1970s. In several respects, too, she might be seen as embodying a local version of the existentially-inflected Beat ethos of photographers such as Ed van der Elsen in Europe and Robert Frank in the USA. Like Baxter, and contemporaries such as James and Jane Ritchie, Noel Hilliard and Bill Pearson, and before them Roderick Finlayson, she found a way into this evolving alternative space outside the mainstream by means of her engagement with Maori society and culture. As she has put it herself, “Maori taught me to trust my instincts, to free myself from my rigid, adult-dominated, materialistic childhood.”<sup>20</sup> Westra’s engagement with a different form of being-in-the-world and its revelation through her practice should be seen, as Ricoeur says of Heidegger’s “analysis of *verstehen* in *Being and time*”, in the following terms: “... what we understand first in a discourse is not another person, but a project, that is, the outline of a new being-in-the-world.”<sup>21</sup> *Camera Antipode* is a contribution to the understanding of Westra’s project.

In relation to its *modus operandi*, perhaps the best way of characterising Westra’s project is to place it within “the romantic tradition of historical knowledge”. The partici-

pant observation fieldwork of anthropologists, as Stanley Diamond argues, "...is an extension of the notion of the romantic historians that sympathy with 'the object of study' was essential to historical understanding."<sup>22</sup> Diamond also stresses the marginality of the anthropological temperament, which expresses itself in a positive way in a "search for a culture to which we can commit ourselves."<sup>23</sup> Westra's temperament might also be described as marginal. She has worked on the margins of the artworld, practising an art form that until relatively recently was viewed as marginal. She has lived on the margins of New Zealand society, scraping a living as a freelance photographer, and associating with other marginal figures. And it goes without saying that she is by definition an outsider to Maori society. But rather than leave the matter there we might better frame Westra's position in relation not just to Maori society but also to New Zealand society as a whole in terms of Georg Simmel's concept of "the stranger". Simmel nominates objectivity as a key defining quality of the stranger and he defines it not as a form of non-participation but as "a positive and specific kind of participation" which "does not simply involve passivity and detachment; it is a particular structure composed of distance and nearness, indifference and involvement."<sup>24</sup> Hortense Powdermaker, in *Stranger and friend*, the aptly named account of her career as an anthropologist, echoes Simmel's words in her useful comparison between the ethnographer and the historian:

Whatever the level of involvement – superficial or deep – the participant observer is also detached. The anthropologist's involvement and detachment is similar in some respects to the immersion of the historian in the written records of a particular period. He, too, is studying culture.<sup>25</sup>

Simmel's dialectic between distance and nearness, involvement and detachment parallels the anthropologist's two-stage process of distancing and drawing near, as formulated by Tzvetan Todorov in the following terms: "first distancing" – the "slight mismatch between one's own society and oneself" that prompts one to leave; "first drawing near" – immersion in and identification with the foreign society but retention of difference from it; "second distancing" – the return home but a 'home' now viewed with something of the perspective of a foreigner; "second drawing near" – the final phase which, without sacrificing the universal, achieves a relativising of both the anthropologist's and the 'other's' categories, a process in which "the whole world will now have become ... like a place of exile."<sup>26</sup> Where to place Westra in relation to these issues is not a simple matter, which is made clear in the discussion of specific works in the second part of the dissertation. Throughout her career, she has had a number of 'homes' of varying degrees of concreteness, without ever settling comfortably in any of them. Like the anthropological fieldworker her project has been shaped by constant shifts between positions of involvement and detachment, participation and observation, and movement between the particular and the universal.

Westra's practice is so integrated into her everyday life that it might be said she is rarely far away from the 'field', however defined, and there have not been any lengthy gaps between sustained bursts of photographic activity. Her overall project has been an inescapably diachronic enterprise, despite the fact that its individual components repre-

## *Conclusion*

sent particular historical moments within the ongoing flow of the history of Aotearoa New Zealand. Westra's publications constitute synchronic statements of their various times, statements that nevertheless are open to changing readings as new readers emerge to reinterpret them. And, as stated in the introduction, beneath or behind these publications is the Westra archive itself, an archive I compared to an image reservoir that has the potential to contribute to projects not yet formulated. Like the lexicon of language itself, it is too large to be grasped by any one academic, curatorial or monographic project, this dissertation being no exception. But it will continue to yield insights to those with focused interests in Aotearoa New Zealand's social, cultural and photographic history of the last fifty years. The archive is open-ended, its incomplete and sprawling contents a guarantee of its continuing relevance; it sits waiting to enter into as yet unknown dialogues with and between the past, the present and the future.



# APPENDICES

1-4



# APPENDIX ONE

INTERVIEW WITH ANS WESTRA



The interview that follows was conducted on the 18th and 22nd of December 1987 at Ans Westra's residence on Makara Road, Karori, Wellington. It was recorded on audiotape. The printed transcription below is a faithful record of my conversations with Ans Westra. The interview formed part of the research undertaken for the writing of an article published the following year in the Australian journal *Photofile*. Much later, I included extracts from it in the chronology I prepared for *Handboek: Ans Westra photographs*. It covers Westra's background, training and early career before focusing on issues of pressing concern to her throughout the 1980s. Thus, from the vantage point of the present, it constitutes an important historical document of Westra's views during a period of transition.

Lawrence McDonald: What part of Holland were you born in?

Ans Westra: Leiden. It's near the coast, which means it's a very highly populated area. It's a small town right between Amsterdam and Rotterdam so you're in easy reach of the bigger cities. I did my schooling as a boarder in Rotterdam. It was very much an urban life, far away from anything rural, though the family was from Friesland province and as a child I spent a few holidays on a farm. But it was very much an alien area. I was a town girl. My family had a small business. We were middle class.

L.M: How did you come to immigrate to New Zealand?

A.W: My mother is very much a homebody, she hates traveling. My father was the adventurous one. He went to Indonesia, was thrown out and then came here. So initially I came just to visit him.

L.M: Did you read any books about New Zealand before coming here?, any picture books?

A.W: Possibly the only thing might have been a little handout from the immigration department. I don't think my father sent me anything. It was a little bit early for those glossy books which became so popular later. When I came here it was very much a first impression. Otherwise I mightn't have come (laughter).

L.M: When and where did you arrive in New Zealand?

A.W: I arrived in Wellington in 1957. My father came to collect me and we traveled on the night train to Auckland. I spent my first eight months in Auckland but I didn't settle. I wanted to go back home. Then I went down to Wellington on the bus because I thought it was a bit silly to come so far and not to see very much of the place. And in due course I made my roots in Wellington.

L.M: When and where did you have your first photographs published?

A.W: It was in two issues of *Te ao hou*. They were some pictures I took in 1958/9, one of my first holidays around Rotorua. I took some close-ups of some children. The negatives are not even in the files; they are earlier. They came out in 1960. It was my first contact with *Te ao hou* and I sold them two covers. And those first published images really stimulated me into doing more and doing it more seriously.

L.M: Prior to this, during your camera club days, did you do much photography?

A.W: I started photographing at school in Holland, teaching myself, just doing contact prints. I saved up and bought myself a Rolleiflex with a 3.5 lens which I used until I sold it in about 1962.

L.M: What stimulated your interest in photography at school?

A.W: I really took an interest because a book came out when I was at school in 1956. It was done by a college boy who photographed his classmates. The photographs were very staged, dreamy interpretations of teenage life. It was the first photo-book I'd ever seen because there weren't that many of them around. The book, which was mainly photos with only a little bit of writing, made quite an impression on me. That's why I bought a Rolleiflex too, because he did them all with a Rolleicord and it gave good results.

L.M: Was this book about a young man?

A.W: It's called *We are 17* and it's about growing up and the other people in his class. It made such an impression and it sold so well that he followed it up with a second book. It said a lot about being a teenager. And I wanted to do something a bit like it, so I saved up for about a year and bought myself a Rolleiflex. I then did some photos of my own classmates but really... right from the start mine were much more about catching people as things happened, whereas his photographs were very set-up. I didn't feel comfortable doing it that way. In those last three years at school we had a very close-knit class with about 11 people in it. We did a couple of little bound books that we left behind with our teachers as a goodbye present. So, that was my early beginnings.

L.M: What about the viewing of photographs? You went to *The family of man* exhibition in Amsterdam. How important was that to you?

A.W: That really staggered me with the number of impressive photographs, how much of life had been captured and how much there was to photograph.

L.M: Did the work of any particular photographer or photographers stand out for you or was it the exhibition as a whole which most impressed?

A.W: Just the whole exhibition overall. There were images that I remember very strongly influencing me for a long time but they're not the kind of images that I would photograph.

L.M: Do you remember how the exhibition was staged when you saw it? All the major exhibitions curated by Edward Steichen at MOMA were presented to the public in a striking way.

A.W: As far as space permitted very similarly in layout. The prints were large and were all free standing and hanging panels. You had to be amongst them and walk around them. And then, of course, the book reinforced the whole thing and made the strong impression even more lasting. I can pick out the images that initially made the most impression and they're really not the sort of work that's like mine. And then there were others like the sequence of these little girls on the street playing card games; I tried to do that again in similar ways. And I would've remembered those images when I was photographing something similar. It was the only photographic exhibition I saw in the early days.

L.M: For how long were you a member of the camera club in Wellington and what was most valuable about the experience?

A.W: I was in the camera club from 1959 to 1963; so the camera club days happened at the same time as I was already publishing. More than anything it was an educational thing because they gave you competition assignments and you had to see how you fared photographing different topics. When I took those first two covers, I was still very much doing it as a holiday thing. In 1961 I started working in the darkroom at Polyphoto but I couldn't keep up with the volume so I ended up retouching solidly for about two months. I then worked at Rembrandt Studios, a camera shop in Wellington. They had a studio attached and we did some studio portraits there.

L.M: In a previous interview you mentioned that in the camera club there was a man who photographed in youth clubs. Who was that?

A.W: Fred Freeman. He's dead; he was already elderly then. He was the only person in the camera club who was doing semi-documentary work. He was doing similar work to me. But he would pose people more. He'd meet girls in town and then ask them to model for him. But he'd also go out into areas and photograph people on the streets; we did that together a couple of times. He influenced me a bit by steering me into photographing certain things that he was interested in.

L.M: Was any of his work published?

A.W: There are a few of his images in a sort of golden book of 50 years of camera club work. But apart from that he wasn't actually working for publications or to make any money from photography. It was purely a hobby; he was retired or semi-retired.

L.M: But it seems that he stood out from other members of the camera club.

A.W: Yes, because he was more interested in documentary. He was very interested in the Island girls settling here, more in a documentary way rather than in just finding a pretty face and using it for a staged portrait. He was freer than that.

L.M: Would it be true to say that right from your early beginnings as a photographer you have been more interested in photographing people in the urban environment than in photographing the landscape? Because you've never really photographed the landscape.

A.W: At the time of my arrival, the landscape was the main feature of the country. And yes, it was very different from the flat little pancake that Holland is. We did go on the Milford track, for instance, and I took some photographs of the bush and Milford sound...all in colour at the beginning. But I felt those things were so over photographed and I couldn't do anything more with them, I couldn't relate to them in my photographs. The ones I felt more strongly about were the pictures of people, like those first two covers I sold of the children around Rotorua. And later I played with photographing mud pools because I'd seen Theo Schoon's work and was influenced by its patterns. But I didn't want to go and photograph the landscape because it was over praised and didn't speak to me strongly enough. I couldn't say anything about it that was different.

When I was 15 or 16 I went on a group trip to France. And afterwards we all exchanged photographs and people said that mine had a particular quality about them, which stimulated me into carrying on. Somehow I had a natural flair for it and then I found I could photograph people in a way that other people didn't. The first time I went to a hui and the pictures were published in *Te ao hou* there was a lot of reaction. I found that that was my strong area.

L.M: Do you think people have become more sophisticated in the way they look at pictures over the period you've been photographing?

A.W: Yes. Certainly there has been a subtle education for people in reading images. They're being used more and more too: for school texts, in exams for people to write essays around, things like that.

L.M: Have your own pictures been used in public exams?

A.W: Yes.

L.M: Recent photography theory speaks of the polysemy of the image and the possibility of multiple interpretations. Are you comfortable with the thought that people are reading your pictures in a variety of different ways?

A.W: Yes. In an image, first there is the photographer and his or her viewpoint and opinion which makes him or her take the photograph. Second, the photograph is seen by somebody who brings her own experience to the way she views it. I have no control over that second process.

L.M: Do you feel that once the images are published and have gone out into the world, people are free to read them in whatever way they like?

A.W: Yes. I've taken the image for a reason that I think is valid. It may be that I want people to be a bit more tolerant of others. I try to bring out the good points in people, their variety and the beauty in the differences. Also I might try to say that somebody who is tough is sensitive too. I can only try to break down people's prejudices with the image. Of course if people want to use the images to reinforce their fixed viewpoints, that can be done as well.

L.M: To take a single example, there's an image of yours, taken in the mid-1970s, which registers a strong form of division and difference. In the foreground, a Maori construction worker is standing in the middle of what looks like Lambton Quay. In the background a much older, pakeha man wearing a hat is staring severely at him (Fig. 39).

A.W: Here's this lovely, couldn't-care-less, great big beer-bellied guy with his arms folded looking at another member of the road gang working. He's just having his morning break while his particular shovel is not being used. And this other guy, so confined in his own little world, is watching on in this enormous isolation. He's not going to be associated with that worker. He'll watch him work for a bit, standing there almost in judgment.

You can't really control how people see and use your images. All I feel I can do is try to give people a little bit of an insight into what other people are about. That's what I feel my role is.

L.M: When you're teaching documentary photography, you only teach from your own images, don't you?

A.W: Yes. I find it very difficult to use anyone else's. They're not experiences that I share.

L.M: Which other photographers do you most admire?

A.W: I feel closest to Dorothea Lange. But she was more of an intellectual. She could give more backing to her photographs; she certainly did more writing around them.

L.M: With her husband, Paul Taylor, she often recorded comments from subjects at the time she photographed them.

A.W: Yes, it means going around with a camera and a tape recorder. Glenn Busch does it here in New Zealand. But I can't do it; I can do only the one thing – operate a camera.

L.M: But Busch is not working in the same vein as you because he's not a street photographer; his pictures are posed.

A.W: He puts in the research first and his pictures are totally posed; but he breaks through that again and lets people be themselves in the pose they want to strike. A totally different style of work. For example, he moved into a disturbed boy's school and lived there for a couple of months, taking photographs. Then he would get the photos developed, take them back to the boys and take some more. In that way I think he used photography very much as a communicative tool. Sometimes I wish I could have that extensive background to my pictures rather than just letting the images stand-alone. But in my case other people will have to write a background to the pictures.

L.M: But given the sheer quantity and time span of your work, there are many significant events a viewer can work from as a way into the pictures.

A.W: But I don't, I can't tell the people's own story, not in words. Not like Glenn Busch does in his book. If he has a photograph of somebody, he also has the person's story of their own life and the way they view it, which is another dimension I haven't got.

L.M: That's something you've ruled out though, isn't it? You've established the boundaries of your style and that's not part of it.

Apart from Dorothea Lange is there anyone else whose work has particularly interested you or you feel some empathy with?

A.W: Not in the same way that I feel close to Lange. Maybe Cartier-Bresson...but of course he has a different starting point, perhaps because he's a man. I had a great admiration for the work of Eugene Smith. Some of it is very controlled and generally when I hear that he preconceived and organized an image, it puts me off. But Dorothea Lange did it too. In one famous image, the photo of the bread line under a board saying "the affluent way of life", the breadline was on the other side of the street and she shifted it (laughter).

L.M: Not something you would have done.

A.W: I wouldn't have had the guts (laughter). No I wouldn't have, I'd have left the image the way it was. But of course it's a marvelous image and it says a lot more the way she put it all in one picture. But I wouldn't have interfered.

L.M: Like you, Dorothea Lange is a woman. Do you attach any significance to that?

A.W: It might have something to do with it, this business of identification.

L.M: It seems that she stood out from the other members of the FSA project team; she was different.

A.W: They didn't employ her full time but they did some people of lesser calibre. It was a personal thing. She wanted to play things her own way, to be free and her own boss. But when they didn't reappoint her she was very hurt.

L.M: Is the fact that you are a woman significant for your photographic practice, for the way you photograph and also the way subjects respond to you?

A.W: Oh yes. For one thing it has made it easier for me because people don't find me so threatening and, of course, if they don't know who I am they tend to think: "...she's only practising, she's only trying out her camera". And actually I can risk more because I might just get away with a smile and they won't hit a woman whereas they would have clobbered me if I had been a man.

L.M: Do you think that could have happened?

A.W: Oh often! (emphatic) The nearest I got to it was when I photographed some gang members hitting a car. They had knives and they came a bit close to me; they realised I was photographing; they were fazed out, either high or drunk. I needed some of my friends to come and stand next to me (laughter) because probably they would have smashed my camera. So I've been in situations...and once in the early days of protest I was actually hit by a policeman...because their tempers were up...it was an anti-Springbok demonstration, a group was going to go over there and it was one of the first demonstrations in parliament grounds where people were getting arrested. A policeman who'd seen me photographing walked up to me and put his fist down my camera. But that's the only time that has happened. But I'm sure it could have happened at other times if I hadn't been a woman.

L.M: The work you have done since returning in late 1969 from your extended stay in Holland has coincided with the rebirth of the woman's movement. So you've had plenty of opportunities to photograph demonstrations on issues such as abortion, etc.

A.W: Yes, pro and anti abortion marches. Also at times it has been an easier way of getting my work exhibited and published. But I've preferred not to have to trade on the fact that I'm a woman; I haven't needed it.

L.M: Haven't you appeared in an exhibition or publication like the recent PhotoForum book with the title *Five women photographers*?

A.W: There has been a decade for women and I was one of three women artists invited to celebrate the end of that. (Janet Bayly, another photographer and Gretchen Albrecht were the other two.) At the same time Real Pictures wanted to do something a bit similar and so we had *Women view women* (Fiona Clark, Jane Zusters, Gil Hanly, Ans Westra). But I've never used women's galleries, for instance. I've had a slight association with them because someone used my photographs in her exhibition but I haven't had to make a point of exhibiting there because I couldn't get an exhibition elsewhere. Perhaps some people have needed that because they felt that they were unfairly disadvantaged and they've used the fact that they are women as an easier way in. It's a bit like the Maori who have certain disadvantages, so they may as well have preferences/better chances. But I've never felt a need for that. I've really felt right from the beginning that the fact that I'm a woman has certain advantages for me. I didn't have to compete. I talked to Margaret Orbell about this. She was a woman in an executive position having to do 150 times as well as a man in a similar position. She felt very strongly that she had to keep continually proving that she could be as good as a man. Whereas I could just use the fact that I was a woman, I could photograph kids more easily because I was less threatening, more motherly. The whole ebb and flow of life – I was feeling more part of it so I could understand it better. It's been an advantage photographing in the Philippines as a woman. Maybe I'm not tough enough in other situations and therefore disadvantaged there. Once I was in a press situation and I think I was the only woman in the press corps at that stage; it was a rather difficult position to be in.

L.M: When was this?

A.W: In 1962.

L.M: Is that the only time you've been in a press group?

A.W: Yes. I did it for two Royal Tours. One in 1962 when I had to photograph at Waitangi for *Te ao hou*. It was quite an experience to have to photograph under pressure like that; so I did another one and I got accreditation for the *Listener*, photographing in Wellington in colour. I think the *Listener* eventually ran a few pictures. That was in the very early 70s because we photographed her just after I came back. We went to Curious Cove, one of the bays where Captain Cook landed. She unveiled something there and I was in the whole pack of photographers. I found that you had to be totally switched on, immediate and able to get unusual pictures. It's really competitive.

L.M: For the bulk of your working life you've been self-employed, haven't you? Apart from assignments for *Te ao hou*, which was a fairly loose arrangement, wasn't it?

A.W: It was a very loose arrangement. Sometimes with School Publications there were individual assignments, but I've never been on the payroll. I've done a few projects for the Ministry of Works but I was traveling anyway.

L.M: Which do you consider to be the ideal display format for your work – exhibition, magazine spread, or book?

A.W: Probably the book. Really I see my work as being instructive, educative. And in a book they have the most lasting impact. It's quite personally satisfying to see your images in frames on the wall, to see how they look, treated with respect (laughter). They become sort of haloed bits of art (more laughter). But they fulfill their function best in a sequence form, in a book.

L.M: You have had quite a number of exhibitions though, haven't you, both one-person and group shows. Is that just a supplementary thing for you, something that acknowledges your part in the photographic scene but is not really the ideal vehicle for your work?

A.W: It has also been a way of selling through dealer galleries.

L.M: Have you sold a lot of prints over the years?

A.W: Gradually...it hasn't been too bad. As documentary photographs they have to have another dimension to sell as exhibition prints. It's easier when they're more neutral pictures. If they're purely abstract, they can be seen more easily as an art form and are easier for people to live with.

Whereas, my pictures raise points. For a long time they were not bought by people to live with. But it has become a little more acceptable and common to be in collections.

L.M: So you've begun to sell more in recent times?

A.W: Yes, and there are a few galleries that are collecting photographs, including my work, as examples of New Zealand photography.

L.M: Individuals who wish to purchase your work do so as a result of seeing it in exhibitions and they go through your dealer?

A.W: Well, Bill Main (of Exposures Gallery) is my dealer...and he keeps the exhibition prints if they haven't sold at the exhibition...over the years they gradually sell...he has sold them to galleries as well. But other exhibitions have been on invitation. I had a retrospective in 1973 at the Dowse, a little bit after *Notes on the country I live in* came out, in combination with the book but not directly so. I did print an exhibition for PhotoForum when they had a gallery up in Courtenay Place and a few years later that exhibition went up to Real Pictures in Auckland. Once the idea for an exhibition is there you've got to be very selective of your own work and assemble it from different criteria than you would for a book.

L.M: The other day you spoke to me about your preference for black and white over colour and I think you made the point that you can achieve a greater degree of abstraction in b/w. Could you elaborate on that point?

A.W: Well, I find that colour distracts, glamourizes and really takes over. You find it's the colour you're talking about and not the content of the picture. So it doesn't suit my kind of work, which is about reading the content. Of course it's also about accessibility and control – I do my own printing in black and white.

L.M: Is the greater survival value of b/w as opposed to the potential fading of colour also a factor?

A.W: Yes, b/w's got greater permanence. With colour, you have to keep copying it and there's no guarantee it will be long lasting. If I had gone into colour straight away and was controlling my own printing – ok. But it's another whole area that you don't have under control and rather than look at interesting people, you look at what sort of colours there are and they take over. It applies to other photographers' work too. I showed a class of hobby photographers Ernst Haas's *Audio-Visual*. It suited them very well because they're all into taking colour; that's the accessible thing for the amateur. But I just can't see it his way because it's only colour that he looks at not content. And even Brian Brake was like that. However the other week he came full circle and said: "only photograph people and it's best to use b/w". I take credit for that statement! (laughter), because I'm sure I influenced him there. I think he only photographed Picasso and Cocteau in b/w because he couldn't afford colour then. But colour was very much the fashion in that period and b/w was a poor cousin. Although nowadays b/w costs as much to produce as colour, you can still get better payment for colour prints.

L.M: You've always done your own printing, haven't you? That made you different from the two other photographers in the *Witness to change* exhibition.

A.W: Yes. John Pascoe was employed in a place where somebody else could do the printing for him. He worked very closely with the people who printed his work; it wasn't a matter of going into a shop for it. I think Les Cleveland printed his work at some stage.

L.M: Do you know him and if so have you had much contact with him over the years?

A.W: Only vaguely. He's much more a political scientist, a person of words. He consciously took his photographs because they were of things he realized were going to change and disappear and he wanted to preserve them in photographs. They were old buildings, which were going to come down and a certain way of life was disappearing. So he came very much from a preconceived idea into photographing specific things. (pause) But I just enjoy taking pictures of people (laughter).

L.M: So in that way you're dealing with things which change more subtly than buildings. Because you don't see vanishing objects or people knocking things down in your pictures, the signs of change are not so easy to read.

A.W: Yes. Les would know that a certain building was sold and was going to be demolished and he would rush out to take a photograph of it. It's much more direct. It was similar with Pascoe too. They were both employed in other work for one thing; they took photographs as an interest. It has always been my living so consequently I take a lot more photographs. I may very well photograph because I want certain things on my files. If I'm not working on a specific book, I may think, "Well, that's something for history". For example, when the athletes came back from the Olympic Games they had a parade through town and I photographed that because it was an historical event I felt should be recorded; and then Norman Kirk died and I rushed off to the funeral. That's a little bit like Les photographing a building. Very often though I go through phases when I'm not working on a book and I can't afford it so I don't take photographs.

L.M: But you don't simply photograph in a purely disinterested way with the idea that something may be of potential interest, do you? There does have to be a purpose behind the decision to go out and photograph something.

A.W: Well you set yourself a book project and then you photograph for that. In financial terms you can hardly justify working totally in a vacuum. So at present I'm in a phase when I very much want somebody to say: "here's some money, now go and photograph this or that". That would give me a justification to record something.

L.M: Yes. But there has never been a government funded documentary photographic unit of any kind in New Zealand.

A.W: No, there's nothing like it here. But we tried to get things established by going directly to the government in the 1970s but never got anywhere. Des Kelly and Larence Shustak were involved in that. It was when there was government money for that sort of thing; now, of course, they would turn you towards private enterprise (laughter).

I wish, for instance, that Victoria University had a visual communications department. I wish that some department like that had a little niche whereby they could say: "ok, every year we set aside \$5,000 and with that we send a photographer to document some specific area of life in New Zealand. And they could actually specify the area. There are plenty of very eager photographers about who would certainly put a lot of time into that. I've missed out on a couple of projects. Because I'd won the Commonwealth prize and was out of the country, I wasn't asked to participate in "photography and the law"; somebody at the Arts Council said I wasn't available so I wasn't asked; it would have been difficult timing but I would've liked to have been asked.

L.M: When did you first encounter the full force of Maori activist hostility?

A.W: The first occasion I came across the activists as such was during Waitangi celebrations. They were having a hiko from Ngaruawahia to Waitangi. Some marchers were staying the night out at Whangarei; they were on the marae relaxing for the evening. I went over, walked in and started photographing. A couple of times somebody said “no, I don’t want to be photographed”; but that was all. Then they started to practise a haka. I was pretty much lost with the Maori but I could pick up from some phrases things like: “wipe my bottom with the pakeha” – it was very expressive. I got into the middle of the haka and photographed. Then one of the dominant ones wearing a beautiful T-shirt with a raised fist had a violent reaction to that and nearly tore the T-shirt off because I said I wanted to photograph it. Also there was a really beautiful girl there with a pakeha boy next to her and she was very much into it. So I took several frames of her. Then the haka stopped and I went back. She came up to me and said she wanted the film, there was no way I was going to have those images. I said no because there were other images on the film (not quite true actually). As I wouldn’t publish without her knowledge and permission, I didn’t want the film destroyed there and then (I actually got away with the film). The pakeha boy also attacked me. He said he’d been with them since Auckland and had been bending over backwards to be accepted and here I was putting his position in jeopardy by doing a typical pakeha thing. Anyway they were going to have a meeting of the locals in the evening and I was staying with a Maori friend, a schoolteacher in Hikurangi who had flatted with me earlier in Wellington before she married. She had an old auntie with her, one of the elders of the district, so I told them about what happened and they wanted to come with me to the meeting. They wanted to find out what these young people were saying. There was a valuable dialogue starting up because many Northland Maori felt the treaty celebrations were for their own good because they were lining their pockets, so they were violently opposed to what the activists were saying. I took these two people with me to the meeting and I said what I was trying to do with my work there. I got a very ‘racial’ reaction, accusing me of trying to come in over the backs of the old people, using them for my own ends, which wasn’t true. I was quite bitterly attacked. There was one young girl there trying to tell the old lady something about Parihaka. She was very moving, she stood up and said that in the battle of Parihaka the women had been raped and she was the issue of that rape (several removed). The way she was speaking was incredibly sincere and deeply felt. But she was not quite coming across to the old lady and I was trying to explain to her when the young woman turned on me and said: “you, Dutch, go back to Holland, clean up your own paddock. Your own country’s in a mess” (which I didn’t agree with). But I felt I’d come across it before – you are faced with a peak of intense feeling when the person can no longer rationalise. As far as they were concerned I should get myself a rowboat and go back to Holland very smartly.

L.M: Did you experience anything like that before the Waitangi protests of the 1980s, in the 1970s for instance?

A.W: In 1975 when the land march came to Wellington, I photographed the land marchers

on Porirua marae, then on the way into Wellington – all quite happily during the meeting with the prime minister at parliament grounds when they were under Eva Rickard. But then she moved away and the activists stayed. Now they pretty soon started chasing the pakeha photographers off; you'd come with a camera to parliament grounds, public property, and they would chase you away. I said to them that I would like to photograph what they were doing, I wanted to listen, I was interested, etc. They had standard evening court sessions on parliament steps where they could talk about issues. So they invited me to that but I couldn't get a foot on the ground. Because I had published work and had made some money out of images of the Maori they felt that I had exploited them. I tried to explain. I said there had just been an article in a photography journal about how little photographers earned, and that really I had made no more than a cleaner. Well, they turned around to me and said I should have stuck with cleaning which wasn't what I was saying. Really I thought, you come to a full stop, obviously you can't go on talking because their resentment is emotional and you can't fight it. Whatever you say, you are white; you are an exploiter. And of course they have been ripped off. But you earn so little on publications that...

L.M: Let's say, for example, a print journalist was there to write about an event like that. Should we make any distinction between the presence of that journalist, observing an event and then writing about it and the presence of a photographer? Do you think it fair that photographers should be singled out as any more exploitative than journalists taking notes?

A.W: No, but the presence of the photographer is more obvious.

L.M: Is there something about photography which gets some Maori people's backs up?

A.W: They've only put that across to me very recently in the introduction to *Whaiora* by Witi Ihimaera where he writes about being photographed. How he suddenly felt hit on the back, how he saw American tourists in the bus all pointing their cameras at him. I can understand that resentment. What has annoyed me at times though is earlier they may have accepted people with notebooks, people who came to write articles. But as a photographer you really depend totally on their co-operation and if you don't have it you don't get your images. You are so much more openly vulnerable that way. Also people with tape recorders at the Ringatu church meetings would've been in the same position because the participants felt that their prayers were very sacred and once they were recorded they would no longer have their power.

L.M: What do you think of the idea advanced by Susan Sontag that the camera is an inherently violent instrument because it can intrusively enter other people's private space?

A.W: First I'll say a little more about Witi's concept of what an image can do. There's been more talk about whether it's actually valid to photograph other people...it's sitting in judgment on them in a way and, possibly, if their circumstances are so different from your own how can you even conceive why they are the way they are. But you become so

terribly restricted. When I went to England for this Commonwealth competition, there were all these different teachers talking about using documentary photography. There were people saying you really have no right to photograph outside your own family; you can only use the members of your own family!

L.M: How do you feel about that position?

A.W: I feel that you are so totally restricted by it. I think there is value in observing through a camera. I try not to come to conclusions. I try to really get influenced by what's happening when I photograph. I am as open as I possibly can be. And I may find that I listen to what's happening and I try to work out what's there and sometimes I find later that I saw the wrong thing. For instance in the 1960s there were some pictures of a group of teenagers during a hui standing on the banks of the Waikato River and they'd misbehaved and were told off by someone. The whole atmosphere around them was despondent. I happened to find myself in the middle of a situation and I tried to work out what was happening from what was being said or, possibly, body language. But sometimes later on I find it's not quite that way and people's values are different from my own. I'm still coming from my own viewpoint, of course, and I cannot avoid that. But I try not to be too strong in my own viewpoint, not to be judgmental or particularly political. I don't belong to a political party or church. (high-pitched tone of voice, laughter) I try to be as neutral as possible. So I don't come from a fixed angle, I try to be as open as possible but of course – like in that situation with the activists – I can never be anything other than a European. I try to hide behind the fact that I'm Dutch and throughout history the Dutch have been very tolerant of other people's opinions. They've taken in the Jews when they were being victimised in other countries; they've taken in whoever needs a hiding place. I try to be open-minded but of course I'm from a sheltered, white, middle-class environment. I can't change those outward signs.

L.M: Have you had much positive feedback during this period of Maori activism from Maori people who've given you reinforcement that they think what you're doing is important and valuable?

A.W: There have been people who've said to me that they remember my photographs and they're happy with them; they're happy about the way I've operated. I keep having to defend that a little bit more now because it was my whole approach not to charge up to someone saying "can I take your photograph". It's difficult to maintain that now because it's what people find more acceptable, rather than me quietly intruding on them and photographing them the way they are. And if they don't feel confident with the way they are, they feel very resentful towards my approach because I seem to want to spy on them. A few years ago a Maori girl at a protest was hugging someone and I photographed her. She attacked me over it, saying: "you can't photograph me unless you ask me first". Then I said very quietly: "I think what you're doing is beautiful; it's beautiful that you're able to just throw your arms around someone and why can't that be shown". I had to start

defending it and I think a lot of it has to do with people being over defensive. It happened again with a later hikoï when I wanted to use one of the photos of a haka in *Whaiora* but we couldn't find the girl to ask her and they advised against using it without her knowing.

L.M: Was it a long and complicated business getting permission to publish some of the photos in *Whaiora*?

A.W: Yes it was. I made the commitment that anybody associated with the protest movement would be asked permission. The last time the protesters walked at the hikoï at Waitangi, all pakeha photographers signed an agreement with their lawyer that we would not publish any of the material without asking them and we would make no profit from them. We would be allowed to cover costs but any money above that would have to go back to the protest movement. And when I came to publish *Whaiora*, they were asked. I don't normally ask people. I feel that if they allow me to photograph, that's enough permission; and legally I don't need to ask. But just before the book went to print, Katarina Mataira felt that everyone who could be recognised should be asked if they minded being in the book. So we started doing that and there was one of the land march pictures, which I thought was important in the context of the book. The woman in it took one look at it and said: "oh my God no, you can't publish that". Now I have a feeling that it's because she looks fairly overweight in the picture; she was probably heavier there than later in life. And I'm sure there was no other reason than that; there couldn't have been another reason. It was a fairly low angle view of them doing a haka on the steps of parliament. The picture was too important to be subjected to her banning of it from publication. It was thrown out and every picture that was thrown out of *Whaiora* got me in tears because I was feeling so passionate about the book. Another picture thrown out was done so for a different reason. It was one Katerina felt she couldn't live with (she took out two). The picture showed a group of gang members in Cuba Mall, Wellington talking to a white girl. She was wearing something very see-through and flimsy and looking very vulnerable in front of these guys...but Katerina was really saying that she still had too much important work to do among the Maori and that if her mana was in any way impaired then she couldn't do that other work. And she said that she simply couldn't afford to be associated with a book which had that picture in it. She felt that strongly.

L.M: Only about that picture?

A.W: Only about that picture in that way because it could have racial connotations, it could be used against Maori.

L.M: When was that picture taken?

A.W: It was an early one, probably about 1976 and I always wanted to use it but it never had a chance.

L.M: The men in the photograph are gang members and you just happened to be in Cuba Mall at the time?

A.W: Yes, I just happened to see it. And I photographed other gang members again and got to know them a little bit better. But that photo was quite early on. They may not have been gang members but they were certainly very much the same kind of people. They may have known the girl, she may have been somebody's girlfriend but it looks as if she is putting herself in a very precarious position. Well, Katerina felt that one should be vetoed. There was no choice about it on my part and I felt that my work should not be open to that kind of reasoning.

L.M: Did you think that she had a valid point?

A.W: Oh I did think that she had a point. I could understand her position, sure. Another example was a picture of an old person, a little bit later, more into the 1980s. It happened to be at a Ringatu hui and this elderly gentleman had just had a spell in hospital and he wasn't very strong so they put a bed in the meetinghouse which is very unusual. The hui was finishing and all the old guys were all pretty tired because they'd been putting a lot of energy into being there which they always do. So there were several old people resting on their beds in the afternoon and I made these portraits looking down on them from the rafters. I saw it as them almost joining their ancestors; there was that feeling of them passing on and sleeping among their ancestors. But Katerina thought that the old guy sleeping with his mouth open didn't look dignified enough. He was a fairly prominent Maori, he'd had an honorary doctorate from Victoria University, so he was somebody and it didn't do that man justice to be photographed in such an exposed way. That was Katerina's reasoning for not using that one, it wasn't a dignified enough portrait of that man. Also she said of my idea about the ancestors looking down at them: "they weren't their ancestors anyway, they were only visiting the marae". So that didn't stand up, it was only my idea. She threw that picture out and I was sorry because it was one of the better hui photos. But I didn't feel as strong about that image as about the one in Cuba Mall because that was one of those 'decisive moment' pictures.

L.M: So the final decision as to which images would be in the book was a matter of consultation between you and Katerina Mataira. Was anybody else involved in that process?

A.W: The publishers. They threw some pictures out because there were too many sentimental images. And they put some in dominant positions, which I didn't agree with. It was a compromise all the way and I wasn't happy with the end product.

L.M: So the publishers had a large say in the positioning of the photographs?

A.W: Yes. They switched a lot around without asking me which I wasn't happy with. I really fell out with them. They put that picture of the kid flying through the air on the

dedication page and I was mad about it because I don't like that image.

L.M: Did John Turner have any hand in the pre-selection of pictures?

A.W: No, but afterwards we selected an exhibition from the pool of images.

L.M: Whose idea was it to have Witi Ihimaera write an introduction?

A.W: Mine, really. I wanted Witi for the whole text but he didn't have the time; he wanted to do it but couldn't. We tried out a lot of different ideas of what sort of text to do. For instance, we tried Bill Parker who wanted to do a very scholarly text. He said it was a major job and he also didn't have the time. But I didn't want that kind of text, I didn't want it to be that weighty because possibly people wouldn't read it. So I was happy that he didn't accept to do it. Katerina really only did it as a favour for me. She found it very difficult to know what sort of text to do. She struggled over it, how to do it justice. She said the only way would be to add another dimension by putting in little things that people could have been thinking or saying. So when she came to children, in the ebb and flow of the book, the language essentially had to be a child's; and when she came to the old people she no longer felt she could speak for them because she hadn't reached that age herself. She felt it wouldn't have been acceptable if she had, so she tried to do it by getting a bit more factual.

L.M: Do you feel that the book is *too* compromised or that something of your intention does emerge from it in spite of the changes?

A.W: I tried to make a positive statement on Maori at this time of development. But I feel that in every way it is a compromise.

L.M: So you feel it could have been a much stronger statement about the times?

A.W: I think it was a stronger statement before it got chopped about but also I feel I was compromising myself because I couldn't put all my energies into it. Now I feel almost that the book shouldn't be in existence (laughter). I wish I could withdraw it and do it again.

L.M: It's unlikely to be reprinted then. Did you ever want *Maori* to be reprinted?

A.W: Yes. In the early 1970s when there was nothing like it and it was sold out. But it had to be updated because the situation had changed so much and that's what I really set out to do but then felt that an update was no longer valid and that it had to be done again. But in the 1960s I wasn't tied to any other people, I could move about freely even though it was still difficult enough to be everywhere at the right time. I remember some events because I couldn't get there fast enough. *But you really almost have to live with the people* [my emphasis], and follow them around as old people from hui to hui and have a very active life, fully involved with their community and tribal affairs. But it's difficult to do it...

Maybe as a Maori you can justify doing it by covering one tribe – your own! (laughter). But you should be looking at all of it and there's so much happening out there.

L.M: What criteria do you use when you're selecting images for a publication? Are they formal criteria, or to do with the importance of the content, or a balance of both? What particular factors do you weigh up when choosing an image?

A.W: Well, first of all I select images because I like them and because they work as pictures and because they say something. And then in a book context they have to fit the ebb and flow of the book. So you start off on that...then it's important what's next to it on the page. If you have two pictures on a double spread they have to balance with each other; that's a visual criterion.

L.M: So you put a lot of thought into this and play around with many possibilities?

A.W: Yes I do. OK you've taken your photographs, you come home and you've got your proof sheets. You put your L shapes on and select the images you like, print these bigger and then put about 40 or 50 images on the floor, trying to get them to fit into the section of the book you're working on. Then you make your combinations and one suddenly works visually. So you start off just using pleasing images and images that have worked. I'm still upset about some that didn't make it because there was no space for them in the book. It always happens...still I'm happy with some of the images in *Whaiora* which I think say a lot and it's good that they're out there being seen by people. It's just that I'm not happy with the final book overall.

L.M: You were very happy with *Maori*, weren't you? Or did you have some misgivings about it?

A.W: I had some misgivings when it first came out but not really about its choice of pictures or about its contents. It was just to do with little things, technical things, the loss of details, etc. But over the years I've grown very fond of *Maori*. I'm sorry about the fact that it has colour in it now because that was a compromise I had to make for the publisher; because they wanted to make a book that would sell it had to have colour on the cover. The cover has always been a stumbling block in any book. I really struggled enormously over the cover of *Wellington city alive*. Afterwards when I saw it I thought it looked too much like a glorified telephone book (laughter). *Whaiora* is reasonably OK even though I wanted other things on the cover but again it was the publisher's choice. I feel that the picture used isn't strong enough; it's a little bit romantic. But as a cover design it works the best of all the books because the picture is not the whole cover.

L.M: You mentioned before that the image taken in Cuba Mall of the gang members is an example of a 'decisive moment' picture. Are you impressed with that notion or do you think it's just a convenient way of describing certain images?

A.W: It was a convenient way in that particular case.

L.M: In an exhibition you had some years ago at Exposures Gallery, Bill Main said something like: “these photographs were selected on the ‘decisive moment’ principle”. Do you think there’s much explanatory power or usefulness in that principle?

A.W: Well it is the very moment when every element in the picture is right, when everything falls into place. When you’re photographing you know when that happens. But I’m too involved with the people to actually take in any other detail on more than an instinctive level. Sometimes I get little bonuses like things that are written in the background or that happen to just fit in; very rarely are they dominant enough to be an integral part of the picture. However I do instinctively know when I’ve actually captured something. That particular exhibition where Bill says he has chosen on the ‘decisive moment’ principle was selected by him from the proof sheets and he did come up with a couple of images I hadn’t stopped to look at before or hadn’t used. It’s a way of judging images but I don’t consciously go out and capture things all the time. If you only go for ‘decisive moment’ pictures you’re almost being overly clever.

L.M: Have you been exhibited widely outside New Zealand?

A.W: Not really. Only when there is an interest in things New Zealand anyway.

L.M: The Commonwealth exhibition was held in London?

A.W: Yes, at the Commonwealth Institute. It was very much their baby. It was also shown in Vancouver.

L.M: Nobody, it seems, has mounted a major exhibition of New Zealand photography in Europe or the United States.

A.W: No. I talked about it with The Centre For Photography in London and they are certainly interested. Somebody would have to put up a proposal and organise it. I’ve never been invited to take part in an overseas exhibition except through Foreign Affairs when they had the *Te Maori* show in Chicago.

L.M: What were you asked to do for that?

A.W: They got the Centre for Photography there interested in an exhibition of photographs and they selected images from *Whaiora* for it. But in a way my work is a little too conventional for photography galleries.

L.M: What kind of work do you think photography galleries are looking for now?

A.W: Avant-garde. Work that breaks through barriers of style, acceptance, etc.

L.M: Are you interested in changing your style or modifying it in any way?

A.W: No, because that doesn't work for me. There are others who can ... I hate to say do photography as an art form because I think mine is an art...but there are other people who are good at other forms of it; I'm good at mine and I feel I shouldn't try to copy other people (laughter).

L.M: Are there any developments in photography which interest you to the point where you might follow them up in some way?

A.W: Oh I'm interested in, for example, Fay Godwin's landscape photos. I'm very impressed by what she's doing so maybe I'll have a go at that. Again it's more documentary work. You are influenced by what you see other people doing and yes I still get great pleasure out of photographing with a Diana, getting the dreamy images that that creates. But I don't have a use for them so they stay in the drawer and the same with Polaroid. I've got a simple Polaroid camera and every now and again I have a little session. I have an idea, I work it out and it goes back in the drawer. It's not what I'm about or what I should be doing.

L.M: Have you photographed your family much over the last twenty years?

A.W: Oh yes, on and off. We have sessions that we do more intensely and I've used them as models sometimes.

L.M: Do you feel optimistic about the future for documentary photography? Do you think you can find a way to keep working within it in its classical form?

A.W: That's what I have to do (laughter). But I do feel that in the historical sense, documentary photography has got a value. I have to keep clinging to that. I look back at my images of the 1960s and the 1970s and they are different from what the scenes would look like if I photographed them now. But of course I have to carry on photographing now so that in the 1990s I can look back at the 1980s and compare it. You can do those things in hindsight. If I could somehow be transposed back into the 1960s I would go mad photographing because now I see how different things are *now*. In the 1960s I felt the same as I do now, you know: "this will always be here". Things change so slowly that it's hard to be inspired by them to go on photographing. But I think the photos certainly have their value because they tell you what things were like.

L.M; You're saying that the taken for granted everyday things you don't give a second thought to, can suddenly stand out 20 years later as quite strange as contexts change.

A.W: Yeah. People's attitudes and their whole lifestyle have changed so very gradually, often without them noticing. You can never take pictures the same way again; they will

always reflect that people and their socio-economic conditions have changed. So I think that's the value of my style of work. Although the annoying fact at present is that it's easier and more profitable to sell things from file than it is to go out and take new photographs. It's very difficult to inspire people into putting money into documenting now. I can sell historical stuff but people don't seem to want a photograph of something they can see when they open their eyes in the street (laughter).

L.M: Is there anything you regret not having photographed in the 1960s and the 1970s?

A.W: Oh, for instance I only looked at Maori in the 1960s; I didn't look at the European New Zealander. So if I could be transposed back I'd go to town (laughter). But of course I've changed too, so perhaps I wouldn't have a valid way of looking at life. However I certainly would love to spend all my time out there photographing, trying to get the images which say something about present day life in New Zealand or anywhere else. I had schemes of going to Russia (laughter). I'd love to do that because I have a feeling that it's still an area where there's a great diversity of life, almost behind our times. And people there still might be like they were here in the 1960s, not so influenced by exposure to television and visual images.

L.M: What effect do you think the massive exposure of people in this society to visual images has had?

A.W: It has made people more suspicious of being photographed. People are much more self-conscious about how they present because they know that the image will be seen by someone else, so they're more likely to present the image they want to be seen.

L.M: Do you think this self-consciousness is peculiar to mass media saturated societies where images are constantly circulating?

A.W: Yes. People may ask: "what are you using it for, is it going to be in tomorrow morning's paper". When you say it isn't, they reply: "if you don't work for a paper what are you photographing for, you must have a reason". The Filipinos thought I was a millionaire because I could afford to photograph (laughter). The differences are much greater there. Here it would be a good idea to say you're a member of a camera club because that would probably justify everything. But all I can say is that I like taking pictures. In the 1960s I found that the Maori trusted me and they were, hopefully, right in trusting me. For instance, in the 1960s I took a photograph in a youth club of a fairly bulky father dancing with his little daughter. It was published in *Te ao hou*. Twenty years later I went to one of those cultural competitions and a man rushed up to me saying: "remember that little girl, look! There she is now, highly pregnant with child number two". I photographed the family again and he was completely relaxed and happy about it because he knew what I did with my images, what kind of photos I take. In those circumstances when I've come back to people who know my work, basically I have a free hand because I'm accepted. At protest

marches they were querying every photographer because they wanted to know their political viewpoint, whether they were police photographers or what. Somebody would say: “but she’s Ans Westra”, and immediately it was ok. So those sorts of incidents also happen and that’s quite gratifying. But it can be annoying to be so widely known because people feel that possibly one day I’ll make some profit out of that image (laughter).

L.M: Lately there have been a number of films (*Under fire, Salvador*) which have a war-zone photojournalist as their hero (or anti-hero) and they try to show the dilemmas of his situation. In *Under fire*, the lead character, played by Nick Nolte, wants to photograph the leader of the Sandinistas but by the time he gets the opportunity, the leader has been killed in a battle with the government forces. Then he is asked to photograph the dead leader in such a way as to make him seem to be alive. He protests: “I don’t do fake, posed pictures like that”. The Sandinistas reply: “this isn’t a photographic but rather a political matter”. So he takes the photos and they are used for propaganda purposes, as morale boosters and to fool the enemy. And gradually the photographer becomes more and more sympathetic to their cause. This film and others like it show a fascination with the practising documentary photographer and demonstrate that people are indeed more aware of his or her presence and importance as a shaper of perceptions of events. A spotlight is placed on the role of the photographer as a cultural hero or villain.

A.W: I felt that role in the protest movement. I would get so swept up by the event. First of all I tried to be totally neutral. At one line-up I was shown to the photographer. The police said: “she’s not one of us”; and I was put back amongst the protesters. But gradually I thought: “well I don’t mind where I belong. I don’t want to belong anywhere, I want to be in this neutral, no man’s land”.

L.M: Do you think it’s possible to be in such a place these days?

A.W; You do get more and more influenced by and thus more and more sympathetic with the people you are photographing because you begin to understand them more. They become your friends. So when the anti-tour protesters were trying to dodge the police lines and to be a nuisance and interrupt the game at Athletic Park, I was sort of leading them on (laughter).

L.M; There’s a statement by Jean-Luc Godard where he says that at the beginning of his career he made films so he could find out about the world and that gave him a role to play in various events; and he became more politically involved as a result of that process.

A.W: Well it’s difficult to stay neutral and you could say my sympathies are with the left. When you’re on the street and you look around for things to photograph, you tend to look at things which stand out, so you don’t look at the mediocre. In the 1970s you would look at hippies. When I was doing the Wellington book, after we’d done our first selection of pictures I ended up with a disproportionate number of images of Maori, hippies, dropouts

and alcoholics (I had five pictures of alcoholics in a sequence). I thought: “my golly this is not a fair proportion of the population, it doesn’t work out statistically”. So we then had to do a double take and try to balance it a little. But because these things are different you tend to photograph them more easily.

Since *Whaiora* I’ve been searching for another book and somebody said why not a book about Dutch immigrants in New Zealand. Well that really bores me stiff and I just can’t force myself to do it (laughter).

L.M: Is that because they’ve been too absorbed into the mainstream of New Zealand society?

A.W: Oh no. They’re actually less and less absorbed. There’s quite a lot of material there and it would be very interesting: how people have left their roots, gone to a new country; and now that their families have grown up they no longer need to have that social interaction with the wider society. They tend to isolate themselves and recreate little parts of Holland.

L.M: Then why does the prospect of such a project bore you stiff?

A.W: Because it’s too close to my own roots. I’m not enough of an outsider. It doesn’t inspire me. When I go back to Holland I don’t photograph much.

L.M: Do you consider that outsider position necessary to the successful practice of documentary photography?

A.W: Yes, in order to actually notice things. I think I took some good photographs of my own children because they’re so close to me but certainly it does heighten your senses when you’re totally in an alien environment. And it makes it much easier to photograph if things are so obviously different; it’s harder to photograph the everyday.

L.M: Do you have much contact with Dutch people or get to speak much Dutch?

A.W: I write regularly to my mother and another friend in Holland in Dutch. I don’t normally ever speak the language – I’m not someone who is oriented to languages anyway. I speak only English. I don’t speak Dutch with the children. When I’m in Holland I find I can switch totally into Dutch without much of an accent, which is useful. But at first when I’m speaking Dutch it sounds very alien, stilted and guttural. And then after a few days it becomes a natural thing and I lose awareness of it. Nowadays when I go to Holland I photograph it more than I used to because it’s so steeped in history. And it would be interesting to photograph certain things the Dutch are doing; it’s just that I think they’d be harder to get close to and photograph because they’re more reserved and aware of what I do with images. I’d much rather go to the Philippines even though that was quite a sad experience, as I was feeling sorry for the people.

*Appendix One*

L.M: Now that you've lived and worked for so long in New Zealand, do you think that has perhaps blunted your outsider perspective? Do you feel in any way that you've become so much a New Zealander that you're now absorbed into everyday life here?

A.W: Yes, it's a bit like that. So gradually you feel almost less inspired to photograph here too. That's partly why I've gone away, seeking new areas. But I might go back to Maori again because after all they are different to me.

# APPENDIX TWO

ANS WESTRA CHRONOLOGY



1936: Born Anna Jacoba Westra in Leiden, Holland, on the 28th of April, the only child of Pieter Hein Westra and Hendrika Christina van Doorn.

“Leiden...[is] a small town right between Amsterdam and Rotterdam so you’re in easy reach of bigger cities. I did my schooling as a boarder in Rotterdam. It was very much an urban life, far away from anything rural, though the family was from Friesland province and as a child I spent a few holidays on a farm. But it was very much an alien area. I was a town girl. My family had a small business, we were middle class.” – Ans Westra, interviewed by Lawrence McDonald, December 1987.

1952: Begins photography while studying at Girls College, Leiden.

1953: Moves to Rotterdam; begins study at the Industrieschool voor Meisjs.

1956: Visits *The family of Man* exhibition in Amsterdam; produces photographic documentation of fellow students, inspired by Joan (Johan) van der Keuken’s book *Wij zijn 17 (We are seventeen)*.

1957: Following four years study, gains a Diploma in Arts and Craft teaching from the Industrieschool voor Meisjs, Rotterdam, specialising in artistic needlework; arrives in New Zealand to visit her father; lives first eight months in Auckland, works at Crown Lynn Potteries.

1958: Moves to Wellington.

“I arrived in Wellington in 1957. My father came to collect me and we travelled on the night train to Auckland. I spent my first eight months in Auckland but didn’t settle. I wanted to go back home. Then I went down to Wellington on the bus because I thought it was a bit silly to come so far and not to see very much of the place. And in due course I made my roots in Wellington.” – Interview with Lawrence McDonald.

*Appendix Two*

1959: Joins Wellington Camera Club; works in various photographic studios.

“I was in the Camera Club from 1961 to 1963; so the Camera Club days happened at the same time as I was already publishing. More than anything it was an educational thing because they gave you competition assignments and you had to see how you fared photographing different topics.” – Interview with Lawrence McDonald.

1960: Wins prize for “Assignment No.2”, *Photography* magazine (U.K.).

1962: Commences career as a full-time, freelance documentary photographer working mainly for *Te ao hou*, a magazine published by the Department of Maori Affairs, and the School Publications Branch of the Department of Education

1963: Travels to Tonga and Fiji.

1964: *Washday at the pa* withdrawn from Primary School classrooms by order of the Minister of Education, Ivan Kinsella, after protest action by the Maori Women’s Welfare League.

1964/5: Certificate of Excellence, New York World’s Fair photographic exhibition, *The world and its people*.

1965: Birth of first child, Erik John on May 7.

1965-1969: Returns to live in Holland.

1967: *Maori* is published by A.H & A.W. Reed, with text by James Ritchie.

1969: Returns to New Zealand near the end of the year/decade.

1970: Receives a QE II Arts Council grant to compile a photographic essay, “The New Zealanders”; has work included in the photographic display in the New Zealand pavilion at Expo 70, Osaka, Japan.

1971: Receives additional QE II Arts Council grant towards the publication of work resulting from the 1970 grant.

1972: *Notes on the country I live in* is published by Alister Taylor, with essays by Tim Shadbolt and James K. Baxter.

1973: Birth of daughter, Lisa Christina van Hulst on July 1.

1973-5: Tutor for PhotoForum summer workshops.

“In 1975 I was domesticated with two young children, determinedly taking photographs in odd free moments. A desire to repeat my work of the 1960s with the Maori people was growing, but it had to wait a while. Essentially work had to be close to home. My youngest child Jacob was born in December 1976. Lisa was then three and a half years old. Photography centred on my children. But I had time to experiment with the Diana and with a simple Polaroid system, getting great pleasure from the chance to work so differently.” – Ans Westra, in *Women view women* exhibition catalogue, 1985.

1976: *Wellington city alive* is published by Whitcoulls, with text by Noel Hilliard; birth of son, Adrian Jacob van Hulst on December 4.

1977: Westra is on the judging panel for the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts exhibition *Ex camera*.

1981: Receives QE II Arts Council grant to compile a collection of photographs of Maori.

1982: An archive of Ans Westra negatives is established at the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

1983: Tutor for PhotoForum workshop in Auckland.

1985: Westra is one of three featured photographers in the touring exhibition *Witness to change: life in New Zealand: John Pascoe, Les Cleveland, Ans Westra: photographs 1940-1965*, organised by PhotoForum/Wellington Inc., in conjunction with the Wellington City Art Gallery.

*Whaiora: the pursuit of life* is published by Allen & Unwin and the National Art Gallery, with text by Katerina Mataira, and an introduction by Witi Ihimaera.

1986: Having submitted a portfolio of work made in Wellington during the first week of March, Westra is judged the Pacific Regional Winner of the Commonwealth Photography Award competition, organised by the Commonwealth Institute, London; spends 23 days in September photographing in the Philippines.

1987: Travels to London for special seminar and award ceremony at the Commonwealth Institute; also visits Holland and New York before returning to New Zealand.

1988: Elected President of PhotoForum, Wellington; participates in *The post office project*, organised by the Alexander Turnbull library, in which several photographers document a large number of rural and urban post offices to be closed by the government as an economy measure; is the subject of a TVNZ documentary for the arts programme *Kaleidoscope*; begins work on book project, “Peaceful Islands” (unrealised).

1988/9: Artist-in-residence, Dowse Art Museum, Lower Hutt; undertakes a six month documentary project on life in the Hutt Valley, with funding from the QE II Arts Council and the Lower Hutt City Council; is an exhibition finalist for the Montana-Lindauer Art Awards, Auckland Society of Arts; re-elected President of PhotoForum/Wellington.

1990: Participates in *Pictures from the big A*, a documentary project organised by the Auckland City Library; co-tutors a workshop with British landscape photographer Fay Godwin (organised by PhotoForum); finalist in United-Sarjeant Art Award; re-elected President of PhotoForum/Wellington; receives major individual artist's grant from QE II Arts Council; tutor for workshop at Southern Art School, Southland Polytechnic, Invercargill.

1991: Nominated by PhotoForum/Wellington for prestigious international award, the Henri Cartier-Bresson Prize, Paris.

1993: Artist-in-residence, Tylee Cottage, Whanganui.

1994/5: Travels and photographs in China, Mongolia, Russia and around Europe before basing herself in the Netherlands for a year.

1995: Returns to New Zealand

1996: Artist-in-residence, Southland Museum and Art Gallery, Invercargill.

1998: Receives Companion of the Order of New Zealand Merit for services to photography; Artist-in-residence (two months), Otago School of Fine Arts, Otago University; receives Creative New Zealand project grant to make *Washday at the pa revisited*.

On *Washday at the pa revisited*: "...I actually visited three different families, there were eight children so there were quite a number to choose from. I haven't got a direct story line. It was really comparing the situation now with then." - "The eye of an outsider", interview with Damian Skinner, *Art New Zealand* 100, Spring 2001, p.99.

Gives lectures and workshops at Whanganui Polytechnic and the Sarjeant Art Gallery.

1999: Works on an unrealised book project, "Ans Westra's World", intended for publication by Steele Roberts Publishing, with funding from Creative New Zealand; Te Papa Tongarewa purchases definitive set of prints of *Washday at the pa*, made in 1999.

Documents sex industry workers in Hamilton and Auckland over a period of several days towards the end of the year.

"I went to a strip club and a couple of brothels and because I had the right contacts, I was able to get in. There was a lot of secrecy around it but I had the support of management so that made my job easier." - Ans Westra quoted in Jane Wynyard, "Candid camera", *The Dominion post*, September 2001.

2000: Artist-in-residence, Dandenong District Council, Melbourne; Te Papa Archives purchase the Ans Westra Archive of personal papers.

*Behind the curtain*, a touring exhibition of 38 black and white photographs of sex industry workers opens at the Manawatu Art Gallery.

2003: Mercedes-Benz residency at Samuel Marsden Collegiate School, Wellington.

2004: Photographs marchers on the foreshore legislation debate hikoī at Parliament grounds; *Handboek: Ans Westra photographs*, a major touring retrospective exhibition of Westra's photographs, opens at the National Library Gallery in August, with an accompanying publication of the same name.

2006: *Ans Westra: private journeys/public thoughts*, a documentary film directed by Luit Bieringa, is premiered at the Wellington Film Festival.

2007: Becomes Arts Foundation of New Zealand Icon Artist.

2009: *The crescent moon: the Asian face of Islam in New Zealand* is published by the Asia New Zealand Foundation, with text by Adrienne Jansen.

2011: *Ans Westra: selected photographs of the Wanganui region* is exhibited at the Sarjeant Art Gallery, Whanganui.



# APPENDIX THREE

ANS WESTRA EXHIBITIONS



ANS WESTRA  
ONE-PERSON EXHIBITIONS

*Ans Westra Retrospective*, Dowse Art Gallery, Lower Hutt, 1972.

*A Private View – Ans Westra*, Taj Mahal Gallery, Wellington, September 1976.

*A Private View – Take Two: Photographs by Ans Westra*, Real Pictures, Auckland, 1980.

*Retrospective I: Maori Portraits 1960–1965*, Exposures Gallery, Wellington, March 1984.

*Retrospective II: Early 1970s*, Exposures Gallery, Wellington, October 1984.

*Retrospective III: Demonstration Decade*, Exposures Gallery, Wellington, March 1985.

*Retrospective IV: Recent Maori Portraits*, Exposures Gallery, Wellington, October 1985.

*Whaiora*, Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago; and the New Zealand Consulate New York, 1986.

*People Power – “Freedom” in the Philippines*, touring exhibition, 1987.

*A Week in New York*, Exposures Gallery, Wellington, November 1987.

*Whaiora*, Contemporary Arts Centre of South Australia, Adelaide, 1987.

*Portrait of the Hutt*, Dowse Art Museum, Lower Hutt, 1991.

*Wanganui Seen 1960–1993*, Sarjeant Gallery, Wanganui, 1996.

*Worship*, Dowse Art Museum, Lower Hutt, 1998.

*Ans Westra’s Landscape*, Christopher Moore Gallery, Wellington, 1998.

### Appendix Three

*Ans Westra Masterprints*, Christopher Moore Gallery, Wellington, 1999.

*Colour Work*, Christopher Moore Gallery, Wellington, 1999.

*Behind the Curtain – Photographs of the Sex Industry*, Manawatu Art Gallery, Palmerston North, 2000; City Gallery Wellington, 2001; John Leech Gallery, 2001.

*Rotorua Visits 1963–2000*, Rotorua Art Museum, 2000.

*Dandenong Portraits*, Heritage Hall, Dandenong, Melbourne, 2000.

*As Far North as You Can Possibly Go*, Christopher Moore Gallery, Wellington, 2002.

*Handboek: Ans Westra Photographs*, National Library Gallery, Wellington, 2004.

*The Public and the Private*, Christopher Moore Gallery, Wellington, 2004.

*The Emerald City*, Christopher Moore Gallery, Wellington, 2004.

*To the Pleasure Garden: photography from 1961–2005*, FHE Galleries, Auckland 2005.

*The Moment*, Bowen Galleries, Wellington, 2008.

*Toyland*, Suite Gallery, Wellington, 2008.

*The Crescent Moon: the Asian Face of Islam in New Zealand*, Pataka Museum of Arts and Cultures, 2009.

*Landscape*, Bowen Galleries, Wellington, 2010.

*Ans Westra: selected photographs of the Wanganui region*, Sarjeant Art Gallery, Wanganui, 2011.

### GROUP EXHIBITIONS

*Expo '70*, Osaka, Japan, 1970.

*Photography '71*, Waikato Art Gallery, 1971.

*Photographs*, Barry Lett Galleries, Auckland, July 1972.

New York World's Fair, New York, 1972–3.

*The Active Eye*, Manawatu Art Gallery, Palmerston North, 1975.

*Ex Camera*, The New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts in association with PhotoForum, Wellington, 1977.

*Wellington Photographers*, National Art Gallery, August–September 1978.

*Contemporary Photography*, PhotoForum Gallery, Wellington, 1980.

*Collection '80*, PhotoForum Gallery, Wellington, 1980.

*Opening Show*, Wellington City Art Gallery, 1980.

*Three Photographers*, touring exhibition, 1982.

*Images of Women: 11 Photographers*, Women's Gallery, Wellington, June 1983.

*Workbooks/Diaries*, Women's Gallery, Wellington, November–December 1983.

*Image '84*, PhotoForum at The National Art Gallery, Wellington, April–June 1984.

*United Nations Decade on Women*, Real Pictures, Auckland, 1985.

*Women in New Zealand Society 1884–1985*, Dowse Art Museum, Lower Hutt, May–July 1985.

*Witness to Change: Life in New Zealand: John Pascoe, Les Cleveland, Ans Westra: Photographs 1940–1965*, PhotoForum/Wellington INC. in conjunction with Wellington City Art Gallery, and toured by the Sarjeant Gallery, Wanganui, 1985–1987.

*Posing a Threat*, National Art Gallery, Wellington, 1985.

*Women View Women*, Real Pictures Gallery, Auckland, 1985 (New Zealand tour 1987).

*Frauen Fotografieren Frauen*, Muncher Volkshochschule, Gasteig Kulturzentrum, September–October, 1986.

*Images: photographic expressions of the Commonwealth*, Commonwealth Institute, London, 1987.

*Contemporary New Zealand Photographic Exhibition*, Mezzanine Gallery, New Zealand High Commission, July–August 1988.

Montana-Lindauer Art Awards, Auckland Society of the Arts, 1989.

*Appendix Three*

National Art Awards, Gisborne Museum and Arts Centre, 1989.

*Pictures from the Big A*, Auckland City Library, 1990.

*United Banking Group Ltd/Sarjeant Gallery Photographic Award*, Serjeant Gallery, Wanganui, September–October 1990.

*PhotoForum 90 Members Show*, touring exhibition, 1990.

*Art and Organized Labour*, Wellington City Art Gallery, 1990.

*Land of Milk and Honey*, Dowse Art Museum, Lower Hutt, 1991.

*Daughters of the Land*, The Bath House Art and History Museum, Rotorua, 1993.

*Lest We Forget: Photography, Memory and National Character*, City Gallery Wellington, 1994.

*Last Saturday*, National Library Gallery, Wellington, 1994.

*Identi-Kit*, Lopdell House, Auckland, 1996.

*Aspects of Tiwai: New Zealand Aluminium Smelters 25th anniversary exhibition*, Southland Museum and Art Gallery, June 1996.

*Parade*, Te Papa Tongarewa Museum of New Zealand, 1998–

*Mud-pool Modernism*, Rotorua Art Museum, 2000.

*Inheriting the Netherlands: a Century of Dutch Art in New Zealand*, Lopdell House Gallery, Auckland, 2000; Te Papa Tongarewa Museum of New Zealand, 2001.

*As We Were*, John Leech Gallery, Auckland, 2001.

*The Caravan*, McNamara Gallery, Wanganui, January 2003; Pataka, Porirua Museum, February–May 2003.

*Living Treasures Two*, Museum of Wellington City and Sea, 2003–4.

*Focus*, John Leech Gallery, Auckland, 2004.

*Capture: Jonathan Campbell and Ans Westra*, Suite Gallery, Wellington, 2010.

*Fire* (Ans Westra) and *Dust* (Alison Clouston), Bowen Galleries, Wellington, 2012.

# APPENDIX FOUR

ILLUSTRATIONS



# NOTES



## INTRODUCTION

- 1 Fredrick Jameson, "Introduction", *Signatures of the visible*, New York & London: Routledge, 1990, p.1.
- 2 Marcus Banks and Howard Morphy, "Introduction: rethinking visual anthropology", in Banks and Morphy (eds.), *Rethinking visual anthropology*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997, p.1
- 3 Anna Grimshaw, "Reconfiguring the ground: art and the visualization of anthropology", in Mariet Westermann (ed.), *Anthropologies of art*, Williamstown, MA: Sterling and Francine Clark Art institute, 2005, pp.199-200.
- 4 J. Hillis Miller, *Fiction and repetition: seven English novels*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982, p.21.
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## PART ONE: ISAGOGICS

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## CHAPTER ONE

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  - 15 *Ibid.*, p.148.
  - 16 Michel Foucault, "What is an author?", in *Language, counter-memory, practice: selected essays and interviews*, edited and translated by Donald F. Bouchard, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1977, pp.113-138.
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- 27 Allan Sekula, "Photography between labour and capital", in Benjamin H.D. Buchloh and Robert Wilkie (eds.), *Mining photographs and other pictures 1948-1968*, Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1983, p.200.
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- 35 John Szarkowski, "Introduction", *The photographer's eye*, New York: MOMA, 1966, no pagination.
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- 59 I take this phrase from an excellent British review of the catalogue: Terry Morden, "Photographs are not dumb records", *Creative camera*, no.8, 1986, pp.33-34.
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- 73 Sally Zwartz, “A witness to change”, *New Zealand outlook*, March 1987, p.66.
- 74 Quoted in Michael Kopp, “Aroha is no longer enough for Ans Westra and the Maori”, *PhotoForum Review*, no.33, 1987, p.13. In addition to those already cited, the following resumé articles on Westra’s career were published in the 1980s: Charlotte Freed, “Focusing on the world of the Maori”, *New Zealand women’s weekly*, November 4, 1985, pp.76–77; Suzanne Pollard, “Maori life through a Pakeha’s lens”, *The Dominion* (Wellington), 20.2.1986; and John Saker, “Ans Westra: city interview”, *Wellington city magazine*, April 1986, pp.20–28.
- 75 Des Kelly, unpublished interview (tape) with Athol McCredie, quoted in Janet Bayly, *op.cit.*, p.71.
- 76 James and Agee and Walker Evans, *Let us now praise famous men*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1988 (1st edition 1941).
- 77 See Johannes Fabian, *Time and the other: how anthropology makes its object*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1983.
- 78 Ans Westra, unpublished interview (tape) with Janet Bayly, 12.3.1985, Te Papa Archives.
- 79 *Photography in New Zealand: a social and technical history*, Dunedin: John McIndoe, 1971.
- 80 William Main and John B. Turner, *New Zealand photography from the 1840s to the present*, Auckland: PhotoForum Inc., 1993, p.59.
- 81 D. Eggleton, *op.cit.*, p.108.
- 82 Hannah Holm and Lara Strongman (eds.), *Contemporary New Zealand photographers*, Auckland: Mountain View Press, 2005.
- 83 See *Marti: the passionate eye* (2004), directed by Shirley Horrocks, and *Ans Westra: private journeys/public signposts* (2006), directed by Luit Bieringa.

## CHAPTER TWO

- 1 The title of this section is, of course, taken from Bernard Smith’s study of historical perception, *European vision and the south Pacific 1768–1850*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960.
- 2 Leonard Bell, *The Maori in European art*, Wellington: A.H. and A.W. Reed, 1980, p.4. See also the catalogue to the exhibition of the same name – curated by Alexa M. Johnston, with an introductory essay by Leonard Bell – which was held at the Auckland City Art Gallery from 3 December 1980 to 25 January 1981. In addition to its 97 paintings and drawings, the exhibition contained 31 photographs, amongst which were Ans Westra’s “Ratana meeting, Taranaki” (c.1965) and “Inia te Wiata’s funeral”.
- 3 In a later study, Bell circumvents this problem by writing: “A European representation of Maori owes more to other European representations visual and verbal, than it does to the actual Maori people, or Maori activities, customs, events from history or legend, to which an image or a title may refer.” Leonard Bell, *Colonial constructs: European images of Maori 1840–1914*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1992, p.3.
- 4 Stephen Heath, *The nouveau roman*, London: Elek, 1972, p.21.
- 5 *The Maori in European art, op.cit.*, p.126.
- 6 For a consideration of Kinder as a photographer see: Ronald Brownson, “John Kinder photographs: wet plate negative to albumen positive” in *John Kinder photographs*, Auckland: Auckland City Art Gallery, 1985, pp.5–10; and Ron Brownson, “John Kinder’s photographs”, in Brownson et al., *John Kinder’s New Zealand*, Auckland: Random House and Auckland Art Gallery, 2004, pp.82–95.

- 7 On Lee-Johnson's photography see John B. Turner, *Eric Lee-Johnson: artist with a camera*, Auckland: PhotoForum Inc., 1999.
- 8 However, a modest beginning, chiefly documentation of nineteenth century work was made by William Main in *Maori in focus*, Wellington: Millwood Press, 1976. See also *Whakaahua: photographic images of Maori life 1860s-1930s*, Auckland Institute and Museum, 1987. And Michael Graham-Stewart and John Gow, *Out of time: Maori and the photographer 1860-1940*, Auckland: John Leech Gallery, 2006.
- 9 Michael King, *Maori: a photographic and social history*, Auckland: Heinemann, 1983, p.3.
- 10 For the former see Michael Dunn, "Some aspects of portraiture of the Maori"; for the latter, Michael King, "Moko of the Maori"; both essays can be found in *Face value: a study in Maori portraiture*, Dunedin: Dunedin Public Art Gallery, 1975, no pagination.
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- 12 King, *op.cit.*, p.4.
- 13 *Ibid.*, p.4.
- 14 J.K. Hunn, *Report on Department of Maori Affairs*, Wellington: R.E. Owen, Government Printer, 1961.
- 15 *Ibid.*, section 8, p.15.
- 16 Hunn defines these terms as follows: "Assimilation: to become absorbed, blended, amalgamated, with complete loss of Maori culture. Segregation: To enforce a theoretical concept of 'apartheid'. One school of thought in New Zealand advocates 'parallel development', which in essence is segregation under another name. Symbiosis: To have two dissimilar peoples living together but as separate entities with the smaller deriving sustenance from the larger (seemingly an attempt to integrate and segregate at the same time)"; section 8, p.15.
- 17 *Ibid.*, section 9, p.15. See also J.K. Hunn, "Opening address", Conference of Young Maoris, Marton, 11.11.1960, p.5.
- 18 *Ibid.*, section 8, p.15.
- 19 *Ibid.*, section 81, p.36.
- 20 *A Maori view of the Hunn report*, published for the Maori Synod of the Presbyterian bookroom, Christchurch: Te Waka Karatiana Press, 1961, p.28.
- 21 J.K. Hunn, *op.cit.*, section 33, p.22.
- 22 *Ibid.*, section 43, p.25.
- 23 "Integration and the Hunn Report", *Te ao hou*, no.35 (vol.9, no.3), June 1961, p.7.
- 24 Richard Thompson, "The Hunn Report", *Comment*, vol.2, no.4, winter 1961, pp.8-10.
- 25 Ans Westra, "Maori", *Photography*, vol.19, no.9, September 1964, p.18
- 26 According to Ian Jeffrey, "Like Sutcliffe's seacoast folk, the Indians were or seemed to be disappearing. Curtis regretted this, but saw that it was inevitable...Aware of a rapidity and inevitability in social change, Curtis set himself to record what was passing away. His books are endlessly informative, in both words and pictures, about people 'destined ultimately to become assimilated with the "superior" race'". *Photography: a concise history*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1981, pp.81-82. See also Christopher M. Lyman, *The vanishing race and other illusions: photographs of Indians by Edward S. Curtis*, New York: Pantheon Books in association with the Smithsonian Institution Press, 1982; and Joanna Cohan Scherer, *Edward Sheriff Curtis*, London: Phaidon, 2008.
- 27 As Roger Blackley notes of the period when Goldie emerged as a painter: "At the turn of the century there were two rival schools of thought concerning the 'end' of the Maori. One was virtually genocidal, proclaiming the literal end of the Maori as a separate race; the other was assimilationist, proposing future New Zealanders of predominantly mixed racial heritage. Both were discourses on the 'end' of Maori culture as such and were calmly debated by Pakeha society." Roger Blackley, *Goldie*, Auckland: Auckland Art Gallery and David Bateman, 1997, p.50.
- 28 David Pearson and David Thorns, *Eclipse of equality*, Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1983, pp.51-52, cited in Roy Shuker, *The one best system? a revisionist history of state schooling in New Zealand*, Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1987, pp.64-65.
- 29 Graeme Dunstall, "The social pattern", in W.H. Oliver with B.R. Williams (eds.), *The Oxford history of New Zealand*, Wellington: Oxford University Press, 1981, p.403.
- 30 Ian Pool, *Te iwi Maori: a New Zealand population past, present and projected*, Auckland: Auckland

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- 31 Joan Metge, *A new Maori migration*, London: University of London, The Athlone Press, 1964, p.3.
- 32 *Ibid.*, p.130.
- 33 Joan Metge and Dugal Campbell, "The Rakau Maori studies: a review article", *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, vol.67, no.4, December 1958, (a) "An anthropological assessment" (J.M.), p.355.
- 34 *Ibid.*, pp.355-6.
- 35 James Ritchie, *The making of a Maori: A case study of a changing community*, Wellington and Auckland: A.H. and A.W. Reed, 1963, p.183.
- 36 Ralph Piddington, review of J. Ritchie's *The making of a Maori*, *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, vol.73, no.1, March 1964, p.86.
- 37 John Forster, "The social position of the Maori", in E. Schwimmer (ed.) *The Maori people in the 1960s*, Auckland: Longman Paul, 1968, p.104.
- 38 See chapter seven for extensive comment on the Bigwoods' photographic books.
- 39 Harry Dansey, "Introduction", in *The Maori in colour*, photographs by Kenneth and Jean Bigwood, Wellington: A.H. and A.W. Reed, 1963, no pagination.
- 40 Bruce Palmer, review of *The Maori in colour*, *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, vol.73, no.1, March 1964, p.88.
- 41 *The half-gallon jar* by Hori, cartoons by Frank St Bruno, Auckland: A.D. Organ Ltd, 1962. The stories in this and subsequent books were first published in *New Zealand home life and companion*.
- 42 Bill Pearson, "The Maori and literature 1938-1965", in E. Schwimmer (ed.), *op.cit.*, p.231.
- 43 James Ritchie, "The future of being Maori", in M.F. Lloyd Pritchard (ed.), *The future of New Zealand*, Auckland: the University of Auckland and Whitcombe & Tombs, 1964, p.76.
- 44 See *Fill it up again* (1964), *Flagon fun* (1966), and *Barrels of fun: selected stories from Flagon fun, The half-gallon jar, & Fill it up again* (1972).
- 45 Michael Beveridge, "Conversation with Frank Sargeson", *Landfall*, nos. 93 & 94, March-June 1970, p.144.
- 46 Roderick Finlayson, "Beginnings", *Landfall*, no.77, March 1966, pp.81-82.
- 47 Auckland University Press published an expanded edition of this book in 1973, omitting one story and adding the Maori stories from his second collection, as well as a few more recent stories. See Roderick Finlayson, *Brown man's burden and later stories*, edited and introduced by Bill Pearson, Auckland: Auckland University Press & Oxford University Press, 1973.
- 48 Noel Hilliard, *Maori girl*, London: Heinemann, 1960.
- 49 Bill Pearson, *op.cit.*, p.240. For a discussion of "The childhood theme in New Zealand fiction", see M.H. Holcroft, *Islands of innocence*, Wellington: A.H. & A.W. Reed, 1964.
- 50 Val Williams, "Women or ladies", *Creative camera*, no. 3, 1987, p.38.
- 51 Val Williams, *Women photographers: the other observers 1900 to the present*, London: Virago Press, 1986, p.71.
- 52 Margaret Monck quoted in Anette Kuhn, "The other observers", *Women's Review*, no.13, November 1986, p.25. Kuhn's essay is an extended review of a series of television programmes called *Five women photographers* made for the British Channel Four by Broadside and linked to the exhibition *Women photographers in Britain 1900-1950* and the book whose title appears in the previous note.
- 53 Ans Westra, unpublished interview (tape) with Janet Bayly, 12.3.1985, quoted in Bayly, "Ans Westra: finding a place in New Zealand", in *Witness to change: life in New Zealand: John Pascoe, Les Cleveland, Ans Westra: photographs 1940-1965*, PhotoForum/Wellington Inc., 1985, p.71.
- 54 Barbara Hall and Jenni Mather, *Australian women photographers 1840-1960*, Victoria: Greenhouse, 1986, "Introduction", no pagination.
- 55 This is the subtitle to Andrea Fisher's *Let us now praise famous women*, London and New York: Pandora Press, 1987.
- 56 Fisher, *op.cit.*, pp.102-119.
- 57 For this she earns the praise of Abigail Solomon-Godeau in a review of the book for *Art in America*, vol.76, no.3, March 1988. Solomon-Godeau applauds her "...attempt to invent a feminist form to express...feminist content" in a text that is "...self-questioning, open-ended, speculative and frank in acknowledging the terms of its own enunciation", p.26. Andrea Liss is no less enthusiastic about the book but she wisely qualifies her praise by pointing out that: "...Fisher's interpretation would only be strengthened by reading these photographs against the agencies' purposes instead of holding these issues at bay and sealing the images into another kind of vacuum". Andrea Liss,

- “The New Deal” (review of Fisher), *Afterimage* (U.S.A.), vol.15, no.7, February 1988, p.18.
- 58 Fisher, *op.cit.*, pp.130–155.
- 59 *Ibid.*, pp.131, 140–1, 144.
- 60 *Ibid.*, pp.144–5, 148–149. For examples of Wolcott’s work in excellent reproductions, and an insightful essay by Sally Stein, “Marion Post Wolcott: thoughts on some lesser known FSA photographs”, see *Marion Post Wolcott: FSA photographs*, Untitled 34, Carmel, California: The Friends of Photography, 1983.
- 61 See the entry on Dorothea Lange in George Walsh et al. (eds.), *Contemporary photographers*, London: Macmillan, 1982, p.432.
- 62 Dorothea Lange, “Documentary photography” (1940), in Nathan Lyons (ed.), *Photographers on photography*, New York: Prentice Hall, 1966. “Documentary photography”, she writes, “records the social scene of our time. It mirrors the present and documents for the future. Its focus is man in his relation to mankind...It portrays his institutions...It shows not merely their facades, but seeks to reveal the manner in which they function...and influences the behaviour of human beings...It is pre-eminently suited to build a record of change among the tools of social science... documentation by photograph now is assuming place”, pp.67–68.
- 63 Karin Becker Ohrn, *Dorothea Lange and the documentary tradition*, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1980, p.46.
- 64 Lange cited in Ohrn, *op.cit.*, p.56.
- 65 Ohrn, *op.cit.*, p.112. See Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson, *Balinese character: a photographic analysis*, New York: N.Y Academy of Sciences, 1942; and Ira Jacknis, “Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson in Bali: their use of photography and film”, *Cultural anthropology*, vol.3, no.2, May 1988, pp.160–177.
- 66 Dorothea Lange and Paul Schuster Taylor, *An American exodus: a record of human erosion*, New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1939.
- 67 Lange quoted in Ohrn, *op.cit.*, p.103.
- 68 D. Lange and P. Taylor, *op.cit.*, pp.5–6.
- 69 See chapters seven and eight of Ohrn, *op.cit.*
- 70 D. Lange cited in Ohrn, *op.cit.*, p.236.
- 71 Edward Said, “Reflections on exile”, in Russell Ferguson et al. (eds.), *Out there: marginalization and contemporary cultures*, New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art and Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990, p.357. Earlier, Terry Eagleton had written a book on 20th century English literature demonstrating the truth of this thesis. See *Exiles and emigres: studies in modern literature*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1970. And immediately prior to the publication of this book, Perry Anderson, in “Components of the national culture”, *New left review*, no. 50, July–August, 1968, had argued that all of 20th century English intellectual production had been dominated by continental European emigres.
- 72 John Newton, “Allen Curnow at Joachim Kahn’s”, *Landfall*, no.220, spring 2010, p.24.
- 73 Bell has published studies of three of these photographers: Irene Koppel (from Germany); Frank Hofmann (from Czechoslovakia); and Richard Sharell (from Austria). See: “Irene Koppel; a forgotten ‘new’ photographer in New Zealand”, *Art New Zealand*, no.101, summer 2001–2, pp.70–75; “Looking outwards; looking inwards: threshold spaces in the work of two migrant Central European photographers in New Zealand in the mid twentieth century”, *The journal of New Zealand art history*, vol.30, 2009, pp.101–112; *From Prague to Auckland: the photographs of Frank Hofmann (1916–1989)*, Auckland: Gus Fischer Gallery, 2011; and “‘Sojourner in a foreign land’: the photographs of Richard Sharell (1893–1986)”, *Art New Zealand*, no.120, spring 2006, pp.80–84. Two earlier studies of Hofmann’s work are: Riemke Ensing, “The portraits of Frank Hofmann”, *Art New Zealand*, no.46, autumn 1988, pp.94–97; and Peter Ireland, *Object and style: photographs from four decades 1930s–1960s*, exhibition catalogue, Wellington: National Art Gallery, 1989.
- 74 Leonard Bell, *In transit: questions of home & belonging in New Zealand art*, Wellington: School of Art History, Classics and Religious Studies, Victoria University, 2007, p.29. In the late 1990s, Ron Brownson asked Friedlander, “Do you consider yourself an outsider?” She replied, “I was an outsider because people made me feel I was an outsider. Yes I was different. I was so English, so outspoken, and I laughed. At times I felt lonely.” “Talking photographs: Marti Friedlander and Ron Brownson”, *Art New Zealand*, no.81, summer 1996/97 p.85.
- 75 If Westra had decided early not to stay and make New Zealand her home it’s likely that she would

- have resembled Hester Carsten, a Dutch photographer who spent some time in New Zealand in the early 1950s, and contributed “Four Maori studies” to *Landfall*, all close-up portraits of middle-aged Maori women. See “Four Maori studies by Hester Carsten”, *Landfall*, no.19 (vol.4, no.3), September 1951, unpaginated but positioned between pages 208 and 209.
- 76 Bell, “Looking outwards...”, *op.cit.*, p.107.
- 77 Anna Grimshaw, *The ethnographer’s eye: ways of seeing in modern anthropology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, p.9. The Indonesian born Dutch artist Theo Schoon (1915–1985), who came to New Zealand in 1939, provides an example of a local modernist way of seeing. As part of his primitivist-modernist project, Schoon contributed photographs of traditional Maori arts to *Te ao hou* (between 1962 and 1965). Francis Pound writes of these photographs, “They proffer something more than the documentary: in their radical frontality, flatness, symmetry and abstraction, they are also modernist works in their own right.” *The space between: pakeha use of Maori motifs in modernist New Zealand art*, Auckland: Workshop Press, 1994, p.133. These photographs, along with others made by Schoon, such as his abstract studies of thermal mud pools, join with the work of the Jewish exiles as rare examples of local formalist modernist photography. However, the implication that anyone practising documentary photography is by definition pre-modernist is both too narrow and mistaken. Damian Skinner asserts, correctly, “... documentary photography of the kind practised by Westra is also modernist, and its modernism is precisely structured around its ‘realism’, and its departure from old-fashioned Pictorialist codes of representation.” “A marae on paper: Ans Westra and *Te ao hou*”, in Lawrence McDonald (ed.), *Handboek: Ans Westra photographs*, Wellington: BWX, 2004, p.46.

## CHAPTER THREE

- 1 Pat Hohepa, review of Michael King’s *Maori: a photographic and social history*, *Art New Zealand*, no.29, 1984, p.63.
- 2 Erik Schwimmer, “The two travellers”, *Te ao hou*, No.37, December 1961, p.1.
- 3 *Te ao hou*, no.31, June 1960.
- 4 Ans Westra, “Henare Gilbert comes home again”, *Te ao hou*, no.39, June 1962, p.2.
- 5 For example, Ans Westra, “Ngaruawahia festival of the arts”, *Te ao hou*, no.46, March 1964, pp.28–29.
- 6 Penny Griffith et al. (eds.), *Book and print in New Zealand: a guide to print culture in Aotearoa*, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1997, p.150.
- 7 Michael Dunn, *The drawings of Russell Clark: New Zealand artist and illustrator*, Auckland: Collins, 1976, p.10.
- 8 John Pascoe, *The high country run*, Wellington: Department of Education, School Publications, vol.1, no.10, May 1947.
- 9 John Pascoe, *Adventure in New Zealand: a trumper’s diary*, Wellington: Department of Education, School Publications, vol.4, no.3, March 1950.
- 10 John Pascoe, *The high country run*, Wellington: Department of Education, School Publications, vol.9, no.7, 1955.
- 11 David McLeod, *On the hill: a story of high country farming*, Wellington: Department of Education, School Publications, 1954. Several years later, McLeod collaborated with Juliet Peter again on a book containing 10 stories, *The tall tussock: stories of the high country*, Christchurch: Whitcombe & Tombs, 1959.
- 12 Peter Wells, *The New Zealand School Publications Branch*, Paris: UNESCO, Educational studies and documents, no.25, 1957, p.19.
- 13 *Ibid.*, p.20.
- 14 *Ibid.*
- 15 Clark’s drawings are all of Maori people and are executed in a sooty and slightly diffuse charcoal manner. E. Mervyn Taylor (1906–1964), the first art editor of the *School journal*, provided the other illustrations, all of artefacts rendered in a sharply defined hard-edged style. Paul’s Book Arcade of Hamilton republished this bulletin in revised form in 1963. Clark (1905–1966) also illustrated Chapman-Taylor’s Primary school bulletin, *Pioneer family* (1954), which was later republished by Whitcombe & Tombs “in conformity with the new social studies syllabus.” He contributed immaculate drawings of settlers on board ship heading to the new land and of

- pioneers engaged in tasks such as clearing the land. Another significant school bulletin written by Chapman-Taylor is *Story of a dairy farm*, first published in 1949, with sharply delineated illustrations by Juliet Peter, and reissued in 1960, with added photographs by Jim Taylor and a new section written by James K. Baxter, “The farm ten years later”.
- 16 *Ruatahuna: a Maori village*, Wellington: Department of Education, School Publications, 1950.
- 17 Roderick Finlayson, *The coming of the Maori*, Wellington: Department of Education, School Publications, 1955.
- 18 Roderick Finlayson, *The springing fern*, Christchurch: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1965.
- 19 *Suggestions for teaching social studies in the primary school volume one*, Wellington: R.E. Owen, Government Printer, 1962. Four volumes were published in 1962 and an index appeared in 1967.
- 20 *Ibid.*, volume two, p.60.
- 21 *Ibid.*, p.61.
- 22 *Ibid.*
- 23 *Ibid.*
- 24 Alistair Campbell, in Llewelyn Richards (ed.), “Beeb and School Publications”, in G. McDonald and R. Benton (eds.), *The Beeby fascicles 2*, Wellington: Te Aro Pres, 1992, pp.17, 19.
- 25 Lawrence McDonald, Interview with Ans Westra, 18 & 22 December 1987.
- 26 Marti Friedlander, “Looking”, in Ron Brownson, *Marti Friedlander photographs*, Auckland: Godwit Press in association with the Auckland Art Gallery, 2001, p.176.
- 27 Edward Steichen, “Introduction”, *The family of man*, New York: MOMA, 1955, no pagination.
- 28 Edward Steichen, “Photography: witness and recorder of humanity” (1958), reprinted in Peninah R. Petruck (ed.), *The camera viewed: writings on twentieth-century photography volume two: photography after WWII*, New York: E.P. Dutton, 1979, p.10.
- 29 Edward Steichen, *A life in photography*, New York, 1962, no pagination; cited in Allan Sekula, “The traffic in photographs”, *Art journal*, vol.41, no.1, spring 1981, p.21; reprinted in Sekula (1984).
- 30 Sekula, *ibid.*, p.19.
- 31 *Ibid.*, p.20.
- 32 Clyde Kluckhohn, “Education, values and anthropological relativity” (1952), cited in Johannes Fabian, *Time and the other: how anthropology makes its object*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1983, p.172.
- 33 Jonathan Green, *American photography: a critical history 1945 to the present*, New York: Harry Abrams Inc., 1984, p.40.
- 34 Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, selected and translated by Annette Lavers, Frogmore, St Albans: Paladin, 1973, p.101.
- 35 John Roberts, *The art of interruption: realism, photography and the everyday*, Manchester & New York: Manchester University Press, 1998, p.124.
- 36 Jacques Barzun, *The house of intellect*, London: Mercury Books, 1962, pp.27–30.
- 37 *Ibid.*
- 38 Roger Oppenshaw and Eric Archer have discerned a preference for “social meliorism over social efficiency in New Zealand social studies” and attribute this to “...the New Zealand intelligentsia itself: its eliteness, its relative cohesion, its sense of cultural mission...” (“Reconsidering the origins of New Zealand social studies: an oral history perspective on curriculum”, unpublished typescript, Palmerston North: Department of Education, Massey University, 1989, p.11.)
- 39 R.H. Lockstone, “The neglect of the mind: social studies in the primary school”, *Landfall* 65 (vol. 17, no.1), March 1963, p.51. Lockstone’s review followed an earlier one in which Margaret Dalziel handed out a similar critical mauling to two Department of Education books entitled *Suggestions for teaching English in the primary school volume one* (1961), *volume two* (1962). Margaret Dalziel, “Disaster in the primary school”, *Landfall* 61 (vol.16, no.1), March 1962, pp.49–60.
- 40 *Ibid.*
- 41 For an account of the evolution of curatorial strategies in the photography department at MOMA, see Christopher Phillips, “The judgment seat of photography”, *October*, no.22, fall 1982, pp.27–63. Szarkowki’s quest for a photographic analogue to Clement Greenberg’s medium specificity thesis for modernist painting set him off on a quite different path to Steichen, yet he was not averse to picking up on some of his predecessor’s moves.
- 42 Mary Anne Staniszewski, *The Power of display: a history of exhibition installations at the Museum of Modern Art*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998, p.257.

- 43 The New Zealand Department of Education published the senior forms Post-Primary School Bulletin *Towards world unity*, vol.1, no.190, in October 1947, consisting of Frank Corner's essay "Behind the United Nations".
- 44 Wayne Miller, *The world is young*, New York: The Ridge Press, 1958.
- 45 *Ibid.*, p.5.
- 46 Ans Westra interviewed by Lawrence McDonald, 18 & 22 December 1987.
- 47 Martin Parr and Gerry Badger, *The photobook: a history volume one*, London: Phaidon, 2004, p.245. A year before the appearance of his book, one of van der Elsken's photographs was included in *The family of man* (see page 146 of the book version). He had met Steichen in New York in 1953, and the curator selected 18 of his photographs for inclusion in the MOMA exhibition of that year, *Post-War European photography* (Hripsime Visser, *Ed van der Elsken*, London: Phaidon, 2002, pp.6-7). Interestingly, in light of the cinematic qualities of *Love on the left bank* and van der Elsken's subsequent filmmaking career, Joan van der Keuken went to Paris to study filmmaking from 1956 to 1958. Parr and Badger argue that his 1963 photographic book, *Paris mortel*, combines elements of William Klein's American work (see chapter seven) with van der Elsken's earlier studies of Paris (Parr and Badger, pp.248-49).
- 48 Robert Castel and Dominique Schnapper, "Aesthetic ambitions and social aspirations: the camera club as a secondary group", in Pierre Bourdieu et al., *Photography: a middle-brow art*, translated by Shaun Whiteside, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990, p.104. Note that this book was first published in France as *Un art moyen* in 1965 and draws upon research carried out in the early 1960s, the period when Westra was a member of the Wellington Camera Club.
- 49 Ans Westra interviewed by Sharyn Black, 28 March 1979, transcript from tape, Ans Westra archive, CA 000621, folder 3, box 2, Te Papa Archives, Wellington.
- 50 *Ibid.*
- 51 Castel and Schnapper, *op.cit.*, p.118.
- 52 See "Champion photographs", *The Dominion*, 12 January 1963 for reproductions of these photographs.
- 53 Interview with Sharyn Black, *op.cit.*
- 54 Castel and Schnapper, *op.cit.*, note #16, p.198.
- 55 Ans Westra interviewed by Lawrence McDonald, 18 & 22 December 1987. Little of Freeman's work appears to have survived but for an example see his "Taua" ("We Two"), a close portrait of a young Maori woman with her arms around her Pakeha partner, reproduced in A. Robert Anderson and F. Lennard Casbolt (eds.), *Camera in New Zealand*, Wellington: A.H. & A.W. Reed, 1967, p.134. This book, which emanated from The Photographic Society of New Zealand, gives a good idea of the kind of work made in New Zealand camera clubs during the time of Westra's membership.
- 56 Quoted in "The ABC was well-learnt", *Photography*, March 1960. Westra's 26 photographs are reproduced in a grid beside the article and the first 24 of them also appear on the cover of the magazine.
- 57 The August 1962 issue includes two of her photographs in its "Photographs of the month" section, "which one?" and "Twilight on the harbour", both of which won "1.1.0 pound" awards.
- 58 Sherry B. Ortner, "Is female to male as nature is to culture?", in M.Z. Rosaldo and L. Lamphere (eds.), *Woman, culture, and society*, Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1974, p.78.
- 59 Nicholas Tucker, *What is a child?*, London: Fontana, 1977, pp.15-16. See Philippe Aries, *Centuries of childhood: a social history of family life*, translated by Robert Baldick, London: Jonathan Cape, 1962.
- 60 Patricia Holland, "What is a child", in P. Holland, J. Spence, and S. Watney (eds.), *Photography/Politics: two*, London: Comedia/Photography Workshop, 1986, pp.45-46.
- 61 Frances Ferguson, "Reading morals: Locke and Rousseau on education and inequality", *Representations*, no.6, spring 1984, p.69.
- 62 Peter Coveney, *The image of childhood*, London: Penguin, revised edition 1967 (first published 1957), p.29.
- 63 *Ibid.*, p.41.
- 64 Jean-Jacques Rousseau quoted in *ibid.*, p.44.
- 65 Jacqueline Rose, *The case of Peter Pan or the impossibility of children's literature*, London: Macmillan, 1984, p.9.
- 66 Edward Said, *Orientalism*, New York: Vintage Books, 1978, p.20.
- 67 Elizabeth K. Solem, *Children on England's canals*, Chicago & New York: Encyclopedia Britannica Press, 1947.

- 68 Roderick Finlayson and Joan Smith, *The Maoris of New Zealand*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958, p.13.
- 69 Representative examples are: Dominique Darbois, *Ahmed: his life in Egypt*, London: Chatto and Windus, 1966. The story is centred on an Egyptian “peasant boy” and his daily life at home, work, and school. And *Hassan: his life in the desert*, London: Chatto and Windus, 1967, which is about a Targui Arab boy, a member of the nomadic Tuareg tribe.
- 70 These titles were either written and photographed by Peter Buckley (e.g. *Cesare of Italy*) or written by Betty Cavanna and photographed by George Russell Harrison (e.g. *Tavi of the South Seas*).
- 71 Dennis Hodgson and Pat Lawson, *Kuma is a Maori girl*, Auckland: Hicks, Smith & Sons, 1961, no pagination.
- 72 This is corroborated by the use of a reproduction of the cover image of *Hey boy!* in the jacket design of I.H Kawharu’s *Orakei: a Ngati Whatua community*, Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research, 1975. In a footnote, Kawharu, himself of Ngati Whatua iwi, refers to “...an intimate photographic study: J and B Hill’s *Hey Boy!*”
- 73 See J.K. Hunn, *Report on Department of Maori Affairs*, Wellington: R.E. Owen, Government Printer, 1961, section 101, p.41, where reference is made to “...the ‘pepper potting’ policy of dispersing Maori houses amongst European houses to promote closer integration.”
- 74 Jane and Bernie Hill, *Hey boy!*, Christchurch: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1962, no pagination.
- 75 *Ibid.*
- 76 *Ibid.*
- 77 This phrase comes from Bill Pearson, “The Maori and literature 1938-1965”, in E. Schwimmer (ed.), *The Maori people in the 1960s*, Auckland: Longman Paul, 1968, p.231.
- 78 Born Arapera Kaa, she won the Katherine Mansfield Memorial competition in 1959 for best short article with the piece “Ko taku kumara hei wai-u mo tama”, published in *Te ao hou*, no.24, October 1958, pp. 6-8. She was a regular contributor of stories and articles to the journal.
- 79 See W. H. Ohia, “Spear fishing”, *Te ao hou*, no.17, December 1956, pp.36-38. Blanc went on to contribute photographs to issues #18, 19, 21, 22, 26, 28, and 29.
- 80 Lesley Cameron Powell, *Turi: the story of a little boy*, Hamilton: Paul’s Book Arcade, 1963, p.29.
- 81 Gregory Reithmaier, *Rebecca and the Maoris*, Wellington: A.H & A.W. Reed, 1964, no pagination. The Rebecca portrayed in the story is Rebecca Faulkner (Ngai Te Rangi).
- 82 Damian Skinner, “Accidental tourists: Ans Westra, Gregory Reithmaier and the National Publicity Studios in Rotorua, c.1963”, in Anna Smith and Lydia Wevers (eds.), *On display: new essays in cultural studies*, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2004, p.84.
- 83 For further biographical information on Poignant see Gael Newton’s essay “Biography” in *Axel Poignant: photographs 1922-1980*, Sydney: Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1982; and Ian Jeffrey, “Axel Poignant: a photographer in Australia”, *Creative camera*, no.213, September 1982, pp.648-652.
- 84 Axel Poignant, *Piccaninny walkabout*, Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1957.
- 85 *Ibid.*, p.ix.
- 86 Axel and Roslyn Poignant, *Kaleku*, Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1972.
- 87 *Ibid.*, no pagination.
- 88 Axel and Roslyn Poignant, *Children of Oropira*, Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1976.
- 89 *Ibid.*, no pagination.
- 90 *Ibid.*
- 91 *Websters new twentieth century dictionary* (unabridged), New York: World Publishing Company, 1947, p.626.
- 92 Clifford refers to “the ‘para-ethnographic’ genres of oral history, the non-fiction novel, the ‘new journalism’, travel literature, and the documentary film.” James Clifford, “On ethnographic authority”, *The Predicament of culture: twentieth-century ethnography, literature, and art*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988, p.24, footnote 3. And Michaels, in an article largely devoted to a review of two non-fiction ‘novels’ (Sally Morgan’s *My Place* and Bruce Chatwin’s *Songlines*), asks, “To what extent do we now regard ethnography as a narrative, even literary form, and not just as a mode of scientific reportage?”. Eric Michaels, “Para-ethnography”, *Bad Aboriginal art: tradition, media, and technological horizons*, St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1994, p.175.
- 93 F. Ferguson, *op.cit.*, p.76.

## Notes

- 94 William Empson, *Some versions of pastoral*, London: Penguin, 1966 (first published 1935), p.25.
- 95 My comments on pastoral are guided by a reading of Empson's key study and also Peter V. Marinelli, *Pastoral*, London: Methuen, 1971.
- 96 Particularly suggestive on the relationship between the British documentary movement and pastoral forms of representation is the following passage from *Some versions of pastoral*: "The Englishman [sic] who seems to me nearest to a proletarian artist is Grierson the film producer; *Drifters* gave very vividly the feeling of actually living on a herring trawler and (by the beauty of shapes of water and net and fish, and subtleties of timing and so forth) what I should call a pastoral feeling about the dignity of that form of labour". *Op.cit.*, p.15.
- 97 Empson deals directly with "The child as swain" in his chapter on *Alice in wonderland* in *Some versions of pastoral*, *ibid*, pp.201-233.
- 98 William Wordsworth, *The prelude*, edited by J.C. Maxwell, London: Penguin, 1971.
- 99 Marinelli, *op.cit.*, p.78.
- 100 Renato Rosaldo, "From the door of his tent: the fieldworker and the inquisitor", in J. Clifford and G. Marcus (eds.), *Writing culture: the poetics and politics of ethnography*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986, p.96.
- 101 *Ibid.*, p.97.

## PART TWO: EXEGESIS

- 1 Michel Foucault, *The archaeology of knowledge*, Translated by A. M. Sheridan Smith, London: Tavistock Publications, 1972, pp.27-8.
- 2 Fredric Jameson, *The political unconscious: narrative as a socially symbolic act*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1981, p.35.
- 3 J. Hillis Miller, "Presidential address 1986. The triumph of theory, the resistance to reading, and the question of the material base", *PMLA*, vol. 102, no.3, May 1987, p.291.
- 4 Jacques Derrida, *Of grammatology*, translated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Baltimore & London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1976, p.158.

## CHAPTER FOUR

- 1 Sylvia Ashton-Warner, *Teacher*, London: Secker and Warburg, 1963, pp.33-34.
- 2 Westra had personal reasons for coming to New Zealand in 1957. However, from a sociological perspective it is interesting to note that in the period between 1950 and 1968, "... 25,000 Dutch migrants ... arrived from the Netherlands and Indonesia." David Pearson, *A dream deferred: the origins of ethnic conflict in New Zealand*, Wellington: Allen & Unwin/Port Nicholson Press, 1990, p.114.
- 3 Unless indicated otherwise, all statements by Ans Westra are taken from conversations/ interviews with the writer conducted on 18.12.1987 and 23.12.1987. No further citations will be made in the notes to this chapter. See appendix one for a full transcript of these interviews.
- 4 In relation to this concept, Heidegger writes, " 'In' is derived from "inan" - "to reside", "habitare", "to dwell"... The entity to which Being-in in this signification belongs is one which we have characterized as that entity which in each case I myself am [bin]. The expression 'bin' is connected with 'bei', and so 'ich bin' ['I am'] means in its turn "I reside" or "dwell alongside" the world, as that which is familiar to me in such and such a way... "*Being-in*" is thus the formal existential expression for the Being of Dasein, which has Being-in-the-world as its essential state." Martin Heidegger, *Being and time*, translated by John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson, New York: Harper & Row, 2008, p.80. Bourdieu's concept of the habitus refers to "the durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations, [which] produces practices which tend to reproduce the regularities immanent in the objective conditions of the production of their generative principle..." And he elaborates on this group/class concept thus, "... the structures

- characteristic of a determinate type of conditions of existence, through the autonomous universe of family relationships, or more precisely, through the mediation of the specifically familial relationships of this external necessity (sexual division of labour, domestic morality, cares, strife, tastes, etc.), produce the structures of the habitus which become in turn the basis of perception and appreciation of all subsequent experience.” Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a theory of practice*, translated by Richard Nice, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977, p.78.
- 5 Roderick Finlayson, *The new harvest*, reprinted in *The springing fern*, Christchurch: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1965, p.170. Originally published as an individual volume by the School Publications Branch of the Department of Education in 1959.
  - 6 Martin Heidegger, “Building dwelling thinking”, in *Poetry, language, thought*, translated by Albert Hofstadter, New York: Harper and Row, 1971, p.146. “Bauen wohnen denken” is the German title of this paper, first given as a lecture on 5 August 1951 and published in 1954. There are strong connections between the words *bauen* (to build), *buan* (to dwell), and *bin/bist* (to be).
  - 7 Ans Westra, *Washday at the pa*, Wellington: Department of Education, School Publications Branch, 1964. Later in the same year the bulletin was republished by the Caxton Press of Christchurch, with an additional 22 images, thereby adding new elements to the story’s plot. My analysis works with the first, School Publications, edition and only makes reference to the Caxton edition for comparative purposes.
  - 8 See Dorothea Lange, *Photographs of a lifetime*, with an essay by Robert Coles, New York: Aperture, 1982, p.20, and p.76, which, beside a full-page reproduction of the photograph, prints a statement from Lange’s article “The assignment I’ll never forget”: “...I was following instinct, not reason; I drove into that wet soggy camp and parked my car like a homing pigeon. I saw and approached the hungry and desperate mother, as if drawn by a magnet. I do not remember how I explained my presence or my camera to her, but I do remember she asked me no questions ... There she sat in that lean-to tent with her children huddled around her, and seemed to know that my pictures might help her, and so she helped me. There was a sort of equality about it.” For an analysis of the repressed ethnic dimension of “Migrant Mother” see Sally Stein’s discussion of Florence Thompson as Cherokee subject, in “Passing likeness: Dorothea Lange’s “Migrant Mother” and the paradox of iconicity”, in Coco Fusco and Brian Wallis (eds.), *Only skin deep: changing visions of the American self*, New York: International Center of Photography/Harry N. Abrams, 2003, pp.345-355.
  - 9 Transcript of interview in *Ans Westra: photographer of an era, Kaleidoscope*, directed by Peter Coates, broadcast on TV1, 30 October 1988, Ans Westra archive, CA 000619, box 2, folder 7, Te Papa Archives, Wellington.
  - 10 Roderick Finlayson, “The new house”, in *Brown man’s burden and later stories*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1973, p.121.
  - 11 This figure has been reached by consulting the relevant contact sheets in the Ans Westra photographic archive, Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library, Wellington.
  - 12 The first draft is titled Ans Westra, “Washday in the pa” [my emphasis], unpublished typescript, Ans Westra archive, Te Papa Archives, Wellington.
  - 13 The family’s real name is Te Runa.
  - 14 For some reason, Mrs “Wereta” herself was unavailable when this photograph was made. Ans Westra, private communication to the author. Mrs “Wereta’s” actual name is Animata Te Runa and she was 39 years old at the time of the photographic session in July 1963.
  - 15 The image chosen for the cover (frame nine) was preferred over three alternatives on the contact sheet. Of the others, frame 10 depicts three figures (Ruia holding Erua nearer to the centre of the doorway, with Rebecca sitting in the threshold), frame 11 also depicts three (‘mother’ and child in the same position as the cover image, with Mutu sitting on the second step), and frame 12 only depicts Ruia and Erua at the side of the doorway. None of these images have the tight composition and dynamic interplay of looks manifest in the chosen photograph. See contact sheet M582, Ans Westra collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library, Wellington.
  - 16 For example: Rothstein’s “Sharecropper mother and child, Arkansas, 1935” (reproduced in a sequence of photographs between parts two and three of William Stott’s *Documentary expression and thirties America*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973); Evans’s “Sharecropper mother and child” (Ivy and Ellen Woods) from the 1960 edition of *Let us now praise famous men*; but see, especially, Ben Shahn’s “Destitute Ozark sharecropper family, Arkansas, October 1935”, for a study of a poor White family (mother and children) and “Sharecropper’s family, Little Rock,

- Arkansas, October 1935” for a Black one. The first is on page 55, the second on page 79 of Margaret R. Weiss (ed.), *Ben Shahn, photographer*, New York: Da Capo, 1973. My point is, of course, a formal one. The New Deal reformist impetus of FSA photography is historically and contextually dissimilar to liberal educational strategies in the New Zealand of the 1960s.
- 17 This photograph and Hine’s work in general is discussed by Allan Sekula in “On the invention of photographic meaning”, *Artforum*, vol. XIII., no.5, January 1975, pp.43–45; reprinted in V. Burgin (ed.), (1982), and A. Sekula (1984).
  - 18 Julia Kristeva, “Motherhood according to Giovanni Bellini”, in *Desire in language*, translated by T. Gora, A. Jardine and L. Roudiez, New York: Columbia University Press, 1980, p.247.
  - 19 Maurice Shadbolt, “Sincerity, Cliché, Ruckus”, *The Bulletin*, November 14, 1964, p.39. Shadbolt’s “New Zealand Newsletter” for this Sydney based publication is mostly devoted to the local feature film *Runaway* (1964). The “ruckus” of the sub-editor’s title refers to the *Washday* controversy.
  - 20 See Roland Barthes, *Camera lucida: reflections on photography*, translated by Richard Howard, New York: Hill and Wang, 1981, pp.40–59.
  - 21 Ans Westra, hand written note on photocopy of *Washday*’s cover image, “Ans Westra photographs 1960–1980”, draft double issue of *PhotoForum* (unpublished), 23.10.1979, supplied to the author by John B. Turner.
  - 22 Elsdon Best, *The Maori as he was: a brief account of Maori life as it was in pre-European days*, Wellington: R.E. Owen, Government printer, 1952 (1st published 1924), p.254.
  - 23 Elsdon Best, *The Maori, Volume 2*, Wellington: The Board of Maori Ethnological Research, 1924, p.304. Several years before the publication of this volume, the Dominion Museum published their Bulletin, number 6, Best’s book *The pa Maori – an account of the fortified villages of the Maori in pre-European and modern times; illustrating methods of defence by means of ramparts, fosses, scarps and stockades*, Wellington: A.R. Shearer, Government Printer, 1975 (1st ed. 1927). The illustration on page 368, John Gilfillan’s painting, “Interior of Te Putiki pa at Whanganui”, ca. early 1840s, depicts an example of such a fortified village.
  - 24 Tony Simpson, *Te riri Pakeha: the white man’s anger*, Auckland: Hodder and Stoughton, 1979, pp. 7–8.
  - 25 Hone Tuwhare, letter to Ans Westra, 8 August 1964, Ans Westra archive, CA 000614, box 1, item 4, Te Papa Archives, Wellington.
  - 26 Hone Tuwhare, “The old place”, *Te ao hou*, no.48, September 1964, p.5. Westra supplied a portrait of Tuwhare for the cover of this issue of the magazine and another head and shoulders photograph on page four to accompany Peter Fairbrother’s profile of the poet. See chapter five for further comment on Tuwhare and Westra.
  - 27 Ray Chapman-Taylor, *Life in the pa*, Auckland & Hamilton: Paul’s Book Arcade, revised edition, 1963, p.107. The glossary entry for pa in Ernest and Pearl Beaglehole’s *Some modern Maoris* (1946) reads: “formerly a fortified Maori place, now commonly applied to any Maori village”, Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research, 1946, p.xxii.
  - 28 “Glossary”, in Bill Pearson (ed.), *Brown man’s burden*, op.cit., p.141. The American equivalent of the expression “to get away from the pa” would be “to abandon the blanket” (personal communication from Associate Professor Jeffrey Sluka, Massey University).
  - 29 See contact sheet no. M596, Ans Westra collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library, Wellington.
  - 30 This satirical song about tract housing was written by Malvina Reynolds in 1962 and first recorded by Pete Seeger in 1963. A sample verse: “Little boxes on a hillside/ Little boxes made of ticky-tacky/There’s a green one and a red one/And a blue one and a purple one/And they’re made of ticky-tacky/And they all look the same.” Westra took two photographs of the new house and chose the slightly less desolate looking one for inclusion in *Washday*. See contact sheet no. M744, Ans Westra collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library, Wellington.
  - 31 This is not the only indication of this tendency in the Caxton Press edition. The most striking instance is the cover image, newly rendered in a rich sepia tone that nevertheless serves to mute the stark force of the original. As regards the republication of *Washday* by Caxton, Government Print was less than happy. A Mr. G. Norton wrote to John Melser expressing his misgivings: “As the Department will incur considerable financial loss on the destruction of unsold copies of “Washday at the pa”, it is most disturbing to note that Miss Westra has expressed an intention to publish the book through a commercial firm. In the Department’s opinion, this is neither right or just and raises the question of copyright.” G. Norton, letter to John Melser, 11.8.1964, Department

- of Education, file E.5/1/14. Norton's plea went unheeded. Melser informed Westra nine days later: "We are happy to release copyright on *Washday* (both text and photographs)", John Melser, letter to Ans Westra, 20.8.1964, *ibid*.
- 32 William Empson, *Some versions of pastoral*, London: Penguin, 1966 (first published 1935), p.13.
- 33 *Ibid*, and all of chapter one, "Proletarian literature", pp.11-27.
- 34 See Terry Mordern, "The pastoral and the pictorial", *Ten.8*, no.12, 1983, pp.18-25. Mordern claims that a "...special relationship ... was formed between the pastoral and Pictorialist photography in late 19th and early 20th century photography" (p.20). He cites the British landscape photographer H.P. Robinson as pivotal in defining a Pictorial photograph as "...one designed to give visual pleasure through the disposition of 'lines, lights shades, masses'" (p.19). Within a New Zealand context, George Chance was the most prominent Pictorialist photographer. To appreciate the marked contrast between his photographic style and Westra's, compare his "Maori maids at Rotorua" with any of her Maori studies, and his "Village in Fiji" with the photographs of the village in *Viliami of the Friendly Islands* (see chapter six). Reproductions of both these photographs can be found in *George Chance: photographs*, Dunedin: Dunedin Public Art Gallery, 1985, pp.99, 71.
- 35 Ans Westra collection, *op.cit.*, contact sheet no. M76.
- 36 See "Women washing clothes in the Ruapeka Lagoon, Ohinemutu", ca. 1880, photographer unknown, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, neg. no. 1/1-021486-G. For a reproduction of this photograph, see *NZ Memories*, no.16, 1999, p.75. The Muir and Moodie photograph (neg. no. E2137/0) can be found in the photographic Collection, Hocken Library, Dunedin. As can "Maori washing day, NZ" (neg. no. 80/1700), from Aotearoa series N199.
- 37 See *Te ao hou*, no.18, May 1957, cover and p.5.
- 38 Stryker directed the F.S.A. photographers to investigate subjects such as the "relationship between density of population and income of such things as: pressed clothes, polished shoes and...wall decorations in homes as an index to different income groups and their reactions", Roy Stryker quoted in John Tagg, "The currency of the photograph", in Victor Burgin (ed.) *Thinking photography*, London: Macmillan, 1982, p.126.
- 39 A pictorial newspaper published, with various name changes, from 1877-1971.
- 40 Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead, *Balinese character: a photographic analysis*, New York: New York Academy of Sciences, 1942. See also Margaret Mead and Francis Cooke Macgregor, *Growth and culture: a photographic study of Balinese childhood*, New York: Putnam's sons, 1951; and Ira Jacknis, "Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson in Bali: their use of photography and film", *Cultural Anthropology*, vol.3, no.2, 1988.
- 41 *Washday* (School Publications edition), *op.cit.*, p.26.
- 42 James and Jane Ritchie, "Children", in E. Schwimmer (ed.), *The Maori people in the 1960s*, Auckland: Longman Paul, 1968, p.317.
- 43 Bill Pearson, "New Zealand since the war, 7: the Maori people", *Landfall*, no.62, June 1962, p.152.
- 44 J.E. [John Ewing] (Chief Inspector Primary Schools), memorandum to Director General of Education re: School Bulletin *Washday at the pa*, Department of Education, file E.5/1/14.
- 45 A.E. Campbell quotes his entire press statement from which this extract is taken in a letter to the Minister of Education, dated 30 July 1964. "Primary school bulletin: *Washday in the pa* [sic], Department of Education, file E.5/1/14.
- 46 *Ibid*.
- 47 I.H. Kawharu, "Urban immigrants and tangata whenua", in E. Schwimmer (ed.), *The Maori people in the 1960s*, Auckland: Longman Paul, 1968, p.185. The League is a voluntary organization founded in response to the Maori social and economic advancement act (1945). It is structured into the ascending levels of local branches, district councils, regional councils and, finally, the Dominion Council itself.
- 48 Beverley James, *The Maori Women's Welfare League: from social movement to voluntary association*, Master of Social Science thesis, Department of Sociology, University of Waikato, 1977, pp.2, 17.
- 49 Ranginui Walker, "Maori people since 1950", in W.H. Oliver with B.R. Williams (eds.), *The Oxford history of New Zealand*, Wellington: Oxford University Press, 1981, p.507. The editorial in the second issue of *Te ao hou* states, "The women of the Welfare League carried out a large-scale fact-finding survey of Maori housing, showing great vigour in a crucial cause... Do people reflect often enough how difficult life must be for homeless young people coming from primitive country conditions unprepared, coming simply because they need work?" *Te ao hou*, no.2, spring 1952, p.1.

- 50 Bev James and Kay Saville-Smith, *Gender, culture, and power*, Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1989, p.44.
- 51 *Evening star* [Dunedin], 23.7.1964. In the background of the photograph showing Ruia hanging washing along a fence, Mount Hikurangi, a landmark of sacred significance to Ngati Porou, is clearly visible. This is the only image that reveals the actual location of the story (Ruatoria, not Taihape).
- 52 Jane F. Bell (Dominion Secretary, MWL), letter to Hon. A.E. Kinsella. Minister of Education (re: *Washday at the pa* by Ans Westra), 29 July 1964, Department of Education, file E.5/1/14.
- 53 D.S.Walsh, "Inter-ethnic relations in New Zealand: a recent controversy", *Journal of the Polynesian society*, vol.73, no.3, September 1964, p.341. And from a newspaper editorial during the *Washday* controversy: "We have an expression that has been long part of New Zealand vernacular expression – 'a Maori house' – far from a description of the neat whare of olden days, it describes a Pakeha dwelling that has long been allowed to fall into poor repair with broken windows and unpainted weatherboards reflecting the lack of interest of dwellers, tribal leaders and authorities. There can be no true accord between our two peoples until this expression is expunged from our tongue and all concerned ensure that everyday is washday at the pa", "Washday everyday" (editorial), *Dannevirke evening news*, 14.8.1964.
- 54 These points are given in Jane F. bell's letter as follows: "2. The living conditions depicted are not typical of Maori life, even in remote areas; there are few Maoris living under such conditions today. 5. If the aim of the publication was to depict a happy Maori family relationship, it is submitted that a more typical, more average family background could have been chosen". Bell, *op.cit.*
- 55 Andras Horn, "The concept of 'mimesis' in Georg Lukács", *The British journal of aesthetics*, vol.14, no.1, winter 1974, p.29.
- 56 Friedrich Engels quoted in Bela Kiralyfalvi, *The aesthetics of Gyorgy Lukács*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975, p.83.
- 57 *Ibid.*, p.80.
- 58 Richard Dyer, "The role of stereotypes", in J. Cook and M. Lewington (eds.), *Images of alcoholism*, London: British Film Institute, 1979, p.17.
- 59 Richard Dyer, *The dumb blonde stereotype*, London: British Film Institute, educational advisory service, 1979, p.37.
- 60 See Richard Dyer, "Stereotyping", in R. Dyer (ed.), *Gays and film*, London: British Film Institute, 1977, pp.27-39.
- 61 Tessa Perkins, "Rethinking stereotypes", in M. Barrett, P. Corrigan, A. Kuhn and J. Woolf (eds.), *Ideology and cultural production*, London: Croom Helm, 1979, pp.135-159.
- 62 *Ibid.*, pp.146-147.
- 63 Richard Dyer, "Seen to be believed: some problems in the representation of gay people as typical", *Studies in visual communication*, vol.9, no.2, spring 1983, p.19.
- 64 Robert Chapman, "Fiction and the social pattern", in Wystan Curnow (ed.), *Essays on New Zealand literature*, Auckland: Heinemann educational books, 1973, p.75. (Note: essay originally published in *Landfall* VII, 1953.)
- 65 *Ibid.*, p.76.
- 66 J.K. Hunn, *op.cit.*, "Section D: Maori housing", pp.125-128. Quotation from page 126.
- 67 Roger Oppenheim, "Maori Culture", in A.L. McLeod (ed.), *The pattern of New Zealand culture*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1968, p.280.
- 68 The full text of the Dominion Council's point contained in Jane F. Bell's letter reads thus: "With the drift of Maori population to the cities, it is further stressed that the publication of this booklet will have a detrimental affect [sic] on the efforts of our people to establish themselves in better living conditions when it is considered that people who see the book will form an adverse opinion". Bell, *op.cit.*
- 69 Raymond Williams, *Marxism and literature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977, pp.121-127. Williams first introduced these terms in his paper "Base and superstructure in Marxist cultural theory", *New left review*, no.82, November-December 1973, pp.3-16.
- 70 "Washday and race relations", *New Zealand Maori Council newsletter*, August 1964.
- 71 "Dean wants bulletin withdrawn from schools", *The evening post* [Wellington], 29.7.1964.
- 72 "Booklet decision angers author", *The Dominion* [Wellington], 4.8.1964. Westra's statement ends with a sentence somewhat in contradiction with the article's headline: "I believe that something even if it is artistically good should not be published if it hurts the feeling of a lot of people".

## Notes

- 73 “School bulletin stirs criticism”, *The Dominion*, 22.7.1964.
- 74 “Washday at the pa”, press statement to radio news, evening, 3.8.1964.
- 75 J.E. (C.I.P.S), *op.cit.*
- 76 A.E. Campbell, *op.cit.*
- 77 A.E. Campbell, handwritten note appended to file copy of letter to Director General of Education, 21.8.1964, Department of Education, file E.5/1/14.
- 78 Pierre Bourdieu, “Public opinion does not exist”, translation in A. Mattelart and S. Sieglau (eds.), *Communication and class struggle 1: capitalism, imperialism*, New York: International General, 1979, p.128. “By opinion”, writes Bourdieu, “I mean propositions which are formulated in a coherent discourse”, p.128.
- 79 David P. Ausubel, *The fern and the tiki: an American view of New Zealand: national character, social attitudes and race relations*, London: Angus and Robertson, 1960, p.162.
- 80 “Bulletin move ‘not warranted’”, *The Dominion*, 5.8.1964.
- 81 *Ibid.*
- 82 J.A. Taylor, letter to Hon. A.E. Kinsella, 22.9.1964, Department of Education, file E.5/1/14.
- 83 *The daily telegraph* [Napier], 7.8.1964.
- 84 “Minister ‘bowing to small pressure group’ says Central Hawkes Bay teacher”, *Hawkes Bay herald tribune*, 4.8.1964.
- 85 G.R.Ashbridge, letter to Hon. A.E. Kinsella, 23.9.1964, Department of Education, file E.5/1/14.
- 86 “Teachers’ views clash on *Washday* book”, *Hawkes Bay herald tribune*, 4.8.1964.
- 87 *Ibid.*
- 88 *Ibid.*
- 89 *The Dominion*, 7.8.1964.
- 90 “Mr Kinsella thinks he did right thing...but city children disagree”, *Christchurch star*, 6.8.1964. Another Maori girl wrote to the Director General of Education, asking, “We are all sorry the copies have to be withdrawn. May we keep our books?” Eva Rapihana, letter to A.E. Campbell, 1.8.1964, Department of Education, file E. 5/1/14.
- 91 *Ibid.*
- 92 W. Durward, letter to the editor, *The Dominion*, 19.8.1964.
- 93 M.D Nightingale, letter to the editor, *The Dominion*, 21.8.1964.
- 94 W. Wattling, letter to the editor, *New Zealand herald* [Auckland], 18.8.1964.
- 95 S. Vaassen, “We’ve hung out our washing”, *New Zealand women’s weekly*, 21.9.1964.
- 96 S. Jones, “*Washday at the pa* in retrospect”, *Auckland star*, 14.11.1964.
- 97 Peter Wells, *The New Zealand School Publications Branch*, Paris: UNESCO, Educational studies and documents, no.25, 1957, p.19.
- 98 See Roland Barthes, *Elements of semiology*, translated by Annette Lavers and Colin Smith, London: Jonathan Cape, 1967, pp.65–67; and John O. Thompson, “Screen acting and the commutation test”, *Screen*, vol.19, no.2, summer 1978, pp.55–70.
- 99 Jane F. Bell, *op.cit.*
- 100 “League president comments on *Washday at the pa*”, *Poverty Bay herald* [Gisborne], 14.8.1964.
- 101 Ans Westra collection, *op.cit.*, contact sheet no.M601.
- 102 Witi Ihimaera, “Ans Westra, holder of the mirror”, introduction to Ans Westra (photographs) and Katerina Mataira (text), *Whaiora: the pursuit of life*, Wellington: Allen and Unwin, 1985, p.6.
- 103 *Ibid.*
- 104 John Pascoe, letter to Hon. A.E. Kinsella, 12.8.1964, Department of Education, file E. 5/1/14.
- 105 *Auckland star*, 3.8.1964.
- 106 Erich Geiringer, letter to the editor, *The evening post*, 5.8.1964.
- 107 Barry Crump, letter to the editor, *The Dominion*, 12.8.1964. At the time of the controversy, Crump was Westra’s partner and the father to be of her son, Erik (born 7 May 1965).
- 108 James K. Baxter, letter to the editor, *The Dominion*, 12.8.1964. In a footnote to a recent study of Baxter’s Jerusalem (see chapter seven of this dissertation), John Newton notes, “... ironically the gist of the complaints against Westra’s book – that it showed rural Maori in a light that reinforced negative stereotypes – is one which has in turn been applied to Baxter’s work from Jerusalem.” John Newton, *The double Rainbow: James K. Baxter, Ngati Hau and the Jerusalem commune*, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2009, p.200, n41.
- 109 Louis Johnson, “Authorised versions or unvarnished truth for the world?”, *The Dominion*, 26.12.1964.

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- 110 Vincent O’Sullivan, “Studies in brown humanity”, *Comment*, no.21, October–November 1964, p.2.
- 111 Steven Webster, *Patrons of Maori culture: power, theory and ideology in the Maori renaissance*, Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 1989, p.29.
- 112 Barry Metcalf [sic], letter to the editor, *Salient* [Victoria University of Wellington student newspaper], 21.9.1964.
- 113 Twenty years later Tipene [Steve] O’Regan told Charlotte Freed, “We were captivated by the sensitivity of her pictures and the images seemed to us to really talk of the Maori world that we were all hungering for. Ans Westra’s pictures are part of the heritage of the 50s and the 60s to us – memories of a rich time. They have played a part in the developing consciousness.” “Focusing on the world of the Maori”, *New Zealand women’s weekly*, November 4, 1985, p.77.
- 114 “*Washday at the pa*: last copies axed”, *The Dominion*, 13.8.1964.
- 115 “Delightful...bulletin”, *The Dominion*, 13.8.1964. Westra’s photograph of Sir Eruera Tirikatene, M.P., “in a discussion at Ratana pa”, can be found in “T.W. Ratana and the Ratana church”, *Te ao hou*, no.42, March 1963, p.35. For further images of Sir Eruera see contact sheet no. M778, Ans Westra collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library, Wellington.
- 116 Jane F. Bell, *op.cit.*
- 117 M.E. Goodman, cited in Yasmin Alhibai, “The child racists”, *New society*, 4.12.1987, p.13.
- 118 Graham M. Vaughan, “Development of ethnic awareness in Maori and Pakeha schoolchildren”, in James Ritchie (ed.), *Race relations: six New Zealand studies*, Department of Psychology, Victoria University of Wellington, 1964, pp.48–49.
- 119 “*Washday*...withdrawn to avoid arguments”, *The evening post*, 6.8.1964.
- 120 “Maori women incensed by bulletin issued by Education Department”, *The Otago daily times* [Dunedin], 23.7.1964. Mrs J. Baxter (nee Jacqueline Sturm) is the fiction writer and spouse of the poet James K. Baxter. A contemporary note on her reads: “Mrs J.K. Baxter, M.A., a member of the Taranaki and Bay of Plenty tribes, has been appointed as the Maori Women’s Welfare League representative of the Maori Education Foundation Board of Trustees... She is secretary of the Wellington District Council of the MWWL...” *Te ao hou*, no.46, March 1964, p.3.
- 121 “Professor Bailey in support”, *Salient*, vol.2, no.13, 7.9.1964.
- 122 Jane and James Ritchie, *Child rearing patterns in New Zealand*, Wellington & Auckland: A.H. & A.W. Reed, 1970, p.134.
- 123 Joan Metge, *In and out of touch: whakamaa in cross cultural context*, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1986, pp.49–50.
- 124 Issue no.7, 1964. Thanks to Ross Somerville, a former pupil of the school, for providing me with a copy of this little known photo-story.
- 125 Sylvia Ashton-Warner, *Teacher*, London: Secker and Warburg, 1963, p. 67.
- 126 John O’Shea, *Don’t let it get you: memories–documents*, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1999, p.54.
- 127 *Ibid*, p.56.
- 128 Peter Cleave, “Tumanko...words of love in Maori”, unpublished typescript, August 1988, p.16.
- 129 Michael King, *Maori: a photographic and social history*, Auckland: Heineman, 1983, p.3.
- 130 Pat Hohepa, review of King, *Art New Zealand*, no.29, 1983, p.3.
- 131 Steven Webster, “An image of halting bi-cultural progress” [review of King], *The Republican*, no.48, December 1983, p.63.
- 132 See Lawrence McDonald, “Ragged house photographs: Ans Westra’s *Washday at the pa*, *Photofile*, vol.6, no.3, spring 1988, pp.18–23; and Neil Pardington and Robert Leonard, “No good going to bed with cold feet: Ans Westra’s *Washday at the pa* and the debate surrounding it”, *ibid*, pp.11–17.
- 133 Christina Barton, “Afterlife: Ans Westra in the wake of the documentary”, in Lawrence McDonald (ed.), *Handboek: Ans Westra photographs*, Wellington: BWX, 2004, p.94.
- 134 *Ibid*, p.95.
- 135 Pardington & Leonard, *op.cit.*, p.17.
- 136 *Ibid*, p.16.
- 137 Ans Westra, “Tonga, or the Friendly Islands”, in *Viliami of the Friendly Islands*, Wellington: Department of Education, School Publications Branch, 1964, pp.56–7
- 138 Peter Wells, *The New Zealand School Publications Branch*, Paris: UNESCO, educational studies and documents, no.25, 1957, pp.19, 20. See chapter three of this dissertation for further details.
- 139 *Suggestions for teaching social studies in the primary school volume two*, Wellington: R.E. Owen, Government Printer, 1962, pp.60–61.

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- 140 Throughout her book Sontag makes a number of bold but unsupported assertions. A representative example, “Taking photographs has set up a chronic voyeuristic relation to the world which levels the meaning of all events.” *On photography*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1979, p.11. Locally, in a review of the exhibition *Recent Maori portraits* at Exposures Gallery in Wellington, the poet, novelist and art critic Ian Wedde writes, “Westra’s photographs of Maori people have, for 25 years, steered their difficult course past the traps of voyeuristic or demeaning genre studies. She’s one of the country’s greats.” *The evening post*, 17.10.1985.
- 141 Barbara Brookes, “Nostalgia for ‘innocent homely pleasures’: the 1964 New Zealand controversy over *Washday at the pa*”, *Gender & history*, vol.9, no.2, August 1997, p.257.
- 142 *Ibid*, p.249.
- 143 *Ibid*, p.251. League members certainly stressed custom but I’m not aware of any mention of language during the controversy.
- 144 Liz Gordon, “Inequality and poverty in contemporary Aotearoa”, *Red & green*, no.2. 2003, p.12.
- 145 Tom Hutchins, “Page seven looks at Maori housing”, *Auckland star*, part one, July 12, 1955; part two, July 13, 1955. Part one is reproduced and part two is extracted in William Main and John B. Turner, *New Zealand photography from the 1840s to the present*, Auckland: PhotoForum Inc., 1993, pp.52-53.
- 146 Anstey and Elton were, of course, members of John Grierson’s documentary filmmaking group throughout the 1930s in Great Britain.
- 147 Ans Westra, in Damian Skinner, “The eye of an outsider: a conversation with Ans Westra”, *Art New Zealand*, no.100, spring 2000, p.98.
- 148 *The evening post*, 17.8.1964.
- 149 Ans Westra, “Application for project funding from Creative New Zealand”, July 1997, copy in possession of author as external assessor for CNZ.
- 150 Quoted in Simon Edwards, “Holder of the mirror depicts how we worship”, *Hutt news*, 21.7.1998, p.54.
- 151 Ans Westra, quoted in an untitled essay by Mark Amery in *Washday at the pa*, Wellington: Suite Gallery, 2011, p.40, a publication launched at the same time as a selection of prints from *Washday at the pa* was exhibited at Suite Gallery in October 2011. This new edition of *Washday* includes photographs made for the School Publications and the Caxton Press editions, three *Washday at the pa revisited* images, and the untitled essay by Mark Amery. However, it would not be accurate to call the publication a third edition because it omits all of Westra’s written narrative, as well as departing from the original narrative order of the photographs. Unsurprisingly perhaps, given that a private dealer art gallery is the publisher, it treats Westra’s photographs, which it reproduces in high quality prints, as a series of linked but autonomous art works.

## CHAPTER FIVE

- 1 Witi Ihimaera, “Ans Westra, holder of the mirror”, introduction to Ans Westra and Katerina Mataira, *Whaiora: the pursuit of life*, Wellington: Allen and Unwin, 1985, p.7.
- 2 For a facsimile reproduction of Smith’s photo-essay see *Photojournalism*, Alexandria, Virginia: Time-Life Books, 1983, pp.110-119.
- 3 In 2007, David Bateman published a deluxe book-length version of Brake’s Monsoon project, incorporating a larger number of photographs and further text. See Brian Brake, *Monsoon*, Auckland: David Bateman.
- 4 W.J.T. Mitchell, “The ethics of form in the photographic essay” *Afterimage*, January 1989, pp.8-13. Two of the books discussed by Mitchell (Agee and Evans’s *Let us now praise famous men*, and Said and Mohr’s *After the last sky*) are undoubtedly photobooks in the accepted sense. However the other two (Barthes’s *Camera lucida* and Malek Alloula’s *The colonial harem*) are more commonly categorised in other ways: as a philosophical meditation on the nature of photography (Barthes) and as a critical study of a set of photographic postcards made and circulated within a colonial context (Alloula).
- 5 Martin Parr and Gerry Badger, “Introduction: the photobook: between the novel and film”, *The photobook: a history volume 1*, London: Phaidon Press, 2004, p.10.

- 6 *Ibid.*, p.11.
- 7 Gerry Badger, “Elliptical narratives: some thoughts on the photobook”, *The pleasures of good photographs*, New York: Aperture, 2010, p.224.
- 8 Roland Barthes, “The third meaning”, in *Image-Music-Text*, translated by Stephen Heath, Glasgow: Fontana, 1977, p.66.
- 9 Parr and Badger, *op.cit.*, p.11. And Barthes writes of the related diegetic ‘arts’ of the photo-novel and the comic-strip, “which combine still and story”, as “born in the lower depths of high culture”. Barthes, *ibid.*
- 10 For a full, detailed account of Ernest Beaglehole’s career and a bibliography of his published works see James Ritchie’s “Obituary”, *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, vol.75, no.1, March 1966, pp.109–119. For a concise account see James and Jane Ritchie, “Beaglehole, Ernest – Biography”, from the Dictionary of New Zealand Biography. Te Ara – the encyclopedia of New Zealand, updated 1–Sept–10. URL: <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/biographies/5b15/1>
- 11 Jane and James Ritchie, *The next generation: child rearing in New Zealand*, Auckland: Penguin, 1997, p.20.
- 12 Ernest and Pearl Beaglehole, *Some modern Maoris*, Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research, 1946, p.xix.
- 13 The Carnegie Science Research Committee of the University of New Zealand (which provided funding) and the Department of Psychology, Victoria University of Wellington published the first report in 1954 and the second in 1955. The third, edited by Ernest Beaglehole, was issued in 1956.
- 14 Ernest Beaglehole and James Ritchie, “The Rakau Maori studies”, *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, vol.67, no.2, June 1958, p.133. This article provides a detailed overview of the project as a whole.
- 15 James Ritchie, *Basic personality in Rakau*, Wellington: Department of Psychology, Victoria University College, 1956, p.33.
- 16 They are in order of appearance: Glenn Mulligan, *Maori adolescence in Rakau* (1957); Jane Ritchie, *Childhood in Rakau: the first five years of life* (1957); Margaret Jane Earle, *Rakau children: from six to thirteen years* (1958); and John Smith Williams, *Maori achievement motivation* (1960).
- 17 James Ritchie, *The making of a Maori: a case study of a changing community*, Wellington & Auckland: A.H. & A.W. Reed, 1963.
- 18 Ernest Beaglehole, “Foreword”, in Jane Ritchie, *Maori families*, Wellington: Department of Psychology, Victoria University of Wellington, 1964, p.i.
- 19 Jane and James Ritchie, *op.cit.*, p.20–23.
- 20 James Ritchie, “The challenge to psychology”, in *Seven inaugural lectures by the foundation Professors 1965–1966 of the University*, Hamilton: University of Waikato, 1966, pp.46–7.
- 21 James Ritchie interviewed by Damian Skinner, 26 January 2004, Maori customary culture oral history project, CA 000807/1/34, tape 3, Te Papa Archives, Wellington. Unless indicated otherwise, all further quotations from James Ritchie are from this interview.
- 22 At the time of the *Washday* controversy, Clif Reed (A.W. Reed) said, “Publishers are falling over themselves to get this book” (a second edition of *Washday*), but he felt, “It would be far better to lose her as an author than to go out of our way now to deliberately offend those people whom we are trying to serve in so many ways.” And he gave this reason for his position, “...it is no doubt typical of the conditions in which many Maoris live; but is it fair to them – to the Maori people?” Quoted in Gavin Mclean, *Whare Raupo: the Reed books story*, Auckland: Reed, 2007, p.128.
- 23 For comment on Walters’s design work for *Te ao hou* see Francis Pound, *The space between: Pakeha use of Maori motifs in modernist New Zealand art*, Auckland: Workshop Press, 1994, pp.124–43. See also, William McAloon, *Gordon Walters: prints and design*, Wellington: Adam Art Gallery, 2004, pp.6–9. Walters used one of his distinctive koru patterns in his cover design for *Contemporary Maori writing* (A.H. & A.W. Reed, 1970), an anthology edited by Margaret Orbell and featuring the work of short fiction writers previously published in *Te ao hou*.
- 24 For four different cover possibilities, see frames 4, 5, and 6 of contact sheet no. M579 and frame 10 of no. M580, Ans Westra collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library, Wellington. Frame 10, M579 and frame 4, M580 both include one Pakeha girl amongst the group of Maori children. To some degree, the cover photograph and its alternatives resemble an earlier study of five Maori children by Peter Blanc (see chapter three), which was reproduced in the article “Children”, in *Te ao hou*, no. 26, March 1959, page 32. The caption reads “six [sic] ways of looking at a photographer”. There are six children in Westra’s photograph too. However, Blanc’s picture

- is not printed in a portrait format but rather in a landscape one and it doesn't have the steep verticality of Westra's or its tight compression of the figures. Blanc's photograph was reprinted inside the article, "Children of the sea", in the *NZ Listener*, 10 May, 1963, p.6, with the caption, "Pupils of Punaruku District High School", and credited to Pius Blanc. The article is about a radio documentary made from the field recordings of anthropologist and former *Te ao hou* editor, Erik Schwimmer, while he was doing fieldwork in Punaruku.
- 25 Ans Westra (photographs) and James Ritchie (essay), *Maori*, Wellington: A.H. and A.W. Reed, 1967, p.11. Further references to this work will be given in brackets within the body of the text.
- 26 See frame 8, contact sheet no. M584, Ans Westra collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library, Wellington. Frame 7 also shows "Mrs Wereta" hugging Erua but their faces are pressed too close together and their expressions are too anxious.
- 27 See frames 1, 2, 3, 5, and 7, contact sheet no. M534, *ibid*. The image chosen is frame 5.
- 28 See frames 4, 5, 7, and 8, contact sheet no. M508, *ibid*. The image chosen is frame 8.
- 29 See frames 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 7, contact sheet no. M690, *ibid*. The image chosen is frame 7.
- 30 Ans Westra, "Author of *Washday at the pa* takes a look at...urban Maori", *The Dominion*, 15.8.1964.
- 31 See "Auckland's Community Centre", *Te ao hou*, no.40, September 1962, p.26. Photographs from this session were also published in Westra's photo-essay, "Visit to a youth club", *Photographics New Zealand*, vol.2, no.9, February 1963, pp.4-5
- 32 See *Maori*, p.95; *Te ao hou*, p.29; and *Handboek*, p.42 (figure 11).
- 33 Richard Hoggart, *The uses of literacy*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1958 (first edition, 1957), p.343.
- 34 Roger Oppenheim, review of John Collier, *Visual anthropology: photography as a research method*, *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, vol.78, no.4, December 1969, p.546.
- 35 Roger Oppenheim, review of *Maori*, *Landfall* 83 (vol.21, no.3), September 1967, p.322.
- 36 Leo Fowler, "New Zealand since the war 6: Maori and Pakeha", *Landfall* 61 (vol.16, no.1), March 1962, p.45.
- 37 As James Ritchie recalls: "We had invited him to come and research ... because we wanted outside confirmation of what we were doing. The New Zealand 'knocking machine' was busy discounting our research before it was even published, and we were left in no doubt that there would be no more funding for such purposes again... the Ausubel research gained some public attention, a short-lived minor notoriety." James Ritchie, *Becoming bicultural*, Wellington: Huia Publishers & Daphne Brasell Associates Press, 1992, p.195.
- 38 David P. Ausubel, *Maori youth*, Wellington: Price Milburn, 1961, p.67. This book was also published as part of the same general series as the Rakau monographs, i.e. it is a Victoria University of Wellington publication in Psychology (number 140). Beaglehole and Ritchie state: "Independently of the Rakau projects, Professor David P. Ausubel ... has been studying the educational progress of young Maori adolescents in two selected Secondary Schools. His theoretical framework has points of similarity and of difference with that of the Rakau work." "The Rakau Maori studies", *op.cit.*, p.152. For a short story written from the point of view of a Maori widgie (female bodgie) see Kathryn Leef, "A modern outcast", *Te ao hou*, no.22, April 1958, pp.15-16.
- 39 Joan Metge, *The Maoris of New Zealand: Rautahi*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976 (revised edition; first edition, 1967), p.53.
- 40 James Ritchie, "The future place of Maori culture in New Zealand society", *Te ao hou*, no.32, September 1960, p.18.
- 41 See *Handboek*, plate 30, page 129 for a different but equally arresting version of this event, in which the pastor holds the microphone stand diagonally for the centrally placed woman's mouth music performance. And see, too, "Annual celebrations at Ngaruawahia", *Te ao hou*, no.41, December 1962, pp.30-35, which incorporates 12 Westra photographs, none of which are reproduced in *Maori*.
- 42 Anne Salmond, *Hui: a study of Maori ceremonial gatherings*, Auckland: Reed, 2004 (1st ed. 1975), pp.1-2. Jeremy Salmond's dossier, "Some hui photographs", is included at the back of this book.
- 43 James Ritchie interviewed by Damian Skinner, 26 January 2004, Maori customary culture oral history project, CA 000807/1/34, tape 4, Te Papa Archives, Wellington.
- 44 Allan Sekula, "The traffic in photographs", *Art journal*, vol.41, no.1, spring 1981, p.19.
- 45 Peter Fairbrother, "Hone Tuwhare", *Te ao hou*, No.48, September 1964, pp.4-5.
- 46 Hone Tuwhare, *No ordinary sun*, Auckland and Hamilton: Blackwood & Janet Paul, 1964.
- 47 James K. Baxter, review of *No ordinary sun*, *Te ao hou*, No.49, December 1964, p.56.
- 48 See "The sculpture of Arnold Wilson", *Te ao hou*, no.52, September 1965, pp.32-33.

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- 49 See Rosemary Vincent, "Selwyn Muru's paintings win wide acclaim", *Te ao hou*, no.46, March 1964, pp.25-27.
- 50 See contact sheets nos. M681, M783-M788, and M791, Ans Westra collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library, Wellington.
- 51 See "The Hi-Five story: overseas fame in three short years", *Te ao hou*, no.43, June 1963, pp.3-4.
- 52 Katerina Mataira, "Modern trends in Maori art forms", in Erik Schwimmer (ed.), *The Maori people in the 1960s: a symposium*, Auckland: Longman Paul, 1968, p.213.
- 53 James Ritchie, "Workers", in *ibid*, p.305.
- 54 James Ritchie interviewed by Damian Skinner, 26 January 2004, Maori customary culture oral history project, CA 000807/1/34, tape 4, Te Papa Archives, Wellington.
- 55 In 1964, Mead contacted Ritchie to state that she would endorse him if he wished to apply for Hortense Powdermaker's vacant Chair in Queens, New York. Later, she endorsed him when he did apply for the newly established Chair of Psychology at the University of Waikato.
- 56 See Margaret Mead, "Visual anthropology in a discipline of words", in Paul Hockings (ed.), *Principles of visual anthropology*, The Hague: Mouton, 1975. See also "Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson on the use of the camera in anthropology", *Studies in visual communication*, vol.4, no.2, winter 1977.
- 57 Margaret Mead, review of *Maori*, *American anthropologist*, vol.70, no.6, 1968, pp.1216-7.
- 58 Kyla McFarlane, "Sentences forming stories: Ans Westra's Maori and Edward Steichen's *The Family of Man*", in Lawrence McDonald (ed.), *Handboek: Ans Westra photographs*, Wellington: BWX, 2004, p.55.
- 59 In many respects, Schwimmer's book represents an updating of *The Maori people today* (1940), edited by I.L.G. [Ivan] Sutherland and published in New Zealand's centennial year. At the end of the 1940s, The Polynesian Society published Sutherland's commemorative booklet, *The Ngarimu hui*, with photographs by John Pascoe, taken at the event in October 1943.
- 60 *Ibid*, p.57. McFarlane quotes the phrase "common humanity and community" from Witi Ihimaera's introduction to *Whaiora*.
- 61 R. Oppenheim, review of *Maori*, *op.cit.*, p.322.
- 62 When asked for his definition of Maori mass culture, James Ritchie replies: "The beer parties on the East Coast." James Ritchie interviewed by Damian Skinner, 26 January 2004, Maori customary culture oral history project, CA 000807/1/34, tape 4, Te Papa Archives, Wellington.
- 63 I would note that at the same time as Westra composed her "Tangi" photographs, Reed published a book of tangi drawings by Dennis Knight Turner, with an introductory essay by Roger Oppenheim. See D. Turner, *Tangi*, Wellington: A.H. & A.W. Reed, 1963. In his introduction, Oppenheim writes, "A featureless society such as New Zealand's can offer little in the way of human sympathy..." (unpaginated). Ten years later, Reed published Oppenheim's historical and anthropological study of the tangihanga, *Maori death customs* (1973).
- 64 Steven Webster, *Patrons of Maori culture: power, theory and ideology in the Maori renaissance*, Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 1989, p.29.
- 65 A. P. Ngata, "Tribal organization", in I.L.G. Sutherland (ed.), *The Maori People today: a general survey*, Christchurch: Whitcombe & Tombs and London: Oxford University Press, 1940, pp.176-77.
- 66 His actual phrase is "mass production", but, as Raymond Williams notes, "This does not really describe the process of production ... What it describes is a process of consumption, the mass market, where mass [means] ... a many-headed multitude with purchasing power." *Keywords: a vocabulary of culture and society*, London: Fontana, 1988, p.195. Recall, too, Williams's earlier caution: "The masses are always the others, whom we don't know, and can't know ... Masses are other people. There are in fact no masses; there are only ways of seeing people as masses." *Culture and society 1780-1950*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1963 (1st ed. 1958), p.289.
- 67 Roy Nash, "The evolution of contemporary policies in Maori education", in *Schools can't make jobs*, Palmerston North: The Dunmore Press, 1983, p.56.

## CHAPTER SIX

- 1 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile* (1762), quoted in Jacqueline Rose, *The case of Peter Pan or the*

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- impossibility of children's fiction*, London: Macmillan, 1984, p.47.
- 2 Rose, p.30.
  - 3 Ans Westra in Damian Skinner, "The eye of an outsider: a conversation with Ans Westra", *Art New Zealand*, no.100, spring 2001. p.96.
  - 4 Ans Westra, "Children of Fiji", *School Journal*, Part 2, no.6, 1964, pp.17-20.
  - 5 Ans Westra, "Pacific island holiday", *Photographics New Zealand*, vol.2, no.11, April 1963, p.20.
  - 6 Janet Bayly, "Ans Westra: finding a 'place' in New Zealand", in Bayly and Athol McCredie (eds.), *Witness to change: life in New Zealand: John Pascoe, Les Cleveland, Ans Westra: photographs 1940-1965*, Wellington: PhotoForum Wellington Inc., 1985, p.69.
  - 7 John Grierson, "Flaherty's poetic Moana", in Lewis Jacobs (ed.), *The documentary tradition: from Nanook to Woodstock*, New York: Hopkinson and Blake, 1971, p.25.
  - 8 Allochronic discourse locates the society under investigation (typically conceived as 'primitive', 'tribal', or 'underdeveloped') in a different time frame, invariably 'earlier', to the home society of the investigator. See Johannes Fabian, *Time and the other: how anthropology makes its object*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1983.
  - 9 It should be noted, however, that in Flaherty's first film, *Nanook of the north* (1922), the post-contact situation of the Inuit is acknowledged in their visit to the trading post and in the scene where Nanook listens to a gramophone.
  - 10 Anna Grimshaw discusses Flaherty's "innocent eye" in *The ethnographer's eye: ways of seeing in modern anthropology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp.44-56. This phrase provided the title for Arthur Calder-Marshall's 1963 biography of Flaherty.
  - 11 See Ferdinand Toennies, *Community and society (Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft)*, New York: Dover Publications, 2002; Robert Redfield, "The folk society", *American journal of sociology*, vol.52, no.4, January 1947, pp.293-308; and *The little community*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1950. And for a brief overview of these concepts see David Pearson, "Community", in Paul Spoonley et al. (eds.), *New Zealand society: sociological perspectives*, Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1990, p.26.
  - 12 Ans Westra, *Viliami of the Friendly Islands*, Wellington: School Publications, 1964, unpaginated. All further references to this work will be given in brackets in the body of the text.
  - 13 Grimshaw, *op.cit.*, p.49.
  - 14 Westra, *op.cit.*, p.21.
  - 15 Ans Westra, "Children at play", *School Journal*, Part 2, no.4, 1964, p.17.
  - 16 Cushla Parekowhai, "Lucky no-one's got a camera eh: Ans Westra in Parakino on the Whanganui River", in Lawrence McDonald (ed.), *Handboek: Ans Westra photographs*, Wellington: BWX, 2004, p.40.
  - 17 See the cover of *Midwest*, no.3, 1993 and page 126 of *Handboek* for the source photograph of "Before Elvis".
  - 18 R. Sage, "Foreword", *Tamariki: our children today*, Wellington: Maori Education Foundation, 1965, no pagination.
  - 19 "League president comments on *Washday at the pa*", *Poverty Bay herald*, 14.8.1964.
  - 20 In 1986, School Publications published a photographic essay set in Amsterdam with text credited to Jacob Westra, the photographer's nine-year-old son. The eight photographs, taken during a three-month trip to Holland in 1985, show Jacob, his sister Lisa and their friend Roosje at various locations in the city (overlooking a canal, on a houseboat, at a playground, inside a covered market, and wandering the streets). The two photographs on the front and back covers of this number of the *School Journal*, depicting the children on a bridge and beside a cylindrical advertising hoarding, are reminiscent of the photographer's earlier *Holiday in the capital*. See "A visit to Amsterdam", photographs by Ans Westra, text by Jacob Westra, *School Journal*, Part 2, no.3, 1986, pp.24-30 (and cover).

## CHAPTER SEVEN

- 1 Stephen Shore, *The nature of photographs: a primer*, London: Phaidon, 2007, p.48.
- 2 Robert B. Goodman (photographs) and George Johnston (text), *The Australians*, Adelaide: Rigby, 1966. A second edition was published in 1967 and reprinted later in that year and in 1968.

- 3 Ans Westra, *Notes on the country I live in*, Wellington: Alister Taylor Publishing, 1972. The bibliographic cataloguing page states, “This book contains a selection from a photographic essay *The New Zealanders* compiled with the aid of a grant from the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council in 1971.”
- 4 The Social Text Editors, “Introduction”, in Sohnya Sayres et al. (eds.), *The 60s without apology*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press in cooperation with *Social text*, 1984, p.2.
- 5 Fredric Jameson, “Periodizing the 60s”, in *Ibid*, p.205.
- 6 *Ibid*.
- 7 Jenny Diski, *The sixties*, London: Profile Books, 2009, p.3.
- 8 Joe Boyd, *White bicycles: making music in the 1960s*, London: Serpent’s Tail, 2006, p.1.
- 9 *Ibid*, p.107.
- 10 Murray Edmond, “Poetics of the impossible”, in Alan Brunton, Murray Edmond, Michele Leggott (eds.), *Big smoke: New Zealand poems 1960–1975*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2000, p.20.
- 11 Tony Judt, *Ill fares the land*, New York: The Penguin Press, 2010, pp.87–88.
- 12 Ian MacDonald, *Revolution in the head: the Beatles’ records and the sixties*, London: Pimlico, 1995, p.288.
- 13 W.H. Oliver, “The awakening imagination”, in Oliver with B.R. Williams (eds.), *The Oxford history of New Zealand*, Wellington: Oxford University Press, 1981, p.456.
- 14 Cited in T.S. Dyce, “New Zealand and Vietnam”, *New Zealand’s heritage*, vol.7, no.103, 1973, p.2860. The author of this article, Tim Dyce, a former seminarian and sometime lecturer in History at Victoria University of Wellington, was a close associate of the late period James K. Baxter (see section on Baxter in this chapter). He set up the first “Jerusalem satellite” in Vivian Street, Wellington; and “...took his mandate directly from Baxter, who addresses him in an open letter at the beginning of *Jerusalem Daybook – the Daybook* manuscript being Baxter’s response to Dyce’s suggestion that he write a ‘theology of communality.’” John Newton, *The double rainbow: James K. Baxter, Ngati Hau and the Jerusalem commune*, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2009, p.155. Also, during the early 1970s, Dyce “traveled on a fact-finding mission to Vietnam and on a comprehensive tour of New Zealand’s communes with Tim and Miriam Shadbolt.” (*Ibid*.)
- 15 Alister Taylor (ed.), *Peace, power and politics in Asia*, Wellington: the organizing committee of the Peace, Power and Politics in Asia conference, 1969, pp.276–77.
- 16 The New Zealand Broadcasting Service (NZBS) began regular television transmissions across the country in 1961.
- 17 Alister Taylor, “Peace, power and politics: a personal view”, *City magazine*, spring 1987, p.62.
- 18 The relevant contact sheet was sighted prior to the lengthy closure of the Alexander Turnbull library from December 2009 to August 2012. It contained a range of shots from which the published image was selected, at least one of which revealed the wider context of the photograph. A visit to the Turnbull library after it reopened in August 2012, in order to ascertain the number of the contact sheet, proved unsuccessful. It could not be found.
- 19 Tim Shadbolt, *Bullshit and jellybeans*, Wellington: Alister Taylor Publishing, 1971, p.168.
- 20 Michael Beveridge, Review of *Bullshit and jellybeans*, *Landfall*, no.101 (vol.26, no.1), March 1972, p.90.
- 21 See Owen Wilkes, *Protest: demonstrations against the American military presence in New Zealand: Omega 1968, Woodburne 1970, Mount John 1972, Harewood/Weedons 1973*, Wellington: Alister Taylor Publishing, 1973.
- 22 Founded in December 1967, *Cock* ran until August 1973. Chris Wheeler published (via his Cockerel Print) and edited all 17 of its issues, cartoonist Bob Brockie provided the illustrations and artist Brent Wong the design and layout. Rough and ready in appearance, satirical and scurrilous in content, *Cock* is a classic example of the underground press and its lifetime coincides with the peak period of the counterculture in New Zealand. Although mostly devoted to politics, its anti-censorship stance appeared to provide the alibi for the liberal use of grainy images of nude women in virtually every issue. However, with characteristic wit, Wheeler was quick to defend the title of his magazine: “Our article of faith is a rooster (after all) and not a phallus, yet what might be called the startle response seems inevitably to move in the direction of the former. As an amateur poultry breeder I am naturally perturbed at this reaction, noticeable, incidentally, more especially in our women folk”, *Cock*, no.2, February 1968, p.1. In the final issue of *Cock*, Wheeler begins with a valedictory editorial in which he writes: “When we get down to what is really going on in our society rather than what the money fuckers who own the news media tell us is going on then we may start to see some changes in the direction of that long-heralded utopia where everybody matters to everybody else.” “What went wrong?”, *Cock*, no.17, August 1973, p.1.

- 23 Prior to this televisual encounter, Tim Shadbolt had reviewed Edwards's book *The public eye for Cock*. His review was not favourable: "If I had to describe Edwards in one word that word would be weak. Aggressive – yes, arrogant – yes, but morally, politically and philosophically I'd describe him as unsure, nervous and weak", *Cock*, no.15, December 1970, p.25.
- 24 "An introductory note from the editors", *Affairs*, no.1, February 1969, p.3.
- 25 Alistair Taylor, "A message from the hay", *Affairs*, no.8, February 1970, p.1.
- 26 Alistair Taylor, "Words from Alistair Taylor", *Affairs*, no.27, November 1971, p.435.
- 27 "The old editor and the new", *Affairs*, no.28, February 1972, p.2.
- 28 "From the editors", *ibid.*, p.2.
- 29 Apparently, one school principal ripped the pages of Baxter's article from all copies of the magazine he could get his hands on.
- 30 Felicity Tuohy, "A few last words from *Affairs*", *Affairs*, no.45, October–November 1972, p.1.
- 31 "Editorial", *Affairs*, no.46, February 1974, p.3.
- 32 The issues of *Affairs* to which Westra contributed photographs are: no. 14, August 1970 ("Hone Tuwhare: interview"); no.15, September 1970 ("Poems by Hone Tuwhare, photographs by Ans Westra"); no.21, May 1971; no.25, September 1971; no.26, October 1971 (cover portrait of James K. Baxter and further photographs of the poet inside the issue); and no.36, October 1972 (cover photograph of J.K Baxter and further Baxter images inside the issue).
- 33 John Newton, *The double rainbow: James K. Baxter, Ngati Hau and the Jerusalem commune*, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2009, p.65.
- 34 Alistair Taylor, "Preface", in *James K. Baxter 1926-1972: a memorial volume*, Wellington: Alistair Taylor Publishing, 1972, p.6
- 35 James K. Baxter, "Hamilton August 1970", in *Ibid*, p.100.
- 36 See contact sheet no. M345, Ans Westra collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library, Wellington. Three of the 12 photographs feature Baxter. The image chosen for *Affairs*, clearly superior to the others, is situated at the right side end of the middle row.
- 37 The articles are: Craig Harrison's sceptical "Why don't you come home Jim Baxter?" in which he writes: "No, we don't need communes. Yes, we do need a new spirit, human values: but here in the cities, and in Otago and Porirua, not up the Wanganui." (*Affairs*, no.26, October 1971, p.402). And Tim Shadbolt's "Baxter's commune", in which he writes: "The first thing that struck me about Baxter's commune at Jerusalem was that it wasn't a commune. It was simply a rural crash-pad. A place where anyone could stay and be fed when the city smashed their souls and brains." (*Ibid*, p.402). Three of Westra's Baxter photos illustrate Harrison's article and one is reproduced in Shadbolt's.
- 38 See W.H. Oliver, *James K. Baxter: a portrait*, Wellington: The Port Nicholson Press, 1983, p.133. In Oliver's book, the photograph is given the caption "At Jerusalem", when, in fact, it was taken at Horo Horo. The five other Westra images in Oliver were taken at Jerusalem. For a recent high quality reproduction of the Horo Horo portrait see Lawrence McDonald (ed.), *Handboek: Ans Westra photographs*, Wellington: BWX, p.62. Also reproduced in *Handboek* is "Hone Tuwhare at James K. Baxter's graveside", p.159, which first appeared in the memorial volume. The uncropped version of the Baxter portrait, first published in the October 1972 edition of *Affairs*, was also published a month later in Owen Wilkes, Tim Shadbolt et al. (eds.), *The first New Zealand whole earth catalogue*, Wellington: Alistair Taylor Publishing, 1972, p.194. Four other Westra photographs of Baxter were also included in this book (pp.195-7). Also included in the *catalogue* was Chris Wheeler's article "Starting your own underground press" (pp.24-27).
- 39 Georg Simmel, "The aesthetic significance of the face", in Kurt H. Wolff (ed.), *Georg Simmel, 1858-1918*, Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1959, p.278.
- 40 The account of the evolution of the women's liberation movement contained in this section is derived from Christine Dann, *Up from under: women and liberation in New Zealand 1970-1985*, Wellington: Allen and Unwin/Port Nicholson Press, 1985.
- 41 For a representative selection of articles from the magazine's first 20 years, see Pat Rosier (ed.), *Been around for quite a while: twenty years of Broadsheet magazine*, Auckland: New Women's Press, 1992.
- 42 Sue Kedgley and Sharon Cederman, *Sexist society*, Wellington: Alistair Taylor Publishing, 1972, p.6.
- 43 Christine Dann, "Further up from under", *Sites*, no. 15, spring 1987, p.37.
- 44 Dawn Kendall, "Introduction", in Gillian Chaplin et al. (eds.), *Fragments of a world*, Dunedin: John McIndoe, 1976, p.5.
- 45 This and the two previous quotations come from Ans Westra's hand written note on a photocopy

- of the image supplied to the *Handboek* project, 2004. For the range of photographs taken at this session, see contact sheet no.1186, Ans Westra collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library, Wellington. The image chosen, horizontal middle row, second left, is shot upwards from a lower angle, giving the male figure greater presence in the frame.
- 46 The central figure of Jerrems's photograph is a young woman who, according to Helen Ennis, embodies "a confident, sexy summation of the transformative power of feminism ... an epitome of the new woman who is in command of her own circumstances and her own image." *Photography and Australia*, London: Reaktion Books, 2007, pp.102-3.
- 47 Ranginui Walker, *Ka whawhai tonu matou struggle without end*, Auckland: Penguin Books, 1990, p.211.
- 48 *Ibid*, pp.212-15.
- 49 Lyn Brooke-White, Alister Taylor, and Chris Wheeler (eds.), *The whole world watches: a record of protests against the All Black tour Thursday, Friday, Saturday June 11, 12, 13 1970*, Wellington: Cockerel Print, 1970, p.8.
- 50 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities*, London: Verso, 1983, p.6.
- 51 Lincoln Kirstein, "Photographs of America: Walker Evans", in Walker Evans, *American photographs*, New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1988 (1st ed. 1938), p.198.
- 52 *Ibid*, p.197.
- 53 Robert Frank, "A statement", in *U.S. Camera Annual*, New York: U.S. Camera Publishing, 1958, p.115, reprinted in Nathan Lyons (ed.), *Photographers on photography*, New York: Prentice Hall, 1966, p.66.
- 54 Robert Frank quoted in "Robert Frank", in George Walsh (ed.), *Contemporary photographers*, London: Macmillan, 1982, p.249.
- 55 Robert Frank quoted in William S. Johnson, "Public statements/private views: shifting the ground in the 1950s", in David Featherstone (ed.), *Observations: essays on documentary photography*, Carmel, California: The Friends of Photography, 1984, p.90.
- 56 *Ibid*.
- 57 Allan Stoekl, "Negation and affirmation in the photographs of Robert Frank", *Enclitic*, vol.7, no.1, spring 1983, p.32.
- 58 C.K. Stead, "Introduction", in Stead (ed.), *New Zealand short stories, second series*, London: Oxford University Press, 1966, p.xv.
- 59 Wystan Curnow, "Landscape and the body", *Antic*, no.3, November 1987, p.146.
- 60 John Pascoe, "Photography in New Zealand", *Landfall*, vol.1, no.4, December 1947, p.302, cited in chapter one. John Grierson articulated his desire for images of the social life of New Zealand rather than further celebrations of the landscape in "The face of a New Zealander", in Jonathan Dennis (ed.), *The tin shed: the origins of the National Film Unit*, Wellington: The New Zealand Film Archive, 1981, pp.21-22.
- 61 In the second half of the 1970s, Reed publishing continued the series at the provincial level with *Hawke's Bay in colour* (1975) by Kay Mooney, with photographs mostly by the Bigwoods but also various other photographers, and *Southland in colour* (1979), containing photographs by Barry Harcourt and text by F.W.G Miller, but the format remained the same.
- 62 Eighteen years earlier, McDonald (with J.D. Watson) wrote the Post-Primary School Bulletin *The Miner* [part of social studies for junior forms], vol.1, no.13, July 1947.
- 63 Peter Ireland, "Looking at New Zealand 1960-1988", in Athol McCredie (ed.), *Brian Brake: lens on the world*, Wellington: Te Papa Press, 2010, p. 248.
- 64 *Ibid*, p.249. Maurice Shadbolt wrote the text for the article.
- 65 Gwen Stacey, "Brian Brake", *Art New Zealand*, no.53, summer 1989-90, p.56.
- 66 *The Australians, op.cit.*, p.288.
- 67 Robin Smith, Warren Jacobs, and Graham Billing, *The New Zealanders*, Auckland: Golden Press, 1975. Smith and Jacobs are the photographers, while novelist Graham Billing supplies the extensive text. Prior to this he collaborated with Guy Mannering (illustrations editor) on the book *South: man and nature in Antarctica, a New Zealand view*, Wellington: A.H. & A.W. Reed, 1964; and wrote the text for photographer R.J. Griffith's book of landscape photographs, *New Zealand: the sunlit land*, Wellington A.H. & A.W. Reed, 1966. Two further revised editions of *The New Zealanders* were published, the first in 1978, the second in 1980.
- 68 Quoted in Bianca Zander, "The eye of Ans Westra", *NZ Listener*, 19 March 2005, p.41.

- 69 Ans Westra, Application for Arts Council award, Ans Westra archive, CA 621/3, box 4, Te Papa Archives, Wellington.
- 70 D.W. Sinclair, letter to Ans Westra, 3 March 1971, in *ibid.*
- 71 Phoebe Meikle, letter to Ans Westra, 7 April 1971, in *ibid.*
- 72 Max Rogers, letter to Ans Westra, 1 October 1971, in *ibid.*
- 73 Mike Nicolaidi, letter to Ans Westra, 21 December 1971, in *ibid.*
- 74 Alister Taylor, letter to Ans Westra, 17 November 1971, in *ibid.*
- 75 J.R. Marshall, letter to Alister Taylor, 25 October 1972, in *ibid.*
- 76 James K. Baxter, “The country and the people”, unpublished typescript, in *ibid.*
- 77 The Jerusalem photograph on page 37 of *Notes* depicts the “Don” [Don Franks] Baxter mentions on pages three and four of his introduction. Franks sits on the floor of a verandah playing a violin.
- 78 Les Cleveland, “Humanity in a low key”, *NZ Listener*, vol.71, no.1727, 11 December 1972, p.51.
- 79 Tom Hutchins, review of *Notes on the country I live in*, *New Zealand photography*, no.13, December 1972–January 1973, p.20.
- 80 All three quotations from Les Cleveland, *op.cit.*, p.51. Earlier, in a “preview” of the book, Bruce Weatherall had made a similar point: “The respectable middle class people of suburbia hardly figure at all in Ans Westra’s country, even though she herself lives in a house in Wellington’s Karori, than which no New Zealand suburb is suburbier.” He goes on to note, “Much of what many people like to think of as the real New Zealand does not appear in the book...” but qualifies this by saying, “Let’s face it, in our own way we all live in different countries.” Bruce Weatherall, “Notes on a preliminary tour of Ans Westra’s country, in the company of the photographer”, *New Zealand photography*, no.12, September–October 1972, p.4.
- 81 Cleveland, *op.cit.*, p.51.
- 82 Gavin Hipkins, *Folklore: The New Zealanders*, Auckland: Artspace, 1998, p.19. Hipkins also includes a quotation from Baxter’s *Notes* text on page 6 and one from Tim Shadbolt’s text on page 24.
- 83 *Ibid.*
- 84 Gavin Hipkins, “Dreamers that struggle to wake: Ans Westra’s *The New Zealanders*”, in Lawrence McDonald (ed.), *Handboek: Ans Westra photographs*, Wellington: BWX, 2004, p.66.
- 85 *Ibid.*, p.68.
- 86 In her comprehensive review article on *Handboek*, Janet Bayly writes of Hipkins’s essay: “He selects the atypical opening image to exemplify Westra’s continuing reference to the by now fully discredited *The family of man*, and thereby moves to his well-worn theme: the “uncanny quality” of New Zealand’s “familiar, empty social landscape”, which he says *Notes* suppresses.” “Ans Westra’ in the realm of textual re-construction(s)”, *Landfall*, no.209, May 2005, p.123.
- 87 See Sigmund Freud, “The ‘uncanny’” (*Das unheimliche*, 1919), translated by James Strachey, in Albert Dickson (ed.), *Sigmund Freud: art and literature*, London: Penguin, 1985, pp.339–376.
- 88 “Keep on moving, Derek Henderson and Magda Keaney talk photography, fashion, locality and *The terrible boredom of paradise*”, in Derek Henderson, *The terrible boredom of paradise*, Derek Henderson, 2005, p.16.
- 89 For a thorough critique of this project see Peter Ireland, “Making a case: Derek Henderson’s terrible boredom of paradise”, *Art New Zealand*, no.121, summer 2006–07, pp.68–71, 91.
- 90 Hanna Scott, “Solitude and scenic”, in Henderson, *op.cit.*, p.9.
- 91 Derek Paterson (ed.), “Portfolio: Marti’s people”, *Zoom*, vol.2, no.5, 1978, p.15. She reiterated this enthusiasm many years later, at the time of her retrospective exhibition at the Auckland Art Gallery: “Documentary photography has always been my preference, ever since I saw *The family of man* exhibition in London, the images of which were such a moving celebration of our humanity and diversity.” Marti Friedlander, “Looking”, in Ron Brownson, *Marti Friedlander photographs*, Auckland: Godwit in association with the Auckland Art Gallery, 2001, p.176.
- 92 Marti Friedlander, “Portraits”, in *The summer book: a New Zealand miscellany* 2, 1983, quoted in Leonard Bell, *Marti Friedlander*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2009, p.11.
- 93 John B. Turner, “Beginnings: a personal recollection of Ans Westra and the 1960s”, in Lawrence McDonald (ed.), *Handboek: Ans Westra photographs*, Wellington: BWX, 2004, p.27.
- 94 Bell, *op.cit.*, p.64.
- 95 Quoted in Bianca Zander, “The eye of Ans Westra”, *NZ Listener*, 19 March 2005, p.40.
- 96 *Ibid.* Included in the acknowledgements at the back of the book is this note, “Ans Westra (for the photograph of the tattooing kit)”.

## Notes

- 97 Marti Friedlander (photographs) and James McNeish (text), *Larks in a Paradise: New Zealand portraits*, Auckland: Collins, 1974.
- 98 *Ibid*, no pagination.
- 99 Derek Paterson (ed.), p.15.
- 100 Bell, *op.cit.*, p.89.
- 101 It was published by John McIndoe of Dunedin. A decade later, McIndoe published a similar architectural study of Oamaru. See Norris Brocklebank (photographs) and Richard Greenaway (text), *Oamaru*, Dunedin: John McIndoe, 1979.
- 102 Frank Hofmann, review of *The unseen city, New Zealand camera*, June 1968, p.23.
- 103 Ans Westra, note in commemorative catalogue, Wellington: City Art Gallery, 1980, no pagination.
- 104 Joe Musaphia, “Bus strike gave birth to book”, *The Dominion*, 14 April 1976.
- 105 A decade later, Collins published a collection of colour images of Auckland, with an introductory text and extensive captions, which conforms fully to the template of the conventional New Zealand photographic book. See Eric Taylor (photographs) and Michael King (text), *Auckland*, Auckland: William Collins, 1985.
- 106 Except that by 1976 Whitcombe and Tombs had become Whitcoulls.
- 107 See *Handboek, op.cit.*, p.140.
- 108 See *ibid*, p.153.
- 109 This is not the case with the reproduction in *Handboek* (p.141). The white borders around the image induce a distanced viewing position.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

- 1 Noel Hilliard, letter to Ans Westra, 28 June 1964, Ans Westra Archive, CA 000614, box 1, item 4, Te Papa Archives, Wellington.
- 2 Noel Hilliard, letter to Ans Westra, 13 March 1966, Ans Westra Archive, CA 000620, box 1, folder 2, Te Papa Archives, Wellington.
- 3 Noel Hilliard, letter to Ans Westra, 12 October 1967, *ibid*.
- 4 Nicholas Thomas, “Narrative as practice? Accessible adventure in ‘Swallows and Amazons’”, *Anthropology today*, vol.3, no.5, October 1987, p.10
- 5 *Ibid.*, p.11.
- 6 Jack Lasenby (story) and Ans Westra (photographs), “The elephants from outer space”, *School Journal*, Part 2, no.3, 1973, p.33.
- 7 The second installment in this series, *Te tautoko 2: tama tu, tama ora; tama moe, tama mate* (1971), has text by Katerina Mataira and is illustrated with Cliff Whiting’s graphics, based on Maori motifs.
- 8 See Warwick B. Elley, *Assessing the difficulty of reading materials: the noun frequency method*, Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research, 1975 (1st pub. 1967).
- 9 Robilliard’s titles, all published in 1974, are: *Paul’s farm; Shearing’s hard work; Fourteen truck drivers; Nurse white is busy; A country school; Pearson’s milk round*. Hirsh and Burns’s titles, also published in 1974, are: *John lives at a motel; and Animals need doctors, too*. Robin Watt’s title is *Open wide, Sui* (1974).
- 10 *Jane* keeps to this format. *Richard* departs from it slightly by printing five half-page photographs, including one on the left hand side.
- 11 W.L. Renwick, “preface”, Jo Horton and Ans Westra, *On the way to reading*, Wellington: Radio New Zealand/Department of Education, 1978, p.3.
- 12 *Ibid*, p.44.
- 13 Gordon Tovey, *Children’s painting*, Wellington: Department of Education, School Publications, 1972.

## CHAPTER NINE

- 1 Quentin Bajac, *Parr by Parr: Quentin Bajac meets Martin Parr*, Amsterdam: Schilt Publishing, 2010,

- p.88.
- 2 Quoted in Carol Armstrong, "Biology, destiny, photography: difference according to Diane Arbus", *October*, no.66, fall 1993, p.36, n.13.
  - 3 *The active eye: contemporary New Zealand photography*, Palmerston North: Manawatu Art Gallery, May 1975, pp.100-102 (Westra), p.95 (Ulyatt).
  - 4 Peter Ireland, "Introduction", *Views/Exposures: 10 contemporary New Zealand photographers*, Wellington: National Art Gallery, 1982, p.6.
  - 5 The other photographers featured in the exhibition were: Janet Bayly, Dinah Bradley, Gillian Chaplin, Bruce Foster, Peter Hannken, and Anne Noble. Along with Peter Peryer and Laurence Aberhart, Fiona Clark and Anne Noble have continued to maintain a high profile in exhibitions and publications devoted to contemporary photography. A recent project by Clark revisits the subjects of her mid-1970s photographs of transvestites, several of which were included in *The active eye*. See Gregory Burke (ed.), *Go girl: Fiona Clark*, New Plymouth: Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, 2002. A major survey of Anne Noble's photography, organised by the Dunedin Public Art Gallery in 2001, toured nationally in 2002/2003. See Justin Paton (ed.), *Anne Noble: states of grace*, Dunedin Public Art Gallery and Victoria University Press, 2001.
  - 6 *Imposing narratives: beyond the documentary in recent New Zealand photography: nine New Zealand photographers*, Wellington: Wellington City Art Gallery, 1989.
  - 7 See A.D.Coleman, "The directorial mode: notes toward a definition", *Light readings: a photography critic's writings 1968-1978*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979, pp.246-257; Coleman revisits this seminal essay in "The image in question: further notes on the directorial mode", in *Depth of field: essays on photography, mass media and lens culture*, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998, pp.53-61; see also Anne Hoy, *Fabrications: staged, altered and appropriated photographs*, New York: Abbeville Press, 1987.
  - 8 See Allan Smith, "Romanticist and symbolist tendencies in recent New Zealand photography", *Art New Zealand*, no.64, spring 1992, pp.80-83.
  - 9 On Margaret Dawson's work of this period see three articles by John Hurrell: "Truly fictive exposures", in *Six women photographers*, Auckland: PhotoForum, no.56, 1987, pp.41-42 (with six reproductions of her work on pages 43-48); "The vacillating personas of Margaret Dawson", *Art New Zealand*, no.47, winter 1988, pp.68-71; and "Reflections, deflections: from Margaret Dawson's Colonial Vision", in Ian Wedde and Gregory Burke (eds.), *Now see hear! art, language and translation*, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1990, pp.43-44.
  - 10 On Christine Webster see: Oliver Zahm, "Fatal Song", in Trish Clark and Wystan Curnow (eds.), *Pleasures and dangers: artists of the 90s*, Auckland: Longman Paul, 1991, pp.100-104; Sheridan Keith, "Christine Webster's large colour photographs", *Art New Zealand*, no.29, summer 1983, pp.40-41; Elizabeth Eastmond, "Gender confusion and general insubordination: some themes in recent work by Christine Webster", in *Christine Webster*, Dunedin: Dunedin Public Art Gallery, 1989; and Sarah Gibson, "Circus of angels: recent work of Christine Webster", *Art New Zealand*, no.83, winter 1997, pp.50-53.
  - 11 On Cindy Sherman see: Judith Williamson, "Images of 'woman' - the photographs of Cindy Sherman", *Screen*, vol.24, no.6, Nov-Dec 1983, pp.102-106 (with ten pages of reproductions of her works); and Laura Mulvey, "Cosmetics and abjection: Cindy Sherman 1977-87", in *Fetishism and curiosity*, London: BFI Publishing, 1996, pp.65-76.
  - 12 On Megan Jenkinson see Peter Shand (ed.), *Under the aegis: the virtues by Megan Jenkinson*, Auckland: Fortuna Press, 1997; her article, "Virtus Moralis", *Creative camera*, no.10, 1988, pp.18-23; Priscilla Pitts, "The art of self defence", in *Six women photographers, op.cit.*, pp.33-35 (with four reproductions of her work on pages 37-40); Elizabeth Eastmond, "Excavating meanings: a conversation with Megan Jenkinson", *Art New Zealand*, no. 82, autumn 1997, pp.55-60; and Gwen Stacey, "Megan Jenkinson, and the waters of optimism", *Art new Zealand*, no.49, summer 1988/89, pp.66-69, 97.
  - 13 On Fiona Pardington's work of this period see two articles by Elizabeth Knox: "Fiona Pardington", in Clark and Curnow, *op.cit.*, pp.4-10; and "The sex of metals: the art of transmutation", in Wedde and Burke (eds.), *op.cit.*, pp.55-6. Also, Anne Kirker, "Flipping the coin: Fiona Pardington's photo-constructions", *Art New Zealand*, no.48, spring 1988, pp.47-49.
  - 14 Bosworth's photographs were included in *The active eye*, beside those of Aberhart and Peryer, but she was not part of *Views/Exposures*. However she has yet to receive a major exhibition in a public

- art gallery or museum and there has been little critical response to her work. But see: *Rhondda Bosworth: Photographs 1974-1999*, Wanganui: McNamara Gallery, 1999; and Virginia Douglas, "Engagement and integrity: the photography of Rhondda Bosworth", *Art New Zealand*, no.107, winter 2003, pp.66-70.
- 15 On Marie Shannon's work of this period see: Gwen Stacey, "The 'panoramic' photographs of Marie Shannon", *Art New Zealand*, no.35, winter 1985, pp.62-65; Rhonda Bosworth, "Domestic scenery", in *Six women photographers, op.cit.*, p.49 (with four reproductions of her work on pages 50-57); and Miriam Harris, "The not so ordinary art of Marie Shannon", *Art New Zealand*, no.84, spring 1997, pp.66-69.
- 16 On Peter Peryer see: *Peter Peryer Photographer*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2008; Gregory Burke and Peter Weiermair (eds.), *Second Nature - Peter Peryer, photographer, New Zealand*, Zurich: Edition Stemmler, 1995; Jim and Mary Barr, *Peter Peryer photographs*, Wanganui: Sarjeant Gallery, 1985; Peter Simpson, "The measure of things: the photographs of Peter Peryer 1974-99", *Art New Zealand*, no.93, summer 1999/2000, pp.56-63, 91; Ann Elias, "Peter Peryer", *Art New Zealand*, no.53, summer 1989-90, pp.80-83; and Peter Ireland, "Peter Peryer: the significance of repetition", *Art New Zealand*, no.31, winter 1984, pp.34-5.
- 17 On Laurence Aberhart see: Justin Paton and Gregory O'Brien, *Aberhart*, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2007; Gavin Hipkins, "Delayed action", in *Where shadows dream of light*, Dunedin: Dunedin Public Art Gallery, 1999; *Nature Morte: 105 photographs 1971-1989 by Laurence Aberhart*, Wellington: National Art Gallery, 1990; Rangihiroa Panoho, "Another view of the photographs of Laurence Aberhart", *Antic*, no.8, 1990, pp.23-24; and Lita Barrie, "Laurence Aberhart: signs of mortality", *Art New Zealand*, no.50, autumn 1989, pp.82-85.
- 18 With the appearance of this book it became clear that I wasn't alone in regarding the three exhibitions as significant moments in the development of New Zealand photography. In his introductory essay to the book, Gregory O'Brien devotes several paragraphs to a discussion of their importance. See "The camera is a small room", in Hannah Holm and Lara Strongman (eds.), *Contemporary New Zealand photographers*, Auckland: Mountain View Publishing, 2005, pp.9-15.
- 19 Harold Rosenberg, *The tradition of the new*, London: Paladin, 1970.
- 20 For concise accounts of the historical background and lead up to contemporary Maori activism see two articles by Ranginui Walker: "The genesis of Maori activism", *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, vol.93, no.3, September 1984, pp.267-281; and "The Maori people: their political development", in Hyam Gold (ed.), *New Zealand politics in perspective*, Auckland: Longman Paul, 1985, pp.251-265.
- 21 See Witi Ihimaera's 1981 Turnbull lecture "Maori life and literature: a sensory perception", in *New Zealand through the arts: past and present*, Wellington: The Friends of the Turnbull Library, 1982, pp.45-55.
- 22 See Peter Beatson, *The healing tongue: themes in contemporary Maori literature*, Palmerston North: Department of Sociology, Massey University, 1989.
- 23 See Barry Barclay, *Our own image*, Auckland: Longman Paul, 1990; also his "Celebrating fourth cinema", *Illusions*, no.35, 2003, pp.11-14; and Merata Mita, "The soul and the image", in Jonathan Dennis and Jan Bieringa (eds.), *Film in Aotearoa New Zealand*, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1992, pp.36-54.
- 24 For the history of the treaty see Claudia Orange, *The treaty of Waitangi*, Wellington: Allen and Unwin/Port Nicholson Press, 1987. For contemporary perspectives see I.H.Kawharu (ed.), *Waitangi: Maori and Pakeha perspectives of the treaty of Waitangi*, Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1989.
- 25 Ans Westra (photographs) and Katerina Mataira (text), *Whaiora: the pursuit of life*, Wellington: Allen & Unwin/Port Nicholson Press with the National Art Gallery of New Zealand, 1985.
- 26 Ans Westra, interview with Lawrence McDonald, 18 & 22.12.1987, see appendix. Unless indicated otherwise all further quotations from Ans Westra are taken from this interview.
- 27 Matheson Beaumont, letter to Bridget Williams, 10 May 1986, Ans Westra archive, CA 000621, folder 9, box 1, Te Papa Archives, Wellington. Beaumont alone signs the letter, but Brian Brake's name (as trustee) also appears at the foot of the page.
- 28 Ans Westra, letter to R. Sutherland, 30 January 1986, Ans Westra archive, CA 000621, folder 9, box 1, Te Papa Archives, Wellington.
- 29 Ans Westra, hand written notes, Ans Westra archive, CA 000621, folder 9, box 1, Te Papa Archives, Wellington.
- 30 Quoted in Su Pollard, "Maori life through a Pakeha lens", *The Dominion*, 20.12.1986, p.11.

- 31 Shirley Tamihana, review of *Whaiora*, *Broadsheet*, April 1986, p.44.
- 32 See Donna Awatere, *Maori sovereignty*, Auckland: *Broadsheet*, 1984 (based on articles originally published in *Broadsheet* nos., 100, June 1982, 103, October 1982, and 106, Jan/Feb 1983); Peta Joyce and Pat Rosier, “Maori Sovereignty racist?”, *Broadsheet*, March 1986, pp.12-13, & 29; and Atareta Poananga, “Death of an honorary white”, *Broadsheet*, April 1986, pp.13-19.
- 33 Peta Joyce, review of *Whaiora*, *Broadsheet*, April 1986, p.44.
- 34 Shirley Tamihana, *op.cit.*, p.44.
- 35 *Ibid.*
- 36 “The situation is complicated by the fact that less than ever does the mere reflection of reality reveal anything about reality. A photograph of the Krupp works or the AEG tells us next to nothing about these institutions.” Walter Benjamin, “Little history of photography”, in *Selected writings volume two, part two 1931-1934*, translated by Rodney Livingstone et al. & edited by Michael W. Jennings et al., Cambridge, MA & London: Harvard University Press, 1999, p.526.
- 37 S.Tamihana, *op.cit.*, p.44.
- 38 Roland Barthes, “Rhetoric of the image”, in *Image-Music-Text*, essays selected and translated by Stephen Heath, Glasgow: Fontana, 1977, pp.38-41.
- 39 Janet Bayly, “A persistent aroha” (review of *Whaiora*), *Art New Zealand*, no.39, winter 1986, p.79.
- 40 Janet Bayly, review of *Whaiora*, *PhotoForum review*, no.28, June 1986, p.38. Bayly’s other (third) review of *Whaiora* appeared in *Artstuff*, no.5, March 1986, pp.25-27.
- 41 Alan Taylor, letter to the Manager, Allen & Unwin NZ Ltd, 26 February 1986, Ans Westra archive, CA 000621, folder 9, box 1, Te Papa Archives, Wellington.
- 42 For Agee and Evans’s view of Caldwell and Bourke-White’s book, see William Stott, *Documentary expression and thirties America*, London: Oxford University Press, 1973, pp.222-23.
- 43 Dorothea Lange and Paul Taylor, *An American exodus: a record of human erosion*, New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1939.
- 44 Peter Ireland, “The fire next time”, *NZ Listener*, 19 July 1986, p.32.
- 45 S.Tamihana, *op.cit.*, p.44.
- 46 Ans Westra, letter to the editor, *PhotoForum review*, no.29, August 1986, p.5.
- 47 Ans Westra in John Saker, “City Interview: Ans Westra”, *Wellington city magazine*, April 1986, p.25.
- 48 Peter Ireland, *op.cit.*, p.30.
- 49 Witi Ihimaera, “Ans Westra: holder of the mirror”, introduction to *Whaiora*, *op.cit.*, p.7.
- 50 See Peter Cleave, “Mountain claiming: the anthropologist as ghost writer”, in Michael Goldsmith and Keith Barber (eds.), *Other sites: social anthropology and the politics of interpretation*, Palmerston North: Department of Social Anthropology, 1992, pp.81-94.
- 51 “Women view women”, *Broadsheet*, no.136, January/February 1986, p.21.
- 52 Gwen Stacey, “Women view women: photographs by Fiona Clark, Gil Hanly, Ans Westra, Jane Zusters”, *Art New Zealand*, no.38, autumn 1986, p.28.
- 53 *Ibid.*, p.29.
- 54 Doug Dallimore (competition co-ordinator), letter to Ans Westra, 6 June 1986, Ans Westra archive, CA 000617, folder 1, Te Papa Archives, Wellington.
- 55 Helen Ennis, “Pacific”, in Noelle Goldman and Stuart Hall, *Pictures of everyday life: the people, places and cultures of the Commonwealth*, London: Comedia, 1987, pp.156-157. In a set of notes on the regional winners, the entry on Westra states: “Her winning portfolio displays an uncanny ability to get inside her subjects and convey their absorption in the events surrounding them. It also reflects a continuing preoccupation in a black and white documentary tradition still prevalent in the Pacific region.” Press information kit, Commonwealth Institute, London, February 1987.
- 56 Stuart Hall, “The mirror or the lens”, in N.Goldman, *op. cit.*, pp.9-10.
- 57 Ans Westra quoted in Michael Kopp, “Aroha is no longer enough for Ans Westra and the Maori”, *PhotoForum review*, no.33, 1988, p.14.
- 58 Westra quoted in *ibid.*, pp.14-15.
- 59 Stuart Hall, *op.cit.*, p.12.
- 60 Noelle Goldman, “Photo constructs”, in N. Goldman, *op.cit.*, p.16.
- 61 Liz Heron, “Empire of new signs”, *New statesman*, 20 March 1987, p.22.
- 62 “People power ‘freedom’ Philippines”, Ans Westra interviewed by Janet Cole, *Craccum* [University of Auckland student newspaper], 21 September 1987, p.10.
- 63 *Ibid.*

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- 64 “Filipino vitality impresses”, *Development*, December 1986, p.11.
- 65 Hank Schouten, “Westra to leave for new horizons”, *The evening post*, 28.10.1993, p.26.
- 66 *Ibid.*
- 67 *Ibid.*
- 68 John Main, letter to Ans Westra, 1 April 1987, Ans Westra archive, CA 000617, folder 3, Te Papa Archives, Wellington.
- 69 “Peaceful Islands”, unpublished book proposal, in *ibid.*
- 70 James Ritchie, “Text for Ans Westra – Peaceful Islands”, in *ibid.*
- 71 Ans Westra, letter to David Lange, 15 May 1992, Ans Westra archive, CA 000617, folder 4, Te Papa Archives, Wellington.
- 72 David Lange, untitled text for “Peaceful Islands”, Ans Westra archive, CA 000617, folder 1, Te Papa Archives, Wellington.
- 73 Ans Westra, Funding application to Literature Programme of the QE II Arts Council of New Zealand, 31 December 1992, Ans Westra archive, CA 000617, folder 5, Te Papa Archives, Wellington.
- 74 Ans Westra, email communication to the author, 28 March 2012.
- 75 Previously, Westra had provided three photographs for a book co-authored by Adrienne Jansen and Borany Kanal, which tells of the latter’s ordeal in Cambodia during the period of the Khmer Rouge and her consequent immigration to New Zealand. See *Borany’s story*, Wellington: Learning Media, Ministry of Education, 1991.
- 76 For a detailed analysis of this work see Lawrence McDonald, *Eye and camera: voice and text – the interaction of photographic images and literary texts in ethnographic and social documentary studies and the work of Glenn Busch*, MA Thesis, Massey University, Palmerston North, 1998, pp.144–203.
- 77 Anna M. Gade, “Introduction”, in Adrienne Jansen and Ans Westra, *The crescent moon: the Asian face of Islam in New Zealand*, Wellington: The Asia New Zealand Foundation, 2009, p.9.
- 78 See *New Zealand – by the way: immigrant photographers & photographs of immigrants*, Auckland: Jenner Zimmermann, 1996.
- 79 Quoted in Diana Dekker, “Faces of Islam”, *The Dominion post*, 2 May 2009, p.7.

## CHAPTER TEN

- 1 Kelvin Smythe, “Biography”, [www.networkonet.co.nz/index.php?section=biography](http://www.networkonet.co.nz/index.php?section=biography).
- 2 In several respects this series resembles an earlier one, “the families of New Zealand”, a projected series of ten “social studies resource books”, written and photographed by Robin Robillard, published by Kea Press and distributed by Price Milburn. The first and fourth volumes are centred on Maori families. See Robin Robillard, *A birthday at the lighthouse*, Wellington: Kea Press, 1967; and *Dayle lives in a country town*, *ibid.* Robilliard went on to contribute six titles to Price Milburn’s “Everyday stories: people at work” series in 1974 (see chapter eight).
- 3 Kelvin Smythe and Ans Westra, *Sarah of the valley*, Hamilton: Developmental Publications, 1993, p.5.
- 4 Raewyn Mackenzie and Ans Westra, “The country is my classroom”, *New Zealand geographic*, no.4, October-December 1989, p.36. In the second, expanded edition of his School Bulletin, *The high country run*, John Pascoe writes: “Were it not for the Correspondence School, these high country children, if they could not get away to boarding schools, might have very little education. As it is with radio lessons, visiting teachers, the chance occasionally to meet or even work with other children in their own classes at ‘residential schools’, the Correspondence School gives them many of the advantages of a normal school.” Wellington: Department of Education, School Publications, vol.9, no.7, 1955, p.27.
- 5 Five years earlier, Westra had contributed a story (text and photographs) to the *School Journal* that tells of a boy, Joab Voss, and his family who have emigrated from Holland to a remote part of the West Coast of the South Island. Westra writes, “There are just a few houses in the bay, and a little school-house. The people there built the houses from trees they cut down themselves. There is no electricity, and they cook over fires and on wood-burning stoves. They grow most of their food themselves.” (p.10) The story, as its title indicates, is dedicated to a verbal and visual description of everything involved in making bread the hard way, without modern technological help. This includes collecting driftwood from the beach for the fire needed to bake the bread. See “Joab

- bakes bread”, *School Journal*, Part 2, no.2, 1988, pp.9–14 (and cover).
- 6 *Suggestions for teaching social studies in the primary school volume one*, Wellington: R.E. Owen, Government printer, 1964, p.60
  - 7 Kelvin Smythe and Ans Westra, *Tenga of Waikuta*, Hamilton: Developmental Publications, 1992, p.4
  - 8 The reader is referred to Hone Tuwhare’s comments cited in chapter four on *Washday at the pa* and his poem in *Te ao hou*, also cited there. I reiterate them here. Tuwhare wrote of *Washday*: “...the ‘kainga’ or ‘old place’ (with all the sentiment and values that old places have) is not clearly identified within the context of a pa.” Hone Tuwhare, letter to Ans Westra, 8 August 1964, Ans Westra Archive, CA 000614, box 1, item 4, Te Papa Archives, Wellington. It is something of this sentiment and these values that Tuwhare addresses in his poem, “The old place”, *Te ao hou*, no.48. September 1964, p.5. Below is the last verse of this poem: On the cream lorry/or morning paper van/No one comes/For no one will ever leave/The golden city on the fussy train;/And there will be no more waiting/On the hill beside the quiet tree/Where the old place falters/Because no one comes anymore/No one.”
  - 9 “The living conditions depicted are not typical of Maori life, even in remote areas; there are few Maoris living under such conditions today... If the aim of the publication was to depict a happy Maori family relationship, it is submitted that a more typical, more average family background could have been chosen.” Jane F. Bell (Dominion Secretary, MWWL), letter to Hon. A.E. Kinsella, Minister of Education, 29 July 1964, Department of Education Archive, file E5/1/14.
  - 10 Raymond Williams, *Marxism and literature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977, pp.121–127.
  - 11 Peter Cleave, “Tumanko...words of love in Maori”, unpublished typescript, August 1988, p.16.
  - 12 To recap, Westra’s books with Katerina Mataira are: *Tamariki: our children today*, Wellington: Government printer for the Maori Education Foundation, 1965; *Te tautoko 1: te motopaika*, Wellington: School Publications Branch, Department of Education, 1971; and *Whaiora - the pursuit of life*, Wellington: Allen & Unwin/Port Nicholson Press with the National Art Gallery, 1986.
  - 13 Kelvin Smythe and Ans Westra *Christmas at the Cape*, Hamilton: Developmental Publications, 1994, p.14.
  - 14 Lawrence McDonald, “From the Family of Man to the family of ‘Ans’: Ans Westra’s photographic books for children”, in McDonald (ed.), *Handboek: Ans Westra photographs*, Wellington: BWX, 2004, pp.72–90.
  - 15 Janet Bayly, “‘Ans Westra’ in the realm of textual re-construction(s)”, *Landfall*, no.209, May 2005, pp.124–5.
  - 16 I take the phrase “little themes” from Claude Chabrol, “Little themes”, in Peter Graham (ed.), *The new wave: critical landmarks*, London: Secker and Warburg, 1968, pp.73–77.
  - 17 See John Grierson, “The face of a New Zealander”, in Jonathan Dennis (ed.), *The tin shed: the origins of the National Film Unit*, Wellington: The New Zealand Film Archive, 1981, pp.21–22.
  - 18 The references signaled in the quotation marks used here are: James and Jane Ritchie, *Growing up in New Zealand*, Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1978; the same authors’ *Growing up in Polynesia*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1979, a comprehensive digest of their and others’ research into child development across Polynesia; and the Price Milburn series “Everyday Stories” to which Westra contributed (see chapter eight).

## CONCLUSION

- 1 But in a much gentler manner, without Parr’s caustic gaze. Westra made many of these studies during a trip to Te Hapua, Northland in the summer of 2002. Meremere Penfold, whose links to Westra go back to a 1963 Maori Women’s Welfare League Conference in Rotorua, invited the photographer to a family reunion. Sarah Hunter, “Colouring in”, *NZ Listener*, 30 March 2002, p.53.
- 2 Ans Westra, “Offstage: Fat Freddy’s Drop”, *Staple*, no.10, June/July 2005, p.54.
- 3 For a reproduction of this image, see the cover of *Illusions*, no.42, winter 2010.
- 4 It is clear from the list in the appendices that Westra has had a considerable number of exhibitions since the beginning of the new millennium. The most recent, *Fire* (Bowen Galleries, 2–28 April 2012), is a series of five large-scale digital prints made from negatives, made in 2001, with pigment inks printed on Ilford Galerie smooth pearl 290 gsm, archival laminate. These photographs, including a striking self-portrait (Fig. 58), were shot in the interior of a house destroyed by fire. In an exhibition note, Westra

- writes, "I was particularly struck by the ghostly images the smoke had made as it curled around the pictures on the walls... The direct overhead light created an otherworldly atmosphere." Ans Westra, March 2012.
- 5 Lili Corbus Bezner, *Photography and politics in America: from the New Deal into the Cold War*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1999, p.141.
  - 6 For a brief account of this change, see Lawrence McDonald, "From Holland to Holyoake: film in the 1950s and 1960s", in Diane Pivac, Frank Stark & Lawrence McDonald (eds.), *New Zealand film: an illustrated history*, Wellington: Te Papa Press, 2011, pp.129-30. Interestingly, six years after his departure from the NFU, Stanhope Andrews ("our roving photographer") contributed a photographic essay to *Te ao hou*. See his "People of Tokerau", *Te ao hou*, no.15, July 1956, pp.26-27.
  - 7 Julian Stallabrass, "Sebastiao Salgado and fine art photojournalism", *New left review*, no.223, May/June 1997, pp.133 & 152.
  - 8 For example, in response to reviews of *Whaiora*, she wrote, "A project so complex as a portrait of the Maori people could only be attempted by an outsider." Ans Westra, letter to the editor, *PhotoForum review*, no.29, August 1986, p.4. And, recently, she told Diana Dekker, "I want to maintain an outsider's place. It gives you freedom. If you get involved with people you have to come out from behind the camera." Diana Dekker, "Ans Westra: gypsy with a camera", *Evening post*, 11 August, 2007, p.E2.
  - 9 Steven Webster, *Patrons of Maori culture: power, theory and ideology in the Maori renaissance*, Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 1998, p.10.
  - 10 Ans Westra, unpublished interview with Janet Bayly, 12th and 17th March 1985, transcript, Ans Westra Archive, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa.
  - 11 Dennison Nash, "The ethnologist as stranger: an essay in the sociology of knowledge", *Southwestern journal of anthropology*, vol.19, no.2, summer 1963, p.158.
  - 12 To cite another example, in 1983 Westra contributed most of the photographs to the *New Zealand official yearbook*, a publication issued annually by the Department of Statistics. One of these photographs, included in a section of the book on unemployment, depicts a young man asleep on a bench in a public place. It drew criticism from the Labour Party's spokesman on employment, Peter Neilson, who described the use of the photograph as "insensitive" and claimed that the *yearbook* "appears to endorse the concept of the unemployed as being lazy people responsible for their own misfortune", "'Dole' photo attacked, defended", *The evening post*, 14 December 1983. Westra's defence of her placement of the photograph was reported thus: "Ans Westra ... said the picture was intended to portray the plight of the increasing numbers of young people who could not get work. She did not think the picture implied that the youth was lazy." "Photograph choice criticised", *The Dominion*, 13 December 1983.
  - 13 This is stated in a note on Westra in *Bowen Galleries*, Wellington: Bowen Galleries, 2008, p.46. In response to a question about this book, Westra writes, "That perhaps final book on Maori is still a way off. It is on the end of my plans, still just an idea at this point ...But my environmental book has preference." Ans Westra, email correspondence with Lawrence McDonald, 20 May 2012.
  - 14 James K. Baxter, "The country and the people", unpublished typescript, Ans Westra archive, CA 621/3, box 4, Te Papa Archives, Wellington.
  - 15 C.K. Stead, "Introduction", in Stead (ed.), *New Zealand short stories, second series*, Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1966, p.xv.
  - 16 John Szarkowski, *Mirrors and windows: American photography since 1960*, New York: MOMA, 1978, pp.18-19.
  - 17 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities*, London: Verso, 1983.
  - 18 See Jacques Lacan, "The mirror stage as formative of the function of the I", in *Ecrits: a selection*, translated by Alan Sheridan, London: Tavistock Publications, 1977, pp.1-7.
  - 19 Tony Wilden, *The Imaginary Canadian*, Vancouver: Pulp Press, 1980.
  - 20 Ans Westra, "My world", unpublished typescript for "Ans Westra's world", unrealised project commissioned by Steele Roberts Ltd Publications, 1999, p.2. Copy supplied by author to the *Handboek* project.
  - 21 Paul Ricoeur, "The model of the text: meaningful action considered as a text", *New literary history*, vol.5, no.1, autumn 1973, p.96.
  - 22 Stanley Diamond, "The uses of the primitive", *In search of the primitive: a critique of civilization*, New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1974, pp.216-217.
  - 23 *Ibid*, p.217. The question of the marginal status of the anthropological fieldworker is addressed in Morris

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- Freilich, *Marginal natives at work: anthropologists in the field*, Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 1978.
- 24 Georg Simmel, "The stranger", in Kurt H. Wolff (ed. and trans.), *The sociology of Georg Simmel*, New York: The Free Press, 1950, p. 404.
- 25 Hortense Powdermaker, *Stranger and friend: the way of an anthropologist*, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1966, p.295.
- 26 Tzvetan Todorov, "Knowledge in social anthropology: distancing and universality", *Anthropology today*, vol.4, no.2, April 1988, p.4.



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