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The Silent Centre: Where Are Pakeha in Biculturalism?

Malcolm MacLean (1)

In 1989 my friend Leslie Parr, in frustration at the rather trite comments of a seminar speaker about our need to become bicultural, leaned over and whispered in my ear "I've been bicultural all my life, and that's a long time". She was right, Maori are already likely to be bicultural. It is we Pakeha - New Zealanders of European extraction - who have to become bicultural. Leslie died three years ago. This paper is for her.

In 1992 and 1993, two seemingly unrelated events in antipodean academia brought Leslie's observations into a clear light. The 'Postcolonial Formations: Nature, Culture, Policy' conference at Griffith University in July 1993 featured seven New Zealand members on the organising committee. Given that little is known about New Zealand cultural studies outside the country, the coverage of this conference in Cultural Studies (Bennett and Blundell, 1995) suggests that these academics are the significant movers in the area. Yet only one of these people was involved the New Zealand Cultural Studies Working Group (hereafter NZCSWG), the instigators of New Zealand cultural studies in the early 1980s.

A few months earlier, the NZCSWG's Journal policy statement changed. It had been that '*Sites* will serve as a forum to encourage and develop understanding of cultural questions from socialist, feminist, anti-racist, popular-democratic and other critical perspectives'. This changed in its Spring 1992 issue to the simpler statement that '(w)e publish articles with a predominantly Aotearoa/New Zealand & South Pacific focus on a wide range of cultural debates from a variety of critical perspectives'.

What is it about the New Zealand Cultural Studies Working Group project, even in its later and narrower form as the Editorial Board for the journal *Sites*, that excluded those most involved in the cultural studies project from a leadership role in a major antipodean conference on postcolonialism? At the heart of this question is the long-standing problem the NZCSWG has had with 'race' and ethnicity. In very early issues of the Journal, Paul Spoonley was raising serious questions about the use of the word 'race' (Spoonley, 1984). Generally speaking, New Zealand academia is still stuck in the problem of 'race' relations. Indeed, most discussion of the colonisation of New Zealand is phrased in terms of 'race relations', although some writers seek more appropriate terminology (Thompson, 1984).

The problem for Sites is indicative of a wider problem for New Zealand: its preferred perspectives are positive and/or liberatory. Only in regard to race/ethnicity is the journal's programatic goal negative. It is anti-racist, premised on a desire to stamp out a problem rather than on a vision of a positive social form. Even the new policy statement fails to resolve this problem by skirting the issue and subsuming it into 'a variety of critical perspectives'. Furthermore, as Wood has pointed out, contributors to Sites have consistently had a difficult and problematic relationship with issues of

'race' & ethnicity (Sluka, 1986; Wood, 1988). This is due to a deep seated trend in much of the New Zealand left, as it abandoned its universalist goals, that made it unacceptable for Pakeha to comment on things Maori. The journal's multiple and contradictory uses of ethnicity along with its occasional conflation with nation and nationality exposes the problem of radical pluralism. Identity politics and the language of identity usually only allow one identity to be claimed at any time. This singularity of identity in practice reveals a failure to secure a radical plurality by prioritising a specific experiential being (Hobsbawm, 1996).

Sites simply has not been able to reconcile the rhetoric of its editorial policy with the practice of its contributors, or for that matter, its editors. The contributors, however, are in a difficult position. The notion that Pakeha academics should not be allowed to comment on things Maori in the anti-intellectual climate that is New Zealand is widely held. The reality is that many of the myths of New Zealand are the result of anthropological musings. This makes Maori even more untrusting of Pakeha academics and Pakeha academics even more scared to comment (Webster, 1995: 389). This fear was further entrenched when a scandal erupted around an article by Allan Hanson in *American Anthropologist* in 1989 that suggested that elements of Maori culture were invented. In the sense that Hobsbawm intended it, this may be so, but the degree of political insensitivity shown by Hanson was profound, and the outcry was loud and wide. It is the only time I recall academic anthropology making the Dominion, Wellington's morning daily, let alone an academic debate making the front page two days running. Although I have now left the country, it is with trepidation that I venture out into the world to comment on ethnic politics in New Zealand, and I only do so to say that the discourse of biculturalism is highly problematic.

In the last five or six years the notion of a bicultural goal has entered popular discourse, although the academy and policy makers have been toying with the ideas for some time, and Maori have been becoming bicultural since 1769. The Pakeha elements of the country are still struggling to identify its meaning. By beginning to unravel this problem of meaning, we can begin to expose the premises and problems of biculturalism.

The principal concerns of this paper are emerging Government programs based around the Waitangi Tribunal, as a means for resolving Maori claims to land, languages and other taonga (treasures) guarantied by the British Crown during the 1840s, and issues of iwi (tribal) development. These, with the accompanying policy positions relating to Maori development, problematise and undermine the stated objective of biculturalism by promoting the reinvention of iwi. In the process, there is no requirement to identify Pakeha - the other side of the binary; it remains the empty alterity so that, unusually, the 'Western' is devoid of specificity in the bicultural world.

Iwi development is leading to a splintering of Maori political power. As the iwi become the means of securing access to resources from the state, Maori unity is being undermined by conflict between iwi, noting of course that Maori 'unity' is only very recent. Maori is a post contact concept distinguishing the indigenous from the coloniser, and Maori unity is a social and political objective that has tended to flounder on group interest - the degree of solidarity between Maori is low, along with a low level of national identity. To be Maori counts for little in the Maori life world: to be a member of a particular iwi or hapu (extended family) counts for much more.

The key issue is the political reality that there is no need for New Zealanders of European extraction to become Pakeha. Without that articulated ethnic awareness, there cannot be biculturalism. Barth's 1969 argument that the key to ethnicity is the identification of boundaries still holds true, but the key to the development of bicultural social forms is clear identification of the characteristics of both cultures. Pakeha have already identified our boundaries, we know what we are not: we are not Maori. But how many Pakeha can clearly identify what we are?

I make these observations with full cognizance given to the very partiality of biculturalism in the landscape of New Zealand's ethnic politics. A recent issue of *Sites* saw both Paul Spoonley (1995a) and David Pearson (1995) draw attention to other pivotal factors. Crucially, that the primacy of a binarised cultural politics coincides with the further economic marginalisation of Maori, of women and of Pacific Islanders as the full effects of a decade of economic rationalism hit home. In addition, this predominant binary has reinforced this economic marginalisation and coincided with, as well as contributed to, a move in Maori politics away from trade unions and the Labour Party to an increasing ethnic exclusivity. Furthermore, it has served to obfuscate an increasing ethnic heterogeneity illustrated by emerging debates and concerns over the identity of New Zealanders of Pacific Island origin as well as the growing diversity of immigrants such as the new Asian business migrants and the professionalised former South Africans. The new Asian migration, in particular, has seen the rise of a virulent and ferocious racism, especially in Auckland. That said, biculturalism has become the dominant paradigm of discourses that envisage a new Aotearoa New Zealand.

Andrew Sharp has argued that there are two notions of culture invoked in debates around biculturalism. In the first, cultures are seen as two separate spheres with different ontologies and epistemologies. Under this conception, it is simply impossible to bridge the gap between these ways of knowing. In the second, cultures are seen as complex and fluid organisations of worldviews. For Sharp, biculturalists use both notions at different times:

> at times as ideal realities, separate, incommensurable, and self-justified; at others as ensembles of detailed custom and habitual activity, played upon by current realities and permeable at the edges, capable of absorbing ideas, and people, from the outside. (Sharp, 1995: 119)

It may seem unsound that this crucial element of the debate is so vague, but it is more likely a sign of the confusion over what the goal of biculturalism really is. Sharp reveals this confusion when he identifies three possible biculturalisms: of the self, of public procedure, or as a mode of inter-cultural contact. These differing notions of culture are played out in each form of biculturalism. The problem is that there is nothing even resembling agreement within New Zealand as to which biculturalism(s) are sought.

The pressure on Maori to be bicultural selves is very strong. The Pakeha dominance means that Maori are more evenly spread along the continuum of cultural engagement than Pakeha. The corollary is that the pressure on Pakeha to be bicultural selves is almost non-existent. Pakeha are so dominant that we do not need to learn any other cultural terms of forms to function in the social framework we occupy. Some Pakeha, however, do become bicultural.

The demands for bicultural modes of communication are more powerful in that there are profound public and private gains to be made from such a strategy. They create the space that allows people to become bicultural selves and facilitate the maintenance of public order by allowing members of the polity to relate to one another. These bicultural modes of communication are at the heart of developing bicultural public procedures in that both are required for the creation of an inclusive public life.

The problem for this conceptualisation is that it relies on a considerably more relaxed notion of culture than the ontologically and epistemologically discrete form Sharp identified as widespread. This idea of cultures as separate spheres is deeply rooted in New Zealand. It is at the heart of a Pakeha notion of Maori culture as a clearly identifiable entity or unit, and of a Maori resistance to any sort of cultural critique. Many Pakeha have a notion of a Maori way of doing things that is uniform nation-wide. This ignores variations in social process and in dialect. Many Pakeha, for instance, seem to believe that there is only one haka, that done before All Black matches. They have no idea of the offence that this particular haka causes to South Island Maori. The debate in June and July 1996 over whether this haka should be changed should have made the concern clear

to all. Equally, many Maori have constructed a notion of a pre-determined Maori (or iwi) way of doing things. At Victoria University of Wellington in 1982, a demand by Maori women and other students that they be taught the full range of ceremonial roles rather than the gender specific ones was rejected by the Maori Studies Department because it was at odds with the local way the these roles were played out. Maori cultural modes could not be changed, and it was implied had never changed. This essentialist primordialism is a common defence in debates about Maori, and is widely adopted by colonised peoples (Webster, 1995: 387).

These common sense notions of culture are fundamentally incompatible with biculturalism. Discrete ontologies and epistemologies require discrete social and political systems. This implies two monocultures within one geographical entity. On the other hand, the flexible notion of culture undermines the logic of the bicultural project by seeming to grant intellectual legitimacy to assimilationist or integrationist arguments. Sharp is right to identify that advocates of biculturalism use both notions of culture. It seems that they do so because practice demands definitional flexibility.

The issue appears clearer when it comes to the socio-political formations that flow from and influence public policy. The incorporation of Maori social forms into the state presents serious problems in three areas. A program of Maori development through local control and the delivery of services through iwi is highly divisive. Firstly, it depicts iwi as uniform and united: this is a widely held authoritarian view of Maori social organisation rather than the more accurate fluid and flexible structure. Secondly, there is a problematic cultural position of Maori vis a vis playing the Pakeha system: the subsumed issue of cultural capital. Finally, it forces and requires dissension between Maori.

There is a dual problem for iwi: some of their formal functions are due to assets returned as consequence of resolution of claims under Articles I and II of the Treaty of Waitangi - those that dealt with sovereignty and governance - while some functions are due to devolution of tasks associated with Article III that guarantees the full rights of British citizenship. The National Government's abandonment of Article III devolution (in 1990/91 with the publication of *Ka Awatea*, the new strategy for Maori Affairs policy, and the 1991 repeal of the Runanga Iwi Act, 1989) still presents new sorts of problems with respect to iwi organisation: how does the administration of the delivery of services funded by asset management relate to the state services provided by taxation (Sissons, 1995; Sullivan, 1995)? Despite this move away from generalised devolution, in April 1996 the Parliament passed the Te Runangani o Ngai Tahu Act which gives the Ngai Tahu iwi autonomy over its affairs as a means to revive stalled talks seeking agreement over the recommendations of the Waitangi Tribunal in regard to the Ngai Tahu claim to disputed areas of the South Island/Te Waipoumanu.

The notion of devolution to the iwi assumes that they are a political entity compatible with Pakeha forms. It seems to rely on a widely held notion - the result of preconceived anthropological notions during the early to mid twentieth century - that iwi have a hierarchical and centralised organisational form (Webster, 1995: 395-7). This is an inaccurate perception. It is important to stress the distinction between the still functioning Maori society, and Maori life in the Pakeha world. The basic unit of Maori society is the whanau, the family, while effective social contact seldom extends beyond the hapu, the extended family. For the most part, the political leader of the iwi is of the same social standing as the leader of any other whanau or hapu. It is only at times when the iwi becomes politically active that its leaders gain greater social status and become rangatira (chief) or ariki (paramount chief) rather than kaumatua (male elder). Decisions are made by consensus, and leadership is ensured by being able effect that consensus. The politics are not as flexible as Melanesia's attained status system, certain people and families have greater claims to leadership through their higher ascribed status, but that greater claim is no guarantee of leadership being

either attained or kept. Furthermore, affiliation to a number of iwi can be claimed through marriage and other family connections. An individual, or a whanau, then becomes a nexus through which a myriad of connections to various hapu or iwi can be claimed. The problems in devolving powers and responsibilities to iwi should be obvious in terms of the controls and policy framework required by an economically rationalist government such as that seen in New Zealand for over a decade.

There is not only a major problem in constructing a solid interface between the two political structures involved in this process. There is also a question of demands on Maori leadership. Maori who have attained success in the Pakeha education system and have standing in the Pakeha world as a result have enormous demands placed on them. Even though Pakeha do not seem to have recognised the problems of attempting the articulation of discrete political systems in the way iwi based development requires, Maori clearly have. As a result, Maori with Pakeha credentials and Pakeha cultural capital are crucial to the success of this process. Young people are often supported through tertiary education by a whanau or hapu to provide that group with the skills to engage in the Pakeha world with some hope of success and advancement. The vast majority of Maori University students study Maori Studies, Law and History - usually in combination. Over the last ten years there has been an increase in the number of business majors. These young people are usually in University study to provide their hapu with a base to engage in the Pakeha world. Maori make up nearly 15% of the population, and nearly 25% of the under 25s, yet represent at best 2 to 3% of the University population. Overall, Pakeha are 2.5 times more likely to have some form of tertiary education. In Universities in particular, using 1987 as a base figure, Maori participation rates would have to have increased by 370% by 1997 to match that of the total population (Benton, 1988: 294). The stress this places on young Maori is astounding, although we often find them working alongside and giving advice to older Maori leaders and providing specific skills that may otherwise be lacking or very expensive.

The third strand is the problem of inter-iwi competition over the allocation of resources. Perhaps the best example of this is the debate over the allocation of quota in the Sealord fishing deal. As a means of settlement of a claim to fishing rights taken to the Waitangi Tribunal by the Muriwhenua people of North Auckland, the Crown proposed to buy the commercial fishing company Sealord on behalf of the yet to be established Maori Fisheries Commission. Maori would then be allocated shares in the company, and thereby a portion of profits. The trade off was that Maori would have no further claim to commercial fisheries through the Tribunal. The upshot was struggle between various iwi over how the shares were to be allocated and the criteria to be employed in determining allocations. The most obvious problem involves Ngai Tahu in the South Island/Te Waipoumanu. They are a small iwi numbering only a few thousand yet have a traditional area similar in size to most of the rest of the country. Other iwi held that it was unfair that they should have a portion of the fisheries deal commensurate with their land area when there were far more Maori in the North Island/Te Ika A Maui with equally pressing needs.

For many Pakeha this debate was proof of their belief that Maori were simply invoking their tribal claims for self gain and that they had little interest in the overall interests of 'Maoridom'. This further entrenches Pakeha political power and is the most profound challenge to biculturalism yet to emerge. This challenge lies not in the way Maori and Pakeha talk past each other, but in the sort of biculturalism Pakeha have adopted as a goal. In the early 1960s, as a consequence of the Report on the Department of Maori Affairs by J K Hunn, there was an official change in New Zealand's racial policy from assimilation to integration. Judith Simon has argued (Simon, 1989: 26) that this implied equality of social power obscures asymmetrical relations. The same argument can be made for biculturalism. In a widely quoted and invoked article, Balibar has argued that we are seeing the emergence of a neo-racism which he termed differentialist racism wherein it is held to be harmful to abolish frontiers because there is an incompatibility between life-styles and traditions (Balibar,

1991). It is disturbingly easy to read Pakeha acceptance of a bicultural model devoid of any notion of power sharing as this differentialist racism. This reading is reinforced by Sharp's identification of a notion of discrete cultures.

The Maori advocacy of biculturalism is premised on a notion of power sharing, which Pakeha simply do not or can not accept. The official Pakeha ideology holds that equality exists, so concessions to Maori or changes to improve their position are not systemic changes but modifications to meet individual needs or problems. Tim McCreanor (1993) has unravelled a typical speech by Doug Graham, Minister for Treaty Negotiations, to show how the rhetoric of the Pakeha state is designed to create the impression of action while ensuring that power remains firmly within the grasp of the Pakeha who gained control towards the end of the last century and have held it ever since. This discourse has centralised Maori grievance but marginalised the instrument legitimating that grievance, the Treaty of Waitangi. In doing so, the problem becomes the inaction of current powerbrokers, not the injustices of the past that produced the grievance. This subtle step admits the reality of the current problem, appeals to fairmindedness and decency to find a remedy and makes the liberal Pakeha the saviour. It denies the issue of sovereignty. As such, it individualises the problem and seeks a series of discrete solutions that see the answer in individual and one-off propositions to which groups of Maori respond. The form denies that one solution can be a precedent for any other.

The dissolution of Maori unity opens the way for the ascendancy of a multiculturalist framework at direct odds to biculturalism as notions of tikanga Maori (the Maori way) are replaced by tikanga iwi (the way of this iwi). The New Zealand multicuturalism is derived from the Maori othering of Maori such that Pakeha are legitimately able use the dissension and differentiation to do nothing. Many Pakeha, especially those who currently hold political power and the huge number of others who want them to retain it, would deny that the actions of the Pakeha polity is designed to retain control. They would argue precisely the opposite, that it is designed to cede power. Yet McCreanor's argument that Doug Graham denies that there is a group challenge to Pakeha control by constructing Maori claims as individual and discrete is sound.

The notion that government policy is leading to the reinvention of iwi and that the dissension between iwi is having the effect of limiting change beneficial to Maori is brought into sharp relief by debates surrounding the Ngai Tahu claim to the Waitangi Tribunal. Toward the end of the round of hearings investigating the legitimacy of that claim, a group in the south west of the South Island/Te Wai Pounamu, known as Waitaha, announced themselves as an iwi separate from Ngai Tahu with their own set of claims and grievances. That these claims were over part of the area and resources covered by the Ngai Tahu claim clearly presented a political problem for both the Tribunal and Ngai Tahu.

Understandably, Ngai Tahu sought to deny the legitimacy of the Waitaha claim. Speaking at the 1991 New Zealand Historical Association conference, the Chair of the Ngai Tahu Trust Board, Tipene O'Regan, made this clear:

> Ngai Tahu are the people that claim traditional manawhenua (authority over and from the land) over the vast majority of Te Waipounamu, the South Island of New Zealand. We are Ngai Tahu (Kai Tahu). The origins of our tribe lie in the North Island, and before that, in the islands of Eastern Polynesia. The story of those origins is the story of migration and the New Zealand chapter is one of steady movement southward, triggered by a variety of motives: conflict, marriage, the need for resources, even the simple zest for discovery. There are three main streams of descent which flow together in those histories to make us the tribe known as Ngai Tahu. In historical order, these steams are, Waitaha, Mamoe and Tahu. (O'Regan, 1992: 6)

O'Regan then spent much of his Beaglehole Memorial Lecture showing how and why Waitaha have no claim to independent existence. His argument is simple, Ngai Tahu conquered Waitaha (and

Ngati Mamoe) incorporating them into their group. He argued that Waitaha had been overrun some time in the early 16th century and under tikanga Maori have lost any claim to independent identity. Waitaha, however, had been involved in the administration of some state programs and if O'Regan is to be believed, saw the opportunity for more gain.

The historical evidence is certainly aligned against Waitaha. There is little to suggest that they maintained an independent existence at any time since the arrival of Cook (1769), and the main South Island land deals in the 1840s were certainly negotiated between the Crown and Ngai Tahu. Under the circumstances it is highly unlikely that Waitaha could ever convincingly argue a Waitangi Tribunal claim. They are, however, attempting to convince us that the Ngai Tahu claim is invalid in its relation to their patch. If O'Regan is to be believed, Waitaha have acted as full members of Ngai Tahu for the last 400 or more years. Yet there now emerges a reinvention of Waitaha. In that part of the South Island/Te Waipounamu there are massive resources at stake. A fully successful Ngai Tahu claim could see them with a significant role to play in the forestry, tourism, fishing and pastoral industries. These involve millions of dollars of assets. That in itself is a powerful incentive to rediscover a lost identity.

At issue here is not the legitimacy or otherwise of the Waitaha claim. Of more concern are the effects of these debates on questions of biculturalism and ethnic profile. At the same time as we have the othering of Maori by Maori, Pakeha seem to remain unaffected by an official state policy of biculturalism. To be sure, it is noticed that Government departments now have Maori and English names (and the Inland Revenue Dept is now Te Tari Taake, or Te Tari Take Take: the names are often parodied), but little else seems to have changes in the lived experience of many Pakeha.

For many Pakeha, the Waitangi Tribunal is a very real threat that will disrupt the 'way things have always been' simply because a bunch of Maori radicals made a lot of noise and liberal parliamentarians bowed down to their demands. The effects of the Tribunal are far more profound than that: as Keith Sorrenson has argued, it is leading to a "radical reinterpretation of New Zealand history" in terms of what is seen to have happened, and the sources we use to construct that history (Sorrenson, 1987). Most Pakeha, however, never see that process and only engage with the public debates around findings as reported on the TV news. Government policy, in these cases, is seen as allowing the Tribunal to continue to function. Ironically, this threat of disruption often leads to the exclusion of Maori from Aotearoa New Zealand in that the discourse of the Board room, public bar and street corner often holds that assets are being taken from New Zealanders to be given to Maori. The Tribunal has the support of a tiny minority of Pakeha. During the 1993 election campaign, Prime Minister Jim Bolger had to assure the Pakeha electorate that all Maori claims would be settled by the year 2000 when he knew full well that the sheer weight of numbers of claims made that impossible.

As the Tribunal, the key site of public sector debates around biculturalism, remains a threat to and outside the experience of Pakeha, the major problem at the heart of the bicultural program creeps to the fore. The rhetoric of New Zealand debates around ethnicity is that there is an emerging bicultural nation, yet unresolved within those claims is the problem that biculturalism relies on an articulated Pakeha ethnicity. There is, of course, no need for Pakeha to ever begin that articulation.

For Brass, 'ethnicity is a sense of ethnic identity...consisting of the subjective, symbolic or emblematic use by a group of people...of any aspect of culture, in order to create internal cohesion and differentiate themselves from other groups' (Brass, 1991: 19). For Brass and for Barth, ethnicity is to ethnic group as class consciousness is to class. If we accept the argument he goes on to advance, that ethnicity is a tool for elites to secure further political power and influence, there is no need for Pakeha to ever articulate the terms of their ethnicity - they, or is that we, hold that

power anyway.

The focus on the Waitangi Tribunal for the portion of this paper that has just been completed is symptomatic of the problem at the heart of a way forward in New Zealand ethnic politics. The shift to even pose the question of the characteristics of a Pakeha ethnicity further exposes the problem at the heart of these debates. In large part, the ethnic politics of New Zealand have focussed on the problems of the state. Through an institutional racism based critique of state practice, change has been sought to make social service delivery more compatible with tikanga Maori. This politics continues the equation of Pakeha moves to build a new Aotearoa New Zealand with anti-racism and seems to presuppose the state to be democratic and inclusive. It perpetuates a Pakeha ethnicity based on guilt and shame for the sins of our colonial forebears. We should carry the responsibility for reparations, but while Pakeha ethnicity is framed as means of atonement and gaining absolution, there will never be a move towards a biculturalism based on power sharing, let alone any sort of multi-culturalism.

Some have moved beyond this politics of guilt that remained the motive force for many Pakeha involved in anti-colonial struggles. Spoonley, whilst willingly admitting the ideological ambiguity of the label Pakeha, points to a number of key potentialities in the construct (Spoonley, 1995a: 53-8; 1995b). Although there have been very few explicitly self-critical discussion of Pakehaness, (for example, see Pearson, 1986; Nairn, 1986; Spoonley, 1986a, 1986b; McCan, 1992) Spoonley suggests that there are elements encouraging awareness. He points to three key factors: the clear public resurgence of Maori with whom Pakeha must interact, the revisioning of Pakeha history so we see ourselves in new light, and the weakening of ties with Britain as a primary point of identity formation. Although there are few engaged in this debate, the very use of the term Pakeha may signify a fundamental shift in the creation of a fictive ethnicity of the dominant group. Some have gone further than most in this shift. The Department of Social Welfare recently launched a staff development package exploring practices that are ethnically responsive, including an understanding of the cultural world and practices of Pakeha (Spoonley, 1995a; 54).

However, the term itself is far from accepted. Pakeha is still a hotly contested term. Letters to the editor columns often feature New Zealanders of European extraction writing of their offence at being called Pakeha. At the height of the commemoration of the 150th signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, conservative columnist Frank Haden wrote in the Dominion Sunday Times a furious and irate column entitled 'Don't Try to Call Me Pakeha' in 1990 (April 22). These protests are often based on claims that the origin of the word is offensive, that it means 'white pig', and that it is derisive. For others, the objection is because it is argued that we are all New Zealanders, and the Maori have been granted special rights that amounts to a form of apartheid.

Those who object to being called Pakeha seem to be manifold, others clearly accept the label and the rhetoric of biculturalism probably as a means to inoculate it of any subversive potential, while a few Pakeha see it as a means to building a post-colonial politics (2). For many Maori, those who actively support their iwi in their efforts to improve their lot and those active in politics to reform the state, biculturalism seems to be a means to secure their te tino rangatiratanga, their sovereignty, through some form of power-sharing. This, however, requires the active and genuine involvement of both parties to the Treaty of Waitangi: Maori and the Crown.

These contradictory frames of reference reveal the confusion inherent in the advocacy of biculturalism by Pakeha. Just as Sites continually failed to adequately grasp the meaning and relevance of the race/ethnicity/bicultural nexus, the contradictions in the small patch of the South Pacific that is Aotearoa/New Zealand remain inconclusive while the question of just who is becoming bicultural remains unresolved.

Just what does it mean to be Pakeha? While state sponsored biculturalism remains the path offered by paternalist Pakeha to justify affirmative action programmes or to facilitate Maori social and economic change rather than as a path towards significant socio-political rearrangements in Aotearoa New Zealand, this question remains irrelevant. Until Pakeha confront colonial relationships and a colonialist legacy and are required to change towards a whole new Aotearoa, official biculturalism remains tokenistic and assimilationism by another name. In short, biculturalism is still overwhelmingly a one way path: despite the name changes, Pakeha and our institutions are still heavily concentrated at one end of the continuum of cultural engagement. Under these circumstances, Pakeha remains no more than a label applied to a weak fictive ethnicity. Until Maori and Pakeha use biculturalism in the same way it seems likely to remain a shield for the preservation of colonialist structures. Social justice suggests that biculturalism without power sharing is meaningless. Good politics suggests that republicanism and the revision of both the methodologies and content of Pakeha history is a path to the future.

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2. The term post-colonialism is not intended to imply that there is no longer a series of colonial relationships, but to suggest that there is a political push to move beyond the socio-poitical relations of colonialism by both critiquing and replacing the institutions and practices of colonialism.

Glossary

Aotearoa - Maori name for New Zealand, often used as symbol of post-colonial objective

ariki - chief of chiefs, lord, noble, first born; leader of the iwi

haka - fierce rhythmic dance usually done before entering battle

hapu - extended family, largest unit of regular (daily or weekly) interaction

iwi - tribe, largest unit of political organisation (although iwi may form confederations known as waka)

kaumatua - male elder; leader of the whanau

manawhenua - authority over and derived from the land

Pakeha - New Zealander of European extraction, the word is probably derived from patupaiarehe or fair-skinned supernatural beings

rangatira - chief; leader of the hapu

taonga - treasures

tikanga - customs, obligations, criteria. To refer to tikanga Maori is to invoke a Maori way of doing

things.

whanau - family, the basic unit of Maori society.

Waitangi Tribunal - advisory body to Government investigating native title claims. Formed in 1975 with powers backdated to hear claims since 1840 in 1984. Currently has over 350 claims yet to hear.

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