Home and Homecoming in Māori and Pacific Literature: 1966 - 2004

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PhD

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English and Related Literature

September 2019

Abstract

This thesis addresses the depiction of home and homecoming in a selection of short stories and novels by Patricia Grace, Witi Ihimaera and Albert Wendt, arguing that home and homecoming have emerged as key tropes in Māori literature from its earliest beginnings. This thesis builds on the argument that the Second World War brought about a significant change in the living conditions of Māori in New Zealand within just one generation, with many Māori moving away from traditional life to live in towns and cities. Many Māori experienced a profound loss of home and of their traditional community. I argue that this spurred a nostalgia for home and community that had to be written back into existence; the development of Māori literature, modernity, and the concept of home are closely interlinked.

The term 'home' and its different facets and meanings in postcolonial literature have been partially explored by scholars such as Susheila Nasta and Rosemary George. However, little attention has to date been paid to the critical motif of homecoming and return migration. This thesis aims to address this gap in criticism by focusing on the moment of homecoming in selected short stories and novels. The overarching question this thesis poses is whether for the protagonists in these short stories and novels, a homecoming is possible, or whether it proves ultimately beyond reach. If this is the case, what follows then? A redefinition of one's idea of home, and consequently, one's identity? Or an acceptance that there is no going back? That in order to define a new sense of home one must create it anew.

By forming a close reading of these short stories and novels against their historical context, and exploring how historical, political and cultural change at the time interlink with them, my thesis explores how the examination of the concepts of home and homecoming can contribute to our wider understanding of Māori and Pacific literature.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

There are many people who have over the years supported me and made it possible for me to go to university in the first place, to discover my love for Māori and Pacific literature, and to continue this journey at Oxford with a Master's, followed at the University of York with a PhD.

First and foremost, I would like to thank two people, who will probably not expect to be named here – my grandmothers, Gerda Schneidemesser and Anneliese Brüggmann. One of them was displaced and had to flee her home, and the interest in my research topic – home and homecoming – had been awoken many years ago, when at the age of thirteen I did a history research project and wrote about her fate as a refugee from Eastern Prussia in the aftermath of the Second World War. Ideas of home, homelessness, the loss of home and how to rebuild a new home in a different place have preoccupied me ever since our conversations, and ever since we were tracing the route of her journey as a refugee from what used to be Prussia and is now Poland to Northern Germany on maps together.

I would like to thank my supervisors, Prof Dr David Atwell and Dr Alexandra Kingston-Reese, for taking me on as their supervisee mid-way through my PhD, and for their support, encouragement and advice over the years. The conversations with them and their feedback on the early drafts of my chapters have been invaluable for shaping my research questions and arguments, and for being able to bring all my research together in the form of this PhD thesis.

The main argument of my thesis builds onto and is strongly linked to the work of current postcolonial scholars, whose work I greatly admire. Among them are, most notably, my supervisor Prof David Attwell, and Prof Elleke Boehmer, Prof Janet Wilson, Prof Mark Williams, Prof Selina Tusitala Marsh, Dr Alice Te Punga Somerville, and Dr Michelle Keown. Further thanks go to Dr Michelle Kelly, who supervised my MSt dissertation at the University

of Oxford and encouraged me to apply for a PhD in the first place, as well as Dr Heidi Thomson and Dr Dougal McNeill at Victoria University of Wellington, who taught me during my undergraduate degree and kindly invited me to present part of my research in a talk when I visited Wellington on a research trip in 2017. All of these I have met, at some point of my studies, in person, and all of them had a profound impact on shaping my research and scholarly work since I was an undergraduate, and some of whom have, throughout my undergraduate and postgraduate studies, been supportive mentors and teachers to me.

I would like to thank Patricia Grace, Witi Ihimaera and Albert Wendt – three authors that I greatly admire, and whose work I have been studying for many years now, and yet I always seem to discover something new whenever I reread it. All of them kindly agreed to meet with me when I was in New Zealand in 2017, and the conversations with them about their work and their lives are memories that I still cherish very much.

I would like to thank my students, Darren Simpson and Daniel Lunnon-Wood, whose words of encouragement, support and good sense of humour during the last year in which I was writing up my PhD thesis was much appreciated. Whenever I had a slightly stressful day, I could count on them to cheer me up a bit or make me some coffee – and I am very grateful for that.

I would like to thank my boss Azemina Holmes, for her understanding in times when my PhD and my teaching duties were competing for my time and attention, and for giving me leave to take some much needed time out in the last two months before handing in to focus on my thesis.

I would like to thank Katja Urbatsch, for her persistent encouragement, first when I was applying for an MSt at Oxford, and then when I was thinking about doing a PhD. These conversations seem a long time ago now, but they were crucial at the time for me to find the self-confidence and courage to continue. I would like to thank especially Katja, but also

everyone else who encouraged me to apply for a scholarship, and wrote a reference on my behalf or helped me to navigate the application process, and I would like to thank the Heinrich Böll Foundation without whose generous financial support this journey would have been a longer, harder, and very different one.

I would like to thank my friends, Jonathan Wilcox and Timothy Ogene – exactly five years have gone by now since we first met in our MSt class in Oxford, and I am so glad that we did, and have somehow managed to continue being in the same place and continent now and then to share a drink and a chat. Your support, encouragement and friendship means the world to me.

I would like to thank Rachel Maltas and Samuel Nouvellon, for their support, for always having an open ear when I needed someone to chat with, and for your friendship. Navigating the ups and downs of the PhD journey would have been a lot harder without friends like you on my side.

I would like to express thanks to my parents – for their support, and for creating a home with memories that I cherish.

I would like to thank Dr Julian Lethbridge, who first taught me when I was an undergraduate, and encouraged me to aim high and to apply for Oxford in the first place, and to do a PhD after that – without his words of encouragement and kind support I would not have ventured onto this journey in the very first place.

My very special thanks go to Dr Jessica Clement, friend, PhD coach, bridesmaid, and so much more, without whose kind advice, many encouragements, availability in moments of need, and loyal friendship this journey would have been a much lonelier and far more difficult one. Jessica, you have gone above and beyond to support me, and it was so, so valuable for me to have someone at my side who has navigated the ups and downs of a PhD before, and was able to guide me through it, and understood what I was going through.

And, last but not least, I would like to give very special thanks to my husband, Alexander Hardie-Forsyth, without whose support all this would simply not have been possible. There were moments when I was very close to giving up – you encouraged me to persevere, you believed in my ability to do this, even when I myself was not so sure. For that, your unfailing support, your ability to cheer me up when I most needed it, and for your willingness to listen to me talk about the same books and authors for four years I will always be eternally grateful!

Oxford, September 30th, 2019

Author's Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other University. All sources are acknowledged as references.

Introduction

I am often asked where I am from – well-intentioned curiosity – and I find that I give different answers depending on who I am talking to. I might talk about where I was born, where I have lived, or where I belong. They all seem to provide fragments of what home is to me.[1]

—Anna Gailani

Anna Gailani is one of twenty-two New Zealand writers who have each contributed an essay to the collection *Home: New Writing* (2017).[2] Originally from Baghdad, Iraq, she had to leave with her family when it became too dangerous for them to stay and spent many years as a refugee in Greece. After the 2003 US invasion in Iraq, the Greek government started to deport Iraqi refugees and she decided to emigrate to New Zealand.[3] She has since qualified as an immigration advisor, and is now the director of an immigration, translation, and cultural consultancy agency called Mideast Modern which supports refugees and migrants in New Zealand. In this capacity, she gives cultural training seminars on the Middle East and speaks publicly about her experience of being a refugee, and the challenges that especially refugees from the Middle East face, as well as 'her experiences of loss, discovery and the quest for a sense of safety and belonging.'[4]

Displacement through natural disasters and climate change – for example, rising sea levels in the Pacific region – but also the results of violent conflicts and the refugee crisis are contributing on a worldwide scale to the fact that currently more than 70.8 million people have been forced from their homes worldwide, more than ever before. According to the UNHCR,

[1] Anna Gailani, 'A Token of Patience', in *Home: New Writing*, ed. Thom Conroy (Auckland: Massey University Press, 2017), 158.
[2] Gailani, 158–64.
[3] Staff Reporter news@whanganuichronicle co nz WhangaChron, 'Anna Gailani in Whanganui to Speak about Refugee Journey', *NZ Herald*, 31 August 2018, sec. Whanganui Chronicle, https://www.nzherald.co.nz/wanganui-chronicle/news/article.cfm?c_id=1503426&objectid=12116883.
[4] WhangaChron.

'we are now witnessing the highest levels of displacement on record', even higher than during the height of the refugee crisis in 2015, and higher than the number of refugees at the end of the Second World War, which presented the record high so far.[5] These are the official numbers – the dark figures are likely higher. With so many people having to leave their homes, immigrating to places where they hope to build a better life, the question is: what does home mean in this context? Are these people hoping to build a new life and a new home for themselves, their families elsewhere? Or are they just waiting out the current situation, hoping to be able to return home again one day?

As Thom Conroy, the editor of *Home: New Writing*, argues in his introduction, 'the notion of home is more relevant and yet more fragile than ever before'.[6] More relevant, because questions of home, homelessness, displacement, and questions concerning migration, migrants and refugees are questions we are confronted with in our everyday life, in the news, and at home. Fragile, because the steep increase in these numbers of people who have had to flee their homes (from 65 million at the time Conroy wrote his introduction just two years ago to almost 71 million while I am writing mine) shows us that a home, something most of us take for granted, is something that is so easily lost and destroyed.

This thesis explores an important and underrepresented part of the story of postcolonial literature – of a change that came inevitably, first slowly but then quite abruptly after the Second World War, and brought about a complete reversal of the living conditions of Māori in New Zealand within just one generation; of the experience of a profound loss of home, and a traditional community that was seen as disappearing and therefore had to be written back into existence. In this way, the development of Māori literature, of modernity and the concept of home are closely interlinked.

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[5] United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 'Figures at a Glance', UNHCR, accessed 23 July 2019, https://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html.
[6] Thom Conroy, ed., *Home: New Writing* (Auckland: Massey University Press, 2017), 12.

It is striking that the early stories by Patricia Grace and Witi Ihimaera, the first Māori authors whose stories were published in book form, all have a rural setting and stress the importance of community and the relationship of Māori to the land. This is emphasized through the return of the young Māori who has been alienated due to having gone away to the city, but is now returning and reconnecting with their home. They present Māori, Māori culture and Māori protagonists as written by Māori who are very much part of their community, and *Pākehā* (white New Zealanders) and their culture do not feature, or only in the margins, which was a novelty in the literature of the time. It is important to differentiate here between homecoming within a national space, such as it was for example the case for young Māori, who moved from their home villages to the cities, or generally for Māori moving from rural to urban areas looking for better work opportunities and between migrants returning to another place or country that was previously a family home. Whereas we can very much find the former in the works of Grace and Ihimaera, the concept of homecoming in Wendt's writing is a different one, as the experience of home and homecoming he writes about is one of migration and diaspora.

Similar developments and stories can be found in other regions of the world that underwent a similar process of colonisation and then decolonisation, for example in African literature. In her article 'An Invisible Presence: Three Māori Writers.' Jaqueline Bardolph links the writer Chinua Achebe and his novels to Grace and Ihimaera, and argues that: 'The first works, designed to express identity, follow a well-known pattern. The first novels, short stories and plays did what Chinua Achebe's novels did for the Africans: they present the full dignity of a culture from the inside, insisting on its rational organisation and the coherence of its world-view.'[7] Whilst I partly agree with her argument, I would argue that it is not quite as simple.

[7] Jacqueline Bardolph, 'An Invisible Presence: Three Maori Writers.', *Third World Quarterly* 12, no. 2 (1990): 132.

Through the motif of homecoming, the earliest stories show an awareness of the tensions on the part of the authors that are present in the community at large. Far from insisting on a coherence, they subtly stir an awareness in the reader that the stories and their, on first view, neat and rural settings, are actually far more complex and set the scene for something else: a rewriting and redefining of Māori identity that, once set in motion, would change the political, cultural and historical landscape of New Zealand forever and demand profound changes in its wake. Through choosing the vehicle of the literary, these authors take the tools that they were taught in schools and universities, the New Zealand education system of the 1940s and 50s, and upend traditional literary modes. Whilst they themselves were only given books with British characters and settings to read as children, they realised the power that literature has for a people's self-identification, and created a literature that had Māori at its centre, with the explicit purpose for Māori to see themselves represented on a cultural stage where so far they had not been given a space.

Home is such a universal topic – something all of us relate to. Yet it is such an elusive concept; as soon as you try to define it, or narrow it down, it becomes slippery, and difficult, because it depends so much on the context, the story, the background. To define and contextualise it is something I am doing in this thesis. The idea of home I reference is very narrowly defined for the purpose of my thesis – namely, home as it is represented in a very specific selection of Māori and Samoan literature. Yet, the parameters of my thesis pose many difficulties when trying to get closer to this term, to narrow it down and define it. In each of my chapters, therefore, the term home makes its appearance in a different way, and I will define it as it appears in that context. However, I am not just analysing the idea of home – but specifically the motif of homecoming, which is a predominant theme in contemporary Māori and, as I will also discuss in this thesis, Samoan literature.

This is a thesis about homecoming, and therefore also about home. It looks at the representation of homecoming and home in literature. More specifically, it is about the depiction of homecoming and home in world literature in English from the Pacific region. I would like to begin my introduction by drawing the borders of this study. There are many great writers and works that are concerned with the timeless and intercultural themes of homecoming and return migration, works that examine and question what home is, and what it represents. For this thesis, I have selected the works of three authors for closer analysis who approach this theme in a distinct, thought-provoking and novel way.

Home and homecoming have emerged as key tropes in Māori fiction from its earliest beginnings for different reasons. One of them was the fact that, due to the rapid urbanisation, and the ensuing loss of a cultural grounding in the typical Māori village community, Māori authors started writing about what was at risk of being lost, or had already been partly lost, namely their home, their community, their sense of identity and belonging. As Powhiri Wharemarama Rika-Heke underlines: '[A]lmost universally, we spoke of the experience of leaving our rural land and, inherent in this, our culture, for the cities. They [the stories and poems] were invocations of loss, filled with regret, nostalgia, and resignation'.[8] A second one was the fact that many Maori left their rural villages and moved to the cities happened in the aftermath of the Second World War, in which many Maori had fought for their country. 'The events of the war', as Chadwick Allen underlines in his study *Blood Narrative* (2002), 'spurred these men and women to pursue their longstanding efforts to assert cultural and political distinctiveness with renewed vigour.'[9]

[8] Powhiri Rita-Heke Wharemarama, 'Margin or Center? "Let Me Tell You! In the Land of My Ancestors I Am the Centre": Indigenous Writing in Aotearoa', in *English Postcoloniality: Literatures from around the World*, ed. Radhika Mohanram and Gita Rajan (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1996), 153.
[9] Chadwick Allen, *Blood Narrative: Indigenous Identity in American Indian and Maori Literary and Activist Texts* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 6.

New Zealand Essays on Home

In New Zealand, two essay collections have been published in consecutive years and feature essays by the country's finest and most famous writers and scholars, centring on the questions of space, place and home. In addition to *Home: New Writing* (2017), there is a collection called *Extraordinary Anywhere: Essays on Place from Aotearoa New Zealand*, edited by Ingrid Horrocks and Cherie Lacey published a year earlier in 2016. Why has this concern with home and space, that of course has always been part of literary culture, seem to have suddenly to resurfaced? Why the form of the essay? What does it tell us about larger questions concerning New Zealand literature and literary scene and conceptions of home? And especially the question of Māori homes, or a sense of belonging for Māori belonging and its histories. These are questions which I explore throughout my thesis.

The form of the essay allows, of course, for very personal insight and narrative and emphasizes the personal experience. It allows, as Martin Edmond elegantly puts it, 'the use of the cognisant self as the instrument by which and through which we make our inquiries. This doesn't mean the self is the focus of inquiry; far from it.'[10] The personal essay allows an individual to approach a large and complex, multi-layered topic from a personal angle. This angle and perspective draws the reader in, lets them follow the writer's thoughts and ideas, get invested in a personal story, and explore, in that way, topics that are not just personal, but also universal in their nature.

Extraordinary Anywhere (2017) opens with a quotation from Rebecca Solnit's essay collection *The Faraway Nearby* (2013):

> What's your story? It's all in the telling. Stories are compasses and architecture; we navigate by them, we build our sanctuaries and our prisons out of them, and to be without a story is to be lost in the vastness of a world that spreads in all directions like arctic tundra or sea ice. […]. Which means that place is a story, and stories are geography.[11]

[10] Ingrid Horrocks and Cherie Lacey, eds., *Extraordinary Anywhere: Essays on Place from Aotearoa New Zealand* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2017), 214.
[11] Rebecca Solnit, *The Faraway Nearby* (London: Granta Books, 2014), 5.

While Horrocks and Lacey do not clearly spell out the links to the introduction of the collection, it serves to create a tight mental connection between the ideas of story and of place, which the authors return to at different points later in their introduction. In total, the collection consists of seventeen essays, two of which are written by the editors themselves. They are grouped under three larger subheadings, the first one is 'Any place might be extraordinary if only we knew it'. The essays grouped under this subheading focus on single locations such as the cities of Christchurch and Napier, or Brancepeth Station in the Wairarapa. The essays in the second section – 'You take place with you as you go on' – focus on multiple places, loss of places, displacement. Other topics and essays in the third section, 'The meshing of thought and world', tackle the ideas of virtual and global space. The collection finishes with a responsive essay by Martin Edmond titled 'PlaceTime' under its own heading 'Speculative Geographies'. These subheadings read a bit like grand gestures, trying to create a larger framework for a number of essays that, though generally connected by the larger theme of being about place and space, are very individual in tone, subject and style. Authors include renowned writers and scholars, such as Alice Te Punga Somerville, Tina Makareti, Harry Ricketts, and Lydia Wevers.

In their introduction, Horrocks and Lacey try to establish parameters and to bring together all the different topics found in the essays of their collection, indicating that what inspired them to put it together was being moved by 'the intensity of feeling so many of us have about our various homes' and the awareness of 'how many other people were also writing, talking and thinking about the distinctiveness of particular places rather than the nation-state'.[12] It is important to them to underline that *Extraordinary Anywhere* 'showcase[s] a group of New Zealand writers and thinkers not especially focused on New Zealand as such' but who are instead 'interested in how lives are actually lived in very specific places, and how these lives –

[12] Horrocks and Lacey, *Extraordinary Anywhere*, 9.

and places – have changed over time.'[13] According to them, 'in these essays, the relationship between the local and the global emerges as a fulcrum for understanding life in 21st-century Aotearoa New Zealand, superseding the imaginary, and potentially exclusionary idea of 'the nation' or brand New Zealand.[14] Yet by then mentioning some slightly more stereotypical perceptions of New Zealand in the following paragraphs, they slightly complicate their statement and reinforce notions of New Zealand that for a non-Zealander might not even be that central – i.e. the idea that New Zealand is 'defined predominantly by its natural landscapes and environments.'[15] Or that 'New Zealanders, or at least Pākehā New Zealanders, are not famous for their eloquence, particularly when trying to speak about living here.'[16]

This is quite a sweeping statement and can easily be refuted – many writers come to mind who did exactly this, like Katherine Mansfield, or, ironically, some of the authors whose essays are brought together in the collection itself. What the authors hint at in this sentence, and clarify in a more nuanced explanation later is the inherent paradox and bitter irony that we find in New Zealand when discussing ideas of home: that Māori writers and an indigenous literary tradition, begins by dealing with home – yet in this collection, again, the focus is on Pākehā writers, and how they struggle to formulate a sense of home. After all, of the seventeen essays in this collection, only two are by Māori writers, Alice Te Punga Somerville and Tina Makareti, who have both published a number of books, essays and articles, and are relatively well-known in the New Zealand literary and academic scene – there are no exciting, new Māori voices and their concerns around home found in this book. Yes, Māori as the *tangata whenua* (people of the land) are mentioned and considered:

> For many Pākehā, settlers and newer migrants, the strength of emotion connected to New Zealand, to a sense of home here, doesn't find easy expression. Many of us are aware that not being tangata whenua means that we don't have a natural, or prior, claim on this place, and so there can be an obstacle

[13] Horrocks and Lacey, 10.
[14] Horrocks and Lacey, 10.
[15] Horrocks and Lacey, 10.
[16] Horrocks and Lacey, 11.

> between emotion and language – we can find ourselves coming up short, at times inarticulate. It can be hard to say what New Zealand means to us, to make certain claims about place, without inadvertently displacing Māori […].[17]

Yet at the centre is, undeniably, a certain anxiety that Pākehā New Zealanders feel about their presence in New Zealand, and how it affects their sense of home.

All seventeen essays deal with ideas of space, place, identity and home in their own, unique ways – and in his response essay, Martin Edmond manages to bring many of the topics back together and makes some very acute observations that are relevant for my own ideas of place, space, and home which I will explore in the course of this thesis. Most poignantly, he writes: 'There is an acute melancholy to be found in the contemplation of the ways in which places change over time; and an equal, and opposite, melancholy to be experienced in those places that do not change, or do not appear to do so. Both speak of exile. […]. The point remains: as soon as we begin to write place, we also begin writing time, even if that time is just the history of a self.'[18]

The other essay collection which deals with questions of space, place and home and features writers from New Zealand was published a year later, in 2017. Titled *Home: New Writing*, its focus is firmly not just on questions of space and place, but also on different notions of home. Twenty-two writers have contributed their essays to this volume – and notably there are quite a few well-known names that already featured with a different essay in *Extraordinary Anywhere* (2016). Among them are Tina Makareti, Ian Wedde, Ashleigh Young, Martin Edmon and Horrocks. Horrocks also provided feedback on earlier versions of Conroy's essay (who is the editor of *Home*).[19] Only two of the authors, Tina Makareti and Paula Morris, are Māori, and one, Selina Tusitala Marsh, is Pacific Islander. Not just from this outset, but also from the essays themselves it becomes clear that this collection is almost to be read as the

[17] Horrocks and Lacey, 11–12.
[18] Horrocks and Lacey, 214.
[19] Conroy, *Home*, 301.

continuing of a debate that was first, if not put in motion, at least put together and framed with clear parameters by its editors in the earlier published collection *Extraordinary Anywhere* a year before. The publisher, Nicola Legat, would like *Home: New Writing* to be read as the beginning of something new and exciting.[20] In her preface titled 'the art of the essay' she introduces the collection as

> […] the debut volume of what will be an annual publication of the best of New Zealand essay writing by this country's most accomplished writers, both established and emerging. The series marks Massey University Press's serious intention to help further an intelligent national cultural conversation, to showcase the work of New Zealand's many fine writers and thinkers, and to support the art of the essay.[21]

These are very ambitious aims. The focus here is, more so than in *Extraordinary Anywhere*, on fostering a national debate, and it firmly places Massey University Press, which was only founded in 2015, firmly its centre. Conroy describes the collection in the following way:

> *Home* includes work from some of New Zealand's finest authors, so I expected a high calibre of writing, but what has surprised me is the tremendous range of the work. In the essays of this collection, home is political, personal, melancholy, euphoric, around the corner, and tucked away at the furthest ends of the earth.[22]

Aside from the writers already mentioned, it features prominent New Zealand writers and academics, such as Selina Tusitala Marsh, Morris and Elisabeth Knox, writers who have shaped and are continuously shaping the literary landscape and debate in New Zealand. The essay collection shows that the meaning of home, its many facets and the myriad topics that are connected to it, such as homesickness, homelessness, being a stranger, and outsider, and many more are topics of continuing importance for New Zealanders in today's world. Conroy refers

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[20] Legat was the founding publisher of Massey University Press in 2015. The editorial board of Massey University Press is comprised of seven members, among which is Ingrid Horrocks who also contributed an essay to *home: new writing*. (see: About | Massey University Press', accessed 30 July 2019, https://www.masseypress.ac.nz/about/.)

[21] Conroy, *Home*, 9.

[22] 'The Feeling of Home Put into Words', Stuff, accessed 30 July 2019, https://www.stuff.co.nz/manawatu-standard/lifestyle/94073120/the-feeling-of-home-put-into-words.

to *Extraordinary Anywhere* in his introduction, and expresses his early worries about the difficulty of Pākehā writers to articulate their sense of home and belonging with regards to New Zealand which the editors of *Extraordinary Anywhere* describe.[23] And that his intention for the essay collection was explicitly 'to spark new dialogue about what an expanding sense of home might mean to us here and now in Aotearoa.'[24]

As Conroy underlines in his introduction, quoting Brian Turner, one of the contributors to this essay collection, 'the word *home* registers more powerfully than just about any other.'[25] He states that the essay collection seeks to shine a light on the strange contradiction that seems to be an inherent characteristic of depictions of home: it is a universal topic, yet also undeniably subjective. It is central to our definition of self yet 'for all its familiarity, something in our conception of home remains secret, at arm's length, irretrievably lost.'[26] This is a paradox that I encountered at various stages of my research.

Why is it that through the form of the essay, the topics of home, place and space are revisited, re-examined, and presented in these collections? What does it tell us that in times when so many people are being displaced and have to actively set out to migrate or flee from their homes to a different place to make a new home, these topics suddenly receive a focus in non-fiction writing? To me, this is not a coincidence, but there is a connection here. I argue that, in times when suddenly we feel that the structures and the status quo we have been used to in our lives are being threatened — we, consciously or unconsciously, question ourselves, and search again for these things that so far have made our lives stable. There is a mirroring going on, a search for a deeper meaning, for the meaning of home while in the news we are watching other people lose theirs, or read about people being denied their status as citizens that before nobody questioned – and realise that it could easily have been ourselves instead. The

[23] Conroy, *Home*, 13.
[24] Conroy, 13.
[25] Conroy, 122.
[26] Conroy, 16.

paradox that is prevalent in both collections is: Why do New Zealand writers seem to have such a focus on questions of home and belonging? It indicates that there is an awareness that, even though they are citizens of a country, the history and ensuing colonisation of Māori within New Zealand makes this topic and questions related to it much more complex.

The First Generation of Māori and Pacific Authors

The three authors whose work I will analyse in my thesis belong to the first generation of Māori and indigenous writers in the Pacific, they were the first ones who wrote novels and short stories that had Māori and Samoan protagonists at their centre – and thus changed the literary landscape of New Zealand, and beyond, forever. All three of them have written short stories and novels, and their oeuvre spans a wide range of themes. They complement each other concerning their styles, their choice of topics, they are all very different writers, and yet there are similarities and common concerns throughout their works. The texts that I have chosen for analysis for my thesis are a selection of the first published short stories by Grace and Ihimaera, namely 'Tangi' from *Pounamu, Pounamu* (1972), 'A Way of Talking' and 'Parade' from *Waiariki* (1975) as well as the story 'The Homecoming' by J.H. Moffat, published in *Te Ao Hou* in 1966. These are followed by three novels, *Tu* (2004) and *Cousins* (1992) by Grace, *Tangi* (1973) by Ihimaera and *Sons for the Return Home* (1973) by Wendt, the last two being respectively the first novels of both authors.

I have chosen these texts because they all depict the motif of homecoming and home in various facets and, by doing so, tell part of a larger story and represent the rise of Māori and Pacific literature. The term 'home' and its different facets and meanings in postcolonial literature have been partially explored by scholars such as Susheila Nasta and Rosemary George. However, little attention has to date been paid to the critical motif of homecoming and return migration. This thesis aims to address this gap in criticism by focusing on the moment

of homecoming in selected short stories and novels from a specific postcolonial region, namely the Pacific, with a specific focus on indigenous literature. While in most cases in the primary literature that I am analysing the protagonists are initially glad to be home, there follows a differing degree of alienation and a sense of displacement. Therefore, the overarching research question I pose in my thesis is whether a homecoming is actually possible – or whether it proves ultimately beyond reach. If this is the case – what follows then? A redefinition of one's idea of home, and consequently, one's identity? Or an acceptance that there is, perhaps, no going back – but that the idea of finding home and returning home could also mean not just returning back, but going forward, and creating something new?

My research demonstrates that postcolonial literature can be read anew through the lens of the specific motif of homecoming. I use as my main analytical technique a close reading of the chosen literature alongside historical documents that provide critical context and widen the scope of discussion. For each chapter, I historicise the literature under discussion, thereby contextualising different conceptions of home and the moment of homecoming. The aim of my thesis is to offer a new perspective on the field of postcolonial literature by contributing close reading and detailed research to a currently overlooked phenomenon within a select body of literature.

My thesis focuses on the writing of the first generation of Māori and Pacific authors, but I extend the narrative to the present day by naming some additional contemporary Māori and Pacific authors who have been influenced by this first generation of Māori and Pacific authors in my conclusion. These authors are, for example, Alan Duff, Selina Tusitala Marsh, Robert Sullivan, and other authors both from New Zealand and the realm of the Pacific whose work would also merit attention. My discussion returns to these writers in the conclusion of my thesis, in order to show how their work is very much connected to and follows in the footsteps of Grace, Ihimaera and Wendt but is also different in focus. Their work demonstrate

a new perspective on questions of home and belonging in New Zealand and the Pacific in the 21st century by moving away from questions of Māori versus Pākehā to a more multicultural picture of New Zealand society. However,there is a simple reason for why there work could not be included in detail.. In this thesis, I concentrate on the first generation of Māori and indigenous writers, whose work was printed as short stories and novels. By focusing on three writers, Grace, Ihimaera, and Wendt, this thesis clearly shows parallels but also highlights differences between how these writers approach and write about the concepts of home and homecoming. This thesis focuses on the three authors, who were the first generation of Māori and Pacific authors, and their selected works. They were the first generation of indigenous writers who wrote about what it meant to them being Māori or Pacific Islander in New Zealand, and whose short stories and books were printed and thus made available to a large, international audience.

The main argument of my thesis builds onto and is strongly linked to the work of current postcolonial scholars. Among them are, most notably, Attwell, and Elleke Boehmer, Janet Wilson, Selina Tusitala Marsh, Alice Te Punga Somerville, Michelle Keown and Chadwick Allen.[27] When trying to define some of the admittedly more theoretical concepts such a postcolonialism, indigeneity, or modernity that are important for the theoretical framework of my thesis, I have decided to work with their definitions and I am grateful for the groundwork they have done, and I am building upon the rhetorical frameworks they have provided to add something new to this very particular body of knowledge.

This applies especially to the concept of modernity and how it tightly interlinks with the emergence of a Māori literature in the moment of fundamental societal change, the

[27] See for example: Michelle Keown, *Pacific Islands Writing: The Postcolonial Literatures of Aotearoa/New Zealand and Oceania* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Alice Te Punga Somerville, *Once Were Pacific: Māori Connections to Oceania* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2012); Elleke Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphors* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Chadwick Allen, *Blood Narrative: Indigenous Identity in American Indian and Maori Literary and Activist Texts* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002)

perceived loss of home and a traditional way of living, and thus the urge to rewrite and recreate it in literature – all this will be explored in more detail in the following chapters. The paradox and bitter irony that we find here is, as mentioned earlier, that Māori literary tradition begins by depicting, asserting and dealing with concepts of home and homecoming when in fact Māori are the indigenous people of New Zealand. The question is: Why is this so? Why do we have this paradox in New Zealand? And what historical forces or processes have driven this? I argue that this happened because, through the process of colonisation Māori were supressed, partly displaced from their own land and their identity and rights were supressed. Allen puts this very concisely when he argues that 'indigenous minority assertion of prior claims to land, resources, languages, and cultures – above all, of the right to maintain some level of cultural and political distinctiveness – appear to threaten settlers' constructions of an available New World and to call into question settlers' attempts to assert their own cultural distinctiveness from Europe.[28] Tellingly, the 1960s and 1970s not only saw a rise in Māori literature, but above all land rights movements in which Māori demanded the return of land the rightly owned, and which had been appropriated, for example during the Second World War.[29]

Further questions that I will examine in my thesis are, among others: What are the implications of modernisation for notions and conceptions of home? How has modernisation influenced Grace, Ihimaera and Wendt and their writing? Why do these writers use the aesthetic forms of the short story and the novel, and to what purpose? How is their depiction of home linked to modernity and how is this situated in the larger story of world literature and postcolonial literature? Was this a project Māori and Pacific authors consciously set out to create, or did it just happen? This thesis examines the underlying connection between the motifs of homecoming and home, contemporary Māori literature, modernity and the formation of a

[28] Allen, *Blood Narrative*, 9.
[29] Ranginui Walker, *Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou - Struggle without End* (Auckland: Penguin, 1990), 207.

new indigenous identity through literature and through writing their identity into being. It seeks to show that these fields relate to each other and to demonstrate that, by using their tradition to address themselves to a modern future, the underlying premise in the works of Māori and Pacific writers is precisely this: to create and re-imagine a Māori community, represented in literature.

As Attwell points out in his work *Rewriting Modernity* (2005), 'Modernity is, of course, a notoriously baggy concept that resists narrow definition.'[30] Rather than trying to redefine it here, I would like to let my analysis be guided by Attwell's poignant observation that

> modernity is the currently governing concept of what it means to be a subject of history. It refers not only to technology and the emergence of an administered and industrialised society, but also to that fluid but powerful system of ideas that we inherit from the bourgeois revolutions on Europe in the late eighteenth century – ideas such as autonomy, personhood, rights and citizenship.[31]

As Attwell points out in *Rewriting Modernity*, 'in South Africa, modernity is inextricably linked to colonialism' and further argues that, building on a point that, as Attwell underlines had been made by Robert Young, 'there is no escape clause from the encounter with modernity, unless one is to accept isolation or eccentricity.'[32] In this thesis, I argue that concepts that Attwell points out can, indeed, be seen in more generalised terms, and are applicable here as well.

At the heart of this thesis stands the work with primary literature which, so far, has been overlooked in the discourse of postcolonial literature, even though it deserves a firm place in the centre of the debate.[33] Seeing that there are many scholars out there who have been doing groundbreaking work in the field of postcolonial studies for decades, and identified, defined

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[30] David Attwell, *Rewriting Modernity: Studies in Black South African Literary History* (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2005), 3.
[31] Attwell, 3–4.
[32] Attwell, 4.
[33] This argument is, among others, supported by Emma Scanlan and Janet Wilson; see: Emma Scanlan and Janet Wilson, 'Introduction: Pacific Waves: Reverberations from Oceania', *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 54, no. 5 (2019): 577.

and established the most important concepts in the field, it is not in the interest of my thesis to try and redefine these. Rather, my thesis aims to contribute to the field of postcolonial studies by building onto these observations and concepts by showing how they relate to a field that has so far been overlooked or little written about: the field of Māori and Pacific literature. This thesis seeks to demonstrate where, in the story of postcolonial studies, Māori and New Zealand literature stands, and how observations made by others postcolonial scholars also apply. Of course, this is something that always needs to be treated with caution. Each region, each culture within the large field of postcolonial studies has its own, very unique setting, as Bart Moore-Gilbert astutely argues in *Postcolonial Theories: Contexts, Practices, Politics* (1997).[34] However, there are parallels and common links to be found on a larger, very generalising scale, as mentioned earlier, especially between the emergence of African and Māori literature. These links manifest throughout my chapters in places where I think they will contribute to our wider understanding of Māori literature and to the overall place of Māori literature in the field of world literature and postcolonial literature. One link we can already see from the outset is in the field of publishing. The novel *Tangi* was first published by Heinemann Reed in 1973, and in 1989 it was re-published as part of the Pacific Writers Series. The Pacific Writers Series was modelled on the Heinemann African Writers Series. The Heinemann African Writers Series provided, as James Currey argues, 'good serious reading at accessible prices for the rapidly emerging professional classes as the countries became independent.'[35] In that way, it arguably helped to establish not only local authors, but also a growing local audience.[36] The Pacific Writers Series was meant to do something similar for the Pacific realm and to back new local writing, and to give a distinct space to Māori and Samoan authors. The idea to create a Pacific

[34] B. J. Moore-Gilbert, *Postcolonial Theory : Contexts, Practices, Politics* (London: Verso, 1997), 9.
[35] James Currey, 'Africa Writes Back: Heinemann African Writers Series — A Publisher's Memoir', in *Books Without Borders, Volume 1: The Cross-National Dimension in Print Culture*, ed. Robert Fraser and Mary Hammond (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2008), 159.
[36] For a detailed account of the series and its impact, please see: James Currey, *Africa Writes Back: The African Writers Series & the Launch of African Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

equivalent was first pushed by Phoebe Meikle, and she insisted on making the first novel by Samoan writer Albert Wendt, *Sons for the Return Home* the first book in the new series (this will be discussed further in chapter four).[37] Five years later, the first novel by Patricia Grace, *Mutuwhenua: The Moon Sleeps* (1978) was also published in the Heinemann Pacific Writers Series. As Gavin McLean underlines, the Pacific Writers Series made an effort to bring in 'old titles by established authors (Noel Hilliard's *Maori Girl*, Witi Ihimaera's *Tangi*) as well as new novels […].'[38] This shows how important questions around publishing houses, editorial decisions and the establishment of the Writers Series are in order to foster not only Māori and Pacific literature and authors, but also a readership.

The texts I have chosen for analysis in my thesis are, as previously mentioned, all linked to each other because they all share the motif of homecoming. In almost all of them, specifically the motif of the funeral, the tangi, plays a major role – sometimes as the focus of the story, as in 'The Homecoming' or 'Tangi', and sometimes as part of the larger story arc, as for example in *Cousins* or in *Tu*. According to Māori mythology, death in itself is a homecoming, a return to the ancestral land of Hawaiki (this will be discussed in more detail in chapter two and chapter three). Most Māori *iwi* (tribes) possess stories that have been passed on from generation to generation about how their ancestors first came to New Zealand from Hawaiki, the lost homeland, by *waka* (canoe). According to Māori oral traditions, the 'Great Fleet', consisting of ten *wakas*, arrived in what they named Aotearoa, the land of the long white cloud, because as such they spotted it on the horizon. In that way, Māori can trace their ancestry back to belonging to a specific *waka*, to the group of their ancestors who arrived together from Hawaiki in the same *waka*. As Moura-Koçoğlu emphasizes, 'stories of Māori arriving from legendary Hawaiki reinforce the Polynesian minority's claim to Aotearoa New Zealand as a native place,

[37] Paul Sharrad, *Albert Wendt and Pacific Literature: Circling the Void* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 39–40.
[38] Gavin McLean, *Whare Korero: Best of Reed Writing* (Auckland: Reed Books, 2007), 19.

repositioning the tangata whenua as rightful owners through time.'[39] She stresses that 'at the time [*Tangi*] was written, a reinforcement of Māori epistemology, mythology and mores [sic] was a central means of resisting dominance of Pākehā culture.'[40] However, this claim could be challenged, as 1973 is too early for a resistance discourse. Much of the writing of this period was very much 'pastoral', as Ihimaera himself states. Reina Whaitiri concludes that Ihimaera's early short stories and his novel:

> Gently force the reader to see the world through Māori eyes and to feel through the very skin of the characters. […] Pākehā readers learn, for the first time, of the intellectual, emotional and spiritual life, the inner existence of Māori.[41]

At the time, this was something radically different.

Māori society is structured according to four different levels: *whanau*, *hapu*, *iwi* and *waka*, with *whanau* denoting the smallest unit, the family, *hapu* the larger family, *iwi* a number of joint families or a tribe, and *waka* being the largest overall unit to which all members of different tribes belong that can trace their ancestry back to a common ancestor. [42] In her article 'The Religious Significance of Māori Migration Traditions', Margaret Orbell illustrates that 'for each tribe, or group of related tribes, there is a different ancestral canoe and a different story', and that these stories, passed down from one generation to the next, are of great significance to each tribe and their sense of identity. [43] Like many myths and legends, oratory, poetry and chants, these stories were transmitted orally among Māori and recorded in writing by European explorers and anthropologists in the second half of the nineteenth century. At

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[39] Michaela Moura-Koçoğlu, *Narrating Indigenous Modernities: Transcultural Dimensions in Contemporary Māori Literature* (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2011), 84.
[40] Moura-Koçoğlu, 84–85.
[41] Reina Whaitiri, 'Maori Literature: The Power and the Beauty', in *State of the Māori Nation: Twenty-First-Century Issues in Aotearoa*, ed. Malcolm Mulholland (Auckland: Reed, 2006), 87.
[42] For more details about the different levels please see Toon van Meijl, 'Maori Socio-Political Organization in Pre- and Proto-History: On the Evolution of Post-Colonial Constructs', *Oceania* 65, no. 4 (1995): 304–22. However, the author also voices criticism about this model, arguing that it is a very 'Westernised' approach towards Maori society.
[43] Margaret Orbell, 'The Religious Significance of Maori Migration Traditions', *The Journal of the Polynesian Society* 84, no. 3 (1975): 341.

around this time, first speculations were made as to where Māori, the inhabitants of New Zealand, had come from to settle in New Zealand. This question has occupied Māori and Western scholars alike, and there are a number of theories, some of which, as for example Andrew Sharp's theory that New Zealand was discovered by accident, have been refuted by now, but had a major influence on the perception of Māori and their historic origin for decades since it was made in the mid-1950s and was generally accepted by Māori scholars of his time, such as Elsdon Best and Sir Peter Buck.[44]

The question of whether Hawaiki once existed and its potential geographical location has occupied many colonial officials, ethnographers, anthropologists and scholars, such as Percy Smith, Surveyor General and Commissioner of Crown Land, and co-editor of *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, since the 19th century. For the purposes of this chapter, the question whether Hawaiki is a 'real' geographic place is not of prime concern, and I will leave this to other scholars to debate. What is of importance for my argument is the notion of Hawaiki as the mythical homeland, a place of belonging which is not just a myth but tangible enough so that all three authors whose work I am looking at refer to it in their work.

Another link between the three authors and their work is the importance of oral culture in their writing. Mythology and oral culture are important in the conception of home and their form plays a specific role. Like many other indigenous people, both Māori and Samoans draw on a rich heritage of oral traditions. Similar to other countries and indigenous cultures that experienced colonialization, a written system of their language drawing on the Latin alphabet was established by the European colonizers; it was especially European missionaries who had a keen interest in translating the bible into the respective languages, and printing it to spread the word of God.[45] New Zealand and Pacific literature, especially the more contemporary

[44] Orbell, 342.
[45] Linda Crowl, 'South Pacific', in *The Oxford History of the Novel in English: Volume 12: The Novel in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the South Pacific Since 1950*, ed. Coral Ann Howells, Paul Sharrad, and Gerry Turcotte, Oxford History of the Novel in English (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 61.

works, are widely available to readers and scholars alike, and through the medium of film some of them have reached a global audience. Among them are *The Whalerider* (1987) by Witi Ihimaera, which was made into a movie directed by Niki Caro in 2002, the novel *Once Were Warriors* (1990) by Alan Duff, and *the bone people* (1983) by Keri Hulme, which won the Booker Prize in 1985. However, the oral literary forms and mythologies, which form an important part of Māori and Samoan culture are far less known.

As Ruth Finnegan argues, '[T]he concept of an *oral* literature is an unfamiliar one to most people brought up in cultures which […] lay stress on the idea of literacy and written tradition', the reason being that 'such forms do not fit neatly into the categories of literate cultures, they are harder to record and present […].'[46] In her ground-breaking study *Oral Literature in Africa* (1970), Finnegan makes a more general argument about oral literature as a literary form before analysing specific examples from African languages. I would like to build upon Finnegan's argument, drawing clear parallels to Pacific oral culture. The central aspect of oral literature is that it is performed and needs a performer as well as usually an audience. The performance as such is central to the form because without the performance, aspects that come alive in the storytelling – the performer's voice, intonation, facial expression, interactions between the performer and the audience – are lost. According to Finnegan, 'the printed words alone represent only a shadow of the full actualization [of the poem/story] as an aesthetic experience for poet and audience.'[47] Another vital feature of oral literature is the art of improvisation, of variation, the temporal aspect of storytelling and performance. It is in their nature that stories and oratory are performed and retold and passed on from one generation to the next. In the act of retelling, therefore, a bond is created through the person telling a story and the audience who is listening and observing.

[46] Ruth Finnegan, *Oral Literature in Africa* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 1.
[47] Finnegan, 3.

Oral literature as a literary form has existed in New Zealand and the Pacific long before European conquerors journeyed into those parts of the world and introduced its people to written literature and print culture. Oral literature forms a distinct genre that influences the literature written by Māori and Pacific Islanders considerably and is part of the written literature that these writers have produced since the late 1960s. In the conclusion of her study *Oral Literature in Africa*, Finnegan stresses that 'African oral literature […] is part of the literature of the world and should be considered as such', and that this literature is a central part of African societies, and that only by considering it as such, we will be able to gain an insight into these societies.[48] Her book focuses, of course, on Africa and various genres of African oral literature – but I would like to take her concluding statement further and propose that a similar argument can be made about oral literature from the Pacific. The reason why I am relying on a work on oral literature from Africa is because hardly any work in literary studies to date has been undertaken on oral literature from New Zealand and the Pacific. Societies that have an oral culture have often been equated by colonizers or anthropologists as being 'primitive' and 'simple'; however, as Finnegan points out, '[P]eople have found it only too easy to slip […] into the assumption that 'non-literate' involved something like our concept of 'illiterate' (i.e. someone who in a literate community may be regarded as having failed to master the ways of that particular culture), and, further, that 'simple' implied simple intellectually or artistically as well as simple in technology' and that '[N]either of these assumptions is in fact logically or empirically defensible.'[49]

Issues around land and citizenship are also central topics that occur throughout the work of Grace, Ihimaera and Wendt and strongly relate to ideas of home and homecoming, as will be shown in the following chapters. These issues can be traced back to 1840, when the Treaty

[48] Finnegan, 519.
[49] Finnegan, 519.

of Waitangi was first signed between Māori and The Crown. Due to the fact that the English and the Māori versions differ from each other, a number of aspects of the Treaty have been disputed ever since. These, as Claudia Orange underlines in her ground-breaking study *The Treaty of Waitangi* (2015), evolved especially around the question of sovereignty, and the ownership of land, because 'in English it ceded to Britain the sovereignty of New Zealand.'[50] However, the majority of Māori chiefs signed the Māori version, which ' failed to convey the meaning of the English version, and the Treaty negotiations did not clarify the difference.'[51] Therefore, the different parties that signed the Treaty had a different understanding about the rights and the powers they were given.[52]

Current political debates in New Zealand show that the Treaty is as relevant now as it was almost 180 years ago, when it was signed in Waitangi, on February 6th, 1840. In recent years there have been a number of important publications that highlight the meaning of the Treaty of Waitangi for New Zealand in the 21st century – for example *Weeping Waters: The Treaty of Waitangi and Constitutional Change*, edited by Malcolm Mulholland and Veronica Tawhai, which emphasises 'the need for a Māori opinion to be articulated and distributed.'[53]

The concept of sovereignty is one of the main aspects of the Treaty that has been criticised and challenged by Māori ever since it was signed. The English version of the Treaty proclaims that Māori ceded all powers of sovereignty to the Crown, but the Māori version does not say this. According to the Māori version, Māori retained their *tino rangatiratanga* (sovereignty) over their *taonga* (treasures, possessions). This specific issue will be explored in more detail in chapter two of this thesis. The motif of homecoming is a core motif in the novels and short stories I have chosen to analyse in my thesis. However, scarcely any academic studies

[50] Claudia Orange, *The Treaty of Waitangi* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2015), vii.
[51] Orange, vii.
[52] Orange, vii.
[53] Malcolm Mulholland and Veronica Tawhai, *Weeping Waters: The Treaty of Waitangi and Constitutional Change* (Wellingron: Huia Publishers, 2010), 2.

have been done so far focusing on return migrants, with a particular lack of their representation in literature. One of the few works in that field is Marjory Harper's book *Emigrant Homecomings*, published in 2005, and it is of importance in relation to my chapters, because, as John MacKenzie points out in the introduction, 'emigration studies have been a major historiographical concern for many years.'[54] Harper underlines that this is a subject of global relevance, since 'understanding return migration can help us understand the contemporary world'.[55] Harper's book offers one of the first studies of the phenomenon of returns, return migration and homecoming. In *Home Truths* (2002), one of the groundbreaking works on home in a postcolonial context, Susheila Nasta argues that 'diaspora is as much about settlement as displacement'.[56] This suggests that finding and creating a home can be tied to an initial sense of homelessness, of loss and dislocation – which ties in with broader arguments around modernity and its effects on Māori and Pacific literature that I formulate based on the close reading of the selected works by Grace, Ihimaera and Wendt throughout my thesis. In my thesis, I also examine Harper's claim that return migrants have always been, and continue to be, agents of change.[57] This is one of the underlying themes that this thesis aims to address. Furthermore, taking into consideration Rosemary George's argument that 'imagining home is as political an act as is imagining a nation' and the way this links to Salman Rushdie's term 'imaginary homelands' and Benedict Anderson's concept of 'imagined communities', I want to examine the link between home and between the creation of a sense of community, and its underlying political importance. [58]

[54] Marjory Harper, ed., *Emigrant Homecomings: The Return Movements of Emigrants, 1600-2000* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), x.
[55] Harper, 29.
[56] Susheila Nasta, *Home Truths: Fictions of the South Asian Diaspora in Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), 7–8.
[57] Harper, *Emigrant Homecomings*, 29.
[58] Rosemary M. George, *The Politics of Home: Postcolonial Relocations and Twentieth-Century Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 6.

As a starting point for my observations I am using Rushdie's essay 'Imaginary Homelands' from the essay collection *Imaginary Homelands* (1982). In his essay, Rushdie evokes the memory of his childhood home in Bombay and argues that 'it's my present that is foreign, and [that] the past is home, albeit a lost home in a lost city in the mists of lost time'.[59] Rushdie exemplifies that writers in his position, who are exiles, emigrants or expatriates 'are haunted by a sense of loss', mostly by the loss of their home, but also the sense of a past that is forever lost. He underlines that 'the past is home, albeit a lost home […] in a lost time'.[60] Rushdie moreover stresses that by writing about it, it will never be quite possible to capture the true sense of home, and to 'reclaim precisely the thing that was lost', because by recreating it in literature 'we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands […] of the mind'.[61] Since the publication of this collection, the term 'imaginary homelands' has been used by scholars such as Nasta and George as a central term in referring to the fact that when writing about home from a situation of dislocation, exile or diaspora, often what is described or written about is not the actual home as it used to be.[62] Rather, it is a personal memory that is intertwined with a profound sense of loss.

According to Rushdie, home is not just a geographical space or a specific spatial point of reference, such as the house where he grew up in Bombay, but there is a temporal dimension and a strong sense of nostalgia to the notion of home as well. He describes it as a memory and thus connects it with the notion of the past, of something gone that exists no longer – but still lives on, in personal memory. By writing about it, a fictional space is recreated in literature. Rushdie, of course, writes about home and homecoming in the context of transnational migration and diaspora, and as someone who cannot simply return home. Nevertheless, I would like to take this argument further and contend that in order to create such an 'imaginary

[59] Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991* (London: Granta Books, 1991), 9.
[60] Rushdie, 9-10.
[61] Rushdie, 10.
[62] For example, Nasta, George and Gurr.

homeland' a writer need not be in exile, or diaspora, but could instead be dislocated within his or her own country, or simply feel alienated and dislocated. In the case of Ihimaera and Grace, we can see different forms of being alienated or dislocated within their community and country, but they are not writers who find themselves in exile. Still, the way they evoke a sense of home in their writing has sometimes the notions of an 'imaginary homeland', as they write about a home that they feel very much connected to because of the memories they have of this place. Wendt is closer to Rushdie in his observations about home and homecoming than to Ihimaera and Grace, as he, too, experiences home and homecoming in the context of transnational migration and diaspora. This observation will form part of my argument, and I relate back to ideas of home as memory and the function of writing about home and the idea of imaginary homelands throughout my chapters.

I frame my research culturally-historically as well as theoretically. One of the concepts that will be critically examined is the idea that literature can be seen as a 'space' where indigenous/colonized people were, and are, able to re-assert their own identity. As I argue in my first chapter, the emergence of Māori literature, written by authors such as Patricia Grace and Witi Ihimaera who form part of the 'first generation of Māori writers' coincided with a time of rapid urbanisation, modernisation and social change in New Zealand.[63] After the Second World War, there followed a period of rapid urbanisation in New Zealand, as many Māori left their rural homes to find employment in the cities.[64] Whereas 'only 11.2 % of Māori were urban dwellers in 1936, this rose to 25.7 % by 1945, and to 81 % by 1996'.[65] This led to a reversion of the ration of rural-to-urban Māori and fundamentally changed the structures

[63] John McLeod, *The Routledge Companion to Postcolonial Studies* (London: Routledge, 2007), 216.
[64] Michelle Keown, *Pacific Islands Writing : The Postcolonial Literatures of Aotearoa/New Zealand and Oceania*, Oxford Studies in Postcolonial Literatures in English (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 138.
[65] Michael King, *The Penguin History of New Zealand* (Auckland: Penguin Books, 2003), 473.

within Māori communities.[66] It is as if, spurred by the impeding loss of their culture, Māori writers started to write about it in order to preserve their culture; literature provided the space and the means to do this.

This links to a variation of the motif of homecoming in different ways, as I will show at the beginning of chapter one: through the establishment of the bilingual magazine *Te Ao Hou* (1952-1976), which was dedicated to a Māori audience and which was an attempt to acknowledge Māori culture and to give it a space within New Zealand society, a forum was created for Māori in print culture *outside* of their traditional rural communities. In this way, it reacted to an increasing Māori urban population and allowed for an identification with Māori culture through the medium of print, thus transcending the problem of physical dislocation and enabling Māori to engage with their culture, their traditions and their language. It is no coincidence that the first issue of the magazine *Te Ao Hou* was published during a time of dramatic economic and social change in Aotearoa/New Zealand that strongly affected Māori communities. The establishment of the magazine can be seen as a certain kind of 'homecoming', of reconnecting with the roots of Māori culture and traditions, while at the same time trying to redefine their place in a modern and urban society.

Moura-Koçoğlu's states that '[T]he medium of literature is a pivotal means for indigenous peoples to make sense of themselves amid profound socio-cultural transformations.'[67] The assumption that is underlying here will be questioned and critically discussed. I will also question the term of a 'literary space' which, according to Pascale Casanova can be understood as 'another world, whose divisions and frontiers are relatively independent of political and linguistic borders'.[68] It can also be seen as a concrete space – in

[66] See also: John B. Beston, 'Witi Ihimaera, Maori Novelist in a Changing Society', *Commonwealth: Essays and Studies*, no. 3 (1977): 19–28., Umelo Ojinmah, *Witi Ihimaera: A Changing Vision* (Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 1993), 2–3.
[67] Moura-Koçoğlu, *Narrating Indigenous Modernities*, 6.
[68] Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2007).), 151.

this case in the form of a magazine, or short stories, that provide a literary framework for exploring questions of culture and identity.

Furthermore, theoretical approaches that will be critically examined in my thesis include the concepts of home and belonging, exile and dislocation which I have already mentioned in the summary of my introduction and the summary of the different chapters. Apart from that, the field of trauma studies will be of great importance for my thesis, especially for my first chapter, where I analyse the homecoming of soldiers who have been traumatised by the war they fought in. However, as Cathy Caruth points out, at the core of the narrative lies not only the traumatic experience of the war itself, but also 'the ongoing experience of having survived it'.[69] She argues that 'for those who undergo trauma, it is not only the moment of the event, but the passing out of it that is traumatic; […] survival itself, in other words, can be a crisis'.[70] I take Caruth's argument further and suggest that it is not just having survived the war that reinforces the trauma, but the experience of coming home that provides the space for trauma to set in. During the war soldiers are occupied with trying to survive from day to day, and everything that is not essential for their survival gets suppressed. After having returned home and trying to settle back into everyday life, all the traumatic things that a soldier experienced suddenly have space to resurface, because, as Caruth maintains, 'in trauma the greatest confrontation with reality may also occur as an absolute numbing to it, that immediacy, paradoxically enough, may take the form of belatedness'.[71] It is therefore of great importance to bring the two concepts – trauma and homecoming – together, and to analyse how they relate to each other.

[69] Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 7.
[70] Caruth, 9.
[71] Cathy Caruth, *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 4.

As Gabriele Griffin argues, '[R]esearch methods we choose to employ will impact on the research findings we generate.'[72] Therefore, I am consciously employing a number of different methods and techniques, and my methodology incorporates archival research as well as close reading of the chosen short stories and novels, alongside historical documents. I will historicise each chapter and situate the literature that it discusses into a broader historical context, underlining different notions of home and the moment of homecoming based on historical and political circumstances.

Chapter Breakdown

For this thesis, I have selected a number of short stories and novels by Grace, Ihimaera and Wendt, as well as a short story by J.H. Moffat which depict the motif of homecoming and home in various ways. I have dedicated four chapters to them, in which I will compare and contrast a selection of their work, spanning a time frame of almost 40 years, from 1966, which was the year in which 'The Homecoming' by Moffat was first published, to 2004, when Patricia Grace's novel *Tu* came out. There is of course not a linear narrative with regard to New Zealand literary history – scholars like Horrocks and Lacey explicitly position themselves against the simplistic and linear narrative of New Zealand history that they perceive to have been perpetrated.[73] And yet through the four chapters of my thesis a narrative can, of course be traced, and I would like to briefly bring this out, without wanting to simplify the complex and contested issue of a country's literary history. The first chapter in my thesis examines the way home is portrayed in the first short stories published by Māori writers in the 1960s and early 70s. In Moffat's and Ihimaera's story the motif of homecoming is the archetypical portrayal of the story of the 'Lost Son', who is welcomed back home and embraced by his family, and the

[72] Gabriele Griffin, ed., *Research Methods for English Studies* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 4.
[73] Horrocks and Lacey, *Extraordinary Anywhere*, 10.

notion of home versus not-at-home is a dual one, with the Māori community and the *marae* firmly positioned at the centre, as the home to which the young man finally returns. Grace's depiction of home is more nuanced. Yet in the stories by all three authors it is apparent that the issue at hand is a lot more complicated than it seems on first reading – as my analysis will show. These are stories that were published between 1966 and 1975 respectively – a time of fundamental political change and upheaval in New Zealand.

In chapter two, the thesis goes further backwards in time. Here, I am analysing the novel *Tu*, published in 2004, yet set in the 1940s, which traces a soldier's homecoming, and is based on Grace's own biography – her father was a soldier in the Māori Battalion, and fought in the Second World War, and to-date it remains the only novel written about the experience of Māori in the Second World War. The reason why I have chosen to position this chapter after the previous one is to give a context for the literature published and the events that happened in the 1960s and 70s. I argue that the Second World War had a significant influence on Māori culture and a change within Māori society and political consciousness that built the foundations and gave rise to the literary movement that unfolded in the 1960s and 70s. By positioning the chapters this way, I wanted to make sure that, at first, the earliest short stories by Māori authors and their depiction of home and homecoming are at the centre of attention as they are groundbreaking literary works. The novel *Tu*, though set in the 1940s and content-wise concerned with topics of the time, was published much later, in 2004. It therefore differs not just in genre but also in writing style from the early short stories. However, it provides the back story, so to speak, for what happens culturally and politically in the decades before Grace's and Ihimaera's short stories are first published. It seemed more interesting to not follow a chronological order here, but to instead position the short stories at the beginning of the thesis, as they constitute very much the beginning of Māori fiction, and to then provide the background to this cultural and political development by stepping back in time, so to speak, in the following

chapter. In chapter three, we have firstly the novel *Tangi* which is published in 1973 and in the second part of the chapter we move past the events of the 60s and 70s, by examining the novel *Cousins*, which was published in 1992 and very much deals with the historical period of the late 1970s, the 80s and the early 90s. This is a period which is markedly different from the mid-70s, which is represented in the short stories that are analysed in chapter one. The reason why I have paired two such different novels by two different authors together in one chapter is precisely to show the differences between them, and between the way they map the concept of home and the motif of homecoming. Ihimaera's novel is very much written in the spirit of the first short stories – it even has the same title as one of his short stories. It is interesting to see how the concept of home and the motif of homecoming are worked out differently according to genre, and this question of genre is one that will be explored in chapter three. However, it seemed too simplistic to just write a chapter about a short story and a novel that both are very similar thematically and written in the spirit of the 1970s. It seemed more interesting to compare the first novel by a Māori author with a later novel by Grace and to explore possible themes they have in common, but especially the differences – because we can see marked differences as to how home and homecoming are portrayed between the two novels. The hope that was very much present in the short stories of the 1970s and the novel *Tangi* has given way to disappointment in the novel *Cousins* – and there is an awareness now that a homecoming, as depicted in the earlier stories, is no longer possible. Chapter four, in turn, is radically different to the first three, as the novel that is analysed here is about migration and diaspora, and it is written by a Pacific Island author, not a Māori, and the protagonist is Samoan, and not Māori. However, there are also themes that connect all the four chapters. Albert Wendt, has grown up and been educated in New Zealand, and spent large parts of his life there, and is an outspoken figure for the rights and representation of indigenous people and the Pacific, thus interweaving his Pacific Island/Samoan heritage and his experience in New Zealand. His novel

Sons for the Return Home, is set in the 1970s,but because the concepts of home and homecoming are so different to the works of the other two authors I decided to place it at the end of my thesis, to be able to offer a stronger comparison of the differences, but also of the things that all the works that have been analysed in this thesis have in common.

Chapter One

'I was Glad I had Come Home': The Marae and the Rural Village as Home in Witi Ihimaera's and Patricia Grace's Short Fiction

In 1952, the publication of the magazine *Te Ao Hou* changed the literary landscape in Aotearoa New Zealand forever, laying the foundation for the literature that forms the corpus of analysis throughout my thesis.[74] *Te Ao Hou* can be regarded as a seminal cultural moment, launching the boat, so to speak, on which Patricia Grace, Witi Ihimaera and many other Māori writers and intellectuals of the time first set sail. This magazine saw the publication of some of their earliest works and gave these authors the platform to reach a larger audience.[75] At the beginning of this chapter, I would like to give a strong sense of the literary culture of the time and provide details as to why the launch of *Te Ao Hou* was so significant. I will then move on to a closer analysis of a selected number of short stories by Patricia Grace and Witi Ihimaera, examining their textuality, exploring their use of metaphors and how their own background informs their writing. Some of the main questions that I aim to answer throughout this chapter are: What role does fictional writing play in the shaping of Māori identity and consciousness? What is the significance of the literary form for authors like Grace, Ihimaera and other Māori writers and intellectuals who are concerned, broadly, with questions of Māori sovereignty? Using the literary form in this way is not an obvious thing to do and comes with some baggage. By writing in English, or just simply by using the medium of print, does one, as an indigenous author or intellectual, not use the tools that were once imposed on the country by the colonizers? Is one not tying oneself a bit too closely to the colonizing culture?

[74] Te Reo Māori for: The New World
[75] Before their writing was published in book form, both Grace and Ihimaera had short stories published in *Te Ao Hou*.

Alice Te Punga Somerville strongly protests the idea that Māori literature only began with the publication of Witi Ihimaera's novel *Tangi* (1973), the first novel written by a Māori author, and makes a strong argument for the fact that a Māori literary tradition, 'when not limited to *written* literature, is centuries old; when not limited to Aotearoa, it stretches back across the Pacific for millennia.'[76] A similar argument is made by Teresia Teaiwa in her essay 'What Remains to Be Seen: Reclaiming the Visual Roots of Pacific Literature'.[77] However, in her chapter, Te Punga Somerville acknowledges the crucial role that the magazine played with regard to fictional writing by Māori authors. *Te Ao Hou* can be translated as 'The New World', and, as Alice Te Punga Somerville observes, 'this metaphor heralded the entry of Māori people into a particular kind of modernity.'[78]

The magazine *Te Ao Hou* (1952–1976) was a bilingual quarterly, published in English but, notably, also in Te Reo Māori, and issued by the New Zealand Government's Māori Affairs Department, which has its headquarters in Wellington. It was founded 'to provide', as its first issue stated, 'interesting and informative reading for Māori homes […] like a *marae* on paper, where all questions of interest to the Māori can be discussed'.[79] Even though it was heralded as a marae by the editor who wrote the first editorial statement, this 'was not necessarily welcomed by those who initiated the magazine.'[80] Somerville, quoting a memo from the Minister of Māori affairs at the time, E. B. Corbett, first quoted by Chadwick Allen, notes that:

> At the outset the magazine was intended to assist the promotion of the objectives of the government […]. I am given to understand that the magazine is now being regarded as the 'marae of the Maori people' where diverse thoughts and subjects

[76] Alice Te Punga Somerville, 'Te Ao Hou: Te Pataka', in *A History of New Zealand Literature*, ed. Mark Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 189.
[77] Teresia Teaiwa, 'What Remains to Be Seen: Reclaiming the Visual Roots of Pacific Literature', *PMLA* 125, no. 3 (2010): 731.
[78] Somerville, 'Te Ao Hou: Te Pataka', 183.
[79] 'Editorial Statement', *Te Ao Hou* 1, no. 1 (1954).
[80] Somerville, 'Te Ao Hou: Te Pataka', 183.

> are brought for discussion. This was never intended.[81]

Te Ao Hou, though an attempt to acknowledge Māori culture and to give it a forum and a space, was founded by the Māori Affairs Department with a specific political purpose, as is demonstrated by this excerpt from a memorandum, written by the director of the department:

> The Māori people are facing social problems which have to be resolved partly by reiteration of certain ideas. These ideas are to help the integration of the Māori people with the community as a whole […]. *Te Ao Hou* is a public medium with the above-mentioned aims. In fact, the reason for the existence of *Te Ao Hou* is to promote these objectives, and it is not justified for any other reason.[82]

The memorandum does not specify what kind of problems needed to be resolved, or which ideas were supposed to be 'reiterated' through *Te Ao Hou*. Leading Māori writers such as Witi Ihimaera have taken a critical stand towards the magazine and its aim. Ihimaera underlines that his very first short story was not published by *Te Ao Hou*, but by the magazine *Landfall*, and that it was always important to him to not write or publish in an exclusively 'Māori space' but for a larger audience.[83] However, during Margaret Orbell's editorship (1962–1966), the nature of the publication changed.[84] The stories began to address everyday racism and tensions between Māori and Pākehā culture, and to voice a demand for political change.

In 1968, an essay entitled 'Maori-Tanga' by P. W. Hau was published in the magazine under the editorship of Joy Stevenson.[85] The word *māoritanga* means Māori identity or values and in his essay, Hau underlines that 'the time for hesitant, deferential debate over Māori culture has passed'.[86] He refers to the idea of uniting two cultures, arguing that:

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[81] Allen, *Blood Narrative*, 46.
[82] 'Memorandum from the Director' (New Zealand Information Service, 20 March 1956).
[83] Witi Ihimaera, 'Personal Correspondence', 25 February 2015.
[84] The editors of *Te Ao Hou* were Erik Schwimmer (1952–1962); Margaret Orbell (1962–1966); Joy Stevenson (1966–1975)
[85] P. W. Hau, 'Maori-Tanga', *Te Ao Hou*, 1968, 24.
[86] Allen, *Blood Narrative*, 69.

> There is an old saying which goes 'Where two bloods are mingled, there the blood grows stronger.' Many of our [Māori] people today are of two bloods, but still we [Māori] have only one [Pākehā] culture.[87]

Hau emphasises that '[T]he present system operates against our [Māori] language and culture surviving', and he calls for action:

> [B]y action we can help our people to learn and keep our tradition and culture alive. So let's put our shoulders to the task and set an example to our young people and teach them the ways of our Māoritanga […] Now is the time for action. Tomorrow will be too late.[88]

This polemic illustrates the difficulties of expressing Māori culture and traditions within a former colonizing culture.[89] It emphasises that, according to Hau, the survival of Māori culture, language and traditions cannot be achieved by assimilation, but only by Māori expressing pride in their own culture and by returning to it in order to ensure its survival. By referring to 'two bloods' Hau underlines that Māori are exposed to both Māori and Pākehā culture and that it can be a challenge to identify with Māori identity while negotiating both of these cultures.

Hau's call for a return to Māori traditions and the Māori language was taken up by various Māori writers from the early 1970s onwards, most prominently by Patricia Grace and Witi Ihimaera. Writers like Moffat and Ihimaera construct clear binary oppositions between Māori culture and Pākehā culture in their writing, which can be seen as a tactic for Māori writers to mark themselves as distinctively different from Pākehā and re-assert their own identity.[90]

In 1955, *Te Ao Hou* issued its first literary competition, encouraging its readers to write stories and articles which would be judged by a panel. The ones deemed worthy of a prize

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[87] Hau, 'Maori-Tanga', 24.
[88] Hau, 24.
[89] For a more detailed description of this relationship see Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (London: Routledge, 1989), 29–32.
[90] This is not unique to the New Zealand context, of course – it can often be seen when minority groups need to assert themselves and their status towards a dominating culture.

would be published in the magazine. The declared aim of the competition was 'to help to increase awareness of what Māori life today really is; an awareness that will undoubtedly be of the greatest help for the future'.[91] Competition entries were invited in English and in Te Reo Māori, which expressed *Te Ao Hou's* declared aim to be a bilingual magazine dedicated to fostering Māori culture, traditions and language. Through the writing competitions which the magazine issued on a regular basis, it created not only a readership, but also encouraged Māori to write and submit stories, and provided a space where their writing was published.

Te Ao Hou provided a forum for Māori in print culture outside of their traditional rural communities. In this way, it reacted to an increasing Māori urban population and allowed for an identification with Māori culture through the medium of print, thus transcending the problem of physical dislocation. There had been demands for the establishment of a national Māori journal for some time before *Te Ao Hou* was founded.[92] In 1940, in an afterword to the essay collection *The Māori people Today: A General Survey,* I. L. G. Sutherland underlined a need for a national Māori forum, particularly for the increasing numbers of Māori who were living in urban settings at the time. Sutherland defines Māoritanga as a *marae*, 'a symbol for Māori community life'.[93] This symbol of the *marae* is taken up in the editorial of the inaugural issue of *Te Ao Hou* in 1952. This symbolism is important here, because it transfers the sense of community that Māori connect with a marae onto the newspaper, and encourages them to see a link between themselves and other Māori readers of the same newspaper, who, though they are not physically in the same space, share a sense of community, and are connected to each through their Māori culture, but also through the fact that they are reading the same newspaper and engage in the same news and stories together.

[91] 'Literary Competition', *Te Ao Hou*, 1955, 4.
[92] Allen, *Blood Narrative*, 37.
[93] I. L. G Sutherland, *The Maori People Today: A General Survey* (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1940), 421.

The inaugural editorial described *Te Ao Hou* as 'a *marae* on paper', linking the physical place of the *marae* with the concept of a 'literary space'. *Te Ao Hou* was the first literary space where stories and fictional writing by Māori were published and made available to a greater reading audience. Many writers who are established Māori writers today and form part of the 'first generation of Māori writers', such as Grace and Ihimaera, were published in *Te Ao Hou* long before their stories and poems were published in book form. [94] Their stories appeared alongside a variety of non-fictional articles, which covered themes such as agriculture, recipes and traditional wood carving and other art forms. In that way, they were made accessible to a large audience.

In a traditional sense, a *marae* is the traditional Māori meetinghouse; it is the centre of the community where Māori traditions and knowledge are passed on from one generation to the next and the place where traditional rituals and ceremonies are conducted.[95] The *marae* is very much a specific geographical space, tied to a Māori community, and each community has their own *marae*. Traditionally, they were made from wood and decorated with beautiful carvings which represented the ancestors, but nowadays they are often enough also modern buildings made from modern building materials, but still very much fulfilling their traditional function of bringing the community together and representing a place at the heart of said community, a home.[96]

However, by the time *Te Ao Hou* was founded in 1952, it was, as the editorial made clear, conceived as a *marae* in a symbolic way. *Te Ao Hou* was defined as a meeting place no longer tied to a specific geographical space, and with that to a specific rural identity, or indeed national identity. It was very much meant to be a meeting place where the readers of the magazine could, through a shared interest and a shared heritage, conceive of themselves as

[94] McLeod, *The Routledge Companion to Postcolonial Studies*, 216.
[95] Hirini Moko Mead and Sidney M. Mead, *Tikanga Māori: Living by Māori Values* (Wellington: Huia Publishers, 2003), 95.
[96] Mead and Mead, 95.

being part of a community of readers that was connected with one another – even though this was not through a shared corporeal community, or an actual shared space. The magazine in that way provided a way especially for Māori who had been displaced from their original communities or had by their own choice moved away for better work or education prospects. This moving away is in itself a form of urbanisation.

In *Imagined Communities* (1983), Benedict Anderson argues that the emergence of daily newspapers 'laid the base for a national consciousness'; his book is based on his work in South-East Asia, which makes it relevant to my argument in the larger context of postcolonial studies. [97] New Zealand has its own distinct postcolonial history that differs from South-East Asia, but one can see some similarities here. Anderson's thesis distils the idea of national belonging in specific cultural forms, the most prominent being the novel and the newspaper, which enable readers to anchor themselves in an imagined speech community. *Te Ao Hou* can be seen as providing this for the Māori community in New Zealand. Even though it was a monthly magazine and not a daily newspaper, *Te Ao Hou* created for its readers a sense of identity – an identity that was not tied to a certain national state or an existing community within a specific geographical space. *Te Ao Hou* provided a means of imagining a collective community in a moment when this community was dispersed.

The role of the *marae* as home is a prominent theme in many of the early stories that were published in *Te Ao Hou*, as is the theme of returning home to one's marae or village community.[98] Homecoming can be seen throughout the stories and the novel as a metaphor for finding a cultural identity. In the 1960s and 1970s there was a strong attempt at re-constructing Māori culture and identity in literature. The moment of homecoming in Moffat's 'The

[97] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006), 44.
[98] This motif has been mentioned by other scholars. See, for example: Allen, *Blood Narrative*, 69. Or Mark Williams, 'Introduction', in *A History of New Zealand Literature*, ed. Mark Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 6.

Homecoming', and in Ihimaera's story 'Tangi', will be analysed in this chapter, demonstrating that the writers perceive that a return to Māori culture and identity is possible. There is a utopian hope in these stories. However, there is also the sense that Ihimaera is writing about the past, and expressing a 'longing for the bygone, [which] was a sentiment widely shared.'[99] Through his writing, Ihimaera reconstructs home for himself, his characters, and his readers. In his introduction to the anniversary edition of *Pounamu Pounamu*, published in 2012 to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the first publication of the short story collection, Ihimaera himself says about the stories: 'The stories in it are about growing up Maori during 'the greenstone years' of my childhood: those years when the rural village and the marae were the centre of our universe.'[100] And explaining his choice of title, he states that 'I called the book after the treasured jade which is symbolic of those things in life that are to be prized above all others.'[101]

However, through the cohesiveness of the stories it becomes clear that already in this early period of Māori literature, Māori writers were aware that their fictional aspirations did not quite match the reality of the time. In Ihimaera's own words, 40 years after they were first published, the short stories in the collection 'are about resilience, survival, facing and surmounting challenge, and carrying on.'[102] There is a very clear political message in this statement – Māori and their culture will face adversity, they will deal with the challenges modernity has posed, and will manage to find their own way in a modern society. Thecohesiveness of these stories, in a way, is evidence of the fact the writers knew fiction did not match reality and they wanted to create an orderliness in their fictional universes to answer the political turmoil of the time. As Somerville points out, 'the highest rate of land alienation and the largest movement of people took place in the twentieth [century].'[103] Ihimaera's later

[99] Witi Ihimaera, *Pounamu Pounamu* (Auckland: Penguin, 2012), ix.
[100] Ihimaera, xv.
[101] Ihimaera, xv.
[102] Ihimaera, xvi.
[103] Somerville, 'Te Ao Hou: Te Pataka', 186.

work is much more explicitly political, but already in these stories and in the way they deal with topics such as death, a funeral, or racism one can see the complexity. In the foreword to the anniversary edition of *Pounamu Pounamu*, Fiona Kidman confirms this notion, detailing that when reading Ihimaera's stories 'things are never quite as they seem. […] the idyll was imperfect. If one knew where to look, there were messages embedded in the text that should have warned the reader […].'[104] Ten years after the publication of *Pounamu Pounamu*, Ihimaera himself said about first three books, *Pounamu Pounamu* (1972), *Tangi* (1973) and *Whanau* (1974) that they are 'lyrical evocations of a world that once was. But they are a serious mismatch with the reality of the times.'[105] Ihimaera does not elaborate what exactly he means with it, however, one could argue that looking back upon his oeuvre, Ihimaera might have judged it to be not political enough, and to not reflect in a more direct way the political upheavals of the time.

Through their writing, Māori writers were able to rearticulate their identity and create a 'literary space' for their culture and traditions. It enabled Māori to make their voices and perspective heard by a greater audience. The idea that literature can be seen as a 'space' where Māori were, and are, able to re-assert identity is underlined by Moura-Koçoğlu when she argues that: '[T]he medium of literature is a pivotal means for indigenous peoples to make sense of themselves amid profound socio-cultural transformations'.[106] Heim stresses this as well, arguing that 'Māori fiction maintains a complex relationship with political ideologies, especially with the discourse of modern Māori activism, which came to prominence simultaneously with the broad emergence of Māori literature on the book market.'[107]

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[104] Ihimaera, *Pounamu Pounamu*, xi.
[105] Witi Ihimaera, 'Maori Life and Literature: A Sensory Perception', in *New Zealand Through the Arts: Past and Present*, The Turnbull Winter Lectures (Wellington: Friends of the Turnbull Library, 1981), 50. Quoted according to Heim, *Writing Along Broken Lines*, 172.
[106] Moura-Koçoğlu, *Narrating Indigenous Modernities*, 6.
[107] Heim, *Writing Along Broken Lines*, 172.

'The Homecoming'

The earliest story addressing these themes is 'The Homecoming' by J. H. Moffat, which was published in *Te Ao Hou* in 1966. Simply entitled 'The Homecoming', the story by J. H. Moffat is about a young Māori man who returns home to his family's village for his father's funeral. The story shows not only the young man's geographical return from the city where he lives and works, but more importantly, a cultural and spiritual return to his ancestral homeland. The story is very short – 29 short sentences, arranged in six paragraphs, and barely longer than a page. The texture of the story is made up of a lot of short, almost paratactical sentences, stating facts and observations, telling rather than showing the reader what is going on and what the protagonist is experiencing. The story is set in the *marae* where Bob, the story's protagonist, sits between his relatives, feeling alienated:

> Bob's eyes were downcast as the speeches went quietly on. He was tired and ill at ease. […] [A] little bewildered he sat in the old meeting house with the family and the old friends he'd left so long ago.[108]

This alienation is underlined by his mother's perception, describing him as 'now a grown man; a stranger almost'.[109] The reason for Bob's homecoming is his father's funeral.

> He [Bob] lifted his gaze to the coffin. So, the old man was dead. Bob had never expected him to die. […]. His mother sat silent, grief bowing her shoulders as she listened to the tributes to the man she knew better than anyone.[110]

On a figurative level, the father's death symbolises the loss of traditional cultural heritage and the impending threat of extinction of Māori culture. The funeral and the homecoming link individual mortality with the alienation from and threatening extinction of Māori culture. This is a theme that can be found throughout different short stories and novels by Māori authors, notably the first short stories that Witi Ihimaera published in his short story collection *Pounamu*

[108] J. H. Moffat, 'The Homecoming', *Te Ao Hou*, 1966, 7.
[109] Moffat, 7.
[110] Moffat, 7.

Pounamu, but also J.H. Moffat and Patricia Grace. In both Moffat's and Ihimaera's story it is the death of a person and the funeral that is the trigger for a young Māori's homecoming. There is a strong sense of loss and anxiety, as by losing and burying their closest relative, the young people also bury their closest familial and cultural link with traditional Māori culture. The only way to prevent this feeling of anxiety and loss is through a homecoming through the young people returning home to rediscover Māori language, culture and traditions and to reidentify with them. In this sense, the funeral also marks the coming together of the old and the young – a generational connection in the moment of death. The *marae* has a great importance here, as it is the place where the young and the old come together, and where Māori tradition and Māori language are upheld and passed on to the next generation.

In the last paragraph of J. H. Moffat's story 'The Homecoming' opposing tensions are visible that occur in the very moment of the protagonist's homecoming:

> He had come back to his people ashamed. They had made him feel proud. […]. A new strength and a calmness came into his soul. Looking around the meeting house at the silent people, he said in a voice he could barely control, 'Thank you, thank you'. Quietly sobbing he leant against the carved wall panel, his tears dropping from the defiant wooden face into the dust. Robert Pipito Jones had come home.[111]

The story, and especially the last paragraph, expresses hope that the physical homecoming will be the beginning of a cultural renewal for the protagonist. The quick transition of his feelings – feeling first ashamed, then proud – reveals the protagonist's struggle to reconcile the two cultures he holds within himself. He is overcome with emotions, which are partly triggered by the funeral and the grief about his father's passing, but also by the confrontation with the fact that he has returned home and has been given an overwhelming welcome by his extended family. His tears merge with the wooden wall panels of the marae, which are also called *poupou*

[111] Moffat, 'The Homecoming'.

and are carved depictions of the ancestors of a community, or even of specific Māori Gods.[112] This signals his emotional reconnection with his ancestors and a cultural renewal. The statement of his full name at the end – Robert Pipito Jones – with the second name being clearly a Māori name, changes the tone of the story. He is no longer Bob, as he is called in the city, but Robert Pipito Jones, a young Māori who has a place in his Māori community as his dead father's son, and who has finally come back home. This is what the ending of the story suggests. However, there remains the question as to whether this is possible, or if such a cultural homecoming is ultimately beyond reach.

As Allen underlines, 'The Homecoming' narrates one of the possible endings to the stories of experimentation with the Pākehā world outside rural villages begun in the previous decade.'[113] The very last sentence is written in a strong and assertive tone and does not seem to leave any doubt about the fact that the protagonist has come home. Yet even though the homecoming is portrayed as being successful, the moment of homecoming signifies a moment of transition between two different cultures; Māori culture (the indigenous culture) and Pākehā culture. This leads us to the larger question of biculturalism in New Zealand, which will be explored in more detail in the second chapter of this thesis.

The protagonist struggles with the two cultures he unites within himself. The duality of his identity is acutely symbolised by his name. At the beginning of the story he is referred to as 'Bob', yet in the last sentence he is called by the full name he was given by his family: Robert Pipito Jones.[114] By changing his name to 'Bob' – a very simple, short moniker that contrasts with the rolling rhythm and more poetic Māori name – he also takes on a new identity. Being called by his Māori name marks another homecoming to his Māori identity and to his

[112] William Farrimond, 'Mask, Moko and Memory: Identity through Solo Performance in a Post-Colonial World', in *Performing Aotearoa: New Zealand Theatre and Drama in an Age of Transition*, ed. Marc Maufort and David O'Donnell (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2007), 409–10.
[113] Allen, *Blood Narrative*, 70.
[114] The change from an English name back to the character's Māori name upon his or her return home to their Māori community is a theme that is also prominent in the work of Grace and Ihimaera.

family who gave him that name. However, even though he has returned home to his family, Bob is still confronted with an inability to fully embrace his indigenous culture and identity because he does not speak nor understand Te Reo Māori. The importance of language in relation to the sense of identity is underlined by Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, who observes that:

> the choice of language and the use to which language is put are central to a people's definition of itself in relation to its natural and social environment, indeed in relation to the entire universe.[115]

In Bob's case, the fact that he does not speak nor understand Te Reo Māori emphasises his inability to fully identify with his indigenous culture: 'Bob knew no Maori. […]. The old man was talking to him now […]. Clumsily, Bob pressed his nose to the old man's, and the unfamiliar greeting drew from him a response he could not understand.'[116] Yet even though he does not understand, there is a longing in him to connect and to understand, even if previously according to his mother 'he'd never cared for Maori ways'.[117] The greeting that Bob describes as unfamiliar here is the so-called *hongi* (which means 'to embrace'). When exchanging greetings, traditionally two people would press their noses against one another's, to exchange *ha*, the breath of life.[118] The motif of 'homecoming' in this and other early short stories, notably those by Patricia Grace and Witi Ihimaera that were published as collections in the early and mid-1970s, describe young Māori leaving their rural family homes to live in the city, and on returning to their families feeling content about their return home, but also alienated and estranged.

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[115] Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, 'The Language of African Literature', *New Left Review* 150, no. April-June (1985): 109.
[116] Moffat, 'The Homecoming'.
[117] Moffat.
[118] For more information concerning the hongi as a cultural practice, and how it was first adopted by Pākehā New Zealanders, see Vincent O'Malley, *Beyond the Imperial Frontier: The Contest for Colonial New Zealand* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2014), 20.

The Question of Genre – The Short Story

The first collection of Māori stories that were put together as an anthology were published in 1970, under the title *Contemporary Maori Writing*, selected and edited by Margaret Orbell.[119] Most contributions in this collection are short stories, with the exception of a few poems. We can find Witi Ihimaera's short story 'Tangi' here, as well as a story by Patricia Grace titled 'The Dream', and a number of other short stories by Māori authors which first appeared in the magazines *Te Ao Hou* and *Mate*, and three poems by Hone Tuwhare which were published with Longman Paul.[120] In her introduction, Orbell stresses that Māori culture was originally an oral culture, but through changes brought about by modernity, the communal and traditional nature of Māori society evolved.[121] Orbell makes the observation that 'despite the survival of oratory on formal occasions, the printed word is now the medium of literary communication. New truths must be expressed in new forms.'[122] She emphasises that the authors who have contributed to this collection are 'the first generation of Maori writers to make much use of literary forms that are European in origin'.[123] It is quite striking that over the first decades that *Te Ao Hou* was published, many Māori writers chose the short story form as their cultural literary form because it underlined the emerging of a cultural voice.

With regard to the motif of homecoming, which is the central theme in the short stories that have been chosen for analysis in this chapter, the brevity of the short story makes the form an ideal carrier of its theme. The moment of homecoming is, almost without exception, the moment of epiphany of the story, a somewhat abrupt, almost condensed event but at the same time also its climax. According to A. L. Bader, the core characteristics of the modern short story are 'plotless, static, fragmentary […] frequently […] a mere reporting of a transient

[119] Margaret Orbell, *Contemporary Maori Writing* (Wellington: A.H. & A.W. Reed, 1970).
[120] Orbell, 8.
[121] Orbell, 7.
[122] Orbell, 7.
[123] Orbell, 7.

moment'.[124] In this sense, the short story genre is able to capture the alienation of the moment of homecoming and its significance for the character. The reader does not learn many details about the main character. Rather, the story focuses on different layers of experience that are encapsulated in this single moment – the feeling of alienation, of shame about not knowing more about his own culture, and his inability to understand Te Reo Māori. This moment of homecoming is the story's moment of epiphany. Within this very instant, a new identification with and understanding of Māori culture unfolds for Bob.

As Margaret Orbell has pointed out, 'the rapidity of the changes that are occurring gives urgency to their [Māori] writing', and *Te Ao Hou* lets Māori authors reach a larger Māori audience with their own stories, and topics of concern.[125] In the stories it published, homecoming is symbolised through a return to the ancestral land and the *marae*, the communal and sacred meeting ground which is the cultural centre of Māori identity and tradition, and traditionally the heart of the rural Māori community. However, as we can see in the story 'The Homecoming' by Moffat, but also in the following stories that will be analysed in this chapter, it is also about a return to the family, and the wider community (*whanau*). In a way, it almost encourages the [Māori] reader to re-examine their own relationship to their family, to question where their true home lies, and to ensure them that even if they, like the main character in the story, do not speak Te Reo Māori, or feel they have become estranged from their Māori family and their culture, they will be welcomed back with open arms. There is the underlying old biblical story here of the prodigal son, who despite what he has done and how low he has fallen in the world, is welcomed home by his father with open arms. But it also serves as a reminder that they are connected to their culture, and are part of it, and that as a son or daughter they have a specific role to fulfil during the burial of a parent, and also a duty towards their

[124] A. L. Bader, 'The Structure of the Modern Short Story', *College English* 7, no. 2 (1945): 86.
[125] Orbell, *Contemporary Maori Writing*, 7.

community. It also shows a glimmer of home – no matter how disconnected one might feel from one's culture, or might even have assimilated with Pākehā culture to the extent of adopting an English name, the *marae* and the family and community will always be there, and always represent a home.

One of Ihimaera's first short stories has a very similar theme to Moffat's 'The Homecoming'. Titled 'Tangi', which is Te Reo Māori for funeral, it is about a young man's homecoming and reconnection with his Māori culture, his family, and his past in the moment of death and loss. Witi Ihimaera was born in 1944, in Gisborne, and grew up in small village called Waituhi. Even though most of Ihimaera's earlier stories are recognizably set in this place and much of his writing is based on his own life and experiences, it is not simply autobiographical. It is important to note that even though Waituhi and its *marae* Rongopai exist, what we find throughout his oeuvre is a fictional recreation. Ihimaera attended Auckland University from 1963-66 but did not complete his degree. He began working as a journalist and later as a postman. In 1968, he took up part-time study at Victoria University of Wellington where he completed his BA in 1971. It is during this time that his first short stories were published. A year later, in 1972, he published his novel *Tangi*. Ihimaera is the first Māori novelist, and the first Māori writer whose short stories were published as a collection. He was very aware of the fact that at the time, there were no Māori novelists, and set himself the challenge to become the first one.[126] Aside from writing novels and short stories, Ihimaera has also published non-fictional writing, and he has been the author of screenplays and an opera libretto, and editor of several anthologies.

Ihimaera has had a very varied career and yet, it is writing and telling the story of his people that has always been his main concern: 'We define ourselves by the stories we tell about

[126] The original blurb of *Pounamu Pounamu* states that: 'Witi felt compelled to write after reading Bill Pearson's [1968] essay ['The Māori and Literature']', which on the one hand described that there has not yet been a Māori novelist, but on the other hand also predicted that Māori literature would come into existence sooner or later.

ourselves, and that's my business.'[127] Even during the periods of time when he was not actively working as a writer, Ihimaera still represented the Māori and his community. In 1972, the then New Zealand Prime Minister Norman Kirk read his novel, and invited Ihimaera for a job in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Ihimaera began his career there in 1973 and held various positions. He worked for the New Zealand High Commission in Canberra, but also in Washington and New York, were he was the New Zealand consul for two years. In 1990, he became Professor of English at the University of Auckland, and the Distinguished Creative Writing Fellow in Māori Literature. In 2002, his novel *Whalerider* was made into a movie and became a worldwide success – some of his other books have since been turned into movies, too. In 2004, Ihimaera embarked on a project that so far has no parallels in world literature – to rewrite the first five of his short story collections and books. This rewriting is in itself a kind of literary homecoming. Over the course of his career, Ihimaera received numerous awards and honours for his books. Among others, he won the Wattie Award in 1974 for *Tangi* and was named in the Queen's birthday honours and made a distinguished companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit in 2004.[128] One of the most recent and highest honours he has received so far was being made a recipient of the Order of Arts and Letters by the French government in 2017. In her speech, the French Ambassador in Auckland Florence Jeanblanc-Risler, acknowledges Ihimaera for having made 'a key contribution to indigenous worldviews, enabling Maori culture, customs and legacy to be discovered and enjoyed by thousands in New Zealand and overseas' and underlines his 'pivotal role in bringing Maori storytelling to the forefront and enabling its international recognition as a taonga from New Zealand.'[129] The term *taonga* is a

[127] 'Interview with Witi Ihimaera', accessed 2 August 2019, https://natlib.govt.nz/he-tohu/korero/interview-with-witi-ihimaera.
[128] '*Queen's Birthday Honours 2004:* Witi Ihimaera', *NZ Herald*, 6 June 2008, https://www.nzherald.co.nz.
[129] 'New Zealand Writer Witi Ihimaera and World War II Veterans Receive French Honours at Auckland Bastille Day Celebration', La France en Nouvelle Zélande, accessed 14 September 2019, https://nz.ambafrance.org/New-Zealand-writer-Witi-Ihimaera-and-World-War-II-veterans-receive-French.

very complex one and it has different meanings.[130] In general, it can be defined as 'something highly valued by Māori and there is also the implication of something being handed down', it is therefore something like cultural treasure and it is also mentioned in the Treaty of Waitangi (this aspect of taonga will be analysed further in chapter two).[131] For Ihimaera's oeuvre to be described as a taonga is of great significance here, as it indicates that his writing has great value and importance for a large community of people, and for generations to come.

Over the course of his life, Ihimaera has given many interviews that reveal how he understands himself as a Māori writer, about how he differentiates between fiction and non-fictional writing, and the meaning of home and of community for him. Some of these topics have already been touched upon in the introduction to this thesis, and earlier in this chapter, others will come up throughout the following chapters and the conclusion. The interviews form an important way of getting an insight into Ihimaera's sense of identity as a Māori author, and therefore I will use them at certain points in this thesis to make my arguments. In an interview with Kim Hill for Saturday Morning, for example, Ihimaera speaks about his memoir *Māori Boy* how the switching from fiction to non-fiction has been very difficult: 'I have been trying to run away from it ever since Random [House] asked me to do it, ' he said. 'It's been very, very difficult. With memoir, you've actually got to engage the truth [...]. This time, I've had to bite the bullet and take off that veil.'[132] Ihimaera confirms an argument made earlier – namely, that, even though much of his fictional writing is set in real places and based on his own experiences, it is still very much storytelling, which comes with a certain freedom and different parameters to memoir writing.

In the interview, Ihimaera also emphasises that it is not just about one Māori character, but about the whole Māori community this character grows up in: 'It's not just about me. It's

[130] Mead and Mead, *Tikanga Māori*, 67.
[131] Mead and Mead, 67.
[132] 'Witi Ihimaera "bites Bullet" with Memoir', Radio New Zealand, 8 November 2014, https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/258896/witi-ihimaera-'bites-bullet'-with-memoir.

about this valley, it's about a Māori story that draws its inspiration from oral traditions. It's about what we were like in the 1940s and 1950s.'[133] Ihimaera's earlier stories often have an oral quality about them – a characteristic that he shares with Patricia Grace and her early stories. Both Ihimaera and Grace grew up with English as their first language, and both have expressed a regret about that. Yet they heard Te Reo Māori spoken in their home communities and integrate Te Reo Māori into their writing in a way that has a distinct linguistic quality – sometimes words and phrases in Te Reo Māori are translated for the reader, but sometimes not, evoking a multilingual and multicultural tone in their writing. Writing in English also means that with their writing, they have reclaimed the English language as their own, and use it to tell their own story back to a large, international audience. As Witi Ihimaera states '[W]riting in English allows me the licence to go where I could not go in Māori.'[134] Both of them are the first generation of Māori writers, paving the way for other writers that came after them, and in this chapter and the third chapter of this thesis it is a selection of their work that will be the focus of analysis.

Ihimaera's first short story collection is called *Pounamu Pounamu* (1972) – *pounamu* is the Te Reo Māori word for greenstone, the green jade that can be found in Aotearoa New Zealand, which is used to make jewellery, weapons and other items and is highly valued.[135] The cover of the book is dark green, to symbolise the greenstone from which it takes its title. It begins with the story 'A Hand of Cards' and concludes with 'Tangi', and they are both stories in which a young Māori returns home from the city to his rural family home for the funeral of an elderly relative. [136] The collection is thus framed by variations on the theme of homecoming,

[133] 'Witi Ihimaera "bites Bullet" with Memoir'.
[134] Witi Ihimaera, 'The Matriarch: Discussion' (University of Auckland, 1990). As quoted in: Heim, *Writing Along Broken Lines*, 203. This has been quoted according to an unpublished typescript of a lecture (see: Judith Binney, *Redemption Songs: A Life of Te Kooti Arikirangi Te Turuki* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2012), 640.
[135] Mead and Mead, *Tikanga Māori*, 182.
[136] *Pounamu* means 'Greenstone' and refers to a special stone that Māori use for jewelry, but also for weapons.

which is connected to death and loss. In the opening story 'A Game of Cards', the protagonist returns to see a dying elderly relative; in the concluding story 'Tangi' the main character returns for his own father's funeral.[137]

The word 'tangi' is short for '*tangihanga*' which translated means 'mourning ceremonies.' It refers to a traditional ceremony for a person's funeral, at which all relatives and friends of the deceased are supposed to be present.[138] The short story 'Tangi' begins in the very moment when Tama, the protagonist, returns home to the *marae* and his *whanau*: 'One step further now. Do not listen to the wailing, Tama. Do not listen to the women, chanting their sorrows, the soaring waiata tangi.' [139] At the beginning of the story, the reader is immediately drawn into the oral and aural elements that are present throughout the story and form an integral part of its overall structure. The story has three different narrative strands, and in this first one, it is not clear here who is speaking – is it Tama, talking to himself to give himself courage to go through the ritual of entering the *marae*? Is he trying to guide himself through the right steps that he, as his father's oldest son, needs to fulfil in order to honour his dead father? Or is it the narrator, as an observer and part of the audience in the *marae*, watching Tama and giving him advice as to what to do next, where to step, where to look? The reader is presented with the wailing, the chanting, and the *waiata* (a traditional Māori song or chant, or in this case lament) which the women sing as part of the funeral. The oral element becomes apparent right from the beginning of the story. This narrative strand is told in the immediate present, when Tama arrives at the *marae* for the funeral. In comparison to Moffat's story, 'Tangi' is more complex as it does not present a unity of time, place and action. It is written in three different narrative strands that change every few lines, but they are not distinctly separated through paragraphs or indentations. For the reader, it is sometimes not immediately clear where each strand begins,

[137] The word 'tangi' in Te Reo Māori refers to a traditional ceremony for a person's funeral, at which all relatives and friends of the dead person are supposed to be present. Mead and Mead, *Tikanga Māor*i, 133.
[138] Mead and Mead, *Tikanga Māori*, 133.
[139] Witi Ihimaera, *Pounamu, Pounamu* (Auckland: Heinemann, 1972), 132.

ends or continues. A key difference is that instead of describing what is happening through a straightforward narration from an omniscient observer as Moffat does, Ihimaera shows how the characters are affected through their use of dialogue throughout his story. He uses the narrative technique of the three different strands and begins his story 'in medias res' as a means to immediately draw the reader into the story.

The second narrative strand is told in in the immediate past, a day or two before Tama arrives at the *marae* for the *tangi*, when he receives the news that his father has died. It is a telephone conversation between him and his younger sister, Marama, who is the bearer of the terrible news that their father has passed away: '"Hello, Tama." My sister's voice is calm and soft. She pauses for a moment. "You will have to come home, Tama. Dad's dead."'[140] The conversation is first between Tama and his sister, and his sister then passes the phone on to their mother, who pleads with Tama to come home immediately.[141] Marama phones Tama at work, and the novel's storyline repeatedly returns to the phone conversation between the siblings. The narrative arc does not follow the chronological order of events, but instead jumps back and forth, returning to things his mother and sister say. The use of the phrase 'come home' which is repeated by both of them emphasises how overwhelming and disturbing the news is for Tama. His focus and memory shifts, recalling words and phrases his mother and sister said while only partly taking in what is happening around him, and being thrown back continually to the traumatic realisation that his father is gone forever.

The entire story is interspersed with the phone conversation between him, his sister, and his mother. Normally, their conversation is indicated by double-quotation marks. However, as other conversations are also sometimes marked in that way, it is not always clear on first view whether we are reading their phone conversation. It could also be a conversation that happens

[140] Ihimaera, 132.
[141] Ihimaera, 35.

in the third narrative strand. Sometimes the quotation marks in the conversation between the two are missing, for example when the second narrative strand catches up with what is happening in the first strand and reaches the moment of homecoming:

> 'I am afraid, Marama. The lights of the marae are near and already I can hear the sorrows of the marae whispering in the wind. Almost there, Tama. The car turns into the gateway, the headlights flickering across the marae. I am afraid, Marama. Kia Kaha, Tama. Be strong.'[142]

Of course they are not speaking on the phone in the above passage, but by leaving out the double-quotation marks that previously indicated direct speech and their conversation, it is again not clear here who is speaking. Is this conversation just happening in Tama's head? Is he speaking to himself, telling himself to be strong? The homecoming to the *marae* in this second narrative strand is imbued with tension and hesitation. Tama reaches the marae in the dark, the headlights of the car only partly illuminating the building in which he knows he will find his dead father, laid out before his funeral. The wind is personified by being described as whispering, carrying the sad news of his father's death to Tama and into the world, before he can even speak face to face with a member of his family. The whole scene has an eerie, dark atmosphere, and there is the repetition of the phrase 'I am afraid' – yet as readers, we do not know what exactly Tama is afraid of, because he does not specify it.

The third narrative strand is composed of memories of Tama's grandmother's death and her funeral that he attended as a child, as well as the difficulty he had coping with the news of her death. But at that time, his father was there to console him and guide him. Now, he is alone. This third narrative strand is told in retrospect, from his childhood and recounts his grandmother's funeral, and how he felt about it as a child: 'Daddy, why did my Nanny Puti die? Because she was old. Are you old, Daddy?'[143] The conversation between parent and child

[142] Ihimaera, 134.
[143] Ihimaera, 132.

about Nanny and about death is interwoven throughout the whole story. Tama's father speaks lovingly about Nanny, but also quite matter-of-factly about her death, using the occasion to explain Māori customs and traditions to his son. For example, when the boy asks, 'Has my nanny really gone now?' the father answers: 'Yes, son. She is gone now and you've got no nanny any more.'[144] He tells the boy to not cry so much, and to go and play, because '[T]here is still a long time for the crying. Nanny must lie here three days before she is buried. Go and play, Tama. But wash your hands first. Remember to always wash your hands when you go from the marae.'[145]

The father also talks about the fact that, like Nanny Puti, he will die one day. In retrospect, he used that occasion to prepare the young Tama for the day of his death, which would inevitably come:

> One day I will be old. Then I shall die.
> No you won't. I won't let you.
> One day, Tama.[146]

The interweaving of the three different narrative strands creates multiple layers of a story, that, through their oral quality in tone and structure, read almost like three different stories, told at once. By being set in different places and times, they are showing how Tama deals with his father's death and with his own homecoming to his community and his marae, and how, even though he is afraid, he takes up the responsibility that is placed on him as the oldest son, after his father's death. A responsibility that his father taught him about when he was still a child, and they spoke about the meaning of death because of the death of his beloved grandma, Nanny Puti. At the time, his father underlines that 'you must always look after your brothers and sisters. And your mother too, if I should die.'[147] Together, the three narrative strands underline

[144] Ihimaera, 133.
[145] Ihimaera, 135.
[146] Ihimaera, 138.
[147] Ihimaera, 138.

this responsibility that Tama recognises yet struggles with because he feels afraid and not ready for it. Yet they also show how he overcomes his fear, and how, step by step he manages to participate in the ceremonies at the tangi, and how, even though his homecoming was triggered by a sad and almost traumatic event, he embraces his culture and what is expected of him by his community. Together, the different narrative strands create a vivid, blurring narrative.

'Tangi' indicates the importance of the *marae* at different points. In a flashback to a conversation with his father when he was still a child, the protagonist remembers his father saying: 'Rongopai is our meeting house, Tama. This was where she [grandmother] was born, where I was born, where you were born. This is our home, Tama.'[148] Here, the significance of the *marae* and the ancestral land as home, as the place where one is born, and to which one will return in death, is emphasised, further deepening the bonds of family and ancestry. The funeral serves as a reason for family members who live in other parts of the country to return to their home village, to reunite with the family, and to share their grief and loss. As Heim underlines, '[T]he meeting house as the centre of marae-based life provides Māori writers with two focuses: the revival or continuation of traditional cultural and economic practices, and the constitution of a distinct tribal self.[149] The *marae* in this sense functions as a home to which the protagonist returns. On the one hand, Tama does this to fulfil his duty as the first-born son and to be the continuity and familial presence that his father requested. On the other hand, he also returns to find his own identity and to reconnect with his Māori culture and his ancestors, who are represented in the carvings and photographs displayed in the *marae*.

In accordance with Māori custom, upon entering the *marae,* Tama is challenged by his uncle and asked about his name, his family and his right to enter the *marae*.

> Now is the time to speak, Tama. Proclaim to all on the *marae* that you are Tama Mahana, eldest son of Matiu Mahana, who was the son of Eruera Mahana. Proclaim that Rongopai is […] your birth right, and that no person may forbid

[148] Ihimaera, 133.
[149] Heim, *Writing Along Broken Lines*, 204.

> you entry onto the *marae*, for you belong here. Let all who hear you that you are indeed a Marama. It is a proud name and your people are a proud people.[150]

Through proclaiming his identity, Tama realises that his actual home is where his extended family lives and where his family's ancestral roots lie, and that he must take up his place among them. The narrator's direct address to Tama, his invitation to proclaim his name and identity with pride, can be read as a universal address to Māori who read this story to in turn declare their own identity. In this sense, there is power in speaking the name and family affiliation. Through the depiction of the *marae*, the concept of home is not just a physical place, but also an acknowledgement of lineage, ancestry, and tribal culture. There are some very powerful ideas at play here and in a sense, this short story is speaking 'out loud' these connections. The written form itself is a declaration.

As with Moffat's story, the homecoming in 'Tangi' is twofold. On the one hand, it indicates the homecoming of the person who has died; his death is the closure of the circle of life, and with his funeral he will return to earth. On the other hand, it enables the living to come home as well, to pay their last respects to a dead family member and reconnect with their family and community who are present at the funeral. This especially applies to the young Māori protagonist, who lives in the city now, away from his home and his community, and for whom the tangi is an opportunity to come back home, and to reconnect with his Māori heritage and his *whanau* (extended family).

'A Way of Talking' and 'Parade' (1975) by Patricia Grace

As with Ihimaera's collection *Pounamu Pounamu*, in Patricia Grace's first short story collection *Waiariki* (1975), the opening story 'A Way of Talking' and the concluding 'Parade'

[150] Witi Ihimaera, *Tangi* (London: Heinemann, 1989), 127.

each focus on a young Māori returning home to her family. As with Ihimaera, the theme of homecoming frames the whole short story collection. In contrast, however, the moment of homecoming is more ambiguous in Grace's collection. Grace grew up in a Māori family with strong links to Māori culture and traditions but was educated in a Catholic convent school and later at Wellington Teachers College.[151] Thus, her writing is influenced by the experience of living within two different cultures.[152] In her work, this influence plays out in that many of her protagonists are Māori women, often young women who grew up in a Māori family but received a university education. Pākehā characters, if they feature at all, merely appear at the periphery of the stories. In response to criticism of the fact that the main characters in her stories are all Māori, Grace replied in an interview:

> There are characters that haven't been written about, there's language that hasn't been used in writing, customs that haven't been exposed. We have our own interrelationships, our own view of the world, our own spirituality. We have our own ancestors, our own legacy of stories. We have our own particular culture to draw from.[153]

The emphasis of the stories chosen for analysis in this chapter lies on the protagonist's reaction to coming back home; as Della Valle argues: 'Distance and the immersion in a new environment have given them new consciousness and sharper instruments to interpret the reality they see'.[154] That means that education, on the one hand, provides the protagonists with knowledge and teaches them skills that enable them to live in a non-indigenous culture. But on the other hand, it also alienates the characters from their own culture. This sense of alienation

[151] Susan Kedgley, 'Patricia Grace', in *Our Own Country: Leading New Zealand Women Writers Talk about Their Writing and Their Lives* (Auckland: Penguin, 1989), 49.
[152] Judith Dell Panny, *The Culture Within: Essays on Ihimaera, Grace, Hulme, Tuwhare* (Ashhurst: Ernst Press, 1998), 10. Grace has acknowledged this in different interviews.
[153] Vilsoni Hereniko, 'An Interview with Patricia Grace', in *Inside Out. Literature, Cultural Politics, and Identity in the New Pacific*, ed. Vilsoni Hereniko and Rob Wilson (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999), 81.
[154] Paola Della Valle, *From Silence to Voice: The Rise of Maori Literature* (Auckland: Libro International, 2010), 107. From her quotation it is not quite clear whom she is referring to. 'Them' and 'they' could be the protagonists of the stories, but also Māori in general.

and dislocation is apparent in many of Grace's stories but features most prominently in 'A Way of Talking' and 'Parade'.

In 'A Way of Talking', Rose, a young Māori, returns home from university for a visit; she is self-confident and addresses the racial injustice she experiences. In contrast, her sister Hera is shy and often lost for words.[155] When the two sisters visit a neighbour, who makes a careless and racist remark about Māori, Rose asks the neighbour rhetorically '[W]hom exactly are you referring to?'[156] Thus, she forces the neighbour to admit that her remark referred to Māori. The use of the pronoun 'whom' and Rose's overly correct way of speaking suggests that she has adopted this way of speaking through her education. This observation is stressed by Hera's reaction to Rose's question: 'Rose […] was talking all Pakehafied'.[157] The use of the term 'Pakehafied' indicates that Rose speaks English in a way that is different to how Hera and Rose, and presumably their family talk to each other – Rose is speaking English not in a Māori way, but like a Pākehā, a white New Zealander. According to Phillip Mann, 'that one word *Pakehafied* sums up an entire attitude. Pakeha use of English represents dominance, an assumption of superiority.'[158] Lydia Wevers points out the political implications of language in this story:

> […] just as the neighbour's language reveals her cultural assumptions, so Rose's adoption of Pākehāfied talking acknowledges the weapon of domination with which she must fight her battles.[159]

There are different tensions in this story. They concern mainly the question of an educated superiority and of the significance of imitating a way of talking or behaviour learned in a non-indigenous cultural environment.

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[155] Patricia Grace, *Waiariki* (Auckland: Penguin, 1975), 2.
[156] Grace, 3.
[157] Grace, 3.
[158]
[159] Lydia Wevers, 'The Short Story', in *The Oxford History of New Zealand Literature*, ed. Terry Sturm (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1998), 286.

Like ‘A Way of Talking’, ‘Parade’ features a young Māori woman, called Matewai, whose name is only given once in the story. She is returning home for a visit after a long time away at university. In both stories, we are given hardly any facts about the protagonists’ life in the city and, like the stories of Moffat and Ihimaera, Grace’s stories focus on the moment of the characters’ return to their rural home. The depiction of nature and specific landmarks as ‘home’ plays a special role in this short story. The story begins with a very vivid description of the protagonist crossing the threshold between urban space and rural space:

> Yesterday I went […] up along the creek where the bush begins, to cut fern and flax. Back there at the quiet edge of the bush with the hills rolling skyward and the sound of the sea behind me *I was glad I had come home.*[160] *It was easy* there, to put aside the heaviness of spirit […]. *It was soothing* to follow with my eyes the spreading circles of fern patterning the hills’ sides, *and good* to feel the coolness of flax and to realise again the quiet strength of each speared leaf. *It was good* to look into the open throated flax blooms with their lit-coal colours, and to put a hand over the swollen black splitting pods with the seed heavy in them. [161]

In the first two sentences, different sensual perceptions are evoked that represent home to the protagonist, such as the quietness of the bush, contrasted by the distinctive noise that the sea and the waves make. Seeing the hills that stretch to the horizon, the protagonist feels reconnected with her home and happy about having returned. Through the repetition of the grammatical structure ‘[I]t was’ followed by positively-connotated words such as ‘easy’, ‘soothing’ and ‘good’, in connection with more sensual perceptions that relate to specific aspects of nature, such as looking at the patterns of fern and feeling the strength of the flax leaves and flax blooms, a strong positively-connotated connection between the protagonist and nature around her is revealed.

When Matewai in ‘Parade’ returns to the house from her walk to the creek, she watches her cousins and her family excitedly getting ready for the annual carnival. She recalls the letter

[160] My emphasis in italics.
[161] Grace, *Waiariki*, 85.

her aunt and her cousin had written to her to invite her to come home to celebrate the carnival with them:

> 'Please come for the carnival', Auntie's letter had said. And the letter from my little cousin Ruby: 'Please come Matewai. We haven't seen you for two years.' *I had felt excitement in me at the thought of returning, being back with them.* And I came for the carnival as they had asked. [162]

There is a sense of melancholia, of childhood recollection, when she used to be part of the carnival and family life, and did not feel the sense of unbelonging she experiences now:

> As I watched [my cousins] from the window it was like seeing myself as I had been not very long ago. As if it were my own innocence that they cast on to the willow branches with their clothes. [163]

The annual carnival takes place while she is back home, and this was initially the reason why she promised her aunt and cousin to come back. Instead of joining in with the excitement and the busy preparation, she feels alienated and set apart. At the carnival itself she sits apathetically aside watching the dancers. She realises that:

> this was not something new and strange, but only that during my time away from here my vision and understanding had expanded. I was now able to see myself and other members of my race as others see us. And this new understanding left me as *abandoned and dry as an emptied pod of flax that rattles and rattles into the wind*.[164]

The description she uses – 'myself and other members of my race' – distinctly identifies her as Māori and sets up a binary opposition to Pākehā. There is an implied reference here to Aotearoa New Zealand as a postcolonial settler nation, in which the relationship between the descendants of the colonizers and the indigenous people is one that is not set but needs to be negotiated.

Due to her education and time spent away from home, the main character now perceives her culture from conflicting perspectives – from a Pākehā perspective, as well as a Māori

[162] Grace, 87.
[163] Grace, 87.
[164] Grace, 84.

perspective. This awareness is painful to her as she realises what the carnival must look like to other people, that is, to Pākehā who come and watch the traditional performances of dances and songs.[165] The comparison to a dry and empty pod of flax stands in contrast to the description of the strength she felt in the flax leaf, and the pods filled with seeds, with the new life that she had touched when she went to the creek earlier in the morning. Now, the strength and energy that she felt by reconnecting with her home and nature seeps away leaving her feeling empty. She becomes passive, listless, abandoned to the forces around her, and no longer an active agent. She describes her experience of the carnival in great detail, commenting that:

> I could see enjoyment on the upturned faces and yet it occurred to me again and again that many people enjoyed zoos. That's how I felt. Animals in cages to be stared at. Is that what we are to them? Museum pieces […]. A travelling circus.[166]

Here, the speaker positions herself as an observer of the audience – non-Māori – who watch the performance of traditional dances by her and her Māori community. The topic of cultural voyeurism is at the heart of this short story. The speaker, by making the comparison between her and her communities performance and that of a circus or even animals, asks whether Māori and their culture are in fact not very different to the spectators – a bit of distraction, entertainment, but not more. These are very strong impressions and resonate with the fact that towards the end of the nineteenth century, Māori were described by European anthropologists and settlers as 'a dying race' – a racist description which, as Mark Williams points out, ignores the fact that Māori, even in the colonial period, 'were in fact working towards their own indigenous modernity, participating in print culture, commerce, agriculture and tourism. Colonial New Zealand, for its part, was not merely the far-flung instrument of European modernity […].'[167] However, what is significant about this moment in the story, is that in fact

[165] Grace, 86.
[166] Grace, 86.
[167] Williams, 'Introduction', 7.

an 'inversion of conventional terms' can be seen here, as Lydia Wevers underlines.[168] We are not only confronted with a non-Māori audience and how they perceive Māori, but in fact with how Matewai, the young Māori protagonist, perceives the audience and how critically she assesse them. Through that, Matewai is given agency, and a critical lens is in fact turned on the non-Māori audience and their behaviour and way of perceiving Māori.

For Matewai, the joy of being back home has given way to a feeling of uneasiness and alienation. She feels as if she is the only one of her family who is not able to enjoy the festivities. Anger and frustration build up and she expresses these emotions when she talks to her grandparents:

> They [*Pākehā*, non-Māori] think that's all we're good for. A laugh and that's all. Amusement. In any other week of the year we don't exist. Once a year we're taken out and put on show, like relics.[169]

Again, the image of being something from the past, objects of cultural interest but with no agency of their own, is brought up in relation to Māori and their culture. In reaction to her anger, her grandfather replies 'It is your job, this. To show others who we are'.[170] This sentence has both cultural but political implication. Her grandfather knows that because of her education, she is able to navigate between Māori culture and Pākehā culture. But most profoundly, she has the ability to negotiate between them. He reminds her that despite her education and city life, she nonetheless identifies with her Māori culture and still feels a strong connection to her rural home and natural setting. It is her responsibility towards her people to remember her cultural roots and to find a way to fight for recognition of their culture and traditions within the Pākehā world. The story ends with her joining in the dancing, finding her place among the other dancers; and it concludes in a *waiata*, a traditional Māori song in Te Reo Māori. This is

[168] Wevers, 'The Short Story', 286.
[169] Grace, *Waiariki*, 88.
[170] Grace, 88.

not merely a poetic flourish to close the story; Grace presents a newly found voice to foster Māori cultural expression.

In both of Grace's stories, the protagonists' experience of alienation is mainly caused by their education. By leaving the rural Māori community and attending university, the protagonists in both 'A Way of Talking' and 'Parade' are exposed to an outsider perspective on Māori culture. Upon returning home, they are confronted with this new way of seeing Māori culture. The scholar Bill Pearson argues that Grace, like her protagonists, started writing out of a growing dissatisfaction with the way Māori were represented in literature. Her stories show 'others' [non-Māori] who 'we' [Māori] are.[171] Grace and Ihimaera had a huge impact on the literary domain, as they 'redefined the position of Māori in relation to Pākehā (white New Zealanders) and, by doing so, forced Pākehā to do the same, underpinning the importance of literary texts as ideological discourse'.[172]

The stories by Grace, Ihimaera, and other writers from the period of early Māori literature have been accused of being 'too romanticising' because of an idealised depiction of everyday Māori life and ignorance of racial tensions. [173] At other places, they have been judged as 'nostalgic', without further elaboration regarding the implications of labelling them in such a way.[174] I do not agree with this reading, as such an interpretation is simplifying the stories and their importance. 77apa do depict a rural setting – but as I have argued in my introduction and in this chapter, there are distinct reasons why there was a need for Māori writers to portray their home and their community in the way they did. Referring back to Hau's essay 'Māori-Tanga' and his call for 'a return to Māori traditions and Māori language in order to ensure their survival in the future' I would strongly argue that the first Māori writers interpreted their role

[171] Bill Pearson, 'Witi Ihimaera and Patricia Grace', in *Critical Essays on the New Zealand Short Story*, ed. C. A. Hankin (Auckland: Heinemann, 1982), 176.
[172] Valle, *From Silence to Voice*, 96–97.
[173] Norman Simms, 'Maori Literature in English: An Introduction', *World Literature Today*, no. 52 (n.d.): 339.
[174] Patrick Evans, '"Pakeha-Style Biculturalism" and the Maori Writer', *Journal of New Zealand Literature (JNZL)*, no. 24 (2006): 16.

in that way: to focus on Māori culture and traditions in their writing and to thus create an opportunity for Māori readers to read about their own culture and traditions, to identify with the characters in the stories and to redefine their own identity. [175]

Returning Home

The different ways in which the motif of homecoming is portrayed in the stories examined in this chapter demonstrate that 'home' is not only a physical and geographical place, but a cultural and spiritual space in which feelings of belonging and alienation play out. Taking this argument further, home can also be read as a construct within the texts, an image that the characters think of and dream of, but that no longer exists – except on paper.

The argument made in this chapter emphasises that the *marae* is a space where different cultures meet and where Māori culture and 'home' are re-constructed and renegotiated. However, a homecoming is no longer necessarily tied to returning to a specific geographical space but can rather be understood as finding a way of identifying with Māori culture and living according to Māori traditions in a modern world.

In this sense, homecoming is not so much about returning to traditional Māori culture, but about finding a way to 'strid[e] both worlds', of negotiating multiple identities. There is a link here between identity politics and how double or multiple identities are lived out free from ties to a specific place in the globalized world – much of this can be seen as a historical consequence of the process we now all comfortingly call 'globalization'. [176] Māori culture is no longer just a rural culture, and it is not just about returning to one's *marae* in a rural setting in New Zealand, but about finding a new (literary) space for Māori culture in a modern world. The short stories all show an awareness of the difficulties concerning homecoming, and a return

[175] Allen, *Blood Narrative*, 69.
[176] Ihimaera, *Tangi*, 1989, 78.

to Māori culture and identity. However, whereas Moffat's and Ihimaera's short stories initially appear to rewrite and reconstruct the concept of 'home' and Māori culture and tradition in a rural context, Grace complicates this in her short story. Modern Māori culture is no longer confined to a rural New Zealand environment. This is also pointed out by Ihimaera in an interview in 1992, when he was asked what it is to be Māori: 'The *marae* was and still is the heart of our culture, but the whole world is our *tūrangawaewae* (home, place of belonging) now […]'.[177] This word literally translates as 'a place (*tūranga*) to stand (*waewae*)'. 'Tūrangawaewae tends to be where we were either born or brought up, or alternatively, our ancestral land. It is a place where we feel we have a strong sense of belonging and a deep spiritual connection.'[178]As a result, the concept and understanding of home is where family, sense of belonging, and the spirits of the ancestors reconvene.

[177] Elizabeth Alley and Mark Williams, eds., *In the Same Room: Conversations with New Zealand Writers* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1992), 223. Turangawaewae can be defined as: place to which one belongs; literal translation: to stand with two feet on the ground.
[178] Māori ki Te Whare Wānanga o Ōtākou, 'Mihi - Introductions', accessed 18 August 2019, https://www.otago.ac.nz/Māori/world/te-reo-Māori/mihi-introductions/index.html.

Chapter Two

'A Place Called War': Depictions of a Soldier Returning Home from War in *Tu* by Patricia Grace

'Not so long ago I was a schoolboy taking part in athletic champs, running a barefoot first in the fifty-yard sprint. After bracing the finishing tape I kept on running. Off I ran, out of the iron gates and away to war.'[179] So ends the second diary entry of Tu, the eponymous protagonist of Patricia Grace's novel *Tu* (2004), a young Māori soldier who has just enlisted to fight for the Māori Battalion in the Second World War. There is excitement in these lines, a sense of a boy who cannot wait to flee the confines of his school and is eager to run away on an adventure. A few pages later, Tu, as the narrator of the first part of the novel, reflects back on what he has written, criticising himself for the fact that his writing is not conveying his actual experience of the journey on board the ship that takes him and his comrades to Northern Africa and Europe. Tu muses about the fact that 'just because the days are monotonous shouldn't mean that writing has to drag on as well', asking himself what would happen one day if someone decided to read it.[180] This self-awareness is reflected on a structural level throughout the novel, which starts out with a letter, coupled with diary entries. There is still a very strong sense that Tu, as the author of the letter and the diary entries, is consciously writing for an audience and aware that what he records might be read by 'a kid in fifty years' time.'[181] Reflecting back on what he has written in his diary, his motivation to join the war effort, and that he just ran away to war, he states that 'even though not perfectly true it's close enough to the truth and it sounds like a good beginning to something' – already alerting the reader to the fact that, of course, he is the narrator and creator of his own story throughout the novel.[182] There is almost an aural

[179] Patricia Grace, *Tu* (Auckland: Penguin Books, 2004), 17.
[180] Grace, 22.
[181] Grace, 22.
[182] Grace, 23.

characteristic about his narrative voice in this chapter; as an audience, we read – or listen to – his story, and he makes it very clear that what he is telling us is based not only on facts, but also on the consideration of how to best relay his experiences to an audience.

Having explored the moment in which Māori fiction first came into being in the previous chapter, I will now go back in time to the 1940s which is the time in which the novel *Tu* is set, to examine how what led to the changes in the 1960s and 1970s in New Zealand's literary culture as represented in that novel. As in other countries around the world, the Second World War had a profound impact on the society in New Zealand – it triggered changes on a cultural, political and sociological level that, once initiated, could not be halted again. I have already argued in the previous chapter that the urbanisation set in motion in New Zealand during the war years, and especially in the year after the war, led to a different understanding by Māori of themselves, and consequently to the establishment of *Te Ao Hou* in 1952, and with that to the establishment of a wider Māori readership, and a space for Māori to publish their stories.

However, Māori communities were not just influenced by the ensuing urbanisation, but also by the fact that many Māori participated as soldiers in the war. Most of them returned after the war, some of them of course did not – and this had a profound impact on their communities. The Second World War is mentioned as a side note by Patricia Grace in some of her earlier stories and novels – for example in *Cousins*, when we learn that Makareta's father falls at Alamein or in her short story 'Going for Bread', where she describes the impact that the war has on the community at home.[183] But it is only mentioned in passing, and in his study *Writing Along Broken Lines'*, published in 1998, Otto Heim notes that 'while warrior spirit is invoked in quite a number of texts, war itself is not a prime topic of concern in Māori fiction.'[184] Heim's

[183] Patricia Grace, *Electric City* (Auckland: Penguin Books, 1987).
[184] Heim, *Writing Along Broken Lines*, 136.

book was published more than twenty years ago – and in the meantime the scene has changed. The Second World War, and especially the experience of the Māori Battalion, now features in the writing of different Māori and Pacific Island authors. In 2001, *Māori Battalion: A Poetic Sequence* by Alistair Te Ariki Campbell was published.[185] Three years later, Patricia Grace's *Tu* came out. In 2010 another poetry collection titled *Cassino, City of Martyrs* by Robert Sullivan.[186] According to Janet Wilson, the novel Tu 'marks out the twentieth-century wars of empire as a subject for Maori fiction for the first time.'[187] Following the publication of *Tu*, Patricia Grace published another novel, titled *Ned and Katina – A true love story* (2009), which features the life story of a Māori soldier who gets wounded in Crete. Despite this burgeoning of texts, Patricia Grace is the only Māori author to date to have dedicated an entire novel to the depiction of the experience of Māori soldiers in the Second World War. In *Tu* (2004), she explores not only in depth the development of individual characters and the trauma that they experienced during the war and upon their return home, but also the wide-ranging role that Māori soldiers played in the Second World War, the way their contribution was crucial in supporting the Allied Forces defeat of the Germans in Italy, and the way that this experience was relevant for Māori identity at large. I therefore argue that through her novel, Grace has indeed made war, especially the Second World War and its impact on Māori society, a prime topic of concern for Māori fiction.

The main narrative of the novel *Tu* is set in the 1940s and is about Tu, a young Māori man who decides to volunteer for the Māori Battalion, like his older brothers, and to fight in the Second World War. The protagonist's full name is Te Hokowhitu-a-Tu, which, as Grace points out in the preface of the novel, means 'the many fighting men of Tumatauenga.'[188]

[185] Alistair Campbell, *Māori Battalion: A Poetic Sequence* (Wellington: Wai-te-ata Press, 2001).
[186] Robert Sullivan, *Cassino, City of Martyrs* (Wellington: Huia Publishers, 2010).
[187] Janet Wilson, 'The Maori at War and Strategic Survival: Tu by Patricia Grace', *Hecate* 34, no. 1 (2008): 73.
[188] Grace, *Tu*, 7.

According to Māori mythology, Tumatauenga is the God of War.[189] However, Te Hokowhitu-a-Tu was also the name that was given to the Pioneer Battalion of Māori soldiers that fought in the First World War.[190] *Tu* is a story about three brothers – and about how the two older ones, who did not want their younger brother to be exposed to the dangers of war try to protect him, to make sure he would survive and be able to go back home. As the third and youngest brother, Tu was not required to serve in the battalion and to fight in the war. Yet, barely of age, he desperately wants to follow his brothers and be part of the Māori Battalion. The brothers cannot prevent him from that, but towards the end of the novel, when all three find themselves on the same battle field in Italy, the two older brothers decide to wound him and to violently protect him to make sure that he survives and can return home – the significance of this wound, both psychologically and physically, will be analysed in more detail towards the end of this chapter.

The novel has different narrative strands and begins in epistolary fashion, but then changes to Tu's diary entries, which are interspersed with third-person narrative passages told from his older brother Pita's perspective. Through these different narrative threads, the focus of the narrative shifts from Tu's immediate experience of the war to that of his two older brothers, who also volunteered for the Māori Battalion, and to his mother's and sisters' perspectives as they anxiously wait for the men to return. As a result, the experience of the war and of the return home – not just of Tu, but also of his brothers and of his family – is explored in great detail through the different narrative strands. Grace's novel explores various facets of the war and its impact on Māori communities in New Zealand, and this is why I have chosen it for analysis in this chapter: because it is such a significant benchmark in Māori literature, and because it portrays the relevance that the Second World War had on Māori identity formation and with that, for the foundation of Māori literature. As I will analyse in more detail

[189] Mead and Mead, *Tikanga Māori*, 46.
[190] Grace, *Tu*, 7.

in this chapter, the Second World War raised questions about citizenship in Māori communities and the formation of the Māori Battalion gave a strong sense of identity not only to Māori men who fought in it during the war, but also to the families at home who supported the battalion through fundraising efforts. Because they participated in the war and because many Māori men sacrificed their lives overseas, upon the return of the soldiers after the war their was a stronger sense of identity and of wanting the right to equal participation in New Zealand society. During the war, many Māori moved to the cities to find work, as I pointed out in the introduction of my thesis, and after the end of the war this urbanisation movement continued, and raised new questions about Māori identity, which, as I argued, led to the formation of the magazine *Te Ao Hou* and with that to the early foundations of Māori literature.

In the course of the novel, the complexity of the motifs of home and homecoming is explored from different narrative perspectives, and Grace captures these motifs in an eloquent and unique way. The main form of homecoming that will be discussed throughout this chapter is the motif of the homecoming soldier – in this case the young Māori soldier Tu, who returns home traumatised and has to renegotiate his place in the Māori community. Linked to this is the idea that someone who returns home can often be seen as an agent of change – they bring experiences with them that no one in their home community has encountered, and have to negotiate this discrepancy, but ultimately their return home does change the microcosm of their community in some way. I argue that we can see Tu as an agent of change and that his questioning of the war afterwards, and what it meant to the Māori, lead to him questioning the idea of Māori citizenship within New Zealand society. Tu's community around him, seeing the impact the war has had on him, start questioning this as well. The notion of home that will be discussed in the first part of the chapter is the idea of the Māori Battalion as home versus the idea of family as home. Questions that will be raised and answered are: What does it mean for Tu to join his Battalion? How could a relatively abstract idea like a Battalion that has no

geographical set place – unlike a house, or marae, for example – be considered as home by him? How is it that the experience he shares with his fellow soldiers represents more to him than the biological bond he shares with his family back in New Zealand? The end of the war, the return to New Zealand and having to leave the Battalion is a traumatic experience for Tu that will be discussed in detail, as well as the fact that the home he returns to, his family and their family house, are not home to him anymore.

In this part, I will also give historical context for Grace's novel and analyse the political role the Māori Battalion played in the Second World War. In the second part, I scrutinise another aspect of home that is prominent throughout the novel: the fact that Tu's sense of home is intrinsically connected to Mount Taranaki, which is the mountain close to the village in which he grew up. This concept of home has, differently to the idea of a Battalion as home, a very strong geographical meaning, and ties in to the understanding that Māori have of themselves as *tangata whenua* (people of the land) who are connected to the land around themselves with their history, their memories and their whole beings. I examine the importance this mountain has in Māori culture, and for Tu, and also what it means that it has recently been granted the legal status of personhood.

As already mentioned in my first chapter, Grace grew up in a Māori family with strong links to Māori culture and traditions, but there is also Pākehā ancestry in her family, and she was educated in a Catholic school and later attended the teacher's college and gained a diploma from Victoria University of Wellington. Grace recounts that at school she was without exception given British books to read, and that whenever the students were asked to write short essays with titles such as, for example, 'A Day at the Beach', they would write about the British beaches. They would write about the colourful changing huts and people in bathing costumes that they had read about in the books – but not about their own personal experience of growing

up in New Zealand, in a Maori community.[191] It was at teacher's college that she first began to read books by New Zealand authors, such as Janet Frame, Frank Sargeson, and Amelia Batistich; Grace underlines, 'when I first read some of her stories it came home to me [that] writing was a question of voice and truth, and of a writer finding his/her own way of telling'.[192] To her, reading about New Zealand in that way, and experiencing for the first time a New Zealand voice in literature led to the realization for her that 'I might have my own voice too. […] I knew also that there were people who I could write about, or characters I could invent, based on people I knew, who hadn't really been written about before. There were stories about them, but not written ones.'[193] It is this last sentence which is so significant here. Based on her own experience of the power that literature has concerning notions of identity and representation, Grace discovered a distinct New Zealand voice in literature and decided to take this further and write about the experience of the Māori, with the aim of bringing their stories to the attention of a wider audience through literature.

Since the publication of her first short story collection *Waiariki* in 1975, which won the PEN/Hubert Church Award for Best First Book of Fiction, Grace has written numerous novels and short story collections, all the while continuing to work as a teacher and raising her family of seven. Being very aware of the influence of books and literature on children, she has also written several children's books with Māori characters at the centre, some of them bilingual in both English and Te Reo Māori. For example, *The Kuia and the Spider/ Te Kuia me te Pungawerewere* (1981), or *Watercress Tuna and the Children of Champion Street/ Te Tuna Watakirihi me Nga Tamariki o te Tiriti o Toa* (1984). She has won several international awards and honours for her books and in recognition of her contribution to literature, among others the Prime Minister's Award for Literary Achievement (in 2006), she was made a Distinguished

[191] 'Http://Www.Anzliterature.Com/Interview/Patricia-Grace-in-Conversation-with-Adam-Dudding/', n.d.
[192] Alley and Williams, *In the Same Room*, 286.
[193] 'Http://Www.Anzliterature.Com/Interview/Patricia-Grace-in-Conversation-with-Adam-Dudding/'.

Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit for her services to literature (2007) and in 2008 she was named the laureate of the Neustadt International Prize for Literature.

The novel *Tu* is based on diary entries by Patricia Grace's father, Sergeant Edward Gunson, who served as a soldier in the Māori Battalion, and historic events and historic material that Grace researched are interwoven with fiction. In an interview with Adam Dudding, when asked about writers that influenced her, Grace states that it was only after secondary school that she came across New Zealand writers for the first time, and that she 'started to hear the New Zealand voice in literature and to understand that real writing is writing that comes from your self – your dreams, imaginings, emotions, dreads, desires, perceptions – what you know. Part of what you know comes from the research that you do.'[194] This is the underlying premise of all her work – but it is especially visible in her novel *Tu*.

The dedication to her novel is very simple and reads:

To the memory of Sergeant Edward Gunson
28 (Māori) Battalion, D Coy, Reg 815133
(1915 – 1983)

It reads like the epitaph on a gravestone – simple, factual, giving his Battalion, the company he was part of, and his regiment's number, and then his birth and death dates by Patricia Grace, who was born in 1937 and lived through the war years as a child. In the acknowledgements at the end of the novel she remembers that, when she was a child, her father and her uncles 'didn't look or seem particularly valiant, but brave or not these men were our heroes all the same. They were funny. They laughed and sang.'[195] So the awareness that her father and uncles had fought as soldiers in the Second World War, had formed a special bond during that time and returned with memories of the war, with anecdotes and with the knowledge of different languages and German, Greek and Italian songs was something that Grace was quite keenly aware of, even as

[194] Adam Dudding, 'The Interview - Patricia Grace', Academy of New Zealand Literature, May 2016, https://www.anzliterature.com/interview/patricia-grace-in-conversation-with-adam-dudding/.
[195] Grace, *Tu*, 284.

a child.[196] However, she also acknowledges in her 'author's notes' in *Tu* that 'these men, I guess along with thousands of others returning from war, came home with a silence also. They had their ghosts.'[197] And she underlines that while her father told some anecdotes about some mischief he was involved in during his time away, 'he never spoke of the action of war itself.'[198] Even though *Tu* is based on biographical notes and dedicated to her father, and Grace titles the first part of her novel and starts the first chapter in the same way as her father starts his diary, namely with the statement 'Left Papakura by train'[199], her father never wrote about the actual experience of the war. His diary entries only cover the journey, and then he began writing again after the war had already ended, stating 'So, after many months of varied experience I take off again…'[200] This gap and silence is significant as it underlines Grace's position and task as a writer who goes in search for the missing bits of the story, interweaves facts and fiction to make a complex, multilayered narrative. As Mic Moura-Koçoğlu emphasises, in *Tu*, 'participation in warfare *per se* is firmly challenged, deconstructing naïve celebrations of a Māori warrior image by displaying the physical and psychological torments suffered'.[201]

Whilst from her author's note or interviews it is not clear why exactly her father joined the Māori Battalion, in Grace's *Tu* the motivation for the protagonist to join the war effort is evident from the very beginning. Tu feels the need to break out of family expectations and the protected life he has led so far at a boarding school: 'Out there, outside the school gates, away from my family and my mountain, there was a whole world to see, a Battalion to belong to, a war to fight'.[202] These words express the longing Tu has to travel, see more of the world, and distinguish himself in battle. It also expresses his perception of war as adventure. In addition,

[196] Grace, 284.
[197] Grace, 284.
[198] Grace, 284.
[199] Grace, 15, 16, 284.
[200] Grace, 284.
[201] Moura-Koçoğlu, *Narrating Indigenous Modernities*, 253.
[202] Grace, *Tu*, 25.

he wants to belong to the famous Māori Battalion of which his older brothers are already part. Tu recalls seeing the Māori Battalion for the first time as a fourteen-year-old boy:

> I understood when the war began that the Battalion was where I belonged, when […] I watched the soldiers march in, this pride of the people. […] I knew this was where I belonged from that moment. It's where I belong now. They are me. I am them.[203]

This quotation captures different notions of what the Māori Battalion represented. The idea of 'this pride of the people' encapsulates the fact that it was the young, capable and well-educated Māori men who were sent off by their communities to join the war effort, or who decided to volunteer. Māori leaders at the time, such as Sir Apirana Ngata, Eruera Tirikatene and Paraire Paikea recognized New Zealand's involvement in the Second World War as an opportunity for Māori to prove their worth as soldiers and by fighting together with their Pakeha comrades to show their dedication as citizens for their nation.[204] As Ngata put it: 'We are of one house, and if our Pakeha brothers fall, we fall with them. How can we ever hold up our heads, when the struggle is over, to the question, "Where were you when New Zealand was at war?"'.[205]

The History and Structure of the Māori Battalion

Also known as the 28th Battalion, the Māori Battalion was formed in 1940, following in the steps of the famous Māori Pioneer Battalion that had fought in the First World War for the British Empire.[206] It is important to note that Māori were not simply integrated in existing divisions of the 2NZEF (2nd NZ Expeditionary Force) as The New Zealand Army was known in the Second World War, but a distinct unit was formed to specifically accommodate Māori

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[203] Grace, 258.
[204] Claudia Orange, 'The Price of Citizenship? The Māori War Effort', in *Kia Kaha: New Zealand in the Second World War*, by John Crawford (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 237.
[205] Wikiriwhi, 'Māoris in the Middle East', WA II 1 DA 68/15/4, Archives New Zealand, Wellington. Quoted after Monty Soutar, *Nga Tama Toa: The Price of Citizenship : C Company 28 (Māori) Battalion 1939-1945* (Auckland, N.Z.: David Bateman, 2008), 417.
[206] J. F Cody et al., *28 (Māori) Battalion*, Documents Relating to New Zealand's Participation in the Second World War, 1939-45. (Wellington, N.Z.: War History Branch, Dept. of Internal Affairs, 1956).

soldiers. This had advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, it meant Māori were separated out and not integrated into units with other Pākehā New Zealand soldiers. Also, should their battalion be attacked it meant that there would be much higher casualty rates among Māori soldiers, as opposed to having smaller groups of Māori soldiers integrated into different Battalions of the 2NZEF. On the other hand, forming a distinct battalion, which was subdivided according to tribal affiliations, meant that the structure of the *whanau* (family) would be replicated within the unit, kinsmen would fight side by side and support each other based on family and tribal affiliations, and then men who led them, because they would be Māori, would be less inclined to risk the lives of their own kinsmen.[207] Also, it invoked a sense of pride for Māori in their own culture and their history of being warriors, which I will analyse more closely in the following pages.

The Māori Battalion consisted of four different companies, and, as Monty Soutar states in his comprehensive study *Nga Tama Toa – the Price of Citizenship*, 'Māori electoral districts provided the basic structure for arranging the companies according to tribal affiliations'.[208] The disadvantage of this was, again, that because several young Māori men from the same families would join up together, it would also mean a much higher casualty rate and a higher loss for families and communities back home if a specific company got attacked. The battalion was supposed to be commanded by Māori officers upon the request of several Māori representatives.[209] When this was questioned by the army authorities, who advised that at first the main positions should be filled by specially selected officers who were mostly Pākehā, this was seen very critically by Māori elders and a number of tribes.[210] Especially Te Arawa, a tribe at the North-Eastern coast of the North Island protested against this, by threatening that 'any move to officer the companies with Pākehā might result in Te Arawa recruits not presenting

[207] Soutar, *Nga Tama Toa*, 43.
[208] Soutar, 43.
[209] Soutar, 45.
[210] Soutar, 44.

themselves for medical examination or attestation.'[211] Other tribes expressed their support for Te Arawa.[212] In the end it was decided to train up 146 Māori recruits as soon as possible, to make sure there were enough junior officers and NCOs that would be able to lead the Main Body of the Battalion.[213]

On May 2nd 1940, the Māori Battalion left Wellington on the Aquitania, to sail to Europe. It fought in a large number of battles in North Africa, Greece, Crete and Italy, was awarded an outstanding number of distinctions, and gained a reputation for fearless warriorship and courage in battle.[214] According to Bernard Freyberg, the Commanding Officer of the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force, '[N]o infantry had a more distinguished record, or saw more fighting, or, alas, had such heavy casualties, as the Māori Battalion'.[215] Michaela Moura-Koçoğlu argues that with the beginning of the Second World War, 'Māori re-appropriated their precolonial and colonial history of warfare in a contemporary framework, [which] serv[ed] as a basis for ethnic pride and a source of self-identification'.[216] Before the arrival of the European explorers, Māori society was 'a complex society, based on tribalism and chieftainship,' and the institution of warfare was part of every aspect of Māori quotidian living.[217] It was seen most explicitly in the form of art in the *marae* where carvings represent warrior ancestors and tell tales of glorious battles, valiant deeds and courage in the face of enemies.[218] Chieftainship links to the cultural concept of *mana*, which is a difficult concept to translate or describe. According to Mead and Mead 'it can be described as the creative and dynamic force that motivates the individual to do better than others.'[219] In Māori culture, each human being is born with a certain

[211] Soutar, 44.
[212] Soutar, 44.
[213] Soutar, 45.
[214] See for example: Wira Gardiner, *Te Mura O Te Ahi: The Story of the Māori Battalion* (Reed, 1995). Keown, *Pacific Islands Writing*, 2007, 102.
[215] Ian C. McGibbon and Paul Goldstone, *The Oxford Companion to New Zealand Military History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 106.
[216] Moura-Koçoğlu, *Narrating Indigenous Modernities*, 126.
[217] Moura-Koçoğlu, 124.
[218] Alan Taylor, *Māori Warrior* (Laie, Hawaii: Brigham Young Univ Inst Polynesian, 1988), 2–4.
[219] Mead and Mead, *Tikanga Māori*, 51.

amount of *mana*, that increases through good deeds, or honourable actions, but it can also decrease through bad behaviour. I amount of mana varies – first born children usually are regarded as having more mana, as they carry a special responsibility; children born to parents with high mana will inherit part of this status when they are born. Valiant deeds in war would increase a person's or his family's mana, or even that of his entire tribe.[220] On arrival in Aotearoa/New Zealand, the European explorers propagated the image of the savage warrior and as Moura-Koçoğlu explains, this 'served to exoticize the native 'Other', with the aim of establishing a stark contrast to the civilized white man and buttressing the moral need for colonial subordination'.[221] The complex religious and mythological structures around warfare, chieftainship and achieving *mana* were reduced to a stereotypical cliché. The political situation in New Zealand at the time when the Māori Battalion was formed is a complicated one, and not all Māori were actually in favour of forming a battalion and joining the war effort.

On September 1st, 1939, Germany invaded Poland. On Monday, the 4th of September, the New Zealand Gazette declared that 'a state of war exists between his majesty and the government of the German Reich'[222] and ran the headline: 'DOMINION AT WAR'. [223] However, Nga Puhi, an iwi (Māori tribe) from the Bay of Islands allegedly declared war against Germany before the New Zealand government officially did, stating in an article in the New Zealand Gazette:

> The Ngapuhis, paramount tribe of Northland, have declared war on Germany and her allies. […] A letter was drawn up assuring the Prime Minister of the Ngapuhis' absolute allegiance to the British Crown and to the Government of New Zealand in the crisis. Mr Savage is to be asked to leave the way open for the flower of the race to enlist in overseas service.[224]

[220] Mead and Mead, 52.
[221] Moura-Koçoğlu, *Narrating Indigenous Modernities*, 125.
[222] P. Fraser, 'Dominion at War', *New Zealand Gazette*, 4 September 1939.
[223] At the outbreak of the Second World War, New Zealand was not yet an independent nation, but had the status of a Dominion.
[224] 'Ngapuhis Declare War', *New Zealand Gazette*, 2 September 1939.

The wording is slightly curious. What is meant by 'flower of the race'? How can a tribe declare war on an entire nation, on a different continent, independent of and without waiting for their own nation's official declaration? It is important in this context that allegiance to 'the British Crown' comes first, and 'the Government of New Zealand' second in the assurance of allegiance. The main reason for this declaration of allegiance, allegedly, is that in 1819, the Nga Puhi leader Hongi Hika travelled to England, and was received by King George IV who gifted him a suit of armour.[225] Since then the Ngapuhi tribe perceived that a connection existed between their *iwi* (tribe) and the British royal family. So, their declaration of war against Germany was made to confirm allegiance between their iwi and the British royal family, from one royal family to another.

In contrast to this, *iwi* (tribes) from the Waikato area were against the formation of a Māori Battalion. This had historic reasons, going back to bitterness about land confiscations and the legacy of the New Zealand Land Wars in the 1860s, and it built on the resistance movement against the formation of the Māori Pioneer Battalion in the First World War.[226] A prominent figure of the resistance then was the Māori leader Te Puea Herangi – who also appears as a character in Grace's novel. When Māori were asked to volunteer in the First World War, Te Puea Herangi responded 'They tell us to fight for king and Country, well that's all right. We've got a king [the Māori King]. But we haven't got a country. That's been taken off us. Let them give us back our land and then maybe we'll think about it again.'[227] Te Puea was also strongly against men from the Waikato volunteering for the Māori Battalion in the Second World War, and very outspoken about it. These examples show that different iwi had differing

[225] Thomas Buddle, *The Maori King Movement in New Zealand: With a Full Report of the Native Meetings Held at Waikato, April and May, 1860* (Published at the New-Zealander Office, 1860), 3.
[226] R. Scott Sheffield and Noah Riseman, *Indigenous Peoples and the Second World War: The Politics, Experiences and Legacies of War in the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 46–47.
[227] Michael King, *Te Puea: A Biography*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1977), 78.

and opposing reactions towards the formation of a Māori Battalion for the Second World War. This was a very political topic that was debated in many larger and smaller meetings and conference among Māori communities and political leaders at the time.

By raising the issue of why Tu joined the Battalion, Grace calls into question how feelings of loyalty connect to sentiments of belonging and identity. As Carlton Hayes clarifies, '[L]oyalty to familiar persons – family, friends, neighbours – is natural and usual. But special civic training is required to make a man loyal to a sum total of persons, familiar and unfamiliar, who constitute his whole nationality'.[228] Edward Said famously coined the difference between these two forms of loyalty *filiation* and *affiliation*, and maintains that 'a filial relationship [i]s held together by natural bonds and natural forms of authority – involving obedience, fear, love, respect'.[229] Affiliation, in contrast, can rather be described as something more impersonal and involves more abstract concepts such as class, or the prevalence of one culture over another.[230]

In the case of Grace's novel, questions of loyalty and the relationship between filiation and affiliation are even further confounded. When Tu joins the battalion, the way he refers to it shows a gradual merging of the individual's identity with that of a larger group. Tu considers his battalion and his comrades to be his home, based on their shared Māori heritage and experience as warriors. However, it needs to be noted that the notion of a Battalion as a place of belonging, of 'home' is also integral to the imperial project.[231] The soldiers depicted feel a sense of loyalty not just for their fellow comrades, which would fall under Said's definition of filiation, but for a concept which is quite remote and abstract – that of a nation – which can be described as affiliation. There is a paradox here, which will be explored in the next pages: the question of citizenship. Māori were, of course, citizens of New Zealand, and yet the whole idea

[228] Carlton Joseph Huntley Hayes, *Nationalism: A Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1960), 10.
[229] Edward W. Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (London: Vintage, 1991), 20.
[230] Said, 20.
[231]Robert Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: A Handbook for Instruction in Good Citizenship*, ed. Elleke Boehmer (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 23.

of a Māori Battalion was formed on the basis that politicians like Ngata felt Māori needed to join the war effort to prove their worth as citizens, implying that they felt New Zealand society did not accept them as equal citizens.

Said suggests that the transition from filiation to affiliation can be seen as a 'passage', and therefore that the two terms suggest different stages of human development.[232] This is questioned by Jeffrey Di Leo, who remonstrates that 'one should be sceptical of the proposition that we can choose affiliation over filiation,' because, even though affiliation seems like a conscious, rational choice that overrules the more emotional instinct that filiation implies, affiliation is, like filiation, something that has been internalised.[233] In *Tu*, the paradox is presented that soldiers feel such a deep comradeship with and sense of loyalty to a country that is their own, but are ruled by a government that represents a former colonial power which does not accept them as equal citizens. This is visible at different points in the novel – for example, there is a scene where Rangi, one of Tu's brothers, has a discussion with their mother and complains about the fact that Māori are not allowed in the same pubs as Pākehā, saying: 'And not allowed in the pubs with the Pakeha and the Chinaman. Why only the Pakeha and the Chinaman? Why can't the Maori boy go to the pub for a drink after work too?'[234] To which his mother just replies: 'Well it's the law.'[235] At a different point, when Rangi discusses his work situation with his uncle, and expresses dissatisfaction at how he is being treated, his uncle replies: 'The brown man has to be twice as good as the white man in order to be equal.'[236]

As Benedict Anderson aptly points out in *Imagined Communities* (2006), a nation is an imagined community because it 'is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship'.[237] It

[232] Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic*, 20.
[233] Jeffrey R. Di Leo, *Affiliations: Identity in Academic Culture* (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), 92.
[234] Grace, *Tu*, 91.
[235] Grace, 91.
[236] Grace, 105.
[237] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 7.

is this sense of fraternity and community within the Māori Battalion for which the men are willing to give their lives. These are men Tu has shared many devastating experiences with and with whom he has fought side by side. Together they planned manoeuvres and attacks and buried their fallen comrades who gaves their lives while fighting as part of the Māori Battalion, but they also shared in the brief moments of escape from the war, moments of joy when they sang or joked together, or recovered after one of their missions. Here, home is not a spatial reference, but relates to a sense of community and a shared identity that has been forged through the tribulations the men faced together. As Tu states in one of his reflective pieces, 'I am a soldier, and our task is to free the world. I'm happy to be a man of the Twenty-eighth Battalion with such a job to do, Maori Battalion staunch and true.'[238] The last sub-clause refers to the famous marching song of the Māori Battalion, which Grace includes in the epigraph of her novel:

> Maori Battalion march to victory
> Maori Battalion staunch and true
> Maori Battalion march to glory
> Take the honour of the people with you
> We'll march, march, march to the enemy
> We'll fight right to the end
> For God, for King, for Country
> Aue! Ake ake kia kaha e.[239]

Questions of Citizenship

Māori leaders at the time, such as Sir Apirana Ngata, Eruera Tirikatene and Paraire Paikea recognized New Zealand's involvement in the Second World War as an opportunity for Māori to prove their worth as soldiers and by fighting together with their Pākehā comrades to show their dedication as citizens for their nation.[240] The war narrative constructed during the

[238] Grace, *Tu*, 112.
[239] Grace, 7.
[240] Orange, 'The Price of Citizenship? The Māori War Effort', 237.

First World War and taken up again in the Second World War was adopted this time with much stronger political fervour. It is a narrative that invokes pride in indigenous culture by reviving a sense of military skill and heritage.[241] The Māori regiment also centred around the notion of citizenship, based on the hope of receiving recognition and equal status of Māori within Pākehā society if Māori were to join the war effort and fight for their country. Through the Treaty of Waitangi, which was signed by representatives of Māori iwi and the British Crown on 6th February 1840, Māori were in effect granted equal rights and citizenship.[242] So, the question remains as to why there was such a strong feeling that only participation in the war as soldiers would grant them recognition and equality. There was also the hope that upon the return of the Māori soldiers at the end of the Second World War, the way Māori were perceived and treated by New Zealand society at large would change, based on the sacrifice that Māori soldiers made for their country.

In his *The Price of Citizenship*, published in 1943, Sir Apirana Ngata draws a comparison between the First World War, where Māori had been 'denied a place in the forefront of the battle', and the Second World War, where 'he [the Māori] asked to take his full share in the front line of the battle'.[243] He poses the question as to whether Māori have not proved to be an asset to their country, demanding that they should be dealt with as an 'asset discovered in the crucible of war should have a value in the coming peace'.[244] These statements serve two different purposes: firstly, they encourage a Māori readership to join the war effort and to dedicate themselves to serving in the Māori Battalion. Secondly, however, Ngata's statements are also clearly directed at a Pākehā reading audience, asking them to consider the joint participation of Māori and Pākehā in the country's war effort and the dedication and citizenship evinced by the willingness of thousands of Māori men to sacrifice their lives for

[241] Gardiner, *Te Mura O Te Ahi*, 8–9.
[242] Orange, *The Treaty of Waitangi*, 43.
[243] Apirana Turupa Ngata, *The Price of Citizenship* (Wellington: Whitcombe & Tombs, 1943), 18.
[244] Ngata, 18.

their country. The understanding of citizenship is connected here to an understanding of identity, but of course also to home, to a sense of belonging to a specific nation and representing it. Whereas the war narrative expressing pride in the Māori warrior spirit and code strengthened their indigenous identity, on a larger scale that narrative was also used to attempt to secure a place for the Māori within New Zealand society.

In her article 'The Price of Citizenship?' Claudia Orange argues that 'as Ngata perceived the situation, commitment in war might be viewed by government and the nation at large as the price of winning citizenship – on Māori terms'.[245] This can be interpreted as Māori not just accepting whatever was decided for them, but that after the war they would be consulted as to what they and their community needed in order to be treated as equal citizens. Sir Charles Bennett, a Māori Battalion veteran, has also raised the question of what constitutes the price of citizenship. He reminds his readers that the members of this troop had all been volunteers and that none of them had been obliged by law to fight in the war. But, as Bennett recalls, '[W]e [Māori men] all said […] we don't want to be a member of this club without having to pay the full fees. In other words, we knew at that time what the price of citizenship was and we were prepared to pay it'.[246] Both Ngata's and Bennett's statements imply that the price of citizenship could be a person's life, or at least his willingness to sacrifice this life for his country. At the end of the novel, when Tu looks back on his experience as a soldier, Tu asks whether this price was too high and with the benefit of hindsight and a sense of the politics that followed the war, he gives an unequivocal answer: 'Of course it was too high. It was too high. We took full part in a war but haven't yet been able to take full part in peace'.[247] What is meant here is that, even though Māori participated in the war, afterwards they were not treated equal to their Pākehā comrades. The hope that Ngata, Bennet and many Māori expressed,

[245] Orange, 'The Price of Citizenship? The Māori War Effort', 237.
[246] Orange, 235.
[247] Grace, *Tu*, 279.

namely that the participation in the war would grant them recognition and equality, and, paradoxically, citizenship, seems to be something that, at least from Tu's perspective, has not come to fruition.

Mount Taranaki as Home

Tu's relationship to this mountain is a key aspect of the novel, and he describes Mount Taranaki as being part of his identity: 'I am my mountain because my mountain is my ancestor, and by my mountain I am identified. […]. He is ever-present in my life. As though painted inside me, he is with me wherever I go'.[248] For Tu, the mountain is not just a landmark, but has a strong spiritual meaning and the relationship that Tu has to this mountain links to the cosmological concept of *whakapapa* which is central to Māori cultural identity. Cleve Barlow defines *whakapapa* not only as mere genealogy and the relationship to the ancestors but also as the 'descent of all living things from the gods to the present time'.[249] In Barlow's definition, a sense of the sacred and the supernatural becomes apparent. Other scholars such as Erin Suzuki and Mere Roberts also emphasise that in Māori culture the land plays an integral part in 'connect[ing] the individual to the divine'.[250] As a result, a person's 'environment and resources are both ancestors and kin'.[251] This essential connection between a human being and the land is even visible on a linguistic level.

In traditional Māori culture, when a child is born, its placenta is buried on the land where the family lives to create a strong bond between the child and its place of birth.[252] In Te Reo Māori the word for 'land' or 'place', *whenua*, has a wide array of meanings, such as

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[248] Grace, 111–12.
[249] Cleve Barlow, *Tikanga Whakaaro: Key Concepts in Maori Culture* (Auckland & New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 173.
[250] Erin Suzuki, 'Genealogy and Geography in Patricia Grace's Tu', *MFS: Modern Fiction Studies* 58, no. 1 (2012): 114.
[251] Mere Roberts et al., 'Whakapapa as a Māori Mental Construct: Some Implications for the Debate over Genetic Modification of Organisms', *The Contemporary Pacific* 16, no. 1 (2004): 4.
[252] Mead and Mead, *Tikanga Māori*, 143.

'ground' or 'country'.[253] However, it also means 'placenta', thus linguistically underlining the essential relationship between land and people, and land and life. Māori describe themselves as *tangata whenua*, which in Te Reo Māori simply means 'people of the land'. What is implied in this term is that Māori, as a people, are intimately connected to and with the land around them, and that the land as the life-giving entity has a high status in Māori society. This is expressed in the following Māori proverb: '*Whatu ngarongaro te tangata, toitū te whenua.*' Which translates as: People will perish, but the land is permanent.

Traditionally, at the beginning of a *hui* (traditional gathering), after the *powhiri* (formal welcome) there is a round of introductions or speeches, which are called *mihi*. According to the traditional Māori custom called *mihi*, when introducing oneself at a traditional Māori gathering, one does not only state one's name, and one's ancestral lineage (whakapapa) but also ones provenance by naming the river and the mountain one is 'related to.'[254] By doing so, one positions oneself within a network of relationships, not just to other people, but also to the land. Through reciting one's whakapapa, one is honouring these connections, while at the same time establishing the way one is connected to the community. Another concept that is important in this context, and which highlights this relationship to the world around oneself is the concept of *tūrangawaewae*.

Mount Taranaki is mentioned throughout the novel – and a striking parallel is drawn to Monte Cassino, in the Italian Alps, thousands of miles away from Tu's home, where Tu and his Battalion fight battle after battle against the Germans. Tu gives a detailed account of the gruelling and perilous journey through the Italian Alps. He describes the cold, wet climate and the hunger the men suffer from, and makes frequent comparisons between his 'home mountain' and Monte Cassino. He refers to the latter as 'ol' man', describing it as follows: 'To the left

[253] Herbert William Williams, *A Dictionary of the Māori Language* (Wellington, New Zealand: R.E. Owen, Govt. Printer, 1957), 494. Te Reo is the language Māori speak in New Zealand. *Te Reo* translated simply means 'the language'.
[254] Somerville, *Once Were Pacific*, xviii.

layer upon layer of hills rising, until, way beyond, they become a continuum of snow-dusted mountains. As we look out many of us are reminded of home, though my own back home mountain is a lone one'.[255] By describing how many of his comrades are reminded of home by looking at the mountainscape, he conjures the idea of a shared geographical home, a sense of belonging to a very specific region in New Zealand that they all share, and that creates a bond between them. Moreover, by calling it 'ol' man', he gives the mountain a personal quality, nicknaming him in a way that a son might call his father, or grandfather, or an uncle or other older male relative. There is almost a sense of homesickness in these lines. Tu himself grew up at the foot of mount Taranaki, among his siblings, and spent his early childhood there. After the war, and years of trying to deal with his traumatic experiences, he finally decides to return to his now deserted childhood home near the mountain. As will be analysed in more detail later in this chapter, he does this because he feels, 'under our mountain is where I like to be, far enough back under his folding and unfolding brow to make me feel at home. Being here has enabled my wobbly legs to settle down'. [256] Similar to his description of Monte Cassino, Mount Taranaki is almost described as an animated creature here, one that provides sanctuary and safety. Reconnecting with his home mountain is very important for Tu in order to find inner peace and to be able to heal from his experiences of the war.

In addition, Tu compares himself to the Italian people who, as he assumes, identify with Monte Cassino in much the same way as he would with his home mountain. Tu wonders how they feel about being separated from their mountain, about being displaced by the war, and having to leave their homes behind. When Tu embarks on his journey to Europe he is far away from where his mountain is geographically located. However, a sense of belonging that is connected to his mountain stays with him and he refers to it throughout the novel. I referred to

[255] Grace, *Tu*, 66.
[256] Grace, 275.

this concept as 'internalised home', by which I mean a notion of home that is connected to the memories and perceptions associated with a specific place. One does not need to be in that particular geographical place to experience the associated sense of home. Tu, as a soldier of the Māori Battalion, is fighting in a battle far away from his home, yet he always experiences a sense of home through this internalised connection to his home mountain.

The central setting for the novel is the third of the four battles of Cassino, which began on 15th March 1944.[257]. According to David Hapgood and David Richardson this was one of the most controversial battles of the Second World War.[258] Its aim was to break through the Winter Line, which had only one weak point: the six-mile wide Liri valley, which gave access to the town of Cassino, and with that to what was called the 'gateway to Rome.'[259] This is why the Germans fortified the town so extensively.[260]

The war is an overwhelmingly traumatic experience for Tu. He describes the battle of Cassino as a nightmare that never ends:

> Getting through the town was like being in one of those bad dreams where you set out on an important journey to find that there are obstacles blocking every pathway. […]. This goes on until you wake at last, never having reached your destination. But there was no waking from this nightmare of Cassino.[261]

In *Tu*, there are detailed accounts of the war and of battle scenes, as when Tu describes the first time he killed an enemy soldier.[262] Tu describes his identity as a soldier as 'one of pride', adding that this is the emotion that 'override[s] other feelings'.[263] He quickly asserts that he does not feel proud about having killed enemy soldiers, but rather because he 'was able to do

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[257] Jonathan Fennell, *Fighting the People's War: The British and Commonwealth Armies and the Second World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 408.
[258] David Hapgood and David Richardson, *Monte Cassino: The Story of the Most Controversial Battle of World War II* (Boston: Da Capo Press, 2009).
[259] Rudolf Bohmler, *Monte Cassino: A German View* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword, 2015), 69.
[260] Glyn Harper and John Tronkin-Covel, *Battles of Monte Cassino: The Campaign and Its Controversies* (Auckland: Allen & Unwin, 2013), 5.
[261] Grace, *Tu*, 165.
[262] Grace, 84.
[263] Grace, 84.

what [he] was meant to do' as though he 'has passed a test, become a true soldier […] and earned membership of [his] Battalion'.[264] However, his deeds haunt him in his dreams and the traumatic experience of having taken other men's lives manifests itself in Tu's inability to forget their screams, the squealing sound of the bayonet-blades being withdrawn, and the moaning of hurt horses. Tu describes these as 'the worst sounds I've heard in all the sounds of war so far'.[265] Sensory perceptions, such as detailed descriptions of sounds, colours, and smells feature repeatedly throughout the book, giving a vivid impression of the battle scene which Tu and the other soldiers experience. For example, after the soldiers climb down from a mountain range, the scenery is described as follows: 'Through mist and drizzle […] were high walls of colour; of brown and red, black and grey, all combining with the deep blue and purple shadows cast by rocky sides and rugged mountain summits'.[266] There are also descriptions of sounds, such as the bursting and shattering of shells, machine gun fire, and the depiction of smells of death – the stinking, rotting, reeking corpses of dead soldiers.[267] The almost synesthetic emphasis of sensations and colours removes the familiarity of home even further from known tastes and familiar sensations.

The traumatic experience of the war and its effect on the soldiers are explicitly expressed. For example, when Tu states that 'in the meantime we have revived our choir, which helps to keep the crackling and clatter out of your head. But many of the voices have gone'.[268] This demonstrates that he and his comrades suffer not only from physical wounds and the privations of battle but also from mental illness, which is suggested by the reference to the sounds in the soldiers' heads. In one scene, Tu describes the different wounds soldiers have received and states: 'Others have developed nervous conditions and have been hospitalised too.

[264] Grace, 84.
[265] Grace, 84.
[266] Grace, 165.
[267] Grace, 165.
[268] Grace, 134.

Most are woken at night by our noisy dreams'.[269] Tu is fully aware that the war has changed him and the other men:

> After all, we were not now who we were before. We were not now the blackened, fit men who had crossed from desert regions in a crowded boat. How long ago? Now we were pale ghosts of men whose bones were coming through to live on the outside of our skins. We were men living in dens and rubbish piles, who crawled on hands and knees in a succession of nights and days in a world without colours. For this was a black, white, grey, flickering world we were inhabiting […] where even blood flowed grey and dark […]. It wasn't the known world, so why shouldn't it have been inhabited by ghosts? Why should we not have been those ghosts?[270]

The tone of his passage is eerie, the landscape seems to mirror the inner turmoil of Tu and the soldiers who have experienced violence, death, hunger and cold. This excerpt shows that the men suffer from the war not just physically, but mentally as well. They detach themselves from what is happening around them, as if this is not the 'real' world and they are not themselves real people who commit the violence and experience it in turn. They feel as though they are transgressing borders between the real and the unreal, becoming ghosts in a traumatising world.

During their first encounters with German troops, the Māori Battalion suffers heavy losses, and Tu thinks about the families back home and how they are affected by the bad news of a relative who has died: 'Those days of waiting were bad time for the home people. Every day there was news of death. […]. Every day people were on the move, gathering at one marae or another to mourn.'[271] According to Māori custom, the body of the deceased is displayed in the *marae* so that everyone can visit them and say their good-byes. Tu imagines the bewilderment of the people back home because, in the case of Māori soldiers dying far from their home in the battles of the Second World War, there is no body: 'Death in far-off lands, death without a body, was death not fully believed. There was only a photograph as a reminder, only a photograph to touch, to stroke while the death ceremonies took place, and no burial to

[269] Grace, 212.
[270] Grace, 179.
[271] Grace, 95–96.

bring about conclusion'.[272] In Māori culture, death represents a final homecoming for the dead person, a return to earth and to the ancestral land, and a closure of the circle of life. Yet in this case, the homecoming is a disrupted one, as the relatives can only relate to a photograph, an image of the person that will never come home again. Māori burial rituals are discussed in greater detail towards the end of the novel when Tu's elder brother Pita is shot. As Tu explains to the reader, traditionally the *hoki atu ra* is recited when someone has died; this is:

> not a prayer but a permit from the living. […] 'Hoki atu ra' is giving you leave so you can march out and go off to join the ancestors […]. It's your living friends and relatives allowing you to go, telling you to get yourself off to the homeland.[273]

However, as his brother had been a devout Catholic, they say the Catholic burial rites as well – just in case.[274] For Tu, imagining the homecoming and his brother being reunited with their ancestors helps him to bear his grief. Recalling the encounter with the swollen bodies of dead soldiers, Tu realises that

> […] the feelings of horror and revulsion were not so much then, as now. Feelings and sensation become delayed when you are in battle, there being no time to dwell as you focus on what you have to do for yourself and your mates and survival. Never mind about God, King and Country in times like those.[275]

In the quotation above, 'then' refers to the moment of battle, while 'now' refers to the moment at which Tu writes his memories down afterwards. Through the use of different narrative strands, especially towards the end of the novel, time, place and even the narrative voice become blurred. It is not quite clear when exactly Tu is writing this, and this excerpt is interjected in his report about the battle of Cassino towards the middle of the novel. It could be that these reflections happen shortly after his return home, long after the war itself, or while he spends time in hospital towards the end of the war. I argue that the fractured structure of the

[272] Grace, 97.
[273] Grace, 203.
[274] Grace, 202–3.
[275] Grace, 166.

novel and the unreliable chronology of events represent Tu's trauma and the experience of a fractured self at the level of form.

This phenomenon of realising the scope of a traumatic event not in the moment that it happens, but belated, is something that Cathy Caruth describes meticulously in her book *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (1996), arguing that 'in trauma the greatest confrontation with reality may also occur as an absolute numbing to it, that immediacy, paradoxically enough, may take the form of belatedness'.[276] As Tu states, the full realisation of the traumatic experience of the war is not immediate, but resurfaces after his return home. As Caruth argues, at the core lies not only the traumatic experience of the war itself, but also 'the ongoing experience of having survived it'.[277] She argues that 'for those who undergo trauma, it is not only the moment of the event, but the passing out of it that is traumatic; […] survival itself, in other words, can be a crisis'.[278] I would like to extend Caruth's argument further and contend that it is not just having survived the war that reinforces the trauma, but that the experience of coming home provides the space for trauma to fully manifest. During the war soldiers are occupied with trying to survive from day to day, and everything that is not essential for their survival gets suppressed. The moment when a soldier returns home from fighting in a war is an instance of tension and complications. As Alan Allport points out in his detailed study *Demobbed* (2010), it is 'an experience both intense and often sharply double-edged […] rich in joy and relief, […] but also full of doubts and frustrations.'[279] Allport's book focuses on the experience of British soldiers after the Second World War, providing the most comprehensive analysis that has so far been published of how soldiers as well as society at large experience the homecoming of men from war. I contend that some themes of return and

[276] Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, 4.
[277] Caruth, 7.
[278] Grace, *Tu*, 9.
[279] Alan Allport, *Demobbed: Coming Home after the Second World War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 106.

homecoming that the book looks at are universal and not tied to a specific setting, and therefore I will use arguments made in this book to examine the representation of homecoming soldiers in a postcolonial context.

The Returning Soldier

This chapter looks at a very specific form of homecoming – namely, the experience of a soldier who has fought in a war and returns home traumatised. This falls into the broader category of return migration. According to Marjory Harper, there are two effects of return migration: on the one hand, there is the impact that the reintegration of individuals upon their home community, on the other hand the effect that the return journey holds over the migrants themselves.[280] Both can be seen in *Tu*. In the novel we find not only one, but two characters who are returning soldiers – one is Tu himself, and the other one is his father, who fought in WWI, and returns home severely wounded traumatised. The father's homecoming has a severe impact on his family. His children were still too small to remember him when he went 'to a place called war' and to them he has always just been a story.[281] When he returns to New Zealand he has to spend a long time in hospital, and his children don't recognise him, as he has nothing in common with the laughing man from the photographs that stand on the mantelpiece.[282] In those days, the oldest of the children, Pita, is called 'Little Father' by everyone – indicating that already at a young age Pita showed responsibility and that it was clear that, as the oldest son, he would at some point be the head of the family and take on his father's place. The father's presence overshadows the atmosphere in the house. During the day, he sits in an armchair, mumbling at times, with shaking hands – but at night the children hear

[280] Harper, *Emigrant Homecomings*, 29.
[281] Grace, *Tu*, 50.
[282] Grace, 51.

him shouting and screaming.[283] At times he is violent as well, hitting and choking his wife – but from the way it is written, it seems as if it is more a manifestation of the trauma he experienced in the war, and not conscious domestic violence.

When this happens, it is Pita who runs for help, and at some point he finds it difficult to remember 'that there had been quiet times, times when their father was 'good'.'[284] Once Tu is born, his family do their utmost to shield him, the youngest, from their father's violent outbursts and his older brothers Pita and Rangi, who are thirteen and eleven years older than Tu, are able to hold their father down now and protect their mother and the rest of the family.[285] When their father dies seven years later, Pita feels a sense of freedom and relief. The family decides to leave their rural home to move to the city and start a new life there and especially to find a good school for their youngest brother Tu, because 'Tu, who had been sheltered from rage, was their hope for the future.'[286] Here, we can see how a soldier returning traumatised from war can have a significant effect on the family and community he returns to. In this case, they suffer domestic violence to such a strong extend that the two older two sons feel responsible to always be on guard and to protect their mother, their sisters and their youngest brother from their own father.

This pattern of feeling responsible and protecting their family continuous for Pita and Rangi and when they realise their little brother has signed up to be a soldier, even though he did not have to and they told him not to, in order to protect him, they try to make sure that he stays alive. Serving side by side in the same battalion means that Tu, who is so much younger than his brothers and spent a lot of time away from them at boarding school, gets to know them better. He acknowledges that they, being the older ones and responsible for their family from such a young age, have been a lot more affected by growing up with a father who suffered from

[283] Grace, 52.
[284] Grace, 56.
[285] Grace, 60.
[286] Grace, 63.

the trauma of the war experience, and they have experienced a lot more hardship than he himself.[287] When his brother Pita dies, this has a profound effect on both Tu and Rangi (as has already been analysed in this chapter). Rangi now takes over the role of the oldest brother from Pita, and continuously waches over Tu and is concerned about his safety. For Tu, this is difficult as he says that he 'never wanted to be a burden' to his brothers.[288] Rangi has taken their brother's death very badly, and Tu encourages him to apply to go home, but he does not even consider doing that.

Then the story skips ahead a few months, and we learn that Tu is now in a hospital. He has trouble remembering ow he got there, but over the next few pages he pieces it together, as he finds what has happened to him difficult to recollect but also difficult to put into words: When they are involved in an attack, he hears his brothers calling him by name – 'Te Hokowhitu-a-Tu', he runs towards the voice and remembers being hit over the side of the head by a rifle butt, and that then someone cuts him with a bayonet in such a way that he is wounded enough to not be able to fight anymore. That someone is his brother Rangi – to make sure that Tu would be sent to a hospital, until the war was over.[289]

Receivign this injury at the hands of his own brother has not only a physical but also a strong psychological effect on Tu. He feels ashamed, and as if his brothers, by inflicting this wound on him, have basically taken away his identity as a soldier of the Māori Battalion. He also feels ashamed when thinking about the people back home, and what they would say if they knew he had not actually received his wounds in a battle, but at the hands of his own brothers, who, as he feels 'decided I was not man enough to withstand the consequences of where I had placed myself – brothers who had made themselves my keepers.'[290] All this bears so heavily on him that sometimes he wishes to be dead. His brothers ultimately injured him to ensure that

[287] Grace, 150.
[288] Grace, 215.
[289] Grace, 236.
[290] Grace, 237.

he would be able to return home again.Yet in the penultimate chapter entitled ‘over’, Tu describes the end of the war, and that he does not feel ready to go home to his people. There are several reasons for Tu’s reluctance to go back home, and one of them is this burden of having survived the war and facing the families of his fallen comrades back home. However, the most prominent reason is Tu’s strong sense of belonging to his Battalion.[291] Tu describes the moment of arrival back in Wellington in the following terms: ‘Footsteps pound the decks and stairways. The voices are loud, and the laughter is joyful. I look for joy as my heart rocks, my hand trembles, my insides lurch’.[292] Instead of the expected joy Tu had hoped to experience upon his homecoming, there is rather a sense of panic that takes hold of his body. After his return, he tries to find work and settle down into a regular life but finds himself unable to do so. He is restless, with a strong sense of unbelonging and displacement. Tu’s survival of the war and safe return to his family triggers a strong sense of guilt because so many of his comrades did not return.

What bears most heavily on Tu is a sense of guilt and shame about having survived the war.[293] This is a common sentiment among soldiers who have survived a war, as J. M. Winter highlights in his magisterial study of the First World War, when he terms this phenomenon: ‘guilt of the survivor’. [294] However, what on the surface looks like shame is a manifestation of his experience of the war. The Battle of Cassino have left Tu severely traumatised.[295] The theme of war trauma is visible throughout the whole novel, as it comes up repeatedly in different contexts, for example when Tu recounts his experience of the battle and combat, but also later on when he is already back in New Zealand and reflects on his experience. Judith Hermann elucidates that ‘at the moment of trauma, the victim is rendered helpless by

[291] Grace, 255–56.
[292] Grace, 260.
[293] Grace, 237.
[294] J. M. Winter, *The Great War and the British People* (London: Macmillan, 1986), 300–301.
[295] The battle of Ypres on 22 April 1915 was the first poison gas attack on the Western front in the First World War.

overwhelming force' and underlines that 'traumatic events overwhelm the ordinary system of care that give people a sense of control, connection, and meaning'.[296] The onus is on Tu and his cousin, the sole survivors of all the young men from their home village and the neighbouring villages, to visit the families of their dead comrades. Tu recounts in his diary that 'it was a hard time bearing all that death homeward […]. Of the men of my generation there were none there to greet us at our home-place. That's all I have to say about that.'[297] The return to the families and the repeated confrontation with him having survived intensifies Tu's trauma, until it becomes so severe that he cannot cope with it anymore and admits himself to an asylum. After having returned home and trying to settle back into everyday life, all the traumatic things that a soldier experienced suddenly have space to resurface. It is the homecoming itself, the return from the war to a place where the soldier is no longer in mortal danger that yields space for the trauma to manifest.

In *Tu*, his family do not seem to understand the trauma occurred during the course of his duty. He is not able to return to his pre-war life and fulfil their expectations that he will take up a job and settle down. It is a challenge for Tu's family to accept this profound change in his character. In his book *Psychiatric Aspects of Modern Warfare* (1945), Reginald Ellery emphasises that one could not simply take men away from their homes, their work, and their everyday lives, 'train them in […] warfare, […] send them off to fight, and then expect them to fall back into their old jobs again as if they had just returned from a fortnight's holiday'.[298] Yet, this exact scenario happens in the novel. Unaware of his shattering wartime experiences that Tu is unable to share, his family and the people around him are confused by his behaviour. Over time, the trauma increases and overcome by a mental crisis, Tu finally takes himself to

[296] Judith Lewis Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: From Domestic Violence to Political Terror*, New ed. (London: Rivers Oram Press, 2001), 33.
[297] Grace, *Tu*, 266.
[298] Reginald Spencer Ellery, *Psychiatric Aspects of Modern Warfare* (Melbourne: Adelaide, Reed & Harris, 1945), 147–48.

an asylum because he felt that: 'Those who loved me were better off without me. My shakes, my blues, my raving dreams were mine and mine alone'.[299] This shows Tu's sense of loss and his loneliness, demonstrating that years after the war he still suffers from the traumatic experiences.

Tu is plagued by nightmares while on the battlefield, but it is only after his return home that his traumatic experiences become so strongly resurgent that he suffers a breakdown. After he is discharged from the asylum, Tu decides to go back to his village and the mountain where he spent his childhood. The village is deserted, but Tu makes one of the houses habitable again and withdraws into what he calls 'an old man's existence', even though he is still a young man in his thirties. By returning to his mountain, Tu has finally come home. He has returned to his mountain and found a place to live. After the traumatic experiences of the war and the equally traumatic homecoming, he can finally settle down and lead a simple life away from society, tending livestock. Tu's concept of home and of identity here is strongly linked to his ancestral, rural home and the landscape that he grew up in as a boy. It is almost as if, overwhelmed by the experiences in the war, he withdraws to try and lead a life away from it all, to return to his traditional Māori roots in order to find healing and respite from his suffering.

Environmental Personhood as a Legal Concept

On 22 December 2017, New Zealand awarded the legal status of personhood to Mount Taranaki. This was, in many ways, a landmark decision and it was based on a long process of campaigning by Māori iwi, which can be traced back to 1840 when the Treaty of Waitangi was first signed. Mount Taranaki was not the first natural entity to be granted personhood. A few months earlier, in March 2017, the Whanganui River was also granted legal personhood, and

[299] Grace, *Tu*, 273.

the legal precedent for this was set in 2016, when the Urewera National Park was granted legal personhood.[300] All of these are natural entities in New Zealand; however, in a few other countries similar frameworks are adopted.[301] Their protections are not simply rooted in environmental protections, but represent so much more. In the instance where personhood is granted to a mountain, or a river, or a specific area of land, two worldviews, namely that of Māori tradition according to which mountains and rivers are entities with their own history and their own rights and that of Western Law are effectively combined, and a Māori world view is recognised within the scope of Western law.

As explained in the introduction to this thesis, Māori retained their *tino rangatiratanga* (sovereignty) over their *taonga* (treasures, possessions) according to the Māori version of the Treaty, but not according to the English version. As Maria Bargh points out, 'Crown assumptions have been expressed in a number of somewhat contradictory assumptions with regards to water. The first is that by signing the Treaty Māori ceded sovereignty and customary title over waterways to the Crown.'[302] This assumption was successfully contested, and in their article 'Giving Voice to Rivers: Legal Personality as a Vehicle for Recognising Indigenous Peoples' Relationships to Water?' James Morris and Jacinta Ruru report that 'in the 1999 Whanganui River Report the Tribunal found that for the Whanganui people the river including its water are a taonga.'[303] To tie this back to the novel, I argue that in the way Tu gives his home mountain a personification and addresses it as 'ol' man', we can see that to him, the mountain is much more than just a landmark – it is his guardian, his treasure and it is only upon

[300] 'Te Urewera Act' (2014), http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2014/0051/latest/whole.html.
[301] For example, in India the rivers Ganges and Yamuna has been granted legal personhood in 2017. The Indian court who made the decision cited the Whanganui river in New Zealand as an example. See: 'Ganges and Yamuna Rivers Granted Same Legal Rights as Human Beings | World News | The Guardian', accessed 19 August 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/21/ganges-and-yamuna-rivers-granted-same-legal-rights-as-human-beings.
[302] Maria Bargh, 'Submission on Water Issues in Aotearoa New Zealand to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights', May 2007, 5–6.
[303] James Morris and Jacinta Ruru, 'Giving Voice to Rivers: Legal Personality as a Vehicle for Recognising Indigenous Peoples' Relationships to Water?', *Australian Indigenous Law Review* 14, no. 2 (2010): 53. See: Waitangi Tribunal, Whanganui River Report. Wai 167 (Waitangi Tribunal, 1999) 74.

the return to his mountain that he feels a sense of protection and rootedness.

Morris and Ruru give a succinct definition of a legal personhood. According to them it is 'an entity – a natural person, company or similar – that has legal rights and may be subject to obligations.'[304] By awarding environmental entities, such as rivers or mountains, the legal status of a person, they are given rights, privileges and protection. The first academic scholar who examined the idea of awarding legal personality to natural entities was the Law professor Christopher Stone who in his influential book *Should Trees Have Standing?: Law, Morality, and the Environment* (2010) argues, among others, that better environmental protection could be guaranteed to mountains, rivers and the like if they are awarded legal personality.[305] Morris and Ruru argued that by affording rivers legal personality, the worldview of indigenous people would be recognised in a legal framework by the government and argued that 'it is timely to consider the application of this concept in the specific context of New Zealand's rivers.'[306] They argue:

> [A]pplying Stone's idea to afford legal personality to New Zealand's rivers would create an exciting link between the Māori legal system and the state legal system. The legal personality concept aligns with the Māori legal concept of a personified natural world. By regarding the river as having its own standing, the mana (authority) and mauri (life force) of the river would be recognised.[307]

The recognition of Mount Taranaki therefore lies on several precedents, mainly those regarding rivers such as the Waikato River and the Whanganui River. Both precedents played a decisive role contributing to Mount Taranaki being recognised as a person in its own right. The role of the mountain as a *tipuna* (ancestor) is based on the Whanganui River case settlement but it is taken further. Granting the mountain personhood is significant in the respect that it emphasises

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[304] Morris and Ruru, 53.
[305] Christopher D. Stone, *Should Trees Have Standing?: Law, Morality, and the Environment*, 3rd edition (New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 2010).
[306] Morris and Ruru, 'Giving Voice to Rivers', 49.
[307] Morris and Ruru, 51.

the relationship between Māori *iwi* and their *tipuna* which, by giving it legal personality, allows it to be recognised within a Western legal framework.

The Iwi who are linked to the Whanganui river hold a common understanding: '*Ko au te Awa, ko te Awa ko au*.': *I am the River, and the River is me*. This same understanding is true for iwi of the Mount Taranaki region and is used by Grace throughout her novel. This symbolises that the Whanganui River or Mount Taranaki are much more than just landmarks, playing an important role in Māori mythology. In the case of Mount Taranaki, the mountain is regarded as an ancestor and symbolises a lifegiving force and home to the iwi who live in the region.

With the return from the war and the end of Tu's notebook, the novel comes to an end as well. Tu describes his writing as

> […] the private mementoes of this twenty-year-old soldier of the Māori Battalion, home from war. His other inheritances are: a hotch-potch of memories, a few scars, […] a troublesome stomach, exploding dreams, sometimes tremors, and a kind of madness in his heart and legs that won't allow him to be still. [308]

The novel both opens and closes with a letter to his niece and nephew, in which Tu reflects on his experience of the war and opines on what joining the war effort really meant for the Māori. The last chapter is the end of the letter, and in it Tu writes that it was

> […] all about being true citizens, being equal, proving worth, having a prideful place. It was nothing to do with God and King, and we were too far away for it to really be about country. […] Freedom was what was being talked about […] the freedom we meant was our own freedom, the freedom and status of the people. Our citizenship.[309]

Altogether, almost 3600 men served overseas with the Māori Battalion between 1940 and

[308] Grace, *Tu*, 266–67.
[309] Grace, 278–79.

1945.[310] In total, 680 Māori soldiers were killed in action or died on active service and 1712 were wounded.[311] This means that almost 20% of the members of the Māori Battalion who went to serve overseas did not come home. But instead of condemning the war with hindsight, or of upholding a celebratory and nostalgic notion of the Battalion and of his experience as a soldier, Tu expresses doubt and warns about simplifying the war and the discussion of why Māori joined it:

> War is not for untangling, not by this little soldier anyway. All I know is that it would be too easy now to say I shouldn't have gone, that we shouldn't have gone, that it wasn't our war, that there should never have been a Māori Battalion.[312]

The fact that Tu describes as himself 'little soldier' is curious. On the one hand, it refers to his family identity as the youngest child, the 'little brother', and the fact that he was so young when he joined the war effort. On the other hand, it can also be read as a term that Tu uses to put himself into place, almost, as if he tells himself off for stepping out of line or passing judgment over something he does not understand. The story comes full circle when he recounts the visit of his niece and nephew when they are about fourteen, and how startled he was by how similar they look to his dead brothers, their fathers.[313] He ends his letter by telling them that he would like to take them to Italy, to see their fathers grave – an important part of his healing process. Writing to them about his plans for the future, and becoming aware that by surviving the war he is now able to pass on stories about his brothers to their children gives Tu a new sense of purpose.[314]

Far from simplifying the involvement of the Māori Battalion in the Second World War and what it means for a soldier to return home after a war, Grace has written a multi-layered

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[310] Soutar, *Nga Tama Toa*, 11.
[311] Timothy C. Winegard, *Indigenous Peoples of the British Dominions and the First World War* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), 265.
[312] Grace, *Tu*, 260.
[313] Grace, 273.
[314] Grace, 281.

novel that shows the trauma of a young Māori soldier who participated in the war as well as the predicament he faces upon his homecoming. By describing the effect of the war trauma that resurfaces after Tu's homecoming and by showing that he never fully recovers from his experiences, Grace questions whether a homecoming in such a situation is actually possible or whether it is ultimately beyond reach. It is therefore curious that Donna Coates' article 'When the World is Free' completely misrepresents this essential part of the novel by breaking up the quotation, only citing it from 'I shouldn't have gone' onwards, thus cutting out Tu's philosophical reflection and undermining the important ambivalence of this passage.[315] On the contrary, I argue throughout this chapter that Grace's novel remarkably depicts the ambiguity and open-ended questions concerning the participation of Māori soldiers in the Second World War, as well as the portrayal of the alienation and difficulties involved in Tu's homecoming. Even though the traumatic experiences and individual fates of three brothers are depicted in the novel, their story reflects not only a personal but a communal trauma that the Māori community experienced during and after the Second World War.

For Tu, the sense of home and belonging is twofold. On one hand, his sense of belonging is strongly tied to his battalion and the sense of comradeship he experiences there. On the other hand, he finds his sense of home and belonging in nature, landmarks, and specifically the mountain close to the village in which he spent his childhood, Mount Taranaki. It is the decision to return home to his mountain and the village where he spent his childhood that finally enables him to settle down again after the horrors he had experienced in the war.

[315] Donna Coates, 'When the World Is Free', in *The Splintered Glass - Facets of Trauma in the Post-Colony and Beyond*, ed. M. Dolores Herrero and Sonia Baelo-Allué (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2011), 49.

Chapter Three

Home and Homelessness in Witi Ihimaera's *Tangi* and Patricia Grace's *Cousins*

'Even though we lived in Gisborne, it wasn't really home. Home was Waituhi. It was all the family living together around Rongopai, the family meeting house. It was living with our family present and our family dead who slept on the hill near Rongopai.'[316] This is how Tama, the protagonist of Witi Ihimaera's *Tangi* (1973), describes his home. Home and homecoming are the central topics of the novel, with the different notions of home addressed in this quote. Waituhi, the rural village is considered to be home, as is the family or larger community. Additionally, the marae, or meeting house, is a form of home. In particular, the concept of home as being the place where the ancestors are buried will be analysed in the first part of this chapter. A crucial moment in the novel is Tama's return home for his father's funeral, giving rise to discussion regarding the idea of death, dying and funerals.

In 1973, only one year after the short story collection *Pounamu Pounamu* appeared, Ihimaera's first novel titled *Tangi* (1973) was published, the very first novel by a Māori writer. *Pounamu Pounamu*, the recipient of the James Wattie Book of the Year Award in 1974, tells the story of a young Māori who returns home to his father's funeral, illustrating his relationship to his community and his Māori heritage. Ihimaera's novel *Tangi* is based on the short story 'Tangi'; the protagonist and the setting are the same. As Paola Della Valle observes, 'the same families and characters are found in many different stories (and later novels), suggesting the author's will to create links between his works as part of a greater whole. The representation of a paradigmatic world is therefore reflected in the creation of a corresponding textual

[316] Ihimaera, *Tangi*, 1989, 84.

world.'[317] According to Mead and Mead, the *tangihanga* ceremony (or short: *tangi*), which is part of a funeral, 'brings together in a coherent way many of the core values of Māori society' and that even today 'the tangihanga remains a powerful and unifying ceremony.'[318] It is a community ritual and has therefore a great importance for strengthening a sense of Māori identity, Māori culture and the importance of the *marae* as a centre for Māori community, as this is where a *tangihanga* traditionally takes place. Otto Heim underlines that 'a tangi is not a permanent state of mind, but an emotionally and culturally crucial moment of shared grief over the loss of a relative.'[319] The traditions of the *tangi* are explained by Tama, the protagonist, in the novel and lead back to the observation that Lydia Wevers and others have made, that Ihimaera is addressing an audience in his novel that is not necessarily intimately familiar with Māori traditions, mythology and language.[320]

The novel itself is preceded by a very simple dedication, that just reads 'To my father' and as the novel itself is about a son's relationship to his father, it sets a tone that establishes the importance of this theme. [321] Here we find very strongly the theme of preserving Māori culture by writing about it, which has already been touched upon in the introduction, chapter one and chapter two. For the protagonist of the novel, his father's death represents not just the loss of a member of his family, but also, on a larger scale, the disappearance of a world he was part of and stood for, and of the Māori values that he represented. But by returning home in order to attend the funeral and be with his family, there is also a strong affirmation of home and of community.

[317] Valle, *From Silence to Voice*, 110.
[318] Mead and Mead, *Tikanga Māori*, 354–55.
[319] Heim, *Writing Along Broken Lines*, 197.
[320] Lydia Wevers, 'The Novel, the Short Story, and the Rise of a New Reading Public, 1972–1990', in *A History of New Zealand Literature*, ed. Mark Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 246.
[321] Ihimaera, *Tangi*, 1989, i.

When the novel was first published, it was framed by a foreword and an epilogue that 'evokes the Māori cosmogonic myth of *Rangitane* and *Papatuanuku*, setting the mythological frame that contains the whole work.'[322]; however, at some point the foreword seems to have been dropped. Certainly, in the 1989 edition it is no longer part of the novel. Why the decision to remove it remains slightly unclear. The foreword is less a prose foreword than a poem – it is divided in stanzas.[323] The second and the third (and last) stanza read as follows:

> This is *Tangi*, a poetic drama in prose about
> a young man and his father.
> This is *Tangi*, an account of death but also
> an affirmation of life.
> This is *Tangi*, describing simply and
> sincerely, the Māori values placed on life;
> and on aroha, love and sympathy for each
> other.
>
> This is *Tangi*, a vivid expression of the
> village family unity of rural Māori life.
> This is *Tangi*, written in the hope that such a
> life, and the values of that life, will never be
> lost.
> This is *Tangi*, the first novel by a
> Māori to be published.[324]

It ends in Te Reo Māori with the line: *Haere mai, haere mai, haere mai* – which can be translated as 'Come forward, welcome'.[325] Here, Ihimaera approaches in a surprisingly direct and candid way some of the themes that have already been touched upon in the introduction, and explored further in chapter one. He emphasizes the importance of the village community, the rural Māori life – and expresses his hope that 'such a life, and values of that life, will never be lost.'[326] There is a hope in these lines, but also a strong anxiety about the loss of a way of

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[322] Valle, *From Silence to Voice*, 116. Traditionally, the myth is referred to as the story of Ranginui and Papa-tu-ā-nūku (See: Mead and Mead, *Tikanga Māori*, 364, 366.) But there are different variations in spelling, and Ihimaera refers to it as Rangitane and Papatuanuku in his novel, and so many of the critics analysing or citing his work have opted for these names instead.
[323] Nadia Majid, *My Mother Was the Earth, My Father Was the Sky: Myth and Memory in Maori Novels in English* (Peter Lang, 2010), 120.
[324] Witi Ihimaera, *Tangi* (Auckland: Heinemann Reed, 1973), v.
[325] Valle, *From Silence to Voice*, 116.
[326] Ihimaera, *Tangi*, 1973, v.

life, of home, which, as already discussed in chapter one, is one of the underpinning themes of Māori literature of the time in which *Tangi* was published.[327] In the foreword the last line symbolizes the *karanga*, the chant of welcome traditionally sung by Māori women who welcome visitors onto the *marae*. As Della Valle points out, 'the karanga is a welcome for the living […]. [But] it also summons the spirits of the dead, who may be represented here by reference to the primeval parents, Rangi and Papa.'[328] By using this poetic opening which through its entire form, but especially through its ending, strongly reminds readers of the form of a traditional Māori oral chant of welcome, Ihimaera recreates the atmosphere of a *marae*, and 'the reader is therefore likened to a visitor and welcomed to a textual marae symbolising the Māori world.'[329]

This connects to Ihimaera's description of his own work and writing, namely as a chance for readers, especially Māori readers who have been alienated from their own culture, to learn about Māori culture: 'My first priority is to the young Maori, the ones who have suffered most with the erosion of the Maori map, the ones who are Maori by colour but who have no emotional identity as Maori.'[330] Traces of traditional oral culture can be found throughout the novel – first of all, it is framed by the Māori myth of origin, which would have been passed on from generation to generation through storytelling. But it is not just in the way the novel is framed or the way it is narrated. In different parts of the novel, the characters themselves perform songs and chants that are part of the oral traditions of Māori culture; for example, there are different *waiata* (chants) that are traditionally sung at the funeral, which the characters sing. When Tama first enters the *marae* for his father's funeral, the *kuias* (old women) sing, and 'the sound of their wailing is like a soft wind whispering: *Haere mai ki o*

[327] For a more detailed discussion of the foreword see: Majid, *My Mother Was the Earth, My Father Was the Sky*, 121.
[328] Valle, *From Silence to Voice*, 116–17.
[329] Valle, 117.
[330] Witi Ihimaera, 'Why I Write', *World Literature Written in English* 14, no. 1 (1975): 118.

tatou mate e. Do you know what they say? *Come to our dead…*'[331] Throughout the next pages, the *waiata* continuous in this fashion. A few lines in Te Reo Māori, followed by a sentence or a short paragraph of narrative or interior dialogue, and then the Te Reo Māori translated into English.[332] In that way readers unfamiliar with Te Reo Māori are able to understand what is being said and are invited to follow the ceremony and participate in what is happening.

It is therefore curious that the foreword has just been omitted from future editions, breaking the frame in which the narrative of the novel was embedded. Nadia Majid ponders that

> […] the poem's exclusion from the new version of *Tangi* appears to be due to the changed focus and philosophy Ihimaera chooses to depict in 2005. The poem complements the style of Māori oral tradition that the writer employs in many passages of the novel, and which he abandons for the most part in his rewriting.[333]

Majid hints here at the fact that in the 1980s, Ihimaera stopped writing for a period of ten years, and then decided to rewrite his earlier works, including *Pounamu Pounamu*, *Tangi* and a second novel, *Whanau*. As Lydia Wevers observes, this decision was made because Ihimaera was 'concerned that his portrayal of the Māori world was perpetuating dated ideas and perhaps responding to criticism that his work was naively sentimental about Māori life, failing to register Māori poverty, alienation and social disadvantage.'[334] Ihimaera, in an interview with Tim Watkin, puts it in more direct terms: 'I didn't like what I had written. That's why I stopped writing. Because it was all horizontal. It was all on the surface. What I needed to do was go vertically into thIext ... I had to grow up.'[335] His way of doing this was to stop writing for ten years, to leave New Zealand and to work, among others, as a diplomat in New York.

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[331] Ihimaera, *Tangi*, 1989, 134.
[332] Ihimaera, 134.
[333] Majid, *My Mother Was the Earth, My Father Was the Sky*, 121.
[334] Wevers, 'The Novel, the Short Story, and the Rise of a New Reading Public, 1972–1990', 247.
[335] Tim Watkin, The homecoming, 25 June 2004, https://www.noted.co.nz/archive/archive-listener-nz-2004/the-homecoming.

Returning to his work and rewriting it seems like such a drastic, unique decision – and yet, seeing that Ihimaera has his roots in an oral culture, it makes sense. It ties in much more with traditions of oral story telling than with a written literature, as in story telling it is a natural element of the process that, though the main elements of the narrative remain the same, the story itself takes new shape over time, gets retold and changes, depending on the situation, the story teller and the audience. In the interview with Watkin, Ihimaera also discusses why he felt the need to rewrite his earlier collections and the novel *Tangi*:

> 'I was a colonised person when I wrote those books. It's been a whole process of personal decolonisation that I've had to go through to do this. Part of that decolonisation is to get out of my family. Trying to create for myself a sense of independence; a sense of political independence and a sense of sovereignty.'[336]

Ihimaera himself says about his first three books, *Pounamu Pounamu* (1972), *Tangi* (1973) and *Whanau* (1974) and early Māori fiction in general: 'It was what I have termed 'the pastoral tradition of written Māori literature' and, with few exceptions, the work lacks anger or political thought.'[337] This reads like quite a harsh judgement of the earlier work. Ihimaera goes even further when he describes his first three works as 'tender, unabashedly lyrical evocations of a world that once was. But they are a serious mismatch with the reality of the times.'[338] As Otto Heim suggests, this statement 'seems to anticipate the radicalisation of his own stance.'[339] We can see a clear shift here: at first, he is a young Māori writer, who is, as he claims, inspired by Bill Pearson's essay from 1969 to become the first Māori novelist. Pearson had stated in his essay that so far there were no Māori novelists, but that he anticipated that there would soon appear 'a Maori novelists of outstanding talent' and he also stated that 'Maori writing will be

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[336] Watkin.
[337] Ihimaera, 'Maori Life and Literature: A Sensory Perception', 50. As quoted in: Heim, *Writing Along Broken Lines*, 172.
[338] Heim, *Writing Along Broken Lines*, 172.
[339] Heim, 172.

distinct in its passion, its lyricism and unforced celebration of living.'[340] Ihimaera also positions himself as an educator and as a spokesperson who records Māori culture and preserves the Māori perspective on the world through his writing. Through the 1970s and 1980s and the political events that took place – the Māori land marches in 1975, the protests against the Springbrook Tour, and finally, the passing of the Māori Language Act in 1987 in which Te Reo Māori is finally recognised as an official language in New Zealand, Ihimaera becomes more and more politicised. His works were republished, with some parts radically changed. Tangi was republished in 2005 as the novel *The Rope of Man*; however, *Rope of Man* also contains a sequel, a continuation of the story, in which Tama, the protagonist, returns yet again to his home village, this time as a grown up man, and because his mother is taken ill.

The Form, Style and Aesthetics of the Novel Tangi

Questions considering the form and style of *Tangi* are raised from its very first page onwards. In the first line of his foreword, Ihimaera describes *Tangi* as 'a poetic drama in prose',[341] though in the last line of the second stanza he explicitly states that 'This is *Tangi*, the first novel by a Māori to be published.' What is a poetic drama? What does the author mean by this? And yet, he also explicitly adopts the form of the novel very consciously. It is the novelist's stated intention that a mixture of forms meet and are brought together in one narrative. Yet there are very different narrative strands, and each of them has its own distinctive quality. The novel is based on the short story 'Tangi' that was published a year before as part of the short story collection *Pounamu Pounamu* and which has been analysed in the second part of the first chapter. The protagonist and the settings are the same, and similar to the short story, the novel has three narrative strands: one is set in the moment of his father's funeral, at

[340] Pearson, 'Witi Ihimaera and Patricia Grace', 137.
[341] Ihimaera, *Tangi*, 1973, v.

his family home in Waituhi, one is set in the present tense, but in Wellington, where Tama works, and one is set in the past, with Tama remembering his childhood. As could already be seen in the short story, the interweaving of the three different narrative strands in the novel creates multiple layers of narrative that are set in different places and times. Both the short story and the novel show a mid-twentieth century New Zealand society that seems distinctly divided between Māori and Pākehā culture, and this is especially visible in the novel and mirrored through its narration. First of all, there are three distinct narrative strands (like in the short story): The narrative strand in the novel that takes place in Wellington, where Tama works is quite separate from the ones that take place in his home village. Three different ideas of home are represented in these three strands: Wellington is where Tama lives and works but does often feel alienated and estranged. Waituhi was his home as a child, a sense of home he did not question, but when he returns to Waituhi as an adult, the situation is more complex and he has to negotiate different feelings, expectations, and also the sense of being alienated from his Māori community and culture.

Thinking about his days at school, where he was often the only Māori student in his class, Tama reflects on his active decision to manage a life in both cultures: 'I took a firm step forward into the Pakeha world. Firmly, I retained it. Somehow, I managed to stride both worlds.'[342] But this assertion seems almost overly positive, and too simple – and rightly enough, three paragraphs later Tama corrects himself, acknowledging that it was indeed not quite as easy as he tried to make the reader believe, 'because the world I was growing up in was a Pakeha one, it was difficult to retain my Māoritanga. […]. Sometimes, I even forgot my Māoritanga and its values. I remember how shattering it was, when I realised it.'[343]

[342] Ihimaera, *Tangi*, 1989, 78.
[343] Ihimaera, 78.

Due to the difference in genre, the novel and the short story portray the moment of homecoming and its effect on both the protagonist and the family he returns home to in different ways. Some critics, like Della Valle, simply argue that the novel 'enlarges and develops the themes and narrative techniques of the short story.'[344] I would, however, argue that the relationship between the short story and the novel is a more complicated one, which is visible in the way the motif of homecoming is portrayed in the different genres. Whilst a short story normally has a strong focus on one aspect or conflict, in the novel there is more space to pursue different storylines. However, this means that in a novel it is easier to lose the focus on a motif. The novel is perhaps in some ways more forgiving here, as the reader might expect that over the course of a book that is a few hundred pages long the focus will shift, not every sentence can be precise, there will be scene setting and sub-plots. When analysing both the novel *Tangi* and the short story titled 'Tangi', we can see this relationship quite clearly. Both the novel and the short story show a young man's homecoming and reconnection with his Māori culture, his family, and his past in the moment of death and loss. The moment of homecoming and the tangi needs to be understood as a moment of strong ambivalence, because, as Heim points out, 'the tangi acknowledges separation and isolation as well as joining and community'.[345] The exact same phenomenon happens in the moment of homecoming, and may explain the ambiguity of the main character's feelings. However, in the short story this moment of homecoming is the main focus, the motif that carries the story and the moment of epiphany towards which the entire story is built. In the novel, there are many side plots, different characters that are accorded quite a lot of space, scene setting and scene description, and moments where the story references the past in great detail. The novel is not merely an

[344] Valle, *From Silence to Voice*, 116.
[345] Heim, *Writing Along Broken Lines*, 197.

expansion of the short story, but is faced with its own challenges when transforming a specific motif and story from one genre of writing to another.

Different Kinds of Home: Waituhi in the Past and Waituhi in the Present

Tangi, in large parts, is focused on the past, and seems intent on portraying an almost pastoral image – this is something that has been underlined by Ihimaera himself, when speakign about his work.[346] It focuses on family life and childhood, and of the protagonist's home, the village of Waituhi, where after years of travelling around and working as farmhands, his parents are finally able to buy a small farm and settle down. So his parents, in a sense, have experienced their own homecoming – to a home they had to leave in order to find work, and earn money, but to which they always longed to return:

> That's your home, Dad would say when we visited Waituhi or when he was talking about it. One day, kids, that's where we're going. Back home. Back to Waituhi. Before we even lived there, we knew Waituhi was indeed home. And Mum and Dad, they saved and worked together to return there.[347]

This sense that much of the storyline in *Tangi* is about the past, is underlined by Jean-Pierre Durix, who, analysing the use of time in *Tangi*, observes that 'identity depends mostly on the past of one's people, whether real or mystic',[348] thus emphasising the notion of home, of a place of belonging as a sense of memory. This is symbolised in the way that Rongopai, which is the name given to the *marae* and centre of the community, is described as 'a house of the twilight years of Māori'[349], a relic from the past. It is a historical building and reminds the village community of how different life in their village used to be in the past. So, linked to Waituhi as home is also the idea of the marae representing home. This motif of a *marae* representing home

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[346] Ihimaera, 'Maori Life and Literature: A Sensory Perception', 45–55.
[347] Ihimaera, *Tangi*, 1989, 84–85.
[348] Jean-Pierre Durix, 'Time in Witi Ihimaera's "Tangi"', *Journal of New Zealand Literature: JNZL*, no. 1 (1983): 102.
[349] Ihimaera, *Tangi*, 1989, 116.

has already been explored in chapter one. But it is an important motif in this chapter as well, because it is such a prominent focus of the novel: most of the funeral rites take place either in or around the *marae*. W In the novel, places and things that represent home to Tama interweave – the tangi of his father is intimately connected to the traditions surrounding the funeral which are performed by his extended family, and to Waituhi as a place where he grew up, where his father will be buried, and where the *marae* stands in which his father is laid to rest, and where the whole *whanau* (extended family) comes together. However – it is not just about the past. That would be a far too simplistic argument. Though some parts of the novel are set in the past, the story is very much about the present, about how as a young Māori man Tama can find a way of negotiating both his Māori culture and heritage, and his wish to have a successful career in the city. It is about the future, too and the questionhow the future will look like for young Māori like Tama.

When Tama returns to Waituhi for the *tangi,* he is overcome with a mixture of different emotions. On the one hand, the *tangi* is the reason for his homecoming, and the death of his father and the shared grief and loss bring him and his immediate family, but also his larger community, closer together and he is glad to be back home and reunited with his family. On the other hand, there is also present a certain alienation, caused by the fact that he has not been home for a long time, and that to his family but also his village community he is leading a city-life now, that is very different and almost stands in contrast to their life in the village. Tama has to come to terms with the fact that his father, his closest genetic link to Māori culture, has died and that there are certain expectations on him, the eldest son, to take up his father's place and responsibilities. The realisation of this, the deep grief he is experiencing, and the self-questioning of whether he, as the eldest son, will be able to step into his father's place and continue the tradition in the way that his culture demands, are threaded throughout the novel.

The occasion of a *tangi* in general is described as 'the homecalling'[350]: 'If there was a tangi, you stopped whatever you were doing, no matter if you were working in some flash factory or at some flash job, and you went home to help out. One of the family had died and the tangi, it was the homecoming.'[351] There is a strong sense here of the importance of community, and of the importance to put this community above individual obligations like a job and to come home to help and support the community. The choice of the word 'homecalling' for a funeral is a striking one – it implies a funeral is understood as an occasion where the family and wider community re-unites, and that everyone is expecting to return home, to pay their respects, no matter how far away they live. There are specific ceremonies and rituals that are performed at a tangi, and these rituals, passed on from one generation to the next, help to strengthen the bond between the generations, and between the members of the community.

Death As Homecoming and Hawaiki, the Lost Homeland

Keri Hulme, in her article 'Myth, Omen, Ghost and Dream', describes the last journey of a deceased in the following poetical way:

> It is thought that when someone dies, they make their way down to the far northern tip of New Zealand, to Te Rerenge-wairua, (the leaping-off place of spirits) at Cape Te Reinga. […] [When] the spirits arrive at Te Rerenge wairua, [they] slide down the roots of the last pohutukawa tree in the land, into a kelp-fringed hole in the sea and make their way to the borders of the night.[352]

Ihimaera retells this myth in his novel, with Tama as the narrator. Tama envisions his dead father, making his last journey to Hawaiki; 'Even now, through my tears, I can see him. He is

[350] Ihimaera, *Tangi*, 1989, 120.
[351] Ihimaera, 120.
[352] Keri Hulme, 'Myth, Omen, Ghost and Dream', in *Te Ao Marama: Regaining Aotearoa: Maori Writers Speak Out*, vol. 2 (Auckland: Reed, 1994), 29.

a shadow moving into the sunset and waving in farewell. […] I can only watch, helpless, as he walks slowly away.'[353] The setting sun is powerful symbol here for the end of the circle of life, and for the fact that with his father's death, Tama feels as if his life has plunged into darkness.

As previously mentioned in the second chapter of this thesis, in Patricia Grace's *Tu* it is the thought of Hawaiki and the knowledge that his brother will be welcomed there by their ancestors which helps Tu to deal with the horrendous and traumatic experience of losing his brother in battle and having to bury him. In the first chapter, both Moffat and Ihimaera refer implicitly to Hawaiki in their short stories, recounting the coming together of the whole *whanau* to farewell a dying relative. Whereas they depict despair and sadness among the living, there is also hope and awareness that whilst their relative has died, his spirit will live on. An important part of the tangihanga, the traditional Māori funeral ceremony, is a chant or oratory in which the deceased person is addressed, told to follow the setting sun, and find their way to Hawaiki.[354] In Māori mythology, the west is associated with the setting sun and death; the spirits of the deceased are believed to find their way to Te Reinga, or Cape Te Reinga, which lies at the north-western most top of the North Island. From there, spirits are believed to descend to an underworld or spiritual world, and journey to Hawaiki, and the spirits of deceased people are believed to journey towards them from Hawaiki, to welcome them and to show them the way. In *Tangi*, food and detailed descriptions of food preparations are used as a sign of home. At a *tangi*, everyone helps out with the organisation, donates money and food, helps with the cooking and the arrangements for accommodation.[355] When Tama is being picked up from Gisborne by his relatives, they tell him all about the funeral arrangements which are in full swing, and the topic of food is the most important one. Koro, one of his relatives, tells him:

[353] Ihimaera, *Tangi*, 1989, 74.
[354] Elsdon Best, *The Maori - Volume I* (Wellington: Harry H. Tombs Limited, 1924), 19.
[355] Ihimaera, *Tangi*, 1989, 127–29.

'Me and some of the boys went pig-hunting to get some pigs for the hangi. A lot of people to feed for three days. Henare Tipene, he gave us a sheep. And your dad's shearing gang, they dubbed in some money to buy tinned food.'[356] The *hangi* is an earth oven and used for a traditional way of cooking food.[357]

At the end of the novel, Tama returns to his whanau and takes on his father's place in the community. 'My life is in Waituhi. To Waituhi I shall return.'[358] The story arc is a neat one – through the traumatic experience of having lost his father and the reconnection with his home and his community through the funeral, Tama is reunited with his Māori culture. He questions himself, his life in the city, and at the end, empowered through his experience and his community reaching out to him, and reassuring him of his place within that community, and his mother's and sisters' need for him to come home and assume responsibility as oldest son, he reaches the decision to return. He firmly rejects Sandra's, his Pākehā girlfriend's, offer to join him for the funeral – and firmly states that 'Sandra and this life are not now my life', meaning his life in the city with her.[359] As Moura Koçoğlu argues, 'Thus, with regard to Tama's personal narrative, the novel highlights an image of the separateness of two different cultural worlds in Aotearoa New Zealand […].[360]

Tangi projects an 'intrinsically Māori voice in such a way that the emotional, spiritual, and communal nature of indigeneity is clarified for, and brought closer to, a non-indigenous readership, to which the novel is clearly addressed.'[361] At different moments, the novel refers to Māori mythology, explaining it to the reader, and whereas it uses Māori words without glossing them, it does make an effort to explain to the reader the meaning of a *marae*, a *tangi*,

[356] Ihimaera, 128.
[357] Mead and Mead, *Tikanga Māori*, 360.
[358] Ihimaera, *Tangi*, 1989, 230.
[359] Ihimaera, 230.
[360] Moura-Koçoğlu, *Narrating Indigenous Modernities*, 90.
[361] Moura-Koçoğlu, 93.

and other cultural concepts. It underlines the cultural, spiritual and communal understanding of indigeneity, of what it means to be Māori and live as Māori.

The Rope of Man

The novel *The Rope of Man* (2005) consists of two parts. Part one is titled 'Tangi 1973' and is a new version of Ihimaera's novel *Tangi*, part two is called 'The Return 2005'. In his author note, Ihimaera states: 'When my first novel, *Tangi* was published in 1973, I planned a sequel which would follow its hero, Tama Mahana, after his return from his tribal village, Waituhi, to Wellington. However, life intervened […] and I also decided to place a ten-year embargo on writing. […]. *At the same time as the spiral is going forward, it is returning.*'[362] 2005, 32 years after the original novel was published, readers are now presented not just with the long planned sequel, but also with a reworked version of the original – a curious choice. Retelling a story, and in the process of retelling slightly changing and recreating it, is a central motif in oral literature. Therefore, as curious as the choice might be to rewrite a novel, and republish it in a different form, namely in oral storytelling, this is a common practice. Ihimaera was criticised for this urge to rewrite his novel. But rather than just criticising an author for a choice he made, it is important to look at what is behind this decision, how it affects the novel and story as such, and to try and understand the motivations behind this. After all, Ihimaera made a conscious decision to rewrite his novel, and add a sequel, after having stopped writing for ten years, and this is significant. He stopped writing out of a growing concern that his work was being read as 'the definitive portrayal of the world of the Māori' and that he had created a stereotype of indigenous people who were linving in rural areas, when this was no longer compatible with the reality of the time.[363]

[362] Witi Ihimaera, *The Rope of Man* (Birkenhead, Auckland: Reed, 2006), 7. Formatting of the last sentence in italics is a choice by the author.
[363] Richard Corballis and Simon Garrett, *Introducing Witi Ihimaera* (Auckland: Longman Paul, 1984), 13.

Concerning the main story, the setting, characters and story line of *Tangi 1973* are very much the same as *Tangi*. What has changed is that a lot more anthropological material has been added. As Anna Rogers stresses in her review, '*Tangi II* [sic] is deliberate, bent on retelling and informing, on making sure the reader grasps the sociological and cultural significance of the events.'[364] The sequel *The Return 2005* opens in similar fashion to both *Tangi* and *Tangi 1973* – with a phone call from the protagonist's sister,133apaka, this time, to inform him that their mother has been taken to hospital. It is not the announcement of a death, as in the previous two novels, but the implication that she is dying is there – and the strong plea from her to her son to come home as soon as possible. [365] The second paragraph of the novel ends with an exchange between Tama Mahana – who now calls himself Tom, lives in London and is a successful news presenter for an international news network called WWN (World Wide News – and his driver: 'Where to, Sir? He [the driver] asked.' To which the protagonist gives the ambiguous answer 'Take me home.'[366]

The Return 2005 gives Ihimaera the opportunity to trace Tama's life after the death of his father. Now 52, and a father himself, Tama represents, on first view, as a Māori who has managed to successfully 'stride both worlds', to find his way in the modern world, without forgetting his Māori heritage. As Della Valle stresses, 'the fact that he has succeeded in his professional life is not as important as the mediation he has attained between modernity, global mobility, world citizenship and his origins.'[367] In the same way as its prequel, it is a story of loss, home and homecoming – yet in this book, the story is not just set in New Zealand, but on the world stage.

[364] Anna Rogers, 'Revisionist Urges', *New Zealand Books* 16, no. 4 (October 2006): 5. As cited by: Valle, *From Silence to Voice*, 215.
[365] Ihimaera, *The Rope of Man*, 172.
[366] Ihimaera, 174.
[367] Valle, *From Silence to Voice*, 216.

The Ritual of the Tangi The tangi is an important ritual in Māori culture and, as a motif, it appears in different short stories and novels that I analyse throughout this thesis. In an interview with John Beston in 1977, Ihimaera gives a clue as to why he might have chosen the *tangi* as the central theme for some of his first short stories, and his very first novel. He states that the *tangi* is 'virtually the only institution we have to convey our feeling about being Māori.'[368] Here, he acknowledges the larger symbol of the tangi: 'I mourn not only my father's death; my world, it is dying too.'[369] With the burial of his father, his closest genetic link, Tama is strongly aware that what his father had and represented – knowledge of Te Reo Maori, knowledge about Māori culture, being a valued member of a community – is fading, too. In the novel, we find a detailed description of the preparations for the *tangi*, and the rituals that take place, and how they link to Māori mythology:

> For three days, Dad will lie on the marae at Rongopai. […]. The stars and moon will circle once, twice… The sun will rise and set, once, twice… then the third night will be my life beginning without a father. For on the afternoon of the third day Dad will be buried close to Papatuanuku the Earth.[370]

Here, the myth of Ranginui and Papatuanuku that frames the novel is evoked again, and the belief that death can be understood as a return to earth, and therefore as the closure of the circle of life: 'It is a world gone full circle.'[371] These detailed descriptions of the tangi rituals and of how Tama feels in this very moment can be found throughout the entire novel. The quote also emphasizes that death for the family of the dead person signals a new part of life – a life in which the person is no longer present, and everyone has to come to terms with it.

The tangi brings all the family back together and is described in the novel as 'the homecalling': 'The call has gone out across this land. The tangi, it is the homecalling. This

[368] John B. Beston, 'Interview with Witi Ihimaera', *World Literature Written in English* 16, no. 1 (1977): 113–25.
[369] Ihimaera, *Tangi*, 1989, 52.
[370] Ihimaera, 89.
[371] Ihimaera, 126.

night the whanau are returning to Rongopai.'[372] The presence of the *whanau*, the extended family, and the three-day long ceremony during which the dead person is laid out in the *marae* are supposed to help with that transition. However, after this it is the responsibility of the living to forge a new life, without the presence of the dead family member, and as the eldest son, Tama feels this responsibility keenly: 'From the ruins of an old life, a new life must rise. Some day. E pa, for you, I will build life anew. For Mere, for all my family, I will build a good life.'[373] Now that Tama's father is dead, he is the head of the family, and this fills him with the sense that he now bears the responsibilities his father bore before him. For example, answering questions about their culture that his nieces and nephews might have, and helping them to navigate their lives as Māori. 'Now, e pa is dead. I am left to answer Hone's questions as best as I can. To make him happy; to be a Kauri. Maybe I won't be able to teach him much Māoritanga for even when I was a boy, that was dying.'[374] Kauris are the name for the giant trees that exist in New Zealand, and at different points throughout the novel, Tama refers to his father as his Kauri, his tree, who was steadfast and his support in life. For example, after his sister called him to tell him that their father has died, and he has spoken to his mother as well, he is lost in memories of his father: 'E pa, you were a giant Kauri giving shelter to your family. One day, I too will be a Kauri. My mother and sisters and brother are my roots. I will spread my shadow over them, protecting them as you have done. One day.'[375] And he remembers a conversation he had with his father as a boy: 'Tama, you must look after your mother and sisters and brother if I should die. That's the Māori way.'[376]

As the oldest son, the role of taking care of the family and supporting them after his father's death falls to him. At the time of his father's death, he is only twenty-two, and

[372] Ihimaera, 130.
[373] Ihimaera, 126.
[374] Ihimaera, 79.
[375] Ihimaera, 29.
[376] Ihimaera, 29.

throughout the novel the gravity of his father's death is repeatedly emphasised. Tama is acutely aware that he cannot be what his father was for the family: the protecting, steadfast presence that is conveyed through the image of the Kauri tree. But Tama acknowledges that his immediate family are his roots. They, in turn, give him strength and something to hold on to, and so he promises to be for them what his father was to them all – not yet, but at some point, in the future. Yet, he has moments when all this – the loss of his father, the ensuing responsibility that falls on him, as the oldest son – is almost too much to bear: 'This is the night of my childhood ending. This is the night of my own life beginning. Father is dead and I am at once a man. So many things have been left undone. So many things to do now that he has gone.'[377] And he acknowledges that: 'The calm of my life has been altered; my days shall be darkness until that time when I can fuse my world together again. I am the eldest.'[378] While sitting in the plane that takes him from Wellington to Gisborne, to his father's funeral, he imagines himself in a conversation with Hine-nui-te-Po, the goddesses of death and night.[379] He accuses her of having taken his father from him and pleads with her to take himself instead: 'I plead now, Hine, with my father back to the light. And me, your child, take me instead. Me, e Hine. Take me.'[380] He pleads with her, knowing fully well that of course this is not possible – his father is gone, and he, as the eldest son, is supposed to take his place now.

Tangi is about a young man, his mourning for his dead father, his homecoming to his marae and his people – and, through the homecoming, and the funeral, he finds a new place for himself: He takes on his father's place and acknowledges his place in his Māori community and his responsibility towards his family. In this chapter, the rural village and the *marae* as home are emphasizedIt is Rongopai, his home marae, to which Tama returns when he receives

[377] Ihimaera, 130.
[378] Ihimaera, 130.
[379] Tama explains the myth of Hine-nui-te-Po to the reader – see: Ihimaera, 92–93. For a more detailed explanation, see:
[380] Ihimaera, 93.

the news of his father's death, and Rongopai reminds him of his childhood and of how his father taught him about his culture. The catalyst for the homecoming is the funeral for his father. In that way, the *tangi* functions as an important ritual which strengthens a person's sense of identity as belonging to a specific *whanau* (extended family), but also the family's identity itself. This has already been discussed in chapter one with regards to the short stories 'The Homecoming' and 'Tangi', but in the novel Tangi it is of great importance and mentioned at various moment of the novel. By explicitly explaining Māori culture, such as funeral rituals, and mythology, through his protagonist, Ihimaera underlines his explicit intention that his writing is primarily addressing Māori readers, particularly young Māori, who may have lost their Māori identity. In addition, by writing about his home and his own culture, Ihimaera is preserving it. There is hope in the novel: a hope that Tama will take up his responsibility as the oldest son, and that he, who so often feels like he is navigating two different worlds, will finally know where his true home is, and where he belongs.

Homelessness in Patricia Grace's *Cousins*

Nineteen years after Ihimaera's novel Tangi came out, Patricia Grace published her novel *Cousins* (1992). In her novel, she creates a powerful narrative about estrangement, isolation, and the failed homecoming of three Māori women, Makareta, Missy and Mata. Her tone is in many respects markedly different to Ihimaera's novel *Tangi*, and to the early short stories that both of them published in the 1970s. The way home and homecoming are portrayed in the novel show sometimes certain parallels, but then also strong differences, and whilst Tangi was all about the protagonist's homecoming, her novel is much more strongly concerned with questions of homelessness. The three cousins, Makareta, Missy and Mata are part of a large Māori family that live in a rural setting; however, due to a number of different circumstances, the cousins lose contact with each other, and the novel follows their fates over

separate but related narrative strands. Themes related to gender and womanhood are explored and questioned. One central topic of the novel is the role of women as the upholders of tradition – and what that means for Māori living in urban spaces who might have lost touch with their traditional cultural roots, but also for Māori living in a modern society. Judith Dell Panny points out that the novel is structured in three separate but interwoven narrative strands, reminiscent of the Māori art of *whiri* (plaiting), where distinct patterns are made by using different strands.[381] The novel is divided in six different parts: the first one focuses on Mata, the second on Makareta, and the third on Missy. The fourth section picks up Makareta's narrative, the fifth Missy's, and the last part is focused on Mata, providing a narrative arch in the novel that begins and ends with Mata's story. There are different narrators in each section, which, as Judith Dell Panny underlines, 'provide six different points of view that confirm and reinforce one another, strengthening the fabric of the fiction.'[382] Grace employs metaphors related to the practice of *whiri*, and by doing so reinforces the idea of a story or narrative to resemble a poetic fabric, woven together by different narrative voices and poetic techniques.

Narrative voice is at the heart of Grace's writing, as she articulates in an interview with Paloma Fresno Calleja, stating: 'For me, my main interest is in the characters. The stories happen because of the characters, the language belongs to the characters, the setting, the environment, the moods… everything. The characters are central to all that.'[383] It is the characters, in this case Makareta, Missy and Mata and their experiences, that form the core of the novel. As in many of Grace's other novels and short stories, the protagonists in her novel *Cousins* are women who have strong links to Māori culture, but who have also lived in Pākehā society (for example, *Mutuwhenuā* or *Baby No-Eyes*). In most of her stories, the women she writes about unite two cultures within themselves: they are Māori and return to their family

[381] See: Judith Dell Panny, 'A Cultural-Historical Reading of Patricia Grace's Cousins', *Kōtare : New Zealand Notes & Queries* 6 (2012): 5.
[382] Dell Panny, 5.
[383] Paloma Fresno Calleja, 'An Interview with Patricia Grace', *Atlantis* 25, no. 1 (2003): 115.

and rural community; yet they are also educated at university or at boarding school in a non-Māori culture – much like Grace herself..[384] As already mentioned in chapter one, teacher's college had a profound influence on Grace – it was there that she started writing and finding her own voice.[385] It was also there that for the first time, she met other young Māori who had grown up speaking Te Reo Māori. Though growing up in a Māori community, her parents did not speak Māori to her, wanting her to excel in English instead, and in an interview with Adam Dudding, Grace points out that the other Māori students she met and socialised with 'seemed to thrive from having two languages rather than only one. I started to feel that loss.'[386] This loss of language and the profound impact this has on different aspects of life, for example on developing a Māori identity, which many Māori of her generation, but also younger generations experience, is expressed in all of her writing. In this chapter, I will analyse the loss of home and identity that all three of the cousins experience at varying degrees. Whereas in the works that have been analysed in the previous chapters the predominant idea of home was that of kinship, family, and forming a connection to the land, the idea of home that will be focused on in *Cousins* is more one of being at home in a culture or a language. That does not mean that the other idea of home do not come into play – they do, and will be touched upon – but questions around culture and language as home are found in a very nuanced way in this novel and this is why particular attention will be paid to them.

In *Cousins* (1992), this is especially prevalent in the contrast between Mata's and Makareta's upbringing throughout the novel. Makareta grows up speaking Te Reo Māori; she is the first grandchild in the larger family, the daughter of the oldest daughter, and so she occupies a high position in the whakapapa (genealogy). *Whakapapa* is a very important concept in Māori culture – the *mana*, (honour) of a family is passed on not only to the oldest son, but

[384] 'The Wider Family: Patricia Grace Interviewed by Paola Della Valle', *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 42, no. 1 (3 January 2007): 133.
[385] 'Http://Www.Anzliterature.Com/Interview/Patricia-Grace-in-Conversation-with-Adam-Dudding/'.
[386] 'Http://Www.Anzliterature.Com/Interview/Patricia-Grace-in-Conversation-with-Adam-Dudding/'.

also, by the oldest daughter.As Mead and Mead state: 'Whakapapa provides our identity within a tribal structure and later in life gives an individual the right to say "I am Māori".'[387], Therefore, Makareta is cherished and cared for, travels with the elders, and learns about Māori culture.[388] Makareta is deeply rooted in Māori culture and therefore experiences her being Māori as positive. She is not even conscious that she could be anything but cherished and loved, and identify with Māori culture, and is fully integrated and feels at home in her Māori community. By contrast, Mata, from an early age on, is excluded. Makareta's father dies when she was young, serving as a soldier in the second World War, and her mother Polly, against the wishes of her family, decided to move to the city and to live there, and intends to take Makareta with her: 'When we reached the track that led to Gloria's I told him I was leaving […]. 'One day soon,' I said. 'Makareta and me.''[389] However, the grandmother and matriarch of the family, Keita, intervenes, emphasising that 'Our son's child stays here. […]. Right here with her family […]' Makareta's whenua is buried up there […]. This is her home always.'[390] As I have already mentioned in chapter two, in traditional Māori culture it is custom that when a child is born, one buries its placenta on the land where the family lives to create a strong bond between the child and its place of birth, its home.[391] In this way, the homecoming of a young Māori to their family home also has crucial spiritual and familial importance. Makareta's mother leaves the community to work in the city and takes Makareta with her. But Makareta's grandmother Keita comes to the city one day for a visit and finds the child alone at home – and decides to take her back with her. Makareta is only five at the time, but when her mother returns from work that day, Makareta announces to her 'Keita is taking me home.'[392] Whether it is her own awareness that her home is with her Māori community and in the village where she is

[387] Mead and Mead, *Tikanga Māori*, 42.
[388] Patricia Grace, *Cousins* (London: Women's Press, 1993), 113.
[389] Grace, 114.
[390] Grace, 100–101.
[391] Mead and Mead, *Tikanga Māori*, 143.
[392] Grace, *Cousins*, 120.

born, or whether she merely imitates words her grandmother might have said is not clear here – but it foreshadows Makareta's awareness of where her true home is. Her mother maintains contact with the child and visits her but acknowledges Keita's insistence that Makareta needs to stay in the village with her community and that this is where she belongs.

In contrast, Mata's mother, Polly's sister, had run away from home to the city and married a Pākehā against the wishes of her family. She dies when Mata is young, and as readers we learn that Mata's father places her in an orphanage instead of leaving her in the care of her Māori family.[393] In the orphanage she is registered under a different name as a way to purposefully alienate her from her Māori family. The family tries to find her and get her back, to raise her as part of the community, together with Makareta and the other children, but the orphanage refuses to let her go. In the orphanage, Mata is abused and is made to feel ashamed of her Māori heritage on multiple occasions. This manifests itself very vividly, for example, in how Mata's hair is described and through this description, the sharp contrast between Mata and Makareta's childhood is emphasised.Both are described as having similar physical features, similar dark, thick hair – yet while Makareta is cherished and her hair carefully brushed, arranged and looked after by her grandmother every morning, Mata's is cut off: '[B]ad curls had to be cut, cut, cut, Matron snapping with the scissors, pulling down hard with the comb. Bad.' Mata is made to feel bad about her curly black hair, and in association about her ethnicity and identity.[394] She has to sweep it up and carry it to the incinerator herself, and '[O]ne day James, the caretaker, had been down at the incinerator when she'd taken her hair to burn. "Been shearing the black sheep, have they?" he'd asked.[395] Through the depiction of Mata, and in this passage especially, Grace gives a powerful example of a society in which Mata is regarded as different, with her hair as a prominent sign of her Māori identity, and is treated in a racist and

[393] Grace, 36.
[394] Grace, 30.
[395] Grace, 31.

oppressive way because of it. However, the racism and oppression she experiences as a child is not just external and reinforced through institutional structures, such as school, or the orphanage. Mata internalises it and it becomes part of her own way of thinking about herself, and of defining herself in comparison to others. Mata has mixed heritage – her father is Pākehā, her mother Māori – but she is considered to be 'non-white' and is therefore treated as different and abused. Her 'blackness' is linked with words and associations such as 'dirty' and 'bad', and Mata receives these messages not only from the matron in the orphanage, but also from other members of staff, her teachers, and the parents of other children. For example, one day when she is visiting a girl called Betty from her class, she is chased out of the house by the girl's mother because 'Betty wasn't allowed to bring dirty, black children into the house.'[396] Back at the orphanage, Mata is caned for not coming straight home after school and the experience at Betty's house has a traumatic impact on her. Asked about the depiction of what Dudding terms 'every-day racism' in her novels and short stories, and her own experience with racism, Grace words her answer very carefully, but stresses that of course her writing is based on her personal experience.[397]

When she is allowed to visit her own Māori family for the first time, Mata is depicted in a way which suggests that she has already internalised the othering she has experienced throughout her entire life: she has very clear expectations of what a house is supposed to look like – and finds the house of her Māori family small, dirty, and not at all the way she had pictured it. This is very significant when looking at Mata's idea and concept of home.Her literal homecoming to her family is disappointing for her, because their house does not correspond with her idealised image of a house. In her imagination and her daydreams, the house and the home she pictures for herself quite vividly has wallpapers with flowers, curtains, bedspreads –

[396] Grace, 17.
[397] 'Http://Www.Anzliterature.Com/Interview/Patricia-Grace-in-Conversation-with-Adam-Dudding/'.

a middle-class, Pākehā home. To Mata, it is this very materialistic idea of a house as a home that is at the centre here – and not so much the idea that her biological family could be a community where she feels at home. Also, Mata has very much internalised a concept of home that is full of colonial stereotypes and it is suggested to her through her education that this idea of a home is a real home, and how people should aspire to live. Because she identifies with this internalised idea of a colonial, white-middle class home so strongly, her Māori family, who do not possess such a home, are implicitly judged and it is difficult for her to feel comfortable in their simple home that is so unlike everthing she had pictured.

In her Māori family, nobody prays or reads scripture – something that Mata and the children in the orphanage are made to do as part of their daily routine, her aunt smokes, her uncle drinks, and Mata feels that she is 'learning to be bad'.[398] Yet she also yearns to belong, she hungers for stories about her mother, and even though she is shy and does not engage much with the other children, she does enjoy watching them. As Doreen As D'Cruz puts it:

> Mata's lurking at thresholds, her linguistic exile from *Te Reo Māori*, her position as fringe observer of her cousins' games, indicate her liminality w143apalathe *whānau*, a position she is unable to overcome in order to place herself along the flow of a different history.[399]

After her holiday she waits to be collected by her family, and to be going home with them – but unbeknown to her and her family the orphanage intercepts the letters they write to each other, and the orphanage refuses her family's request for her to live with them. The emotional link between Mata and her Māori family has been severed before, when Mata was placed in the orphanage by her Pākehā father. However, now that her family has found her and is so eager to re-establish and to strengthen their relationship with Mata, the orphanage as a Pākehā institution effectively acts as a gatekeeper from her family and her heritage. This has led to a

[398] Grace, *Cousins*, 35.
[399] Doreen D'Cruz, 'Along "the Many-Stranded Circle": Narrative Spiralling from Isolation to Homecoming in Patricia Grace's Cousins', *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 45, no. 4 (2009): 463.

new disappointment for Mata and an even stronger alienation – she now knows that she has a family and is longing to see them again. However, because the orphanage does not pass on their letters, Mata does not even know about her family's attempts at trying to adopt her and take her back home. Mata is convinced that her family does not like her, and does not want her, and feels even more abandoned then she did before.

Growing up in an orphanage, feeling abandoned and unloved by her family constitutes a big loss for Mata. The kind of home and sense of belonging she longs for is family – domestic warmth, love, a sense of community, that means, a very elementary sense of home that for her would come from being part of a family and having Māori relatives. Culture as home might seem to be only secondary to that – and yet I argue that her state of being could nevertheless also be described as cultural homelessness. With that I mean that belonging to a Māori family would automatically also mean that Mata would feel rootedness and a sense of home and belonging in her Māori culture and therefore the two – and elementary sense of home that is comprised of a family and a place where she can feel domestic warmth and a more secondary sense of home, namely that of belonging to a specific culture – are actually connected here. As has already been pointed out in this chapter, Mata is treated as an outsider even in the orphanage because of her Māori heritage and her black curly hair and is taught to see these in a negative way. Connecting with her own family for her also means reconnecting with her Māori culture and her identity – and by being denied contact with her family, Mata is also denied to identify with her own culture, which manifests itself as a profound feeling of loss.

The concept of cultural homelessness has been usefully analysed by Vivero and Jenkins in their article 'Existential Hazards of the Multicultural Individual: Defining and Understanding 'Cultural Homelessness''.[400] They underline that their 'construct of a cultural

[400] Veronica Vivero and Sharon Jenkins, 'Existential Hazards of the Multicultural Individual: Defining and Understanding "Cultural Homelessness"', *Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology* 5, no. 1 (1999): 6–26.

home emphasises the emotional aspects of group membership, identification, attachment and belonging' and that they define cultural home as 'a sense of belonging to an ethnical or geographic community'.[401] Vivero and Jenkins examine what it means for people with mixed ethnicity to grow up and the effects that this can have on a person – and coin the term 'cultural homelessness', which, as they argue, 'describes certain individuals of mixed ethnic and/or cultural background living within a framework of experiences, feelings and thoughts that do not belong to any single racial, ethnic or cultural reference group.'[402] In a later article which Jenkins co-authored with Raquel Hoerstings, they clarify that 'Because individuals lack an ethnic enclave or a community with which to identify, they lack a cultural home. They may experience a strong yearning to 'go home,' but home is no one place.'[403] This relates to Mata – we know that she is mixed-race and that her father places her in an orphanage after her mother died. After once visiting her family Mata does long to go back, yet because she has grown up estranged from her family as a child it is also difficult for her to identify the place where her Māori family lives as her home, because she has only seen it once on a holiday. The reason why I think the concept of cultural homelessness is relevant to understand Mata's predicament can be found in the very beginning of the novel: Mata is described as just stepping out of the life she has led so far and just walking aimlessly, the very symbol of a homeless, lost person. She had a room and somewhere where she lived, so she was not homeless in that sense – but culturally speaking, she is.

The concept of burying the *whenua* close to the home, to ensure that a child is rooted and has a home and place of belonging they can always return to (which has been explored in chapter one and earlier in this chapter) can also be found in *Cousins*. Missy has children herself and is worried about them not being rooted in Māori culture. She is worried about this because

[401] Vivero and Jenkins, 9.
[402] Vivero and Jenkins, 11–12.
[403] Sharon Jenkins and Raquel Hoersting, 'No Place to Call Home: Cultural Homelessness, Self-Esteem and Cross-Cultural Identities', *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 35 (2011): 19.

she gives birth in the hospital, and not at home like previous generations of Māori women. In the hospital,Ithe placenta is disposed of , and not buried according to Māori protocol. She perceives a strong connection between the missing link, the missing root to the land and young Māori who have lost their sense of belonging and observes: 'The old people say their [the young people's] confusion is because their whenua have gone down the slush hole with all the tutae and the rubbish, instead of being buried in the ancestral places where they belong,' – underlining the importance of land and community as cultural home. [404]

By being brought up in an orphanage and outside of her Māori family and her culture, Mata does not experience the cultural sense of belonging that is self-evident to both Makareta, and Missy. For a long time, she is at home nowhere. This sense of unbelonging is depicted so powerfully at the very beginning of the novel, when Mata decides to just start walking, and to leave everything behind, because she feels no sense of connection or belonging to the house in the city and her job in the factory. The image that is sketched of her at the beginning of the novel is that of a grey-haired, barefoot woman, walking on the road, by herself, through the day, and then further, ignoring nightfall:

> Walked enough, and didn't know how she had come to be in the middle of the road. Couldn't remember […]. Eyes not looking out but looking down instead, at two feet. At two big-toe toenails cracked, grooved, blacked, crusted and hoofed. […]. There was blood and dirt. One could be the other, dirt or blood. […]. Unowned. Nothing owned nothing owed […].[405]

She epitomises the homeless, lonely stranger, an outcast. The syntax in the first part of the book suggests that she is sometimes talking to herself while walking, and she describes how she has not taken anything with her, except a photo of her mother that she was given as a child.[406] There is a sense of a person who is not only homeless, but perhaps has a mental disorder, who is

[404] Grace, *Cousins*, 235.
[405] Grace, 11.
[406] Grace, 14.

disoriented and does not know where she is. In Māori culture, which is so focused on community life, a single, lonely person often symbolises that something is not quite right, that they are not connected to the whole, not at home, but strangers, searching, erring, on their own without the support and comfort of a community. The novel begins in medias res, and it is unclear why Mata is where she is, why she is by herself, and who she is – which transfers a sense of disorientation to the reader. From this first part of the novel, where the readers first encounter Mata in her homeless, disoriented state, there are flashbacks to Mata's childhood, and gradually the reader learns her story.

In contrast to Mata, both Makareta and Missy grow up within her community, and are from an early age onwards steered towards their role as women, as mothers and carers. The idea of the woman as upholder of tradition is most explicitly projected onto Makareta, the oldest girl. She is taken to meetings with the elders from an early age and instructed by them in Māori mythology, oral debate and genealogy. She is excused from household duties to concentrate on her education and enrolled in a Māori boarding school where her knowledge and education is further cultivated, but also sets her apart from her cousins and the other children who just attend the local school.[407] In contrast, Missy has to look after her younger siblings, to help with household chores, to cook and clean when her mother is ill from a very young age onwards. She envies Makareta for the attention and privilege that she is awarded, and dreams of moving away from her village to the city to escape the hard work and the monotonous daily chores.

When Makareta returns home after finishing boarding school, she returns in the belief that it is her birthday and her homecoming is to be celebrated. In fact, unbeknownst to her, an engagement has been arranged for her according to traditional Māori custom.[408] This was

[407] Grace, 128.

[408] Arranged marriages were common in Māori culture; *whakapapa* (genealogy) played an important role, and as Makareta is the oldest grandchild of a well-regarded family, her grandparents took great care to find a suitable husband from an equally well-established family to ensure the continuation of the family's high genealogy.

arranged by Keita, her grandmother, who is focused on preserving Māori tradition and ensuring a viable future for the next generations of the family. To her, this is only possible through genealogy and the combining and passing on of land, and through arranging marriages that will further enhance the family's mana, which is inherently connected to ownership of land, and genealogical relationships. Yet Makareta is not consulted and had been thinking about going to university, of furthering her education and moving to the city. The only way for Makareta to refuse the traditional role that is expected of her and to assert her independence as a Māori woman is to leave her family. In Makareta's case, her homecoming is not a return to her family and culture but initiates a complete severance.

Makareta's role is taken up by Missy, her younger cousin, who quietly steps into her place and marries the man Makareta was supposed to wed in order to ensure the continuity of kinship ties and Māori traditions, and because promises had been exchanged between the two families.[409] In a curious twist it is not Makareta, the cherished oldest granddaughter, who has been carefully educated and prepared for her coming role in the Māori community, and whose physical beauty is often mentioned throughout the novel, but her somewhat neglected, overlooked, scrawny younger cousin Missy. Because Missy has worked and looked after children all her life and fulfilled her place as dutiful daughter, she does not seem to mind the traditional role assigned to her.

It is only shortly before Makareta's death that she longs to go back to her family and the place where she grew up.[410] She speaks about the fact that she combines different cultures within herself, and describes the life she has led in the city as a:

> […] double life, as my life always has been in the city, but it became less difficult as I understood it more. It's an absorbing and interesting life as long as you are certain, and as long as you keep hold of who you are.[411]

[409] Grace, *Cousins*, 146.
[410] Grace, 201.
[411] Grace, 204.

Makareta realizes that, as a native speaker of Te Reo Māori and as someone who was brought up with the old stories and learnt about Māori culture from her elders she bears a great responsibility:

> I was brought up by my old people to be a keeper of the culture and a holder of the land. I could look upon that as a privilege. On the other hand, I could look upon it not as a privilege but a right – a right that others, through circumstance, have been denied.[412]

This quote exposes the tensions within Makareta's character. Makareta does not want to see her own upbringing within Māori culture and Māori values as a privilege, but as a right that all Māori should have. But the way she was brought up entails a great responsibility: she is a keeper of the culture, determined to pass on her knowledge to other Māori and to openly address the issue of Māori having been denied this right of self-knowledge and self-determination. However, because she lives in the city, far away from her ancestral home, this proves difficult for her and she is challenged with expressing her Māori identity in an urban environment. Makareta is very aware of her responsibility to speak up for Māori and their rights. The concepts of voice and speaking, of language, but especially voicelessness, are very prevalent in *Cousins* and the question of who is speaking, who is given a space to speak, or a say in matters concerning them, and who is silenced or silent thread themselves through all three narrative strands. This is most obvious in the first and the last part when Mata's story is told, or when she tells her own story. At many different instances, Mata describes how she is lost for words, how she does not know what to say. Mata is not given much agency about anything concerning her life. She is placed in an orphanage by her father and when she is old enough to work, her legal guardian finds her a job in a factory and a room in a boarding house

[412] Grace, 216.

where she works as an unpaid servant, unable to gain financial independence.[413] Because she is separated from her Māori family, Mata never learns to speak Te Reo Māori and when she visits them as a child, she does not understand what her relatives are saying to her or how to respond.[414] This scene repeats itself at the end of the book, when Mata returns to her family's village for Makareta's funeral. Due to her lack of knowledge of Te Reo Māori and the sense of unbelonging which this causes, she does not know what is being said, does not understand the funeral rites and traditions.[415]

With regard to Makareta, it initially seems as if through her education in both the Māori traditions and language via her grandmother and the elders of her community, as well as her academic education in the boarding school, she is taught to develop a voice and to speak as Māori and for Māori. However, in the crucial moment when she returns home and realises that a marriage has been arranged for her, there is a breakdown in communication. She is unable to talk to her grandmother, who arranged the marriage, unable to communicate the different ideas she has for her own life. The only way out that she sees is getting into a cab and driving off, without speaking to anyone except her cousin Missy and her aunt Gloria, and without giving her grandmother any explanation as to why she feels she has to go.[416] It is only later in life that Makareta finds her voice again and positions herself as an advocate for Māori rights. Through the character of Makareta, Grace alerts the reader to the development of a self-confidence in Māori identity in times of political uprising that began in the 1970s.[417] The novel differs from Grace's first short stories in the way that, as especially through Mata's and Makareta's narrative voices, it explicitly addresses racial injustice, political issues such as the Māori Land Marches in the 1970s, and the fight for Māori rights and equality – but also women's rights.[418] Grace's

[413] Grace, 61.
[414] Grace, 47.
[415] Grace, 254–55.
[416] Grace, 149–51.
[417] Walker, *Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou - Struggle without End*, 212.
[418] Heim, *Writing Along Broken Lines*, 172.

emphasis on equality and the recognition of Te Reo Māori as an official language highlights the importance of language and of education for the re-establishment of Māori identity. Towards the end of the novel, Makareta expresses that:

> They [Māori] need to know that our truth does not appear on pages of books unless it is there between the lines. Our truths need to be revealed. But on the faces the truth is written, on the scarred and broken faces, in the sick, disabled bodies, in the dreamless, frightened eyes.[419]

This passage openly addresses the disparity between Māori and Pākehā perspectives and conceptions of history, as well as, according to Chadwick Allen, 'the underlying unequal power relations that determine whose version of history and whose methods of historiography are considered "legitimate"'.[420] The importance of education and of knowledge, and also a demand for equality is underlined by Makareta when she points out that '[I]t's not sticking to the old ways that is important […] but it's us being us, using all the new knowledge our way. Everything new belongs to us too'.[421] Makareta explicitly encourages Māori not just to return to old traditions, but to use knowledge and education to find new ways to help Māori culture survive in the future, and she fights for the recognition that Māori have the same rights as Pākehā. Makareta does not only demand a right to self-determination for herself and all Māori, but she clearly addresses racial injustice. She stresses the importance of education as a means of accessing knowledge about cultural history, and as a means of writing one's own history – otherwise the injustice that has been done to Māori will not be revealed. But even Makareta, who is firmly rooted in her Māori culture through her upbringing, has experienced alienation from her family and is denied a true homecoming as she is not able to reunite with her family in her lifetime.

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[419] Grace, *Cousins*, 215.
[420] Allen, *Blood Narrative*, 16.
[421] Grace, *Cousins*, 253.

In her article 'Along "the Many-Stranded Circle"', D'Cruz briefly refers to the genre of the *Bildungsroman*, but does not elaborate on this.[422] I examine the question of genre further in this chapter, because I find it somewhat curious that the genre of the *Bildungsroman* is often brought into play when analysing literature written in a (post)colonial context and my discussion builds on Jed Esty's work and argues that, for different reasons, *Cousins* cannot be read as a *Bildungsroman* because defining aspects of the genre do not appear. In the novel, the core narrative arc typical of the *Bildungsroman* is present: the individual characters at the centre of the story, trying to find their place in society. In *Unseasonable Youth* (2012), Jed Esty draws a parallel between the formation of nationhood and the novel's protagonist's process of maturing into adulthood; he raises the question whether this was possible at the margins of the British Empire or in the colonies, where nation-building was suppressed and the indigenous population of the countries were denied equal status in society. Taking his argument further, I contend that for the characters in Patricia Grace's novel, the main challenge is a reconnection with Māori culture and a cultural homecoming – but that the homecoming is a failed, disrupted one and does not allow the characters to find their place in Māori or Pākehā culture, or to successfully negotiate the two. In the case of *Cousins*, we see that a real homecoming is not possible in the novel for any of the three characters; there are different scenes in which a character returns, but the homecoming is a failed, disrupted one. The core motif of the bildungsroman is strongly linked, as Franco Moretti underlines in *The Way of the World*, to the idea of finding a homeland, of the strengthening of one's sense to belong to a wider community.[423] In the classical bildungsroman there is a sense of closure at the end which we do not find in *Cousins*.

[422] D'Cruz, 'Along "the Many-Stranded Circle"', 463.
[423] Franco Moretti, *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture* (London: Verso, 2000), 19.

In this a range of different experiences of home and homecoming have been identified. When looking at the first part of the chapter and Ihimaera's novel *Tangi*, it becomes apparent that the idea of home is strongly tied to the village of Waituhi and to the family's *marae*. Even though at the beginning of the novel the protagonist's family does not live there, because his parents are working for shearing gangs to save up the money for a house and move around a lot, the sense that Waituhi is there home and they will one day be able to permanently return (and not just for occasional visits to see family) is instilled into the children from an early age. There is therefore an experience of homecoming for the protagonist at a younger age, when his family finally buys a house and settles in Waituhi. The central motif of homecoming for the novel is, however, triggered through the father's death, which is literally called 'the homecalling' in the novel: When he dies, Tama, who has moved to the city, returns home to his family and community. As a child, he did not question the fact that Waituhi was his home, but when he returns to Waituhi as an adult, the situation is more complex. Whilst he is happy to be back home and reunited with his family and community, he has to negotiate different feelings, expectations, and also the sense of having been alienated from his Māori community and culture through having lived in the city. Finally, though, he makes the decision that as the eldest son it is his responsibility to take on his father's place, and to return to his community. When comparing the motif of homecoming in the short story 'Tangi' and in the novel *Tangi*, the genre of the novel is able to explore this moment in a different way than the short stories. The novel's scope allows the plot to lead up to the moment of homecoming and to record what happens afterwards; there is more room for the development of the characters, but also more sub-plots and scene setting. The focus of the narrative lies not so much on the singular moment of homecoming, but more on the actual development of the characters and the plot itself; on complications, and on the question of whether a homecoming and finding a new way of

identifying with Māori culture and tradition is actually possible, and if so, what it could look like in a modern society – or whether it is ultimately beyond reach.

Similarly to Ihimaera's novel *Tangi,* the motif of the *tangi* and the funeral plays a role in Patricia Grace's novel *Cousins* as well. However, whilst in Ihimaera's novel there is a tangible hope in the story that the protagonist's homecoming for the funeral means a rediscovery of his Māori identity, and that he will return home to his village for good, Grace complicates this notion of homecoming in her novel. At first, it looks like as if here as well the funeral triggers a homecoming for the different characters: The three narrative strands merge at the novel's end when Makareta dies and her body is brought home to the *marae* and her family. Mata travels with her and meets her cousin Missy again. Through the *tangi,* the funeral, and the ceremonies that take place in the *marae*, the family is reunited. However, this homecoming is a fraudulent and disrupted one. Makareta is dead and had never been reconciled with her family throughout her lifetime. Even though towards the end of the novel she had planned to go back home and had been looking forward to it, this is denied to her.[424] Mata, who discovers Makareta's body, at first does not know what to do. She remembers that 'there were things to do when someone died. […]. There were things to do, but I did not know about them.'[425] She gets in touch with her estranged husband Sonny, who is Māori, and he contacts Makareta's family and friends. Encouraged by Makareta's friends, Mata reluctantly agrees to accompany Makareta's body back to the *marae* in her family's village, the family she had met only once, as a 10-year old.

It could be argued that the Bildungsroman motif is visible in the depiction of Mata's character – after all, she does return to her community at the end, and is welcomed back home. I am hesitant to draw this conclusion, though, because when Mata arrives at the *marae,* she

[424] Grace, *Cousins,* 244.
[425] Grace, 248.

feels out of place due to not understanding Te Reo Māori, and not knowing the funeral rites and the traditions, and what she is supposed to say or do.[426] Mata is overtaken with sadness, but she is not sure whether she is crying because of Makareta's death – or something else:

> I had never cried before in all my life and now I felt that I would never stop. […] Years of tears. […] I wasn't sure that my tears, or any of the crying I had done that day were for Makareta. They seemed to come from an unfound place, from years.[427]

All the hardship, the ostracization, exploitation and difficult years that Mata has had to experience seem to culminate in this very moment. All her life, she has pulled herself together and just carried on – but now, she cannot do that anymore. She Is overcome with these strong emotions, not just, as she says, out of grief for her cousin, who has died. For Mata, the moment of her return to her family emphasizes all the years that she has had to spend separated from them, her loneliness and her sense of unbelonging – and she grieves for the home, the community and the life that she has never had. There is a striking parallel here to the protagonist in Moffat's short story 'The Homecoming' that has been analysed in the first chapter in this thesis: in his case, the tears dropping on the wooden panels of the marae symbolized a merging with his place of upringing and an emotional reconnection with his culture. Mata's situation, however, is not quite as straight forward. I argue that her tears come more from a place of grief about the family and home she did not have. Her cousin Missy takes her to sit beside Makareta's body, and the novel ends on this image, the three cousins reunited – yet one of them dead, and one of them never having been part of the family community in a true sense.[428] So the ending is very different to 'The Homecoming' or *Tangi*, where it is strongly affirmed that the protagonist has, in fact, returned home and found his place in the community again, or in *Tu*, who, despite the trauma he goes through, finally settles and finds a home again by returning to

[426] Grace, 252.
[427] Grace, 254–55.
[428] Grace, 255.

his mountain. In *Cousins*, the ending is more open, and leaves the reader with more questions. It seems as if, at least for Mata and Makareta, a true homecoming was ultimately not possible. In that way, it has more in common with Albert Wendt's novel *Sons for the Return Home*, at least with regards to the motif of homecoming.

Chapter Four

'Samoa, Our beloved Home': Representations of Home in Albert Wendt's *Sons for the Return Home*

In the opening sentence of his ground-breaking manifesto 'Towards a New Oceania' (1976), Albert Wendt, the first Samoan writer to publish a novel, firmly locates himself in Oceania when he states: 'I belong to Oceania'[429]. In the paragraph which follows, he further clarifies that he is rooted in Oceania with his identity, his imagination, his whole being. However, in his first novel *Sons for the Return Home* (1973) the idea of home that Wendt presents is more complex.[430] Through his protagonist, Wendt explores the experience of being a young Samoan in New Zealand and questions the idea of home while being part of a minority group of migrants, struggling to find their place of belonging in society. In the first part of this chapter, I examine the context in which the novel *Sons* was published and its reception, and I link my analysis with important points from Wendt's essay, showing how Wendt's writing fits into a larger tradition of postcolonial writing. The second part of this chapter focuses on the different meanings of home to the two generations in Wendt's novel, and the effect of homecoming on the protagonist. While in the previous chapters, in which I focused on the the work of Māori writers, the concept of home represented was strongly linked to the land, the marae and the community, the concept of home in Wendt's novel is radically different, as, in contrast to the other works, it is about migration and diaspora. The figure of the migrant is the focus of Wendt's novel. As John Connell, Russell King, and Paul White argue, 'the migrant is seen as the critical participant-observer into his/her own condition, enabling powerful insights to be made into the 'insider-outsider' dichotomy and real 'lived experience' of migration.'[431] The

[429] Albert Wendt, 'Towards a New Oceania', *MANA Review* 1, no. 1 (1976): 49.
[430] From here on referred to as *Sons* in the rest of the chapter.
[431] John Connell, Russell King, and Paul White, eds., *Writing Across Worlds: Literature and Migration* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), xii.

protagonist in the novel *Sons for the Return Home* very much occupies the position of an observer and an outsider, as can be seen later on in this chapter. Curiously, the same can be said about Albert Wendt, and Wendt in fact calls himself an outsider (for example in his non-fictional text 'Inside 'Outsider' Wendt). Diaspora is an important focus in all of Wendt's oeuvre, but especially in this novel: by writing about it, Wendt, as Paul Sharrad argues, 'dramatises the effects of displacement and marginalisation, and the yearning for dignity and a home to belong to.'[432] This yearning to belong or to be at home is a very common theme for people who grow up with a migration background, or who live in diaspora.

In *Sons*, we have not only one protagonist and his understanding of home, but two distinct groups: the parent generation, for whom home is Samoa, which they long to go back to, and the protagonist, the generation of their children, for whom neither New Zealand nor Samoa is home. Both parents, who are Samoan migrants in New Zealand, harbour a nostalgic perception of the homeland they left behind. They engage their sons' imagination by repeatedly describing the beautiful landscape to them and thus a mythical homeland, a lost Eden, is conjured up by the parents.[433] Ironically, by doing this they reinforce stereotypes which colonial explorers and writers of travel narratives and adventure fiction propagated in their writing about the Pacific, or in stories that were set in the Pacific. In contrast, upon his return to Samoa, their son recounts his experience in much more realistic terms. Reviews and the reception of the novel play a role here, as well as the question of form. As the notion of home is depicted in this novel interlinks with nostalgia, I engage with current research on nostalgia and the nostalgic recreation of a home that has been lost. One of the most prominent themes of *Sons* is the idea of the outsider, the stranger at home neither here nor there – a theme that Albert Camus prominently wrote about in his novel *L'Etranger* (*The Outsider*), and which had a

[432] Sharrad, *Albert Wendt and Pacific Literature*, 48.
[433] Albert Wendt, *Sons for the Return Home* (Auckland: Longman Paul, 1973), 74–78.

strong influence on Wendt when he was a young man. So strong, in fact, that several intertextual references are embedded in his own first novel, and Camus is the only person that is ever referred to by name.[434] The final subsection is concerned with the protagonist's homecoming to Samoa – which proves to be not a homecoming at all, but a deeply alienating experience for him. Differently to the other authors whose work has been analysed in this thesis, Wendt does not really have a group to represent, as he himself grew up as a migrant and in diaspora. Through his writing, he is demonstrating isolation, alienation and the exceptionalism of his own position and at the end offers a retreat into literary work.

'Oceania is us. We are the sea, we are the ocean' – Depictions of Oceania as Home

As Michelle Keown emphasises, 'since the early days of European incursion into the Pacific, Westerners have commonly conceptualised the Pacific as a constellation of 'tiny islands in a far sea, remote from European colonial centres of power'.[435] These kind of descriptions of Oceania and the Pacific as vast and empty follow a common colonial trope and they fit into the tradition of colonialist texts, which are, as Elleke Boehmer asserts, 'littered with images of nameless threat and trauma; of inertia and impossible immensity, of places of engulfing darkness and overwhelming enigma, recalcitrant peoples, unbreachable jungles, vast wastelands, huge and shapeless crowds.'[436] Pacific scholars and writers like Albert Wendt, Epeli Hau'ofa, Selina Tusitala Marsh, Teresia Teaiwa and many others have continually stressed in their work that indigenous people and their traditions and cosmologies understand Oceania as being an interconnected whole consisting of land surfaces as well as the water

[434] Wendt, 73.
[435] Keown, *Pacific Islands Writing*, 2007, 3.
[436] Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, 89.

around them.[437] Keown underlines that the term Oceania 'draws attention to the centrality of the sea for Pacific Islanders', emphasizing that it is the sea that connects all the different islands and people.[438] This perception is also one that is advocated by Albert Wendt, who stresses that the term 'Oceania' encompasses sea as well as land, and that the islands within the Pacific together with the sea form a connected whole.[439]

Albert Wendt is not only a writer of fiction but has also published a number of important essays; his critical essay 'Towards a new Oceania' shows that we cannot separate the creative from the critical writing because it provides an important insight into his position on colonialism and the importance of culture and literature. In particular, literature plays a pivotal role in the quest for self-determination and (creative) nation building in a postcolonial world, specifically for Oceania and people from the Pacific region. In his manifesto, the Pacific region is renamed as 'Oceania' by Wendt and he endows it with distinct female characteristics, describing her as '[S]o vast, so fabulously varied a scatter of islands, nations, cultures, mythologies and myth, so dazzling a creature'.[440] Wendt characterises the nature of Oceania as ever changing and clarifies that she cannot just be described by mere facts.[441] Instead, he insists that the mythologies and the oral cultures which exist, and have existed in this region for thousands of years, play an important part in how we picture and understand it.[442] Wendt goes so far as to call Oceania a lover whose shape, pain and nature nobody will ever quite know. He describes the process of trying to get to know Oceania as the search for Hawaiki, the lost homeland: 'We are all in search of that heaven, that Hawaiki, where our hearts will find

[437] See for example: Michelle Keown. *Pacific Islands Writing : The Postcolonial Literatures of Aotearoa/New Zealand and Oceania*. Oxford Studies in Postcolonial Literatures in English. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.Albert Wendt 'Towards a New Oceania'. *MANA Review* 1, no. 1 (1976); Teresia Teaiwa and Selina Tusitala Marsh. 'Albert Wendt's Critical and Creative Legacy in Oceania: An Introduction'. *The Contemporary Pacific* 22, no. 2 (2010): 233–48; Epeli Hau'ofa, ed. 'Our Sea of Islands'. In *We Are the Ocean*, 27–40. Selected Works. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008
[438] Keown, *Pacific Islands Writing*, 2007, 3.
[439] Wendt, 'Towards a New Oceania', 49.
[440] Wendt, 49.
[441] Wendt, *Sons for the Return Home*, 1973, 49.
[442] Wendt, 49.

meaning; most of us never find it, or, at the moment of finding it, fail to recognise it.'[443] In his essay, Wendt sketches a mystifying multi-layered idea of Oceania, and of a place of belonging, of home. Yet his statement has a distinctly melancholic ring to it: he draws the readers' attention to the fact that, in his view, the search for home, for a place of belonging, somewhere where we find meaning is basically an impossible one. Home, or 'that heaven' or 'Hawaiki', as Wendt terms it, is a place that exists in our dreams, but cannot be reached. Or, as he clarifies, we might not actually realise we have found our place of belonging, a home, when we do – because we always long for something else.

Speaking about his own search for a place of belonging, Wendt states that 'at this stage in my life I have found it in Oceania: it is a return to where I was born, or, put another way, it is a search for where I was born […].[444] Again, a statement that makes the reader stop and ponder. Presumably the geographic location of where someone is born is relatively easily identifiable. Wendt, therefore, is pointing to something else here that is inherent to a sense of home and belonging: a sense of heritage, of perhaps belonging to a family, a community, of knowing one's own history and the history of one's people. Wendt himself has continually moved between Samoa and New Zealand, first as a student, and later when he worked as a Head Teacher in Samoa, but then returned to teach at the University of Auckland. Janet Wilson argues that *Sons*, 'amounts to an exploration in semi-autobiographical terms of how to transpose this sense of rootlessness into an artistic world view, enabling him to find a home in his work.'[445] Here, we can see a parallel to the writing of Grace and Ihimaera, and the reasons why they chose to start writing about Māori culture: to write their culture and their sense of home and belonging back into being. In Wendt's case, home is not one place – but his work,

[443] Wendt, 'Towards a New Oceania', 49–50.
[444] Wendt, *Sons for the Return Home*, 1973, 49–50.
[445] Janet Wilson, 'Deconstructing Home: "The Return" in Pasifika Writing of Aotearoa New Zealand', *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 54, no. 5 (2018): 643.

as Wilson points out in the quote above, provides him with a place to inhabit, a place to feel at home.

In his essay, Wendt refers only in the very first sentence to Oceania as 'it'; afterwards, whenever referring to it by a pronoun, he uses 'she', evoking in the reader the image of a motherland, deliberately characterised as female.[446] In her book *Migrant Metaphors*, when referring to Indian and African writers, Boehmer writes that 'the land was in more cases than not pictured as maternal, or as abused and adored female body.'[447] The same can be said about Wendt, an indigenous Pacific writer, and indeed other writers from the Pacific, such as Epeli Hau'ofa. Wendt can therefore be read as part of a larger trajectory of postcolonial writers by writing similarly about his home, Oceania, in his essay 'Towards a New Oceania'. However, there is also a large body of fictional and non-fictional colonial literature that describes India, Africa, the Americas, and the Pacific Region, and their unknown terrains by drawing on female metaphors. But the way these metaphors are used appears markedly different to how they are being used by indigenous and postcolonial writers.

In his essay 'Towards a New Oceania', Wendt strongly critiques this misogynist way of perceiving and referring to femininity; he condemns the colonial stereotypes and tropes which the colonizers, explorers and 'ologists' as he calls them, projected onto Oceania.[448] Wendt's description of Oceania stands in sharp contrast to texts written by European explorers. European explorers portray it in a misogynist way, as something 'other', something to be conquered, and, according to Boehmer, '[T]his symbolism of the female body again captured the salient traits of the racial other: of a body receptive to the male, and, if not, then requiring subjection'.[449] In Wendt's essay, however, the reader can find a strong sense of appreciation. He portrays the land as life-giving entity, as the home from which all life is created, and where

[446] Wendt, 'Towards a New Oceania', 49.
[447] Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, 116.
[448] Wendt, 'Towards a New Oceania', 49.
[449] Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, 83.

all creatures – humans and animals, natural and supernatural, dead and living – are at home.[450] In his writing, he expresses a strong sense of identifying with Oceania, wanting to protect it, the motherland, from corruption and violation. This theme, that home becomes a place in the artist's work, shows strong parallels to how home is depicted in Māori writing, especially in the selection of works by Witi Ihimaera and Patricia Grace that have been analysed in the previous chapters of this thesis.

This image of Oceania as female is stressed by a number of other postcolonial writers, for example by the Fijian writer, critic and anthropologist Epeli Hau'ofa in his essay 'The Ocean in Us.'[451] Like Wendt, Hau'ofa emphasises the strong connection between indigenous people and Oceania. He points out the devastating effect of colonialism on the people of the Pacific and stresses that the 'derogatory and belittling views of indigenous cultures' by the European colonizers have had a lasting effect on how indigenous people understand their own history and traditions, with an influence upon indigenous people's self-image that continues to the present day.[452] Throughout his essay, Hau'ofa critically evaluates the relationship between colonizer and colonised. He sees it as a power relationship which supresses the indigenous people and he advocates for a holistic perspective, calling for Oceania to be seen as 'a sea of islands' and not as 'islands in a far sea'.[453] The latter perspective, as he points out, has been purported by European explorers who mapped the Pacific region as tiny dots in a vast ocean, whereas the former recognises that both sea and islands are connected.[454] Like Wendt, Hau'ofa portray Oceania as having feminine characteristics. Hau'ofa writes: 'Conquerors come, conquerors go, the ocean remains, mother only to her children', and characterizes Oceania as

[450] Wendt, 'Towards a New Oceania', 50.
[451] As Epeli Hau'ofa points out in his essay, 'this paper is based on lectures delivered at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo, and the East West Center, Honolulu, March/April, 1993.' See: Eric Waddell, Vijay Naidu, and Epeli Hau'ofa, eds., *A New Oceania: Rediscovering Our Sea of Islands* (Suva, Fiji: The University of the South Pacific, 1993), 1.
[452] Waddell, Naidu, and Hau'ofa, 2.
[453] Waddell, Naidu, and Hau'ofa, 7.
[454] Waddell, Naidu, and Hau'ofa, 7.

not only possessing a female body which nurtures, protects and gives a home to all its inhabitants, but above all as a maternal figure.[455] According to Hau'ofa, human beings have come into existence only through her, and it is thanks to her that they are able to live. It is not only an emotional bond illustrated here between the people and the land and the sea that constitutes Oceania, but also a tangible and necessary connection. Without Oceania, the people would not be able to exist, because Oceania provides them with a home, food and a sense of identity.

There is a link between how Pacific Islanders perceive Oceania, the land and the sea around them, and how Māori perceive the earth: both are understood as sources of nurture. As depicted in chapter one, and chapter three, Māori use the word *whenua* to refer to both the land and the placenta, emphasising that the land is life-giving and without it the people would not be able to exist. Hau'ofa's statement seems to imply that only all those who call her home and acknowledge the bond between themselves and Oceania, can claim her as a mother figure. To any explorers, tourists, or whoever else might venture into her realm from abroad, without acknowledging her importance, this deep connection is not accessible. There is also a strong temporal reference in Hau'ofa's claim, an emphasis that the sea has existed for thousands of years and is an ever-living presence, integral part of mythologies and cultures. Colonial history has been but a brief period of that time and has not changed the essential relationship between the sea, the land, and its people. However, Hau'ofa acknowledges that 'this mother [Oceania] has a big heart though; she adopts anyone who loves her.'[456] Again, emphasizing the image of Oceania as a caring, loving mother figure – and also underlining that he is not excluding anyone from seeing Oceania as home, as long as that person shows love and respect towards her. Hau'ofa's essay ends with a strong assertion, attributing human characteristics to Oceania,

[455] Waddell, Naidu, and Hau'ofa, 11.
[456] Epeli Hau'ofa, ed., 'Our Sea of Islands', in *We Are the Ocean*, Selected Works (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008), 11.

acknowledging its changing nature and the importance it plays in the mythology of people from the Pacific.[457] At the same time, he illustrates the relationship between humans and the world around them:

> Oceania is vast, Oceania is expanding, Oceania is hospitable and generous, Oceania is humanity rising from the depths of brine and regions of fire deeper still, Oceania is us. We are the sea, we are the ocean […].[458]

This acknowledgment strongly affirms that people who live in Oceania are interconnected with her, reinforcing the important relationship between indigenous people and land previously discussed throughout my thesis.

In her work *Imperial Leather (1995)*, Ann MacClintock argues that long before Victorian imperialism 'Africa and the Americas had become what can be called a porno-tropics for the European imagination — a fantastic magic lantern of the mind onto which Europe projected its forbidden sexual desires and fears.'[459] Something similar happened in the Pacific Region, constructed through travel narratives and adventure tales by authors such as Robert Louis Stevenson (*Island Nights Entertainment*, 1893) and Jack London (*South Sea Tales*, 1911). Through these types of publications, certain stereotypes about the indigenous people were perpetrated, such as that of the unpredictable savage threatening the lives of Western explorers, the noble savage, whose ethics and community life had been destroyed by greedy European explorers, or promiscuous Pacific women who are strongly sexualised in the stories. There is a strong difference between how colonial explorers and writers of adventure tales depicted the country they travelled to, and how Pacific Island writers depict and recreate an image of their own countries. As Boehmer underlines, '[T]he past and the land, the land as embodiment of the values of the past, provided sources of authenticity, primarily for the nation

[457] Hau'ofa, 16.
[458] Waddell, Naidu, and Hau'ofa, *A New Oceania*, 16.
[459] Ann MacClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in Colonial Context* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 22.

emerging from its history of colonial occupation, but also more specifically, for its intellectual élite.'[460] Wendt, who is the first Samoan to gain a university degree from any New Zealand university, and the first Samoan professor at a New Zealand university, is part of that intellectual élite in the Pacific, who were tasked – or rather, tasked themselves – with the enormously difficult challenge to rewrite their nation's culture and history from an indigenous perspective in the face of the political changes that happened in the Pacific in the 1950s, 60s and 70s.

In his essays, Wendt emphasises the importance of oral storytelling traditions of the Pacific and the interconnectedness between the different cultures at home in the Pacific region. He appeals to the reader to recognise the strength and uniqueness of this heritage. Whilst being critical of the negative stereotypes that are perpetrated in colonial writing about the Pacific and Pacific Islanders, Wendt also firmly rejects positively stereotyped images of the Pacific Islands as a 'lost Eden' and is highly critical of anthropologists such as Margaret Mead, who travelled to and wrote about the Pacific in the early twentieth century and whose texts, as Keown argues, offer 'an Orientalist vision of the Pacific.'[461] Wendt emphasises:

> I've written mainly about my own people. I hope I've illuminated some areas of who those people are and, through them, what people are like everywhere. I hope I've also destroyed some of the stereotypes and fallacious myths about Samoa, Polynesia and the South Seas. (I pray though that I haven't replaced them with other misleading ones!).[462]

In this statement, Wendt stresses the power of writing for the construction and deconstruction of identities – specifically in the context of the people of Oceania, and but also in more general terms. He contributed to this by writing both fiction and non-fictional texts. At the point when his essay 'Towards a new Oceania' was published in 1976, Wendt had already written two plays: *Comes the Revolution* and *The Contract* (both published in 1972). He had also published

[460] Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, 116.
[461] Keown, *Pacific Islands Writing*, 2007, 49.
[462] Wendt, 'Towards a New Oceania', 49.

his first novel, *Sons for the Return Home* (1973), a novella titled *Flying Fox and the Freedom Tree* (1974), and a large number of poems, a selection of which were published as a collection titled *Inside us the Dead*, but also a non-fictional essay titled 'Inside "Outsider" Wendt' (1974).

Literature as a Space to Renew Indigenous Culture and History

Wendt sees literature as playing a vital role to achieve cultural self-determination and underlines that '[C]reating our own literature helps us define ourselves in our own terms.'[463] To Wendt, postcolonial texts are born out of the loss of culture and self-representation which indigenous people experienced through the process of being colonised. As a trained historian, Wendt firmly believes that '[I]t is important that we decolonise our histories […]. In school our histories were taught as prehistory or folk history.'[464] Wendt calls for a confrontation with and an analysis of the past in order to achieve an understanding of who indigenous people of the Pacific are, and how they have been shaped by colonialism.[465] He argues:

> [A]ny real understanding of ourselves and our existing culture calls for an attempt to understand colonialism and what it did and is still doing to us […]. Without it, we will remain the often grotesque colonial caricatures we were transformed into.[466]

Art and literature are, according to Wendt, important means of re-discovering one's own culture and central to achieving this understanding.

As Wilson argues, Wendt wrote *Sons* 'around 1965, having returned to Samoa from New Zealand to promote South Pacific literature.'[467] However, it took another eight years to get published. When *Sons* was published by Longman Paul in 1973, it became an immediate

[463] Vilsoni Hereniko and David Hanlon, 'An Interview with Albert Wendt', *The Contemporary Pacific* 5 (1993): 200–201.
[464] Vilsoni Hereniko and Hanlon, 204.
[465] Wendt completed a BA and an MA in History at Victoria University of Wellington and wrote his MA dissertation on the Mau resistance movement in Samoa, in which his grandfather Tuaopepe Tauilo took part.
[466] Wendt, 'Towards a New Oceania', 50–51.
[467] Wilson, 'Deconstructing Home', 643.

bestseller. The novel was the first one in the publisher's Pacific Paperback series, developed by Phoebe Meikle and modelled on the successful Heinemann's Africa series.[468] In 1978, Patricia Grace's first novel was published in the same series, and according to Elisabeth Caffin, she was discovered by Meikle as well.[469] *Sons for the Return Home* became an 'instant bestseller' and the first five print-runs sold 12,000 copies in total.[470] The book was included in the syllabus of secondary schools and, most importantly, the syllabi of several teachers' colleges and the University of the South Pacific. These inclusions had a significant impact on sales numbers and helped the novel to reach a broader readership. It meant that the novel was assigned as a core text to a large group of students from all over the Pacific region over subsequent years, these students read and discussed it in class, and then taught it once they were qualified teachers. Albert Wendt is the first Samoan author to publish a novel, *Sons for the Return Home* (1973) and the first Pacific Islander to be appointed as a professor at a New Zealand university (University o– Auckland, 1988-2006). He is one of the most influential writers of the Pacific Region and belongs to the first wave of Pacific writers and academics. This first wave represents, as Selina Tusitala Marsh and Teresia Teaiwa argue, 'the first full wave of conscious, conscientious Oceanians', who have left a 'unique intellectual heritage.'[471]

In *Sons* a Samoan family migrates to New Zealand when their two children are still young so they can give them a better education. However, the focus of the parents is always to return to Samoa. After the younger son, who is the protagonist of the novel, completes his university studies, they return. Samoa is the imagined homeland, recounted through stories and tales told by the parents and they dream of returning one day. But when they do, their son,

[468] Elisabeth Caffin, 'Aotearoa/ New Zealand', in *The Oxford History of the Novel in English: Volume 12: The Novel in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the South Pacific Since 1950*, ed. Coral Ann Howells, Paul Sharrad, and Gerry Turcotte, Oxford History of the Novel in English (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 49.
[469] Caffin, 49.
[470] Sharrad, *Albert Wendt and Pacific Literature*, 40.
[471] Teresia Teaiwa and Selina Tusitala Marsh, 'Albert Wendt's Critical and Creative Legacy in Oceania: An Introduction', *The Contemporary Pacific* 22, no. 2 (2010): 233.

brought up in New Zealand, finds that his parents' stories depicted a nostalgic image and a romanticised idea of Samoa which does not correspond with the reality he experiences.[472] He does not feel at home in Samoa, cannot stand the heat, feels as if 'he couldn't escape the noise and smell of people', the strong dependence on religion that the people in the isolated village display.[473] Finally, he makes the decision to break with his parents and to return to New Zealand.

The protagonist is a young Samoan man who throughout the novel is not given a name, but just referred to as 'the boy'. He falls in love with a Pākehā girl, referred to simply as 'the girl', and the other characters in the novel have no names either, but are instead referred to via their relationship to the protagonists (i.e. 'the boy's father', 'the girl's mother). By not giving the protagonists specific names, Wendt creates a sense of representativeness. the story is clearly set in Wellington, New Zealand, but the boy could be any boy with a Samoan or indigenous background or any boy growing up as the son of migrants in a minority community. The girl could be any white girl – though she does not represent racist aspects of New Zealand society and this is what makes her different from others. The characters stand for a larger image of New Zealand society and details such as their names are not in the foreground. Instead, the focus is on the larger themes of the novel, such as the search for identity, the experience of displacement, love between two young people from different races, issues of racism, and struggling to find a sense of belonging in a society still affected by its colonial past.

The reviews Wendt received for his novel were quite mixed. Some of them praised his novel as groundbreaking, as a 'novel [that] will be widely read and discussed for some time to come'.[474] Some highlighted the fact that he was the first Samoan to publish a novel and the

[472] Wendt, *Sons for the Return Home*, 1973, 175–77.
[473] Wendt, 176.
[474] Audrey Gordon, 'Review', *NZ Woman's Weekly*, 19 November 1973.

Auckland Star even referred to him as 'a voice for Samoa'.[475] Other reviews expressed a sense of being uncomfortable with the racial tensions addressed throughout the novel, and a number of Samoan readers were angered by the fact that they saw themselves and their people depicted in what felt like a negative way.[476] Another issue mentioned and criticised in a number of reviews was the overt depictions of sex. The Fijian government decried the novel as being 'pornographic' and *The Northern Advocate*, for example, critiques the author for seeking 'to upset established values' and for a 'grubby preoccupation […] with the sleazy side of life.'[477] This description refers not only to the protagonist's active distancing from his parents' religious beliefs and the church community he grew up in, but above all to the overt sex scenes, and also to the debate around abortion and the fact that the protagonist's girlfriend decides to have one. Concern over the explicit sex scenes had been raised by Paul Longman, Wendt's publisher, before the publication of the novel. In the communication between Wendt and his publisher, Longman mentions that nine people (including himself) had read the book prior to publication. He points out that three readers are teachers' college lecturers and that 'the decision whether to set *Sons* for their students rests with them.'[478] He emphasises that the book has remarkable promise and wants to ensure its achievement. Longman states that he wants to publish it 'as a moving and important contribution to inter-racial interpretation and understanding' – but that, as a publisher, he also has to keep the economic side of things in view and that he 'must make sure that a certain part of the market is certain, i.e. that we are sure of adoption by several teachers' colleges and at least one university.'[479] This verdict is followed by a five-page long summary consisting of the scenes that the readers found concerning and the changes that they

[475] Michael Brett, 'By Teaching and Example, a Voice for Samoa', *Auckland Star*, 5 November 1973.
[476] J. Beston and R. M. Beston, 'An Interview with Albert Wendt', *World Literature Written in English* 16, no. 1 (1977): 152.
[477] Anon., 'Racialism', *Northern Advocate*, 5 November 1973.
[478] Paul Longman, 'Letters from Longman Paul Ltd to Albert Wendt (MS-Papers-11619-342)' (Wellington, 82 1978), Alexander Turnbull Library, https://tiaki.natlib.govt.nz/#details=ecatalogue.785288.
[479] Longman.

wanted to be made to the book. On page five, Longman explicitly voices the lecturers' concern about 'the effect of four-letter words on parents and others who could prevent them from setting the novel', and that he, as a publisher, is 'nervous about a possible prosecution for indecency.'[480] However, Wendt insisted on leaving them in.

Despite its remarkable success and being adapted as a movie in 1979 by Paul Maunder, *Sons for the Return* has not been the subject of research for many academics. Paul Sharrad, who is the first scholar to dedicate a monograph titled *Albert Wendt and Pacific Literature: Circling the Void* (2003) entirely to Wendt's work, devotes a chapter to *Sons for the Return Home*; Michelle Keown dedicates a chapter to Wendt and his work in *Postcolonial Pacific Writing: Representations of the Body* (2005). A few articles are available which focus explicitly on *Sons for the Return Home*, written by scholars such as Francoise Kral, who have analysed the racial tensions displayed in the novel, and the image of the young immigrant as an outsider who is not integrated and accepted by either New Zealand or the Samoan society.[481] Except for one important exception, namely Prof Janet Wilson, who published an article titled ''Deconstructing home: "The Return" in Pasifika writing of Aotearoa New Zealand' on this very subject in February 2019, none of these scholars, have scrutinised the difference in the notion of home between the parent generation and that of their children, or the moment of 'homecoming'.[482] This gap in scholarship is somewhat surprising, seeing that the title of the novel emphasises the importance of home and homecoming, and because the novel itself is situated around the larger issue of migration and return migration. All the more important that in her article, Wilson analyses the motif of return in *Sons* in great detail, along with novels by

[480] Longman.
[481] See: Sharrad, *Albert Wendt and Pacific Literature*.; Michelle Keown, *Postcolonial Pacific Writing: Representations of the Body* (London: Routledge, 2005). Francoise Kral, 'Integrating, Belonging, Unbelonging in Albert Wendt's Sons for the Return Home', in *The Pain of Unbelonging: Alienation and Identity in Australasian Literature*, ed. Sheila Collingwood-Whittick (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2007), 165–80.; Francoise Kral, 'Integrating, Belonging, Unbelonging in Albert Wendt's Sons for the Return Home', in *The Pain of Unbelonging: Alienation and Identity in Australasian Literature*, ed. Sheila Collingwood-Whittick (Rodopi, 2007).
[482] Wilson, 'Deconstructing Home'.

other Pasifika authors.[483] Wilson makes the poignant argument that: 'Wendt's major contribution in *Sons for the Return Home* […] is to the literary trope of the return, which he reroutes from rooted locations, including family and kinship attachments, into a more mobile, dynamic one, better suited to a multicultural society.'[484] I agree with this observation, and the following sub-chapters will explore in more detail questions of home and belonging that arise from the novel.

Outsiderness and Unbelonging

The theme of being an outsider, a foreigner in the place where one lives and the strong sense of unbelonging which links to this feeling, features prominently throughout *Sons for the Return Home*. From the first page onwards, there are many scenes where the protagonist is portrayed as an outsider – either because he chooses to ostracise himself or because the community around him refuses to integrate him. In addition, there are intertextual references to Albert Camus' *L'Etranger* (*The Outsider*) in the novel, and in several interviews and essays Wendt consciously refers to himself as an outsider. He acknowledges the influence that both *The Outsider* and the essay collection 'The Myth of Sisyphus' by Albert Camus have had on himself and his writing in an essay he wrote titled 'Discovering *The Outsider*':

> My head exploded, my heart thundered as I gobbled it up in one reading. Here was the book, the testament, I'd been looking for to help understand myself […]. I was bowled over by its poetic lucidity and open vulnerability. The novel invited me into its heart, into the blazing sun which was lodged there […] and defined and mapped out [a] way of being for me.[485]

This is due to several reasons – but the most prominent one is the strong parallel between both Wendt and Camus, as well as the protagonist of Wendt's novel and Camus' protagonist

[483] Wilson, 643.
[484] Wilson, 645.
[485] Albert Wendt, 'Discovering The Outsider', in *Camus's L'étranger: Fifty Years On*, ed. Adele King (London: Macmillan, 1992), 49.

Mersault. Both Wendt and Camus live in a country with a tangible colonial past – Wendt in New Zealand, Camus in Algeria. Both express unease about the suppression of the indigenous inhabitants through the colonizing force. In the case of Wendt this is the British and the Germans, for Camus it is the French. Both Mersault and the protagonist of *Sons for the Return Home* have turned away from religion, both are criticised for their decision to do so and feel alienated by society.

Wendt thematises the silence of cultural outsiderness in the opening scene of the novel: The novel begins with the protagonist sitting alone in the student cafeteria. The first chapter is only two pages long; it portrays a protagonist who prefers to be by himself, distanced from what is going around him, and hardly speaks. A girl joins his table and tries to start a conversation, but he remains silent and is preoccupied with his own thoughts.[486] Even as a schoolboy, the protagonist is described as an outsider in school. He is the first Samoan to be chosen for the school's rugby team, but off the rugby field he has no contact to his teammates, only befriends the three other Samoan students at the school and is described as a quiet student who keeps to himself.[487]

The image of the outsider and the protagonist's feeling of alienation is further portrayed in close detail in the party scene in chapter seven. The boy is contrasted with the girl, who invited him: 'He hoped she would return to him soon and make him feel part of the party and the world she could move through so easily from which he had deliberately ostracised himself.'[488] Deliberate ostracization as opposed to accidental or inherited ostracization suggests that the protagonist does not want to belong and prefers to keep his distance. One of the reasons for this decision could be that he finds being made to feel different and as an outsider hurtful,

[486] Wendt, *Sons for the Return Home*, 1973, 2–4.
[487] Wendt, 12.
[488] Wendt, 23.

and thus by making the decision to keep to himself he retains a sense of agency over the situation. It is not the others who exclude him, and he is then helpless and cannot do anything against it – it is he who makes the decision.

It is through the relationship with the girl that the boy is able to not only form a sense of belonging in New Zealand and as a part of New Zealand society, but he also experiences a sense of inside, a sense of being part of it after all: 'He admitted to himself that this was the happiest time he had ever spent in New Zealand. By loving her, he was feeling for the first time a growing and meaningful attachment to the country which had bred her.'[489] To the boy, the relationship to the girl is the only thing that helps him not to feel like a perpetual outsider:

> As you walk the main street of this city which, through loving her, you have learnt to accept, under the dark dome of this sky that covers this country which, through loving her, you have grown to know in all its moods and sickness and loneliness and joy and colours and cruelty, this is what your heart tells you. She is you; the very pores of your breath. Without her, this city, this country, would be a barren place of exile.[490]

However, the relationship changes them both and has a profound effect on the girl. She grows more distant from her friends as their racism towards her boyfriend surfaces, and she feels alienated by their behaviour. After an argument, she admits her thoughts to her boyfriend:

> They are stupid and silly, aren't they?
> Who?
> My so-called friends. After being away from them for so long, I wanted to go back to them, find out if I was still like them. […] they are a useless, heartless bigoted bunch. […]. And to think that I was once like them.[491]

At a party where the boy is confronted with racist and sexist stereotypes he turns to leave in silence. The girl, who invited him, shouts after him, challenges him to beat up the guy who insulted him: ''Aren't you going to fight him?' the girl called. He stopped for a moment, made up his mind, and went into the hall. 'Coward!' he heard her shout as he opened the front

[489] Wendt, 24.
[490] Wendt, 129.
[491] Wendt, 126.

door.'[492] She runs after him, shouts at him and even hits him, but he takes it all in silence. When she finally she bursts into tears he takes her to a coffee bar to confront her about what just happened. To her questions about why he did not beat the guy up and her accusation that now all her friends will think he is a coward, he just replies: 'You wanted me to prove to them that your coconut boyfriend is as good as they are, didn't you?'[493] He questions her about why she invited him in the first place, she admits how painful the growing realisation of distance and loneliness is for her:

> Maybe I wanted them to hurt you, punish you, for taking me away from them and the senseless world I used to like and feel comfortable in. Maybe I wanted you to hurt them because they're the bloody types who […] are down on all people with different skin pigmentation…[494]

Before meeting the boy, the girl was blissfully unaware of her friends' racism and felt a sense of belonging connected to her friendship group. However, the presence of the boy has revealed to her the true side of her friends, and by choosing him and her relationship to him over her friends, she suddenly finds herself not belonging to this group anymore. In her study *Strangers to Ourselves*, Julia Kristeva analyses the phenomenon of the stranger, the outsider, and argues:

> By explicitly, obviously, ostensibly occupying the place of the difference, the foreigner challenges both the identity of the group and his own – a challenge that few among us are apt to take up. A drastic challenge: "I am not like you." An intrusion: "Behave with me as you would among yourselves."[495]

The boy is used to this feeling and treatment from long years of being treated like this – this is not saying that it does not enrage him, or hurt his feelings, but his way of dealing with it is to stay silent, leave, or turn away or just ignore what is happening. The girl, however, is not used to this sort of behaviour. Seeing the world from his perspective has opened her eyes to the racist

[492] Wendt, 125.
[493] Wendt, 125.
[494] Wendt, 126–27.
[495] Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 42.

behaviour of her friends – but also for his loneliness, and the position of the outsider that he occupies.

Questions of Form – The Novel as a European Form

In the editor's note to the 1996 edition of *Sons*, Vilsoni Hereniko writes: 'Until the publication of this 'first novel by a Samoan author,' I regarded novels as something European, a colonial artefact.'[496] This is an interesting statement for several reasons, as it raises questions about whether the form of the novel is related to a specific culture, whether it is a 'European' form, and what happens if, as in the case of *Sons*, this form is adopted by a non-European and indigenous author. It also emphasizes the link between the novel as a cultural object and the process of colonialism and imperialism. In his ground-breaking study *Culture and Imperialism* (1994), Edward Said underlines the connection between the novel as a cultural artefact and imperialism, and he points out that 'the novel, as a cultural artefact of bourgeois society, and imperialism are unthinkable without each other.'[497] As John Rieder proposes, 'Said does not argue that imperialism determines the form of the novel, but simply that it provides a structure of possibilities and a distribution of knowledge and power that the novel inevitably articulates.'[498]

In their introduction to Volume 12 of *The Oxford History of the Novel in English: The Novel in Canada, New Zealand and the South Pacific since 1950* (2017), the editors Coral A. Howells, Pauls Sharrad, and Gerry Turcotte stress:

> Perhaps more than any other group, Indigenous writers have seized the novel format with a ferocious intent to redraw the boundaries of the literary imaginary, rewriting nation with humour, brutality, insight and understanding. It is a voice,

[496] Albert Wendt, *Sons for the Return Home* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 1996), v.
[497] Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994), 70–71.
[498] John Rieder, *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2012), 3.

> since the 1980s in particular, that reminds us that subjugated identities can never be indefinitely suppressed or silenced.[499]

In writing their own literature, indigenous authors created a space for their voice to be heard, a space where they could rewrite their people's history and where their (indigenous) readers saw themselves represented. The three authors whose work I examine throughout my thesis started out by writing short stories and their first work, like that of many local writers who were published for the first-time in the 1960s and 70s in New Zealand, was published in journals, such as *Te Ao Hou* and *Landfall*. In the case of Ihimaera and Grace, this was followed by a short story collection with a local publisher. This is a pattern that Elizabeth Caffin identifies in her chapter on the publishing industry in Aotearoa/ New Zealand.[500] However, as Caffin points out

> Ironically, it was British multinationals, through their local staff, who picked up on the new confidence, strength and defiance of Māori and Pacific voices and who recognized a growing eagerness among the public to hear them.[501]

Publishing houses were generally hesitant to publish novels, not just those written by indigenous writers but by other novelists as well. In the 1970s, it was still considered a risk to publish an author who was not already relatively well known outside of New Zealand.[502] The situation began to change slightly with the establishment of local publishing houses and the founding of Auckland University Press.[503] This was New Zealand's first university press, which published a New Zealand fiction series and was dedicated to bringing titles that had gone out of print back into the market.[504] The writing of indigenous authors fostered a broader

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[499] Coral Ann Howells, Paul Sharrad, and Gerry Turcotte, eds., *The Oxford History of the Novel in English: Volume 12: The Novel in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the South Pacific Since 1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 9.
[500] Caffin, 'Aotearoa/ New Zealand', 46.
[501] Caffin, 49.
[502] Caffin, 51.
[503] It was founded in 1966, but not formally recognised before 1972.
[504] Caffin, 'Aotearoa/ New Zealand', 51.

readership, carved out a literary space that became larger and larger over the years, and paved the way for the work of other indigenous writers to be published, which led to greater visibility of indigenous authors in the New Zealand publishing scene.[505] In 1991, Huia Press was founded, the first publishing house in New Zealand that explicitly

> […] strives to contribute to the awareness, education and understanding of Māori perspectives. Perspectives that have been an inspiration to Māori people and of significant value to New Zealand as a nation as it continues to define, create and express itself nationally and on the world stage.[506]

All three authors whose work has been analysed in this thesis – Patricia Grace, Witi Ihimaera, and Albert Wendt – have had a number of their books published by Huia Press.

Sons for the Return Home has been described as 'the first Samoan novel' in different articles and reviews,[507] as well as 'a postmodern novel', 'a Samoan novella', and 'a roman à clef.'[508] The critic Subramani argues that Wendt invented the 'Samoan novel'.[509] This term has also been applied to the work of other Samoan writers whose work was published more recently, for example to Sia Figiel and her novel *Where We Once Belonged* (1996) and Figiel describes Wendt as having had a profound influence on her work. This links into the discussion about 'diaspora' or 'migrant' novel, alongside the 'postcolonial novel', which is related to the former, but a different type. Nuanced academic research has been conducted on the latter, and there are a number of significant studies on it, such as *The Cambridge Companion to the Postcolonial Novel* (2016). For the purpose of analysing *Sons for the Return Home* and the motif of home and homecoming, it is of interest to consider Claire Barker's definition of the

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[505] Wevers, 'The Novel, the Short Story, and the Rise of a New Reading Public, 1972–1990', 247.
[506] 'Huia | About Us', accessed 6 November 2017, http://www.huia.co.nz/huia-bookshop/about-us/.
[507] See for example: Olaf Ruhen, 'First Samoan Novel of "Classic Beauty" Says Veteran Novelist', *Pacific Islands Quarterly* 45, no. 1 (1975): 68–69. Ruhen underlines that Wendt's novel is an important contribution to Pacific art, and that despite the fact that the novel has not been used by other Pacific artists as an artform, it is 'Polynesian in all its rhythms.'
[508] Translated from French as 'novel with a key', a description given to novels which portray real-life characters thinly disguised under a layer of fiction or fictional names.
[509] Subramani, 'Oral Forms in Wendt's Fiction', *Echos Du Commonwealth* 8 (1981): 59.

postcolonial novel; she argues that '[P]ostcolonial novels rarely offer neat forms of closure' because '[P]ostcolonial histories are still unfolding, conflicts are still unresolved and injustices are still uncompensated.'[510] However, as Linda Crowl points out,

> Book history in the anglophone South Pacific is overwhelmingly not about novels. Novels, though a recent phenomenon in the Pacific, have emerged from a now lengthy but rarely studied history of print culture introduced to a wide and diverse region as part of Western colonial expansion.[511]

In *Sons for the Return Home*, Wendt finds a way of aesthetically mediating between Samoan culture and forms of oral literature, as well as the forms of the novel and short story which have been imported to the Pacific through colonialism. Wendt was introduced to the culture of oral storytelling by his grandmother and recounts:

> [A]s a child I was fascinated by the oral literature of my own people. Samoa was and still is extremely rich in its oral traditions, and I was lucky with my grandmother […]. She was steeped in Samoan culture and the Bible and spoke fairly fluent English. Every night she dazzled us with *fagogo*, lengthy descriptions of her own life and history, and yarns of her own unique weaving.[512]

In *Sons*, Wendt uses the form of the novel and interweaves it with Māori mythology and distinctly Polynesian oral storytelling. Whereas Wendt's first publication can be characterised as taking on the classic form of the novel, his later work experiments more and more with different forms and genres: non-fiction and fiction, essays, poetry, a number of novels and collections of short stories. His most experimental work is *The Adventures of Vela* (2009), on which he worked for more than a decade, and which is written entirely in verse form, and has been heralded as a Pacific epic. Though one reviewer dryly remarks

> In [sic] the back cover, Vela is described as a "Pacific epic…stretching from hundreds of years before the arrival of the Papalagi to the present day and fuses the great indigenous oral traditions of storytelling and Western poetry." I don't know about Pacific epic, but Vela is certainly no Samoan epic. At least not the

[510] Claire Barker, 'Disability and the Postcolonial Novel', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Postcolonial Novel*, ed. Ato Quayson (Cambridge University Press, 2016), 113.
[511] Crowl, 'South Pacific', 61.
[512] Albert Wendt, 'Inside "Outsider" Wendt', *New Zealand Bookworld*, 1974, February-March edition, 74,76.

> Samoa that I know of. And I can't imagine your grandma telling you such stories. Vela more appropriately, is an Albert epic.[513]

Wendt was awarded the Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best Book (Asia/Pacific Region) in 2010 for *The Adventures of Vela* (2009).[514] Among his other many awards and honours he was also made a Member of the Order of New Zealand in 2013.[515]

In the previous three chapters, I demonstrated that both Patricia Grace and Witi Ihimaera use Māori words in their writing, interweaving them into the text; Patricia Grace even uses Te Reo Māori syntax, even though her stories are written in English, giving them a distinct and oral character. Many of her short stories have a very oral character about them, and often read as if they were stories told aloud to an audience. Albert Wendt and Samoan writer Sia Figiel take the tradition of oral Samoan narrative form even further, adapting them to the form of the novel in distinct ways. Wendt, for example, uses the open-ended *fagogo* strategies that he was introduced to by his grandmother, and Sia Figiel, according to Ken Arvidson, uses 'the model of *su'ifefeloi* or 'weaving-together', [to] allow her narratives to follow an associative, many-layered line of development.'[516] In *Sons for the Return Home*, Wendt embeds Māori mythology throughout and the protagonist retells one of the central myths to the girl, namely the story how Maui, the trickster hero, met his death.[517] Māori mythology has been referred to in the previous three chapters with reference as to how important the myths are to create an idea of home and how they underline the relationship between human beings and the land. These myths illustrate how central these concepts were and still are to an understanding of

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[513] 'Pacific.Scoop.Co.Nz » Book Review: Nafanua Dead in Vela's Verse', accessed 6 November 2017, http://pacific.scoop.co.nz/2010/04/book-review-nafanua-dead-in-vela%e2%80%99s-verse/.
[514] Teaiwa and Marsh, 'Albert Wendt's Critical and Creative Legacy in Oceania', 234.
[515] 'Albert Wendt Receives New Zealand's Highest Honour', Radio New Zealand, 30 May 2013, https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/212597/albert-wendt-receives-new-zealand's-highest-honour.
[516] Ken Arvidson, 'Testing Our Limits - Regionalism, Nationalism, and Selfhood in the Anglophone Literature/s of Oceania', in *Towards a Transcultural Future: Literature and Human Rights in a 'Post'-Colonial World* (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2004), 197.
[517] Wendt, *Sons for the Return Home*, 1973, 99–102.

home for Māori. In addition to this, Māori and Pacific mythology represent a distinct understanding of the world, as has been mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. The constellation of the stars, the grouping of islands, the formation of the land is often used to represent a particular myth, or something that the Gods or Maui did. Accordingly, the supernatural and human beings who inhabit this world are linked. By using these narrative techniques, Wendt creates a link between traditional indigenous ways of story-telling and more classically 'Western' genres of literature and narrative. For example, when looking at the individual chapters of *Sons for the Return Home*, it becomes quickly apparent that they read similar to a collection of short stories. Each chapter can stand on its own and the plot or setting is not continuous.

The first chapter, is set in Wellington and portrays the first time that the protagonist, as a master's student, meets the girl. The second chapter contrasts this by focusing on the moment that the protagonist and his parents board the ship to sail from Samoa to New Zealand almost twenty years earlier and also focus on the scene of arrival in their new country. The novel is actually based on a short story, as Wendt explains in an interview.[518] He details further that he 'set out to write a short story really – a rather ordinary love story which then turned into a novel about two cultures, two families, two young people.'[519] He 'wanted to write each section, each chapter, as a complete statement, short story in itself – little explosions that ran into each other, kept the reader in suspense, and yet made it possible for the book to be read at random at any point… And I wrote *Sons* as I would write a series of poems.'[520] This underlines the author's intention to bring out the lyrical and oral elements in his way of telling the story of the boy and the girl and of merging various narrative techniques and genres.

[518] Juniper Ellis, '"The Techniques of Storytelling": An Interview with Albert Wendt', *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature* 28, no. 3 (1 July 1997): 88.
[519] Wendt, 'Inside "Outsider" Wendt', 6.
[520] Wendt, 54.

Return Migration and a Nostalgic Perception of Home

The novel addresses the differences between two generations towards the perception of home: for the parents, their homeland is Samoa and their aim is always to go back one day. But for the children, who grew up in Wellington, this is not the case. Having migrated to a foreign country where the parents feel alienated and are met with racism, the image of Samoa that they pass on to their two sons is one of nostalgia. For the children, especially the younger son who is the first of his family to attend university and fall in love with a (white) New Zealand girl, they enter a world which is different and far away from that of their parents. Samoa cannot be home – but because the protagonist is Samoan, continually confronted with racial stereotypes, and made to feel that he is different, New Zealand cannot be his home either, as much as he wishes it to be. Wendt himself admits that the plot of the novel is genuinely 'corny' – boy meet girl, boy loses girl.[521] However, as Paul Sharrad notes,

> [W]hat gives interest to the book is the socio-cultural texture behind the romance, the artistry of structuring the novel in contrastive parallels (white – brown, past – present, action – descriptive reflection) the interwoven symbolic scenes and the construction of a myth to give a distinctive metaphysical substance to the alienation of the central character.[522]

Sons for the Return Home shows several autobiographical elements which, as Sharrad stresses, can often be found in a first novel.[523] Both Albert Wendt and the protagonist in the novel are Samoan and immigrate to New Zealand to receive a better education; both attend Victoria University of Wellington to study history; both distance themselves from the strong religious background they were brought up in.[524] In his essay 'Inside "Outsider"', Albert Wendt

[521] S. Alaisa, 'Excerpts from an Interview between Professor Albert Wendt of the School of Education and the Editor of "UNISPAC"', *UNISPAC* July-September (1982): 33.
[522] Sharrad, *Albert Wendt and Pacific Literature*, 41.
[523] Sharrad, 41.
[524] But there are also marked differences – for example Wendt immigrates to New Zealand on his own, to attend secondary school, whereas the protagonist in his novel arrives together with his parents at a much younger age.

confirms that 'there is more of me in *Sons* [*of the Return Home*] than in any of my other work.'[525] To Wendt himself, these biographical elements are of great importance. He asserts that 'one of the strengths of a novel comes from a reader understanding where you, the author, are coming from.'[526] Wendt thus constructs a fictional alter ego through which he explores questions of home, displacement and identity. He describes the novel as

> an attempt […] to show what it is like being Samoan, and being Samoan in another culture […]. It is about every migrant's dream of the grand return home […]. To sound really grand, I think Sons is about Polynesia – what it was, what it is, what it is becoming. [527]

When the novel was considered for publication, Wendt was criticised by his publisher on several points and asked to make changes. For example, the publisher perceived the novel to be too racist towards white New Zealanders.[528] Wendt refused, insisting that the novel was based on his personal experience.[529] This is what makes the novel stand out as not just a story about two young people falling in love with each other, but as having a much larger narrative that criticises racism and the treatment of migrants in New Zealand society. The protagonist himself experiences overt racism from an early age and there are countless scenes in the novel where this is visible. For example, when they are in school, his brother gets called a 'dirty coconut Islander'.[530] When he beats up the children who called him names, he gets caned in front of the entire school by the principal who calls him 'a brainless Islander who should be deported back to the islands.'[531] In the eyes of the boy's parents, it is they who are discriminated against because they are Samoans. However, Wendt complicates the idea of racism in his novel,

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[525] Wendt, 'Inside "Outsider" Wendt', 6.
[526] Ellis, 'The Techniques of Storytelling', 83.
[527] Dustjacket of *Sons for the Return Home*, Longman, Auckland, 1973.
[528] This is a concern on the part of White New Zealanders that Wendt had to stand up to repeatedly, even in his later work when he was already an acclaimed author. (See for example the interview with Juniper Ellis, "The Techniques of Storytelling" when he talks about his novel *Ola*, and that he was criticised for being 'unfair to racism', questioning in the interview 'How can you be unfair to racism?'. Ellis, 'The Techniques of Storytelling', 88.
[529] Personal Conversation
[530] Wendt, *Sons for the Return Home*, 1973, 13.
[531] Wendt, 13–14.

when the protagonist admits to his girlfriend how he used to have racist attitudes towards Māori.[532]

Racist and sexual fears and desires were not only projected onto the land, but also onto the people by the European explorers, as described by Anne McClintock.[533] The stereotype of the sexualised Pacific Islander exists until today and finds repeated mentioning in the novel. For example, when the girl invites the boy to join her at a party, he arrives but cannot find her immediately. A man at the bar starts talking to him, and when the girl comes in, oblivious to the fact that the two are in a relationship, he turns to him and says: 'You want to meet her? She really likes Islanders. Probably because coconuts are supposed to be big where we fellows should be big.'[534] He describes the man as

> [T]he type of New Zealand man he'd always disliked, attempting to prove his masculinity in public; the rugby player and surfie who, suffering from fear of his own inadequacies as a male, believed the racist myth of black virility, and who was now trying to convince himself (and his friends) that the myth wasn't true. The whole history of the pakeha had been cursed with this fear, and the Māoris and other minority groups had to pay for it. All pakeha women who went out with Polynesians and blacks were considered nymphomaniacs after the supersized whang. Conversely, all pakeha men who took out Polynesian women were after the expert fuck.[535]

There is a tangible anger about racism in the novel, and against the prejudice that the protagonist experiences at the hands of the girl's white friends and the white community. [536] However, the boy's mother also harbours strong prejudice towards the white girl and the relationship between her son and the girl. This becomes especially apparent when the girl, having discovered that she is pregnant, reaches out towards the boy's mother for support. However, his mother is horrified at the thought of her son marrying a white girl: 'My own son,

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[532] Wendt, 98–99.
[533] MacClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 369.
[534] Wendt, *Sons for the Return Home*, 1973, 124.
[535] Wendt, 125.
[536] See: Sharrad, *Albert Wendt and Pacific Literature*, 39.

married to a palagi. My grandchildren to be half-castes. It cannot be!'[537] She is worried about how having half-caste grandchildren, and how her son's relationship to the girl will taint her family's success story and how it might cost her and the entire family the return home to Samoa that she is picturing not just for her and her husband, but also for her sons.[538]

The parents are not well integrated within New Zealand society, and the only social contacts they have are with other Samoans Pacific Islanders. The protagonist observes that '[L]ike most other Samoan families in Wellington, their lives revolved round the Pacific Islanders church'[539]. Throughout the novel, religion plays a very important part, not just because his parents lead a devout Christian life, but also because the church represents a community to them. It fulfils, in a way, the role that the church community and the extended family played which they left behind in Samoa. Their social life is regulated through the church, and '[A]fter a few years the man was appointed a deacon, his younger son […] taught Sunday school and his wife became a respected member of the church social committee.'[540] Thus, over the years, a gradual acceptance takes place. The family is integrated and becomes part of the local church community. This is a common migration pattern, especially for migrants who do not speak the language of their host country. They seek a community they can feel at home in and where they feel accepted. Here, they do not have to fear racism, are part of a community of people who are all foreign in New Zealand, and share the same language, and a common experience of having left behind their home and resettled in a foreign country that bonds them together Additionally, the church community for them is a way to achieve a status and recognition. However, by joining the local Pacific Island community and by continuing to speak Samoan both at home and with the other families, the parents are at the same time distancing themselves from mainstream New Zealand society. By insisting that their sons join

[537] Wendt, *Sons for the Return Home*, 1973, 135.
[538] Wendt, 135.
[539] Wendt, 30.
[540] Wendt, 30.

them they deny them to bond with New Zealand as their new home and the society they are living in. They project on their children their own sense of New Zealand as a place where their stay is only temporary, even though their youngest son lives in New Zealand for almost twenty years.

The mother talks about religion to the children, declaring that: 'The papalagi brought Christianity to Samoa, but then, as they gained atheistic knowledge and worldly wealth and power they forgot God and became pagans again.'[541] In doing so, she evokes a sense that the family, by being religious Samoans, are superior to New Zealanders who do not believe in God anymore. She also makes a clear distinction between Samoa, where people are God-fearing, like them, and New Zealand, where modernity and a modern lifestyle have led people to go astray. To her and her husband, the church community represents their home and social life, also providing them with a sense of belonging and their place in the world. At some point, however, the protagonist realises that 'religion had suddenly become meaningless to him. It wasn't a matter of disagreeing with church doctrines and beliefs: he was just bored with it.'[542] This leads to arguments with his parents, who blame his university education for his attitude.[543] The protagonist feels guilty for hurting his parents' feelings by not attending church anymore, and his deliberate disengagement from the church community intensifies the fact that he does not seem to belong, that he is an outsider. By deliberately ostracizing himself from the other Samoans and the church, which plays such a central role in his family's life, he shows a strong consideration of morals. To him, not being able to believe in God anymore also means that he is different from the others, and therefore does not belong in their midst anymore.

Depiction of Home as a Nostalgic Memory

[541] Wendt, 75.
[542] Wendt, 67.
[543] Wendt, 67.

In *Sons for the Return Home*, the idea that the parent generation has of home is very different to that of their children. For the parents, home is Samoa and they nurture a nostalgic idea of it and pass it on to their children until the protagonist 'would admit to himself that almost all he knew of Samoa was a creation of his parents and other Samoans he admired.'[544] For the children, Samoa is an imagined home that is impossible for them to reach, a myth. It is not based on their own experience and memory, but on the stories that their parents tell them. Although they live in Wellington, New Zealand, this is never considered as home by the parents. Through the constant references to their return migration to New Zealand, the parents make it impossible for the children to consider Wellington their home and to identify with the society they are part of.

In the second chapter of the novel, which begins on the morning in which the parents and the protagonist, who is a young child at the time, leave Samoa for New Zealand, the family leave behind their beloved home to sail to New Zealand – a country they have never been to. The child is afraid of 'all those strange white people speaking a language he didn't understand', and through the child's perspective, as readers we experience an underlying sense of anxiety that is evoked in this scene.[545] Even though they try to soothe the boy, the parents are anxious about the journey and what awaits them as well. Only when he goes out onto deck one night, looking at the stars in the sky, the father 'felt unafraid for the first time, and he thought longingly of the island they had left.'[546] The act of longingly thinking back to Samoa and the home they had left permeates the entire novel. For both the protagonist's parents Samoa represents their home, a home they plan to return to once their son has received a good education, and New Zealand is perceived as a place of exile, a time of hardship which needs to be endured before they are able to return home.[547]

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[544] Wendt, 78.
[545] Wendt, 5.
[546] Wendt, 6.
[547] Wendt, 40.

When the family arrive in the harbour of Wellington, the scene is not a joyous one, even though they are welcomed by relatives they have not seen for a long time. Instead, the passage is full of wariness and uncertainty: 'They emerged from the ship into the cold air of New Zealand, clutching one another's hands and peering fearfully at the crowd.'[548] Only now are we, as readers, introduced to a specific geographic location. The verb 'emerged' suggests that characters are very passive and manifest from the ship as part of a nameless mass of passengers and immigrants. The chilly air evokes a contrast with the warmth of their home and signals a sense of the harsh reality they will face as immigrants in New Zealand. As if they are anticipating this, they clutch one another, seek to find support in each other, and guard themselves against the rest of society. References to the wintry weather, especially the chilly winter in New Zealand are made repeatedly by the parents throughout the novel and serve as a reminder that in Samoa the weather is warm, the sun shines, and it is not as dark and miserable as in New Zealand.[549]

Throughout the novel, the mother repeatedly makes statements such as: ''We're all going back home as soon as he [the oldest son] finishes university.'[550] Even though they have lived in New Zealand for two decades, the place which the parents think of and dream of as their home is still Samoa. During their time in New Zealand, to which the boy's parents often refer as exile, they tell their sons about Samoa – and create a mythical homeland, not representing the true conditions but a resurrection of the homeland which they remember, dream of and long for while they cannot be there.[551] The myth is created through the mother's descriptions of Samoa, and the way she teaches her sons about the country of their birth.

Her positive claims about Samoa are contrasted with negative remarks about New Zealand. For example, she says about Samoa: 'all the villages are clean and tidy and widely

[548] Wendt, 7.
[549] Wendt, 74.
[550] Wendt, 14.
[551] Wendt, 76.

scattered round the coast – one has a lot of room to live in.'[552] By contrast, she declares New Zealand to be 'crowded, noisy and unhealthy' even though she has never left Wellington and does not know the rest of the country.[553] She also tells her sons that in New Zealand, people do not care about each other and gives this as the reason for the existence of orphans and poor people; she explains that in Samoa, there are no poor people or orphans, because everyone looks after each other and their community.[554] The mother's reaction to New Zealand and New Zealand society shows an enormous amount of stereotyping and simplification. Over the years especially the mother's strongly romanticised depictions of Samoa result in 'a new mythology, woven out of her romantic memories, her legends, her illusions, and her prejudices, [being] born in her sons: a new, fabulous Samoa to be attained by her sons when they returned home after surviving the winters of a pagan country.'[555] Ironically, this observation almost sounds like a colonial travel narrative – only that 'pagan' does not refer to indigenous or native people who were converted to Christianity by European explorers. The description refers to New Zealanders who, in the eyes of the mother, have turned away from religion, and the term 'pagan' is used to contrast New Zealand society with the religious society in Samoa which they have left behind.

Return to Samoa

The last part of the novel begins in the moment when the protagonist and his family return to Samoa. When disembarking from the plane, the scenery is unreal to him: blinded by the sun and unprepared for the heat that is engulfing him, he feels 'like a new-born child [who

[552] Wendt, 74.
[553] Wendt, 74.
[554] Wendt, 75.
[555] Wendt, 76.

is] exposed for the first time to the harsh light of day.'[556] Looking back at the airplane when leaving the airfield he thinks about it as looking 'like a large metallic fish which had disgorged him on to the shores of a country real only in myth or fairy tale or dream.'[557] At the airport, he and his family are greeted by a large group of relatives who welcome them home – but in contrast to his parents and his brother who respond joyously to the hugs and the welcomes, he realises that he can't. He feels overwhelmed, but also has an increasing sense that what is happening around him is not real. This ties in with his perception of Samoa as being a country that only exists as a myth or a fairy tale. Because for the twenty years which he and his family lived in New Zealand, Samoa was exactly that to him: a place which he only knew from his parents' stories, a mythical homeland that they created in a bout of nostalgia for the place and the family which they had to leave behind.

Coming out of the airport, he sees the sunset and it seems to him as if 'the whole western horizon […] was bleeding.'[558] The term bleeding evokes an entangled set of associations.On the one hand, it refers to the deep colour of the sunset in Samoa, but on the other hand there is a strong association of pain tied to this description. It can be read as a reference to the scene before his homecoming to Samoa, where he has a fight with his girlfriend's former lover and sees himself in the bathroom mirror, covered in blood. Or it could refer to the abortion which his girlfriend decided to have. Taking these other possible interpretations into account, there is a sense of being hurt, of pain, of an open wound associated with the term 'bleeding.' His homecoming to Samoa is not a joyous occasion for him. A sense of disappointment sets in when he and his family are on the bus that takes them across unpaved roads back to the village where he and his brother had been born. To his brother's question 'It's good to be home, isn't it?' he remains silent, thinking to himself '[I]t was hard to believe that he had spent nearly

[556] Wendt, *Sons for the Return Home*, 1973, 170.
[557] Wendt, 170–71.
[558] Wendt, 173.

twenty years preparing and waiting for this return.[559] So many years and now nothing more than an uncomfortable seat, as a stranger, in a bus […].'[560] The realisation that again, he is an outsider, someone who does not belong or does not quite fit in is painful for him. Now, in Samoa, he is considered to be too 'papalagi', too white and too Western, and somehow different. This manifests itself physically when, after the first week which is one of welcoming and feasting, and which he enjoyed, he is seized by a violent fit of diarrhoea. Whereas his parents recover quickly, and his brother and all the Samoan guests do not get infected at all, he takes a long time to recover, and while he is sick, he also suffers from a period of depression.[561]

Because the image of Samoa and of their home that the parents passed on to their sons was one of nostalgia and a creation of a mythical homeland, the protagonist finds himself unprepared to deal with the reality that confronts him. For example, he feels overwhelmed by the flies and mosquitos which attack him and even though he sleeps under a mosquito net, they deprive him of sleep.[562] He is also unable to cope with the communal way of living and struggles with not being able to escape the noise and smell of people and the absence of privacy. Moreover, he struggles with the expectation to fulfil the role of the educated, obedient son. Then there is the noise – he finds himself desperately looking for silence, in a place where he is surrounded by the constant sounds of animals and nature, and of people around him – but when finally he does find a moment of silence, he is confronted with memories of the girl.[563]

Whereas his brother settles in quickly and is admired by the whole village community, the protagonist grows more and more distant and withdrawn. It is unbearable to him to be cast as the outsider again, to realise that he does not belong. Dismayed, he escapes to Apia to stay in a hotel room for a few days, but also this is only temporary.[564] The ending of the novel leaves

[559] Wendt, 172.
[560] Wendt, 172.
[561] Wendt, 174–75.
[562] Wendt, 175.
[563] Wendt, 176.
[564] Wendt, 192.

the protagonist displaced and in an airplane flying away from Samoa, back to New Zealand – suspended in mid-air. What we find here is in a very general sense the fate of the outsider, the stranger:

> Not belonging to any place, any time, any love. A lost origin, the impossibility to take root, a rummaging memory, the present in abeyance. The space of the foreigner is a moving train, a plane in flight, the very transition that precludes stopping.[565]

The boy choses to leave Samoa – he is in the position to reject Samoa as home an turns instead to his pan-Pacific heritage as an alternative, because he grew up between cultures and whilst he does not feel at home in either, it also means that he is bound to neither, and can move between cultures ans spaces. Yet he knows at the same time that New Zealand can not be his home either. While sitting in the plane, he has the revelation that '[H]e didn't even know why he was going back, but even that didn't seem important any longer.'[566] As Wilson underlines, 'Home and return are therefore diametrically opposed in the novel's ending: the "home" that the protagonist returns to in Samoa is no more a place of belonging than Aotearoa New Zealand.'[567] The concept of home that we find in Sons is twofold. There are two distinct and opposing groups of which each have a very different view on home. On the one hand, there is the parent generation's sense of home. Home to them is always Samoa, the homeland that they have left behind, and for themselves and their sons they recreate a nostalgic version of that home, while they live in New Zealand. They dream of the return home throughout the entire time they live in New Zealand. On the other hand, there is the protagonist, for whom home is neither here nor there. He has grown up in New Zealand, but because he is Samoan, he feels a keen difference between him and his school mates, or between himself and the other students at university. One of the most prominent themes in *Sons* is the motif of the outsider, the

[565] Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, 7–8.
[566] Wendt, *Sons for the Return Home*, 1973, 216.
[567] Wilson, 'Deconstructing Home', 645.

stranger, who never feels as if he really belongs anywhere. His family's return to Samoa is an incredibly alienating experience for the protagonist. He realizes that the Samoa his parents had recreated for him and his brother is but a nostalgic depiction and does not correspond to the reality he experiences. Again, he feels like an outsider, like someone who does not belong – and cannot bear it. This feeling becomes so strong that he finally decides to leave. The end of the novel, when the protagonist is suspended in mid-air, in a plane between places symbolises this sense of identity. It is now almost fifty years since *Sons for the Return Home* was first published. Yet the novel holds its place and the topics it addresses – outsiderness, trying to find a sense of belonging while living as a migrant in a state of transnational diaspora, the questions around the notions of home and the paradox that is clearly visible between how the first generation of migrants and the second generation, their children, define a sense of home are as current now as they were fifty years ago. The critical reception that the novel first received must be understood in the zeitgeist of the early 1970s. When reading the novel now, criticism from the time and descriptions of the novel as being 'pornographic' or as seeking 'to upset established values' seems a bit exaggerated now, yet at the time what Wendt was writing was considered different and radical. The ambivalent conclusion of *Sons for the Return Home*, of being poised between two worlds seems open-ended, and leaves a lot of questions – yet in that sense it seems to fit the description of Barker, who, as mentioned earlier in the chapter, has identified this to be one of the key elements of the postcolonial novel. [568] It might also suggest that in the situation of someone like the protagonist in *Sons for the Return Home*, this in-between state is all there is: the notion of home and a possible homecoming are but a dream, and the reality is that if you are an outsider, someone who lives in different cultures but is never completely at home in either this state of in-betweenness is your fate. And yet, at the very end of the novel the protagonist seems to be able to find something positive and freeing about his

[568] Barker, 'Disability and the Postcolonial Novel', 113.

situation: 'He had nothing to regret, nothing to look forward to. All was well. He was alive; at a new beginning. He was free of his dead.'[569] There is an inner calm in this quote. The protagonist seems to be very much in the moment, neither looking back to things that could have been or that he could have done differently, nor projecting things into the future and losing himself in that. He is very much in the moment, his calm but perceptive observation suggests that while it is at times painful to be an outsider, and to feel as if you do not truly belong, this also means that you are not tied to anywhere either. The phrase 'free of his dead' reads as if he feels that he has no obligations to his ancestors, no obligations towards a community or a culture he does not identify with.

[569] Wendt, *Sons for the Return Home*, 1973, 217.

Conclusion

This thesis has explored an important, yet underrepresented part of the story of postcolonial literature: the depiction of home and homecoming in a selection of Māori and Pacific literature. As I argued in my introduction, home is a universal topic and something to which all of us can relate. Due to its ubiquity, however, it is a concept that is hard to define. This thesis has analysed the depiction of home in selected short stories and novels, placing my own research within the larger body of criticism that already exists around the texts that I have chosen. Secondly, it has argued that the motifs of home and homecoming have emerged as key tropes in Māori literature from its earliest beginnings. In many of the earliest short story published in the 1960s and 70s we find these motives, which suggests that exploring these was of great importance to different writers for reasons that I have analysed in more detail in my thesis. Thirdly, my thesis addressed a significant gap in scholarship by focusing on the moment of homecoming in selected short stories and novels from a specific postcolonial region, namely the Pacific, with a specific focus on indigenous literature. The overarching research question that I posed in the introduction of my thesis was: is a homecoming possible, or does it prove ultimately beyond reach? In the short stories and novels that I have chosen for analysis, we have encountered very different depictions of home and the moment of homecoming appeared in many different facets. And the answer to this question differed in the work of the different writers.

My first chapter explored the political situation around the founding of the magazine *Te Ao Hou* in 1952 and how it was deliberately presented as a 'marae on paper', a meeting ground or home. *Te Ao Hou* allowed for an identification with Māori culture through the medium of print, thus transcending the problem of physical dislocation and enabling Māori to engage with their culture, their traditions, and their language. This can be seen as a certain kind

of 'homecoming', of reconnecting with the roots of Māori culture and traditions, while at the same time trying to redefine their place in a modern and urban society. The emergence of Māori literature, written by authors such as Patricia Grace and Witi Ihimaera who form part of the 'first generation of Māori writers', coincided with time of rapid urbanisation, modernisation and social change in New Zealand. By writing about the rural Māori community, or about young Māori who return from the city to this community, a fictional space and a sense of home was recreated in literature and called back to life. In Moffat's and Ihimaera's stories, the motif of homecoming was the archetypical portrayal of the story of the 'Lost Son' who is welcomed back home, embraced by his family, and accepts the sense of returning home. Grace's stories, however, are slightly more nuanced. The different ways in which the motif of homecoming is portrayed in the stories examined in this chapter demonstrate that 'home' is not only a physical and geographical place, but a cultural and spiritual space in which feelings of belonging and alienation play out.

Chapter two focused on the Māori involvement during the years of the Second World War and on the motif of the homecoming soldier traumatised by the war. However, as Cathy Caruth points out, the core of the conflict narrative lies not only in the experience of the war itself, but also 'the ongoing experience of having survived it'.[570] She stresses the fact that 'for those who undergo trauma, it is not only the moment of the event, but the passing out of it that is traumatic; […] survival itself, in other words, can be a crisis'.[571] This chapter built on Caruth's argument and suggested that it is not just having survived the war that reinforces the trauma, but the experience of coming home that provides the space for trauma to fully manifest. During the war, soldiers are occupied with basic survival and everything that is not essential is suppressed. But as soon as they return home and try to settle back into everyday life, the

[570] Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, 7.
[571] Caruth, 9.

soldiers' traumatic experiences have the space to resurface, because, as Caruth argues, 'in trauma the greatest confrontation with reality may also occur as an absolute numbing to it, that immediacy, paradoxically enough, may take the form of belatedness'.[572]

My third chapter explored two novels – *Tangi*, published in 1973, and *Cousins*, published nineteen years later in 1992. The central motif in the novel *Tangi* is the same as in the short story of the same title, which was analysed in chapter one: namely, the *tangi* (funeral) as the reason for a protagonist's homecoming. The *tangi* is an important ritual in Māori culture to bring the *whanau* (extended family) together. The concept of home that is presented throughout the novel is threefold: it is tied to the home village of the protagonist, Waituhi, it is tied to his home *marae*, Rongopai, and it is also tied to the protagonist's indigenous community. In the novel, the funeral is described as a homecalling. Tama, the protagonist, follows this call home. The funeral triggers his decision to return to his *whanau* (extended family), his village and his *marae*. The moment of 'homecoming' plays a different role in the genres of short story and novel. In the short story, it is the moment of epiphany, whereas in the novel, the moment of 'homecoming' is drawn out and further complicated by other story lines.

The way home and homecoming are portrayed in the novel *Cousins* shows certain parallels, but also strong differences, to *Tangi*. Family and the rural village where Makareta grows up also symbolize home, but whilst *Tangi* was entirely focused on the protagonist's homecoming, Grace's novel is more strongly concerned with questions of homelessness and the fact that a homecoming can also fail. *Cousins* openly critiques and addresses inequality and Māori rights. My analysis of the stories and the novels shows that the hopes and aspirations connected with 'homecoming' which are visible throughout the short stories of the 1960s and 1970s which have been analysed in this thesis have resulted in disappointment in the novel.

[572] Caruth, *Trauma*, 4.

There is a tangible awareness that a homecoming, as depicted in the earlier stories, a return to the rural village and the traditional ways of life, is no longer possible.

Chapter four examined another quite different kind of home and homecoming. Forr example, there is the differences between what two generations consider as home. On the one hand, we have the parents who have immigrated from Samoa to New Zealand, so that their sons can get a better education. Yet they always think of Samoa as home and as the place that they will eventually return to once their son has finished his education. On the other, there is the son: although born in Samoa, he can hardly remember it and it is his parents' memories and nostalgic depictions that form the image he has of Samoa. He attends university in Wellington and has lived there all his life, yet because he is Samoan he feels like an outsider, and questions where he really belongs. The return to Samoa, which to his parents is a homecoming, leads to an identity crisis. He makes the painful discovery that all the stories about Samoa that his parents told him were nostalgic depictions and that the reality is very different. Feeling neither at home in Samoa, nor in Wellington, but less alienated in Wellington than in the Samoan village, he decides to leave and return to New Zealand. However, the main difference between Wendt's novel and the other novels and short stories analysed in this thesis is not the different understandings of home between two generations, which to a certain extend is also traceable in Māori writing. It is rather that Wendt's novel is about diaspora and migration, and it that sense it introduces a different notion of home, and a homeland as distant and problematic for the second generation of immigrant, who differently to their parents do not remember it.

What we saw in all of these different chapters is that, through the return home, a redefinition of the protagonists' sense of identity and of home is set in motion. In the novels and short stories that I have analysed throughout my thesis, all of the protagonists have to come to terms with the fact that there is no simple return home – the idea of finding a home, and of

returning to a place that one can call home creates, in each situation, the need to go forward and to create something new.

The three authors whose work I analysed in this thesis – Patricia Grace, Witi Ihimaera and Albert Wendt – were pioneers when their work was first published in the 1970s. They belong to the so-called first generation of Māori and Pacific Island authors and changed the literary landscape through their contributions. They were key figures in the rise of Māori literature, which also coincided with a rise in political consciousness. Their role as writers allows them a special status within their community, because they wrote their respective cultures back into being by claiming a space for themselves in the literary scene at the time. However, they have also paved the way and served as role models for the next generation of Māori and Pacific writers. This is acknowledged among others by Robert Sullivan, who himself has greatly benefited from the guidance and mentorship that Grace, Ihimaera and Wendt provided. He notes that: 'By being active participants on writing committees and in workshops, and by promoting Maori literature generally, the older and more established authors continue to encourage new Maori writers and writing.'[573] He comments on both Ihimaera and Grace specifically, underlining that Ihimaera 'has consistently been a kaitiaki (guardian) for our writers and writing; a mentor and supporter, he is a living taonga (treasure).'[574] About Grace, he acknowledges that she 'has won literary awards around the world; but among her most important achievements has been fostering the indigenous literary community in Aotearoa.'[575]

Potential new areas to investigate that were beyondthe scope of my thesis to engage with are the work around the motives of home and homecoming bythe writers of the so-called 'second generation' of Māori and Pacific literature, such as Robert Sullivan, Selina Tusitala Marsh, Teresia Teaiwa, Sia Figiel or Karlo Mila, or Alan Duff., I would also have loved to

[573] Reina Whaitiri and Robert Sullivan, 'The Forest of Tāne: Māori Literature Today', *Manoa* 9, no. 1 (1997): 77.
[574] Whaitiri and Sullivan, 78.
[575] Whaitiri and Sullivan, 78.

include poetry next to the short-stories and novels and to analyse, for example, the way the Māori Battalion is portrayed in Alistair Campbell's *Māori Battalion: A Poetic Sequence* (2001) or Robert Sullivan's *Cassino, City of Martyrs* (2010). Exploring the poetry by Campbell and Sullivan, especially since there is so little still written about the experience of the Māori Battalion during the Second World War, and to explore who the motives of home and homecoming are depicted in their work would have added a rich layer to my analysis. Especially the authors who represent the second wave and have a Pasifika background demonstrate a new perspective on questions of home and belonging in New Zealand and the Pacific in the 21st century. Their writing moves away from questions of Māori versus Pākehā to a more multicultural picture of New Zealand society. By this I mean that in New Zealand, we have different cultural groups such as a growing Pacific Islander community and an Asian community and all these different cultures interact with one another.

Through a close-reading of selected short-stories and novels by Grace, Ihimaera, and Wendt, I have demonstrated that finding and creating a home can be tied to an initial sense of homelessness, of loss and dislocation – which ties is with broader arguments around modernity and its effects on Māori and Pacific literature. In that way, modernity, home and the development of Māori literature are closely linked. By analysing how home and homecoming are portrayed in the stories and novels for this PhD thesis, I have brought these three concepts into correlation with each other and I have shown how they are connected.

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