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Geometries of Life

Simon Barber

A thesis presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Goldsmiths, University of London
Centre for Research Architecture
December 2017

Declaration of Authorship: I Simon Barber hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Simon Barber

Abstract

The central concern of my thesis is the ongoing colonial encounter between Māori and Pākehā (European settlers). It seeks to translate perspective across Māori and Pākehā worlds without subordinating either world to the terms of the other.

The condition of possibility for the work has been my encounter with an other, or outside, of my own thinking at two wānanga (Māori places of learning). Study at these wānanga, and living in the Māori place of Pōrangahau, has constituted a non-ethnographic fieldwork, or field geothory, that provides the generative ground of the thesis. My learning at these places enabled me to detail a constellation of Māori concepts, making possible a sketch of some of the patternings of Māori life and thinking, and opening me up to an experimental inhabitation and use of those concepts.

In the two chapters following the introduction – ‘Māori Geometries’ and ‘Pākehā Geometries’ – I describe something of the basal motifs of Māori and Pākehā worlds: reproduction and monetary exchange, respectively. In each account, the central motif described is both a patterning traced by a mode of life and an epistemological diagram of the structures of thought that co-constitute with(in) that pattern.

The third and fourth chapters follow the clash and entanglement of these two worlds through historic and ongoing processes of colonial encounter. My specific focus is Te Waipounamu (the South Island), where my people Kāi Tahu are from. The third chapter is concerned with the way in which the land has become commodified and subject to the inscriptions of private property. The fourth chapter tracks a set of ideas that arrive and become indigenised, finding fertile ground in the land reconfigured as commodity, resulting in an indigenous neoliberalism.

A final chapter works with with the notebooks Marx kept of his readings on indigenous societies in the last few years of his life. It also conducts a reading of Marx from the perspective of the Māori concepts described in the first chapter. Through double-directional reading I imagine a Māori Mār̀x, sketching some of the contours of the theory she might produce.

Acknowledgements

Although no doubt an impossible task I wanted to say thanks to all the people and places that have provided the life, breath and background of the present work. Impossible because their expansive and open-ended contribution can only but exceed any attempt to list them by some orders of magnitude and multitude. Firstly then, thanks to all those not named here for their boundless contribution.

Most of all, thanks to Georgia, Sonny and Louis for their love, care and humour, so absolutely constitutional to my wellbeing and without which I would fall apart. Thanks also for your endless tolerance of my bullshit. Thanks to London, and especially Brockley, New Cross, Lewisham, for your quickened pulse and warm hospitality. Forever homesick for that place and time. Thanks, love and praise to all the friends I made there - too numerous to mention, you know who you are. Thanks to the Marquis of Granby. A finer meeting place, away from home, in the sense I have tried to develop in this thesis, would be hard to imagine. Thanks to CCS, place and people, for leading me bleary-eyed through a copernican shift in my perspective. Thanks to CRA, especially the other members of roundtable three (David Burns, Ariel Caine, Daniel Fernandez Pascual, Helene Kazan, Daniel Mann, Hannah Meszaros-Martin, Mirna Pedalo, Joao Prates Ruivo, Francesco Sebregondi, Matthew Simmons, Anna-Sophie Springer) who taught me so much in thought and in friendship. Thanks especially to Susan Schuppli for accepting me into the Centre, which was also to pull me out of a quagmire, and for her immense support and crucial advice (editorial and otherwise) throughout her supervision of this thesis. Thanks to everyone from the Glasgow-London-Berlin-Copenhagen Seminars for making the process less lonely and for leading me in more interesting directions than I would have been going otherwise. Good times. Thanks to the BSG (Dhanveer Brar, Victor Manuel Cruz, Ciarán

Finlayson, Sam Fisher, Lucie Mercier, Fumi Okiji, Ashwani Sharma) for the gift of study held in sociality for which I am immeasurably and thankfully indebted. Likewise, thanks to everyone from Plan C for organising collective care from the resources held within our everyday sociality. Lost without it.

As a way of returning now to Aotearoa, thanks to the tupuna and ancestors for life in the present and for the ties that bind to different places, peoples, trajectories, responsibilities. Thanks to my teachers and classmates at Te Wānanga o Raukawa (Mike Paki, Rawiri Ruru, Kim Mcbreen, Ānita Rāwiri, Jimi McLean, Eru Edward Te-Rangikatipu Takirau, Angelina Frances Stretch, Lynette Rahiri Tamarapa) and at Te Wānanga o Kurawaka (Tawhai Bartlett, John Crofts, Brian Gregory, Mark Hakiwai, Denzil Hokianga, Arapata Reuben, Jason Roberts, Robert Ropiha, Joseph Taunoa, Paora Te Nahu, Charles Timu, Tipene Tutaki, John Wano, Fergus Wereta, Anthony Whaipakanga, Patrick Williams) whose expansive manaakitanga, most importantly the generosity of inclusion, are the precondition, possibility, and vital condition of the thesis. Thanks especially to Freda Moffit at Raukawa for her support and patience and to silver-tongued Ngāti Porou Doc Ferris Snr. at Kurawaka for lessons in life and whaikōrero. Thanks to Pōrangahau and the people of Ngāti Keri, in particular to Larry Sciascia, Spills Sciascia, Matua Ropiha for hospitality, friendship and for providing additional kōrero that has found its way into the present work.

Thanks to Stephen Turner whose thinking has been so formative to my own that I can no longer always tell when I am referencing him. Stephen's feedback on drafts of this thesis has made the problem of unattributed entanglement worse while undoubtedly making the thesis better.

Massive gratitude to Stephen for his generosity, not just to me but also to the issues his thinking engages. Thanks to Miri Davidson, whose lazer editorial eye for my idiocy, and glacial patience with the same, means that the present work is much better than it would have been without her.

Thanks to her also for her friendship and kindness, a redemptive force in periods of anguish and anxiety seemingly bound by necessity to the process of writing a thesis. Thanks to my parents for not wavering in their belief in me despite the cosmological aeons I spent at university doing something I couldn't explain. Thanks to the examiners of this thesis, Brenna Bhandar and Stefano Harney, for their generous and open engagement with the thesis allowing the viva to feel more like collective study than combative defence. Much appreciated.

Thanks to Kererū, Tūī, Kākā, and Tīrairaka for stylish lessons in geometries of life and flight.

Simon Barber

Leigh 2018

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1 Introduction: Geometries of Life

This project started in a quite different place than it has ended up. Or, perhaps it is more accurate to say that it has gone full circle but become only vaguely recognisable to itself in the process. Regardless, the central concern has remained the encounter between Māori and Pākehā (European Settlers) and ongoing processes of colonisation. What has changed is the way I have come to be orientated within the complex of problems that, since inception, have provided the generative grist for the thinking referenced here. By way of introduction I have tried to intimate something of the whakapapa ((recite) genealogy, lay flat, build a foundation) of the work that follows.

1.1 Critique of the critique...

I had initially set out to write a critique of settler colonial reason. Given, as a New Zealander, I could already claim intimate inhabitation of the object of critique, the next step was to describe the contours and contradictions of necessary false settler consciousness.¹ Some aspects of this critique were to be: the abyssal absence in the heart of sovereignty that provides the good and solid ground of European law; the eternal naturalness of private property and market exchange that must be produced and

¹ In its more vernacular and Gramscian form this was to be termed settler common sense. Mark Rivkin has a recent book by that name. Rifkin, Mark. *Settler common sense: queerness and everyday colonialism in the American Renaissance*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014.

policed by the visible hand of state violence; how the level of attainment of progress towards civilisation, and proximity to God, was measured by degree of similitude to Europeans; how settler memory took the form of settler dreaming² (of original inhabitation³, of being at home, of becoming indigenous⁴); how this dream was in turn productive of the insomniac paranoia of settler nationalism⁵. In any case, I would attempt some grand excursions (settler-grand, somewhat like Jane Campion's *Piano*⁶) under the headings of European categories such as Law, Economy, and History.

Whether or not this project would have been possible is now moot. Around the same time I shifted my studies from the Centre for Cultural Studies (CCS) to the Centre for Research Architecture (CRA), my critique began to run out of steam. The reasons for this were multiple and manifold. In CCS my thinking was worked out amidst the theoretical terrains and political impulses of marxism and postcolonial studies. My supervision by a 'Bad Marxist' and 'Postcolonial Socrates', personified these strands. The space held open for an open reading of *Capital* on the one hand, and vehement, unrelenting argument as postcolonial pedagogy on the other, remain formative to the work at hand (if *in absentia*).

² Turner, Stephen. "Settler Dreaming." *Memory Connection* 1, no. 1 (2011): 114-26.

³ Hardy, Linda . "Natural Occupancy." In *Asian and Pacific Inscriptions* , edited by Suvendrini Perera, 213-27. Melbourne: Meridian., 1995.

⁴ Whilst the other authors in this list are criticising the phenomenon mentioned, Paul Patton is exemplary of it. Patton, Paul. "Nomads, Capture and Colonisation." In *Deleuze and the Political* , 109-31. London: Routledge, 2000.

⁵ Hage, Ghassan. *Against paranoid nationalism: searching for hope in a shrinking society*. Annandale, N.S.W.: Pluto Press Australia, 2003.

⁶ *The Piano*. Directed by Jane Campion. Performed by Holly Hunter, Harvey Keitel, Sam Neill, Anna Paquin. France: Jan Chapman, Ciby 2000, 1993. Film.

A crucial synthesis of the antagonisms, alignments and knotted intersections of Marxism and postcolonial studies was provided by Gayatri Spivak. As suggested by my provisional title - *A Critique of Settler Colonial Reason* - my intention was to repeat Spivak's critique of colonial reason for its settler variant. In 2012 Spivak's *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalisation* was published, a collection of essays that gathered the threads of a gradual yet undeniable transformation in her thinking. Although a dramatic oversimplification, for brevity's sake - as well as drama's - we might map this shift onto a trajectory away from a moralistic and reactive mode of critique towards that of creative and engaged pedagogical intervention.⁷ From critique to (aesthetic) education, from ethics to 'systematic and systemic interventions in the epistemological.'⁸ Although I was already quite late to the party, the phase shift in Spivak's thinking signalled by this publication meant that my critical engine was not just leaking steam from a busted gasket or two, it was a thoroughly surpassed technology. The compelling theoretical intercourse I could discern between Spivak's aesthetic education and Frederic Jameson's cognitive mapping provides close ancestry for the beginnings of my own move away from the collapsing architecture of critique.⁹ Both thinkers diagnosed a certain unrepresentability of the circuits of capital in its movement toward the extensive closure of the globe.¹⁰ Whereas Jameson's response, by way of a

⁷ An aesthetic education is "the epistemological task [of] persistently mobilising the joint between truth and knowledge to produce imaginative suppleness for the possible practice of freedom" Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. *An aesthetic education in the era of globalization*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012. P 544

⁸ Ibid. 182

⁹ Jameson, Frederic , Cary Nelson, and Lawrence Grossberg. "Cognitive Mapping." In *Marxism and the interpretation of culture*, 347 - 360. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988.

¹⁰ Ibid and Spivak, *An aesthetic education*, 192.

geographic metaphor, suggested the need for orienting coordinates amidst cognitive vertigo, Spivak's prescription was temporal, involving practices of slow, careful reading and/as training for the habit of the ethical.¹¹ The conjunction of these two strands provided important impulse in the nascent formulation of the present work.

... of the critique...

My own move out from under the auspices of critique wasn't simply a case of being led by example (although Spivak's ferocity and generosity in thought, politics and person, remains for me, exemplary). My critique was already suffering from a number of misfires and malfunctions internally. The complexity of the realities under examination was stubbornly refusing to submit to my categorical imperative. Perhaps, when it comes to critique, the calm and austere architecture of the table of contents can only ever suppress the actual madness and profligacy of the contents itself. For my own part, I had begun to find it impossible to tame the object of my study into anything like the orderly categories of systematic critique. Where they did not just bleed into each other so as to become indiscernible, they reproduced in mutant forms, or otherwise ran amok. The entire machinery, where it could be assembled in whatever tentative form, was continually threatened by complete collapse.

This already wavering enterprise was further called into question by the Sisyphean thought of its relevance given my extreme dislocation from the context I was

¹¹ Spivak, *An aesthetic education*, 9, 27.

reflecting on. Working as I was, on the other side of the planet, I was removed from the subtlety of the quotidian experience of living in the place I was supposed to be thinking about. The plan was to sit in the British Library and set about the division of the contents of my temporally frozen image of New Zealand. Less often quoted than his most famous thesis on Feuerbach, Marx commented that the 'scientific dissection of the air into its component parts left the atmosphere itself unaltered'.¹²

What troubled me was the persistent thought that no one in Aotearoa New Zealand was in particular need of a critique made in abstraction from the shifting realities of actual context, least of all Māori, who have never been under much illusion as to the various hypocrisies of settler attitudes and institutions. At the most fundamental level, my categorical anxiety was borne of the realisation that however neatly I arrayed my categories of analysis, they were only ever capable of being one-sided. They could only but cut the world up according to the foundational structures of European thought and culture, returning to me a world made over according to my own image (again).

... of Settler Colonial Reason

I was also becoming wary of the then emergent disciplinary formation of Settler Colonial Studies. Settler colonial studies responded to the fact that still-colonial settler colonies

¹² Marx, Karl, and Ben Fowkes. *Capital: a critique of political economy*. Vol. 1. Harmondsworth Mddx: Penguin Books, 1976. P 167

were not well described as being somehow postcolonial. Settler colonialism differentiates within colonialism primarily because it aims not only to dominate external existent populations and configure extraction ports so that wealth might be transferred back to the mother country. Settler colonialism provides a solution to a different problem: a glut of labour in the metropole as opposed to a shortage and the need to generate new markets and readymade terrain for capital's compulsive expansion. The historical answer was the transport and transplantation of a section of the 'home' population and their accompanying social relations.¹³

The difference, for myself at least, between colonialism and settler colonialism is best understood along the lines of the distinct modes of subsumption Marx describes as formal and real.¹⁴ Whereas in the colonies, capital operates as parasitic on existing processes of production (formal subsumption), in the settler colonies capital seeks to create the conditions for fully capitalist production, i.e. production within capitalist social relations (real subsumption). Post colonies often find themselves in an uneasy relation between these two poles.

What worried me was the vehemence with which settler colonial studies, previously a more nebulous region within postcolonial studies, was coming to be demarcated as its own discipline. Seemingly acting as self-appointed governor of this new territory, Lorenzo Veracini, in a flurry of activity, was instrumental in the production of all the trappings of a distinct scholarly field: a layout of the new subdivision via

¹³ Wakefield, Edward Gibbon, and Lloyd Prichard Muriel F. *The collected works of Edward Gibbon Wakefield*. Auckland: Collins, 1969. pp 93 - 178.

¹⁴ Marx, *Capital*. Pp 975 - 1060.

canonical monograph, a journal, a blog, a conference.¹⁵ Whilst I was happy working within this more amorphous terrain I still felt somewhat fenced in by the new definitions and designations.

Settler colonialism is indeed part of globalizing processes and of course there are relays and relations between the various settler colonies. The desire for analytic separation between settler colonialism and colonialism, however, seemed to have more to do with the politics of the academy than actual historical realities.¹⁶ In its new globalised and google-earthed mode, settler colonial studies marked an elision of the indigenous peoples who, in their particularity, experience the arrival of a supposedly unitary process. Whatever settler colonialism might be, it is fundamentally worked out in these specific and heterogeneous encounters. Settler colonialism is, as New Zealand-based theorist Stephen Turner puts it, actually a question about indigeneity.¹⁷ In its desire to generalize, settler colonial studies maligns half of the relation.

Another theorist central to the formulation of Settler Colonial Studies as a self-contained field is Patrick Wolfe who has spoken provocatively of the 'binary frontier' of colonisation.¹⁸ My own experience of inextricable entanglement of people and place seemed to me to suggest the impossibility of pointing with any certainty to that dividing line in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The extensive borders of the nation long since being settled, were a binary frontier to exist, then, the border of this binary frontier must

¹⁵ Veracini, Lorenzo. *Settler colonialism: a theoretical overview*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. And *Settler colonial studies blog*. Accessed May 10, 2017. <http://settlercolonialstudies.org/>

¹⁶ Veracini, Lorenzo. "Introducing." *Settler Colonial Studies* 1, no. 1 (2011): 1-12.

¹⁷ Stephen Turner, *Uncommon Commons* talk, Nottingham Contemporary. 2016

¹⁸ Wolfe, Patrick. "Recuperating Binarism: a heretical introduction." *Settler Colonial Studies* 3, no. 3-4 (2013): 257-79.

necessarily be intensive. Even granted an infinitely complex edge, all manner of crossings, cross-pollinations, and co-constitutions seemed to me forbidden by the dividing line of this stark dualism.

Wolfe admits to this empirical inadequacy but remains convinced of the fact of mutually discrete societies prior to contact: 'go back far enough, in other words, and there can be no disputing the existence of an unqualified empirical binarism.'¹⁹ Despite disputation being forbidden - combined with the pre-emptive 'gotchya' that to question the binary is something only a non-Native would do²⁰ - I would still like to ask what happens if we go back even further than that. Regardless of intention, the unqualified binary drawn here has served a clear purpose, one amplified in the writing of those downstream from Wolfe.²¹ The clean separation enabled by this theoretical binary incision enables the treatment of settler colonialism as a self-contained entity, the business of settlers, relieving settlers of the need for engagement with indigenous peoples, and enacting the segregation of settler studies from indigenous studies.

One of the first lessons imparted to me by the relational way of Māori thinking was the error in the above of beginning with Māori and Pākehā as constituted terms and subsequently seeking to describe and explain their relationship. This would generally amount to an (empirical) account of what Pākehā have done to Māori as an instance of a larger (theoretical) formation called settler colonialism. Quite apart from the chauvinism carried in the subject/object grammar of formulations such as these, they

¹⁹ Ibid p 257

²⁰ Ibid. p 257

²¹ Kēhaulani Kauanui, J. "'A Structure, Not an Event': Settler Colonialism and Enduring Indigeneity." *Lateral* 5, no. 1 (2016). Accessed May 10, 2017

work to naturalise a 'European' or 'Western' mode of thinking in disregard of how Māori might approach things. In the latter approach, Māori and Pākehā are understood as relational terms that emerge amidst swirling forces of co-constitution. They bring each other into being rather than each expressing a prior essence impervious to alteration through interaction. The apparently unimpeachable fact of discrete societies that then muddy a primordial binary through ongoing contact is completely backwards from this perspective. The meeting place of co-constitution is prior whilst the imposition of an abstract binary onto this relation is the historical construction.²²

1.2 Un-Critique

My shift to CRA provided my project with much-needed ventilation from a number of angles. The first was in what seemed to me to be a refreshing fatigue with high theory. This had generated a more utilitarian approach to theory, as opposed to the fascination with all things continental and baroque, that was then stultifying a cultural studies drifted a long way from its Birmingham political commitments. This is not to say that CCS did not have an engaged political praxis, only that it existed in greater separation to the course work. A complement to the different distribution between praxis and politics in CRA was that my work would need to have a practical component. The challenge of thinking my work as a practice has provided a persistent and difficult spur, one that has

²² O'Malley, Vincent. *The Meeting Place Maori and Pakeha Encounters, 1642-1840*. Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2014.

helped me to pose with more precision the question of the usefulness of my own research.²³

The practice-led orientation also had implications for the type of people the Centre gathered together. Whereas CCS had largely been populated by people of a solely theoretical persuasion, CRA assembled a wider variety of skills and put us around a (round) table together. Quite apart from the fact this inoculated against the narcissism of small theoretical differences, I felt for the first time somewhat useful if only amongst the collectivity of various abilities.

In addition to a different comportment towards theory in CRA, the reading list itself was distinct. The first text we read as a group was Latour's *We have Never Been Modern* as a preparation for reading his then newly published *Modes of Existence*.²⁴ Latour was something of pariah in the particular left intellectual milieu I had been part of, not least because of his hostility to Marx (despite never, as far as I can tell, having read anything beyond the Communist Manifesto).²⁵ Despite my misgivings, it was undeniable that CRA had put Latour to good and political use in their Forensic Architecture project.²⁶ Reading Latour against the grain I had to begrudgingly concede a number of his insights. Indeed, the basic contours of Latour's ontology of a flat network interrelating human and non-human actors seemed to me to be a kind of generic,

²³ I am indebted to the other participants of the practice seminars held conjointly with fine art PhDs for massively expanding my imagination as to what might constitute practice.

²⁴ Latour, Bruno. *We have never been modern*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002. And Latour, Bruno, and Catherine Porter. *An inquiry into modes of existence: an anthropology of the moderns*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013

²⁵ Noys, Benjamin. *The persistence of the negative: a critique of contemporary continental theory*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012.

²⁶ *Forensis: the architecture of public truth*; Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2014.

de-exoticised (for a European audience) indigenous theory. Acting as a preliminary other or outside to the thinking I had been sequestered in, Latour helped me to begin articulating the insights of indigenous theory in more accessible (to me) terms.

The same Latour is also, of course, famously opposed to critique of all stripes (excepting perhaps his own). In a celebrated article 'Why Has Critique Run Out of Steam?'²⁷ Latour conducts a delirious free association - not, sadly, of the Marxist variety - by which he identifies critique with war, Stalin, destruction, nuclear stockpiles, barbarians, a drunk in a Goya painting, and so on, and so on... Critical barbarians (admittedly, a title I am quite fond of) are all those agents of the negative who seek to sack the market place wherein the careful and cautious (Roman?) citizens of Science Studies nervously protect their wares.²⁸ Where critical barbarity subtracts from the world, the type of constructivism championed by Latour only adds to the world through the patient description and following of networks.²⁹ In combination with Latour's flat ontology where nothing is more important, real, or complex than anything else, his commitment to the positivity of what exists results in a stuck holism where change and transformation become difficult to imagine.³⁰

²⁷ The text is impressive for the sheer brazenness of its hypocrisy (e.g. a more reductive description of critique than that expressed in Latour's flowcharts would be hard to find) and ironies (e.g. his formulation of a 'fair position' seems remarkably similar to a dialectical synthesis of factual and fairy positions. The whole construction - objects are too weak *and* too strong - starts to sound a bit like a Schrodinger's cat version of the critical posture he is mocking). Latour, Bruno. "Why Has Critique Run out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern." *Critical Inquiry* 30, no. 2 (2004): 225-48.

²⁸ As an example of Latour's retailer's rhetoric: "If [they became Latourian constructivists] we could let the critics come ever closer to the matters of concern we cherish, and then at last we could tell them: "Yes, please, touch them, explain them, deploy them.""

²⁹ Latour. "Why Has Critique Run out of Steam?" p 232

³⁰ Harman, Graham. *Prince of networks: Bruno Latour and metaphysics*. Melbourne: Re.press, 2009.

Whilst I agree with Latour's description of critique as always resting on an archimedean point - by which the critic divides themselves from the world, producing the world as object and the critic as judge, (whether the Cartesian or Kantian subject,) he bends the stick too far. Latour's injunction against the negative casts out a crucial aspect of any evaluative capacity and neutralises agency. While deconstruction is undoubtedly one of the prime examples of the destructive style of critique Latour detests, Derrida in fact shares with him the same affirmationist disposition.³¹ As Derrida has stated, deconstruction begins by saying "yes" to every text twice.³² Oui, oui. Anything subsequent to the original double affirmation never exceeds or erases the primacy of affirmation. It is in terms of this shared affirmationist substrate - consisting for Latour in only ever saying yes to what there is, what exists - that they are closer to each other than Latour might care to admit. With regard to the status of a simple criticality, short of critique, I would summarise my difference from the aforementioned "yes men" by a vernacular New Zealand variant: yeah, nah.³³ Even if we agree on an ethos of thick description, a world punctured by non-being or otherwise open to rupture requires we not disavow these absences in advance.

My aim to think with a Māori ontology relieves me of the need to adhere to that of Latour's, in any case. He continues to provide a useful toolkit for the translation of particular relational concepts. The similarities as well as important differences between

³¹ Noys, Benjamin. *The persistence of the negative*.

³² Derrida, Jacques. *Ulysses Gramophone*. Berlin: Brinkmann & Bose, 1988. And Spivak, Gayatri. *Outside in the teaching machine*. New York: Routledge, 1993.

³³ In similar spirit, although without contravening derrida, would be the London: 'yeah, yeah, but nah, nah'

a Māori ontology and that of Latour³⁴ become clear in the subsequent chapter on Māori Geometries. Both ontologies could be said to be 'flat' although whakapapa (inter-relational genealogy of the cosmos) adds an intergenerational axis and has as its beginning a pregnant nothingness. In the chapter on Pākehā Geometries the blind spots produced by Latour's affirmationist commitments are illustrated by the real abstractions - their particular mode of existing - he is unable to approach because of his foreclosure of non-being.³⁵

1.3 The Other of Thought

The realisation of an imperialism inherent to critique did not immediately lead to a transformation of my thinking. Sure, I would no longer explicitly set out to desiccate the Māori place I was to study according to European categories. Quite apart from a certain homology with historical processes of colonialism, there seemed to me a stasis or redundancy to the above in terms of simply unfolding a logic determined in advance. This point is illustrated nicely for me by a computer programmer, Jonathan Basile, who

³⁴ In terms of the a-symmetry between collective and individual ontologies referenced here, the following point from the philosopher Carl Mika seems apt: 'I speculate that indigenous philosophy, as it appears in the literature, does not draw heavily on particular individuals so vehemently as Western philosophy does. Written indigenous philosophy engages instead more with, and drills deeply into, a fundamental cultural phenomenon—not through the lens of another individual, but with the writer bringing together the spheres of lived experience, intellect, and the unknown.' Mika, Carl. "Counter-Colonial and Philosophical Claims: An indigenous observation of Western philosophy." *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 47, no. 11 (2015): 1136-142

³⁵ This probably would not worry Latour himself given that he doesn't believe capitalism exists or if it does only as 'pixels'. Latour, Bruno. *The pasteurization of France*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988. P 173

decided to make Jorge Luis Borges "Library of Babel" - a library containing every possible combination of the alphabet, and so every thing that could ever be written - a digital reality. The immense resources needed for even digital storage required that only a seed or snap shot of the entire library be algorithmically generated. The Library becomes searchable through the reversibility of the generative algorithm so that the location of any specific text can subsequently be pinpointed. The intractable problem I was faced with was how to emancipate myself from the closed containment of the self-same of my own thinking. How to exit the library wherein everything I might think is already predicted in advance.

Imperialism is, of course, by no means limited to critique. Emmanuel Levinas had diagnosed an 'imperialism of the self' at the centre of phenomenology whereby any experience of the other is always mediated through, and constrained by the horizon of, the self.³⁶ Whilst this formulation is extreme, for phenomenology, as a description of the contents of consciousness, the self would seem to always at least encroach on the other, if not necessarily colonise.³⁷ Regardless, in order to break open the closed circle of the One, the Same, Being, or however the self-same might be termed, that he perceived to exist, Levinas conceptualised an ethical disposition towards an irreducibly, infinitely, wholly Other. Levinas' Other however remains pure abstraction, only existing

³⁶ Levinas, Emmanuel. *Totality and infinity: An essay on exteriority*. Translated by Alphonso Lingis. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1969. p 39

³⁷ For a discussion of the difference between the positions of Levinas and those of phenomenology see: Reynolds, Jack . " The Other of Derridean Deconstruction: Levinas, Phenomenology and the Question of Responsibility." *Minerva - An Internet Journal of Philosophy* 5 (2001): 31-62. Accessed December 11, 2017. <http://minerva.mic.ul.ie/vol5/derrida.pdf>.

as an ethical dispensation, a Thought of The Other, thus never managing to transgress the borders of the self.³⁸

Edouard Glissant makes the point in a passage that has become for me a constitutional article or first principle:

[T]hought of the Other is sterile without the other of Thought. Thought of the Other is the moral generosity disposing me to accept the principle of alterity, to conceive of the world as not simple and straightforward, with only one truth--mine. But thought of the Other can dwell within me without making me alter course, without 'prizing me open,' without changing me within myself. An ethical principle, it is enough that I not violate it. The other of Thought is precisely this altering. Then I have to act. That is the moment I change my thought, without renouncing its contribution. I change, and I exchange. This is an aesthetics of turbulence whose corresponding ethics is not provided in advance.³⁹

As this passage expresses, true encounter is not something that can be simulated via speculation. It necessarily involves the real visceral act of encounter, the disorientating, dissonant and turbulent experience of having one's epistemic integrity unsettled. It is only in the opening out into relation offered by conjunction that the self-same can be

³⁸ Zalloua, Zahi Anbra. *Continental philosophy and the Palestinian question: beyond the Jew and the Greek*. London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017.

³⁹ Glissant, Édouard. *Poetics of relation*. Translated by Betsy Wing. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010. Pg 154.

transgressed. The other is that by which I can open on to experience other than my own.

The resolution to the impasse I had found myself in was not one that could be performed at the level of theory. To come to any understanding of other worlds requires long-term participation and learning from place and peoples. As Māori Marsden suggests 'the route to Māoritanga through abstract interpretation is a dead end. The way can only lie through a passionate, subjective approach.'⁴⁰ Thus the thread that pointed the way outside of my own thinking was also an answer to the question of practice. I needed a much more fulsome encounter and engagement with Māori ways of living and thinking. This limit to my own thinking, the need for it to be crossed by other ways of thinking, led me back to Aotearoa New Zealand to the Māori place Pōrangahau where I have been living and the two *whare wānanga* (Māori places of learning) I have been studying with.⁴¹ A more detailed account of these (ongoing) encounters is the subject of the first chapter.

An objection that might be raised at this point is that all I have really done is provide an idiosyncratic argument for what ultimately amounts to anthropology. The very same anthropology, that is, whose primitivism, exoticism, and historical complicity with colonialism is retained in its D.N.A. This charge is generally given as the basis of an injunction against all interference or interrelation with other peoples for fear of recapitulating the sins of the father. Whilst I will shortly explain how my project differs

⁴⁰ Marsden, Māori, and Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal. *The woven universe: selected writings of Rev. Māori Marsden*. Otaki, N.Z.: Estate of Rev. Māori Marsden, 2003. p32

⁴¹ Whaikōrero at Te Wānanga O Kurawaka, Pōrangahau. Ahunga Tikanga at Te Wānanga O Raukawa, Ōtaki.

from anthropology or ethnography it is true that my project shares with anthropology the business of entering into relation with other peoples, leaving me amongst the accused.

Anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro does not deny the veracity of the charge historically but suggests that the discipline is coming to the end of a karmic cycle, needing only to be given a final shove (of radical reconstitution) for it to be transformed into a praxis aimed at the decolonisation of thought.⁴²

We all know the popularity enjoyed in some circles by the thesis that anthropology, because it was supposedly exoticist and primitivist from birth, could only be a perverse theater where the Other is always 'represented' or 'invented' according to the sordid interests of the West. No history or sociology can camouflage the complacent paternalism of this thesis, which simply transfigures the so-called others into fictions of the Western imagination in which they lack a speaking part. Doubling this subjective phantasmagoria with the familiar appeal to the dialectic of the objective production of the Other by the colonial system simply piles insult upon injury, by proceeding as if every 'European' discourse on peoples of non-European tradition(s) serves only to illumine our 'representations of the other,' and even thereby making a certain theoretical postcolonialism the ultimate stage of ethnocentrism. By always seeing the Same in the Other, by thinking that under the mask of the other it is always

⁴² Viveiros de Castro, Eduardo. *Cannibal Metaphysics*. Minneapolis: Univocal Publishing, 2014. p 40

just 'us' contemplating ourselves, we end up complacently accepting a shortcut and an interest only in what is 'of interest to us' – ourselves.⁴³

As Viveiros de Castro makes clear the injunction against interaction with other peoples, other worlds, other ways of life, is premised on the claim of the Hermetic closure of the European self.⁴⁴ What this epistemic closure blocks and disavows is the source of anthropology's most interesting concepts, problems, entities, and agents, in the imaginative powers of other collective peoples.

The Iranian philosopher Hamid Dabashi, thinking from the (tangential) other side of this relationship, also notes the narcissism of European thought that renders it congenitally deaf to the perspective of non-Europeans. He suggests the urgent need of a break with the structuration of discourse whereby non-Europeans are compelled to address European interlocutors who "habitually assimilate whatever they read back into what they already know". Dabashi suggests that,

Instead of the habitual *mise-en-scène* within which we talk to them as they talk to themselves, we need to change the whole architectonics of this interlocution altogether, and address the only interlocutor that has been left to all of us: a fractured and self-destructing world.⁴⁵

⁴³ Ibid. 40 - 41.

⁴⁴ As shall be discussed in the chapter on capitalist geometries, the self-contained solipsism of western subjectivity finds its genetic origin in the activity of exchange.

⁴⁵ Dabashi, Hamid. "Fuck You Žižek!" ZED Books. September 05, 2016. Accessed May 10, 2017. <https://www.zedbooks.net/blog/posts/fuck-you-zizek/>.

The urgency with which our world demands the architectonic shift Dabashi describes is reason enough for me to disregard the injunction against the epistemic turbulence of encounter. Whether Viveiros de Castro would agree with me on this, I am not sure, but ethnography seems to me the wrong way of defining the co-constitution fundamental to this relation. My own encounters at the *whare wānanaga* (houses of learning) seem better described as a learning *with* and *from*, a fact largely determined by the collective approach fundamental to those institutions. Where this learning has enabled me to think with Māori concepts, in whatever limited way, and to think them in apposition to those of a European world, I would prefer Viveiros de Castro's notion of an anthropology of concepts.

1.4 From Production to Life (Reproduction)

As suggested by Glissant, being opened *by* the other of Thought does not mean I need renounce the contribution of my own thought. I did however need to improvise a preliminary orientation, a way of setting out, that did not cut the world up in advance according to the prejudices of my thinking. That is, I needed a way of being open *to* the other of my thinking. A reading of Marx from an indigenous perspective, informed in this instance by Glen Coulthard's account of his people's (Yellowknives Dene, Canada) collective reading of Marx, enabled a provisional conceptual matrix with which to turn toward *te Ao Māori* (the Māori world). The conceptual formation resulting from this

conjunction is an expansive and relational indigenous reinterpretation of 'mode of production' as 'mode of life'.

The term 'mode of life' gathers and extends a number of prior formulations. It originates with the historical materialism of the classical political economists. Beginning with François Quesnay in France and Adam Smith in Britain, the idea emerged that the progress of nations, along an ascending gradient from savage to civilized, was dependent on the mode of subsistence that prevailed in those societies. Thus we move from hunter-gatherer, to shepherding, to agriculture, to commercial or market society. Whilst beginning to think how the production of the necessities of life gives the definitive features of those lives, the conceptual framework of the classical political economists was entirely beholden to a fantasy of a linear progress. A triumphal progress they of course found their own societies to be at the apex of.⁴⁶

Karl Marx, in his critique of political economy, reformulated mode of subsistence as mode of production. For Marx, mode of production refers to two broad aspects of the processes through which a society produces its means of subsistence and thus reproduces itself. The *productive forces* are the tools, technologies, raw materials, and labour that go into the material process of production. Whilst the *relations of production* are the social relations between people that give the context within which production takes place. This includes both the positionality of the agents of production in relation to each other, and the mental attitudes of those agents.⁴⁷ However, the two aspects constantly work on each other in a double movement, dialectical not circular: the

⁴⁶ Ronald L Meek. *Social science and the ignoble savage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

⁴⁷ Karl Marx. "1859 Preface". *A contribution to the critique of political economy*. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977.

productive forces condition the relations of production, the relations of production condition the productive forces.⁴⁸

Marx's concept of the modes of production has been the subject of megalithic - not particularly useful and slightly perplexing from a current perspective – debates. These have centred around the nature of transition from one mode to another, the teleology or otherwise of those transitions, and the internal homogeneity or otherwise of a dominant mode of production. The debate around the development of pre-capitalist societies, with all the teleology that implies, encompasses all three aspects.⁴⁹

Whilst Marx predominantly outlines the specific content of various modes of production – slave, feudal, capitalist – the form of his concept has a generality in that every society or group of people can be said to have a dominant mode of production of some sort. Although not widely discussed in the debates just mentioned, Marx's notion of metabolism expands and complexifies the concept of mode of production, making it more useful for my intentions here.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Kulchyski, Peter Keith. *Like the Sound of a Drum: Aboriginal Cultural Politics in Denendeh and Nunavut*. University of Manitoba Press, 2005. P 88

⁴⁹ Foster-Carter, Aiden. "The Modes of Production Controversy." *New Left Review* I, no. 107 (1978). Accessed May 10, 2017.

<https://newleftreview.org/l/107/aidan-foster-carter-the-modes-of-production-controversy>.

⁵⁰ See also: Marx, Karl. *Grundrisse foundations of the critique of political economy* (rough draft). Translated by Martin Nicolaus. London, UK: Penguin Books, 1993. P 489. Whilst mostly ignored in the 'transition' and 'development' debates, the term has been widely used in systems theory. It has also been usefully deployed by Neil Postman and John Bellamy Foster in their Marxist geographies and ecologies respectively.

1.5 Metabolism

Marx deploys the concept of metabolism in his discussion of the labour process, as such, independent of any particular social formation. The minimum definition Marx gives the labour process is 'purposeful activity aimed at the production of use-values'.⁵¹ For Marx, the appropriation of the materials of nature to maintain life is a human universal and therefore independent of the particular form it may take.⁵² In its full formulation things are more intricate:

Labour is, first of all, a process between man and nature, a process by which man, through his own actions, mediates, regulates and controls the metabolism between himself and nature. He confronts the materials of nature as a force of nature. He sets in motion the natural forces which belong to his own body, his arms, legs, head and hands, in order to appropriate the materials of nature in a form adapted to his own needs. Through this movement he acts upon external nature and changes it, and in this way he simultaneously changes his own nature. He develops the potentialities slumbering within nature, and subjects the play of its forces to his own sovereign power. We are not dealing here with those first instinctive forms of labour which remain on the animal level. An immense interval of time separates the state of things in which a man brings his

⁵¹ Marx. *Capital*, 1976, p. 290.

⁵² *Ibid.*

labour-power to market for sale as a commodity from the situation when human labour had not yet cast off its first instinctive form. We presuppose labour in a form in which it is an exclusively human characteristic. A spider conducts operations which resemble those of the weaver, and a bee would put many a human architect to shame by the construction of its honeycomb cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is that the architect builds the cell in his mind before he constructs it in wax.⁵³

There are several points worth making explicit, here. Firstly, the labour process is not the metabolism itself. It is the action that mediates, regulates, and controls it. Metabolism refers to the level of material, meaning chemical, interchange.⁵⁴ Life, in its most general form. Secondly, the divide between the human and nature is dialectical rather than categorical. 'He' (and the gender imbalance is not the only resonance of a Victorian patriarch in this passage) confronts the materials of nature as a force of nature. And in changing external nature, enters into a process whereby his nature also changes. It is through the cunning of reason that the potentialities and processes of nature are subordinated to human intent.⁵⁵ The materials are gathered (sugar, yeast, water, hops) and develop their potentialities (fermentation), but the result (beer) is stamped with human intent. Indeed, it is this intent that marks the human as distinct

⁵³ Ibid., pp 283-284.

⁵⁴ Marx drew the term from agricultural chemistry, especially Justus Liebig regarding the transfer of nutrients into life and their return to the soil. Foster, John Bellamy. *Marx's Ecology: Materialism and Nature*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000. P 154. Marx's concept of Metabolic rift is the subject of a recent book by McKenzie Wark. Wark, McKenzie. *Molecular red: theory for the anthropocene*. London: Verso, 2016.

⁵⁵ Marx, *Capital*, 1976, p. 285.

from instinctual production of the animal. The cell that the architect builds in their mind, or indeed the web that the researcher might attempt to describe, has an important aspect not made clear in this passage. In an earlier text Marx remarks that ‘it is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness.’⁵⁶ Thus it will be the mental shapes, produced socially, and hence materially, that will become crucial for my own analysis of the geometries particular to different modes of life.

1.6 Modes of Life

Glen Sean Coulthard (Yellowknives Dene) picks up on Marx’s conception of the mode of production in the context of indigenous struggle in Canada. Coulthard points to an early formulation by Marx and Engels in *The German Ideology* where they describe the relationship between the mode of production and everyday life.

[A] mode of production must not be considered simply as being the reproduction of the physical existence of the individuals. Rather it is a definite form of activity of these individuals, a definite form of expressing their life, a definite mode of life on their part. As individuals express their life, so they are. What they are,

⁵⁶ Karl Marx. “1859 Preface”. *A contribution to the critique of political economy*. Moscow: Progress, 1977. Accessed September 15, 2017.

<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1859/critique-pol-economy/index.htm>.

therefore, coincides with their production, both with what they produce and with how they produce. Hence what individuals are depends on the material conditions of their production.⁵⁷

As Coulthard recounts, it was the expanded conception of mode of production as mode of life, an 'intricately interconnected social totality ... encompassing the economic, political, spiritual, and social' that was able to enrich the Dene's articulations of their deeply relational conception of land and culture (a relational ontology that in fact collapses that last binary to begin with.)

The conception of mode of life that Coulthard develops from Marx cannot be seen as being premised solely on human life.⁵⁸ This is because it is not thought from within its European provenance but instead from a Dene perspective. Coulthard, following Vine Deloria, explains:

[Vine Deloria is] attempting to explicate the position that land occupies as an ontological framework for understanding relationships. Seen in this light, it is a profound misunderstanding to think of land or place as simply some material object of profound importance to indigenous cultures (although it is this too); instead it ought to be understood as a field of 'relationships of things to each other.'⁵⁹ Place is a way of knowing, experiencing and relating with the world ... In

⁵⁷ Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels. *The German ideology*. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1976, p 37.

⁵⁸ Arguably neither is Marx's but to pick up this thread would be to wade into debates that are of little help here. Althusser's anti-humanist Marxism gives an obvious example.

⁵⁹ Vine Deloria Jr., "Power and Place Equal Personality", in Vine Deloria Jr. and Daniel Wildcat, *Power and Place: Indian Education in America* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 2001), 23.

the Wedeleh dialect of Dogrib (which is my community's language), for example, 'land' (or *dè*) is translated in relational terms as that which encompasses not only the land (understood here as material), but also people and animals, rocks and trees, lakes and rivers, and so on. Seen in this light, we are as much a part of the land as any other element. Furthermore, within this system of relations human beings are not the only constituent believed to embody spirit or agency.⁶⁰

The challenge here is to try to think the concept of mode of life, still carrying what is useful from Marx, but opened by the relational, non-anthropocentric ontology Coulthard describes.

A provisional definition of mode of life, one that provides a basal orientation expansive enough so that Māori and Pākehā modes of life might be placed in apposition in a way that guards against, or at least reduces, categorical violence is as follows:

A mode of life implies a massive and dynamic interrelation of processes and things (things in process). It regards the metabolism through which a society of human and non-human actors, material and metaphysical forces, (re)produces itself. An ocean of relation through which a totality has both its being and becoming. A concert of the whole.

⁶⁰ Coulthard, Glen. "Place against Empire: Marx, Indigenous Peoples, and the Politics of Dispossession in Northern Canada." *Pre-publication, sent to me by author*, (2013). P 19

1.7 Geometry

Geometry references the patterns that are traced, or otherwise emerge within modes of life. Geometry carries a double meaning as both broad descriptor of the shapes that emerge within modes of life, and the methodology for discerning them. The term geometry is useful in conveying the intended sense of the undecidability between nature and culture: the indiscernibility or interplay as to whether geometry is a mental construct or found outside of ourselves as well. Geometry, in the sense I intend, is both a patterning traced by a mode of life and an epistemological diagram of the structures of thought that co-constitute with(in) that pattern.

A geometry of life begins from the indigenous opening of Marx's concept of 'mode of production' as 'mode of life' and seeks to develop its more expansive conception in light of Marx's assertion that social being determines consciousness.⁶¹ The aim, then, is to try to think this epistemological claim of Marx's when the 'social' is understood as land: a field of the flux and interrelation of human and non-human agencies. A geometry of life takes an indigenous perspective by way of coming to a comparative historical materialism open enough so that different worlds are not dissected according to the preexistent categories or compartments of one of those worlds. However, as worlds enter into relation and become co-constitutive their comparative ground is forced and forged by the real activity of their interaction.

The relation between a mode of life and a mode of thinking is one of immanence.

⁶¹ Marx. "1859 Preface", 1977.

A mode of thinking is an expression of the rhythms, metabolisms, or grammars, of the flux or orchestration of a mode of life, amongst and as part of those patterns. Whilst an immanent expression of a world, each mode of thinking remains particular, perspectival. A geomentality is a relationship with the Earth that issues from the particular rhythms and patterns of a world expressed as a particular enunciative fold within it. A particular mode of thinking, or geomentality, emanates from a particular fold, flourish, or embellishment within a world (something like a human). The conjunction - mode of thought *and* mode of life - is (re)productive of what I refer to as a 'world'. A 'world', then, references a nebulous zone of coherence between a mode of thinking and a mode of life, as opposed to the integrated whole or closed totality often implied by that word.

Whilst 'geometries' - as it refers to the different patternings, rhythms, grammars, and so on, expressed in a world - is always plural, 'geometry' refers to the method of discerning and describing them. This is not intended to suggest some sort of unitary method, the geometers modes are as plural as the geometries they are concerned with. A geometry is simultaneous with the world it issues from. Hence, a multiplicity of worlds implies multiple geometries. The unbounded totality of all the modes in their singularity we might term cosmological by way of differentiation from abstract universality.⁶²

As discussed, 'worlds' are not necessarily organised by a grammar of subject and object (a world along these lines would be a peculiar case.) In addition, given the relation of immanence between thought and world, geometry is not strictly speaking ontology due to the absence of a logos (or a measure) external to the contours the

⁶² Simondon, Gilbert. "The Position of the Problem of Ontogenesis." *Parrhesia* 7 (2009): 4-16. Esp. P 13.

world that geometry emanates from. It is for this reason that the chapters that follow each operate according to a singular geometry.

Where the geometries become comparative is through the historical processes of the encounter between worlds. The resolution of dissonance and the dissolution of differences between worlds, the restructuring of a world according to the logic of another, the entanglement and reciprocal reverberatory modification of worlds, as has characterised colonialism, for example. Here, geometry tries to follow the relation between patternings as different modes of life encounter each other, enter into relation, and co-figure each other.

1.8 The Meeting Place

In brief, the above is the process whereby critique became geometry and whereby the myopic view of the settler colonial came to be replaced by a tentative move towards an outside of my own thinking. In its new form the project may seem less explicitly political, less engaged with the identification of historical injustices, less openly hostile to Pākehā disavowal. Throughout the process I have come to agree with Foucault when he notes that ‘imperative discourse that consists in saying “strike against this and do so in this way,” seems to me to be very flimsy when delivered from a teaching institution or even

just on a piece of paper.⁶³ So, although there is less saber-rattling than there might have been the present work might be of more use.

What it aims towards is the construction of a meeting place where Māori and Pākehā could be present without subordinating them to master terms or prior categories. Isabelle Stengers describes the stakes of such a place as follows:

How to turn an opposition into a possible matter of contrast? Obviously, this is not only a question of goodwill. My guess is that we may do so through the experimental extension of the specific risks that singularize each position. Giving a chance for contrasts to be created where oppositions rule implies producing a middle ground but not a medium or average mitigating differences. It should be a middle ground for testing, in order that the contrasts evolve not from tamed differences but from creatively redefined ones.⁶⁴

It is my conviction that the construction of a meeting place is of more use than self-searching and perhaps self-flagellating critique, if we are to collectively move beyond our still-colonial present. But the meeting place is necessarily a collective construction, meaning only so much can be contributed from within the solitary confinement of the PhD thesis. In the work that follows I have attempted to imagine a

⁶³ Foucault, Michel. *Security, territory, population: lectures at the Collège de France*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. P 3

⁶⁴ Isabelle Stengers, "Beyond Conversation: The Risks of Peace," in *Process and Difference: Between Cosmological and Poststructuralist Postmodernisms*, ed. Catherine Keller and Anne Daniell (Albany: SUNY Press, 2002), pp. 236–237.

geometry of life as a geotechnic of the epistemological tectonics that are the ground of the possibility of this co-construction.

Planning for the (constituent) assembly of the meeting place began long ago, work undertaken patiently and persistently by Māori since the first arrival of Pākehā. A current expression of this vast generosity shown Pākehā by Māori is given by *Matike Mai Aotearoa: The Independent Working Group on Constitutional Transformation*. Formed in 2010, *Matike Mai* has held over three hundred hui (gatherings) around the country at varied sites spanning the Marae (traditional meeting place) to the gang pad.⁶⁵ These hui sought input and engagement from Māori on questions of constitutional transformation. The report that resulted from these engagements provides a profound record of the strength and vitality of Māori democratic practices and the energy and expansiveness of Māori political imagination.⁶⁶

Matike Mai begins from a foundation of two previous constitutional assertions of Māori authority: *He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Niu Tirenī* of 1835 (Declaration of Independence of the United Tribes of New Zealand) and *Te Tiriti o Waitangi of 1840* (Māori language text of the Treaty of Waitangi). The Treaty of Waitangi/*Te Tiriti o Waitangi* has an ambiguous status whereby it is seen as the founding document of New Zealand but is afforded no constitutional status. In effect, the Treaty/*Te Tiriti* is taken by the settler state to be foundational as a symbol of Māori voluntarily relinquishing sovereignty. Against this assertion, *Te Tiriti* is clear that what

⁶⁵ *Matike Mai*, *He Whakaaro Here Whakaumu Mo Aotearoa: The Report of Matike Mai Aotearoa - The Independent Working Group on Constitutional Transformation* (New Zealand 2016). Pg 18. Accessed August 12 2017. <http://www.converge.org.nz/pma/iwi.htm>

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

Māori agreed to was that the British Crown would take responsibility for the kāwanatanga (government) of Pākehā settlers whilst Māori would retain their autonomy and authority over themselves and the land. New Zealand's 'unwritten constitution', reflects only a disingenuous and dishonest usurpation of authority by Pākehā, the absent foundation at the base of settler sovereignty.

The Matike Mai report seeks to address constitutional deficit implied by this situation by detailing a plan of constitutional transformation. Towards this, the report outlines six possible constitutional models that issued from the hundreds of hui (gatherings) they conducted.⁶⁷ The majority of the models suggest some variation on an arrangement whereby two separate spheres of influence, a Māori Rangatiratanga (chiefly authority and autonomy) sphere and a Pākehā Crown/Kāwanatanga (government) sphere, interact by way of a third relational sphere. The transformational effects of this new constitutional framework operate in two directions. On the one hand:

rangatiratanga [chiefly authority and autonomy] would once again be a site and concept of our constitutional uniqueness rather than merely a means of accessing or trying to limit Crown policy. It could be exercised as an absolute authority in our sphere of influence because it has always been absolutely our power to define, protect and decide what was in the best interests of our people. As a taonga handed down from the tīpuna it could flourish by being sensitive once more to all of the relationships and tikanga that have shaped it in this place.

⁶⁷ Ibid. Pp 99 - 112.

It would be a conciliatory but independent authority no longer subject to the power of another, and the only constraints upon it would be those that tikanga has always imposed – that independence is only real when it depends upon the interdependence one has in relationships with others.⁶⁸

On the other,

In its own sphere of influence it would still source its power in its history of Westminster sovereignty but it would no longer need to be conceived as a dominating power that is arrogant in its indivisibility and unchallengeability. Rather it could find in its oft-professed good faith a more honourable power that prizes relationships more than conflict.⁶⁹

It is towards the fulfilment of the healing vision of this constitution, a co-constitution, our co-constitution, that the present work hopes to contribute to, in whatever small way, by trying to work out and across, and in receipt of, the gifts of our difference in relationality.

⁶⁸ Ibid 112

⁶⁹ Ibid 112

2 Māori Geometries

As detailed in the Introduction, it was my need for sustained engagement with the place and people of my research that led me back to Aotearoa New Zealand. Whereas I grew up in Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland, since my return I have lived in Pōrangahau, a small town on the east coast of Te Ika-a-Māui/New Zealand's North Island. Coming back to Aotearoa New Zealand reconnected me to a fluid and complex experience of inhabitation: an experience that had been subject to the coagulation of memory during the period in which I was away.

Before leaving Aotearoa New Zealand, I studied philosophy and English literature at the University of Auckland. Both departments had seemed to me then to be thick with the air of a museum. 'Thought', we were being led to believe, was a sort of curatorial or bureaucratic interment or entombment of great (European) figures. This stifling atmosphere was dispelled for me, however, by two singular teachers who returned me to the possibility that thinking could be part of living experience in intimate relation with the present.

Stephen Turner convened a course called 'Post-theory' in which he facilitated a collective theorising about the place of our thinking, with careful attention to the Māoriness of that place, albeit from a Pākehā (European Settlers) perspective. A

second course on New Zealand Literature, taught by the author Witi Ihimaera, led us to a place in literature of a beating indigenous heart, in vital contrast to a Pākehā literature still largely beholden to mourning and memorialisation of its European provenance.

The combined force of these two encounters led me to a moment of intense realisation, the type of experience described by Glissant as being ‘prized open’.¹ Testament to the solidity of settler common sense – despite it concealing a foundational absence of legitimacy – was the fact that, although I was well into my twenties, I had no real sense that I was living in a Māori place, nor any understanding of the colonial history that had brought Pākehā to be there at all. This blockage, despite the glaring contrary reality, is perhaps even more startling given that I have Māori ancestry.

It is important to stress the intensity of the experience of realisation with regard to the place and history of my inhabitation. Critical legal theorist Ani Mikaere, in recounting her experience of teaching aspects of the history of colonisation to law students, noted the anger that it often brought to the surface.² Anger not, as might be expected, from Māori, but from Pākehā students with a strong aversion to hearing the simple facts of history. In light of the fact that Māori had not only to bear the brunt of this history, but also to explain it to angry Pākehā, Mikaere proposed segregated classrooms for components of the course. While I did not feel angry towards Māori (for calling into question the ordained settler right to inhabitation, possession, and identity), it remained an intense experience: the subterranean rumblings of repressed knowledge surfacing

¹ Glissant, Édouard. *Poetics of relation*. Translated by Betsy Wing. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010, p. 154.

² Ani Mikaere. *Colonising myths, Māori realities: he rukuruku whakaaro*. Wellington, N.Z: Huia Publishers and Te Wānanga o Raukawa, 2011, pp. 30–31.

as hostile disavowal. A tectonic destabilisation of the ground of settler consciousness, something akin to what I imagine a psychoanalytic breakthrough might feel like. It was this experience that provided the original, formative opening of the present work.

In a short story written for Ihimaera's course, I explored how I felt about my Māoriness in relation to my grandmother who had kept it a secret (the irony of it being her loss of memory that caused the secret to spill out). There I spoke about how I didn't feel very Māori, or even know many Māori, and how my Māoriness amounted to a taxi driver guessing I had a bit of Māori in me. In a later essay on the 2007 terror raids I discussed how the settler state, armed with new anti-terror legislation, had predictably identified certain Māori as the terrorists that the legislation was enacted to oppose. In conclusion to that essay, I wrote:

I am only a small part Māori and given that my upbringing, and hence inculcation, was very much European, I may be more similar to the 'white potato' that Māoritanga is absorbed into in [Māori theorist] Donna Awatere's thought.

Now I might be inclined to say, as the artist Robin Kahukiwa has said of herself, that my Pākehā ancestors far outnumber my Māori ones.³ Yet, that whakapapa (genealogy) is there, and without it I would not be. In any case, the fact of my own Māoriness, my relationship with my Māoritanga, remains for me an unsettled formation. This is present as a certain inconsistency in this thesis. Whereas I refer to Māori in ways that suggest I

³ And mine even more so than Kahukiwa's. Robyn Kahukiwa and Patricia Grace. *Wāhine toa: women of Māori myth*. Auckland, N.Z.: Penguin Books, 2000.

do not include myself, I also refer to the tūpuna (ancestors) in ways where I do infer my connection. Where I have felt Māori at all has been due to the generous inclusiveness of other Māori. Pākehā are more likely to be incredulous. In any case, the anxiety I have referred to has been frequently voiced by other members of my iwi (tribe, nation) in particular. For a number of historical reasons – including the location of whaling stations and the decimation of the male population during ferocious battles with Te Rauparaha⁴ – Te Waipounamu (New Zealand's South Island) had long been the site of multi-ethnic communities that were not to come about until later in the rest of New Zealand. My own whakapapa (genealogy) relates me to one of these very communities, which, as I discuss more fully in Chapter 3, were meeting places of experimental sociality and cohabitation prior to official colonisation.⁵

An important point with regard to the present discussion is that although I am partly indigenous, I am by no means indigenous to a Māori way of thinking. In my attempt to engage actively with Māori thought, there are points at which I have departed from traditional explanations of Māori concepts in the process of thinking these through myself. Mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) and Tikanga Māori (Māori laws and philosophy) are part of a living and dynamic system of thought and tradition that carries the life of the tūpuna (ancestors). To simply believe this system without testing it for myself or allowing it to encounter my own thinking would be to follow it as religion. This has not been my aim.⁶ I have sought to make such provisos evident in what follows by

⁴ c. 1760s–1849. Ngāti Toa rangatira (chief) famous as a war leader.

⁵ These communities are discussed more fully in Chapter Three.

⁶ Neither did it seem to be the aim of my classmates. Lunchtimes in the wharekai (dining hall) at Te Wānanaga o Raukawa were often filled with talk about the status of various kōrero (stories) about ancestors. In one class, we had learned of an iwi that whakapapa to ancestors from space. Opinions were

consistently placing myself in relation to the Māori concepts I have studied, so that no one will confuse my text with an authoritative account of Māori concepts from someone deeply embedded in Te Ao Māori (the Māori World). It is, instead, the field notes of my own encounter with that world.

The formerly abstract nature of my connection to my Māoritanga (Māoriness) has become significantly less abstract through my studies at two *whare wānanga* (houses of higher learning).⁷ This encounter has enabled me to provide a reading of a constellation of Māori concepts, one of the most important of which is the concept and experience of *wānanga* (collective study) itself. I begin, however, with the concept of *whakapapa*, as it describes the relational substrate, the basal mode of existing, of *te Ao Māori* (the Māori world).

2.1 Whakapapa

Whakapapa expresses the reality whereby everything in the universe is embraced and related (literally) through the intergenerational reproduction of the cosmos, beginning with creation itself. As the lawyer Moana Jackson explains:

various as to whether this was meant as fiction or fact. One explanation was that as a fleet of *waka* (canoes) comes over the horizon, it appears as if it has landed from space. That they are still debated, discussed, and applied to present context is proof enough of the vitality of such traditions.

⁷ In *Te Waipounamu* (the South Island), *whare wānanga* were also referred to as *whare purakau*.

Our people gave meaning to life and found its origins through the complex interactions of a complex whakapapa that transformed darkness into light, nothingness into a dazzling reality, and a void into a life-filled experience.⁸

In te Ao Māori (the Māori World), everything that is or has been is part of a cosmic whānau (family) that issues from the intercourse of the primordial parents: Papatūānuku (earthmother, infinite foundation) and Rakinui (skyfather).

As a verb, whakapapa means lay flat, to place in layers, or to build a foundation. Thus, to recite tātai (genealogies) and kōrero (stories), which are collectively termed whakapapa, is to map out the complex web of existence and to orient oneself within it.⁹ For example, a Tūhoe account tells the story of how the kumara (sweet potato) shares a whakapapa with rats, caterpillars, humans, a star, gods, and finally the primordial parents Raki and Papa.¹⁰ The whakapapa of the kumara, then, gathers together an ensemble of agencies that the process of growing kumara envelopes, revealing their interrelation and interaction.

Ani Mikaere notes that the concept of whakapapa is both foundational to the Māori world and quite incompatible with a comparable European mode of relation. This is because, as she argues:

⁸ Moana Jackson. 'Whakapapa and the Beginning of Law', unpublished, 2003. Quoted in Mikaere. *Colonising myths*, 2011, p. 287.

⁹ Charles Ahukaramū Royal. 'Te Ao Mārama – the natural world: An interconnected world.' *Te Ara: The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*. September 24, 2007. Accessed December 11, 2017. <https://teara.govt.nz/en/te-ao-marama-the-natural-world/page-2>.

¹⁰ Mere Roberts. 'Revisiting the "Natural World of the Māori"', in Danny Keenan. *Huia histories of Māori: Ngā Tāhuhu Kōrero*. Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand: Huia Publishers, 2012.

In a worldview that asserts the interconnectedness of all living things and that requires a perpetual nurturing of relationships to ensure the maintenance of equilibrium, there is no room for hierarchy as an organizing principle.¹¹

Mikaere refers to the concepts of whakapapa, 'the interconnectedness of all living things', and whakawhanaungatanga, 'the perpetual nurturing of relationships to ensure the maintenance of equilibrium'. In the context, whakapapa makes a claim about the way the world is, while whakawhanaungatanga suggests a way of relating to the world. Because the world has its existence through whakapapa, whakawhanaungatanga (nurturing and maintenance of relationships) is the tika (right, correct) way of comporting, and orienting, ourselves in that world.

It is useful, as Mikare suggests, to see hierarchy as the comparable, although incompatible, counterpart of the concept of whakapapa in the European conceptual imagination. The concept of hierarchy comes to us most directly from the Christian theologian Pseudo-Dionysus the Areopagite, who wrote around the fifth century.¹² Pseudo-Dionysus, whose work was influential on medieval and renaissance theologians in Europe, himself drew upon earlier Greek philosophers. His notion of hierarchy is best known today in the form of the 'Great Chain of Being' (in Latin, *scala naturae*: the 'ladder of being'): a hierarchy through which God ordered all things in terms of their

¹¹ Mikaere. *Colonising myths*, 2011, p. 315.

¹² Arthur O. Lovejoy. *The great chain of being: a study of the history of an idea*, 1933. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001.

proximity to himself, their positions derived by the degree to which they possessed a rational soul.

With God atop this hierarchy, it descended through categorical ranks: angels, demons, stars, moon, kings, princes, nobles, commoners, wild animals, domesticated animals, trees, other plants, precious stones, precious metals, and other minerals.¹³ Each realm of being is then further divided to produce a minute hierarchy wherein, for example, pigeons are further from God than eagles, whilst both are higher than fish. With regard to the human realm, the Great Chain of Being reflected the class and gender distinctions of medieval society. A monarch was at the apex as the representative of God on earth, with aristocratic lords beneath him and peasants at the bottom. The family mirrored this with the father most proximal to God, his wife beneath him, and their children beneath them.

This notion of hierarchy was both static and linear. Because they had been decreed by God, the positions within the hierarchy were fixed. Each entity had its place and that was where it would stay, except perhaps in the extreme examples of the Fall of the rebellious angels and the disobedience of Adam and Eve. It was linear in the sense of having only one criterion: proximity to God, dependent on the degree of rationality of the soul. In addition, in Pseudo-Dionysus' hierarchy, the only direct links of an entity were to its immediate superior and inferior – hence the metaphors of chain or ladder.

Both hierarchy and whakapapa are conceptions that encompass all things, material and metaphysical, and that seek to understand or describe the relationships

¹³ Ibid.

between them. Both provide a comprehensive conceptual framework expressive of order and meaning in the world. Yet whakapapa is by no means static. It is a vital and dynamic process of growth and increase, of 'never ending beginnings', as Moana Jackson has put it.¹⁴ Whereas hierarchy refers to an immutable ranking of superior and subordinate categories, whakapapa understands the relationship between things in terms of reproduction: its key conceptual categories are whānau, whanaunga, tūpuna, tamariki and mokopuna (family, relations, ancestors, children, grandchildren). All things are interrelated through the web of cosmological kinship layered across generations.

The difference between hierarchy and whakapapa is expressed, above all, in the different geometries of each concept. Hierarchy descends vertically from god in linear gradations. Whakapapa, on the other hand, suggests laying flat: a non-hierarchical web of interrelation constituted by multiple lines of connection. The associated meaning of layering adds an intergenerational temporality and works from the foundation (papa) upwards. Here, the movement is not one of vertical ascension but cyclical increase, nicely expressed in the coils of a koru (fold, loop, coil, curled shoot of fern frond). A final distinction to note is that, in the concept of hierarchy, the substance or essence of an entity is primary, while any relationship it bears with other entities is secondary. Whakapapa, on the other hand, privileges the relations between entities as constitutive of those entities. Where whakapapa is in play, essence *is* relational.

Whakawhanaungatanga, a term closely related to whakapapa, describes an ethics, or a way of going about things, consistent with a world structured by whakapapa.

¹⁴ Mikaere. *Colonising myths*, 2011, p. 294.

Whanau (literally, to be born) means '(extended) family', whanaunga 'relative', and whanaungatanga 'relationships'.¹⁵ Given the active sense of whakapapa, and retaining the expansive meaning of that term, whakawhanaungatanga refers to the building and maintenance of relationships with the world, the maintenance of reciprocal responsibilities and obligations between ourselves and all other aspect of creation. In this sense, it is a skilful action of entering into, and maintaining, connection and relation, so as to place oneself firmly within the world and to nurture balance with that world.

Taking whakapapa to be foundational to the way the world has its being and becoming, and whakawhanaungatanga to be a disposition, or mode of comportment, in intimate consistency with that world, the series of related concepts and experiences are elaborated accordingly.

2.2 Wānanga

As I have mentioned, the limits of my own thinking, as well as those of the settler colonial university, seemed to me to necessitate an engagement with Māori ways of

¹⁵ Hirini Moko Mead. *Tikanga Māori: living by Māori values*. Wellington: Huia Publishers, 2003, pp. 28–9, 212–13, 371. Alternatively, E.T. Durie translates whanaungatanga as kinship. He notes its expression in: the primacy of kinship bonds as determiners of action; the primacy of whakapapa in social reckoning and rights formulation; the right of individuals to determine, develop and validate their individual identity within a chosen descent group; the basis for hapū allegiance; and the interconnectedness of Māori people. E. T. Durie. *Custom Law*. Report, Treaty Research Series. Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand: Treaty of Waitangi Research Unit, 1994, p. 5.

thinking and learning. Returning to Aotearoa New Zealand, I enrolled to study at two *whare wānanga*: Te Wānanga o Raukawa and Te Wānanga o Kurawaka.

Te Wānanga o Raukawa is a Māori learning institution based in Ōtaki, a small coastal town on the lower west coast of the Te Ika-a-Māui (the North Island). In 1975, a confederation of *iwi* (tribes) and *hapū* (clans) – Ngāti Toa Rangatira, Te Ati Awa ki Whakarongotai, and Ngāti Raukawa ki te tonga – gathered to produce strategy for securing the health and wellbeing of their people.¹⁶ As one of the organisers noted, the gatherings emerged out of a desperate situation in which virtually no youth could speak *te reo Māori*, *Marae* (meeting places) were falling into disuse and disrepair,¹⁷ and intergenerational cultural transmission was under severe strain. Throughout the course of these meetings, the consensus emerged that the revival of Māori education was crucial to addressing these issues. In 1981, the confederation founded Te Wānanga o Raukawa, an experimental endeavor to re-institute a Māori place of learning, on Māori terms, and according to Māori values.

The success of Te Wānanga o Raukawa has led to the (re)instantiation of *whare wānanga* throughout the country. The other *whare wānanga* I study at is one such example: a small, family run *wānanga* in Pōrangahau, where I am living. Te Wānanga o Kurawaka was set up to serve the needs of the local *hapū* Ngāti Keri, and the local *iwi* Ngāti Kahungunu, by training people for the formal demands of speaking on the *marae* (meeting place).

¹⁶ Terrence M. Loomis. 'Indigenous Populations and Sustainable Development: Building on Indigenous Approaches to Holistic, Self-Determined Development'. *World Development* 28 (5), 2000, pp. 893–910.

¹⁷ The term *marae* refers to an open area or public square where formal greetings and discussions take place, although it is often used to also designate the surrounding buildings such as the *whare tūpuna* (ancestral house).

Traditionally, where wānanga were the places where hapū (clan) and iwi (people, nation, tribe) traditions were shared, new knowledge was created, and where, through this process, tohunga were produced.¹⁸ Tohunga were spiritual authorities who, in their skilful activity (for example, carving, healing, and formal speechmaking), acted as conduits for the expression of ngā atua (the gods). Whereas the term 'whare' is reasonably well translated as 'house', 'wānanga' is more complicated. As Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal, a former teacher at one of the wānanga I attended, explains:

Wānanga is a term which refers both to the internal process of considering, debating, thinking, exploring and so on, and the external exchange between individuals. Hence, the term can be used for an individual undergoing a process of wānanga as well as a group of people doing the same thing, exchanging views, debating and so on. In the latter example, the group itself is called a 'wānanga'.

Wānanga, then, has a double applicability, whereby it can refer to internal or collective processes of study as well as the collective that undertakes that study. Wānanga expresses a mode of learning whereby skill or know-how comes about through a direct relationship with, or direct intervention of, the gods. Godly power (mana atua) flows into the present through the ancestral lineaments of whakapapa. The work of wānanga (study) is to learn to harness this power, to focus it so as to enable certain things to

¹⁸ Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal. *Wānanga: The creative potential of mātauranga Māori*. Porirua: Mauriora-ki-te-Ao/Living Universe Ltd., 2011, p. 15.

come about – a skilful means of entering into processes so as to bring about a desired result. Through careful observation and interpretation of godly signs in the phenomenal world, tohunga held open the relationship between ngā atua (the gods) and the needs of the people in the present.¹⁹ As Royal puts it:

Life is thus lived in a perennial drama of the expression of mana (godly power, authority) in the world through tohu (signs, omens) which ‘were predictive indicators of the workings of the phenomenal world, and tohunga (priests or knowledgeable experts) were the skilled interpreters of such signs.’²⁰

While there is no doubt that the orientation of traditional whare wānanga has undergone modulations into the present, certain consistencies and continuations remain strongly apparent in both of the whare wānanga I attend today.

2.2.1 Te Wānanga o Raukawa

Perhaps the most obvious continuity between traditional and contemporary wānanga is that learning still takes place through noho (residential seminars) involving periods of collective cohabitation and study throughout the year. The lack of formal grading and

¹⁹ Māori Marsden. *The Woven Universe*, ed. Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal. Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand: Estate of Rev. Maori Marsden, 2003, p. 14.

²⁰ Royal, *Wānanga*, 2011, p. 15.

the value placed on collective achievement and care is a further inheritance from the traditional orientation.

In an initial seminar, my classmates and I were encouraged to discuss the ways in which we might consider ourselves rangatira (chiefs) of our learning process. We agreed that retaining a certain autonomy or sovereignty within our collective learning was important and discussed the work of 'weaving-together' that is the craft of the rangatira. The point was subsequently raised that if we were all ultimately descended from rangatira, then we were all also atua (gods). Hence, the orientation according to which learning is understood as harnessing the flow of our ancestral gods remained apparent.

With regard to the character of learning and knowing, Royal describes a certain unity between the world and knowledge. However, this is a unity characterised by immanence as opposed to correlation or mirroring. Royal explains:

The kind of knowing and knowledge of importance to the traditional whare wānanga is the kind of knowledge that arises from an 'immediate' and 'intimate' experience of the world. Here there is no notion of knowledge as a discretely created phenomenon representing the world and experience, like a photograph. Rather the world is knowledge. It seems that the world speaks directly into the consciousness of the student.²¹

²¹ Ibid., p. 19.

During a class on knowledges derived from Ranginui (sky father), our kiako (teacher), Mike Paki, was having difficulty getting me to understand his meaning. After some time, we went and sat outside. There, he illustrated how I could identify weather patterns through the movement of the clouds; he pointed to the angle a garden had been planted at in order to maximise the sun; and we discussed the frequencies, such as radio waves, traveling through the air. It was a process of learning through close observation of a series of processes of which we were inside. In this instance, my teacher was trying to make fertile the conditions through which the world might speak to me. And, indeed, Royal describes the pedagogical situation as one wherein the ‘world seems to speak directly into the experience of the observer. Knowledge comes pure and clean from the world itself and reaches into the consciousness of the gifted person.’²²

The particular programme I enrolled in at Te Wānanga o Raukawa was called ‘Ahunga Tikanga: Māori Laws and Philosophy’. Ahunga refers to a font or origin, whilst tikanga means ‘the correct way of doing things (around here)’, ‘custom’, ‘protocol’, ‘law’.²³ Ahunga Tikanga, then, refers to the origins of law in the whakapapa of creation, with tikanga expressing a world conditioned by whakapapa. As Ani Mikaere, former director of the Ahunga Tikanga programme, describes: ‘Whakapapa is central to the philosophical framework that our tūpuna [ancestors] evolved over thousands of years, out of which emerged a distinctive system of law. It is this law, and the theory of existence that underpins it, that form the focus of study in Ahunga Tikanga.’²⁴

²² Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal. *Let the world speak: towards indigenous epistemology*. Porirua: Mauriora-ki-te-Ao/Living Universe Ltd., 2009, p. 5.

²³ See also Marsden, *The Woven Universe*, 2003, p. 66.

²⁴ Ani Mikaere. ‘He aha te ahunga tikanga?’ *Ahunga Tikanga* 1, 2012, p. 9.

An important axiom that flows from this conception is that tikanga is 'first law' in Aotearoa New Zealand. The use of 'first law' by Māori theorists to translate 'tikanga' asserts the fact that the long history of Māori inhabitation of Aotearoa encompasses the short history of Pākehā occupation. Long history of inhabitation is the ground of an indigenous law, a law and history prior to the settler-state that the latter seeks to refuse and undermine because it calls into question its legitimacy and authority.²⁵

In addition to the assertion of the primacy of tikanga, as against Pākehā legal forms, Ahunga Tikanga also adopts a critical stance to that which is considered to be tikanga. This is in response to techniques and processes of colonisation wherein Pākehā forms, manners, and outright fabrications have insinuated themselves into Māori traditions and beliefs. A nice example of the latter was relayed to me by the chairperson of Raukawa Marae (meeting place), Rupene Waaka, who recounted a story about a controversy that surrounded the opening of the Marae in 1936.²⁶ Raukawa kaumatua (venerable elders) had for some weeks been in fierce debate with the carvers, architects and builders of the Marae. The newly built Marae was to be opened by Koroki, the fifth Māori King.²⁷ The point of contention was the fact that entering the Marae involved passing between the spread legs and exposed vagina of a (carving of) a female ancestor. This aspect of tikanga was to do with women's power in the bestowing and lifting of tapu (sacred, prohibited, restricted). This ability issued from the potency of

²⁵ The way I have defined first law here draws from Stephen Turner, 'The Indigenous Commons of Aotearoa New Zealand.' Public lecture, Goldsmiths, London, June 26, 2012. Turner, in turn, draws the term 'first law' from Barry Barclay. See Stephen Turner, 'Quiet revolution on Aotearoa New Zealand', *Arena* 1, 2002.

²⁶ Rupene Waaka. Lecture, He Akoranga Iwi me Hapū: ko te Marae me ōna Āhutanga, Raukawa Marae, Ōtaki, April 11, 2016.

²⁷ Koroki Te Rata Mahuta Tawhiao Potatau Te Wherowhero, 1908/9–1966.

the womb and its connection to Te Kore (pregnant nothingness, seedbed of creation) the ultimate source of tapu. The kaumatua, through their adoption of Pākehā mores, had come to the opinion that it would be too demeaning for the King to have to enter in this way. Āpirana Ngata, a leading Māori intellectual at the time, had to convince the elders that passing beneath the vagina was indeed tikanga. In this instance the kaumatua conceded, but the shift in attitudes that the debate revealed was part of a more general process through which female power in the Māori world was neutralised or destroyed since the beginning of colonisation. Out of the context of this imbalance, further patriarchal forms were incorporated into Māori practices.²⁸ *Ahunga Tikanga* seeks to critically appraise such stances by returning to the foundations of tikanga in the whakapapa (stories, genealogies) of the creation the universe, so as to ensure what is being taken as law is indeed an expression of Te Ao Māori.

In the opposite direction, care must be taken that tikanga is not reified into rigid doctrine or static ritual. The whakapapa of creation that describes the actions of ngā atua (the gods) carries the wisdom of the tūpuna (ancestors). They do not provide, however, unchanging rules but instead kaupapa (first principles) that can be returned to so as to guide creative application and interpretation in the present. This process is deliberative and often the subject of hui (gatherings for debate and discussion) and wānanga (collective study). Kaupapa are expressed in what E.T. Durie refers to as the conceptual regulators of tikanga, foundational concepts such as mana (sacred authority, power), manaakitanga (hospitality, generosity), aroha (love), whakawhanaungatana

²⁸ Ngāhuia Murphy. 'Māui and the Moon-tides of Māori Women.' *Ahunga Tikanga* 1, 2012, pp. 61–74.

(relationality), utu (reciprocity). Tikanga refers to the pragmatic and open-ended, vital and dynamic application and (re)interpretation of first principles in light of shifting contexts.²⁹

Another important tenet of Ahunga Tikanga regards the the expression of confidence in ourselves and our ancestors: confidence in their wisdom, and confidence in our own ability to continue to grow, adapt, and apply that wisdom. This further indicates a confidence in the fact that tikanga is a comprehensive system of law, deeply expressive of Māori experience, controverting the Pākehā assertion that it is a primitive construct of a primitive people inadequate for contemporary life.³⁰

A story relayed by one of my classmates provided an illuminating insight into the importance of confidence in intergenerational cultural transmission. My classmate was recounting his upbringing in a time and place in which the fullness and relevance of tikanga was a simple fact of day-to-day experience. He spent every weekend of his youth at one of the four marae (meeting places) of his grandparents. In those times, he said, tikanga was like breathing. Now a grandparent himself, he told of the problem he faced when his grandchildren call him up, wanting explanations of certain concepts and practices of tikanga. This was like trying to answer questions about grammar: often the only answer the native speaker has to the question of ‘why?’ is that, ‘that’s just the way we do it’. The ‘why?’ of tikanga had not expressed itself in his youth because his experience of it was so quotidian, emerging only as tikanga receded under the

²⁹ Durie, *Custom Law*, 1994, pp. 3–7.

³⁰ Mikaere, ‘He aha te ahunga tikanga?’, pp. 9–19. Kim Mcbreen, ‘Ahunga Tikanga as Decolonising Methodology’, Teaching handout, Te Wānanga o Raukawa, March 2016.

intrusions of colonisation. His response was to tell his grandchildren that tikanga wasn't something that could be learned abstractly; they needed to come camping in their rohe (ancestral lands) with him. Learning about tikanga might then take place by learning to catch an eel: one might learn the eel's whakapapa through tātai (genealogies) and kōrero (stories) and its tikanga through close observation (what it likes to eat, where it likes to rest, for example), one might also learn about kaitiaki (guardianship) of the land through protocols such as returning the first catch. In this way, my classmate sought to build his own confidence in the teaching and transmission of tikanga through practical activity. Tikanga, he hoped, through the flow of experience, might take on the fullness of breath for his grandchildren.

2.2.2 Te Wānanga o Kurawaka

At Te Wānanga O Kurawaka in Pōrangahau, I am studying whaikōrero (formal speechmaking). The art of Whaikōrero has its origins in the deliberation between the first children of Ranginui and Papatūānuku. Trapped between the close embrace of their parents, the children began to grow tired of living in darkness. Whether or not they should separate their parents so as to allow light to enter into the world, and how to go about doing so, was a source of heated contention amongst them. The diplomatic and deliberative speechmaking amongst the children of Rangi and Papa is the origins of whaikōrero.³¹ Continuing to reverberate with its initial impulse, whaikōrero continues as

³¹ Takuta Ferris Snr. 'Whaikōrero'. Lecture, Te Wānanga o Kurawaka, Porangahau, April 15, 2016.

the diplomatic art, between earth and sky, of resolving conflict and deciding on actions in order to bring light into the world.

Whereas *whaikōrero* is generally, although by no means exclusively, a male art, *kārangā* (ceremonial call, welcome), is the female counterpart. Together they form the key practices according to which encounters are regulated in the formal space of the *marae*. It is through *kārangā* and *whaikōrero* that difference is mediated and expressed – through welcome, hospitality, and the tracing of connections through *whakapapa*. *Whaikōrero* mediates differences not just between peoples, through formal welcomes, but also between opinions within groups. *Whaikōrero* is the vehicle for stating issues, outlining opinions, giving options for future actions, airing past grievances, and so on. By no means limited to its textual elements, it involves highly expressive and stylised gesture, and is deeply embedded in and responsive to the spatial and formal protocols of the *marae* (meeting place).

The majority of the other men on my *whaikōrero* course were from the local *hapū*, *Ngāti Keri*. Many of them explained that they had been discouraged at school, or by their parents, from speaking *te reo* (Māori language). Māori language and culture had been seen during that period as an impediment to successful operation in the *Pākehā* world. On retiring and returning home to *Pōrangahau*, they had come to feel their acute loss of language and ability in the fact that they were unable to perform *whaikōrero* on the *marae*, a task generally taken up by *kaumatua* (elders).

The study of *whaikōrero* made explicit one of the key differences between *wānanga* and my previous experiences of education. This was the explicit rejection of

any notion of an abstract or generic student. It is, of course, one of the key tenets of the multicultural Pākehā university that all students are different, and that teaching and learning should be organised in a way that accommodates this diversity. Such ideals are, however, more often than not platitudinous: they bear an extracurricular air and rarely penetrate teaching in any profound sense. At wānanga, quite the contrary is the case. Each student begins their studies with their own whakapapa, their own hapū and iwi traditions, before building upon this foundation by spreading out from their own centre. For the Ahunga Tikanga course, this meant beginning by learning my own iwi accounts and then looking at the way these vary from those of other iwi. This was even more pronounced in the study of whaikōrero, because knowledge of one's own traditions is essential to this art form. To speak on the marae is to become the living expression of one's ancestors, and hence to act as the mouthpiece for those ancestors and all those who share them.

One of the basic components of whaikōrero is the mihi, a formal introduction. Part of my own is as follows:

Ko Takitimu te Mauka	The mountain is Takitimu
Ko Ara a Kiwa te Moana	The sea is Ara a Kiwa
Ko Uruao me Takitimu te waka	The canoe is Uruao and Takitimu
Ko Tahupōtiki te tūpuna	Tahupōtiki is the founding ancestor
Ko Takutai o te Tītī te marae	The marae is Takutai o te Tītī
Ko te Kāti Huirapa te hapū	The hapū is Kāti Huirapa

Ko te Kāi Tahu te iwi

The iwi is Kāi Tahu

The literal translations do not carry the true sense of my introduction, which in fact states that I *am* the mountain Takitimu, or that it is me, by way of ancestry. What is of notable about this grammar of identity — I ‘am’ my ancestors, or my ancestral lands or objects — is that I have introduced myself without giving my own name. I have instead intimated central features of my whakapapa as a way for others to position or place me in relationship to their own whakapapa.

The latter is of vital importance to the practice of whakawhanaungatanga, the making and maintaining of cultural bonds. For instance, at Te Wānanga O Kurawaka, most of my classmates are Ngāti Kere. Pōrangahau, where I live, is part of the rohe (ancestral lands) of Ngāti Kere. For that that reason, I have the status of manuhiri (visitor) in comparison to the hau kāinga (locals). This can change depending on the relation in question. Recently, as part of our class, we conducted a powhiri (formal welcome) for a group of American tourists. During this, I stood to the side of the home people, given my greater difference or distance to the Americans.

In any case, it is in the interests of the tangata whenua (local people) to extend hospitality to their visitors, for this increases their mana (power, prestige). An important way of welcoming visitors is to find ways to include and connect them through whakapapa. As part of his pōwhiri (welcome) for me, Takuta Ferris Senior, my kaiako (teacher, instructor) at Te Wānanga o Kurawaka, described a line of joint ancestry between his wife and myself through our joint affiliation to Kāi Tahu (also known as Ngāi

Tahu, the principal iwi of the South Island). Through his skillful tracing of the connections of whakapapa, I was invited to feel as though I were a local, an ultimate expression of manaakitanga (hospitality, generosity).

Similarly, at Te Wānanga O Raukawa, there are core courses that every student is obliged to take, called 'Iwi and Hapū Studies'. These courses are designed to foster building connections to, and learning from, each student's own whakapapa, and to encourage students to think about how they might help to strengthen their iwi and hapū. One of the assignments for this course involved conducting a critical analysis of a marae that we have a strong connection to. As the marae I whakapapa to is a long way from where I live, I decided to conduct my analysis on the marae in Pōrangahau, Rongomaraeroa. However, one of the conditions for choosing a marae for the project was that one was able to whakapapa to it. This was to be tenuous for me, given the lack of an obvious connection. My teacher, Rawiri Ruru, saw no problem. He explained to me the whakapapa according to which my Ngāi Tahu ancestors were on the same waka (canoe) as the local Ngāti Kahungunu in the voyage to Aotearoa New Zealand from Polynesia, before separating and sailing to Te Wai Pounamu (the South Island). As required for the assignment, he was able to reproduce the line or lineage that reflected this connection.

In a more vernacular mode, a local friend told us that when he moved to another part of the country, he was challenged by the locals about his whakapapa. In response, he boasted that he was on the canoe with Māui, the mythic trickster, when he fished up the North Island. The Māori name for the North Island is Te Ika-a-Māui – the fish of

Māui – referencing these acts. By making this statement, my friend stated his shared whakapapa with the locals by going back to a mythic period common to all Māori.

In addition to the ways in which whakapapa is integral to the processes of wānanga just outlined, wānanga has its own whakapapa, which traces its connection to the primordial energy of the cosmos. Rev. Māori Marsden records a whakapapa for wānanga as follows:³²

Te Hihiri (energy)

Te Mahara (conscious awareness)

Te Hinengaro (mind)

Te Whakaaro (thought)

Te Whē (sound)

Te Wānanga

This whakapapa outlines the stages of refinement through which raw energy becomes consciousness, consciousness becomes the fullness of mind, and thought is given voice through the cloak of sound, before reaching final refinement in the collective study, debate, and deliberation of the wānanga.

³² Royal, *Wānanga*, 2011, p. 20.

2.3 Ngā Atua (The Gods)

As indicated in the previous section, in wānanga, learning takes place in intimate relationship with ngā atua (the gods); tikanga (law, protocol) flows from their actions as expressed in the whakapapa of creation. As such, ngā atua (the gods) are conceptually vital and crucial to discerning the way of te Ao Māori (the Māori world). In what follows, I will sketch something of the understanding of, or relationship with, ngā atua that I developed through my study at the whare wānanaga.

If there is a pan-iwi consistency to accounts of the atua, it is that no iwi (nor even any hapū) records exactly the same traditions, nor are those traditions static and unchanging over time. This attribute of the creation traditions, viewed collectively, is consistent with the decentralised social structure of the hapū and their continuous differentiation in the assertion of their independence from one another. On the other hand, it is necessary to avoid succumbing to the anthropological reductionism that was a feature of early settler accounts,³³ according to which anthropologists sought to elide the complexity of the differing iwi and hapū accounts in favour of a unitary composite (a point I return to below in more detail).

Bearing such risks in mind, there are certain generalities to ngā atua (the gods) that can nevertheless be identified. A couple of points regarding them are worth stating from the outset. Atua are gods, but they are also tūpuna (ancestors). As such, they are

³³ Mikaere. *Colonising myths*, 2011, pp. 308–9.

not treated with the same distance or sacrosanctity as the God of the Christian tradition; people are instead in constant interaction with ngā atua. Ani Mikaere asserts that, this being the case, humans are not in a relationship of servility to the atua. Karakia (approximated as incantation or prayer) are instead 'a form of dialogue between relatives' rather than a plea for mercy or favours.³⁴ Mike Paki, my teacher at Te Wānanga o Raukawa, argues that the roles are effectively reversed from those of Christian prayer. Through the careful observation and skilful entry into a process, one 'commands' the god most relevant to the desired outcome of that process. The 'command' suggested here is the interaction of the permission of the gods with the power to act, expressed through the person issuing the command.³⁵

Keeping these distinctions in mind, it becomes possible to sketch an account of Māori whakapapa of creation. In order to think with Māori concepts, or to inhabit them to whatever extent is possible, the stories of creation are vital. There can be no bypassing the whakapapa of the atua, as these are ahunga tikanga: the font, foundation, and encapsulation of the Māori conceptual frame. They are 'complex image statements' about the world, in the words of Royal,³⁶ and the origins of tikanga or 'first law' in Aotearoa. Ultimately, they are the source of kaupapa (first principles) from which all other interpretations and applications are derived. In outlining these creation traditions, I have quoted at length from a number of authors. I have found this necessary both due

³⁴ Ibid., p. 316.

³⁵ Mike Paki, 'Reciprocity and the Essence of Law'. Ahunga Tikanga Noho, Te Wānanga o Kurawaka, Ōtaki, September 9, 2016.

³⁶ Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal. *Indigenous Worldviews a Comparative Study (A Report on Research in Progress for Ngāti Kikopiri)*. Ōtaki: Te Wānanga o Raukawa et al., 2002.

to the difficulties of conceptual translation and the necessity to construct a voice shielded somewhat from whatever desires and distortions I might bring to the narratives.

2.3.1 Te Korekore

A general, but not universal,³⁷ feature of the creation traditions is that they begin with Te Kore (or Te Korekore), a pregnant nothingness, which might also be considered as the fullness of chaos.³⁸ Māori Marsden provides an admirable explanation of this difficult concept:

One is tempted to translate Te Korekore as the 'void'. But the traditional religious and theological ideas associated with the concept have hardened into such a rigid framework that one hesitates to use the term. Whilst it does embrace ideas of emptiness and nothingness, this by no means exhausts its meaning. The word 'kore' means 'not, negative, nothing'. When the root of a word is doubled in Māori, it intensifies its meaning. For example 'kai' is to eat, 'kaikai' is greedy. Again, kore is an absolute concept. How is it possible to intensify that which is already absolute? By means of a thorough-going negativity, that which is negative proceeds beyond its limits and assumes the characteristics of the positive. While it does not entirely emancipate itself from the negative, it does

³⁷ In some Kai Tahū traditions, for example, Te Pō is prior to Te Kore.

³⁸ Royal, 'Te Ao Mārama', 2007.

become relatively positive. ... Thus Te Korekore is the realm between non-being and being: that is, the realm of potential being. This is the realm of primal, elemental energy or latent being. It is here that the seed-stuff of the universe and all created things gestate. It is the womb from which all things proceed. Thus the Māori is thinking of continuous creation employed in two allegorical figures: that of plant growth and that of gestation in the womb.³⁹

Marsden goes on to show the rhythmic consonance across the patterning of plant growth, human birth, and the creation of the universe itself. As outlined above in the conclusion to the discussion of the concept of wānanga, the emergence of consciousness takes place through a comparable patterning.⁴⁰ Through the whakapapa that describes the developmental stages of each process – whether biological, cosmic or conceptual – we are able to see slight variants of single motif that provides the basal refrain of te Ao Māori (the Māori world). For plant growth:

Te pū, te more, te weu, te aka, te rea, te waonui, te kune, te whē.

(Primary root, tap root, fibrous root, trunk, tendrils, massed branches, buds, fronds.)

³⁹ Marsden, *Woven Universe*, 2003, pp. 20–21.

⁴⁰ Ani Mikaere includes the following whakapapa for the genesis of the consciousness mind: 'Na te kune te pupuke (from the conception the increase), Na te pupuke te hihiri (from the increase the thought), Na te hihiri te mahara (from the thought the remembrance), Na te mahara te hinengaro (from the remembrance the consciousness), Na te hinengaro te manako (from the consciousness the desire).'

Mikaere, *Colonising myths*, 2011, p. 311.

For human birth:

Te apunga, te aponga, te kune-roa, te popoko-nui, te popoko-roa, hineawaawa,
tamaku, rangi-nui a tamaku.

(Conception, the first signs of swelling, the distended womb, the distended
vagina, contraction, membrane ruptured, first stage of delivery and final stage.)

For creation:

Te Korekore i takea mai, ki Te Pō-tē-kitea, Te Pō-tangotango, Te Pōwhāwhā, Te
Pōnamunamu, ki te wheiao, ki Te Ao Mārama.

(From the realm of Te Korekore the root cause, through the night of unseeing,
the night of hesitant exploration, night of bold groping, night inclined towards the
day and emergence into the broad light of day.)⁴¹

As can be seen in the whakapapa, the passage from Te Korekore (pregnant
nothingness) to Te Ao Mārama (the world of light) is resonant with both plant growth
and human birth, through a certain heliocentrism. Marsden's student Te Ahukaramū
Charles Royal sees the cycles of night and day to be the fundamental model – indeed,
the model of all existence:

⁴¹ Marsden, *Woven Universe*, 2003, pp. 20–21.

The rising of the sun, the journey it makes across the sky, and its setting in the west is a cosmic mystery. Because this cycle is repeated every day, traditional Māori considered it the basic principle of the world. The sun represents the birth and growth of mana (power) in the world. The birth, rise and death of the sun came to be the primary model for all existence – all of life should in some way give expression to this pattern.⁴²

A couple of important points can be drawn from the above. The first is that all entities – plants, humans, thoughts, emotions – emerge through a cyclical increase and development that is analogous with the creation of the universe itself. Working from the other direction, knowledge of the whakapapa of creation is itself drawn from close observation and communion with the cycles of the earth, of day and night, the seasons, as well as cycles of birth and growth. Further, all existence, which appears to include quite diverse modes of existing – thoughts and plants, for instance – emerge according to a cognate rhythmic patterning. Without any great distinction of realm or category, everything emanates from the fundamental patterning of the world itself – procreation, increase, growth – of which they are particular expressions.

⁴² Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal, 'Te Ao Mārama', 2007.

2.3.2 Te Pō

Te Pō is the long night, of which there are many stages, which emerges from te Korekore. The transition from te Korekore to te Pō can be understood as the transition from the fertile womb to conception and impregnation. Through the many stages of Te Pō, a number of beings are born, who then go on to produce everything else in the world. In what have become the basic features of the standard North Island account, the primordial parents, Ranginui (skyfather) and Papatūānuku (earthmother) are born from Te Pō (night). Ngāi Tahu (also known as Kāi Tahu), the iwi that I whakapapa to, has a different tradition, in which Takaroa (the sea) plays a more central role. Kim McBreen explains:

In Kāi Tahu traditions, Rakinui had several partners, and Papatūānuku was with Takaroa before Papa and Rakinui got together. Takaroa went away, Raki and Papa got together, Takaroa came back, fought with Raki, injured him, and went away again. I like this tradition because it reflects the world of my tūpuna – the going away and coming back of Takaroa, the red of Rakinui's blood at sunrise and sunset. You can see why they recognised Papatūānuku as having a relationship with both Rakinui and Takaroa, because that's how the land sits,

surrounded by sea and sky. When we look to the horizon, we can see that Raki and Takaroa are also intimately entwined.⁴³

McBreen also points to a Tainui (a confederation of Central North Island iwi) tradition in which Ranginui and Papatūānuku are bisexual or asexual, and Tāne-mahuta (the forest) produced a child with another male through what was termed bisexual conception. Variants such of these have largely been occluded by their homogenisation within the heteronormative and patriarchal accounts that have been a concurrent production of colonisation.

Ani Mikaere shows how, in settler conditions, Papatūānuku was rendered entirely passive to Ranginui's male desire, in contrast to the agency and power of multiple female deities in prior accounts, while Leone Pihama points to the fact that there appear not to be any comparable terms for 'gender' or 'sexuality' in te reo Māori.⁴⁴ The variations recounted here are openings through which we can question some of the notions embedded in what have become the standard accounts. Through them we can discern that monogamy, masculinity, or heterosexuality were not privileged, nor gender and sexuality fixed. They express instead something much closer to the endless sexual variation that the tūpuna (ancestors) would have observed in the world around them. Heteropatriarchy, on the other hand, clearly has a different provenance.⁴⁵

⁴³ Kim McBreen. 'Our tūpuna dreamed the future for all of us: healthy relationships are at the heart of decolonisation.' Teaching handout, March 2016, p. 4. In the southern part of Te Waipounamu (The South Island), 'ng' is substituted for a 'k'.

⁴⁴ Leone Pihama. www.rangahau.co.nz/exemplar/143/#. Accessed March 2016.

⁴⁵ These conclusions are paraphrased from Kim McBreen, 'Our tūpuna dreamed the future for all of us', 2016.

Continuing the narrative from this point of prior variation, Rakinui and Papatūānuku emerge in the darkness wrapped in a tight embrace and their children are born between them. The tight embrace of their parents, however, means that the children have to live in darkness. Some of the children conspire to separate the parents, while others disagree. As mentioned, it is these debates between the children about which course of action to take regarding their parents which constitutes the origin of *whaikōrero* (formal speech making).⁴⁶ The children succeed in separating their parents, ultimately through Tāne (god of the forest); thus, the world is born into Te Ao Mārama (the world of light).

2.3.3 Te Ao Marama

Te Ao Marama is the world of light, the world of being that we inhabit. Within the world of light, the children of Raki and Papa go on to become various deities or spiritual presences of all the realms or fields of existence, including Tāne of the forest, Rongomaraeroa of peace and cultivated foods, Tūmatauenga of the human realm, Tawhirimatea of weather, and so on, covering all of existence. As Royal says: ‘the weaving together of these deities in a vast genealogy is the traditional Māori method for explaining the natural world and its creation.’⁴⁷ Ani Mikaere continues the narrative:

⁴⁶ Ferris, ‘Whaikōrero’, 2016.

⁴⁷ Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal. ‘Māori creation traditions - Common threads in creation stories.’ *Te Ara – the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, 8 February, 2005. Accessed December 11, 2016. <https://teara.govt.nz/en/maori-creation-traditions/page-1>.

One of the many tasks that falls to these early beings, once born into Te Ao Mārama, is the creation of human life. Once again, there is some variation in the detail, but there is general agreement that the first being to contain the human element, the uha, is Hineahuone, formed from the red earth at Kurawaka. She and Tāne produce Hinetītama, who goes on to have further children with Tāne. Hinetītama later decides to leave Tāne and moves to Rarohenga, where she takes on the persona of Hinenuitepō, assuming for herself the role of guardian of her children following death. The responsibility of caring for her offspring while in Te Ao Mārama she leaves to their father.

The story of how Māui-tikitiki-a-Taranga fails in his quest to attain immortality for humankind is also noteworthy, in that it signifies the completion of the life cycle. His strategy for cheating death is to crawl into the vagina of Hinenuitepō, intending thereby to reverse the birth process. Instead of gaining the immortality he seeks he seals the fate of humankind: having emerged from Te Pō to Te Ao Mārama when we are born, we are all destined to return back to Te Pō and to the care of Hinenuitepō at the end of our lives.⁴⁸

A thread of commonality across the accounts of creation is a beginning of darkness or nothingness, a birth of beings within this darkness, and a separation of earth and sky

⁴⁸ Mikaere. *Colonising myths*, 2011, p. 312.

that is the birth into Te Ao Mārama (the world of light). Within the latter, the atua (gods) go about producing everything in existence. Māori Marsden describes these three stages as Te Kore (potential being between non-being and being), Te Pō (becoming, gestation, growth, increase), and Te Ao Marama (being), with a return to Te Pō upon death.

2.3.4 Metaphysical Colonisation

Māori atua (gods) have been the locus of significant contestation. Nowhere has the metaphysical edge of colonisation been more apparent. The reason for this is clear. The actions of the atua are the origins of tikanga (laws, protocols) and mana (power, authority) and therefore the source of an independent authority incompatible with Pākehā rule. As Moana Jackson explains:

If colonization was to proceed, therefore, [Māori philosophy and the institutions that arose from it] needed to be dismissed, redefined, or subsumed within the alien institutions of the colonist. They were a part of the Māori soul, and needed to be attacked by the Leviathan of Crown sovereignty.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Moana Jackson. 'The Treaty and the Word: The Colonization of Maori Philosophy'. In *Justice, Ethics and New Zealand Society*, eds Graham Oddie and Roy W. Perrett. Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1993.

A crucial thread of this attack is in the contamination and distortion of the stories of the atua: a metaphysical colonisation that, whether actively or passively, sought to render the Māori soul isomorphic with that of the European. Missionaries, of course, had a direct means of undertaking this task; what they considered to be degenerate or demonic customs were to be abandoned and replaced altogether.⁵⁰ Anthropologists, however, effected a colonisation of the atua through an internal mutation of the creation traditions. This was, in effect, to strike at the generative heart of tikanga at a time when a deluge of settlers, disease, and the widespread theft of land had placed acute pressure on the transmission of ancestral knowledge amongst Māori. The authoritative status of the anthropological accounts led to a feedback loop wherein Māori belief and practice have become imbricated with modified Pākehā accounts.

The whakapapa of creation, however, express their own agency in their irrepressible or irreducible differing with each telling. This is not to suggest that they lack consistency, only that context provides an at least minimal singularity that assures continual difference. Whakapapa are always brought to bear on the present of their recitation, with the most felicitous lines of descent emphasised depending on the occasion. This is no different when the whakapapa is to ngā atua (the gods). Tohunga (priest, experts) emphasised parts of the traditions that were particularly important to the present contexts of the collectivities in which they were embedded. In this way, the agency of the traditions met with the needs and desires of the people.

⁵⁰ M.P. K. Sorrenson. 'The Whence of the Maori: Some Nineteenth-Century Exercises in Scientific Method'. In *Ko te whenua te utu / Land is the price: essays on Maori history, land and politics*. Ebook. Auckland, New Zealand: Auckland University Press, 2014.

Anthropologists, however, brought their own desires, both collective and individual, to these traditions. As the historian M.P.K. Sorrenson has pointed out:

The ethnographers nearly always found in Māori culture what they expected to find; their expectations were kindled by the prevailing anthropological theories of the day. In this respect the ethnographic record on the Maori is a fairly faithful reproduction of the changing fashions in anthropology.⁵¹

A defining characteristic of their attempts to record Māori accounts of creation has been the tendency to elide complexity and difference, to homogenise and systematise differing versions of creation myths into a single generic account. The desire to reduce the pluralism of Māoritanga and to render some systematic cultural whole works in the service of producing 'Māori culture' as an equivalent, so that a neat exchange can take place across European categories. In this way, pre-existent categories are used to reconfigure the Māori world, a fact hidden in the formal aspects of the comparison. Along similar lines, Noaki Sakai states, in regard to translation:

The regime of translation is an ideology that makes translators imagine their relationship to what they do in translation as the symmetrical exchange between two languages. The operation of translation as it is understood by common sense

⁵¹ M.P. K. Sorrenson. 'How to Civilise Savages: Some "Answers" from Nineteenth-century New Zealand'. In *Ko te whenua te utu / Land is the price: essays on Maori history, land and politics*. Ebook. Auckland, New Zealand: Auckland University Press, 2014.

today is motivated by this ideology. The conventional notion of translation from English into Japanese, for instance, presumes that both English and Japanese are systematic wholes, and that translation is to establish a bridge for the exchange of equal values between the two wholes. A translation is believed to become more accurate as it approximates the rule of equal value exchange.

While Sakai might be referring more narrowly to linguistic translation, his assertion holds if culture is considered more generally in terms of a text or language. Here, the figure of the ethnographer stands in for the translator. The result has a double aspect. On the one hand, the plurality of Māori life is homogenised so as to render a totality termed 'Māori' comparable with its counterpart, 'European'. On the other hand, te Ao Māori is reconfigured by the compartments and categories of the European world in order to produce a symmetry allowing for one-to-one comparison.

Beyond what might be termed categorical violence, the prime moment of the metaphysical colonisation of the atua was the introduction into Māori whakapapa of a male sole progenitor closely modelled on the Christian God, and a creation story strongly resembling the account given in Genesis. As Te Rangi Hīroa put in an aptly titled chapter 'The Creation of the Creators': 'The discovery of a supreme God named Io in New Zealand was a surprise to Maori and pakeha alike.'⁵² However, despite academic consensus that the god Io is a more recent cross-cultural invention, Io has become deeply embedded in Māori religious expression. For this reason, to enter into a

⁵² Te Rangi Hīroa Peter Buck. *The coming of the Māori*. Nelson, N.Z.: R. W. Stiles, 1925. Pg 527.

discussion of the colonisation of atua encroaches onto terrain of people's deeply held beliefs.⁵³ As Ani Mikaere explains:

to cast doubt on the authenticity of a version of Māori cosmogony that is now widely accepted by claiming that it has been colonised is, therefore, to enter into perilous territory. But enter it we must, if we are to be sure that the concepts we embrace so wholeheartedly as embodying Māori spirituality are in fact our own and not some distorted version of what was once ours, remoulded in the image of the coloniser's beliefs.⁵⁴

A further caution is that, in attending to processes of colonisation, care is taken not to neutralise Māori agency or to reify the dynamism of Māori thought and practice in its encounter with that of Europeans. The threat of doing so arises in precise conjunction with the need to decolonise aspects of tikanga that have been appropriated and exploited in the service of colonial rule. The lure that must be regarded carefully at these points is the notion of a pristine pre-European Māoritanga that inadvertently renders itself as static and sterile. The inclusion of Io in the creation myths does not necessarily make them 'inauthentically' Māori.

⁵³ This last point is itself entangled with the very processes of colonisation under discussion. Atua are far more intimately bound to experience than God and, as such, are far less reliant on faith or belief. For instance, to say that I am born of this world and that it nurtures me, to understand myself as related to everything else in the world, which is to understand my whakapapa to Rangi and Papa, requires no great leap of faith. It makes sense at an empirical level. That the world is cyclical and reproductive likewise makes experiential sense.

⁵⁴ Mikaere. *Colonising myths*, 2011, 233.

Pōrangahau, where I live, is part of the rohe (ancestral lands) of Ngāti Kahungunu, from whom the Io stories originate. The inclusion of Io into Kahungunu whakapapa was 'an agreed body of tradition accepted as genuine Ngāti Kahungunu tradition in 1907 by a responsible body of elders.'⁵⁵ This, of course, does not mean that it was not produced through the encounter of Māori with Christianity. Two Ngāti Kahungunu tohunga (priests, experts) – Te Matorohanga and Nēpia Pōhūhū – and the scribe, Te Whatahoro Jury (also Kahungunu), who himself added a significant amount of material, provided the account exploited by the anthropologists Percy Smith and Elsdon Best. Both of the tohunga, as well as the scribe, were converted Christians at the time of the teachings in question. Te Whatahoro's manuscript of Te Matorohanga's oral teaching of the Io whakapapa mark a considerable intellectual and creative effort in order to coherently synthesise Māori and Christian cosmologies.

Likewise, there are multiple examples of the active and creative engagement of Māori with Christianity. Te Kooti wove together traditional oral narratives with those of the Old Testament in order to call together a community and provide spiritual sustenance for the self-defensive struggle against colonisation.⁵⁶ As already suggested, if there is a consistency in the accounts of the atua, it is that no iwi, nor even any hapū, records identical or static traditions. The difference and constant differentiation of Māori myths prior to European encounter suggests that the variations that emerged afterwards

⁵⁵ D.R. Simmons. 'The Words of Matorohanga'. *The Journal of the Polynesian Society* 103 (2), 1994, p. 137.

⁵⁶ Judith Binney. *Redemption songs: A life of Te Kooti Arikirangi Te Turuki*. Auckland, N.Z.: Auckland University Press, 1995.

represent changes of degree – albeit degree marked by the incorporation of comparatively radical newness – rather than a fundamental break with tradition.

A fine example of the inability to fix an account of Io was in Best's hiring of Hare Hongi (H. M. Stowell) to transcribe the Matorohanga manuscript. Best was frustrated to discover that Hongi was modifying the (Ngāti Kahungunu) account to bring it in line with that of his own people (Ngāpuhi). Whereas positivist history is lifeless in the sense that the past is irrevocably past, in Māori traditions each retelling was a creative and generative effort of bringing past knowledge to bear on, or reactivating it within, the present. The great irony of Best's frustration with Hare Hongi was that he and Smith had made far more fundamental changes to support the anthropological convictions they espoused and the theological beliefs they held.⁵⁷ And yet, we can see Smith and Best's retellings as further evidence of the irrepressible nature of these kōrero (stories) to differentiate themselves according to the vantage of those telling them.

The versions of these traditions as retold by Pākehā anthropologists differ in comparison to inter-iwi and inter-hapū variations in number of respects. Firstly, Pākehā versions introduced radically alien social forms into the myths by way of the basic assumptions of those who told them (for example, private property or the Victorian patriarchy). They also exerted a centralising and homogenising effect on all other variants due to their inseparability from settler power. This tendency was a faithful expression of the isometric logics of settler sovereignty more generally. Ensclosed within settler regimes of knowledge production, the accounts of anthropologists also

⁵⁷ Mikaere, *Colonising myths*, 2011, pp. 233–49.

garnered authority and durability by way of their written form. The rendering of these whakapapa into written text ran parallel to the breaking down of oral transmission amongst Māori due to processes and pressures of colonisation. This authority of written accounts was also heightened by the scientific aura accorded to settler anthropologists like Smith and Best, amplified by their leading roles in institutions such as the Polynesian Society and the Dominion Museum. Combined, the consequences of the Pākehā tellings were to fix the accounts in place, to arrest the generative difference at their heart, and to render them lifeless so that they might become amenable to final categorisation and handed over to historical record.

Whether or not Io was part of Māori belief before European contact is to an extent moot, given that it undoubtedly is for many Māori today. As discussed, the modification of traditions and the inclusion of novel elements could hardly be said to be antithetical to Māoritanga. Certainly it is not my place to judge the validity of Ngāti Kahungunu traditions or that of any other iwi, except perhaps my own. However, the implications of the introduction of a male sole-progenitor, formally identical to God, anterior to the cosmic parents Raki and Papa is a different discussion to that of the status of their authenticity. As Mikaere cogently and convincingly argues, the material effect of this metaphysical cut was the introduction of hierarchy, firstly and most damagingly in the form of patriarchy, into the Māori world. This is the compelling reason – Mikaere’s ‘we must’ – for broaching this perilous terrain.

The introduction of a male first cause and creator of the universe, even when seemingly only appended to the beginning of prior accounts, affects a fundamental

transformation in Māori thought. Once introduced, Io begins to restructure the entire domain according to the social world from whence he came. By creating a supreme being prior to Rangi and Papa, and one which is moreover their creator, the shift is made to a European metaphysics of production, ex nihilo creation, and hierarchy. This might be seen as a form of metaphysical colonisation of a fundamentally reproductive and procreative Māori world, a world hitherto characterised by genealogical interconnection. The first metaphysical incision of a more general strategy to divide and conquer is the breaking down of a balance between male and female elements through the diminishing of female power. This colonial strategy had its historical precedent in the breaking down of women's power so as to eliminate the impediment it represented to the large scale theft of common land in Europe – a period now referred to as the witch hunts.⁵⁸ The centrality of female potency to life is evident in the whakapapa of creation. That the metaphors of reproduction also constitute the names for the different social structures across Māori society marks as undeniable the fact of female power and its elision by colonisation.

2.4 Mana

Mana is a spiritual force that can be described as the power of the atua (gods) made manifest. Mana is often translated with the use words like 'power', 'authority' and 'prestige'. Aspects of each of these words allow us to approach the nuance and

⁵⁸ Silvia Federici. *Caliban and the Witch*. New York: Autonomedia, 2014.

complexity of the concept of mana. Māori Marsden describes mana as consisting a double aspect of both power and authority. Mana is, according to him,

lawful permission delegated by the gods to their human agents and accompanied by the endowment of spiritual power to act on their behalf and in accordance with their revealed will. This delegation of authority is shown in dynamic signs or works of power.

To clarify the difference between the two aspects of mana, Marsden takes the example of a car at a traffic light. In order for the car to move lawfully, it needs the permission of the green light; but it also needs the power to move, that is, for the gear to be engaged, for the engine to run, and so on. Law and power are, in this example as in the case of mana, inextricable from one another.

A further, though interconnected, aspect of mana is approximated by the terms 'charisma' and 'prestige'. Authority is closely associated with personal power and the ability to influence others. A person's mana is relational and socially embedded, in the sense that its effectiveness relies upon it being acknowledged by others. Likewise, the acts through which a person increases their mana are socially orientated, and their personal achievement is for collective benefit. Thus the associated concept of manaakitanga – generosity, care for others – is crucial with regard to the maintenance and increase of mana.

In the Māori world, every person is born with a greater or lesser amount of mana depending on factors such as the mana of their parents and whether they were older or younger siblings.⁵⁹ Mana is derived from a person's tūpuna (ancestors) and is in that sense ascribed, but as Durie outlines, mana achieved through acts was often ascribed to the tūpuna after the fact.⁶⁰ Mana was in practice a combination of ascription through whakapapa and achievement through acts. Running parallel to the combinations of ascribed and achieved mana is the distinction between two aspects of mana contained in the term mana whenua: mana *in* the land and mana *over* the land. Mana in the land, or mana tūpuna, issued from Rakinui and Papatuanuku and the relationship through whakapapa of tangata whenua (people of the land) to them. Mana over the land, or mana tangata, came from the actions and prowess of more recent tūpuna, usually associated with waka (canoes). To have 'ten toes embedded in the soil', as Durie phrases it, it was important to be able to draw mana from both sources.

With regard to the various aspects of mana just described, Hirini Moko Mead makes a useful distinction between mana atua (spiritual authority); mana tangata (human authority); and mana tūpuna (prestige and power drawn from the ancestors).⁶¹ However, all mana ultimately issued from ngā atua (the gods), either through whakapapa, or through the permission and power expressed in the action and influence of tūpuna or their contemporary embodiments. Mana infused all aspects of Māori life

⁵⁹ Mead, *Tikanga Māori*, 2003, p. 51.

⁶⁰ Durie, *Custom Law*, 1994, pp. 36–8.

⁶¹ Mead, *Tikanga Māori*, 2003, p. 362.

and was one of a number of vital pulses or processes that expressed the life of te Ao Māori.

2.5 Social Organisation

The rhythms of reproduction and growth which provide the (prelinguistic) grammar of Te Ao Māori (the Māori world) also find expression in Māori social organisation. Whereas European thought takes the individual to be the fundamental building block of society, this is not the case for Māori. Initially, at least, this can be read in the te reo (Māori language) used for different social groupings. In te reo, societal structures were given terms derived from the language of reproduction. The term hapū (inadequately, as will be discussed, approximated by the terms clan or sub-tribe) also carries the meaning of pregnancy. As such, it can be likened to the womb-like potentiality of Te Kore in the creation myths. The hapū was that potentiality that enveloped whānau (smaller family groupings); whānau were inside of hapū, in this regard. Whānau also means to give birth, and in this sense, whānau was the location where tangata whenua (people of the land) were born. Whenua, the word for land, is also the word for afterbirth. Tangata (people) are whenua (land), and whenua is a multiplicity of tangata, resembling tūpuna (ancestors). The latter is not personification, to call it so merely transposes the European subject/object distinction onto the Māori world, making the relational connection to the land as tūpuna (ancestor) seem a quaint practice of imaginative

projection. The concept of tangata whenua suggests the absence of a distinction between humanity and nature, rather than the imaginary occlusion of this distinction. Iwi (tribe, nation, people) were social groupings of lesser importance prior to contact with Europeans. The term iwi refers to 'bones', expressing, as Moko Mead suggests, the connection with the bones of the tūpuna (ancestors) buried in the ground, from which mana whenua (power from the land) was derived. The combination of the above terms suggests an image of the different collectivities as a female body.⁶² In keeping with this interpretation is the fact that women are referred to as te whare tangata (the house of humanity).

2.5.1 Hapū

Prior to colonisation, the basic political unit of Māori society was the hapū. The term hapū carries the meaning of pregnancy, and because of this it invokes the womb-like potentiality of te Kore. It expresses the principle of growth and increase, the swollen fertility of the hapū consisting of multiple whānau. Likewise, it refers to the hapū members sharing the womb of the collective tūpuna.⁶³ In the pre-contact period, Hapū membership ranged between a hundred and a thousand people and was characterised

⁶² Royal, *Let the World Speak*, 2009, p. 74.

⁶³ *He Hinātoke ki te Ao Māori / a glimpse into the Māori world: Māori perspectives on justice*. Wellington: Ministry of Justice, 2001, p. 33; Mead, *Tikanga Māori*, 2003, p. 215.

by common descent, a common area of residence and participation in collective activities.⁶⁴

As the authors of *Māori Perspectives* point out, hapū were both independent and interdependent.⁶⁵ Whilst politically autonomous, they were intermeshed with the complicated matrix of whanaunga (kinship) through bilineal whakapapa. Autonomy required that each hapū be able to defend itself, while inter-hapū hostilities could lead hapū to fight each other alone or in various combinations. Thus hapū autonomy was in tension with the need to maintain inter-hapū allegiances for defence against other combinations of related hapū or external forces, or for economic activities that required larger numbers. District hapū normally stood together in war and remained autonomous during periods of peace.

Hapū membership was dynamic, with several hapū combining or fusing for war or other endeavours, members splitting off to form new hapū or to incorporate other hapū. Individuals also had the ability to change residence and hapū allegiance or to maintain different relationships of allegiance with different hapū through the networks of intermarriage or through each line of their parental whakapapa. E.T. Durie comments that 'despite the trend to fragmentation and local autonomy, a sense of common ancestral origin survived amongst the various hapū of a region, assisted by the meticulous maintenance of whakapapa and various strategies for strengthening kin relations.'⁶⁶ The various stresses on the integrity and autonomy of the hapū were

⁶⁴ Durie, *Custom Law*, 1994, p. 15.

⁶⁵ Ministry of Justice. *He Hinātore ki te Ao Māori a glimpse into the Māori world: Māori perspectives on justice*, 2001, p. 33.

⁶⁶ Durie, *Custom Law*.

counteracted by the figure of the Rangatira (chief), who weaved the hapū together through their charisma.⁶⁷

2.5.2 Whānau

The whānau was the basic unit of social life. Whilst political commitment was to hapū, emotional commitment was to whānau.⁶⁸ Whānau also means birth, and it was in this sense that a person was born into the whānau. The connections of whānau were those that whakapapa to larger groups would be drawn from. And it is within the whānau that a person was raised and socialised. A whānau consisted of three or four generations living together under the name of a relatively recent ancestor. The whānau was not simply a subsection of the hapū, although a large enough whānau sharing the same location could easily become a hapū. Different whānau members could belong to different hapū.

Whānau had their own systems of authority operating under the guidance of a kaumatua (venerable elder). The whānau was the site of day-to-day reproduction through collective economic activity, and shared care of tamariki (children). The whānau was autonomous regarding day-to-day decisions, with kaumatua giving voice to the political interests of the whānau at the hapū level.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 25.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 16.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

2.5.3 Iwi

In the pre-contact period, iwi was a general term for the people of an area, likely to be connected through common descent. It could also refer to the combined hapū of a district in general terms, or to specific combinations of hapū or hapū members for fighting and other ventures. In addition, the term could be used for when only a section of, or certain individuals from, a hapū formed a party for some particular endeavour. Names for iwi were usually drawn from a common ancestor, more generationally distant than those of hapū to allow for the greater distance between kin combined as iwi.

Iwi, meaning bone, references the common tūpuna (ancestors) whose bones were buried in the land. Through the ancestors, the term also expresses the collective strength of group, and the notion of strength through collectivity.⁷⁰ Through this symbolism, iwi can be seen as designating the underlying structure that articulated the parts.⁷¹

There is disagreement about the status of the iwi prior to contact with Europeans. E.T. Durie suggests that the term 'iwi constituted a social category, those of common descent, while hapū constituted a social group, those who regularly operated together.'⁷² In Durie's view, iwi initially had no mechanisms of political control; political power was based in the hapū. Hirini Moko Mead appears to disagree on this point, although this is possibly due to the generality of his analysis, which does not divide the status of iwi by

⁷⁰ Mead, *Tikanga Māori*, 2003, p. 219.

⁷¹ Durie, *Custom Law*, 1994, p. 16.

⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30.

historical periodisation. However, he is emphatic when he states that ‘the iwi is the social group that claims an estate or rohe and defends it against all threats of attack from others.’⁷³ He is similarly decisive when he states that ‘even though the hapū acted as an “autonomous” body and enjoyed a large measure of control over everyday affairs, it could not stand alone in both a military and a social sense. The hapū was part of a larger social and political entity called an iwi.’⁷⁴ This would seem at odds with Durie’s claims that ‘in the contact period, the iwi of a region exercised no corporate functions as politico-economic units and had no mechanisms of political control.’⁷⁵ Durie here refers to the term iwi in the sense of a general name for the common descent group of a region. With regard to iwi as hapū combinations, he states that ‘though conceptualised according to their districts, [they] were not defined by district boundaries but by the extent of the hapū alliance.’ It seems that while common descent was rich in potentiality for connections and alliances between hapū, the iwi did not exist as a political entity beyond the dynamic and negotiated allegiance of hapū.

It remains important to keep in mind the independence and interdependence of hapū, and the different types of relationships between whānau and hapū, whānau and iwi, and hāpu and iwi. Early ethnologists such as Elsdon Best sought to impose their own models onto Māori social structures. A simplification characteristic of these distortions was to render Maori society as a static and orderly hierarchy with a number

⁷³ Mead, *Tikanga Māori*, 2003, p. 220.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 219.

⁷⁵ Durie, *Custom Law*, 1994, pp. 58–61.

of whānau composing a hapū, and the sum of the hapū forming an iwi.⁷⁶ Additionally, each hapū supposedly had a single rangatira (chief) positioned within a comprehensive iwi hierarchy, the apex of which was the ariki, or iwi chief.

As described above, Māori social structures were in fact dynamic and intermeshed matrices of whakapapa, residence, intermarriage and alliance. Social and political groupings had adapted in response to changing contexts, pressures and opportunities prior to European contact and continued do so afterwards. Certainly change accelerated in the nineteenth century as the pressures of colonisation forced a centralisation of political power as both a strategic response to, and a result of, the seismic cultural shifts that resulted from colonial encounter.

There was a tendency for hapū to form into larger aggregations throughout this period, and iwi began to emerge as political entities, with corporate functions. This occurred as hapū and iwi membership and regions became more stable and settled due to processes of dispossession by settlers, limiting some of the earlier dynamism. Pan-Māori configurations, such as the early King movement that adopted elements of the monarchy system, express a tendency towards the centralisation of power. Unification of this kind was a strategic attempt to staunch the appropriation of land by Europeans that sought to exploit points of tension and disunity both internal to hapū and between them.

⁷⁶ Angela Ballara. *Iwi: The dynamics of Maori tribal organisation from c.1769 to c.1945*. Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1998, p. 19.

2.6 Conclusion

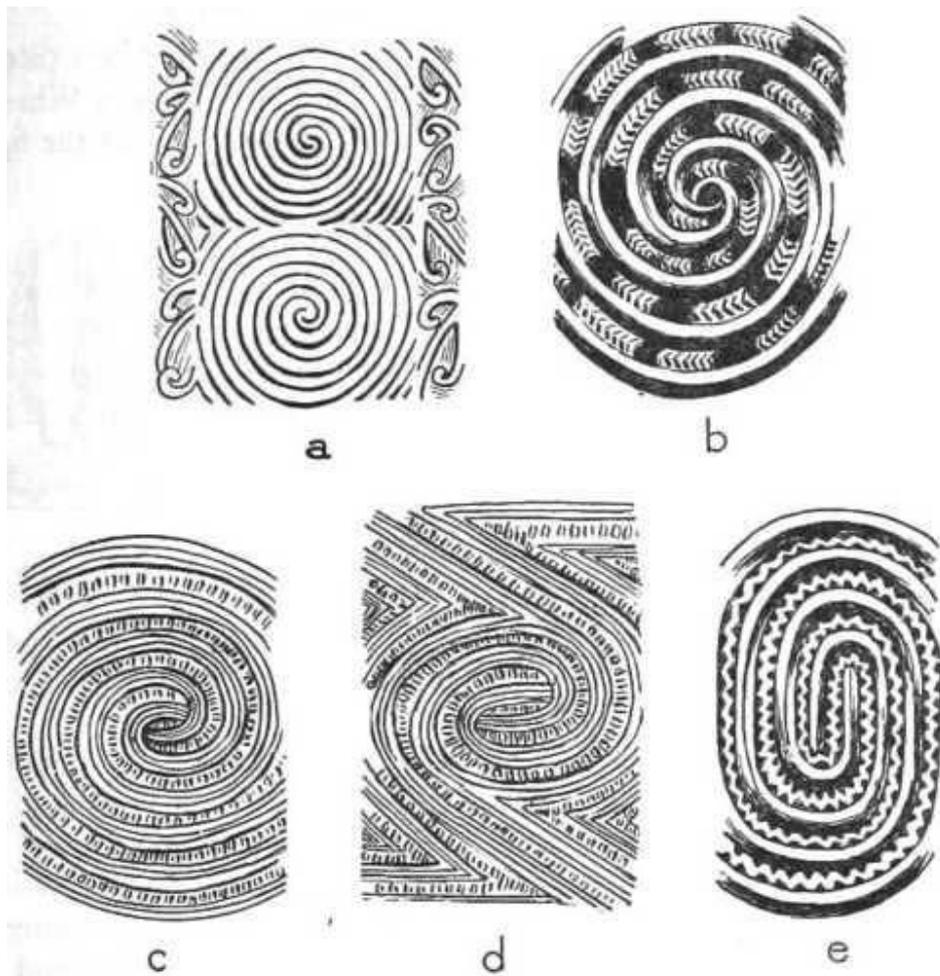


Fig. 92. Double spirals, after Anaha.
a, pikorauru; b, takarangi; c, rauru; d, maui; e, whakaironui.

Te Rangi Hiroa, 1949

It is possible to discern a repeating pattern in the different aspects of te Ao Māori described above. The growth of plants, human reproduction, the emergence of consciousness, the structure of social collectivities, the protocols for social interaction, and the origins of cosmos itself, are all expressions of a world that has its being and becoming through whakapapa.

This motif of relational, reproductive existence finds expression in whakairo (carving) as the double spiral. The double spiral indexes the double descent lines of the primordial parents Rakinui and Papatūānku, and the interrelation of all things through their embrace. Its spiral lines are both the whirlpool (an image of destruction) and the whirlwind that lifted Tane to the heavens so that he could retrieve knowledge for the world. They show a continual process of coming into, and moving out of, being. From the womb-like nothingness of te Kore, to the pregnant potentiality of te Pō, to birth into the world of light and enlightenment in te Ao Marama, and finally returning to te Pō in her form as Hine-nui-te-Pō, cyclic existence spirals out and returns to the primal centre of the cosmos in te Kore. The Takarangi spiral (Figure B above) gives a motif of the metabolic pulse of a world characterised by reproductive intergenerational interrelation, simultaneous with, and strobed by, a thoroughgoing, potent negativity through which the present is constantly opened by creative increase.

The mode of thinking that emanates from this world is characterised by immediacy or imminence. As there is no self set against nature, there is no internal private subject experiencing an external world. Instead, there is 'a sensuous and continuous interaction of experience and consciousness', a communion with the

universe wherein 'external was internal, objective was subjective, the mind was body, knowledge was experience.'⁷⁷ A further aspect issuing from this immanence is the absence of a conception of any abstract entity called 'knowledge'. The comparable set of practices (comparable to the set of practices that produce knowledge as an abstract entity) was the more intimate enfolding within process better described as 'know-how', in which 'understanding and action flowed seamlessly'.⁷⁸

Intimation of the continuity between understanding and action, experience and world, self and social collectivity, can be read in the forms of Māori sociality. In whakairo (carving), carvings do not represent the ancestors, but instead carry the life of those ancestors. In whaikōrero (formal speech making), the speaker gives voice to these ancestors, allowing them to speak through him.

In his study of whaikōrero, Poia Rewi makes use of the term 'geomentality', initially coined by the cultural geographer (from Aotearoa New Zealand) Hong-Key Yoon. Yoon defines 'geomentality' as

an established and lasting frame (state) of mind regarding the environment. It is necessarily translated into a geographical behavioral pattern and is reflected in a pattern of cultural landscape ... What an architect's plan is to a building, a geomentality is to a pattern of cultural landscape.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Royal. *Let the World Speak*, 2009, p. 5.

⁷⁸ Royal. *Wānanga*, 2011, p. 12.

⁷⁹ Hong-Key Yoon. 'On Geomentality'. *GeoJournal* 25 (4), 1991, pp. 387–92.

With regard to *whaikōrero*, Rewi picks up on the term *geomentality* to get at the relationship between the orator's gestural patterns and the patterning of the world/context within which they speak. For Rewi, it is *geomentality* that enables the 'interaction between the speaker and the spiritual domain whereby the speaker becomes the medium of that spiritual past, a presence by proxy who embodies the direct ancestors'.⁸⁰ Gesture is deployed as a ritual amplification of the patterning of the world, a fractal refrain or repetition, that allows for communication across scales. Les R. Tumoana Williams and Manuka Henare suggest that the *wiriwiri*, a shimmering of the hand used in *whaikōrero*, is the gestural iteration of the *takarangi* spiral, each a motif of the process through which the cosmos was engendered.⁸¹ The vibrational attunement of the shimmering hand gives in miniature an expression of a *geomentality*, a cosmic geometry that itself gives expression to the borderless relationality of agencies past and present, human and nonhuman, sensible and suprasensible.

Likewise, the *marae* (meeting place), the normal context of *whaikōrero*, is a concentrated expression of the Māori mode of life. As such, it provides a diagram of *geomentality*, a compressed image of the Māori relationship with the earth.⁸² The layout, architecture, and protocols of the *marae* combine to give expression to the *whakapapa* of creation. For a *hui* (gathering) at a *marae*, the *manuhiri* (visitors) will gather at the boundaries and wait to be called on by the *tangata whenua* (home people). Outside the

⁸⁰ Poia Rewi. *Whaikōrero: The world of Māori oratory*. Auckland, N.Z.: Auckland University Press, 2010, p. 74.

⁸¹ Les R. Tumoana Williams and Manuka Henare. 'The double spiral and ways of knowing'. *MAI Review* 3, 2009. Accessed December 12, 2017. <http://ojs.review.mai.ac.nz/info/>.

⁸² The term *geomentality* provides a useful accompaniment to my own conception of a geometry of life, if we think of the world as patterning of a vantage that in return overlays the world with pattern.

marae is likened to te kore – nothingness – as there are no relations here, as yet. As the manuhiri begin to talk amongst themselves, this marks the first rustlings of life in te pō. Once they receive a call of welcome from the home people, the visitors begin to move onto the marae. Passing through the entrance of the marae is likened to the entry into te ao mārama (the world of light). Adjacent to the marae (courtyard) is usually the whare tūpuna (ancestral house). The whare tūpuna is formed by the body of the ancestors: Papa is the ground and Rangi the ceiling. At Rongomaraeroa, the marae in Pōrangahau where I have been living, the whare tūpuna is called te poho o Kahungunu (the bosom of Kahungunu). The ancestor Kahungunu's spine forms the central beam and his ribs the lateral rafters. Carvings of atua and ancestors (and photos of more recent ones) adorn the walls. To enter into the whare tūpuna is to pass over into the realm of the tūpuna, completing the cycle from birth or creation to death.

The hui is a gathering of human and nonhuman actors and ancestors given voice by the kaikōrero (orator), who acts as an enunciative node of the relational complex. Gods, ancestors, do not recede into austere distance but exist in the present as they are reactivated in the acts of their descendents. Features of the land are also given voice in this way. Taniwha (water beings) are relational beings that express the processual existence of a body of water and all of the forms of life nourished by that water. Whaikōrero is one of the means by which a Taniwha may be given voice in the deliberative processes of the marae. None of the above takes place as personification but through the emanation of the past, the reverberation of its voice, into the present through the curls and curves of whakapapa. In this way, politics is not something that

takes place in exclusion from a nature rendered mute, mechanical, or powerless, but instead through a relational gathering whereby the world is allowed to speak.

3 Pākehā Geometries

The way our present thinks – the way it thinks us – is not something that can easily be shrugged off. A mode of thinking is necessarily shaped by the mode of life from which it emanates. We are (re)produced, (de)formed, and (pre)formatted by the mode of life of which we are part, and which we affect and change through our action. The mode of life that we inhabit inhabits us. A characteristic insight of an earlier moment of ecological thinking was that there is an extraordinary unity between ourselves and our world. Life does not exist in isolated compartments.¹ However, our way of living, the capitalist mode of life, induces an amnesia with regard to the intimate imbrication and congenial inter-relation of ourselves and our world. The division between mind and matter, culture and nature, subject and object, becomes real through historical processes of the shifting configurations of our social activity.

Marx, in his *Grundrisse*, remarks on the historical process of the decisive cleft in a prior unity:

It is not the unity of living and active humanity with the natural, inorganic conditions of their metabolic exchange with nature, and hence their appropriation of nature, which requires explanation or is the result of a historic process, but

¹ John Bellamy Foster. *Marx's Ecology: Materialism and Nature*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000, p. 16. By way of analogy, as soil is changed by the plants that grow upon it, so too are the plants affected by changes in the soil.

rather the separation between these inorganic conditions of human existence and their active existence, a separation which is completely posited only in the relation of wage labour to capital.²

In capitalism, the world is pre-formatted so that I am free in a double sense: freed from the means of production and so free to sell my labour-power. I must buy my means of subsistence on the market and the only commodity I have for exchange is my labour-power. This freedom which expresses itself as the compulsion to earn a wage so as to purchase the means of my reproduction, the means of my continuing to live, pre-exists us. We are *thrown* into this compulsion such that our basic or rest state appears as unemployment.³ Undoubtedly this condition exerts certain pressures and deformations on thought: time, energy, and attention are three sites of stress that immediately spring to mind. However, there is a further, deeper, sense in which the wage-relation, structures our relation to the world.

As others have noted, it is through the violent historic processes of the clearance of direct producers from the land – enclosure, colonisation, extirpation, ‘so-called primitive-accumulation’⁴ – that the world comes to appear as something inert and external.⁵ The abstraction of nature and culture from each other, the production of their epistemological and experiential distinction, is brought about by forcibly breaking the

² Karl Marx. *Grundrisse foundations of the critique of political economy (rough draft)*. Translated by Martin Nicolaus. London, UK: Penguin Books, 1993, p. 489.

³ Michael Denning. "Wageless Life." *New Left Review*, November-December, 66 (2010): 79-97.

⁴ Karl Marx and Ben Fowkes. *Capital: a critique of political economy. Vol. 1*. Harmondsworth Mddx: Penguin Books, 1976, p. 871.

⁵ Alfred Schmidt and Ben Fowkes. *The concept of nature in Marx*. New York: Verso, 2014.

umbilical metabolic relationship between people and the land they work and which nourishes them. In this vein, Raymond Williams was to note the sharpening resolution between terms of nature and culture was a function of increasingly pervasive 'real interaction'.⁶ It is this break that sets the human against nature, the subject against the world as object, dividing us even from our own bodies, making it appear as a lucky contingency that I need water to survive when water is precisely what falls from the sky. Unwinding this occlusion is not simply a matter of deft maneuvers within thought. The profound interrelation of thought with the sociality of our interaction with the world requires a more thoroughgoing transformation of these relations and activities.

This is not to deny agency in thought. It is, however, to point to the fact that thought does not just dangle in mid-air. It is to register explicitly the inherent sociality of thinking – against the assertion of it as individual creation *ex nihilo*, intellectual property – and its inextricability from the actions and practices of social activity. The flow of our thought runs up against relatively concrete – but historically produced and hence contingent – structures through which thinking must course or else overflow through social transformation.

Trying to discern and describe the patterning of the Pākehā world, that European world in variation through its encounter with Māori, is for me far more a process of endoanthropology or auto-critique. The inherent difficulty in study of this kind does not only arise from the fact that the patterns of te Ao Pākehā are so habitual for me, so commonplace as to be rendered invisible. They are also, as will be worked but more

⁶ Raymond Williams. *Problems in materialism and culture: selected essays*. London: Verso, 1997, p. 83.

fully in this chapter, the scaffolding and parameters of my own thinking, from inside of which, and through which, I am forced to try and discern those patterns. A rather Kantian problem, perhaps. The difference, as will be made clear, is between the Kantian and Marxian accounts of the origin of those structures (transcendental or historical materialist, respectively).

The intention of this chapter, and the preceding one, is to describe a particular mode of life by according to it a certain (conceptual) autonomy. To think it (with)in its own terms. As such, this chapter does not seek to describe te Ao Pākehā through the conceptual frame of te Ao Māori. Instead the attempt is to discern and describe some details of the patternings I am inside via the sensory apparatus of a tradition internal to that world. My studies in London have been at a *whare wānaga* of an altogether different variety, Goldsmiths College. The theorists drawn on in this section – Marx, Sohn-Rethel, Simondon – are traceable to this institution where they form part of a vibrant intellectual fashion. At least, that is how I came to them. It is via the relational endoanthropology (of the European mode of life) formulated by these *tohunga*, amongst others, that I have sought to bring the basal patterning of the Pākehā world into relief.

The basic feature of the rhythmic patterning of this world I have singled out for attention is the act of exchange. Hidden within the quotidian act of monetary exchange, the blood (and sweat⁷) of our social being, is the comprehensive framework of Pākehā geomentality, the epistemological expression of our relationship with the earth. Money is that circulating (ideal) substance through whose movement the interrelation of isolated

⁷ In Marx's phrase, 'Circulation sweats money from every pore.' *Capital*, 1976, pg 208.

although dependent labours is performed. It might be argued that this focus on exchange disregards the pivot whereby Marx leads us away from the surface appearance towards the hidden abode of production, the more urgent site of exploitation and politics. It could also be argued that my preference for exchange issues from the fact that the funded PhD, if it even counts as wage-labour, is a particularly exotic form of it, in far remove from the frontline of social antagonism. There are in addition a couple of good reasons for the choice.

The first is that with the arrival of the European mode of life in Aotearoa, the internal divisions of class, or the wage-form, is not the foremost surface of encounter with te Ao Māori. The teeth through which the European world seeks to enter into relation with te Ao Māori, as is fleshed out in historical detail in the following chapter, is exchange and the attendant relations and conversions of private property. For Māori, the commodification of labour is further downstream than the commodification of land. As with the enclosures in Europe, there is a double individuation that produces both the land as private property and the landless wage-labourer. However, these are greatly staggered in Aotearoa New Zealand as Māori are initially only required to give up their land and lives, not their labour.

A second reason follows from the intention to outline aspects of Pākehā geomentality that are constituted by the relationship between a way of life and way of thinking. For this task, it is the simple commodity form and its expression in the abstract intellect that is decisive, not the economic relationship between value and labour. Whilst the operations, abstractions and techniques of race and gender are crucial to, and

inextricable from, the functioning of capitalism – the most general term for the way of the Pākehā world – they are not dealt with explicitly here. Again, it is possible that this is the result of the shadow cast by my own positionality, or else the historical erasure integral to the very abstractions under discussion. I discuss the racial and gendered operations of capitalism in the final chapter from the imagined perspective of a Māori Marx.

3.1 Gregarious Animals

In his famous preface of 1859, Marx proposed that it was not consciousness that determined being, but social being that determined consciousness.⁸ In *Capital*, speaking of commodity exchange in ancient Greece, Marx provided a clear example of the social determination of epistemological configurations. He pointed to a certain configuration of invisibilities folded within a regime of visibility, the internal darkness of that visibility, resulting from a particular organisation of social being.⁹ In Marx's example, Aristotle is able to see the expression of the value of one commodity in another (five beds = one

⁸ Karl Marx. 'Preface'. *A contribution to the critique of political economy*. Moscow: Progress, 1977. Accessed September 15, 2017.

<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1859/critique-pol-economy/index.htm>. The progress Publishers edition uses 'existence' instead of 'being' to translate the German 'Sein'.

⁹ "In the development of the theory, the invisible of a visible field is not generally anything whatever outside and foreign to the visible defined by that field. The invisible is defined by the visible as its invisible, its forbidden vision: the invisible is not therefore simply what is outside the visible (to return to the spatial-metaphor), the outer darkness of exclusion—but the inner darkness of exclusion, inside the visible itself". Louis Althusser and Étienne Balibar. *Reading capital*. Translated by Ben Brewster. London: NLB, 1970, p 26.

house) requires that the house be qualitatively equated with the bed. Aristotle finds, however, this commensurability of unlike things is 'in reality' impossible. Aristotle is unable to grasp that the equivalence that one commodity expresses in the other, that which between them is commensurable, is the human labour that has gone into them. He is unable to see this, Marx tells us,

because Greek society was founded on the labour of slaves, hence had as its natural basis the inequality of men and of their labour-powers. The secret of the expression of value; namely the equality and equivalence of all kinds of labour because and in so far as they are human labour in general, could not be deciphered until the concept of human equality had already acquired the permanence of a fixed popular opinion. This however becomes possible only in a society where the commodity-form is the universal form of the product of labour, hence the dominant social relation is the relation between men as possessors of commodities. Aristotle's genius is displayed precisely by his discovery of a relation of equality in the value-expression of commodities. Only the historical limitation inherent in the society in which he lived prevented him from finding out what 'in reality' this relation of equality consisted of.¹⁰

In passages such as this Marx provides a rough sketch or schematic of the relationship between social being and social consciousness. As the object of Marx's critique is

¹⁰ Marx. *Capital*, 1976, p. 151.

political economy, as opposed to epistemology, this interrelation is never worked out in full. Sohn-Rethel has done the most to elaborate this path suggested, but not taken, by Marx. The shift in object of critique orientates the focus away from labour and production to exchange; from the commodity form and how labour has come to be subsumed by that form to the origin of that form; from the exploitation of labour to the epistemological bases that support and enable that exploitation through the division of intellectual and manual labour.

The commodity *form* is the shared beginning of both theories.

3.2 Real Abstraction

Sohn-Rethel takes as his point of departure Marx's beguiling analysis of the fetish-like character of the commodity (and its secret).¹¹ Commodity fetishism is, as Marx defines it, 'nothing but the definite social relation between men themselves which assumes here, for them, the fantastic form of a relation between things'. Or, re-phrased, 'to the producers ... the social relations between their private labours appear ... as material [*dinglich*] relations between persons and social relations between things.'¹² This might seem straightforward enough: commodities socialise through the matrix of the exchange relationship, whilst the labour of their production appears to the producers as isolated activity mediated only by its product. Commodities are partying, we have no social life.

¹¹ Alfred Sohn-Rethel. *Intellectual and manual labour: a critique of epistemology*. New York: Macmillan, 1978, p. 8.

¹² Marx. *Capital*, 1976, pp. 165-6.

However, it is the commodity *form* that has proven so intriguing in its complexity. Sohn-Rethel became ensnared by the ‘metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties’,¹³ the ‘magic and necromancy’¹⁴ of the commodity form for years. ‘Finally’, Sohn-Rethel recounts, ‘with an effort of concentration bordering on madness, it came upon me that in the innermost core of the commodity structure there was to be found ‘the transcendental subject.’¹⁵ From this initial glimpse of the ‘secret identity between commodity form and thought form’,¹⁶ he developed a critique of philosophical epistemology as a complement to Marx’s critique of political economy.

In Sohn-Rethel’s account, philosophical epistemology begins with Descartes’ attempt to build a ground for knowledge from the mathematical and experimental scientific method established by Galileo and subsequently perfected by Newton.¹⁷ For Sohn-Rethel, this development of a theory of scientific knowledge aimed at producing a coherent ideology in alignment with, and supportive of, the production relations of bourgeois society. That is, it served to bolster and sharpen the division between intellectual and manual labour so that the latter could be held in subordination to the former. The fetishisation of intellectual labour over and above manual labour finds its apotheosis in the figure of Immanuel Kant, whose descriptor as the ‘Adam Smith of Epistemology’, makes clear the complementarity of Sohn-Rethel’s project to that of Marx’s.¹⁸

¹³ Ibid., p. 163.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 169.

¹⁵ Sohn-Rethel, *Intellectual and manual labour*, 1978, pp. xii - xiii.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. xiii.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 14, 17.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 14. Indeed, the categories *a priori* and the market both provide the absence (of explanation) that is the condition of possibility of coherence for the respective theories.

Kant demonstrates how pure mathematics and pure science achieve their supposed purity through their total separation from manual labour. He does this by grounding them in an *a priori* completely independent of physical, sensorial experience.¹⁹ That this so-called ground was itself completely groundless was later pointed out with characteristic wit and contempt by Friedrich Nietzsche: "How are synthetic judgments a priori *possible*?" wondered Kant, and what did he answer? They are *facilitated by a faculty*".²⁰ Sohn-Rethel's appraisal is similar: 'Kant was right in his belief that the basic constituents of our form of cognition are preformed and issue from a prior origin, but he was wrong in attributing this preformation to the mind itself engaged in the phantasmagorical performance of "transcendental synthesis *a priori*", locatable neither in time nor in place.'²¹

For Marx, as for Sohn-Rethel, forms – whether forms of thought or society – are historical: they originate, change, mutate and die within time.²² If abstraction is the 'workshop of conceptual thought', and consciousness is determined by social being, then it stands to reason that particular abstractions have both a history and a social origin.²³ Thus, the scandal of Sohn-Rethel's account was to introduce history to the realm of truth, to demonstrate category by category the relationship between the activity of commodity exchange and the formation of Kant's categories *a priori*.

¹⁹ That this move enfolds within itself the bourgeois division between educated and labouring classes was a fact concealed to Kant and his contemporaries.

²⁰ Friedrich Nietzsche and Marion Faber. *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future* (Oxford world's classics). Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 102.

²¹ Sohn-Rethel, *Intellectual and manual labour*, 1978, p. 7.

²² *Ibid.*, 17.

²³ There is an ambiguity in Sohn-Rethel's account as to whether abstraction itself is produced by commodity exchange, or only the specific abstractions peculiar to commodity producing societies.

3.2.1 The Exchange Abstraction

The abstractions of thought peculiar to commodity producing societies are first forged in the practical activity of market exchange, via a process Sohn-Rethel terms real abstraction:²⁴

The essence of the commodity abstraction, however, is that it is not thought-induced; it does not originate in men's minds but in their actions. And yet this does not give 'abstraction' a merely metaphysical meaning. It is abstraction in its precise, literal sense. The economic concept of value resulting from it is characterised by a complete absence of quality, a differentiation purely by quantity and by applicability to every kind of commodity and service which can occur on the market ... While the concepts of natural science are thought abstractions, the economic concept of value is a real one. It exists nowhere other than the human mind but does not spring from it. Rather it is purely social in character, arising in the spatio-temporal sphere of human interrelations. It is not people who originate these thoughts but their actions. 'They do this without being aware of it.'²⁵

²⁴ Christopher Arthur suggests that the more precise term would be 'practical abstraction' given that mental abstractions still have real world effects if people act on them. Chris Arthur. "Abstraction, Universality, And Money." In *Marx and Philosophy Conference* . Proceedings, London. 2010.

²⁵ Sohn-Rethel, *Intellectual and manual labour*, 1978, p. 19.

In the chapter on the commodity that begins *Capital*, Marx describes an antagonism hidden in the form of the commodity: that between use-value and exchange-value. Marx will unfold the entirety of the remaining analysis from this contradiction internal to the simple commodity form. Sohn-Rethel begins from Marx's distinction, although he makes a slight modification. His focus is instead on use-value and exchange-value as activities – 'the actions of use and the action of exchange'²⁶ – that give the basis of the two contrasting values.

For Sohn-Rethel,

the practice of 'use' covers a well-nigh unlimited field of human activities; in fact it embraces all the material processes by which we live as bodily beings on the bosom of mother earth, so to speak, comprising the entirety of what Marx terms 'man's interchange with nature' in his labour of production and enjoyment of consumption.²⁷

On the other hand, the action of exchange marks a change in purely social terms: a change in the status of ownership. For this change in ownership to take place it must be assumed that the material status of the commodity will not change (for example, degrade, decompose, or be expended in use) for the duration of the exchange. The human-nature metabolism – the material, meaning chemical, interchange between them

²⁶ Ibid., 23.

²⁷ Ibid., 27.

– must be suspended (or at least assumed to be).²⁸ Thus, for the purposes of exchange, the commodity must be abstracted entirely from the realm of use. I cannot sell you my cake while I am eating it.

This exclusion of use in exchange expresses itself in a doubly abstract manner. Firstly, all the physical, sensuous attributes of the different commodities are abstracted as a numerical exchange-value, the ratio through which one commodity can be exchanged for another (1 kilogram of wool = 2 litres of beer). In monetised society exchange-value *appears* as price (2 litres of beer = \$6).²⁹ The second aspect of the of the abstraction from use is that material processes, entropy or otherwise, are suspended and the commodity appears as temporally frozen for the purposes of exchange. Sohn-Rethel elegantly surmises this aspect of abstraction in a passage clearly resonant with the thinking of his occasional interlocutor, Walter Benjamin.

There, in the market-place and in shop windows, things stand still. They are under the spell of one activity only; to change owners. They stand there waiting to be sold. While they are there for exchange, they are not there for use. A commodity marked out at a definite price, for instance, is looked upon as being frozen to absolute immutability throughout the time during which its price remains unaltered. And the spell does not only bind the doings of man. Even nature

²⁸ Marx's concept of 'metabolism' is discussed more fully in the introduction.

²⁹ 'In the midst of the accidental and ever-fluctuating exchange relationship between [commodities], the labour-time socially necessary to produce them exerts itself as a regulative law of nature. In the same way, the law of gravity asserts itself when a person's house collapses on top of them.' Marx. *Capital*, 1976, p. 168. Price is a mere appearance, but our interest here is in the form and origin of this the abstraction that grounds this appearance rather than its occlusion of labour as that which determines the magnitude of value.

herself is supposed to abstain from any ravages in the body of this commodity and to hold her breath, as it were, for the sake of this social business of man. Evidently, even the aspect of non-human nature is affected by the banishment of use from the sphere of exchange.³⁰

Commodities in the marketplace must appear as if suspended in time, and as exchange-values leave no trace of their sensuous qualities. Exchange marks a purely social change only, a change that has no bearing on the physical body of the commodity. In brief outline, these are the components of the abstraction from use in exchange.

Discussing this abstractness, Marx comments that ‘not an atom of matter enters into the objectivity of commodities as values; in this it is the direct opposite of the coarsely sensuous objectivity of the commodities as physical bodies.’³¹ However, the negation of use in exchange still involves the physical act of exchange, the transfer of the commodities in time and space. Exchange-value, whilst suprasensible, retains a social and hence objective reality. It is because both actions – use and exchange – share the same physical reality that they must be mutually exclusive in time: one cannot take place while the other does. To further delineate the act of use from the act of exchange, Sohn-Rethel deploys the German terms of first nature (material, physical, sensuous world) and second nature (social, abstract) to designate ‘two spheres of

³⁰ Sohn-Rethel. *Intellectual and manual labour*, 1978, p. 25.

³¹ Marx. *Capital*, 1976, p. 138.

spatio-temporal reality side by side, yet mutually exclusive and of sharply contrasting description.³²

Sohn-Rethel illustrates the foregoing distinction by asking us to imagine that we are at the butcher's with a dog. The dog understands a great deal of the transaction, including a keen sense of property, however:

when you have to tell him 'Wait, doggy, I haven't paid yet!' his understanding is at an end. The pieces of metal or paper which he watches you hand over, and which carry your scent, he knows, of course; he has seen them before. But their function as money lies outside the animal range. It is not related to our natural or physical being, but comprehensible only in our interrelations as human beings. It has reality in time and space, has the quality of a real occurrence taking place between me and the butcher and requiring a means of payment of material reality. The meaning of this action registers exclusively in our human minds and yet has definite reality outside it – a social reality, though, sharply contrasting with the natural realities accessible to my dog.

Despite the stark distinction between the two natures, wherein the activity of use is excluded entirely from the activity of exchange, the same is not true of the minds of the exchangers. Our minds are invariably taken up with usefulness of the commodities we might purchase. Shopping involves a certain empiricism in which we can examine

³² Sohn-Rethel. *Intellectual and manual labour*, 1978, p. 28.

things, hold them, even simulate the use for which they are meant. The empiricism remains speculative, however, necessarily stopping short of lifting the spell under which commodities stand still in the market. Material reality only accrues to commodities once they pass out of the market and into the private possession of a purchaser.

Because our minds are taken up with all the variables and heterogeneity of use, and because the abstraction of exchange is exclusive to the action itself, the abstractness of our behaviour does not show up to us. If it did, exchange could not take place. As Sohn-Rethel phrases it: 'one could say that the abstractness of their action is beyond realisation by the actors because their very consciousness stands in the way. Were the abstraction to catch their minds, their action would cease to be exchange and the abstraction would not arise.'³³ Individual consciousness is not without abstractions – but the original moment of abstraction of exchange is blocked by the mind's occupation with the world of use.

An increasing separation between the imagination and action of those who exchange accompanies the development and generalisation of commodity exchange. Whilst the minds of people in the market become increasingly private, their action is expressive of an increasingly general social form. One result of this fracture in experience is the individualised, private consciousness characteristic of Western subjectivity. The other is money.³⁴ As Marx had noted, there is a direct relationship between the generalisation and homogenisation of social relations and the experience of heightened individuality:

³³ Ibid., p. 27.

³⁴ The formal correspondence and shared genetic origin between money and western subjectivity is a point I return to shortly.

Only in the eighteenth century, in 'civil society', do the various forms of social connectedness confront the individual as a mere means towards his private purposes, as external necessity. But the epoch which produces this standpoint, that of the isolated individual, is also precisely that of the hitherto most developed social (from this standpoint, general) relations. The human being is in the most literal sense a ζῷον πολιτικόν,³⁵ not merely a gregarious animal, but an animal which can individuate itself only in the midst of society.³⁶

As already suggested, Marx's explanation for this seeming paradox is to be found in his theory of commodity fetishism whereby social relations between people take on the appearance of isolated individuals and social relations between things. Without being in contradiction with Marx, Sohn-Rethel shifts the terms of analysis so as to better elaborate the germinal epistemological implications of Marx's theory.³⁷

3.2.2 Social Synthesis

³⁵ Zoon Politikon, meaning 'political animal'.

³⁶ Marx. *Grundrisse*, 1993, p. 84.

³⁷ Sohn-Rethel anticipates several arguments against his shift in focus. Sohn-Rethel. *Intellectual and manual labour*, 1978, p. 33.

In order to understand exchange not only as individual acts but as a social network, Sohn-Rethel develops a conception of 'social synthesis'. As he elaborates, 'every society made up of a plurality of individuals is a network coming into effect through their actions. How they act is of primary importance; what they think is of secondary importance. Their activities must interrelate in order to fit into a society.'³⁸ Furthermore, in keeping with Marx's insight that 'social being' determines consciousness, the 'socially necessary forms of thinking of an epoch are those in conformity with the socially synthetic functions of that epoch.'³⁹ Sohn-Rethel's use of the term 'synthesis' – instead of 'being' – is of course a direct gloss on Kant's transcendental synthesis, making explicit the difference in opinion as to the origins of the categories of cognition.⁴⁰

3.2.3 Money

How, then, is the social synthesis achieved in commodity producing societies wherein labour is carried out private producers independently of each other in an increasingly specified division of labour? It is through buying and selling – through exchange – that we solve the problem of our isolated dependence. As commodity exchange develops and becomes the general form exchange takes in society, the actions of exchange are

³⁸ Ibid., p. 5.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 9. For example ancient, feudal, modern bourgeois stages of commod production are Intrinsicly linked with corresponding forms of division between the labours of the head and hand.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 37: '...the word synthesis is used to arm the formulation of my enquiry with a spearhead against Kant's hypostasis of an a priori synthesis from the spontaneity of mind, and thus to pay transcendental idealism back in its own coin.'

reduced to a strict uniformity. The various heterogeneities of context (people, place, date, etc.) are erased in the ideality and formal identity of each instance of exchange. This uniformity emerges through the process, driven by the needs of commercial intercourse, whereby one commodity comes to be that in which the value of all other commodities are expressed. Historically, this process finds its final realisation in money.⁴¹ From the perspective of this final result, however, it appears as if all commodities express their value in one particular commodity because it is money, erasing the process whereby that commodity become money by other commodities expressing their value in it.

The exchange abstraction does not immediately enter consciousness, being blocked at the point of sale, but produces its own practical result through the process just outlined, wherein commodities divide into commodities and money. In order that money be able to act as universal equivalent, to relate all other commodities via itself, it 'must be vested with an abstractness of the highest level'.⁴² As the money form develops directly from the commodity form it retains that form's internal division between use and exchange. It is, paradoxically, an abstract *thing*.

The abstractness of money does not appear as such, and cannot be expected to 'appear' as it consists of nothing but form – pure abstract form arising from the disregard of the use-value of the commodities operated by the act of exchange equating the commodities as values.⁴³

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 30.

⁴² Ibid., p. 6.

⁴³ Ibid.

The physicality of money is only ever a metaphor for the abstraction it stands in for and disguises. Whether it be cash, card, or a small packet of data makes little difference, because the exchange abstraction never itself achieves concrete representation. We might note, however, the historical tendency by which the physical embodiment of money – from metal to a tiny electrical impulse, for example – asymptotes with the immateriality it stands in for. Its materiality becomes ever lighter without ever crossing over to pure abstraction. At high resolution, the parallel lines of this asymptote is the border between use and exchange that we saw in its infancy in the simple commodity form.

Sohn-Rethel illustrates the dual nature of money with a second parable about a trip to the butcher's, although this time in Ancient Greece and minus the dog. An Athenian travelling to market with coins in their pocket begins to have some doubts about the type of material his coins should be made of. All the existing things in the world seem subject to change, decay, corruption, and so on – in short, all those characteristics Plato places in opposition to the eternal and unblemished forms or ideas. Despite being a worldly thing, money appears to be exempt from the ravages of worldly existence. The eternal incorruptibility of money seems exemplified in the fact that the issuing bank guarantees money's pristine virginity through replacement, should its material signifier be subject to wear and tear. Stopped in their tracks by the vertiginous thought that they might have Platonic Ideas jingling in their pocket, our Athenian conjectures:

These are things ... and they are things not only for me but for anyone to whom I offer them in payment for commodities he has to sell. And they have the same meaning for every member of this Athenian polis of mine; this universal social reality is in the nature of money ... My coins are as real as my body and as the meat they buy for me to feed on, as real therefore as the body of everyone else. Immaterial money, 'ideal money', thought-coins -- what an absurdity! No coin could be money without being materially real.

Despite reaching this decisive conclusion, the Athenian remains troubled by the obstinate thought that it is only half the story. Yes, their coins are made of real stuff, as real as anything else, but how then are they exempt from temporal change? How can matter not subjected to time be existing in time, be indestructible, be real but also beyond the reality of sensory perception? They ask:

How is it different, then, from the the reality that Plato terms 'ideas'? But brother Plato is wrong in pushing this reality out of our commercial world and gazing at it in the skies only because of its indestructibility. On the contrary, this stable, unchanging, abstractly uniform material of which my coins are made is right in my pocket.

The contradiction is not resolved on entering the agora: should they go and spend their simple silver coins at the butcher's, or join Plato in discussing the purely abstract substance that coins *should* be made out of? Caught between the horns of these incompatible alternatives, our Athenian – as with the coin in their pocket – is split in two.

3.2.4 The Insuperable Gap Between Action and Intellect

Sohn-Rethel is content to leave our Athenian here and continue on. I myself, however, find I am stuck at the crossroads with the Athenian. The problem for me is the 'how' of the conversion of the abstract actions of exchange into those of the abstract intellect. As Sohn-Rethel remarks, there is an insuperable gap between the abstractness of the action of exchange and the subsequent abstractions of the intellect. The latter are derived from the former, but have been cut off from their source. That which crosses this gap is the homology or isomorphism of form. The block I have in thinking the conversion is due to the very parameters of thought. The abstractness at the origin of thought casts a shadow within the only means I have to try and think it, the abstract intellect.

Zeno helps to understand the paradoxical state of affairs by which I find myself arrested by a contradiction in experience. Consider the instant of exchange. Much of the reality of the market has the status of an 'as if', a socially necessary 'as if' that Sohn-Rethel terms a 'social postulate'. For example, I am under no real illusion that

materiel processes of decay have been suspended in the market, but I behave as if this was the case. These passive abstractions, passive insofar as they are implicit to the structure of social activity, are in contrast to the instant of exchange which concentrates the various components of the exchange abstraction in a flash of real abstraction.

First nature, lingering as the scene of the 'as if', however emaciated, vanishes in the strobe light flash of the full realisation of second nature in the instant of exchange. The parameters or para-ontology of the abstract world are, strictly speaking, impossible within ordinary sensuous reality. An arrow sails through the air without difficulty. In the instant of exchange, the arrow is frozen in its tracks due to having entered the infinite divisibility of the abstract spatialised time of Zeno. The infinite and empty instant of exchange is in stark opposition to the lumpy, earthly temporality of first nature that could only ever approach infinity across the yawn of aeons. The instant of exchange in which second nature prevails over first nature, when Zeno's arrow stops in its tracks, is the unthinkable, jarring contradiction at the precise geometric centre of the exchange relation.

In order to pass through the aporia of exchange, Sohn-Rethel painstakingly details the rigorous isomorphism between the components of exchange and the categories basic to Western thought. There is no need to rehearse each of these comprehensively here, their basic features being: the (practical) solipsism of exchange between private proprietors, exemplified most completely as a subjective orientation in Descartes' *cogito ergo sum*; the unicity of money as the universal equivalent and of Parmenides' 'the One'; abstract quantity (more than [$>$], less than [$<$], equal to [$=$]) in

exchange and 'natural numbers'; the abstract time and space of commodities in exchange and the same in Euclidean geometry; the use and exchange values of a commodity and the Aristotelian doctrine of substance and accidents; the homogenous divisibility of money and the same as expressed in atomicity; the abstract movement of commodities in transit and the mathematical opposition of the discontinuous and the discrete.

What interests us is the way in which the processual matrix of social relations becomes a comprehensive matrix of conceptual categories through which the world is apprehended. A final homology given by Sohn-Rethel differs from the others in that it is not part of the exchange abstraction, but rather a consequence of it. The different elements form a compound abstraction that constitutes:

an all encompassing pattern or framework of nature in the abstract. In logical terms they can be described as non-empirical, purely formal concepts of timeless universality. And they can relate to nothing other than to a nature seen as a physical object-world antithetically divided from the social world of man and from its history.

Sohn-Rethel helps us to see at high resolution the dividing line of the epistemological orientation, the regime of geomentality, whereby an individual subject stands in opposition to a material object world.

3.2.5 The Subject of Exchange

More recently, and by an independent route, the classicist Richard Seaford came to many of the conclusions just outlined whilst improving and extending Sohn-Rethel's historical account in number of respects. Without, at that stage, any familiarity with Sohn-Rethel's line of argumentation, in his *Money and the Early Greek Mind*, Seaford related the emergence of a number of assumptions in Greek thought to the advent of coined money during the sixth century B.C. Greek philosophy, originating in the period, posits a cosmology wherein a single impersonal abstract substance permeates the entirety of existence: a kind of universal equivalent of the universe that, on the one hand, is transformed from and into everything else, and on the other provides an underlying unity to the seeming plurality of the sensuous world.⁴⁴ Exemplary of the first aspect is Heraclitus' conception of the cosmos as 'an ever living fire' wherein fire is the elemental substrate that undergoes transformation into all other things and back again. As Heraclitus himself phrases it, 'all things are an exchange for fire and fire for all things, like gold for goods and goods for gold.'⁴⁵ The other aspect, the homogenous unity of abstract value, is exemplified by Parmenides' 'the One'. The first and only such 'ideal substance'⁴⁶ in history, undergoing transformation in each exchange whilst

⁴⁴ Richard Seaford. *Money and the Early Greek Mind: Homer, Philosophy, Tragedy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 175.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 232.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p 120.

simultaneously expressive of an unchanging unity, is money – historically emergent alongside the corresponding philosophical beliefs.

In a later text, Seaford extends his earlier analysis to show in detail the emergence of a particular conception of subjectivity amongst the Greeks. Through a close reading of early texts, he illustrates how the idea of the individual mind or soul as a unitary site of consciousness was indelibly linked to the first monetisation in history. Through the dual power of money just described, money ‘simultaneously promotes the isolated autonomy of the individual and provides a model (the unification of diversity by semi-abstract substance) that shapes ... the unity of individual consciousness.’ The strange materiality of the ideal/abstract substance/thing of money is the pattern – in both the sense of a plan and the regularity of repeated iteration – of so-called ‘Western’ subjectivity. The isolated individual of exchange that emerges in Greece is modulated into our present via Cartesian and Kantian variants. The historical process of individuation whereby the integrated unitary self took shape was the generalisation of monetary exchange.

The insights of Sohn-Rethel and Seaford as to the historical emergence of the abstract intellect and the integrated unitary self alongside the emergence of money are present in Marx in germinal form. A brief summary of Marx’s account provides a useful summary on the topic generally, but is particularly germane because of the character of the language he uses. Marx refers to the ‘broadening and deepening’ of exchange, the ‘constant repetition’ that makes it into normal social process.⁴⁷ Resulting from the

⁴⁷ Marx. *Capital*, 1976, pp. 181-2.

extensive spread, increased frequency, and standardisation of the acts of exchange, the distinction between use and exchange is inscribed with ever greater clarity. The need for this distinction to find external or real expression is productive of the drive towards an independent form of value. Parallel to the process whereby the fruits of labour are converted into commodities through exchange is the development of the division of commodities into money and commodities.⁴⁸ The latter division is in fact a matter of contrast, a double individuation, the money commodity being only a particular expression of the commodity form. Marx describes the process whereby exchange fixes on one commodity as the exclusive universal equivalent, and where the universal equivalent becomes identified with a particular commodity (for example, gold) as being one in which a commodity 'crystallizes out into the money form.'⁴⁹

3.3 Individuation

'That money is a commodity', Marx noted, is 'only a discovery for those who proceed from its finished shape in order to analyse it afterwards.'⁵⁰ In a similar vein, Marx mocked the way in which writers such as Adam Smith and David Ricardo projected the notion of the eighteenth century individual back through all stages of history. The starting point for their narratives of economic development becomes the isolated hunter or fisherman who is also, somehow, a fully fledged bourgeois individual *à la* Robinson

⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 180-1

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 183, 187.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 184.

Crusoe. By beginning with their own subjectivity, and taking it to be natural and hence unchanging model of Man, Smith and Ricardo block any understanding of the historical emergence of that individual, its process of individuation.

In agreement with Marx on this point, the philosopher Gilbert Simondon diagnosed modernity as being characterised by a myopic focus, across the disciplines, on the already constituted individual. Thus, in every case, it is ‘the individual, as a constituted individual, that is the interesting reality, the reality that must be explained.’⁵¹ Simondon’s intervention into the modern condition of the ubiquitous ontological privilege granted the individual aims to wrench away our attention from this singular focus. This Copernican shift in orientation seeks instead to understand the individual through the process of its individuation by placing ‘the individual into the system of reality in which the individuation occurs.’

From this perspective, we might regard the increasing generalisation and homogenisation of social relations brought about through the advent of monetised exchange as *the process of individuation* of the unitary, individualised, consciousness characteristic of the transcendental subject. As mentioned above, Marx’s name for the process by which money individuates amongst commodities is crystallisation. Indeed, the substance of value for Marx, the ghostly residue of the labour gone into the production of commodity, inheres in its body as ‘crystals of social substance’.⁵² Simondon’s paradigmatic example of individuation is the process of crystallisation.

⁵¹ Quoted in Didier Debaise. ‘What is Relational Thinking?’ *Inflexions* 5, ‘Simondon: Milieu, 1 Techniques, Aesthetics’, (March 2012), pp. 1-11. www.inflexions.org.

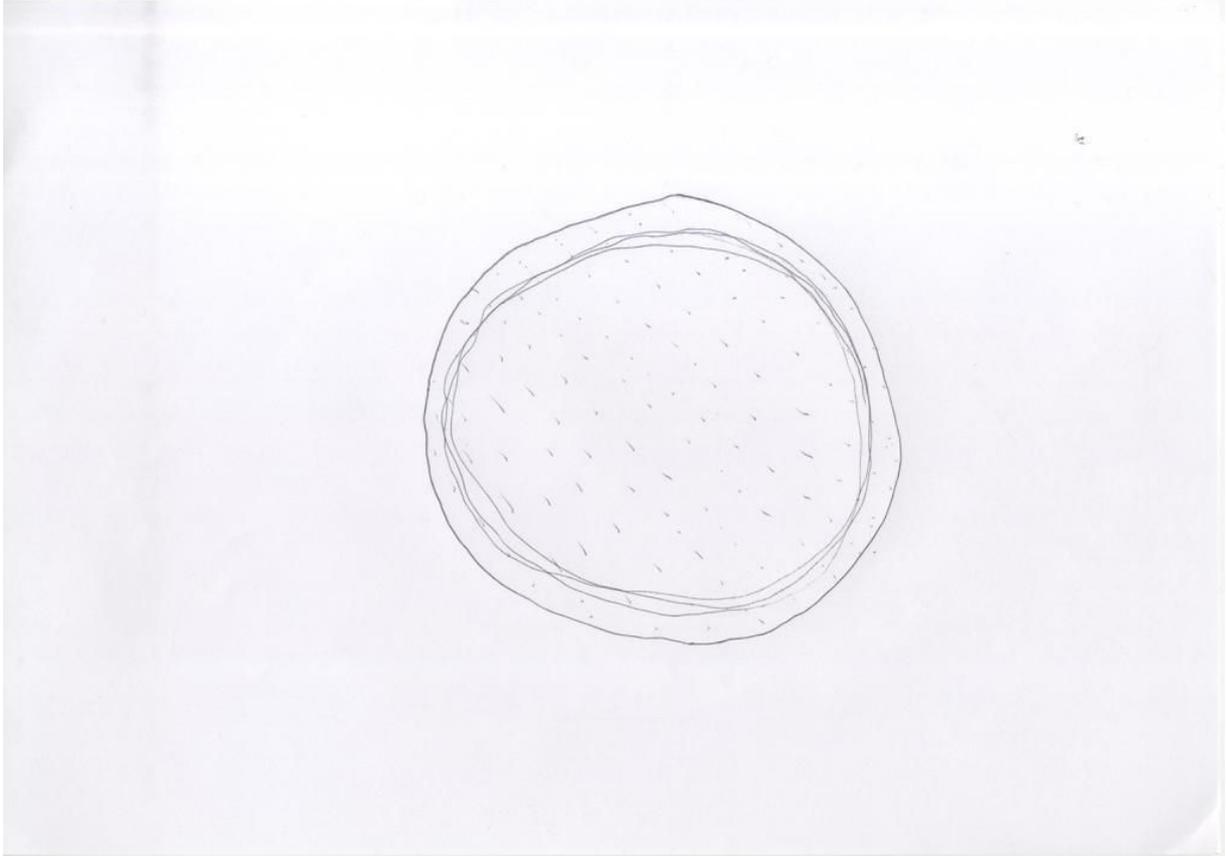
⁵² Marx. *Capital*, p. 126.

Below, I give a summary of Simondon's account of the process of crystal formation with the intention that it provides a rigorous analogy of the way in which simple acts of exchange comes to structure the world according to their own image.⁵³

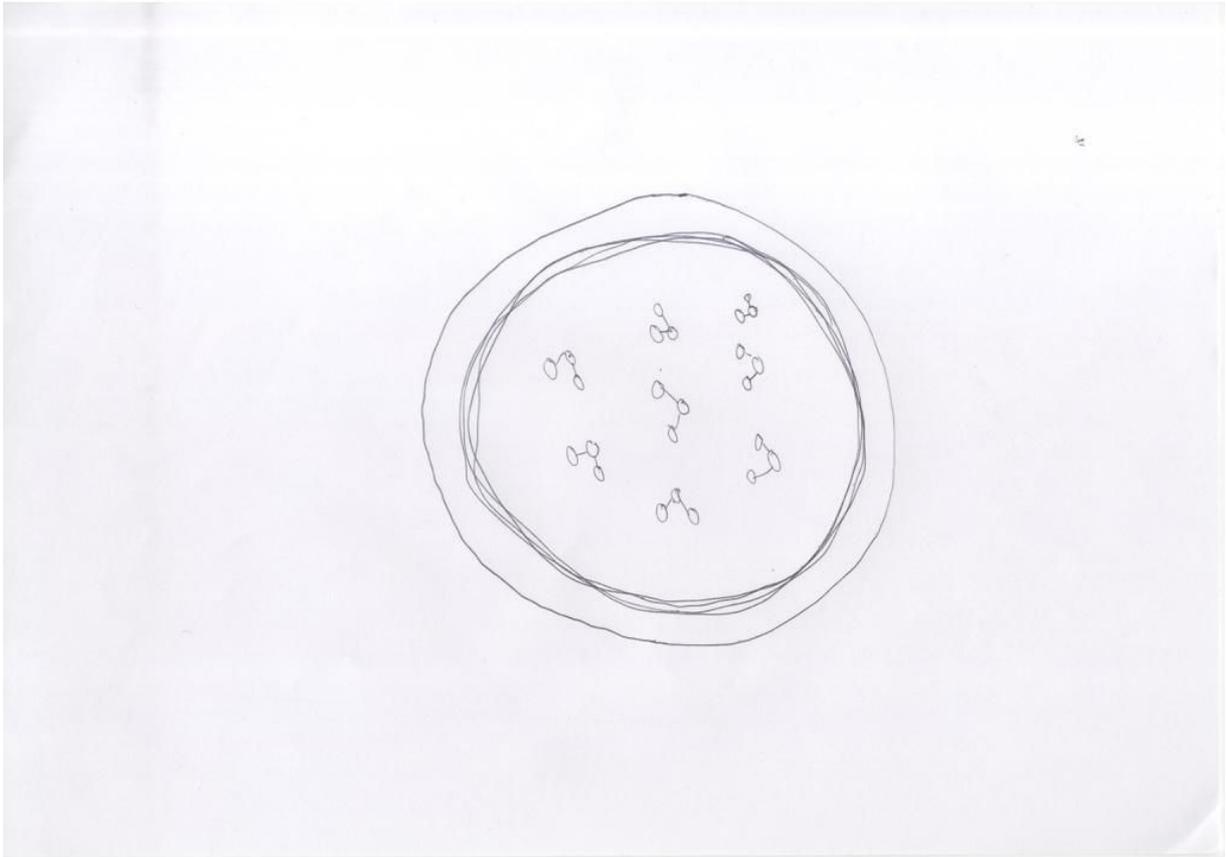
3.3.2 Crystallography of the Snowflake

Simondon's example begins with a petri dish filled with a super-cooled water (water that remains liquid below freezing point). In this stage or state, the water is a field of singular, disparate potentialities, characterised by metastability. Metastability is not simply equilibrium at a higher level. It is marked by a volatility in which the slightest change in the parameters of a system (for example heat or pressure) can lead to a complete change in the system state and the breakdown of equilibrium. For this reason, metastability is also termed 'false equilibrium.'

⁵³ My summary of Simondon's account of crystal formation is taken from: Gilbert Simondon. 'The position of the problem of ontogenesis.' Translated by Gregory Flanders. *Parrhesia: a journal of critical philosophy* 7 (2009): 4-16. <https://www.parrhesiajournal.org>.

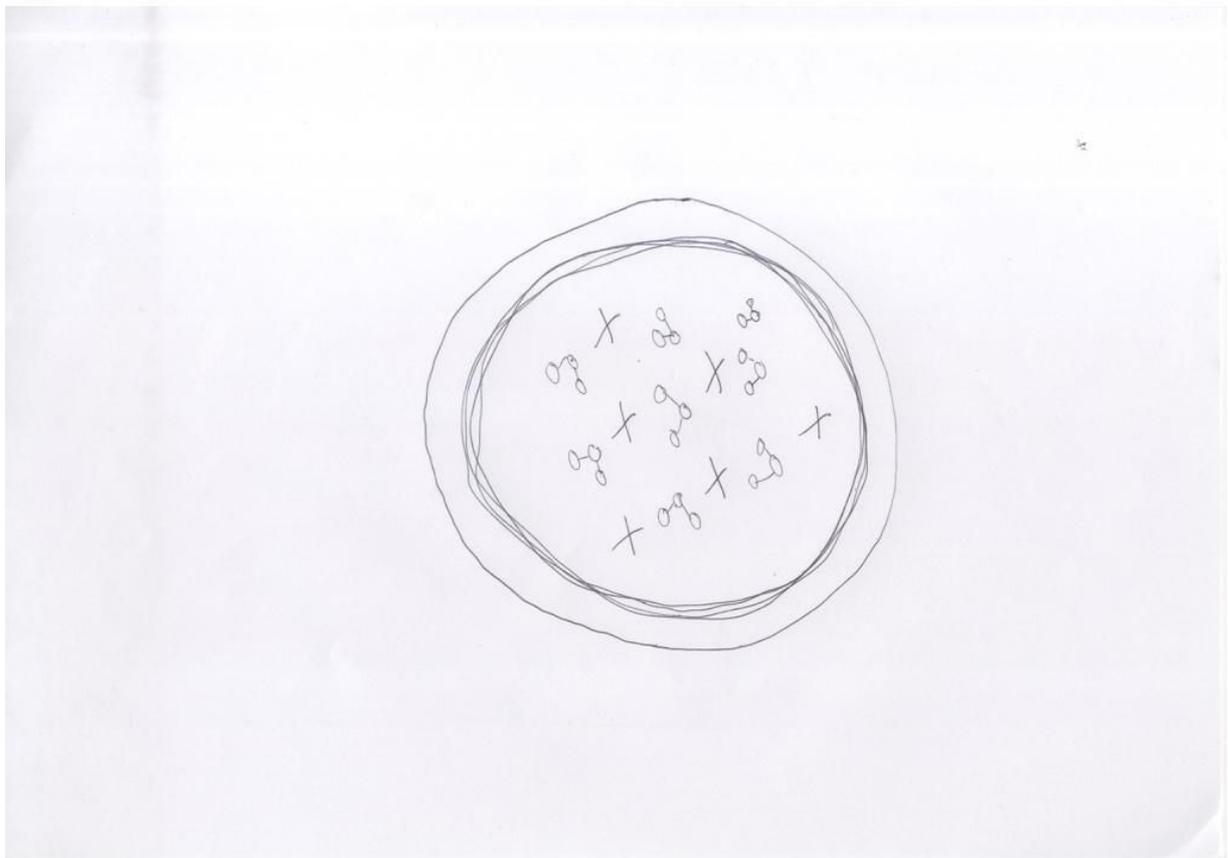


At a lower order of magnitude than the metastability just described are the molecules constitutive of water. Whilst characterised by a charged potentiality, there is at this stage no communication between the orders of magnitude, between the materiality of the water molecules and the energetic metastability of the system.



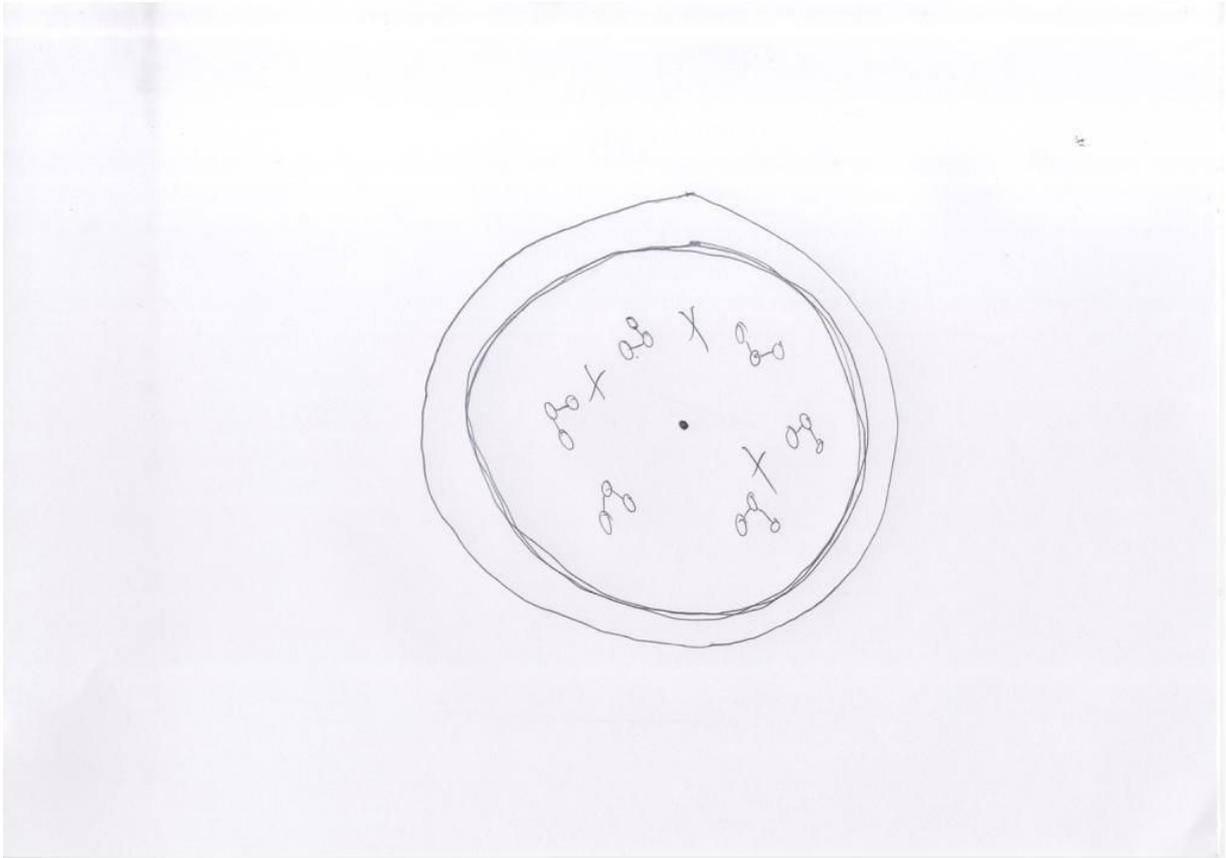
The positivity of the singular points of charged potentiality is not all that exists in the system, however. The field is also populated by torsions and tensions, incompatibilities and energetic differentials. Being, here, is more than itself, in excess of itself: it is the non-identity of being to itself. This is due to the fact that these potentialities and incompatibilities are a problematic that seeks resolution. However, not all the potentials can be actualised simultaneously, and each actualisation precludes others through incompatibility. This state is distinct from Deleuzian notions of the virtual or the possible. The potentialities are the real potential energy of a system, they actually exist as

potential. As Simondon phrases it, 'The potential, conceived as potential energy, is real, because it expresses the reality of a metastable state, and its energetic situation'.⁵⁴ It is through the tensions of incompatibilities, of singular potentialities not exhausted by actualisation, that being is said to be more than itself, to be in a relation of non-identity with itself.

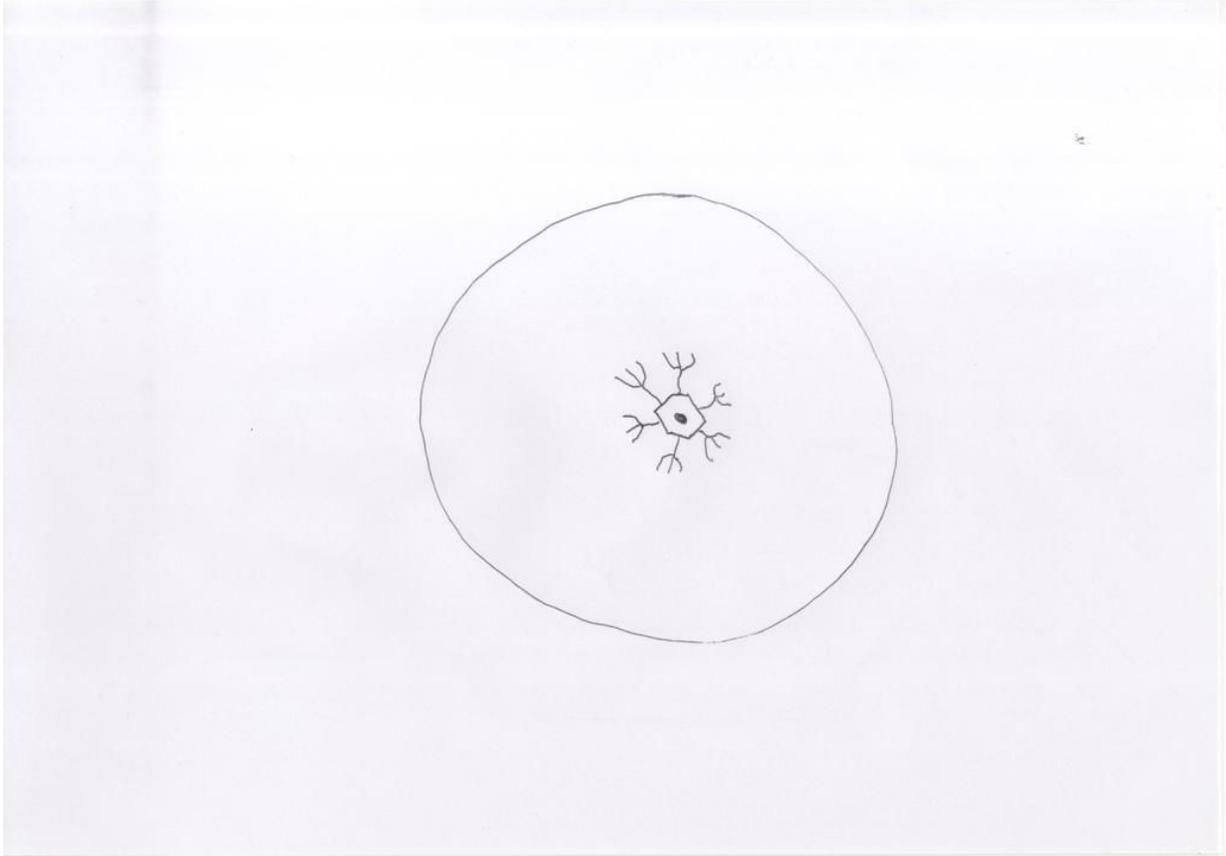


⁵⁴ Gilbert Simondon quoted in Arne De Boever, Alex Murray, Jon Roffe, and Ashley Woodward, eds. *Gilbert Simondon: Being and Technology*. Edinburgh University Press, 2012, p. 226.

At this stage, an impurity, known as the seed or germ, is introduced to the supercooled water. Somewhere along the surface of this impurity is a point that is isometrically identical to the structure of the crystal that will subsequently form. It is this point that supplies the original piece of information that allows for communication between differing orders of magnitude: potential energy (higher) and molecular (lower). At a middle order of magnitude, the point of communication, potential energy actualises itself while matter organises and divides itself. This initiates the process whereby Being can slip out of phase with itself, or dephase itself in relation to itself. Simondon describes this as Being overflowing out of itself, beginning at its centre. The isometric point that provided the trigger is both inside and outside of the crystal, although, as impurity, it is internal to the event of crystallisation.



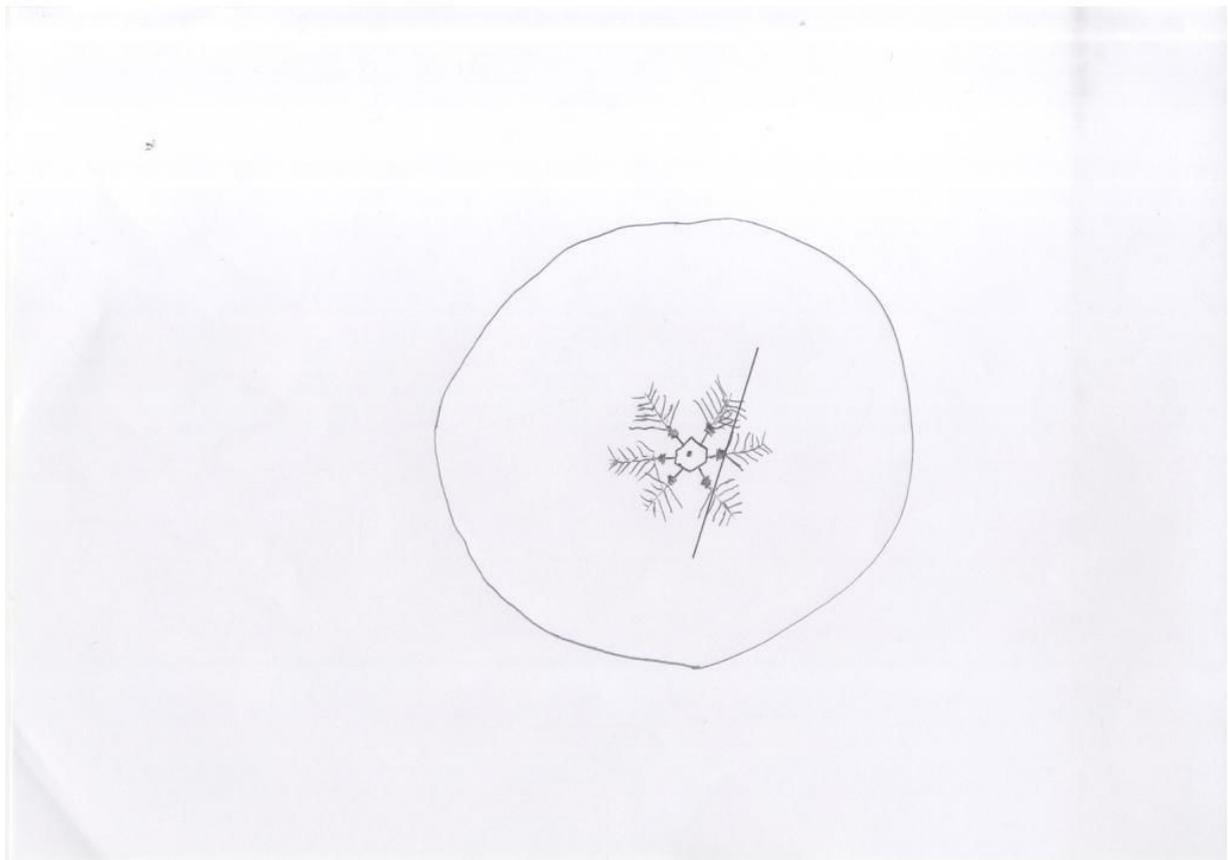
The initial communication, or de-phasing of being, instigates a stage of the process Simondon describes as the 'spreading out of being'. Beginning from the isometric trigger, each already-constituted molecular layer serves as an organising basis for the following layer, in the amplification of a reticular structure through progressive iteration. Through this process, the incompatibilities of potentialities are resolved – individuated – as the structuration of the metastable state. Whilst the increasing consistency, as opposed to inconsistency, reduces energy in the system, the preindividual charge is never exhausted.



Simondon's term for the relationship between the individuated crystal and the surrounding water is 'associated milieus'. The relationship between an individual and its environment is maintained by the common relationship to the pre-individual state of potentiality.

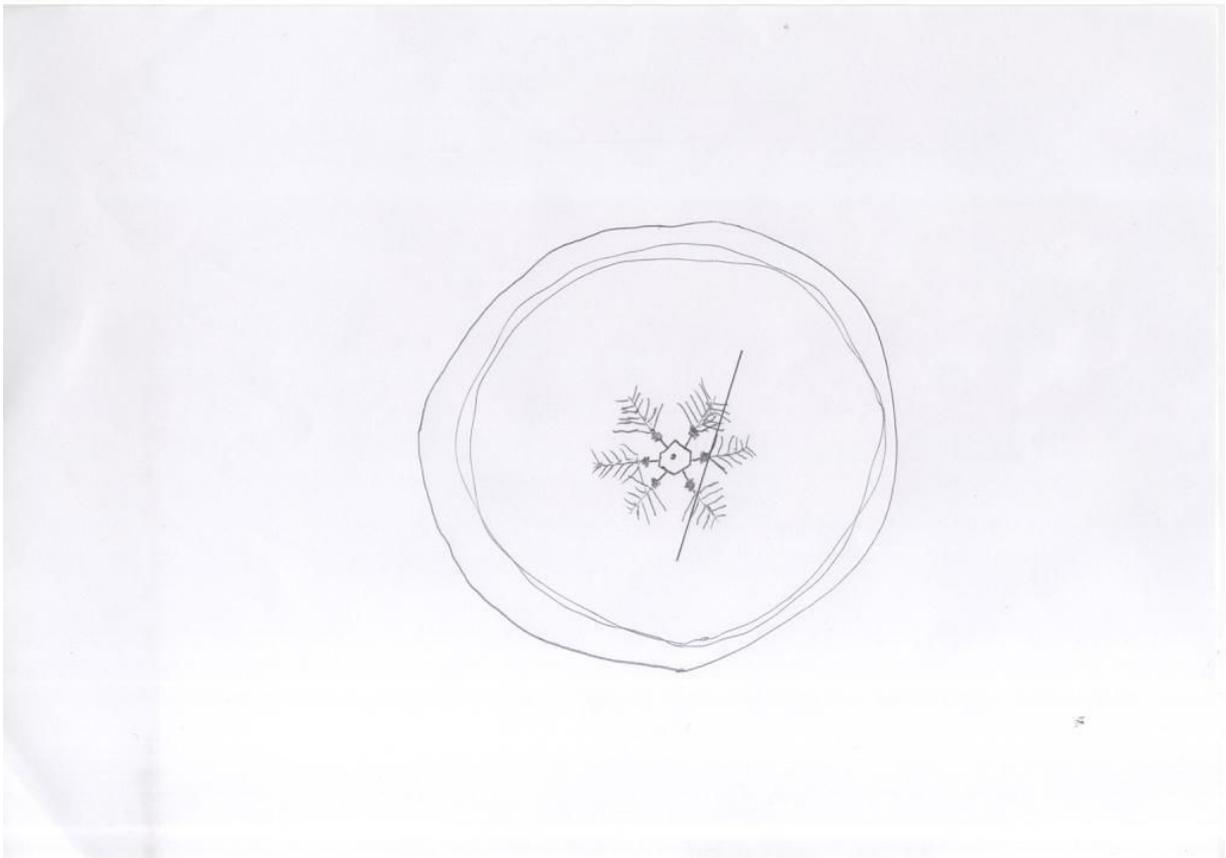
In this way, each individuation is in fact double: the crystal and its milieus both simultaneously individuate. Individuation occurs through a dual process of the internalisation of the exterior and exteriorisation of the interior. The relationship between an individuated being and its associated milieus is not one of binary difference (crystal/water). The crystal is made of water, and remains in communication with the

surrounding water. The difference is one of contrast produced through the mediation of different orders of magnitude whereby potentialities of a system and the singularities of matter enter into communication. The individual and its milieu are both crossed by their common pre-individuality.

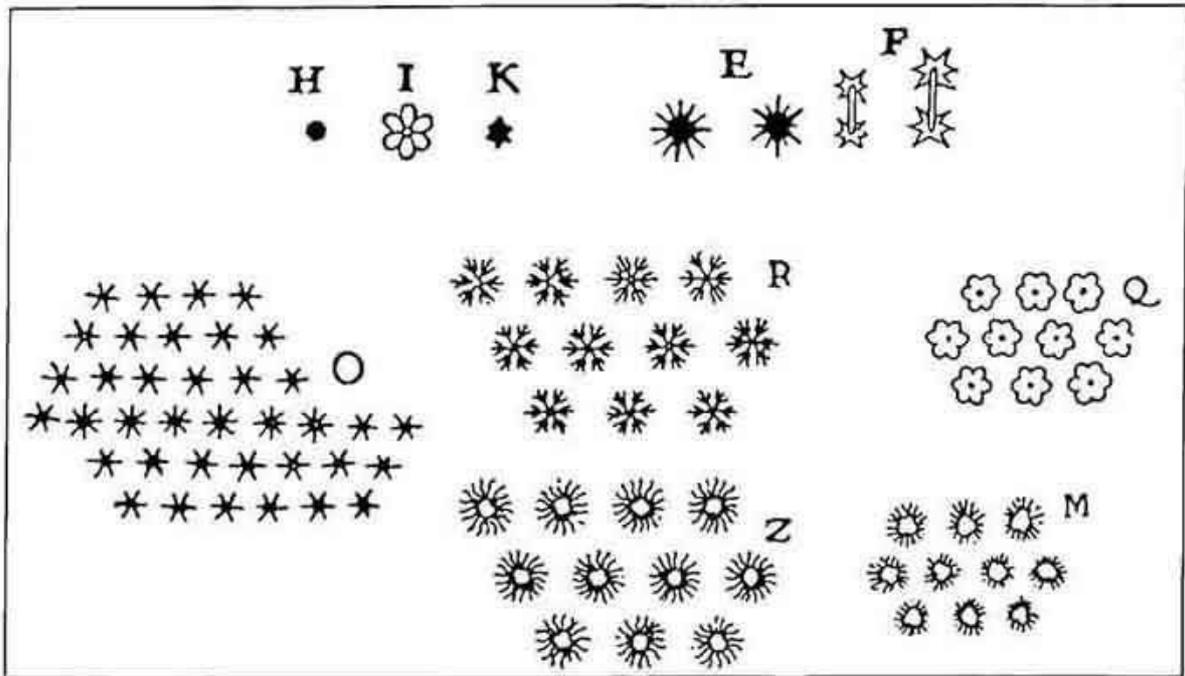


In brief terms, this completes a diagram of Simondon's paradigmatic instance of the process of individuation. In summary, the central elements are: the charged tensions and incompatibilities of the potentialities of being expressed in the non-communication between energetic and material orders or domains; the doubled individuation that

produces the contrast between individual and associated milieus; the internal relation between an individual and its preindividual charge, meaning the unexhausted or unresolved potentialities it harbours and which serve the basis for future individuation; the process by which a domain becomes subject to (re)structuration through the repeating expansion of the isometry given by the initial impurity (transduction).



3.4 Conclusion



Detail of the hexagonal structure of snowflakes. Rene Descartes, 1635

The abstractness invoked in the action of exchange irradiates the world through a process akin to reverse xray. The flash of abstraction impresses its own skeletal image back onto the world of first nature. Thinking with Simondon's example of crystal formation, it is possible to discern how simple acts of exchange are like the molecular bonds of ice crystals that 'amplify a reticular structure through progressive iteration'. The compressed and concentrated abstractions contained in exchange come to propagate themselves into the sensuous domain of existence, making the world over according to their own skeletal image. Somewhere along the the surface of a material seed or

impurity, gold perhaps, a point is isometrically identical to the abstract, suprasensible yet real – social – crystallisation process that initiates from that singular point. The commodity abstraction lays over the earth like a metaphysical permafrost, reifying relationality into the appearance of static substance, homogenising difference, and rendering it equivalent for exchange.

Geomentality is an expression of, and within, a mode of life: a kind of calligraphic embellishment or rhythmic flourish resonant at different scales. The compound of the abstractions of exchange, once their shape has been gifted to consciousness in the form of the abstract intellect, provides a comprehensive framework of abstract nature. Abstract nature then usurps the sensuous world so that the former is taken to be the more real, more concrete world. The coarse, plural, and motley sensuous world comes to be aligned with error and imprecision. The blur of continuity and contrast dissolves into homogenous atomicity reorganised according to the discrete and absolute borders of private property and abstract precision.

At first, the distinction between use and exchange – the double aspects of an individuation from prior unity – remains rough and porous. However, as monetised exchange comes to be the dominant form of social synthesis, so too does its pattern become the dominant structuring configuration of thought. The historical expansion and intensification of capitalism is parallel to the increasing resolution of the abstractions of the intellect that subsequently inscribe themselves into the world with ever greater

definition.⁵⁵ Colonisation draws distant continents into the metabolism of circulation, 'drawing the dimensions of exchange over the whole world.'⁵⁶

The absolute exclusion of use in exchange, eventually resulting in money as an independent expression of value, models the unitary individual isolated and apparently prior to the social ground that is in fact its precondition. A more amorphous or nebulous experience becomes circumscribed by the perimeter of the self. As Marx suggests,

gold or silver in its crude state, becomes, immediately on its emergence from the bowels of the earth, the direct incarnation of all human labour. Hence the magic of money. Men are henceforth related in their social process of production in a purely atomistic way. Their own relations of production therefore assume a material shape which is independent of their control and their conscious individual action.⁵⁷

Money, in which the pristine eternity of its ideality erases the past, posits the originality of production, a self-moving, creative beginning, occluding through this cut the rhythms of reproduction that pulse as the necessary ground of its continuing functioning. The repetitive choreography of exchange fashions the 'mysterious shape' of Pākehā social relations and consciousness, the geomentality by which we reify the earth under the sign of the frozen sterility of second nature. The basal motif of the Pākehā world I take to be the crystal of reified social relations that repeats at different scales: value,

⁵⁵ The abstractions peculiar to commodity exchange not abstraction *per se*.

⁵⁶ Marx. *Grundrisse*, 1993, p. 225.

⁵⁷ Marx. *Capital*. 1976. p. 187.

homogenous crystals of social substance; the integrated individual as unique snowflake unfolding in conformity with the molecular logic exchange; and finally, capitalism as a crystallised domain. Beneath it all, the earth's surface is lacerated by the ideal incisions of private property.

4 In the Colony

4.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapters, by way of a geometric shorthand, I provided a description of what might be described as the basal motifs of two worlds, Māori and Pākehā. The encounter between worlds involves the resolution of the incompatibilities that hum as unreconciled dissonance or jar as outright antagonism. I use resolution here in a double sense: to mean both the working out of contradictory elements and the definition (high or low resolution) at which structuring patterns are inscribed in a world. The latter sense concerns the clarity with which one world finds expression in and against another, or with which a certain pattern is expressed within a world.

In the example that follows, I turn to a local moment of the encounter between those two worlds. I describe the way in which one world seeks to decide resolution in its own favour, reducing dissonance and canceling noise in accordance with its own image or signal. The Pākehā world seeks to interrupt, undermine, block, dissolve, ingest, and de- or recompose the basal patternings of the world it encounters so as to impress on that world its own structurations. I trace an aspect or moment of the crystallisation process whereby the forms of the Pākehā world replicate themselves into the Māori world. The particular set of forms I follow here comprises an intergenerative cluster –

both diagram and living, breathing assemblage – comprised of law, private property, the liberal individual, farm fencing, land survey, settlers, and so on. In short, it comprises the processual interrelations of metaphysical and material things that are reproductive of a distinctive social geometry outlined in the previous chapter in terms of relations of exchange.

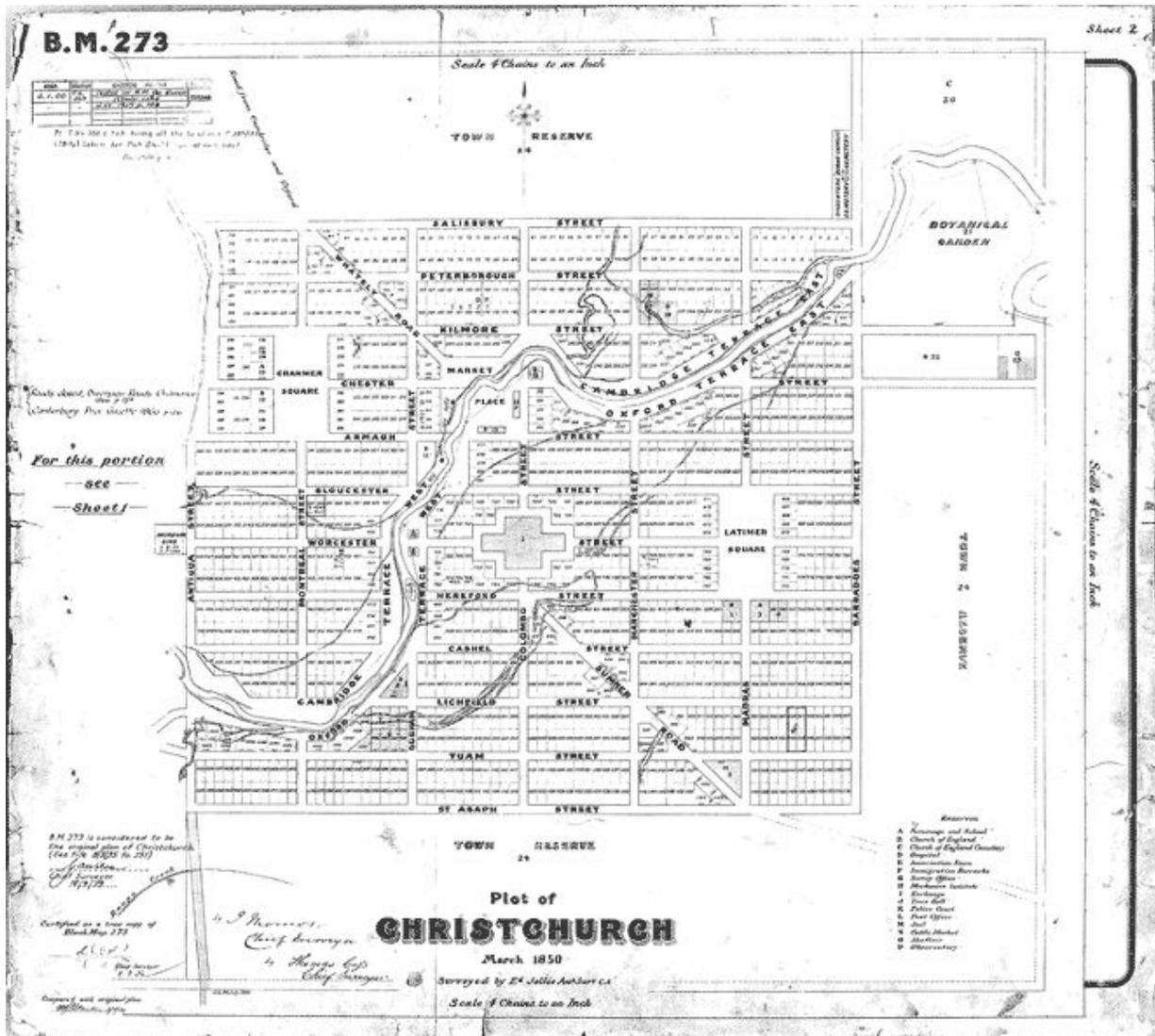
As Marx has pointed out, the capitalist mode of life encounters anterior pre-existent modes of life and ‘encounters them as antecedents, but not as antecedents established by itself, not as forms of its own life process.’¹ In the first instance, capitalism seeks parasitic relationship with existing forms of the production of life. In the second, it seeks to reconfigure those processes from the ground up in accordance with its own blueprint. The primary moment of this reconstitution is the shaking loose of people from their connection to the land and the commodification of that land and labour. In this way, Māori are enjoined to a now near-global process, the enclosure of the Earth, a necessary precondition for the emergence and expansion of capitalism. As the historian Eric Hobsbawm suggests (if via a metaphoric completely inverted to that developed in the last chapter):

The great frozen ice-cap of the world’s traditional agrarian systems and rural social relations lay above the fertile soil of economic growth. It had at all costs to be melted, so that that soil could be ploughed by the forces of profit-producing private enterprise.

¹Karl Marx. *Theories of surplus value: books I, II, and III*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2000, p. 468.

While I have referenced the globality of the process, settler colonialism does not hover above indigenous places exacting rents like the floating island of *Gulliver's Travels*. It is intimately and inextricably a production of the processes of colonisation, of the resistance it encounters, of its singular contexts and contingencies. The Pākehā world is not itself unchanged by the process of its own transport and transplantation. In fact, the Pākehā world is itself a product of the process of the conflict, imbrication, and cogenesis of the encounter between the European world and its 'host' world. Likewise, Europe was not an isolated entity that simply enforced its will on the world, but was in constant mutation with the ricochets and reverberations of its colonial activities. This is the process whereby settler colonialism is worked out in and through the conflicts, confrontations, and interrelations of specific encounters.

The account that follows tracks the process whereby land is transformed into a commodity, becoming doubled and split as use and exchange value, by way of a local example. It looks at the way the land bears the inscription of this process in its parceled-out form as the orthogonal grid of private property, with the number eight wire fence becoming the earthly shadow of the ideal boundary of private property.



Plan of Christchurch for the New Zealand Company. Edward Jollie, 1850.

I follow this process in Te Waipounamu (the South Island) because that is where the people I share whakapapa with – Kāi Tahu (Ngai Tāhu) – hold mana whenua (power, authority from the land), and also because it is exemplary of certain processes that I wish to highlight. As rough schematic, rather than neat categorisation, the chapter is divided into two parts. The first is the classical moment of primitive accumulation,

clearing people from the land, the production of a market in land and labour; the second is the neoliberal continuation and attenuation of initial processes of dispossession through intensive expansion whereby more and more dimensions of life are handed over to the markets. The analysis flickers between Māori and Pākehā perspectives so as to express the lack of a neutral ground outside of the processes whereby the antagonisms between worlds are resolved into newly formed consistency.

By attending to various settler fictions – those of literature, advertising, political economy, and law – the processes through which the colony calls itself into being come into view. Once visible, a series of questions present themselves. How do such epistemological propositions become operational in summoning the colony into being? How do settler fictions pass over from one mode of existence into another (from fiction to true fiction, perhaps, as reverse correlate of the transition from real abstraction to abstraction)? This chapter engages with considerations such as these by attending to the historical process of the instantiation of New Zealand as a settler colonial state.

4.2 Farm Fencing

In the early stages of the colonisation of Aotearoa New Zealand, fencing was designed to protect crops, orchards and gardens from stock, rather than to demarcate the borders of property or to limit the movement of animals. Whilst these small areas were enclosed, the majority of the land remained unbounded. This was largely due to the degree of

time- and labour-intensiveness of the methods of fencing available at the time, and the lack of a large and cheap labour force to carry out this work.² Samuel Butler, who, amongst other things, owned a sheep station in Canterbury in the 1860s, recorded the following technique for getting his sheep to stay on his property:

Directly [they] reach the boundary show yourself with your dog in your most terrific aspect. Startle them, frighten them; do so again and again, at the same spot, from the very first day. Let them always have peace on their own run, and none anywhere off it. In a month or two you will find the sheep begin to understand your meaning.³

By the mid 1860s, following the patenting of a process that enabled the mass production of thin gauge wire, wire fencing enabled settlers to enclose vast areas. In 1866, John Grigg called for tenders for 32 kilometres of fencing, and by 1871 George Charles Tripp had 48 kilometres of wire fencing erected. In 1879, Moa station, between Dunedin and Alexandra, had 402 kilometres of wire fencing.⁴

The *Oxford English Dictionary of Quotations* records a mid-seventeenth century proverb, 'good fences make good neighbors'.⁵ The proverb implies, of course, that disputes will arise if the borders of property are not clearly and physically demarcated.

² Robert Peden. 'Farm fencing – Wire fencing', *Te Ara – The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, updated 2009. www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/farm-fencing/1

³ Samuel Butler. *A first year in Canterbury settlement*. Christchurch: Kiwi, 1997 [1863], p. 151.

⁴ Robert Peden. 'Farm fencing – Wire fencing', *Te Ara – The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, updated 2009. www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/farm-fencing/3

⁵ Elizabeth Knowles. *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Within two years of the signing of the Tiriti o Waitangi and the Treaty of Waitangi (the Māori and English language versions respectively), laws controlling fencing had been passed. In 1847, an ordinance stipulated that neighbours were to share the cost of building and maintaining border fencing.⁶ The land, previously held in common by various iwi and hapū, which were open to interconnection, had been transformed so that the only thing held in common was that barrier which separated property owners.

As well as owning a sheep station, Samuel Butler was a writer of some note. For instance, he is credited with instantiating the now well-worn science fiction device of machines that have surpassed and dominated their creators. During his years in the South Island of New Zealand, he composed the notes and drafts for his utopian and satiric novel *Erewhon*, the unnamed narrator of which is employed on a sheep station in an unspecified British colony.⁷ Although the novel undeniably references Thomas Moore's *Utopia* ('Erewhon' is nowhere misspelt backwards), the civilisation that the unnamed narrator of the novel discovers is far from utopian: Erewhonians punish their sick, and those who have experienced gross misfortune, while hospitalising embezzlers and rewarding the fortunate. Critics quickly realised the book to be a staunch critique of Victorian institutions, proposing *Gulliver's Travels* as a more appropriate model of influence. However, the novel does engage with a prevalent utopian impulse of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries: the settler utopia of an uninhabited land that offers an unspoiled, more temperate and accommodating version of the country of

⁶ 'VIII: An Ordinance To Encourage The Fencing Of Land' [2 October 1847]. Accessed 23 August 2011 at www.victoria.ac.nz/law/nzlostcases/Ordinances_1840s.aspx.

⁷ Peter Raby. *Samuel Butler: A Biography*. Iowa City: University of Iowa, 1991. Samuel Butler and Peter Mudford. *Erewhon*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970.

origin – an outpost for the expansion, betterment and glory of the home culture. The image of the future colony resembles the utopian imagination in that it dreams of a new space free of the poverty and oppression of an industrialised economy. In practice, however, this dream is troubled and refused by the fact of the prior inhabitation of the land by non-Europeans. The dream of virgin soil has to be forcibly mapped onto a resistant and already inhabited terrain. *Erewhon*'s central preoccupation is precisely this settler utopia, specifically as it emerged during the nineteenth-century colonisation of Aotearoa New Zealand.⁸

In the book, the narrator is compelled to see what lies west of his settlement by the tantalising thought of free arable pasture, gold, or convertible pagan souls (Heaven's currency). On setting out, he is joined by an enigmatic yet physically hideous guide named Chowbok. Chowbok, an itinerant farm hand, is a reasonably textbook example of the enlightenment trope of the wily and mischievous savage. At a certain point, the narrator is abandoned by Chowbok, only to find the civilisation of Erewhon immediately afterward. Interestingly, we later learn that Erewhonians kill Chowbok's people on sight, due to the fact that they are aesthetically displeasing. The inhabitants of Erewhon are beautiful and have brown skin, but the society itself shares a number of parallels with Victorian England, although machines have been banned for several hundred years owing to their tendency to dominate human beings. The narrator's settler dream of a pastoral idyll, free of competition, is thwarted by his discovery of a densely populated civilisation resembling Britain. Erewhon thus holds an ironic mirror to the

⁸ Butler uses the advent of colonisation as a way of posing the question of the limits of the human. That said, it is the pressures put on the concept of the human through processes of settlement that give his central impetus.

settler nostalgia for the home from simpler times transported to greener pastures. The central conceit of the novel operates through the projection of Victorian institutions and cultural beliefs onto a dislocated terrain, already coded by an exoticised gaze.

The actual colonisation of New Zealand is governed by the same logic. Whereas the dream of an untouched pastoral idyll had previously been attached to Canada and the western United States, vigorous advertising on behalf of the New Zealand Company did much to shift the supposed location of this imagined utopia. Whilst political economists had for some time pontificated about the good of colonial expansion for dispersing the poor around the globe, and thus at the same time diffusing political tensions in the home country, the myth of an uninhabited and better Britain was fleshed out in literature. The condition of British novels such as *Mary Barton* and *Alton Locke* popularised the idea that foreign expansion was the cure for social tensions that were thought to be caused by a surplus of labour.⁹

Writing on the Chartist Movement in 1839, Thomas Carlyle extravagantly proclaimed:

And the rest is in a world where Canadian Forests stand unfelled, boundless Plains and Prairies unbroken with the plough; on the west and on the east green desert spaces never yet made white with corn; and to the overcrowded little western nook of Europe, our Terrestrial Planet, nine-tenths of it yet vacant or tenanted by nomads, is still crying, Come and till me, come and reap me!¹⁰

⁹ Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell and Macdonald Daly. *Mary Barton: A Tale of Manchester Life*. London: Penguin, 1996; Charles Kingsley. *Alton Locke*. London: Macmillan, 1902.

¹⁰ Thomas Carlyle and Alan Shelston. *Selected Writings*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971, p. 231.

One would not need to misread Carlyle's last line by much to gain a much truer insight into the desire drive of colonial expansion. Statements such as this were by no means merely rhetorical. As Edward Shortland noted around 1850, the notion was

a very favourite one among new comers, who landed full of the idea that there were large spaces of what they termed waste and unreclaimed land, on which their cattle and flocks might roam at pleasure, and to which they had a better right than those whose ancestors had lived there, fished there, and hunted there; and had, moreover, long ago given names to every stream, hill, and valley of the neighbourhood.¹¹

By this time there had already been several centuries experience of the violence required against indigenous peoples in order for the planet to appear 'vacant'. Yet the dream was maintained in spite of the insistent refutation by Māori of its central tenet. By 1879, Reverend James Buller described New Zealand as a less populated replica of England:

¹¹ Edward Shortland. *The Southern Districts of New Zealand: A Journal with Passing Notices of the Customs of the Aborigines*, London: Longman, 1851.

There is room in New Zealand for millions. It would relieve the over-crowded country at home ... if all who find it hard to get on in England, would only emigrate to New Zealand. It is but to go from one England to another.¹²

Replete with place names, plants, and pall mall, the cutting had begun to replicate its genetic material. Lady Barker, writing to convince her readers back home that Christchurch was just like England, only subtly improved, wrote:

The Avon winds through the grounds, which are very pretty, and are laid out in the English fashion; but in spite of the lawn with its croquet-hoops and sticks, and the beds of flowers in all their late summer beauty, there is a certain absence of the stiffness of English pleasure-grounds, which shows that you have escaped from the region of conventionalities.¹³

Elsewhere, Barker, commenting on the hot-house mimicry of better Britain, reveals a more sinister side, if only at the level horticulture: 'I don't think I have ever told you that it has been found necessary here to legislate against water-cress. It was introduced a few years hence, and has spread so rapidly as to become a perfect nuisance, choking every ditch in the neighborhood of Christchurch.' So it was that by 1870, the *Christchurch Press* could proclaim that the transmogrification was complete:

¹² James Buller. *Forty Years in New Zealand*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1878, p. 450.

¹³ Lady Barker. *Station Life in New Zealand*. Christchurch: n.p., 1951, p. 42.

Thousands of acres that a few years ago were covered with brown tussock [are] now studded with stacks of grain, sheep, cattle, and cozy looking homesteads that will remind you of the best farmed districts in England.¹⁴

The narrator of *Erewhon* discovers, in place of the empty idyll he had anticipated, a densely populated civilisation that resembles England but with some of its coordinates skewed. *Erewhon*, a disjointed and back-to-front nowhere, plays with precisely the settler dream articulated in the preceding quotes. As Stephen Turner has surmised of this settler tendency for displacement: 'Settler dreaming actually produces a sense of nowhere by making it all the harder to know where one actually is, or more specifically whose place it might actually be.'¹⁵ After providing an ethnography of *Erewhonian* culture, the narrator steals away in a hot air balloon with a woman he has fallen in love with (named Arowhena, 'aroha' being the Maori word approximately translatable by 'love'). On returning to London several months later, frustrated by people's disinclination to believe his tale, the narrator schemes to sell the *Erewhonians* into slavery – justified, he believes, by the fact that it would enable their conversion to Christianity. Although the narrator shares some biographical similarities with the author, a likely target of the satire is Edward Gibbon Wakefield, theorist of colonisation and absentee founding father of New Zealand.

¹⁴ Christchurch Press, quoted in Stevan Eldred-Grigg. *A New History of Canterbury*. Dunedin: J. McIndoe, 1982, p. 45.

¹⁵ Stephen Turner. "Settler Dreaming." *Memory Connection* 1, no. 1, 2011, p. 123.

The settler colony begins its presencing in the dream-like images that swirl above settlers as their common sense, providing the promise, impetus, and projection that is the necessary supplement to the practical activity of colonisation. It is by way of literature that it becomes possible to discern the premonition of the colony to come, a premonition that begins to take corporeal shape in the plans and proposals of Edward Gibbon Wakefield, agent and architect of the New Zealand Company.¹⁶ As I will return to, Wakefield's genius is in his ability to conjure with the fictions and fantasies of the future colony, to bring that colony into existence.

4.3 Kāi Tahu/Ngāi Tahu

The iwi I whakapapa to is Kāi Tahu (also spelled Ngāi Tahu).¹⁷ Kāi Tahu has become the collective name for the various peoples that hold manawhenua (mana from/over the land) for the vast majority of Te Waipounamu (The South Island). As Kāi Tahu, our whakapapa relates us to the atua (god) Uenuku in Hawaiki. Hawaiki is the ancestral home of Māori in the Pacific and Uenuku is an atua god associated with rainbows, with which Uenuku shares his name. In Hawaiki, Uenuku had a large waka built for him by

¹⁶ The New Zealand Land Company, more regularly known as the New Zealand Company, was formally established in 1839. It was essentially a continuation of the New Zealand Association formed two years prior, with origins back to the original New Zealand Company of 1825.

¹⁷ Kāi Tahu is a dialectical variance originating from the southern part of the Te Waipounamu (the South Island), where my tūpuna (ancestors) are from. The corporate iwi uses Ngāi Tahu. I have maintained the distinction, using Kāi Tahu as a name for the people and Ngāi Tahu to refer to the corporate iwi. This distinction is idiosyncratic but I wanted to express the fact that the corporate iwi (Ngāi Tahu) is not identical to the people that exceed it (Kāi Tahu).

the tohunga (expert carver) Haeora.¹⁸ For the maiden launch of the waka, Uenuku called together a group of seventy young men comprised of his own sons and the sons of other chiefs. The men each had their hair ceremonially dressed with a hair comb, with Uenuku performing this for his own sons. However, Uenuku left his son Ruatapu without a comb. When Ruatapu inquired as to why he had been left without a hair comb, Uenuku responded by saying that this was because he was an illegitimate son and therefore that he had no right.¹⁹

Angered by this public shaming, Ruatapu plotted to kill his brothers. He made a hole in the waka and then concealed it with woodchips. Once at sea, he covered the hole with his foot until they were far away from land. Removing his foot, he sunk the canoe, drowning the rest of the crew with the exception of his brother Kahutiaterangi, who managed to escape. Kahutiaterangi recited karakia so as to warm his body and to summon his tipuna (ancestors) for assistance. He was soon joined by his ancestral taniwha (sea beings) and then either transformed into, or was carried on the back of, a whale. In this way, Kahutiaterangi travelled to Aotearoa (New Zealand) and his name became Paikea, meaning whale. Kāi Tahu and the North Island iwi Ngāti Porou both whakapapa from Paikea.

The name Kāi Tahu means people of Tahu, the common ancestor from whom Kāi Tahu trace descent. Tahu Potiki, as he was called, was the youngest son of Paikea and Hemo ki-te-Raki. Kāi Tahu is made up of several iwi (nations, peoples) who

¹⁸ Mere Whaanga. *A carved cloak for Tahu*. Auckland, N.Z.: Auckland University Press, 2004.

¹⁹ Atholl Anderson, Judith Binney, and Aroha Harris. *Tangata Whenua an illustrated history*. Auckland: Bridget Williams Books, 2014. P. 60.

together constitute the tangata whenua (people of the land) of Te Waiponamu (the South Island). The first people to migrate south were Waitaha, who were later joined by, and with, Kāti Mamoi. A further wave of migration brought Kāi Tahu, who, through combination of alliance, marriage and war, interwove with the existing peoples. My hapū, Kāti Huirapa, was described in the Waitangi Tribunal report as exemplary of Kāi Tahu in general. In that report, Tipene O'Reagan is quoted as saying:

Perhaps our Kati Huirapa people centred on Arowhenua best typify the three primary streams of whakapapa that go to make us – they are the centre of our Waitaha tradition, they have significant Mamoe descent and they carry the name of Huirapa, one of our most important founding tupuna [ancestors] from the southeastern North Island roots of Kai Tahu. Our tupuna tied us together in a kupeka, or net, of whakapapa...²⁰

The first inhabitants, Waitaha, had consecrated the land with the mauri (life force) of their ancestors.²¹ Thus, their whakapapa was interwoven with the land. As Rawiri Te Maire Tau explains: 'Through this sacred practice the landmarks "become" the ancestor, so that the South Island was transformed into an ancestral church.'²² These whakapapa

²⁰ Waitangi Tribunal. *Ngai Tahu Land Report*. Report. Vol. Wai 27. Wellington: Ministry of Justice, 1991, p. 183.

²¹ Te Maire Tau. "Ngāi Tahu and Waitaha." Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand. February 8, 2017. Accessed December 16, 2016. <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/ngai-tahu/page-4>.

²² Te Maire Tau. "Ngāi Tahu - The genealogy of the land." Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand. February 8, 2005. Accessed December 16, 2016. <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/ngai-tahu/page-5>.

were subsequently taken on by Kāi Tahu, who, through the process of interconnection with the existing peoples and their traditions, came to express mana whenua (power from the land) in Te Waipounamu.

The decade beginning in the late 1820s saw ferocious warfare as Kāi Tahu came under attack from Ngāti Toa. Led by Te Rauparaha and armed with muskets, Ngāti Toa made their way down Te Ika a Maui (the North Island) after having been forced out of their home in Kawhia. They attacked local tribes in Taranaki and the Wellington region before crossing the straight to Te Waipounamu. Both Kāi Tahu and Ngāti Toa faced immense losses throughout the decade of conflict. In 1839 lasting peace was reached, and secured through intermarriage. The world was rapidly changing throughout this period with the arrival of an increasing tide of settlers. The world in which mana (sacred power, prestige, authority) prevailed as a first principle was receding. Atholl Anderson suggests that there was discontent amongst Kāi Tahu that this transition left them frozen with depleted mana given the outstanding utu (reciprocity) owed to Ngāti Toa for their invasion. Responding to this contention, a chief is said to have stated that Kāi Tahu would navigate the changing world by 'dazzling enemies with riches.'²³

A year later, seven Kāi Tahu chiefs would sign the Treaty of Waitangi. Kāi Tahu had been in contact with Pākehā since around 1795. From the end of the eighteenth century, multi-ethnic whaling and sealing communities lived under the auspices of Māori at various sites throughout Te Waipounamu. Kāi Tahu operated a roaring trade, selling

²³ Harry Evison. *The Ngāi Tahu deeds: a window on New Zealand history*. Christchurch, N.Z.: Canterbury University Press, 2007. I recorded the quote in my notes but have since been unable to access the work to locate the page number.

supplies of meat, potatoes and wheat to the whaling ships, leading to a number of Kāi Tahu rangatira to establish shore stations in 1835.²⁴

My tipua (ancestor) Parure²⁵ is likely to have witnessed some of the fighting with Te Rauparaha. Because of the ongoing threat from Ngāti Toa, she, and others, moved further south to Whenua Hou (Codfish Island). Whenua Hou is notable for its highly defensible geography, being surrounded by reefs that make for a perilous approach by sea. In the eighteenth century, the Kāi Tahu chief Haoreki had designated Whenua Hou as a place where Māori and Pākehā couples could live together. It was also the site of one of the communities of sealers just mentioned. Parure married Robert Watson, an English settler from the sealing station on Whenua Hoa. Together they had a daughter, Harriet Kuihi, born around 1833, who would herself go on to marry a whaler, Nathaniel Bates. This thread of my whakapapa is double-stitched to this meeting place of the encounter between worlds. This was a meeting place whose occupancy was by no means extricable from colonisation, but which certainly existed under more equal terms than the structured domination of Māori by Pākehā inaugurated by the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840.

Visiting a comparable whaling community in Te Awaiti in 1839, Ernst Dieffenbach, the naturalist aboard the New Zealand Company ship the *Tory*, found

²⁴ "The Settlement: Claim history." Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu. Accessed September 16, 2016. <http://ngaitahu.iwi.nz/ngai-tahu/the-settlement/claim-history/>.

²⁵ Parure was the daughter of Te Rehe and Te Anu. It is possible her last name was Hurahura. Linda Scott J., Finlay P. Bayne, and Michael J. F. O'Connor. Nathaniel Bates of Riverton: his families & descendants. Whangamata, N.Z.: Mike J F O'Connor, 2008, p. 40.

about forty European men all living with Māori women. Appraising the result of a couple of decades of cohabitation, he noted:

Mutual advantage, and the connection of almost all these Europeans with native women, from which connection a healthy and fine-looking half-caste race has sprung up (about 160 in number), kept the white men and natives in harmony with each other, and has cemented their union. Thus we find Europeans arrayed against Europeans in the combats of the different tribes amongst whom they lived, or emigrating with them to another locality, or following the hazardous chase of the whale with a crew of natives.²⁶

The whalers and sealers of these communities were a different sort of people than those that followed them. The communities were markedly multi-ethnic, being comprised of Americans (Native and otherwise), Africans, Indians, Chinese, Spanish, Scandinavian, Irish, Scottish and English.²⁷ They spoke, according to one eyewitness, a 'barbarous ... low ship slang',²⁸ they were the motley crew described by Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker 'motley, both dressed in rags and multi-ethnic in appearance', who forged new languages and new modes of sociality through their

²⁶ Waitangi Tribunal. *Te Tau Ihu o te Waka a Māui: report on Northern South Island claims*. Report. Vol. 1. Wai 785. Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand: Legislation Direct, 2008, pp. 169-170.

²⁷ Jock Phillips "History of immigration - Early years." *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*. August 11, 2015. Accessed August 16, 2017.

²⁸ Jane Kelly. "Maori Maps." *Cartographica* 36, no. 2 (1999), p. 8.

collective work and cohabitation.²⁹ They lived reliant on Māori hospitality and in accordance with Māori protocols, regularly marrying Māori women. The Europeans were commonly convicts and other refugees of the enclosures in Britain and Ireland, seeking escape from the fierce social exclusion back home. These communities would later be displaced by a deluge of much more homogeneous European settlers of higher social stratum, more buttoned down Victorian morality, and greater vested interest in the preservation of the class relations of their home country.³⁰

In Ian Wedde's novel *Symme's Hole*, the narrator imagines the arrival of purchasing agents of the New Zealand Company from the perspective of one of inhabitants of these earlier communities.

And looking over his shoulder again at the Colonel's party in their white flannel trousers, Dieffenbach in a glazed sailor's hat he'd borrowed, the Colonel's white jacket with a piping of green around the lapel and cuffs ... Colonel Wakefield flapping his arms, his head jerking about as if he expected to see a populous town rise out of the ground before his very eyes, English gardens of droopy elms on the outskirts with pretty English women in them, green veins in their necks, and further out post-and-rail enclosures with the squire knocking dung from his riding boots by the stables ... didn't he know that the ground he walked on was

²⁹ Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Buford Rediker. *The many-headed hydra sailors, slaves, commoners, and the hidden history of the revolutionary Atlantic*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2013, pp. 332-3.

³⁰ immigrants were largely upper working and lower middle class. See, Keith Sinclair. *A History of New Zealand*. London: Cox and Wyman, 1959.

steeped in human blood? And that the land he bought didn't belong to anyone in a way that meant they could do that?³¹

The scene dramatised here is the arrival of the *Tory* in August of 1839. The New Zealand Company, anxious to stake claim in New Zealand before it was annexed as a British colony, had despatched an envoy to purchase as much land as possible for future settlements. Within two months of their arrival, Colonel Wakefield, who headed the mission, claimed to have purchased over twenty million acres spanning both Te Waka-a-Māui and Te Ika-a-Māui (the South and North Islands, respectively). Within months, four boatloads of settlers would arrive. The arrival of the *Tory* marked the closure of the possibilities held in these multi-ethnic communities living in accordance with first law, and signified the onset of a different trajectory that sought the replication of England elsewhere.³²

4.4 Edward Gibbon Wakefield

It was in fact Edward Gibbon Wakefield, the brother of Colonel William Wakefield, who was the prime architect of the New Zealand Company. As with Samuel Butler,

³¹ Ian Wedde. *Symmes hole*. London: Faber and Faber, 1986, p. 191.

³² In a brilliant piece of criticism Linda Hardy has suggested that this is a settler dream of natural occupancy that tries to extricate colonisation from these earlier natural inhabitations. Whilst some of this argument sticks against Ian Wedde and his treatment of Worsler Heberley, in general terms these early settlements were what Ngāi Tahu chiefs had experience of and hoped to further by signing The Treaty/Te Tiriti. Linda Hardy. "Natural occupancy", in Suvendrini Perera ed. *Asian & Pacific inscriptions: identities - ethnicities - nationalities*. Bundoora, Vic: Meridian, 1995, pp. 213-27.

Wakefield composed a popular fiction regarding the colonisation of New Zealand, although one that had a much more obvious, concrete influence than *Erewhon*. As one historian surmised:

Like the modern advertising agent, Wakefield and John Ward, the first Secretary of the New Zealand Company, were masters of the gentle art of the puff direct and the puff oblique. Fine phrases flowed smoothly and abundantly from their pens, and although neither of them had ever visited New Zealand, this acted only as a further stimulus to their imagination.³³

Wakefield described his dream for the settlement in terms that leave no doubt as to the model he wished to map onto foreign terrain:

[A]n entire British community, and not merely one formed of British materials – a community that shall carry away from the soil of Great Britain the manners, the institutions, the religion, the private and the public character of those whom they leave behind on it; and so carry them away as to plant them in the new soil where they settle.³⁴

³³ Waitangi Tribunal. *Ngai Tahu Land Report*, 1991, p. 261.

³⁴ Edward Gibbon Wakefield and Muriel F. Lloyd Prichard. *The Collected Works of Edward Gibbon Wakefield*. Glasgow: Collins, 1968, pp. 819–20.

Wakefield, whom the Waitangi Tribunal refers to as an 'erratic genius', can certainly be said to have had a vivid imagination. The majority of his writings imagine some sort of straw interlocutor or conjure with outlandish hypotheticals. Wakefield was sent to Newgate prison for three years for one of his earliest get-rich schemes, after kidnapping a young heiress from her school and attempting a Gretna Green marriage with her. At the time, the majority of the prisoners in Newgate were sent to Australia as indentured labourers.³⁵ Unsurprisingly, this meant that the prison had become a kind of informal university, focused on the single discipline of the colonisation of Australia. Using information gleaned from prisoners and the prison library ('I have read everything ever written on Australia, whilst here'), Wakefield wrote an extremely successful series of articles for the *Morning Chronicle* between August and October 1829.³⁶ The series, entitled *A Letter From Sydney*, pretended to be written by a colonist from Australia, and outlined Wakefield's plan, amongst many perverse asides, for what he termed 'systematic colonisation'.

Systematic colonisation was Wakefield's plan to instantiate a capitalist utopia – an almost direct inversion of the peasant, sailor, pirate and slave utopia from below that figured in medieval European poetry, Cockaigne.³⁷ Whereas Cockaigne imagined liberation from dearth, domination and hierarchy, Wakefield sought the transport of English social relations in their entirety. The son of a land agent (whose customers

³⁵ Ibid., p. 30.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 29, 93–178. The articles were then published in book form at the end of 1929.

³⁷ Re cockaigne (also cockayne) See Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker. *The Many-headed Hydra*, 2002; Herman Pleij and Diane Webb. *Dreaming of Cockaigne: Medieval Fantasies of the Perfect Life*. New York: Columbia UP, 2001.

included David Ricardo),³⁸ Wakefield dreams of 'fertile land, rising miraculously out of the sea near Britain' – meaning that it would be subject to domestic property values, as against the relative cheapness of land in the colonies.³⁹ Wakefield perceives, however, that whether it is that land rises miraculously next to Britain, or that British people and property relations are transferred to land elsewhere, both will produce much the same result. The dearth Wakefield seeks liberation from is that of labour available for the valourisation of capital in the colonies, made scarce by the availability of cheap land. Answering his own question of what 'an Englishman who ardently desires the greatest good of his country' might ask for if granted a single wish, Wakefield conjectures as follows:

on the whole, he would, I think, wish for the power to increase the territory of Britain according to the wants of the people. And, in making this choice of blessings, he would not be actuated by any ambitious views with reference to the territorial extent of his country. His sole object would be to put an end to that portion of crime and misery which in Britain is produced by an excess of people in proportion to territory; and he would not care, therefore, whether the increase of territory, having that effect, should take place near to or at a distance from Britain. Behold, I say to men of that class – behold your wish accomplished! Do

³⁸ Bernard Semmel. 'The Philosophic Radicals and Colonialism.' *The Journal of Economic History* 21 (4), 1961, pp. 513–25.

³⁹ *Ibid.* Wakefield, 1968, p. 181.

you doubt the possibility of so great a good? Let me try to persuade you that it is within your reach.⁴⁰

Further elaborating on his point, Wakefield poses a thought experiment whereby he imagines that it were possible to 'remove any portion of the wasteland of South Africa or Australia, and attach it to the coast of Britain'. If this were to be done rashly, and the size of Britain quadrupled overnight, crime and misery as a result of unemployment would cease immediately. However, the cost of this cure for immiseration is too high for Wakefield: 'but would not rent cease also? Would not wealth and civilisation perish? ... Assuredly this would all happen.'⁴¹ Instead, the prudent terra-transporter would proceed by attaching 100,000 acres of quality land to the coast of Lancashire, and, 'becoming part of a densely peopled country, they would yield a rent proportionate to that market value.'⁴² For Wakefield, then, the pillars of civilisation are the increase of wealth and the ability to charge high rents.

The central feature of Wakefield's design for a practical and empirical utopia is that land should only be obtained by settlers at an 'adequate price'; adequate here meaning that the cost of buying land should be prohibitive to new settlers so that they are forced to sell their labour for a number of years before they are able to buy land for themselves. Wakefield's biographers commonly assert that he had no intention of replicating British class relations in their entirety: after a few years paying their dues to

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 163.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid., p 163.

the colony via wage labour, settlers would enjoy upward mobility through the purchase of land.⁴³ There is, however, good reason to doubt any pretensions to benevolence on Wakefield's part. Several observers at the time noted that labourers in the frontier towns of the United States could earn enough to buy their own land within Wakefield's estimated period.⁴⁴ Yet Wakefield regarded the frontiersman with disgust: 'grossly ignorant, dirty, unsocial, delighting in rum and tobacco, attached to nothing but his rifle, adventurous, restless more than half-savage'.⁴⁵

In any case, Wakefield's verbosity with regard to the need for labour, and his uncharacteristic silence as to the truths of where that labour would be sourced, marks an unwritten rule within political economy. The French Revolution had, in the minds of political economists, attenuated the need for discretion regarding the coercion of the working classes. Scottish philosopher and historian David Hume, writing with pre-revolutionary carelessness, perhaps best summarised this pact:

If ever, on any occasion, it were laudable to conceal truth from the populace, it must be confessed that the doctrine of resistance affords such an example, and that all speculative reasoners ought to observe, with regard to this principle, the same cautious silence, which the law in every species of government have ever prescribed to themselves. Government is instituted in order to restrain the fury

⁴³ See the introduction to the *Collected Works* (cited above); Miles Fairburn. 'Wakefield, Edward Gibbon – Biography', *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, Te Ara – the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, updated 2010. www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/biographies/1w4/1

⁴⁴ Michael Perelman. *The Invention of Capitalism: Classical Political Economy and the Secret History of Primitive Accumulation*. Durham: Duke UP, 2000, pp. 334–5.

⁴⁵ Wakefield. *Collected Works*, 1968, p. 181, 196.

and injustice of the people; and being always founded on opinion, not on force, it is dangerous to weaken, by these speculations, the reverence which the multitude owe to authority, and to instruct them beforehand that the case can ever happen when they may be freed from their duty of allegiance. Or should it be found impossible to restrain the licence of human disquisitions, it must be acknowledged that the doctrine of obedience ought alone to be inculcated and that exceptions, which are rare, ought never or seldom be mentioned in popular reasoning or discourses.⁴⁶

Yet Wakefield's importance to political economy largely derives from his heretical stance towards this class secret. Lionel Robbins described Wakefield's incursion into political economy as 'the descent of some gorgeous tropical bird among the sober denizens of a respectable farmyard.' We may not agree with Robbins' choice of analogy, but the point is clear enough. As Michael Perelman has forcefully argued, Wakefield's considerable influence on political economy has been consistently elided in favour of a comfortable fable about Adam Smith and hidden hands. When Adam Smith did gain a brief flourish of popularity, it was only because of the veracity and skill of his advocacy of the free market, whilst carefully obfuscating the state practices of forcefully creating those same markets. Smith's invisible hand is an ideological cover, a silk glove, for the violence of the hand of the bourgeois state. As Marx recognised in his *Capital*, Volume 1, Wakefield's honesty with regard to the necessity of state coercion in

⁴⁶ David Hume. *The History of England*. Oxford: Talboys and Wheeler, 1826, pp. 288.

the production of markets gave him a clarity that is entirely absent from Smith and his proponents.

Wakefield was less concerned with such subterfuge because of the huge dividends his plans could promise to investors. Obviously, state-guaranteed land sales, which would at the same time guarantee labour to capital, would provide for massive increases in the market value of land. Wakefield, the son of a land agent, confirms in private correspondence that land speculation was indeed one of his concerns.

For Marx, Wakefield is perhaps the last classical political economist of use before they became simply vulgar proponents of bourgeois interests.⁴⁷ The first was William Petty, whose *Political Arithmetic* can be seen as instantiating the abstraction of the economy as an isolatable object of study. William Petty dreamed that Ireland, 'that vast Mountainous Island, [would sink] under water,' dispossessing the inhabitants of their land and forcing them to swim to England where established industry would ensure their more effective exploitation. This he deemed 'a pleasant and profitable Dream indeed.'⁴⁸

Wakefield wrote at a time when the issue in Britain was not the shortage of wage-labour but massive scale of unemployment brought about through the preceding few hundred years of enclosure. Ireland had not sunk beneath the waves, but the

⁴⁷ Marx, Karl, and Ben Fowkes. *Capital: a critique of political economy*. Vol. 1. Harmondsworth Mddx: Penguin Books, 1976. pp. 174-5, p. 932.

⁴⁸ Peter Linebaugh recounts that "It was William Petty who dreamed that [Ireland] 'that vast Mountainous Island [would sink] under water,' thus expropriating its inhabitants from their land and livelihood, forcing them to migrate to England where they could be exploited efficiently, 'a pleasant and profitable Dream indeed.' He found the dream unsettling 'a distemper of my own mind' because it violated his epistemology use only reasoning in 'terms of number, weight, or measure'. Petty introduced quantification, understanding society through abstract aggregation, instigating the abstraction of 'the economy' as an object of study". Peter Linebaugh. *The London hanged: crime and civil society in the eighteenth century*. London: Verso, 2006, p. 47.

widescale theft of land by the English amounted to much the same for the original inhabitants. If Wakefield appeared resplendent in any way to the pig-trough partisans of political economy, it was because he dared boast a solution to an incendiary social situation that would also generate vast profits.

Wakefield's vision for a systematic colonisation proposed the pre-configuration of land in accordance with the existing property and class relations of the home country, so that 'nine-tenths of it be sunk in the sea, and afterwards emerge by tenths, gradually, as it became absolutely necessary for the wants of mankind'⁴⁹. Being submerged in the sea meant, here, being made unattainable to the working classes as it was in England; 'mankind', in turn, should be read to mean Europeans, and, specifically the owners of capital in Europe. Māori, after all, had no need or desire to see the land submerged for the provision of wage-labour. The model towns Wakefield envisioned would be the centres from which property relations would radiate outwards, with the unattainability of land on the part of any but a few capitalists compelling those who lacked capital (including indigenous populations) to enter into the wage-labour market, hence fixing the supply of labour in place. As Marx summarised:

First of all, Wakefield discovered that, in the colonies, property in money, means of subsistence, machines and other means of production does not as yet stamp a man as a capitalist if the essential complement to these things is missing: the

⁴⁹ Gourlay, Robert . *Statistical Account of Upper Canada*. London: Simpkin and Marshall, 1822. Wakefield was clearly influenced by this idea of Gourlay's. For a similar passage see Wakefield. *Collected Works*, 1968, p. 132. For an account of Gourlay's influence on Wakefield see: Perelman. *Invention of Capitalism*, pp. 324-5.

wage-labourer, the other man, who is compelled to sell himself of his own free will. He discovered that capital is not a thing, but a social relation between persons which is mediated through things. A Mr Peel, he complains, took with him from England to the Swan River district of Western Australia means of subsistence and of production to the amount of £50,000. This Mr Peel even had the foresight to bring besides, 3,000 persons of the working class, men, women and children. Once he arrived at his destination, 'Mr Peel was left without a servant to make his bed or fetch him water from the river.' Unhappy Mr Peel, who provided for everything except the export of English relations of production to Swan River!⁵⁰

In this passage, Marx captures the totality of social relations to be imported to the colonies: not only agricultural or manual labour, but also the labour of what is termed 'social reproduction' – that is, the largely unwaged labour necessary to maintain the labour power of such workers, or the lives of the capitalists for whom they work. Wakefield's keen interest in social reproduction, albeit an interest purely from the vantage of capital, in some ways preempts later works such as Engels' *The Origin of the Family*. In his *Outline for a System of Colonisation*, Wakefield provides the following 'extreme calculation':

⁵⁰ Marx. *Capital*, 1976, p. 932.

A thousand immigrants of all ages might not, at the end of twenty years, increase the Colonial population by more than that number. As many might die as would be born, and, if there were an excess of males, the number might, at the end of twenty years, be much less than a thousand. But five hundred young couples, supposing that each couple rear six children, and that in twenty years half of the original immigrants be dead, would, in that short period, increase the Colonial population by three thousand five hundred souls.⁵¹

Wakefield continues, in this vein, to calculate the cost of transporting a mixed population as compared to young breeding pairs, arriving at a saving of £37,000 for the latter over twenty years (including, of course, a compound interest of 5%). Wakefield admits that the calculation is 'extreme', but maintains that it illustrates a principle. It is by following that principle that the Crown might raise land 'miraculously out of the sea'.

Wakefield became hugely influential in the colonisation of New Zealand (as well as Canada and Australia). Indeed, it was the Company's dealings combined with the anxieties over the French that led to the annexation of New Zealand as a colony. Although this diminished the power of the New Zealand Company, the colonial office continued to adhere to Wakefield's prescriptions. Wakefield's dream, then, is not so much for a new land as a new homeland, but as an expanded field for capital. His insight that the processes of settlement themselves must be structured to provide adequate lodgings for capital, and his influence in ensuring this was the case, make

⁵¹ Wakefield. *Collected Works*, 1968, p. 181.

Wakefield the absentee founding father of New Zealand – its most lucid dreamer, because of the unclouded economic drive of his dream.

4.4 Wakefield and Ngāi Tahu

It was Kāi Tahu land that would provide, in the words of a Ngāi Tahu land claim, ‘the laboratory for Wakefield's experiments in colonisation’.⁵² Wakefield's scheme, as outlined above, was designed to secure the transplantation of English social relations to the colonies so as to ensure the existence of a landless class compelled to sell their labour for wages. Ingeniously, the transport of that labour to the colonies was to be paid for by the market in land in the new colony, where both the Crown's monopoly on sales and the inflated price prevented labourers from acquiring their own land, while also funding their transportation. Infrequently discussed in the literature on Wakefield is the other side to his clever machine for the transubstantiation of an incendiary social situation into new and fecund terrain for capital's valorisation – in other words, his strategies for the dispossession of Māori land.

For the scheme to work, the land would have to be acquired from Māori for next to nothing. Māori land, through its appropriation and sale, would fund the infrastructure for the entire venture. Māori, in effect, were to fund their own colonisation. Wakefield was able to cast even this seemingly blatant injustice in a golden light. As with many of his contemporaries, Wakefield felt that, as the situation stood, Māori land

⁵² Waitangi Tribunal. *Ngai Tahu land claim*, 1991, p. 260.

had no value. This value could only be conferred by European capital in its conversion of the land to an exchange value. Of the lands purchased, a tenth of each town, suburb and rural district would be reserved for Māori and held in trust by the company. This reserved land would be interspersed amongst the settlements and increase in value accordingly. This scheme, known as ‘the tenths’, would allow Māori chiefs to join the European class of landed gentry, while the remainder of Māori would be compelled to sell their labour alongside the Pākehā proletariat. By way of this measure, Wakefield was able to convince the critics of systematic colonisation that they were indeed conferring great benefit on those who were to be colonised. When the Crown took over the business of colonisation from the New Zealand Company, the Society for the Protection of Aboriginals demanded the continuation of Wakefield’s tenths.

As stated, it was Colonel William Wakefield, given the nickname Colonel Wide Awake by some of the Māori he had dealings with, who was tasked with turning his brother’s dream into a reality. His instructions from the Company were as follows:

[Y]ou will take care to mention in every booka-booka, or contract for land, that a proportion of the territory ceded, equal to one-tenth of the whole, will be reserved by the Company, and held in trust by them for the future benefit of the chief families of the tribe you will readily explain that, after English emigration and settlement, a tenth of the land will be far more valuable than the whole was before. And you must endeavour to point out, as is the fact, that the intention of the Company is not to make reserves for the native owners in large blocks, as

has been the common practice as to Indian reserves in North America, whereby settlement is impeded, and the savages are encouraged to continue savage, living apart from the civilized community – but in the same way, in the same allotments, and to the same effect, as if the reserved lands had been purchased from the Company on behalf of the natives.⁵³

In 1839, after only two months in the country, Colonel Wakefield claimed to have carried out these instructions to the letter, making expansive purchases on both islands, totalling some twenty million acres. Before word of the purchases had even reached London, four boat loads of settlers, many convinced that they held secure title to land in their new home, were dispatched by the Company. However, the Colonial Office was nonplussed with the landgrab that the Company had sought to rush through. A commission was instigated to investigate the validity of title gained without Crown grant. In January of 1840, a proclamation was given that no titles to land that were not derived from the Queen were valid. However, the scale of the New Zealand Company purchases – as flimsy as they were – and the fact they had already brought hundreds of settlers to the colony, meant that the Imperial Government, subsequently known as the Crown, was embroiled in the Company's dealings without very little possibility of extricating themselves.

The Crown was forced to acknowledge the New Zealand Company and provide sanction for its dealings. Late in 1840, an agreement was reached whereby the Crown

⁵³ Ibid., p. 262.

would take responsibility for implementing the Company's 'tenths', while the Company was issued with a forty-year charter for the stated activities of 'the purchase, sale, settlement and cultivation of lands in New Zealand'⁵⁴. The Company's governor, Joseph Sommes, understood the charter to mean that the Company was 'essentially the agent of the Government in disposing of waste land for the purposes of emigration and settlement.'⁵⁵ While the fortunes of the company would rise and fall with the various governors and governments, the colonisation of Aotearoa New Zealand would remain fundamentally 'Wakefieldian' in character as the Crown became committed to the company's scheme of systematic colonisation. Cheap Māori land would be used to fund New Zealand's settlement, and the paucity of the payments to Māori would be justified by the stake in the fledgeling colony supposedly represented by the reservations left to them.

Beginning in 1844, as a direct result of the New Zealand Company's scheme to reproduce 'a slice of English life – a kind of instant civilisation – into the colonial environment',⁵⁶ Kāi Tahu made a series of land sales to both the Crown and the New Zealand Company.⁵⁷ In 1844, the Company negotiated a waiver of the Crown's right to preemption and purchased the Otakou block – half a million acres – to be settled by the Scottish settlers of the Otago Association. This purchase was to be eclipsed by the Crown's immense Kemp purchase of around twenty million acres, which would become the location for the settlement of the Canterbury Association.

⁵⁴ Waitangi Tribunal. *Te Tau Ihu Vol I*, 2008, p. 202.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Wakefield, E. J. *The handbook for New Zealand*. J.W. Parker, 1848.

⁵⁷ Waitangi Tribunal. *Ngai Tahu Land Claim*, 1991, pp. 245-76.

In the decade following the initial purchase, the Kāi Tahu were deemed by the Crown to have alienated the majority of their land, some 35 million acres. Central to these deals was the Crown's responsibility to reserve ten percent of the land (3.5 million acres) for Kāi Tahu, to preserve access to Kāi Tahu mahinga kāi (food gathering sites), and to provide schools and hospitals. These reserves were crucial to Kāi Tahu's ability derive economic benefit from the emerging settler economy. But the supposed tenths never materialised, nor did the schools and hospitals promised. Likewise, the supposedly safeguarded access to mahinga kai was cut off. Without land, Kāi Tahu were not just excluded from the participation in the new settler economy, but excluded from their very means of subsistence. Dispossessed, they became impoverished.

4.5 Property

The Crown's decision not to provide adequate reserves was no oversight. As we saw above in the instructions given by the New Zealand Company to Colonel Wakefield, the Company was wary of what it deemed to be large reservations granted to Native Americans, which, in its view, hampered the integration of indigenous populations into settler society, impeding full settlement. That said, the New Zealand Company's solution was to intersperse blocks of land throughout the settlement, and not to reduce their total size.

However haphazard and inconsistent the Company's attempts to implement the tenths had been, as responsibility passed over to the Crown, the intention shifted fundamentally. This shift turned on prevailing European conceptions of property. These conceptions were ultimately still derived from John Locke, whom George Caffentzis has described as the foremost philosopher of primitive accumulation⁵⁸. Locke had been motivated by the need to come to a conception of property that would justify the appropriation of Native American land. Clear echos of his thought can be heard in the New Zealand Company's statement regarding whether or not Māori held title to their lands, and whether or not these lands covered the entirety of the country.

If an interest in the land, never yet recognised by any Christian nation, as possessed by savages, is to be attributed to the natives of New Zealand; if the aborigines are to be regarded as being ... proprietors of the whole surface of New Zealand, ninety-nine hundredths of which are probably covered with the primeval forest; then, doubtless, the claims of the natives would be co-extensive with those of the Company ... But the only interest in land which our law has ever recognised as possessed by savages, is that of 'actual occupation or enjoyment' ... If the claims of the natives be limited to such lands ... the question can, at the utmost, be one only of a few patches of potato- ground, and rude

⁵⁸ Caffentzis, George. *John Locke: the philosopher of primitive accumulation*. Bristol : Bristol Radical History Group , 2008.

dwelling-places, and can involve no matter of greater moment than some few hundred of acres.⁵⁹

However, for Colonel Wakefield's purchase deeds to be valid, it had to be assumed that Māori had title to alienate their land in the first place. That these deeds were worthless was attested to not only by a commission but also by the fact that Māori had no intention of leaving the lands they had apparently sold. The Crown accepted a Company proposal to make further purchases to properly extinguish title where it remained. This only served, however, to confirm the view amongst Europeans that Māori were not in possession of their 'wastelands'. The draft report of a commission that was tasked with a full investigation of the issue marks the brief opening of a possible course not taken, its closure hanging now only as indictment. The report effectively found that title to land could only be established according to tikanga, or first law. This was a rare admission of the existence of first law and the rights of long inhabitation. Several witnesses attested to the fact that Māori did believe that they held ownership of the entirety of the land. This draft of the report was rejected in favour of one led by Lord Howick, which deemed the Treaty of Waitangi unjust to Europeans, asserted that Māori had no rights of 'wild lands', and recommended that the Crown assert sovereignty over all uninhabited lands. However, the Colonial secretary, Lord Stanley, chose to ignore the stipulations of the latter report, claiming they were against 'justice, good faith, humanity, or policy'.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Waitangi Tribunal. *Ngai Tahu Land Claim*, 1991, p. 251.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

Lord Stanley's moves to uphold the rights of Māori was short-lived. Within a year, Lord Howick, who had authored the latter report, took on the role of colonial secretary and immediately set about implementing the report. His letter to the governor of New Zealand, Governor Grey, makes clear his Lockean attitude towards Māori tenure.

To contend that under such circumstances civilized men had not a right to step in and to take possession of the vacant territory, but were bound to respect the supposed proprietary title of the savage tribes who dwelt in but were utterly unable to occupy the land, is to mistake the grounds upon which the right of property in land is founded.⁶¹

As the Tribunal Report neatly surmises, for Lord Howick, by this stage elevated to the title of Earl Grey, 'tribal property was public property and on cession, public property was transferred to the Crown.'

Walter Mantell, appointed as the commissioner for extinguishing native titles in 1848, was in 1851 charged by Governor Grey with implementing the reserves for the immense Kemp purchase. Mantell's express intention was to limit Kāi Tahu to small, inadequate reserves. Mantell stated that an allocation of ten acres per person would

not enable the Natives, in the capacity of large landed proprietors, to continue to live in their old barbarism on the rents of an uselessly extensive domain.⁶²

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 254.

⁶² Ibid., p.111.

Mantell's actions were part of a concerted effort made by the Crown to undermine the communal basis of the Māori mode of life. From 1865 to 1890, around 360 Acts of parliament affecting Māori land were introduced, and another 199 Acts in the period between 1891 and 1908.⁶³ Expressing some sort of decimal fixation, communal entailment of property was made impossible and the number of people who could be registered as owners of land was limited to ten, undermining hapū unity and collective decision-making.

As evidenced in claimant testimony to the Waitangi Tribunal, Professor Alan Ward stated that

there was a deliberate determination on the part of some officials ... to keep [the reserves] small so that Ngai Tahu should not persist with a traditional lifestyle but be obliged to leave reserves and engage with the European order. Capital and training for the purpose was not provided by government because nineteenth century people believed not in welfare, but in an ethic of individual competition and self-reliance. It should be noted of course that this attitude was applicable to poor settlers as well as Maori – it was not discriminating in that sense. But members of ruling groups often conveniently overlooked the fact that they had not risen entirely on their own merits.⁶⁴

⁶³ Donald M. Loveridge. *Maori Land Councils and Maori Land Boards: A historical Overview 1900 to 1952*. Report. Rangahaua Whanui. Waitangi Tribunal , 1996, pp. 75–76.

⁶⁴ Waitangi Tribunal. *Ngai Tahu Land Report*, 1991, p.271.

It is true that the foregoing account slips into the language of ownership when discussing the relationship of Māori to the land. Yet this has much to do with the way in which the question is posed by Europeans. Europeans are eager to know if Māori own the land. If the answer is no, then it is surely available for full appropriation by the Crown. But if the answer is yes, then the Māori way of being in relationship with the land, whatever that may be, becomes inflected and infected by the structure of property.

4.6 In the Penal Colony

The teeth of the European world – that by which it seeks to first desiccate so as to ingest, then to de- or reconstitute, the Māori world – are comprised of law. Whilst outright theft of land by Pākehā, often under the guise of confiscation as punishment for rebellion, certainly took place, the vast majority was appropriated by legal means. Law acts, hence, as a technology of dispossession. But for it to be justified beyond its own jurisdiction, it must not only dispossess, but also incorporate. This double movement necessarily takes place with groundless simultaneity: a moebius strip of law-instantiating and law-preserving violence. The land becomes property so that it may become the Crown's property. In this operation the law is a kind of harrow for homogenising the earth, rendering it as abstract space, as a preparation for incisions of discrete cadastral boundaries.

Critical legal studies theorist Brenna Bhandar provides a taut description of the transformation at issue:

The Marxist critique of the cunning of abstraction reveals how the commodity form congeals multiple forms of use value, the various types of labour involved in producing, cultivating, tending to the land (or scientific invention, or coats, or hats for that matter), into a 'material shell of the abstract property of value.' In masking these different forms of labour and use, the commodity logic of abstraction obliterates pre-existing relations to the land, and pre-existing conceptualisations of land as something other than a commodity. The legal form renders invisible (and severely constrains) the ways in which people live, act, (re)-produce the conditions of their existence, and relate to one another in ways not confined to commodity relations of ownership and exchange. In the words of Pashukanis, the 'concept of property loses any living meaning and renounces its own prejudicial history.' The legal form imposes its homogenous time on the title document held in the registry, or the patent registered in the Patent Office, and condenses multiplicity into a singular figure of the owner.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Bhandar, Brenna. "Title by Registration: Instituting Modern Property Law and Creating Racial Value in the Settler Colony." *Journal of Law and Society* 42, no. 2 (June 2015): 253-82, p. 264. Bhandar goes on to highlight some crucial points regarding the transformation just described. On the one hand, she shows how racial abstraction operates as a necessary complement or coefficient of the property abstraction. For land to be deemed 'terra nullius' and hence available for registration, the actual occupants of the land must be erased via racial abstraction that deems them beneath the law and hence incapable of bearing rights.

Land, considered as a living system of relationality between all things that share an existence with one another, has its breath extinguished when subjected to the logic of commodification. The practice and history of land as live, relational being and becoming is constrained and erased in the associated forms of exchange value and private property.

Whilst the foregoing takes us some way toward describing what has been transformed in processes of settler colonialism and how such transformation takes place, it still remains to theorise the ontological nature of this transformation. What is at stake is the way in which epistemological propositions about the relationships between persons and things – for example, settler ideas about property – become operationalised through the technology of law. Law's agency is not a product of the reference between a world and statements about that world, whether literal, figurative or fictional, but a technical performance whereby statements become operational within a particular procedure or transaction. The means by which law is able to perform the translation of the ideal into the agential rests on the way in which it embeds or insinuates itself into language considered not as a representational but a performative medium.

The critical legal scholar Alan Pottage, via an anthropology of law, helps us to glimpse the strangeness of the ritual by which Europeans consecrate the land as commodity.⁶⁶ Pottage recounts the way in which a Roman lawyer's focus was on the recitation of legal formula with absolute precision because, as with a charm or spell, the efficacy of the legal formula depended on it being delivered flawlessly. The need for

⁶⁶ Pottage, Alain. "Law after Anthropology: Object and Technique in Roman Law." *Theory, Culture & Society* 31, no. 2-3 (2014): 147-66.

absolute accuracy in recitation was due to the divine provenance of law, its origins in the language of ritual, and so its ability to make things happen and bring things into existence. In this sense, the legal formula was akin to the pharmaceutical or chemical formula: a recipe for making something, or making something happen. However, the legal formula was not a means to an end. Instead,

the incantation of a formula measured out a rhythm or periodicity that generated the temporal, existential, frame for the fabrication of *res* and *personae*.⁶⁷

Whilst the conception of the self as a bounded and comprehensive interiority *arises* from exchange, it *arrives* with settlers as their baggage of abstraction. Whilst settler second nature is carried by settlers 'behind their backs', it finds purchase in the Māori world via the operation of law. Crucial to this process of insinuation is the particular constitution of the European subject as a doubled subject with abstract legal personhood. What law achieves by way of its measured incantation is the introduction of timeless abstract rights, and the entirely abstract bearer of those rights, into temporal existence.

Modern law effaces its origin in rite and ritual, charm and chant, in its proclamations of empty abstract universality. Rather than a historical process of gradual disenchantment, the passage of law into the present is better described as a routinisation of charisma, one that disguises all but a trace of the indissoluble

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 153.

performativity of its operation. The routinisation of the occult origin of the law's capacity to act in the world reaches a further stage of development in the written word. Māori, it seems, could still hear the ceremonial chant that attended to the contract, however deaf its European proponents were to it. Māori readily perceived the agency and mana accorded to the written word by Europeans, but were probably more attentive to the rituals and performances associated with the production of texts, especially legal ones. As Alison Jones and Kuni Jenkins have commented, Māori would have 'considered the bizarre text of less relevance than the deed's ritual consolidation of the relationship with Europeans'.⁶⁸

One of the earliest purchase deeds to be signed between Europeans and Māori was to provide land for a missionary settlement in Kerikeri. Whereas the European signatories felt that they were securing all resources, 'Rights and Appurtenances ... for ever', Hongi Hika and Rewa, its Māori signatories, understood the contract differently. Not only was the text unreadable to Hongi and Rewa, but alienating the land in European terms was itself unthinkable. Instead Hongi and Rewa sought to grant the missionaries 'possession' by their inclusion, looking to sow the Europeans into the whenua by weaving them into the hapu, as one of Hongi's present day whanauka (relatives) has termed it. The legal performance of the purchase deed signified for Māori the consolidation of a relationship, a relationship whose persistence was guaranteed by cohabitation. For Pākehā, it meant the precise opposite. The missionaries assumed that

⁶⁸ Jones, Alison, and Kuni Jenkins. *He Kōrero Words between us first Māori-Pākehā conversations on paper*. Wellington, N.Z: Huia, 2011, p 93.

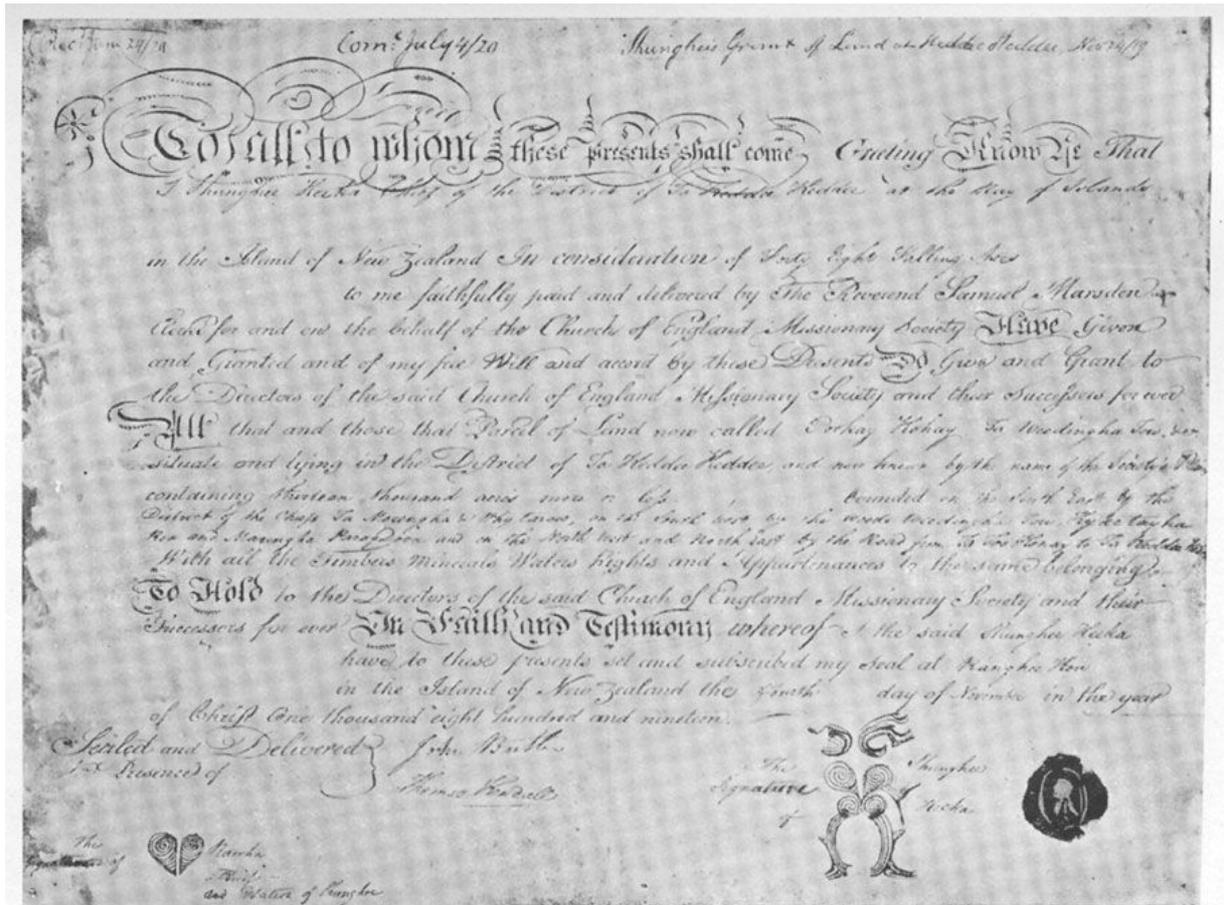
they were securing their independence from the local chiefs through the extinguishment of the latter's claim to land.

The difference in understanding between the signatories is nicely expressed in the different methods of signing the deeds. Rev. John Butler and Rev. Thomas Kendall signed with plain signatures as the seal of the fictive legal personality of both themselves and The Church Missionary Society. Hongi Hika signed by having a portion of his tā moko (facial tattoo) reproduced on the document. Hongi's insignia carries far more dramatic personality than a plain European signature.⁶⁹ Tā moko are unique to each person and carry information about (bilineal) whakapapa. Hongi's outline of his moko carries his ancestral relationship to the land and bestows the document with his mana (sacred authority, power). Here, in the expression of mana, and the translation of possession as incorporation into the group, we glimpse Aotearoa as the place of the fullsome expression of tikanga, or first law, before it becomes suffocated under the European law of the abstract.

Kafka's *In The Penal Colony* provides an apt allegorical summary for the transformation just outlined. Kafka's story describes a judicial process whereby the condemned have the commandment they have broken inscribed on them by an elaborate contraption. The letter of the law, an extremely baroque calligraphy, is inscribed on the body of the accused until they are dead. In the settler colony, the land, whose hau (breath) is the interrelational reciprocity of all the entities nurtured upon her bosom, and whose pulse is the metabolism of that sustenance, is subjected to the

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 99.

inscription of the apparatus of European law. Papatūānuku is interminably inscribed with the orthogonal geometry of private property, its cuts and contracts, divisions and demarcations, until rendered abstract and lifeless for exchange.



FACSIMILE OF DEED OF NOVEMBER 4TH, 1819,
Signed by Rev. John Butler, Rev. Thomas Kendall, Hongi Hika, and Rewha

'Grant of land at Keddee Keddee [Kerikeri] by Shunghee Heeka [Hongi Hika] to the Church Missionary Society'. 1819. The deed was also signed by Rewa.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ '...that Parcel of Land now called Pookay Kohay [Puke Kōwhai] Ta Weedingha Tou [Te Whiringatau] etc. situate and lying in the district of Ta Keddee Keddee [Te Kerikeri], and now known by the name of the name of the Society's Plains containing thirteen thousand acres more or less, ... With all the Timbers

4.7 Māori Land

The idea of fixed, sharply delineated territorial boundaries was alien to Māori prior to the arrival of Europeans. The various Pākehā practices of land surveying were instruments with which to inscribe the idea of private property onto the land. The historical advent of the separation of people from the land, which may well be considered the practical basis of the epistemological split between humanity as subject and nature as object, becomes elaborated in the crystalline form of private property. This form then irradiates the earth with the straight lines of its abstract logic: the 'first nature' of ordinary sensuous experience (use) becomes inscribed with the demarcations of abstract 'second nature' (exchange).

In contrast to the land title boundaries, where the land was fenced according to the grid of property's ideal existence in map form, Māori conceptions of place and territory were worked out in the lineaments of *kōrero* (narrative). The differences between European and Māori methods of land surveying were that the former used wooden pegs whilst the latter fashioned its pegs from an altogether more social substance. As Tipene O'Reagan describes:

Minerals Waters Rights and Appurtenances to the same belonging to hold to the Directors of the said Church of England Missionary Society and their successors for ever.' *Ibid.*, p. 98.

Sometimes trees were planted or stones placed to reinforce and define a known limit. And as the genealogies were recited and waiata chanted the oral pegs were hammered into the land. As the pegs were struck the stories were fixed through generations.⁷¹

Territorial boundaries were, in any case, more fluid and negotiated, living entities than the absolute abstractions of their European counterparts. This is evidenced in a recent Waitangi Tribunal report, which states that hapū and iwi

had no settled political boundaries of the kind associated with Western states. The hapu were more concerned with the maintenance of connections with other groups, mainly through whakapapa, or genealogy, than with establishing areas of exclusivity. They had also been mobile over the years. The result today is that many hapu may have customary interests in a particular area or, at least, have ancestral associations with it.⁷²

In contrast to a view of iwi that likens them to European states divided by a Westphalian system of borders, the Ngāi Tahu historian Athol Anderson describes a situation in which 'multiple levels of territoriality tended to concentrate around the main settlements and towards the centre of tribal territory, declining towards the periphery'.⁷³ It was

⁷¹ Kelly. *Maori Maps*, 1999, p. 15.

⁷² Waitangi Tribunal. *Te Tau Ihu Vol 1*, 2008, p. 92.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

contact with Europeans that saw the 'ossifying [of] ethnic and tribal boundaries [which] served indeed as integral to colonial structures'.⁷⁴

Prior to European arrival, First law was comprised of an intricate web of living relationships with each strand or relation being fluid and negotiated, not absolute. To move around the land was to move in intimate relationship with the ancestors, mana whenua (authority from/over the land) having its source in whakapapa. In its more local aspects, mana whenua issued from the continuation and repetition of the activities of intergenerational inhabitation. The authority to harvest a patch of oysters, for example, came from the cyclic, seasonal repetition of that activity that each time strengthened and renewed the associated authority. If the practice was abandoned, the authority faded. The centre of hapū activity was a more concentrated place of authority *because* it was the centre of hapū activity and inhabitation. The longer a place had been inhabited, the more the various cycles of life were repeated there, the more powerful and ingrained was the mana over or from that place. These were not, however, relationships of mutual exclusion, but could overlap, flow in different directions, or fade, only to be rekindled at a later date. Pākehā, however, were intent on fixing this dynamic system both in time and place by way of making possible the absolute alienation of exchange.

In 1841, a number of Ngāi Tahu from Ōtaku produced a map of Te Waipounamu for the Commissioner for the Management of Native Reserves. The map, notable for its accuracy, has as its epistemological background the oral tradition, which provides an

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 112.

account of the genesis of the land. In this tradition, the topography of Te Waipounamu is transmitted by way of the the image of the island as a sunken waka (canoe). The amateur ethnographer James Herries Beattie who recorded a number of traditions from Te Waipounamu in the 1920s. In the account recorded by him, for sons of Rakinui (skyfather) travel to visit Papatūānuku. Leaving her shores they travel the ocean but misfortune arises and their waka (canoe) sinks:

Unfortunately it did not sink levelly, the western side being left much higher than the eastern, as a rule, except opposite Kaikoura. The four main voyagers clambered onto this high side [and were] turned to stone, Aoraki became Mount Cook, and his three younger brothers became the peaks nearest it. The whole canoe forms the South Island, the oldest name of which is Te Waka-a-Aoraki, and the highest point in the canoe is the stone representing the owner himself.⁷⁵

It falls to Tūmatueka, the atua (god) principally associated with human affairs, to make the sunken waka (canoe) fit for inhabitation.

[Tūmatueka] made an inspection of this Canoe of Aoraki and found things far from his liking. The high and elaborate prow had shattered, forming the present Marlborough Sounds, and this he left as it was. The western side of the canoe he found to be one long unbroken line and he dealt with it first, but we will leave it to

⁷⁵ Beattie, Herries. *The Māoris and Fiordland*. Dunedin: Otago Daily Times and Witness Newspapers, 1949, p. 7.

last. He found the stern had sunk very irregularly, the stern post [Bluff Hill] being surrounded by water which encroached a long way inland. The eastern side was another long unbroken line, but was generally lower in elevation than the western side, while much of the cargo had slipped towards the stern and forms the mountain masses in the interior of Otago.⁷⁶

What this story demonstrates, according to the Geographer Jan Kelly, is

evidence from a long time past that the Maori who formulated this teaching not only knew the shape of the island as a whole, and could hold that image in their minds in terms of relative locations, form, elevations, and scale, but also were able to fit local detail into the pattern of the whole in a retrievable manner.⁷⁷

Attempting an explanation of the ability to produce the 'spectacularly accurate image' of a large and complex island, inaccessible in places, Kelly emphasises the

sheer need to understand where one is, to hold the patterns of the land in the mind and memory and heart, not in a dispassionate way but from deep within a cosmology that encompasses those patterns ... Many peoples share, or have shared, the ability to think of land in such a way. It is an understanding sunk in a

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Kelly. *Maori Maps*, 1999, p. 20.

land relationship that modern minds, no longer in need of it, may find difficult to comprehend.⁷⁸

While I am not convinced that modern minds have somehow eschewed the need for such a relation with the land, it seems clear enough that the relationship is difficult to inhabit from within a Pākehā perspective. Kelly, in her study of maps produced by Māori through their encounter with Europeans, allows us to glimpse some of the coordinates of a different spatial mode of apprehension.

The written maps produced by Māori through the encounter with Pākehā were a novel development. They were devised to aid European comprehension of oral maps by providing a graphical meeting place between radically different conceptions of space and place. As I have discussed, the term *tangata whenua* (people of the land) references a double directional relationality. The people are the land and the land is people, as *tipuna* (ancestors). As such, the land is peopled, interwoven and consecrated with the names and stories of ancestors producing, as mentioned, an ancestral church. To know one's way around is to know one's *whakapapa* to the land and its stories. In this orientation, there is no distinction between knowing *where* one is and knowing *who* one is.

During extensive deliberations over what Pākehā intended to be land sale agreements, some five hundred people from Ngāi Tahu gathered in Akaroa. As one of the Crown agents recorded:

⁷⁸ Ibid.

the "correro" [Kōrero, dialogue] commenced by the chiefs coming forward and calling the names of the lands to be sold-Commencing from Kaikoura one chief went down to the peninsula- Then Taiaroa called the lands from the Peninsula to Waitake-Then Solomon from Waitake to Moeraki-Portiki and others southward from thence to the Heads of Otakou⁷⁹

As the land was experienced as a multiplicity of ancestors, it was mapped by recounting the names of those ancestors.

A striking feature of the written maps produced to support the oral maps is the primacy of water in determining their layout. The general vantage of the maps appears to be from the water, with water edges and water routes marked first, and pathways and significant names added subsequently. The land begins its presencing from the water. Purchase deeds were regularly accompanied by maps of the area supposedly being bought. One particularly apt example registers the untranslated interface between different worlds, even as those worlds inhabit the same place. Asked to produce a map of land to be purchased, Ihaia Kaikoura sketched the coastline of his people's rohe (ancestral lands) but simply refused to name an internal boundary.⁸⁰ Kaikoura's map-making was consistent with both the lack of existence of an internal boundary in the absolute sense desired by the European purchasers, and the Māori conception of place whereby land begins its presencing from the water.

⁷⁹ Waitangi Tribunal. Ngai Tahu Land Report, 1991, p. 407.

⁸⁰ Waitangi Tribunal. Te Tau Ihu Vol 1, 2008, p. 94.

In Te Waipounamu, it was through dealings with the New Zealand Company that the notion of fixed tribal boundaries was introduced. As Company purchaser and brother of Edward Gibbon Wakefield, Colonel William Wakefield was well aware that an immutable boundary was integral to the absolute alienation he sought on behalf of the Company. Both concepts were foreign to Māori, and indeed, following the argument of the preceding chapter, could not have been produced with a Māori mode of life.⁸¹

4.8 Treaty Claim

At the time of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, Kāi Tahu were still the hegemonic authority in Te Waipounamu. They entered into agreement with the Crown as equals and in good faith. Kāi Tahu were keen to partake in new opportunities provided by settlement. Having also reached peace with northern Maori that year, Kāi Tahu sought to enhance their mana through interaction with the settler economy and settler technologies.⁸² By 1849, it was clear the Crown had no intention of upholding its obligations under the agreement.

In 1868, Kāi Tahu took their claim regarding the Crown's breaches of the Treaty to court, only to have the government pass legislation that forbid the court from hearing

⁸¹ Te reo Māori (Māori language) had no word for sale and no notion at all of English custom land sale. See: Margaret Mutu. "Custom Law and the Advent of New Pakehā Settlers" in Danny Keenan. *Huia histories of Māori : Ngā Tāhuhu Kōrero*. Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand: Huia Publishers, 2012, esp. p. 105.

⁸² This expression of desire for engagement with Europeans and their accoutrements has often been taken by the latter to represent a desire to jettison the Māori world. Even Māori who witnessed first-hand the industrial revolution in London and Manchester were by no means convinced that it constituted advancement, given the stark pauperisation that was its obvious component. See O'Malley. *The Meeting Place*, 2014.

the case. In 1887, a Royal Commission released a report suggesting that a substantial amount of land be returned to Kāi Tahu as means of redress. A change of government saw the report ignored. In 1920, a further commission suggested Ngāi Tahu be paid £354,000.⁸³ Whilst this report remained contested by Kāi Tahu, the government proved unwilling to pay even the amount detailed in its own report. It was not until 1944 that it began payments of £300,000, significantly less than the report suggested, in £10,000 per annum installments. In order to have an entity deemed suitable of receiving the money, the Crown legislated into existence the Ngāi Tahu Māori Trust Board. This was an important moment in the Crown's fashioning of Kāi Tahu in its own image, remoulding the iwi into an entity with which it was prepared to do business.

In 1986 Rakihia Tau, on behalf of the Ngāi Tahu Māori Trust Board, filed claim with the Waitangi Tribunal.⁸⁴ The Waitangi Tribunal was created in 1975 as a concession to increasing discontent, and increasing organisation of the expression of that discontent, from Māori. Although symbolically important, the Tribunal was initially limited in its purview to breaches of Te Tiriti/The Treaty after 1975. This clause was vehemently criticised by Māori, given that most of their land had, of course, been stolen long before this date. Under sustained pressure from Māori, the Crown conceded, and in 1985, legislation allowed the Tribunal to hear breaches dating back to the signing of the Treaty.

⁸³ The Tribunal report records that from 1872 through to 1920, no less than 17 separate inquiries took place. 21.2 ngai tahu land claim

⁸⁴ wai 27 p 11 (of pdf)

In 1984, neoliberal policy began to be implemented in New Zealand with a speed and veracity that was described by *The Economist* as ‘out-Thatchering Thatcher’.⁸⁵ Proponents of neoliberal ideas had effectively taken over the Labour party in a coup described by commentators at the time as ‘Chile without the gun’. Dubbed ‘Rogernomics’ after the then-finance minister Roger Douglas, neoliberal reform in this period saw a fire sale of state owned assets. An impediment to the rapid dismantling of the state was the expanded remit of the Waitangi Tribunal and a provision in the State Owned Enterprise Act that constrained the Crown from breaching the Treaty of Waitangi by selling assets that might form part of the negotiations with iwi. A frustration of the neoliberal impetus to hand everything over to the market set the background for the Crown’s response to the Tribunal’s findings.

The Tribunal’s report found that the price paid by the Crown – around six one hundredths of a penny per acre – amounted to theft.⁸⁶ It noted, however, that the claim was never ‘primarily about the inadequacy of price that Ngai Tahu was paid’, as Ngāi Tahu understood the agreement to be the formation of an ongoing relationship, not the extinguishment of ties in the alienation of private property. As the Tribunal report describes:

Ngai Tahu have certainly a sense of grievance about the paucity of payment they received for their land but then Ngai Tahu have always regarded the purchase

⁸⁵ Georg Menz. “Making Thatcher Look Timid: the Rise and Fall of the New Zealand Model” in Susanne Soederberg. *Internalizing globalization: the rise of neoliberalism and the decline of national varieties of capitalism*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

⁸⁶ Waitangi Tribunal. Ngai Tahu Land Report, 199, p. 14.

price not as a properly assessed market value consideration in the European concept but rather as a deposit; a token, a gratuity. Ngai Tahu understanding and the substance of their expectations was that they agreed to share their resources with the settler. Each would learn from the other. There was an expectation that Ngai Tahu would participate in and enjoy the benefits that would flow from the settlement of their land. As part of that expectation they wished to retain sufficient land to protect their food resources. They expected to be provided with, or to have excluded from the sale, adequate endowments that would enable them to engage in the new developing pastoral and commercial economy.⁸⁷

The report concluded that the Crown had acted 'unconscionably' and in breach of the Treaty of Waitangi, causing 'grave injustice' over a period of 140 years. Ngai Tahu were, it considered, entitled to 'substantial redress from the Crown'.⁸⁸

The Crown entered into negotiations with Ngāi Tahu to work out the particulars of the redress. In a sign that it was not ready to discontinue its past behaviour, the Crown unilaterally suspended negotiations in 1994. Ngāi Tahu again took the Crown to court and successfully blocked the Crown from selling any Crown-owned land or assets until it had fulfilled its obligations under the Treaty. This forced the Crown back to the negotiating table. In 1998, the Ngāi Tahu Claim Settlement Act was passed and a settlement made with the financial value of \$170 million. Sir Tipene O'Regan, the chief

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 1066.

negotiator for Ngāi Tahu, maintained that the full value of their claim was closer to \$16 billion: ‘the level of this generosity to Pakeha society has never been acknowledged.’⁸⁹

4.9 Tribal Corporation Neoliberalisation

Prior to the settlement being granted, the Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu Act 1996 brought Ngāi Tahu into being as a legal entity, a particularly European form of consecration. Te Runanga o Ngāi Tahu became a corporation with the rights and responsibilities of a natural person. This was the first time an iwi had gained legal status. As Ngāi Tahu historian Rawiri Te Maire Tau recounts:

[G]iven the time in which it was created, where indeed according to many ‘there was no alternative’ to neoliberal economics, it is no surprise that Ngai Tahu followed the wisdom of its age in its organisational structure and so it has carried on until today.⁹⁰

Ngāi Tahu adopted the model of the corporation, with a tribal council simulated as a board of directors. They adopted, in their own terms, ‘the best corporate governance models we could find in the world [drawing] from the democratic structures of local

⁸⁹ "Insight." In *Mana news*. Radio New Zealand. July 31, 2000.

⁹⁰ *Scoping paper on tribal economies*. Report. Ngāi Tahu Research Centre. Ahrahia Pathfinders, 2012.

government and Western best practice.⁹¹ Operations are divided across two main entities. Management of Te Runanga o Ngāi Tahu's commercial activities and assets is carried out by Ngāi Tahu Holdings Corporation. This manages an investment portfolio which boasts tourism, seafood, property, farming, finance, among its interests. In 2016, the Holdings Corporation managed about \$1.5 billion of assets in total, and had a net annual income of around \$168 million. This allowed for a \$44.2 million distribution to the Office of Te Runanga. The Office, the other executive branch, is responsible for managing distributed profits to fund education, housing, employment, and cultural activities for its over 50,000 iwi members.

Te Maere Tau notes with regard to Ngāi Tahu's corporatisation:

Ngāi Tahu is a reflection of its tribal heritage and values, as much as it is a reflection of the neo-liberal economic theory of the 1980s. At a superficial level it is a tribal entity that functions to service tribal members. In that sense it is an indigenous corporation. Yet at a deeper level it is a modern adaptation of the settler economy, with Pakeha workers dominating the holding corporation.⁹²

Tau goes on to describe the historical ironies and contradictions expressed in the advent of the tribal corporation:

⁹¹ "Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu." Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu. Accessed June 16, 2017. <http://ngaitahu.iwi.nz/te-runanga-o-ngai-tahu/>.

⁹² *Tribal economies*, 2012, p. 42.

[M]ercantilist corporations robbed and subjugated the indigenous people of the lands from which they sought to benefit. It is thus a considerable irony that corporations have now come to subsume and appropriate tribal structures themselves, dictating what they are and are not capable of and restricting indigenous people's ability to realize the values and customs which lie at the very heart of their culture ... now, tribes, through the adoption of the corporate model, internally colonise their people. Thus it can be argued that indigenous people bind themselves within the logic of a foreign entity which is wholly incapable of providing the self determination that they seek.⁹³

A key influence for Ngāi Tahu in the redefinition of the iwi along corporate lines has been 'the global guru of neoliberal populism', Hernando de Soto.⁹⁴ There are two main thrusts to de Soto's solutions for 'undevelopment'. On the one hand, he argues, the state inadvertently produces and shadows an informal economy by encumbering the formal market with unfeasible bureaucratic requirements. Hence, regulation needs to be removed to allow proper flourishing of the informal economy. Secondly, the state's withdrawal from regulatory intervention in the market need only be accompanied by an expanded endowment of private property rights where they were not previously recognised, and the strict enforcement of those rights. Once granted individual title, a lean-to in a *favela* becomes capital with which to leverage debt so as to fund

⁹³ Ibid., p. 15.

⁹⁴ Mike Davis. *Planet of slums*. London: Verso, 2006, p. 79.

commercial enterprise. De Soto's is a vision, as Davis argues, of micro-entrepreneurialism as the 'transubstantiation of poverty into capitalism.'⁹⁵

Despite the experience of the use of individual title as means of dispossession, Ngāi Tahu has shown enthusiasm for the expansion of the logic governing de Soto's pronouncements. For example, the conversion of customary fishing rights into fishing quotas renders a usufructuary right as a commodity, making it amenable to market exchange.⁹⁶ A further, more explicit, result of de Soto's influence has been the institution of savings scheme for Ngāi Tahu members, called Whai Rawa. As Rawiri Te Maire Tau recounts in a report for the Ngāi Tahu Research Centre:

Whai Rawa was essentially based on the economic ideas of Hernando de Soto, where he argued that capitalism essentially rests on capital. Unless tribal members have capital they will never be able to generate wealth. The basic premise was that Ngāi Tahu would set up bank accounts for all members of the tribe and every year an annual distribution of approximately NZ\$100 would be allocated to their account. If tribal members managed to save \$100, the tribe would allocate the same amount. On that basis each member could save \$300 per annum. The key point here is that the Whai Rawa savings plan was for all tribal members whose savings added to the available interest for distribution. Withdrawals from this account could only be made by tribal members for three

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 179.

⁹⁶ Tau, Te Maire . "Neo-Liberal Settlements From Adam Smith to Treaty Settlements." *New Zealand Journal of History* 49, no. 1 (2015): 126-44.

reasons, which fitted the Whai Rawa goal of building three capital assets among whanau (family) and individual tribal members. The three important areas of capital assets were defined as knowledge capital (education), social and business capital and personal capital (superannuation and a retirement plan).⁹⁷

Ngāi Tahu's neoliberal orientation can also be read in statements that communicate corporate personality. Corporate personality, however, has become inextricable from the iwi itself, so the statements work to define iwi members according to corporate imperatives. The official website makes repeated mention of Ngāi Tahu as a 'resilient, entrepreneurial people', 'possessing entrepreneurial character', and so on.⁹⁸ The entrepreneur has been widely regarded as the preeminent figure of neoliberal subjectivity.⁹⁹ Whereas neoliberalism shares with its classical forbear a belief in the unparalleled efficiency of the market for resolving (mediating, governing) human affairs, neoliberalism shifts focus in an important regard. Whilst classical liberalism obfuscated the necessity of force in the state's production of markets, it propounded, as part of this obfuscation, that markets were natural and hence needed only to be left to themselves. Neoliberalism, on the other hand, places greater importance on the role of competition in the marketplace. As such, in addition to ensuring the conditions that enable markets, the state must also intervene to prevent monopolies from arising.

⁹⁷ Ngāi Tahu Research Centre. *Tribal Economies* 3, 2012, p. 42. My son and I both have Whai Rawa accounts.

⁹⁸ "Ngāi Tahu - the iwi." Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu. Accessed December 16, 2017. <http://ngaitahu.iwi.nz/ngai-tahu/>.

⁹⁹ Campbell Jones and André Spicer. *Unmasking the Entrepreneur*, Cheltenham: Edward Edgar, 2010.

For both the classical and neo- variants of economic liberalism, the human is considered to be a rational market actor. However, whereas classical liberalism envisioned the extensive spread of the market and the harmonies of trade thus produced, neoliberalism seeks an intensive expansion of the market so that everything under the sun might be rendered commensurable for exchange on the market. It is this intensive expansion of the market that produces the entrepreneur as the neoliberal subjectivity *par excellence*. In this situation, the self becomes not just a commodity, but capital to be valorised in the market of life. And it is initiatives such as Whai Rawa that work to practically produce members of the iwi as entrepreneurs.

In compelling Māori social organisation to rewrite itself in corporate neoliberal mode, the Waitangi Tribunal might be seen as a continuation of the colonisation by legal means initiated by the Native Land Court, which effected dispossession by the imposition of individual title, a corrosive process that served to break up collective ownership, allowing the re-structuring of land title as private property relations. The Tribunal process exists, ostensibly, to enable redress for historical injustices such as those inflicted by the Native Land Court. However, in effect, it continues the Native Land Court's project through transforming the social and organisational nature of the claimants during the process of hearing the claims. This process culminates in the the organisational form Māori have no choice but to assume in order to receive the financial compensation suggested by the Tribunal: the tribal corporation.

The corporatisation of iwi is supported by the breakdown of structures of social organisation and decision-making brought about by dispossession. As a site of

executive power, the iwi itself was a production of encounter with Europeans. This transformation leads to a centralisation of power, which has stifled and sidelined traditional processes of decision-making, and rendered diverse voices that the hapū gave air to as marginal.

Annette Sykes recognises a familiar colonial pattern in the Crown's privileging of iwi as partners for negotiation.¹⁰⁰ She refers to the tactic whereby the Crown co-opts an indigenous elite through the bestowal of various economic favours and privileges allowing for softer, more indirect control. For Sykes, the period beginning with the Tribunal claims made in the 1980s and continuing into the present

 saw the rise of a Maori elite within the process of litigating, negotiating and then implementing Treaty settlements, many of whom have become active sycophants of the broader neoliberal agenda which transfers a limited subset of publicly owned assets and resources into the private ownership of corporations to settle the injustices that have been inflicted upon hapu and iwi Maori.¹⁰¹

The tribal corporation, then, has been a joint construction of the neoliberal state and an emergent neoliberal Māori elite. With regard to Ngāi Tahu specifically,¹⁰² Te Maire Tau notes that 'stress fractures are beginning to show as Ngai Tahu grapples with exactly

¹⁰⁰ Sykes, Annette . "The politics of the Brown Table." Transcript. Bruce Jesson Memorial Lecture, 2010.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 2.

¹⁰² With regard to indigenous elites, Sir Tipene O'Reagan the former chairperson of Ngāi Tahu has said that members need "bread and circuses". This is of course precisely the opposite of direct political involvement in the management of Ngāi Tahu affairs. Ngāi Tahu Research Centre. *Scoping paper on tribal economies*, 2012, p.26.

how they are supposed to live up to their motto 'For our generations and the next' under the standard corporate model.¹⁰³

4.10 Living the Settler Dream

The various characters assembled by this chapter form quite a crowd. Wakefield would no doubt beam with pride if confronted by a retrospective view of the the success of his enterprise. He would likely crack a wry smile at the fact that the very form of his vehicle for colonisation, the corporation, had proven to have an enduring legacy – given that it was via the very process of redress for the land dealings he instigated that iwi became corporatised.

Perhaps we can only dimly perceive the rough music of the communities of whalers, sealers, and the Kāi Tahu women whose mana and long memory of place provided them with sanctuary, such music having been drowned out by the protestants, presbyterians, and puritans who followed in Wakefield's train. In the first instance, we glimpse the refugees of expropriation and exploitation and their Māori hosts, who, through their cohabitation and intimate sociality, provided foundry for the improvisation of concrete universals, non-exclusionary belonging in difference. In the second, we see those whose faith rested in the abstract universality of the market, and salvation in the accumulation of capital.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p.3.

It seems Wakefield and Hernando de Soto would get along famously, if only on the basis of their shared penchant for conjuring profitable solutions to poverty from thin air. Te Maire recounts that Ngāi Tahu's corporate form and neoliberal impetus were largely de facto, consequences of the seeming truth of that irrepressible slogan of neoliberalism: 'There Is No Alternative'. There is a sharp irony to this given the title of de Soto's most famous book, 'The Other Path'. De Soto's book was named in polemical contradistinction to the 'shining path' of Peruvian communist José Carlos Mariátegui, who developed a theory of communism that placed relationships to the land at its core and saw the communal bases of indigenous life as harbouring immense liberatory potential.¹⁰⁴

Whilst Ngāi Tahu's considerable success in generating wealth is beyond debate, the question as to the end served by this wealth remains contentious.¹⁰⁵ Kāi Tahu have always made use of what was to hand in forming dynamic responses to the challenges and possibilities of a shifting context. Yet, viewed through a neoliberal lens, te tino rangatiratanga (self-determination) morphs into the entrepreneurial self, determined to make money in the market. Mana (power, prestige, authority) becomes money, mauri (life force) becomes inert matter, and tikanga (first law), as a field of relations and breath of reciprocity, calcify as the law of substance and property. These translations are performed through the real operation of dispossession, the imposition of individual title, the commodification of the land, *and* the subsequent struggle for redress. Although

¹⁰⁴ Angotti, Thomas. "The Contributions of José Carlos Mariátegui to Revolutionary Theory." *Latin American Perspectives* 13, no. 2 (1986): 33-57.

¹⁰⁵ Ngāi Tahu Research Centre. *Scoping paper on tribal economies*, 2012, p. 41.

some land might be returned to the people, those people will have been transformed in the process of getting it back.

5 Whakapapa of Ngāi Tahu Neoliberalism (or, A Genealogy of Ngāi Tahu Morals)

In the previous chapter, I mentioned Rawiri Te Maire Tau's kōrero (talk, narrative) in which he recounted that Ngāi Tahu had adopted corporate form and neoliberal strategy because, at the time, neoliberalism was seen to be the only game in town. I have already pointed to the irony of Hernando de Soto's neoliberal 'other path' being cast as the only available path while it was, in fact, 'other' to an indigenous movement based on collective ownership of land.¹ I also suspect that Tau is being a little coy with this explanation, given that the story of Ngāi Tahu's exposure to, and adoption of, neoliberal doxa follows such a surprisingly direct path. In my view we would do well to examine whether there are deeper conditions enabling Ngāi Tahu's swift corporatisation. Doing so entails constructing a whakapapa of some of the ideas that inform and orientate the corporate iwi (tribe). To tug on a certain thread regarding my whakapapa and to find Karl Raimund Popper on the other end is no doubt a surprise – yet, as it turns out, Popper is entangled in the very roots of Ngai Tahu's neoliberal turn.

Popper moved from Austria to Te Waipounamu (the South Island) as a refugee at the onset of WWII. While there, he gained employment lecturing in philosophy at the University of Canterbury, where he taught his foremost disciple, another refugee, the

¹ There is of course the added irony that Hernando de Soto shares his name with spanish conquistador (Hernando de Soto, 1495–1542) notorious for his ruthless exploitation of indigenous villagers.

historian Peter Munz. Munz, a history professor in New Zealand for most of his working life, in turn, went on to exert profound influence on the thought of the Ngāi Tahu/Kāi Tahu historian Rawiri Te Maire Tau. As the head of the Ngāi Tahu Research Centre at the University of Canterbury, as well as a key historian for Ngāi Tahu's Waitangi Tribunal process, Tau is one of Ngāi Tahu's foremost public intellectuals.

Popper, Munz, and Tau share a number of theoretical assumptions that are worth teasing out, as there is a tangle of shared concerns between myself and these three figures that brings us to the site of a strange crossroads or confluence. In the attempt to turn opposition into a matter of contrast, I have attempted to map my own orientation onto theirs so as to make apparent the lineaments of congruence and disagreement. Reading against the grain, or perhaps taking concepts, stories or qualities from them against their will, I have tried to gather some provisional materials for the experimental construction of a Māori Marx that follows. Rather than treating the encounter as a simple contingency or aside, it is only in and through the juncture of the arrival of (neo)liberal ideas into the the Māori world, and their subsequent reproduction, that a Māori Marx becomes a relevant possibility.

5.1 The Open and Closed Case of Karl Popper

Popper moved from Austria to Te Waipounamu (the South Island) as a refugee at the onset of WWII. Together with two other Austrian emigres, Friedrich Hayek and Ludwig von Mises, Popper laid the intellectual foundations for neoliberalism. Each wrote a

seminal neoliberal text and all were involved in the establishment of the Mont Pelerin Society, the generative centre of neoliberal ideology and activism established after the second world war. Popper, greatly admired by Margaret Thatcher, was an important influence on her political thinking.

During his time in Te Waipounamu, Popper penned his most popular work, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*. Popper regarded the book as his war effort, and certainly it is a war-like text: some eight hundred pages of heated polemic against those he feels to be the theoretical enemies of liberal democracy. Popper argues that in the Ancient world, the chief propagandists for the opposition to democracy were Plato and (to a lesser extent) Heraclitus, whose ideas find their modern renaissance with Hegel. Hegel's thought subsequently forks, Popper claims, into left and right variants: Marxism and Fascism respectively.² Māori, in the terms of Popper's armchair anthropology, occupy the same position on Popper's developmental continuum as did the tribal Greeks prior to the emergence of democracy.³ That which connects Māori, Ancient Greece and Modern Europe, Popper contends, is a reactionary and regressive tribalism, an irrational form of social bonding that impedes intellectual, political and economic rationalisation. By securing group cohesion through irrationality, and by dominating the individual under the social totality, tribalism provides the basis of all totalitarianism. However, as Popper clarifies:

² Karl Popper. *Open society and its enemies*. Routledge Classics. Routledge, 2011, pp. 58–9. Popper's attempt to associate Hegel with Nzaiism is speculative and ignores concrete influence of thinkers like Nietzsche, or the actual antisemitism of thinkers such as Schopenhauer, who he celebrates. On this point, see Walter Kaufmann. 'Chapter 7: The Hegel Myth and Its Method', in *From Shakespeare to existentialism: studies in poetry, religion, and philosophy*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1959.

³ Popper. *Open Society*, 2011, p. 302.

There were, of course, many differences between the Greek and the Polynesian ways of life, for there is, admittedly, no uniformity in tribalism. There is no standardized 'tribal way of life'. It seems to me, however, that there are some characteristics that can be found in most, if not all, of these tribal societies. I mean their magical or irrational attitude towards the customs of social life, and the corresponding rigidity of these customs.⁴

It is worth noting the sheer scope of Popper's claim, according to which everybody – globally and throughout history – except for certain Greeks and their liberal heirs, can be characterised by the same 'tribalism' that drives modern fascists. Quite apart from the bad manners of seeking sanctuary in a Māori place and then likening your hosts to the fascists from your own country, Nazism, of course, shared far more genetic resemblance with European colonialism than it did any aspect of Māori society. Concentration camps, for instance, were invented by the English in Africa,⁵ while the indigenous holism that morphs rapidly, in Popper's caricature, into totalitarianism, has expressed far less propensity towards genocide than has liberalism.

It is not only Popper's baseless anthropology that has received criticism. His reading of Hegel is widely considered to be woefully inadequate, only ever having read a severely abridged edition of selected works.⁶ Likewise, his presentation of both Plato

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Reviel Netz. *Barbed wire an ecology of modernity*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 2009, p. 139.

⁶ Kauffman. "The Hegel Myth", 1959.

and Marx has been accused of being marred by inaccuracy, dishonesty, or both.⁷ Yet it is these materials from which Popper constructs the terms of his operative binary between what he terms 'closed' and 'open' societies. In order to briefly schematise the differences between such societies, it helps to view things from the perspective of the proponents of each. On the one hand, the piecemeal social engineer of the open society; on the other, the utopian of the closed society.

The piecemeal social engineer, Popper argues, seeks to improve society gradually, without recourse to any general laws that might be said to govern the development of that society. The utopian works the other way around. General laws of social development are identified and then used to dictate political action. Because laws of historical development give the predictive basis for action, the utopian is said to be historicist. The associated charge of holism refers to the utopian's belief that individuals are socially produced, and hence defined in relation to a social totality. For the piecemeal revisionist, on the other hand, the individual is prior, with society being nothing beyond the sum total of the interaction of these already-constituted individuals. Margaret Thatcher's contention that 'there is no such thing as society' neatly summarises this view. As society does not exist, neither do laws or principles governing historical development, due to society being only the anarchic swarm of individual action. The utopian, on the other hand, sees the individual as determined by society and society as operating according to internal laws of development. These laws are thus

⁷ Grant, G. P. "Plato and Popper." *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* 20, no. 2 (1954): 185-94. doi:10.2307/138597. Klosko, George. "Popper's Plato: an assessment." *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 26, no. 4 (1996): 509-27.

allowed to usurp humanity's agency for choosing the course it should take, while they dominate people's minds by strictly demarcating and determining the limits of thought. Taboo and dogma come to govern all social action so that our utopian is shown to be, at base, a totalitarian. The piecemeal social engineer, on the other hand, is the liberal democrat, who, strong enough to live without irrational beliefs that provide social cohesion, applies their critical rationality to debate and addressing social ills.

Popper maps the foregoing distinction between closed and open societies onto a historical narrative that begins with the Greeks, who were, he argues, 'the first to make the step from tribalism to humanitarianism.'⁸ Both Herclitus and Plato's writing is seen as a response to the dissolution of the old tribal aristocracies in the face of emergent 'equalitarianism and humanitarianism.'⁹ The comparable 'democratic' moment for modernity is identified in the industrial revolution and the American and French revolutions. Hegel, the intellectual heir of Heraclitus, is indicted as a 'mouthpiece of reaction against the French Revolution'.

For Popper, any advance towards mature, rational civilisation from irrational infancy is beset by the pressures and pangs of the dissolution of social cohesion. The desire to return to the secure, closed hierarchies of tribalism is a reaction to these growing pains. It is the *shock* of 'the transition from the tribal or "closed society", with its submission to magical forces, to the "open society" which sets free the critical powers of man' that provides political impetus for the reactionary movements that wish to 'overthrow civilization and to return to tribalism.'¹⁰

⁸ Popper. *Open Society*, 2011, p. 302.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

The most pernicious aspect of tribalism, and its lesser form of collectivism, is that the individual is derived secondarily from the social totality (the tribe, or a social grouping, such as class, for collectivism). In this orientation, the individual is determined by their positionality in relation to the whole, instead of the whole being merely an abstract denomination of the sum of the activity of free individuals. Thus, the original integrity of the individual is undermined by its social origin, and personal responsibility is handed away to the social whole. It is precisely this point which Popper finds to be the foremost site of antagonism between the closed society and the open society seeking liberation from it. The individual is given as the preeminent 'stronghold in the defences of the new humanitarian creed. The emancipation of the individual was indeed the great spiritual revolution which had led to the breakdown of tribalism and to the rise of democracy.'¹¹ Emancipated individualism is said to be in virtuous complementarity with Christian morality, their combination resulting in the fundamental character of Western civilisation. Popper neatly encapsulates the difference at the heart of this distinction by way of Biblical imperative: "love your neighbour", say the Scriptures, not "love your tribe".¹²

Popper goes on to give the individual of the open society a distinctly neoliberal character. He begins by describing Western individualism as flourishing in an ever-widening gap between habitual taboo and the state. In between is the sphere of rational decision and personal responsibility, of the consumer choices of the rational market actor. Further, interpersonal relationships are no longer dictated by 'accidents of

¹¹ Ibid., p. 197.

¹² Ibid., p.198.

birth'¹³ and become instead included within the realm of choice. Add to this the 'competition for status'¹⁴ between individuals, apparently absent in closed societies because of static hierarchies, and the (proto-)entrepreneurial subject of neoliberalism is readily discernible.

Popper adds further terminological refinement to the opposition between open and closed societies. Closed societies can be said to be 'organic' societies because they lack competition between different parts, forming instead an operational whole similar to the body of an organism. As a society loses its organic character – as it is 'opened' by individualism and competition – it may increasingly become an 'abstract society'. What Popper intends by 'abstract society' is proximal to the situation I discussed in Chapter 3, in which social relations become abstract relations of exchange. Popper conducts a thought experiment by way of explication:

We could conceive of a society in which men practically never meet face to face – in which all business is conducted by individuals in isolation who communicate by typed letters or by telegrams, and who go about in closed motor-cars. (Artificial insemination would allow even propagation without a personal element.) Such a fictitious society might be called a 'completely abstract or depersonalized society'. Now the interesting point is that our modern society resembles in many of its aspects such a completely abstract society. Although we do not always drive alone in closed motor cars (but meet face to face

¹³ Ibid., p. 306.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 305.

thousands of men walking past us in the street) the result is very nearly the same as if we did – we do not establish as a rule any personal relation with our fellow-pedestrians.¹⁵

Popper's account of increasingly abstract social life is undoubtedly prescient with regard to our present of social media(tised) sociality. Whilst Popper admits that the isolation of abstract society works against our biological need for company, he discerns in the abstract social relations of exchange a certain freedom. It is in the space of the market that entering into relationships becomes a matter of choice, thus providing fertile impetus for individualism.

In trying to map Popper's distinction between closed and open societies onto those I developed in the first two chapters (as 'Māori Geometries' and 'Pākehā Geometries'), I find his less moralising distinction between organic and abstract societies to bring us closer together. With regard to the abstract society, it is clear that both of our definitions converge on the abstract social relations of market exchange between private individuals. His 'organic' society, however, is less useful, informed as it is by the cliches of armchair anthropology. This leads him to make wildly erroneous claims, such as the notion that competition for status is absent in Māori society due to static hierarchies. This is straightforwardly incorrect. The dynamism of mana (sacred authority, power, prestige), its decrease or increase through skilful action, is a core aspect of the metabolism of the Māori mode of life.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 305.

Additionally, Popper's 'organic society' is largely synonymous with his closed society, being bound together by irrationality and governed by static hierarchy and blind taboo. Whist 'tribal' irrationality serves to bind a community together, it arrests the possibility of progress by inhibiting rational criticism of society's norms and laws (by failing to distinguish between natural and man-made laws.) As Popper's 'West' approaches the abstract society, it becomes the bearer of an increasingly clear rationality. The West is thus unique in its attainment of a rational basis for society in the economic relations of private property. Tellingly, in terms of the general tenor of Popper's argument, perfectly rational society is also perfectly anti-social.

The abstract society is, in my view, better understood in opposition to a society of immanence. A prelapsarian (as long as colonisation replaces 'the Fall') immanence of relation is one that has not undergone the split producing a self set against nature, subject against object, first nature rent by second, and labour freed from the means of production and hence 'free' to sell its labour-power. For this society of immanence, the land, of which the self is part, is instead an open field of unending relationality, as opposed to the closed integrity of the abstract individual of private property, who dissolves the embrace of real sociality in favour of the abstract freedoms of isolation.

Popper allows us to glimpse something of the political implications of the emergence of the exchange abstraction into immanence in a lengthy and fascinating aside about Greek geometry.¹⁶ He notes, in the writings of Plato, two distinct meanings of equality: one with a geometrical basis, the other arithmetical. Although not explicitly

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 182 fn. 9 and pp. 348-50.

registered by Popper, it is important to note that the bifurcation of the meaning of equality occurs precisely in the period following the monetisation of Greek society.¹⁷ Tracking the different definitions of 'equality', Popper points to a moment in the development of geometry that is akin to the moment that Zeno's arrow freezes mid-flight.¹⁸ Zeno's paradoxical arrow halts in mid-air the instant its tip enters the infinite divisibility of abstract space. Along these lines, Popper refers to the irruption of irrational numbers into geometry that resulted from the Pythagorean attempt to arithmetise geometry and cosmology. This attempt ran up against the aporia of the irrationality of the square root of two, a fissure arithmetic opened in the harmonic forms of practical geometry. The irrationality of the square root of two presented an incommensurability between measures through non-repeating infinity. For Plato, as Popper has it, the emergence of irrationality into geometry amounted to a scandal that was initially repressed and later required the inversion of Pythagorean project. Plato was to reverse Pythagoras' program of the arithmetisation of geometry, seeking instead the geometrisation of mathematics, enabling irrational numbers to be tamed by being dealt with and subsumed on a systematic basis.

It was from the incommensurability introduced into geometry by arithmetic that two distinct notions of equality developed. The first has its basis in practical geometry, the second in abstract arithmetic geometry. The equivalence of practical geometry is an equivalence of measure and proportion: the construction of the proof, using compass

¹⁷ Sixth and fifth centuries bc. Richard Seaford. *Money and the Early Greek Mind: Homer, Philosophy, Tragedy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

¹⁸ Zeno's paradox is discussed in chapter two of this dissertation.

and straightedge, that the angles of a triangle are equivalent to 180 degrees, for instance. In numerical or arithmetic geometry, the notion of equivalence is of the sort expressed in the equation $1=1$. In the latter case, equivalence is entirely abstract, the terms of equivalence emptied of all content beyond number.

Popper takes the proportional type of equivalence to be an expression of the totalitarian impulse due to the priority given to the relationship between the parts and the whole. Plato, according to Popper, deploys proportionality to naturalise and idealise class hierarchy,¹⁹ each class being fixed in position in accordance with the harmony of the whole. This, for Popper, is in opposition to democratic numerical equivalence, which makes no distinction between units, having abstracted entirely from their differences. This latter conception of equivalence provides the basis for Popper's notion of 'equalitarianism', wherein identical private individuals construct piecemeal relations through their interaction without recourse to a social whole. We are back to the abstract citizen of liberalism, forged in the first instance in the activity of market exchange.

The origin of abstract political equivalence in proponents of commercial society is confirmed by the figure of Pythagoras. Although much uncertainty surrounds Pythagoras, it seems likely that he or his followers were the members of a commercial class, actively involved in the spread of coined money. Pythagoras himself was from Samos, a monetised commercial centre that had succeeded Miletus as the centre of trade. He moved to southern Italy around the same time as coined money was introduced there, for which it was at least possible that Pythagoras was responsible. It is

¹⁹ Popper. *Open Society*, 2011, p. 173-4.

likely to have been Aristotle who reported that Pythagoras claimed to be King Midas, whose golden touch is an expression of money, as the universal equivalent, transforming everything into gold.²⁰

As a cultish society who also exerted political influence and were proponents of the market, the Pythagoreans provide an Ancient precursor to the Mont Pelerin Society. Much in line with Popper's equalitarianism, the Pythagorean politician, Archytas of Tarentum, pronounced that:

The discovery of calculation (logismos) ended civil conflict and increased concord. For when there is calculation there is no unfair advantage, and there is equality, for it is by calculation that we come to agreement in our transactions.²¹

Pythagoreans, for whom 'number is the being of all things', emerge at the same moment, unprecedented in history, where monetised exchange means that number seems to inhere in things themselves.²² Whereas for the Babylonians, arithmetic was based in practical calculation and observation, with the Greeks, number develops an ontological existence entirely divorced from the realities it 'counts'. A key contributing factor to this separation is undoubtedly the abstract numerical value inherent within commodities (as price) and the coined value that lasts beyond the transitory existence of commodities themselves. It is from this abstract self-sufficiency of numbers that the idea of the discrete individual that owes society nothing (for its constitution) arises.

²⁰ Seaford. *Money and the Early Greek Mind*, 2004, p. 267

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 269.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 272.

Popper is in agreement that the political equality of the abstract atomistic individual emerges in step with economic rationalisation. Indeed, it is this this supposed cultural advance that, for Popper, places 'the West' at the apex of an evolutionary scale.

Popper's digression as to the origin of different conceptions of equality usefully provides a clue as to a concept of equivalence not simply borne by exchange. Elsewhere in *The Open Society* he chides Marx for his 'useless slogan',²³ 'from each according to his ability, to each his needs!'²⁴ Popper's hostility to this phrase is likely a response to the lumpy proportional equivalence it implies, still tied to concrete life processes (needs), not evacuated of difference (abilities), and implicit in the assumption of totality (from each, to each). For this less abstract concept of equivalence, whose providence is in the immanence not yet undergone in the the split of monetary abstraction, it makes sense to retain the term 'egalitarian', against Popper's 'equalitarian'.

Whereas Popper is intent on securing the link between market rationality, political equivalence, the individual, and open society, he achieves it only through effecting a complete non-relation with Māori. It is through his caricature of the 'closed' tribal society, as well as a lazy linguistic association, that Popper condemns holism to its necessary connection with totalitarianism. Individualism can then be said to provide the only guard against domination of the parts through their subservience to the whole. We might compare on this point, however, Popper's description of Māori society as closed and

²³ Popper. *Open Society*, 2011, p. 505.

²⁴ Karl Marx. *Critique of the Gotha Programme*. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1970. Accessed December 13, 2017. <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1875/gotha/index.htm>.

static, governed by taboo and dominated by naturalised hierarchy, with actual accounts of Māori democratic practices. Frederick Manning, for example, an early settler remarked that

the natives are so self-possessed, opinionated, and republican, that the chiefs have at ordinary times but little control over them, except in very rare cases, where the chief happens to possess a singular vigour of character, or some other unusual advantage, to enable him to keep them under.²⁵

Francis Dart Fenton agreed when he observed, in 1857, that:

No system of government that the world ever saw can be more democratic than that of the Maoris. The chief alone has no power. The whole tribe deliberate on every subject, not only politically on such as are of public interest, but even judicially they hold their 'komitis' on every private quarrel. In ordinary times the vox populi determines every matter, both internal and external. The system is a pure pantocracy, and no individual enjoys influence or exercises power, unless it originates with the mass and is expressly or tacitly conferred by them.²⁶

²⁵ Frederick Manning and Alex Calder. *Old New Zealand and other writings*. London: Leicester University Press, 2001, p. 37.

²⁶ Quoted in Vincent O'Malley. *The Meeting Place Maori and Pakeha Encounters, 1642-1840*. Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2014.

It is these radically democratic and egalitarian aspects of indigenous life that captured Marx's attention in the last years of his life, as he began to broach that question in his thought of which he had previously abstained from asking: what were the contours of the communist society to come? Although there are dangers of translation here, I do not think we can surrender terms like democracy to Popper who would see it as an eternal – if incompletely realised – discovery of the West. Because an absolute purity of non-translation would make encounter impossible,²⁷ the term democracy is necessarily a meeting place requiring co-constitution and (re)construction. As these quotes make clear, this is a task to which Māori bring considerable resources and experience by virtue of the radically democratic and deliberative impulses of their society. The notion of proportional equivalence is certainly much closer to the comparable Māori concept of utu (reciprocity), and its underlying conception of balance. This will be discussed more fully in the closing chapter, being integral to the theory that might be produced by a Māori Mārx.

5.2 The Disembodied Concept of Peter Munz

²⁷ If each word remains singularly constrained by the world it issues from, then each languages become discrete and dialogue ceases. This tension is exacerbated by my lack of abilities in te reo. The problem is addressed for me, however inadequately, by working with concepts. Whilst sketching is less precise, there being no possibility of one to one translation between words, it becomes a sort of pedagogy whereby I learn the concepts in the process of continually trying to draw them adequately.

As with Popper, Peter Munz came to Te Waipounamu as a refugee, part of the Jewish diaspora forced to flee Germany, Austria and Italy.²⁸ A young man at the time of his arrival in 1940, Munz enrolled at the University of Canterbury, where he was to become a devoted student of Popper's. Munz would subsequently travel to Cambridge to study under Wittgenstein, becoming one of only two people to study with both men.²⁹ Whilst both Popper and Wittgenstein exerted profound intellectual influence, Munz came down much closer to Popper, continuing the latter's research programme in many respects. After completing his studies at Cambridge, Munz returned to Aotearoa New Zealand, where he taught history at the University of Victoria the remainder of his working life, regularly contributing to public and scholarly debate.

The philosophy of history Munz draws from Popper has two strands. One of these is a more refined philosophical Darwinism, whilst the second is a coarser cultural Darwinism that is lent respectability by being difficult to clearly demarcate from the first. Philosophical Darwinism belongs to the school of traditional evolutionary epistemology, wherein biology is taken to be the fundamental frame for answering questions of cognition and knowledge. As cultural evolution is not purely biological for Munz, we can assume some distinction between these two forms of 'evolution'. The exact intricacies of their connection and disconnection are beyond the scope of my immediate interest in this chapter. As it is Munz's cultural Darwinism that most clearly finds its way into Tau's

²⁸ Russell Price. 'Obituary: Peter Munz.' *The Guardian*, March 12, 2007. Accessed December 13, 2017. www.theguardian.com/news/2007/mar/12/obituaries.mainsection.

²⁹ David Edmonds and John Eidinow. *Wittgenstein's Poker: The Story of a Ten-Minute Argument Between Two Great Philosophers*. New York: Harper Collins, 2001, p. 13.

thinking, this is my primary focus, although I conclude the section by briefly returning to Munz's conception of philosophical Darwinism.

For Munz, every culture can be described in terms of its distance or proximity to our earliest common ancestor, whom he refers to as 'black Eve'. Whilst he admits that early cultural evolutionists used this conception in racist ways, Munz sees their mistake in identifying 'early' with stupidity or childishness.³⁰ Munz instead offers what he thinks to be a 'non-insulting, unpatronizing explanation of the limits of the early mind' wherein 'early' simply means that a culture has made less evolutionary steps, and hence is less complex, less rational, less open, and so on. This for Munz is simply the 'brute reality of cultural evolution', a brute reality, he bemoans, it has become 'fashionable' and 'politically correct' to avoid facing up to.³¹ Conceding, as Munz does, that cultural evolution is not 'purely biological',³² the question remains as to the metric by which Munz calculates cultures' distance from our collective origin. In the immediate context of defending cultural evolution from its racist victorian associations, Munz answers that the 'limitations of the early mind are the result of isolation and of absence of the kind of contact which would expose beliefs and taboos to criticism'. This 'absence of contact', as shall be seen, is in fact a euphemism for a culture not yet having been colonised and brought up to speed with the universal rationality of the West.

³⁰ Peter Munz. 'The Two Worlds of Anne Salmond in Postmodern Fancy-Dress', *New Zealand Journal of History* 28 (1), 1994, p. 73.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 71. Munz finds the anthropologist Anne Salmond guilty of both charges when, 'in painting a picture of the meeting of two worlds in the eighteenth century as if these two worlds represented two different but comparable cultures, she is really disguising the fact that one of the worlds had evolved farther away from the initial condition than the other'.

³² *Ibid.*, 74.

In a 1991 review article, 'How the West Was Won: Miracle or Natural Event', an important reference for Tau's position on the value of Mātauranga Māori, Munz makes clear a number of his assumptions regarding cultural evolution. Munz refers to the fact that the 'West was Westernised', phrased as such because universal, and hence timeless, rationality precedes the West. The West becomes itself only by approaching universal rationality. For Munz, therefore, 'we speak of westernisation when people shed their traditions, thus transforming "Westernisation" from a geographical concept, which is relative, into a historical one which is absolute.'³³ As he elsewhere surmises, with regard to his evolutionary scale, 'some cultures are farther from black Eve than others; and cultures which have become so thin as to generate universally valid science rather than parochially legitimizing and self-representing chants, are the farthest removed ones.'

Whilst for Munz, the evolution toward increased rationality should be general a tendency of human culture, it is inhibited by the countervailing irrationality that services the need of social bonds so as to replace those (such as kinship) undermined by market relations. The continuum from the totally closed kinship of our earliest ancestors in the Olduvai gorge, to the free market rationality of 'man-made canyons of Manhattan',³⁴ is marked by the diminishing hold ritual and belief have on society. As irrationality ceases to provide the foundation for society, social cohesion is undermined. As Munz outlines, social cohesion is negatively correlated with rationality, as it is only produced 'efficiently'

³³ Munz, Peter. 'How the West Was Won: Miracle or Natural Event?' *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 21, (2), 1991, p. 254.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 253.

if the beliefs and rituals are false and idiosyncratic, for rationality is a universal principle and only irrational institutions are sufficiently divisive to exclude people with which one does not wish to cooperate. Economic rationalisation becomes affordable with the emergence of social fabrics that are autonomous and promote solidarity without having to rely on kinship and/or exclusive belief and rituals. Where and when old, irrational, economic-rationalization, inhibiting traditions are shed, we approach modernity.³⁵

Whilst Munz takes his anthropological data on indigenous societies directly from Popper's baseless fabrication, his auto-ethnography of the West is hardly more realistic:

Modernity ... is variously and broadly described as the emergence of a society without poverty, with perpetual economic and cognitive growth, egalitarian and cosmopolitan, in which oppression and arbitrariness are comparatively absent. The societies that are in the grip of it are no longer grounded in shared beliefs but are held together by shared interests arising from consumer wants and a radical interdependence springing from an advanced division of labor. The so-called 'West' is obviously characterized by this description, and the rest of the world is approaching these conditions because of their contacts with the West.³⁶

³⁵ Ibid., pp. 253 - 254.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 259.

In this account, colonisation is beneficial for colonised peoples as it allows for their Westernisation, meaning their economic rationalisation, meaning their progression towards universality. Munz goes on to formulate the benefits of colonisation as a 'general law' of cultural evolution: 'colonisation is beneficial and a precondition for growth, not because of the positive advantages it bestows but because of the corrosive effects it has on traditions.'³⁷ In this schema, taking its lead from Popper's epistemology of falsifiability, colonisation is merely a beneficent falsifying of irrational beliefs disinhibiting the evolutionary potentials of the colonised mind.

The notion of the West as the apex of historical development is, of course, not new. Munz praises the 'sound and progressive' program for the study of history embarked upon by the moderns, that is, 'the stadial theory of History' instantiated in the 1750s by Adam Smith and the Physiocrats.³⁸ The stadial theory denotes stages by which societies develop along a continuum, from hunters to shepherds, shepherds to agriculturalists, finding final apex (more or less) in commercial civilisation. In Munz's telling, this research program was, although still perfectly sound, brought down by the enlightenment discovery of individual uniqueness.³⁹ Whereas Darwin understood that the individual worked in conjunction with species to produce evolution, human societies had failed in this application of the lesson. History, as a result, became an unrelated clutter of individuals, absent of overarching themes. The opening up of state archives (ready material for the biography of individuals) and Malinowski's functionalism (which

³⁷ Ibid., p. 262.

³⁸ Ronald L. Meek. *Social science and the ignoble savage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

³⁹ Munz. "How the West Was Won", 1991, p. 256.

held that a society's functioning could be explained without recourse to history) combined to sound the death knell for the research program. Historians, set adrift, went on to 'research into neglected areas of the past, such as events in which women, children, minority groups, and other underprivileged and unglamorized people had taken part.'⁴⁰ For Munz, the turn to research of this kind signalled an abandonment of 'the proper task of historical study'.⁴¹

Because the first three stages of the stadial theory were common the earth over, Munz contends, the only real question left to history is why the West tended towards Westernisation while every other culture remained mired in tradition and taboo. Already having either end of the scale, arraying the world's various cultures, like skulls, along a line from 'black Eve' to 'the moderns', Munz requires only a principle of differentiation that will allow him to track the West's development from beginning to end. The historical materialist notion that the mode of subsistence is decisive in regards to the character of societies and their stage of development is far too historicist for a Popperian. To avoid the pitfalls of historicism on the one hand or the unexplained miracle on the other, Munz instead makes his historical law into a natural law. History becomes evolution.

And yet, as Munz admits, cultural evolution is not really biological evolution and so natural selection cannot provide the basis for development. His answer, instead, is that where 'neutral' social mechanisms of the market enable social cohesion, this relieves the need for cohesion through irrational belief and practice, allowing the emergence of critical rationality. Munz asserts, however, that evolution must not be

⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 258-9.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 259.

taken to mean progress but instead only a blind yet causal process. And yet, Munz has a concealed entelechy within his metaphysics. The rationality towards which evolution blindly tends, by the groping elimination of falsity, is already constituted in advance, the market an odorless neutrality. Westernisation, it turns out, is little other than the spread of something that was universal to begin with; modernity, only the anamnesis of full rationality through the globalisation of a monoculture; the violence of empire actually the gift of universality, hidden in the forceful imposition of economic rationality.

Blinded by the irrational belief that his own culture's rationality was a neutral universal, Munz deems there to be nothing of interest in any other culture's thought: a distinct failure of the very curiosity he finds to be a defining feature of the moderns and profoundly lacking for Māori.⁴² There can be no question for Munz that the rationality he finds his own culture to be in possession of could have a historical basis. No question, that is, that there are or could be other patternings traced by other modes of living that express themselves in other modes of thought, other phrasings of existence, other grammars of sociality, other rhythms and relations of spatio-temporality. The distorted perspective of the mode of thought that issues from monetary exchange – a myopia resulting from the strongly centripetal abstract unity of money, and hence the self – causes the belief that its own way of thinking is the only valid one. It fails to see the pattern of its own sociality with the world – intergenerational and interrelational

⁴² 'The Maori were not good observers. They remained caught in tribal genealogies and that was all that the past and the present meant for them ... thus they were not able to take an interest in the Europeans, who were coming to threaten and eventually destroy the indigenous style of life. This is a serious matter, for a society in which people are unable to discern and diagnose life-threatening events is lacking in something that is essential.' Munz. 'The Two Worlds of Anne Salmond', 1994, pp. 61-2.

co-constitution, reproduction at the level of metabolism – as being the shape with which it stamps the world. It is only through the narrowness of the particularity of this view that enables it to construe itself as all that there is.

As Munz is unable to be interested in, or even acknowledge, other ways of thinking, he is unable to see where they converge and contrast with his thinking. As a result, he ends up trapped in an evolutionary dead end. For Munz, language is initially maladaptive because the realm of symbols does not feel the wash of the material environment, and so cannot respond to it in the the same way the body does. However, as language enables differentiation, it eventually leads to competition between ideas, thus enabling the increase in rationality through ‘natural’ selection. In order to repair the break between the material world and the symbolic world, so biology can retain its seat as First Philosophy, Munz argues that an organism is an embodied concept, and the concept is a disembodied organism. As he states:

The behavior of a fish and the functioning of a theory of water are exactly identical. The fish represents water by its structure and its functioning. Both features define an initial condition (for example, the degree of viscosity of water) which, when spotted or sensed, trigger off a prognosis or behavioral response which, in case of a fish, fails to be falsified. By contrast, a bird does not represent water.⁴³

⁴³ Peter Munz. *Philosophical Darwinism: on the origin of knowledge by means of natural selection*. London: Routledge, 2014, p. 155.

Here, the Cartesian split between subject and object becomes a feedback loop between organism and environment. To bring this modification over into epistemology, however, he has to argue for exact identity between the behaviour of fish and the functioning of a theory of water. Not rigorous analogy, but exact identity.⁴⁴ However, Munz continues:

From the perspective of biology, knowledge – that is, the cognitive relationship between two terms – is a form of self-reference. There is the world; and there is the world in a pattern shaped by the world itself, and that pattern refers cognitively to the world. The knower is part of the known and has been shaped by what is known. The reflector reflects, more or less adequately, because it is itself part of what is being reflected.⁴⁵

This – surprisingly, given our differences – is a quite elegant reformulation of the conception of a ‘geometry of life’ that I have sought to develop in this thesis. Whilst I might not choose a metaphors of mirror and reality, there is much of confluence between our orientations.⁴⁶ The key difference stems from the fact that whereas Munz places biological evolution at the base of all things, I remain committed to the explanatory powers of whakapapa.

⁴⁴ A strange result of the transition from the organism to the idea is that ideas are entirely separated from those who created them. Munz criticises the anthropologist Anne Salmond for writing as a woman: ‘Salmond writes very much as a woman as her derogatory comments on seventeenth-century European universities (which were “male dominated”) show.’ Munz. ‘The Two Worlds of Anne Salmond’, 1994, p. 69.

⁴⁵ Peter Munz. *Philosophical Darwinism*, 2014, p. 185.

⁴⁶ I would prefer something like ‘patterning patterning, and being patterned by, other patternings.’ Admittedly not a phrase likely to win over the likes of Peter Munz.

Both evolutionary theory and whakapapa suggest that every living thing traces its origin to single source.⁴⁷ However, for Munz's theory to remain consistent, he must retain an exact identity between organisms and ideas even as he notes the difference in the non-materiality of the idea. Further, Munz concedes that he cannot place cultural evolution on a 'purely biological' footing, but leaves the question begging as to the way in which biological evolution is carried over into culture. By attempting to contain everything within biology, Munz becomes unable to offer an explanation for entire dimensions of meaning and has to go to extraordinary lengths to stop his container leaking, whether into the metaphysical or cultural.

Thinking with the concept of whakapapa might have helped Munz navigate these difficulties. Whakapapa works less rigidly to describe functional ensembles through narratives of relationality. In doing so, whakapapa comfortably gathers together different modalities of existence – for example, gods, ideas, emotions, animals, technologies both social and material, a lake – and gives insight into the way they are enjoined within processes of intergenerational reproduction. Munz might then be able, as he wishes, to place 'each step, when one is looking backwards, into some kind of nondeterministic-causal relationship' without implicit recourse to Victorian assumptions about race and progress.⁴⁸ It might also allow him to clarify some of his mumbled tergiversations about the way in which biology relates to thought or to culture.

⁴⁷ Even if they might disagree as to the definition of 'living'.

⁴⁸ Munz. 'How the West Was Won', 1991, p. 270.

5.3 The Mirror of Rawiri Te Maire Tau

This detour through Popper and Munz might have been avoidable if the lineage did not find its contemporary proponent in the figure of Rawiri Te Maire Tau. As mentioned, Tau – as the head of the Ngāi Tahu Research Centre and key historian for the tribunal process – is one of Ngāi Tahu’s foremost public intellectuals. Tau is a compelling figure as he seemingly adopts wholesale Popper and Munz’s orientation that sees Māori thought as a closed down evolutionary relic in contrast to pristine Western rationality. This is all the more interesting as Tau is not only an academic historian but also a brilliant and careful kaitiaki (guardian) of Ngāi Tahu oral traditions. Tau’s historical work is an important precondition of my own.⁴⁹

This potentially double aspect of Tau’s thinking provides an important caveat for how his claims are to be taken. One of my teachers at Te Wānanga o Raukawa said that the Rev. Māori Marsden, both a tōhunga and an Anglican reverend, was able to keep his Māori and Christian whakapapa separate. This was no great feat for him, I was told, as Māori are used to recording whakapapa bilinearly, through each of their parents. Due to this, Māori thought is particularly disposed to maintaining parallel streams without necessarily needing to reconcile them. It is possible that seeming oppositions in Tau’s writings reflect the fact that he keeps two whakapapa: public academic historian

⁴⁹ As a thinker deeply embedded in Te Ao Māori, although convinced of the superiority of Western rationality, Tau usefully provides something of a dialectical mirror of myself. This chapter is intended as a kōrero (talk) with him, as much as anything.

in the European tradition on the one hand; intra-iwi or intra-Māori tōhunga in the tradition of the whare wānanga on the other.

Certainly, in a pair of articles on Mātauranga Māori, Tau seems to argue *both* for the value, usefulness, autonomy and singularity of matauranga Māori *and* for it having been thoroughly falsified by a superior epistemology.⁵⁰ In the earlier of the two articles, entitled 'Mātauranga Māori as an Epistemology', Tau takes his lead from Munz's ethno-epistemological claim that 'history' is the sole preserve of the 'Judaean-Graeco-Romano-European tradition.'⁵¹ As against the precise reckoning of time and the factual record of events, 'oral traditions' blurred both. As the primary aim of Māori 'stories' was to reinforce group identity and promote cohesion, they were relative as opposed to the objective history of the West. Tau summarises the epistemological implications of this form of cultural memory as follows:

Like any framework based on relativity, there are strengths and weaknesses. The strength is that the framework's truisms act as cohesive binding agents that maintain the community. Its weakness is that the framework acts as a kind of intellectual prison – a closed shop for thinking.⁵²

⁵⁰ Rawiri Te Maire Tau. 'Mātauranga Māori as an Epistemology.' In Sharp, Andrew, and Paul G. McHugh. *Histories, power and loss: uses of the past: a New Zealand commentary*. Wellington, N.Z.: Bridget Williams Books, 2001, pp. 61-73. And, 'The Death of Knowledge: ghosts on the plains.' *New Zealand Journal of History* 35 (2), 2001, pp. 131–52.

⁵¹ Tau. 'Mātauranga Māori', 2001, p. 62.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 69.

So far, so very Munzian.⁵³ Tau does, however, go on to make a number of arguments that find broad resonance with my own, although he draws different conclusions from them.

Whereas Tau agrees with Munz that Māori oral traditions are not history, he does regard them as standing alone, ‘neither valid or invalid.’⁵⁴ Extending the same logic, Tau disagrees that there is a Māori form of thought corresponding to every European category such as law, politics, economics, and so on. From the perspective of the self-sufficiency of Māori forms of thought, Tau questions the usefulness of Māori Studies Departments within universities that place Mātauranga Māori on a Western foundation and proliferate ‘Māori plus (x) European Category’ (for example, Māori Law) as fields of research. Tau instead argues for wānanga wherein students can ground themselves in Māori ways of thinking and learning, of which whakapapa provides the ‘skeletal structure’, and of which te reo Māori (Māori language) is foundational. Tau is critical of the Pākehā notion that the Māori mode of thinking can be ‘unraveled’ from textual analysis alone, pointing to all the ways that the thoughts of a community are not reducible to the written word.

However, rather than wānanga becoming ‘intellectual ghettos’ as a result of their independence, Tau argues, via Popper, for the need for students to be challenged by

⁵³ There is no small irony in Munz continually shoring-up of European identity in the act of proclaiming that the absence of the need for irrationalities to produce social cohesion is a solely a European trait. Munz operates a textbook Orientalist binary opposition whereby the non-European is ‘irrational, deprived (fallen), childlike, “different”; thus the European is rational, virtuous, mature, “normal”.’ Edward Said. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 2003, p. 40.

⁵⁴ Tau. “Mātauranga Māori”, 2001, p. 69.

other, perhaps conflicting, ways of thinking.⁵⁵ Crucially, the exposure to other ways of thinking would take place on and from a ground of Mātauranga Māori instead of having been framed in advance by the epistemological scaffolding of the Pākehā university. In this line of argumentation, the problem comes less from inherent defects of Mātauranga Māori than from its subjection to European logics, frameworks, foundations, and standards. In this regard it is possible that Tau, less concerned about his own personal beliefs, sees himself as giving voice to trenchant critique so as to challenge and provoke debate about some of the reifying assumptions of Mātauranga Māori.⁵⁶

Regardless of his intent, in the later of the two articles, entitled 'The Death of Knowledge: Ghosts on the Plains', Tau is emphatic:

[D]uring the era of colonization, Ngāi Tahu learnt that their traditional knowledge system consisted of 'false knowledge', beliefs rather than true or certain knowledge, and that these beliefs imploded because of their innate weaknesses. With the collapse of whakapapa, which was the fabric that held the traditional world view together, Māori were caught in a twilight of the gods. Following the collapse of one knowledge system, they did not adapt quickly enough to master, manage and generate from within new knowledge systems in response to the

⁵⁵ Tau's examples are 'the structuralist, post-structuralist theories of a Lévi-Strauss and a Foucault or even the historical views of Peter Munz.' Ibid., p. 79.

⁵⁶ In this regard, Tau relays an interesting anecdote about a venerable member of Ngāi Tahu Te Aritaua Pitama (1906-58). Pitama gave extensive lectures and produced radio programming on Māori history for the Christchurch public. In these public utterances he confirmed the views of Pākehā historians and anthropologists about Māori thought and history. In his oral compositions in te reo, he expressed entirely different views. Tau also cites another source that confirms the practice of including deliberate mistakes in material for Pākehā. Ibid., p. 75.

ideas brought to these shores by the colonizers. Thus Ngāi Tahu have existed in two worlds, neither of which they knew. To not know is to not possess knowledge. To not have knowledge of the world reduces a people to mere observers, powerless to participate in or create a world driven by their needs and the needs of their descendants.⁵⁷

Much of the article turns on a point seized upon by Munz, according to which Māori were apparently uninterested in the arrival of Europeans because the latter were outside the framework of genealogy through which Māori viewed the world.⁵⁸ Tau, although working with a much more adequate notion of whakapapa than Munz, who understands it to mean imprecise (biological) genealogy, reaches the same conclusion. He gives the example of tōhunga (experts) who devised whakapapa for Pākehā that designated them as descendents of Kiwa, the atua (god) of the Pacific Ocean. Tau draws the conclusion that this showed that Māori thought was, on the one hand, incapable of timely adaptation to novel stimuli and, on the other, that whakapapa, although it pretended to be a knowledge system, was in fact just a belief system structured by the paradigm of genealogy. Following a central tenet of both Popper and Munz, Tau characterises whakapapa as designed to secure group solidarity, and hence an impediment to rational thought.

Tau goes on to describe Mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) as 'mirror knowledge', a concept he takes from Popper.⁵⁹ Mirror knowledge is the projection of the

⁵⁷ Tau. 'The Death of Knowledge', 2001, p. 131.

⁵⁸ Munz. 'The Two Worlds of Anne Salmond', 1994, 61–2.

⁵⁹ Tau. 'The Death of Knowledge', 2001, p. 136.

self onto the world so that what is presumed to be knowledge is in fact only a projection/reflection of the self. As Tau phrases it, 'Narcissus lived inside the pool, or as Maori now say, "Ko au te awa, ko te awa ko au" (I am the river, the river is me). Subject and object are the same.'⁶⁰ As Tau explains, where mirror knowledge prevails, 'knowledge of the world is a projection of the self. That projection is then reflected back into the consciousness and a continuous self validating loop is established.' A prime example of this looping pseudo-knowledge, for Tau, is the set of Māori creation traditions that I have discussed in Chapter 2 as emanating from basal patterning of the Maori world.

For Tau, the explanation of the origins of the world given in the creation traditions simply mirrors the processes of reproduction. Māori explained the creation of world by using human reproduction as the model because this is what they had observed, so they saw the universe to reflect themselves. Because all things are born from the cosmic copulation of Rangi and Papa, beginning in the womb-like darkness of Te Pō and then entering into the light of Te Ao Mārama, the land is seen to be a vast ancestral church. Atua (gods), tupuna (ancestors) and people share a temporal and spatial immediacy, living as we do on Papatuanuku's breast. In terms of temporal orientation, Māori traditionally understood themselves to be facing the past. The future was considered to be behind our backs because, as it had not occurred yet, it could not be seen directly but was best perceived in the lineaments of what had gone before. The stories and myths of the atua and tupuna provide models for action. The reenactment of

⁶⁰ Ibid., p.149. This argument has some similarities with Levinas' notion (mentioned in the introduction to this dissertation) whereby the self is the unbreachable horizon of all encounter the world.

these actions both activates the life of the ancestor in the present and also marked an increase: another, more expansive curve to the koru. Like the takarangi spiral, this temporality has a double aspect: the immediacy of reactivation, where I am my ancestor through action, as well as the spiral of intergenerational increase.

Tau, however, informed by the thinking of Popper, Munz and – in this instance – Nietzsche, sees only closed repetition without difference:

[J]ust as Māori imposed their past onto the landscape, the landscape therefore set the boundaries for how the present could be understood and, therefore, how the future would be written. The German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche recognized this danger in his own people when he warned of the past becoming 'the gravedigger of the present'. For Māori, the danger was intensified because the individual lived within a conceptual valley encircled by ancestral alps limiting any vision to the future and reducing the individual to the known. Accordingly, actions were predetermined and, thereby, society [was].⁶¹

The Nietzsche reference here, one of several throughout the text, is worth examining. It comes from Nietzsche's polemic against academic historians, 'On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life'.⁶² The operative distinction in the text is between the healthy use of history in the service of life and the present, and pathological variants

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 139.

⁶² In Friedrich Nietzsche. *Untimely Meditations*. Edited by Daniel Breazeale. Translated by R. J. Hollingdale. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

that suffocate life, and stultify the present under the weight of the past. As Nietzsche expresses through the image of the necessity of both light and dark for plant growth, both memory and forgetting are needed for a healthy experience of historicity.⁶³ It is far from certain whether Nietzsche would consider Māori as asphyxiated by an unventilated inhabitation of the past, or if his scorn is not directed more towards the type of 'scientific' historiography with which Tau is appraising Māori. The passage the quote is lifted from is rich with potential associations. Nietzsche goes on to remark that 'the most powerful and tremendous nature would ... incorporate into itself all the past, its own and that most foreign to it, and as it were transform it into blood. That which such nature cannot subdue it knows how to forget.'⁶⁴ In Tau's example, Māori thought is denigrated for including Pākehā by way of whakapapa: incorporating them by turning them into blood, in Nietzsche's phrase. In Munz's example, which Tau takes the point from, whakapapa is ridiculed for not retaining the memory of the encounter with Abel Tasman, conceivably a Nietzschean forgetting.⁶⁵ Further, Nietzsche remarks that there are different types of history, suitable for different soil, sand, and climates. If transplanted to the wrong locales, they become ruinous weeds. Māori experience of historicity, in which the actions of atua and great ancestors give models for action in the present, seems far closer to Nietzsche's 'monumental' history than anything Tau wishes to transplant by way of Munz. Even Nietzsche's own method of 'genealogy' has far more resonance with

⁶³ Ibid., p. 62.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 63.

⁶⁵ Tau. "The Death of Knowledge", 2001, p.145.

whakapapa as a method than a Darwinian evolutionary schema, epistemological, historical or otherwise.⁶⁶

Nietzsche aside, the point outlined by Tau in the above quote makes clear the connections and divergences between his orientation and my own. That which renders Māori trapped, for Tau, is the same lack of distance between subject and object that I have referred to as an immanence. This immanence, in Tau's view, is instead the circuit of self transfixed by a mirror.

The implication of this scenario is significant because it suggests one thing: Māori were unable to create a critical distance between themselves and the text that was their world. In other words, if we accept that Maori viewed and interacted with the world according to a text already written, Māori, in the main, acted and behaved according to the text. This is what is meant by mirror knowledge and, by its nature, mirror knowledge reinforces the orthodoxy of the community, thus perpetuating the loop and the image of the self. Knowledge therefore becomes the orthodoxy. Orthodoxy is the death of knowledge. To complete the equation, a community with dead knowledge is well on its way to digging the grave spoken of by Nietzsche.⁶⁷

Tau denies that Māori knowledge came under strain because the basis of Māori life and knowing, the land, was subjected to rationalisation in accordance with an alien system.

⁶⁶ See Dirk R Johnson. *Nietzsche's Anti-Darwinism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

⁶⁷ Tau. "The Death of Knowledge", 2001, p.145.

In Tau's – markedly idealist – account, Mātauranga Māori collapses because of its inherent inferiority to Western rationality. It failed to evolve quickly enough and fell prey to a fitter system.⁶⁸

It is telling that the metaphor Tau uses to describe an oral historicity is a written text. This superimposition is not the only indication that Tau's account of the Māori world finds its fundamental orientation from the patternings of the Pākehā world. 'An individual', he continues, 'can only stand and observe from a critical distance if there is a place to stand outside the text.'⁶⁹ It is the text of Western rationality that provides Tau with the distance to critically read the text of Te Ao Māori. He does not see this, however, as reading Te Ao Māori from the perspective of another text, because the text of Western rationality denies that it is a text, and claims its perspective to be a neutral and objective universality. That the individual has become the epistemological unit is also taken for granted. Criticising the inadequacy of Mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) as way of knowing the world, Tau makes the bold claim that 'we now know that the world was not created from a giant act of copulation.' As the austere man of modern science will tell you, it was actually a Big Bang...

Whilst Tau and I agree that a mode of life is expressed in a way of thinking, and that intercultural encounter is crucial for being opened up by other perspectives, he seems happy for this to take place according to a principle of assimilation. Colonisation in his view is what I have already referred to as anamnesis of universal rationality through the globalisation of Europe. Europe does not colonise, it simply becomes

⁶⁸ Tau makes the argument explicitly by way Popper and Munz. Ibid., pp 141-2.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 140.

universal by progressively rendering the globe in its own image. Singing from the same hymn book as Popper and Munz (the individual of private property made eternal through Christ), colonisation is of great benefit to the colonised.

Factors that drove change in knowledge within the Western world were also to become factors that were to change the manner in which Māori understood the world and consequently the way in which they organized themselves. To this end, colonization need not be seen as a negative experience if one takes a longer view of time, aligns what has occurred in New Zealand as a global phenomenon common to all cultures and, more importantly, accepts that change happens.⁷⁰

In this account, the 'economic rationalisation' of Te Waipounamu (the South Island), of which I gave a detailed account in the previous chapter, as a necessary condition for epistemic rationality, was a global process to which Māori would be enjoined sooner or later. Assimilation into the monoculture of capitalism was not only a beneficial advance, it was also fated.

As the land is taken, rationalised and rendered antisocial, the tupuna (ancestors) subjected to the interminable inscription of the law of property, ideas of Western supremacy percolate down through a newly formed Māori managerial class. If the view of Mātauranga Māori adopted by Ngāi Tahu executives is that it is an expression of the

⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 140–1.

'limitations of the early mind', and economic rationality is taken to be rationality *per se*, then neoliberalism might well appear as the only option. My argument instead is that this is a convenient narrative for an economic ideology seeking to both indigenise and globalise, so that it can homogenise the the earth in its own image. In the following chapter, I imagine an encounter between Māori thought and a philosopher of different stripes than those proponents of the free market, from Adam Smith to Te Maire Tau, that have been the reference of this chapter.

6 Māori Mārx

The attempt to envision a Māori Mārx is for me the process of attempting to gather together the strands across the worlds of my learning: the university and the wānanga, London and Pōrangahau. These worlds have been the historical subjects of contact, encounter, entanglement, and incomplete subsumption. The improvised and provisional Māori Mārx that follows is by no means meant as a definitive construction or a logical unfolding of the thought metonymised by each name then adhered to one another: Māori ‘plus’ Marx. Instead, the attempt is to imagine a geometer – a proper noun as a sort of meeting place – capable of the connective and comparative geometry with which we might begin to discern the outline of a world free of the violent constraints of this one. Again, Édouard Glissant provides an elegant formulation of the impulse of such a figure:

To oppose the disturbing affective standardization of peoples, whose affect has been diverted by the processes and products of international exchange, either consented to or imposed, it is necessary to renew the visions and aesthetics of relating to the earth.¹

¹ Édouard Glissant. *Poetics of relation*. Translated by Betsy Wing. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010, p. 148.

In the last few years of his life Marx's thought underwent a profound transformation, registered in his focus on the multiple modes of life expressed in non-Western and non-capitalist societies. Marx's thinking in his final years can be seen as a more expansive arc spiraling back alongside the preoccupations of his youth. Where Marx returned to investigate the possible configurations of human existence, he did so now not through the figure of the abstract human, but through the the empirical existence of indigenous peoples. This work remains a radical open-endedness at the end of Marx's life. Marx's hearty engagement with peoples outside and other to his own thinking suggested that a(nother) radical transformation of his thought was underway at the close of his life. One vital conclusion can be drawn from this, one often stubbornly refused by Marxisms of many stripes: Marx himself saw the need for his theory to undergo expansion and transformation through the engagement with perspectives beyond the 'blank' abstractions of European construction.

However, to try to revive only this Māori Marx would be akin to the rather kitch act of drawing a moko (facial tattoo) on Marx's face. This might be useful to Marxism to an extent, providing insight into a terrain Marx's thinking had entered into but never described. It would remain, however, a perspective limited by Marx's own positionality. But there is a second, more dimly lit, Māori Mārx that observes the first from a different position. This figure is instead a Māori reading of Marx: something much more difficult to construct. The conceptual matrix outlined in my first chapter, supported by the fullness of my experience at the wānanga, provides an improvised orientation from which to develop this reading.

6.1 Drawn from Experience

Although they might appear to be strange materials for the construction of a Māori Mārx, there are a couple of strands, drawn from my own experiences of collective thinking and practice, that seem particularly germane to this task. The experiences I have in mind issue from my involvement with two different collectivities: a political group called Plan C, and an (also political) reading group called Black Study Group. I have referred to both groups as political, although they are perhaps best understood as each differently redistributing the political across the more everyday coordinates of sociality. Each group, through collective thought, practice, and less definable togetherness, offered me crucial insight into the possible kaupapa (first principles) that would find expression in a Māori Mārx. I will briefly describe each group in the process of gathering a couple of things from each.

6.1.2 Plan C and Social Reproduction

The 'Plan' of Plan C registered our collective desire to organise against capitalism in ways that went beyond the forms of the Party and the Network. Whereas the Party seemed to have run aground due to rigid hierarchies and outdated strategies, the

Networks that were supposed to replace it had proved too fleeting, or even non-existent, to gather and maintain real social power, whilst also not being as horizontal in practice as they pretended to be in theory. A 'plan' was something we could gather around that did not require shared ideological origins, the expulsion of dissent, or coagulation into an official party line. The 'C', an ambiguous invocation of community, collectivity, the commons, or communism, indicated our attempt to make a plan to get ourselves out from underneath the brutal (A for) austerity being enacted by the Tory government, or the nostalgic plan B of an ineffective Labour party whose imagination reached its limits in the social democracy of the post-war period.

One of the central impulses around which we agreed to organise was the idea of social reproduction. In brief, this is the idea that the wage-relation hides far more labour than it reveals or recompenses for. Reproductive labour – the labour through which we reproduce ourselves and others, both for and against capital – is the hidden ground of the field of labour generally. Those forms of labour that remain hidden might include: domestic labour, affective labour and care work, sex work, unemployed labour/the labour of being unemployed, illegal and/or undocumented labour, the homeless, those in school, those in prison, and those in mental health facilities. If something of this conception had previously remained, for me, abstract, this changed profoundly with the birth of my son during the writing of this work. Being at home throughout the first two years of his life, although often taken up with the strange abstract performance of research and writing, has opened me up to the crucial importance and difficulty of reproductive labour as well as the brazen scandal of its invisibility as work. The political

challenge, of course, remains that of the collective recognition of such work beyond the immediate purview of personal experience.

The central theorist of social reproduction was, for us, Silvia Federici, the author of the seminal *Caliban and the Witch*.² In that work, Federici picked up Marx's notion of primitive accumulation (the planetary dispossession through which capital secures the ground – the initial hoard of capital – of its subsequent development), and found it to be lacking in a number of regards. Whether or not Marx intended the concept to be a historical moment at the origins of capitalism remains up for debate.³ Federici was clear, however, that the moment of primitive accumulation was ongoing, contemporaneous with capital's unceasing expansion and intensification. More importantly, Federici made the argument that primitive accumulation could not be understood from the perspective of the abstract universal subject:

For an essential aspect of the capitalist project has been the disarticulation of the social body, through the imposition of different disciplinary regimes producing an accumulation of 'differences' and hierarchies that profoundly affect how capitalist relations are experienced. We, therefore, have different histories of primitive accumulation, each providing a particular perspective on capitalist relations, necessary to reconstruct their totality and unmask the mechanisms by which

² Silvia Federici. *Caliban and The Witch*. New York: Autonomedia, 2014.

³ See for example: Rosa Luxemburg, Joan Robinson, and Agnes Schwarzschild. *The Accumulation of Capital*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963; *The Commoner*, Enclosures, the Mirror Image of Alternatives, 2 (September 2001), commoner.org.uk; Michael Perelman. *The Invention of Capitalism: Classical Political Economy and the Secret History of Primitive Accumulation*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2004. David Harvey. *The New Imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

capitalism has maintained its power. This means that the history of primitive accumulation, past and present, cannot be fully comprehended until it is written not only from the viewpoint of the future or former waged workers, but from the viewpoint as well of the enslaved, the colonized, the indigenous people whose lands continue to be the main target of the enclosures, and the many social subjects whose place in the history of capitalist society cannot be assimilated to the history of the waged.⁴

In *Caliban and the Witch*, Federici examines primitive accumulation from the perspective of women and their reproductive power. There she illustrates how the theft of the commons, through the severing of direct producers from the land, first necessitated the breaking of women's power due to their centrality in offering resistance to the encroachments of capitalism. One of the foremost methods through which this was achieved was the witch trials that traversed the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The witch trials were the spectacular aspect of a general strategy that sought to exacerbate division and hierarchy between men and women, to steal women's knowledge (such as midwifery and medicine) and to malign their work, so as to turn women's bodies into machines for the production of the labour-power necessary to capitalism's functioning. The state-sponsored burning of hundreds of thousands of women across Europe is a grotesque emblem of the historical construction of women's

⁴ Silvia Federici. 'On Primitive Accumulation, Globalization and Reproduction.' *Friktion: Magasin for køn, krop, and kultur*, September 10, 2017. Accessed September 14, 2017. <https://friktionmagasin.dk/on-primitive-accumulation-globalization-and-reproduction-c299e08c3693>.

work as the undervalued and unpaid work of the domestic sphere, casting women from more variegated and egalitarian positions into the narrow and subordinate roles of housewife, housemaid, or sex worker.

By the time Pākehā arrived in Aotearoa, this technique of primitive accumulation had formed a tried and tested weapon in the arsenal of empire. As Ani Mikaere has noted, and which I discussed in more detail in Chapter 2, the imposition, division, and hierarchisation of gender was one of the preeminent techniques through which Pākehā destroyed the general structure of balance in te Ao Māori. As with Europe, this had been part of the operation of dispossession and privatisation of the commons. The importance of women, and the high status regarded their reproductive power, was enshrined in the te reo Māori (Māori language) names for social organisations, as well as in the role of women in sacred acts such as the bestowal and lifting of tapu (sacred restrictions, prohibitions), as discussed in Chapter 2. As mentioned, the basal patterning of te Ao Māori was reproductive, expressed in whakapapa. The word for land in te reo Māori is also the word for placenta, reflecting the fact that we are born from Papatuanuku, making our primary relationship to the sacredness of the cosmos through Papatuanuku. In this conception, women are acknowledged as being given to a more direct experience of the reproductive way of the world.

Which is to say that a Māori Mārx would most likely be someone who took reproduction to be the more expansive, cyclical, and important category; under our current set of social relations, both Māori and Pākehā, it seems more likely that our figure would be that of a woman. Papatuanuku is the means of reproduction before and

beneath all separations of property, of nation, use and exchange. She is the proletarian body subject to domination and exploitation, commodified and devalued. It is as her, and in her name, that Māori Mārx would seek emancipation from the violent and staccato rhythms of capitalist production.

6.1.3 Black Study Group

A reading and writing group of which I have been a part, Black Study Group, is another experience of collectivity whose deep influence gives me some aspects of a roughly sketched outline of a Māori Mārx. In a text we wrote collectively, we described ourselves as follows:

Our London based Black Study group formed in 2013 as a result of an already existing set of shared concerns with the history of black radicalism, the politics of black diasporic thought, and the production of black diasporic culture. We had been in conversation about these things in passing for a while, it was just that we decided to meet more regularly, over longer periods of time, and thought it might be a good idea to feed and water each other whilst doing so.⁵

⁵ Simon Barber, Dhanveer Brar, Victor Manuel Cruz, Ciarán Finlayson, Sam Fisher, Lucie Mercier, Fumi Okiji, and Ashwani Sharma. 'The Movement of Black Thought.' *Darkmatter*, no. 10 (September 29, 2015). September 29, 2015. Accessed September 20, 2017. www.darkmatter101.org/site/2015/09/29/the-movement-of-black-thought-study-notes/.

Cedric Robinson's *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* was the first text our reading group read, another in a long line of collective readings that the book has called together. When *Black Marxism* came into the world, the prevailing conservatism tried to diffuse the epistemic dynamite its pages contained by meeting it with a resounding critical silence. Yet, against this, *Black Marxism* carried with it its own conditions of production, the sociality of collective study, as an underground and undercommon agency. The text was passed around like contraband amongst radicals, dog-eared and with multiplying marginal notations.⁶

Black Marxism, as with *Caliban and the Witch*, does not simply fill in a gap in Marx's account. Instead, it offers a perspective excluded in Marx, which demands the profound reappraisal of the original theory. Robinson tracks the phenomenon of racialism in Europe, beginning in the twelfth century, whereby increasing connections of trade and encounter drive a process of racial division and ordering. Feudalism, already thoroughly permeated by racialism, was not negated by capitalism. Instead, feudal racialism was one of the existing forms with and through which capitalism developed, the combination evolving into what Robinson terms 'racial capitalism'. Race was capitalism's epistemology, its ordering principle; as such, far from expressing the blank economic universals, Robinson makes the case that capitalism is racial in its operations from the outset.

⁶ It would take twenty years for *Black Marxism* to be properly published. Robinson, Cedric J. *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000.

Despite Marx's imposition of an orderly geometry of discrete nations, and congruent imperial sites in domination of peripheral societies, Robinson showed how the actual proletariat existed underneath and across these borders: fugitive, transported and immigrant. The nationalist character so often expressed in working class movements has its origin in the racialism of the feudal period, carried into the present, in part by the excisions enacted by Marx, and the raced and national character thus imparted to the figure of the proletariat.

In the process of tracking and outlining the ways in which considerations of race are excluded in Marx, Robinson was to discover, by gathering together, that which he named as the Black Radical Tradition. In so doing, he opened the narrow Eurocentrism of Marxism out into a more expansive field of the heterogeneous configurations of life and the deeper main of theories of, and experiments in, human emancipation: 'an accretion of intelligence gathered from struggle.' As Robinson noted,

Marx had not realised fully that the cargoes of labourers also contained African cultures, critical mixes and admixtures of language and thought, of cosmology and metaphysics, of habits, beliefs, and morality. These were the actual terms of their humanity.⁷

Such was the way in which the liberatory struggles of other people, issuing as they did from different ground and experience, could not even show up as political struggle to

⁷ Ibid., pp. 121-2.

Western Marxism. The Māori Radical Tradition, vital and vibrant into the present, surely exists out in the expanse of the unbracketed beyond, the ocean of relation and liberatory endeavor, out there with the Black Radical Tradition.⁸ Indeed, it is by being always in excess of the abstract containers and compartments of Western political thought that Māori politics so regularly confounds Pākehā radicals and reactionaries alike. A Māori Mārx, it seems, might say of historical Marx: 'If he is a Marxist, then I am not'.

6.2 A Spectre of Communism is Haunting Pākehā

Early settlers in Aotearoa New Zealand harboured the nervous conviction that Māori were in fact communists, haunted as they were by the class antagonism that had surfaced beneath them in Britain. For Pākehā, the problem of Māori communism had two interrelated aspects. On the one hand, communal ownership of the land was an impediment to its commodification and purchase. On the other, settlers discerned in communal life a fecund ground for the development of political hostilities and anti-colonial insurrection. In a period tense with what they saw as 'native rebellion', Pākehā sought state suppression of what they termed 'land leagues', collectivites

⁸ As Fred Moten and Stefano Harney have said of this beyond: 'The earth is local movement in the desegregation of the universal.' And Stefano Harney. 'Base Faith.' *E-flux* 86, November 2017. Accessed December 01, 2017. www.e-flux.com/journal/86/162888/base-faith/.

across iwi (tribe, nation, a people) and hapū (clan) that had formed to halt the sale of land.⁹

Alongside more openly hostile strategies, settlers sought to circumvent the land leagues by locating individuals who were willing to sell communal land, then working to elevate that person's right to the title of the land against its other owners. Speaking on behalf of his people in the process of blocking one such land sale at Waitara the Te Ati Awa, rangatira (chief) Te Rangitake (Wiremu Kingi) famously stated: 'Governor, there is no land for you. Waitara is in my hand; I will never let it go – never, never, never.'¹⁰ In a reversal of reality characteristic of the arse-over-backwards logic of settler justifications, the Colonial Treasurer and Minister for Native Affairs, C.W. Richmond, described this situation as though Te Rangitake were a rogue naysayer depriving Māori generally of the benefits of the sale. Speaking in 1860, he conjectured:

It seems to be assumed by some people that the discovery of a single unsatisfied claimant would upset the whole purchase. This, it is thought, justice imperatively requires. But is this really so? Is this, I ask, substantial justice? We did not mean, it is true, to buy unless with the consent of all. But suppose that, through their own contumacy, or say, even through our neglect, some are left out, what does common sense tell us is substantial justice? I say substantial justice is partition; and if they can't agree amongst themselves, their boundaries ought to be settled

⁹ Tensions had, reliably, escalated following a number of New Zealand Company 'purchases'.

¹⁰ Fitzgerald, Maurice, comp. *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates. 1858-1860*. Wellington, N.Z.: Government Printer, 1886, p. 179.

for them by a higher power. That is what substantial justice demands. It is not just that the minority should condemn the majority, who wish to escape from it, to the tribal life, to the beastly communism of the Pah [pā, fortified village], to the slough of barbarism from which they are striving to emerge. That is what English law would give them. Any joint owner is entitled to a partition of the common property.¹¹

Richmond provides an early example of the use of the term 'communism' as a pejorative through its association with the animalistic and the primitive. In the process, he also provides, perhaps inadvertently, a nice definition of English law as 'substantial justice'. This seems an apt phrase, issuing as English law does from an ontology of substances and essences, in contrast to the relational justice of tikanga (first law). The law of substance, we learn, is that of partition. Land, a field of relationships, needs to be parcelled out in severalty so that individual ownership can be ascribed. Richmond also confirms that the boundaries of division are to be enforced by a higher power, a profound inversion of tikanga, where mana whenua (power from the land) grows out of the ground.

J. A. Wilson, exemplary of way in which early settlers multitasked the business of colonisation, was a soldier in various settler militias in the 1860s, a special

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 185-6.

commissioner charged with settling land 'confiscated' from Māori, a Judge for the Native Land Court, and a businessmen.¹² In 1866, he wrote:

As in his private warfare, so in his general life, the Maori was a thorough communist. But through the warp of his communism, woofs of chieftainship and priestcraft were woven into a texture strong enough to answer all the requirements of his simple civilisation ... Although the chief carried himself with an air of authority, and the priest wore an appearance of superiority, each was subtly influenced by the communism of the body of which he formed a part. The former felt the pulse of the people before taking a step; the latter did not disregard their feelings and prejudices. Each lived in the same way as the people around him.¹³

In contrast with Richmond, Wilson's use of the term 'communist' is relatively sympathetic and shows some understanding at least of the radically democratic and egalitarian qualities of Māori life. Wilson retains, however, the same conception of progress whereby Pākehā understand themselves to be at the apex of a linear hierarchy from the simple to the complex, savage to civilised.

¹²Jinty Rorke. 'Wilson, John Alexander'. *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, 1993. Accessed September 14, 2017. *Te Ara – The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*.

¹³ John Alexander Wilson. *The story of Te Waharoa: In three parts; A chapter in early New Zealand history*. Auckland, N.Z.: Printed and published at the Daily Southern Cross Office, 1866, pp. 226–28.

The assertion that Māori were communists continued into the twentieth century without much modification.¹⁴ Writing in 1910, the journalist and historian James Cowan stated: ‘The social organization of the Maori tribe was as well-nigh perfect a commune as can be imagined. It was communism almost pure and undefiled. A commonwealth in which practically all had equal rights.’¹⁵ The anthropologist Elsdon Best, the foremost Pākehā authority on Māori at the time, also regularly deployed the term to describe Māori. Best thought Māori to be ‘an interesting communistic and neolithic people’, and communism, despite its disadvantages, to be ‘suitable to certain culture grades’ such as that of Māori. Further elaborating his notion of ‘culture grades’ in a book published a year after the Russian revolution, Best stated: ‘A communistic people of the Māori type cannot cast aside the habits of a thousand years and step fully equipped into a superior plane of culture.’¹⁶

The most famous statement of Māori communism, notable for the clarity with which it gave voice to Pākehā desire, comes not from an anthropologist but from parliamentary debates. In 1870 the Justice Minister, Henry Sewell,¹⁷ stated:

The object of the Native Lands Act was two-fold: to bring the great bulk of the lands ... which belonged to the Natives, and which, before the passing of that

¹⁴ More recently, the settler fantasy projected onto Māori is that they are terrorists, as was the case in the terror raids visited on Tūhoe in 2007.

¹⁵ Raymond Firth. *Primitive Economics of the New Zealand Maori*. Routledge Revivals. New York: Routledge, 2011 [1929], p. 351.

¹⁶ Elsdon Best. *Social usages of the Maori: a public lecture delivered under the auspices of the Wellington Centre of the W.E.A.* Wellington, N.Z.: Maoriland Worker Printing and Publishing Co., 1918, p. 4.

¹⁷ Henry Sewell had earlier been New Zealand’s first Prime Minister (called the *Premiere* at the time), in 1856.

Act, were extra-commercium ... within the reach of colonisation. The other great object was the detribalization of the Natives – to destroy, if it were possible, the principle of communism which ran through the whole of their institutions, upon which their social system was based, and which stood as a barrier in the way of all attempts to amalgamate the Native race into our social and political system. It was hoped by the individualization of titles to land, giving them the same individual ownership which we ourselves possessed, they would lose their communistic character, and that their social status would become assimilated to our own.¹⁸

Ideas such as these were not specific to New Zealand. Sewell's statement, just quoted, was made to Parliament only months prior to the instantiation of the Paris Commune in March 1871. Subsequent to the brutal repression of the Paris Commune, legislators in France were increasingly aware of the link between indigenous forms of communal ownership in the colonies (in Algeria, in this instance) and communistic impulses at home.

In his notebooks of 1875, Marx excerpted a number of passages from the work of the Russian anthropologist Maxim Kovalesky regarding indigenous communal land ownership in Algeria and French colonisation. Kovalesky noted incredibly similar deliberations amongst the French National Assembly to those that been taking place in New Zealand Parliament:

¹⁸ New Zealand Parliamentary Debates. Vol. 9. 15 August to 13 September. Wellington, N.Z.: Government Printer, 1870, p. 361.

The formation of private landownership (*in the eyes of the French bourgeois*) as *the necessary condition of all progress in the political and social sphere*. The further maintenance of communal property, ‘*as a form that supports communist tendencies in people’s minds*’ (Debates of the National Assembly, 1873) is dangerous both for the colony and for the homeland; the distribution of clan holdings is encouraged, even prescribed, first as a means of weakening subjugated tribes that are ever standing under impulsion to revolt, second, as the only way toward a further transfer of landownership from the hands of the natives into those of the colonists.¹⁹

Kovalesky, as excerpted by Marx, goes on to further detail the pronounced anxiety of the French that communal ownership in Algeria would lead to anti-colonial struggle. For the French National Assembly, previously responsible for the brutal repression of the Paris Commune, this fear was to be abated by ‘tearing away the Arabs from their natural bond to the soil.’²⁰ In the minds of colonial administrators and Members of Parliament, fear of communist agitation and insurrection in the metropolises was imbricated with the fear of uprisings in the colonies issuing from the basis of communal inhabitation of the land, ‘extra-commercium’.

¹⁹ Karl Marx. *The Asiatic mode of production: sources, development and critique in the writings of Karl Marx*. Translated by Lawrence Krader. Assen: Van Gorcum, 1975 [1879], p. 410; Marx’s emphasis.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.412. The parenthetical insertion in the first sentence is Marx’s.

6.3 “Māori Liberalism”

Surveying the settler literature on ‘Māori ‘Communism’, the anthropologist Raymond Firth pointed out that despite regular use of the term, none of the authors in fact defined what they meant by communism.²¹ Firth explains those authors’ recourse to the term as being due to ‘that strain of idealism which leads the student of human affairs to see in both the past and the future state of man gleams of a brighter and purer light than that which is visible through the dingy atmosphere of present conditions.’ In Firth’s view, social reformers look to anthropological data to support their theories, finding utopias in ‘primeval societies’. Firth finds that it is the intercourse between socialists and anthropologists that has led the latter’s discourse to become contaminated with poorly defined socialist terminology.²² Such is the provenance, in Firth’s opinion, of the term ‘primitive communism’, originating as it does with Marx and Engels before its profligate cross-pollination with the discipline of anthropology.

Firth was writing in the 1920s, not long after the Russian Revolution, a time when the fear of communism was again palpable for the upper classes of Europe. This was especially the case at conservative institutions like the London School for Economics where Firth, a colleague of Karl Popper, was employed.²³ If social reformers were

²¹Firth. *Primitive Economics*, 2011, p. 355.

²² Firth. *Primitive Economics*, 2011, p. 351.

²³ Although, as reported by a student, Firth was apparently critical of the lack of nuance or specificity in Popper’s characterisation of ‘tribal society’, he agreed, it seems, with Popper’s critique of historicism. Roger Sandall. ‘Open Societies and Closed Minds: Popper, Tribalism, Democracy, and the Defense of

looking to non-European societies for proof of communism, and anthropologists such as Best were keen to fit Māori into preordained categories of human development, Firth had different designs. In the hope of frustrating any attempts to view Māori as anything resembling an earthly, if primitive, communism, he finds Māori to be nothing other than bourgeois European subjects, if only in larval form.²⁴

In his protestations against the spectre of Māori communism, Firth has a point: communism is a European construction ill-fittingly and haphazardly applied to Māori social forms. However, in order to refute the claims of Māori communism, he produces a caricature of communism so absolute that he can argue that just about anything – ‘theft of valuables, gluttonous consumption of food, idleness’, for example – provides evidence of individual desires and private property.²⁵ Even the expectation of reciprocity in gift-exchange is likewise marshalled as falling short of the purity required for Firth's absolute communism. For Firth, it seems communism is a condition in which no one is allowed their own toothbrush.

He does not, however, make an argument solely by way of examples that contravene Firthian full communism. Firth also works persistently, although more subtly, to bring out and accentuate notions of individualism, the nuclear family, property ownership, and other more exotic social forms indigenous only to capitalism.²⁶ As an example of the latter, a rangatira (chief) in Firth's view become ‘a kind of capitalist,

Civilization’, *Roger Sandall: Ideas and Argument* (web log), December 10, 2008. Accessed May 4, 2017. www.rogersandall.com/open-societies-and-closed-minds/.

²⁴ Firth. *Primitive Economics*, 2011. See especially his discussion of the individual (pp. 121-7) and arguments around property, chiefs, and whanau (pp. 272-385).

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.124

²⁶ see fn 24 above.

assuming the initiative in the construction of certain “public works”. And, in language clearly resonant with the proto-neoliberalism of those such as Popper, the rangatira also ‘played the part of an entrepreneur, repaying the labour expended on his behalf by gifts to the specialists engaged’.

The ideological bias of Firth’s account becomes readily apparent in the uphill battle he is forced to wage against his own sources in order to locate the nuclear family in Māori society. The anthropologist Elsdon Best, one of Firth’s foremost sources, is clear that Māori social organisation lacked the nuclear family, with the the whanau (extended family grouping) serving the comparable function. Best points to the lack of a term in te reo Māori (Māori language) to designate the nuclear family as well as the fact that the words for siblings also refer to cousins, and those for parents also to aunts and uncles. Indignant, Firth demands that a study of the relations between ‘true’ parents and children, brothers and sisters, husbands and wives be undertaken before Best’s assertion could be taken as complete.²⁷ Firth would like the nuclear family placed over the whanau like a bracket and suspects, correctly no doubt, that he would then find considerable affection between the familial pairs he had abstracted for examination. Such is the way in which he finds confirmation for his pre-established categories.

A devoted student of Bronislaw Malinowski, Firth was a functionalist, for whom societies were to be analysed according to a snapshot view that excluded temporal development. Elements of economic activity were to be understood in relation to the contemporary milieu in which they functioned and not explained through historical or

²⁷ Ibid., p.102.

evolutionary development.²⁸ Functionalism arose in the 1920s in opposition to the then still dominant historical materialism of political economy that developed in France and Britain in the eighteenth century that conceived of a continuum of societal progression, from savage to civilized. The primary feature in the categorisation of societies was the means in which subsistence was provided for, which would then determine the character of other institutions such as government and property relations.²⁹ Primitive communism was the starting point of many such conceptions as the original conception was modified into the nineteenth century. Whereas Firth's functionalism explicitly refused the notion of historical stages, the title of Firth's major work, *The Primitive Economics of the New Zealand Maori*, shows clearly enough that, as ahistorical as it was, functionalism maintained a categorical schema whereby societies ranked according to their level of development or complexity.³⁰

As opposed to his theoretical contamination by socialist schema, Firth's notion of the primitive is a liberal one. Liberalism, generally construed, poses a different point of origin for its narrative of the historical development of human societies than 'primitive communism'. The famous image with which liberalism begins its story is that of the Hobbesian state of nature: a war of all against all, which precedes the foundation of a social contract entered into by warring individuals. The entity their collective contractual obligation produces is the sovereign, which Hobbes depicts in the image of a

²⁸ Ibid., p. 21, 26.

²⁹ Ronald L. Meek. *Social science and the ignoble savage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

³⁰ Firth labels Māori as primitive in relation to 'that degree of technical efficiency and complexity of organization which is termed "civilization".' Firth. *Primitive Economics*, 2014, pg.444.

sea-creature composed of a manifold of individuals, the Leviathan.³¹ (It is worth briefly noting for now that, within a Māori mode of life, taniwha are water-based relational beings important to social constitution – a comparison I will return to further in this chapter.)

Hobbes captured what life was like in the state of nature with the memorable phrase ‘solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short’.³² Less well known is the passage that immediately follows this description:

It may peradventure be thought, there was never such a time, nor condition of war as this; and I believe it was never generally so, over all the world: but there are many places, where they live so now. For the savage people in many places of America, except the government of small Families, the concord whereof dependeth on natural lust, have no government at all; and live at this day in that brutish manner, as I said before. Howsoever, it may be perceived what manner of life there would be, where there were no common power to feare; by the manner of life, which men that have formerly lived under a peaceful government, use to degenerate into, in a civil war.³³

³¹ Karl Schmidt makes the quite chilling argument that, despite its popularity, the image of the Leviathan as animal is secondary to Hobbes’ of understanding sovereignty as machinic. Schmitt, Carl, George Schwab, Erna Hilfstein, and Tracy B. Strong. *The Leviathan in the state theory of Thomas Hobbes: meaning and failure of a political symbol*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.

³² Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan (Oxford worlds classics)*. Edited by J. C. A. Gaskin. Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 84.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

Hence, we see that for Hobbes, the original point of departure for his theory is a fabricated 'anthropology' of Native Americans, one that enables him to place his own society at a developmental stage superior to theirs. That which separates the two societies, condemning Native Americans to the state of nature in Hobbes' view, is the lack of a 'common power to fear'.

Far from being confined to the seventeenth century, this attitude persists into the present. By far the most popular history of New Zealand ever written is Michael King's 2003 *Penguin History of New Zealand*, a kind of kiwiana *Aeneid* whereby King provides a historical pedigree for settler New Zealand. Amongst other things – the argument that British motivations for colonisation were essentially humane, for example – King's history describes Māori life prior to colonisation as being 'if not invariably nasty, then sometimes brutish and short'. King's intention in using a phrase so consonant with Hobbes' famous assertion works to affix Māori to some early stage of a developmental schema, inferior to that of Pākehā, providing structural support for the assertion of the colonial beneficence.

Adam Smith was one of the original proponents of the stadial theory of history described above. However, there is a clear and persistent anxiety that troubles Adam Smith's theory of linear historical development and his assumption of the British place at the summit of superiority.³⁴ For Smith, as with Hobbes, indigenous people were a model for the least developed stage of society, whilst he took his own 'market' or 'commercial' society to be the most advanced. The problem for Smith was that his reading on

³⁴ Harkin, Maureen. "Adam Smith's Missing History: Primitives, Progress, and Problems of Genre." *ELH* 72, no. 2 (2005): 429-51.

indigenous people, Native Americans mostly, suggested that they weren't particularly savage at all. Much of the society he saw around himself was tainted by the detriments of commerce, whilst the so-called 'savages' he read about seemed to embody attributes, like liberty and independence, that he held extremely dear.³⁵ It is worth noting that Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* was versioned as 'The Origin of the Wealth of the English People' in te reo Maori (Māori language) in a settler state-sanctioned newspaper called the *Maori Messenger* in 1849. The purpose of this was to try to impress upon Māori the superiority of English culture, and to educate Māori as to the basis of this superiority in an advanced division of labour. Ironically, it was precisely the detrimental effects of an advanced division of labour that provided a nagging doubt as counterpoint to Smith's enthusiasm for capitalism.

Despite inhabiting, as we all do, the catastrophic results of the telos of modernity, the belief that our so-called civilisation is the sharp point of an arrow of progress remains an insistent hallucination of our present. One reason for this is the way in which capitalism has operated as a self-fulfilling prophecy. As capitalism has globalised and 're-made the world in its own image', it appears as if this was in fact the destined future for all other cultures on earth. Any past of a culture is now seen in relation to its capitalist present. This lends an air of necessity to our present that was in fact a contingency shored-up by theft and destruction on a global scale. Other possibilities, and other ways of living, have been violently subsumed into a capitalist present that has naturalised itself as the most advanced point on a single line of progress.

³⁵ Ibid.

The operation whereby capitalism posits and confirms its own necessity through the violent subsumption of other peoples is evident in the way in which Firth renders Māori as liberal subjects in larval form alongside the actual transformation of Māori into liberal subjects through processes of colonisation. A report, written a couple of years before Firth published *Primitive Economics*, provides an elegant description of this transformation in process. The report, written by Sir Maui Pomare and Sir Apirana Ngata, is from a Young Māori Party meeting held in 1927 in conjunction with a tennis tournament. Both Pomare and Ngata, members of the Young Māori Party, effectively advocated in the period that the best path for Māori development was through the full assimilation to the capitalist economy and the adoption of Pākehā mores and institutions.³⁶ As reformists, they believed in the values of individualism and the protestant work ethic:

The latter-day Maori is throwing off the shackles of the past, looking little, if at all, over his shoulder, and interesting himself in the activities and pastimes of his pakeha fellow-citizen. Socially he is rapidly fitting himself into the life of the country, where for a time he found himself in bewilderment. His deportment on the tennis-lawns of Rotorua and Wanganui, where good behaviour, sportsmanlike qualities, and control are part of the players' equipment, was favourably commented on by visitors from other lands. The communal Maori has become an individualist in proprietorship and in his home life. His womankind, as

³⁶ Ngata began to change course from assimilationism at the end of the 1920s. See Jeffrey Sissons. "The post-assimilations thought of Sir Apirana Ngata." *New Zealand Journal of History* 34, no. 1 (2000).

with other races, is speeding up the process of Europeanization in the home life and surroundings, so that the pakeha ideal of 'home' is being gradually realized in the Maori villages throughout the Dominion. And the culture complex that centres round the term 'home' (in its English significance) has with Native modification been adopted. Economically and commercially the influence of four generations of civilization could not fail to affect the Maori extensively. With the loss of the greater part of their landed inheritance, the increase in population, the increased cost of living, the raising of the standard of life, and the weakening of the protective elements of the old-time communism, the Maoris of today were feeling the economic pressure with progressive severity.³⁷

Regardless of whether or not they were communists, liberals, or as is most likely, neither, Māori have been moulded by and translated, however partially, into liberal subjects since – even if theirs is a liberal subjectivity that modifies and modulates continually, although in accordance with a constant logic, like the turning of kaleidoscope.

As discussed at length in the previous chapter, one of the modulations of that subject into the present has been the active adoption of neoliberal nostrum by elements of Ngāi Tahu. Using Firth's argument as an alibi, Rawiri Tau has undertaken a revisionist writing of history whereby he finds Ngāi Tau, prior to European arrival, to be

³⁷ Ngata, A. T., and M. Pomare. Maori Conference at Putiki. Report. G-8. Presented to the House of Representatives by Leave, 1928, p. 2.

property owning individuals.³⁸ Tau's argument turns on his translation of *utu*, generally translated as reciprocity, to mean 'trade', 'payment' or 'exchange'. Tau, impatient on this point, suggests we 'should not drag ourselves down debating the anthological differences' between the words. Along these lines, Tau also thinks that in ascribing individual ownership to distinguish between the 'property right of the *whānau* [extended family group] rather than the individual ... is a matter of splitting hairs.' The most incongruent translation Tau deploys to make his point, however, is that he everywhere takes customary rights of inhabitation and food gathering to be the private ownership of private property. Māori Marsden provides a succinct summary the generally accepted view as to Māori relationship to property:

Ownership of property in the pre-contact period was a foreign concept. The closest idea to ownership was that of the private use of a limited number of personal things such as garments, weapons, and combs. Apart from this, all other use of land, waters, forests, fisheries, was a communal and/or tribal right. □ All natural resources, all life was birthed from Mother earth. □ Thus the resources of the earth did not belong to man but rather, man belonged to the earth. Man as well as animal, bird, fish, could harvest the bounty of mother earth's resources but they did not own them. Man had but 'user rights'.³⁹

³⁸ Tau, Te Maire. "Property Rights in Kaiapoi." *Victoria University of Wellington Law Review* 47 (2016): 677-98.

³⁹ Māori Marsden and Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal. *The woven universe: selected writings of Rev. Māori Marsden*. Otaki, N.Z.: Estate of Rev. Māori Marsden, 2003, p. 67.

Tau's argument is specific to Ngāi Tahu's creation of a narrative of being exceptional amongst Māori by way of our advanced development of commerce. In Tau's Popperian schema described in the last chapter, this economic rationalisation also places Ngāi Tahu in intellectual and cultural advance of other Māori. The foremost aim, however, seems to me to be to provide historical justification for the current iwi as 'tribal corporation', one of whose main businesses is property development. In this regard, Tau even uses the way in which in 1925 Ngāi Tahu/Kāi Tahu collated whakapapa, in order that membership of the iwi could be formalised and shares allocated, to be proof of a historical propensity towards individual ownership. Tau gives no sense, in this regard, that he sees the translation of whakapapa to the to the land, to the tipuna, into a title registry to be the profound conversion that it assuredly is. For Rawiri Tau, te Ao Māori (the Māori world) was a world quagmired in blind tradition that was rendered obsolete by the arrival of Europeans and their machines. 'The future', on the other hand, 'lies in accepting the death of the past.'⁴⁰

It is worth stating explicitly, here, that my commitment to engagement with te Ao Māori and the thought that issues from it derives from my conviction as to the necessity of this engagement. It flows from my entanglement with the place of my living and thinking and the fact that Māori thought is the (longer) thinking of that place. Perhaps even more importantly, I engage with Māori thought because of the considerable resources it makes available for the collective praxis we must craft if we are to

⁴⁰ Te Maire Tau. "The Death of Knowledge: ghosts on the plains." *New Zealand Journal of History* 35, no. 2 (2001), p. 150.

emancipate ourselves from a present that weighs on us as constraint, as unfreedom, and the inability to catch our breath. Perilous, geocidal, stuck.

In any case, the last time I looked, Māori were every bit as contemporary as Pākehā. The reason for the enduring Pākehā fiction that Māori are less advanced stems from a peculiar irony of colonisation. Whilst colonisation placed intense strain on the ability for Māori intergenerational transmission of memory, it did not break that ability. The same cannot be said for Pākehā. Pākehā lost their memory in the process of colonisation. For the colony to succeed permanently, it required differentiation from the home country. As Stephen Turner has noted, in the settler memory, or archive, the first Europeans to arrive step out of their boats onto the shore of an already constituted New Zealand. In the settler memory, New Zealand, paradoxically, exists prior to colonisation. It is through this process of projection that settler memory enters a loop that severs it from everything prior to around 1840.⁴¹ As a New Zealander, my cultural memory is inaugurated with the birth of the nation. It is from the Pākehā perspective of short memory that the longer memory of inhabitation looks as if it is primitive. At least it must feverishly proclaimed to be so by way of staunching the anxiety of historical inadequacy.

6.4 Marx and Māori

⁴¹ Stephen Turner. "Reenacting Aotearoa New Zealand" in Lamb, J., and V. Agnew, eds. *Settler and creole reenactment*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, pp. 245-258.

The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian, nations into civilisation. The cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down all Chinese walls, with which it forces the barbarians' intensely obstinate hatred of foreigners to capitulate. It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilisation into their midst, i.e., to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image.⁴²

Even undercut, as this passage is, by a more antagonistic counterpoint, there can still be little doubt that the Marx (and Engels) who wrote the *Communist Manifesto* held a unilinear conception of historical development. Non-Western societies, in their irresistible capitulation to capitalism, were always in the prehistory of their eventual 'civilisation'. The Communist Manifesto largely accepted the four-stage theory of human development – hunter-gatherer, shepherding, agriculture, commerce – but added to it a fifth stage: communism. As communism would emerge from the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production, colonisation, *the Manifesto* implies, has the beneficial aspect of accelerating the progress of non-Western societies towards their inevitable future.

As Marx's reading on non-Western and non-capitalist peoples deepened in the following decades, he modified this conception into a far less deterministic, more

⁴² Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels. *The communist manifesto: a modern edition*. London: Verso, 2012, p. 47.

complex and multilinear schema, one that left open the question of possible trajectories of transformation. Marx would continue to rethink and rework the way in which he conceived of the relationships between the earth and its peoples, and between those peoples, for the remainder of his life. Indeed, in the last few years of his life, Marx was so profoundly opened by his readings on indigenous societies that his thinking would become fundamentally transformed.

The *Grundrisse*, a series of notebooks Marx kept between 1857 and 1858, marked a shift away from his earlier, unilinear conception of historical development. Previously Marx had thought according to a schema that moved through epochs of clan or tribal, ancient, and then feudal modes of production, before culminating in the bourgeois mode of production contemporary to Marx's writing. These successive stages described a unilinear economic progression. As Ellen Meiksins Woods points out, from the *Grundrisse* onwards, Marx becomes considerably less determinist in his thinking, 'if by that is meant someone who treats human agents as passive receptacle of external structures or playthings of eternal laws of motion'.⁴³ One of the key ways in which nonlinearity was complexified was through the introduction of multiple geographical points of origin, each subject to its own history of development.

Though they each have different characteristics, for Marx, the earliest forms of social organisation are all communal. In an extended discussion of 'precapitalist' societies, Marx describes three different communal forms under the headings of Asiatic,

⁴³ Ellen Meiksins Wood. "Historical Materialism in 'Forms which Precede Capitalist Production'." In *Karl Marx's Grundrisse foundations of the critique of political economy 150 years later*, edited by Marcello Musto, 79-92. New York: Routledge, 2008, p. 88.

Graeco-Roman, and Germanic. It seems, at least superficially, that Marx would agree with Popper, Munz and Tau that Māori were a tribal people of a comparable stage as the tribal Greeks or Germans. In the view of Popper, Munz and Tau, what is of interest are factors that negatively produce growth. In this view, Ngāi Tahu are little different from the entrepreneurial Gauls, who turned their colonisation by the Romans into a business opportunity. Reciting Munz, Tau's point is that

the local indigenous inhabitants [of Gaul and Germania], like Māori in New Zealand, were smart enough to seize the opportunities offered by Roman traders and Roman armies to enrich themselves and improve their standard of living. They took service in the Roman armies and were increasingly eager to sell goods as well as slaves to Roman merchants. None of these opportunities were lost on the indigenous people, and their relentless pursuit eroded indigenous loyalties, customs and traditions.⁴⁴

The specificities of each culture are mostly irrelevant to these authors, being only so many examples of static, irrational dogmas that require 'culture clash' (colonisation) to set them onto the path of rationalisation.

Marx, on the other hand, is interested in the way in which a 'living and active humanity' in unity 'with the natural, inorganic conditions of their metabolic exchange with nature' becomes split in two: 'a separation which is completely posited only in the

⁴⁴ Tau. "The Death of Knowledge", 2001, p. 143.

relation of wage labour to capital.⁴⁵ Freed from the means of production, torn from the unity of their umbilical, metabolic exchange with the earth, the worker stands 'purely without objectivity, subjectively' in 'dot-like isolation'.⁴⁶

Marx's discussion of the unity of human activity with nature, and its subsequent separation, takes place within a historical materialist account of the origins and development of property in pre-capitalist societies. Following the passage just quoted, Marx grapples with the concept of a unity between humans and the world prior to the separation of active humanity from its inorganic conditions. Although Marx suggests that the prior unity, given that it is the normal condition of humanity, does not require explanation, he is forced to provide one from within its subsequent division in order to understand that division.

Marx defines 'property' in its prelapsarian state (prior to separation) as belonging to a community, and belonging to a community as belonging to the land. Through this double belonging, the individual relates to the earth as being their 'inorganic body'.

Property therefore means belonging to a clan (community) (having subjective-objective existence in it); and, by means of the relation of this community to the land and soil, [relating] to earth as the individual's inorganic body.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Marx, Karl. *Grundrisse foundations of the critique of political economy (rough draft)*. Translated by Martin Nicolaus. London, UK: Penguin Books, 1993, p 489.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 485, 496.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 492.

Thus, prior to division, a human being's relation to their natural conditions of production was as 'natural presuppositions' of the self, as the inorganic body of their subjectivity in which their subjectivity is realised – their 'extended body' (the earth).⁴⁸ This relationship is necessarily mediated by the community: 'an isolated individual could no more have property in land and soil than he could speak.'⁴⁹ Existence in a situation such as this is characterised by a unity of subject and object – subjectively as ourselves and objectively as the land – which Marx terms 'subjective-objective' existence.⁵⁰

Even couched, as it is, in the clumsy language internal to subsequent separation – 'property', 'subjective-objective', 'inorganic' – Marx's understanding is astonishingly resonant with the basic contours of the Māori conception of themselves as tangata whenua. Whenua, meaning both land as well as placenta, reflects the fact that we are born from the womb of Papatuanuku (earth mother). Tangata whenua is a relationship of belonging to the earth as the earth. The closest comparable concept to 'property' in the sense Marx is discussing is that of mana whenua. As outlined in Chapter 2, mana whenua – mana meaning sacred authority and power (for action) – has two aspects: mana in the land and mana over the land. Mana in the land is issued by way of the whakapapa from Ranginui and Papatuanuku to their children, that is, all of creation, including tangata whenua (people of the land). Mana over the land came – still by the social connection of whakapapa – from the prowess of more recent ancestors. The former can be referred to as mana tipuna (ancestors) the later as mana tangata

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 485, 492.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p.485.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 492.

(people).⁵¹ These two aspects of mana that I am using here to translate Marx's notion of property in non-capitalist societies correspond, in the first instance, to the relationship to the earth as an extended body, and in the second, to the community that mediates the relationship of the individual to the earth. For Māori, an individual living in isolation was inconceivable.⁵² An important contrast, in fact probably only a clarification, is that Papatuanuku is far from inorganic, being a living biological system with her own agency and personality. This implication is in Marx in the way that he views humans as the subjectivity of the objective earth, a point that finds agreement in Māori Marsden's notion of 'humankind as the envelope of the noosphere – conscious awareness of Papatuanuku.'⁵³

Acknowledging Marx's insight into some of the general premises of an existence not divided by oppositions of use and exchange, wage labour and capital, does not mean accepting the residual teleology evident in his schema. The Marx of the *Grundrisse* still holds that the original form of human social organisation is communal, and that, passing through various transformations, will again become communal (communist), but at a higher level – classless society with the productive forces developed by capitalism. It is true that there is an increased multilinearity here in comparison to his earlier work, which arises from the multiplication of the possible paths through which early classless society arrives at communism. Marx negated the conception of a single unilinear path by including 'the Asiatic mode of production', which

⁵¹ Durie, E. T. *Custom Law*. Report. Treaty Research Series. Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand: Treaty of Waitangi Research Unit, 1994, pp. 14-18.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 10-14.

⁵³ Marsden. *Woven Universe*, 2003, p. 46.

could only be understood as following its own twists and turns, rather than following in Europe's footprints. Nevertheless, at this stage Marx's opinion remained that no one comes to communism except through capitalism.

A related problem vexes Marx throughout the *Grundrisse*. In his introduction, Marx struggles over the correct starting point for his critique of political economy, failing to come to a satisfactory answer.⁵⁴ Inverting Hegel's idealism, Marx initially suggests beginning with 'material production'. Marx comes to the conclusion, however, that the notion of 'production in general' abstracts from historical development, and although it brings out elements common to all production, it elides specificities and differences in its apparent unity. Ultimately, Marx finds, production in general is a category with which 'no real historical stage of production can be grasped.'⁵⁵ Marx poses two possible responses to this impasse: the first being to begin with 'living wholes' such as a given nation and then, through analysis, to discover some 'determinant, abstract, general relations such as division of labour, money, value, etc.'⁵⁶ The second option works in the opposite direction, beginning with abstract, general relations and working on them to flesh out 'living wholes.' Whilst Marx is certain that second option is the correct one, he is immediately troubled by the fact that simple, abstract, general relations have their own history. Each would first need to be accounted for, leading to a necessary regression to a historical point zero from which it would then be possible to begin. Marx counters that the correct place to begin is with a category that holds a particularly central position within the specific social formation or epoch to be studied. Marx remains

⁵⁴ Marx. *Grundrisse*, 1993, pp. 81-109. See also the Martin Nicolaus' forward to this edition, pp. 35-38.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

uncertain at the close of the introduction, fudging the answer by stating that the initial category must be both central to a particular social formation but also 'more or less' common to all social formations. The question is left to hang until the last pages of the manuscript, in a section titled 'Value', in which Marx has a note to himself that says, 'move forward'. Marx arrives at his answer to where he ought to have begun only at the end of his discussion.

Marx's answer, as will become the famous departure point of *Capital*, is the simple commodity, divided and doubled as use/exchange value, the opposition from which Marx will dialectically unfurl the entirety of *Capital*. The commodity is Marx's primary (auto-)anthropological category of capitalist society. The contradiction at the seam of the commodity (use/exchange) is expressive of the contradictions of capitalism generally, as a fragment of a hologram that reveals the entire image. Forgetting for a moment any judgements that order societies according to certain metrics, Marx enables a comparison between a society of reproduction in unity with the earth and a society organised around commodity exchange (the practical result of which is money). Or, to put the question differently, he enables an analysis of what becomes of Ranginui and Papatuanuku once subsumed within capitalist social relations.

Marx's answer, beguilingly enough, comes towards the close of the third volume of *Capital*.

Capital-profit (or better still capital-interest), land-ground rent, labor-wages, this economic trinity as the connection between the components of value and wealth

in general and its sources, completes the mystification of the capitalist mode of production, the reification of social relations, and the immediate coalescence of the material relations of production with their historical and social specificity: the bewitched, distorted and upside-down world haunted by Monsieur le Capital and Madame la Terre, who are at the same time social characters and mere things.

Capital, arriving in Aotearoa with the nation-state and law in its tow insinuates itself between Rangi and Papa and forces a nuptial with the earth. As its terrain for expansion, the ground of its reproduction, and the source of its raw materials, capital is lost without this unholy union. Following this ritual, the earth rises up in ghostly form. Previously fixed in place, in the form of a commodity, the earth socialises as her own apparition in the form of exchange value. Beneath the conjured apparition of the the earth as exchange, rendered inert through the severance of direct producers from the land, the earth becomes the object of 'the right of the proprietors to exploit the earth's surface, the bowels of the earth, the air and thereby the maintenance and development of life.'⁵⁷

Such is the inverted world of the commodity, its fetish-like character, in which relations between people take on the fantastic form of social relations between things. However, from the perspective of the unity prior to the instantiation of capitalism, the distinction that makes possible the inversion of its terms (people and things) is absent. Within that unity, there is a general sociality amongst all things in the world through the

⁵⁷ Marx, Karl, and Ben Fowkes. *Capital: a critique of political economy: volume three*. New York: Penguin Books, 1981, p. 909.

interconnection of whakapapa. The world has its very existence through that sociality. But from the appearance of Papatuanuku as lifeless, her ghost is called to dance whilst her body, including humans, is subjected to exploitation, spoilage and degradation. In Marx's apt phrasing:

all progress in capitalistic agriculture is a progress in the art, not only of robbing the labourer, but of robbing the soil; all progress in increasing the fertility of the soil for a given time, is a progress towards ruining the lasting sources of that fertility.⁵⁸

From a Maori perspective, however, the inversion that has human relations appear as social relations between things was, even prior to inversion, still only a partial view. Humans *and* things had always had social relations between and amongst themselves. Papatuanuku is a general field of sociality.

As discussed, Marx resolved his problem as to the dialectically appropriate starting point with the commodity, containing as it does the kernel of the contradictions of capitalism generally. Yet the commodity was a category specific to capitalism as it had developed in the West. In the last decade of his life, Marx became both increasingly hostile to colonialism as well as deeply engaged with, in Teodor Shanin's apt phrase, 'the very heterogeneity of structure and motion around the globe.'⁵⁹ The commodity

⁵⁸ Marx. *Capital*, 1976, p. 638.

⁵⁹ Shanin, Teodor. *Late Marx and the Russian Road: Marx and 'the peripheries of capitalism'*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983, p. 22.

could not provide the point of departure for the type of comparative analysis adequate to this heterogeneity. A thinker *of* process and motion, whose thought remained *in* process and motion for the entirety of his life, Marx devoted himself to the understanding of non-Western and non-capitalist societies as part of his attempt to reformulate his approach. Testament to the fact that much of the Marxism that followed Marx carried nothing of the motion and vitality of his thought, some of the foremost interpreters of Marx in the period after his death considered that the new direction Marx's thought took in the last few years of his life was a result of senility.⁶⁰ Why else would Marx abandon the serious scientific work of the logical analysis of the categories of *Capital*, in favour of reading about people who had to catch up to capitalism before they could dream of communism?

A major indication of the transformation Marx's thought underwent throughout this period is the letter he wrote in response to a question from the young Russian revolutionary, Vera Zasulich.⁶¹ Zasulich wrote to Marx in February of 1881 seeking clarification on a question that she considered to be 'of life and death' import for the socialist struggle in Russia. Zasulich asked whether the rural commune in Russia was, freed from domination by the state, capable of developing in socialist direction, or if it was destined to perish. If the former, was the case then the 'revolutionary socialist must devote all [their] strength to the liberation and development of the commune'? But if, on the other hand, the rural commune was an archaic dead-end, then all that was left to russian revolutionaries

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 19, 32.

⁶¹ Zasulich was in exile at the time of writing. No armchair revolutionary, she had shot the governor of St. Petersburg as retribution for him flogging a prisoner. Ibid., pp. 178.

was more or less ill founded calculations as to how many decades it will take for the Russian peasant's land to pass into the hands of the bourgeoisie, and how many centuries it will take for capitalism in Russia to reach something like the level of development already attained in Western Europe.⁶²

Marx spent three weeks working intensely on a response, producing four lengthy drafts before finally sending a shorter version. Marx was hardly unprepared for the question. According to Jenny Marx, in 1870 Marx had begun to teach himself Russian 'as if it were a matter of life and death', so that he could read Russian sources directly. In the years that followed, he amassed a vast library of Russian books, taking voluminous notes on his reading. In his answer to Zasulich, Marx was clear: his research had convinced him that 'the [rural] commune is the fulcrum for social regeneration in Russia.' Ironically, this was taken to be an entirely heretical stance from the perspective of Russian Marxists and the letter would not be published until it was uncovered in 1924.⁶³

In one of the drafts of the letter, Marx provided more detail. There he stated that:

Precisely because it is contemporaneous with capitalist production, the rural commune may appropriate for itself all the positive achievements and this without undergoing its frightful [terrible] vicissitudes.⁶⁴

⁶² Vera Zasulich. "A letter to Marx (February/March 1881)" in *ibid.*, pp. 98-99.

⁶³ David Ryazanov. "The discovery of the drafts" in *ibid.*, pp. 127-133.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 105. Brackets indicate that a word was crossed out in the original.

Marx and Engels would confirm much the same sentiment in an 1882 preface to the second Russian edition of *The Communist Manifesto*, the last of Marx's writings published during his lifetime. As is made clear in this preface, Marx had thoroughly transformed in his thinking any notions of unilinear evolutionary stages, opening onto a far more heterogeneous field of possibilities in the relationships between different social forms.

At the time of his response, Marx's readings into non-Western and non-capitalist societies had greatly expanded – geographically, temporally and otherwise. Marx's notebooks from between 1879 and 1882 run to some three hundred thousand words of excerpts and notations. Focusing mainly on works by anthropologists, Marx's research spans Indian history and village culture; Dutch colonialism and the village economy in Indonesia; gender and kinship patterns among Native Americans and in ancient Greece, Rome, and Ireland; and communal and private property in Algeria and Latin America.⁶⁵

The literature on the notebooks from this period is slim, not least because of their polyglottal texture, the multiple languages used even within single sentences, and their rough incompleteness. Lawrence Krader, who made about half of the materials available for the first time in 1972, surmised at the end of his lengthy introduction that the notebooks' 'incomplete form has nevertheless indicated the transition of Marx from the restriction of the abstract generic human to the empirical study of human societies'.

⁶⁵ Anderson, Kevin. *Marx at the margins: on nationalism, ethnicity, and non-Western societies*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010, p. 196.

⁶⁶ It is perhaps for this reason that E.P. Thompson had regarded Marx as, in these last years of his life, spiralling back to the concerns of his Paris youth,⁶⁷ where, in his 1844 *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, he had been absorbed in Hegel's discovery of 'the formation of the earth, its coming to be, as a process of self-generation.'⁶⁸

Raya Dunayevskaya regarded the notebooks as 'epoch making', expressive of the radical open-endedness of Marx's thought, and providing a novel position from which to reinterpret his life's works. She wrote of the Marx of the notebooks as 'returning to probe the origin of humanity, not for purposes of discovering new origins, but for perceiving new revolutionary forces, their reason, or as Marx called it, in emphasizing a sentence of Morgan, "powers of the mind."⁶⁹ Whilst Dunayevskaya is no doubt correct that Marx gathered materials and perspectives to bear on the present, she introduces a teleology that is more complicated in Marx's own writing – conflating Marx's research into ancient society and contemporary non-Western societies as both being 'origins' of the West.

As Krader suggests, the notebooks actually show the thoroughgoing anti-teleological charge of Marx's thinking, as well as his refusal of a Darwinian evolutionary schema when applied unmodified to human culture. Marx's criticism, and it

⁶⁶ Marx, Karl. *The ethnological notebooks of Karl Marx: Studies of Morgan, Phear, Maine, Lubbock*. Transc. and ed., with an introd. by Lawrence Krader. Assen: Von Gorcum, 1974, p 85.

⁶⁷ Thompson, E. P. *The poverty of theory, or An orrery of errors*. London: Merlin Press, 1995, p. 220.

⁶⁸ Marx, Karl, and Lucio Colletti. *Karl Marx: Early Writings*. Translated by Rodney Livingstone and Gregar Benton. London: Penguin Classics, 1992, p. 356.

⁶⁹ Raya Dunayevskaya, *Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future*, Wayne State University Press, 1996, p. 221.

applies completely to the authors of the cultural Darwinism discussed in the previous chapter, involved, as Krader put it,

evolution made over into evolutionism, a doctrine comforting and comfortable to the sustainers of the given civilisation as the telos of evolutionary progress; the incorporation of the subjective values of civilisation as the end-result of the evolution as the ground for self-satisfaction. The past was reconstructed to these ends, strengthening by the moral means derived therein the dominance and exploitation of one nation by another.⁷⁰

The heterogeneous themes of the notebooks are no accident. Marx's intense focus was on indigenous societies, with particular emphasis on the relations between men and women in egalitarian societies, the changes over time within societies, colonialism, and technological advances in agriculture. As we know from Marx's response to Zasluch, these insights had a real and vital bearing on the struggle of Marx's present.

The most voluminous notes issued from Marx's reading of the anthropologist Henry Morgan on Native Americans. Marx painstakingly excerpted such details as the animals from which each clan descended from, the precise description of certain rituals, as well as the indigenous words for things. Likewise Marx was enthralled by the profoundly democratic practices of the Iroquois and the power and participation of women within those practices.

⁷⁰ Krader. "introduction" in Marx. *The ethnological notebooks*, 1974, p. 84.

A particularly fine formulation of the way in which Marx's thought was transformed by his encounter with indigenous peoples is given by the surrealist poet and historian Franklin Rosemont. As Rosemont suggests, through his readings of Morgan and others, Marx came to understand:

the true complexity of 'primitive' societies as well as their grandeur, their essential superiority, in real human terms, to the degraded civilization founded on the fetishism of commodities. In a note written just after his conspectus of Morgan we find Marx arguing that 'primitive communities had incomparably greater vitality than the Semitic, Greek, Roman and a fortiori the modern capitalist societies.' Thus Marx had come to realize that, measured according to the 'wealth of subjective human sensuality,' as he had expressed it in the 1844 manuscripts, Iroquois society stood much higher than any of the societies 'poisoned by the pestilential breath of civilization.' Even more important, Morgan's lively account of the Iroquois gave him a vivid awareness of the actuality of indigenous peoples, and perhaps even a glimpse of the then-undreamed of possibility that such peoples could make their own contributions to the global struggle for human emancipation.⁷¹

In what follows, I return this fundamental opening at the close of Marx's thought, thinking (with) Marx from the perspective of this transformation. This is done in

⁷¹ Franklin Rosemont. "Karl Marx and the Iroquois." In *Arsenal: surrealist subversion*, 201-13. Chicago, IL: Black Swan Press, 1989.

combination with the provisional attempt to read Marx from the perspective of the Māori concepts developed throughout the present work. This seems to me the process Marx started, in whatever limited, one-sided way he could, through his own readings.

6.5 Māori Mārx

The first point to note in a comparison between Marx's style of thinking and a Māori style of thought, other than the asymmetry of a comparison between a person and a people,⁷² is a shared pattern described by the spiral. To take a visual example, the curled tendrils of the koru fern – the word meaning a fold, loop, or coil – so important to Māori thought also work as a diagram of Marx's dialectical mode of presentation.⁷³

⁷² Carl Mika's point is a good one: 'I speculate that indigenous philosophy, as it appears in the literature, does not draw heavily on particular individuals so vehemently as Western philosophy does. Written indigenous philosophy engages instead more with, and drills deeply into, a fundamental cultural phenomenon – not through the lens of another individual, but with the writer bringing together the spheres of lived experience, intellect, and the unknown. Carl Mika. "Counter-Colonial and Philosophical Claims: An indigenous observation of Western philosophy." *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 47, no. 11 (2015): 1136-142, p. 1140.

⁷³ The relationship between Hegel's dialectic and Māori notion of wānanga (study) has been noted by Ruakere Hond. "The Concept of Wānanga at Parihaka" in Te Miringa Hohaia, Gregory O'Brian, and Lara Strongman, eds. *Parihaka: the art of passive resistance*. New Zealand: Victoria University Press, 2001, p. 82.



Vladimir Nabokov, in his autobiography, *Speak, Memory*, recounted his discovery of the spiral geometry of the dialectic:

The spiral is a spiritualized circle. In the spiral form, the circle, uncoiled, unwound, has ceased to be vicious; it has been set free. I thought this up when I was a schoolboy, and I also discovered that Hegel's triadic series (so popular in old Russia) expressed merely the essential spirality of all things in their relation

to time. Twirl follows twirl, and every synthesis is the thesis of the next series. If we consider the simplest spiral, three stages may be distinguished in it, corresponding to those of the triad: We can call 'thetic' the small curve or arc that initiates the convolution centrally; 'antithetic' the larger arc that faces the first in the process of continuing it; and 'synthetic' the still ampler arc that continues the second while following the first along the outer side. And so on.⁷⁴

Working from the other direction, it is hard not to be struck by the dialectical nature of Māori Marsden's account of the whakapapa of creation:

The genealogy of creation occurs in stages in which one order, after it has reached its culmination, takes a giant leap forward to be succeeded by a radical departure resulting in the introduction of a new stage. That process is illustrated by the stages, void–root foundations–energy-consciousness–spirit–form–a new space/time continuum–Ranginui (Skyfather) and Papatuanuku (Earthmother).

The dialectical character of the Māori account of creation does not end with Ranginui and Papatuanuku. In fact, it is odd that in Rawiri Te Maire Tau's account of Māori thought as lacking critical distance, leading to its confinement in mirror thinking, that he does not mention the Māori enlightenment.⁷⁵ As I have recounted (Chapter 2), the first children of Rangi and Papa became frustrated at living in the darkness of their parents'

⁷⁴ Nabokov, Vladimir Vladimirovich. *Speak, memory*. New York: Knopf, 1994, p. 275.

⁷⁵ Tau. "The Death of Knowledge", 2001.

tight embrace. After much dialogue and debate, they resolved to split their parents apart, allowing light to enter the world. Tane, the atua of the forest and knowledge, one of whose form is the mighty Kauri tree, inverted himself placing his feet against the sky and his shoulders against the earth, thus separating his parents. This is the way in which Te Ao Marama (the world of light, the realm of being) was born from Te Pō (the night, the realm of becoming). The etymology of the term 'dialectic' is from the Greek 'dia', meaning split in two, and 'logos' reason, hence to reason by splitting in two. Tane's separation of his parents seems the dialectical act *par excellence*.

From the perspective of the shared dialectical texture or spiral rhythms of both modes of thinking – Māori and Marx – I want to pick up the thread of the multiplication and delinearisation of trajectories of development within societies and between them. In a compelling series of articles entitled 'Once Were Communists', the Marxist thinker Terry Coggan recounts an anecdote from his youth:

At a public meeting in the 1970s, I heard Māori rights activist Syd Jackson say that Europeans came to Aotearoa (New Zealand) with a culture that was 'materially superior' but 'spiritually inferior' to that of the indigenous Maori people they encountered. As a newly minted Marxist, I knew that by material and spiritual culture he meant the economic base, the legal and political superstructure, and the forms of social consciousness particular to each society,

even if I wasn't sure how value judgments like 'inferior' or 'superior' belonged with such a scientific analysis.⁷⁶

There is undoubtedly something of use in the distinction drawn by Syd Jackson in describing the difference between Māori and Pākehā at the moment of encounter, although some might find 'spirit' too Hegelian a category for a materialist dialectics. Moreover, Robb is far too quick to map Jackson's terms onto the a cruder reading of base and superstructure. Nonetheless, the anecdote opens up the question of the multiple registers of progress and the values whereby development along these axes might be evaluated.

Historical materialism, where it remains beholden to a rigid schema according to which the the economic base determines all superstructural elements, eclipses its own imagination. If the forces of production are the only agency through which social forms evolve, then emancipation starts to look like a technological problem. And perhaps it is, but not the technology of a lifeless materialism that thinks of matter as inert and technology as solely a matter of objects. Technological objects – whether handheld gadgets or global infrastructure – are, of course, thoroughly social. Acknowledgment of this fact, however, does not necessarily stop the idea that technology is a matter of objects narrowing our vantage and monopolising our imaginations. If the model of base and superstructure is wound down into a more complex, differential unity comprised of

⁷⁶ Coggan, Terry . "Once Were Communists - Part One: The First Communism." A communist at large. December 6, 2014. Accessed June 5, 2015. <https://convincingreasons.wordpress.com/2014/12/06/once-were-communists-part-one-the-first-communism/>

multiple agencies – in fact, nothing but agencies – then the other aspect of technology is able to step into the light: namely, the techniques of sociality as they are imagined and elaborated in thought and in practice. Techniques of sociality are all those technologies that mediate and enable difference, without needing to tame it, their level of advancement being decided by the degree to which they secure and increase *both* independence and interdependence. These latter terms, which might seem to pull in different directions, provide the basic fabric of sociality – in(ter)dependence – that has as its fullest realisation something akin to ‘difference without fear’ in Adorno’s terms, ‘difference without separability’ in those of Denise Ferreira da Silva, or else ‘extravagance in the bashment’ in the terms of Richard Cowie Jnr.⁷⁷

Given the radically democratic and egalitarian aspects of Māori society in comparison to that of Europeans – the advanced technology of tikanga in handling difference in ways not at the expense of autonomy – Pākehā, when they arrived, must have appeared to Māori as having very primitive social skills.

Marx’s categories such as the commodity are those of an endoanthropology, too internal to his own society to be able to provide the basis of comparison between societies without presuming the universal existence of the commodity in advance. Whereas the commodity fulfils his requirement of being of particular importance within capitalism, it fails on his requirement that it also be ‘more or less’ common to all social formations. Where the commodity might seem to be a ‘more or less’ universal category

⁷⁷ Adorno, Theodor W. *Minima moralia: reflections from damaged life*. London: Verso, 2005, p110 ; Denise Ferreira da Silva, “On Difference without Separability,” *Incerteza Viva: 32nd Bienal de São Paulo*, exhibition catalogue, eds. Jochen Volz and Júlia Rebouças (São Paulo: Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, 2016), 57–65; Richard Cowie Jnr. *Pay as you go cartel*. INCredible, London, 2001.

is in its useful, or 'thingly' aspect. However, as Gayatri Spivak points out, 'although the difference between use and exchange seems immediately available to intuition, use-value and exchange-value are in the same form: the value form.'⁷⁸ Thus, use and exchange are brought into existence simultaneously through their opposed identity in the value form. Whereas we could take, as for instance Sohn-Rethel does, a view of the world of 'use' as broadly designating the entire sensuous domain of existence, this still blocks from view other ways in which the world might have its being and becoming – the existence of the world in and through the sacred, vital, and agential co-imbrication of whakapapa, for example.

Although the commodity cannot provide a universal basis of comparison, this does not mean that it is precluded from providing a point of comparison. A question that emerges from such a comparison would regard what the commodity-fetish that arrives with Pākehā – albeit behind their backs – looks like from a Māori perspective. An initial aspect follows from an absence of the opposition between use and exchange in Te Ao Māori (prior to European arrival). As a result, the apparent inversion that sees human relations (between workers) 'appear as relations between material objects, instead of revealing them plainly',⁷⁹ remains a limited or bracketed perspective. For Māori, there was instead always a field of interrelation and co-constitution, a sociality between and amongst ourselves and the world. To invert the inversion enacted by the commodity would be to still be blinded as to the fullness of the dynamic inter-relationality of everything with everything else.

⁷⁸ what's left of theory 191

⁷⁹ Cap 169

Sir Tipene O'Reagan, who has been called the architect of modern corporate Māoridom due to his role as the chairman of Ngāi Tahu throughout the Treaty settlement negotiations, used to say that 'mana and money sound very similar'.⁸⁰ My view is that O'Reagan is fundamentally mistaken, and this mistake is reflected in the form of the corporate iwi. O'Reagan's comparison is straightforward enough: in the old days, if you had a lot of mana you had a lot of power and prestige and an increased sphere of influence. These days, money stands in for mana and, indeed, for neoliberal Māori, mana motuhake (self-determination) appears as having money in the free market. My contention is that the concept that plays as central a role in te Ao Māori as money does in the Pākehā world is not mana, but whakapapa. Marx describes money as a nexus rerum, the nodal point of connection between all things.⁸¹ Whakapapa expresses a horizontal interrelation of all things, as well as their (vertical) intergenerational layering, the vital and dynamic system of co-constitution resulting from sharing the world. Money, likewise, signifies an entire system of relationships, the relationship of every commodity to every other commodity. However, money and whakapapa cannot coexist. Marx says as much in regard to the institution of monetised exchange in ancient Greece:

Monetary greed, or mania for wealth, necessarily brings with it the decline and fall of the ancient communities [Gemeinwesen]. Hence it is the antithesis to them.

⁸⁰ James, Colin. "Transition from tradition to modernity." *Māori Law Review*. June 12, 2013. Accessed April 20, 2016.

⁸¹ Marx. *Grundrisse*, 1993, p 228.

It is itself the community [Gemeinwesen], and can tolerate none other standing above it.⁸²

Beyond the corrosive effects of the infinite accumulation money suggests is possible, it is apparent that the narrowness of the commodity-perspective – the world as use/exchange, relationality being between commodities – blocks a more fulsome experience of, and communion with, the world.⁸³

In the introduction to this dissertation I described Glen Coulthard's opening up of Marx's concept of 'modes of production' in terms of the more expansive 'mode of life'. Rather than Marx's more anthropocentric notion of relations of production conditioned by forces of production, a mode of life refers to 'a field of relationships of things to each other.' A geometry of life tries think the epistemological implications of the concept of mode of production modified according to an indigenous view as mode of life. A geometry of life – the patternings traced in a world by the flux of its constituent sociality – gains a third dimension through the development of a geomentality. A geomentality is a relationship with the earth that issues from the particular rhythms and patterns of a world expressed as a particular enunciative fold within it (something like a human). As a rhythmic aspect, a geometry of life has a fourth temporal dimension that is given through the metabolic interchange with the earth, the tempo of which is particular to mode of life. The comparative, historical, vital, and sacred materialism approached by

⁸² Ibid., 223.

⁸³ The narrowness of the geomentality attendant to commodity exchange, its fetish-like character, is indeed only an appearance. In the closing sequence of *Capital*, Marx discusses primitive accumulation as the far more planetary mode of (violent) interrelation, one whereby the preconditions for capitalism are produced through colonisation, slavery, and genocide.

the conception of a geometry of life is an initial and provisional methodological formulation of a Māori Marx.

A geometry of life seeks to remain open enough such that, as just described, a *priori* reconfigurations of other worlds are lessened. Absolute symmetry or complete non-distortion of perspective remains, however, an unachievable purity that would likely be entirely sterile, even if it were possible. The point is not to come to an objective view from nowhere but instead to reach a meeting place where different perspectives can be held in their difference with the hope of coming to novel, collective and experimental constructions. It is worth pointing out here that a geomentality characterised by the experience of a sovereign self acting as pilot in relation to the body and its senses is only a particular configuration, an excrescence of a mode of life that has monetised exchange as one of its most distinct patterns. As naturalised as it might seem, this experience of the self is relatively exceptional in the history of the earth's peoples.⁸⁴ A conception that works to dethrone the mind as the centre or seat of the self, would see the mind as a sixth sense, a subtle materiality that served as a register of the

⁸⁴ "The western conception of the person as a bounded, unique, more or less integrated motivational and cognitive universe; a dynamic centre of awareness, emotion, judgement and action organised into a distinctive whole and set contrastively against other such wholes and against a social and natural background is, however incorrigible it may seem to us, a rather peculiar idea within the context of the world's cultures." Clifford Geertz quoted in Seaford, Richard. "Monetisation and the Genesis of the Western Subject." *Historical Materialism* 20, no. 1 (2012): 78-102.

patterning of sociality with/amongst the world, expressing them as perspective within that world.

6.6 Proletarian Papatūānuku

Glen Coulthard has argued convincingly that although Marx acknowledges a doubled moment of dispossession *and* proletarianisation, his interest is for the most part with the latter. Dispossession drops out of view as the chronological narrative of *Capital* progresses. Coulthard suggests moving away from Marx's more capital-centric analysis to one in which land is more central, and so dispossession a more sustained focus, speaking more directly to indigenous experience.⁸⁵ In light of this, my claim that Papatūānuku is best understood as proletarian might seem incongruent.

What I hope to make apparent via this phrasing is that the process of dispossession of people from the land is also one in which the land is forced to 'work' in the factory. The farm field is a factory in which the industrial rhythms of capitalist agriculture sever and supplant those of the metabolism of people living in intimate, umbilical connection with the earth. Whereas Papatūānuku is formerly the means of reproduction of life on the planet, once dominated by capital this function is devalued, and her ability to do so lessens as she is impoverished by increasingly frenetic exploitation. Capitalist agriculture produces a rift by demanding more from the earth

⁸⁵ Coulthard, Glen. "Place against Empire: Marx, Indigenous Peoples, and the Politics of Dispossession in Northern Canada." *Pre-publication, sent to me by author N/a* (2013): 1-34.

than it is able to give sustainably. The profit motive that demands that production increase in each cycle is in direct relation to the increasing poverty of the earth. Capital tries to staunch this deficit by increasing its violent means of technological intervention. The literal Latin meaning of proletariat is 'those with many offspring', and was used in its ancient Roman sense to designate the lowest class of people, whose members, poor and exempt from taxes, were useful to the republic only for the procreation of children.⁸⁶ It is in this impoverished reproductive sense that Papatūānuku, as dominated by capital, is proletarian.

Because of the particular relationship of humans, understood as tangata whenua (people of the land, born of Papatūānuku), to her, the dispossession of people from the land is from Papatūānuku's perspective a theft of her land people. As Māori Marsden explains:

The function of humankind as the envelope of the noosphere – conscious awareness of Papatuanuku – is to advance her towards the omega point of fulfilment. This will mean a radical departure from the modern concept of man as the centre of the universe towards an awareness that man's destiny is intimately bound up with the destiny of the earth ... Thus will he embrace a holistic view which encompasses all life. He will thus learn to flow with and ride upon the vibrant energies of the Cosmic stream ... So will he overcome his sense of

⁸⁶ Robinson, Cedric J. *An anthropology of marxism*. Hampshire: Ashgate, 2001, p. 17.

isolation, that estrangement which breeds despair – the encounter with nothingness. Only then will he recognise inwardly that he has come home.⁸⁷

And so the the dispossession that produces the worker as a subject set against inert nature is also the reconfiguration of Papatūānuku's own consciousness against herself.

A recent and celebrated case, the result of many years of struggle by the various iwi and hapū involved, marks the attempt to return consciousness and voice to Papatūānuku. The *Te Awa Tupua (The Whanganui River Claims Settlement) Act 2017*, bestows legal personhood to the Whanganui River.⁸⁸ By way of the act, two people are appointed by the Crown and iwi associated with the river to be Te Pou Tupua (guardians of the river) and to speak on the river's behalf.⁸⁹ This is no doubt a considerable achievement that provides significant protections for the river, whilst also opening the law up to far more dynamic and creative processes than have been previously available to it.

The decision has become one of international renown, and will no doubt find resonance with many working in the wake of new materialisms, plural ontologies or posthumanism. That a river might be given voice is a practical fulfilment of the hope expressed by Latour for a 'parliament of things'.⁹⁰ However, both legal personhood and parliament are, of course, bourgeois forms entirely consistent with the continued

⁸⁷ Marsden. *Woven universe*, 2003, p.46.

⁸⁸ New Zealand Parliament. *Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Claims Settlement) Act 2017*. Public Act no. 7. 20 March 2017.

⁸⁹ Former MP Dame Tariana Turia and educator Turama Hawira have been appointed the first Te Pou Tupua.

⁹⁰ Latour, Bruno. *We have never been modern*. Harvard University Press, 2006.

domination of the the Earth by capital. In the terms of first law, the Whanganui River's subject-objectivity, understood as a relational agency, is expressed in the multiple taniwhā that inhabit it. A taniwhā is a relational being that inhabits a body of water and acts as kaitiaki (guardian) of the health and vitality of that water, including all those things nourished by it. A taniwhā is an expression the field of reciprocity and cohabitation whereby the health of the river is also the health of the communities it sustains. The latter are in a position of responsibility and obligation to the river as reciprocity for their own existence.

As against the indivisible individual of the river as legal person,⁹¹ I want to argue for the unbounded relational totality of the river expressed by taniwhā, in fact an expression of the collective powers of the earth. It is through this agency and by way of our participation in this ensemble figure that we might begin to fulfil our responsibilities to Papatūānuku by negating the ruinous exploitation of her (including us) by capital. That is, the liberation of the earth by the coming to self-consciousness of proletarian papatūānuku.

This will not be possible if our imaginations are to remain contained by the forms of capital, whether legal, economic or otherwise. The Pākehā way of life forecloses, however inconclusively, that of Māori, as te Ao Pākehā, the commodity-world, asserts itself as the only possible reality. That a negation of this negation remains open to us – that the atua (gods) might this time heave capital off of Papatūānuku – is due to the vast manaakitanga (hospitality, generosity) shown Pākehā by Māori. That Pākehā fail to see

⁹¹ "Te Awa Tupua [the Whanganui river] is an indivisible and living whole", New Zealand Parliament, *Te Awa Tupua Act*, 2017, 2:12.

the door Māori hold open, or to see the possibilities for our co-constitution and cohabitation beyond relationships of domination, is due to the violence carried by Pākehā in the readiness to refuse, extinguish or flatten other modes of life precluding us from sharing the energies and imagination of this vision. Thus the unending struggle by Māori, which finds one present expression in the patient work of the Matike Mai collective for a constitution based on first law, appears to Pākehā as an attempt to undermine our sovereignty. The continuation of violence is upheld against the offer of open aroha (love). Elderly Marx, in his spiraling investigations into the future synthesis of the advanced social technologies of indigenous peoples with the productive forces of capital, might well, had he read it, have excerpted Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal's definition of aroha.

Aroha can be said to be the power, energy and quality which seeks to bind and unify. It has a strongly compassionate and loving dimension as it tries to overcome separateness, brokenness and division. Aroha might be said to be the presence of primordial unity seeking to express itself in a world of duality.⁹²

⁹² Royal, Te Ahukaramū Charles. *Wānanga: the creative potential of mātauranga Māori*. Porirua: Mauriora-ki-te-Ao/Living Universe Ltd., 2011, p.19, fn 14.

Glossary of Māori terms

ahunga	font, origin
ahunga tikanga	the origins of law in the whakapapa of creation; the font, foundation, and encapsulation of the Māori conceptual frame
Aotearoa	New Zealand
ariki	iwi chief
aroha	love
hapū	clan
iwi	people, tribe, nation
kaikōrero	orator
kaitiaki	guardianship
karakia	incantation or prayer
kāranga	ceremonial call, welcome
kaumatua	venerable elders
kaupapa	first principles
kiako	teacher
kōrero	stories
koru	fold, loop, coil, curled shoot of fern frond
kumara	sweet potato
kupeka	net
hapū	clan, sub-tribe
hau kāinga	locals
hui	gatherings for debate and discussion
mahinga kāi	food gathering sites
mana	sacred authority, power, prestige
manaakitanga	hospitality, generosity
mana atua	godly power, spiritual authority
mana motuhake	self-determination
mana tangata	human authority, mana over the land
mana tipuna	prestige and power drawn from the ancestors, mana in the land
mana whenua	authority from/over the land
manuhiri	visitor
Māoritanga	Māoriness
marae	meeting places
Matauranga Māori	Māori knowledge
mauri	life force
mihi	formal introduction
moko	facial tattoo
mokopuna	grandchildren
ngā atua	the gods
noho	residential seminars
Pākehā	settlers of European origin
papa	foundation
Papatūānuku	earthmother, infinite foundation

powhiri	formal welcome
Rakinui (also Ranginui)	skyfather
rangatira	chiefs
rohe	ancestral lands
Tainui	confederation of Central North Island iwi
takaroa	the sea
Tāmaki Makaurau	Auckland
tamariki	children
Tāne	god of the forest
Tāne-mahuta	forest
tangata	people
tangata whenua	local people, people of the land
taniwha	water beings
tapu	sacred, prohibited
tātai	genealogies
Te Ao Māori	the Māori World
Te Ao Mārama	the world of light
Te Ika-a-Māui	New Zealand's North Island
Te Kore/Korekore	pregnant nothingness, seedbed of creation, fullness of chaos
te reo	Māori language
Te Waipounamu	South Island
Te Waka-a-Māui	South Island
te whare tangata	the house of humanity
tika	right, correct
tikanga	the correct way of doing things (around here), custom, protocol, law
tikanga Māori	Māori laws and philosophy
te tino rangatiratanga	self-determination
tohunga	expert practitioner of any skill or art
tūpuna (also tipuna)	ancestors
utu	reciprocity
waka	canoes
wānanga	study, collective study
whaikōrero	formal speechmaking
whakairo	carving
whakapapa	genealogy, the interconnectedness of all living things
whakawhanaungatanga	nurturing and maintenance of relationships, relationality
whānau	family, birth
whanaunga (also whanauka)	relations
wharekai	dining hall
whare purakau	houses of higher learning
whare tūpuna	ancestral house
whare wānanga	houses of higher learning
whenua	land, afterbirth
wiriwiri	a shimmering of the hand used in whaikōrero

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