

A Half-Caste on the Half-Caste in the Cultural Politics of New Zealand

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Introduction

Across cultures and time we can identify numerous acts of miscegenation and the creation of labels such as half-caste, half-breed, mulatto, octoroon, métis and chabine. (Young 1995) The altering of the essence of the original and the associated impurity often carried a stigma, a sometimes subtle and not so subtle sense of inferiority. To be of mixed descent has been a matter of shame and social reproach in many cultures, something to be concealed if possible.

Many offspring of miscegenation have been shrouded in the notion of race¹, particularly those that resulted from colonisation. It was through the category of race that colonialism was theoretically focussed, represented and justified in the nineteenth century and which fabricated a bipolar model of us/them, coloniser/colonised. Yet paradoxically it was also through racial relations that much cultural interaction was practiced. Indeed we need to acknowledge that other forms of racial distinction have worked simultaneously alongside this bipolar model, in particular the half-castes and their hybridity.

In recent times I have sought to explore questions of identity for Maori, Pakeha and those who find themselves positioned 'in-between'. A recurring response to my exploration by many is that I somehow I have a problem with my identity, an identity crisis, and that I am not quite sure who I am. I believe a key influence of such comment is the knowledge that I am a self-identified 'half-caste'. Indeed a Maori doctor once facetiously diagnosed me as having *cultural schizophrenia*. Now when I confront issues of identity I do not mean to give the impression that I have an identity

¹ Although the question of the adequacy of 'race' as a concept is not discussed, it is taken as understood that the notion of racial purity is a phantasm.

crisis. I am and have always been quite clear about who I am. I am simply a ‘half-caste, I am both Maori and Pakeha. At first this was very much an unconscious label that I ‘picked up’ as a child. However in recent times I have adopted this label quite consciously as part of a project of defiance and resistance to those who would seek to reduce me to one or the other. It should therefore be noted from the outset that this exploration is about a half-caste that is positive about his identity and who has embodied the crossing of boundaries, acknowledging both biology and the social/cultural implications. In this sense, by using the term half-caste , I concur with McDonald’s analysis of such labels who suggests, “cogently I believe, that for the Maoris who use them these terms ‘do not represent an arithmetic measure of genetic material nor a description of descent but are instead claims to affiliation in two cultures ... a claim to being bicultural.” (McDonald 1975)

However I don’t want to underestimate the tension and isolation of much ‘half-caste’ experience, and what it means to not have a sense of unproblematic ethnic identification. Because of language limitations and dislocation from the ethnic communities, many half-castes have limited choice in how they can express their hybridity. But this is not the totality of the half-caste experience.

The purpose of this paper then is to firstly, highlight the place of the half-caste in the history of Maori pakeha relations and secondly explore what contribution a half-caste might make to seeking out common ground in the progression of those relations. Where appropriate I draw on personal and family illustrations?

Early Miscegenation and the Half-Caste Offspring

The appearance of half-castes² amongst the populous of New Zealand began with the advent of the first Europeans and the resulting miscegenation. (Salmond 1993) In the

² This was the general term in which children of mixed parentage were comprehended. John Polack (Polack 1840) in 1838 suggested the label ‘Anglo-New Zealanders’, ‘Anglo being a compound to the term New Zealanders of which Maori were generally known as at the time. There were also terms circulating such as ‘utu pihikete’ (paid for in biscuits), ‘huipaiana’ (hoop iron, another article of trade)

North Island half-caste children were seen in the first decade of the nineteenth century, but most of the mixed race families began in the 1830s and 1840s when some of these early voyagers, whalers, sealers and traders took up temporary and permanent residence, acquired Maori women and became ‘Pakeha-Maori’³. (Bentley 1999) Numerous Maori families today, identified by a common European surname, are the descendants of nineteenth century Pakeha Maori marriages (eg. the Tapsells, Bells, Ormsbys, Bidois, Ferrises to name a few). Dick Craig, speaking of some of the first of the Pakehas in Ngati Maniapoto⁴ had this to say about one such Pakeha-Maori, William Turner⁵:

“William Turner’s advent ... is a fascinating one. It goes back to the time when the Rev. Samuel Marsden was in the habit of succouring Maoris stranded in Sydney.

One of these was a young chief named Kare Kare, who had served as a semi-slave on whalers for no less than eight years and was desperately sick. On Marsden’s intervention arrangements were made through the governor of New South Wales to take the now recovered Maori back to his homeland and in charge of him was placed William Turner. Kare Kare was shown kindness and was the instrument through which four traders who came with the ship were received into the Ngati Pou sub-tribe, a branch of the Waikato Maniapoto people. The landing was at Waikato heads.

As inducement to stay -for it was 1834, the Pakeha were traders and the muskets they brought were a treasured tribal possession - the four men were offered brides from the higher ranks of the subtribe.

The four men were Turner, Marshall (whose name crops up through Waikato’s early history), Kemp (who later settled in Kawhia) and a man named Payne. The last-named eventually returned to England after his wife’s death. Marshall and Kemp reared their families in the Waikato, whilst Turner settled near Pirongia, where his wife, part-Maniapoto by birth, held lands.” (Craig 1978)

Bentley (1999) who has recently completed a major study on such Pakeha-Maori

and ‘o te parara’ (out of the [whalers] barrel). These were derogatory references to supposed transactions that preceded conception. (Anderson and Hocken Library. 1991)

³ During the late 1820s, Pakeha Maori came into general use as a descriptive term for resident traders, and extended to whalers and early settler farmers living among Maori tribes. (Bentley 1999)

⁴ I am a member of this tribe whose domain is essentially the King Country, North Island.

⁵ This account is supported by evidence given about the Turner family in the Native Land Court minutes of the Te Rohe Potae Block case. (Te Rohe Potae Poraka., 1986) Another account has William Turner’s settlement in New Zealand as a result of a ship wreck in 1834. (Turner, 1982).

notes they shared a great pride in the number of their half-caste offspring and “seemed to have considered it their patriotic duty to populate desolate areas, working without cost to the country to propagate, increase and multiply the population”. William Turner, like many other Pakeha-Maori of his time, developed a reputation as prodigious breeders.⁶ Families of nine to twelve children were the norm. (Bentley 1999) Hochestetter (cited in Turner 1982, 4) records in 1859 meeting Turner at his house some five miles north of the Te Kopua mission station.

“Turner’s wife had borne him eleven children, seven robust boys and four pretty girls.”

I am descended from two of those children, Mata Sarah and Te Toko Turner. (See genealogy at Appendix A). Both went on to marry half-castes themselves, George Ngatai and Mere Te Wai, children of the Frenchmen Pakeha-Maori, Louis Hetet.⁷ (Craig 1978; Turner 1982; Turner 1995).

These ancestors of mine were possibly among that group of half-castes of the Waikato and Maniapoto tribes who were the subject of the following observation by one traveller:

“There were many half-castes of both sexes among the throng, and the strain of European blood, which in most cases might be distinctly traced, had evidently, by one of those singular processes of nature which it is difficult to understand, aided to produce in them here, as elsewhere, a robust and healthy race of people.” (Kerry-Nicholls 1884, 28-29)

This comment by Kerry-Nicholls on half-castes is typical of the early literature of colonial New Zealand. The half-caste was the subject of that double logic of Victorian Racial theory “which both enforced and policed the lines between whites

⁶ Bentley (Bentley 1999, 204) notes that the Pakeha-Maori John Howell fathered 19 children while his peer James Coburn beget some 25 children.

⁷ Speaking of Louis Hetet, Craig notes: Visiting New Zealand in charge of a whaling expedition in 1835, Louis Hetet on his return to France purchased cattle and farming supplies, and then sailed back ... married a cheiftenness of the Maniapoto tribe, Rangituatahi, and settled at Otorohanga... In the Maniapoto tribe the work of Louis Hetet and of his three sons - George Hetet, John Taonui Hetet and Henry Matengaro Hetet, remained ever of paramount importance, and of the sons proved themselves as businessmen in the early days of the King Country.

and non-whites but at the same time focussed fetishly upon the contacts between them” (Young 1995, 180-181):

“In the olden days many white men married Maori women, but to-day there are many more marriages between white men and Maori women, and marriages often taken place between half-caste young men and white girls. Such unions are fertile. I know of a case of a white man who married a particularly dark Maori girl, almost negroid in colour. They had two daughters, both as fair as Caucasians. One daughter was married to a white man with fair hair and light blue eyes, the other to a Maori. The children of both unions had very fair skins with rose-coloured cheeks, Malayan hair, brown eyes, and very soft, sweet voices. Many, indeed most, half-caste girls are, in their youth, handsome, sylph-like, and vivacious in manner, but on attaining womanhood the Maori features often become more pronounced and in their maturity many of the women develop corpulence.” (Donne 1927, 267)

Until the word ‘miscegenation’ was invented in 1864⁸, the word that was conventionally used for the fertile fusion and merging of races was *amalgamation*.

Amalgamation and Assimilation

Amalgamation as an official policy of the both the Colonial Office and the New Zealand settler government sought to incorporate the aboriginal inhabitants into British-style state institutions on an equal footing with Pakeha settlers. (Ward 1995) However the fundamental flaw of this policy was that it was:

“emasculated by European attitudes of racial or cultural superiority, and by pandering to settler prejudices, which denied the Maori real participation in the European order, except at a menial level.” (Ward 1995, 39)

The notion of amalgamation was in effect in New Zealand one of assimilation where the ‘savage’ (albeit a noble savage but nonetheless savage) would give way to the ‘more civilised’. Commenting on colonisation in New Zealand in 1838, one writer suggested:

⁸ In 1864 and during the middle of the American Civil War an anonymous pamphlet was published in London and New York, entitled *Miscegenation: The Theory of the Blending of the Races Applied to the American White Man and Negro*. It was with this book that the word miscegenation was introduced.

It may be deemed a cold and mercenary calculation; but we must say, that instead of attempting an amalgamation of the two races -Europeans and New Zealanders - as is recommended by some persons, the wiser course would be. To let the native race gradually retire before the settlers, and ultimately become extinct (Anon. 1838, 252)

Indeed by the latter part of the nineteenth century the popular belief was that the Maori race was inevitably doomed and would vanish:

“The Maori is passing away like the Kiwi, the Tui, and many other things, and by-and-bye they will disappear just as the leaves of the trees and nothing will remain to tell of them but the names of their mountains and rivers.”⁹

It was thought that the Maori would leave a temporary and diminishing strain of native blood in the white race. (Buck 1924; Cowan 1930; Keesing 1928) The half-caste then was part of this natural course “progressively abandoning the ways of their ancestors, adopting Pakeha ones in their stead and with intermarriage hastening the process, becoming physically and culturally more and more like Pakehas until New Zealanders were literally one people, all brown-eyed and faintly copper-coloured” (Metge 1976, 303):

“the features of the Maori race will disappear from among the half-castes ... physically they are noble and beautiful and only require an education to develop the force and power of their minds.” (Thomson 1859)

Educational and social policies¹⁰ were directed towards the Europeanisation of the Maori which at one point was explicitly facilitated by legislation. Section 17 of the Native Land Amendment Act 1912 provided for just that, that is the Europeanisation of the Native on application (given the satisfaction of certain criteria).¹¹

⁹ Pehi Hetau Turoa of Ngatokorua, New Zealand Herald, 1881, issue unknown.

¹⁰ For example, the prohibition of speaking the Maori language at school as well as the individualisation of and breakdown of the Maori collective through successive Native land legislation.

¹¹ This provision allowed for a ‘native’ to make an application to the Native Land Court seeking an order in council by the Governor General to declare him/her a European. The criteria required to be satisfied were a) a certain proficiency of English; b) a standard four education; c) sufficient land or a trade/profession to provide for a means of income. The provision was enforced up until 1931. During

This gradual Europeanisation of the Maori was premised on the polygenist school of thought within Victorian Racial theory¹² which argued that the descendants of mixed-blood unions would eventually relapse to one of the original races, thus characterising miscegenation as temporary in its effects as well as unnatural in its very nature. (Young 1995) This view lasted well into the 20th century. Sorrenson (Ngata et al. 1986, 258) cites a letter from Sir Peter Buck¹³ to Eric Ramsden¹⁴ who states: “I am with you as an advocate for miscegenation. It is an evitable process which has taken place down the ages and the blending of the two races into New Zealand citizenship should do away ultimately with the bickering between pakeha and Maori.”

Ironically then it was this official philosophy of assimilation that sanctioned racial inter-marriage. (Ward 1995) Bentley argues that half-castes by and large blended into European society with relative ease, for the settlers generally considered them mentally and physically superior to Maori and acceptable marriage partners. Of course many observers were predisposed to see evidence of the acculturation in European ways as behaviour worthy of approval, while retention of Maori ways were often deplored. This was reflected in the paternalistic and patronising attitude towards

that time 76 natives were Europeanised. For most the rationale for such a change in status was the facilitation of conveyancing matters. Natives faced greater restrictions than their European counterparts.

¹² Young explains that for racial theorists of the early and mid nineteenth-century the major dispute lay between monogenesis and polygenesis. The monogenetic argument was that the different human races were descended from a single source in which case racial difference was explained through the thesis of degeneration. This meant that the pure origin of man was the white male - that universal mean and measure of all things - and that all other forms were a deterioration from this ideal, as a result of gender or geography, or both. The polygenetic argument, on the other hand, that the different races were in fact different species, and had been different all along, allowed the denial that different peoples can mix at all and that any product of a union between them is infertile, or infertile after a generation or two. (Young 1995)

¹³ A contemporary of Sir Apirana Ngata, Sir Peter Buck (also known as Te Rangihiroa) was a medical doctor, Member of Parliament and renowned scholar. See Condliffe, J.B. 1971. *Te Rangi Hiroa; the life of Sir Peter Buck*.

¹⁴ Journalist and author of *A Memoir ... Te Rangihiroa*, Department of Maori Affairs, Wellington, 1954.

the half-caste's existence. The 1860 *Half-Caste Removal Disability Act* rendered legitimate the offspring of illicit unions between Europeans and Maoris which, at a subsequent period, had been consecrated by marriage. One Honourable member of the General Assembly justified the Act given the *extraordinary* circumstances of the early years of contact between Maori and Pakeha that produced offspring with attached stigma:

In the early days of the colony unions had been formed between European settlers and Maori women under circumstances which in some degree should modify the judgements pronounced generally against all such illicit connections. And when the parties had subsequently made all the reparation in their power by marrying, it was but just that the children should be relieved from all invidious disability.¹⁵ (New Zealand General Assembly, 9 October 1860, 640)

This paternalism was also reflected in the comments by columnist William Otorohanga in a piece entitled "our half-caste population". He suggested:

"Let us say that neither Treaty of Waitangi nor common honesty must stand in the way of pakeha progress, and the Maori, being the stubborn creature he is, shall step into the gutter while we parade the sidewalk; let us do all this. But what of our half-caste population - that section of our fellow citizens which, both by kinship and treaty law, are doubly British subjects, and therefore ought to appeal to our compassionate affections ... Peradventure it may lead us to be merciful: I can conceive that those half-castes whom a callous desertion has cast upon their Maori mother for nurture and upbringing should share the disabilities and restrictions of that mother - this is plain; but that those who either by their own exertions, or the compassion of their pakeha fathers, have raised to higher grade should suffer the same indignities as their darker-skinned cousins creates a position as preposterous as it is incredible." (Baucke 1928, 289)

and furthermore:

Do you think that he is callous to the arbitrary humiliations which our arrogance is heaping upon him; that he is proud of the dual blood in his veins; that he does not know that he is neither flesh, fowl, nor good red herring; that he does not in his heart of hearts rebel at the injustice of his anomalous position? He does; but he cannot sulk, and die like the Maori mother that bore him; because the mingling of bloods is Nature's vitalising agency, by which she rebuildeth decadent species. (Baucke 1928, 291)

¹⁵ The effects of the Act were to be limited to a definite period.

W.B. Otorohanga also noted examples of discrimination faced generally by Maori during these early years, and with strong disapproval, similar treatment accorded to some half-castes.

“Another half-caste lady friend (lady in all things but a tattooed chin, whose home and home-life is clean, and sweet, and her heart of purest carat gold) travelled into the city ... wandered from hotel to hotel, where, because of her tattooed chin, each refused her harbourage ... He is an educated, hard-working half-caste master mechanic. A few months ago he took his sick (half-caste) wife to a country hospital, and because it was too late to take her up that day he sought rest for the night at the nearest hotel ... it was not until the frantic husband spoke of police ... that they were permitted shelter for the night ... No matter how educated, clean lived, how intimate his or her knowledge of Act, regulation, and land law may be, he is not permitted to either sell, lease, mortgage, or in any way deal with it, until he has submitted to the same degrading restrictions as the lowest full-blooded Maori. (Baucke 1928, 290-291)

Such discrimination reflected that despite the blurring of the lines between the races by the process of genetic interaction, the half-caste (at least in the North Island) was increasingly associated with, and indeed did in many cases associate with, their Maori heritage.

The Diluted Maori and Identification

It was becoming increasingly apparent that while there would be further diffusion within the Maori people of the white strain, it was generally rather indistinguishable, and more importantly that only in a small percentage was the ‘white blood’ strong. By the end of the first quarter of this century it was evident that the Maori population would not be extinguished. (Pool 1991) Furthermore the vast mass of the Maori people were keenly conscious of their native blood and ancestry. With reference to the views of Dr Maui Pomare, the Editor of the Maori newspaper Te Pipiwharau¹⁶ stated in 1907

“Kua puta tana kupu ko te ngaro o te Maori, he ngaro ki roto i te pakeha, i te kaha rawa o te marena o te Maori ki te pakeha, na konei hoki i kaha ai te piki o nga awhekaihe. I nga ra i mua nui atu te pirangi o

¹⁶ See online at <http://www.nzdl.org/fast-cgi-bin/niupepalibrary?e=d-0niupepa--00-1text---1011--1-mi%2f-50---20-about---1-01-0w-0&a=d&cl=CL1.11>

te wahine Maori ki te tane pakeha, a kei te mau tonu ano taua tikanga pohehe i enei ra. Kaore matou i mohio ki te take e rere nei te wahine Maori ki te pakeha, he iwi ke te tane, he iwi ke te wahine, he kiri ma to tetahi he pango to tetahi, he reo ke to tetahi he reo ke to tetahi a he aha ia nei nga mea e whanaungatanga ana i waenganui i a raua i pirangi ai te wahine Maori ki te pakeha? Ki ta matou nei titiro he tau ke atu te marena o te maori ki te Maori ano. I enei ra ka nui te whai o nga taitamariki Maori ki te wahine pakeha. He mea tenei hei tirohanga ma taua te Iwi Maori, ara te pupuri tonu i to taua nei kiri to te Maori. Ko te mutunga ano ia te Maori he ngaro ki roto o te pakeha ... Kahore he ture i tuhituhia hei aria i te moe o te Maori i te pakeha, otira he ture ano kua tuhituhia ki te ngakau o ai iwi, o ia iwi, kia u, kia mau, ki a ratou ano...” (The Editor, ‘Mo te Maori, mo te pakeha ranei?’ Te Pipiwhararua, No. 112, July, p. 1-2)

He has stated that the Maori will vanish, be assimilated by pakeha through the greater intermarriage between Maori and Pakeha, and the increase in half-caste offspring. In the days of old, the Maori woman desired the Pakeha man, and this erroneous practice still continues in these times. We do not understand why Maori woman flock to the Pakeha, the man and woman are from different races, one has white skin, the other black, they speak different languages, so what are the things between that to form a relationship, that the Maori women desires the Pakeha? From our point of view a Māori marrying another Maori is a different matter. These days, there are plenty of young Maori men who pursue Pakeha women. This is something that we the Maori people need to look at, that is the retention of our Maori complexion. Else the end result will be the assimilation of Maori by pakeha ... These is no law preventing intermarriage between Maori and Pakeha, but there is a law that has written in the heart of each tribe that they should hold steadfast to themselves...” (A translation by the author)

This type of Maori resistance led Keesing to conclude, “that the barriers of race are not, therefore, being broken down by an easy fusion between the two stocks.” (Keesing 1928, 101) Te Rangihiroa suggested that one such reason for this reversal of decline was this increase in the growth of the mixed-race population. (Buck 1924)

Up until 1921 the census had endeavoured to collect data on two different classes of ‘half-castes’, those living as Maori, or with ‘tribes’, and those living as Europeans. It not entirely clear how this distinction was ascertained in the field during enumeration. (Pool 1991).¹⁷ Half-castes living as Europeans figure more prominently in areas where Maori are few in numbers such as the South Island. Indeed the post-European

¹⁷ There were problems with reluctance of Maori to participate, the length of time census data was collected, mobility and the flexibility of definition with varying criteria applied. (Anderson and Hocken Library. 1991, 20)

racial experience in the South Island appears to have been quite different from that in the North Island.¹⁸ In the North Island, while there was a high rate of hybridisation, most people of mixed-race ancestry retained a sense of their Maori identity and ancestry. Pool (1991) argues that this reflected a high frequency of ‘matrilocal’ marriage, that is Pakeha males went to live in the communities of their Maori partners, with the result ‘ that the majority of the offspring of these early intermarriages remained within the Maori population. Family data on my Turner and Hetet ancestry clearly support this pattern. Both families resided among their Waikato-Maniapoto tribal relations. (Turner, 1982; Turner, 1995)

On the other hand, in most of the South Island, Anderson (1990) reveals how Maori-Pakeha hybridisation followed a very different path. He notes that the patterns of early mixed-race families and the nineteenth century census records disclose a rapid assimilation and acculturation towards the Pakeha population. He argues one reason is that, from as early as the 1820s, the families were mainly ‘patrilocal’; that is, the Maori women partners left their communities and went to live in European or mixed-race settlements where they brought up their children in predominantly European ways.

This tendency for half-castes to associate with one parent or the other meant that unlike the Metis in Manitoba and the Griquas on the Orange River where new peoples were created with their own identities there was no such creation of a separate mixed-blood community in New Zealand.¹⁹

The exercise of determining half-castes living as Europeans and those living as Maori ceased with the 1926 census. In its stead, and up until 1971, most persons who declared themselves ‘half or more Maori’ were enumerated as Maori. The primary definition was in the Maori Affairs Act 1953 which applied the ‘half or more’

¹⁸ See Anderson (1991) for a substantive discussion of the half-caste experience in the South Island.

¹⁹ The closest to any formation of half-castes as a corpus group was with *The Middle Island Half-caste Crown Grants Act 1877* which authorised the issue of Crown Grants of Land in the South (Middle) Island to certain half-caste individuals whose families had been promised that land would be provided for them.

equation: “Maori means a person belonging to the aboriginal race of New Zealand; and includes a person intermediate between half-castes and Maoris.”²⁰ (Pool 1991)

However, the reporting of blood via the census in the past did not reflect the exact biological composition of the Maori population. Sir Peter Buck noted, that where as the 1916 census calculated the half-caste proportion of the Maori population at 12.7%, his investigation of ancestry amongst the men of the New Zealand (Maori) Pioneer Battalion in 1919 revealed that 48% were of mixed race. A subsequent analysis by him of 94 Native Schools placed 50% of the 4 039 pupils as also of mixed race. (Buck 1924) Such data supports Metge’s conclusion that “the census does not give an objective count of the number of persons who are half Maori or more. Instead it gives us something of far greater significance, the number of those who identify themselves as Maori: in other words a reliable measure of the Maori social group.” (Metge 1976, 42) Indeed my claim to be half-caste is not based on exact biological composition (see genealogy at Appendix A), but rather cultural and self-identification with both my Maori and Pakeha heritage.

The Maori Affairs Amendment Act 1974 altered the definition of Maori to reflect this act of self-identification. It reads: “‘Maori’ means a person of the Maori race of New Zealand and includes any descendent of such a person.”²¹ No one who qualifies under this definition is required to declare him or herself as Maori. It is a matter of self-identification, which he or she is free to change on occasion.

²⁰ The Hunn Report (Hunn 1961) noted ten separate statutory formulae, but stated that ‘in essence, the definitions denote either (a) half-blood (or more) or (b) a “descendent”’. One of the more broad ranging definitions was located in section 2 of the Maori Housing Act 1935. Under this Act, Maori is deemed to include any Polynesian who is a native of any Island of the South Pacific Ocean. Of course the term Maori is a post-contact construct. Prior to European contact, the word *maori* simply meant normal or usual as in wai Maori or fresh water. There was no concept of a ‘Maori identity’ predicated around cultural or national semblance. Instead, the distinguishing features, which demarcated groups, were mainly attributed to tribal affiliations and the natural environment which were neither singular, fixed or ahistorical. For a useful discussion see Durie (1998) at p 51.

²¹ This definition is now the standard statutory definition for Maori. See for example the Electoral Act 1993.

The urbanisation of Maori in the post-World War II period brought more and more Maori into contact with Pakeha and vice versa. Consequently the rate of intermarriage increased. Harré, for example, found that half of all Maori marriages in Auckland, in 1960, were to Pakeha. (Harré 1966) Increasing numbers of individuals of mixed parentage seemingly faced the question, 'what are you, Maori or Pakeha?'

However having completed an extensive study of Maori and drawing on other research (Harré 1966; McDonald 1975) Metge (1976) claimed in the 1960s that Maori who accept identification as Maoris did not thereby automatically deny their 'Pakeha side'.

From my own experience ... I would suggest that more and more are refusing to make a clear-cut choice and insisting that they are both, not just on occasion but as a general rule. They express their position by using such terms as 'half-caste' (especially on the East Coast), 'half-and-half', 'Maori and Pakeha', 'a bit of both'. (Metge 1976, 40)

She also noted that individuals who regarded themselves as Pakeha also sometimes acknowledged the Maori in their ancestry: However Metge was writing at a time which was arguably only witnessing the beginnings of new dynamics in Maori-Pakeha contestation for space and legitimacy in New Zealand's cultural politics.

Re-Maorising and Redrawing the Lines

With an international climate that has promoted the rights of indigenous peoples around the world, Maori ethnic revival and mobilisation has increasingly gained greater public attention since the 1970s. This has included a renaissance of the Maori language and culture and the renegotiation of the socio-relationships between Maori and Pakeha people. The latter has focussed on a rejection of the assimilationist (and its latter label in the 1960s, 'integration') policies of successive governments and also a notion of multiculturalism as an official policy for race relations which was bandied about the 1970s and which continues to surface in public debate. Instead, the notion of biculturalism (contested in meaning and application) between Maori and Pakeha has been promoted within various institutional arrangements of government and civil society, and with varying success. Furthermore, the establishment of the Waitangi

Tribunal²² in 1975²³, along with its expansion in 1984 to investigate Treaty of Waitangi Grievances in retrospect to 1840 has introduced the New Zealand public to revisionist interpretations of history that have dispelled the myth that New Zealand has essentially had good race relations. (Coates et al. 1998; Durie 1998; Pearson 1996; Sharp 1997; Spoonley et al. 1996; Walker 1990; Walker 1996)

Consequently many Maori and some Pakeha have chosen to be more assertive in adopting 'Maori lifestyles/practices' and asserting political claims of self-determination or *tinio rangatiratanga* for Maori communities premised around the ethnic category of Maori and/or tribe. Of course a technique dominant ethnic groups use, to deny political claims by non-dominant groups, is to attempt to control decisions about the use of ethnic categories. Indeed, Pakeha (and indeed some Maori²⁴) who wish to undermine political claims made by Maori people have sometimes denied the claimants right to Maori ethnicity. For example, it is often pointed out that there are no persons of pure Maori ancestry and by implication no Maori. The following letter to the editor entitled 'Maoris don't exist' is typical of such sentiment

Sir, -- There is no such thing as a Maori today. I believe there is no one in New Zealand with more than 50 per cent **Maori blood**, and the average so-called Maori would certainly have less than 25 per cent **Maori blood**. How can these people claim that their one-quarter of Maoriness is being oppressed by the other three-quarters of themselves? The main difference between part-Maoris and Pakehas is their upbringing, not their bloodlines No compensation is necessary or desirable, and it is clearly ridiculous that recompense is being made to people with a majority of European blood in them. It would be very revealing if certain part-Maori radicals would admit their full ancestry instead of concentrating on one small part of it. I wonder what canoe the Mairs came over in?²⁵

²² See reports online at <http://www.knowledge-basket.co.nz/waitangi/welcome.html>

²³ Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975

²⁴ This is illustrated by the current debate between proponents of so-called 'urban Maori' (Maori who source much of their identity as Maori through their domicile in the cities) and tribal Maori. See (Coates et al. 1998; Durie 1998)

²⁵ Brian S. McKnight, *The Dominion*, 26 Jun 1995, Edition 2, Page 10. The mention of 'Mairs' is in reference to Ken Mair who is a prominent Maori activist. He is descended from Captain Gilbert Mair, a prominent colonial soldier during the New Zealand Wars. I am descended from his brother, Major William Gilbert Mair. (Andersen and Petersen 1956)

A reaction by some Pakeha to Maori assertiveness then has been to maintain that Maori and Pakeha are 'one people' and to deny the legitimacy of making ethnic distinctions in everyday life. This denial is associated with an unconscious assumption that the terms "Pakeha" and "New Zealander" are synonymous. Of course, when it comes to a discussion of matters such as crime or other negative social statistics, the issue of pure ancestry or denial of ethnic distinctiveness is somewhere lost in memory:

There is an ugly double standard that exists in this country. If I steal a car, I am contributing to "Maori crime" statistics. If I had dropped out of school without any qualifications, I would be contributing to the problem of "Maori education". It would appear that the category "Maori" exists only when it is convenient to attach negative connotations to it, for in all other cases **we are all New Zealanders**.²⁶

Some New Zealanders of European descent have also registered their dislike of the use of the ethnic label "Pakeha," a word of apparently Maori origin, which is now commonly used in New Zealand English.²⁷ Others, on the other hand, have sought to investigate the notion of 'being Pakeha' arguing that no longer can New Zealanders of British stock consider Great Britain as the mother country but instead must construct their own unique identity that reflects their own reality rooted in the Pacific. (King 1999; Ritchie 1992)

Within these questions of identity, new lines have been redrawn and policed between Maori and Pakeha, new ethnic rhetoric espoused, individuals called upon to declare the allegiances and a renewed enthusiasm for essentialism. This has led Dame Joan Metge herself to revise her earlier position on the choices that 'half-castes' are making. In a personal communication²⁸ she notes "the binary constructions of cultural identity and representation which have brought New Zealand to the brink of

26 K Slater, More than a transfusion The Evening Post, 21 March 1996, Edition 3, Page 4.

²⁷27 There is term for pale-skinned folk who were also called 'turehu, patupaiarehe, urukehu, pakepakeha'. When local people first saw Europeans with their pale skins, they called them 'pakepakeha' after an ancient people who had arrived from the sea, from outside Maori territories. (Salmond 1993, 21)

²⁸ April 13, 1999.

confrontation and beyond on occasion". She also notes "the growing proportion of New Zealanders who are the offspring of intermarriages, often in successive generations, and who are torn apart by essentialist categorisations of being Maori and being Pakeha".

This essentialism has been promulgated around physical appearance, cuisine, knowledge of culture and language and modes of behaviour and lifestyle. In an edited collection (Ihimaera 1998) of 'post-modern Maori', discussing their experiences of growing up Maori, a number of 'half-castes' reflect on their problems with their identity, their cultural schizophrenia:

"Can I, a fair skinned, blue-eyed person, whose Maori genealogy is uncertain, claim myself to be Maori, have the right to speak as a Maori? ... On the basis of upbringing and genetic determination, I am unhesitatingly constructed by the majority as being non-Maori. Nonetheless, identifying myself for most of my life as a non-Maori whilst experiencing within myself an ever-increasing sense of being Maori, of being recognised by other Maori ... Why then have I in recent years had such a strong need to identify myself as Maori? And to what extent does my upbringing, appearance, and uncertain whakapapa matter?"

while another explains his misunderstanding of the blood constitution of mixed ancestries having stubbed his foot as a child:

"Somewhere along the line I'd picked up the notion that it was the colour of the blood that determined the colour of the skin. Maori had dark blood while FEW had pale blood ... I had never thought of my feet as being especially ethnic, but the richness of the blood seeping from them was all the evidence I needed. The prospect of losing my Maori blood and only being left with the Pakeha terrified me ... Looking back at the stubbed it toe now, I realise it was the first time I was consciously confronted by my dual heritage and the first time I became aware of having a preference for one over the other."
(193-194)

and finally the necessity to choose to be either Maori or Pakeha and not both so that one can be the more fully that which he or she has chosen:

"If I wanted to I could choose to not be Maori. I could get away with being or 'passing' for Pakeha. And while this may prove useful on certain occasions, I have to be honest- the idea horrifies me. It amounts to a negation of my potential to be Maori. *It amounts to a negation of my tupuna Maori.* It is for this

reason that I cannot describe myself as part-Maori, un-Maori and/or a *born-again Maori* regardless of the fact that I also descend from, look like, grew up like and maybe sometimes still *act* like people who are not tangata whenua²⁹ in this country (and who are not only my fiends but also my family). If I identify as any of the above then I negate my potential to be more My Maori; I act as if my reality is not the product of colonisation in this country; and I negate my ability to *change* my reality. I must take responsibility for the totality of my identity and the only way I can do that is by *not* allowing myself, let alone anyone else, to limit my potential to be more fully Maori." (263)

I too by way of physical appearance 'can pass for being Pakeha' if I wish to choose so, although I am forever told that my style of speech gives me away for 'having Maori in me'. Yet, for me I fail to see the necessity to make that either/or choice so that I can be 'more fully' of the other. Why can I not be *both Maori and Pakeha*?

Repositioning the Half-Caste as Cultural Lubricant: A Concluding Comment

For me then, the agenda is somewhat different. I am accepting of my hybridity. I do not resist it. In fact my racial hybridity is extremely important to me. I constantly refer to it in my discussion about my identity. For me being half-caste is about simultaneously claiming both my Maori and Pakeha heritage which is all about an upbringing that has been both Maori and Pakeha, maintaining a knowledge Maori and Pakeha (I am bi-lingual) and literally living both Maoriness and Pakehanness. I find myself situated in a space where two cultures edge each other, not only in biological terms but also in many social aspects of my life including relationships with family and friends, diet, politics and cultural practices.

In the historical construction of Maori Pakeha relations as colonised and coloniser I find myself as both. For example when I discuss the Waikato Wars during the 1860s, *I can and do speak of* ancestors on both sides of the battle line. I cite Mere Te Rongopaomaomao who carried a gun at the battle of Rangiriri and who on her escape, hid in bush can remember the shouts of the soldiers, 'Maoris in the bush, shoot em'. (Paki-Titi 1998) Yet I also note Private Richard Double (a.k.a. Theodore John Meredith), who served in the Second Waikato Militia. Meredith went on to join the Armed Constabulary, whose duties included patrolling the Puniu River Border, across

²⁹ Indigenous people .

which my Maori ancestral kinsfolk had retreated. (Harman 1983) Then there is Major William Gilbert Mair who called on Rewi Maniapoto (a leading chief of my Ngati Kaputuhi and Maniapoto tribes) and his followers at the Battle of Orakau to surrender, only to receive those illustrious words that have become a catchcry for Maori resistance, “Ka whaiwhai tonu matou ake, ake, ake tonu” (We shall fight on for ever and ever). (Walker 1990) Mair went on to be figure prominently in the peace negotiations between the Crown and the Maori King, became a Judge in the Native Land Court, and had a child with the aforesaid Mere Te Rongopaomaomao. (Andersen and Petersen 1956)

Without a doubt the tensions and negotiations between being both coloniser and colonised that I experience are real and continuous. I recall some embarrassment with the sight of a photograph of Theodore John Meredith who was in possession of a whip belonging to the ‘notorious’ (if you believe some assessments) Von Tempskey, commander of the Forest Rangers during the New Zealand Wars. (Stowers and Binsley 1996) I use to wonder how many of my Maori relations faced this whip?

This internal contradiction of coloniser/colonised exists and I work with this contradiction in my everyday life in different ways, using different mechanisms in different situations to express myself, grasping the opportunity to create a half-caste lifestyle and claiming my own space as common ground for identity. While one might argue that we are all mixed descent, I am not insisting that ‘Maori’ must acknowledge and live their hybridity if that is not the particular identity they wish to adopt. However I do not expect Maori, Pakeha or whomever to deny those of us the privilege of adopting an identity that is both Maori and Pakeha. Nor do I welcome any proclamation as being disloyal or un-Maori/un-Pakeha. I can recall some people’s bewilderment when I tell them to work out how I am Maori while at the same time how I am Pakeha. This confusion is a sad indictment on a society that seeks to categorise and stereotype each other around the principle of exclusion rather than inclusion based on binary constructions of Maori vs. Pakeha and vice versa.

For me the image of a half-caste suggests a plurality that overcomes the dichotomy of Maori or Pakeha. The biological factor of the half-caste challenges that binary. More

importantly the 'active half-caste' has the potential to make an important contribution in how Maori, Pakeha and New Zealand should be defined. Shrouding the seams of identity the half-caste has the advantage of moving between both cultures with the ability to translate and mediate commonality and differences in a dynamic of exchange and inclusion.

The half-caste identity is positioned in the middle as a *potential* lubricant in the conjunction of cultures. There is a history of this. (Bentley, 1999) Many half-castes in the past have served as cultural intermediaries between Maori and Pakeha. The son of William Turner, Harry, acted as one of the principal intermediaries between the Pakeha, the Maori King and the Maniapoto chiefs about the time the decision was made to open up the King Country to the railways.³⁰ On the other hand, others have taken advantage of their ability to go-between. It is recorded in my family history of two half-castes (no relation) who assisted in the removal of family mokomokai (Maori tattooed heads) from burial caves to serve the appetite of private collectors. We should always be wary of those who would seek to exploit their position for personal gain and greed, which know no cultural boundaries.

This should not however discourage us from the more positive path of celebrating the diversity, the richness and energy created at the point where differences meet and commonality discovered. Bipolar models must cede to models that can account for more complex polyethnic encounters and the sociological 'reality' of the increasing hybridity of human experience. (Pearson 1996) For New Zealand this means a greater recognition in our social histories of the real extent of Maori-Pakeha intermarriage, and of the racial and ethnic diversity of Maori and Pakeha reflected in the half-caste.

30 Following the Waikato War in mid-1866, the Maori King's (established 1858) supporters withdrew beyond the confiscation line and established an aukati or frontier between themselves and the settler soldiers.

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