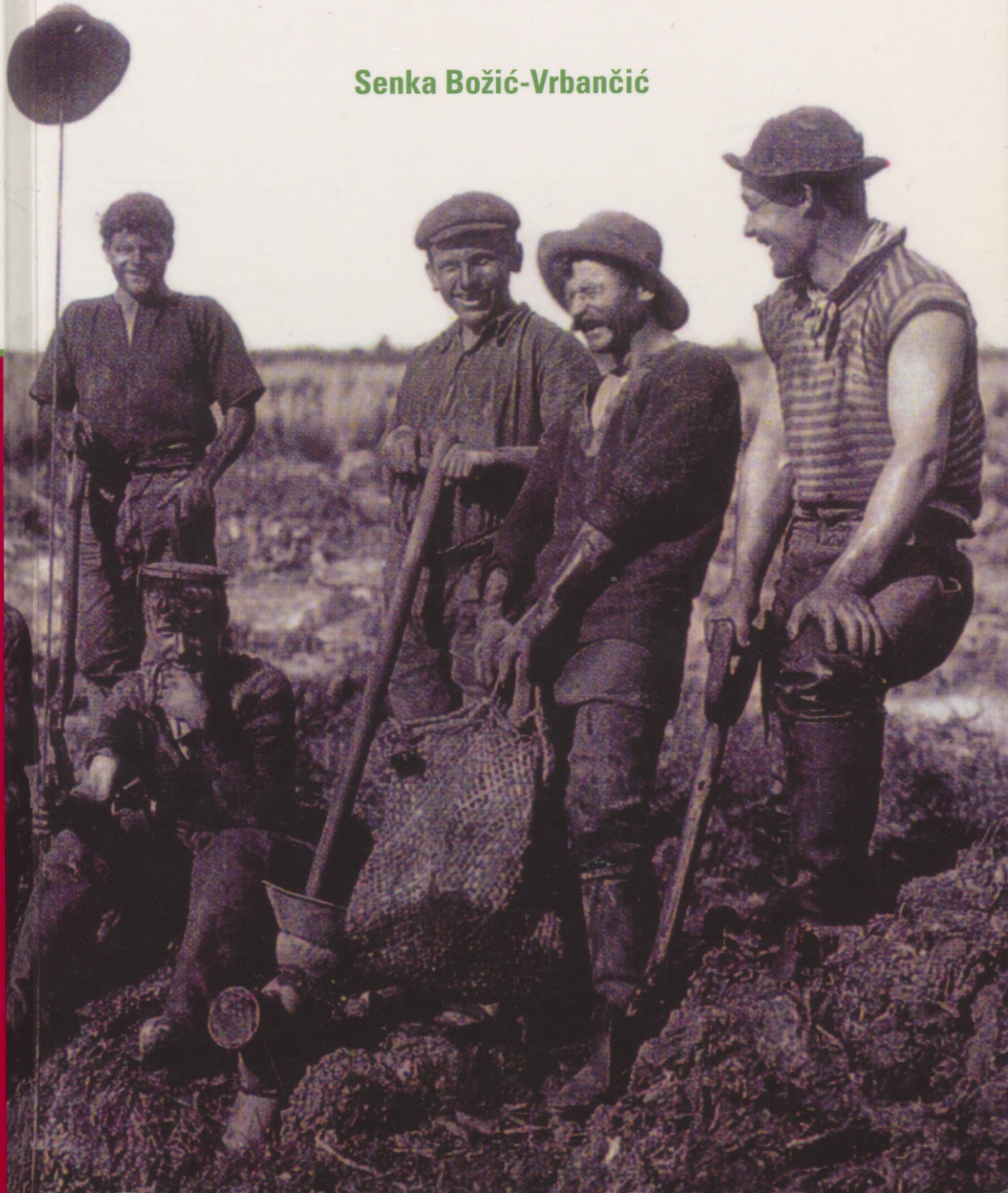
Tarara

Croats and Maori in New Zealand

memory, belonging, identity

Senka Božić-Vrbančić



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Front cover and pages 2–3: Gum diggers in gumfield, 1914.
(Front cover shows detail only.) The photographers, Northwood Studio,
entitled the picture 'Dirty but happy Austrians from Dalmatia'.
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Back cover: Ross Leroy Yelash and his children and Tony Mate Yelash with a
photograph of their Croatian great-grandfather.

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Contents

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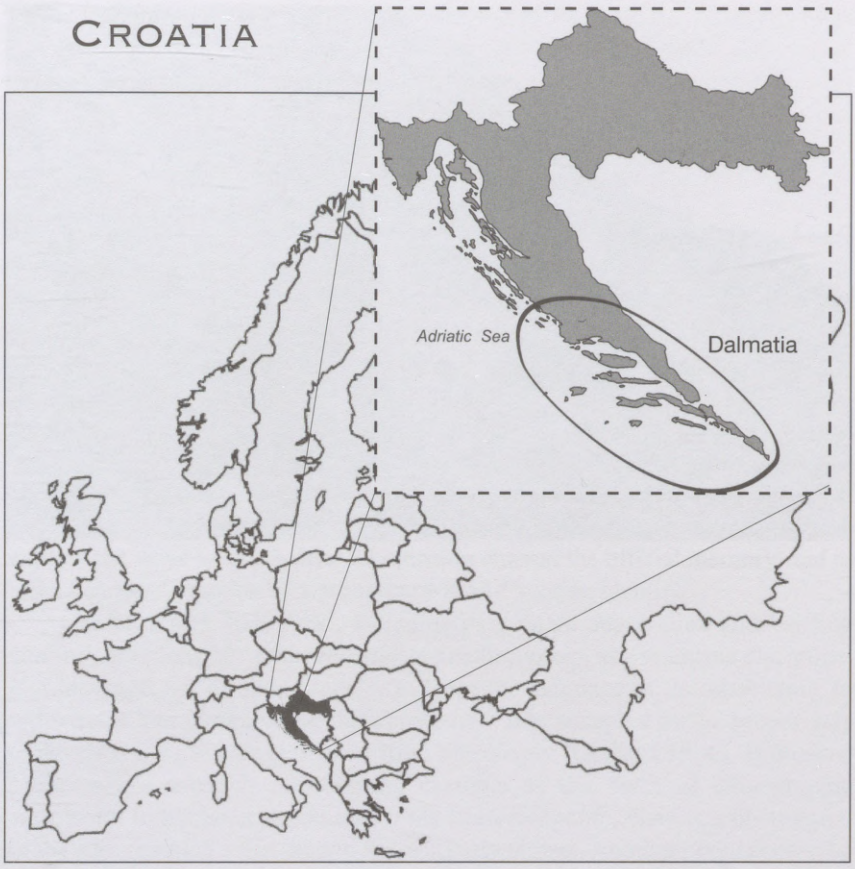
Senka Božić-Vrbančić
MELBOURNE, MARCH 2008


CROATIA
Adriatic Sea
Dalmatia


Far North Region
NEW
ZEALAND

Top: Podbiokovlje, Croatia.
Above: Lake Ohia, New Zealand.

Beginnings

I stand on a bleak, deserted field in the Far North of New Zealand, where hundreds of Maori and people from all around the world used to dig kauri gum. It is my field. I stand by a ruined village in Dalmatia, from where hundreds of peasants left for New Zealand to dig gum. It is my village. I am overwhelmed with a feeling of 'emptiness' and confronted with my desire to narrate, to unfold, ethnographic accounts of Croatian and Maori relations on the gumfields.

Maori and Croats, working together on the gumfields of the far North of New Zealand between 1880 and 1950, developed what is usually described as a 'harmonious relationship', one that was marked by a significant degree of intermarriage. My aim in this book is to throw a little light on their contact, to explore the ways in which their relationship entered the official memory, and to reflect on the formation of a particular Maori-Croatian identity.

'The field' and 'fieldwork', including participant observation and 'writing culture', have long been the main tools of anthropology as a scientific discipline. Not long ago, to 'do the village' – to learn the language of its inhabitants, to write notes and comment on their customs – was accepted as the proper way to describe a particular culture or tribe objectively (Clifford 1986). Bronislaw Malinowski's research is a shining example of this form of ethnographic endeavour. In his book *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, there is a photograph of the ethnographer's tent among Kiriwinan dwellings. Another photo shows the ethnographer immersed in his writing, while curious Trobrianders stand outside and observe this unusual rite, having no idea that their culture is being written into a monumental ethnographic work. This semi-clandestine act of writing has become central to the crisis of representation, the crisis in anthropology itself, caused by the 'impossibility' of representing the truth.[1] In some theories this impossibility is transformed into new possibilities of ethnographic writing, where ethnography is seen as fiction or as a 'partial truth'.

James Clifford, among other scholars, has pointed out this partial truth and fiction in, and of, ethnography. Clifford argues that fiction is not something opposed to truth. He considers ethnographic writing to be fiction in the sense 'of something made or fashioned' (Clifford 1986: 6). The Latin root of fiction, *fingere*, means 'to shape', and this preserves the meaning, not only of making, but also of 'making up' fiction. As Clifford writes, '[e]thnographic truths are thus inherently *partial* – committed and incomplete' (Clifford 1986: 7). This acceptance of the 'incompleteness' of ethnographic writing corresponds with contemporary social theories of discourse which stress the incompleteness of the social and the systems of meaning and representation that evolve within it (Foucault 1977, Laclau and Mouffe 1985, Žižek 1989).

Gumdiggers in gumfield, 1914, photographed by Northwood Studio, who titled it 'Dirty but happy Austrians from Dalmatia'. ATL 1/1-011218-G

Inspired by discourse theory, I consider that the ethnographer's task today is not just to be aware of the incompleteness of any writing, to acknowledge the impossibility of charting the wholeness of a culture or simply to claim that all truths are constructed. Rather, the task is to examine the historical and political construction of systems of meaning, and the inscription of these systems in all narratives and practices, including the ethnographer's own.

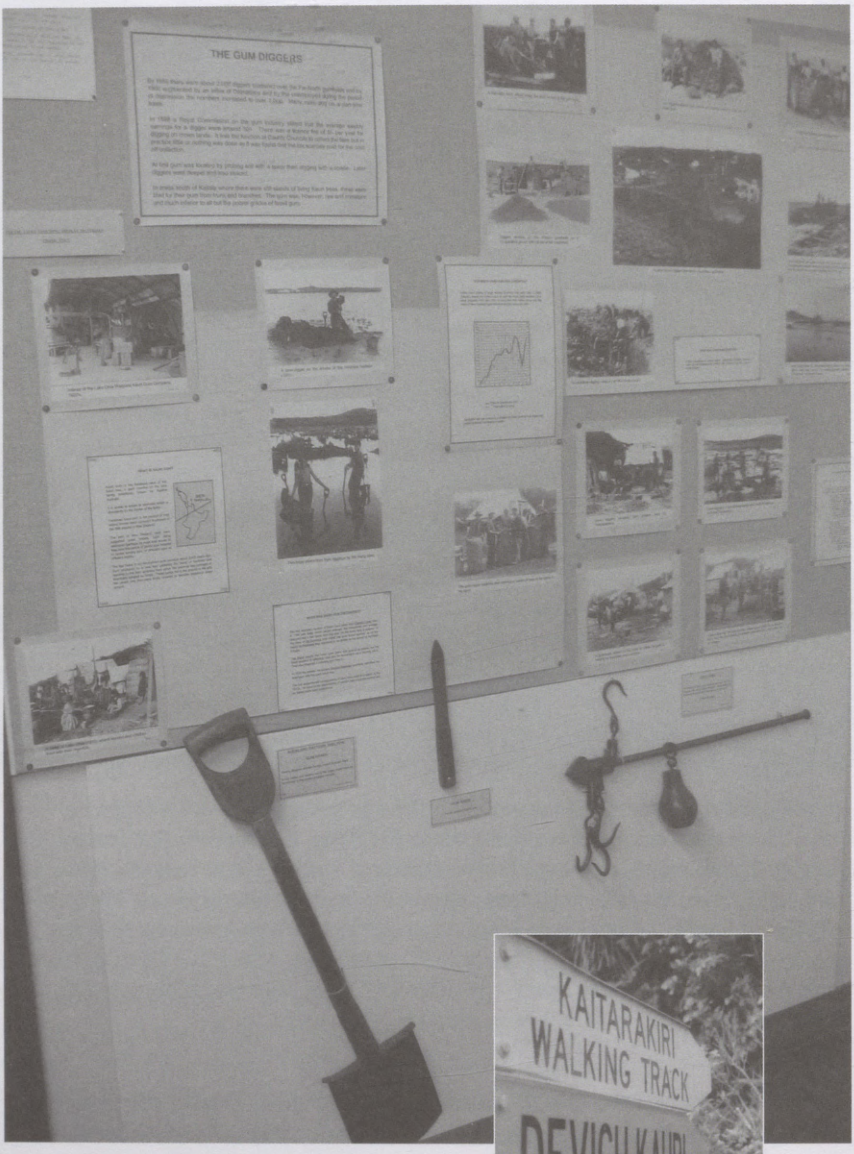
So, what then is my field? An ethnographer's fieldwork normally involves leaving home to travel in and out of different settings. We can also do fieldwork 'at home', in our own cultural world. My fieldwork is confined to two particular locations: the gumfields in the Far North of New Zealand and a few tiny Dalmatian villages at the foot of Mt Biokovo by the Adriatic Sea in Croatia.

My own biography is partially connected with both localities. I lived in Croatia until 1996, when I moved to New Zealand. But I was not aware that it was possible to connect these localities until I visited Cape Reinga, in the Far North of New Zealand, in 1997.

At a place not far from the Cape, I saw a century-old photo about life on the gumfields. It showed a group of men with smiling faces, muddied shirts and gumspears. They were labelled 'Dirty but happy Austrians from Dalmatia'. Today, Dalmatia is a province of the Republic of Croatia. In the nineteenth century, when the photograph was taken, Croatia was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and, even though Croats were never treated by Vienna as Austrians, in many parts of the British Empire immigrants from Austria-Hungary were simply labelled 'Austrians'. This labelling shows how national identity is a floating signifier, a point I discuss explicitly in Chapter Two. This labelling of Croats as Austrians annoyed me. From 1990 until 1995, Croatia fought for its independence and, at this time, I was immersed in the narratives of 'the Croatian nation'. Hence, the meaning of Croatian identity and the feeling of belonging to 'my country' were very important for me. However, this idealistic picture of 'belonging to the country' changed in the course of my research.

Gumdiggers drying and winnowing gum-chips at the property of Mr Nicholas Covich snr at Ahipara Hill, Northland, 1933. Identified are: Nicholas Covich jnr (seated, 3rd from left), Dempsey Hokai (standing, 4th from left), Visko Scarpa (at front, with sieve, 5th from left), Waha Murray (at front with arms folded, 7th from left), Rangi Murray (at back with striped football jersey, 10th from left), Nicholas Covich snr (at back with hat, 11th from left), gum buyer Jack Raos (12th from left), Jack Yelavich (at front with sieve, 13th from left), Sam Thomas (15th from left), Gresko Urlichu (16th from left). Northwood Studio. ATL 1/1-011214-G

Another photo, taken about twenty years later, shows Maori and 'Austrians' working together on the gumfields. Their relationship is described as 'very compatible'. In local museums, such as those in Kaitaia, Houhora and Matakohe, I hoped to find some record of that relationship. Instead, what I saw in those museums was just a nicely painted picture of the Pakeha[2] way of life in New Zealand. In Kaitaia and Matakohe, I saw photos which showed Maori and Croatian gumdiggers working together, but the captions simply told me where they were, that they worked hard and developed relationships with one another and nothing more. I decided to visit some of the preserved gumfields and, while I was shocked by their greyness and emptiness, I noticed numerous signs indicating a Croatian presence in the region: names of streets and farms, such as Urlich, Lunjevich and Stanisich.



Above: The introductory section of the gumdiggers' display in the Far North Regional Museum in Kaitaia.

Inset: Devich Kauri sign.

Left: Stanisich farm called 'Ljepotica', which means 'Beauty'.

I stopped at Milich farm and introduced myself to a Maori woman, Anne, who was working in front of the house. 'Oh, you are Tarara,'[3] she said, '*Kako si* (How are you)?' She explained to me that her father was a Dalmatian gumdigger and that he had married a Maori woman:

> There were many Dalmatians here and Maori called them *Tarara*. *Tarara* are hard working people. They are from Dalmatia … and Dalmatia, you know that's the rock somewhere in Europe, close to Italy … and there is nothing on that rock … people are very poor and skinny … so, many of them came here to work and Maori welcomed them … and they decided to stay … it's better here than on that rock … and they had a lot of wars there … everyone wants that rock … Turks wanted it, Austrians wanted it … and I think that Italians wanted it as well … my father told me that … and even now there is a war there … news is awful … everyone wants that rock … I cannot understand why, but that's how it is. I'm glad that you're here, so you're safe now.

It was then that I became interested in the Maori-Croatian relationship.

How much do contingency and accidental encounters shape our fieldwork? In early 1999, when I returned to the Far North of New Zealand to begin my research, I stayed as a guest in Anne's home. Days spent with her provided me with my first knowledge of Maori-Croatian relationships. She also helped me to arrange interviews with many other Maori-Croatian descendants. In a similar way, an accidental encounter shaped my fieldwork in Croatia. During my first visit to the almost deserted and ruined Dalmatian village Živogošće, I heard a harsh voice singing some folk song. It turned out to be a shepherd with a few sheep and goats (page 17). Out of professional habit, when he was passing along a narrow path, I asked him whether he had any relatives in New Zealand. He stopped singing, nodded and started talking about Sweetwater and Waipapakauri, the gumfields of the Far North. 'Have you ever been there?' I asked. 'No,' he replied.

> My relatives told me. My father's uncle lived there. He was with Maori. Nice people. At the beginning he didn't like them, they look as Turks you know. They are darker than our people are. But, they are not like Turks at all. They are very nice people. I can tell you a lot of stories about our people who went there, to live on the gumfields.

He continued to sing, but this time the song was about New Zealand. This is just one instance of a local knowledge that somehow connects the gumfields of the Far North with villages in Dalmatia.

The village of Gornje Živogošće is like many other villages in central Dalmatia. It is almost deserted and its hard rocks and cracked roofs are overgrown with ivy and grass.

It was from these stone-built villages and hamlets that, at the end of the nineteenth century, people went to New Zealand in search of 'bread'. In Gornji Zaostrog, I spent a few days with a local historian who told me stories about each house, the people who lived there and the time when they moved to the villages on the coast or to New Zealand. Suddenly, these ruined houses had a

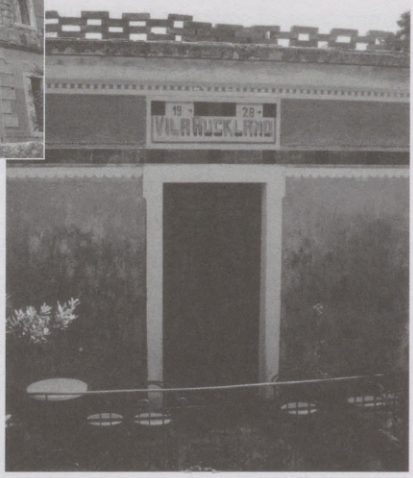
new meaning. They were remnants of a hidden past. In a Franciscan monastery, I was shown books filled with the names of those who left for New Zealand. In Gornja Podgora and Živogošće, a few locals showed me pieces of kauri gum sent to them from New Zealand. In Vrgorac, I noticed a house with the inscription 'Vila Auckland'. I had driven many times before along this coastal road, but I had never noticed this New Zealand presence. Like many others, I had never stopped in these villages at the foot of Mt Biokovo. To me, they looked deserted and I felt the same sense of emptiness I experienced on the New Zealand gumfields. The emptiness that links these geographically separated locations, these 'forlorn' places, was caused partly by the now almost forgotten kauri gum industry.

According to Clifford (1984), we should think of the 'field' as a habitus, a cluster of embodied dispositions and practices, rather than simply as a place. But how does one do research on fields which are like 'ghost towns'? How does one penetrate their emptiness and the silence they contain? How does one retrieve their pasts?

'THE PAST IS A FOREIGN COUNTRY'

Today, we can travel virtually anywhere, but we still cannot travel to the past. As David Lowenthal (1985) puts it, quoting L.P. Hartley, 'the past is a foreign country.' However, the fact we will never reach there makes the foreignness of this country unique. The problem of how to retrieve the past will always remain. In the case of my research, how does one bring to life the ghost towns where Maori and Croats used to live? A nostalgic aura envelops my work. Although those Maori and Croats with the most immediate experience of life on the gumfields have died, their memories have been passed on to younger generations. As the kauri gum industry as a whole ceased to exist and shifted to museums, Maori and Croatian memories of this era became part of their descendants' identity. These memories are often manifest in highly emotional forms, such as the images of grandparents, souvenir pieces of kauri gum or the different stories told by the people who once lived there, and are often combined with a nostalgic longing for lost moments of happiness.

This tendency to romanticise the past exists as part of a global struggle for memory, a struggle for history. Pierre Nora argues that we live in a time where disconnection from the past has become deeper than ever. As a result of this disconnection, a feeling of anxiety has developed which often grows into a nostalgic desire to accumulate relics of the past. No previous human epoch has deliberately produced so many archives, museums, libraries and depositories as our own. According to Nora, we feel religiously obliged 'to accumulate fragments, reports, documents, images, and speeches – any tangible sign of what was – as if this expanding dossier might some day be subpoenaed as evidence before who knows what tribunal of history' (Nora 1996: 9). The dead and discarded objects of the past have become imbued with the aura of who we were, who we are and who we are going to become.



Clockwise from top:

A shepherd in Gornje Živogošće.

Vila Auckland in the Dalmatian town of Vrgorac.

One of the last inhabitants in the Dalmatian village of Gornje Živogošće.

Deserted and ruined houses in the Dalmatian village of Gornja Podgora.

Once, the past was seen as stable and known. It was used as a tool to construct collective identities that gave us a feeling of belonging and common origin, and to create what was seen as 'our heritage' (Nora, 1996, Lowenthal 1985, Hall 1992). Today, however, this 'our' calls heritage, with all its categories, into question. There are widespread debates on how heritage has been constructed and invented. It is argued that official histories were highly selective and, as a result, most of the past was never recorded, especially the past of poor, excluded or marginalised peoples. When these debates occur in settler societies, such as New Zealand, the issues are even more complicated.[4] In addition, there has been growing awareness among scholars that the past, as we know it, has been constantly retrieved through the sedimented layers of previous interpretations and through the 'reading habits' developed through the different discourses of previous generations.[5] The way we read the past today is always contingent upon our own views. In short, nobody, however immersed in the past, can divest themselves of their own knowledge, prejudices and desires.

At the beginning of my study of Maori-Croatian contact in New Zealand, I found the work of Michel Foucault was crucial to my understanding of the political problems involved in our understanding of the past. His writings on knowledge and power stress the constructive process of history and the importance of voices from the margins. These voices, ignored by the official histories, are forms of knowledge that reveal the past in a new way. He named these voices 'subjugated knowledges':

> ... a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naïve knowledges located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity. I also believe that it is through the re-emergence of these low-ranking knowledges, these unqualified, even directly disqualified knowledges ... and which involve what I would call a popular knowledge (*le savoir des gens*) though it is far from being a general common sense knowledge, but is on the contrary a particular, local, regional knowledge, a differential knowledge incapable of unanimity and which owes its force only to the harshness with which it is opposed by everything surrounding it – that is through the re-appearance of this knowledge, of these local popular knowledges, these disqualified knowledges, that criticism performs its work. (Foucault 1980b: 82)

Foucault also used the term 'counter-memory' to denote memories excluded from the collective memory that societies choose to represent as their history. On the one hand, in this respect, we have the official histories, which are based on regimes of truth, 'that is, the types of discourse which [society] accepts and makes function as true' (Foucault 1980c: 131). On the other hand, there are popular knowledges that are unrecognised or disqualified by the official discourse. Foucault stresses the importance of genealogy as a method of diagnosing the power relations that are implicated in the construction of all forms of knowledge.

In the first phase of my research, I was concerned with the way Maori and Croatian gumdiggers were represented in colonial New Zealand. I did extensive

library research into the representations of Maori and Croats who worked on the gumfields at the turn of the nineteenth century. The milieu of the gumdigging era is well illustrated in the numerous newspapers of the time, such as the *New Zealand Herald*, the *North Auckland Age*, the *Weekly News* and the *New Zealand Observer*. These newspapers, together with official records, such as the Reports of the Royal Commission on Kauri-Gum Reserves, provided the most direct sources. Throughout these publications, both Maori and Croats are typically described as 'locusts on the gumfields' or as 'hordes of barbarians'. The whole 'class of gumdiggers' were considered to be the 'dregs of society', the bottom of the social hierarchy. Maori and Croats were at the extreme end of this hierarchy and were regarded as intruders into the newly thriving economy of gumdigging. By toiling on the gumfields, Maori and Croats were considered obstacles to the stabilisation of the colony's economy, which was at this time claimed as the exclusive right of British settlers and farmers. In Chapters One and Two, I explore these colonial representations of Maori and Croats, and analyse how the identity of both groups, as well as the collective identity of colonial New Zealand, was constructed through these representations.

In my preliminary research, I also read some PhD and MA theses on the gumdigging industry, as well as works on the Croatian community in New Zealand. Apart from being important sources of information, these works enabled me to analyse the official discourses that operated in New Zealand at the time they were written. For example, the few theses on the history of Croatian or Yugoslav immigration, written mostly by Croatian descendants in New Zealand during the 1960s and 1970s when the policy of assimilation was still very strong, are full of useful and valuable figures, tables and statistics, such as the birthplace data of immigrants who applied for naturalisation papers, their distribution according to census and statistical reports of the New Zealand Immigration Office, and the patterns of intermarriage amongst them. However, this thorough statistical tapestry serves mainly to demonstrate the authors' arguments that Dalmatians, Croats or Yugoslavs were well assimilated into New Zealand society. In a similar way, but in the opposite direction, monographs produced at that time in the former Yugoslavia, on Dalmatians living in New Zealand, mostly depict the development of Croatian or Yugoslav clubs.

There is a great wealth of literature on New Zealand history and I concentrated on those works which seemed most important for my research. My central reading was based on the works of Anne Salmond, Angela Ballara, James Belich, Joan Metge, M.P.K. Sorrenson, Michael King and Steven Webster. At this stage of my study, I was also concerned with the ways the Maori-Croatian relationship was recorded in travel books, local histories of New Zealand's colonial period and in the local museums which have mushroomed in the areas around the old gumfields. However, I soon realised that Maori-Croatian contact, even though recorded in these different sources, is never elaborated beyond a few sentences. These sparse records usually convey harmony and understanding between the two groups. By painting their contact romantically and sympathetically, they serve to hide the trauma of New Zealand's colonial past.

In these local narratives, the past is perceived in a specific way. Life on the gumfields is purified of pain and conflict and, in some instances, shifted into an artificial museum setting, complete with mannequins, that presents a 'heroic pioneering time'. In Foucauldian terms, these descriptions of the Far North, like any other, reflect specific kinds of power relations. Today, New Zealand represents itself as a bicultural and multicultural country. Diversity is celebrated over sameness and multiplicity over monoculturalism. These new bicultural and multicultural policies have effected a flowering of re-examination and rewriting, and the re-emergence of various suppressed memories. It is in this context that the new Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa was opened. The old national or 'Dominion' museum closed because, as the Government put it, '[it] no longer served the wider [bicultural or multicultural] community' (Museum of New Zealand Online, 2003). In these new readings of the past, Maori oral history and tradition, as well their relation to Pakeha, have been examined in new ways. Nevertheless, there is still almost no consideration of the contact between Maori and Croats on the gumfields. Apart from the basic description of their contact as 'harmonious', Maori-Croatian memories have not been included in the new system of remembering. As Marita Sturken (1997) has written, forms of remembrance indicate the status of a particular memory within a given culture. In 1999, just a few months after the Museum of New Zealand opened, Maori and Croats built a monument in Te Rangihiroa Park in Henderson, a suburb of Auckland, to commemorate and celebrate their 'harmonious relationship'. In doing so, they showed a need to make their memories public.

In the second phase of my research, I concentrated on analysing what Foucault termed 'subjugated knowledge' – in this case, the local and regional knowledge of the Maori and Croatian way of life on the gumfields that survives in both Dalmatia and the Far North of New Zealand. I conducted interviews with descendants of the Maori and Croats who used to live on the gumfields, I examined personal letters written by gumdiggers, marriage certificates, church records, photos, paintings, novels, poems, postcards, even stamps on postcards, school records, notes written by teachers and priests, personal diaries, bills, and the different objects used by gumdiggers, and I visited private museums owned by Maori and Croats, museums which are not on the official list of museums in New Zealand. Thanks to a colleague of mine, Professor Hans-Peter Stoffel, who studied Slavic-Polynesian language contact in New Zealand, I was able to listen to some of his recorded interviews with Dalmatian gumdiggers and, in one case, a gumdigger and his Maori wife.[6] However, following Clifford's (1986) argument that every truth is a 'partial truth', I realised that, in the same way that 'official history' is constructed by powerful 'lies' of exclusion and rhetoric, 'subjugated knowledge' is itself neither pure nor unchangeable. Rather, it is being constantly revised and transformed according to the needs of the present. For example, during the 1950s when gumdigging became less attractive and prices slumped, both Maori and Croats tried to find new professions and employment, either locally in self-contained farming units, or by migration to larger towns (Stoffel 1996). Soon, the 'Austrians', who at the beginning of the century were seen as a threat to the stability of the colony and

were described with metaphors of animal imagery, came to be represented as honest industrious 'Yugoslavs' due to their economic success in some industries, especially winemaking. Under the pressure of assimilation, some of them chose to 'forget' their relationship with Maori. Anxiety about the future reconstructed their memories and desires in relation to their position in society.

During the 1980s and 1990s, in line with the growing celebration of diversity in society, the 'cultural difference' of Croats was again stressed, but this time in the context of 'enriching' New Zealand society. Once again, some of these changes led to a puzzling reconstruction of the past. The idealised myth about the 'compatibility' of Maori and Croatian has become part of Maori-Croatian identity. The complex interplay of power relations, of tolerance and intolerance, and of inclusion and exclusion that is linked to changes in New Zealand's nation-building processes (colonialism, assimilation, biculturalism, multiculturalism), is inscribed in their narratives. I became more and more aware that the past is indeed a foreign country, and that what we need in our analysis is not a theory of knowing the past, but rather a theory of 'discursive practice' (Foucault 1970). The past and the ways in which it is recorded and interpreted, in literate or oral histories, are not stitched into each other. The past and interpretations of the past float free of each other, they are ontologically 'out of joint'.

Identity as a Process

In trying to understand how memories of the past and of the gumdigging era are constructed and re-constructed over time, I became concerned with the way that these constructions are mobilised in particular identity formations in New Zealand. Such questions as, what are the relationships between collective and individual memory? what are the relationships between popular memory and individual memory? are individual memories always inflected by collective memories and, if so, why do members of the same group not identify in the same way and not share similar views on the past? became paramount in my research. In short, I was concerned with questions of subjectivity, with how subjects respond to the exercise of different discourses.

According to Foucault (1977), the subject is produced through, and within, discourse. He argues that a 'disciplinary society' developed in eighteenth-century Europe. In this new form of social order, the human body was constructed and inscribed by a series of disciplinary discursive practices. Most importantly, power was exercised through the subjects' own self-control and through the exclusion or regulation of all who were seen as 'abnormal' and 'strange'. In Chapters One and Two, I chart the emergence of a disciplinary society in colonial New Zealand. For the first time, various colonial institutions, such as the Native Land Court and Native Schools, were used as instruments to discipline and regulate subjects who did not fit into the developed 'normalising judgement'. But the question remains: if power is everywhere and everyone is controlled, is resistance possible at all? In other words, is the subject capable of engaging in their own self-constitution and of resisting, negotiating or accommodating disciplinary forms of control?

As Stuart Hall suggests, in Foucault's late and incomplete work *History of Sexuality*, Foucault recognises that 'theoretical work cannot be fully accomplished without complementing the account of discursive and disciplinary regulation with an account of the practices of subjective self-constitution' (Hall 1996: 13). In order to describe such practices, he introduced the concept of 'desiring subject' and, for the first time in his work, addressed the problem of the interior landscape of the subject. Foucault's aim in this regard is to examine the 'technologies of the self, which permit individuals to effect by their own means or with help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves' (Foucault 1988: 18). Such technologies of the self are the practices people enact upon themselves, the practices of self-production. In short, *identities are seen as processes of becoming* rather than of being.

In this context, 'identity' is misleading, as it is never fully constituted. It is more accurate to speak about 'identifications'. In their work on the construction of identity, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985) argue powerfully that identification can be analysed as a failure of identity. They develop Foucault's theory of discursive practice and Althusser's concept of overdetermination, to argue that political discourses and identities are the result of articulatory practices. Laclau and Mouffe employ Althusser's concept of overdetermination to assert that, rather than existing as a given object, the social is a process that is always incomplete. They point out that overdetermination criticises every type of fixity and affirms the 'open and politically negotiable character of every identity' (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 104). For Laclau and Mouffe, articulation is a practice that is always transformative, and they call the structured totality which results from articulatory practice *discourse*. They term the differential positions that are articulated within a discourse, *moments*, and any difference that is not discursively articulated, *elements* (Laclau and Mouffe 1985:105).

Criticising the concept of discourse Foucault developed in his early work, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, where he distinguishes between discursive and non-discursive practices, they argue that every object is constituted as an 'object of discourse'. Hence, a distinction between discursive and non-discursive practices is oxymoronic (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 107). In his later writings, however, Foucault shifts from an archaeological to a genealogical approach and this brings his theory of discourse closer to that of Laclau and Mouffe (Torfing 1999: 90). While Foucault's archaeology describes the rules governing the formation of discourse, his genealogy diagnoses discursive practices. Furthermore, Laclau and Mouffe argue that discourse, as a system of differential entities, exists as a partial limitation of a 'surplus of meaning'. 'Any discourse is constituted as an attempt to dominate the field of discursivity, to arrest the flow of difference, to construct a centre' (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 112). They call these different discursive attempts to fix the meaning of the social 'nodal points'. Accordingly, the practice of articulation consists of the construction of nodal points that partially fix meaning within the social.

Laclau and Mouffe derive their concept of nodal points from the Lacanian notion of *points de caption*, privileged signifiers that fix the meaning of a signifying process.[7] They argue that all identity is relational and 'all discourse is subverted by the field of discursivity which overflows it, [and] the transition from "elements" to "moments" can never be complete. The status of elements is that of floating signifiers, incapable of being wholly articulated to a discursive chain. And this floating character finally penetrates every discursive (i.e. social) identity' (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 113). The floating signifiers are structured into a unified field through the intervention of the privileged, discursive nodal points. Moreover, the intervention of the nodal point and the corresponding fixation of social meaning always implies certain exclusions.

Inspired by this theory, I recognised that the New Zealand social models, of colonialism, assimilation, biculturalism and multiculturalism, could be seen to function as different nodal points. They quilt together the multiple layers of 'floating signifiers', such as national identity, indigenous culture, tradition, ethnicity, justice and so on. Floating signifiers do not have a fixed meaning; on the contrary, their meaning is 'overdetermined by their articulation in a chain with other elements' (Žižek 1989: 87). For example, when 'New Zealand national identity' as a floating signifier was quilted through 'assimilation' (based on a homogeneous culture) as a nodal point, its meaning was completely different from that of today, which is quilted through the nodal point of 'biculturalism' (based on cultural diversity). In the same way, other floating signifiers changed their meanings, always conferring a precise signification between each other.

It is important to stress that, for Laclau and Mouffe, passing from one nodal point to another – in the case of New Zealand, from colonialism to assimilation and multiculturalism or biculturalism – in no way implies 'a story of progress'[8] or 'cumulative improvement', as each stage is relationally constituted through antagonism. As Laclau and Mouffe argue, antagonism is the limit of the social order. But this limit is not external, it 'must be given within the social itself as something subverting it, destroying its ambition to constitute a full presence' (Laclau and Mouffe 1985:122–27). To understand the construction of social antagonisms, Laclau and Mouffe introduce what they term the logic of equivalence and difference. The logic of equivalence functions by 'splitting a system of difference' and creating equivalent identities. Through the system of equivalence (something identical that underlines differential positions) the social is usually divided between two opposing camps. However, the system of differences dissolves the existing chains of equivalence and the polarities that accompany them, and increases the differentiation of the social. As a consequence, there is always a complex interaction between the logic of difference and equivalence:

> ... the ambiguity [penetrates] every relation of equivalence: two terms, to be equivalent, must be different – otherwise, there would be a simple identity. On the other hand, the equivalence exists only through the act of subverting the differential character of those terms. This is exactly the point where ... the contingent subverts the necessary by preventing it from fully constituting

> itself. This non-constitutivity – or contingency – of the system of differences is *revealed* in the unfixity which equivalences introduce. The *ultimate* character of this unfixity, the *ultimate* precariousness of all difference, will thus show itself in a relation of total equivalence, where the differential positivity of all its terms is dissolved. This is precisely the formula of antagonism, which thus establishes itself as the limit of the social. (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 128)

Antagonism causes a moment of dislocation in the social that negates identity. This moment, in turn, causes new social constructions that seek to suture the fissure created by dislocation. Hence, antagonistic dislocations of the social have a dual character: '[i]f on the one hand, they threaten identities, on the other, they are the foundation on which new identities are constituted' (Laclau 1990: 39). It is the fact that antagonism is an internal limit of the social that makes historical variation possible. In the case of New Zealand, passing from colonialism to biculturalism reflects the impossibility of a closed system or, in Slavoj Žižek's words, the inability of the symbolic to master antagonism.

Inspired by this theory, I have come to recognise a number of antagonistic relations within New Zealand's social space that prevent it from making a final closure and achieving its full identity. These relations are neither wholly oppositional nor contradictory, as 'the two antagonistic poles differ in the very way in which they define or perceive the difference that separates them' (Žižek 2000: 215). For example, the disruptive effects of antagonism in New Zealand's social space are clearly visible through the dislocation of the very document on which colonisation is based, the Treaty of Waitangi.[9] With this dislocation, the Treaty has been open to interpretation and, as consequence, to 'contingent hegemonic retotalizations' (Laclau 2000: 291). The way it is interpreted by different groups cannot be seen as mere opposition or contradiction, since each group does not perceive the gap between themselves and others that is created by these different interpretations in the same way. The gap itself is interpreted from different points of view, or nodal points, as in a given social relation there are always a variety of nodal points which create a base for hegemonic struggle. Moreover, different attempts to fix the meaning of the Treaty affect other areas, such as education, heritage and tradition, thereby contaminating them with the same antagonism and making them inconsistent.

Slavoj Žižek sees antagonism as the Lacanian Real – something that resists symbolisation and yet is created by the symbolic. Here the role of fantasy is crucial, as it is a fantasy that disguises the impossibility of any closed system. Fantasy emerges as a support exactly in the place where the incompleteness of reality becomes evident and it is through fantasy that we experience our world as 'a wholly consistent and transparently meaningful order'. Hence we can say that fantasy structures our social relations. On the one hand, fantasy has a stabilising dimension, 'the dream of the state without disturbances out of reach of human depravity'(Žižek 1996: 24), and on the other, fantasy's destabilising dimension creates images that 'irritate us'. In other words, the obverse of the harmonious community will always produce some disconnected piles of fragments, some stereotypes that try to conceal the lack in 'reality' itself. Clearly, the New

Zealand social imaginary contains a series of constantly repeated traumas: first, that of the indigenous and colonised; second, that of the immigrant, who is separated from his or her imaginary homeland; third, that of 'abandonment' by the 'Mother Country'; and finally, the sense of postcolonial guilt, which is constantly being reframed and rearticulated. All of these compose what Žižek refers to as 'first veil of fantasy'.

In the same way that Laclau and Mouffe critique the classical notion of a holistic society, they criticise the classical notion of the subject as an entity given in advance. They argue that the subject is produced by discursive practices that occupy a series of particular positions that are not fixed in advance, and which change in accordance with the system of equivalences. The subject's relation to the social takes place through various processes of identification, which are only possible because the subject's identity is structured around a lack.[10] The subject, 'as the lack of being', simultaneously demands, and prevents, the closure of identity. In this sense, 'the lack of subject' is constitutive, it constantly generates new identifications. All of these are mis-identifications, in the sense that they hold out a false promise of the subject being 'sutured' into the meaning of the social and forming a stable identity. In summary, Laclau and Mouffe argue that the subject is the lack and constantly tries to fill this lack by adopting one of the various identities available in the social. However, the social, or the symbolic, is itself incomplete and lacking. Furthermore, the fact that identity is never complete and that there is something in the subject that resists full identification, is what makes difference possible (Žižek 1994: 62). That is, although the subject will always fail in their attempts to fully identify with their social, or symbolic, sphere, it is this very impossibility that motivates the desire to acquire identity.

It is in this context that I will analyse the different identifications of Maori-Croats. I will examine how they are partially interpellated[11] within the different discursive formations that have operated in New Zealand. Their stories illustrate the overlapping of different discourses, such as race, ethnicity, gender and class, in the production of their identity. Their personal and collective memories are inscribed by these discourses. In other words, they do not reflect a 'pre-given "reality"' (Brah 1996: 11), since what we call reality is always constructed through a discursive field. This does not mean that the material world does not exist. Of course it exists, but the way we see it and interpret it is structured by the particular discursive field we inhabit (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 108).

As Žižek has demonstrated, the construction of reality through the discursive field would not be possible without the intervention of the element of fantasy. For example, as mentioned earlier, Te Rangihiroa Park in Henderson is dedicated to the relationship between Maori and Croats. This site is interpreted in different ways by different groups. For most Maori and Croatian descendants, the park acknowledges the 'compatibility' between Maori and Croats. For the members of the Croatian Cultural Society in Henderson, the site represents much more than the Croatian relationship with Maori: it is a symbol of the establishment of the Croatian community in New Zealand, of hard work and the beginning of the winemaking industry. The Croatian Cultural Society also sees the park as

recognising the fact that it is the main representative of Croats in Auckland.[12]

For Maori from the Waipareira Trust in Henderson,[13] Te Rangihiroa Park also symbolises much more than the close relationship between Maori and Croats on the gumfields. For them, it recognises Maori struggle in New Zealand and celebrates Sir Peter Buck, one of the first highly educated Maori, and the role he played at the beginning of the twentieth century. However, in official discourse, the park does not celebrate struggle, but the possibility of different groups of people peacefully coexisting in New Zealand. During the 1970s, the park was called Glen Eden Rd Reserve. During the 1980s, when biculturalism was defined in official government policy as 'a fundamental characteristic of New Zealand's heritage and identity', the park was renamed Te Rangihiroa Park. In the late 1990s, with the celebration of cultural diversity – 'we are One nation, two peoples and many cultures' – half of the park was dedicated to Maori and the other half to Croatian immigrants to New Zealand. For some other groups, the park may represent completely different values. For those who live nearby, it might represent just a nice place to rest, with an excellent playground for children. For members of the Green Party, it might represent a viable ecosystem, as in 1969 part of the park was used for the city depot. In any case, it is clear that all of these discourses are social constructions and the way subjects identify with the different subject positions provided by a field of discursivity is always very complex.

OUTLINE

This book consists of two parts. In Part One, I explore identity politics in colonial New Zealand. First, I analyse colonialism within a broader theoretical context. I then concentrate on the work of Michel Foucault, which I think can offer valuable insights into the nature of the power relations that operated in colonial New Zealand.

In Chapter One, I discuss the ways in which indigenous people were subjected to various disciplinary and regulatory techniques and how their movement to the gumfields of the Far North was part of these processes. Following this, I look at the ways disciplinary techniques worked through different institutions, such as the Native Land Court and Native Schools, and how the work of these institutions was articulated with the wider project of constructing New Zealand identity.

In Chapter Two, I concentrate on the ways Croats, as non-British migrants, were positioned in colonial New Zealand. First, I focus on their emigration from Dalmatia to New Zealand, their experience of arrival and their working conditions on the gumfields. I then move on to examine how the 'Dalmatians' came under the focus of the British gumdiggers and, consequently, of the Government, and how this resulted in the formation of the Commission of Inquiry into the Kauri Gum Industry. I finish the chapter with an analysis of the ways Dalmatians were positioned during World War I. The main argument that runs through these two chapters is that the construction of identities, dominant and dominated, must be analysed in the context of the complex interplay of power relations in colonial New Zealand.

Above: In 1914, Šimun Mijo Ujdur, a Croatian from Gradac, established Birdwood Vineyards, one of the biggest in the country, on the site where Te Rangihiroa Park is located today in Henderson, West Auckland. The park is dedicated to the relationship between Maori and Croats. Šimun Ujdur Collection.

Left: Šimun Mijo Ujdur. Šimun Ujdur Collection.

Below: Dame Mira Szaszy next to the Tarara monument at Te Rangihiroa Park. Mira Szaszy Collection

In Part Two, I examine the role of collective and individual memory in producing the identity of Maori and Croats and their descendants. In Chapter Three, I analyse Maori and Croatian memories of the gumfields and in what ways the gumfields became a new home for some gumdiggers. I argue that, as a result of the impact of various discourses, both groups became dislocated and that it is precisely this feeling of being 'out of place' which formed the basis for their relationship.

In Chapter Four, I examine some of the official statements that describe the Maori-Croatian relationship on the gumfields as 'sympathetic' and 'harmonious'. I also look at a number of stories, told by Maori-Croatian descendants, that stress that the similarity between the Maori and Croatian cultures is the main reason for their contact. I challenge these views, and argue that what is seen as similarity is linked with the way in which the regime of power operated to position these two groups in relation to each other.

In Chapter Five, I concentrate on two life-stories told by Maori-Croatian women who share similar backgrounds but identify themselves in culturally different ways and, as a result, have had different experiences of New Zealand 'reality'. I analyse how, in both cases, the different discourses of race, ethnicity, class and gender overlap in the production of their identities.

In Chapter Six, I aim to show how memories on the gumfields are incorporated into the collective memories of different groups and how talking about life on the gumfields becomes a euphemistic way of talking about identity. I analyse the story of the kauri gum industry as told in three different museums. Using Nora's (1996) concept of 'sites of memory', I classify the Matakohe Kauri Museum, which tells the official story of the kauri gum industry, as a dominant site of memory, and the Jurlina and Yelash Gumfields Museums, which tell the story of Croatian and Maori gumdiggers, as dominated sites. I argue that, even though these sites look completely different, a parallel reading reveals many similarities between them.

Finally, in Chapter Seven I consider how political changes in contemporary New Zealand reflect on Maori-Croatian identity. The concept of 'biculturalism' and the celebration of difference are highly contested themes in present-day New Zealand.[14] Given this, in the first part of the chapter I outline the representation of 'difference' in the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. I then analyse how discourses that represent New Zealand as a country where the harmonious co-existence of different groups of people is possible are reflected in popular culture, namely in the film *Broken English,* a love story between a Croatian woman and a Maori man. I argue that in all of these narratives the trauma of the colonial past is hidden. While Te Papa reconfigures New Zealand history so that national identity becomes a domain of fun culture, and replaces the antagonisms of the past with a celebration of cultural difference, *Broken English* displaces the traumatic events of the past and projects them onto the figure of an imported Other. Finally, I explore how these new discourses and practices reflect on the ways Maori and Croats represent themselves and how they offer their cultural difference for the 'multicultural Western consumer'.

Part One

The Identity Politics of Colonial New Zealand

Chapter One

'Teach the body' – Maori in Colonial New Zealand

Colonial encounters between Europeans and Maori have been discussed by a number of scholars (Wright 1959; Metge 1971; Ward 1973; Owens 1974, 1992; Adams 1977; Salmond 1991, 1997; Sorrenson 1992; Belich 1996; Ballara 1998; Webster 1998; Binney 1990a), but to what degree these encounters transformed both the colonising and the colonised subjects is still a matter of debate. Some scholars have argued that colonialism was fatal for the indigenous population, in so far as it destroyed traditional Maori values. Others try to portray Maori culture as if it somehow survived the colonial encounter untouched and unchanged. In order to escape this dichotomy, in this study I will focus on the manner in which colonial encounters transformed both colonisers and colonised. On the one hand, this transformation was shaped by the colonisers' varying attempts to dominate the colonised. On the other, it was shaped by Maori resistance to and accommodation of the new regulations. The conditions of the transformation of Maori and European cultures in colonial New Zealand were not equal, given that they relied on relationships of power. However, it would be wrong to assume that for either group it was possible to 'survive' their encounter without cultural change.

In the sections that follow, my primary concern is to consider the new structures of meaning and politics of identity that emerged in colonial New Zealand at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. What was crucial at that time was the creation of what Foucault (1977) would refer to as a society of normalisation characterised by the passage from 'disciplinary power' to 'bio-power'. Foucault (1977) argues that the disciplinary society is one that is grounded in the idea of normality. Analysing the pattern of the Enlightenment, he describes 'modern man' as being born in a welter of regulations, under constant pressure and bombarded with almost invisible particles of power, which he dubbed 'a micro-physics of power'. And all of this is enabled by the special knowledge of the body, a knowledge which perfidiously constructed its object for the first time – the human – situated between scientific description and strategies of control. For Foucault, knowledge and power are mutually creative, mutually constitutive, in short they are self-constitutive. This power/knowledge of the body was manufactured in the machinery of the Enlightenment, orchestrated in the hidden life of the 'enlightened society': in barracks, prisons, schools and hospitals. All this machinery was geared to produce docile bodies – bodies that could be used, transformed, subjected, improved and normalised.

Producing docile bodies correlates to the first phase of capitalist production. The insertion of bodies into factories and other methods of industrial production is just a transition towards the next phase, towards the combination of 'disciplinary power' with 'regularisation'. Foucault (1998:139) argues that it was in the nineteenth century that these two poles of power combined to form what he termed 'bio-power'. Bio-power is internal power, it regulates social life from within its own body, every individual reactivates it. No one can escape the exercise of bio-power, it works on the dominated but also on the dominant as well. Instead of repressing differences, instead of total exclusion, bio-power optimises differences and through the politics of inclusion, disciplines them.

In a manner similar to Foucault's analysis of 'a society of normalisation', a society where the norm of discipline and the norm of regularisation intersect, my concern is to unpack how the colonial project in New Zealand was socially transformative, showing how certain regulations imposed by the colonial government interacted and were articulated in the wider project of identity formation. I do not engage in a detailed analysis of colonial society; instead I examine the development of some colonial institutions in the nineteenth century, such as the Native Land Court and Native Schools, which served a double purpose: of repression or exclusion on the one hand and disciplined inclusion on the other. I examine the work of these institutions and the interplay of the different discourses and practices in connection with the movement of some Maori families to the gumfields of the Far North.

THE NATIVE LAND COURT

The Native Land Court was formed in 1862 and started to operate in 1865. Its main purpose was to facilitate faster sales of indigenous land to European settlers. The land sale system in New Zealand started in 1840, after the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, and it clearly brought changes into the Maori way of life. From the moment contact with Europeans began,[1] even before the signing of the Treaty, Maori society had begun to change: sexual interaction between Maori and Europeans was common, some Maori women married European traders, many Maori worked as seamen, some travelled and worked overseas, new cultural artefacts and religious concepts were introduced, and many learned to read and write in mission schools (Ballara 1998; Stokes 1997).

After the signing of the Treaty, the Crown recognised Maori ownership of land and obtained an exclusive right to purchase land from Maori for resale to European settlers. Salmond argues that both sides abused the land sale system:

> In Maori terms land was inalienable, taken only by conquest and occasionally transferred by gift; and it was group property, held in trust by the chiefs. The chiefs had no traditional right of disposal, since this like everything else operated by consensus, nor was there any precedent for sale. In their hunger for European goods, especially muskets, unscrupulous chiefs sold off land without consulting their people, or even land to which they had no claims at all. In their greed for land, settlers did not always examine the chief's credentials carefully, and paid the lowest possible prices. (Salmond 1994: 24)

Despite such dubious practices, the land sale system imposed a cash economy on traditional Maori society. Even though most Maori continued to work and live in groups based on descent,[2] in this new situation chiefs had to learn how to accumulate funds from land sales, land lease and trade, and how to distribute these funds to meet the new needs of their people (Petrie 1998). In some cases, they accumulated money to build churches, trading ships and flour mills.

Many Maori groups were involved in agricultural production for the Pakeha market. According to Belich (1996), the desire to interact economically with neighbouring settlers was a key incentive for land sales. New economic opportunities caused some migrations and formations of new groups that used 'their profits to make more money for themselves, rather than for their kin group' (Belich 1996: 213). But by the 1850s, the number of Europeans increased sharply and European farmers began to take over agricultural production. The demand for land increased so rapidly that some Maori chiefs started to resist further sales (Binney 1990: 95).

In 1858, a number of Maori tribes in the North Island elected a Maori King, as an attempt to unite into an 'anti-land-selling confederation' (Sorrenson 1992: 153). Soon after the King Movement was established, wars between Maori and Pakeha began. As Sorrenson has put it, 'land had become the focus of economic and political confrontation' (Sorrenson 1992: 148). The wars of the 1860s touched the lives of all Maori in New Zealand, not just those involved in the fighting but also those who were neutral or who actively supported Europeans. After the wars, large tracts of Maori land were confiscated. Some tribes lost virtually all their most productive land as European settlers, often protected by military settlers and the police, moved further into the interior of the North Island (Sorrenson 1992: 159). It was during this time that the Native Land Court started to operate. Created by 'a piece of legalisation that was itself an act of war .... The court become known to Maori simply as the Land Taking Court' (Binney 1990: 143).

The main purpose of the Native Land Court was not just to break Maori resistance to land sales. It was also instrumental in the destruction of the Maori communal system and in the imposition of the European work ethic on the Maori population. The Court introduced sales under individualised titles to land. It was possible for any Maori to bring tribal land before the court to establish a collective title and nominate ownership of a specific block. This new law opened the way for many Maori to sell land and use the money for private, rather than communal, purposes. At the same time, European settlers were able to manipulate Maori and buy land for little money (Binney 1990: 143). In short, through the work of the Court a new 'system of control' emerged, in which the small details of everyday life of Maori entered the web of the legal system. Everything counted to prove ownership of the land, everything was recorded carefully for different claims. Oral histories, even 'a stone marking the burial place of the *pito* (navel cord) of a child was, for example, accepted as vital evidence of a family's relationship with the land' (Binney 1990: 143).

As Foucault argues, documentation is an essential component of the growth of power. The first official lists of tribes were created in 1862.[3] These lists were based on a model developed prior to the signing of the Treaty, that divided Maori into fixed large tribes or iwi, and subdivided into smaller groups or hapu. As a result, the various small groups that had been displaced by war or the changing economy were completely ignored The problem was the Native Land Court judges insisted that all Maori must identify the large tribe they belonged to. If some claimed they belonged to more than one iwi, this damaged their credibility for being listed as entitled to land (Ballara 1998). Accordingly, identifying with those larger groups recognised by the government became paramount.

At the same time, the confiscation and sale of land pauperised and depleted the Maori population. The loss of the most fertile land in the Waikato and Bay of Plenty brought about the resettlement of many families. Gradually, through seasonal farming work, they were forced to fit into the colonial farming economy. A great number of Maori took individual work opportunities. Cut off from their kin groups they became 'a "reserve army" of labour at the disposal of the Pakeha economy' (Belich 1996: 213). Although some families established their own farms, they were deprived of the financial help available to Pakeha farmers. Those forced to leave their land settled in the Maori communities closest to their new job. Many Maori families travelled north and began digging kauri gum.

By the 1880s Maori, who were at the time thought to be near extinction, comprised only 8.6 per cent of the New Zealand population (Sorrenson 1992: 165).[4] Due to their low standard of living, they were prone to diseases such as influenza, smallpox, whooping cough and measles. These were often fatal, as Maori had no immunity to them. The sharp decline of the Maori population was perceived as the 'natural order of things' by British colonisers.[5] From the beginning of colonisation, Maori had been ranked 'higher than most other "savages"', on account of their agricultural and artistic skills (Sorrenson 1975: 97). It was argued that they had the capacity to be civilised through their contact with the 'superior' European race. But when, in the middle of the nineteenth century, the Maori population started to decline, they were seen by some Europeans as a 'dying race':

> As the Pakeha rat drove out the Maori rat, as the introduced grasses drove out the Maori fern, so will the Maori die out before the white man. (Common saying, quoted in Firth 1959: 456)

> The English fly is the best possible fly of the whole world, and will naturally beat down and exterminate, or else starve out, the merely provincial Maori fly … Natural selection is being conducted by nature in New Zealand on a grander scale than any we have contemplated, for the object of it here is man. (Charles Wentworth Dilke, quoted in Wevers 2002: 139)

Apart from suggestions that the best way to deal with the decrease of the Maori population was 'to let [them] gradually retire before the settlers, and

ultimately become extinct', some writers at the time believed that only those Maori who could change their customs and behaviour or who could adopt European values would survive the impact of the European race.

> It is with the wild races of human beings as with wild animals, and birds and trees and plants. Those only will survive who can domesticate themselves into servants of the modern forms of social development … . (James Anthony Froude, quoted in Wevers 2002: 148)

Michael King (1992: 285) argues that, because of all of these problems at the end of the nineteenth century, many Maori avoided interaction with Pakeha and lived isolated in rural communities. This isolation helped them to preserve some traditional cultural values and survive the destructive impact of Pakeha culture. Like King, James Belich argues that while Maori interacted economically and technologically with Europeans, this participation in the European economy did not completely destroy traditional culture and tribally organised groups. He suggests that while 'Maori cultural autonomy and identity survived the impact of Europe; Maori political independence did not' (Belich 1996: 270). According to Belich, 'as long as work was done seasonally … by tribally organised groups, and with the proceeds used to some extent for tribal ends (it) did not indicate detribalisation or assimilation' (Belich 1996: 269–70). From this perspective, culture is seen as somehow divided from economics and politics. By contrast, Steven Webster (1998: 76) contends that economic changes introduced by Europeans prior to the 1840s had already changed the Maori traditional way of life. Arguing from a Marxist perspective, he criticises scholars who stress cultural or racial differences as the main reason for the division between Maori and Pakeha in colonial New Zealand. For example, Webster considers the concept of 'two worlds', which Michael King introduced to describe the differences between Maori and Pakeha ways of life at the end of the nineteenth century, to essentialise the 'difference between Maori and European cultures' (Webster 1998: 77). He states that Maori and Pakeha clearly lived in 'one world' – the world of capitalist production that pauperised and depleted the Maori population. For Webster, colonisation had the effect of turning Maori into the working class.[6]

I would agree with this critique, if colonialism was solely about economic domination and the implementation of capitalism. However, colonial power was exercised in and through not only economic but also political and cultural practices. Accordingly, New Zealand colonial society cannot be understood in terms of either a cultural or a class perspective. As Webster argues, social research is always in danger of essentialising culture. However, he himself falls into economic reductionism by portraying the colonial situation as a phenomenon that was merely superstructural to local capitalism. Although he warns us against the essentialism and the ahistoric conception of Maori culture that the 'two worlds' model presupposes, he in turn essentialises class struggle. He goes so far as to argue that since the beginning of colonisation all struggles have been class struggles. Hence, he believes there are 'authentic' Maori class

interests in contemporary New Zealand which he wants to help strengthen, along with 'those of Maori committed to changing this society for the better' (Webster 1998: 258).[7]

However, any discussion about colonisation and the transformations it brought about must be understood within the context of power relations. Maori culture or identity (as well as Pakeha culture and identity) are not essentialist categories, both are inscribed within different discursive processes in a colonial situation. As Thomas argues, colonial projects are culturally and strategically complex:

> The actors no doubt have intentions, aims and aspirations, but this presupposes a particular imagination of the social situation, with its history and projected future, and a diagnosis of what is lacking, that can be rectified by intervention, by conservation, by bullets or by welfare. This imagination exists in relation to something to be acted upon – an indigenous population, a subordinate class, a topographic space – and in tension with competing colonial projects, yet is also a self-fashioning exercise, that makes the maker as much as it does the made. And projects are of course often projected rather than realised; because of their confrontations with indigenous interests … and their internal inconsistencies. (Thomas1996: 106)

THE NATIVE SCHOOLS

The first Native Schools were opened in 1867, with the purpose of improving and regulating the Maori way of life and hence saving Maori from their fate of extinction (Simon 1998). However, the main concern of the schools was not just to 'save' Maori, but to change their behaviour, to 'fix' what was seen as a shortcoming in their way of life. The *Manual for Use in Native Schools* may teach us a lot about the circulation of power and the flourishing disciplinary techniques of the time. By 1907 there were ninety-seven Native Schools in New Zealand (Simon 1998: 18). Unlike the early mission schools, where literacy in Maori was taught, all classes in Native Schools were conducted in English. As a result, the use of Maori as an everyday language declined. For a long time, children were punished for speaking Maori at school (Salmond 1994). In addition, they were taught that the only possible way to survive was by adopting the Pakeha way of life or, to be more precise, the 'best' of the Pakeha way of life. The following extract is from the *Manual for Use in Native Schools* published by James Pope, Inspector of Native Schools, in 1884:

> When two different races of men have to live together, the race that, through any cause, is more ignorant, weaker in numbers, and poorer than the other must learn the good customs of the stronger people or else it is sure to die out …. Now, here in New Zealand there are two races – the Pakeha and the Maori ….We have to speak about the pakehas. These have a great many good points. They know a great deal; they work very hard; they love their wives and children, and take great trouble to feed them well and clothe them decently; they take good care to send their children to schools; they eat good food; they wear warm

> clothes; they live in good houses; they make good laws … and they obey these laws very well …. But some of them do very bad [things]. They drink too much; they smoke too much; they quarrel and fight; they are unkind …. Where the Maoris adopt these bad customs and do not take to the good ones, but keep to the old Maori ways, the bad customs make them die out …. It is not only in New Zealand that this sort of thing happens …. Eighty years ago there were many thousands of natives in Tasmania; now there is not a single one – all have died! These people learned some of the bad ways of the whites, but none of the good ones. The Tasmanians are gone! …. The Red Indians, too, learnt to drink rum and to do wrong like the whites, but they would never become tame and take care of themselves as whites do, so they died out as fast as the white people settled near where they lived. But now it is said that the heart of the Indian has changed; he is taking to the good ways of the white people … well, the Indian has left off dying out; he means to live. The Negroes were taken from their own country to America to be slaves to the Americans, and, though they were often badly treated by their masters, yet they did not die out. Just because they were slaves they were prevented from doing things that have caused other races to decay. They could not be lazy; they were made to work. … So, in spite of hardship they had passed through, the Negroes lived and throve …. What you have just read should teach you that, if the Maoris will take to the best European customs, they will live and do very well … but, if the Maori keeps to his own old ways, and adds to them the worst habits of the worst pakehas, he will be sure to die out … . (Pope 1884: 31–4)

This manual does not propagate the 'exclusion' of the 'inferior race'. On the contrary, it allows 'two different races to live together'. However, this puts both people under threat – the colonisers face the danger of becoming wild and immoral, and the colonised, through their inclination to adopt 'the bad things' from the 'superior' race, face the threat of extinction. What is required is the control of both.

The most significant terms in Pope's text for Maori are 'die out' and 'dying race'. Of course, the threat of disease for Maori was real, but as soon as the word enters the text, its meaning shifts: it patronises the indigenous people by subtly erasing the differences between two 'races'. There has long been a connection between colonialism and disease. The fact that the indigenous population was seen as disease-ridden was itself considered justification for the colonial project. Whereas, on the one hand, disease signified the physical and moral corruption of a colonised people who lacked civilisation, on the other hand it underlined the superiority and civilised behaviour of the coloniser. Therefore, according to the manual, natives all around the world die out because of their moral weakness. Only 'Negroes', as slaves, learned something from the superior civilisation, thus establishing an example for Maori – who might not die out if they adopt 'the best European customs'. Of course this implies, either explicitly or implicitly, a command to erase their own customs.

The question arises, how does one learn to 'beat' disease? The *Manual for Use in Native Schools* has the answers. There are many different ways, one of which is to recognise the importance of 'order and tidiness, cleanliness in body and mind, self-control and obedience' (Simon 1998: 71). Native school pupils had to work very hard: they cleaned toilets and classrooms, collected firewood, and they often had to perform military drill exercises, accompanied by music and flag-raising ceremonies. In his manual, James Pope announced:

> At first sight we might conclude that schools' education has nothing to do with health; but it really has a very great deal to do with it. When we talk about health we should remember that there is something besides the body to be thought of; there is the mind … If we allow our bodies to be idle … our bodies soon get ill and weak … and the mind would be ill too. We should become dull, stupid, and sad … we should become insane …. The good that comes to the body through the work done by the mind may be greatly added to if we teach the body as well as the mind. This seems a strange saying, does it not? 'Teach the body!' you will say; 'How can we teach the body?' In very many ways. Singing … swimming … but the best of all things for teaching the body are drill and gymnastic exercises. (Pope 1884: 113–18)

Disease, body, mind – all of these began to be integrated into a central problem of society – the obsessive production of 'good' or 'normal' citizens. Rules were imposed everywhere. Many aspects of the Maori way of life were criticised. One of these was hui, the Maori political as well as social gathering. Hui were arranged by local Maori communities and sometimes 'hundreds or even thousands of visitors were accommodated and fed throughout their stay' (Salmond 1994: 1). Some Maori worked very hard in seasonal work for half of the year in order to save enough money to attend hui. But this was not seen as a proper way of doing things. Leisure time was also prescribed by the government, hence children in the Native Schools had to learn how to have a 'real rest':

> It is a very good thing for people to meet and talk over the matters of importance … It is well that people should celebrate the opening of churches and meeting houses … when young people are married, too, it is good for their friends to assemble and rejoice with them …. It is also a good thing that people should, when holidays come round, rest from their work …. But rest … must be real rest … it must be harmless, healthy rest. To ride fast for fifty miles to a hui, then to eat as much as you possibly can, and to drink rum or beer till you are drunk or nearly mad, is not rest at all …. Let us try to describe something that would give real rest. Did you ever hear of picnic? Well, you shall do so now. Europeans say to themselves: 'This is Easter (or Christmas); let us take our wives and children for a picnic.' … The picnic and the tea-meeting give far more real pleasure than the Maori hui does, and no pain at all – only health, strength and peace. (Pope 1884: 97–102)

It is important to note that a discourse about sexuality also operated in the Native Schools. Foucault (1998) argues that the discourse of sexuality articulates

Physical education class outside Te Kao School, *c.* 1910. Photographed by Mr Banks of Te Kao School. ATL 1/4-015202-F

a form of racism through its evocation of miscegenation. Children were taught how to control their sexuality and the vitality of the body: sex became a domain of control. Those children who were of 'mixed blood' or 'half-caste' were placed under constant surveillance. Of course, all children were under surveillance, but 'mixed-race' children got special attention. Since Pakeha children sometimes attended Native Schools if other schools were not available in their district, all pupils were classified according to race. 'Mixed-race' pupils were further divided into those 'living as Maoris', which was seen as inappropriate or lacking the morality of Europeans, and those 'living as Europeans', which meant behaving in a suitable, civilised way. In general, teachers were taught how to write journals and logbooks, how to develop systems of marking and classifying, how to keep a record of each pupil, how to record any kind of 'deviation', and at the same time, to 'be on their guard against allowing their own habits to degenerate under the influence of surrounding negligence' (*Directions for Teachers of Native Schools* 1880). Their role was very clear. They were expected to not only impose European values on pupils and to be 'models of a "civilised" way of living' (Simon 1998: 56), but also to resist the constant threat of devolving into savagery.[8] They had to observe and record each child's 'transformation' into a civilised, 'normalised' citizen of the Empire. As Pope wrote:

> Nearly all pakehas … notice that in a village where there is a good Native school the children look stronger, better, and happier than those belonging to villages where there is none; some even say that their parents look better, too. If this is so, it must be that the parents learn something from their children, or, perhaps from the teacher and his wife. (Pope 1884: 119)

It is precisely at this point that the complexity of colonial power emerges. Maori children were subjected to European values and discipline in Native Schools but, more importantly, at the same time they became 'the vehicle for transmitting a wider power' (Foucault 1980: 72). Parents 'learned' from their children and often demanded that their children use only the English language and not Maori. This was because English was considered to be 'the language for successful adjustment to the European world' (Salmond 1994: 27). As Foucault (1980) argues, power is widely exercised, passes through all possible channels and makes each individual act accordingly. With their adjustment to the European world, Maori did more than learn 'suitable behaviour', they became part of the process that was aimed at making the Empire immortal.

But this process was never smooth and nor did it always work according to plan. Due to the way the Maori population reacted to them, the efficacy of disciplining techniques varied enormously in different parts of New Zealand. For example, while many Maori parents insisted that their children use only English, others demanded that their children were educated in both English and Maori. Whina Cooper, one of the great Maori leaders, says that her father insisted on her having a Maori education as well as go to the Native School and learn English and the Pakeha way of life. She recalls that he had three reasons for sending her to the Native School. The first was that she needed to be able to deal properly with Pakeha in order to keep the land. The second was to learn how to survive in the Pakeha world: 'In Pakeha world, it will be only the Pakeha and those who understand the Pakeha that will be able to make money and keep it. See how a coin is round? That's so it can fall through the holes in the Maori pockets and roll away from them' (King 1982: 46). The third reason was his 'hunger' for news and wider knowledge. He, like many Maori at that time, was able to read and write in Maori due to the early missionary schools, but could not read or write in English:

> When Whina came home from school, her father would ask her what was happening in the outside world. And when the pink-covered *Auckland Weekly News* arrived, she was expected to read it to him .... 'He wanted to know everything that was going on – about wars, elections, what the Government was doing, earthquakes, everything.' (King 1983: 47)

One of the most difficult tasks of colonial society, or of any 'society of control', is to produce compliant subjects. And, as Foucault argues, the most powerful form of control is to have individuals control themselves. The process of subjection is complicated, and there were many different ways in which Maori responded to the disciplining techniques. However, it is clear that all the conditions which Foucault (1977) considered necessary for maintaining a disciplined society were more or less operating through the Native Schools. At the micro-level, disciplinary technologies operated through the likes of body-building exercises, mind-building exercises, a strict timetable, control of sexuality and gender division. At the same time, these micro-formations were inserted back into society at the macro-level. By imposing a disciplinary regime

Teacher, outside with a blackboard, taking a geography class *c.* 1910. Northwood Studio. ATL PA1-0-394-05

on native subjects, colonial society could be incorporated into the large-scale policies of the British Empire. Maori children and their parents were learning not only the abstractions of trade, money and timetables but also the imaginary space of the Empire.

This process was very slow; the optimistic slogan from the Native Schools' text book, 'teach the body', spread in an interactive way into all aspects of life. In one of his reports to the government Pope says:

> It is useless to expect that the Maori schools will, in a few years, change the character of a whole race to such an extent that its members will be prepared to abandon all their old habits, traditions, prejudices, and modes of living. Nor is it at all plain that it is desirable that such an utter change should be brought about hastily, even if the thing were possible. Past experience seems to show that uncivilised peoples cannot, without imminent risk of extermination, give up their old ways of life all at once and adopt others, for which they can be fitted only by slow and gradual changes in the conditions, subjective, and objective, under which they exist. (*AJHR* 1881, E-2: ii)

It is clear then, that the main purpose of the Native Schools was to change the character of Maori, to discipline them and to control them. In the 1880s, a few schools pioneered Maori secondary schooling. Although it was generally believed that Maori should be trained for practical work, a few individuals managed to get university degrees and enter the professions. By the early 1900s, some who received their education at Te Aute College formed the Young Maori Party and 'attempted to combine the technology, skills and ideas

of the Pakeha world with aspects of traditional Maori life .... The most well known were: Apirana Ngata, Te Rangi Hiroa, Maui Pomare ... ' (Barrington and Beaglehole 1974). Referring to his education, Apirana Ngata, who in 1905 entered Parliament and served there for almost forty years, said:

> Once I was committed to the system of education ... there seemed no disposition to look back. More; there was an impatience with all that the Maori village life implied. My father's tentative efforts to interest me in the contents of that life met with no response. His words came in at one ear and out the other without leaving an abiding impression on the mind or memory. The shutters were always put up against the Maori world. (Barrington and Beaglehole 1974)

In 1906, Dr Maui Pomare wrote:

> Like an imprisoned bird of the forest, he [Maori] pines for the liberty and freedom of his alpine woods. This was a warrior race, used to fighting and liberty or to death. All this has gone. Fighting is no more. There is no alternative but to become Pakeha. Was not this saying uttered by the mouth of a dying chief many generations ago: *Kei muri i te awa kapara he tangata ke, mana te ao, he ma.* (Shadowed behind the tattooed face, a stranger stands, he who owns the earth and he is white). (Quoted in Smith and Callan 1999: 23)

The disciplining techniques introduced through the work of the Native Land Court and Native Land Schools had a broad impact on Maori life. In the next section, I analyse these effects on the life of Maori working in kauri gumfields, where many Maori families went to try to earn a little money in order to survive. Ironically, their way of life on the gumfields was seen as disordered, and in need of modification and civilisation.

'Teach the body' – The Kauri Gum Industry

Kauri gum is the fossilised resin of the massive kauri trees that once formed vast forests over the northern half of the North Island of New Zealand. By 1805, Europeans had realised the commercial possibilities of kauri gum. In 1815 traders started to ship kauri gum to Australia, Britain and America but, as Smith has put it, they 'asserted that they did not know (nor particularly cared) for what purpose the commodity was desired [sic]' (Smith 1952: 42). The gum, which the Maori called kapia, was traditionally used for chewing, tattooing, to light fires, as a torch and for torture (Reed 1948: 63–6). Sometimes Maori used kapia for pest control in the kumara beds, 'where it was used to eradicate caterpillars' (Fordyce 1998: 121). By the 1840s, it was known that kauri gum could be used for oil varnishes.

In the early years, gum was easily found on or near the surface of the earth. As this surface gum became increasingly scarce, workers were forced to dig for it. Usually, diggers used a 'gum spear' to probe the ground and locate the gum. Firth points out that 'for approximately the first twenty years ... [gumdigging] was restricted almost solely to the Maoris, and the Europeans regarded it as an

From top:

Northland Forest Park, Kauri Tree called 'Four Sisters'.

Kauri gum, in the Far North Regional Museum, Kaitaia.

Kauri gum samples, in The Jurlina Family's Gumstore.

employment worthy only of natives' (Firth 1922: 15). Maori in the Far North, who traditionally depended upon cultivation of the land, worked as gumdiggers when their crops failed. Sometimes, Maori from other parts of New Zealand travelled north to earn and save some money, for building churches or, as the Arawa people did, for financing 'a fleet of small cutters and schooners which in turn facilitated a prosperous trade between Auckland and East Coast ports' (Petrie 1999: 207).

During the 1860s, the kauri gum market became well established in the American and British markets, and European immigrants joined Maori in collecting gum. The gumfields attracted individuals from all around the world. In 1882, W.D. Hay in his book *Brighter Britain: or Settler and Maori in Northern New Zealand*, tried to describe people who worked as gumdiggers:

> Among them one may come across men who are graduates of universities. One may find members of noble houses, representatives of historic names … clerks, accountants, secretaries, and shop men swell the ranks …. There are guileless peasants, natives of Norfolk or Devon, France, or Germany … there are runaway sailors, ex-convicts, thinkers, tailors … negroes, Kanakas, Maoris, Chinamen; a collection of gentlemen educated to every pursuit under the sun. (Quoted in Smith 1952: 57)

Most gumfields were on Crown land, but some were on Maori land or on land acquired by settlers. A report presented to Parliament in 1898 showed that the area of Northland gumfields at that time was 814,000 acres: consisting of 435,000 acres of Crown Land, 166,000 acres of Maori land and 213,000 acres of private lands (*AJHR* 1898 H-12: 3). Gumdiggers who worked on Crown-owned gumfields did not have any limitations other than an annual licence fee of five shillings. On private gumfields, contracts between diggers and landowners, or diggers and the companies that leased land for the purpose of extracting gum, were common. For example:

> *Mitchelson Brothers* – No payment for digging. The digger is only a bailee of the gum for the firm until it is delivered at their store. The firm has the right to fix the quality and price of the gum, but is bound to pay the fair and reasonable value. The digger to leave the land on receiving forty-eight hours' notice. Number of diggers, 436, exclusive of Maoris.
>
> *Molesworth and Saies* – No payment for digging. The gum is the property of the firm, and is to be sold to no one else, but the digger is entitled to receive for it the fair market price. Number of diggers, 70, besides 330 Maoris. (*AJHR* 1893 H-24: 11)

Some gumdiggers were self-employed, selling their gum at the nearest store or to gumbuyers who visited the gumfields. Gumdiggers usually lived in camps. As they moved around the various gumfields, these camps developed and declined very quickly. Some camps were very small, but some were large enough to become permanent settlements (Ryburn 2000: 69). Gumdiggers

worked from dawn till dusk. They 'went out with spear, spade and pikau bag, to dig by day and scrape by night, until they would have enough to make it worth a visit from the gum-buyer' (Mitcalfe 1984: 77). Europeans adapted the searching techniques and implements used by Maori. They also adopted the Maori form of shelter, the whare.

During the first phase of the kauri gum industry, when most of the diggers were Maori, the government paid little attention. But after the 1860s, when gumdigging was a well-established industry and attracted many Pakeha, as well as individuals from all around the world, the government became involved. The ideal of colonial New Zealand at that time was to establish a proper settler society, where the development of land was prized as the only possible way to progress the colony. A high value was placed on a stable domestic life, strictly gendered work roles, abstinence from alcohol and so forth. All other activities that escaped this desired 'order of space' were seen as dangerous. The goal was to place, transform and observe each individual, Maori and European, in what was seen as the 'ordered space' of the colony. According to Foucault (1977: 164), the art of the spatial distribution of surveillance is one of the primary means of obtaining a disciplined society. Gumdigging and goldmining were seen as industries that could not produce long-term prosperity. Given the nomadic character of the job, everyone who worked as a gumdigger was under suspicion of being 'wild', 'problematic' and 'undisciplined'.

Pope reported to the government in 1883 that gumdigging was one of the main factors tending 'to retard the progress of Native Schools' and was responsible for the failure to transform Maori from an 'uncivilised' to a 'civilised' mode of life:

> Among the difficulties that prevent the best results from being obtained are those that depend on the ways in which Maoris get their living. In the North of Auckland districts gum-digging is the principal industry on which the Maoris depend for supplying themselves with clothing and such luxuries as they use. In some cases, too, they get part of their supply of food by the same means. Their practice generally is to go to the gum-fields, earn a small amount of money, and then return to their kaingas [villages], where they remain until they are absolutely obliged to go gum-digging again. They may truly be said to live from hand to mouth. This mode of life, of course, prevents them from acquiring habits of steady industry, and from accumulating property. If bad times come the Natives are reduced to a state of semi-starvation, and, generally, they lead hopeless, aimless lives. (*AJHR* 1883, E.-2: 10)

A preoccupation with the Maori inability to understand the value of money or to develop a 'proper' and desired work ethic is also evident in reports from other Native districts. For example, an official working in the Hokianga district in 1880 reported:

> During the year a large number of the people have been engaged in road making for the County Council, and also in digging kauri gum: at the latter occupation

> they have realised large sums of money, a single individual in many instances earning as much as £6 and £8 sterling per week. I am glad to be able to state that drinking has not been nearly so prevalent as formerly, and that their earnings are expended principally in good clothing and other necessary articles, though they are still very reckless and improvident, and do not appear to understand the value of money, or make any kind of provision for the future .... [The] two schools ... are quite deserted, which is in a measure owing to the high rate of kauri gum – nearly every Native, including the women and children being engaged in collecting it. (*AJHR* 1880 G 4: 2–3)

One official criticised Maori for preferring to work as gumdiggers 'rather than working for the neighbouring Pakeha settlers' (*AJHR* 1879 G1: 4). Thus, even though Maori were forced to migrate in order to survive, their work on the gumfields was taken as evidence of their failure to become 'civilised' and to adopt a Pakeha way of life. In contrast, those Maori who managed to survive by cultivating land were praised by officials. For example Judge Clendon, in his 1880 report on Maori in the Kaipara district, is notably impressed with the way Maori cultivated the land, due to the fact they were able to produce more than was necessary for their own consumption (Ryburn 1999: 55).

The standard of living of Maori on the gumfields was also seen to be one of the reasons for population decline. Many officials pointed out the horrifying living conditions of Maori gumdiggers, who often worked in swamps and built their huts in close proximity. There were no toilets, no fresh running water and diseases were spreading. In his 1880 report to the government, the Hokianga District Magistrate states that:

> I cannot report favourably. The health of these people during the past year has been very bad ... if they still persist in living in their present condition, there can be only one future before them – extinction as a people – and that at no very distant period. (*AJHR* 1880 G-4: 2–3)

In his 1883 report as Inspector of Native Schools, Pope suggested that the government assist Maori financially and 'supply a sufficient quantity of seeds, plants, grain, etc.' (*AJHR* 1883, E.-2: 10–11), to enable them to develop a more domestic way of life. He stated that Maori had no capital, as most of their land had been sold for little money and transferred through the land courts to Europeans. Following Pope's report, the government did send some seeds to a few Maori villages. However, they refused to help in any other financial way.[9] Since gumdigging did not require any financial investment, it remained the only way of earning money for many Maori.

On the gumfields, Maori had to work hard in order to earn a living. Despite this, the dominant discourses about their inability to cultivate the land and adopt 'the middle-class English habits of economy, cleanliness, moderation and hard work' (Pope 1884), led to gumdigging being perceived as an easy choice. In this way, gumdigging itself became proof of Maori laziness (see Petrie 1998):

Above: Maori Kauri gum diggers, ready for a day's work, 1914. Northwood Studio. ATL 1/1-009777-G

Right: Liza Tahi, *c.* 1910. Northwood Studio. ATL 1/2-066527-F

> Laziness and want of thrift are the curse of the Maori. They still only cultivate barely sufficient land to provide for their immediate wants … they lack the main incentive to downright industry, i.e., poverty, for they can always command a fair amount of money by spasmodic gum-digging. (*AJHR*, 1891, G-5: 1)

J.S. Clendon, reporting on the Maori way of life in Kaipara, Whangarei and part of Auckland in 1890, wrote:

> From the gum industry they have 'received' a considerable amount of profit, enabling them to live in an easier manner than they would otherwise have done had their means of subsistence been derived solely from their cultivations.

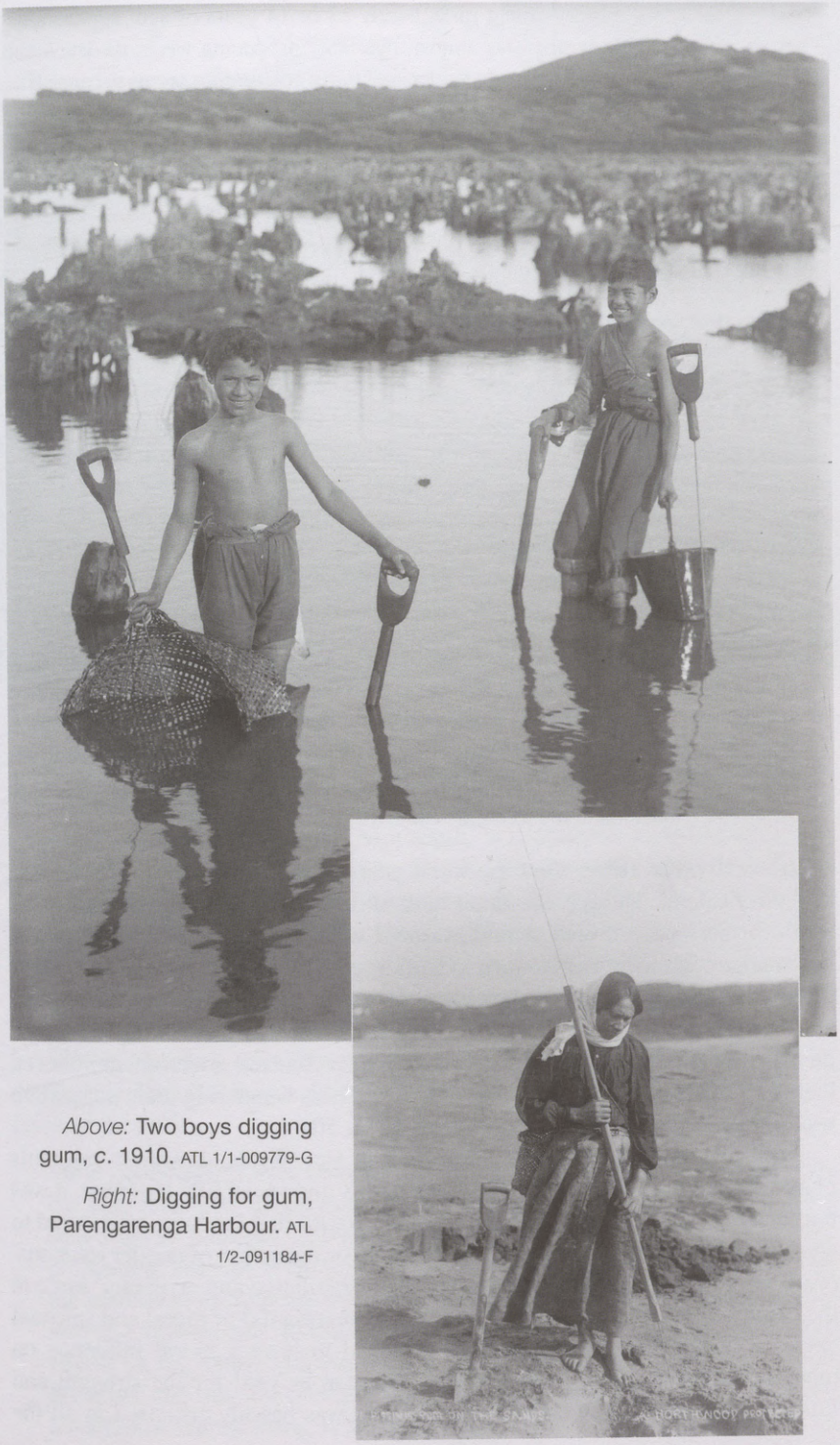
Similarly, an official from Mangonui noticed that:

> there is no improvement to be noticed in their mode of life and in the extent of their cultivations. The ease with which they can earn money by gum-digging of course accounts for this, and the necessarily roving life is directly demoralising. (quoted in Petrie 1999: 206)

The assumption that money earned from gumdigging was 'easy' money that could demoralise Maori was discussed by many writers at the time. Their concern was with the Maori character. An 'Occasional Correspondent', writing from Omapere, Hokianga Heads, says:

> The timber and gum trades have, for the past half century, occupied the time and business energy of the Maori. … For many years past the Maori villages have been deserted during the winter months, and nearly the whole population (males, females, and children) have been working on the gumfields …. This, which is but an unsettled life at its best, has had a pernicious effect upon the character of the Maori. He has contracted vices, the outcome of a superabundance of ready cash, which tend to demoralise, and cause him to regard the higher aspects of civilisation with indifference. Perhaps the worst effect of this vagrant life is its influence on the children. These young ones follow their parents to the gumfields, presumably to assist them in the operation of scraping and minding the whares, but in reality they only run wild on the hill sides, when they ought to be in the schools organised for their benefit by the Government … . (*New Zealand Herald*, 29 November, 1892 p. 3; *Weekly News*, 3 December, 1892 p. 37)

Maori women on the gumfields were also reported to be sexually promiscuous. Some members of 'respectable' Pakeha society claimed that Waikato Maori, instead of working on their own land, 'provide nine tenths of the kauri gumdiggers and two thirds of prostitutes' (Petrie 1999: 211). As prostitution was seen as another reason for the decline of the Maori population, the government decided to put more effort into educating Maori girls to be 'good' mothers and housewives. In 1899 Apirana Ngata, one of the few highly educated and influential Maori wrote:



Above: Two boys digging gum, *c.* 1910. ATL 1/1-009779-G

Right: Digging for gum, Parengarenga Harbour. ATL 1/2-091184-F

> The prostitution of very young girls, barely 13 or 14 years of age, is notorious, the first connection with males almost invariably producing weak, ill-developed infants, that seldom live beyond a tender age. Early prostitution seems to cause later sterility among those who marry and make faithful wives .... Maori womanhood cannot be so base, so lost to all sense of shame – that it would not resent the insult – the stigma of a permanent defilement. The disease is new-induced because in the sudden transition from our darkness to the full light of European day, the bonds of an ancient discipline have been loosened, and we are groping yet for something to replace the old, and are finding it out tardily. (Ngata 1977: 35–7)

To Ngata, the way of life on the gumfields was a negative result of this transition from 'darkness' to the 'full light of European day'.

Notably, it was not only the Maori way of life on gumfields that was criticised by the government. Despite the fact the country was celebrated as a working paradise, where everyone who wanted to work hard could earn enough to buy land and build a home, gumdiggers as a class were not respected in New Zealand (Bassett 1990: 170). Any person who moved to the gumfields was held in general contempt and considered to have slipped to the bottom of the economic and social ladder. It was believed that the fields attracted the wild, the rowdy and the reckless. In 1884, the United States Consul to New Zealand, G.W. Griffin, wrote in *New Zealand: Her Commerce and Resources*:

> It is generally supposed that a European who resorts to gum-digging is unfitted for any other occupation. He leads a reckless, dare-devil sort of life, away from friends and kindred, and from the restraints of civilisation. All the finer feelings of his nature become blunted, and he falls to a lower depth than the savages with whom he makes his home. (Griffin 1884: 123)

Ironically, the 1880s were the worst years of a long economic depression in New Zealand. During this time, both skilled workers from the cities and small farmers were forced to find seasonal work such as gumdigging. It was not uncommon for farmers to turn to gumdigging as a source of supplementary income. Occasionally gumdiggers were able to save enough money to buy land and become settlers, but most lived in permanent camps, moving from one gumfield to another in search of work. The New Zealand government believed that the fastest way to 'civilise and settle down' this wandering male population was simply 'to marry them off' (Phillips 1987: 50).

From the earliest years of colonisation in New Zealand, women migrants played an integral role in stabilising both family and social life. However, it was not 'until the last decades of the nineteenth century that the State intervened to control and define the family and a particular configuration of gender relations' (Park 1991: 28). Women were seen as both a 'stabilising and civilising' force in the community, in so far as they acted as 'the guardian[s] of moral and spiritual values' (Park 1991: 29). They were expected to have a moral influence on men and children. Proper motherhood was seen as vital for the strength and future of the nation. Accordingly, prostitution was harshly criticised in all the

Gumdigging village, *c.* 1910. ATL 1/1-006280-G

newspapers. The fight against the unmarried wandering male population resulted in Parliament passing bills encouraging them to embrace the domestic life that a capitalist economy demanded. As a result, 'a crucial moral distinction based on economic reasoning' emerged between 'the itinerant males who carried with them dissolute habits and outdated economic traditions' and 'the settlers, men who acquired land, resided in one place and consequently adopted a new ethic of savings and hard work' (Phillips 1987: 50). In the 1890s, some politicians went so far as to suggest penal detention for all men who had no established residence or visible means of support.

William Satchell, who moved to the Far North gumfields in1886, describes the segregation of different groups of people on the gumfields in his novel *The Land of the Lost*:

> Some [gumdiggers] were from the universities of England; some were ignorant but with their wits sharpened to an extraordinary degree by experience. They were from all countries – from Austria in great numbers – and of all trades and professions. The type of the settler who had a wife and family somewhere beyond the confines of the field was also well represented. He was of a tamer species, but also of a stronger and sterner. He worked methodically, with his eye steadfastly riveted on the future; and that future would probably behold him grey-headed but active and rosy, the owner of lands and houses, of cattle and horses, and of a handsome family, living in an earthly paradise, the work of their own hands.

> There was also another class, less desirable in character and not so easy to define in words. These men moved rapidly from field to field, living on the gullibility of the storekeepers or loafing on the good nature of the diggers. Some of them were fugitives from justice. There was also a sprinkling of mechanics and clerks out of employment; old men for whom the world had no further use, and who preferred independence to the strict, prison-like rule of a poor man's refuge; and last, but not least, a sprinkling of natives of both sexes. (Satchell 1971: 31)

Despite the importance of gumdigging for the New Zealand economy of the time, official discourse continued to express a negative attitude toward gumdiggers.[10] Even though the industry itself demanded the gumdiggers move from field to field, under this new gaze of the desirable colonial way of life they were seen as a people who simply roamed the country. In Satchell's novel, one gumdigger, referring to this situation, laments, '[e]very inch of this north country is poisoned with dead hopes, and it will never be any good till the gum is gone out of it'(Satchell 1971: 12).

In time, ethnic divisions arose between gumdiggers. Even though British gumdiggers were not respected by either the government, members of the urban elite or respectable settlers, they considered Maori to be an uncivilised people. Hence, they distinguished their own position from that of the Maori. There was some fear that the 'horde of natives' on the gumfields would seriously affect the European gumdiggers. The newspapers of the time reflect the British gumdiggers' view of Maori:

> This field, as well as others between this and Auckland, is flooded with Maoris, who come from as far as the Waikato and the King Country, also from the North, in crowds – men, women, and children – who are covering the hillsides like swarms of locusts, sweeping all the gum before them, so that shortly there will be none left for the legitimate European digger, who at the present time of retrenchment has nothing else to look to for a livelihood. The natives from the South have plenty of land of their own lying idle, being too lazy to cultivate it, and preferring a nomadic life and plenty of drink, they will ultimately destroy the great industry of the province. … [H]ardly a night passes without the hills resounding with demoniac shrieks and yells from the rum-sodden Maoris passing out from public houses to their camps … natives, when under the influence of alcohol often become completely mad, and at any time defenceless Europeans in isolated huts might be massacred in one of their drunken frenzies …. Can the Government not keep the Crown gum lands for Europeans' labour to the exclusion of these hordes of natives, especially in these hard times … Te Peake Gumfield, Kaukapakapa. (*Weekly News*, May 19, 1888 p. 14)

While gumdiggers in general were classified as the 'dregs of society' and placed at the bottom of the social ladder, Maori were found at the extreme end of this hierarchy. Clearly, stereotypes about the Maori way of life, formed in the imperial archive of knowledge, served to justify the distribution of 'micro powers' and regulate social relations according to the interests of the colony.

Chapter Two

'Teach the body' – Croats in Colonial New Zealand

Once New Zealand was established as a British colony, Chinese, Germans, Italians, Dutch, Croats and others also migrated to this new 'Promised Land'. The way these non-British immigrants were treated by the state in New Zealand varied enormously. While some were seen as a welcome addition, others were virtually excluded from society. In this sense, their very presence added a new dimension to the development of New Zealand's identity, politics and culture. In this chapter I will examine the impact of non-British migrants on New Zealand culture by focusing on the lives of Croatian immigrants on the gumfields. From the 1880s until the end of the gumdigging industry in the 1950s, Croats were the largest non-British immigrant group on the gumfields of the Far North.

Before analysing the life of Croats in New Zealand, I need to first examine the conditions that forced them to emigrate from Croatia at the end of the nineteenth century. As Abdelmalek Sayad argues, 'before becoming an immigrant, the migrant is first an e-migrant' and, consequently, 'the structure and contradictions of the sending communities' are important for analysis as well as 'the concerns and cleavages of the receiving society .... Immigration here and emigration there are two indissociable sides of the same reality, which cannot be explained the one without the other' (quoted in Bourdieu and Wacquant 2000: 173–75). Croatia's position within the global order of the time had a huge impact on Croatian identity. Therefore, analysing emigrants' social positions and their motives for leaving within this wider historical context will enable us to better understand their way of life on the New Zealand gumfields.

Emigration from Dalmatia

Millions of Europeans moved to America around the turn of the nineteenth century. More than half a million Croats took part in this migration, which was the biggest exodus in Croatian history (Čizmić 1981). For most Croatian peasants at the time, the New World symbolised the Utopia of a full stomach and new opportunities. While the main stream of migration flowed to America, a trickle of those who travelled the oceans made New Zealand their final destination. Although small in number, this initial settlement created a chain migration (Stoffel 1994).

Most of those who migrated to New Zealand from Croatia were from the coastal province of Dalmatia, which experienced hard times in the nineteenth century. In 1867, when the joint empire of Austro-Hungary was proclaimed, the Croatian regions of Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia were divided between

Vienna and Budapest.[1] Whereas Croatia and Slavonia were granted internal political autonomy within the framework of the Kingdom of Hungary, Dalmatia found itself subject to Austria as a common province (Romanenko 1992: 114). Although German subsequently became the administrative language, the government of Dalmatia was mostly comprised of members of the Italian upper class. These wealthy landowners remained in Dalmatia even after the 'disappearance' of Venice's rule. 'Their motto was that the people of Dalmatia, albeit predominantly Slav, were nevertheless Italian in terms of civilisation' (Barbieri 1990: 192). This greatly affected the manner in which the province was governed. For instance, more than two thirds of schools at that time used the Italian language exclusively and, as a result, 90 per cent of the population was illiterate. Ultimately, however, this meant Austria was effectively able to use an Italian minority, a vestige of feudal nobility, to rule Dalmatia.

In those parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire under the direct rule of the Emperor Franz Josef, cities flourished as sites of cultural experimentation, centres of music, education, science, art, architecture and urban modernisation. Franz Josef personally influenced the architecture of many parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, primarily through his preference for the neo-baroque and neo-Renaissance styles. This was seen by many to have had a unifying effect on the multi-national and multi-cultural Empire. However, as a result of its relative autonomy, Dalmatia's urban centres mostly remained in a state of stagnation. Franz Josef's empire viewed Dalmatia as a useless and impoverished appendage, of interest more for its 'exotic history' and scenic landscapes than for capital investment (Violich 1998). Most importantly, Dalmatia served as a buffer against the Turks. For these reasons, most Dalmatians did not feel they belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Moreover, the imposition of heavy taxes, monopolies on trade routes and strict conscription terms created a sense of antagonism within the province. Rather than being a unifying force, the Austro-Hungarian presence in Dalmatia gave rise to political division. While, on the one side, there were those who were pro-Italian, others were drawn to the burgeoning *narodnjaci*, the Croatian national movement. In addition, because the majority of the population were illiterate and lived in isolated villages, they had a very limited sense of belonging to a wider community. Primitive paths built for the donkey, the traditional Dalmatian form of transport, were often the only connection between villages. Due to their isolation, villagers developed varied identities based on local sites of cultural production.

Benedict Anderson (1991) argues that all ideas of community are essentially 'imaginary'. From this perspective, the sense of community that binds societies is seen as a kind of fiction: community is not simply a group of people, it is also the narrative that connects all its members. According to Anderson, the advent of capitalism brought about changes in the media of communication. These changes enabled people to think about themselves in new ways and establish new forms of collective identity. Two new types of media that emerged in Europe in the eighteenth century were the novel and the newspaper. Both created new

ways of 'imagining' community and can be seen to have contributed directly to the rise of national consciousness.

Anderson also discusses the emergence of communal identity in the more complex case of large empires. Here, 'official nationalism' emerged as a synthesis of the discourse of the imperial nation and its empire. This enabled 'the short, tight, skin of the nation [to be stretched] over the gigantic body of the empire' (Anderson 1983: 86). In the case of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, where the state consisted of eleven distinct nationalities, where there was a notable lack of geographic and economic unity and where citizens often spoke only one of half a dozen different tongues, the task of maintaining a sense of a unified state was very complicated. In order to create a semblance of unity, German was made the official language on the administrative level, and a single army was formed. Moreover, through his efforts to shape the culture and architecture of the empire, the Emperor helped to unify the collective imaginary.

In Dalmatia, the southernmost periphery of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, however, all of these unifying factors were absent. As a result, by the end of the nineteenth century the division between the Italians and the *narodnjaci* began to deepen. In an attempt to stem this rift, the Habsburgs established a political system which recognised diversity and gave local languages equal rights (Sluga 2001: 210). In Dalmatia, public reading rooms were opened where, for the first time, Italian did not have to be spoken. By 1914 there were twenty-eight newspapers in the Croatian language and only three in Italian (Violich 1998). An attempt was also made to replace Italian with Croatian as the official language used in schools.

On the one hand, these attempts by the Italians, *narodnjaci* and Habsburgs to shape Dalmatian identity appear to confirm Anderson's theory that language and texts determine the communal imaginary. On the other hand, however, as Glenn Bowman notes, Anderson fails to recognise the reason for such identification. The newspaper plays an important part in the process of building a collective identity but 'does not automatically interpellate the reader within the subject positions they prefer; the text, and its positions, are objects to be interpreted' (Bowman 1994: 141). The political situation in Dalmatia at that time created a cultural climate in which people readily identified their own experiences with the stories of others who had been in similar situations. For instance, when the unification of Croatian lands began to be discussed, news arrived of the Serbian uprising against the Turks and many Dalmatians joined in support of the national movement for the unity of Croatia and all Southern Slavs. However, in the most isolated villages these new ideas of collective identity meant little. Most of the peasants living in these villages were extremely poor. As a result of their poverty and isolation, they developed strong family ties and local community structures. This sense of community arose independently from the wider Croatian desire for national unity and became the main imaginary frame through which collective identity was constructed.

Many of the villagers lived according to the *zadruga* system where extended family members live and work together. Households of between twenty and

thirty members were common (Bičanić 1981:125, Violich 1998:89). The majority of villagers worked in viticulture, which was the type of agriculture best suited to the local climate. These isolated villages were situated on the coast of Dalmatia, where the climate is Mediterranean. The coastline is rugged, with mountains rising abruptly from the shoreline and offshore islands dotting the deep-channelled Adriatic. The hillsides on the mainland and on the many islands are terraced and walled with limestone rocks removed from the land. Throughout the centuries, Dalmatia's economic life grew out of the asymmetry between the poverty of the land and the fruitfulness of the sea. The poor soil is extremely difficult to cultivate and is best suited to such Mediterranean crops as grapes, stone fruit, olives and figs (Barbieri 1990).

The way of life in these Dalmatian villages is nicely illustrated by Marica Milich, one of my correspondents, who was born in 1907 in the village of Gornja Podgora:

> My village of Podgora stood high above the Adriatic Sea on a mountainous plateau on the Dalmatian coast. It was a very old village. All the houses were in a cluster, and they were of stone, even the roofs were made of stone .... Karst and rocks everywhere. We had small pockets of cultivable land and we had some silverbeet, potatoes, cabbage and many fig and olive trees ... and of course, we had vineyards. My family also had a few sheep and goats. We didn't have a donkey, but many other families did. They would share them. As a matter of fact all the villagers shared everything. We were helping to each other .... There were no roads at that time, just little paths between villages. Our village cemetery was by the sea and when somebody died, men would carry that person to the grave on their shoulders. It wasn't a good life really. As a child I had to work constantly, I was baking bread, going to the mountain to collect firewood and grass and so on ... some other kids were attending the school, but my family did not have money to send me to school ... we were selling some wine and that's all the money we had ... villagers used to tell that it was a time when vineyards spread everywhere and they were making good money ... but I don't remember that. I heard that something happened to the vineyards ... the grape plague ... I don't know ... many of the men left our village because of that, they couldn't make any money in Podgora ....

The 'grape plague' mentioned by Marica was caused by the North American insect *Phylloxera* that hit Dalmatian vineyards between the 1880s and 1901, almost devastating the entire grape stock (Prpic 1971, Violich 1998). Compounding this natural disaster, in 1891 the Austrian government reduced import tariffs on Italian wines. As a result, Dalmatian wines could no longer compete on price and demand declined (Violich 1998). It is not surprising that under those economic and political conditions people wanted to find a 'better life' and 'justice'.

Even though Dalmatian villages were isolated from the cities and other parts of Austria-Hungary, continuing contact by sea brought some news about life in the New World countries. In addition, emigrants themselves frequently

Terraced vineyards constructed by dry-built walls in the little hamlet of Žrnovo.
Photograph by I. Pervan

Inset: The hillsides on the Dalmatian island of Hvar, showing the terraces of vineyards and vegetables.

sent messages and letters to the editor of the Croatian newspaper, *Dom*. In many of these letters America was prized as a country where everyone could work and earn enough money, 'could freely speak [her/his] language … and [have] more freedom and rights than under the rule of Austria and Hungary' (Prpic 1971: 146).

The highest rate of emigration from Dalmatia occurred between 1890 and 1914. This sudden departure of people from the country began to impact on the agricultural economy. As Josip Smodlaka, the Dalmatian representative in the Austrian Parliament in Vienna, stated in 1910:

> Our peasants are sailing for America …. The island of Brac, the largest of the Austrian islands, is located in the vicinity of Split, the largest city of Dalmatia. On the island the fields are already lying fallow, a large section of the population is already missing …. (quoted in Prpic 1971: 148)

An Austro-American Company was established, with the idea of profiting from this growing emigrant traffic. The Cunard Line was given permission to transport emigrants directly from the ports of Trieste and Rijeka. Thousands left Croatia through these ports. Many others, however, wished to avoid being conscripted into the Austro-Hungarian army. In order to achieve this, they were forced to travel without a passport and had to find passage elsewhere in Europe. The situation became so desperate that it was proverbial to say that the sole article of Dalmatia's trade was a lively export in human flesh to America (Prpic 1971).

DALMATIAN 'AMERICAS OF MIND'

In the small, isolated village of nineteenth-century Dalmatia , the idea of moving to a new country to start a new life to escape the then unbearable poverty soon spread. When a neighbour emigrated to America, Australia, Argentina or New Zealand, an entirely new picture of a world with immense possibilities would be introduced. For Dalmatians, America became the term for everywhere and anywhere that life was better. When letters and photos arrived, families would gather together and slowly read every detail. Those writing home often exaggerated their earnings. For the migrants, however, anything was better than poverty and heavy taxes. Through the fantasy frame of a 'better future', the image of a 'new life' somewhere in 'different Americas' emerged. Eventually, America came to symbolise the entire New World, where everyone desired to go. In Central Dalmatia, New Zealand was also seen as 'America':

> Work was what Mama came to New Zealand for – and to see America. In the old country, she explains, all the new world is 'America' not just America on the map. 'Everyone wants to go there,' says Mama. 'I used to listen to them talking about it and I would say to myself: "I will see this America, too!"' (Batistich 1980: 39)

It is difficult to establish how people from a few Dalmatian villages came to hear about the 'America' that is the gumfields of the Far North of New Zealand.

According to Jelicich, the arrival of the Austrian frigate *Novara* in Auckland, with 173 Dalmatians in a crew of 352, was probably the first Croatian contact with New Zealand. In line with the 'scientific' information gathering that had become one of the tools for exercising European power after the end of the eighteenth century, the Geographical Society of Vienna organised a grand scientific expedition to travel around the world. The aim of the expedition was to see what the world was like in the year 1857 by gathering as much hydrological, botanical, anthropological, economic and cultural data as possible (Scherzer 1863 vol. 1: 12) Although the Austro-Hungarian Empire had no colonies outside Europe, it clearly competed with other empires in the drive to collect information. In its quest to acquire knowledge of the world, the expedition influenced the lives of not only those with whom it came in contact but also the lives and expectations of those in Dalmatia.

The *Novara* docked in Auckland on December 22, 1858. There is no mention in *Novara*'s logbook of whether any of the Dalmatian crew abandoned the frigate. Nor are any reported to have stayed with Ferdinand von Hochstetter, a geologist from Vienna who was asked by the New Zealand Government to stay on to conduct geological surveys. In his book written afterwards in Vienna, Hochstetter described the kauri gum industry as follows:

> From the very first beginning of the colonization of New Zealand, the Kauri forests of the North Island have proved a source of wealth to the settlers … the kauri gum, Kapia of the natives … is soft and of a milky turbidness, not unlike opal; in course of time however, it hardens, becomes more or less transparent, and assumes at the same time a bright yellow colour … it is always found in great quantities in the soil of those places, where Kauri forests stood of old …. It is an article of commerce which is in great demand, and principally exported to England and North America; it is used in the preparations of lae and varnish, and said to be applicable to various other branches of industry …. (Hochstetter 1997: 140–50

By gathering and circulating information about the kauri gum, Hochstetter, and the voyage of the *Novara*, possibly transformed the lives of those in Dalmatia and New Zealand. After returning to Dalmatia, sailors from the *Novara* possibly spread the news about the kauri gumfields. Hunger seeks such knowledge and helps in its distribution. Apart from people in Dalmatia learning of the gum as a result of the *Novara* expedition, I can find no other extant materials suggesting how the first link in the chain of migration from Dalmatia to New Zealand was created. Trlin states that the New Zealand naturalisation files record that during the 1860s forty Dalmatians sought gold, started families and stayed in New Zealand. He added, however, that 'almost nothing is known about the lives of these pioneers and their role in the development of chain migration to New Zealand' (Trlin 1979: 34). In any case, by 1924 more than 6000 Dalmatians were registered in New Zealand, most working as gumdiggers.

Amelia Batistich, a New Zealand writer of Dalmatian descent, describes in her works of fiction how the golden kauri resin was woven into the imagination

of people from such villages as Podgora, Vrgorac, Imotski and Korčula. It had an almost sublime status:

> 'Nova Zelanda!' They said the name over, liking the promise that it held. Father Ilya had even got them a piece of the kauri gum from the museum in Vienna. It looked like rich and wonderful stuff. They all wanted to hold it, to feel its polished smoothness, to look into its mottled depths for a sign of the future. 'A new kind of gold!' … the villages' patriarch pronounced, and Father Ilya said: 'It means gold and that's what you'll never get if you stay here. I tell you young men, go. Look for a better life in a new country far from the troubles here.' (Batistich 1980: 12)

In the beginning, emigration did not occur in family units. Typically, a young man who was unemployed at home was first sent to work in a foreign country to earn the money that the family needed for its various expenses: to repay debts, to build a house, and so forth. Although numerous Croatian descendants have given accounts of how their parents were brought to New Zealand, I will concentrate here on the Babich family story:

> It just happened that the head of the Babichs, a large family from Imotski, heard about New Zealand during his visit to Podgora. New Zealand had long been the talk of that small town. There, in a tavern, Petar Babich met Ivan Vela and they struck up a conversation about life over wine and brandy. Vela invited Petar to accompany him to Makarska where he used to buy goods, mostly pasta and rice for retail. While they walked toward Makarska, Vela told stories about New Zealand and the time he spent there. He talked about Sweetwater, digging of fossil remnants of some tree called kauri that disappeared without a trace. Yet, Petar Babich was more interested in the possibility of making good money. Vela asked him about his family. 'I have seven sons!' said Petar Babich. 'Why should they drop like an ox under the Austrian yoke? Why should they all not go to New Zealand?' … The year was 1904. Petar Babich thought about his seven sons; the youngest was four the eldest eighteen. Three sons were from his first marriage to Matija who died giving birth; four came from his second marriage to Iva. They had lived in a small house that belonged to his brother Nikola; eleven children and four adults altogether under one roof. It was not an easy living and the future did not seem promising in their tiny village of Runovici …. As soon as Petar came home he gathered the entire family and announced that his sons were bound for a journey to a country called New Zealand. He went on to explain to his wife Iva that the boys were strong and healthy and how they could earn handfuls of sterling merely by digging out some remnants of a tree. (Peter Babich, Auckland 2000)

In this sense, Ivan Vela's stories of life in New Zealand can be seen to have inspired Petar Babich to send his young boys on the long journey to the gumfields. Five of them would eventually make it to New Zealand. The first to leave was the eldest son Jakov in February of 1904. The local priest helped to gather the £14 necessary for the fare. He explained to the family how long the journey

The Babichs in New Zealand. Josip Babich far right. Babich Family Collection

would take, where the boy would transfer to other ships and which continents and seas he would cross. The Babichs, who had never set foot outside of their native village, were all excited. 'That is how it all began. In the following six years, one by one, five sons disembarked in New Zealand' (Peter Babich 2000). The last to leave, in 1910, were fourteen-year-old Josip and seventeen-year-old Stjepan. A rich Italian landowner near Runovici lent them the money for the fare. Petar Babich, Josip's son, describes the boys' long journey to New Zealand:

> They left Runovici … the goats, the sheep, the stunted grapevines and a grieving mother to cross the globe for some other sheep, some other grapevines and some other future … It was a cold winter morning. Petar, the father and uncle Nikola walked quietly beside the boys …. A silent procession of men heading towards Makarska. The two horses plodded wearily behind, burdened with trunks overloaded with clothes and belongings that were to travel a full twelve thousand miles. … They walked a total of eighty kilometres which was the distance between Runovici and Makarska. Once they reached Makarska the boys rested for a couple of days. They strolled through the main street in Makarska, prayed in the church … purchased smoked meat and hard tacks and took the freighter *Bosna* heading for Trieste. Hence they took a train to Rome and switched to a train heading for Naples. In Naples, they embarked on a ship *Orsova* owned by the Orion Line Company. It was her first trip upon docking – through the recently opened Suez Canal to Colombo and then to Fremantle across the Indian Ocean. (Peter Babich, Auckland 2000)

The Babichs, like many other young Dalmatian men, were expected to work hard on the gumfields and send the money they saved back to their family to help them survive through the bad times. The economic effects of this money

being sent from those working in New Zealand soon became evident throughout Dalmatia. Deteriorating roofs were tiled, the houses of 'New Zealanders' became bigger and more beautiful, new fields were purchased and vineyards began to recover. In addition to individual homes, churches were also repaired, their bells replaced and new schools built. As Vinko Dikovic, a local historian and poet from Zaostrog recalls, 'The bells rang – New Zealand':

> Here in Zaostrog … our local priests helped to raise money to send our poor young boys to 'Zelanda'. These poor boys had to promise in front of all the villagers that the first money they earned would be sent to the Church … not to mother, not to father … but the Church. (Vinko Dikovic, Zaostrog, Croatia, 2000)

M. Gareljic, a retired teacher from Podgora notes:

> New Zealand was always present in this region … especially in Zaostrog and Podgora. It was in everybody's mouth. Every house that was a bit bigger and nicer, you could be sure it was built with New Zealand money …. There is an inscription on the biggest house in Porat: 'God helps New Zealand.' (Gareljic, Podgora, Croatia, 2000)

Drago Krznaric immigrated to New Zealand in 1958 remembers one occasion during his childhood in Podgora when:

> … there was the sound of the church bell which announced to the villagers that somebody had passed away. The villagers in the vineyard started calling each other, 'Do you know who has died?' My father just took his cap off and crossed himself, and said, 'It must be someone in New Zealand.' (quoted in Hutching 1998: 62)

Rather than simply changing the local economy, migration to New Zealand can be seen to have transformed the social imaginary of those in Dalmatia. Those who remained at home developed fantasies about life in New Zealand that became included in their everyday lives. In the language of psychoanalysis, 'fantasy gives meaning and purpose to the subject's life.' This meaning, however, is itself part of the fantasy. In other words 'people don't have fantasies. They inhabit fantasy spaces of which they are part' (Hage 1998: 70). While, for those at home, their romantic image of New Zealand was a source of hope, those who emigrated encountered a very different reality. The move from the phantasmic structure of Dalmatia, to that of the 'America of the mind' was not a smooth process. It was made all the more difficult in that it took place within the broader relationship between the Austro-Hungarian and the British empires.

NEW ZEALAND'S 'OTHERS'

After leaving their stony Dalmatian villages, the Croat migrants entered the structured space of the British Empire. In New Zealand, as in many other parts of the British Empire at the end of the nineteenth century, cultural reality was determined by the imperial archive of knowledge. This archive was based on a

hierarchy which placed British civilisation at the highest level, above all others. Accordingly, the domination of 'inferior' peoples by the 'superior' British was considered a natural condition. It was within this context that the indigenous Maori were subjected to the various strategies which sought to 'discipline' and 'regulate' them. These disciplining techniques were also applied to the colonising population. The goal was to reproduce British culture in the new colony. Belich (2001) describes the period from 1840 to 1880 in New Zealand as one of 'progressive colonisation'. This was characterised by an optimistic ideology of economic progress, which 'worked through an unholy alliance between myths and economics, an extraordinary system of dream-led growth through growth' (Belich 2001: 17). New settlers often described themselves as Britons of the South in an attempt to dissolve differences between Scots, English and Irish. However, according to Belich, after 1880 the ideology of progress was replaced by a 'new ideology of recolonisation'. During this time a new sense of collective identity began to emerge, one in which New Zealand saw itself as a 'better Britain' (Belich 2001: 76–77). Within this new ideology ideas concerning the purity of race became paramount. Racial and cultural differences were seen as abnormalities and, as a consequence, efforts were made to reduce them as much as possible.

This new construction of social reality, which Belich sees as a shift from progressive colonisation to recolonisation, can be viewed through Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) principles of equivalence and difference. The logic of difference tends to expand political space, enabling a proliferation of different meanings and positions. By contrast, the logic of equivalence, by subverting each differential position, creates a second meaning. For example:

> in a colonized country, the presence of the dominant power is every day made evident through a variety of contents: differences of dress, of language, of skin color, of customs. Since each of these contents is equivalent to the others in terms of their common differentiation from the colonized people, it loses its condition of differential moment … thus equivalence creates a second meaning which … though parasitic on the first, subverts it, the differences cancel one another out insofar as they are used to express something identical underlying them all. (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 127)

This logic of equivalence prevailed in New Zealand after the 1880s, around the time the first Croats began to arrive. This logic entailed simplifying New Zealand social space and expanding the paradigmatic pole of meaning over different strata of the population. In the process, almost everyone could be said to have been ensnared by some kind of metaphor. The logic of equivalence, which is something identical to an ideal type of New Zealander, first operated on the level of 'whiteness' and through the exclusion of the indigenous population. On the other hand, some Maori were given the opportunity to become 'brown Britons' (Belich 2001: 189). 'Whiteness', in this sense, operated on different levels and at different intensities: depending on whether one was considered to be a 'pure' or a 'dirty' white. In this classification, English and Scots saw

themselves as the ideal race, Irish and Northern Europeans (Scandinavians, Danes, Germans, Austrians) were regarded as 'a good second best', while those from Southern and Eastern Europe were deemed the least desirable of the white races. (Belich 2001). Asian immigrants, who were mostly Chinese and Indians, were the least welcome of all.

Therefore, the first groups of Croats arrived in the gumfields during a time when New Zealand was trying to build a sense of nationhood based on the idea of cultural homogeneity. The different ethnic groups settling in New Zealand were assessed in accordance with a hierarchical scale of possible assimilation into local culture. As it was based on an idealised set of British values, New Zealand's burgeoning culture was seen to be more British than Britain itself.

DALMATIANS ON THE GUMFIELDS

Dalmatians were initially called 'Austrians' because the majority of them had Austrian passports.[2] Those who arrived without passports mostly claimed they were from Dalmatia. Some, however, gave only the name of the village they had come from. As a result, New Zealand immigration officials often made mistakes when recording migrants' names and countries of origin. For example, it is possible to find Dalmatian entry papers where the country of origin is stated as Madagascar. This is probably due to the fact that Madagascar sounds very similar to Makarska, the name of a Dalmatian city. To begin with, most Dalmatians did not have any problems when dealing with officials. However, when many started arriving in large groups, they became highly visible and drew journalistic attention. In 1892, a *New Zealand Herald* journalist interviewed John Bilich, one of the Croatian boarding-house owners who had just lodged a large group of newcomers from the steamboat *Mokooia*:

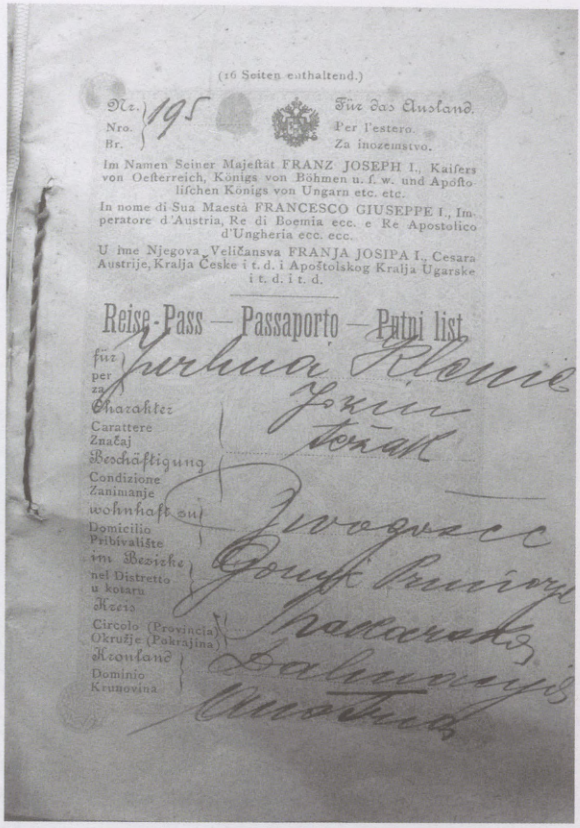
> It seemed that through letters sent from this country, the New Zealand gumfields have a good reputation in Dalmatia, and Mr Bilich added that many of the young men are easily induced to leave home in order to escape naval and military service … The majority of the new arrivals are young men under 30 years of age, and Mr. Bilich, from his conversations with them, expressed himself convinced that a desire to escape conscription had weighed heavily with them in leaving the land of their birth …. Asked as to what employment they followed at home, one of the number of men explained that he was a stonemason, but the majority were farmers, a few shoemakers, and a few tailors ….

Boarding-houses were meeting places for new Croatian immigrants and the starting point for the gumfields. The owners of boarding houses often advertised their business in Croatian newspapers:

> Ivan Bilic, the owner of a boarding house on the corner of Wyndham and Albert Street – The owner speaks English well and is available to our Croats as interpreter for any situation. I am also known among gum traders. (*Bratska sloga*, 15 May 1899)

Here and overleaf:
Different generations of Dalmatians, though coming from the same villages, arrived in New Zealand with a variety of passports: Austrian, Italian, Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes ...

Jurlina Family Collection, Marinovich Family Collection



(16 Seiten enthaltend.)

Nr. 195 Nro. Br.

Für das Ausland. Per l'estero. Za inozemstvo.

Im Namen Seiner Majestät FRANZ JOSEPH I., Kaisers von Oesterreich, Königs von Böhmen u. s. w. und Apostolischen Königs von Ungarn etc. etc.

In nome di Sua Maestà FRANCESCO GIUSEPPE I., Imperatore d'Austria, Re di Boemia ecc. e Re Apostolico d'Ungheria ecc. ecc.

U ime Njegova Veličansva FRANJA JOSIPA I., Cesara Austrije, Kralja Češke i t. d. i Apoštolskog Kralja Ugarske i t. d. i t. d.

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R. Ispettorato dell' Emigrazione

NAPOLI

STAZIONE DI BONIFICA SANITARIA

In partenza il 3/7 27

da Napoli

per

in 3.ª Classe

col Piroscafo

IL DIRETTORE DELLA STAZIONE DI BONIFICA

Data 8-LUG 1927

SERVIZIO DI PROFILASSI

DISINFESTAZIONE

BAGNO

VACCINAZIONE E RIVACCINAZIONE

L'Incaricato

L'Incaricata

Il Medico Vaccinatore

Il Medico addetto i servizi sanitari

Data

The owners of boarding houses often arranged for newcomers to buy the tools they needed for work on the gumfields. Those who did not have enough money to pay for equipment bought the bare necessities on credit. The Auckland shopkeeper Betts recalls his first encounter with the 'Austrian' men:

> At that time hundreds of Austrians were being landed at Auckland. A large majority of them passed through the hands of Mr. Joseph Franich who kept a boarding-house in Durham Street. When the men had settled down I would be packed up with watertight boots made of solid kip, with toe- and heel-plates and hob-nailed, also toe-plates bent to fit the waist of the boot, for the right foot, for the spade. The boots were strung over my shoulders until I could hardly see my way to get to the boarding-house, I might say that nearly all wore size eleven. On arrival at the house I would be surrounded by dozens, all talking their own language, and grabbing a pair of boots. Mr Franich soon appeared, crying out 'Muchi! Muchi!' [Shut up, Shut up]. With a few other words peace was restored. I would hand Mr Franich the load docket, and would repeat the visits until all were suited, and would leave with a few orders for sizes twelve and thirteen. (Reed 1948: 79)

After purchasing the necessary clothes and equipment, these Croatian 'novices' were immediately sent to the gumfields, where most of them already had relatives or friends. If they did not buy all the necessary tools in Auckland there was always another chance on the gumfields, as shops were soon set up which could be hauled from one place to another by a pair of oxen. Here, the gumdigger could buy a spade, a spear, an axe, a few tin mugs, a skillet, or a tent. In return for credit, he was to sell gum to that shop only, thus paying back the debt. Such trade was termed the 'tucker' system and sometimes led to greater debt.

Austrian gumdiggers and a man being shaved, *c.* 1910. ATL 1/2-048093-F

On the gumfields, the Croatian gumdiggers usually lived and worked in groups. Petar Yelavich, an elderly gumdigger from Ravca, describes the Croatian way of life in the camps in his unpublished memoirs:

> One after another … they would come to camps … boys from Podgora in one camp, those from Vrgorac in another, some from Zrnovo in yet another, or sometimes all together. (Yelavich n.d.)

Regardless of the size of the camp or the number of people, a group would often have a leader who was either the oldest among them, or the one who spoke some English. The leader would often sell the gum, buy the supplies and act as a mediator between the group and the merchants – the outside world.

Digging kauri gum was hard labour. A gumdigger would carry all the necessary equipment for work: he would put a gum spear and a shovel on his shoulder, an axe in one hand, a billy in the other and secure an empty flour bag on his belt where he temporarily kept lumps of gum. He would also take a knife for scraping and some food. During breaks, the gumdigger would use his billy to make tea or soup. By the end of the day, his haversack would be heavy with gathered gum. The Croats commonly referred to the gum sack as pikao, which was derived from the Maori expression pikau denoting a burden carried on one's back. The axe was used to clear underbrush or to remove obstacles while digging. Digging required experience in deciding where to

put the first shovel and hit the right spot. To discover gum, one had to stick a spear in the ground. Its length varied from one metre for dry soil to eight metres for swamps.

According to Yelavich, an experienced digger intuitively felt what was hidden underground as it was difficult to tell whether the spear hit a rock or kauri gum and even more difficult to tell how big that something was:

> With a spear, one can feel every piece of coal, rock, wood, or resin, be it tiny, big, small or hard. A skilled gumdigger-explorer knows how to follow a small lead and hit on larger deposits. Having observed the colour of a residue on the point of his spear … a digger decides on the yield and on the dimensions of the hole, marking it with a shovel or some other tool . … Once a hole is marked, the explorer moves on while others remain to dig … (Yelavich n.d.)

If the 'explorer' found shallow gum, only one digger would do the digging, but if the gum was deep, two or three diggers would work on a hole. Croatian gumdiggers introduced a new technique in gum digging known as facedigging and they also 'invented sluices, gum-washing machines and new types of sieves' (Mitcalfe 1984: 77).

Facedigging was a process where gumdiggers systematically worked large areas, overturning the soil to a depth of several feet, and picking up even the smallest gum nuts and chips. Settlers, who generally disliked gumdiggers because of the damage they did to the land, were satisfied with this new technique of digging as it left the land suitable for cultivation. Facedigging, however, did cause other kinds of problems for Croatian gumdiggers. There was some fear, for instance, that the 'Austrians' overproduction' would seriously affect the wealth of British diggers. An 1893 letter to the Editor of the *New Zealand Observer*, written by one British gumdigger, reflects some of these fears:

> It is unquestionably time that the people of New Zealand woke up to a recognition of the evil consequences that must follow this influx of Austrians. Did I say Austrians? Well, I am wrong. They are not Austrians …. They are Russian Slavs and consequently are very much more undesirable as colonists than Austrians would be …. The Russian Slav, like the Chinamen is 'peculiar' in many of his little ways. He has a frugal mind, for example, oh very frugal! Lives, like John, on the smell of an oiled-rag. And like John again, he is extraordinarily industrious. He gathers honey – I mean gum – all the day, and stores it up at night, and keeps it stored very often for many days and nights holding on for a rise! … The Russian Slavs save more money than English …. And he sends more than two thirds of his earnings out of the country … to Dalmatia …. If steps are not taken to drive these Russian Slav invaders away the result will be this: These foreigners will band together to lease our gumfields … and they will boss the situation … (*New Zealand Observer,* 13 May, 1893: 2)

The writer of this letter clearly refers to the established 'archive of knowledge'. Croats, here classified as Slavs, are considered not good enough for New Zealand society, an inferior race who are consequently not welcome. The writer also

compares Croats with the Chinese. There are certainly many representational parallels between Croatian and Chinese migration to New Zealand. In the beginning, Chinese labourers working in the gold fields were considered 'industrious, frugal, moral, healthy, and law-abiding' (Pearson 1990: 96). However, by the 1880s their productivity, as with that of the Croats, was seen as an 'economic threat' to the colony. Also like Croats, Chinese immigrants were overwhelmingly male and worked and lived in isolated communities. Reading together some of the stereotypes applied to Croats and Chinese reveals that a deep psychic fear of the Other was interwoven into the fabric of colonial New Zealand. Neither Chinese nor Croats met the stereotyped view of the 'desirable coloniser'.

The Liberal Government responded to British fears and in 1898 formed the Commission of Inquiry into the Kauri Gum Industry to check the suitability of Croats for working on the gumfields. In a remarkable series of encounters, the commissioners questioned British settlers and diggers about Croatian behaviour on the gumfields. The following statements were given by British diggers to the commissioners:

> *Thomas Somers*: … They [Austrians] come in large numbers temporarily, and exhaust the gum, and the British diggers, many of whom have taken Crown land have practically no resources left to meet their liabilities or work the land …. Our greatest trouble is the alien invasion. (*AJHR* 1898 H. – 12: 17)

> *John Gray*: There were two hundred Austrians on the field the winter before last; … there are very few now. We do not want them, because of their competition … The Austrians, bad as times now are, can earn £2 to £3 a week by working from sunrise to sunset. I am of opinion that the only way to deal with this influx of the Austrians is, if possible, to pass a law by which they would be prevented from digging gum until they were in the country, say, twelve months or longer. Of course, that would only apply to Crown lands. (*AJHR* 1898 H. – 12: 37)

> *Robert Morrow Houston*: … The Austrians on the fields are a great evil at the present time. … the North will be destroyed by the Austrians … (*AJHR* 1898 H. – 12: 48).

> *Joseph Evans*: … I find that the Austrians are hardworking industrious people, but they take a lot of money away …. I believe they are impoverishing the country by sending money out of it. (*AJHR* 1898 H. – 12: 38)

Croats toiled day and night, living frugally and working in large groups, in contrast to the British diggers, who mostly worked alone. As the quotations above demonstrate, Croats were blamed for everything bad that happened on the gumfields, including impoverishing the young colony. They were even seen to be driving the price of gum down, due to the large quantity they brought to the market:

> … the quantities of gum brought into the market by the Austrians serve to lower the market price. (*AJHR*.1898 H – 12: 9)

Clockwise from top:

Group of gumdiggers from Vinodol near Dargaville. From left: Josip Maračić, Josip Petrinovic, Bogoslav Sokolic, Petar Kriskovic, Josip Mrzljak. Šimun Ujdur Collection

Three gumdiggers from Dalmatia in Tangaihi, 25 March 1915. From left: M. Lulic, F. Lulic (brothers from Igrane) and Bariša Tomaš (from Tučepe). Šimun Ujdur Collection

Group of gumdiggers from Vinodol near Dargaville. Šimun Ujdur Collection

Waiharara gumdiggers. Šimun Ujdur Collection

From top:

Gumfield and diggers, Northland region, possibly at Sweetwater, *c.* 1930. ATL 1/1-004967-F

Gumfield and diggers *c.* 1910. ATL 1/1-011227-G

Gumdiggers in gumfield, *c.* 1910. ATL 1/1-011240-G.

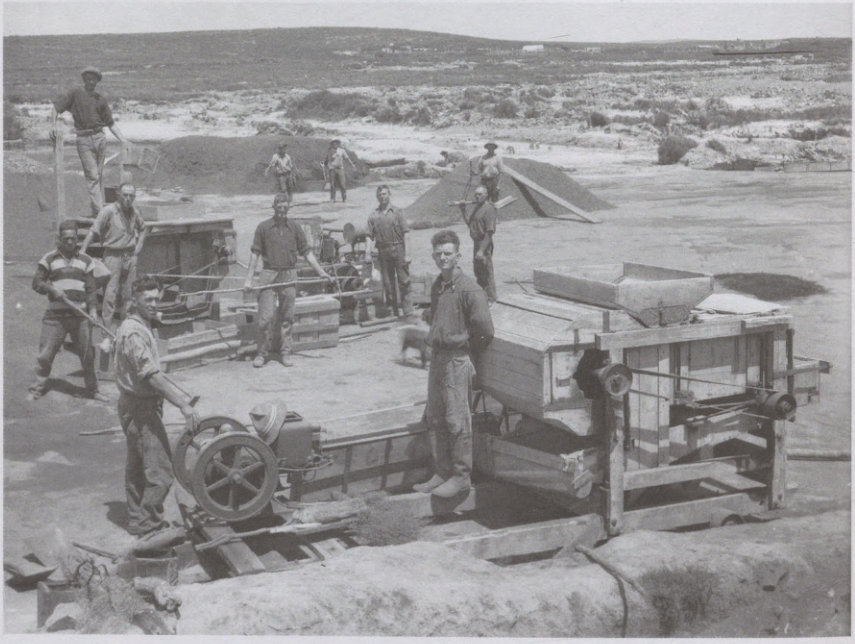
All Northwood Studio

One common complaint of British gumdiggers was that the Austrians worked very long hours, often awaiting the first light of dawn in the field and digging the Britishers' patches out. But Matthew Steed from Waiharara appears to directly contradict this assumption:

> Austrians are law-abiding citizens … Their mode of working is very fair; they will not rush on to your patch and dig the gum away from you. (*AJHR* 1898 H – 12: 40)

The Commission also questioned some Croatian gumdiggers. The commissioners were interested in their overall way of life on the gumfields: the amount of money they earned, the amount they sent to Dalmatia, and the amount they spent in the colony.

> *Jacob Radetich*: I am from Croatia, in Austria. I came in New Zealand in 1893. I was digging gum at Babylon. I heard from some of my countrymen and others that they were making good wages at gum-digging, and that is the reason I went to Babylon. I paid my own passage from Dalmatia to New Zealand …. While digging on the swamp, with the twenty-two of us, we lived as well as, or better than, British gumdigger, as our bills would prove. We had beef, fowls … and I am sure it costs us never less than 15s. a week. … The way we work fields is on the face, and we put everything through … we were working on the co-operative system … we had two men acting as cooks, and whatever was made in the swamp was divided between us, cooks and all ….



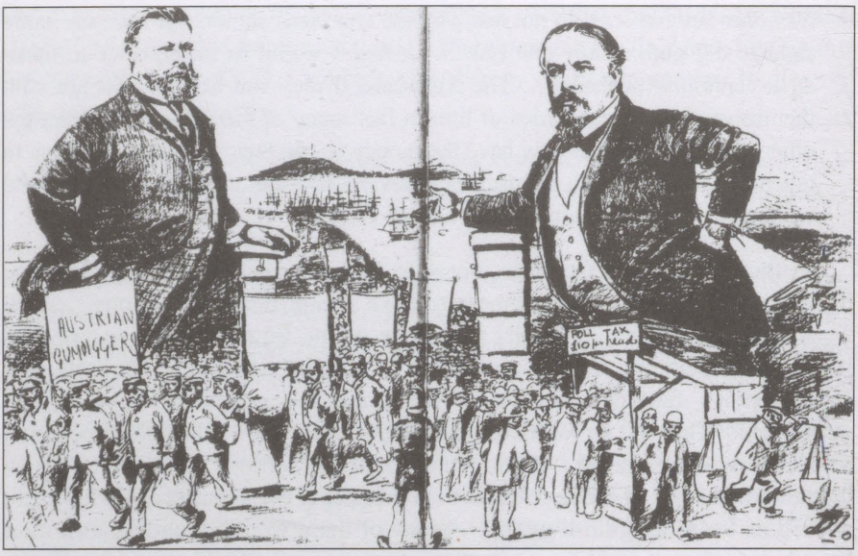
Men with gum-sifting machines, Northland region, *c.* 1910–19. Northwood Studio. ATL 1/1-009785-F

> *Nicholas Seutch*: … I do not see why the Austrians should not have the same right to dig gum as any one else … in fact it would be an injustice to make an exception with them …. The Austrians, if they can help it, will not stint themselves in the necessaries of life; in fact many of them live better than the other gumdiggers when they have the money to pay their way. It is nonsense to talk about them starving themselves when you consider the long hours and hard work connected with gumdigging. (*AJHR* 1898 H. –12: 35)

In their report, the Commission state that the Austrians 'speak Slavonic dialect, not German … they appear to have strong family affections … they work very long hours … [their] ignorance of the English language prevents [them] understanding market quotations …' (*AJHR* 1898 H – 12: 7–9). The Commission's findings, therefore, undermine the beliefs held by British gumdiggers. They go so far as to claim that 'Austrians – laborious, energetic, resourceful, well behaved – would make admirable settlers.' The report goes on to recommend that 'if blocks of land of good quality could be set aside for them, as well as for other gum-diggers … many of them would doubtless turn their knowledge of wine and olive-culture to good account' (*AJHR* 1898 H. – 12: 9). Furthermore, the Commission suggested that the land laws of the colony should be translated into the 'Dalmatian language', 'so that those who wish to become settlers at once may have the opportunity of doing so, and thus investing the money they save' (*AJHR* 1898 H. – 12: 9).

Despite these and other positive comments made by members of Parliament, the Kauri Gum Industry Act 1898 was passed to reduce the number of Croats in the gumfields.[3] Large areas of Crown land were ordered to be reserved just for 'the digger of British extraction' (*New Zealand Herald*, Special Supplement, 11 April, 1923: 9). In 1908 and 1910, other restrictive laws against 'aliens' on the gumfields were passed, protecting interests of the British gumdiggers (*AJHR*, 1914, C-12: 8–9).

Some gum merchants refused to deal with Croats. Robert Morrow Houston, giving evidence before the Commission of Inquiry into the Kauri Gum Industry in 1898, said that he, as a storekeeper, used to give equipment on credit to gumdiggers. He added, however, that 'I have refused on all occasions to give an Austrian a start, … but I have never refused a Britisher' (*AJHR* 1898 H-12). This type of attitude strongly reflects public opinion at that time. Rumours about immoral 'Austrians' were frequently accepted as fact. The negative attitude towards them grew stronger by the day. In opposition to the stance taken by the Commission, Premier R.J. Seddon, speaking in Parliament, continued to denigrate the Croatian gumdiggers by describing them as 'locust-like' (PD 1898 (105): 547). At the same time, in Letters to the Editor of the *New Zealand Herald* and the *New Zealand Observer,* many different names can be found for these unwanted foreigners: Austrians, Bulgarians, Italians, Russian Slavs, Bohemian Slavs, Bohemians from Dalmatia, and Dalmatians. The early perception of them, apart from this confusion with names, was mostly based on animal imagery: Croats were described as the 'greatest pest', 'like locusts', a 'herd of sheep', 'squareheads', a 'horde of barbarians', 'white Chinamen', etc.



'The Alien Invasion', *New Zealand Observer,* 29 April 1893, pp. 10–11. Special Collections, Auckland City Libraries (N.Z.), 7-A14230

> The main inconveniences of camp life, independent of the weather, are of the insect species – the blow fly, the mason fly, and the mosquito …. Other insect pests … are numerous, but according to the majority of the diggers, the greatest pests of all are the Austrians who are now flocking to the different fields. (*Supplement New Zealand Herald*, 25 March 1893: 1)

> Again, the Austrians are travelling over the gumfields in gangs of 100 or more; … since the Austrians have passed over like locusts, it is impossible to earn a living. (*New Zealand Herald*, 29 April 1898: 3)

> They come together in mobs, they herd like sheep on their arrival, and their methods of living are neither clean nor compatible with food sanitation. (*New Zealand Observer*, 11 August 1900: 2)

> But these [the exhaustion of gumfields, unemployment] are not the only dangers which the influx of a great horde of foreigners, a very large proportion of whom are trained to arms, may be to the country. In the event of war with Russia, the sympathies of the Austrians, since they are of the same Slavonic race, would to a man be with the enemy. I ask, is there no danger of their passive sympathy being converted into an active participation in the strife against us? (*New Zealand Herald*, 27 October 1898: 7)

Aside from being seen as a potential 'enemy within', ironically it was the Croats' industriousness that made them a 'great danger'. At first a small trickle of 'Austrians' or 'Slav-Austrians' moved to the gumfields; however, as their numbers increased, so did their visibility. Their numbers on the gumfields were constantly exaggerated and 'this no doubt led to an exaggerated belief in the threat of monopolising and exhausting the gumfields' (Marshall 1968: 185).

New Zealand Observer, 1893 13 May, p. 2 – there are at present time on the gumfields of Auckland between two and three thousand of these people [Austrians].

New Zealand Herald, 1899 26 April, p. 4 – three thousand Austrians in the Auckland Province …

The census record below of the total number of Austrians working in the gumfields during the 1890s clearly demonstrates that the numbers published in the *New Zealand Herald* and the *New Zealand Observer* were blown out of proportion. As the British diggers tended to dislike the Croats because of their inability to communicate in English and their working the gumfields in gangs, the exaggeration of their numbers led to them being seen as a threat.[3]

In summary, the Croats found themselves amidst a political, economic and social environment on the gumfields that created tensions. It was this tension that led to the setting up of the special commission that examined the Croatian presence on the gumfields. The Commission was given the mandate to 'judge something other than crimes'. In Foucauldian terms, its aim was to examine how 'normal' Croatian gumdiggers were by making 'a normalising judgement' (Foucault 1977). In the process, they were subjected to a system of surveillance which sought to qualify and classify their behaviour and, if necessary, punish them for it. In this case, 'the normality' of the Croats was judged according to their suitability for being incorporated into colonial society, and punishment would consist of their being removed from the gumfields.

Homi Bhabha argues that 'one has to see the *surveillance* of colonial power as functioning in relation to the regime of the *scopic drive*. That is, the drive that represents pleasure in "seeing", which has the look as its object of desire … and locates the surveyed object within the "imaginary" relation' (Bhabha 1994: 76). We can further expand Bhabha's point through Žižek's interpretation of Lacan. According to Žižek, Lacan suggests there are two types of identification, both based on the relation between imaginary and symbolic identification or between the ideal ego and the ego-ideal. The imaginary ideal ego emerges when we 'appear likeable to ourselves', when we identify with the image of

Census year	Total Number of Austrians
1886	536
1891	564
1896	881
1901	1874
1906	2212
1911	2131

Source: Marshall (1968).

'what we would like to be.' The symbolic ego-ideal is the point 'from where we look at ourselves', it is identification 'with the very place from where we are being observed' (Žižek 1989: 105). From this perspective, colonial discourse in New Zealand could be said to have acted as the ego-ideal of dominant culture. Emerging from the imperial archive, colonial discourse formed a nodal point that quilted 'heterogeneous subjects into a unified ideological field'. Hence stereotypes of Croats on the gumfields arose from members of the dominant culture identifying with their symbolic ego-ideal. That is, British gumdiggers perceived themselves, not as racists, but as the ones who were concerned for the future of the new colony:

> To prevent Austrians [Croats] coming at all, would be a departure from the free migration which has not only long been in practice, but which has hitherto been regarded as a relief to the crowded countries of the Old World advantageous to new and thinly-peopled countries … all of us came to New Zealand in obedience to this widely prevailing migratory instinct. Australia has been peopled by it. Happily in both cases, the immigrants have been chiefly of Saxon or Celtic blood. The United States also has become the great nation it is to-day, because for the first hundred years it was occupied by a similar people, all speaking the English language …. But recently, both in the United States and in the British Colonies … instead of welcoming every nationality as before, efforts have been made to keep the English speaking countries for people of like blood and race with themselves. The exclusion of Chinamen was the first pronounced step in this direction. Subsequently, the exclusion of Orientals and Asiatics from Australia has been discussed, and many restrictive measures have been adopted by the United States to limit or prevent the admission of the poorer classes of Belgians, Italians, and other nationalities …. We think legislative action ought to be taken in the coming session to regulate and limit entrance into this colony, not only of Austrians, but of all other alien races. (*Auckland Star*, 4 May, 1893: 4 F-G)

In his analysis of nationalism, Žižek (1993) argues that national identity is a fantasy space, or 'Thing', accessible only to members of that particular community. On the one hand, this ideal thing is possessed by those who belong to the nation. On the other hand, it is constantly at risk of being 'stolen' by others. For Lacan, the Thing is at the same time that which is desired by the subject and the cause of that desire. In this sense, the nation as a Thing is a fantasy space that is at the same time the stage upon which that fantasy is enacted. The writer of the above letter clearly believes he is in possession of that Thing which defines a New Zealander. He appears to panic because the growing presence of aliens, such as the Chinese, Italians and Austrians threaten to take it away. However, this newly established 'New Zealandness' he wants to defend 'is not reducible to the so-called set of values [in this case British values] that offer support to national identity' (Žižek 1993: 201). According to Žižek, the Thing that defines the nation is at once present in all these values the subject subscribes to and is, at the same time, irreducible to them. For this reason,

the nation Thing always eludes definition. When anyone tries to define what their national identity is, they usually 'enumerate disconnected fragments of the way [their] community organises its feasts, its rituals of mating, its initiation ceremonies, in short, all the details by which is made visible the unique way a community *organizes its enjoyment*' (Žižek 1993: 2001). Paradoxically, even though the nation always appears to the subject as 'their Thing', as something accessible only to them and that others cannot grasp, they nevertheless believe that it is something constantly threatened by 'others' who want to 'steal their enjoyment' by ruining their way of life. To the nationalist subject the 'other' is always either a workaholic who is trying to steal their jobs or an idler attempting to live off their labour.

In this context, we can recognise that the British gumdiggers were identifying with their nation-Thing when they displaced the cause of their bad social position on to external sources. From the British point of view, since New Zealand was supposed to be a 'workers' paradise' that represented 'the best of Britain', any disruption of that picture could only have been caused by others, or the foreign elements present in society. What was at stake in ethnic tensions on the gumfields therefore, was the coloniser's belief that they were in possession of that which defined New Zealand's burgeoning national identity. The stereotyping of Croats on the gumfields can be seen to have resulted from British immigrants identifying with the national Thing. It was this that allowed them to think about themselves, not as racists, but as the ones who were concerned for the future of the new colony.

In what was supposed to be their promised land the Croats, who were treated in their homeland as second, third and fourth-class citizens, found themselves once again considered an 'alien', 'strange', 'immoral' and 'uncivilised people'. In 1901, *Pucki list*, a newspaper published in Croatia, printed a letter written by a Croatian gumdigger in New Zealand:

> ... the English government prohibited the entrance of Croats to New Zealand .... There is always a clause for Croats, abroad as well as in our homeland: one has sent us away from our homes, another has awaited us here .... (Niko Nedjeljko Radovic, *Pucki List*, 16 Svibanj 1901)

In 1909, *The North Auckland Age* also published a letter written by a Croatian gumdigger:

> Austrians are men just as much as Britishers and what is good for the one race should be good for the other. The only reason the British digger has for disliking the Austrian is that the latter worked harder than a Britisher .... I have always heard that the British country was the country of fair play before I came to New Zealand but here it seems as though the law tried to do all it could to injure myself and my countrymen even to the extent of trying to take our bread and butter from us and to refusing us the right to work .... I don't see any reason why there should be any difference made between the Briton and the Austrian ... I am etc, one of the Ich. (*The North Auckland Age*, March 8, 1909: 5)

General fears about Croats were voiced again during World War I when Austria-Hungary fought alongside the German and Ottoman Empires against France, the United Kingdom, tsarist Russia, the United States and their allies. In New Zealand, Croats were regarded as 'enemy aliens' and the public constantly suspected the 'Austrians' of being spies. Previously, during the 1880s, Croats had been considered undesirable because they were Slavic. However, this was conveniently forgotten during World War I and Croats were seen as the enemy as a result of being Austrian. In an article written in 1914, the editor of *Zora* (The Dawn), a Croatian newspaper published in New Zealand, criticised both the New Zealand government and public for continuing to refer to Croats as Austrians:

> ... Are we Austrians or Croats?
>
> Upon the arrival of Croats in New Zealand, the colonists replaced the name 'Croat' (Hrvat) with 'Austrian' and this has remained up until the present date. Croats left their homeland to be free of German dictatorship, but then they had the great misfortune of being christened with the name 'Austrians' which they loathed ....
>
> Croats upheld their native language from as far back as the fifth century – throughout this period, constant battles with Pan-germanians and Mongolians, the name 'Croat' has endured, while the borders of the Croatian Kingdom remain unaltered – Croatian kings and political leaders were being killed and still the Croatian language flourishes ....
>
> I would like to take this opportunity to humbly ask the authorities of New Zealand's Government as well as the public, that when coming in contact with our people that you refer to us as 'Croatian' and in no way 'Austrian' (German) because the time has come to put an end to this incorrectness. I would also like to request that the members of society aboard steamboats be made aware of this and to inform their clerks that they respect the names of Croatian passengers. Whenever the passengers are mentioned they are always labelled 'Austrians' (their names are never mentioned) ....
>
> Our newspaper maintains with all its available resources that the name 'Croat' be adopted by the English people in this colony. At the same time it calls upon the already settled Croats that when they find themselves in a situation with those who are behind the times to undo the injustices. (*Zora*, 3 January 1914)

It is evident in this article that the author references history in order to demonstrate that Croatia is a legitimate national identity and therefore independent of Germany and the Austro-Hungarian empire. This desire to distance themselves from their Austrian label, however, did not prevent the New Zealand government from placing some Croats in prison camps, like the one on Somes Island (Hingley 1979: 29).

In November 1914, the important German gum market went into decline and this had evident repercussions for the New Zealand economy. With this

Dalmatian internees on Somes Island, 1915. Northwood Studio. ATL 1/2-091248-F.

new economic crisis the intolerance towards Croats increased. In addition, New Zealanders felt that the war was a test of adulthood for the young colonial nation and many men responded enthusiastically to the call to arms (Phillips 1987). For the government, loyalty to Britain became paramount and the definition of an enemy alien was extended from 'the ordinary definition of an enemy alien as someone who owed allegiance to an enemy power' to 'any person who had become naturalised in New Zealand and who would have been an enemy alien had she or he not been naturalised, and also anyone reasonably suspected of being an enemy alien' (Bassett 1999: 158). Croats were accused of 'flying Austrian flags, drilling with rifles dropped off by a German submarine and preparing a beachhead for a German invasion of New Zealand' (Bassett 1999). Moreover, Croatian women, who comprised just three per cent of all Croatian immigrants in New Zealand, were suspected of dressing as men and spying for the Germans.

As a consequence of these almost hysterical fears, numerous petitions appeared demanding the internment of all Croats in Northland. In June 1916, the government devised the solution of sending all Croats to the Parengarenga gumfield. Parengarenga was chosen because of its isolated location and because the gumdiggers already working there were mostly Croats and Maori. Yet, it was not the Croats who protested against this proposal. Rather it was those who were going to be directly financially affected – the gum dealers. They immediately elected a delegation to take their complaints against this proposal to the government in Wellington. They opposed the idea of gumdiggers being confined to a field that would be owned by a single company and could not be accessed by other tradesmen. The sitting Member of Parliament for

Kaipara, Gordon Coates, objected to the Parengarenga proposal along with the gumdiggers. After considering all of these protests, the Massey Government, which depended on Coates' vote, decided to send an Aliens Commission to investigate the accusations against the Croats (Bassett 1999: 162; Jelicich 1990).

Again, like the Kauri Gum Industry Commissioners in 1898, the new investigators were sent to judge Croatian behaviour and character. The Commission report was published in full in both the *Auckland Star* and the *New Zealand Herald*. Even though their findings were favourable and they praised the Croatian gumdiggers for being good and loyal citizens, they were unable to put New Zealanders entirely at ease. As the war dragged on, the public resumed its demand for something to be done about the Croats. They suggested the government should either send them to the front lines or have them interned. In 1917, complaints arose about Croats taking advantage of the fact that British males were far off fighting a war, leaving them free to buy up their land, take away their jobs and eventually move in on their women (Bassett 1999; Trlin 1979; Čizmić 1981). Croats were forced to prove their loyalty in every possible way.[4] However, no matter what they did to demonstrate their patriotism, they were seen as people who threatened the very core of New Zealand society simply by their presence.

In 1918, amidst the ruins of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Croatia entered into an alliance with other southern Slavic countries and on 29 October in the city of Zagreb, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was proclaimed. A few weeks later, the Allies signed the armistice with Austria-Hungary and Germany. With the fighting over, the Croats detained in New Zealand labour camps and prisons assumed that their suffering would soon end. Once again reports circulated describing their good behaviour and loyalty to the Crown. However, a policeman complained that the Croats' enthusiasm for work had dropped considerably following the armistice. Hence the Government decided to keep all Croats interned until October 1919 – almost one year after the end of the war.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have revealed that New Zealand society at the turn of the nineteenth century was dominated by ethnocentrism and prejudice. As reflected in New Zealand's immigration policy, in order to create national unity, the government prized racial and cultural purity. Nationalities were considered welcome in the colony according to the degree to which they were similar to the colonising population. According to this colonial classification of peoples, Southern Europeans, including Croats, were not considered worthy of populating a 'workers' paradise'. Moreover, those who managed to make it to the gumfields were placed under constant surveillance. This resulted in them being constantly stereotyped in accordance with the modes of representation that were expressive of the economic and political anxieties manifest in New Zealand at that time. Considered to be 'aliens', 'a danger', and finally 'alien

enemies', Croatian immigrants developed a constantly changing identity. Therefore, in one way their identity was determined by the various ways they were represented in their host society. However, in another way, they shaped and interpreted their own identity by actively responding to these images of themselves. In summary, the identity of Croats in New Zealand was constantly transformed through this dual process of representation and resistance. As one of my correspondents put it:

> Our old people here didn't know that they are Croats … they had a village identity, … they didn't know that people from Slavonia and Dalmatia were the same people, no, they treated Slavonias as strangers … anyway they were called Austrians here … that was OK at the beginning, they didn't mind being called Austrians … but later on they had a lot of problems … they were seen as enemies … ohhh … in reality they hated the Austro-Hungarian Empire, I mean the only reason for them to move from Dalmatia to New Zealand was the exploitation of their own country by Austrians … a lot of problems really …and the British gumdiggers didn't like them …. In addition to that our people are mostly Catholics and it was a priest here, Don Zana, an Austrian priest … he thought that Austrian gumdiggers can speak German, but the only language they could understand was Croatian hence many avoided Don Zana … and he didn't like it … he thought that they are plotting something against him … a lot of problems really. Anyway during the First World War many of them learnt that they are Croats … but to be Croatian meant nothing to British … they didn't really have a good opinion about Slavs … and again, after the First World War, when the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was created they had to learn that they are Yugoslavs … ohhh … it wasn't easy for them … my father was literate and he knew that he is a Croat of course, but many others didn't know that … they couldn't understand … the only thing they cared about was to have a peaceful life here, to have a right to work and save some money … and at the end many of them wanted to be just New Zealanders, but they were never just New Zealanders …they were always something more …. I mean it was always very clear who is a real New Zealander … and those who claimed that they were Croats, after returning to Croatia … many of them realised that they actually don't belong there … it is a sad story … . (D.J., Auckland 2001)

By combining Anderson's (1991) idea of the 'imaginary' community with Žižek's (1993) conception of the element of fantasy involved in the creation of these communities, we discover how the collective imaginary is always sustained by the presence of something that cannot be defined. This something is, in the last instance, seen as 'a way of life' which stands in for the whole of community or 'the nation Thing'. However, the process through which different communities are unified is always complicated by both internal and external forces. In the case of Croats in New Zealand at the turn of the nineteenth century, their identity was shaped in accordance with not only their social position, but also the political changes that were occurring in the Balkans.

FINAL REMARKS ON PART ONE

In Chapter One, I described how the bio-politics that emerged during the nineteenth century introduced new disciplinary and regulatory techniques into both European and colonial society. However, while due to the exercise of power the British saw their Empire as a sort of unity, at the same time in the Austro-Hungarian Empire this notion of unity was never strong. Many European historians writing about the rule of Austria-Hungary at the beginning of the twentieth century stressed that Austria clearly lacked the 'soul and energy' that defined the unity of the British Empire. They argued that Austria-Hungary failed to 'penetrate beyond the surface of its subjects' sense of self' and, therefore, rather than developing a strong sense of collective identity, created only an 'abnormal' 'fragmented body' (Sluga 2001). Even though those historians stressed the failure of the Austro-Hungarian Empire to change the character of its people and establish a collective will, they nevertheless showed how both models of colonisation produced the same effect: the de-territorialisation and consequent re-territorialisation of people.

Due to global processes and dynamics of the two empires, British and Austro-Hungarian, Maori and Croatian histories intersected. These two peoples met on the gumfields of the Far North. Here, both groups occupied similar positions and both were subjected to different forms of racism. Over time, they connected and developed a relationship, one marked by a significant number of intermarriages. In Part Two I analyse recollections of the relationship between Maori and Croats on the gumfields. This relationship is often described as harmonious. I will argue, however, that it can only be explained with reference to the wider social context within which it occurs. The gumfields, where the two peoples met, came into being as a result of the global process of colonisation. The wider context thus produced and defined this new social relationship. Further to this, I will show that Croats and Maori were not isolated on the gumfields, nor did they develop their 'harmonious relationship' simply because of their 'compatibility'. Rather, their relationship was shaped by the political, economic and social forces that linked the gumfields to the wider interests of the colonial powers.

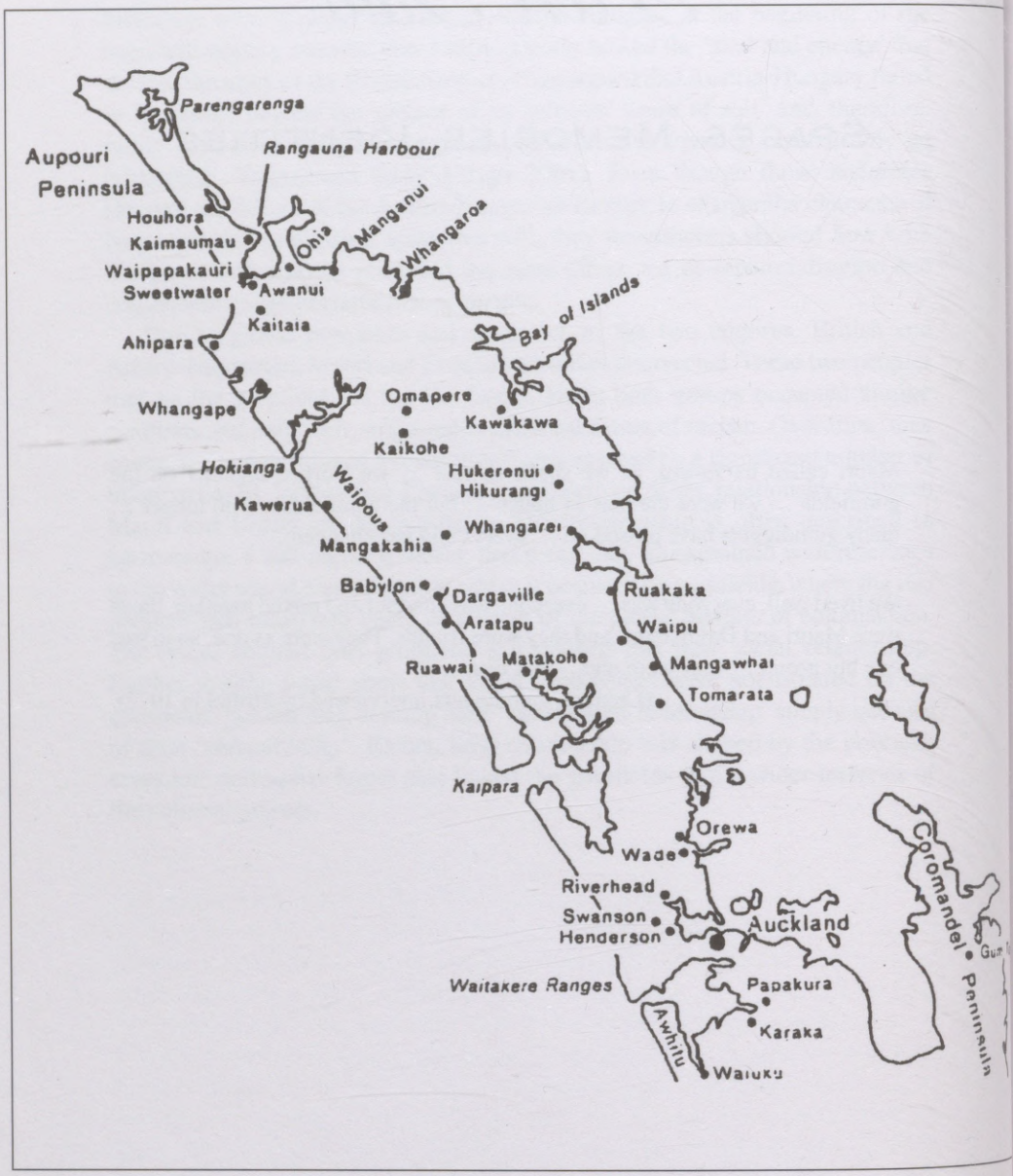
Part Two

Spaces, Memories, Identities

Maori called us *Tarara*, as we speak so fast … we worked together on the gumfields … we were the best of mates … but the gumfields are no longer … many gumdiggers have passed on … everything has changed …

We lived well, everyone was … everyone was cheerful and mixed together, those were Maori and Dalmatians, and they were friends. They were as one, so to say, one big group … they were one … not two …

(Croatian gumdiggers interviewed by Stoffel in 1973).



Gumfields of the Far North. Hayward 1989

Introduction

The relationship between Maori and Croats began on the gumfields. As, in their own way, both groups were excluded from the dominant culture, they soon connected and formed lasting bonds. However, this encounter did not take place on every gumfield, as both groups were confined to the most isolated areas. For this reason, the places where contacts between Maori and Croatian were most intense were the remote regions of Lake Ohia, Ahipara, Waipapakauri and Parengarenga in the Far North of New Zealand

During the 1950s the gumdigging industry stopped because synthetic substitutes for gum were created. As a result, most Maori and Croatian gumdiggers left these places and moved to the cities or nearby villages in search of new work. In the process, they left behind empty shanties and small huts, the machinery used for digging and washing gum, schools they had built for their children, dance halls and post offices. Almost overnight, what were once places populated with hundreds or even thousands of people suddenly became ghost towns.

New Zealand history is full of such ghost towns. Settlements were hastily established alongside short-lived industries, such as gold mining and gumdigging, and were just as quickly deserted when the demand for the particular product stopped or the resource was depleted. Often these dead economies of the past have found a home in local heritage museums, where they usually symbolise the pioneering era of early British immigrants in New Zealand. Ironically, the rebirth of the gumdigging industry in local heritage museums resembles Foucault's idea of heterotopic spaces (Foucault 1986). Most of these museums are meticulously ordered, in opposition to the mess and jumble of the life on the gumfields. They appear to stage the early immigrants' desire to 'civilise' the wilderness. It seems, in the end, that it is the museum that fulfils their mission to tame the new country. But something has been somehow forgotten in these displays framed by the notion of 'real' New Zealand history. And Maori-Croatian stories about life on the gumfields clearly belong to this 'unrecorded' space.

All historical narratives leave something unrecorded; they represent a collective past that society chooses to respect as its history. But clearly, there is not just one collective memory about the past. On the contrary, as Maurice Halbwachs (1992) argues, there are as many collective memories as there are groups and institutions in a society. Furthermore, Maori and Croatian memories about their encounter on the gumfields, even though not recorded by official New Zealand history, are still alive and vivid. These memories are mainly orally transmitted from one generation to another and have stayed within the local community.

Apart from these oral accounts, there are other traces that indicate a close bond between the two groups on the gumfields. On many tombstones near the gumfields, inscriptions are written in both Maori and Croatian: *he tuhu aroha na te, počivao u miru*. There is a billboard at the entrance to the township of Kaitaia written in three languages, Maori, Croatian and English, which reads *haere mai, dobrodošli, welcome*, on one side, and *haere ra, sretan put* and *farewell* on the other. The local Maori radio station in Kaitaia includes Croatian songs on its playlist and many members of the Dalmatian Club in Kaitaia are Maori. There are also Maori families with Croatian surnames all over Muriwhenua. There are family albums written in Maori and Croatian and literary works, both published and unpublished, that were inspired by this history. In this section, I will examine some of these traces of the Maori-Croatian encounter.

I am aware that the way I connect and analyse those traces is inscribed with my theoretical approach and that, in this context, my own writing becomes a 'partial truth'. I am also aware that, in the same way that official resources are partial and incomplete, 'subjugated knowledges', such as Maori-Croatian memories of the gumdigging industry, also represent history from a particular perspective. As Andreas Huyssen (1995) points out, there is no such thing as pure memory. The experience of an event always differs from one's memory of it, as recollection is a form of representation that contaminates the event with the systems of meaning that are used to structure it. Hence, the chapters that follow do not simply record recollections of life on the gumfields. Rather, I explore the discursive space through which these memories are constructed

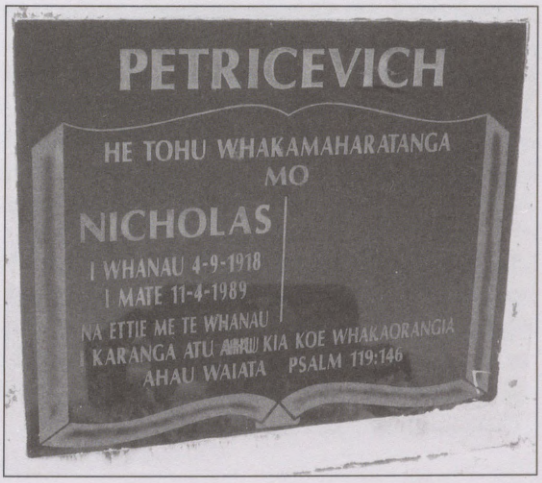
Sign at the entrance to Kaitaia.

Clockwise, from top:

Tombstone near the Opoka gumfield, inscription written in Croatian.

Tombstone, inscription written in Maori.

Tombstone, inscription written in Maori, Croatian and English language.



and re-constructed and examine the relations of subjectivity and identity that evolve in, and through, these different discourses. Clearly, through the process of remembering, the gumfields have gained many new layers of meaning, for both those who are included in official representations of the past and those who are on the margins. Accordingly, I will show how memory has transformed the gumfields into a kind of invisible living memorial through which the past is constantly negotiated and re-negotiated (see Kahn 1996). Most importantly, I show how talking about life on the gumfields has become, for both Maori and Croats, a euphemistic way of talking about identity.

Chapter Three
NARRATIVES OF THE GUMFIELDS AS A HOME

'THE SCARS IN THE GROUND'

> The gum lands spread around me in a waste that was endless and boundless and treeless, ugly in their desolation and their emptiness (*New Zealand Herald*, 11 February 1907, p. 6).
>
> It is a bleak and desolate place, and you feel as though you have reached the end of the earth (Hingley 1979: 3).

The gumfields have been described by various authors as desolate, isolated, poor wastelands. These wastelands, however, appear to be a place full of memories for my correspondents – the descendants of Maori and Croatian gumdiggers.

My first view of the gumfields impressed me. I saw glimpses of still-barren country and ruined shanties hidden in the bush. I tried to envision the life of the thousands of people who lived and worked there a century ago. For me, the gumfields seemed nothing more than a sad reminder of the past. One old Maori woman, who lives near the Ahipara gumfield, later[1] told me that 'you have to read the scars in the ground'. After this, I essentially found myself seeking to understand these 'scars in the ground'. Her stories about the 'Opoka', as well as stories told by other people, are filled with descriptions of the landscape and events:

> Opoka means digging holes … this is a memory place for me. Everything is completely different now but I can read scars in the ground. There were a lot of homes here … everybody shared the land. We all dug gum. People used to say that a shanty town was here. I don't call it a shanty town. I call it home. Maori and *Tarara* were once here. My grandparents knew how to speak *Tarara* … a lot of Maori spoke *Tarara* … and still some of us can sing *Tarara* songs. (a Maori woman who as a child worked in Ahipara gumfield)

For Maori, the land is full of ancient meanings deeply rooted in their culture. To my correspondent, this empty plateau is full of signs, messages and memories – it is home. However, the gumfields became 'home' for some Maori through a specific historical situation. Initially, it was a place far away from home to where one travelled to earn a little money. As Matire Kereama, an elder from Te Aupouri tribe, recalls:

Opoka gumfield.

I remember, as a young girl, how … money … had to be found to build the new church. About that time the people heard about the gum fields in the Far North. Big money was to be made there, so they decided to go to the gumlands and see for themselves. They started off early, leaving the old folk at home. The women with children travelled on horseback and the fittest women and the men walked…. They were going to a place they knew nothing about, but by keeping together, anybody who met trouble would have ready help. Indeed, it was rather wonderful how in the old days our people lived, loved and died together…. The party settled beside the big lake called Waiparera. Several other camps were located nearby and the people came to welcome the newcomers to the gumfields of the north. Before long a temporary camp was established…. Next day each family found a new camping site, building their houses out of tents and other materials…. Building those houses was certainly fast work … by nightfall a brand new tent and sack village was in full bloom. Then the hunt began for material called 'kauri gum'. The local people showed to our folk what to do, what to look for and where to dig. They also instructed them how to dive for the gum in the lake…. Some went off to dig for the stuff which they gathered in loads, each digger putting all he found into a common lot … My father … took it to the market at Auckland by the boat which called weekly at Kaimaumau … after a few years … our people returned home for the opening of the Catholic church. (Kereama 1968a: 27–30)

Matire's recollections chart a different map to the one where the gumfields are seen as home. In this case they are a place her people 'knew nothing about', a place connected to the unknown activity of digging kauri gum. As in all migratory narratives, home was something left behind. The gumfields only became a home through the process of the economic development of colonial New Zealand. But they did not emerge solely through the quest for work, they were constructed through the regimes of power that operated at that time.

Careful analysis of Matire's story reveals that the journey to the gumfields was a result of colonialism. For instance, the fact her people needed money to build a church was a direct effect of the cash economy and Christianity introduced through colonisation. Maori travelled to the gumfields only because other types of work were closed to them at that time. Moreover, people who worked on the gumfields were considered to be at the bottom of the social ladder. Through learning how to dig gum and to construct temporary huts they developed a new locality: and the fact that the gum her father had to travel to Auckland to sell was exported to Britain, Germany and America reveals that the gumdiggers' lives depended on the global market.

While from a European perspective the gumfields were considered to be solely of economic importance, for Maori the Far North happened to be a place of much deeper spiritual significance. Some of the gumfields are on the spiritual pathway to the place which, according to Maori mythology, is the original ancestral home of Hawaiki. Hence, Matire suggests to visitors to the Far North that they try to imagine different journeys there:

> When you visit Ninety Mile Beach allow your thoughts to turn to the travellers who have preceded you along the sandy pathway, from the ancient Maori spirits padding their weary way, to Hongi Hika and his raiders of the 1820's who used the beach as an invasion route; from Ngaruhe, the Aupouri hero who was killed at Hukatere Hill, to the gum diggers and missionaries who made their mark in the north and ended their days at Te Rerenga Wairua.... When you visit the Far North steep yourself in the legend and mythology of this famous shore. Leap if you have refrained from drinking the Waters of Death, sit silently by the lighthouse and listen to the whisperings of departing souls, offering your quiet 'Haere ra, haere ra' (Farewell, farewell). (Kereama 1968b: 74)

In the realm of myth, Maori history begins in a time before creation. The gods, Rangi and Papa, were made after the creation of the universe and after the birth of the mythical homeland Hawaiki. Papa, the earth mother, and Rangi, the sky father, had six sons: the gods of the forest, sea, crops, winds, wild foods and mankind. The god of the forest, Tane, split Rangi from Papa and brought light to the world. Tane created forests, birds and people. One of the most important heroes of this time was Maui. He provided important resources for people and shaped the environment. With his magical jawbone he fished up the North Island of New Zealand while sitting in his waka, or canoe, which became the South Island. Maui's fish was rediscovered by Kupe, the great navigator from Hawaiki. Due to war and overpopulation in Hawaiki, seven canoes (the Tainui,

Te Arawa, Matatua, Kurahaupo, Aotea, Takitimu and Tokomaru) followed Kupe and voyaged to New Zealand (Metge 1971, Salmond 1994, Orbell 1996). These new lands were named Aotearoa, the Land of the Long White Cloud.

Muriwhenua, the Far North, is believed to be the tail of Maui's fish. It is also the place where Kupe first landed in Aotearoa and is, as a consequence, the place where the history of Maori New Zealand begins.[2] Muriwhenua is important to all Maori, not just those tribes that survive today 'under the names of Ngati Kuri, Te Aupouri, Ngai Takoto, Te Rarawa, Ngati Kahu and Te Paatu' (Urlich Cloher 2002: 6). It is the spiritual pathway (Te Ara Wairua) along which the spirits of all Maori dead must travel to reach their first and final home of Hawaiki. The spiritual journey starts at Ahipara, then proceeds along the coast of Te Hiku o te Ika (the tail of the fish – Ninety Mile Beach) between the high and low tides to Te Rerenga Wairua (Cape Reinga), the place of departure:

> There is a tree there – a *kahika* – on the side of the cliff. The branch of the tree hangs downward and then bends up at the bottom. The spirits wait here for an opportune time to take their final plunge into the water, waiting for the seaweed and kelp to separate in the flow of the tide, to expose Te Pokatorere, an underground cave that tunnels in below where the lighthouse now stands. They surface where the two oceans, the Tasman and Pacific meet … on reaching Three Kings, they sing laments before leaving for their spiritual home of Hawaiki. (Urlich Cloher 2002: 34)

The tribes of Muriwhenua see themselves as the guardians of this precious ancestral treasure. Everywhere in Muriwhenua, place names mark the links with the past. On the north-east coast, for example, there are Kupe's gardens (Nga Huanga-a-Kupe), Kupe's cauldron (Te Omu-a-Kupe) and Kupe's Hat (Te potae-o-Kupe). Every beach, island, mountain or hill is associated with a story of an ancestor's life, battle or resting place (Urlich Cloher 2002). History is recorded throughout the land and through the whakapapa (genealogy) of the local people. It is precisely here, in this highly spiritual place for Maori, that the kauri gum industry developed.

Gumdiggers also left their mark on the landscape. The canals and holes they left behind added new layers of meaning to the land. New names also appeared in the whakapapa of Maori families:

> When I was learning my *whakapapa* I noticed some names finishing on –ich, *Tarara* names… 'How that happened?' I asked … 'Oh, it happened on the gumfields,' my mum said. (Dover Samuels, Auckland 1999)

Although Maori-Croatian contact is framed by the gumfields and became part of local Maori history, it occurred mainly due to the global forces that produced the gumfields. It was this wider context that defined Maori-Croatian contact, and enabled it to happen in the first place. However, before I start to explore this encounter, I will analyse accounts of the Croat's first contact with the gumfields.

Te Rerenga Wairua (Cape Reinga).

GUMFIELDS AS 'HOMELESS HOME'

Various sources, such as the Kauri Gum Commission Report, family books, poems and letters, show that the Croatian migrants' first encounters with the gumfields were depressing. While the Far North meant so much to Maori, to many Croats it was nothing more than a swampy wasteland that looked like the most godforsaken place on earth. The large holes that gumdiggers left behind as they moved from field to field only strengthened this initial impression. This uprooted barren land was washed out by rainstorms. Moreover, gumdiggers burnt the thick scrub that hindered their digging. Repeated fires streaked the gumfields with white spots of potter's clay, leaving no trace of fertile soil. Winding rutted roads looked like a silvery trail of water that faded into the distance. For many, the shock was devastating:

> Mate Franich, who came to New Zealand in 1894 at the age of nineteen, initially felt that he could never become attached to the country. It had no people, no history, no culture, and was hardly civilised. It had no attractive old villages with houses clustered together on hillsides, no music, singing and dancing, no girls …, no food or wine as could be found in Dalmatia. The only thing in New Zealand was work, and more work, day after day, on cheerless swampland, followed by night after night sitting up half asleep scraping the gum. (Sutherland 1963: 66)

> I was just 16 … when I arrived on the gumfield … it was a night … my father waited for me and he prepared a dinner … he lived in a small shanty … oh … I travelled half of the world for a better life, for a better house and what I saw here, in my promised land was just a small shanty, like a tent … I was shocked. 'Where is the house,' I asked my father, 'Where is the cellar … where is the wine????' He smiled and said 'Nothing of that my son.' Next morning I saw the gumfield … wasteland … I was shocked … I wanted to go back home … my first day on the gumfield was awful … we worked very hard, from dawn till dusk … I said to my father 'If you worked like this back home we would have a good life there.' At least in Dalmatia we had our own land and house and we had a lot of friends. (Stoffel's interview with Vegar, 1972)

Vegar and Franich's perception of the gumfields as a meaningless empty space with 'no people, no history, no culture' corresponds with the colonial discourse of the time that portrayed all non-European countries as primitive and uncivilised. Sense of place is 'inseparable from the ideas that inform it' (Basso 1996: 84), inseparable from the discourse that creates its meaning. As Laclau and Mouffe (1985) argue, reality only exists as a meaningful whole within a network of meaning. Accordingly, one's sense of place is inseparable from the discourses that articulate and make visible 'objective' reality. While the barren land of the Far North may have looked depressing, it meant completely different things to Maori and Croats. For Maori, its specificity was constructed through its link with the past. For Croats, it simply reminded them of their dislocation and diasporic condition. Unlike migrants today, who can easily stay in touch with their families, when Croats arrived in New Zealand it took months for a letter to reach its destination. They were distanced from everything that was known and familiar. Their relationship to the gumfields, therefore, was largely mediated by memories of what was left behind. Most importantly, it was mediated by the way Croatian immigrants as a group were inserted within the social relations of New Zealand. They were separated from their families, they were disorientated by a 'strange' landscape, 'strange language', and different customs, and they encountered unexpected racial prejudices from the British gumdiggers.

In 1908, the Croatian bard of the gumfields, Ante Kosovich, published a collection of eight lengthy poems entitled *From the Dalmatian in Exile*. Written in the manner of traditional folksongs, his poems reflect on the trials and sufferings of his compatriots.

> Dalmatia I have news to give you now
> Of your poor sons who suffer here and how,
> This wild, hard country beats them down
> It is a physical, as well as spiritual hell
> And these cold thoughts have spurred me on to tell
> Of how our bodies suffer, in the lonely hell
> Of gumfields

Like animals we come
To slave from dawn to dark
For kauri gum.

Kosovich's poems were originally written in Croatian and were often sung around the fire on the gumfields. He also had an audience in Croatia, in his native village of Gornji Zaostrog. During my research in Dalmatia, I visited Kosovich's village with local historian Vinko Dikovic. Today, Gornji Zaostrog is an abandoned village, a ghost town. While we were standing in front of what is left of Kosovich's house, Vinko started to recite one of the songs published in *From the Dalmatian in Exile*:

It was the year nineteen hundred
The year remembered as an awful one
For our people living over here
Hiding all over New Zealand's land
From the English who persecuted them
Reporting every news of them
Claiming to be the masters of the soil
Though it had never been so
And the fertile gumfields
Vast and harshly naked …

When he finished, he paused and started to cry. 'Do you have Ante Kosovich's book?' I asked. 'Oh, no,' he replied, 'but when I was a child my parents used to recite these songs.' He then explained that all the villagers used to gather at one of the houses, especially during the long winter evenings, and talk about politics and the villagers who were working in New Zealand. They read letters sent from New Zealand, though none of these described the hard work and discrimination that Dalmatians experienced on the gumfields. Family pride prevented most gumdiggers from writing about their suffering and shock. When Kosovich published his collection of poems describing life on the gumfields in detail, his fellow villagers in Dalmatia realised that something was wrong in the 'promised country'. However, because the money they received from New Zealand was the main income for many, Kosovich's songs did not stop the flow of emigration.

Work, and what work
Standing in water all day
Ten feet down in the earth
Digging for that cursed gum
Look up the sky, and ask if you are a man at all
Come home, dragging your sack full of gum
Light up the fire, get your tea, boiled meat and potatoes
No women here to do it for you

Sit down on a box, start the night's job of scraping the day's gum clean of dirt
Keep at this till your lids drop
And what do you get for all this?
Precious little, when the month's tally is taken
Here enters the villain, the gum buyer, agent of the rich city merchant
Look out for this fellow, he'll cheat you all he can … and he does
On his scales your gum always weighs less
You try to argue it out with him … but you have scant English
'Not that much master … this much'
He protests, 'Do I look like the kind of man who would rob the honest toiler??'

Kosovich (1908) also describes in detail a typical gumdigger's house:

Let me tell you about the gumdigger's home
No stone or wood did make the walls,
Nor rain or wind was fenced off by a dome.
Instead, the ragged sacks did cover all,
The roof, the back, the front, and if one called
He could not grab a knob for there was none.
A sack was hanged, not door, to keep the sun away, since locks are for a better thief
And that abode seemed free from such a grief.
Yet grieve they did while days would turn to years,
In homeless homes with eyes relieved of tears

The gumfields were perceived as a 'homeless home', not just by Kosovich, but by the majority of Croatian gumdiggers. They dreamed about their homeland and life away from the gumfields. As a result, their 'real home' became more and more associated with the past, while the present was seen to be out of time. In this context, we can say that their dislocation was temporal as well as spatial (see Ahmed 2000). They were living in the past and for the past, creating mental pictures of a 'homeland of the mind' (Rushdie 1991). Migrants' narratives, in this sense, invert Lowenthal's idea that 'the past is a foreign country'. Clearly, for the first generation of Croatian immigrants on the gumfields, the present was 'foreign' and the past was home. Treated by their host country as 'different' (Žižek's 'not being like us'), they withdrew into a community of their own and cultivated nostalgic memories of 'the old country'.

These homelands of the mind painted a place of safety and comfort in sentimental colours. Here, they found their families and friends, and their senses were filled with familiar sensations: the smell of pine trees, figs, olives and vineyards, the feel of the hot rays of the sun, the hard stony surface of the Dalmatian coast and the warm, blue Adriatic Sea. All of these things were different from the mild, humid, constantly windy New Zealand air and the cold

waves of the Pacific Ocean. Rudi Sunde, who worked on the gumfields up until the end of the industry, expressed this dreaming about his homeland in his poem 'Figs and the Vine'.

I left my homeland, the figs and the vines,
I left my dear parents, I left them behind;
No more did I see them, nor the dark blue sea,
I sailed away, my fortune to seek.

The gumfields, the gumfields,
that's where I went,
To the gumfields, the gumfields
my life there I spent;
Hooking and digging and scraping the gum,
On the gumfields, the gumfields
oh why did I come? …

I landed in New Zealand at the age of sixteen,
A lonely young man, as homesick can be;
I made my way northward, by boat and by train,
Travelled to the gumfields on the dark
windswept plain.

Life there was hell, life there was rough,
Of swamps and cold water I sure had enough;
Digging by day and scraping by night,
Scraping away by dull candlelight …

Many's the year I lived on the field,
Scheming and dreaming that one day I'd leave;
I dreamed of my homeland
The friends left behind
I dreamed of my homeland,
The figs and the vines …
(The Dalmatian Pioneer Trust's booklet, 1997)

In her analysis of migration, Sara Ahmed argues that the question is not just about how migrants are located within a new social space, or how they create their homelands of the mind, but also about how 'bodies re-inhabit space' and even how 'spaces re-inhabit bodies' (Ahmed 2000: 90). The issue is that leaving home involves leaving not only the lived experience of everyday life, but also the environment that forms part of the subject's identity. As she puts it, 'being-at-home suggests that the subject and space leak into each other, *inhabit each other*' (Ahmed 2000: 89). Migrant narratives, therefore, express a triple dislocation: spatial (home as a particular place), inner spatial (home as a place

we are inhabited by) and temporal (home as the past). Together, all of these dislocations form the basis of hope for a new beginning, the home to be created in the future. Many accounts of the way Croats felt on the gumfields are clearly shaped by these dislocations and the hope for a better future:

> Jakov wakes reluctantly, for a moment not recalling where he is. But the cold reality of the prickly sacking blankets and flattened *mingi mingi* mattress over hard slats soon reminds him. He lies for a moment treasuring the still vivid dream. He had been back in the village of his birth in Dalmatia, surrounded by friends and family, all talking nineteen to the dozen. There was singing, dancing and arguing in the streets in the usual evening get-together. A glass of good wine in his hand, he felt happy and warm .... Jakov shakes off the dream. Swinging his feet onto the pounded earth floor of his one room shanty he asks himself, as he does every morning, 'Why did I come to this country?' He answers himself, as he always does, 'For a better life....' Things though are not quite as he expected.... It's often difficult just to make ends meet. Despite this Jakov remains determined not to return home.... Here there is still some hope. (Puharich 1997: 6)

Jakov's insistence that he came to New Zealand 'for a better life', shows his reluctance to identify with the present. For him, on the gumfields real life is located only in the past and the future. His perseverance expresses a sort of double nostalgia, the nostalgia of the past transmitted into the future. Freud's (1953) description of the unusual temporal dimension of daydreaming fits these migrant narratives. According to Freud, daydreaming manifests a temporal paradox where past, present and future are strung together on the thread of the wish that runs through them. Indeed, Croatian immigrants' experiences on the gumfields fit this topology. Through their memories they are transported to a childhood scene of an idyllic pastoral landscape full of pleasant Mediterranean smells. This idealised image contrasts with the 'harsh' environment of the gumfields. Memory, in this sense, soothes the plight of the present, the bleak gumfields where there is 'nothing but bush and swamp and tea tree', and serves as a drive for their wish for a better life. 'Why did I come to this country?' The answer is always the same, 'for a better life'. Even though they were represented mostly as 'hell', the gumfields became a site of hope and new beginnings through the desire for a better future. With the aid of nostalgia, Croatian migrants gradually built up a new home on the gumfields.

When discussing the creation of what she calls 'multi-locationality' or the 'multi-placedness of home', Avtar Brah asks when a location becomes home for migrants (Brah 1996: 193). In the case of the Croatian migrants, it was their encounter with Maori gumdiggers, as well as the establishment of family ties, that facilitated their construction of a new home on the gumfields. Their relationships with Maori and the establishment of a settled life were not left to chance. They were shaped by the wider context of power relations that marginalised both groups. Brah argues that the way a particular group is situated in and through a wide variety of discourses 'is central to how different groups

come to be relationally positioned in a given context' (Brah 1996: 183). Both Maori and Croatian gumdiggers were stigmatised on the gumfields. In one way, the stigmatising process excluded them from the dominant culture. However, in another way, it is exactly this process of exclusion that constituted the conditions of their relationship. The bond between Maori and Croat was formed through the shared experience of what Ahmed would call 'not being fully at home'. Clearly, the Muriwhenua gumfields were home in a wider context for Maori gumdiggers, yet the experience of social exclusion constructed their position as being 'out of place'. In this context, the common ground for Maori and Croats was their 'positionality' within the social, their 'out-of-place-ness', which led to the formation of their new homelands.

Chapter Four

MAORI AND TARARA ON THE GUMFIELDS

Little has been written about the relationship between Croats and Maori. In the course of my research I interviewed numerous Croatian-Maori and almost all expressed a very romanticised view of their history. According to them, relations between Croats and Maori were harmonious because their cultures were similar:

> The Tarara and Maori were very friendly, very similar culture. I reckon the Tarara Maori mixture, as far as children goes, is the best looking mix you can get. (Eva Housham, Kaitaia 1999)

> The Dallie and Maori got on so well. There is no other race that got on so well like the Dallie and Maori. (Martha Radich, Awanui 1999)

> Maori and Dalmatians did well together. We are similar people you know, we have similar culture … we dance, we sing, we do fishing, we laugh, we are honest, we are hard working people, yes … we are very similar. (Lina Petricevich, Ngataki 1999)

> Tarara and Maori, that's the best possible mix you can think … very similar people, same customs …. (Urlich, Lake Ohia 2000)

> [Maori and Croats] seem to be compatible and live more like whanau, that is family, one big family; no colour consciousness, related very easily to each other …. They also enjoyed playing games and dancing together …. (interview with an old Maori women). (Szaszy 1990: 50)

> We both love to eat, love to be noisy, love to entertain. Tarara are boisterous like the Maori and love to socialise …. They are also just as strongly family orientated as Maori. That's one of the greatest aspects of the relationship. They have an almost identical feeling about life and death, they cry and wail the same as us. That's why Maori and Tarara got on so well. It was a lucky mix. (Simon Petricevich, Auckland 2002)

> We Dalmatians got on well with the Maoris from the start. It was always as if we were related, maybe somewhere back in time. The Maoris had a name of their own for us; Tarara, from the sound of our speech, not unlike their own; the same broad vowels and rolled 'r's, the musical inflexion that belongs naturally to song. But it was more than that, an immediate liking, a recognition, as if Maori and Dalmatian were the same kind of people under the skin. (Batistich 1987: 35)

These narratives concur with the prevailing view in contemporary New Zealand that Maori and Croatian cultures are 'sympathetic' to one another. I will be discussing this likeness in more depth in Chapter Seven. In this chapter, I focus on the ways in which narratives such as these hide the trauma of the past. I will argue that the perceived similarity between Maori and Croatian cultures is an effect of both the processes of inclusion and exclusion that operated in colonial New Zealand and the way in which this regime of power posited these two groups in relation to one another. Moreover, this cultural positioning affected both groups externally and internally. As Stuart Hall argues, 'it is one thing to place some person or set of peoples as the Other of a dominant discourse. It is quite another thing to subject them to that 'knowledge', not only as a matter of imposed will and domination, but by the power of inner compulsion and subjective confrontation to the norm' (Hall 2000: 706).

'Broken Maori and Broken Croatian' – Hone Heke meets Marko Kraljević

Although the established opinion is that Maori and Croats had a very good relationship on the gumfields, the first written account of their encounter on the Muriwhenua gumfields paints a rather different picture. In the 1898 Kauri-Gum Industry Report and Evidence, the aim of which was to examine 'the normality' of Croatian gumdiggers and their suitability for life in the colony, three of the Maori gumdiggers interviewed by Commissioners gave the following statements:

> *Selwyn Heyward* (a Native of Warahi, living on the boundary of the Native and Crown land): I am a gum-digger, and own some land, and farm it. I do not like Austrians. I consider the Austrians are a danger in this district, on account of their bad behaviour to the native women. They have made advances to a number of girls, and some behaved in a very indecent manner towards them. It has had the effect of frightening our girls and women to go anywhere …. (*AJHR* 1898 H.- 12: 44)
>
> *George Hadfield* (Maori): … I often go away from home, and have to leave my wife, and she is very frightened of the Austrians. (AJHR 1898 H.- 12: 44)
>
> *Matthew Tupuni*, Native (interpreted by E. Evans): I am one of the chief Natives at Te Kao, and interested in this land …. There have been complaints against the Austrians on account of their behaviour towards our women. My daughter was one of those who was stopped and indecently spoken to by an Austrian, who exposed his person. I went to remonstrate, and one after the other said that it was not him who did it, and the matter had been allowed to drop …. Another complaint I have against them is that they dig gum on the Cemetery Reserve. There had been a piece of ground specially marked off, and which was considered tapu, and notices were posted up at the corners, in the Austrian language, warning them not to dig within the boundary of this land; but they ignored them, and dug gum within that tapu ground …. (*AJHR* 1898 H.- 12: 44)

This last account suggests that, in the beginning, some Croatian gumdiggers were ignorant of Maori customs and, being eager to find more gum, did not pay a lot of attention to Maori tapu sites. Together with mana and utu, tapu was one of the most important concepts in Maori society. Tapu literally means sacredness. However, as Metge explains, like many other Maori concepts, it cannot be translated into English by a single word. Tapu could be polluting as well as sacred and 'is closely associated with danger, anxiety and restrictions on freedom of action' (Metge 1995: 85). For example, burial grounds are always tapu and, in order to lift this *tapu*, everyone is supposed to wash their hands when they leave a cemetery (Salmond 1994).

Maori complaints about Dalmatian behaviour on the gumfields did not arouse any concerns among the Commissioners, as they were mainly interested in the statements given by British gumdiggers and the amount of money that Dalmatians sent back to their villages. Nevertheless, they indicate that, initially, problems arose between Maori and Croats as a result of misunderstanding.

Apart from these recorded Maori complaints about Dalmatians there are no other official accounts of their encounter at the time. In this instance, we need to remember that the Commissioners' interviews concentrated on the negative aspects of the Dalmatian presence on the gumfields. Hence, the statements given by the Maori gumdiggers should be read in that context. It is also worth noting that their statements were given in Maori and translated to the commissioners by the gumbuyer Edward Evans. Edward's father, Joseph Evans, was known as the 'King of the North' because he owned two hotels and several gum-stores,[1] leased a huge block of land from Maori for gumdigging and largely 'controlled the gumfields from Te Kao to Awanui' (Stokes 1997: 478). Around the time the Kauri-Gum Industry Report was being compiled, Evans senior employed 500 Croat, 300 Maori and 200 other European gumdiggers (Smith 1952: 133). Joseph Evans' sons learnt both Maori and Croatian. For example, the Croatian Ivan Kostanich recalls what occurred when a Croatian woman asked Evans to use the phone:

> The daughter of Luka Covic asked Evans if she could use the phone. He says 'As you wish'. She tells him she wants to talk. He tells her 'Go on talk.' So she starts to talk to another woman in Croatian language but she swears a lot. So he takes the receiver from her hand. 'You'll never use it again!' She says 'How come?' … 'What are you to that woman, why have you cursed?' He knew our tongue, he received our newspapers … yes … and he says 'You'll never do it again!' And he never let her use it again. For he knows our language, he understood it. And he was in business of course, he had hotels, a gumstore of course, he needed to learn, it could be that he learned it in the business, and he found use to it. As our people spoke no English. (Stoffel's interview with Ivan Kostanich)

This coexistence of three languages is noteworthy and can serve as a basis for analysing Maori-Croatian contact. For example, during the 1970s in the course of his study of Slav languages in New Zealand, Hans-Peter Stoffel noticed that many Croats who used to work as gumdiggers often mixed English and Maori words with Croatian. Stoffel (1988) argues that Croatian gumdiggers were initially

monolingual speakers of their respective dialects. Similarly, a large proportion of Maori at that time spoke only their native language. In this respect, it appears likely that neither group felt the urge to learn English. Because both Maori and Croats preferred to work in groups and frequently met on the gumfields, they picked up a few words or, in some cases, learned each other's language. Over time, some Maori learned to speak a 'broken' Croatian and some Croats a 'broken' Maori. In this way, a sort of Maori-Croatian pidgin developed.

> Well, I learnt Croatian because there were a lot of Dalmatians here, on the gumfields. They come from 'Old Country'. They could not speak English when they arrived, which meant that I had to learn Croatian. My husband is Croatian and I wanted to know his language. At the beginning I spoke broken Croatian. Maori used to speak broken English and it was the same with Croatian – broken Croatian. (Stoffel's interview with a Maori woman conducted in Croatian)

This blending of the Maori and Croatian languages has also been depicted by Selwyn Muru, a Maori artist who grew up in the Far North. In his screenplay 'Moj Dobri, E hoa', Muru describes how Maori gumdiggers helped one newcomer from Dalmatia, Teresko, build his hut on the gumfields:

> *Mud walls for the hut are already up. SONNY, IVAN and TERESKO are flat out trying to have the shelter completed before dark … As the sun sets more friends arrive to help, and also to bring basic necessities. A ramshackle table; a roughly made bed; old mattress, a couple of makeshift chairs, old camp oven, 4 gallon tins, pots and pans, blankets, a broken mirror, a couple of tilly lamps for the night etc. Some friends are building up a large bonfire a safe distance away almost directly in front of the shack. Just on dark; the bonfire is lit. There is now a makeshift table created out of several planks plonked on boxes. The rest of the planks are placed on smaller boxes for forms to sit on. More friends arrive bringing fish heads for barbecuing, dried shark for cooking in the embers, several cartwheel bread, pipis, mussels etc. Two horsemen also pull up with a barrel each of homebrew. Very soon, a party with guitars, ukuleles and singing is in full swing.*
>
> SONNY
> E nuhi ana ra hia tatou katoa kua tatu mai nei i te po nei ki te whakarangatira to tatou hira i a Teresko. He pani i waenga nui i a tatou; waihora hei a tatou hei whanau mona. He tangata whakaiti; he hoa mahi no matou; he tangata pai. Kua tu to whare e Teresko. He hara i te whare mo nga kingi. E ngari ma te mea kua whai whare koe; he Kingi koe i tenei po.
>
> [*Na* [*Ears listen! Ears hear me out!*] *Greetings everyone for being here tonight to welcome our friend Teresko. He is an orphan in our midst; let us now be his family. He's a humble person, a fellow worker and a good man. Your house is up Teresko. It is not a house for a King. But as you now have a house; you are truly a King.*]

VOICES
Kia ora! Tena koe e Sonny! Cheers e hoa, etc. Speech Teresko! Korero Tarara! Make the speecha Teres! Yeah mate!

TERESKO
Dobro vece! [*Good evening*] Kia ora koutou; kia ora tatou.

This is an emotional time for him.

TERESKO
I feel sadah … I feel goodah! Sadah, 'cause I left my family in Dalmatia – goodah, cause I finda a new family here. Don't know how to thank you for the kindness. I have nothink in the pocket …

Slapping his trousers pockets with his hands.

TERESKO
… but plenty here for you.

Thumping his heart with his clenched right fist.

TERESKO
One day I learnah the Maori. I speakah like you; better than you. Kia ora tatou! Hvala! zivjeli. [*Thank you! Cheers*]

VOICES
Kia ora Teresko! Tino pai e hoa! Kia ora te pipi tarara etc.

Of course, this blending of languages did not happen separately from the blending of other cultural forms. One of the most interesting accounts of the Maori and Croatian cross-cultural encounter is given by Wiremu Tomas, the son of Ante Tomas, who came to New Zealand from Dalmatia in 1906 to work on the gumfields, and Heta Hetariki Wiremu, a Maori woman from Taonga on the Rangaunu Harbour. Wiremu Tomas describes the way Maori and Croats spent their evenings sitting by the campfire 'spinning yarns', events in which he participated as a small child.

> … When the Dallies arrived from Yugoslavia with just the bare fare they had nobody and nowhere to go – the Maoris befriended them when they came here – they lived with Maoris and ate fish and cabbages with them and the Maoris helped them … And they were called Tararas because of the way they talked – very fast and all excited, you couldn't make out a word … So they were just called 'Tony Tarara' and 'Jack Tarara' and that and everyone knew who you meant. But the Dallies were hard, they lived a working man's life, same as the Maoris …. Most of the time they were the best of mates, they trusted each other if they were short of tobacco or meat they borrowed from each other, even

> money .... In the evening after work the people would sit around the campfires drinking black tea and spinning yarns ... the Dallies would tell stories about the 'old country' and the Maoris would tell them about old Maori life. They would both tell about their heroes, the Dallies about how they were invaded by the Turks and one hero slayed the whole lot and the Maoris about Hone Heke, how tough he was and how many people he killed and ate the whole lot. They used to compete and try to outdo each other with their stories.
>
> The Dallies used to sit around the fire and sing about their heroes, how they fought in great battles and they had a book they used to recite from, and all the others used to sit nodding their heads and saying 'dobra, dobra' [good, good]. And when one got tired the book would be passed to the next one, who carried on. They used to play an instrument called the GUSLE that had one string and sounded something like a bagpipes, you know, its got a tune but there's another tune that's the same all the time and flat as hell. They made it out of an olive oil can and horsehair. (Tomas, n.d.: interview with Wiremu Tomas)

Descendants often identify the importance of oral tradition as one of the main similarities between Maori and Croatian cultures. I will first elaborate the meaning of oral culture in Maori society.

As many New Zealand anthropologists have noted, the main themes in pre-colonial Maori society were mana (prestige), tapu (sacredness) and utu (the principle of equal return) (Salmond 1994, Metge 1971). Mana, or prestige, was inherited from ancestors – the more important one's ancestors, the greater one's mana. Consequently, genealogical knowledge, or whakapapa, was very important, as it enabled group members to establish linkages with each other and with their hapu and iwi. It also gave group members 'the knowledge needed to manage relations with other groups' (Metge 1995: 91). Custodians of whakapapa were chosen very carefully. Elders usually selected one or two particular young people from the community.

Although mana inherited at birth was considered important, it did not necessarily secure one's position in society. It was possible to lose or even increase mana. Performing bravely in war, marrying into a good family or demonstrating good oratory skills on the marae (meeting house), for instance, could increase a person's mana. Good oratorical skills were deemed to be of great value. The best orators were capable of influencing communal policy and, for this reason, 'oratory became crucial to the exercise of leadership, and among the Maori it developed into an art' (Salmond 1994). The great orators used to recite genealogies and tell proverbs to strengthen their argument and win over their audiences. Sometimes children were taken to these sessions, which were usually held at night-time, to watch and learn from great orators. Oratory skills were also an important part of hui. These gatherings were organised for a variety of reasons, such as policy meetings (runanga), funerals (tangi) and important birthdays or feasts (hakari). Hakari 'were staged by chiefs and later returned by their visitors as a visible display of wealth and a way of winning further mana' and sometimes 'attracted thousands of visitors,

many of whom had travelled 200 miles or more by foot' (Salmond 1994: 15). Orators continued to play an important part in Maori life on the gumfields.[2]

In Wiremu Tomas's account, on the gumfields Maori would compete with the Dalmatians when telling stories sitting by the campfire. They told stories from their past of heroes such as Hone Heke. One of the first Maori chiefs to sign the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, Heke soon became dissatisfied with the way money was distributed in the new colony. In 1844 he cut down the flagstaff in Kororareka and removed the British flag.[3] His rebellion was supported by many of the Bay of Islands Ngapuhi chiefs. However, the government sent troops, including Maori who were enemies of Heke, to quell the resistance. Although the rebellion was destroyed in 1846, Heke became a symbol of resistance and the fight for justice (Sorrenson 1992: 151, Belich 1996: 207).

There has also been a long oral tradition in Dalmatia. In the central and southern Balkans, epic singing has existed for a long time. From the ninth and tenth century, when literacy was introduced to the South Slavs, it existed side by side with written literature (Coote 1978: 257). As Koljević (1980) argues, epic songs were not so much a specific form of art, as a complex expressive medium reflecting the long cultural history of the area. The songs often had a tragic structure and were 'charged with the highest communal moral concepts' as well as an 'intense expectation of the future' (Koljević 1980: 1). The singers of these songs, whom Lord (1981) calls 'singers of tales,' often changed words during their performances, connecting the past with the present situation and consequently addressing the needs of the present time. In this context, a singer of tales was, at the same time, a composer of tales (Lord 1981: 13). While songs and performance skills were passed from one generation to another, the circumstances under which a singer performed always influenced the message of the poem.

Although epic poetry was usually performed during large gatherings and festivals, it was also performed in the evening hours as the main entertainment for people in villages and small cities. Lord argues that epic singing was extremely popular in small villages because of their very high rates of illiteracy. However, according to Žanić (1998: 38), epic singing in Croatia is still alive and popular in small villages today even though literacy is now very high. Interestingly, one of the main functions of epic poetry was to spread news. Even with increased literacy, it continues to be an important source of news and often plays a bigger role than the mass media in distributing knowledge of a particular event. Occasionally, performers will sing about events that have occurred in other countries (for example, the assassination of American President John F. Kennedy). However, songs where heroes from the past serve as metaphors for the present continue to be the most important (Žanić 1998).

Vocalists usually try to intensify the emotional impact of their songs by playing the one-stringed musical instrument called the *gusle*. Ideally, the *gusle* is made from maple wood, which is also used for coffins, as it symbolises the cult of the ancestors. However, if maple is not available, the *gusle* can be made of pine, olive, walnut or other kinds of wood (Koljević 1980: 2). As we can see

from Tomas's account, on the gumfield, the Dalmatians used whatever materials were available. In this case, they used an olive can to make their *gusle*.

Tomas also recalls that the Dalmatians sang about a hero who killed many Turks during the war against the Ottoman Empire. Songs about the war were popular throughout the Balkans, especially in Serbia and Bosnia.[4] The most popular hero was a Serbian nobleman, Marko Kraljević. Songs about Marko were first written in the sixteenth century and since then he has been invoked to address the needs of conflicting politics in the Balkans.[5] In Dalmatia, border conflicts with the Turks were often merged into the general picture of a fight for justice and the heroes involved were often similar to Marko Kraljević. They were richly dressed, they fought against the Turks (the oppressors), sometimes they fought for fun but, most importantly, they fought for justice (Koljević 1980: 215–23). We do not know who the hero was that the Dalmatians were singing about on the gumfields. In any case, songs about heroes who had fought against the Turks were symbols of resistance in general.[6]

There are many possible ways of analysing the similarities between the Maori and Croat oral traditions. However, to insist that Maori and Croats developed a close relationship because they shared an oral tradition and their cultures were similar serves only to essentialise their connection by underpinning it with a kind of ahistorical, atemporal universal structure. In opposition to this view, I argue that the analysis of Maori-Croatian contact requires examination of its historical specificity, namely, those relations of power which differentiated both groups from other gumdiggers and situated them in relation to one another (see Brah 1996: 183). Rather than looking for a 'positive element' or similarity between the two, I aim to explore the 'negativity', or the lack on which they constructed their relationship.

This negativity, or lack, is expressed through their experience of 'not being fully at home' (Ahmed 2000) and through the dislocation that shattered their identities. They told stories about their past to each other. The heroes of these stories were symbols of resistance who fought for justice. Maori knew nothing about the Dalmatian hero who killed many Turks but through an act of 'translation' they replied with stories of their hero, Hone Heke. While they did not share a common past, they did share the similar position of being oppressed in their own countries, Dalmatians within the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Maori within the British Empire. Each, in their own way, found themselves dislocated and oppressed on the gumfields. This dislocation, this lack, became the precondition for making something new. Their stories mapped 'lost' battles of the past but at the same time gave them a common terrain for making a new relationship. Thus it was not a common background and the similarities between their cultures that connected them, but the very desire to overcome the position in which they found themselves. Through this desire, the gumfields became a place of cultural production for Maori and Croats, a new home.[7]

Lovro and Makareta with their son Sony.
Sony Petricevich Collection

Intermarriages

Another important factor in 'settling down' and building a 'new home' on the gumfields, was the establishment of a community based on a new network of kinship, the intermarriage that occurred between Maori and Croats. Not surprisingly, in line with the general picture of the Maori-Croatian relationship told by their descendants, the narratives on intermarriage are mostly highly romanticised. For example, Dame Mira Szaszy, a daughter of Lovro Petricevich, who came to New Zealand from Dalmatia in 1903 to work as a gumdigger, and Makareta Raharuhi, from the Ngati Kuri tribe, recalls:

> [My father] along with the others arrived in Auckland, travelled on to Mangonui and joined the gumdiggers at Lake Ohia. The little information he imparted about those early days was that they landed without food, or idea of where and how they would be housed. However the Maori took them in, feeding and housing them until they learnt how to build raupo huts .... Anyway my father settled in the far north, married my mother, a Maori, learnt her language and produced eight children. After my mother died he married another Maori woman and had two sons to her. Obviously he had a preference for Maori women. This was the fate of most of those Dalmatians who settled in the far north. (Szaszy 1995: 50)

According to Mira, the high rate of intermarriage between Maori and Dalmatians is simply a result of their preference for each other. Once again, we find that the individual account of a descendant is similar to the official view of the relationship between Maori and Croats. For example, in his book *Maori: A Photographic and Social History*, Michael King states that on some gumfields the majority of diggers were Maori and Dalmatian, and this resulted in a large

number of marriages between the two groups (King 1994: 212). To suggest that Maori-Croatian intermarriages were a result of their natural attraction to one another, or simply a result of their numbers on the gumfields, overlooks the complexity of their situation in New Zealand: not only in terms of their displacement but also in the way power operated through sexual relations.

The politics of Sexuality in Colonial New Zealand

The idea of racial purity permeated New Zealand society around the time Croats and Maori were working on the gumfields. Newspapers proclaimed that an influx of aliens was threatening the very existence of both the young colony and the Anglo-Saxon race. Views such as these were an extension of the 'regime of power' that marginalised Maori and Croats on the gumfields. It is important to stress that, as Foucault (1998) argues, this racialised regime of power was implicated in all social relationships: cultural, political, economic, sexual, etc. For Foucault, the emergence of biopolitical states and societies of normalisation, transformed sex into a political and racial issue. He accepts that racism was also embedded in early discourses on sexuality. However, in eighteenth-century Europe, 'sex became a "police" matter' (Foucault 1998:24) that was regulated through different discourses. In the past, purity of lineage was secured through blood relations and a 'system of alliance' that coupled 'the religious or legal obligations of marriage with codes for the transmission of property and the ties of kinship' (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1983: 170). In the nineteenth century, however, this 'system of alliance' began to overlap with technologies of sex that, 'through pedagogy, medicine, and economics ... made sex not only a secular concern but a concern of state as well ... . [S]ex became a matter that required the social body as a whole, and virtually all of its individuals, to place themselves under surveillance' (Foucault 1998: 116). These technologies of sex were correlated to a new racism, one that emerged as a dynamic racism that gave to race the right to 'regenerate' itself through its purity. This new racism was linked to mechanisms that permitted bio-power to exercise itself in its individual (disciplining) and global (regulatory) dimensions:

> Beginning in the second half of the nineteenth century, the thematics of blood was sometimes called on to lend its entire historical weight toward revitalising the type of political power that was exercised through the devices of sexuality. Racism took shape at this point (racism in its modern, 'biologizing' statist form): it was then that a whole politics of settlement (*peuplement*), family, marriage, education, social hierarchization, and property, accompanied by a long series of permanent interventions at the level of the body, conduct, health, and everyday life, received their colour and their justification from the mythical concern with protecting the purity of the blood and ensuring the triumph of the race. (Foucault 1998: 149)

This notion of 'purity of race' was clearly used in many colonies. In New Zealand, at the end of the nineteenth century, it targeted all non-British people as well as those of 'mixed race':

> New Zealand for New Zealanders. Our ambition is assuredly not to colonize our country with Chinese or Kanakas or Austrians. Neither are we ambitious to have a mixed race – a hybrid or mongrel people of no nationality in particular, but in reality a mixture of all. On the contrary we are all anxious to preserve the purity of our race. (*New Zealand Observer*, Sat. 27 May, 1893, p. 2.)

The statement, 'New Zealand for New Zealanders', also shows how national identity is a floating signifier. At the beginning of colonisation, the name 'New Zealanders' was used exclusively for Maori. However, with the emergence of New Zealand nationalism at the end of the nineteenth century, it was used for immigrants who were British by origin.

From the beginning of the colonisation of New Zealand, issues associated with mixing of races, or hybridity, were very important. It was believed that Maori and Europeans could become one people through amalgamation (Wakefield and Ward 2000: 29). But this argument changed in accordance with the new theories that were emerging in Europe at that time. According to Young (1995), there were numerous conflicting arguments about hybridity in nineteenth-century Europe. However, the underlying premise in all of them was that, in terms of the classification of races, the Europeans were at the top. In short, at that time it was believed that: a) union between different races is always infertile; b) the mixing of races produces a new, mixed race with new moral characteristics; c) mixed breeds die out quickly or revert to one or other of the permanent parent 'types'; d) hybridity between allied races is fertile but that between distant races is infertile or tends to degeneration; e) hybridity produces a mongrel group that makes up a 'raceless chaos' that threatens the pure races (Young 1995: 18). In discussions about hybridity in New Zealand, we can find the echo of all of these arguments. At the beginning of colonisation, there were some indications that intermarriage was supported by both Maori and European. Through 'marriage alliances', both wanted to gain access to the other's community. While this was mostly for the purpose of trade, at the same time prostitution and concubinage proliferated (Sorrenson 1992). In 1859, Arthur Thomson, Surgeon-Major in the 58th Regiment, published *The Story of New Zealand*, in which he expressed his view on amalgamation:

> In all conquests, whether by the mind or the sword, which have terminated in good to the weaker party, the conquerors have invariably amalgamated with the conquered; and this is most necessary among the New Zealanders, as their rapid decrease is much aggravated by breeding in and in. It is therefore satisfactory to find that Caucasian blood already flows in the veins of two thousand of the native population. … A large proportion of these half-castes are New Zealanders in language and manners, and they are singularly free from scrofula, the diseased taint in the Maori blood. Physically they are a noble and beautiful race, and they only require education to develop the force and power of their minds. In the third generation the nut-brown skin, the black eye, and the raven hair generally disappear. To promote the union of races, the English laws regarding inheritance to native land should be altered, for, as the law now stands, concubinage is

> indirectly encouraged, and legal unions between European males and native families are discouraged. This amalgamation is solely due to European men and Maori women, only five European women having had children by Maori men. Such, however, is the custom in all countries where two races come together in different degrees of civilisation. (Thomson 2000: 305-6)

From a Foucauldian perspective, it might be argued that the deployment of alliances, such as intermarriages that will give European men access to Maori land, and the disciplining and regulation of sexuality, was propagated by amalgamation theorists in New Zealand. Unmanaged sexuality was seen as a threat and, while mixed-blood children who were born from marriages were celebrated as a 'cultural bridge' between the two races, those born out of prostitution and concubinage were perceived as a symbol of the immorality of Maori culture and the degeneration of European culture. European men who were involved in these kinds of sexual interaction with Maori women were labelled 'devil's missionaries' (Wakefield and Ward 2000: 30). In 1864, Gorst noted that:

> ... abandoned little half-castes are to be seen running about wild, like dogs or pigs, growing up in filth and barbarism, inheriting the vices of both races and enjoying the care of neither. What is done for them is not generally the work of the civilised and Christian European, but of the savage half-heathen Maori. The mother's relations give food and an occasional ragged shirt and treat the children on the whole with kindness; but they feel the wrong and dishonour done them by the white man, and it does not increase their love and respect for the white man's race (Gorst 2001: 32).

While Gorst was concerned about the Maori view of Europeans and addressed the government with a request for legislation to protect mixed-blood children and oblige their fathers to take care of them, others were more concerned about children with European blood being brought up as Maori. European men who married Maori women and lived in the Maori community were also perceived as degenerative and a threat to society. Their way of life was seen as a rejection of the civilising mission of Europeans. In 1848, the Rev. John Morgan requested the government to build 'in every respect an English school' for half-caste children, who he believed could be civilised faster than full-blooded Maori children due to their European blood. Morgan contended that these children could then go on to help educate other Maori and 'raise them in the scale of civilisation.' The government discussed the problem but decided that any help for half-caste children 'would only increase their number'. Hence, they continued to treat them in the same way as 'full-blooded Maori children' (Barrington and Beaglehole 1974: 51).

Arguments such as these exemplify the inclusive rhetoric but exclusionary practices characteristic of many colonial governments of the time (Stoler 2000: 23). While, according to the theory of amalgamation, Maori should have been included and blended into European culture, in practice they were excluded.

In government statistics, mixed-blood persons were listed under the native population of New Zealand. In 1867, Native Schools started to operate and the government established a special system of surveillance for mixed-blood children. Teachers, for instance, were instructed to observe their behaviour and write down their degree of 'Maoriness' or 'Europeaness'.

The question of mixed-blood persons being more or less Maori or European was dismissed by other writers in colonial New Zealand. For example, Alfred Newman argued that, due to the decline of the Maori population, a fertile fusion or amalgamation between the two races was impossible. He concluded from this that all Maori, as well as mixed-blood persons, would eventually die out:

> The half-castes are often handsome and well made, but they all die young ... young half-caste women especially die very young .... Topinard writing on the respiration of various races of men tells us that the mulattos have a chest capacity inferior to that of either parent race .... I believe that this lessened chest capacity is to be found in nearly all New Zealand half-castes. ... Though the climate is excellent for both races, the crossing does not seem to result in improved fertility. The cross between a white woman and Maori man has been so rare as not to afford any data for observation. As white women become more plentiful everywhere, the proportion of half-castes to the two races is steadily diminishing. Early colonists and many theorists believed that the races might amalgamate; as a matter of fact the two races will never mingle, and the infinitesimal influence that the white race may receive until that not far distant time when the Maori race dies out, will therefore be at once imperceptible. (Newman 1881: 25–8)

By the end of the nineteenth century, the sharp decline of the Maori population, together with increased European immigration, resulted in a situation where 'Europeans outnumbered Maori by fourteen to one' (Sorrenson 1992:141). In this context, Maori and persons of 'mixed-blood' were no longer perceived as a threat to the racial purity of New Zealand. It was not until the beginning of the twentieth century, when the Maori population began to increase steadily, that the government introduced a law requiring that all Maori births, deaths and marriages be recorded. This had been compulsory for Europeans since 1848 (National Archives 1990: 16).

With the rise of nationalism in New Zealand around the turn of the twentieth century, all non-British migrants came to be perceived as a threat to the unity of the colony. New Zealand women were warned to stay away from these 'foreigners'. It was argued that intermarriage would lessen British power over the colony. In this sense, ideas concerning the purity of race were combined with discourses on blood, degeneration and sexuality. In one way, we can say that all of these concerns about the purity of race and social hygiene were gendered. Only the women, not men, who married foreigners had to forfeit their New Zealand citizenship. During World War I, New Zealand women who married Croat 'enemy aliens' were also classified as aliens. For example, after Miriam Bridelia Cummings, born in Thames in 1879 to Northern Irish parents, married

Peter Soljak, a Croat, in 1908, she was treated as a foreigner. She was turned away when she registered for a bed in a Tauranga nursing home prior to the birth of a child. Her name was removed from the electoral roll. Finally, in 1919 she registered as an alien 'but only when it was made clear that if she did not she would go to prison' (Coney 1993: 131). Miriam Soljak protested several times to the Prime Minister. She also publicised the troubles of New Zealand-born women married to aliens. However, it was not until 1948 that the government gave women their own independent nationality.

Intermarriage between Maori and Croats, therefore, cannot be analysed without consideration of the different discourses on sexuality that operated in colonial New Zealand. The underlying aim of all of these discourses was to accord British culture the right to claim privilege in the cultural, economic and political domains. As a result of this situation, most of the Dalmatian men who decided to settle in New Zealand tried to bring women from their own country. This was due partly to the regulation of sexual relations and partly to the patriarchal customs in their own country, where marriages were mostly arranged by relatives and parents. Nevertheless, until 1920 only three per cent of Croatian immigrants were women. Canvin states, that 'the first female immigrant did not arrive until 1900' (Canvin 1970: 11). On the other hand, there are many accounts of Dalmatian men marrying Maori women:

> My parents met on the gumfields of course. My mother Maori, my father Dallie. We grew up during the depression, it was hard. When you look back you wonder how you survived .... Because I was brought up among two races I can speak both languages. It was a case of having to. I remember the dancing halls. It was always the Dallie and Maori there. I remember the *Tamburitza* band playing at Sweetwater hall. I went to listen to them, I thought they were marvellous. (Martha Radich, Awanui 1999)

> My father, Ante Hristic, came to New Zealand early on in the 1900s before being conscripted. He was known as an Austrian. He met my mother Katarina Marsden on the gumfields .... Going to school some Dallies couldn't speak a word of English. We all learnt together, it didn't take long .... My father didn't really teach us to speak Dallie. Mum couldn't speak English well so we spoke Maori to her. We never spoke Maori in front of Dad though. Maybe Mum thought it was rude .... I remember on Saturdays my father gave us treacle tins to fill up with nuts (chips of gum). The buyers were Tony Tomas and Clem Yurlina. We never had any trouble growing up together. We all dug gum or milked cows. (Eva Housham, Kaitaia 1999)

Little has been written about the marriages between Maori and Croats. The only records to have survived are some Croats' letters home, and bits and pieces in family books.

In the following section I analyse three stories about Maori-Croatian marriages. The three stories, each in their own way, depict the Maori and Croatian way of life on the gumfields.

NEW ZEALAND

COPY OF REGISTER OF MARRIAGE

Nº 52085

1935. *Marriage in the District of* HOUHORA. [R.G.—118.

When and where married.	Names and Surnames of the Parties.	Ages.	Rank or Profession.	Condition of Parties: 1. Bachelor or Spinster (or as one may be). If Widower or Widow, 2. Date of Decease of former Wife or Husband.	Birthplace.	Religion: 1. Present. 2. Usual.	Parents. Father's Name and Surname (1), and his Rank or Profession (2).	Mother's Name (1), and Maiden Surname (2).
January 27th. 1935.	Mijo Sucich	54	Store-keeper	1. Bachelor 2. –	Dalmatia	1. Te Hapua 2. –	1. Jure Sucich 2. Farmer	1. Kate Sucich 2. Despot
Te Hapua Hall.	Te Aue Rewi Aperahama	26	Domestic	1. Spinster 2. –	Te Hapua New Zealand	1. Te Hapua 2. –	1. Rewi Aperahama 2. Gumdigger	1. Marama Aperahama 2. Hakiaha

MARRIED, after the delivery to me of the Certificate required by the Marriage Act, 1908, by Haimona Kingi, Officiating Minister [or Registrar].
Marriage was solemnized between us, In the presence of us,
Mijo Sucich — Tame Romana
Te Aue Rewi Aperahama — Rapine Romana

I hereby certify that the above is a true copy of an entry of Marriage in the records of my office. Given under my hand at Wellington, this 14th day of September, 194 9
Fee for this certificate is 2/6.) CAUTION.—Any person who (1) falsifies any of the particulars on this certificate, or (2) uses it as true, knowing it to be false, is liable to prosecution under the Crimes Act, 1908. Registrar-General.
Deputy

From top:

Wedding of unknown couple. Jurlina Family Collection

Marriage certificate of Mijo Sucich and Te Aue Rewi Aperahama. Sucich Family Collection

Mijo and Te Aue Rewi on their wedding day. Sucich Family Collection

The first story, written in 1996, is included in the family book of the descendants of Andrija Kleskovich and Erina Kaka. Kleskovich and Kaka met on the Te Kao gumfields and married in 1891. According to Harrison, Moss and Piripi (1987) this was the first recorded marriage between a Croatian and a Maori. Although unofficial marriages possibly occurred before this, the marriage between Andrija and Erina is mentioned by many of my correspondents as

being the first. This desire to locate the 'first marriage' is in line with the need to establish the foundations of a new community, and place the beginning of the Maori-Croatian relationship. In this context, the marriage between Andrija and Erina can be seen as a 'stationary' moment in Maori-Croatian counter-history: a significant point that marks the legitimation of their collective memory. It marks the specificity of Maori-Croatian historicity and makes their relationship on the gumfields unique. The way members of the Anderson family tell the story resonates with both this need to shape the Maori-Croatian collective memory and, most importantly, the contemporary quest for memory and the search for roots.

The second and third stories were recorded during interviews with Hans-Peter Stoffel during the 1970s.The second is told by Lovro Petricevich, who arrived in New Zealand in 1904 and married a Maori woman, Makareta Raharuhi. Lovro's account provides a wealth of detail about everyday life on the gumfields and the discrimination that both groups experienced.

The third story is told by Lina, a Maori woman from the Hokianga who married a Dalmatian man, Mijo Kovacevich, on the Ahipara gumfields after World War I. In opposition to the first two stories, Lina's account provides us with the possibility of analysing the way Dalmatian men attempted to impose their cultural values on their wives.

MAORI AND CROATIAN INTERMARRIAGES

Andrija and Erina Kleskovich

The *Anderson Family Book*, published in 1996 for the family reunion, tells the story of Andrija Kleskovich, from the vicinity of Dubrovnik, who had been digging gum at Houhora, and Erina Kaka from Houhora, of the Aupouri tribe. They married in Kaitaia on 6 April 1891. We also learn that Andrija learnt the Maori language and was adopted by the Aupouri tribe. Later, he changed his name to Tuna Anderson. The book begins in three languages: Maori, Croatian and English, but after the first few pages it is written solely in English:

> I TOHUA TENEI PAKAPUKA KI O TATOU TUPUNA, KI A ANARU KLESKOVICH-ANDERSON ME TONA HOA RANGATIRA A ERINA KAKA – KI A RAUA TAMARIKI, ME RAUA URI …
>
> E MAUMAHARA ANA HOKI MATOU, KO TATOU I HEKE MAI I NGA KAWAI O NGA IWI E RUA, TE TAHA TARARA O ANARU, ME TE TAHA NA REIRA, KO NGA MIHI NU KI A KOUTOU KATOA, I PUAWAI AI, I TUTUKI AI, TENEI KAUPAPA.
>
> Ovu knjigu posvecujemo nasim predacim Andrija Kleskovic i Erina Kaka, njihovoj djeci i potomstvu … Priznajemo da smo potomci dvi uljudbe, nasa Hrvatska po Andrija a Maorska po Erini, bez njih toboznji, mi ne bi postojali.
>
> This book is dedicated to our ancestors Andrija Kleskovich and Erina Kaka – their children and descendants … We also acknowledge that we are descendants

> of two cultures, our Croatian heritage through Andrija and our Maori heritage through Erina, without which we would not be here …

In the foreword of the book there is also an explanation of the family symbol:

> TEKAU MA RIMA O NGA RUA O TE HARAKEKE
> NGA RUA O WHAO KO ANARU RAUA KO ERINA
> KO NGA RAU O WAENGANUI TEKAU MA TORU KO A RAUA TAMARIKI
> KO NGA RAKAU E RUA ME ONA PUAWAI
> HE TOHU I HEKE MAI I NGA KAWAI TANGATA
> O CROATIA ME TE AUPOURI
> KO TETAHI ANO O ENEI TOHU KO NGA PUAWAI ARA
> KO NGA URI WHAKAHEKE
>
> The fifteen leaves of the flax symbolise Andrija and Erina Kleskovic-Anderson which are the outer leaves and their thirteen children the inner leaves, the two sticks in the centre of the flax bare represent the two cultures Croatia and Maori. The flowers represent the succeeding generations born of those and those yet to be born in the future (Clarke 1996:1).

In a way, the form of the Anderson family book resembles Maori oral history, as it records the whakapapa, or genealogy, of the people through family and tribal stories, and myths and legends. The book begins with an account of the origin of the Te Aupouri tribe. There are a number of different versions of the origins of Te Aupouri. The one depicted by the Anderson family describes the romance of Ruanui, the chief of a village on the shores of the Hokianga, and a princess of the very powerful Whangaroa-based Ngapuhi tribe. Because the Ngapuhi considered Ruanui incapable of leading such a great and mighty tribe, they deemed him unworthy of the princess' hand, and would not allow the marriage to take place. Undeterred, Ruanui took the princess to his village one night. However, they were seen leaving and Ngapuhi warriors followed them. Ruanui knew that he and his villagers could not resist this much stronger and better armed enemy, and in order to save his people he decided to create a smoke screen by burning the village. Together with his people he left the village under a thick pall of smoke. They journeyed northward away from the Hokianga, first to Herekino, then Ahipara and Pukepoto, and on to Te Kao. On the way, they changed their name to Te Aupouri, which means the People of Dark Smoke.

Following the story about Te Aupouri, the Anderson family book outlines the whakapapa of the Kaka family and then moves onto the life of Andrija or, in Maori, Anaru Kleskovich. We learn that he was born in 1867 in Trgoviste, a village near Milna that is located in the region of Dubrovnik, Croatia. As a young man he moved to America with his cousin Petar, who was a Catholic priest. At that time, Andrija did not know that he would settle in New Zealand, in one of the remotest parts of the Far North, the village of Te Kao. He also had no idea that his destiny would link him to the tribe of Dark Smoke, Te Aupouri.

Descendants of Erina Kaka and Andrija Kleskovic, Te Kao.

He was told by his mother to follow in the footsteps of his cousin, and soon after he arrived in America he entered into a seminary to become a priest. But after three years 'an argument between Andrija and the church occurred and he left never to return until 3 months before his death, when he took Mass in church at Awanui.' After leaving the seminary, he worked as a cook in San Francisco and then embarked on a ship to New Zealand. Soon after arriving, he travelled to the gumfields in the Far North, ending up in Te Kao, a tiny settlement named after a traditional Maori custom that involved drying kumara and storing it in pits. Here, he found work with Maori gumdiggers.

Later on, he would tell his mokopuna, or grandchildren, how gumdiggers worked far away from anything. One had to ride for days to the nearest food store. Upon returning to the camp, some had difficulty in restraining themselves from drinking alcohol. Often, they would exceed their limit and would end up fighting. Andrija would often calm these situations. The Aupouri grew to appreciate him more and more. He learnt Maori and, since he spoke English fluently, he later represented the tribe as a Native Land Court interpreter.

He met his 'maori princess' Erina Kaka, the daughter of Hohepe Te Kaka, a great Maori Chief, and Annetta Marupo, in Te Kao and fell in love with her. They married and lived at the Spring Camp gumfields, Waihopo, and had thirteen children. All of the children were full members of the tribe and were, therefore, tangata whenua or people of the land.

The family book clearly positions the identity of the Anderson family in the past. It traces their family origins and, even though today none of the family members speak Croatian and only a few can speak Maori, they wrote the introduction to the book in three languages (the Croatian part was written

by a Croatian immigrant who lives in Kaitaia and is a friend of the family). This recovery of the past serves to secure their identity in contemporary New Zealand, their 'true self', which they see as Maori and Croatian. However, there is a third dimension that is not mentioned by the writers of the Anderson family book, but is present in the use of the language in which the book is written, English. Even though silent and unspoken, the colonial regime of power which framed Andrija and Erina's marriage speaks in its own way. The presence of the English language signals the outcome of a historical contest for power. This power is not just external, like 'an extrinsic force, whose influence can be thrown off like the serpent sheds its skin' (Hall 2000: 712). On the contrary, power is inside as well as outside. In this context, I see a dimension to the Anderson family book that is a hybrid site of memory, not in line with the Maori tradition of recording whakapapa. This process of hybridisation involves not just two cultures, Maori and Croatian, but also a third, the dominant culture.

Lovro Petricevich and Makareta Raharuhi

Lovro Petricevich arrived in New Zealand in 1903 as a sixteen-year-old boy, worked as a gumdigger, married a Maori woman named Makareta Raharuhi and became a well-known kaumatua, or person of senior social status, in the North. Hans-Peter Stoffel interviewed Lovro in 1973, mostly in the Croatian language in which Lovro tells his life story:

> The name of the ship was Omrod … it took me 40 days, while today they come in 10 days. There were seventy of us, of my people, Croats. … My language, you know, I …, sorry, sometimes I can't express myself fluently … I have been too much in English or Maori …. I was born in Dalmatia, the village of Zivogosce near Makarska, 12 miles from Makarska …. I heard about kauri gum and money that is possible to make … that was the only reason why I decided to come.

Lovro Petricevich left his small town of Živogošće and went on the long journey to New Zealand to earn money digging kauri gum. Upon his arrival in Auckland, he immediately embarked on a ship to the Far North. He travelled to the encampment of Aurarere, near the almost dry Lake Ohia, which during summer time resembles a 'moon-like space, dry soil covered with dark stumps of ancient kauri trees.' After that, he went to Awanui, then Waipapakauri and Parengarenga. He explains how he went deeper and deeper into the North, eventually settling down at Te Hapua, a small Maori village near Spirits Bay and Cape Reinga. However, he did not find it easy earning money as a gumdigger, as even those remote parts of New Zealand depended on the prices set in large centres such as New York and London:

> That time it was not easy to make much money, the gum was … the prices went up and down, all the time; it was not stable as far as money goes, for making money. Who dug it did well with 10 shillings per day.

In addition to these economic problems, Lovro faced racism on the gumfields:

> Some Croats worked for Thompson, a British gumbuyer .... Maori were working for Thomson as well, but we were paid differently .... Maori earned seven shillings per day, we were paid sixteen, because we were white, but British were paid even more than us .... that wasn't good really .... British took Maori land without paying for it and at the end Maori had to work for them for a little money .... I did not like that .... I think that you have to respect everyone, and English didn't respect Maori, they didn't respect my people as well. Possibly they thought that they are better than us .... They thought we're below them, that's all ... but Maori liked my people ... Maori got along with us more than the English folks, English folks were not as friendly in the beginning. But Maori were always with us, all of the time. No matter that they were poor, and they lacked everything, but they would always offer, whenever one of us came ... they liked us ...

Gradually, Lovro found himself surrounded more and more by Maori gumdiggers and became familiar with their language and customs. He married a Maori woman, Makareta Raharuhi, who was of Te Heraka-Hika lineage, one of the rangatira, or high ranking, lines of descent of Ngati Kuri. Makareta's grandfather, Te Kahika Raharuhi, was a well-known Northland leader. In Maori society, women transferred their rank to their children. Therefore, if the rank of the father was not high, children could derive elevated status from their mother and possess mana whenua, 'mana specifically deriving from the land and thus giving the child claims to rights and shares in that land' (Binney and Chaplin 1990: 25).

> To tell ya the truth, both brother and me wanted to go back home, our mission was to spend two-three years here in Nova Zelanda and go back home. But the case was such that the women found time for us, and we did not want to turn them down. And so we stayed here long time. The case was such that we got married ... Maori woman, the same as any except the color, that's it. We got along nicely, had no problems, they had time for us, of course. If she hadn't time, I wouldn't have it either, at first I was very shy. We saw that the person stands so we didn't want to turn them down. When you see a person that has a lot of time for you, it's hard to refuse. It's not easy.

After the wedding the couple moved to Waihopo, near Houhora, where they worked hard and had eight children in quick succession.

Makareta died in 1924, and soon after Lovro left the gumfields of Houhora and opened a shop and a dance hall. Later on he opened another store and dancing hall in Te Hapua. Lovro did well until the Depression of the 1930s, when he went bankrupt. He was forced to close his shops and to look for work in different parts of the Te Aupouri peninsula. His children were often looked after by his extended Maori family. Although he was surrounded by his Maori family and British gumbuyers, and far from Dalmatia, Lovro, or Rorana Tarara as Maori called him, never gave up his native language:

Lovro Petricevich (back left) and his wife Makareta Raharuhi (front centre) with their family. Mira Szaszy Collection

> For a long time I was surrounded just with Maori and English, but I didn't forget my language, I improved it here, I learned it here almost half more than I knew before, and this all happened as I learned English. I had a grammar and a dictionary of our tongue, our language. And so there were many words there which I didn't know before, I don't know all the words of course, there's a pile of them. And so I learned some of my words, Croatian words, at the same time as I learned English. And I read. I would get books from the Old Country and read them here. I was obsessed with books, I liked anything, history, poetry and all other things … I liked to know what was happening there, in Old Country. I was fascinated with that and I was glad to know that … whenever it was possible I read.

Lovro read a lot about Croatian history and the fate of political leaders such as Zrinski and Frankopan. While we do not know whether he tried to explain these distant European events to his hapu, he gives his opinion of them on tape:

> I have a book here that explains how Zrinski and Frankopan were executed in the Neustadt, they were our leaders of course, and they were not vile men and yet they cut their heads off … that's Croatian history and it's not good.

Lovro was highly respected in the Far North, where he lived for many years. He often represented his hapu during tribal meetings. He welcomed many Pakeha teachers to Ngataki and Te Hapua on behalf of his tribe, introducing them to

the code of reciprocal hospitality and tribal ethics. When Lovro Petricevich, or Rorana Tarara, died in 1976, he was farewelled at Ahipara marae as a kaumatua of the North. He was buried according to the Maori tradition of tangi. However, his spirit was farewelled on its long journey, as one kaumatua put it, not to Hawaiki but to Dalmatia. In speeches held at his tangi, some recalled Lovro's beginnings in the new country:

> In 1903 a young boy of sixteen left [Dalmatia] to find a new life thousands of miles across the sea in New Zealand where the gumfields offered more opportunity … 73 years later Lawrence Petricevich was buried from the Ahipara Marae, a signal honour for a European. In traditional Maori custom he was farewelled by his immediate family whilst too his wider adopted family, Te Rarawa and Te Aupouri mourned the passing of a beloved Kaumatua of the North.
>
> It is difficult for us today to imagine what the lad felt as the ship dropped anchor in Auckland, but there would undoubtedly have been some trepidation. He had left all his family, all the security of community, language and customs, and like so many of his countrymen, he had only courage and determination to keep up his spirits and he surveyed the scene at [gumfields] where he was to spend many years trying to strike it rich. Life in the gumfields was tough and … yes, Lawrence learnt the hard way, but even so there were satisfactions and joy in the toil. Sometimes round the fire at night with the billy boiling or the wine laced with water, Dalmatia was remembered in song and dance. A developing pride in simple achievements, helped in the acceptance of the new country and later a real belonging to it … we had much to learn from him … we learnt particularly from his human dignity, from his ability to develop relationships, to make the best of things, to see possibilities for happiness …. He cared for people … Undoubtedly much of this stemmed from his early becoming deeply immersed in things Maori … (A Tribute – L. Petricevich, 1976).

This account of Lovro shows that Maori and Croats did not come together simply to produce something new. On the contrary, the very condition of their meeting was framed by colonial power. It is precisely from this account that we can properly understand the truly traumatic nature of the process of hybridisation. Lovro was surrounded by Maori culture and hence learnt Maori language and customs. Yet his business depended on the dominant culture, so he had to learn to speak English. At the same time, he was trying to remember and learn about things connected with his own, Croatian culture. Thus, the combination of these three cultures redefined his own identity. However, his identity was never fully constituted, as there was always something suppressed. Moreover, that something was mercurially interwoven around a specific axis of differentiation that existed in the social.

The way Lovro describes his marriage with Makareta is also very significant. It was not he who initiated the marriage, but Makareta. In other words, she opened the door to a new unknown territory of love and sexual desire. Lovro presents himself as somebody who was shy and not focused on women and

Lovro Petricevich standing outside a nikau whare with Lord Bledisloe, Governor General of New Zealand, and Lady Bledisloe, *c.* 1931, Pandora (near Spirits Bay).
Mira Szaszy Collection

marriage at all. His only intention was to work and save some money, but it was Makareta who had time for him. He was attracted to Makareta's beauty, but at the same time he needed to justify his desire: 'Maori woman, the same as any except the colour, that's it.' Behind this statement we can read the complex articulations that marked the racial and gendered position of Maori women in colonial New Zealand. Furthermore, it can be argued that this statement is in line with a masculine domination that presents all women as timelessly the same, in that underneath her skin and physical appearance Makareta was just a woman. In another way, however, it is possible to read across the grain to ask whether he is not signalling a disagreement with the subordinated position of Maori in general.

Maori identity was defined in opposition to that of Pakeha, and the colour barrier was thought of either in terms of difference or in terms of negativity. It is precisely this negativity that is questioned in Lovro's statement about the way the British gumbuyer paid Croats and Maori different prices for their gum. As a Croatian, Lovro found himself in the middle of a hierarchical scale, where he was paid more than the Maori gumdiggers but less than the British. He disagreed with this discrimination and identified with the Maori position, demanding racial and economic equality. In this broader context, his statement that Makareta was a 'Maori woman, the same as any', can be seen as a rejection of the dominant power that positioned Maori in a negative way and subverted their difference into negativity.

As 'foreigners', who interrupted the colour-based hierarchy in colonial New Zealand, Croats were also perceived as a threat to the dominant culture. The introduction of this 'foreigner' element resulted in a multiplication of 'enemies', all defined negatively in relation to the British. This negation of identities, which served as an external reference for the construction of Pakeha identity, influenced the way Maori and Croats formed their relationship. In short, Lovro's account shows that the way Maori and Croats were positioned and subjected by the colonial regime clearly influenced the nature of their encounter. The exercise of power positioned both groups as Other to the British. However, at the same time, both Maori and Croat experienced themselves as Other and this experience produced something new, a new ground for their relationship.

Lina and Mijo Kovacevich

The third story was told by Lina and Mijo Kovacevich in an interview with Hans-Peter Stoffel in Ahipara, in 1973. From this account we learn that, as opposed to Andrija Kleskovich and Lovro Petricevich, who made the effort to learn Maori language and customs, some Dalmatian men imposed their language and customs on the Maori women they married. Lina was born in the Hokianga in 1898, and in 1915 she moved to the Ahipara gumfield to work as a gumdigger. At that time, mostly Maori and Croats worked on the Ahipara gumfields. Lina attended a Native School as a child, where she learnt to write and read in English. She first worked on the gumfields for a Dalmatian gumdealer and soon picked up some Croatian words as well. She remembers how, during the weekends, Maori and Croatian gumdiggers would gather together in the several dance halls in the area. She also recalls Maori learning to play the Croatian national folk instruments, the *gusle* and the *tamburica,* and to dance the *kolo*. The *gusle* and the *tamburica* were the most popular folk instruments amongst Dalmatians in the Far North of New Zealand. The *gusle* has just one string and its sound serves more as a background for story telling, while the *tamburica* is closely related to the Russian balalaika and the Italian mandolin. Maori who learnt to play the *tamburica* used to sing songs in the Croatian language.

Lina first met Mijo Kovacevich, a Dalmatian man from Raščane, when he arrived on the Ahipara gumfields during World War I. They married and built their own small shanty on the gumfields. In the 1950s, when the gumdigging industry stopped, they moved to live in Ahipara. The following extracts are from Stoffel's interview with Lina and Mijo in their Ahipara house. The interview was conducted in Croatian:

Lina: I started to learn Croatian when I came here … on 28th of February 1915 … it was a Big Friday … actually I started to learn a few years after that …

Mijo: You started to learn immediately, maybe one year after your arrival to Ahipara … you were fluent from the beginning … look … when you started to learn (Mijo constantly mix Croatian and English words).

Lina: Croatian Mijo … speak Croatian … don't use English words …. Well, at the beginning I spoke broken Croatian. Maori used to speak broken English and it was the same with Croatian – broken Croatian …. Here we mixed with Dalmatians … we worked together … and I started to learn their language … but my Croatian was broken Croatian … not good … it took me a year and half to become fluent … some Dalmatians learnt Maori …. Nowadays, you know, when I meet somebody from Croatia I speak Croatian … when I meet Maori I speak Maori and when I meet Pakeha I speak English … Pakeha don't know other language so I have to speak English … sometimes we have visitors from Mijo's village … so, you know … when they arrive from 'Old Country' they cannot speak language … they don't know English … they don't know Maori so, I can speak Croatian with them …. I mean you have to speak their language if you want to talk to them …

Mijo: I was born in Raščane village (Mijo again mixes Croatian with English words).

Lina: Mijo speak your own language, don't mix English words with Croatian. I can see that you cannot speak your own language any more, this professor here wants you to speak your language, our language.

Mijo: I am an old man …. I arrived to Zealand on the twenty … (Mijo again mixes Croatian with English words).

Lina: oooouu Mijo … speak our language … our language … Croatian language.

Mijo: I arrived during the war … the First World War …. There were many Dalmatians here … and many of them married Maori women …. We needed women to take care of us …

Lina: they don't live here any more … and many of our people don't speak our language any more …. Many of them have children, but they don't speak our language …. You can even find some Dalmatians who used to live in the 'Old Country', and here they started to learn English, and they say that they have forgotten their own language … that cannot be true …. I wasn't born in Croatia, but I haven't forgotten …. That cannot be true … that is impossible …. They were born in the 'Old Country', they arrived here, they couldn't speak English and now they say that they have forgotten our language … mmm.

Lina: Sometimes, when Mijo want to send a letter to his brother I write in Croatian … When letter arrives from Croatia I read for Mijo …. He cannot see properly and he doesn't know well his language …. He was never in school … and he had an accident … so I have to take care of him … I do everything for him …

Lina: You know not all of Dalmatians speak the same language … they are from different villages and they have different languages … I think that they don't know a proper Croatian …

Mijo: I speak a proper Croatian but those who are from islands … they don't …

Lina: I really think that they don't know their own language … for example they say tica (bird – dialect in Dalmatia) … but I think it is pronounced ptica (bird – standard Croatian language) … I checked in their books … ptica … they don't speak their own language well … I think that they speak very fast and that's why they don't know … for example in Croatian you pronounce y for j, … jaja (yaya – eggs) … I can write, I learnt … but nowdays our people can't. … That's a new generation, and they are the same as English …. English kills all languages.

It appears that while Lina learned Croatian in order to be able to talk to her husband and his relatives, Mijo did not attempt to learn Maori. In fact, he never learned to speak English properly, and had to depend on Lina to translate words for him. Despite the fact that he expected Lina to cook food in the Dalmatian way and to work hard inside as well as outside the home, he thought of himself as the sole 'breadwinner' of the family. It is important to stress that this unequal division of labour was not uncommon in New Zealand, where a patriarchal ideology constructed clear boundaries between 'women's work' and 'men's work' (Park 1991). While this ideology affected all women in New Zealand, in Lina's case it took a specific form since she had to struggle with a triple claim of patriarchy. Lina was already positioned as a woman within both Maori and wider New Zealand culture, and by marrying a Dalmatian man she found herself at an even greater disadvantage.

Although we do not know what she thought about her own position or whether she recognised her subordination in the way I have described it here, Lina's account helps us to understand the complexities that were involved in Maori-Croatian intermarriage. To describe these marriages as a 'magnificent example of a harmonious race relationship in the Far North' fails to acknowledge not only the racial and sexual discourses which positioned these two groups of people at the bottom of the colonial system, but also that their relationship was inscribed within the cultural practices they inherited from their past. In addition to this, different individuals respond to these discourses in various ways, hence it is impossible to paint a homogeneous picture of Maori-Croatian intermarriage. While this may seem a simplistic point, it exposes the fact the ongoing representation of Maori-Croatian intermarriage in the Far North ignores the complexities of their encounter. This tendency to romanticise Maori-Croatian intermarriage continues today among Maori-Croatian descendants. In the course of my research, I interviewed many Maori and Croats and almost all stressed that there were no problems in the relationships between Croatian men and Maori women. A few, however, acknowledged that indeed there were some problems:

> The Maoris on the gumfields had their wives, daughters and children with them whereas the Dallies were all single people, all *tanes* (males). Now that made a big difference because the Dallies have left all their women in Yugoslavia and so they've got to have something and they're chasing the Maori girls. And they tell them a lot of lies, good ones, and the girls believe them and by the time they find out its all shit its too late. So a lot of them 'married' Maori girls and the ones that already had wives, had children with these girls and when their other wife comes from Yugoslavia, the girl has to leave, and she goes back to her parents, who probably didn't want her to go with the Dally in the first place but she let his cock be her boss .... There was a lot of trouble with the Dallies *ma wahineing* (women chasing), but if the girl wants that Dally what can the parents do – she stays there until he gets sick of her or she gets sick of him and then usually that's when the law comes in. Because while she's been staying there they've been digging gum together and they've got quite a heap, could be up to £2000 worth. And when the gum is sold, or the girl leaves, the Dally won't give her half, so the parents step in and they go to court – then the girl gets her half and goes back to her parents. This was the main trouble between the Maoris and Dallies on the gumfield (interview with Wiremu Tomas, in Tomas n.d).

> My Father was a Dalmatian gumdigger .... He was living with my mother ... she was a Maori .... They had two children ... when I was six my father brought his fiancée from Dalmatia and left us ... we didn't know that he had a fiancée in Dalmatia ... he was lying to us ... he was lying to my mother .... I remember her crying very often ... I used to hate my father and all his family ... my half-brothers and sisters ... they had everything, we had nothing ... we were abandoned half-castes ... but now, if you ask me I can see that it was a custom at the time to use and abuse Maori women ... so many Europeans did it ... and many Dalmatians did it ... it was like that and I accept it. Nowadays people don't want to talk about that ... it's not nice really ... but it happened .... (M.R., Awanui 2000).

These rare examples demonstrate that most Maori-Croatian descendants constructed their identity in contemporary New Zealand by privileging some memories about the life of their parents on the gumfields over others. I will analyse the many factors contributing to this romanticisation of the past in more detail in Chapter Seven. Here, I wish to stress that different experiences of Maori-Croatian intermarriage correspond to the ways different individuals accommodated and negotiated the discourses to which they were subjugated. Both Maori and Croats experienced oppression on the gumfields but, at the same time, both were already culturally inscribed within their own cultures. Hence their relationship mirrored not just the way they responded to dominant discourses, but also the way they tried to maintain and reconstruct some of the Maori and Dalmatian cultural values in this new context.

LETTER BRIDES AND THE BEGINNING OF THE WEAKENING OF MAORI-CROATIAN RELATIONSHIPS

A large number of the Croatian gumdiggers wanting to settle down in New Zealand would ask their parents in Dalmatia to arrange a marriage for them. This was due, in part, to the 'regime of power' which operated in colonial New Zealand and, in part, to customs inherited from Dalmatia. Discourses on progress in colonial New Zealand painted a picture of an ideal settler as a farmer with a stable domestic life. Here, women immigrants were seen as a 'stabilising and civilising factor' for community (Phillips 1987). Those Croatian gumdiggers who saved enough money to buy a small farm and bring wives or *fiancées* from Dalmatia, slowly entered the chain of equivalencies, making the move from sojourners to settlers. Even though they could not expect any help from the government, which assisted only British gumdiggers, they gained a more respectable position in society than Croats who were single or living with Maori women. Despite this, up until 1920, only three per cent of Croatian immigrants were women. The absence of Croatian women was noticed by a *New Zealand Herald* journalist. In his description of Croatian gumdiggers' social life on the gumfields in 1909, he noticed that their free days were affected by the fact that:

> Few of their womenkind have as yet reached these shores. This is due to the fact that the bulk of arrivals are young unfettered men, but instances are frequent where thrifty fellows have been enabled to bring out their *fiancées* and settle down to the delights and burdens of matrimony ... The Croatians work hard, but they also take a good deal of recreation, for in addition to the ordinary holidays which mark our calendar they keep an extra 25 days in festival of various saints. On such occasions gaiety is predominant, and the Croatian colours float from the camp flagpoles. They are musically inclined, and part-singing is a pastime in which all seem enabled to join with pleasing effects. In camp they favour the game of bowls, and like all Continental races, are fond of dancing. Billiards is fast becoming an attraction, and this is leading them, slowly but surely, into the Britisher's zone of recreation (*New Zealand Herald*, 14 October, 1909, p. 6).

He further stated that, in spite of frequent accusations that they were a nomadic people trying to earn a hundred or so pounds in order to flee back home, 'it is probable that 90 percent will become permanent residents and many are taking the initial steps to such an eventuality by wedding women of British origin, and obtaining naturalisation papers.' However, Croats not only had a hard time obtaining naturalisation papers,[8] they found it difficult to marry women who were British by origin since many of these women were warned to stay away from undesirable foreigners.

In her novel *Croatia Mine,* Florida Vela portrays the emotional feelings of a young Dalmatian man, Stipe, when he asks a British girl for a dance:

> ... Nikola and Stipe went to Symonds Street to the Purple Ballroom. ... Stipe, his heart beating like a drum, walked to a group of girls standing in a corner. ... His voice shook as he said, 'Can I have this dance?' ... Awkward and silent, he watched her pretty mouth twist. 'No,' she sniggered, 'I don't think so.' ... They burst into fits of laughter as he strode away, his heart thumping, his fingers digging into the sweating palms of his big, rough hands. ... Thank God no one saw, he thought, as he slunk to the toilets to escape the crowd, the music, and the derisive laughter. I'll never again risk that sort of humiliation. I'll never approach the *Englezice* [English women] again.
>
> ... 'He's a Dally,' Fiona said, looking through the crowd, trying to catch a glimpse of him .... 'They say if you marry one, you've got to work like a slave,' Molly West shuddered ... 'They say the only women that can put up with Dallies are their own .... They manipulate them till they've got the poor women under their thumb' (Vela 1997: 25).

From this perspective, the gap between young Dalmatian men and British women in New Zealand appears greater than the twelve thousand miles which separated these men from the local women in Dalmatia. Differences in culture, customs and language, but above all racial prejudice, were all barriers that could not be easily overcome. In spite of this, some Dalmatians did end up marrying British women. For example, John Totich, one of the leaders of the Dalmatians in Dargaville, wrote in one letter to his friend:

> ... as for getting married, that if I can tell you the truth – God is not on my mind. ... It would be better to drown than marry in this country and to one of this country's girls because you would not suffer any more. If I am to get married I would rather one from home, as I have said I am against these English girls. ... Because these girls I believe are not faithful or loyal to their husbands. These girls are just like wild cats .... (Totich Collection, letter number 11)

This letter is an example of how one discourse, in this case, the racist attitude towards Dalmatians, can produce another, prejudice about 'English girls'. It is interesting to note that Totich married a British woman, even though he perceived them to be troublemakers. He was one of the most respected Dalmatians in Northland.

Many Dalmatian men continued to follow the practice of arranged marriages they inherited from their Dalmatian villages. Gumdiggers would travel around the camps enquiring if anyone had a cousin or sister who would want to travel to New Zealand. This would often lead to long discussions being held by the campfire (Victor Jurlina, Sweetwater 1999). If no agreement was reached, gumdiggers would simply write to their parents and ask them to choose one of the village girls for them. By the turn of the nineteenth century, the impoverished Dalmatian villages were almost deserted. A large number of young men had already left Dalmatia for America, Argentina, Australia or New Zealand. Since the women at home themselves dreamed of beautiful places faraway, words such as New Zealand glittered like the promise of gold.

Up until the turn of the nineteenth century, most peasants in Dalmatia lived within *zadruga* numbering sixty to eighty members (Bičanić 1981: 125). While the family was the basic unit of social life and organisation, membership was broadly defined. The male was principal figure, all men were considered to be socially higher than women. Florida Vela, who arrived in New Zealand after World War II, tells a short anecdote about her mother's family that illustrates male authority in the household:

> My mother used to say *u pravim kucama je uvik i zena imala pravo kao i muz* … (in the 'proper' families the women were always equal to men) … but I still think that she wasn't right …. I mean … she used to tell the story that in her family they had two chairs …. One chair was for her father and another one … eh another one wasn't used because her mother and her grandmother would both stand up and not use it … her mother would say to her grandmother *vi ste stariji … vi sidite …* (please sit down … you are older …) but her grandmother would say to her mother … *no, no ti si radila … ti sidi …* (no, no, you were working all day … please sit down and have a rest), so my grandfather said that he needs to chop down the second chair … but it was not the question of the first chair and who would sit on it … never … (Florida Vela, Auckland 2002).

The authority of the father was seen as a natural and unquestionable right. The style of work in the *zadruga*, where the wider family and neighbours worked without wages during harvest time, persisted in some villages throughout the twentieth century. Although women often worked in the fields, men were always represented as the main breadwinners. In this patriarchal society, children were constantly expected to support their parents. Sons usually inherited property and daughters were given dowries, which would include linen, bedding, and sometimes furniture or part of the land, when they left home to live with their husbands' families.

Most marriages were arranged by the parents, who took into account social status, wealth, and honour. Some women resented the arranged marriage system and, as a result, were often excluded from the family. In addition, there were many cases of young men marrying, then going to New Zealand or America after a few months, and remaining away for up to thirty years. Žuva Nobilo, one of my correspondents in New Zealand, says of her childhood in Dalmatia:

> My mother and father were married in 1919 …. They had four children quite quickly … those were hard times after the First World War and it must have been heart breaking for my mum and dad but they decided that he must emigrate to earn some money to bring us up decently and to give us a good education …. I must tell you this. I do remember very vividly when my dad left home to go away, I was a mere four year old little girl. It was evening time. He was very upset and was picking up us kids and kissing us one by one and my grandmother and mother were crying … my mother agreed to stay just a few more years in Dalmatia … those few more years stretched to quarter a century when my mum and dad eventually saw each other again. (Nobilo 1987: 39)

Marica Milich in her home in Kaitaia (New Zealand) covered with her *chilim* (rug). It was the custom for every bride in Dalmatia to bring to her new house bedding or a rug. She divided her *chilim* in three pieces for her children.

Inset: Marica's children in front of her *chilim*. Matija Henderson Collection

These women were called 'white widows.' In fact, at the turn of the nineteenth century, there were numerous families in which both the father and the sons were absent, leaving the mother and daughters to care for the family properties together. These women were under the constant gaze of the community. They were constantly judged on the way they lived and how they managed the money sent by their men. They were often seen to be 'too lazy for any kind of work' and 'immoral'. Despite this, these women worked hard to satisfy both the community and their absent husband. As Miri Simich observed:

> Some of men were in America or in New Zealand. One of them who worked as a gumdigger in New Zealand sent his money to his wife in Igrane. So, she built the beautiful house … it became the nicest place in Igrane … nice roof … tap water … they had a tap water because they built tanks. And people didn't like it. She stopped carrying water and wood on her back. I suppose her husband sent a money because he didn't want his wife to carry wood on her back … so locals didn't like that at all. They said that she is a lazy woman. Funny eh. I understood her, really. Her husband wanted to stop her to do hard work … but people there didn't like that … silly people. Women are beast of burden in Dalmatia. That's a law there … domestic law …. (Miri Simich, Auckland 2000)

For the women in Dalmatia, the fantasy of New Zealand represented not just 'white bread and meat', but also the possibility of escaping the repression of the traditional way of life. Their hope of breaking down this structure grew with every single letter that arrived from those different 'Americas'. The more letters were sent to those poor Dalmatian villages, the more 'letter brides' were sent to New Zealand.[9]

Antica Belich, who arrived in 1900, explained to her children how her father arranged her marriage. In her granddaughter's words:

> … in the north of New Zealand was Ivan Belich …. [W]hen Ivan heard that a woman whom he knew was returning to Dalmatia he begged her to do her best to find a suitable wife for him …. [T]his woman met up with Antica's father … she described in glowing terms the sub-tropical climate of Dargaville and the wonderful future for hard-working people in New Zealand. She told Stipan how thrilled Ivan would be to have one of his daughters for his wife … (Keene 1987: 9)

The couple were married in St Patrick's Cathedral in Auckland and moved to live in a gumdigging camp in Sweetwater. 'For five days a week, she worked on the gumfields with the men while on the two remaining days she attended to household duties. Of course she cooked the meals for the family and often others every day …' (Keene 1987: 9). Antica described how she knew just one rumour about New Zealand before she arrived: '[d]on't put your hand in New Zealand soil for too long or your fingers will grow!' Instead of her fantasy, however, her reality in New Zealand turned out to be a gumfield – a desolate, isolated, poor wasteland.

Photos sent from Dalmatian men in New Zealand to their native villages. Ujdur Collection, Yelash Collection

Totally unaware of the conditions in New Zealand, of those bleak, barren gumfields, young Croatian women travelled almost half way across the globe with the idea of a 'better life in their minds', to marry a husband they had never seen, sometimes not even in a photograph. Ana recalls:

> It was the year 1935. I was 28 and everyone in Nakovana treated me as a spinster. When Jure sent a letter asking for a wife my mother told me: 'You must go. This is a good opportunity for you.' The journey to New Zealand I remember very well. I didn't speak any English .... Nobody told me that people speak different languages ... it was terrible .... I can tell you ... it was terrible .... I can remember seeing Jure from the boat at the port in Auckland. He looked older than on the photo that he sent to Nakovana ... and his suit wasn't nice too ... ohhhh ... I was afraid. I didn't like him. I really wanted to go back home. (Ana, Kaitaia, 1999)

After a long journey Ana found herself in Auckland and, while waiting in a Dalmatian boarding house for a boat to the Far North, she heard strange stories about 'natives'. Ignorant boarders told her that 'the natives were awful savages and that they would eat her for dessert'. Ana was frightened by these stories. She remembers being unaware of who actually lived in New Zealand: 'I didn't know that black or brown people existed at all. Nobody told me that.' Nor did she have any idea that her husband's first wife was a Maori. It appears he failed to mention this in the letter he sent to Nakovana. At first sight, Ana found Waiharara so depressing, that she wished 'there were a bridge over the oceans ...' Nevertheless, she dutifully agreed to marry the man for whom she had travelled halfway around the world. Once they were married, she was immediately taken to an old shanty on the gumfields where, as well as having to cook, clean and scrape gum, she had to take care of the children from Jure's previous marriage. She worked from dawn to dusk:

> My husband's house was worse than my family house in Podgora. I just couldn't believe it. Waiharara was just the end of the world to me. So, I had to do all the cooking, washing and gardening. Sometimes I had to cook for a lot of Dalmatian men there ... my hands were badly ruined washing so many clothes. We did grow some vegetables: cabbage, celery, potato and we had a house cow and chooks for eggs. We used to sell some eggs to the local shop in Waiharara. Maori worked together with us. I've never had any problems with Maori. There were mainly Croats and Maori in the camp. At the beginning I didn't want to mix with Maori. I thought that they are wild people. I could hardly communicate with them. It took me a year to realise that Maori are like us ... they are just people, nothing else ... yeah ... just people. They are very good and kind indeed. (Ana, Kaitaia, 1999)

Until World War II, the town of Dargaville contained the largest settlement of Croatian gumdiggers in New Zealand. After arriving in Auckland, a large number of Croatian women would travel to Dargaville along the Wairoa River on a *lanca*, or ship. They would then stay in a boarding house run by the Batistich

Picture bride, Žuva Nobilo. Žuva holding a picture of Nikola Nobilo (Dida) in front of her house in Lumbarda on her wedding day, 22 January 1939. 'It was a proxy wedding. I had a nuptial mass with all ceremonies, the choir sang and I heard myself say "I will" but it was more like play acting than the real thing. Before I could leave my country I had to be legally married to Dida ... Dida's brother Ivan stood by me ... I still can hear Ivan when he was asked does he take me for his brother Nikola's wife, he said loud and clear "I will" and that was that.' Steve Nobilo Collection.

family. Amelia Batistich, a young girl at that time, nostalgically remembers the many unique events that occurred during this period, such as the arrival of the young, poor brides, the weddings held in the boarding house or in shanties and children being born. She also recalls the pain women immigrants experienced in adapting to New Zealand's surroundings:

> I remember the excitement with which we awaited the coming of the new arrival. My mother would be up at daybreak, making sure that everything was shiny ready. The boat always came in early and we went to meet it. A contingent of boarders came along too. The shy girl stood in the midst of all this hub-hub, trying to absorb names, shyly answering questions, and acknowledging introductions. Everyone wanted to know about 'home'. My mother took firm charge of her, because she too had been such a stranger when she first came to New Zealand and knew what it was to feel lost in a new land. ... preparations for the wedding soon had us all astir. There was the wedding dress to be bought, the veil and satin shoes. Mother took charge. The bride-to-be went to the shop with her and let herself be fitted. The fiancé always insisted on nothing but the best. After, there would be a time to think of economy, but for the wedding no expense was spared. (Batistich 1964: 23–6)

After a 'luxurious' wedding in Dargaville the brides from Podgora, Vrgorac, Zaostrog or Korčula would be disappointed to realise that their long, tiring journey ended in the gumfields, in a *sanda*, or shanty, near some muddy holes. Those who found themselves on farms were even more disappointed, as they were completely isolated. As one woman put it, 'we lived as animals ... mud

everywhere … no proper house … no church bells on Sundays and the worst thing was that there were no other women around …' In her novel *Sing Vila in the Mountain*, Amelia Batistich describes a mother's loneliness in desolate Tangi, her own mother's first home in New Zealand:

> 'Every day I scrubbed the floors …. I washed them with my tears …. No one to talk to. Not even the smoke of a neighbour's chimney to be seen. Only a clay road that nobody ever came by …. Then one morning ….' The rumble of wheels rolling up the rise, the clop of horses' hooves, voices, then a wagon … coming down the hill. The cart stopped right next to the gate. Men, women and children spill out. Maoris, come to set up camp in the paddock next door. People at last. 'I stood and watched them all day. Just to be looking at people, at children playing, that was enough. And when one of the men sat down on a box and started to play accordion … I thought I was in Paris,' Mama said …. The Maoris stayed several weeks. The women couldn't understand Mama and she couldn't understand them. But the friendship got by on smiles and exchanges of gifts. Slowly a few English and Maori words crept in and got mixed with Dalmatian. *Tena koe, ki te kai, haeremai* …. 'Oh, I was sad to see them go away,' Mama said. (Batistich 1987: 35–6)

However, none of these stories about loneliness and hard work reached Dalmatia. Family pride prevented Croatian women from including stories of suffering in the trade of fantasies, and new brides kept coming with new hopes. As Ana explains:

> I never told anyone in Dalmatia about my hard life here … and the first shock that I had when I saw my husband's house … I didn't want my mother to worry and I didn't want people from my village to stop coming here … ooooooo, no … we needed them here … so I sent some beautiful photos … picnic on the beach … everyone nicely dressed … yeah … never the photo of the gumfields … never …. If I did … they would stop coming … so, we encouraged them to come …. When my husband sent his photo to my village asking for a woman who will marry him he sent a nice photo, not a gumdigging one. On that photo he looked as an aristocrat …. I thought that his life in New Zealand must be wonderful … but when I saw him … to tell you the truth … if there were a bridge across the ocean I would go back to my home in Nakovana. (Ana, Kaitaia, 1999)

Ana still keeps the photos of her husband Jure dressed in his fancy suit. We could say that, in the photos Croatian men sent back to Dalmatia, they appeared likeable to others. The images represented what 'they' would like them to be. The question to ask here is, for whom were they enacting these roles? Whose gaze do we identify with? Whose gaze is implicated in the seductive photos Croatian women continued to send back to Dalmania, after they were caught in the reality of New Zealand life? If a photograph captures and freezes one moment in time (Benjamin 1989), how did these 'frozen' moments support the fantasies of 'different Americas' for people in Dalmatian villages? These photos, as well as the letters that described New Zealand as a haven for workers,

were sites of desire for both those who stayed in Dalmatia and those who left. These idealised images were necessary because the 'real thing' never existed – the photos had no reference to reality. For those who left, they served as a means for reflecting on the better life they sought but could not find and were a way of maintaining their senders' reputation back in Croatia. At the same time, the photos were vehicles of desire for a better life for those who stayed in the Dalmatian villages

The photos also played a role in New Zealand. They represented both the place in which Dalmatians would like to see themselves, and the ideal image of themselves once they were there. Amelia Batistich, for instance, remembers using a photo of her uncle looking like a British lord when describing her family background at school.[10] She also recalls wanting to have a proper British name, in order to be indistinguishable from the rest of the children in her class. The politics of assimilation was so strong that some Croats, especially those who started farms and brought their wives from Dalmatia, decided to 'forget' the past they shared with Maori.

In 1926, the government introduced a new immigration policy, placing a ceiling on the number of migrants from Yugoslavia permitted in the country. At the same time, however, they actively encouraged proxy, or arranged, marriages for those who had already obtained naturalisation papers. As a result, many Croatian gumdiggers used their savings to buy a small farm, bring a wife over from Dalmatia and make a new beginning.

The arrival of Croatian brides affected the way marriage between Maori and Croats was perceived. Since many Croats who brought their fiancées from the home country believed that they had gained a 'better' position in society, a division emerged between those who married Maori and those who married 'women of their own kind'.

It is important to note that there were also internal divisions between Croatian migrants. Dalmatia was a region composed of varied identities and these multiple forms of Dalmatian identity were sometimes maintained and reconstructed in New Zealand. For example, in Dalmatia it was believed that men from the inland villages were not 'good enough' to marry women from seaside villages. Batistich's story about the experience of Maria Derich, who travelled from Dalmatia to New Zealand to marry Mr Yelich, a Dalmatian gumdigger, reflects how some of the local classifications from Dalmatia were reconstructed in this completely new environment. Maria was from a village situated by the sea and Mr Yelich was born in a village that was only a couple of kilometres away from the coastline, but was from where one couldn't see the sea.

> Kuma [aunty] was one of the early letter brides. She had sent her photograph to a relative in New Zealand and he'd shown it to Mr Yelich. Such a lovely girl! Mr Yelich's mind was made up at once. Nothing unusual in that, the prize was to the swiftest, but Kuma was a girl from one of the proud villages of the coast and the men from that village did not like their woman marrying 'out'. And Mr

> Yelich was definitely out. A man, not from the coast at all, but from a village over the mountains! Kuma duly arrived in Auckland .... By this time the men of her village had got wind that she was coming. They were there in a mass when the ship docked, maybe not just on a matter of parochial pride but to get a good look at the girl! When they saw her their pride was ablaze – such a girl! From their own village too! Let her marry that Yelich? Never! That night thirty of the best marched up Queen Street, up to the hotel where Kuma was staying. Outside her window they halted – thirty Romeos and one Juliet.
>
> 'Maria Derich, come to the balcony,' they called with one voice. She heard and came. Like a princess in a story she stood there and heard suitors. 'Here we are, thirty men of your own village. Choose a husband from one of us but don't marry that man from over the mountains.' ... But Kuma ... refused them all. 'Where were you when I was at home?' she called down to the thirty. 'Why did not one of you offer for me then?' And thanked them kindly and told them to go home. She was promised to Marko Yelich and marry him she would. Not even a carnation thrown down to the rejected; and never after a word of regret. (Batistich 1987: 140–41)

Žižek's concept of the 'theft of enjoyment' proved useful in analysing the divisions that emerged in New Zealand with the rise of nationalism. The same concept can be used to analyse the divisions that existed amongst Dalmatian immigrants. According to Žižek (1993), the way we construct our belonging to a particular group of people always involves an element of fantasy. Fantasy gives consistency to what we call 'reality', in that it fills the impossibility of that reality being fully symbolised. National identity is precisely this element that cannot be fully symbolised. Hence, we cannot specify what it means exactly to belong to a particular group of people who claim the same background. However, it is through this feeling of belonging that we perceive ourselves as part of a homogeneous entity. It is because of this feeling of belonging to a nation, or a particular ethnic group, that British diggers reacted with hostility towards Croats. They represented them as the other, the other who does not belong to their imagined community and who threatens that community with their 'overindustrious habits'. Moreover, the British believed the Croats wanted to steal their community's 'way of life', even though it was something accessible only to those who really belong to that particular community. Of course, similar divisions also existed within British identity. English, Irish and Scottish backgrounds were always distinguished in their own ways. In addition, divisions were also established according to class and gender. However, in the context of early colonial New Zealand, a fantasy frame of the nation subverted these differences to create a homogeneous notion of the whole.

Fantasy structures and modes of differentiation also existed within Dalmatian society in New Zealand. It is significant that at the time the first Dalmatian migrants were arriving in New Zealand they did not have a strong sense of collective identity. For most, their identity was determined in relation to the village in which they were raised. In Dalmatia at that time, people who

Weddings, Weddings, Weddings. Jurlina Family Collection, Yelash Family Collection

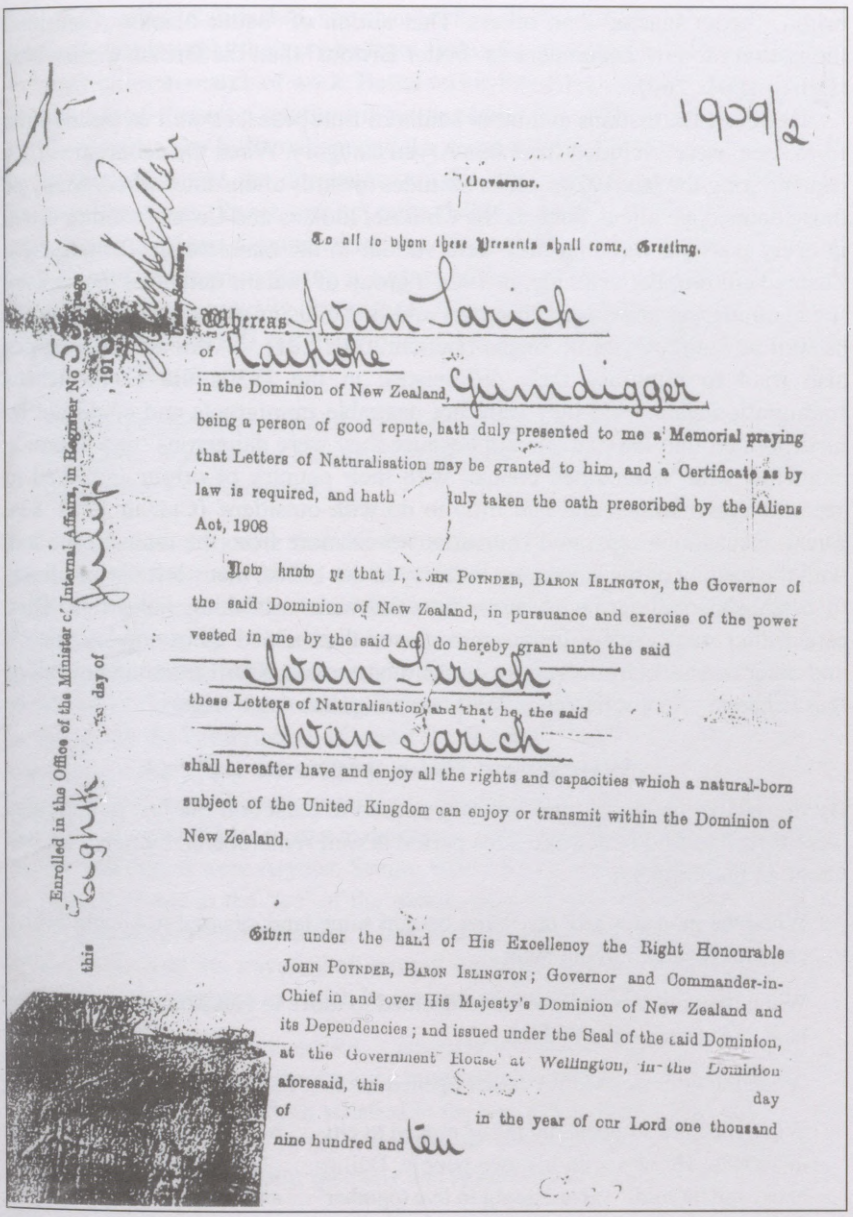
lived by the sea believed they were more civilised than inland villagers. This is primarily due to the fact that those on the coast had a maritime connection with the world while those who lived inland were much more isolated because of the lack of roads. The identity of those villagers who lived by the sea was clearly based on the fantasy of 'primitive inlanders' constantly threatening their way of life with their 'primitive habits'. Moreover, due to the patriarchal ideology of that time, they felt especially threatened by the idea of inlanders wanting to marry local women. Women were perceived to be possessions of the village. Accordingly, if a woman from a seaside village chose to marry an inlander, she was often completely excluded from the community. At the same time, however, if men from those same villages married women from the inland they did not necessarily loose their rank and position in the village.

Due to a combination of economic and social factors, at first, Dalmatian immigrants to New Zealand were overwhelmingly male. Initially, they tended to live on the gumfields in camps with those from the same village. However, as a result of the discrimination they all experienced, and their being classified as Austrians, they began to connect and to interact much more than they ever did in Dalmatia. Gradually, while living in New Zealand, they developed a new sense of group identity. Even so, because of the many political changes then occurring in the Balkans, their identification with the home country was often conflicted and confusing. In addition, all of these political changes were reflected in their own position in New Zealand.

Initially, the majority of Dalmatian immigrants did not have any intention of settling in New Zealand. With the government promoting a stable domestic way of life, they were constantly criticised for sending money out of the country. Hence, many had to make the decision to either return to their Dalmatian village or stay in New Zealand and make a new beginning. In the early days, those who married Maori were not treated differently, because Maori and Dalmatian were positioned in a similar way on the gumfields.

When the government encouraged the arrival of proxy brides during the 1920s, the old distinction between inlanders and coastal villagers again became important. Inlanders, for instance, were not allowed to approach women from coastal villages.[11] Nevertheless, since bringing women to New Zealand meant the decision to settle and stay, Dalmatians began to develop a new sense of community and belonging in New Zealand. It was not a coincidence that the first Yugoslav clubs in New Zealand were established at this time. Even though there were many political disagreements between clubs, based on their pro-Yugoslav or pro-Croatian orientation,[12] in general they demonstrated that Dalmatians were beginning to feel secure as one of the many ethnic groups in New Zealand.

Paradoxically, at the time Croats were beginning to establish a stronger sense of collective identity, there was little place in New Zealand for ethnic diversity. With the emergence of nationalism, the notion of New Zealand being a homogeneous community began to develop. During the 1920s, the idea that New Zealanders were one people was even stronger than at the end of the nineteenth century and it was assumed that all ethnic differences would be assimilated into the mainstream culture. According to Belich, the main racial category in New Zealand at that time was Aryanism. Aryanism blended differences between Scots, Welsh and Irish: 'Celts were not Anglo-Saxons or Teutons, but they were Aryans' (Belich 2001: 209). Aryansim also incorporated northern Europeans and, most importantly, incorporated Maori. In 1885, in *The Aryan Maori*, Edward Tregear argued that Maori shared their origins with Northern Europeans. He maintained that the Maori language was similar to Latin and that Maori rock paintings appeared to represent a knowledge of India. By the 1900s, it was widely believed that Maori were descended from Aryans and were basically Caucasian. In the 1920s, according to the politics of assimilation it was argued that Maori were, due to their Aryan



1909/2

Governor.

To all to whom these Presents shall come, Greeting.

Whereas Ivan Sarich
of Kaikohe
in the Dominion of New Zealand, Gumdigger
being a person of good repute, hath duly presented to me a Memorial praying that Letters of Naturalisation may be granted to him, and a Certificate as by law is required, and hath duly taken the oath prescribed by the Aliens Act, 1908

Now know ye that I, JOHN POYNDER, BARON ISLINGTON, the Governor of the said Dominion of New Zealand, in pursuance and exercise of the power vested in me by the said Act do hereby grant unto the said
Ivan Sarich
these Letters of Naturalisation, and that he, the said
Ivan Sarich
shall hereafter have and enjoy all the rights and capacities which a natural-born subject of the United Kingdom can enjoy or transmit within the Dominion of New Zealand.

Given under the hand of His Excellency the Right Honourable JOHN POYNDER, BARON ISLINGTON; Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over His Majesty's Dominion of New Zealand and its Dependencies; and issued under the Seal of the said Dominion, at the Government House at Wellington, in the Dominion aforesaid, this day of in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and ten

Enrolled in the Office of the Minister of Internal Affairs, in Register No. 5 Folio 1918 this 1st day of

Ivan Sarich was born in 1885 in Račišće, the Dalmatian island of Korčula. He got his naturalisation papers in New Zealand in 1910 and married a Maori woman, Te Kare Ariki Toia. Kipi Robert Sarich Collection

origin, 'better blacks' than others. This notion of 'better blacks' resembled the notion of New Zealanders as 'better Britons' than the British themselves (Belich 2001: 209).

However, Dalmatians and other southern Europeans, as well as immigrants from Asia, were excluded from this Aryan category. When the economic crisis began during the late 1920s, racist attitudes towards aliens intensified. Many of those defined as 'alien', such as the Chinese, Indians and Croats, tried to prove in every possible way that they were similar to the mainstream, British, New Zealand culture. For example, in 1926 a group of Indians defended themselves 'by claiming that they were "brothers and first cousins of the English people"' as well as being Aryan by origin (Belich 2001: 231).[13] Although Dalmatians also tried to minimise their differences, in the 1930s the Controller of Immigration stated that they were not desirable immigrants and could not be incorporated into the mainstream because they were dangerous 'non-Teutonic elements' who 'maintained contact with their country of origin and lived in separate communities and had little to do with outsiders' (Canvin 1970: 82). These accusations separated Dalmatians even more from the mainstream and, with the decline of the kauri gum industry in the 1930s, many left the gumfields to establish small farms or move into the wine or fishing industries. They established small, self-sufficient businesses that helped them employ friends and other members of the family. In the next section, I will examine how all of these changes were reflected in the Maori-Croatian relationship.

WHEN THE GUM STOPPED ...

By the 1950s, the kauri gum industry ceased to exist and the last gumdiggers were forced to find new work. This period is well remembered by many Maori-Croatian gumdiggers:

> When the gum stopped, my father bought some land, grassed it, bought twelve cows and began milking them ...
>
> When the gum stopped my father decided to move to Henderson, bought some land and started wine-making ...
>
> When the gum stopped my father opened his first fish-shop ...
>
> When the gum stopped, my father moved to city ... but I stayed with my mother in Te Kao. He was with his own people, Dallies. ... One night my father came back, and he said, ' we are going to live together' ... and he stayed with us ... but he took off again ... to Dargaville ... to his own people ... see my father wanted to stay with us, but there was no job in Te Kao. We lived in a shack, the whole lot of us, the whole family, we had no house at that time, nothing. It was really hard. (Hans Peter Stoffel's interviews with Croatian gumdiggers' descendants, 1970s)

The period 'when the gum stopped' actually marks, not only an economic change for Maori and Croatian gumdiggers, but also a complete change in the

Maori-Croatian relationship. The changes had already begun in the 1930s, when many Croats brought their wives from Dalmatia, purchased farms or migrated to larger cities in search of work. Based on his linguistic analysis, Stoffel (1988) divides Maori-Croatian relations into two phases: the first period, from 1880 to 1930, is marked by bilingualism and the second, from 1930 to 1950, is marked by trilingualism and the dominance of the English language. The difference between these two phases was not only visible in language but also in all other areas marking Maori-Croatian relations. When the basic tie, which was founded on a mutual oppression during a certain historic period, ceased to exist, other cultural relations gradually diminished. After the 1950s, the paths of Croats and Maori who had worked and lived together on Muriwhenua gumfields diverged. As Wiremu Tomas put it:

> [When the gum stopped] a lot of Dallies bought land, businesses, farms or grew vineyards, whereas the Maoris most of them went back, and settled on their tribal lands .... (Tomas n.d.)

It is important to note that the 1920s were also a time of distinctive Maori movements. From the 1890s to the 1920s, Maori landholdings were further reduced[14] and much of the land Maori still owned was marginal and unsuitable for development. In 1916, the Maori prophet Rua Kenana and his followers fought a gun battle with police and refused to fight for the British Empire in World War I. Te Puea, a granddaughter of the Maori King Tawhaio, also organised resistance to the conscription of Maori for the War.[15] However, at the same time members of the Young Maori Party, along with their most prominent and highly educated leaders, such as Apirana Ngata, Maui Pomare and Peter Buck, promoted the assimilation of Maori into mainstream culture. Some of them accepted the theory that Maori were Aryans. Seeing World War I as an excellent opportunity to include Maori in the 'we' of the nation, they formed a recruiting committee and organised a Maori battalion. Maui Pomare was particularly keen to include Maori in the war. He travelled all around the North Island, visiting many marae and delivering speeches in which he praised Maori volunteers:

> Our people's voluntary service ... gave a new and glorious tradition to the story of the Maori race. It gave the crowning touch to the sense of citizenship in the British Commonwealth; it satisfied in the one fitting fashion the intense desire of the Maori to prove to the world that he was the equal of the Pakeha in the fullest sense – physically, mentally and spiritually. (quoted in King 1977: 79)

It was not easy to persuade Maori to fight for the British Empire. In the North, however, the response was higher than in other parts of New Zealand. Interestingly, news of German atrocities in Belgium improved the local recruitment rate. Whina Cooper, who at that time lived in the Hokianga, remembers:

> We identified with the Belgians. Like the Maoris, they were only a small people, and they were being invaded and mistreated by the Germans. Our old people

> said that could happen to the Maoris. They said that if the Germans weren't stopped over there they might come and do the same thing here. Our old people also felt it was up to the Maoris to play their part in defending Aotearoa. … Maui Pomare … spoke at big meeting at Waipuna Marae. He is the best speaker I ever heard. He was saying why everybody had to take their share of the fighting – how it would preserve the traditions of our ancestors and help us get a better deal from the Pakeha. (King 1982: 71–3)

Belich argues that Maori performance in the war and the strategy of high-profile loyalty employed by members of the Young Maori Party increased respect for Maori among the Pakeha, even 'whitening them' in Pakeha eyes (Belich 2001: 212). Maori were also accepted into the 'we' of the nation through their involvement in sport. Rugby was already a national game in the 1900s and, by the 1920s, it was the dominant sport in New Zealand. The members of the Young Maori Party helped to institutionalise Maori rugby teams and in the 1920s some Maori players were included in the national team, the All Blacks. Mainstream opinion was that Maori were by nature warlike, hence they were good in warlike games (Belich 2001: 213).

Young Maori leaders also had some influence on the government. Apirana Ngata was Native Minister from 1928 to 1934. He established the land development scheme for Maori, secured state credit for Maori farmers and, in some parts of New Zealand, especially the East Coast of the North Island, dramatically improved Maori farming. Although farms created by Ngata's initiative supported about 12,000 Maori by 1935, the scheme proved to be uneconomic in many areas where Maori lived, and it certainly did not help Maori who lived in the Far North. In the Hokianga, where the land was more fertile than on Te Aupori peninsula, newly established dairy farms provided support for around 3000 Maori (Belich 2001: 202) However, in Te Hapua, Te Kao, Sweetwater and Waiharara, most Maori were still digging kauri gum, as the land was very poor and could not sustain production at an economic level. In general, even though the government put some effort into improving the position of Maori, according to statistics 75 per cent of the Maori male population were registered as unemployed in 1933 (King 1992: 293). Those who tried to find employment in the cities were subjected to highly exploitative working conditions. In addition, the majority of Maori were unskilled workers, since the education they received in Native Schools was focused mostly on farming and home skills. They lived in houses which were below standard and many were literally starving.[16] Reports on Maori health estimated that the Maori death rate in 1938 was 24.3 per 1000 people, compared with 9.7 for non-Maori (King 1992: 291). Muriwhenua Maori, who depended on the declining kauri gum industry, were reduced to a state of penury:

> Gum is now so scarce that it does not provide [a living] … no industry that could absorb their labour exists in the district. (Dr Duncan Cook, Medical Officer for Health 1936)

In 1938, the Government was asked to provide urgent assistance for Maori in Te Hapua, as many were close to starvation and, in the same year, most of the schools in Muriwhenua were closed due to the spread of disease. The Health Officer who visited the Parengarenga gumfields in 1939 reported that 'the diet of local Maori, which consisted mainly of kumara, bread, biscuits and tea with occasionally fish but no dairy produce, fruit or vegetables, was responsible for the state of malnutrition' (Koning and Oliver 1993: 38). In a similar way, officers who surveyed houses in Muriwhenua stated that these settlements 'revealed appalling conditions':

> (a) hygienically, filth, overcrowding, no water; no sanitary conveniences etc: (b) structurally many of the homes consist simply of a wooden frame work, covered by sacks sewn together and are certainly not weatherproof. Some were living in tents, others in the usual type of Maori shack built of corrugated iron – all grossly overcrowded. (Koning and Oliver 1993: 39)

Requests were continually made for government assistance. The land development scheme, which started operation in Te Kao in 1925, was not successful and problems persisted. The Right Reverend Frederick Augustus Bennett, Bishop of Aotearoa, visited Muriwhenua in 1937. Shocked by the living conditions of Maori and the infertile land, he suggested that the government should move all Maori from the Te Hapua district to Kapowairua, where the land was more fertile. But Maori objected to this suggestion. Duncan Cook, a District Officer suggested that:

> [T]he trouble at Te Hapua is that in the past the various houses were located with reference to school, rather than agricultural land. The new houses which are urgently required must be relocated on arable land, where each Maori family could grow a considerable part of their own food supply. However, a policy of this nature is impossible unless the present school has a boarding establishment attached ... I am definitely of the opinion that if the Maoris in Te Hapua are ever to become self-supporting, and not parasitic on the white population of New Zealand as they are at the present, they must have a boarding school of this nature, as well as small homesteads and farms located on the best pieces of soil. (Report on Health of Maoris inTe Hapua and Te Kao 1936)

Laclau's conception of the way the logic of equivalence and difference operates within the social can again be a useful tool for analysing this new political space that emerged under the policy of assimilation and operated through the interplay of inclusion and exclusion. While their participation in World War I and their sporting success may have included them in the 'we' of the nation, at the same time Maori were politically and culturally excluded from New Zealand society. For instance, Maori representatives in Parliament painted a picture of political inclusion, but these representatives often supported assimilation and, as a consequence, the exclusion of Maori cultural values.

Belich argues that the main legacy of the Young Maori Party 'was not assimilation but a kind of benign segregation', as they managed to develop

separate military, sporting and land development organisations which helped to preserve 'Maoriness' (Belich 2001: 206). Webster (1998) contends that the idea of 'Maoriness', as a form of 'racial pride', was constructed at this time. Webster moves on to state that this idea served to 'hide' the exploitation of Maori, thereby preventing them from realising their real interests as a working class and seeing that Maori culture as a whole was a 'way of struggle'. However, since Maori participated in many different forms of struggle, not just the workers' struggles that Webster's argument implies, the idea of Maoriness itself can be seen to have been the result of a 'way of struggle'.

According to Laclau (1990), the experience of dislocation lies at the base of any struggle and the response to dislocation is the imaginary reconstitution of the negated identity. From this perspective the idea of Maoriness could be seen as an articulation of Maori demands for racial equality, political participation, economic equality, and access to education and medical care, with available political and strategic discourses. Since none of these discourses were homogeneous, and there were many nodal points around which discursive elements were constructed, the articulations were marked by contradictions. In this context, Belich's idea that the politics of the Young Maori Party 'was not assimilation but a kind of benign segregation' is misleading. What he sees as 'benign segregation' was actually a result of the traumatic experience of dislocation which constituted the discourse of Maoriness. Moreover, this idea of Maoriness was inscribed by the politics of assimilation and by social antagonism. For Laclau, antagonism is the disruption of a symbolic universe, a disruption which impedes the social from fully constituting itself. In this sense, the idea of Maoriness promoted by members of the Young Maori Party, as well other Maori movements of the time, was indeed a response to assimilation.

It is important to note that these movements were not homogeneous, as they reflected different responses by Maori to new circumstances. For example, while members of the Young Maori Party called for a Maori unity 'constructed from tribal building blocks', Wiremu Ratana established a religious and political organisation which emphasised Maori unity on a non-tribal basis (Belich 2001: 199). He established the Ratana Church and preached the unity of Maori as God's chosen race. Traditional Maori leaders, along with the Pakeha elite, were dissatisfied with this movement. In 1924, Ratana travelled to Britain in an attempt to present a protest petition to the British King. He called for the ratification of the Treaty of Waitangi. Over time Ratana gained strong Maori support and, according to some estimations, by 1936 more than half of the Maori population backed the Ratana movement (Belich 2001: 197). In 1932, members of his church entered Parliament and, by 1943, the Ratana movement held all four Maori seats. According to Belich, Ratana's followers 'denial of tribalism' 'was a precursor of subsequent urban non-tribal organisations' (Belich 2001: 198).

Before World War II only 11.2 per cent of Maori lived in urban areas. However, uneconomic farming practices and ensuing poverty forced many Maori families to move into the cities. By the late 1960s, 'Maori had become a predominantly urban people' (King 1992: 289). While, on the one hand, Maori

achievements during World War II were again used by politicians to stress the unity of the New Zealand nation, on the other, Maori faced discrimination in employment and accommodation. They were paid less than Pakeha, only a small percentage held professional positions and they were refused entry, or were discriminated against, in many hotels, pubs, cinemas, barber's shops, public swimming baths etc. (Belich 2001: 190). All of these circumstances helped to construct a collective Maori identity: one which was constituted around the idea of Maoriness and was politically constructed in the process of struggle.

A series of new Maori social movements began in the late 1960s. Although all of them were constructed around the idea of Maoriness, there were several points of antagonism among them. For example, while some groups claimed that the Treaty of Waitangi was a fraud, others insisted the Treaty should be the central constitutional document and that it guaranteed Maori rights. In short, as Laclau and Mouffe (1995) argue, the articulation of, and inclusion in, a particular political discourse is always the product of struggle and there is no struggle in which the identity of all intervening forces, both dominant and dominated, is not transformed. While the idea of Maoriness was constructed as a 'constitutive outside' which threatened the assimilationist policies of a unified New Zealand, it was at the same time inscribed within this policy. It is thus unproductive to claim that the idea of Maoriness was simply the expression of an underlying essence, one which served to obscure 'the other side of Maori culture' and 'the real Maori interests'.

The strong assimilation policy also affected the position of Croats in New Zealand at the time. The logic of equivalence and difference, in reference to 'foreigners', operated through the interplay between the promotion of an assimilatory inclusion of 'others' and the exclusion of 'non-assimilated' others. As noted earlier, the main purpose of assimilation politics in New Zealand was to legitimise the dominant group as the natural identity of the nation. As in the colonial period, this dominant group saw itself as capable of judging others and their degree of assimilation.

With their 'way of life' and 'outlook', Croats were considered incapable of being fully assimilated. By 1961, more than seventy per cent of the total Croatian population in New Zealand was urbanised (Canvin 1970: 17). However, their transition from the gumfields to the cities was far from easy. Those who went into the winemaking industry had constant problems with the government. On the gumfields, when the first vineyards were being established, Croats were blamed for spreading 'evil' among the Maori. In Auckland, they were accused of selling 'Dally plonk' that could 'kill' and 'demoralise' not only Maori but all honest citizens. At that time, the prohibitionist movement was very strong and a two-gallon sale restriction was introduced. After it was finally lifted in the 1950s, more and more vineyards began to be developed.

Most Croatian winemakers were based in Henderson, West Auckland. Trlin argues that Croats preferred small-scale independent businesses, like winemaking, food retailing and catering, because these jobs 'provided an avenue for economic advancement requiring little education or skill and only a

rudimentary command of the English language, all of which effectively excluded Yugoslavs from professional positions' (Trlin 1968: 13). However, Croats were excluded from professional positions not only because they lacked knowledge. They experienced racism and discrimination and, even when they had equivalent or better qualifications than Pakeha, they were seldom offered work. For example, even though Amelia Batistich was educated in New Zealand schools, she still faced problems when she tried to find employment outside the Croatian community (Batistich 2001).

Small independent businesses, such as restaurants, fish-shops, vineyards, dairy farms and orchards, gave Croats the opportunity to employ all the family and to work long hours (Trlin 1968: 15). Trlin argues that, during this time, the family became an important social and economic unit for Yugoslavs. He sees the reason for this to be their 'unconscious striving for greater economic security to replace the social security provided by the village community in Europe and relinquished by the settlers in New Zealand' (Trlin 1968: 15). Furthermore, most of the Croats in New Zealand can be seen to have been positioned in a way which forced them to operate only within their own community and family. The formation of strong, supportive family networks and a coherent community acted as a site of resistance to racist oppression. It also enabled the traditional values inherited from their villages in Dalmatia, such as male dominance, to survive longer in the new environment.[17] Paradoxically, at the same time, the government was forcing Croats to develop a strong community, it described their separation as the reason for their always incomplete assimilation. They were therefore caught in a contradiction. *An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand* (1966) depicts this double-bind, from a Pakeha perspective:

> Some Yugoslav families have reached their second New Zealand born generation, but they are still a problem as their assimilation is not easy. This has been partly due to the feelings of loyalty to the Slav people and partly to the feeling that any government, but particularly one controlled by aliens, is an unnecessary evil. Shortly after the Second World War Yugoslavs overseas were asked to return home. Less than 300 left New Zealand, though many who remained made the decision reluctantly. The war record of the New Zealand Yugoslavs was not good. Some, often of New Zealand birth, volunteered and served with distinction. The majority strongly resisted attempts to conscript them and, though Yugoslavia was an ally and volunteers were requested by the Consul, none came forward. It will take time for the Yugoslav to have the same fundamental feelings and outlook as the British New Zealander. (Wilson 1966: 628–29)

At this time, many Croats were becoming economically successful, especially in the wine industry. This success again challenged the assimilationist concept of inclusion and exclusion, in that Croats were positioned as assimilated or included economically while, at the same time, they were seen as unassimilated or excluded from society. As Hage argues, this construction of the categories 'assimilated' and 'unassimilated':

> Did not only indicate the division of the population between two sections – one seen as central/assimilated and the other as marginal/unassimilated. More importantly, it also constructed non-assimilation such that it empowered the 'assimilated' to see in the unassimilated a negative, problematic group and actively to exclude them from the social, political and cultural spheres of society. (Hage 1998: 137)

For example, Croatian economic inclusion is outlined in the words of the Prime Minister Robert Muldoon who, praising the growth of wine industry in New Zealand, said:

> I never cease to marvel at the number of people [Dalmatians] in this district who have built thriving businesses on hard work .... their travel half-way round the world to try for a new life must have special qualities of initiative and courage. These qualities are passed on to their descendants and are of great value in our national life. (Wine Review 1971: 11)

During this time of 'economic success', many of the Croats who had married Maori began to distinguish between those who stayed to live within the Maori community in the North, and those who moved and lived within Croatian communities. The expressions 'our Maori' and 'their Maori' were common. They were used mostly to distinguish between Maori-Croatian descendants. 'Their Maori' referred to those who were seen to be living a 'Maori way of life'. The influence of the dominant ideology is very clear, in this instance, as the 'Maori way of life' symbolised laziness and a lack of economic initiative. Thus, the effects of the policy of assimilation can be seen to have also caused changes in the Maori-Croatian relationship. Their roads diverged but the effects of their contact did not disappear completely. They were visible in the cultural practices which came into being as a result of this contact. For example, in 1971, Dansey wrote in his book *Maori Custom Today*:

> I wonder [if] in Northland ... (the flower ceremony) began in the gum-fields, picked up from the Dalmatians who have been long-time neighbours and who are often related by marriage to Maori families. One of the prettiest Maori wedding customs is what is called 'the flower ceremony'. As far as I know it is confined to Northland and Auckland where it is sometimes seen at weddings of people whose families came originally from Northland. In this ceremony the toastmaster or some prominent member of the family takes pieces of the wedding cake, which are wrapped up especially for the purpose and presents them to representatives of the various families present. Each little parcel has a flower on it, hence the name of the ceremony. Sometimes decorations from the cake take the place of the flower. In other days I believe that those who were called had to recite a genealogical table to prove their right to the gift but this seems to have lapsed. Dr Joan Metge in her book 'A New Maori Migration' notes that she saw the ceremony in Northland when it was little more than an entertainment for the children. Those who were called had to sing for their flower. Whether you join in a toast to the cake or stand up and sing for your

> flower, you know it is all part of a custom to which we all subscribe wishing the bride and groom well and enjoying ourselves in the process. In principle it's neither Maori nor Pakeha … (Dansey 1971)

In a way, these cultural practices can be seen to exist as a result of hybridity. One of the most beautiful examples of this hybridity is the poem 'An ordinary day beyond Kaitaia', with which I would like to end this chapter. It is written by the renowned New Zealand poet Kendrick Smithyman and it ends in a sort of Maori-Croatian-English language labyrinth. Kendrick Smithyman (1922–1995) initially worked as a primary school teacher, published eleven books of poetry and taught at the University of Auckland (McKay 1971: 88). He often spent summers in the Far North and became friends with Dalmatians and Maori. The very title of the poem points out for whom the poem was intended, those 'beyond Kaitaia' on the gumfields where Maori and Croats worked. Furthermore, within the poem allusions and connotations are often made to the history of the region, and to the way of life of its Croatian inhabitants:

> Between a sea and an ocean
> the farmlands lie low
> without a hill to comfort them.
>
> Or
> A peasant people won hard
> from waste, teaching their weird flats
> a novel language, an old belief
> Saint Cyril and Saint Methodius to pray for …

As these verses suggest, the Croats who lived 'beyond Kaitaia' built a church to honour Saint Cyril and Saint Methodius, and they were among the first to develop farms on those barren gumlands. Other verses refer to the Maori-Croatian relationship:

> And the kin: tanned, earnest
> Slavic Polynesian faces …
>
> I am a stranger. Too facile, to say
> we are all strangers. The land is made
> to our liking. Not far north
> they are going, to offer.
> To Hine, whose likeness still the swamp.
> To Hine-nui, whose tumultuous hair the chattering
> idiot cabbage trees mimic,
> Hine-nui-te-Po, She who is darkness,
> at the heart speaking of the land,
> along the wind's edge, at the sea line.

You cannot put by. I write in her dust
on the bonnet of our station wagon
M A T E. That will do, for a time.

If we live, we stand in language.
You must change your words.

The magic of the poem, and of its Maori-Croatian-English meanings, are all present in the word MATE. This final image draws together the linguistic and historical threads of the poem: English is signified by the language in which the poem is written; Croatian is evoked in the references to Saint Cyril and the Saint Methodius Church, as well as the image of Polynesian-Slavic faces; and Maori appears in the last verses, which are flooded with creatures from Maori mythology.

In the world of light the goddess Hine-nui-te-po was called Hine-titama. Her father, the omnipotent Tane, is the originator of both the forest, plants, animals and birds, and the world of darkness, the underworld to which they belong. However, because of his incestuous desires, Hine-Titama runs away from her father and changes her name into Hine-nui-te-po, the Great Lady of the Night. In Maori mythology, she is usually associated with death. Her father Tane provides for everything that is alive, so everything dead comes to her empire. The trickster hero Maui tried to free mankind from death by conquering Hine-nui-te-po, but he was betrayed by a laughing bird, and the Lady of the Night embraced him between her legs and suffocated and killed him (Orbell 1996: 57). It is significant that the narrator of the poem writes the word MATE in the dust of Hine-nui-te-po that has fallen on the hood of the car. In English, 'mate' can mean anything: a friend, a husband, a wife, a male, a female, to copulate, to wed, to marry or to befriend. In Maori, 'mate' signifies death, for it is Hine-titama who brought death to humanity by running away from her father, Tane. Finally, in Croatian, 'Mate' is a Christian name, one commonly heard in the narrow, stony streets of Dalmatia, and one which continues to resonate in the Far North of New Zealand.

Chapter Five

'After all, I am partly Maori, partly Dalmatian, but first of all I am a New Zealander'

> When I was young many strangers questioned me about my racial background, complimenting on my complexion and implying I couldn't be a local Maori. My annoyance made me say 'It is the result of genetic compatibility.' (Szaszy 1990: 51)
>
> After all, I am partly Maori, partly Dalmatian. I am a hard-working woman. Of course, first of all I am a New Zealander, there is no question about that. They, I mean Maori and Dalmatians, they are different people you know, different races I suppose and I prefer to be a New Zealander. (Miri Simich, Auckland 2000)

In this chapter, I will explore the complexity of the process of individual identity construction of Maori-Croatian descendants in New Zealand. As suggested in previous chapters, it is impossible to talk about individual identity as if it were separate from collective identity. Furthermore, while individual identities are always implicated within the collective experience of a group, as Brah (1996) argues, the relationship between these two forms of identity is always complex and often contradictory. According to Brah, group experience cannot be reduced to a sum of individual experiences because the construction of collective identity always implies a partial erasure of the internal heterogeneity of a group. In other words, something must be suppressed or forgotten in order to construct a collective identity and that something is always connected with power relations in the social. In addition, the construction of group identity always happens through reference to others. As Laclau argues, 'there is no way that a particular group living in a wider community can live a monadic existence – on the contrary, part of the definition of its own identity is the construction of a complex and elaborated system of relations with other groups'(Laclau 1995: 147). However, the position of all groups in the social is rarely equal. The struggle of any group that seeks to affirm its own identity against a dominant group always transforms the identity of all intervening forces. In other words, it hybridises them. Just as the position of all groups in the social is not equal, the process of hybridisation will always reflect relationships of power.

I am interested in the way individuals of Maori-Croatian background constituted their own identity within the heterogeneous discursive practices that operated in New Zealand and how they experienced the hybridisation of identity and power relations. Laclau (1994) argues that the subject always identifies with one or more of the available discursive positions in the social. Of course, individuals never choose freely between different discursive positions. For example, 'in a racist and sexist society no one chooses to be positioned as white, black ... Asian, mixed race, male, female and so on; one finds oneself "always already" positioned by forces and institutions within a discursive field that is never wholly of our choosing' (Smith 1998: 56). In terms of class, it is clear that Maori and Croats did not choose freely to be gumdiggers and to be positioned at the bottom of the social ladder. They were constrained to work as gumdiggers and to sell their labour cheaply in order to survive. As always, the constitution of their subject position reflects myriad acts of power. Subject positions are not *a priori* categories; on the contrary, they reflect the configuration of power relations in a given historical moment. However, individuals always experience these positions through political discourses.

Laclau argues that the subject is the subject of lack, a lack that is 'active and productive', in that it constitutes the desire to identify with the social order (Laclau and Zac 1994: 35). The incorporation of the subject into the social order, into the symbolic, occurs through an act of identification through which the subject recognises herself or himself as being this or that. The subject seeks the fullness of her or his identity in the symbolic, but this fullness is impossible to attain since, as Laclau and Mouffe (1985) explain, the symbolic is itself structured around the very lack the subject wishes to fill. The symbolic does not exist as an objective system; on the contrary, it exists on the level of meaning for the subject. The meaning of the social is offered through different discourses which provide the imaginary framework through which the subject interprets the symbolic order. In other words, as Žižek explains, the lack in the social is always covered by a fantasy construction through which we experience the social as objective reality. The objective world appears natural, even though it is based on an ideological fantasy. In short, fantasy structures reality, it is the 'support that gives consistency to what we call "reality"' (Žižek 1989: 44). Moreover, it is fantasy that constructs the frame that enables the subject to desire something and it is through fantasy that the subject learns how to desire. Therefore, in Žižek's interpretation, fantasy does not simply fulfil the subject's wishes; on the contrary, 'in the fantasy scene the desire is not ... "satisfied", but constituted' (Žižek 1989: 118).

This approach enables us to understand that what we call the subject's 'experience' does not reflect an objective, pre-given reality. This does not mean that reality does not exist, but that the way we experience it is already part of an ideological fantasy. In one way, the subject's experience is always unique. Hence, we cannot find two persons who have an identical experience of the same event. However, in another way, the subject's experience is also contaminated by the group experience. We have seen that the way Maori and

Croats were positioned, both on the gumfields and within New Zealand society as a whole, was reflected in the construction of their collective identity. Here, I am interested in the way an individual's experience of these positions comes to provide a different marker of identity. I will concentrate on the life-stories told to me by two Maori-Croatian women, Miri Simich (née Urlich) and Mira Szaszy (née Petricevich). Their stories illustrate an overlapping of different discourses, such as race, ethnicity, gender, and class, but differ widely in the way these discourses are interpreted and experienced. Both Miri and Mira have similar backgrounds, a Maori mother and Dalmatian father, a childhood spent on the gumfields, both attended Native Schools and both faced racism. However, in the late 1930s, Miri married a Dalmatian man and moved to live within the Dalmatian community, while Mira was sent to Auckland to attend Queen Victoria School. For both, the change of environment once again transformed the way each experienced their own position. Issues of racism, ethnicity, gender and class are interwoven in their narratives, though with different outcomes. In this context, it is impossible to talk about 'true' or 'false' experiences as, in each case, experience and the subject formation that lead from that experience, are processes already contaminated by ideological fantasy:

> To think of experience and subject formation as processes is to reformulate the question of 'agency'. The 'I' and the 'we' who act do not disappear, but what does disappear is the notion that these categories are unified, fixed, already existing entities rather than modalities of multi-locationality continuously marked by everyday cultural and political practices. (Brah 1996: 117)

MIRI'S STORY

Miri was born in Whangaroa. Her father, Peter Urlich, a Dalmatian from the village of Drasnice, came to New Zealand at the beginning of the twentieth century to dig kauri gum. Miri's mother, Hiria Hori, was a Maori woman from Whangaroa. They had six children. When Miri was four, her mother died and she was brought up by her Dalmatian father and Maori grandparents. At the age of nineteen, she married a Dalmatian gumdigger, Rudy Simich. From 1947 to 1951, Miri lived in the village of Igrane in Dalmatia.

I spent three days with Miri, talking about her life. Miri started with stories from her childhood and, within a few hours of the interview, I was struck by an obvious 'conflict' within her memories, between three value systems, Pakeha, Maori and Dalmatian. Gerard Noiriel (1996) contends that children born of immigrant parents are often exposed to a kind of double cultural experience, and go on to develop multiple identities that influence one another. In the case of second-generation Maori and Croats, almost all of my interviews confirm that this pattern is even more complicated. Through their practices and memories, Croatian fathers relayed the norms and fantasies of their country of origin to New Zealand. Through their language, practices, gestures and memories, Maori mothers relayed the norms and fantasies of Maori society. Their children not only inherited these two cultures, they also learnt Pakeha norms through the

educational system. The power of the dominant culture was exercised on Maori-Croat children through the creation of Native Schools. Archival sources show that the majority of children in Native Schools in the Far North were Maori-Croats. Despite this, many Maori-Croatian children had their first experience of 'not being Pakeha' at school, which added to their conflicting sense of identity.

The Native Schools attempted to discipline Maori and 'half-castes'. The only language that children were allowed to use in the Native Schools was English. Although, as a child, Miri had a Dalmatian surname and spoke Maori as a first language, after she attended school she started to reject her cultural background. Because of the strong politics of assimilation, she clearly wanted to identify with Pakeha:

> When I was six I started school … that was my work … to go to school and learn … In school it was forbidden to speak Maori. Oh, yes. No Maori. Absolutely. That school was the native school … you know ... but there were some white people in that school ... Shepherds … that was their name. The country was very wild in earlier days ... But I know that English immigrants, the Shepherds, turned the land into beautiful farms ... Maori couldn't do that. Not really. No. Not clever enough. Those Shepherds were our neighbours … over the hills. They were very good. I had lovely friends there. I was like a daughter to them, I always wanted to be their daughter. I thought they were wonderful … they had cattle, thousands … thousands … they were wealthy … Pakeha. We called them Pakeha. It's lovely word … they don't know that. It means white person. But they don't like that word keha … it is name of flea. But it's a lovely word … it's a compliment to them …

Although Miri remembers her Pakeha neighbours as being 'wonderful people', her picture is clearly idealised, as those neighbours were the only representatives of the dominant culture in her region. Her idealised memory of Pakeha is supported by an authoritative discourse that operated within other discourses during that time. When I asked Miri about her Maori family and her early childhood, her story completely changed:

> My tribal people, my mother, my grandfather and grandmother, well they are all real Maori. Those days Maori lived in *nikau* houses … They were a huge family. There was grandma, grandpa, aunts, uncles, they were all together. We prepared food … big chimney … cooking … puddings and things … beautiful brown pudding … open fire … lovely. I remember that. They lived in a *nikau* house. They built a perfect *nikau* house … the rain couldn't go in … And … I remember … gathering … quite a big gathering … and a lot of food. My grandfather had a lot of pigs … and we kids enjoyed ourselves … it was quite a happy time. Lovely memories, really. Maori are lovely people you know … My father used to say that they were very very good, very good indeed. No lack of love there. My grandfather, Paul Hori, he was a chief … so, everybody respected him. Nobody talked when he was talking … I remember, he built *pataka* … storage house … they were drying fish there … as high as possible … you know flies don't go

Hori family beside a storage pataka. Miri Simich Collection

> high ... funny way to get ideas, isn't it? But applicable. The Maori knew that ... they were very clever people ... hard to believe ... but they were ...

The 'conflict of memory' and the interplay of different discourses are also noticeable in the way in which Miri described her Dalmatian father:

> My father was Urlich, Peter Urlich from Drasnica. He was born in Dalmatia you see. He came to New Zealand when he was a young man. He married my mother, a Maori woman. They lived in Whangaroa. My father was the only Dalmatian there ... there were many of them who used to dig gum ... but they moved. My father married my mother and he built himself a house, home I suppose. My mother died when I was only a baby. She did something that she wasn't supposed to do ... and she died. She wanted pipis, but she wasn't supposed to go to water, it was *tapu* ... but she did ... and she died. My father had to look after six of us. I don't know what he did do, but Dalmatians did gumdigging as the only thing they could make money from ... and ... he had to travel from Matamiro, our little village, to other gumfields ... he used to come home with two horses and a lot of food ... there was no shortage in food ... My father spoke Maori fluently ... and sometimes he mixed Dally, Maori and English together ... ha, ha, ha. He only spoke Dalmatian when we had a breakfast ... he prayed in Yugoslav language. Maori, English and Dalmatian ... three languages together ... sometimes we couldn't understand him ... ha, ha, ha. Lovely eh. Maori liked him. He helped Maori quite a lot. My father planted cabbage ... and I think that it was he who brought the first tomato there. Tomatoes were unknown in those days ... yeah ... he was very clever ... more clever than Maori. He started to have a farm. Maori there didn't know anything about farming. He was more clever than Maori. You see, he was Dalmatian.

These examples reveal a range of discourses operating at the same time. Miri's stories about her childhood do not tell us a lot about the childhood itself, rather the stories reflect the discursive frames through which her experiences are interpreted. In order to grasp the way her identity is caught in the tension between the way she was socially positioned as a Maori-Croatian woman and her desire (or need) to become like a Pakeha, one has to take into account the specifics of New Zealand culture at the time: such as the position of the indigenous Maori and of the Croats as non-British migrants, and the complex discursive practices of each. Miri's desire to be Pakeha – 'I was like a daughter to them, I always wanted to be their daughter' – is the desire to be included in the respectable mainstream of Pakeha society, from which Maori and Dalmatians were excluded. However, even though she put Pakeha, Dalmatian and Maori cultures in a hierarchical order, with Pakeha at the top and Maori at the bottom, her rejection of Maori and Dalmatian culture is never absolute. Her emotional connection to Maori and Dalmatians made it possible to identify with one value system or the other. In other words, Miri's 'conflict of memories' is not caused by cultural difference *per se* but by the power relations and cultural hierarchies that existed when she was a child.

When Miri was nineteen she married a Dalmatian, Rudy Simich. What is striking is how important it was for her that her Pakeha neighbours approved of their marriage:

> My Rudy was 18 when I met him, but I was only 12. Well … my family went to the opening of the convent not far from Kaeo and of course all other people came because we were not the only Catholics there … hundreds of people came from the East, West, South and North. That convent is still here of course today. And so many people arriving … we arriving too at the time and another little truck just arrived … small little truck … full of people … there were some people on the back there … some people in the front … so, they were Dally. Somehow my father picked up their language … must be a Dally voice from the cabin that he recognised … and one old man was there … I mean for me that man was old … when you are young you think that everyone who is middle aged is old … ha, ha, ha … So that man was Mate Simich, my Rudy's father. And he said: 'Ohhh … hello … this is my son, Rudy Simich.' My father understood Dalmatian, you see. He was Dalmatian himself. That's how I met Rudy for the first time. Just shake hands … When I was 16 I saw him again. I had gone to my sister's place. She lost her baby and wanted me to be with her in Whangaroa. I was spending my money in Whangaroa. I was earning 5 shillings per week at that time and I saved some … so I bought nice clothes … making myself nice … I took bus to go back home, to my father's house and I was in my new coat and hat … you know how stupid girls can be … but I wasn't stupid I suppose that I wanted to look nice, so Rudy was there … on the bus … and he fell in love with me. I liked him a lot but he was only a gumdigger, and that wasn't good, not really. Ha, ha, ha … O my God … just a gumdigger … anyway, in two years we were married. He didn't say anything like … you know … he didn't

> say that he loves me or something like that ... no, not Rudy. He bought me no ring, no ring. But he bought me a beautiful watch. He said that is better to have the watch than the ring. More practical. So, that's Rudy again ... yeah ... yeah ... beautiful watch and I ... I wanted a ring of course ... but that's Rudy, anyway ... My father approved the marriage and my neighbours, the Shepherds, Pakeha people you know they approved it as well ... they liked Rudy. They used to tell me, this English woman, when she heard that I was married to Rudy ... she said ... 'good boy'. They liked me, they always liked to talk to me. I was almost like them anyway, I mean in my veins I have Maori and Dalmatian blood, but I did everything like Pakeha, I thought of myself as being one of them. I mean the colour of my skin is little bit different ... but ... you know ... I'm not different from white people ... one day my Pakeha neighbours told me about my mother. My mother was lucky, they said. My mother was lucky because my father married her. Otherwise ... most Maori girls ... you know ... just go ... don't make anything in their lives. So, my mother was lucky ... but unfortunately she died. My father never spoke about my mother. Never. Lonely man, but he decided to live there, with Maori. Never looked at another woman. Never married again. He approved of my marriage with Rudy, and our Pakeha neighbours did it. My father liked my Rudy, really. My sister Kate married one Maori man ... he was lovely but just when he was without beer inside him. Many Maori used to drink a lot. My father made his own wine, but we didn't drink a lot ... we used it as a medicine, you know, like people in Dalmatia do.

Again, Miri's recollections express a number of different, overlapping discourses. Miri's description of physical features, such as the colour of her skin or her reference to blood, draws on the discourse of the purity of races, while in stressing that she behaved and acted exactly in the same way as Pakeha, she appears to accept the discourse of assimilation. It is precisely this discourse, which judged ways of acting and behaving, that was the most important for the construction of her identity. She sees herself as somebody who belongs to 'white culture' and who can pass as 'white'.

Ahmed argues that while all identities involve some degree of passing for another, we still have to 'differentiate between kinds of identifications and particular forms of "crisis" over identity' (Ahmed 2000:126). Even though all identifications perpetually fail, and subjects continually try to assume images that they cannot fully inhabit, we still need to take care to recognise that subjects assume images that are already differentiated. Miri's desire to pass as white, as Pakeha, clearly depends on a history of prior identifications, her self-identification and identification by others. According to Ahmed (2000), white subjects do not experience a crisis of identity, since the position of being white already assumes a degree of comfort and security. Not being white, in this context, means being deviant or different. However, passing as white means being assimilated and, therefore, belonging to a privileged community. It is this notion of belonging that is imagined differently by subjects who are white, and subjects who are not, but want to pass as white. Miri's desire to pass as white

creates an identity crisis of 'not belonging', of knowing there is always a danger of being seen as different. Her Pakeha neighbours were a constant reference for every action in her everyday life. Hence, their approval of her marriage to Rudy meant being accepted into, and no longer rejected from, a much desired way of life. Although Rudy was 'just a gumdigger', which was another obstacle to gaining a desired social position, at the same time, she represents him as an honourable, good man because he wanted to marry her, and she uses this to distinguish between herself and other Maori women, who usually 'don't make anything in their lives'. Again, what we have here is a reference to the dominant discourse, which often stressed the immorality of Maori women. In a similar way, she makes a distinction between Dalmatians as a people who use wine for medicine, and Maori who usually drink a lot.

After their marriage, Miri and Rudy moved to Dargaville which, until World War II, was one of the largest settlements of Dalmatian gumdiggers in New Zealand:

> We lived in Dargaville. A lot of Dalmatians were there. They were gumdiggers. Nice people really. Gum you see, it was very good. It was wonderful really, it was better than gold itself … it was easier to get it … Some Dalmatians in Dargaville were very wealthy you see, for example I remember Mr Franicevich … a wealthy man … a big farmer … he used gumdigging money to buy a farm … he had a big family. They became my best friends of course. You know, all Dalmatians were good to me, after all I am half a Maori half a Dalmatian. They just really, oh … probably I was OK, otherwise they wouldn't like me I suppose. I was a hard working woman and they are hard working people, Dalmatians. They invented some machines for gum … but I can't tell you a lot about that because my Rudy never wanted me to work … not really … gumdigging is not a job for women you see … I mean some Maori women worked there but I wasn't like them, I was different you see … I was like Dalmatian women … I had Rudy and my sons to look after. Oh, yes. I had a family to look after. It was a happy time for me really …

In this passage, there is a noticeable shift from Miri's previous perception of 'the gumdigger' as an undesirable social position, to one where she describes gumdigging as a good decent job. Although this time she identifies as Dalmatian, Miri also makes a clear distinction between herself and other Maori women. Her desire to belong to a respectable class is underlined by her friendship with the richest Dalmatian family in the area. As well as these discourses on race and class, however, her narrative is also inscribed with gender relations. It was considered 'natural' that Rudy, as the main breadwinner, made all the important decisions for the family. The proper order of things was a sexual division of labour, where Miri did the domestic work while Rudy provided the income. As Brah, and many others, have argued, 'the institution of the family constitutes one of the key sites where the subordination of women is secured' (Brah 1996: 76). Miri accepted this subordination without question and, when Rudy decided to go back, she followed him to Dalmatia:

... my Rudy wanted to go back ... so we travelled to Dalmatia. My Rudy wanted to see how his people survived the war because there was the terrible war, you see. Some people died ... it wasn't really good at all. We saved enough money for our trip, well I suppose we could be farmers with that money ... it was hard for me because after all ... I was going away from home ... just pretty tough to go. And I was frightened ... who knows ... I may not like them or they may not like me. See. O yes. So, we went. We were supposed to go for good, really, it was our intention. But, it wasn't bright ... not really ... such life there is a tough life ... well, I lived a very hard life myself ... but it was hard there ... very hard ... you know it was after the war ... people had terrible damage from bombs and things ... all the houses were demolished and nobody is immune from bombs ... not in earlier days nor nowadays. Everything was smashed up ... I know that the house we went to ... my Rudy's people's place was smashed up ... we managed to live in it somehow, but part of the courtyard was smashed up. I was amongst strangers there ... but I did well ... you see I had to be one of them. I couldn't impose my ideas on them, they imposed their ideas on me because I am a visitor and I chose to go there. You know what I mean. Nobody forced me to go. I just ... as a family we go ... we had three sons and it was very good for Rudy's parents to be able to see their grandsons. Our sons went to school there. They did well, *odlicno*, that's what they say for excellent, you know that ... *odlicno*.

Miri describes herself as being amongst 'strangers' when in Dalmatia. She clearly saw the Dalmatians as different from herself. However, while she was in New Zealand, Dalmatia was seen as a familiar place, as both her father and her husband were born there. Furthermore, although she considered herself Dalmatian, when she moved to Dalmatia she found herself surrounded, not by known and familiar behaviours, but by 'strangers' and a 'strange culture'. She felt 'out of place', out of the place where the 'order of things' was so familiar and natural. In Dalmatia, everything was unfamiliar to her. Hence, the mountains, the sea, the ways of doing things and acting and, most of all, the position of women in Dalmatian society seemed unnatural. Miri never questioned the position of women in New Zealand society, but in Dalmatia she was shocked by the patriarchal order:

I can tell you ... it's no life for women. No, because women were beasts of burden, you know. They did everything. Everything. During the war the Germans took away all donkeys. The donkeys were beast of burden. Germans took all of them, one or two left. The donkeys were very good for carrying things. The coast by the Adriatic Sea is very mountainous. When I first landed my eyes on that mountain there I got frightened. I wanted to go back. Would you believe it ... women there go to the mountain by themselves ... to do digging ... olive trees are there ... olive trees are everywhere ... on the rocks ... my mother-in-law ... she had the job to pick all the fruit and leaves for animals. She carried it on her back. The men never carried anything. They carried just little *motika* (tool). Even a little *motika* was too much for them to carry, they hooked it on a woman. It's too much for men. He just walked with his hands in his pockets. O yes. It was too much for them to carry a

little *motika*. He hooked it on his mother's back … or sisters' backs or wife's back … yeah … They just smoked their cigarettes and it was OK. Ooooo but woman. She doesn't mind. She expects that. She knows all about that. I learnt how to do that sort of thing. I learnt everything … how to carry water on my back … how to carry olives and tools, how to wash cloth … yeah … In Dalmatia everything was different. I didn't wash with other women there. I brought my water to wash private. I don't like everybody to see what you got, you know … I didn't like them to see my underwear. I will tell you how they did wash. One day I did it wrong way and I made a mess of it. I copied my mother-in-law how she does it … She will have a fire in what they called *kuzina* (kitchen, very often outside the house) … not in the main house … and I wondered what she's doing … in time she got ashes from the fire and she put ashes and boiled water in *vedro* (huge pot) … she had two *vedro* … one for rinsing … ashes is good … ash water is for washing the clothes … they pour the water over the clothes … I didn't know how to do that … oooo. I did mess … shame on me. But I learnt. Ash water was beautiful for washing. Wonderful. I didn't rinse my cloth with other women. I preferred to do that at my home. I knew different way to do things, of course … but they didn't want to listen. They think that their way is the best way. They treat women as animals. Silly people eh. It was really hard … And I went to help with wine … they packed everything in sheep's stomach bags … they treated the stomach and turned into a carrying bag. And they put the juice in those bags … and we carried juice to home to put in the cellar. And then potatoes. They grow some potatoes there too. And you need to carry potato too. From the top of the hill … boy I can carry … I didn't know that I can carry like that. But I wanted to show them that I can do what they can do … I suppose that I was pretty good. This New Zealand woman can work, all right. I did everything. I always take some wood home on my back. I know how to put everything over my shoulders. I learnt that. My mother-in-law helped me. But once Rudy helped me. Oooo the men you know, the men don't do that sort of things … they were shocked … they don't like it … when they see that Rudy is bringing home on his shoulders … oooo they don't like it … that's women's job. Isn't that peculiar … oh … how silly people can be … their tradition … I am a woman and I can do it, but Rudy, a big man can't … funny people … they like their men to be men … I didn't like that. So, I was proud of my man. I'll tell you, Rudy was marvellous … Rudy saw it. It's not life for a woman, nooo. After all I was getting older and he decided that we need to go back to New Zealand. I am a hard working woman … after all I'm a half Maori a half Dalmatian … of course, first of all I am a New Zealander, there is no question about that. I was a stranger to them, *a gospodja* (Madam) … they called me Englezica [English woman], I liked that, I was a real lady you know, I had my beautiful dresses from New Zealand, I had my shoes, not *opanci* [peasants' shoes] … their women didn't have a nice dresses, not really … their women are beasts of burden … They are different people you know … silly people. You work for the family there, not for yourself. You work for the whole house … oooo I did everything according to how they do things and plus my own way of doing things. I learnt everything … I'll tell you … it's hard life … I prefer to be in New Zealand, I am a New Zealander, all right.

Miri's encounter with what she saw as a 'different culture' underlined the construction of her New Zealand identity even more. Ahmed states that 'the figure of stranger is far from simply being strange; it is a figure that is painfully familiar in that very strange(r)ness' (Ahmed 2000: 21) The figure that appears strange is one we have already encountered but, when we meet them 'out of place', we recognise them as a stranger. Hence, this recognition also operates in producing who 'I' am, or who 'we' are. Miri did not recognise herself as a Maori woman, or as a Dalmatian, but as a New Zealander. Out of that context, she suddenly perceived Dalmatians as 'strangers'. She shared the reality of everyday life with other women in Dalmatia, but she experienced that reality through the position of a New Zealand woman. Accordingly, she questioned the position of women in Dalmatian society, but never questioned the right of 'her Rudy' to make decisions for her as the *pater familias*. Moreover, she states that the main reason for leaving 'the strange way of life' in Dalmatia was Rudy's recognition that life there was not good for women. However, the next day, during the interview she conceded that their actual reason for leaving was that Rudy completely disliked the Yugoslav government and did not like the idea of their sons becoming communists. As a matter of fact, he spent two years trying to get back the family's passports and money that the government took from them when they arrived in Dalmatia.

In 1951, the Simich family returned to New Zealand, going back to Dargaville and the gumdigging business. Although there were many Dalmatians living in Dargaville at that time, Miri no longer felt 'out of place'. She had a strong sense of belonging to New Zealand, or Pakeha, culture. She sometimes went to the Dalmatian club with Rudy, but stopped going when he died. A few years ago, Miri started to listen to Maori radio. She says that although she cannot speak Maori any more, she can understand the language:

> Sometimes, when I am alone I listen to the Maori radio ... you know it is in Maori language ... and I can understand, that's so nice, really. I think sometimes of my Maori grandma, lovely lady, yeah. My dear grandma ... she was a lovely old lady. She was old of course, she didn't live as old as me now, she died quite early, but we children looked at old person as very old ... but I began to compare myself now ... my grandmother would be surprised that I am still alive ... ha,ha. In those days doctors were hard to get. I know that my grandfather died of cancer. He was a marvellous old Maori man. Quite a few Maori were like him ... he was a gentleman ... he was a gentleman as far as I am concerned. I was working for doctors in Whangaroa and I heard that he was sick so, naturally, I come home to see my grandfather. He was lying down on the bed ... he feels pain ... I saw ... he had very sharp pencil knife ... I saw him with my own eyes. I couldn't believe it. He used his knife to cut what was bothering him. I saw him ... he was in pain ... he was suffering ... oh ... yeah ... and he died. My grandmother died later. She is my favourite person ... well she died but for me she is still alive. She is my favourite person, my grandma. She often cried with me ... because of my mother ... she lost her daughter ... but she spent her

> time with her granddaughter. I think that's wonderful. I remember … and I can understand her feeling … yeah … lovely memories. Maori were poor you know but everything changed nowadays … Maori aren't poor anymore, not really … I listen to the radio and I hear that they want their land back … terrible things are happening now … Maori want certain land back … that's not right … when you sell the house … so it's not mine any more … you came here and bought this … whether if I love it or not … but it is not mine any more …

Žižek (1997) argues that the desire that is staged in personal narratives such as Miri's is not entirely the subject's own. The question posed by the subject is not 'What do I want?' but 'What do others see in me?' or 'What am I to others?' Miri's narrative confirms this argument. Embedded in a complex network of relations, she tried to find some kind of security by identifying strongly with the most desirable social position. However, at the same time, this most desirable position acts as both the cause and the goal of Miri's desire. In other words, Miri's desire was constructed through the assimilationist representation of the Pakeha way of life as the best possible way of life, and this construction staged the fantasy that gave the coordinates to her desire.

In contrast to Miri, who rejected her Maori and Croatian background because of the assimilationist discourse that was dominant until the 1970s, her granddaughter Natasha identifies strongly as Maori:

> I feel Maori. My grandmother was partly Maori partly Dalmatian. She married a Dalmatian man. Granddad had no doubts. He was real Dalmatian. And then there is my father. He is New Zealander all right. But he is very much Dalmatian too, a very traditional man. He doesn't feel as a Maori. No. But I feel as a Maori. My mother is Scottish by origin. I have never been in Scotland or in Dalmatia. I belong here. I am Maori. I don't speak Maori but I always wished I could. I want my kids to learn Maori. I'm not anti-Pakeha. No. I want my kids to have respect for different cultures … My partner's mother is Maori and his father is Pakeha, Scottish by origin … The reality in New Zealand society today is that being Maori is something special … I am very proud to be Maori. My grandmother used to live in nikau house. That's cool. I am very proud … My grandmother does not really understand that. You see she was brainwashed. She did not want to be Maori, because it was better to be British … But I respect her for what she is and she is Maori. Some people still look down on Maori. Even my father used to say that Maori are lazy and just scream about land rights. Lazy horis. New Zealand has been transformed by Pakeha values and being Maori is very important for me. My dad cannot understand my feelings about being Maori. But I feel some kind of responsibility to be Maori. I am who I am. (Natasha Simich, Auckland 2000)

Within one family, though between different generations, it is possible to see how identity is constructed and reconstructed over time, primarily as a response to other questions related to culture and politics. Natasha's desire to identify as a Maori woman must be viewed in relation to the contemporary political

Miri and her granddaughter Natasha.

environment, which sees Maori and Pakeha biculturalism as a fundamental characteristic of New Zealand's heritage and identity. Her desire to identify as Maori can be seen to be staged within this new ideological space. I will address this issue in Chapter Seven. Here, my primary concern is that 'no individual can choose to stand outside the totality of interpretative frameworks; our fundamental dependence upon the interpretative function of discourse is written into our very human condition' (Smith 1998: 57).

MIRA'S STORY

Mira was born in August 1921. Her father, Lawrence Petricevich, a Dalmatian from the village of Živogošće, came to New Zealand to work as a gumdigger when he was sixteen. Mira's mother, Makareta Raharuhi, was Maori and from the Ngati Kuri tribe. They had eight children. Mira was three when her mother died and, as with Miri Simich, she was brought up by her Dalmatian father and her extended Maori family. In contrast to Miri, however, Mira stressed her Maori identity from the beginning:

> I grew up through times of great poverty, with little to eat, scratching the garden for carrots, one tattered dress through the year, no shoes, and underwear made from flour bag material … but despite our lack of material possessions in Parengarenga, Te Hapua, we possessed great inner strength. Our strength came from the long ago – interwoven strands of several cultures – Maori, Pakeha, Dalmatian adhering together by faith of belief in a power beyond ourselves. In short, our identity was well established and accepted. Being an isolated community we had no identity problems. We were all Maori regardless of our different origins. At least that's the way it was then. My father, a Dalmatian, spoke Maori fluently.

Te Hapua was one of the most isolated Maori villages in New Zealand and, with the decline of the gumdigging industry, many of its inhabitants were on the verge of starvation. The Native School was one of the focal points in the community and teachers were often the only Pakeha in the village:

> We did have a quite of lot of teachers … we were an isolated community … my very first teacher was a woman … her husband was looking after the farm in Hokianga … she arrived with nothing … but nothing … and I think she stayed there for about three or four years … and must be real dedication … some mission …. she had nothing … no furniture … and her children learnt Maori … and of course Maori was forbidden in school, but we were a Maori community and we spoke Maori …

Mira started school when she was eight. Her father was often absent, as he had to travel from one gumfield to another in order to earn a little money for his family. Mira, even though a small child herself, was obliged to look after her youngest brother. She could not go to school until he was six, so they started school together:

> I didn't go to school until my brother was old enough to go to school … I stayed at home to keep him company … I become his protector at school … from other boys and so on … I believe that I did that very well … I remember doing that … I remember fighting other boys … I won … I don't remember a time when any boy beat me.

Mira's recollection of fighting with boys is significant, given that she spent almost all her life fighting for the position of Maori women. Mira did extremely

well in school and she was picked to go to Auckland and continue her schooling there:

> I and Merimeri Rapata were chosen to go to school, to Queen Victoria School in Auckland ... I think the head master did arrangements for two of us from the school to be sent to Auckland ... to school ...
>
> I remember being very very poor ... having nothing ... absolutely nothing ... they required uniform in Auckland ... I didn't have it ... so the teachers got to help me ... the teachers got together and they bought some material, serge, to make me a gym frock. They made it themselves, they made those basic things for me ... the journey to Auckland took a week ... it was like travelling to another world but I do not think that I found anything in particular difficult ... I suppose I was an open kind of person. I looked forward to anything new. I boarded with the Leathems, a Pakeha family in Mt Albert, and experienced for the first time in my life comforts of a more affluent lifestyle. The Leathems, my Pakeha-Irish foster parents, gave me a comfortable double bed ... it was just for me ... I didn't share it with others ... in Te Hapua we had to share our bed. Merimeri stayed just around the corner with the Holt family. Mrs Holt and Mrs Leathem were sisters, both well educated women with young families and they encouraged us, Maori girls, to stand up for ourselves, especially against the prejudice we faced. When we told them how Pakeha would be served before us in shops, or people would push in front of us at the trams, Mrs Leathem and Mrs Holt told us that we are as good as the next person. At that time we needed support and these Pakeha women were our support.

Although Mira experienced racism immediately after moving from Te Hapua to Auckland, at the same time, she learnt that not all Pakeha were the same, as the Leathem family treated her well. Whereas Miri Simich strongly identified with 'her Pakeha', and saw Pakeha wealth as the result of the way they behaved and did things, Mira appreciated the help she got from 'her Pakeha' but tried to find the Maori way of life in her new surroundings:

> I was close to Mrs Leathem but I was much closer to a Maori family who lived nearby. There was a beautiful old Maori woman and I visited her often and I used to sit at her knee. She used to sit on the floor with her long black skirts. And I longed to put my head on her lap. I seemed to make friends with much older women ... She wasn't the only one ... Whina Cooper for instance ... much older woman ... Anyway, the kuia's home was a place where I could relax and speak Maori. Somehow I didn't drop the Maori language. I pursued it personally without too much encouragement anywhere. I somehow hung on to it. My skin was absorbing Maori culture ... I didn't think about that ... I did it unconsciously. And I think I was one of the ones who returned from secondary school, still speaking the language when I arrived home. Many of the others at that time, their tongues became tied.

Whereas Miri wanted to be the daughter of her Pakeha neighbours, Mira tried to find a mother figure in Maori women. While Miri was surrounded mostly by

Maori, her desire to escape poverty led her to accept Pakeha values as the best. On the other hand, being surrounded by the Pakeha way of life and luxury, Mira longed for Maori friends.

Mira's statement that her skin absorbed Maori culture says a great deal about her situation. Skin functions as one of the main cultural signifiers of difference. Ahmed suggests that the skin can be seen as 'a border or boundary … keeping the subject inside, and the other outside', its task being 'to prevent the inside from becoming outside and to prevent the self from becoming other' (Ahmed 2000: 44). In Mira's narrative, her skin functions to protect what she sees as her inner self, her Maori self. Hence, the fact that her skin was unconsciously absorbing Maori culture and she longed to put her head on the kuia's lap at the same time as she was open to change can be seen as an attempt to find some stability in her body, a body that, through the process of schooling and living with a Pakeha foster family, started to feel 'out of place'. Even though she praised her foster parents for the support they gave her, the kuia's house was where she could relax and enjoy the feeling of 'being at home'. However, at the same time, she wanted to move beyond the boundaries of her skin, beyond the boundaries of Maori culture which, in any case, was already contaminated by Pakeha values:

> When I left Te Hapua I was aware that the community expected me to reach the summit … that was the message … In those days Maori believed in education … seek knowledge … there is the Maori saying *whaia te matauranga*, seek knowledge … that was a thing to do … reach the top, reach the peak of Pakeha knowledge … climb that kind of mountain and reach the top. My little village looked to me … it seemed to me, to do likewise. And I think it placed a great burden, a great responsibility on the shoulders of the young to carry this kind of weight, it was a tremendous weight. … I studied very hard, sometimes till four in the morning ….
>
> The source for my vision came from my inner self – a determination to achieve. I used to say to myself … 'if they [Pakeha] can do it, so can I'. Also Sir Apirana Ngata's urging towards education at that time helped a great deal. Add to this my own uncle's words:
>
> *Whakananua to matauranga*
> *Ki te wehi o Te Atua*
> *Heri korito e toko ake ai te tino tamaiti Maori*
>
> Infuse your knowledge
> With the wisdom of God
> As a nucleus to promote the perfect Maori child. (Szaszy1995: 133)

Mira wanted to be the perfect Maori child. Initially, her desire to enter the Pakeha world through 'proper' education did not result in her rejecting the Maori world. On the contrary, she was fully aware of her 'Maori inner self'. Over time, however, her 'skin', as the boundary of separation from the outside

Mira Szaszy.
Mira Szaszy Collection

world, the Pakeha world, started to change. The invisible networks of power at work in every institution, especially education, gradually opened her skin to new forms of identity and Pakeha values became predominant in her way of thinking. In her own words:

> My aim was to be a doctor, but Queen Victoria didn't offer the range of academic subjects needed, so I and Merimeri enrolled for one pressure cooker year at Fagan's Coaching College. I studied madly, six subjects, mathematics, trigonometry, algebra, geometry and I also studied Latin in one year. I passed all my subjects but my Latin mark wasn't high enough for medical school. Instead, in 1942 I went to Auckland Teachers Training College and Auckland University. It was a tough time to be studying. World War II was raging in Europe and the Pacific, and Auckland was awash with American servicemen, enjoying the relative calm and security of New Zealand as well as the charms of some of the local women. I envied a lot of young girls who were having a great time with all the solders and I was trudging up and down the hill to do my degree. I kept my mind on my studies and in 1944 I received my Teacher's Certificate. In 1946 I graduated with a BA from Auckland University ... I made it ... I was one of the

> first Maori women to gain a university degree … but I wanted more … I wanted to study in Britain … and I was refused … I suppose they didn't want coloured women there … but I went to Hawaii and in 1949 I picked up a Diploma of Social Science from the University of Hawaii. A Pakeha education meant a lot … it was my ticket to the Pakeha world and I was too young to be aware that I was losing my Maori culture … we were conditioned to assimilation politics, we were brainwashed … I know I was, as far as education was concerned, because it influenced my thinking regarding my own children and the non-teaching of Maori to my children when they were born [she married a Hungarian man Albert Szaszy in 1956 and gave birth to two sons]. It was only later when things Maori began to surface that you realised, yes, these things happened to me, but not at the time.

The time 'when things Maori began', marks the beginning of what is now known in New Zealand as the Maori Renaissance. In the late 1960s a series of Maori social movements began. It could be said that, as a result of these movements,[1] Mira's skin was touched once again, and re-opened. She began to work as a Maori welfare officer in Auckland and soon became painfully aware of Maori poverty, unemployment, poor health and insufficient education. Most of all, she become aware of the fact that Maori women suffered what she saw as double discrimination: they were discriminated against by Pakeha, and by Maori men:

> I covered an area from Helensville to Mercer, and later Waikato, visiting homes and dealing with every social issue under the sun, again often working till four in the morning. Seeing streets full of substandards I encouraged Maori to buy sections and save for a deposit to build their own house. I helped set up tribal committees, and in doing so, I became aware of the lack of status of Maori women, who were barred from speaking on marae. I took up the fight to give Maori women a voice on the marae. I thought that as long as they weren't heard on marae-based committees, the issues that concerned them and their children wouldn't get attention. They were not allowed to speak on the marae so therefore they were really excluded, except for hands to do the work … I was a member of the Maori Women's Welfare League which had its beginnings back in 1951, when the head of the Maori Welfare Department, Rangi Royal, had instructed female welfare officers to form branches of a welfare league for women. I applied to be the league's national secretary in 1952 but was turned down because I was considered too educated to be able to relate to my own people. Six months later the job was mine and over time I held many others within the league, including Dominion president from 1973 to 1977. The league brought me into contact with Whina Cooper.[2] I was secretary during Whina's presidency and was constantly at her side, as her driver and right-hand woman. I regarded myself as her pencil and her maid of honour. I also worked as a lecturer, I was deputy chair of Radio New Zealand and I travelled constantly between Auckland and Wellington. When Albert [Mira's husband] became seriously ill with polyneuritis in the 1970s and was almost paralysed I helped

Mira Szaszy with Prince Charles. Mira Szaszy Collection

run his business [he had his own plastic business]. I can tell you that in 1969 I was on 22 different organisations – most of them dedicated one way or another to bettering the lot of Maori and Maori women in particular.

Mira retired in 1985, but continued to be active, especially in the United Nations, where she addressed the rights of indigenous people from all around the world. In 1990, she was awarded a DBE and the title of Dame, which she accepted with the words: 'I would have loved to have the Treaty honoured before me – it is more important.' A few years later, addressing Maori graduands at Victoria University, Wellington, Mira said:

> … to know your culture is to know your identity and in turn to know your identity helps you to accept yourself and to be able to say to yourself, 'I know who I am, I respect who I am, this person who is me is good.' Unfortunately many of our children on the streets today do not know who they are … Many do not know who they are because we, as parents and elders, have reneged on our responsibilities …. To a degree Te Kohanga Reo and Kura Kaupapa Maori seek to actively fill this gap in the psyche of our children. But for the many who have never had this special nurturing, they drift … (Szaszy 1995: 135)

Mira stressed the importance of ancient traditional values as core values for being Maori. In this way, her 'Maoriness' could be described as 'essentialist'. However, this essentialism must be seen as a result of the strategy of resistance against Pakeha domination. Mira sees 'a multitude of violations both seen and unseen from sexual harassment, incest, rape, murder, theft, fraud' committed by Maori people as being a direct result of the cultural deprivation caused by Pakeha oppression. She contends that Maori experience exclusionary racist strategies on an everyday level, in employment, housing and so on. However, she believes that 'to eradicate denial, one must move beyond it', and the only way to do this is to have 'a new Maori humanism' based on spiritual strength and the ancient values of Maori culture (Szaszy 1995: 134). When, at the end of my interview with Mira, I asked her about her Dalmatian background, and the meaning of that background for her, she said:

> I know some Dalmatians who are actually my relatives and they think that I have forgotten my Dalmatian side. But I haven't forgotten. You know I faced discrimination in this country because I am a Maori, for example in early days I was very often refused accommodation because of the colour of my skin, but I was discriminated against as a Dalmatian as well … I will tell you something … in 1946 I was a contestant with a better than average chance of becoming Miss New Zealand. Later I called it 'Missed New Zealand'. The organisers claimed I didn't have the stamina for a position that required the winner to travel overseas as an ambassador promoting the post-war 'Food for Britain' campaign. According to the pageant doctor, pre-contest medical checks had revealed that I had a shadow on my lung and inflamed kidneys. I couldn't believe that and I had my own checks done, which gave me a clean bill of health. I was so incensed that I wrote to the Prime Minister, Peter Fraser. On the night of the announcement, the top prize went to another contestant but while the winner was doing her lap of honour around the Town Hall, the Prime Minister shocked the room by standing and crossing the stage to me. He offered his arm to me and walked me down to the people and from that point on he looked upon me as another one he watched over. They didn't want me not just because of my Maori background, but because of my Dalmatian background as well. I was told to enter under my mother's maiden name rather than the foreign sounding Petricevich … Dalmatians were treated as foreigners, not real New Zealanders. But who are real New Zealanders anyway, Maori people are those who were first on the land and hence Maori are indigenous people of New Zealand. We have to learn that there is enough place for everyone in this country, for Dalmatians as well … I always thought that Maori needed me more than Dalmatians. Dalmatians were wealthy, after gumdigging many of them moved to cities and started different businesses … some of them developed racist attitudes towards Maori, but at the beginning Maori helped them a lot. My father used to tell us a lot of stories about Maori giving help to Dalmatians. My sister Mandolina remembers my father much more, when I moved to Auckland I couldn't afford to travel very often back to Te Hapua or Ngataki. But when I was in Europe I decided to go to

> Dalmatia, to find my father's family house and see his village. It was really nice there, it is sad that the village is almost deserted ... but, you know ... I belong here, to my people, Maori people.

These two life histories demonstrate that there are many possible points of identification in the social. As Laclau argues, a single subject may occupy many different subject positions but the meaning of each position is constituted with respect to its differential relations within the entire social system. For Laclau and Mouffe (1985), subject positions are forms of struggle. The identification with different subject positions is always complex and involves 'the reopening or restaging of a fractured history of identifications that constitutes the limits to a given subject's mobility' (Ahmed 2000: 127). When we analyse the positions which subjects tend to inhabit we have to consider the 'constraints that temporarily fix subjects in relations of social antagonism' (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 129). In other words, we have to analyse the nodal points that partially fix meaning within the social.

Furthermore, it is clear from these two narratives that, when we tell stories about our lives, these stories are always told through interpretative frameworks. We select what to tell and how to tell it, we see some things as worth telling and completely exclude those things we think will distract from the image we wish to present of our lives. Both the things we include and those we exclude in our narratives are important for identity construction. Both are the result of specific discursive formations and practices and both depend on the forms of struggle that exist in society. In her narrative, Miri has been clearly influenced by the dominant assimilationist discourse that positioned Dalmatians and Maori at the bottom of the scale. Hence, she developed a strong desire to overcome her own position by adopting a Pakeha way of life and values. As opposed to Miri, Mira was influenced by the Maori Renaissance and saw the policy of assimilation as a mask for oppression. Hence, she developed a strong Maori identity. For Miri, Pakeha values were clearly the best choice, and she explains the 'low position of Maori' in society, as well as the high rate of crime within the Maori community, as the result of their Maoriness. For Mira, the discovery of Maoriness and the 'true self' helped in the fight against crime. In addition, both of them experienced their position as women differently. While Miri accepted the sexual division of labour in New Zealand, she complained about it in Dalmatia. However, because of her emotional ties with her family, she never questioned the role of her husband as *pater familias*. Mira, however, was influenced by feminism as well as anti-racism. Hence, she was involved in political projects and fought for the rights of women, especially Maori women. Even though, through her struggle with the Pakeha world, she essentialised Maori culture and started to prize traditional Maori values, we nevertheless have to recognise that she deployed this essentialism as part of her strategy of resistance to those dominant values.

Miri and Mira offer very different interpretations of what it has meant to be Maori-Croatian in New Zealand. Even though they have similar backgrounds

they articulate different political positions. Furthermore, their subjectivity is inscribed within differing political practices and this has resulted in them identifying with different subject positions. However, what their narratives have in common is that, while both try to describe who they really are, they do so by describing the antagonisms which beset them.

Chapter Six

Visiting the past: Kauri gum stories

Andreas Huyssen writes that 'remembrance shapes our links to the past, and the ways we remember define us in the present. As individuals and societies, we need the past to construct and anchor our identities and to nurture a vision of the future' (Huyssen 1995: 249). The dialogue between the present and the past never ends. In the previous chapter, I showed how the way individuals remember the past, and identify themselves, is articulated along specific social axes of differentiation, such as class, gender and ethnic background. Each of these axes is invested with a particular set of meanings, which differ according to the discursive formations that are used as an interpretative framework. In this chapter, I will focus on the ways in which the past is incorporated into the construction of collective memory, into the 'we' of a particular group and the 'we' of the nation. I will examine how memories of the gumdigging industry and life on the gumfields became part of a collective Maori-Croatian identity, as well as part of the official history of New Zealand, by analysing the way the kauri gum story is told in three different museums: the Matakohe Kauri Museum, the Jurlina Gumstore-Museum and the Yelash Gumfields Museum. All of these museums are located in areas where there were once gumfields. The Matakohe Kauri Museum tells the official story of the kauri gum industry, the Jurlina Museum is a family museum which concentrates mostly on the story of Croatian gumdiggers and the Yelash Gumfields Museum presents the story of Maori and Croats on the gumfields. I consider all of these museums to be 'sites of memory' (Nora 1996) or, in other words, instruments of the construction of identity.

Carol Duncan (1991) contends that museums can be powerful machines for constructing identity and community. From their emergence, which can be traced back to classical times, museums were repositories of knowledge and objects of value, and places of inquiry for historians, philosophers and scholars. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries many wealthy individuals created their own cabinets of curiosity by collecting artefacts, antiquities, art and minerals. These private museums functioned as displays of power, wealth and privilege (Vergo 1993: 2). However, the emergence of bio-power in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe changed the function of museums. Museums opened to the public and became places where state power was exercised. Moreover, the advent of national collections transformed museums into 'identificatory powerhouses' (Maleuvre 1999: 107). The purpose of the modern museum was twofold: they

first collected and housed heterogeneous artefacts and later, through systems of ordering and classifying, they became mechanisms generating meanings and (re)producing 'regimes of truth' (Foucault 1980c). They enabled states 'to direct the population into activities which would, without people being aware of it, transform the population into a useful resource' (Hooper-Greenhill 1995: 168). In artefacts exhibited and 'correctly classified' in museums, people saw their heritage, the mythic body of their community and their collective identity.

At the same time, imperial projects were being justified through museum displays. Most of Europe's great cities built museums where vast collections of artefacts, taken from peoples from all parts of the world, were exhibited and classified. In the nineteenth century, these artefacts served mainly as evidence of cultural evolution. In line with this, museums also exhibited humans. Eskimos, Tahitians, Somalis, Australian Aborigines and many other non-European peoples were displayed as examples of evolutionary progress.

The first exhibitions in New Zealand mirrored such colonial discourses by portraying European civilisation as superior to all others. At the same time, museums reflected the European desire to possess a cultural otherness, by staging representations of 'exotic Maori culture'. The original purpose of the Auckland Museum, which was established in 1852, was to display 'the "exotic" flora and fauna of the new country, and the arts, crafts and relics of its people' (Auckland Museum, 2003). There were also exhibitions which included Maori groups performing traditional songs and chants. For example, an exhibition held in Christchurch in 1906 featured a Maori village where groups from Rotorua and Wanganui performed. Sir John Gorst opened the exhibition with the words that only in New Zealand 'could one find an uncivilised race living in perfect amity and equality with the civilised race' (quoted in Maxwell 1999: 137).

At the same time, a number of individuals collected artefacts and formed their own collections. Gradually, as the colony began to consider itself distinct from the 'mother country', various local museums opened with the intention of preserving what was considered to be particular to New Zealand history. However, this official history of New Zealand was highly selective and classificatory. As Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998) argues, it divided history into three distinct hermetic categories: the nature story, which stopped with the arrival of Maori; the indigenous story, which stopped with the arrival of Europeans; and the European story, which is represented in terms of the progress and development of the country. In this context, Maori artefacts functioned as sites 'unconnected to particular events of Pakeha colonisation' (Bell 1996: 68). More recently, with the emergence of a new national imaginary, museums in New Zealand have begun to reflect the bicultural and multicultural policies of the country. As a result of this change in direction, museums have begun to acknowledge the Maori contribution to the development of New Zealand society, as well as the contribution of other non-British immigrants. A number of museums have invited representatives of Maori tribes and immigrant communities to participate in the creation of exhibits. At the same time, Maori groups, as well as other minority groups in New Zealand, have created their own museums.

Today there are over 460 museums in New Zealand (New Zealand Museums, 2003).

The vision of the past offered in these new museums often conflicts with the visions offered by traditional museums. However, there is a tendency in social research to designate these new minorities' museums as sites where 'pure memory exists', memory which has not been influenced by historical representation. For example, in his analysis of sites of memory, such as museums, archives, cemeteries, and monuments, Pierre Nora argues that there are two orientations to the past, memory and history: '[m]emory is life; always embodied in living societies and as such in permanent evolution .... History on the other hand, is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer. Memory is always a phenomenon of the present, a bond tying us to the eternal present; history is a representation of the past' (Nora 1996: 3). For Nora, memory was once the legacy of what people knew intimately and this kind of pure memory existed in archaic societies. Modern societies, on the other hand, being driven by change, have created a new form of memory 'which is nothing but history, a matter of sifting and sorting' (Nora 1992: 2). History turns memory into documents and papers, and this documentation shapes the way the past is remembered. From this perspective, what we now call memory is not memory as such, as it has already become history. Today, memory is uprooted from the past and its residues are left in places such as museums, archives, cemeteries, collections, festivals, monuments, and anniversaries. Nora refers to these places as *lieux de mémoire,* 'the ultimate embodiments of a commemorative consciousness that survives in a history which, having renounced memory, cries out for it' (Nora 1996 :6). Inspired by Foucault (1980b), Nora distinguishes between dominant and dominated sites, the public and the private, and so on. Dominant sites are 'spectacular and triumphant, imposing and, generally, imposed – either by a national authority or by an established interest, but always from above', whereas dominated sites 'are places of refuge, sanctuaries of spontaneous devotion and silent pilgrimage, where one finds the living heart of memory' (Nora 1996: 19).

In this chapter, I build on Nora's work by analysing his conception of dominant and dominated sites of memory in relation to the gumfield museums. In the process, I distinguish my reading of dominated sites from his. I consider the Matakohe Kauri Museum to be a dominant site, and the Jurlina and Yelash Museums to be dominated. All of these museums, in their own way, externalise the story of kauri gum digging, and this externalisation serves as support for different identity constructions. However, whereas Nora regards dominant and dominated sites as opposed to each other, I show that these sites are linked, even when they appear completely unconnected. In summary, I will demonstrate that a parallel reading of these sites reveals many similarities: first, there is a constant flow of meaning between dominant and dominated sites; second, although private sites are often produced in opposition to dominant ones, the same ideological forces tend to operate through both; finally, and most importantly, I will show that neither site displays what Nora terms a 'spontaneous' or 'pure' memory.[1]

THE KAURI MUSEUM (MATAKOHE)

> WELCOME TO THE KAURI MUSEUM! Our displays tell the story of the magnificent kauri tree, its timber and its gum. This was a very important part of pioneering in northern New Zealand … [the museum] provides a stimulating insight into New Zealand history.
>
> The collection of exhibits is very good … it has wide appeal, both to overseas tourists who gain an insight into New Zealand's history, and to New Zealanders who can make a connection with the past. (www.kauri-museum.com)

The Kauri Museum at Matakohe opened in 1962, as a memorial to the district's pioneers. The museum was originally named the 'Pioneer Museum'. However, in 1965 the museum was reconceptualised and began to tell the 'Kauri Story'. This was largely due to the development of the Kauri Collection and because the term 'pioneer' was beginning to assume problematic overtones of colonisation. Nevertheless, the 'pioneering story' still dominates the exhibition, as the 'kauri story' has been completely integrated within it.

Visitors are encouraged to see the Sterling Family Wing (Mervyn David Sterling was a founder of the museum), the Smith Family Wing (after one of the first British settlers in Matakohe), the Tudor Collins Wing (after a photographer from Warkworth) and the Bob Ross Family Wing (after a well-known roofing contractor from Takanini who, in 1983, built three additional rooms and donated his collection to the museum). Using *tableaux* and dioramas, the Museum tells the 'little stories' that describe the day-to-day experiences of the early pioneers. The collections depict their indoor lives through displays of early household articles and varieties of furniture. For example, a dining room table is set for Sunday dinner, and a magnificent kauri wardrobe is situated in the main bedroom. What is important, however, is that these objects, being displayed together, imply a comfortable representation of colonial life.

An excellent example illustrating this point is the Sterling Wing, which represents six rooms of a kauri period house and shows the variety of furniture used by its inhabitants. The rooms exhibited are inhabited with dressed models, so we can see how 'mother prepares to remove the baking from the oven in the kitchen as father arrives for his meal,' or how 'daughter dresses for her wedding in the main bedroom with its brass bedstead and ornate kauri furniture'. Visitors are constantly reminded that everything they see is displayed with the intention of showing what 'real' life was like in early New Zealand. However, this 'early New Zealand history' is represented only through the 'real' life of four British families. The stories that these four British families tell are now considered to be part of the regional collective memory and, as Bell argues, 'for residents not involved in building the local museum, identity and history are claimed for them' (Bell 1996: 56).

Roger Mulvay, the director of the Kauri Museum, states that those people who donate goods to, and set up displays in, local museums can be seen as 'museum makers'. However, it would be naïve to believe that the 'museum

makers' are the only ones responsible for the content of the museum and its politics of exhibiting. Artefacts, photos, panels and captions are organised in the Kauri Museum in accordance with a larger ideological project of creating New Zealand identity. For example, the Kauri Museum was built in 1962, before the policy of biculturalism or multiculturalism started to appear in social debate. At that time, the most common story signifying the national imaginary, and expressed by various politicians, was the story of the unity of peoples in one nation (Sharp 1997). As the politics of assimilation was very strong at the time of its construction, it is hard to find any trace of the cultural diversity that existed in early colonial New Zealand in the Kauri Museum.

When I inquired about the Maori and Croat gumdiggers who lived and worked in the region, many of whose descendants still live in the area, one of the museum personnel suggested I go to the basement of the museum, where the outdoor activities of settlers are presented. 'Does that mean that Maori and Croats did not have an indoor way of life?' I asked. She paused, looked at me, and said that the Kauri Museum is devoted to the story of early European settlement, not Maori. Hence, it does not present the Maori way of life. 'But Dalmatians are Europeans, aren't they?' I asked. To which she replied, 'Oh, you can find something about them in the basement.'

The basement of the museum is a large space which houses the kauri gum collection. Exhibitions include a gumdigger's whare, a saw mill and old machinery used in both kauri milling and the kauri gum industry. The museum booklet claims that the Matakohe Kauri Gum Collection, donated by Andrew Rintoul, J.J. Lord and Bob and Una Ross, is 'the largest display to be seen anywhere and is unique in the world' (Sterling and Cresswell 1985:n.p). The gum collection is very distinctive, with strange shapes of different colours and shades. Some of the lumps look as if they were shaped by hand, some are dark, nearly black, and some are golden and transparent. In some pieces, fossilised butterflies and insects are imprisoned in the transparent interior. The labels inform us that kauri resin is produced in many parts of the tree and that, while most of the gum collected by the diggers would have been a few thousand years old, the gum that was retrieved from the swamps could be as old as 40,000 years.

However, the labels do not tell us that gumdiggers also used to display beautiful pieces of gum in their camps. For example, in 1909 the *North Auckland Times* reported the beauty and size of one particular piece found by a Maori woman in the Mangakahia district which 'caused no small amount of excitement in the camp to which she belonged'. The reporter also mentioned that:

> Some time ago we reported the find of a large piece of gum at Mangawhare weighing 220 lbs. The Croatian owners instead of selling the find made a glass case in which they deposited the gum and exposed it to the rays of the sun. The result of the experiment is that a cleansing process is in operation, and it is becoming remarkably transparent. The owners are delighted … (*North Auckland Times*, 31 August 1909)

The Kauri Museum makes no mention of these first exhibits of kauri gum. Next to the glass cases containing kauri gum, there is a 'typical gumfields scene', with two life-size mannequins on display. The two gumdiggers, 'Steve and Bob', are set in a corner against a mural backdrop of the gumfields. The mural is drawn in an artful manner to express the vast barren fields, 'a typical swampy, scrubby area where the gum was found.' In *The Museum Makers*, the museum director writes, 'the models are extremely good life-like replicas of local pioneers and provide a sometimes eerie insight into past lives' (Stone 1996: 102).

The accompanying label tells us that the mural was painted by Garth Tapper and Peter Reid, and that the two models are of the Dalmatian gumdigger, Steve Yelavich, and the donor of the wing, Mr Bob Ross.

What the labels do not tell us is that Mr Ross probably never worked as a gumdigger. We can only assume that, as the donor of three display rooms, part of the museum's verandah and the whole of its roof, he 'deserves' to be exhibited. Mr Ross also donated his collection of kauri gum pieces to the museum, which he bought from Peter Vezich, a Dalmatian from Dargaville, and Mate Kovich, a Dalmatian from Whangarei. The labels tell us only about the donors, not the gumdiggers who worked in the area.

On the wall, behind the gumdiggers, there is a framed poem:

> The happy gumdigger who lived in shack
> Ti tree for a bed and a mattress of sack
> He worked at times just when he wished
> For meals were eels from a creek that he fished
>
> Butter and bread he took in a sack
> For miles each day he'd walk from his shack
> With spear and spade to dig out the gum
> His washing plant was an old oil drum.
>
> An era has gone of the gumdigger's boom
> – and the ti tree brush he used for a broom
> To sweep out his shack – that was the way
> For the happy gumdigger of yesterday.

The poem's message is clear: while times may have been tough in the beginning, the gumdiggers had a good life and succeeded in establishing a community. Clearly, in the Matakohe Kauri Museum, gumdiggers are the property of a mythical pioneering story which portrays the world of the ideal coloniser who, in emigrating, had 'a chance to face life in the raw, to show courage and physical strength' (Phillips 1987: 5).

The museum's narrative construction of life on the gumfields continues with a wide selection of photographs. These photographs provide contexts for the objects and machines on display. Photographs are often used in historical museums to 'prove' that something or someone really existed. The emphasis

Model of Steve Yelavich, Kauri Museum, Matakohe.

on 'realism' offered through the photographic display is demonstrated in the following extract from a speech given by the museum's director:

> The exhibits ... clearly show ... just what life was like. ... The extensive photographic displays develop realism and detail for the exhibits. (Stone 1996: 102)

The majority of the photographs exhibited in the gumdiggers' room were taken by the Northwood brothers and Tudor Collins. In all of these images, the gumdiggers appear to be very happy. In such images, history appears 'arrested' and somehow fixed, as Walter Benjamin argues, but their interpretation is never static or passive. The way the Kauri Museum interprets each photo is guided by the overall narrative of pioneering history. Furthermore, each caption serves as 'a sign indexing some component of the main narrative, both amplifying and concretising its ideological message' (Katriel 1999: 113). Although there are several photos in which we can see Maori and Dalmatian gumdiggers, the labels tell us only that both of them were present on the gumfields, that they used to work together in groups and that they developed a 'harmonious' relationship. We also learn that Dalmatians, or Yugoslavs, were very honourable and industrious. Their historical treatment by British settlers and gumdiggers is completely erased. The Dalmatians, who the British described as 'locusts', 'strayed sheep', and as displaying problematic 'frugality', have magically become a model of the 'pioneer and indigenous harmony' favoured by the new ideology. In keeping

with this, a photo of Maori gumdiggers is accompanied by a caption telling us that life on the gumfields was very suited to the Maori temperament.

Clearly, even though the Kauri Museum tells us little about the lives of Maori, the stereotypes produced in colonial New Zealand about their being unable to adopt a domestic and stable way of life continue to circulate. Following Foucault, we can say that these captions (as well as all the other objects and photographs exhibited in the Kauri Museum) are caught in the nexus of a power-knowledge relationship. For example, one of the very few photographs of Maori and Croats working together is accompanied by the label: 'Allan McPherson, Dalmatian gumdiggers and Maori assistants.' The caption clearly selects what is important for visitors to know – the underlying hierarchical order of groups. I discussed this with one of the museum's attendants and he suggested that, if I wished to learn more, I should visit Drago Yelavich, a barber from Kaitaia, who he believed would be able to tell me the names of the people in the photo. It appears that the names and roles of Maori and Dalmatian gumdiggers were of no interest to those who wrote the museum's captions. The depiction of British settlers as cultural heritage makers and the marginalisation of Maori and Dalmatians draws on the colonial division between 'British pioneers', hardworking people who had a dream of a 'better' society, and 'natives', who 'worked on a hand-to-mouth basis'. From this perspective, Maori, along with the 'other immigrants' who sent money back to their place of origin, did not contribute to the establishment of the new society.

The Kauri Museum shows that remembrance of the past is always a form of memory building that is, in turn, influenced by the dominant power relations in society. Since the Kauri Museum represents the real heritage of New Zealand, we could say that the kauri gum story is an integral part of the pioneering myth that represents New Zealand as a 'working paradise' for British immigrants. Somewhere on the margins of this idealised image is the story of the 'natives' and their connection with the Dalmatians. It is believed that Maori, who had the right 'temperament' for gumdigging, developed a 'harmonious relationship' with the Dalmatians, who also liked gumdigging, but did not contribute to the establishment of the new society. It is not difficult to detect how this marginal, though equally idealised, myth is reflected in the Croatian and Maori private museums that I will analyse in the next section.

THE JURLINA FAMILY'S GUMSTORE-MUSEUM

In the Jurlina family's little shanty, which was formerly a gumstore, numerous memorabilia of the gumdigging era and the Croatian community have been preserved. The Jurlinas, Milan and Victor, have tried to preserve that part of the past by leaving everything intact, like a small family museum.

The Jurlinas live in Sweetwater, a small village between Ninety Mile Beach and Kaitaia. A vendor of kauri gum, Milan Jurlina is known as 'the last gum-dealer', continuing the business that his father, Clem Jurlina, started in 1912 and worked in for many years. The Jurlinas are the last representatives of an industry which, at its peak, made profits for New Zealand that were counted

Victor Jurlina in his father's gumstore at Sweetwater.

Below: Milan and Victor Jurlina.

in millions of dollars. Nowadays, they sell gum to tourists, and export about a tonne a year to Japan and Asia:

> We still buy a bit of gum. People find it when they dragline through swamps – that sort of thing. But there's no one digging for a living now. We pay $3–$5 per kilo depending on the quality. It's mostly nostalgia – grandparents who remember the old days say to the kids, 'You take it up to old Milan.' The kid comes in with $20-worth and it goes into the shed .... We still get enquiries – silly little ones like a chain of Japanese supermarkets wanting small, clear pieces for millionaires' pet rocks ... in India they want it for dental products [molds for false teeth]; the Taiwanese want it for beds and, until recently, laboratories in Texas used it in the kauri gum test for solvency in hydrocarbons ... the last order was 100 kg to Holland. It was going to be used in restoring antique furniture to make it as authentic as possible. Any furniture made 100 years ago was all kauri gum varnished ... yeah .... (Milan Jurlina, Sweetwater 1999)

In a little tin shack that used to be dragged by oxen from one gumfield to another, and in the large warehouse nearby, everything remains as it was – a museum? Personal belongings, bottles, books, bills, bags of kauri gum, photos ... a herbarium of memories.

Although everything is small, tight and crowded, the first impression one gets of the gumstore being claustrophobic is soon suppressed by the feeling of a whole new world opening up – the world of Croatian gumdiggers. A wall is covered with shelves full of books, above them an old calendar, several different scales for weighing kauri gum and an old phonograph sit in the corner alongside a large box, covered with transparent plastic, containing beautiful examples of shiny kauri gum – some of which are even more beautiful than those in the famous Kauri Museum in Matakohe.

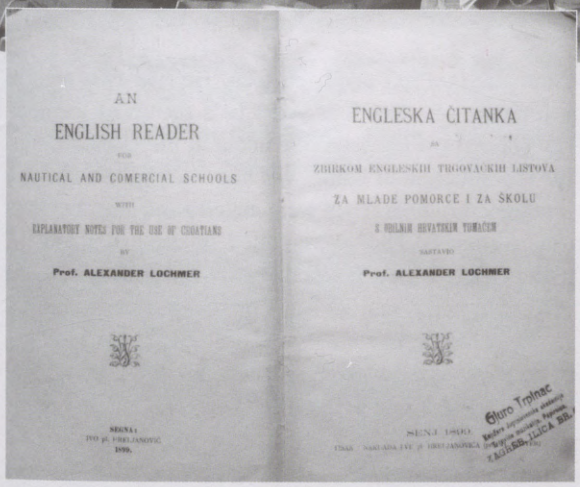
The samples of gum have to be kept in the dark to prevent them from losing their shine and transparency, so Milan Jurlina covers them with a potato bag. Amongst a collection of odds and ends, there is a bottle of wine dated 1929, with the inscription 'The Kingdom of Slovenians, Croats and Serbs' and a social-realist drawing of a village girl drinking a glass of wine on the label. Underneath a little window there is a table covered with boxes filled with Maori carvings. On the wall by the window hangs an old Austro-Hungarian passport. On another wall, there are crowded shelves with piles of yellowed paper dangling above – orders from Holland, Germany, Sweden and Denmark. Amongst all these things there are various books, including a prayer book written in Croatian entitled *Marijin Mjesec*, published in Croatia in 1891, a Croatian copy of Prince Rudolf's biography *Životopis kraljevića Rudolfa*, and a book by the poet Preradović, *Izabrane pjesme* (*Selected poems*). Finally, there are many invoices, piles of record books, lists of Croatian names, Maori names … and photographs.

Objects have been accumulating in the gumstore for almost one hundred years. Although there appears to be no system of ordering things, whenever Victor shows me an item he then carefully returns it back to its place of origin. Any displacement would soon produce an irrevocable chaos, and the collapse of this little microcosm. Every object in the store is associated with particular memories and, as Victor and Milan carefully examine every nook and cranny, I am flooded with information about the gumdigging way of life, with stories and anecdotes about the people who were once involved in the now almost-forgotten industry:

> This is Dad's office. It was dragged around the gumfields by bullocks. Corrugated iron makes wise buildings – it's cheap and long lasting. Dad used to sit in here with a lantern … (Milan Jurlina)

> When you come here you can almost dream what it was like in the past. … My father used to sit on this chair late into the night filling in the ledger books, … This place is full of memories, of things forgotten and people who were once here and they have all gone … (Victor Jurlina)

A genealogy of names can be followed through the old ledger books, as well as the record of the moment gumdiggers were signed in, how many dollars they borrowed, how many kilos of kauri gum they sold, and how many kilos of flour and sugar they bought. Looking through the old papers, Victor starts to read some names:



AN

ENGLISH READER

FOR

NAUTICAL AND COMERCIAL SCHOOLS

WITH

EXPLANATORY NOTES FOR THE USE OF CROATIANS

BY

Prof. ALEXANDER LOCHMER

SENJ

1899.

ENGLESKA ČITANKA

ZA

ZBIRKOM ENGLESKIH TRGOVAČKIH LISTOVA

ZA MLADE POMORCE I ZA ŠKOLU

S OBILNIM HRVATSKIM TUMAČEM

SASTAVIO

Prof. ALEXANDER LOCHMER

SENJ 1900.

From top:

Orders and business papers, Jurlinas' Gumstore.

Engleska Čitanka (an English Reader), Jurlinas' Gumstore.

Kauri gum carvings, Jurlinas' Gumstore.

> Petricevich Ilija, Stanich Shime … Nizich Mate, Tomasovic … Yerkovich, Jelaš Ivan … Yurkushich Ivan … (Victor Jurlina)

Victor pauses after each name, adding a ceremonial dimension to the event, and after a few minutes his brother Milan starts to comment:

> … Yurkushich Ivan, you know … he died here, never got married, didn't even want to get married, the Brajkovics … later went into the wine business, the Urlichs, a large family, to be able to tell one from the other so my father gave them nicknames, Mate Urlich, Mate Soko, Mate Jovo … yeah … Simon Urlich married a Maori woman … Nicholas Covich married a Maori woman too …. There are photos here, plenty of photos, there was an Englishman here, Northwood, and he was a photographer, took thousands of photos …. (Milan Jurlina)

The Jurlinas keep the photographs in a wooden box under the table. Although some of them are copies of those exhibited in the Kauri Museum, in the little gumstore the same photos evoke quite different connotations. First, they do not serve as a context for the objects on display, since the objects here are not divorced from their original context. Unlike the Kauri Museum, the items displayed in the gumstore are already in their 'authentic' place. Second, there are no written labels to guide us, just the stories told by Milan and Victor. These stories were passed on by their father and other gumdiggers who worked in the area and, as the brothers tell them, they bring life to the photos. Milan starts with a photo of his father, Clem:

> Father came out from Dalmatia in 1903 aged fourteen. He had two pounds spending money for the journey, yet after four years he'd set up as a trader. He came to his uncle. The choice was between one uncle in the United States and one in New Zealand. The situation at home was bad – a peasant country with others taking over – not good futures. They were called Austrians, but they came to get away from the Austrians. They were called square-heads too …. After a few years of being here Dad helped bring others out from Dalmatia. The intention was to come and make money and go back, but Dad never went back … like all those others … Srhoj, Ujdur, Grebic, Belich …. They had a good life here … the *tamburica* orchestra used to practise in the shed in the twenties and there'd be a Yugoslav ball every year. There was social card playing and Dally bowls with a round bowl – not off-centre – and grape wines, and dances like the *kolo* done in a circle …. Between North Cape and Kaitaia there were fifty big shops. There were five billiard saloons in a range of 500 metres around here. The circus would come around to the flat, and one-man entertainments like silent movies, violinists and magicians … yeah. (Milan Jurlina)

When I asked Victor and Milan about the relations between Croats and Maori, they continued with a new series of stories:

> Dalmatians got on well with Maori … both gregarious and both a bit outcast. It was always easy to communicate, and there was a lot of intermarriage … (Milan Jurlina)

Tamburica band in Sweetwater. Back: (L-R) Mate Divich, Petar Martinic, Mate Radich, Ivan Rakich, Mate Radich (Lipi), Mate Nizich, Steve Erceg.

Middle (L-R): Nikola Belich, Mate Markotich, Tony Cibilich, Ivan Franicevich, Ivan Radich, Ljubo Soljak, Ivo Zivkovich, Tom Bikich, Frank Unkovich, Peter Bilish.

Front (L-R): Marin Kurte, Milan Jurlina, Ivan Jurlina, Johnny Unkovich, Peter Batistich, Ivan Martinac, Nikola S.

Sitting: Natalie Bilish, Nick Belich, Jimmy Belich, Mary Bilish, Tony B., Victor Jurlina, Olga Jurlina. Jurlina Family Collection

Dalmatian Rugby Team, '12,000 miles away from home'. Jurlina Family Collection

> There were many Maori girls around and just a few British girls. I think that the ratio was ten diggers to one girl … and that's why Sweetwater was called 'Girls' paradise'. There were many dancing halls around but British girls avoided Dalmatians and I think that one of the main reasons for that was … you know, Dalmatians had dirty hands. After constant gumdigging their hands would become black, and couldn't be washed with soap. Sometimes they put bread into hot water, then covered the hands with the hot bread and after a while the moisture would suck the dirt out … anyway some of the Dalmatians married British girls, but many married Maori or brought their fiancées or families from Dalmatia and all of them became respectable settlers ….
>
> Many Dalmatians and Maori were really good friends … they were constantly together … working together … fishing together … for example I remember Mika Pipe … of course Pipe is not his real surname …. I mean he used to smoke a pipe and he was called Mika Pipe … he was fishing with some Maori on the Ninety Mile Beach … and they used explosive … they were not allowed to do that … but that how it was … and he did something wrong … and lost his left hand … yeah …. Mika Pipe … there are many photos here … (Victor Jurlina)

Each photo is accompanied by a story told by my interviewees and each story cross-references other items 'exhibited' in the museum. Actually, Milan and Victor do not like to use the word 'museum' for their father's gumstore. For them, the gumstore is a special place, a place of memory:

> This is a memory place for us … and we haven't actually encouraged visitors … but anyhow people who come here have an interest … usually they have some relations with something recorded somewhere here … there are so many names recorded here … and when someone comes in and maintains the name and say my grandfather was so and so … and we go through the books and find that name … it is like a dream … it is like catching a big fish … it gives them a great satisfaction to see a little of the history of their family … (Victor Jurlina)

Unlike the Kauri Museum, where the story of gumdigging can be seen as a political construct of the time, the Jurlinas' gumstore appears as a perfect example of a 'dominated' and 'private' site of memory – a 'place of refuge', where one finds 'the living heart of pure memory' (Nora 1996). In that little gumstore, everything looks as if time has not passed and things are kept without regard to what is typical or representative. Nevertheless, it would be naïve to think of Victor and Milan's stories as forms of 'pure' memory.

As mentioned in Chapter Four, the gumdigging industry lasted until the 1950s, when synthetics were developed and demand from big economic centres such as London and New York declined. For almost a century, the lives of gumdiggers had been totally dependent on the economic decisions made in these big centres. Victor and Milan explained to me how gum was packed into boxes, moistened so it wouldn't lose its quality, and shipped all over the world. The biggest shipments were sent to New York and London, and then on to Canada and Germany. During World War I the industry died out almost completely. The

Dalmatian workers sorting and bagging kauri gum, *c.* 1910–1930s. Northwood Studio.
ATL 1/1-010561-G

European markets, mainly those of England and Germany, ceased to exist, and the only remaining place to export to was the already flooded American market. For this reason, in 1914 the New Zealand government went into business for the first time, buying all the gum at half price and promising to pay the other half later, when the market was re-established. In 1916, the government employed 200 gumdiggers to clear state land, so as to make it suitable for farming.

World War I was especially damaging for Croatian gumdiggers – they dispersed, some going off to war while others, accused of being spies, were taken to labour camps and prisons. In Sweetwater, where the Jurlinas lived, the digging never stopped, and the market revived after World War I. Following a demand for smaller gum pieces, methods of digging changed, gum-washing tubes were introduced, and groups were organised to work on machines. However, by the end of the thirties, even small lumps were becoming hard to find, and the end of the industry was readily foreseeable. At the same time, in the United States varnish was replaced with lacquer and demand for gum declined. As a consequence, the number of diggers dropped.

Old Clem Jurlina felt the industry slowing down like a heartbeat. The end came with the development of artificial synthetic materials. Kauri gum was no

longer needed for linoleum. Around 1950 only a few hundred gumdiggers were still on the gumfields. Less and less was being exported and, eventually, digging was completely abandoned. New Zealand newspapers wrote, '[t]he mortal bells are ringing over the deserted gumfields' (*New Zealand Herald*, 17 July 1950). Old Clem and his people felt uncertain. The Croatian gumdiggers were affected by the changes and they were forced to look for new occupations. A number had saved enough money to buy a farm, some moved to the towns, others turned to fishing, or planted vineyards and orchards, sometimes on the same land where they used to dig. Victor and Milan explain that the end of industry was a shock for all gumdiggers:

> Dalmatian gumdiggers were treated badly … but gradually, because of their industrious habits and because they were mostly honest men, they were accepted into the society and many of them moved to the cities and became successful winemakers and some of them were successful politicians … for example Jim Belich was the Mayor of Wellington … and Cleme Simich … and Millie Srhoj … very respectable people … there is a historian Trlin and he published a book, *Once Despised Now Respected*, yeah … our people have done a great job in this country … they started with nothing, but now they are respected. (Milan Jurlina)

The story of hardship on the gumfields has become an icon of Croatian cultural identity in New Zealand, representing their capacity for hard work and the strength of the community. Over time, it has also become a story of success and acceptance. In this context, Victor and Milan's stories do not escape the pioneering discourse which operates as a 'legitimating mechanism'[2] for establishing group identity in New Zealand. The telling and retelling of these stories about hardship on the gumfields is required to 'invent, maintain and renew identity' (Gilroy 1993: 198).

> Matakohe Museum is very nice, and our local museum in Kaitaia is nice as well, but the story about Dalmatians is not told in a proper way. Our people invented machines, helped in the Northland development … and helped in making of New Zealand … in one way that is acknowledged in these museums but in another way there are so many aspects that are not mentioned at all … they still see the British way of life on the gumfields as better than the Dalmatian way of life … but we did well … we climbed our way to success … and we are a respectable community today … (Victor Jurlina)

In spite of Victor's objections to the Matakohe Kauri Museum, the colonial discourse linking gumdigging with the pioneering myth and the making of New Zealand surfaces in his narrative. His own story links hard work and gumdigging with the foundation of the Croatian community, and the position of that community in New Zealand. In this context, the Jurlina Museum can be seen as a diaspora museum which, through Victor and Milan's stories, strives to define the achievements, measured in terms of how they are respected by their host society, that underline the linear progress of the community.

Like many other diaspora museums, the story of living in a new country depicted by the Jurlina Gumstore-Museum reveals questions about displacement and memory of the homeland which are at work in the process of constructing a collective identity. Political changes in Dalmatia[3] and the relationship between Britain and the Balkans have also affected the way collective identity has been constructed, confusing the meaning of homeland for Dalmatian gumdiggers, who have mostly interpreted them in relation to their economic and political position in New Zealand society. In another way, however, all of these changes underlined their immigrant condition as one of constant suffering and the impossibility of defining the meaning of 'home'. As Brah argues, 'home is a mythic place of desire … it is a place of no return, even if it is possible to visit the geographical territory that is seen as the place of origin'. (Brah 1996: 172) This point is illustrated by one of the Jurlinas' stories about the last gumdiggers in Sweetwater.

At the end of my interview, Milan showed me a photograph of a group of 'old-timers', gumdiggers who decided to stay and die on the gumfields. In the early 1950s, there were only a few Croatian gumdiggers left on the Sweetwater gumfield. They were receiving state pensions, their *sante,* or shacks, remained on state land and they had the right to use them for the rest of their lives. Eventually, the fields became silent and the valleys and hills where the gum was once dug slowly became covered in grass. The shacks of those who left the *gomfil* disappeared along with the dance halls and billiard saloons. However, even though the town had vanished, some of the gumdiggers remained there until they died. They belonged to the generation that emigrated to New Zealand in the first decade of the twentieth century. They were in their sixties or seventies

Old-timers. Jurlina Family Collection

when the gumdigging stopped and, unlike most of their younger colleagues, they had no money or desire to start again. This older generation appear to have become stuck in a gap between the past and the future. The past became blurred in the memories of childhood, in the historic turmoil of their homeland and the many events that happened underneath the olive trees where they used to play as kids. Furthermore, their parents were long dead and, as the letters had long stopped arriving from Croatia, they had no knowledge of any relatives. They were afraid to go back to Dalmatia, but they were also afraid of changes in New Zealand.

Those who felt that Dalmatia was their 'real home', and subsequently moved there, were generally disappointed. While they returned to their place of origin, they missed the feeling of being at home. Living in New Zealand, they had been secure in the knowledge that Dalmatia was home, a space to which they felt they belonged but, when they returned, they failed to have this sense of belonging. This resulted in the subversion of the unfamiliar New Zealand space into the familiar – a new home.

> It is impossible to return to a place that was lived as home, precisely because the home is not exterior but interior to embodied subjects … The experience of leaving home in migration is hence always about the failure of memory to make sense of the place one comes to inhabit, a failure that is experienced in the discomfort of inhabiting a migrant body, a body that feels out of place. The process of returning home is likewise about the failures of memory, of not being inhabited in the same way by that which appears as familiar. (Ahmed 2000: 91)

However, the new home, the familiarity of the gumfields back in New Zealand, had ceased to exist. Those who decided to stay on in the former gumfields were walking around like shadows:

> For fifty years they lived on the gumfields, so they wanted to die there, to leave their bones next to the kauri gum pieces they used to dig. They found pleasure in the long morning walks, in smoking their cigarettes and watching others who started to work on Dad's farm. They were repeating: 'Yes, I have worked my share, now it's time to watch others work.' They liked jokes and sometimes they sung old Dalmatian songs. Some of them, even as old as ninety-two couldn't stop gumdigging … yeah … some liked fishing and regularly went with local Maori to Ninety Mile Beach to catch plenty of toheroa …. Dad was taking care of them till the very last day. When we were kids we used to go with Dad to their shacks, sell them food, papers, take the sick and disabled ones to the hospital, fulfil their testaments, and at the end … bury them in the graveyards in Sweetwater, Waipapakauri and Kaitaia. (Milan Jurlina)

Victor particularly liked the story about one old gumdigger, who I will call Jure, who decided to stay on the gumfields. He lived all his life in a little shanty. At the age of eighty he had no food to eat, no friends, and no family. He dreamt about his homeland every day, and wanted to die in Dalmatia. Victor's father Clem, who used to visit him once a month, decided to buy him a plane

ticket. Clem was busy that week and when he went to see the old gumdigger he found his dead body in front of the shanty. Jure had very little left: some old yellow letters written in Croatian, a cigarette-case, a few family photos, and a small amount of money, barely sufficient to cover the costs of the funeral. His letters and photos are kept in the Jurlinas' museum. One of the photos is a portrait of a young Jure, dressed in his 'Sunday best'. It was probably taken to be sent to his family in Dalmatia. In another picture, taken on the gumfields, Jure's clothes do not fit well – his shirt is dirty and too small, and his hat is clearly too big. When Victor finished his story, he silently looked at the photograph of Jure gumdigging and I saw that there were tears in his eyes. As Kavanagh notices in his study of memory and museums, 'memories of the past and the imagination experienced in the present will both be couched in feelings – such as pride, anger, affection, dismay – determined by how something has been experienced … emotions are not just internal impulses, but the way we communicate who we are' (Kavanagh 2000: 169).

On one level, Victor's reading of the photo tells the life-story of one gumdigger. On another level, through his story of the experiences of this gumdigger, of his imaginings, fantasies and memories, Victor makes meaning of his own identity. Like most Croatian immigrants at the turn of the nineteenth century, Jure sought a better life for himself and his family. By emigrating to New Zealand, 'the workers' paradise', Jure became the 'other', the 'foreigner', 'the displaced person'. He worked hard all his life but he had no money. Wanting his family in Dalmatia to see a different picture of his life in New Zealand, he sent them a nice photo, not the gumdigging one. If, as Benjamin suggests, the photograph captures and freezes one moment in time, then these images of Jure give us two moments connected by his desire. The question to ask here is, for whom is Jure enacting these roles? Whose gaze is he identifying with? Whose gaze is considered when Victor Jurlina tells the story of Jure's life?

As an old man, Jure still felt like a newcomer, an immigrant. Stressing the importance of Jure's wish to die in Dalmatia, Victor discloses the double nature and relativity of both Jure's life and his own. When he talks about his own life, it becomes clear that his story is dominated by the stories of the previous generations and by memories which are not his own. Marianne Hirsch names this kind of memory 'postmemory' as, she argues, it 'is distinguished from memory by generational distance and from history by deep personal connection. Postmemory is a powerful and very particular form of memory precisely because its connection to its object or source is mediated not through recollection but through an imaginative investment and creation' (Hirsch 1997: 22). The following quote clearly illustrates how Victor's identity is partly shaped by the memories of his ancestors:

> Where you came from is what you are … and finally we came from Croatia and that influence is still here. You look at photographs and you see *baba* [grandmother] and *dida* [grandfather] up there and you know how it all started. And you can't forget about Croatia, even though I myself have never been there

> but it makes you realise that you are part of different land in some way … although you settle down and you are a completely satisfied Kiwi, there is still something in your heart and when you hear the *tamburica* play, for example, or, old songs like *Daleko mi je biser Jadran* it is not just a song … it is a song that goes through the heart … you feel it … it is more than a pleasant song, it is song of feeling ….. (Victor Jurlina)

Memories of the first-generation Croats in New Zealand, in this sense, continue to live in the memories of their children, creating what Brah (1996) calls the 'multi-placedness' of home.[4] This 'multi-placedness' in the imaginary of Croatian descendants does not mean that they do not feel anchored in their place of settlement. Rather, it means that the way they are anchored is like 'daydreaming', where past, present and future are strung together on the thread of the wish that runs through them – establishing itself in the continuous search for full identity.

While the Kauri Museum constructs the kauri story according to an official New Zealand myth, the Jurlinas' museum is a place where history is constructed according to the desires of one particular marginal group. However, these desires are themselves inseparable from the official mythology. Accordingly, Victor's interpretation of them becomes a *lieu de mémoire*. Even though the objects exhibited in the Jurlinas' museum are not removed from their original contexts, Milan and Victor's stories give them a new life by adding new layers of meaning. Their stories stabilise the narrative of the foundation of the Croatian community in New Zealand and, at the same time, evoke a nostalgic yearning for the past and the homeland which can never be entirely forgotten.

YELASH GUMFIELDS MUSEUM

The Yelash Gumfields Museum is located at the top of Ahipara Hill, beyond huge, golden sand dunes. Among the local people in Ahipara, the hill is known as Opoka, one of the last gumfields in New Zealand. Yelash Gumfields Museum is neither in tourist books, nor on maps. In the course of my research, I found a few articles in old newspapers about Toni Yelash, the last gumdigger in New Zealand. After the collapse of the kauri gum industry, Yelash decided to stay on the Ahipara gumfields and build a museum, dedicated to Maori and Croatian gumdiggers, to house his various gum machines, tools, samples and other memorabilia. However, he died in 1982, while living alone in his small tin shanty and the museum project remained unfinished. In 1998, when I was in Ahipara interviewing some Maori-Croatian descendants, I decided to go to the hill to look for remnants of Yelash's shanty-museum.

The road from Ahipara to the Opoka gumfield meanders over barren and broken country. The soil is a greyish-white sandy clay, and all that seems to grow on it is thin, scrubby manuka. The hill rises into a gloomy, barren plateau. It is a bleak and desolate place. I was overwhelmed with the feeling of emptiness and realised why one of the most famous poems about the gumfields starts with the line 'the end of the earth isn't far from here'.

I then noticed an old corrugated iron shack with a sign post in front, which read: 'Yelash Gumfields Museum'. The door was open, but nobody was there. An abandoned museum on the abandoned gumfields. It started to rain, so I decided to stay for a while in the museum. Inside, I felt as if I was back in the Jurlinas' gumstore: there were bottles stacked on dusty shelves, an old gramophone from the twenties, a dusty wooden mask, pieces of kauri gum sorted in boxes, a gum scale, newspaper clippings and, on the desk, a photo of an old Toni Yelash.

On a small table in the corner, there were a number of old letters written in Croatian, dating from the 1930s to the 1940s. Next to the table was a box full of photographs. They were mostly of Maori and Croatian gumdiggers, although there were also some Maori family portraits. I felt like an intruder in this abandoned museum, surrounded by photos and letters that somehow looked unread – like the history of the Maori and Croats who are tied to the area.

The next day in Ahipara, I was told that Yelash's grandsons live close to the museum. When I returned to the shanty, eager to find its owners, a young Maori man opened the door and introduced himself: 'I am Tony Yelash, a grandson of the old gumdigger Toni Yelash. Welcome to our gumfield museum.'

Tony explained to me that his grandfather had spent almost all of his life in the shanty. Toni Yelash came to New Zealand in 1926, when these vast hills were just beginning to be known as the new rich gumfield of the Far North. In the late 1940s, as the price of kauri gum started to fall and the golden days of the Ahipara hills began to fade, endless rumours spread of the depletion of the gumfields, saying that the demand for gum would cease over night. As a result, the gumdiggers slowly abandoned Opoka. It was not a fast process, as the industry was itself slowly dying. Although many gumdiggers switched to farming and agriculture, Toni Yelash kept on digging. He stayed on the hill from where he could see the long sandy dune and Ninety Mile Beach. He once flew over the area in an airplane and saw where the others were now living, but still thought that he belonged to Ahipara Hill. He considered the journey a waste of time as every second away from Opoka was a lost one. Finally, his shack was the only thing left on Ahipara Hill. Towards the end of his life he started to dream about a museum. He took some initial steps towards establishing it, but died before his project was finished:

> When my grandfather died, my father wanted to continue with the museum project, we got some money from the Government, we made plans, paid professionals to make plans, wanted to employ a lot of people, our local people, Maori … we proposed a big project and an important part of the project was accommodation for visitors who wish to stay and take in the unique atmosphere of the gumfields. We wanted to build small cosy shanties for visitors, styled from the original type that the gumdiggers used and we wanted to build a large marae-style accommodation unit for groups to stay. We wanted to provide a venue for those who wish to study this unique environment by way of accommodation, walkways, information and identification of trees, plants … for individuals and groups. We had many meetings in our local marae in Ahipara and at the end

Clockwise from top:

Opoka Gumfield.

A photo of Toni Yelash on display in Yelash Gumfields Museum.

The corrugated-iron building housing the Museum.

Sign post, Yelash Gumfields Museum.

From top:

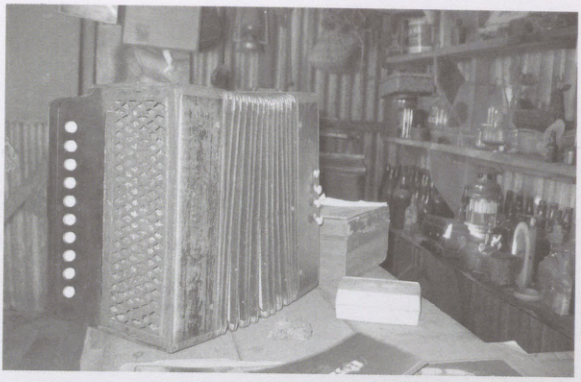
Interior of Yelash Gumfields Museum.

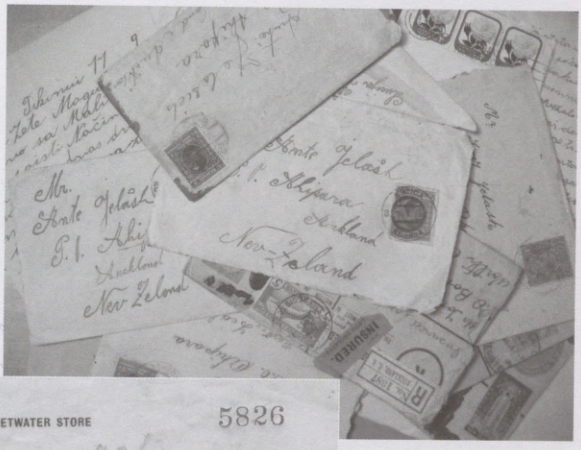
Letters written in Croatian language, Yelash Gumfields Museum.

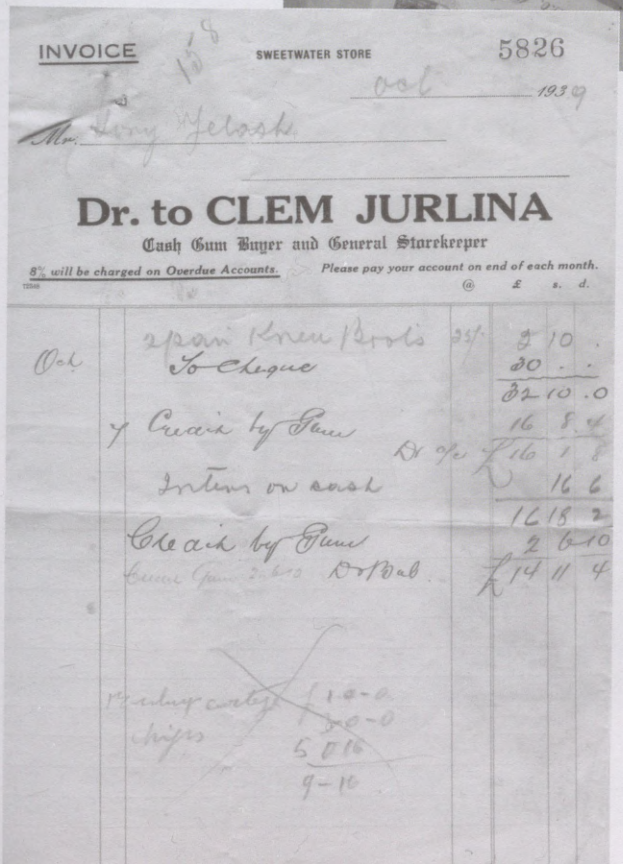
Invoice, Yelash Gumfields Museum.

Overleaf:

Invoices, Yelash Gumfields Museum.







INVOICE SWEETWATER STORE 5826

Oct 1939

Mr. Tony Yelash

Dr. to CLEM JURLINA

Cash Gum Buyer and General Storekeeper

8% will be charged on Overdue Accounts. Please pay your account on end of each month.

			@	£	s.	d.
Oct	2 pair Knee Boots	35/-			10	.
	To Cheque			30	.	.
				32	10	.0
	1/2 Credit by Gum			16	8	4
		Dr 1/2		£16	1	8
	Interest on cash				16	6
				16	18	2
	Credit by Gum			2	6	10
	Gum Cases 2.6.0	Dr Bal		£14	11	4

Telephone 40-999
P.O. Box 797
CABLE ADDRESS:
"MAMAC" AUCKLAND

9 LOWER ALBERT STREET.

Auckland. 9 March 1953

M Tony Alach
Ahipara

IN ACCOUNT WITH **MARRINER & CO.**

Cr. Kauri Gum Merchants

PACKAGES Cases	PACKAGES Bags		MARKS	WEIGHT Cwt.	Qrs.	Lbs.				
		Kauri Gum:								
	8		4/18	15	·	8	155/	116 16 ·		
	13		4/N	20	1	10	100/	101 13 11		
	4		4/82	6	·	·	120/	36 ·	254	9 11
		To Freight + Cartage 25 Bg						8 8 9		
		. Freight Cart K/E sack						8 ·		
		. Cheque Lorewith						145 13 2	254	9 11

INVOICE SWEETWATER STORE 412

234 O.B.

June 16 1953

Mr. Tony Jelash

Dr. to C. JURLINA & SONS

Cash Gum Buyers and General Storekeepers

A.D.Ltd. 11640 cash Store

			@	£	s.	d.
16	6/50 flour. 11-16-0	2gall olive oil 4-10-0		9	6	
	1/70 Sugar 2-14-6.	39 lb bacon. 5-10-6		8	5	·
	6 candles 13/6.	6 tea 1-18-		2	10	6
	6 jam 21/-	12 sardines 16/6		1	17	6
	8 tobacco 1-7-4	4 Kerosene 20/-		2	7	4
	2 Spade 3-5-0.	2 salt 4/-		3	9	·
	1 loose papers 19/6.	2 axehandles 3/6		1	15	0
	6 letter 10/- 15 lb Biscuit 30/-			2	·	
	2 E. Tins 6/-	1 pair gum boots 11/17/6		2	3	6
	30 macaroni 2-5-0.	2 shovels 3/2/-		4	7	
	4 dog biscuit 3/6.			8	8	0
	160 lb potatoes 6½			4	6	8
				50	15	6

To be paid before 31/3/54

Clockwise from top:

Letter written to Toni from another Dalmatian gumdigger. Yelash Gumfields Museum

Photo of a young Toni Yelash.

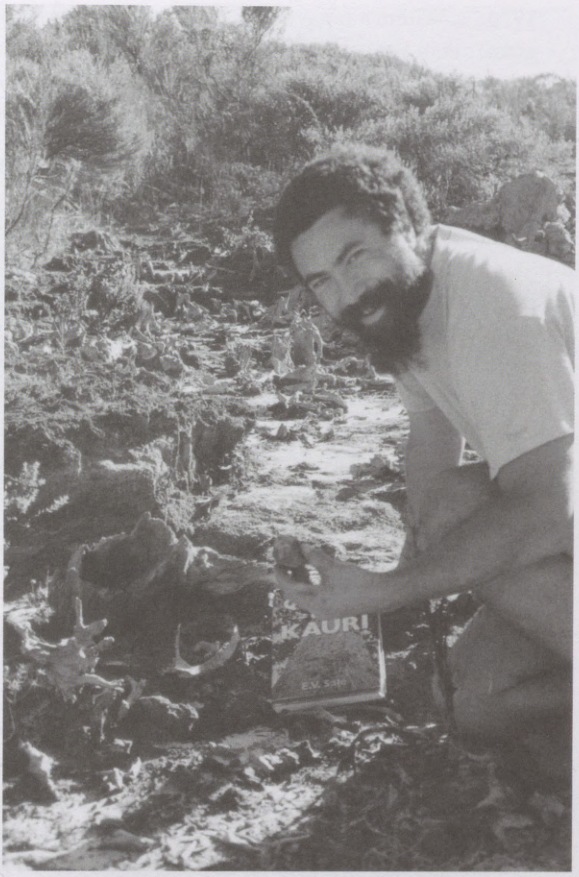
Pile of sieves. The gum-bearing soil was washed through sieves to separate gum chips from the soil. Yelash Gumfields Museum.

> nothing … the Government decided to stop everything … why … I cannot tell you … I think it's the land issue … some of this land is Maori land but some is still the Crown's land … of course, we Maori want our land back … and the Government stopped the museum project. My father left because there are no jobs available for us here in Ahipara, but I decided to stay. I renovated the shack, I mean I just turned the shop into a museum … and I think that I am doing history here, I am telling stories about our way of life, Maori way of life … and gumdigging was our way of life. I read a lot of books and I tell you, I am well prepared to be a guide.

The plan for the Yelash Museum Project was in line with the new museology. Its aim was to import visitors to experience the gumdigging way of life, to live in replicas of gumdiggers' shanties, stay for several days and relax by digging gum. At the same time, gumdigging was intended to be represented as a mainly Maori way of life. The project aimed to resurrect a dead economy and turn it into a tourist destination. However, the project did not attract outside support and, today, the Ahipara gumfields are not even on the New Zealand map. Tony, as his grandfather once did, hosts lost tourists who somehow manage to find his museum. He acts as a professional guide and as an expert on the kauri gum industry. Most importantly, he acts as a guide for Maori culture.

Tony starts his tour with a story from Maori mythology, the creation of the mythical homeland Hawaiki and Tane, the god of the forest. He showed me a photo of a huge kauri tree. He explained how kauri forest once covered much of Aotearoa, but disappeared, 'nobody knows what really happened, but when Pakeha arrived they destroyed the last pockets of the forest'. Maori knew that

Museum Project, Yelash Gumfields Museum



Tony Yelash as a guide, Opoka gumfield.

kauri gum was valuable. They used it for several purposes: gum was boiled and then taken medicinally as a treatment for vomiting and diarrhoea, it was used as a fire lighter, as a torch for attracting fish and so on. However, according to Tony, Pakeha once again destroyed this resource. They discovered that gum could be used as a varnish and started to exploit it. After this, Maori collected kauri gum in order to earn money to survive:

> After signing of the Treaty in 1840 Pakeha did everything to destroy Maori. Maori didn't have money, they lost their land, so they did gumdigging. Gum supplied cash and many Maori families survived because of that. My people, Te Rarawa, dug gum from the beginning of the industry, but Ahipara gumfield become known during 1920s, during the depression time in New Zealand. I say that for Maori the depression time started already in the 1840s, after signing of the Treaty, but in books on New Zealand history you can read that the Depression was in the late 1920s … anyway … during the 1920s this gumfield attracted Tarara people …. I mean Opoka is a Maori gumfield, but during 1920s many Tarara joined Maori to work here … Tarara were oppressed by Pakeha but Maori welcomed them. For example my grandpa is from Dalmatia, he came in

> 1926 .... Within a few years, Opoka had become a boom town with a population greater than Kaitaia and there were 1000 diggers here ... I think that there were more than 400 Tarara gumdiggers here. Yeah, as I said those were depression days in New Zealand, but in Ahipara, my grandpa and many others prospered.

Tony explained to me how seasonal digging began after tub-washing machines were introduced. Gumdiggers worked through the winter because there was a constant supply of water. To make maximum use of the water available during winter, gum-washing parties developed a seasonal pattern of digging the flat land during summer, when it was easiest to dig, and washing the gum when the winter rains came. Two rusted tub-washing machines are displayed in front of Tony's museum. He described how three to four men would fill the machines with shovels, while one would separate the rinsed kauri gum through a small opening at the lower side of the barrel. Everyone had to work hard and, as more and more people came to the gumfields to find work, the number of shacks, cabins and tin shelters built between the canals dug for rinsing gum grew constantly. By the end of the 1930s, a gumtown had formed, with a few shops, billiard rooms, dance halls, a school, a hotel, a postmaster, fire brigade and many gumbuyers' offices.

> My grandpa became a storekeeper and gumbuyer. He also was one of the men who helped to organise and supervise the road-building. You know, at that time the road between Opoka and Ahipara didn't exist. Every time gumdiggers had a dance my grandpa collected money for the road. As soon as sufficient funds were raised, twenty three men began working. In thirty-three days they built a road over half a mile long. My grandpa worked, purchased the materials, and supervised every step. It was his grand idea, the great road that would finally connect gumdiggers with the harbour at the foot of Ahipara Hill.

At the end of the interview, Tony took me on a tour around the gumfields. He showed me where the now-vanished town once sprawled, where the houses, saloons, and the school had been. He pointed to each place with his finger, as if the old shanties and houses were still there: 'Try to imagine ... try to picture ... use your imagination and you will learn much about Maori and Tarara gumdiggers ...' All I could see was tall grass and scrub. It looked as if no one had lived there for a thousand years. For Tony, however, every square metre was different. From where he was looking, there were a thousand landmarks, and each one told a story.

> Here, where the soil seems to be raised in a line, was once a dam. It was made fifty years ago, to create a water supply for the washing machines ... That shallow ditch over there was one of the main channels leading the water to the machines ... See that fig tree ... there was Yelavich's house. Many Tarara planted fig, olive and lime trees, they had small vineyards behind their shanties. My grandpa said to us that Tarara smelled of garlic, which was constantly eaten, thanks to the old belief that it can cure heavy colds and many other diseases ... see there ... that was a billiard room ... and here Maori used to have hangi ... they were good pig

Sokol Hall, *c.* 1939. Yelash Family Collection

Picnic Day, *c.* 1940. Yelash Family Collection

> hunters and they did fishing. Maori were always good fishermen … they also did shark fishing … fish was eaten smoked or dried … and there … there Maori had vegetable gardens … people cultivated kumara, potatoes and corn ….

Tony was able to read the land. He picked up gum along the way, and explained its origin and quality. He talked about Maori being guardians of the land. He told me that Maori are the only people in New Zealand who are actually linked to the land and can see and read its different layers. He explained how Ninety Mile Beach is significant for all Maori, as it is a spiritual pathway to Hawaiki, the ancestral homeland of Maori, and how five tribes, Te Rarawa, Te Aupouri, Ngati Kuri, Ngai Takoto and Ngati Kahu, are guardians of the area. He described some of the spiritual and tapu places around the gumfields and finished the tour with a story about how the New Zealand government does not care about Maori history and how it misrepresents their culture:

> What I want to show here is that the Maori way of life survived … many Maori who live in the cities are not real Maori …. They know nothing about Maori culture … they transformed into Pakeha …. I cannot speak Maori as well, but I want to learn … one day I will be able to talk on the marae … our elders here say that we, young Maori, cannot speak on the marae because we cannot speak the language … but that's not right …. We cannot speak because we have never been taught our own language … it's not our mistake … but I'm going to school now and I'm learning … to be able to fight against the system. You have to know your own culture … and my culture is in my blood …. I have strong Maori blood as well as Tarara blood …

Lowenthal (1998) contends that our heritage starts with what we inherit from the past and that it is commonly seen as something passed on in the blood that determines the character and fate of individuals and groups. This conception of heritage is widely used by both the dominant and the dominated, by the majority as well as various minority groups. Tony sees his heritage as rooted in two allegiances. The legacy of Te Rarawa tribe enables him to justify his position as a guardian of the land, while the legacy of his grandfather justifies his life as a lonely curator. However, his identification with the strength of his Maori and Tarara blood plays a much bigger role than just essentialising and legitimising what he sees as oppressed cultures. On issues such as unemployment, land rights and Maori education, for example, it functions as a tool in the wider struggle of his community. For Tony, Pakeha oppression continues and, for this reason, he associates Maoriness with suffering and resistance. It is in this context that he makes a distinction between 'true' and 'false' Maoriness. His idea of true Maoriness is based more on resistance to oppression than on tradition, as he cannot speak Maori. If some Maori do not resist, it is because they have transformed into Pakeha and are misled in their true identity. In this way, the social is represented as a system divided between the oppressors and the oppressed. From this perspective, the connection between Maori and Tarara on the gumfield is seen

as some kind of brotherhood, a relationship of oppressed peoples who resisted Pakeha domination.

When I asked Tony about his grandfather's relationship with his grandmother, he said:

> How did my grandpa meet grandma I am not quite sure. People say that he had wife in Croatia … and children …. They are my relatives … I suppose, but I don't know anything about them … here he lived with my grandma and when she gave birth to my father he said: '*Lipi je*' which means he is beautiful in Croatian language, and that's how my father got his name – Leapyear – which is pronounced in the same way as Croatian *lipi je* …. There are plenty of granddad's letters in the museum, but I cannot read them … they are written in Croatian language …. You know, there were many Tarara here and they lived together with Maori, no problems at all … nice people … everyone says that … Pakeha didn't like Tarara, so, many Tarara experienced oppression and they connected with Maori … that's really how they started to live together … that was the only way to survive …

The Maori and Croatian way of life on the gumfields is thus represented as a form of resistance to the Pakeha system. The next day Tony invited more than sixty of his relatives and friends, all of them connected with Maori or Tarara gumdiggers who once worked on the Opoka gumfield. A hangi was prepared and, while some of the older women were talking nostalgically about their childhood on the gumfields, Tony asked me to read a few of his grandfather's letters for him. Most of the letters were from Croatia, from Yelash's family, but some were written by Croatian gumdiggers working on other gumfields. In one, a friend of Yelash working on the Mangawhare gumfield wrote:

> Dear Toni …. I hear that you have many Maori friends there, but I also hear that you live with one Maori woman. People talk about that. That's not good Toni. You know that everyone in this country who lives with natives cannot make money. In general, natives are known to be lazy and they are not able to save any money. Remember, the natives were cannibals … and the house with the black woman's hand in it is not a good house … it is a disgrace and I hope that you will soon change your mind. I am writing this for your own good. Some of our people married Maori, but I know that many of them made a big mistake … they are going to stay poor forever … and we are here to make a better future for us … we suffered a lot in our own country and there is no need for us to suffer again … my advice – stay away from Maori …

While I felt uncomfortable reading this letter to Tony, he smiled and said:

> See, that Tarara was writing under the influence of Pakeha … see how Pakeha were working against us … they wanted to destroy our brotherhood but they haven't succeeded … they were only partially successful and this letter is proof of that … and it's still going on … Pakeha think that they are superior, I'm sick and tired of being told by Pakeha who I am and what is my culture … I

> know where I come from .... I know my past ... and this museum project is not just about our past, it's about our present as well, it is about our future. The Government blames us because we are unemployed, they say that we are radical and have marijuana farms ... but at the same time they don't want to support this project, they don't want to give us possibility to work and live here, on our land ... they lock our culture into their own museums ... we are removed from their maps ... so tourists cannot find us ... but a few months ago we had more than twenty Germans here ... and they will be back ... they liked what they saw ... and they'll send others ... we'll survive.

Clifford, informed by Mary Louise Pratt's work on colonial encounters, writes about museums as contact zones, as spaces where a relationship between different peoples becomes, usually through the museums' collections, 'an ongoing historical, political, moral relationship – a power-charged set of exchanges, of push and pull' (Clifford 1997: 192). The Kauri Museum in Matakohe can be categorised as an official site of the memory of gumdigging and the Jurlinas' gumstore as a private site of memory. However, although both are also contact zones, as they exhibit objects that provoke ongoing stories of struggle, the Yelash Museum most resembles the description of a museum as a 'power-charged' exchange between history and the present.

Although the Yelash Gumfields Museum is on the frontier, it is not a museum of frontier; although enmeshed in immigrant histories, it is not a diaspora museum; although on Maori land, with indigenous ties to the land and the specific attachment of a contemporary tribal community, it is not just a tribal museum. It is an ongoing site of struggle. Yelash Gumfields Museum evokes Maori history before European contact, it provokes memories of colonisation, land alienation and displacement, it provokes memories of an industry that has disappeared, of Dalmatian gumdiggers and their contact with Maori, but most importantly, it is a site of ongoing conflict and negotiation of identity.

In this chapter, I have analysed the story of the kauri gum industry as it is told in three museums. Even though these three narratives look completely different, they actually have much in common – all are preoccupied with establishing the position of a particular group in society. In Nora's terms the Matakohe Kauri Museum is clearly a dominant site of memory. The museum's story is framed within the notion of colonial history and the pioneering era of New Zealand. Furthermore, the representation of the kauri gum industry and the gumdigging way of life is simply a part of the larger ideological project of creating a New Zealand identity. The Jurlinas' gumstore and the Yelash Museum are dominated sites of memory; they are not imposed from above by the government or some official organisation, they are not tourist destinations and they are not on the map of New Zealand. Nevertheless, as I have shown in this chapter, they cannot be seen as sites 'where the living heart of memory beats' (Nora 1996). 'Pure memory' exists neither in dominant nor in dominated sites of memory. These three museums are hybrid places, or in Clifford's words, 'contact zones' where different groups of people establish ongoing relations. Of course, as Clifford

Ross Leroy Yelash and his children and Tony Mate Yelash with a photograph of their Croatian great-grandfather.

(1997) stresses, these are not relations of equality. Even so, in their own way, all three museums use the kauri gum story as a constitutive element in the formation of collective identities. In short, within each museum the kauri gum story becomes a site of social struggle.

Chapter Seven

Celebrating forgetting: Biculturalism in New Zealand

During the last three decades, biculturalism has been defined in official government policy as 'a fundamental characteristic of New Zealand's heritage and identity'.[1] In 'common' language, biculturalism is constructed as recognition of the historical interaction of two peoples, Maori and Pakeha (the *New Zealand Oxford Dictionary* defines Pakeha as 'a light-skinned New Zealander, especially one of British birth or ancestry'). However, in contrast to this common understanding of the word, official government policy defines biculturalism as a celebration of cultural diversity. This 'celebration' includes not just the 'two' who are being celebrated, but also the 'many': 'we are One nation, two peoples and many cultures'. This slogan contains a 'mathematics' of hybridity which aims to reconcile the violence of colonial history with present-day bicultural policy, and harmonise tensions in society by celebrating the forgetting of that past. In other words, beyond the One, the Two and the Many, there are numerous complex articulations that mark the repressed histories of colonisation, racial violence, and the traumas of colonial settler society.

In this chapter, I shall explore the complex articulation that produced the One, the Two and the Many within New Zealand bicultural discourse, through an analysis of the positions of Maori and Croats in contemporary New Zealand. My analysis will focus on the way Maori and Croats are represented in the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. While Maori have been positioned as one of the Two, the Croatian community has been positioned as one of the Many. I shall explore the relationship between these positions and its role in the construction of the One, the New Zealand nation. Furthermore, I shall show how the positioning of Maori, as one of the Two, and Croats, as one of the Many, reflects the complex interplay of power relations that are linked with changes in the nation-building processes of colonial New Zealand. By reconciling One, Two and Many in its postmodern edifice, Te Papa epitomises the role of social fantasy that is not simply an embellishment or mesmerising attraction of display and multimedia playfulness, but rather a social fantasy that disguises the impossibility of a closed system. In the second part of the chapter, I analyse the feature film *Broken English,* which depicts the relationship between Maori and Croats in new and entertaining ways. Finally, I shall explore a number of other new discourses and practices to show how, in contrast to Te Papa, Maori and Croats have developed ways of re-presenting their own identity.

WELCOME TO 'OUR PLACE' – THE MUSEUM OF NEW ZEALAND TE PAPA TONGAREWA

The Museum of New Zealand, Te Papa Tongarewa, opened in 1998. A large building[2] located in the heart of Wellington, New Zealand's capital city, Te Papa is considered to be the main cultural attraction of the country, for both foreign visitors and local people:

> Te Papa is the national museum of New Zealand.
>
> Te Papa is different from any other museum on the planet ... playful, scholarly, imaginative, educational, interactive, bold – Te Papa speaks with a Kiwi accent. (Museum of New Zealand Online, 2003)

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998) suggests that the word 'museum' brings to mind mostly negative adjectives, such as boring, uninteresting, tedious, dull, drab, prosaic, monotonous and lifeless. Museums tend to be regarded as places full of dead, forgotten things enclosed in glass cases, that are far from the bustle of life and interesting only to fastidious academics. In Te Papa, however, the key words are 'experience' and 'adventure':

> Te Papa – passionate about learning, serious about fun – a place of exact imaginings.
> Te Papa takes you inside the New Zealand experience.
> (Museum of New Zealand, 2003)

As Kirshenblatt-Gimblett argues, 'experience' has become the key word for the new consumer-entertainment orientated museology. It suggests a link between museums and tourism and 'indexes an engagement of the senses, emotions and imagination. Museums were once defined by their relationship to objects. Today, they are defined more than ever by their relationship to visitors' (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998: 138). Hundreds of thousands of tourists move around the world every year, most of them seeking an unforgettable 'experience'. In order to attract them into their museums, each country tries to define its uniqueness in an increasingly complicated and intricate world market, where varied places, cultures and landscapes compete with each other. This uniqueness, typically compressed into a few vibrant metaphors, competes with thousands of others in a seemingly coherent world of postmodern pleasure.

New Zealand tends to present its uniqueness as a tourist destination with the biculturalism of indigenous Maori and Pakeha culture. Accordingly, Te Papa plays an important role in both the tourism industry and the national imaginary. From the point of view of the tourist, Te Papa is contextualised within the broad range of consumable experiences offered worldwide and struggles to entertain visitors who will have mulled over any number of possible destinations: be it Disneyland, Naples, Egypt or wherever.

> We have seen nothing to match Te Papa in the many museums we have visited in many countries. It is stunning!! Well done! (Museum of New Zealand 1998: 2)

From the point of view of New Zealanders, Te Papa offers a new way of imagining the nation, 'one in which all New Zealanders are travellers' and 'the destination is collective self-understanding' (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998: 139). As one visitor put it:

> Your concept of displaying Maori and European history is inspirational. You have opened up a huge new interest for me and I am grateful. (Museum of New Zealand 1998: 2)
>
> It gives you shivers down your spine and makes you so proud (and glad) to be a New Zealander. (Museum of New Zealand 1998: 3)

The unique Te Papa 'experience' is encapsulated by a threefold concept, which classifies the world according to Maori mythology and culture in combination with a Western scientific narrative. This is illustrated in the passage below which describes the emergence of the earth and its continents:

> PAPATUANUKU – The earth on which we live.
>
> The earth, the sea, the flora and fauna and the environment of Aotearoa-New Zealand, the Pacific and the wider world.
>
> TANGATA WHENUA – Those who belong to the land by right of first discovery.
>
> The cultural identity of the Maori people of Aotearoa, including art, heritage, history, language, marae skills, science, society, technology and relationship with the land, and their place in the Pacific and the wider world.
>
> TANGATA TIRITI – Those who belong to the land by right of the Treaty.
>
> The cultural identity of the more recent settlers of New Zealand, including art, multicultural heritages, history, science, society, technology and relationship with the land, and their place in the Pacific and the wider world. (Museum of New Zealand 1989: 4–5)

This threefold concept shapes the politics of the museum's display. The first floor is devoted to Papatuanuku, to the land 'where it all begins'. The installations highlight the natural environment of New Zealand, the 'awesome forces' of nature, 'spectacular geological events, such as earthquakes and volcanoes' and so on. In Te Papa, information is not enough. Visitors are encouraged to imagine 'the massive forces that broke up the southern super-continent, Gondwanaland, and moved New Zealand down into the Southwest Pacific'. They can 'feel [the earthquake] in the shaping of the earth beneath [their] feet'. They can walk through a primeval forest, 'filled with the sounds of birdsong'. In short, they can experience the real New Zealand (Museum of New Zealand 1998: 4–13).

However, the 'experience' of New Zealand cannot be fully imagined without engaging with its people. Hence, the fourth floor is devoted to Tangata Whenua and Tangata Tiriti, to the celebration of two peoples, many cultures and One Nation. The overall layout of the exhibition literally illustrates the bicultural

concept of The Nation. In the centre, the display *Signs of a Nation, Nga Tohu Kotahitanga* offers a contemporary commentary on the Treaty of Waitangi, the very document on which the concept of biculturalism is based:

> The Treaty of Waitangi is a living social document. Debated, overlooked, celebrated. A vision of peaceful co-existence, or the cause of disharmony? (Museum of New Zealand, Signs Online, 2003)
>
> [I]t is impossible to live here and not have an opinion about the Treaty. (Museum of New Zealand 1998: 34)

The very space where the exhibition stands also reflects the meaning of the Treaty for the New Zealand nation. It is a 'stunning space,', situated 'underneath a very high, wedge-shaped ceiling'. The words of the Treaty are inscribed on the walls of this 'monumental, cathedral-like space'. For Te Papa, 'this place is sacred, powerful and dignified – a place where the clarity and simplicity of the actual words of the Treaty express the vision of two peoples seeking to co-exist peacefully in one country.' A cluster of poles, each containing a speaker, enable visitors to hear the voices of 'ordinary New Zealanders' and their views on the Treaty. These voices are 'like snapshots in time, with quotes from the time of signing through to current opinions' (Museum of New Zealand, Press Release, Online 2003).

To the left of *Signs of a Nation* is the display *Mana Whenua*. Here, visitors can experience 'the living dimensions of Maori arts, language and culture' (Museum of New Zealand 1998: 36). The permanent display is supplemented by ongoing temporary iwi exhibitions which aim to show the heterogeneity of Maori society. To the right of *Signs of a Nation,* a section called *Passports* presents different stories of people who migrated to New Zealand:

> The New Zealand story is about journeys and arrivals. A thousand years of people leaving home to come here. Now, concentrating on the 19th century and onwards, you can meet the immigrants. Who were they? What did they bring? What did they leave behind? How would you fare? …
>
> *Passports* explores and celebrates the remarkable stories of the people who migrated to New Zealand … As a visitor to this exhibition, you will embark on your own dynamic, interactive journey of discovery. (Museum of New Zealand, Press Release, Online 2003)

This display clearly relates to the interplay of One, Two and Many in the construction of the New Zealand nation. Pakeha, as an immigrant culture, are presented as One of the Two peoples who constitute the New Zealand nation, but there is an intriguing difference in the way Tangata Whenua and Tangata Tiriti are presented. While the display stresses the Maori heritage of Tangata Whenua, Tangata Tiriti are said to have 'multicultural heritages'. These cultures constitute the Many of New Zealand's official national discourse and, according to Te Papa, within a bicultural nation the multicultural Many belongs with the Pakeha.

PASSPORTS, PASSPORTS, PASSPORTS

The *Passports* exhibition begins by showing the history of British immigration through stories screened in video and on maps. Stories and photos of immigrants other than British, such as Chinese, Indians, Dutch, Greeks, and Croats, are exhibited on huge panes and tell of 'their regional lifestyles'. Visitors to *Passports* are encouraged to buy a passport in the Museum shop and 'get involved in the great personal stories' of the different peoples who migrated to New Zealand from different regions of the world.

The first time I visited Te Papa I bought Greek, Polish and Croatian passports. On the cover page of each was written 'our people came this way'. My Croatian passport told the story of Vlado Barbalich, who arrived in New Zealand in 1951. I learned that he did not like the communist system in his country. He escaped from the island of Krk to Italy, where he was based in a refugee camp at Trieste. Here, he was given the opportunity to migrate to either Australia or New Zealand. 'I chose New Zealand,' he said. 'Why? Because it was about as far away from Yugoslavia as you could get.' I learned that although Vlado imagined New Zealand was a tropical paradise and his first impression of the new country was a shock, he soon started to like his 'new homeland'. He worked hard and eventually opened a coffee shop, which served Mediterranean food and wine and played live Greek music. When I entered the exhibition, I had 'my passport' stamped and moved to the Croatian section of the display. Here, through the story of the Babich family, I learned that Croats have been in New Zealand since the 1880s, that they worked hard as gumdiggers and that many of them became successful winemakers.

The *Passports* exhibition focuses on all nationalities in New Zealand other than Maori. Temporary displays highlight the contribution made to New Zealand by different ethnic communities, such as the Chinese and the Dutch. In 2002, the exhibition focused on the 'astonishing contribution made by the Indian community' (Museum of New Zealand, Online, 2003). The exclusion of Maori from *Passports* implicitly constructs the idea of an indigenous New Zealand culture. Other cultures only become 'bicultural' in relation to this 'no-passport' Maori culture. The Passport culture therefore, is diverse and not homogeneous. Furthermore, Te Papa presents British migrant culture in New Zealand as having evolved with the indigenous culture to produce a unique form of 'Kiwiana'. However, as represented in the *Exhibiting Ourselves* section, for instance, other ethnic groups, even though included in this new 'Kiwiana' culture, are somehow locked into their ethnicity. They appear to 'enrich' New Zealand society by their mere presence or, to be more precise, they enrich 'non-Maori New Zealand society' with their different 'lifestyles'.

Ghassan Hage's (1998) analysis of multiculturalism in Australia is relevant here. In his analysis of the children's book *The Stew that Grew*, which aims to explain the multicultural nature of Australia, Hage points out that the stew, into which all ethnic groups are said to add their ingredients, is cooked by an Anglo-Celtic couple. According to Hage, the discourse of enrichment expressed in this 'Eureka stew' not only places 'the dominant culture in a more important position

than other migrant cultures', it 'also assigns to migrant cultures a different *mode of existence* to Anglo-Celtic culture. While the dominant culture merely and unquestionably *exists*, migrant cultures exist *for* the latter' (Hage 1998: 11). Similarly, in Te Papa, different ethnic groups are included in the representation of the Tangata Tiriti side of the bicultural imaginary, but it is clear that temporary exhibitions are tied only to migrants from countries other than Britain. As minority groups, they add different flavours to the immigrant culture.

This discourse of enrichment also operates in the representation of Mana Pasifika:

> Many people of Pacific Island origin live in New Zealand, adding to the richness and diversity of life here. Mana Pasifika acknowledges the strong bonds between New Zealand and other Pacific nations. (Museum of New Zealand 1998: 24)

While Croats, Indians, Dutch, Chinese, Greek, Italians, Polish, Germans, Samoans, Fijians, Tongans, etc., enrich society by their mere presence, immigrants from Britain and Maori culture are represented as 'two very different cultural streams [that in early New Zealand] began to run together.' As the Museum booklet suggests, traces of these streams can be followed to the present:

> What we value depends on who we are.
> What we like depends on who we are.
> What we make depends on who we are.
> (Museum of New Zealand 1998: 30)

...and we are 'One nation, Two peoples, Many cultures.'

In its specific, entertaining way, Te Papa seeks to (re)define the national imaginary. Its rhetoric is clearly a political tool that serves to develop a sense of bicultural national identity.

Laclau's theory of nodal points is a useful tool for understanding this mode of representing national identity. For Laclau, nodal points are master signifiers that partially fix the meaning of the social. As a nodal point, biculturalism gives specific meaning to all other elements, such as national identity, ethnicity, indigenous culture, tradition, justice, tolerance and so on. It reads the past in order to construct a specific picture of society: in this case, the harmonious coexistence of different groups of people, a utopian ideal of contemporary New Zealand. According to Laclau, it is impossible to completely close the meaning of society. However, it is precisely this idea of closure that functions as the ideal that obscures the impossibility of any closed system. Hence, we can say that the fantasy of an ideal society where all groups live together peacefully, discursively constructed in terms of tolerance, structures the display represented in Te Papa. Žižek stresses that, on the one hand, fantasy has a stabilising dimension, 'the dream of the state without disturbances out of reach of human depravity' (Žižek 1996: 24) On the other hand, fantasy has a destabilising dimension that creates images that 'irritate us'. In other words, the obverse of a harmonious community produces disconnected fragments, or stereotypes, that try to conceal the lack in

'reality' itself. In Te Papa's nation-building story, this de-stabilising notion of fantasy, where the discourse of tolerance has a different meaning, is exactly what is repressed.

Recently, in the context of building the 'one' New Zealand nation, tolerance was quilted through a different nodal point – that of assimilation. In this context, tolerance was directed towards those who could be assimilated into mainstream Anglo culture. Hence, those who were defined as inherently 'different' were considered to be 'unassimilable'. Prior to this, the meaning of the 'one' was constructed through 'colonialism'. During this time, New Zealand identity was incorporated within the larger 'one' of the British Empire. From this perspective, Maori were seen as an uncivilised people who needed to amalgamate, transform and melt into the 'one'. As 'a dying race', Maori were considered incapable of surviving the fatal impact of races in which all those who were 'inferior' simply died out.

Laclau stresses that the idea of passing from one nodal point to another does not imply the existence of some kind of natural social progression. Rather, each dislocation of the social and its meaning is based on antagonism. In this context, we can see that the content of a particular nodal point does not reflect a pre-given existing objective reality. On the contrary, it reflects hegemonic struggle.

The context that would lead to the birth of a new national museum was signalled by the political changes that occurred during the 1970s and 1980s. The vision of a multicultural nation that is not 'one' but 'many' was announced in 1973 by the Labour Prime Minister, Norman Kirk. In light of increasing Maori protest[3] and political changes in other settler societies, Kirk proclaimed New Zealand a multicultural country and decided that 6 February, the day when the Treaty of Waitangi was signed, would be a national holiday. A special programme, including a live performance called *Aotearoa,* was prepared for the Waitangi celebration. The main goal of the programme was to picture New Zealand's 'journey towards nationhood and the part played by peoples of many cultures on this great voyage of discovery' (Orange 2002). The live performance started with the arrival of the first inhabitants, Maori. They were followed by English, Scots and Irish. Other European people including Danes, Germans, Croats, Greeks, Dutch and Italians were also represented. These were followed by Pacific Islanders and Indians. Finally, a giant moa laid an enormous egg on the place where the Treaty was signed. The egg symbolised the 'new' New Zealand, where the harmonious coexistence of different groups of people was celebrated.

However, this idea of New Zealand as a multicultural society and the interpretation of the Treaty as the unifying symbol of the new nation was widely criticised by Maori. Their protest resulted in some constitutional changes and a shift in government policy towards biculturalism. This move towards biculturalism proved to be equally difficult. Some politicians clearly supported the idea of multiculturalism. For example, in 1984 Prime Minister Robert Muldoon said:

> We take our culture from all the ancient tribes of Britain, as well as from the ancient tribes of Maoridom; but in addition, the Dalmatians who came to dig the gum and later made the wine; the Chinese who came to work the goldfields; the Dutch … the refugees, first from Nazi bestiality, and subsequently from communist terror in eastern Europe and in South East Asia. Modern waves of Polynesian migration have also washed on our shores. So, we are a mixed people. (Quoted in Sharp 1997: 44)

Some Maori intellectuals were strongly opposed to this interpretation of New Zealand history. As Ranginui Walker put it, 'the reduction of Maori to a position of one of many minorities negates their status as the people of the land and enables government to neutralise their claims for justice' (Walker 1995: 292). The concept of multiculturalism was seen as radically opposed to Maori interests and justice.[4] In an article written for the Institute of Policy Studies in 1988, Raj Vasil explains this tension between biculturalism and multiculturalism:

> For the present it is better to accept the notion of a bicultural New Zealand, as preferred by Maori, than to create an unnecessary and damaging controversy by insisting on multiculturalism …. Some Pakeha, who in the past had rarely thought of New Zealand as anything else than a white Western nation, now faced with Maori demands for its recognition as a bi-racial and bi-cultural nation, insist on arguing with a certain vehemence that New Zealand, in view of the existence of many ethnic minorities, can properly be viewed only as a multicultural and multi-racial society. They insist that in fairness the identity and cultures of the other ethnic components – the Chinese, the Indians, the Greeks, the Italians, the Dutch, etc. – cannot be ignored …. In many cases it is a fact that this argument provides a convenient means by which many Pakeha can deny Maori what they want …. It would be advisable for Pakeha to view New Zealand as a bi-racial and bi-cultural nation for the time being. (Vasil 1993: 1–2)

In the same year, the government decided to build a new national museum. It was argued that the existing museum 'no longer served the wider community', as it failed to emphasise the essential biculturalism of the nation, a biculturalism that included the celebration of many different cultures (see Museum of New Zealand Online, 2003).

The concept of biculturalism adopted by Te Papa is highly problematic. A 1999 report, prepared by Te Papa on bicultural developments in museums of Aotearoa, says that 'the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa … is working in partnership with museums, iwi and related organisations to promote bicultural development in museums of Aotearoa New Zealand' (Murphy 1999 n.p.). However, biculturalism as a concept is clearly interpreted differently by Maori:

> [T]o museums, biculturalism is about bringing Maori and non-Maori together as one. … for Maori there is a link between colonisation and current moves towards bicultural development … Maori associate one event of the colonisation

> process with another. Grievances relating to the loss of guardianship of artefacts are not seen in isolation from other grievances, such as those concerning land, language and cultural property. (Murphy 1999: n.p.)

Te Papa's concept of a biculturalism that aims to bring Maori and non-Maori together is most visible in the display of Te Marae O Te Papa Tongarewa, a living, contemporary marae operating within the museum. This display gives a sense of belonging, not just to Maori, but to other migrants as well:

> For Maori, the marae is a focal point for groups who share kinship – whanau, hapu, iwi. Here they can meet to discuss and debate, to celebrate, to welcome the living, and to farewell those who have passed on. … Te Marae o Te Papa Tongarewa is like any other in the country, except that its 'kinship group' encompasses all the iwi and cultures whose treasures and stories are held at Te Papa … Iwi will identify and relate to their ancestors through the striking contemporary carvings – so too can other cultures. Different carved ancestral images suggest the professions of early migrants – farming, education, clergy, family-raising, artistic endeavour, linked with Pakeha, Asian, and Polynesian design references. (*Nau Mai Haere Mai, Welcome to Te Marae o Te Papa Tongarewa* – Te Papa leaflet, n.d)

In one way, Te Papa's idea of building a new marae is similar to Kirk's idea of building a giant egg to symbolise the new nation. Both the moa's egg and the marae could be understood as attempts to eradicate the previous symbolic order and to replace it with one where all the people of New Zealand will feel at home. 'Through a shared whakapapa this wharenui embraces the peoples of this country, making Rongomaraeroa a forum for the nation' (Museum of New Zealand 1998: 38–9).

In the context of this 'shared whakapapa', the nation is represented as belonging not just to the two, Maori and Pakeha, but also to the many. It is as one of the many that the Croatian community enters the 'we' of the New Zealand nation. As a consequence, the antagonisms of the past are replaced with a celebration of cultural difference. In her analysis of multiculturalism in Australia, Ahmed argues that in this new context 'the nation still constructs itself as "we" not by requiring that "they" fit into a standardised pattern, but by the very requirement that they "be" culturally different' (Ahmed 2000: 101). Although, together with other ethnic groups, such as the Chinese, Dutch, Indians, and Pacific Islanders, Croats are not seen as 'typical New Zealanders', they fit into the New Zealand nation precisely because they allow the nation to imagine itself as heterogeneous. For example, commenting on the position of the Croatian community in New Zealand, Helen Clark, the Prime Minister of New Zealand, says:

> In one way New Zealand is a multicultural society … we have many different communities here, different people from all around the world live in this country and that's good for us. We want them to keep their own languages and their customs. Difference gives richness to our society. The Croatian community is

> a good example. Croatians have been in New Zealand for a long time but they have preserved their customs and language. At the same time they have fully participated in New Zealand society. Some of them are well-known winemakers, businessmen or politicians. (personal interview with Prime Minister Helen Clark, Auckland 2001)

This statement is full of references to the need to tolerate difference and indeed the need to celebrate difference. But, as I have already mentioned, we need to ask the question of who is tolerated, who is tolerating, and who is celebrating and what is celebrated? Hage (1998) argues that the discourse of tolerance in societies that celebrate diversity is not, as it may seem at first glance, the complete opposite of the discourses of exclusion and intolerance. According to Hage, the promotion of both tolerance and intolerance presupposes that the dominant group 'practises the same imaginary position of power within a nation imagined as "theirs"' (Hage 1998: 85). In other words, in the discourse of tolerance the dominant majority is placed structurally in a position of power, inasmuch as it is granted the active power to tolerate while minorities can only be at the receiving end of tolerance. During the colonial era, Croatians were excluded from the 'we' of the nation because they were different. During the period of assimilation politics, it was 'culture' that was excluded, not the individuals who participated in the economy. In contemporary New Zealand, we now find Croatian cultural difference being celebrated and the businesses being developed by Croatians, such as those in the wine-industry and fishing, being seen as part of their tradition.

While Te Papa celebrates the officially recognised hybridity of 'Kiwiana', the Maori-Croatian relationship, which I have described as being a counter-hybridity, is not mentioned at all. In 1999 a group of Croatian-Maori descendants in Auckland decided to build a monument to commemorate the close bonds established between these two peoples. They also discussed the idea of building a special marae for Tarara people, the descendants of Maori and Croats. But there is no mention of this in Te Papa. Te Papa built its own marae, one that tries to impose a shared whakapapa on all ethnic groups in New Zealand. However, Te Papa's narrative of a 'shared whakapapa' has the effect of repressing the constantly repeated traumas of New Zealand colonial society: first, the trauma of the indigenous and colonised; second, the trauma of the immigrant who is separated from her or his imaginary homeland; third, the trauma of the exclusion of non-British migrants; and finally, the feeling of postcolonial guilt that is constantly reframed and rearticulated. Together, all of these traumas compose a political environment that reveals the manner in which Te Papa, as the national museum of New Zealand, functions as a fantasmic support of reality.

The exhibitions at Te Papa have reconfigured New Zealand's history such that national identity becomes a domain of fun culture, entertainment and an endless circulation of *simulacra*. This imagined reality ignores unpleasant intrusions from the past, yet it pretends to correspond with the past in a way that

gives a new vision of New Zealand society, one where New Zealand identity is represented in the process of becoming rather than being. In this context, we can say that Te Papa is much more about 'who we might become' than 'who we were' and 'who we are'. By shifting to this seemingly empty authority of the future, Te Papa hides the discursive machinery that operates in the present. Paradoxically, due to its attempt to deny the traumas of the past, or even to project an imagined future into the past, the most conservative traits of the new museology lie in this authority of the future.

BROKEN ENGLISH

Like the postmodern new museology that transforms museums into tourist destinations and fun culture, popular postmodern culture also suppresses the trauma of the past. Jameson (1991) portrays the postmodern as an apologetic cultural discourse of the third stage of multinational capitalism. He sees postmodern popular culture as a 'new kind of flatness or depthlessness', a 'peculiar kind of euphoria' coupled with a loss of memory, the effacement of a unique personal style and the domination of pastiche and parody. This new kind of depthlessness in popular culture is not 'innocent' – it 'reprograms' popular memories, often reducing the past to nostalgia, and thereby effacing trauma and violence. In this context, the celebration of diversity in postmodernism can be seen as a celebration of forgetting that develops different strategies to mask the trauma of the past.

There is one story in New Zealand popular culture that depicts the Maori and Croatian relationship. The movie *Broken English* is a love story about a Croatian woman and a Maori man (in the past mostly Croatian men married Maori women). The film does not refer to the Maori-Croatian relationship on the gumfields. It is a new story built upon the global perception of the dissolution of Yugoslavia. Within the movie, characters from Yugoslavia represent the evil forces in the contemporary world, while the spirituality of the indigenous people stands for goodness. Johana Pigott wrote the film script and, in 1996, rewrote it into novel form. On the back-cover of the book is written:

> Nina is Croatian. Eddie is Maori. Their experience is worlds apart, but when they meet they feel made for each other. Their attraction seems strong enough to break the tyranny of the past ... until they have to confront Nina's domineering father ....

The story begins with a description of the madness of the war in former Yugoslavia. In order to escape this madness, Nina and her family travel to New Zealand, the country where her mother had been raised. This scene appears to recycle the old motif from colonial New Zealand that portrayed the country as a 'workers' paradise'. In this postmodern example, New Zealand is once again represented as a heterotopic space, a space of hopes and flourishing new beginnings, in stark contrast to the Balkans, where 'normal' life is impossible. A few sentences of the novel embrace centuries in order to explain the background of the Croatian family that moves to New Zealand:

> Yugoslavia, the kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes: a disparate collection of races and religions, split and gathered over the centuries by Roman, Austrian and Ottoman empires and more certainly glued together by the Communists under Tito. Eleven years after Tito's death the great southern nation of Slavs was finally pulling apart. The political leaders managed, with more than a little help from centuries of bloody history, to turn confusion into blood-feud. Every atom of racial fear and sense memory was exploited by the Croatian and Serbian sides for their political ends. It was like lighting a fuse that would bomb them all back to the seventh century. (Pigott 1996: 14)

This mythic history of the Balkans, which the novel uses to describe the causes of ethnic hatred, criminality, male dominance and sexual perversion, is embodied in the mighty figure of Nina's father, Ivan. Even though he is displaced as a refugee, Ivan generates all these evil things in his new environment. He finds friends ('small-time Yugoslav losers') and establishes the situation in which he is 'a magnet to those people, a Godfather fresh from the home country, full of drive, ready to take advantage of any circumstance that presented itself' (Pigott 1996: 16). In short, he is a stereotype of the 'bad immigrant'. He steals and resells things such as cigarettes, booze, and video tapes, he is involved with drugs, and he is a racist who hates Maori, Asians, and Pacific Islanders.

In opposition to this dark figure of the Father, Nina likes New Zealand, likes all people, and enjoys different cultures:

> New Zealand was her idea of heaven …. She looked up at the humming pylon towering over their yard and remembered when she first came to New Zealand. She thought they were going to live in a house with a tree in the garden, a little green tree with leaves in a little green garden with grass and flowers …. The power pylon was their tree, and the bare yard their garden … soon it would be covered with concrete. The garden was walled with concrete blocks and, at the top of the drive, metal gates with spikes along the top operated automatically. It was a mad enclave, their own private bunker …. Through the holes in the wall she saw the neighbour's house and heard the sound of a Cook Islands hymn being sung …. She loved her Island neighbours. She loved to hear them sing their beautiful harmonies. In their garden they had huge vegetable patches neatly laid out with exotic green plants, their paths were always swept. They made a simple life seem elegant and somehow her own people seemed primitive by comparison. Sometimes she thought that her Croatian brothers were caught in a kind of time-warp, forced to live forever in the darkest days of history. (Pigott 1996: 24)

Nina works in a restaurant where she meets a young Maori cook, Eddie. In contrast to her incestuous, dictatorial, cruel and criminal father, Eddie embodies only positive elements, as do her Cook Island neighbours. All of the characters present an intermingling of stereotypes. On the one hand, there is the Western perception of people from the Balkans as being caught in the turmoil of history and, on the other hand, we have an idealised picture of indigenous people living in harmony with the environment. Thomas argues that contemporary

constructions of indigenous peoples as being highly spiritual, connected with the land and so on, 'possess a good deal in common with earlier reifications and fetishizations of notionally simple ways of life, but have a distinctive character that derives from the politics of identity in the present' (Thomas 1994: 171). He labels this new discourse contemporary primitivism:

> The primitivist discourses … cannot be straightforwardly located in particular, institutionally circumscribed colonising projects such as that of the Australasian Methodist mission or the British administration in Fiji; rather … contemporary primitivism is diffused through consumer culture and a variety of class and interest groups. (Thomas 1994: 171)

In settler societies like Australia, New Zealand and Canada, the 'primitivist idealisation' of indigenous peoples is often propagated by both whites and indigenous peoples themselves. However, according to Thomas, given that their meanings and effects are both contextual, we have to be careful not to read all primitivist discourses in the same way. For example, in that it stressed traditional values and ignored European influences of all kinds, the *Te Maori* exhibition which toured the United States, Australia and New Zealand during the 1980s certainly offered a romanticised version of the meaning of being Maori. At the same time, it played 'a crucial empowering role in a wider struggle that has not been limited to the legitimisation of traditional culture' (Thomas 1994: 186).

However, *Broken English* presents a rather different situation. In this case, the 'exoticism' of Maori culture is combined with the 'Balkanism' of Croatian culture. While 'Maoriness' is represented as a sophisticated, peaceful belonging to the land, 'Croatianness' symbolises a reversion to the backward, the primitive and the barbarian. Balkanism here parallels Said's Orientalism: it is the 'Other', a pre-civilised hell which acts as a sort of heterotopic surrogate for an underground Western self that farcically tries to distance or cleanse itself from the evils of the Balkans. In *Broken English*, the Croats symbolise the trauma of New Zealand colonisation. Although not associated with it, they serve as an imported evil on to which the trauma of the colonial past is projected. The role of Nina's father is clear, he is the pure evil who needs to be eliminated. He functions as a transitory figure who moves between different racisms. He is omnipresent, powerful, almost invincible, a control freak, a criminal, has incestuous desires and above all, he is a staunch racist. He hates both Maori and Pacific Islanders and when Nina brings her Asian friends to her father's party, he says:

> Nina brought the fucking United Nations peacekeeping force. Jesus Christ! Even your standard white Kiwis jittered with paranoid racism when faced with an Asian … Asians! (Pigott 1996: 104)

Nina's father occupies the central position of the novel and all the other characters from different ethnic groups rotate around him – he is the measure of all of them, classifies them, describes them as people without a proper history, is disgusted by their customs, their food and their clothes. In short, the

description of his Croatianness resembles 'Britishness' and the colonial history of New Zealand.

Nina's role is more complicated. Although she is open-minded, she is still unable to understand the indigenous culture. The first misunderstanding between Nina and Eddie arises when she laughs at Eddie's small whakapapa tree:

> 'This is my whakapapa!' She couldn't work out what he said. It sounded like he said 'fuck-a-papa'. 'Your fuck-a-whatta?' Nina said, then grabbed the vodka bottle and drained it. She was thinking this was funny. 'My whakapapa. My family.' Eddie looked at her with a kind of disgust. She didn't notice. Nina laughed, then he waved his arms at her wildly and savagely. That beautiful face full of anger and ugliness. 'Ko taku whanau kei roto i te pohutukawa nei!' Eddie shouted at her. Nina was shocked … 'My family's in this earth,' he tried again. 'In the dirt,' she said stupidly, then wished she hadn't …
>
> 'My papa's dead, eh' he said quietly as he dug the hole. 'We just buried him. I hadn't been home in three years and after tangi my mother and my brother Manu gave this to me to bring back to Auckland. This pohutukawa.' Eddie bowed his head and she realised, to some extent what she had done … She knew [that] … she was an intruder and always would be. (Pigott 1996: 50)

While Nina is aware that she is an intruder, her father, as a personification of the colonial father, acts as if he were a king. He possesses the land, a house with a courtyard in Mt Wellington, where he keeps his beautiful daughter Nina locked up, protected from the uncivilised forces of New Zealand society, her Maori boyfriend, her Asian friends, and their Cook Island neighbours. When Eddie decides to fight for Nina, he fights symbolically for the land as well. He brings his pohutukawa, or whakapapa tree, into Ivan's courtyard and, using a taiaha, wins the fight with the evil Father. With this carnivalesque bashing of the evil Father, the land becomes mythical and pure. All the evils of colonisation are gone. Nina, an open-minded intruder (a good white) has finally become a New Zealander, which means much more than simply possessing New Zealand citizenship. As Pigott writes, 'Nina wanted … to belong here … [she wanted] to attach herself … to this guy. If she belonged to him maybe she would belong to this country'(Pigott 1996: 48). By the end of the novel, she achieves her desire to belong to the land. She is married to Eddie, they have a child and her 'indigenisation' is fulfilled:

> Nina walked in the sunshine on a beach by the great and mysterious Pacific Ocean with Eddie and their child. This was her country, these were her people and the thread between them would be there always. (Pigott 1996: 186)

At this point, it seems as if the link between open-minded intruders, the good whites, and the indigenous people is established forever. However, this link does not represent just a mystical national reunion, it expands to the entire universe:

> And each night when darkness fell and their earth cruised into shadow, they could stand on this beach and look out into space. They could see they were

> part of the star river between the earth and the moon … Simply that. Essential, eternal, divine. (Pigott 1996: 186)

This is the fantasy of a society that has reached the paradisal stage where all antagonisms of the past are soothed and the people are secluded from the barbarous Europeans, the bad whites. This fantasy implies that it is possible for a society to take just the pure and innocent and to exclude all who are evil. Ahmed argues that in postcolonial societies the narrative of '"going native" offers itself as a rewriting of a history', it 'reimagines violence as the opening out of the possibility of friendship and love' (Ahmed 2000: 124). These fantasies of becoming native are, according to Ahmed, connected with the tendency within contemporary consumer culture to make indigenous people objects of desire, as they embody the place that contemporary Western subjects seek to inhabit. Narratives of 'becoming native' involve fantasies about what 'natives' are: for instance, innocent people who live in tune with nature, in tune with each other, and are devoted to family life. In this sense, everything that is lacking in the life of the contemporary Western subject is offered in the image of the 'native'. Becoming here means the re-forming of the Western subject. It is a transformation or hybridisation which, on the one hand, masks the antagonisms of the past by releasing 'the Western subject from responsibility for the past', and, on the other hand, confirms the agency of the Western subject, or his or her 'ability to be transformed' (Ahmed 2000: 125).

What is interesting about *Broken English* is that the evil is imported. During the 1990s, the war in the Balkans became a media spectacle for the Western consumer. Innumerable books and films sought to capture the violence taking place in the Balkans. The West saw the Balkans as the 'other side' of civilisation. In this way, the Balkans conflict was consumed in exactly the opposite way to how the images of indigenous people have been consumed. Žižek (1999) attacks this seemingly 'empty' and 'benign' position of the multicultural Western consumer who can juggle the stereotypes of different people. For Žižek, multiculturalism is the ideal form of the ideology of global capitalism and involves 'a patronising Eurocentrist distance' (Žižek 1999: 216). This distance signals a new form of racism, 'a racism with a distance', that parallels global power (see also Hardt and Negri 2000). *Broken English* can be seen as an example of this racism with distance. It reflects the fantasy of New Zealand as a 'green paradise', wherein the peaceful coexistence of indigenous people and 'good whites' is established through hybridisation. As the good whites can be 'indigenised', this solves the issue of belonging. However, the trauma of the past is not simply hidden, it is projected on to an imported figure of Evil, one which can absorb all negative images.

When I talked with Maori-Croatian descendants about the way they experienced the film of *Broken English*, I heard many different responses. Only a few enjoyed it. Most of them found the movie to be racist and to have completely misrepresented the Maori-Croatian relationship. One woman said that she rejected any kind of identification with either the Maori or the Croatian

side in the movie, and that she felt obliged to explain to her friends that the story is not actually based on fact:

> We are nice people but the way Croats are shown in this movie is disgusting and the way Maori are shown is pathetic … I couldn't stand it. This is the first movie that depicts Maori and Croats together and still it is done in a way that I felt ashamed. I wanted to shout in cinema 'Look … this is not OK. My mother is Maori, my father is Croatian but this is not proper picture of my people … my father is not a naturally born killer.' It is a violent movie, some people laughed and clapped when Eddie fought with Nina's father, but I looked at them and thought 'Oh my God … how one can identify with this … how one can get pleasure from this.' Yeah. Please if you want to write about Maori-Croatian relationship do not write about *Broken English*. It is a misrepresentation of everything.

Broken English is just one of many examples in contemporary New Zealand culture that serves to reprogramme what Foucault calls popular memory: ' … a whole number of apparatuses have been set up (popular literature, cheap books … and much more effective means like television and the cinema) … [and through these apparatuses] people are shown not what they were, but what they must remember having been. Since memory is actually a very important factor in struggle … if one controls people's memory, one controls their dynamism. And one also controls their experience, their knowledge of previous struggles' (Foucault 1989: 92). In *Broken English* the knowledge of all the struggles in New Zealand is displaced. It is projected on to unpleasant intruders who are 'borrowed' from the global 'basket' of defined 'enemies', people that the Western subject does not identify with but can consume as an image of pure evil.

In this context, *Broken English* is not concerned with the history of the relationships that have existed between Maori and Croats in New Zealand. It describes their cultures through two discourses, the orientalist and the primitivist, in order to offer a pleasant picture of New Zealand society, one in which different groups of people live in harmonious coexistence and who, in the end, can become indigenised. Ahmed argues that, in multicultural societies, this passing for indigenous, or passing for black, 'has become an increasingly powerful individual and national fantasy' (Ahmed 2000: 132). This passing is enabled by adopting elements of an indigenous, in this case Maori, culture. It is 'a process … which then fixes and freezes those elements as indicators of what it means to be' Maori, 'connected to the land, respect for family …' (Ahmed 2000: 132). She argues that these processes do not just fetishise and exoticise the meaning of indigenous culture, they also recreate 'the white subject as the one who knows the difference, even if that difference is no longer seen as external to the self or community' (Ahmed 2000: 132). From this perspective, Maori culture becomes a means through which Pakeha New Zealanders can discover their true selves. The process of indigenisation enables them to belong to the land in a new, hybrid way. It is through this kind of hybridity that the face of the dominant self and nation expands.

TARARA DAY

This expansion of the 'dominant self and nation' evokes the question of how those on the margins respond to the new politics of identity or, in the New Zealand context, how subordinated groups represent and celebrate their differences within the politics of biculturalism. Here I will analyse how Maori and Croats celebrate their identity in the new cultural landscape that has been opened up by biculturalism.

In 1999, just a few months after Te Papa opened, Croatian-Maori descendants decided to build a monument to commemorate the close bonds established between these two peoples. It was erected in Te Rangihiroa Park, Henderson, Auckland, by the Waipareira Trust and the Croatian Cultural Society. The inscriptions on the black granite read:

> TE HUIHUINGA O NGA TANGATA E RUA
> PRIJATELJSTDVO DVAJU NARODA
> THE UNION OF THE TWO PEOPLE
>
> WALK UNITED BEFORE GOD
>
> This plaque commemorates the close bond established between MAORI and CROATIAN (Tarara, Hrvati) forefathers.

In the background a kauri tree and an olive tree symbolise the two people. The monument was unveiled by the Governor-General of New Zealand, His Excellency the Rt. Hon. Sir Michael Hardie Boys, and Dame Mira Szaszy. A special celebratory programme included Maori and Croatian songs, folk dances, and Croatian and Maori cousins were presented as one of the most important characteristics of their combined cultures.

The programme started with a powhiri, or Maori welcome ceremony, and on the small stage built especially for the occasion various speakers delivered speeches. Among those who spoke were the Mayor of Henderson, the Croatian consul, Maori-Croatian Members of Parliament D. Samuels and C. Simich, and a few kaumatua, or Maori elders, from the North. All stressed the importance of the occasion and the special link that the people of New Zealand have with all the races and cultures who have contributed to its richness and uniqueness. New Zealand was portrayed as a small paradise in which there is a place for everyone who has the ability to respect other cultures. Maori-Croatian contact was presented as an example of the good will of people to share the land, share their culture and live peacefully. Some Maori and Croats talked about the gumfields and the way of life there, describing it as hard but, indeed, very enjoyable and nice.

It is not difficult to detect how the decision to build this memorial was influenced by the new bicultural policy of celebrating the hybridity and coexistence of the many different cultures in New Zealand. Along with Te Papa's reading of the past, Maori-Croats also decided to offer a story about their 'harmonious relationship', of the 'compatibility of races', the 'compatibility

Maori Cultural Group, Tarara Day.

of customs' and of being one 'happy family'. Of course, the memory that is repressed in this story is the memory of the conditions under which they met and formed this relationship. Also repressed is the time, during the 1950s and 1960s, when many Croats gained economic success and developed racist attitudes towards Maori under the influence of the then dominant discourse of assimilation.

Ahmed argues that, in multicultural societies, the 'cultural difference' that is celebrated as the main characteristic of the nation is often assumed to be static and fixed, 'something that can be displayed in the present', free of contradictions (Ahmed 2000: 105). In this context, some cultural forms are seen to be more acceptable than others. For example, cultural difference expressed through different styles of music, dress and food is very acceptable. The right to express one's cultural difference through ethnic style becomes a mechanism for constructing the 'we' of the nation, the multicultural 'we'. The different cultural styles that mark the diversity of the national 'we' are accepted precisely because they are different. At the same time, Ahmed argues, there is something similar underlining all of these differences – the notion that all of them are assimilable into the body of the nation and do not threaten the 'we' of the nation.

Croatian Cultural Group, Tarara Day.

In his critique of deconstructionist metaphysics, Jameson shows how one may understand this phenomenon, by linking the notion of money with that of cultural difference. By demystifying Paul de Man's concept of 'metaphoric identification', that is, the possibility of language treating different things as the same, Jameson shows that it is compatible with a Marxist analysis of equivalence: for example, 'what a pound of salt could possibly have in common with three hammers, and in what way it makes sense to affirm of them that they are, somehow, "the same"' (Jameson 1991: 232). In that it subsumes different things under the same monetary form, this 'primal metaphorical violence' is precisely the violence that constitutes cultural difference as the main characteristic of the 'we' of the nation. If, in addition, we add to the notion of the 'we' of the nation Žižek's definition of the nation as a Lacanian Thing, we can say that what makes this possibility of including and celebrating cultural difference as 'ours', is our belief in some mysterious materiality beneath that difference. As Ahmed puts it, 'the "we" of the nation can expand by incorporating some others, thus providing the appearance of difference, while at the same time, defining other others, who are not natives underneath, as a betrayal of the multicultural nation itself (such other others may yet be expelled from the national body)' (Ahmed 2000: 106). So long as Croats and Maori express their difference in terms of appearance (food, folk music, dance and dress), while underneath remaining the same as other New Zealanders, their differences can be accepted into the national 'we'. However, if they overstress their difference, or 'over identify' with their ethnic backgrounds, they can easily be seen to be a danger to the national 'we'.

Ahmed also analyses how 'cultural difference' becomes a part of consumerism in the contemporary world. The Western subject is invited to

enjoy the celebration of diversity through the process of consuming those who are defined as 'culturally different'. In short, 'cultural difference' becomes a fetish. Food and eating are the best examples of this process of fetishisation:

> One of the benefits of multiculturalism is often cited as the range of restaurants that the consumer can visit: the range of flavours and spices that can be tasted. Ethnicity becomes a spice or taste that can be consumed, that can be incorporated in the life world of the one who moves between (eating) places. Differences that can be consumed are the ones that are valued: difference is valued insofar as it can be incorporated into, not only the nation space, but also the individual body, the body-at-home (this body does not have to leave the home to 'eat' difference). *By implication, differences that cannot be assimilated into the nation or body through the process of consumption have no value.* (emphasis in original; Ahmed 2000: 117)

Influenced by bell hooks (1992), Ahmed moves on to argue that the Western subject's eating and consuming of different foods parallels the power relations in society. When one eats, one swallows, digests, farts and shits. In other words, when the white consuming subject eats the Other as exotic food, they take in what is seen as good and assimilable and let out what is seen as the unassimilable waste.[5] Here we can draw a further parallel between Ahmed's argument and Derrida's idea that 'eating well' could be taken as the rule of subjectivity itself. In his discussion with Jean-Luc Nancy on 'what comes after the subject?' Derrida argues that the question is not 'should one eat or not eat?' since one must eat in any case, but is one of 'eating well':

> One never eats entirely on one's own: this constitutes the rule underlying the statement, 'One must eat well'. It is a rule offering infinite hospitality. And in all differences ruptures and wars (one might even say wars of religion), 'eating well' is at stake. Today more than ever. One must eat well – here is a maxim whose modalities and contents need only be varied, *ad infinitum*. This evokes a law of need or desire … orexis, hunger, and thirst ('one must', 'one must [eat] well'), respect for the other at the very moment when, in experience (I am speaking here of metonomical 'eating' as well as the very concept of experience), one must begin to identify with the other who is to be assimilated, interiorizied … (Derrida 1991: 115)

'Eating the Other', in this context, means that we construct 'the self' in relation to the other. While I certainly agree with Ahmed's argument that in contemporary multicultural societies 'eating the other' is connected with consumerism, here I am concerned with how the other learns to be eaten or, in other words, how the other sells their own difference. I will explain this point through an analysis of the way Maori and Croats 'sold' their cultural difference at the Tarara Day celebrations.

The Tarara celebration of the two cultures, Maori and Croatian, was highlighted through the exhibition and sale of food. One part of the park was set aside for this exhibition and sale of culture. A Maori hangi, or earth oven,

was prepared. The hole for the hangi was dug the day before. The hangi stones were brought during the night and early in the morning a fire was lit and the stones were arranged on top. After a few hours, once the stones were heated enough, the ashes were removed, the stones were covered with cabbage-leaves and the food (pork, chicken, mutton, kumara, pumpkin and potatoes), packed into wire baskets and muslin bags, was lowered into the hole on top of the heated stones. Water was sprinkled on the stones, then the hole was covered with wet sheets and a layer of earth. The hangi was left to cook for a few hours while a group of Maori men played guitars, sang songs and explained to visitors the process of cooking. Some of them were wearing T-shirts designed especially for the occasion with the logo of the Waipareira Trust and the Croatian Cultural Society. At the same time, beside this Maori food corner, a group of Croatian men were cooking Croatian food (roast lamb) while a few Croatian women prepared Mediterranean-style salads.

On the opposite side, there were tables covered with books and paintings as well as other items of interest to Maori and Croats. While the food was cooking, the visitors were entertained by various Maori and Croatian cultural groups. Finally, when the food was ready, special guests, who included Members of Parliament, journalists and academics, were invited to sit at tables prepared for them and other guests were instructed where to buy a special coupon for the food.

> Mmmm, I like Maori food, I like Croatian food … this is really fantastic.

> I am proud to be Maori, but today I have realised that I am Croatian as well … I really like Croatian food … it's excellent … no wonder that Maori and Croats did well on the gumfields …

> You cannot find a better mix really, Maori and Croats … try their food and you will see why their mix is absolutely the best one.

It is clear that Maori and Croats at the Tarara Day were 'selling' their differences, presenting their ethnicity as 'a spice or taste that can be consumed'. Paradoxically, because Tarara Day did not arouse the anticipated interest among other New Zealanders, they were the biggest consumers of their own product. Media coverage of the event was minimal. One member of the Waipareira Trust made some jokes in an effort to explain why they did not manage to create interest in the wider community:

> Yeah, we have a lot of Maori and Croats here, but we would really like others to come and celebrate with us … Dally people are known as greedy … so maybe that's the reason others don't want to join us …

In a similar way, a member of the Croatian Society used old stereotypes to make jokes about Maori:

> We are happy today that the hangi is on time, since we were expecting Maori to work according to *Maori time* [to be unpunctual], we prepared a lot of our own food, just in case …

Tarara Day
(Maori/Croatian Picnic Day)

Meal Ticket

How can we explain the fact that Maori and Croats at Tarara Day were selling their culture in exactly the way 'prescribed' by bicultural policy in New Zealand and that they used old stereotypes when they talked about one another? What is the logic of this 'strange' connection between the memory of some 'happiness on the gumfields' and the circulation of old stereotypes? Alcorn (1996) argues that if stereotypes are just faulty knowledge, then replacing them with more 'adequate explanations' would easily eradicate them. But stereotypes serve as a reactivation of the original fantasy, a reactivation of the impossible kernel around which they are formed. We use them exactly at the moment when we want to discover 'some deeper truth' of others, we use them often as jokes 'laughing and forming communities precisely as effects of those who can laugh with us and those who … are excluded from our laughter' (Alcorn 1996: 87). The way Maori and Croats act towards some stereotypes and the way they use them – 'I know that not all Maori are lazy, but still … [there is something in their laziness];' 'I know that not all Croats are greedy but still [there is something in their over-industrious habits]' – shows that stereotypes reanimate the trauma of the past. It is precisely because of this that stereotypes range from the sublime to the ridiculous. That is, we always paint our belonging to the community in 'majestic sublime tones' that cover the gap, or social antagonism. Stereotypes, then, belong to the unwritten Law of the community, the obscene, shadowy double of daily 'Law', the 'Law of obscenity'. This is, in Žižek's terms, the element which holds together any given community. We belong to the community only if we can share its dirty jokes and most vulgar stereotypes. Hence, stereotypes are pure enjoyment. Stereotypes are the symptom of the community, of the Nation.

Opposite, from top:

Maori hangi, Tarara Day 1999, 2002; Tarara Day Meal Ticket; Croatian food

Below: Croatian food, Tarara Day 1999.

Notes

Beginnings

1 On the politics of representation and anthropology see Asad 1974, 1991; Fabian 1983, 1991; Clifford 1983, 1988; Marcus and Clifford 1986; Marcus 1989; Marcus and Cushman 1982; Marcus and Fischer 1986; Moore 1990, 1994.

2 Maori called Europeans Pakeha after an ancient term for pale-skinned people 'who had arrived from the sea, from outside Maori territories' (Salmond 1991: 27). The word Maori was not used as a category for people until their contact with Europeans. It meant 'ordinary', and the indigenous people of New Zealand started to use it when they wanted to 'distinguish their own normality as a people from the exotic or alien newcomers' (Ballara 1998: 42). In this book, I use the word Pakeha for the mainly British settler population in colonial New Zealand and their descendants.

3 The Maori name for Dalmatians is Tarara. Stofell (1988, 1994) argues that the most probable explanation of that word is the analogy of sound. Maori listeners were attracted to the sharp 'r' that the English could not pronounce.

4 On settler societies and the formation of identities see, for example, Bennett, Turner and Volkerling 1994; Stratton and Ang 1998; Mackey 1999.

5 See Lowenthal 1985; Douglas 1987; Anderson 1991; Friedman 1992; Hutton 1993; Huyssen 1995; Nora 1996; Sturken 1997; Dureau 2001.

6 These interviews were recorded from 1971 to 1974.

7 Lacan argues that, in language, signifier and signified are not united. He contends that the signifier is not a representation, as argued by realist representationalism. Rather, in producing the meanings of the signified, the signifier produces the signified itself. In this context, the signified does not have any meaning outside of language, it is lost as a real point of reference: 'every signification refers to another one and so on and so forth, the signified is lost in the metonymic sliding characteristic of the signifying chain. Signified disappears because it is no longer associated with the concept' (Stavrakakis 1999: 26). *Points de caption* are particular signifiers that halt this movement of signification, fixing the meaning of the whole chain by linking signifiers to signifiers. However, *points de caption*, although they produce stability and fullness, cannot make meaning entirely stable.

8 Fairburn (1996) argues that most New Zealand historians have seen the past as 'a story of progress'.

9 The Treaty of Waitangi was signed in 1840 by Lieutenant Governor William Hobson on behalf of the British Government and by a number of Maori leaders. The Treaty was signed in two languages, Maori and English. In English, the Treaty gave Britain the sovereignty of New Zealand, while Maori 'were guaranteed full

rights of ownership of their lands, forests, fisheries and other prized possessions. The Treaty also promised them the rights and privileges of British subjects, together with assurance of Crown protection .... [The Maori version] failed to convey the meaning of the English version and the treaty negotiations did not clarify the difference. Each party to the treaty was left with expectations about the power they would exercise .... In the following years it became clear that the Treaty contained the seeds of continuing conflict, particularly over land, power and authority' (Orange 1988: 1).

10 Here Laclau relies on Lacan's theory of the mirror stage, where the primacy of the act of identification is stressed in the process of subjectification. For Lacan, the mirror stage is formative of the first image of the Self as a unity. He explains that a child, in a series of fragmented movements, perceives itself in relation to the mirror world of reflections for the first time as 'I'. But this 'I' is an Ideal 'I', it is a spatial imaginary identity since it cannot eliminate the real uncoordination of the body. The child tries to accomplish a stable identity in language to gain an adequate representation through the world of words (Stavrakakis 1999). Yet, by submitting to the world of words, the child is also submitting her/himself to the symbolic, and becomes a subject in language. Words, as signifiers, fail to represent the subject and, as a consequence, the subject becomes an effect of the signifier. As Laclau and Zac put it: 'Every signifier fails to represent the subject and leaves a residue: something fails to be reflected in the mirror-world of reflections. There is an essential asymmetry, between projection and introjection, for although the image is brought in, it remains outside; the inside 'starts' outside. In other words, not everything is reflected in the image-mirror, and what remains on the other side is the impossible, the primarily repressed. This asymmetry points to the faults that install uncertainty and trigger identifications. The moment of failure marks the emergence of the subject of lack through the fissures of the discursive chain' (Laclau and Zac 1994: 32).

11 The term interpellation is used by Althusser to describe the process of subjectification which begins when individuals recognise themselves as being addressed by the social:

> ... ideology 'acts' or 'functions' in such a way that it 'recruits' subjects among the individuals (it recruits them all), or 'transforms' the individuals into subjects (it transforms them all) by that very precise operation which I have called *interpellation* or hailing, and which can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace everyday police (or other) hailing: 'Hey you there!' Assuming that the theoretical scene I have imagined takes place in the street, the hailed individual will turn round. By this mere one-hundred-and-eighty-degree physical conversion, he becomes a *subject*. Why? Because he has recognised that the hail was 'really' addressed to him, and that 'it was *really him* who was hailed' (and not someone else). (Althusser 1995: 130–31)

Althusser has been criticised because of the argument that interpellation 'recruits them all', transforming them into subjects, leaving no place for the agency

of the subject (Brah 2000, Ahmed 1998, Butler 2000, Laclau 1990, 2000). According to Žižek (1994:62), when an individual is addressed by a policeman, 'Hey, you there!', she or he does not constitute her/himself as the subject at that particular moment since prior to the recognition in the call of a policeman (the symbolic) the individual is already constructed as subject (split subject), hence the ideological recognition in the call of a policeman (the symbolic) is just the act of identification with which the subject submits her/himself to the power relations that exist in the symbolic, but this identification is never complete, the subject is never completely interpellated.

12 After the break-up of the former Yugoslavia, the Yugoslav club in Auckland, whose members were predominantly descendants of Croatian gumdiggers from Dalmatia, split into two clubs: Dalmatian and Croatian. Sometimes members of the same family became divided between the two (see Trlin 1995).

13 The Waipareira Trust is New Zealand's largest urban Maori organisation (see Sharp 2003).

14 Identity issues are also at the heart of the debate about 'multiculturalism' in Australia, Canada, USA and Europe.

CHAPTER ONE

1 The first contact between Europeans and New Zealand Maori occurred in 1642 when the Dutchman, Abel Tasman, and his crew arrived at Taitapu 'Golden Bay'. Later, the Dutch named this 'newly discovered' land *Zeelandia Nova,* 'New Zealand'. Nearly 130 years later, in 1769, Captain James Cook circumnavigated New Zealand, calculating the population of New Zealand at 100,000. After Cook's 'discovery' of New Zealand other Europeans began to visit the 'new land', the navigators being followed by whalers, sealers, traders and missionaries. Mission schools were established and many Maori were taught to read and write in the Maori language (Salmond 1994: 21).

2 According to early European records about the way of life of the indigenous people of New Zealand, they were organised into descent groups of different scales: iwi, hapu and whanau, which Europeans recognised as tribes, sub-tribes and extended families, formed by descent from a common ancestor (Belich 1996; Salmond 1994). Their economy was based on gathering, fishing, hunting and horticulture.

3 Unofficial lists were compiled earlier by missionaries and amateur ethnologists.

4 By that time they owned just one sixth of the land.

5 Thomas Richards, in his study of the British Empire in the nineteenth century, argues that with bio-power the belief in the wholeness of the natural world and the natural 'order of things' became 'almost a matter of faith, and thus ended as a central myth of imperial knowledge' (Richards 1993:57). The Empire's desire to control the world was supported by the idea of British superiority and the possibility of knowing all far away corners of the kingdom. The Empire's scientists and administrators collected much information, they surveyed, mapped, took censuses, described different people, their customs, religions, languages,

etc, which they organised into a series of classifications. These classifications were stored in an 'Imperial archive of knowledge', a Foucauldian library of all libraries. But this archive 'was not a building, nor even a collection of the texts, but the collectively imagined junction of all that was known or knowable, a fantastic representation of an epistemological master pattern, a virtual focal point for the heterogeneous local knowledge of metropolis and empire' (Richards 1993:11). This overwhelming classification of different knowledges enabled the multiplication of various stereotypes. Different racial and ethnic groups were included in the archive exactly through this kind of stereotyping. Here Richards shows the importance of fantasy in the construction of what is called reality. This powerful fantasy construction of the imperial archive filled the gap between the British desire to control its colonies and the impossibility of absolute control.

6 Like Webster, Elisabeth Rata (2000) argues that it is misleading to talk about the survival of Maori culture as essentially independent from historical processes and capitalist production. With their engagement in European economy, Maori became a working class and their cultural forms (especially during the revival of Maori culture) served as instruments of reorganisation of class relations.

7 This argument assumes the theory of false consciousness, with Maori caught in the grip of false consciousness – that stereotypes their traditional culture, their Maoriness, as masking their 'real' social position as an oppressed group. Hence they require firm leadership to guide them towards their 'real' interest:

> I most dread the possibility that what I intend as a defense of Maori interest is instead somehow mistaken or even misused as an attack on them. This may be inevitable in the sense that the interests which I intend to attack have defined themselves as Maori interests – but, if my argument is correct, misleadingly. Insofar as these are not real Maori interests, I do not mind damaging or offending them. (Webster 1998: 258)

False consciousness theory assumes that we can stand in an objective position, distinguishing between 'true' and 'false' interests. For Laclau (1990), and Žižek (1989), not only is it impossible for us to occupy such a position, this promise is itself an ideological illusion.

8 Clearly, these texts evoke the anxiety of colonisers alongside the authority (see also Adams (1977: 35) on views of new settlers about the earlier wave of Europeans who were 'subject to the natives'.

9 At the same time the Government assisted Pakeha gumdiggers who applied for small farms and wanted to settle down. But they failed to assist Maori. Ironically, it was Maori-owned land that the Government considered as unproductive and between 1891 and 1911 nearly four million acres of Maori land were bought, mostly for the purpose of settling farmers and their families (Binney 1990:206).

10 But this negative attitude did not prevent The New Zealand Shipping Company from advertising gumdigging in its *Settler's Guide to New Zealand* published in 1893. The guide encouraged family migration according to the Government's

rules, but suggested that gumdigging was a perfect side-line job for farmers. 'A skilful and industrious digger can earn as much as £3 to £4 per week at the work, and even children can make a few shillings a day at it' (Petrie 1999: 213). It is important to note that, at the same time that New Zealand was advertised as a paradise for British families, 125,000 former immigrants left the country because of poverty and unemployment (Smith and Callan 1999: 17).

CHAPTER TWO

1 At the same time, some parts of Croatia were under the rule of the Austro-Hungarian, Turkish Ottoman and French Empires. For example some parts of Dalmatia were under Venician rule for nearly 400 years, until 1797 (Violich 1998).

2 While the continental Croats (Croatia and Slavonia) received Hungaro-Croatian passports, the coastal Croats (Istria and Dalmatia) received Austrian passports. Hungaro-Croatian passports were issued in Croatian and French; the front cover bore the coat of arms of Croatia-Slavonia-Dalmatia, and was tied with a three-color ribbon: red, white and blue. Austrian passports were issued in German.

3 Reed states that 'it could be said of the Croats, whose peaceful invasion of the gumfields caused such a stir in the late nineteenth and earlier twentieth century, that no other racial group has had so many inaccurate names applied to them' (Reed 1948:72). Marshall (1968) notes that even the famous anthropologist Raymond Firth, writing in 1923 after making a detailed study of gumdigging, referred to the Croats in a newspaper article as 'Czechs from Dalmatia and adjacent Slav provinces – popularly known as Austrians' (*New Zealand Herald, North Auckland, Special Supplement*, 11 April 1923: 9).

4 Since the public of New Zealand constantly suspected that Croats were plotting something, a closed circle of Croatian leaders in New Zealand attempted to create the image that Croats were 'more than eager' to fight for the Empire. Thus they offered 600 of their men to go to war and raised £6000 in funds. Eventually, 72 Croatian men ended up in the New Zealand forces (The list of the participants in the First World War is held in the Dalmatian Historical & Genealogical Society, Auckland).

CHAPTER THREE

1 Ahipara gumfield is known among the local people as Opoka – digging holes.

2 Neither the date nor the place of the first landing in Aotearoa is known (Davidson 1992: 6). Some authors (Salmond 1991) argue that the first settlement may have been about AD 800.

CHAPTER FOUR

1 In the *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, Joseph Evans was described as a 'Hotel keeper, Gum Buyer, General Merchant and Storekeeper, and Landed proprietor, Waipapakauri. Branches at Awanui, Hohoura [sic], Tekao and Waiharara' (1902, vol 2: 601). His son Edward, 'was born at Mangatete in 1873 and has spent the

greater part of his life in Awanui. In 1869 he took charge of his father's store at Tekao, where the gum trade alone soon eclipsed the business done by Mr Evans at his other branch stores' (1902, vol 2: 609).

2 There are some accounts that show that Maori held hakari on the gumfields:

> Hundreds of pounds were spent for just one hui. In the vicinity of Kawakawa in 1891 Maoris dug gum diligently almost half a year to prepare an unsurpassed hui in the honour of the arrival of the Maori King Tawhiao. (*New Zealand Herald*, 31 March, 1891, p. 4)

3 Hone protested and cut the flagstaff down three more times (Sorrenson 1992: 151).

4 Dalmatia was never under direct Turkish rule but border fighting between Venetians and Turks took place there. During the seventeenth century, Venice established a complete defensive system along the Dalmatian border with Turkey. People from the local population who served in the Venetian army were called outlaws or Morlochs. Outlaws in the Balkans were often associated with the fight for social justice. Since the Middle Ages, epic singers portrayed outlaws as people who were driven to the woods as victims of the system. During Turkish rule, especially in Serbia and Bosnia, outlawry become a widespread form of social protest and sometimes attained the scale of mass movements and rebellion. Many outlaws were highway robbers but, mostly, they were seen as honourable men who fought for dignity and personal freedom, they were 'lonely fighters defying common destiny' (Koljević 1980). This gave rise to the characteristic heroic epic figure.

5 In the sixteenth century poems, Marko kills his brother because they could not agree about their property. In the eighteenth century poems, while Turks kill his brother and he kills many of them, he is sometimes described as the Turks' vassal. In the nineteenth century, he is ready to die for truth but he also kills for fun. Finally, especially in Serbia where rebellion against the Turks was very strong, he becomes a national hero, a super-human who defies the Turks with his magic sword and extraordinary horse. In all of these songs, his fate reflects historical events in different areas of the Balkans. Some of these songs about Marko also have a comic structure and his faults are stressed. For example, he liked to drink wine and is described as hot-tempered. But these faults are not seen as deficiencies, rather they are a compliment to him (Koljević 1980: 176–85).

6 Tomas also recalls that Dalmatians used to read from a book: 'they had a book they used to recite from, and all the others used to sit nodding their heads and saying 'dobra, dobra' [good, good]. And when one got tired the book would be passed to the next one, who carried on' (interview with Wiremu Tomas). This custom of public reading from books, usually the reading of epic poems, is described by the Italian scientist Alberto Fortis, who in 1774 published *Travel in Dalmatia*. Fortis was fascinated by the way people in Dalmatia used to listen to those who were able to read from books. The audience was often very emotional, some even cried. Fortis described this as a result of their inability

to develop a sophisticated way of thinking, hence their 'inferior' souls were touched by primitive stories about the past (Fortis 1984: 58). Fortis described Dalmatians as *Morloks*, noble savages. This custom of learning and repeating as well as re-inventing the songs of the past also fascinated some nineteenth century German romantics (e.g. Jakob Grimm). In the twentieth century, some American and British scholars (e.g. Milman Parry) tried to prove through the study of the 'Yugoslav oral epic' that the poems of 'the most brilliant epic singer ever', Homer, his *Iliad* and *Odyssey,* were oral compositions. There are many accounts demonstrating that the Dalmatians on the gumfields continued with this custom:

> In the evenings while we were scraping the gum, one of us always used to read from a book or newspapers … and we listened to that person. Some gumdiggers were illiterate. They couldn't read or write. They used to listen and they tried to remember. Later they could repeat everything. They had a big interest in knowledge, they wanted to know world politics … and so on. (1st generation correspondent, born 1896 near Vrgorac. Stoffel 1994: 159)

There are also accounts pointing out that Maori had a similar custom of public reading. For example, John Eldon Gorst (1864) in *The Maori King* describes how Maori were interested in wider knowledge, in world politics. Since they could not read newspapers or books written in English they used to sit around the fire while 'one native girl … who understood English perfectly' read aloud (Gorst 2001: 30).

7 This moment of connection could be seen as the moment of unconscious cosmopolitanism, a version of Gilroy's *Black Atlantic*.

8 Marshall, in his MA thesis 'Kauri Gum Digging 1885–1920' notes that 'applications of other nationalities experienced a reasonable delay before letters of naturalisation were granted, whereas it was common for Dalmatian applicants to be told that their applications were "under consideration". Sometimes Dalmatian applicants did not even receive the courtesy of a reply' (Marshall 1996: 239).

9 For a fuller account of Croatian migrant women see Bozic-Vrbancic 2003.

10 'To cheer myself I'd walk down the hall picking out the good looking relations, the ones who looked rich. Uncle Tony in his fur-collared coat, standing at the door of a limousine, the kind we saw only on the pictures. Auntie Rose in her buttoned-up boots. Mama's cousin Beppa wearing a hat with so many feathers it looked as if it might fly right out of the picture. Uncle Alexandar …ah! there was a gentlemanly relation for you. Definitely distingue, pensive, more than a touch of class …. I even tried passing him off as a lord to Mamie Hegarty but she wasn't impressed; besides, she said, lords don't come from Dalmatia, and even if they did we wouldn't be related to them. Why, we only came to New Zealand to dig gum she knew all about us Austrians … '. (Batistich 1987: 66–7)

11 Canvin, in his MA thesis on Yugoslavs in Auckland written in 1970, noticed that village loyalties persisted in the New Zealand environment. Stereotypes within

the group also circulated, for example, men from Podgora believed that they were better and more hard working than men from other villages (Canvin 1970: 47). During my research I have noticed that even today some second and third generation Dalmatians in New Zealand make a distinction between those whose parents or grandparents were born in villages by the sea and those who were born in inland villages.

12 For example the first Yugoslav Club was established in 1930, the Croatian Cultural and Benevolent Society in 1933, and similar clubs were opened in Whangarei, Hamilton, Wellington, Dargaville and Kaitaia (Trlin 1968: 14–5).

13 Anti-Indian feeling was strong and it was argued that 'unfortunately we in New Zealand know but little of the Aryans of India … Our knowledge is practically confined to inhabitants of central India, a degraded race' (Belich 2001: 230).

14 In 1891 Maori owned 11 million acres but in 1920 they owned just 4.8 million acres, almost all of it in the North Island (Belich 2001: 192). Of this total, over three-quarters of a million acres were leased to Europeans and a further three quarters of a million were estimated as unsuitable for development (King 1992: 291).

15 Te Puea said: 'they tell us to fight for a king and country … Well, that's all right. We've got a king. But we haven't got a country. That's been taken off us. Let them give us back our land and then maybe we'll think about it again' (King 1977: 78).

16 'In 1931 a young Maori woman from Ahipara appeared before the Supreme Court in Auckland. She was charged with causing the death of her seven month old daughter by failing to provide the necessities of life, proper food and medical attention …. The mother and child lived in a small raupo whare, in which six children and three adults lived …. A statement from the defence counsel that the child had been born under starvation conditions and that all the inhabitants of the whare, including the mother, were suffering from starvation failed to persuade the jury, who returned a guilty verdict but recommended leniency'(Koning and Oliver 1993: 19).

17 See work by Rahila Gupta (1988) on South Asian women in Britain. She argues that the family network, which developed in resistance to racism, was supportive in one way but, in another way, it 'has delayed and distorted' the possibility of Asian women fighting against male dominance.

CHAPTER FIVE

1 During the 1960s, a series of Maori protest movements started demanding Treaty-based rights. Several new Maori organisations, such as the New Zealand Maori Council and the Maori Women's Welfare League, were established. From the beginning of the 1970s, Maori protesters were supported by a growing number of Pakeha. That was the time when concepts of multiculturalism and biculturalism started to appear in policy proposals. Slowly, political changes began – the Waitangi Tribunal was established as 'a judicial venue for the review of Maori land grievances' and in education, where Maori insisted more on taha Maori, or the Maori side of education, new programmes were set up

at three levels – primary, secondary, tertiary (Webster 1998: 34). In the 1980s, Maori kindergartens, kohanga reo, were established and, for the first time, the government considered bilingual education. At that time it was estimated that just fifteen per cent of Maori could speak the Maori language.

2 Whina Cooper was the daughter of a leading Te Rarawa chief, Heremia Te Wake. She was elected first president of the Maori Women's Welfare League in 1951, a position she held for five years. In 1975, she established Te Roopu O Te Matakite and led the Maori Land March from Te Hapua, in the far north, to Parliament in Wellington. This march dramatised a national Maori determination not to lose any further land to Pakeha ownership. She remained a prominent Maori protest figure in the 1980s (King 1994: 251).

CHAPTER SIX

1 Nora's concept of pure memory has been criticised by many scholars (Sturken 1997, Hamilton 1994, LaCapra 1998, King 2000, Tonkin 1992, Katriel 1999) as 'highly nostalgic' and problematic. All of these critiques point out that memory has never been stable, spontaneous and pure. It is always 'affected by elements not deriving from the experience itself' (LaCapra 1998:21).

2 For comparison, see Fortier's (2000) study about the formation of Italian migrant belongings in Britain.

3 Until World War One it was a part of Austria-Hungary, then it was the Kingdom of Slovenes, Croatians and Serbs, then it changed to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and after World War Two it became the Socialist Federated Republic of Yugoslavia and during the 1990s the Republic of Croatia.

4 There are many accounts given by Croatian descendants in New Zealand that are similar to Victor's feeling that he belongs not just to New Zealand but to Croatia as well. For example, there is the case of Matija Henderson who, in the 1980s, visited her mother's Dalmatian village of Gornja Podgora for the first time in her life. After receiving a warm welcome from her family, Matija went to visit her mother's house. She was overwhelmed. In her memory, she clearly remembered each room and each stone; she remembered the scent of lavender and rosemary. Matija knew that her memories were not her own, but her mother's memories and it was hard for her to believe that the sounds and the voices of her mother's childhood had become so deeply carved into her own memory:

> I know that I belong to New Zealand, my life is in Kaitaia … you see …but emotions were so strong … I was really confused … at the same time everything there was so familiar and known in one way, but in another one everything was new and strange … but I can tell you … the smell of Dalmatia, karst, rocks, the Adriatic sea … that smell was somehow already part of my life … (Interview with Matija Henderson, Kaitaia 1999)

In her memoir *Never Lost for Words*, Amelia Batistich remembers visiting the land of her parents for the first time:

> The JAT airplane landed in Belgrade. I remember looking down and saying

> to myself, This is Yugoslavia. I am here … I suppose passports and visas were checked – I don't remember that. All I was aware of was the hubbub of voices around me, the crush of people all coming or going to or from some place in Yugoslavia – and I was one of them. I remember sitting among them and looking wonderingly around me. Everyone looked like me, with that Slav face I knew so well. I felt like Saggy-Baggy Elephant in the Golden Book I read to my children. Somehow Saggy had got mixed up with tiger cubs when he was baby and had grown up with them. Nobody looked like him. Then one day he wandered off, happened upon a herd of elephants and everyone looked like him. And that's how I felt all the time I was in Yugoslavia. All around me I heard the familiar speech of my mother tongue that I had grown up with in Dargaville … I was driven to Zaostrog [the village of Amelia's parents] … All the way to Zaostrog I looked to see if I could see any sign of Napoleon's Road. I couldn't. The road we travelled on was called the Magistrala, a noble name for a noble road. As we took the turning down to Zaostrog I felt a mounting excitement. What would my first sight of the village be? What sounds would welcome me home? I was in for a shock. We coasted down the slope and there before me was the sea and the shore and hundreds of happy holidaymakers. Souvenir stalls, markets piled with peaches, pears and watermelons and a transistor radio playing 'Hang Down Your Head, Tom Dooley'. But when I reached my mother's house all her stories came flooding back to me. I could see the all-powerful figure of my grandmother … filling the doorway with her presence. I pictured my mother with her four sisters up there on balcony … I was standing before the ruin of my ancestral home where Barbarichs had been born and lived and died for ten generations – one more ruin in a huddle of ruined houses in the abandoned upper village, the *selo*, nestled under the stony mountains of my parents' Zaostrog.

All her life in New Zealand, Amelia had been living between two worlds. Dalmatia was a home, a home never seen but lived through the stories of her parents, relatives and Dalmatian friends. The trauma of childhood, of her being positioned as 'different', is clear through Amelia's re-telling of the story of Saggy-Baggy Elephant. However, on the way back, Amelia learnt that her real home is New Zealand:

> As we winged our way of Sydney airport the New Zealand voices around me sang into my senses. I knew then who I was, what I was: a New Zealander going home. Home, where I belonged. Yugoslavia sloughed off me like a skin. Not forgotten – never would be – but not my place, not my children's. Destiny had placed us at the other end of the world and we had taken root in this earth like those Italian olive trees in Cornwall Park, we with our foreign faces and foreign ways. I remembered that arrival in Belgrade where everyone had looked like me but I saw now that it was what lay behind the face that made us what we were …

CHAPTER SEVEN

1 http:// www.mft.govt.nz/support/kpm/framework.html#Role of Government Policy.

2 For the four years of its construction, Te Papa was one of the biggest museum projects in the world.

3 Rights based on the Treaty were demanded, such as land rights and the official recognition of the Maori language.

4 Anna Yeatman criticises this position of Maori arguing that, although Maori were oppressed in New Zealand, Maori separatism and claims for justice deny 'reciprocal respect for the same claim on behalf of others' and ignore the fact that Maori coexist with Pakeha, which means that the binary opposition Maori-Pakeha 'constantly ran the risk of overlooking both New Zealanders who fall outside this binary and the complexities within these two identities' (Yeatman 1995: viii). In this way, according to Yeatman, Maori claims for a separate identity and privilege are constructed in the same way as those who have had privileged subject status. On problems of Maori claims and justice, as well as a critique of bicultural policy in New Zealand, see also Ramesh Thakur 1995.

5 On the connection between eating, power and the formation of identity see also Probyn 2000.

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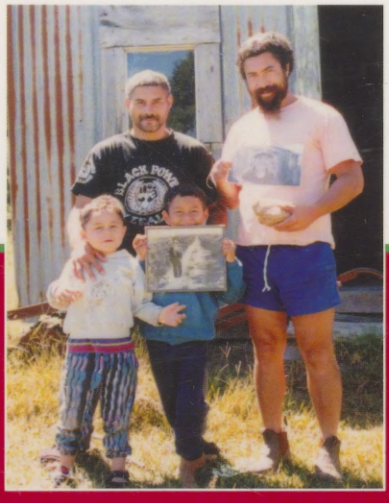
INDEX

A number in **bold** indicates an illustration or table. An en dash (–) between two numbers indicates continuous treatment of a topic, a tilde (~) only that a topic is referred to on each page in the range.

THE Maori name for Croats is Tarara. Between 18[illegible] and Croat worked together on the kauri gumfields of [illegible] intermarriage came to form a unique community. Dra[illegible] official narratives of the kauri gum industry to Croatia[illegible] interviews, films and photographs, documents and museum representations, Senka Božić-Vrbančić investigates how identity 'matters', as the very thing of politics and political action. Through the shared history of Maori and Croats, she explores issues of multiculturalism and biculturalism, hybridity, belonging, space, place and memory.



Senka Božić-Vrbančić holds a PhD in social anthropology from the University of Auckland, New Zealand. She has worked in the Center for Sociology and Cultural Studies (Ukraine), Department of Sociology at the University of Zadar (Croatia) and in the School of Philosophy, Anthropology and Social Enquiry at the University of Melbourne (Australia), where she is currently McArthur Research Fellow. Her scholarly interests range widely, from indigenous and migrant identity formation, the politics of representation, visual culture and diaspora issues, to nationalisms and multiculturalisms. Her work has been published in various journals, including *Ethnography, History and Anthropology*, and the *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, as well a[illegible] [illegible]ty Press, 2008).

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