

HE WAKAPUTANGA O TE RANGATIRATANGA O

NU TIRENE.

1. KO MATOU, ko nga tino Rangatira o nga iwi o NU TIRENE i raro mai o Haurake, kua oti nei te huihui i Waitangi, i Tokirau, i te ra 28 o Oketopa, 1835. Ka wakaputa i te Rangatiratanga o to matou wenua; a ka meatia ka wakaputaia e matou he Wenua Rangatira, kia huaina, "KO TE WAKAMINENGA O NGA HAPU O NU TIRENE."

2. Ko te Kingitanga, ko te mana i te wenua o te wakaminenga o Nu Tirene, ka meatia nei kei nga tino Rangatira anake i to matou huihuinga; a ka mea hoki, e kore e tukua e matou te wakarite ture ki te tahi hunga ke atu, me te tahi Kawanatanga hoki kia meatia i te wenua o te wakaminenga o Nu Tirene, ko nga tangata anake e meatia nei e matou, e wakarite ana ki te ritenga o o matou ture e meatia nei e matou i to matou huihuinga.

3. Ko matou, ko nga tino Rangatira, ka mea nei, kia huihui ki te runanga ki Waitangi a te wenua nei i tenei tau i tenei tau, ki te wakarite ture, kia tika ai te wakawakanga, kia mau pu te rongu, kia huihui ai te tika i te hokohoko. A ka mea hoki ki nga tau iwi o runga, kia wakarere te wawai, kia huihui ai te wakawakanga o to matou wenua, a kia uru ratou ki te wakaminenga o Nu Tirene.

4. Ko matou, ko nga tino Rangatira, ka mea nei, kia huihui ki te runanga ki Waitangi a te wenua nei i tenei tau i tenei tau, ki te wakarite ture, kia tika ai te wakawakanga, kia mau pu te rongu, kia huihui ai te tika i te hokohoko. A ka mea hoki ki nga tau iwi o runga, kia wakarere te wawai, kia huihui ai te wakawakanga o to matou wenua, a kia uru ratou ki te wakaminenga o Nu Tirene.

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AN ESSAY BY ROSEMARY McLEOD

Rosemary McLeod is a *North & South* senior writer

White Guilt

This isn't a good time to be white. To be white is to be unfeeling, money-grubbing, a trampler on the rights of others, a person without spirituality or conscience. To be white is to carry a burden

of past wrongs, a history of shame. Our very successes are our failures; they were earned only by monoculturalism, colonialism, chauvinism, racism and treachery. We have no discernible virtues.

To be Maori is better. It is to be spiritual, family-oriented, caring for each other and the environment; it's to have a meaningful history. It is to have the right to a place to stand, an inalienable piece of land. It is to be an aggressive victim, secure in a sense of moral superiority. It is to have the most powerful weapon of all in the modern world: someone else to blame.

There are times — Waitangi Day this year was one — when it seems the rift between whites and Maori is impassable, when Maori radicals are on the attack and issues seem framed by an extreme clarity. To be white at the close of this century, in this country, is to feel voiceless, though, in the argument. It's to be excluded from debate because we've lost moral entitlement, say white liberals keen to make amends. To be white is to have a legacy of guilt so grave that we cannot defend ourselves.

But is that really the truth as we know it?

He W[h]akaputanga o te Ranatiratanga o Nu Tirene: A Declaration of the independence of New Zealand. This declaration, organised by British Resident James Busby, was signed by 34 chiefs at Waitangi on 28 October 1835 and by July 1839 had a total of 52 signatures. The original was in long hand. This is one of two printings made by the mission press at Pahia in 1837.

Some Facts About Maori

(Taken from government department statistics, census and media reports.)

Almost all the 213 farms Landcorp owns are covered by Maori land claims. Landcorp also manages pastoral leases covering 2.5 million hectares of South Island hill country; they're also subject to Maori claims.

Ngai Tahu, the 100,000-strong South Island tribe claiming the lion's share of Maori fishing quotas, as well as vast South Island land holdings, is the least "Maori" of all New Zealand tribes according to how its members identify themselves. Around half of Ngai Tahu identify as solely European.

Aoraki Consultants was paid \$577,798 between May 1992 and March 1994 for work on Ngai Tahu land claims. The company is owned and operated by Sir Tipene O'Regan, chairman of the Ngai Tahu Trust Board.

Of 511,000 people who acknowledged Maori ancestry in the last census (1991), 22 per cent said they were not of Maori ethnicity.

70 per cent of Maori living in Christchurch are not of Ngai Tahu descent.

Less than 25 per cent of Ngati Porou live in their tribal area.

A quarter of the Maori population claims no tribal affiliation.

Most "Maori" of the 16 tribes covered in a 1994 study by Victoria University Professor Emeritus John Gould was Tuhoe, from the Urewera area; 80 per cent describe themselves as solely Maori.

Government Property Services pays a fixed rental of \$5400 a year to Maori owners (The Wellington Tenth Trust) of a Pipitea Street property in Wellington, and subleases it for \$60,000 a year.

The September 1992 Sealord fishing settlement gives Maori 20 per cent of the country's current and future fishing quotas.

Maori are 13 per cent of New Zealand's population. They will be 15 per cent in 2031. By 2040, half the New Zealand population is expected to have some Maori heritage.

One in three Maori families is headed by a sole parent, usually a woman, usually dependent on benefits.

Health workers say high rates of unemployment and sexually transmitted diseases suggest Maori could be more likely to get AIDS than other racial groups.

46 per cent of prison inmates are Maori.

More than 80 per cent of Maori prisoners suffer from some form of hearing loss.

Maori criminals reoffend more than any other group, but are less likely to get psychological counselling in jail.

Race and identity are less obvious than appearance makes them seem. Forced to consider them in anger, in the face of harsh accusations, they can look hard-edged, something they're not. Guilt can be just as deceptive a lens to see them through; sometimes it's just a mask for anger. As for history, its lessons are learned only with patience, and sometimes too late.

We read statistics about Maori, now. We used to read little about them at all other than their legends, and our own legends about them. There are new legends now, in which we are always in the wrong, and as for the facts, they're in the statistics, and they're our fault.

All we can do is pay for our past wrongs, we are told. The payment should not only be in cash, but in self-flagellation and shame. Once the aggressors in this country, we are now cast in the roles of mediators and penitents. We must make amends, and make a new history; one in which everything turns out for the best.

History is no longer taught as a straight, progressive line of battles won, kings crowned, and trade routes opened. Ordinary people have their place in it now; personal histories contain greater truth. In our own families we'll see patterns of oppression, racism, chauvinism; the vices we've brought to this country. The history my children have learned at primary school is family trees, and the Treaty of Waitangi.

What is a family history? It depends on who's telling it. My family is like any other; it remembers what it chooses, and leaves out what doesn't suit. Some relatives are never mentioned, others are unaccountably scorned. After all this time, nobody knows why anyone ended up in New Zealand, but we can assume that wherever they came from looked a lot worse to them than a far country with few civilised amenities, inhabited by cannibals.

Some of my ancestors arrived here 170 years ago; the others all came well over a century ago. It's not long in human history, but long enough to have lost track of a lot.

Photograph albums in junk shops are filled with people nobody wants to remember: nameless babies in christening gowns, with solemn faces; bridal couples posing warily against painted backdrops. The Maori people in a cousin's photograph album of a century ago look out in black and white without names, without stories, like clues to an old mystery.

There are hints that Maori were always there, on the edges of my family's perception. Twenty years ago, in discussion with my father, he says the carved walking stick given to his grandfather by Sir Maui Pomare has broken. He mentions, too, that his grandmother, Lizzie, spoke fluent Maori; that a lake on the farm is tapu, and Maori will never go there. Asked for explanations: how did his grandfather know Pomare? why did his grandmother know the language so well? he offers only a tight, impenetrable silence. History that is real relates to this farm, where he has whimsically named the creeks and paddocks, to its animals, and to two world wars fought in Europe. Otherwise, he'll tell you nothing.

It's the early 1950s, and my mother and I stay with Maori people in their state house in Pahiatua. My mother met Irini in the maternity hospital where her daughter and I were born on the same day; they bath us in the twin washtubs, one of us in each, on either side of the wringer.

Three Maori families live at the far end of our Masterton street, one "good" and the others "bad". The good Maoris have a tidy front garden; the bad Maoris next door have broken windows and a messy section. The Maori kids who live opposite will beat you up if you walk past their place.

From the time I leave for boarding school in 1958, till I leave school in 1966, I will never have a Maori child in my class.

If there is a Maori culture, I am barely aware of it, growing up. I have heard of Howard Morrison. My mother has souvenirs of Rotorua that she bought on her honeymoon. At the end of 1963 I spend the school holidays with a family on a remote farm in Whangape, in the far north, where there are few Europeans. In the shearing shed at night we struggle to catch the hit parade on an old valve radio that only picks up

Race and identity are less obvious than appearance makes them seem. Forced to consider them in anger, in the face of harsh accusations, they can look hard-edged, something they're not. Guilt can be just as deceptive a lens to see them through; sometimes it's just a mask for anger. As for history, its lessons are learned only with patience, and sometimes too late.

the National Programme: international popular culture is more real to us than the Maori kids our age we see at the distant store.

In two successive flats, while I'm at university, there are tragedies. The first involves Shorty, an art student friend my boyfriend brings to a party at my flat. The flat is inevitably besieged by gate-crashers, and in the chaos that follows, Shorty is attacked with a broken bottle in his face. One of my flatmates is arrested and charged with causing Shorty grievous bodily harm. My boyfriend and I give statements to the police; my flatmate and his friends, whose parents are wealthy and well-connected, tell another story. Against these well-dressed young men in tweed jackets and ties, Shorty's parents and Shorty himself look small and poor. And Maori. My flatmate is found not guilty.

In the bitter aftermath of this incident, I move to a new flat with other students, and Tony, a fellow arts student, majoring in English, moves in. Handsome, slight and shy, he is Maori. He never mentions his family, and I am shocked one day when a Maori man delivers a telegram for him and calls out a name I don't recognise: his name is really Taunoa.

Tony and I are reading *The Alexandria Quartet* at the same time; we have a game where we collect obscure words Durrell uses to test each other's vocabulary. One night he comes home drunk, falls off the retaining wall below our path, and dies of head injuries. At first, the police believe he has been murdered.

Though exams are looming, many of us go to Tony's tangi in a place we've never heard of, on the tip of the East Cape. There, we enter another reality, a world where Maori is spoken all around us, where everyone is Maori, where the customs are strange. We discover that he must have grown up in a language and culture he never even hinted at being a part of. To know this seems inexplicably strange and sad.

As a young journalist in the early 70s, I cover the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Maori Reserve Land when it sits in Wellington. I am amazed by the injustice of the peppercorn rentals the Crown pays local landowners, like the Wellington Tenth Trust. I cannot imagine how such agreements came about. I report Maori activist Dunn Mihaka's early grandstanding in court, refusing to acknowledge the justice system, and am amazed at the patience of magistrates dealing with him.

Face to face, I see the evidence of some of the growing statistics about Maori, moving to the cities in a drift that begins around the time of my birth. I cover the trial of Rufus Junior Paul Marsh, a 15-year-old

National Audiology Centre tests found 9.6 per cent of all school entrants failed hearing tests in 1992 due to glue ear. Maori failure rates were 15 per cent. Maori males are twice as likely to be affected by heart disease, pneumonia, influenza and chronic respiratory disease as non-Maori.

As of 1994, only 42 per cent of Maori children were fully vaccinated against childhood disease compared with 60 per cent of the two-year-old population as a whole. Maori children suffer higher rates of vaccine-preventable diseases such as measles, whooping cough, mumps, hepatitis B, diphtheria, tetanus, rubella and polio.

The Maori rate of schizophrenia is more than double the rate for New Zealanders as a whole (23.7 in every 100,000 for Maori, compared with 11 in 100,000 for everyone else). Schizophrenia is the cause of 37 per cent of all Maori male psychiatric admissions to hospital (the European male rate is 22 per cent) and 32 per cent of all female Maori admissions (the European female rate is 16 per cent).

Maori readmission rates for mental illness have virtually doubled in the past 10 years. European rates have barely changed.

A 1991 Maori dental health study in Wanganui found that 34 per cent of Maori five-year-olds had no dental decay. This compared unfavourably with Pacific Islanders (47 per cent) and European children (62 per cent).

Maori women have the highest lung cancer death rate in the world, and the highest rates of lung cancer and coronary artery disease of any group in the developed world.

70 per cent of Maori women aged 20-24 are smokers. 80 per cent of Maori women aged 15-35 are smokers.

The Maori smoking rate of both sexes is double the total New Zealand rate: 46 per cent of Maori aged 15 and over are smokers, compared with a total national rate of 23 per cent. 60 per cent of all Maori women and 50 per cent of Maori men smoke. One in three Maori smokers goes through more than 20 cigarettes a day.

Each day 50 young Maori start smoking. The brand of cigarettes which they prefer is the brand which sponsors rugby league and softball.

A Plunket Society survey found that 69 per cent of Maori women smoked when they were pregnant.

Maori make up two thirds of New Zealand's cot deaths.

Maori life expectancy is 68 years for men and 72.9 years for women. Non-Maori men live five years longer; non-Maori women live seven years longer. In 1950-52, average life expectancy for Maori men was 54 years, and for Maori women, 56.

Maori die from asthma at twice the rate of non-Maori. Maori children aged from one to four die at five times the European rate; Maori children aged from five to 15 die at three times the non-Maori rate.

Maori are admitted to hospital two and a half times as often as non-Maori, are sicker, and stay longer.

A 1989 Auckland survey found the sudden death rate among Maori men was three times greater than the European male rate

The coronary disease death rate among Maori women aged 45-54 is double the European rate. In 1951, nearly 18 per cent of Maori lived in cities. By 1981, nearly 79 per cent did.

A quarter of all Maori live in the Auckland Regional Council area, and another 25 per cent in the Bay of Plenty and Waikato. In Northland, Maori are 28 per cent of the population. In the Gisborne region, 55 per cent of pre-schoolers are Maori. Maori are six per cent of the South Island population.

Maori infant mortality is going down, but is still far higher than for any other group. The rate for babies under a year old, per 10,000 births, is around 86 for boys and 97 for girls in the total population. For Maori it is 162 for boys and 134 for girls.

Tainui people were the biggest shareholders in the consortium which bought the DEKA and James Smith's department stores from Lion Nathan in 1992, and then expanded its interests by buying Toy Warehouse.

23 per cent of Maori are unemployed, compared with eight per cent of non-Maori. Maori youth aged 15-19 have a 41 per cent of unemployment rate compared with 19 per cent of non-Maori.

A 1989 study by researchers Hilary and Maui John Mitchell looked at the top 40 Maori performers in English and Maths in the 1987 school certificate exams. They found that achievers were labelled "mallowpuff Maoris" by other Maori students; that they consciously had to break with Maori friends because of negative peer pressure; that some had begged to be taken out of top streams; that some had deliberately failed tests; that they had asked schools and teachers not to comment on their achievements; that they had asked teachers to deduct marks from tests so they would not appear to have done well.

42 per cent of Maori school leavers in 1988 had no qualifications. In the 1991 census, 60 per cent of Maori over 15 years of age had no educational qualifications, compared with 42 per cent of the population as a whole

Nearly one in three Maori boys is held back a year at primary school

Maori children make up at least half the number of children suspended from school each year.

Only 30 per cent of teachers taking Maori bilingual or total immersion classes in primary schools are fluent in Maori language (defined as being able to sustain te reo Maori all day.)

Maori children are twice as likely as others to fail school certificate.

7.2 per cent of Maori students sitting bursary got an A pass in 1993, compared with 25 per cent of Europeans.

20 per cent of Maori school leavers in 1993 went on to tertiary education, compared with 45 per cent of the total population.

In 1991, 40 per cent of Maori were aged under 15.

accused, with another 17-year-old Maori, of battering an alcoholic in Wellington's Hopper Street to death. As brutal details of the killing unfold, the two boys fight playfully over a piece of string.

A young woman schoolteacher friend of mine, who has been suffering from depression, is abducted and taken to Red Rocks Beach near Wellington, where she is brutally gang-raped and kicked in the head by a group of Maori with steel-capped boots. After a night of this, and the bland acceptance of young Maori women in the house they later take her to, they ask her to meet them again in the pub.

I visit Sydney abortion clinics to write a feature on where New Zealand women are getting the abortions they can't yet get in this country. What I see is pale Maori girls waiting in their dressing gowns to be operated on in the nearby curtained-off cubicles. They look as if they are barely out of small towns; as if this abortion clinic is their first experience of city life.

Twenty-odd years later, I return to Ruatoria, which I passed through on my way to Tony's funeral. We're more aware of Maori now; they are less invisible. Their feelings about the past are different from ours. At times this is a shock, maddening.

I stay with Jeremy and Jane Williams, European farmers under siege from local Maori Rastafarians who've been cutting their fences, burning down their farmhouse and outbuildings. If they wanted to leave, they couldn't; the actions of these young Maori have rendered the farm unsaleable. Whenever the Williams leave their home, they can't be sure it will be there when they return.

I talk to the Rastafarians, stoned on marijuana, rendered almost inarticulate, raving garbled nonsense. Within their group, there has been a savage murder, and their current leader is killed in turn by local Maori farmer Luke Donnelly.

I talk to the head of the district high school in Ruatoria, Amster Reedy, about education policy there. Reedy is to become a politician with Mana Motuhake: he's a passionate, articulate believer in education based around Maori tradition. Back in Wellington, I talk to a librarian friend about my concern over the limits I believe this policy may impose on bright children. "There must be a physicist there, given the population," I say. My friend accuses me of being racist. Physics is a European concept, she says.

There's an agreement now that we live in a racist society, and that every observation Europeans make is rendered invalid by it. Racism

My house is finally burgled: I come home to find a young Maori male inside, while his companions — another Maori youth, a young Maori woman and her baby — wait outside to help him carry my family's possessions away. To mention that the thieves were Maori is to invite accusations of being racist. But what *is* racism, I begin to wonder, and why is it generally believed that it works only one way?

explains Maori failure in education, the Maori crime rate, and poor Maori health. It underlines why we must compensate Maori for past injustice, like land confiscations. It is the reason why Maori children must enter total immersion classes in their own language without delay, despite the policy being unproven. We must move quickly, without too much reflection, before it's too late.

I visit Waitara, where the board of trustees of the high school, and its headmaster, have been accused of racism for having a sub-standard classroom for teaching Maori. Other classrooms in the school are plainly as sub-standard as this one. And I discover that more Maori students here want to learn Japanese than their own language.

I write about the Parnell Panther, Mark Stephens, the violent Maori serial rapist released from eight years' jail to the care of his uncle, paid by the State to be his minder. The Justice Department releases him from jail to a small north Auckland town known for its high Maori gang profile. Stephens is said to be upset that one of his victims was part-Maori; he only intended to rape Europeans.

Talk of whanau, or extended family, is common now: it's believed whanau will look after Maori in trouble. Nobody asks Stephens' uncle where he was when Stephens was an abused child, or how whanau helped him then. I see whanau present at other trials of Maori killers, as if support is only important when it's too late.

My house is finally burgled: I come home to find a young Maori male inside, while his companions — another Maori youth, a young Maori woman and her baby — wait outside to help him carry my family's possessions away. This time it doesn't work. With police, I catch up with the accomplices, who look coolly at me as I shout at them. Their look says they feel entitled to take anything they want from anyone. They're better-dressed than I am. Over the police radio, I hear their list of past convictions for theft.

To mention that the thieves were Maori is to invite accusations of being racist. But what *is* racism, I begin to wonder, and why is it generally believed that it works only one way?

As a young child, I saw a clear-cut example of it when my mother's white South African landlord screamed abuse at one of her visitors, and threw him out of his boarding house. The visitor was a Pakistani, a Brahmin, doing a doctoral thesis here in chemistry. Later, I had a Chinese boyfriend. His uncle invariably looked through me as if I wasn't there, and asked him when he was going to Hong Kong to get a proper woman. These men, I could see, were racist; they were denying the value of other human beings because of their skin colour.

Racism means more than that, now; it means making any observation based on other races that is not positive. And it means we must be uneasy about affirming our European origins: to be positive about that means, among certain white liberals, that you're implying negativity towards other racial groups. It's better to shut up.

So scared have most of us become of sounding racist that people now only make observations based on race off the record. Teachers in Wellington have told me about the children of Maori gang members coming to school with cigarette burns up their arms — but not for publication. In rural New Zealand, farmers have scornfully pointed out the rusting machinery in the paddocks of Maori landowners; they bitterly resent the low interest rates Maori pay, but to say so in public would invite abuse.

Silence doesn't make such feelings go away.

So confused have our feelings about race and the underclass become that other morality suffers. Writing about the murder of millionaire businessman Jim Fletcher, I found that white liberals I knew were ready to regard him as a somehow worthy victim because he was rich and white, and his killer was poor and brown.

Writing about a Taranaki road crash, a triple fatality caused by a Wanganui architect crashing into a car with two Maori women travelling in it, I found, too, that some people wanted to believe the Maori women must have been at fault.

If racism is elusive and confusing, so are some of the means of redress. A friend working as a probation officer found that a Maori col-

Up to age 44, the main Maori cause of death is traffic accidents. The death rate for young Maori men in traffic accidents is triple that for young Maori women.

Maori are twice as likely to be drunk drivers. Gang members are 30 times more likely than any other group to be involved in fatal car accidents

From 1970 to 1980 the average number of live births for Maori women halved from 5.2 to 2.4. This was one of the fastest fertility declines in the world.

Maori teenagers are three times as likely to have children as non-Maori. (The rate almost halved between 1966 and 1993, to 75 per 1,000.) Maori teenagers have more abortions than European teenagers.

Nearly half of all Maori women aged 15 and over are mothers with dependent children. 61 per cent of Maori children live in two-parent families, down from 81 per cent in 1981. In 1991, 39 per cent of Maori children lived in sole-parent families, compared with 16 per cent of non-Maori children. 84 per cent of Maori sole parents are women: three quarters of them are aged between 20 and 39, and 56 per cent have never married.

Kohanga reo enrolments trebled from 4132 to 14,802 between 1983 and 1993. In 1993, almost half the Maori children in pre-school education attended kohanga reo.

Almost half of non-Maori students stay on to seventh form, compared with one in five Maori.

At the 1991 census, 54 per cent of Maori women and 45 per cent of Maori men aged 15 to 19 had some school qualifications (a school certificate pass in one subject or more).

Between 1986 and 1992 the number of Maori students in tertiary study rose five-fold. They're most strongly represented in polytechnics, where they made up 11 per cent of the 1992 roll.

10 per cent of all teacher trainees in 1992 were Maori: teacher recruitment policy now favours Maori applicants.

At the 1991 census, 26 per cent of Maori men and 22 per cent of Maori women had tertiary qualifications. The non-Maori rates are 45 per cent for men and 34 per cent for women.

Maori women aged 20-24 are most likely to have tertiary qualifications; Maori men aged 35 to 39 are most likely.

The number of full-time employed Maori fell by 22 per cent between 1986 and 1991.

50 per cent of Maori women and 69 per cent of Maori men are working.

Between 1986 and 1991, Maori men suffered 40 per cent of the job losses in the manufacturing sector.

Just over 25 per cent of Maori men work as plant and machine operators. 44 per cent of Maori women work as clerks or in service and sales.

At the last census, 24 per cent of Maori men and 25 per cent of Maori women were unemployed.

league could help himself to one of the few cars at their disposal for work, and keep it as long as he liked regardless of others' need, because he was on "Maori time," a notion that couldn't be challenged without being accused of cultural insensitivity.

A nurse friend noted that a dying Maori patient had no visitors, but when he died, one of her colleagues claimed several days leave for his tangi; though she had not previously acknowledged the relationship to anyone, he was now a member of her whanau. Querying such a leave application would not be possible; it would be culturally insensitive.

Training as a social worker, another friend had to attend an educational session at a marae. There, Maori women abused her and the other trainees for the past practice — not one they were part of — of taking Maori children into care. Angered by one woman, who was especially abusive because her own children had been taken from her in the past, my friend asked, "and you, as a mother — what was *your* responsibility in all this?" The Maori woman spat in her face. She had no right to object; in fact, she'd probably have lost her job if she had.

My mother found the "Hori" column in the local newspaper in the 60s hilarious. By today's standards it was offensively racist, poking fun at the stereotype Maori lifestyle. Yet the same woman kept photographs in her album of Maori friends, and had friends from a wider range of cultures and races than anyone I've ever known.

My children studied the Treaty of Waitangi at primary school, though they have never heard of Magna Carta, the basis of our rights and legal system. As it happens, they are of Maori descent. My son discovers that this qualifies him for special outings that get him out of regular classes. Such a privilege seems to extend to no other ethnic group in his multicultural

school. Should I have misgivings about this — or should I let them exploit the system? Their father once sought tribal funding for study fees, having heard all his life that Maori had special entitlements. He found that the amount on offer was so small it wasn't worth claiming.

So edgy have we become about racial issues that it's too complicated to reveal a Maori component in one's personal life. Other Europeans have congratulated me for having children of Maori descent in these confusing times. I find that offensive.

I try to find Irini, the woman whose home I stayed at all those years ago, whose daughter was born on the same day as me. I can find no trace of them at the Registry Office under the name my mother knew.

Statistics take on a flesh and blood form closer to the world I know. Near the house where I lived as a child, not far from the Maori families who were "good" and "bad", Raymond Ratima murders his own children and his wife's relations, becoming one of this country's few mass murderers. Shorty, the Maori boy whose face was badly disfigured at the party in my student flat, is long dead. He never became an artist; he became a drug addict. The white flatmate accused of attacking him has become a successful and respected artist.

The violence continues. I have now covered two trials of Rufus Junior Paul Marsh for murder, and under the justice system we have, I may live to cover another.

It's the 1980s, and writer Ian Wedde is editing an anthology of New Zealand poetry. He asks me if I have ever heard of Taunoa, the boy I flattered with so many years ago. Wedde has found some of his poetry, during his research, and wonders what happened to him. In London, a fellow student at university in the late 60s talks about the novel he has been writing ever since, which he says hinges on Tony and his death. What is his-

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tory, and how does it work? I notice — not for the first time — that as a woman, I have not survived as part of the story, or even as Tony's flatmate. Like other men my age, recalling the past he quite naturally edits women out.

The Whangape farm where I stayed in 1963 became the scene of a bitter dispute with some local Maori when it was bought by a lottery winner. A number of other farms in the far north now have Maori land claims looming over them, and are therefore rendered unsaleable. My own children are likely future beneficiaries of the Wellington Tenths Trust.

What does any of this amount to? If I were a Maori radical, or a white liberal convinced of their view of the world, the answer would be clear-cut. The Geddes family at Whangape, and the Williamses at Ruatoria, ought not to have been farmers there, or ought to have gifted their farm to local Maori who would have liked it. They did wrong in selling it. Surely they came by it wrongfully in the first place. Shorty and Tony were both contaminated by a white world, without which they would still be alive today. The criminals I've seen and written about were mere savage innocents, victims of oppression just passing it on to their hapless victims.

Well, that attitude is an answer, if that's the kind of answer you want. It implies a head-on conflict that can be resolved only with pain and the kind of intimidation tactics practised by militants like Wanganui's Ken Mair of Te Ahi Kaa. It means you can justify the destruction of European monuments and bail up broadcasting executives in their offices to demand more Maori broadcasting hours.

Real life has less arrogance and blurrier edges. The Williamses at Ruatoria are still there for the long haul; their last arson attack was in 1988, and today Jeremy has bought out other

family interests in the farm, taking a risk on developing a thriving Angus stud. He now has three children, who attend the local kohanga reo and school, where they are in Maori immersion classes. Rosie, aged seven, is well on the way to being a fluent speaker of Maori, as her own great-grandparents were. And a local Rastafarian recently asked her father for a job.

As for the Maori in my cousin's album, there was an explanation all along that neither my father nor my cousins' parents would give: that we're descendants of the Whites, one of the first missionary families to arrive in this country, and settle in the Hokianga, not all that far from Whangape.

One member of the family caused a scandal at the time by sleeping with Maori women; he annoyed other missionaries by trying to stop Maori being alienated from their land. And he was one of the signatories to the Treaty of Waitangi. His brother became a distinguished ethnologist, author of the first encyclopedia of Maori customs, an acknowledged expert in the Maori language, an editor of a Maori newspaper, and a Land Court judge. The White family ran businesses with Maori last century; the photographs probably relate to that.

And what should I make of this? A Maori radical, or a white liberal supporter, would say it's clear-cut: my family forgot its history because of racism; shame at being tainted by association. They would most likely mock the Christian impulse that brought the family here, to confront another culture and subdue it.

Yet the photographs were not destroyed, though they may yet end up in a junk shop. History is still being written. I would rather believe it is more complex and interesting than we imagine, and that the simple answers we leap to quickly, and the reflex emotions they bring with them, are what we should doubt the most. ■

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