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“I Must Not Trust Myself to Write on These Matters:’ The
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Zealand* (1863)”

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Abstract

English version

Frederick Edward Maning's 1863 novel *Old New Zealand* is a cornerstone of New Zealand literature. It is simultaneously an eyewitness account of pre-colonial Māori cultural practises, and a wry satire that unpicks its own authority as eyewitness account as quickly as it builds it. While the last few decades of *Old New Zealand* scholarship tend toward biculturalist interpretations of Maning's text identifying precedents for contemporary ideas such as "Māori," "Pākehā," and "race relations," this thesis breaks with this tradition to present a postcritical analysis focussing instead on the production of uncertainty in the reader's encounter with the text. Drawing on Toril Moi's recent development of an Ordinary Language Philosophy approach to literary criticism directly inspired by Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*, and Sara Ahmed's work on affect and emotion as independent entities that emerge in encounters between oriented bodies, uncertainty is analysed as an affect that emerges as part of the reader's encounter with the text. This thesis claims that the ways certainty is narratively and rhetorically undermined in Maning's text encode an argument for the deliberate cultivation of uncertainty in the face of cultural difference. Fostering uncertainty was, in Maning's time, a way of overcoming the complacency caused by British assumptions about their own superiority toward what Maning saw, in contrast, as the very real threat of armed resistance by Māori to the colonisation of their homeland. In the twenty-first century, as demands by indigenous groups for self-determination become increasingly difficult to ignore, becoming comfortable with uncertainty is a prerequisite if non-indigenous people are to support or work alongside indigenous people without getting in the way. This thesis shows how the uncertainties that Maning constructed to help his contemporaries better see the threat of Māori resistance can be fruitfully repurposed by twenty-first century readers to make space for Māori self-determination.

Deutsche Fassung

Frederick Edward Manings Roman *Old New Zealand* aus dem Jahr 1863 ist ein Eckpfeiler der

neuseeländischen Literatur. Er ist gleichzeitig ein Augenzeugenbericht über die kulturellen Praktiken der Māori vor der Kolonialzeit und auch eine ironische Satire, die ihre eigene Autorität als Augenzeugenbericht genauso so schnell auflöst, wie sie sie aufbaut. Im Text können paradoxerweise sowohl die Wurzeln der Pākehā-Identität des einundzwanzigsten Jahrhunderts als auch rhetorische und sprachliche Systeme identifiziert werden, die unermüdlich daran arbeiten, die Möglichkeit der Stabilisierung von so etwas wie „Pākehā-Identität“ zu unterminieren. Während die letzten Jahrzehnte der Forschung über *Old New Zealand* zu bikulturalistischen Interpretationen von Manings Text tendieren, welche versuchen Präzedenzfälle für zeitgenössische Ideen wie „Māori“, „Pākehā“ und „Rassenbeziehungen“ zu finden, bricht diese These mit der bikulturalistischen Tradition, um eine postkritische Analyse zu präsentieren, die sich stattdessen auf die Produktion von Unsicherheit bei der Begegnung des Lesers mit dem Text konzentriert. Gestützt auf Toril Mois vor kurzem entwickeltem Philosophie-der-normalen-Sprache-Ansatzes zur Literaturkritik, der direkt von Ludwig Wittgensteins *Philosophischen Untersuchungen* inspiriert wurde, und Sara Ahmeds Arbeit über Affekt und Emotion als unabhängige Einheiten, die bei Begegnungen zwischen orientierten Körpern entstehen, wird Unsicherheit als ein entstehender Affekt analysiert, der als Teil des Anerkennungsprozesses zutage tritt, welcher die Begegnung des Lesers mit dem Text ausmacht. Diese These argumentiert, dass die Art und Weise, wie Gewissheit in Manings Text narrativ und rhetorisch unterminiert wird, ein Argument für eine bewusste Kultivierung von Unsicherheit angesichts kultureller Unterschiede beinhaltet. Das Schüren von Ungewissheit war zu Manings Zeit eine Möglichkeit, die Selbstgefälligkeit zu überwinden, welche durch britische Annahmen über ihre eigene Überlegenheit gegenüber dem, was Maning im Gegensatz dazu als eine sehr reale Bedrohung eines bewaffneten Widerstands der Māori gegen die Kolonialisierung ihres Heimatlandes ansah, verursacht wurde. Da im einundzwanzigsten Jahrhundert die Forderungen indigener Gruppen nach Selbstbestimmung immer schwieriger zu ignorieren sind, ist es eine Grundvoraussetzung, sich mit Ungewissheit anzufreunden, wenn nicht-indigene Personen indigene Personen unterstützen oder mit ihnen zusammenarbeiten wollen, ohne dabei im Weg zu sein. Die Unsicherheiten, die Maning konstruierte, um seinen Zeitgenossen zu helfen, die Bedrohung durch den Māori-Widerstand besser zu erkennen, können daher von den Lesern des einundzwanzigsten Jahrhunderts nutzbringend umfunktioniert werden, um Raum für die Selbstbestimmung der Māori zu schaffen.

1. Introduction

Frederick Edward Maning's 1863 novel *Old New Zealand* is a cornerstone of New Zealand literature. It is simultaneously an eyewitness account of pre-colonial Māori cultural practises, and a wry satire that unpicks its own authority as eyewitness account as quickly as it builds it. Within its pages can be identified paradoxically both the seeds of twenty-first century Pākehā identity, and rhetorical and linguistic systems that tirelessly work to unpin the possibility of stabilising any such thing as "Pākehā identity." While the last few decades of *Old New Zealand* scholarship tend toward biculturalist interpretations of Maning's text that work to locate precedents for contemporary ideas such as "Māori," "Pākehā," and "race relations," this thesis breaks with the biculturalist tradition to present a postcritical analysis that focusses instead on the production of uncertainty in the reader's encounter with the text. Drawing on Toril Moi's recent development of an Ordinary Language Philosophy approach to literary criticism directly inspired by Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*, and Sara Ahmed's work on affect and emotion as independent entities that emerge in encounters between oriented bodies, uncertainty is analysed as an affect that emerges as part of the process of acknowledgment that constitutes the reader's encounter with the text. This thesis claims that the ways certainty is narratively and rhetorically undermined in Maning's text encode an argument for a deliberate cultivation of uncertainty in the face of cultural difference. Fostering uncertainty was, in Maning's time, a way of overcoming the complacency caused by British assumptions about their own superiority toward what Maning saw, in contrast, as the very real threat of armed resistance by Māori to the colonisation of their homeland. In the twenty-first century, as demands by indigenous groups for self-determination become increasingly difficult to ignore, becoming comfortable with uncertainty is a prerequisite if non-indigenous people are to support or work alongside indigenous people without getting in the way. The uncertainties that Maning constructed to help his contemporaries better see the threat of Māori resistance can thus be fruitfully repurposed by twenty-first century readers to make space for Māori self-determination.

Surrounded by believers in a Victorian hierarchy of races that positioned white Europeans as the pinnacle of evolution, Maning shows instead in *Old New Zealand* the folly of being certain about the nature of the Māori peoples and cultures whose ongoing presence in New

Zealand presented a potential challenge to the supposedly self-evident superiority of British forms of life. For twenty-first century readers, the uncertainty that is produced in the reader's encounter with the text can serve other purposes. Where the biculturalist picture of cultural difference treats uncertainty as a problem to be solved through frameworks of translation, *Old New Zealand* shows that the uncertainty inherent in encounters between different people is in fact a necessary property of shared space, and one that urgently needs to be acknowledged, accepted, and incorporated into everyday understanding. This sentiment, thankfully still available from Maning's writing, remains relevant for Pākehā readers today. By treating an encounter with the text the same way that *Old New Zealand* suggests treating encounters with people different from oneself, it becomes possible to unlock the knowledge the text might have to teach us about how to handle uncertainty as a necessary, not obstructive, part of living with difference, and thus how to make this attitude a pillar of our own encounters with others.

This thesis approaches *Old New Zealand* from a new direction, claiming that its principal literary achievement is a sophisticated series of rhetorical and narrative attacks against conceptual rigidity, championing instead flexibility, adaptiveness, and uncertainty as appropriate stances to take toward cultural difference. Where other critics have attempted to resolve the text's instabilities and contradictions in pursuit of particular, stable, and certain interpretations, this thesis takes pains to leave its ambiguities and ironies intact, focussing instead on analysing and explicating the messiness, uncertainties, and confusions that they produce in the reader's encounter with the text. Culture is addressed using Wittgenstein's terms *form of life* and *language-game*, understood to refer to the self-defining sets of intertwined habits and rules of language-use that manifest as the real but fundamentally ungrounded mechanisms governing the ways meaning emerges in encounters between people. *Old New Zealand* retains, in this analysis, the power to teach its reader something valuable about cultural difference: both how to respond to it, and how to communicate across and through it. Maning's principal achievement is the production of a narrative that enables its reader to see and thus to question their own forms of life and the certainties their logic produces. By taking *Old New Zealand* not as a source of information about history and race, but instead as a model for how to think about cultural difference in ways not prefigured by twentieth century understandings of colonial history, it is possible to recover new and useful tools from a novel which, 160 years after its initial publication, remains as intriguing and exciting to read as ever.

Old New Zealand and F. E. Maning

At Onoki we saw the Pakeha Maori. He is a thorough curiosity. He is still a powerful active man with childlike manners at times, full of wit and a well read man bursting with quaint ideas. He is a child of nature and an intellectual scholar combined.

– E. R. Chudley, diary entry, 18 July 1875

[Maning's] experiences were published under the title of "Old New Zealand, by a Pakeha Maori," and it may safely be affirmed that, allowing for passages written for effect, no New Zealand story which is at variance with the spirit of Mr. Maning's book can be trusted, though the lights and shades of his picture show contrasts which, as in other countries, leave room for large and varied disquisitions.

– G. W. Rusden, *History of New Zealand*, Vol. I, 1883

Old New Zealand: A Tale of the Good Old Times (hereafter ONZ) was first published in 1863, anonymously attributed to "a Pakeha Maori" (ONZ 91). Organised into fifteen chapters, it loosely narrates fragments of approximately the first twenty years of its author Frederick Edward Maning's life in New Zealand, starting from his arrival in 1833 and covering the period in which he lived alongside and with the Ngāpuhi *hapū* Te Hikutu at and around Onoke on the shores of the Hokianga Harbour. Interspersed with seemingly autobiographical details from Maning's life are vivid descriptions of Māori customs and beliefs and of the narrator's own interactions with his Ngāpuhi neighbours, including the nature of his relationship with a local *rangatira* and the process by which he obtained title to a piece of land of his own. The narrator is prone to rumination and digression on numerous topics both related and unrelated to the course of the narrative at hand, speaking in a consistently prominent voice the artificial nature of which is repeatedly thematised throughout the text. *Old New Zealand* is by turns humorous, fascinating, surprising, and thought-provoking, presenting in vivid and captivating detail a picture of what, it is easy to imagine, it might have been like to live in New Zealand in the early stages of its colonisation, when Māori still held dominion over most of the country and a Pākehā minority was required to adapt to Māori forms of life if they wanted to survive.

Maning was born in Dublin in 1811 or 1812, and his family emigrated to Tasmania when he was around 12 years old. As John Nicholson, Maning's biographer and a distant nephew of Maning himself, describes his early life, the young Maning lived on several colonial farms

around Hobart during his time in Tasmania, and in later years would work to manage and clear agricultural land himself, often alone (Nicholson 22–29). Maning's arrival in New Zealand on the *Mary and Elizabeth* in 1833 and his subsequent life over the next two decades is loosely narrated in *Old New Zealand*. He resided during this time as one of the small number of European settlers in New Zealand who lived closely alongside, and sometimes within, Māori host communities. In the *Tangata Whenua: An Illustrated History* project, which aims to present New Zealand history with an explicitly Māori focus, Judith Binney et al. describe as typical arrangements in which chiefs would

marry European men to women of their tribe, and [...] grant them the use of land, as a way of further binding them to the community. [...] Reciprocal ties imposed mutual obligations, but there were also benefits. [...] Early European residents of New Zealand were almost entirely at the mercy of their host communities, but to ensure ongoing access to western goods and technology rangatira accorded the traders a considerable measure of protection. Some Europeans, often dubbed Pākehā-Māori, were absorbed almost entirely into their host communities. (Binney et al. 27)

Many of the details of Binney et al.'s description appear in narrative form in *Old New Zealand*, including the mutual obligations which, as has been thoroughly analysed by prominent Maning scholar Alex Calder and historian Vincent O'Malley, are satirised by Maning (Calder, "Accounting for Pakeha" 25–26; O'Malley 106–08). In 1839 Maning was enabled by his Māori neighbours to purchase a block of land at Onoke. He built a small house for himself, and "for the next few years [...] immersed himself in the Hikutu community and spent most of his time in their company" (Nicholson 72), whereby he became known as Te Manene. He entered into a relationship with Moengaroa, "a woman of rank" amongst the Hikutu, to whom he was likely married in a *taumau* betrothal ceremony (Nicholson 72–73). Considered in combination with the ascription of the text to "a Pakeha Maori," and the narrator's consistent self-reference throughout the text using the same terms, a brief introduction to the historical meaning of the term itself is now warranted.

A search of Auckland University's Early New Zealand Books archive quickly corroborates Binney et al.'s definition of Pākehā-Māori from sources contemporaneous to Maning, in terms ranging from neutral to negative. John Johnson, Colonial Surgeon for governors William Hobson and George Grey, provides a scientifically bland description from 1846 (Johnson 127).

In 1852, Henry R. Richmond, a lawyer's son who had emigrated to New Zealand in 1850, wrote a backhandedly insulting characterisation in his journal of the "English squatter or 'pakeha maori' as they are called in contradistinction from 'pakeha rangatira' or gentleman foreigner" (23 Feb 1852, cited in Scholefeld 85). Auckland banker Alexander Kennedy offers a blatantly racist dismissal in 1852 of the Pākehā-Māori as "a class which [...] preferred the pleasures, freedom, and novelty of savage life, to industry and civilization [...] [and] invariably sunk to the level of the native character, if not below it" (Kennedy 17). By 1859 it was possible for historian Arthur S. Thomson to declare in his two-volume *The Story of New Zealand* that the era of the Pākehā-Māori was over, its demise inevitable once "the natives visiting [English townships] detected that many of their white men [i.e. the Pākehā-Māori they had married into their tribe] were an inferior class to the settlers" (300). Thomson estimates that the population of Pākehā-Māori peaked at 150 in 1840 (301), after a gradual increase over the three decades prior, with a rapid decline following. Maning therefore would have likely joined around 70-80 other Pākehā-Māori scattered throughout New Zealand when he himself arrived in 1833. Thomson also reiterates Kennedy's earlier suggestion of growing contempt by the 1850s from Māori host communities for their previously-vital Pākehā (Thomson 300; Kennedy 17). By the time *Old New Zealand* was published, Maning's earlier position as a Pākehā-Māori was no longer viable. In choosing to narrate his story from this position, Maning therefore secured for his public persona an assumed body of experience that was historically unrepeatable—and subsequently also impossible to verify independently.

Self-consciously literary text was rarely published in New Zealand in the mid-19th century. At its appearance, the editors of Christchurch daily newspaper *The Press* reviewed *Old New Zealand*. Although self-deprecatingly admitting that they "regard with so great favour [...] a genuine production of New Zealand, that we should probably form a higher estimate of its literary worth that it really deserved" ("Old New Zealand" 2), their review reveals a great degree of respect for a book that "not only professes to be, but actually is, by a real Pakeha Maori" ("Old New Zealand"). Clearly, these two properties of *Old New Zealand*—its Pākehā-Māori authorship and its New Zealand origin—are notable, and the self-deprecatory admission of bias can be read as a lament about the rarity of such events in 1863, and a consequent admission of uncertainty about how they ought to be apprehended. Edwin Hodder's complaint in the Preface to his contemporaneous *Memories of New Zealand Life* about the monotonous nature of publishing works at the time adds further evidence to the extraordinary nature of *Old New*

Zealand. Hodder writes that of the “many volumes written upon New Zealand [...] [n]early all relate to the history of its colonization, the natives, statistics, instructions to emigrants, and other kindred subjects” (7). His characterisation is quickly confirmed by perusal of Auckland University's *Early New Zealand Books* (ENZB) digital archive.

Nineteen publications are listed in the ENZB archive for 1863, of which *Old New Zealand* is the only narrative work not strictly taking the form of a journal or travelogue. Alongside Maning's text and the second edition of Hodder's *Memories* can be found Samuel Butler's *A First Year in Canterbury Settlement*, a work that Butler's father assembled principally from letters and journal entries not originally intended for publication. Joining these are four military histories, four political pamphlets, three guidebooks for new or prospective colonists, two travelogues, a text in te reo Māori about Pākehā land tenure practises and laws effecting Māori land, a pamphlet of statistics about the Auckland region, and an atlas. Together these titles make up the complete offering of the Early New Zealand Books archive for 1863. George Grey's *Polynesian Mythology* does not appear until 1871, followed one year later by Alfred Domett's *Ranolf and Amohia*, the text that Jane Stafford and Mark Williams chose to mark the opening of the Maoriland period in their literary history work of the same name (Stafford and Williams 14). Appearing nine years beforehand, and as an ostentatiously literary and non-utilitarian publication, *Old New Zealand* is remarkable. It both responds to existing tropes by offering information about the state of affairs in New Zealand, and breaks with them by making performatively literary moves. Not merely a journal or guidebook, *Old New Zealand* is also something entirely different, as well.

The Affect of Reading: Postcritique Via Moi, Wittgenstein, and Ahmed

Old New Zealand is fundamentally a book about culture and cultural difference, written at a time before the study of culture had been firmly established as a subject of academic research. It is at the same time a narrative preoccupied with communication. Its montages are often illustrative of differences in expectations and obligations between the narrator and the Māori people that he encounters, to the extent that these can be gleaned from the words spoken and actions performed by the people participating therein, and with nevertheless great uncertainty. *Old New Zealand* does not so much represent cultures as performatively reproduce the processes by which the identification of cultural difference itself becomes possible. Reading the

text can thus generate confusion, unclarity, incompleteness, ambivalence, and uncertainty, as the author's presumably real-world encounters with difference are played out for the reader in their own encounter with the text. Its contradictions and complexities produce a struggle for meaning that likely mirrors Maning's own experiences of coming to terms with the differences between the forms of life he inhabited as a British colonial subject, and those of the Ngāpuhi people upon whose patronage he depended for survival. Relying heavily on irony, the narrative often skirts direct representation in favour of implication and contradiction, sometimes leaving the reader little guidance for how they are supposed to recover meaning from their own encounter with it.

To make sense of the sometimes-disorienting ways that *Old New Zealand* functions, this thesis turns away from critical approaches that treat texts as representational, instead taking up the postcritical approach outlined by Moi in *Revolution of the Ordinary*. Moi uses Wittgensteinian philosophy to approach literary texts not as representational systems but as forms of communicative activity. She works through the implications of Wittgenstein's later writings, particularly his *Philosophical Investigations* and the Ordinary Language Philosophy movement that grew in its wake, applying Wittgenstein's ideas to the study of literature while simultaneously undertaking a postcritical re-evaluation of the role and methodology of critique more generally. Consequently, the relationship between author, text, and reader is understood as one in which texts become "actions and expressions" (196) that "place claims on us" as readers (205) and thus "call for our acknowledgment" (205, emphasis removed). Acknowledgment is central to Moi's approach to literature, and thus to this thesis. A brief discussion of its meaning is therefore warranted.

Acknowledgment, for Moi, is a complex social activity with affective, moral, and communicative aspects. It is

not an operation a subject performs on an object, and its goal is not scientific certainty. If the other's expressions, actions, behavior amount to a claim on us, to respond to that claim is to establish between us a kind of community based on the recognition of our separateness. To acknowledge your expressions and behavior is to show that I understand how it is with you. In all these ways acknowledgment "goes beyond" knowledge. (Moi 208)

Acknowledgment involves a recognition of the subjectivity of the person who introduced an

expression, action, or behaviour into the acknowledger's frame of reference. It establishes a quasi-social shared context between actor and acknowledger, in which the acknowledgment involves a recognition of difference, and of distance. The idea that acknowledgment "goes beyond" knowledge comes from Stanley Cavell, who argues that acknowledgment "[g]oes beyond [knowledge] not, so to speak, in the order of knowledge, but in its requirement that I *do* something or reveal something on the basis of that knowledge" (Cavell 257). For Moi, a text is understood as providing knowledge of some kind to its reader, and because the provision of that knowledge takes the form of an action and an expression performed by a person—namely, the writer—the reader becomes obliged to respond. It is within this response that the experience and the work of reading takes place. By conceptualising reading as a process of acknowledgment, Moi's approach makes texts available for analysis using Wittgenstein's ideas about language, wherein meaning emerges not directly from representational or referential processes but from the embedded, context-specific *way* that the language in question is used.

Moi's picture of acknowledgment bears similarities to the conception that Ahmed proposes in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* of emotions as objects that arise autonomously in encounters between entities. Ahmed critiques orthodox pictures that treat emotions as internal to subjectivities, arguing that they fail to sufficiently deal with the adhesive, political nature of emotions, with their tendency to "stick to some objects, and slide over others" (8). When one feels fear of terrorists, for example, the terrorists "are immediately identified as agents of extreme fear" (72): the fear is readily affixed *to* the terrorist, who becomes a literal embodiment of fear. By contrast, Ahmed's picture of emotions as autonomously-emerging objects decouples the emotion and its fixing, making legible "the complexity of the spatial and bodily politics of fear" (72). Fear is not intrinsically bound to the terrorist but emerges as a third object at the point of contact between ourselves and the terrorist, ready for exchange in "affective economies, where feelings do not reside in subjects or objects, but are produced as effects of circulation" (8). By contrast, more orthodox notions of emotion fix it to one or the other side of the encounter, as something felt, interior to a subjectivity. With such fixing the external, autonomous quality of emotions as third entities is lost. What is also lost is the implicit uncertainty that inevitably results when an emotion is treated as external to the bodies of the participants in an encounter.

Separating emotion from subjectivity also serves to separate it from certainty. An emotion not considered from the position of a subjectivity that is experiencing it is a nebulous,

inherently vague thing. Considered positively, this vagueness offers room for stepping back, cooling off, and re-thinking. Such productive dissociation eases the recognition of possible uncertainties about the social environment in which the emotion has appeared. The emotion need not be felt as an objective or even subjective truth, but becomes available to analysis in, or as the product of, potentially very different ways of looking at the world. Returning to Ahmed's example of fear and terrorists, as long as the fear is treated with certainty as fixed to the body of the terrorist—the terrorist *is* fearsome—then there is no room for questioning whether such adherence is necessary, or whether it might be contingent, and perhaps politically motivated or supported. Unfixing emotions from bodies therefore makes room for different, perhaps unfamiliar, forms of consideration.

Treating meaning in literature as, after Moi, a question of use and acknowledgment works similarly to unfix affects from bodies, shifting critical focus to the nature of the use and its consequences with reference to the reader of the text in question. As Moi correctly identifies, “[f]or Wittgenstein, words only gain meaning in use” (95). In texts, words are used to construct actions and expressions which call for acknowledgment from the reader. The “use” of language in texts therefore includes this property of being simultaneously an action and an expression, and thus of having some affective impact upon a reader, who is in turn bound to acknowledge that impact. The role of the scholar becomes one of tracing such impacts and the acknowledgments that they call forth, alongside identification and analysis of the actions and expressions that caused them. While doing so, the scholar must bear in mind the “infinite, open-ended, and fundamentally untheorizable” nature of language-use itself (Moi 95). Affective impacts and forms of acknowledgment will vary from reader to reader, therefore it is hopeless to attempt a recovery of meaning with an attitude approximating scientific certainty.

When analysing representational processes through a lens of acknowledgment and affect, the focus of inquiry changes from the nature of the representation to questions about why the writer might have chosen to use the specific representational schema that they did, rather than some other. The goal is not to determine the writer's intentions in any scientific way but to address how a reader's process of acknowledgment might include recognition of choices made by the writer during their production of the representational system in question. Treating reading as a process of acknowledgment shifts the focus of literary analysis from the properties of a text, treated as if it were a static object, to the mechanisms that the text deploys upon its reader, and consequently to the ways that these mechanisms might participate in the

production of affect in the reader's encounter with the text. The text *just is* actions and expressions that the reader is bound to acknowledge, albeit in ways that cannot be determined with objective certainty. In the attention paid to affect, the deemphasis of representation, and the turn away from objective verifiability, this method of literary analysis is thoroughly postcritical.

Postcritical intellectual work aims to move beyond the limits imposed by orthodox notions of critique. It provides radically different perspectives upon, and sometimes outright rejects, several normative assumptions about the nature and purpose of intellectual work that characterise critique as an activity. One of postcritique's foremost advocates, Rita Felski, offers a useful characterisation of these assumptions in the form of five common properties of critique. For Felski, critique is a "negative," "secondary," "intellectual" activity that "comes from below" and "does not tolerate rivals" ("Critique and the Hermeneutics of Suspicion"). While these qualities are necessary to enable the work of critique itself, they effectively circumscribe its reach, imposing limits upon what critique can say and do. By choosing to selectively ignore or reject these characteristic qualities of critique, postcritical work aims to reach beyond the limitations they impose, enabling new methods for analysing media and literature.

Following Felski's characterisation, the Moi-inspired methodology by which this thesis approaches Maning does not adhere to orthodox critical methodology. Focussing on the reader's encounter with the text precludes a "negative" or suspicious account by closing the distance between lay and critical readers. Freed of this requirement, "reading [...] can become an adventure" (Moi 219), an idea that Moi adopts from Simone de Beauvoir and Cora Diamond. The critic does not attempt to read differently to the lay reader; instead, their "task is to find the right words to express [their] adventure" (Moi 221). Critical response moves away from a purely rational analysis, towards a richer engagement with affect as a material product of the reader's encounter with the text. Moi writes that "[t]o read is to pay attention to the particular text, to look and think in response to particular questions" (178); moreover, "to give an account of a reading is to give an account of an experience, the experience of an adventure" (196). This approach is by no means *anti*-intellectual: to produce an account of the experience of reading—the actions and expressions of the text, the acknowledgment that it calls forth—many intellectual reserves are tapped. It does, however, delegate intellectual responses to a supporting role, where they assist in documenting the affects produced in the critic's own

encounter with the text, which is treated as exemplary but arbitrary. Rather than treating “the work of the scholar as a never-ending labour of distancing, deflating, and diagnosing” (Felski, “Critique and the Hermeneutics of Suspicion”), this thesis embraces the ways that *Old New Zealand* manipulates and enchants its reader, analysing not to disenchant but to understand how its enchantments might be productively repurposed.

In Moi's characterisation of reading as an adventure, a role emerges for the author as the architect of that adventure whereby writing is recast as a process subservient to reading. Arguing in *Revolution of the Ordinary* in defence of authorial intent, Moi figures writing as a kind of thinking that takes place to a significant extent in the feedback loop established between the putting-down of ink on paper and the author's encounter with that same ink as they read their own words back to themselves. Speculating about Gustave Flaubert's process of composing *Madame Bovary*, Moi writes:

As Flaubert struggled with every word and every comma [...], he wasn't taking dictation from a pre-existing mental image of the finished work. He was paying close attention to the words on the page. Then he crossed them out and rewrote them, over and over again, until each sentence seemed right. [...] [O]nly by looking at what he had done could Flaubert decide whether it was what he wanted to do. (201)

Moi here proposes a reflexive model whereby, as an integral part of the process of writing, the writer necessarily also occupies a reading position in relation to the text. In this picture, the writer is indeed the entity who assembles the stream of words that constitute the text in the form the reader receives it. The way they do this, however, is to repeatedly place themselves into the position of a reader of their own text. The act of writing folds into the act of reading, collapsing hierarchies of knowing with significant consequences for understanding Maning's positioning of his narrator in *Old New Zealand*.

The author's position is deflated to that of a choreographer of language: not a wellspring of intended meanings but a collaborator in a textual performance that produces affective responses, both in themselves and in the reader, which remain to a significant degree unpredictable. The author's intention is wholly present, but exists at one degree removed from the reader's encounter with the text. Language, not the author, causes affects to emerge in that encounter, autonomously and independently of the presence of the author themselves. While it is trivially true that the writer did choose the particular words that appear on any given page

of a text, the novel connection that Moi makes is to frame the author's actions of choosing also as expressions made in search of community and acknowledgment, "at once acts of self-revelation and an appeal to others" (19). As a crucial part of writing, the author takes time to step back and place themselves into the position of reader, to check that what they have written "seems right" (201)—and thus, whether it is something that they want to share in some way with their readers.

It is thus fruitful to consider how the contradictions and uncertainty-producing devices woven into the text of *Old New Zealand* might have *seemed right* to Maning. What was he thinking, for example, when he inserted the richly ironic, liar-paradox-adjacent parenthetical "(I love sincerity)" into the midst of a passage about the plainly self-serving friendliness of a local chieftain:

The chief [...] having made some enquiries first of the captain of the schooner, such as whether I was a *Rangatira*, if I had plenty of *taonga* (goods) on board, and other particulars; and having been answered by the Captain in the most satisfactory manner,—came up to me and gave me a most sincere welcome. (I love sincerity). He would have welcomed me, however, had I been as poor as Job, for pakehas were, in those days, at an enormous premium. (ONZ 95)

Injected into the narrative without preamble or commentary, the three small words upset the comfortable simplicity of the details being conveyed. The irony foment meaning so that it becomes unclear whether the narrator is being wry or merely naïve, before the *insincerity* of hiding his narrator's sarcasm in parentheses folds back upon the author, threatening to make him a target of his own satire. As with other instances of Maning's disruptive irony it is of course possible for the reader to resolutely decide upon a single interpretation, but doing so would rob the text of its potential to express, by demonstration, the incommensurability of meaning and language. If the narrator's stated love of sincerity is ironic, then he does not *really* love sincerity. In this case, however, the irony simultaneously expresses a sincere admiration for the chief's canniness, undoing itself in a revelation that the narrator *does* love sincerity after all—or at least, he loves the way that sincerity can be insincerely used to achieve one's goals. As with the liar paradox—"this sentence is a lie"—the truth-value of the narrator's "I love sincerity" cannot be fixed. It is thus significant to ask why Maning might have chosen to construct a text whose final meaning must remain indeterminate in this way. The text's contradictions and

confounding rhetorical devices, which can easily leave the reader confused, may indeed have been left as puzzles to be solved by the reader in pursuit of meaning hidden behind the language. If so, the *seeming right* might have involved a sense of glee: what Calder identifies as the “exuberance of an author who is enjoying being rather clever” (“Accounting for Pakeha” 12). But what *seemed right* may also have been, for Maning, the same sense of confusion and groundlessness—the vertigo of being suddenly uncertain—that accompanies the reader’s realisation of the consequences that the narrator’s expression has for their efforts to fix meaning in their own encounter with the text. From this perspective the un-solvability of the puzzles just is the point. They exist to confuse.

By placing the experience of “seeming right” at the core of her model of writing, Moi effectively argues that the affects produced during reading should be understood as independent objects produced neither within author nor reader but in the space of encounter between reader and text. This picture parallels Ahmed’s conception of emotions as objects that arise autonomously in encounters between entities. What Ahmed’s work does for emotions, Moi’s does for reading. Detaching the “seeming right,” along with any other affects produced while reading, from both language and reader, Moi instead locates them correctly as autonomous entities that take form in the moment of encounter between reader and text. Permitting of this autonomy breaks hard bonds between text, author, and affect, producing a view of readers and texts as collaborators in the production of meaning, rather than competing sources of authority. Such a relationship is inherently unstable and uncertain, and it is within this instability that the uncertainties that form the key concern of this thesis find expression.

Crucial to Moi’s broader argument about writing as a call for acknowledgment is the space made in her picture of authorship for the machinations of language to remain opaque, even to the writer themselves. In Moi’s characterisation, the writer reaches satisfaction with their sentences not when they *are* right, but when they *seem* right. Rightness emerges as a personal evaluation of the affects produced in their own encounter with the text, rather than from objective analysis. The *seeming* admits of an irreducible uncertainty in the process: the best a writer can do is produce something that *seems* right, and hope that they will be understood. Readers always bring something more to the process of reading, perhaps seeing different things in the language, or seeing them in different ways. In Moi’s model, authorial intent intersubjectively connects reader to writer, but holds the gap between them generously open to idiosyncrasy on both sides of the link. The consequence of adopting this view is a destabilisation

and multiplication of interpretive possibilities, whereby the author assumes a collaborative relationship with the reader, rather than a hierarchical or antipathetical one.

Locating the affective experience of reading at some point between reader and text, and, significantly, showing that encounter as one that is shared by both reader and writer, produces new possibilities for understanding what is happening when a reader encounters *Old New Zealand*. Moi's conception of reading radically de-emphasises the urgency of critique as a process wherein the text is pinned down and scientifically dissected in the interests of curbing its power to distort or mislead. Instead, focus is turned toward the ways that affects might be consensually produced in the encounter between reader and text—which is, recalling Moi's speculation about Flaubert's writing process, an encounter that we in fact share with Maning himself. When, as will be addressed in Chapter 2, the artifice of Maning's narrator is repeatedly thematised, this action can be understood as a call from author to reader to acknowledge the contingency of textual authority, including his own. It is in such playing with the inherent uncertainty of the reading encounter that Maning is at his most generous, most successful and, as will be shown, most valuable, for twenty-first century readers of *Old New Zealand*.

Culture's Emergence in the Encounter with Different Forms of Life

Maning's text is fundamentally a narrative about culture and cultural differences, and its analysis thus requires a critical language for speaking about culture itself. Following Wittgenstein's model of language, however, draws attention to the *use* of the word "culture" not as a referential pointer to some actually-existing object but as a verbal mechanism, potentially misleading or obscurant, for working through ideas. Laying out his model for thinking about language in the dialogical format of his *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein works principally with three jargon terms: *language-game*, *form of life*, and *pictures*. The first two, *language-game* and *form of life*, offer ways of thinking through parts of what is ordinarily referred to as "culture," without necessitating a precise definition of what "culture" might be. The third, *pictures*, presents a way of working through concepts not as certain propositions or concrete entities but as framing devices that impose restrictions, obscured sometimes to the point of catastrophe, on the ways language can be practically employed around the concept in question. A complete analysis of Wittgensteinian terminology is beyond the scope of this thesis, however a brief sketch that cleaves to Moi's interpretations

as presented in *Revolution of the Ordinary* is given in the following paragraph, and connections are subsequently drawn to Ahmed's work on race and orientations as sets of inherited habits.

The Wittgensteinian terms *language-game* and *form of life* provide ways of thinking about language and culture as practises that are learnt, used, and apprehended by different groups of people. For Wittgenstein, all communication is understood as consisting in the playing out of *language-games*, sets of implicit rules which govern how words and phrases become meaningful—how language can be used—within different communicative contexts. Language-games are bound up in, constitute, and express differing *forms of life*. This term may suggest a post-Saussurean social-constructive understanding of language with a focus on the arbitrary nature of sign systems, however as Moi argues with clarity, a *form of life* is something richer, capable of binding not just abstract processes of signification but also the social and biological body and its interactions with the material world:

Cutting across the nature/culture divide, the concept of “forms of life” is elastic enough to range from the purely biological to the completely cultural, to encompass the human body as well as the finest distinctions of the practices in a specific culture. To learn to speak is to be initiated into all this, or rather into the version of all these practices that apply in our family, our society, our version of human forms of life. When we learn to speak, we learn at once the shared criteria for the meaning of words, and the personal nuances those meanings will have for us [...]. To learn what to call a thing (father, love) is to learn what it is [...]. I learn what love is by noticing how my parents use the word. (Moi 56)

Forms of life both ground and circumscribe the ways people use language to communicate with each other. To learn how to speak in the first instance is to learn how to use words like the people around you do. To learn to speak a new language, especially as an adult, is thus simultaneously to accept an obligation to see things the ways other speakers of that language see them, even when these are radically different from what is familiar. These shared patterns of seeing and understanding—these *forms of life*—provide sets of common-sense understandings about how the world works, both in material and abstract terms. For a language to be successfully employed within a community of speakers the speaker must also adopt the corresponding form of life: the system of rules, assumptions, and orientations by which meanings and words interrelate, through that language, for that community. While this

example presents one way of understanding what “forms of life” might mean, it does not exhaust the potential usages and implications of the term, a fuller explication of which is beyond the scope of this thesis.

A similar principle to forms of life can be identified in Ahmed's work on orientations, which draws on and revitalises Edmund Husserl's phenomenology as a way of talking about the affects produced by a body occupying space. Ahmed writes about both queerness and whiteness as orientations upon the world, arguing that “[t]he starting point for orientation is the point from which the world unfolds: the here of the body and the where of its dwelling” (“Orientations” 545). Orientations include positions of perspective and framing systems which limit what is seen and what can be seen, similar to the ways that forms of life determine a language-user's orientations toward objects and people, both enabling and limiting recognitions and expressions of intersubjectivity. For Ahmed, orientations also encode and are encoded by habits, patterns of behaviour learnt and adopted from birth:

We can think about the habitual as a form of inheritance. It is not so much that we inherit habits, although we can do so: rather the habitual can be thought of as a bodily and spatial form of inheritance. (“Whiteness” 156)

Habits, like forms of life, are adopted through an automatic process of contextual alignment. They come to determine both how the environment is to be interacted with, and what can be expected from such interactions, such that “[t]o be oriented is also to be oriented toward certain objects, those that help us find our way. [...] They gather on the ground and also create a ground on which we can gather” (Ahmed, “Orientations” 543). Our orientations predispose us to act in certain ways, and they also predispose us to find certain things comfortable and familiar, others uncomfortable or strange. Ahmed's focus on habits, and Wittgenstein's forms of life, separately and together suggest an understanding of “culture” as a dynamic and emergent quality of the interactions between different people: something that has meaning only within the context of such interactions.

By adopting a lens that posits culture as dynamic and emergent, Maning can be interpreted as writing about patterns of habit that have emerged from, after Ahmed, the inheritance of different kinds of bodily and spatial proximity. Habits, as forms of life, emerge automatically and contextually. They are at their most legible in encounters between people with different cultural backgrounds. Treating culture as an inheritance acknowledges simultaneously its

existence and the immanent groundlessness of that same existence. Culture is not an external framework which can be applied to analyse, in a top-down process, the behaviour of others, but is instead something that becomes legible from the bottom up. It emerges piecemeal in encounters between different and perhaps incompatible language-games and forms of life, permanently marked by the uncertainty of irreducible subjectivity with which such encounters are experienced.

Talking about culture in terms of habits or forms of life precludes fixing of the “culture” under discussion to the bodies of the people to whom it is supposed to belong, instead figuring it as a dynamic entity at its most legible in encounters with difference, and therefore resistant to attempts to apprehend it totally. Like Moi's picture of the intersubjective *seeming-right* of literary production, or Ahmed's picture of emotions as autonomous third objects emerging from encounters, culture appears in Maning's writing as a spontaneous emission—surprising, partial, dynamic, and uncertain—that takes form wholly within the narrator's, and the reader's, encounters with difference. Such a view presents a challenge to the biculturalist view of encounters between Māori and Pākehā as the playing out of differences that can, in principle, be understood through processes of translation or making-equivalent. Against such visions *Old New Zealand* suggests that “culture” might in fact be something unknowable, with efforts like biculturalism to manage cultural difference merely the workings of colonial power recast as assistance and understanding. Biculturalist critique of *Old New Zealand*, however, represents the strongest thread of scholarship discernible over the last few decades. Therefore, this thesis will now directly address biculturalism itself, using Maning's text to show how to move past its limitations to a future that is more uncertain and thus more laden with potential.

2. Getting Over Biculturalism

As a tool to widen academic knowledge to include non-Pākehā perspectives, biculturalism has doubtless played an important role. It is, however, no longer sufficient to address an increasingly self-evident need to make space for Māori self-determination. As Patrick Evans argues in his historicization of the bicultural period, the biculturalist scholarship that was dominant in literary criticism from the 1980s until the early 2000s was necessary to demonstrate within academic circles the actual existence of Māori cultural formations that bear significant differences to European ones. However, biculturalism is limited by its rigid binary structures, as it imagines Māori and Pākehā cultures as mutually informed yet in principle defined by their differences to each other. In biculturalist thought both Māori and Pākehā ways of life are subsumed under the overbearing language-game of biculturalism itself, within which points of conflict between cultures are treated as problems of translation and thereby suppressed, typically to the benefit of dominant Pākehā interests. Such a picture becomes a hindrance when addressing Maning's writing, in which the possibility of a singular, stable perspective is consistently undermined. This chapter presents an outline of the state of contemporary *Old New Zealand* scholarship. It shows its persistent reliance on biculturalism, and the limitations that such reliance necessarily imposes. Taking up a fresh approach instead opens pathways to different insights into *Old New Zealand*, as well as what it might have to offer to contemporary readers.

Maning in New Zealand Literary Studies

Over the last 25 years, Maning's writings have been the subject of renewed critical interest within New Zealand literary scholarship. *Old New Zealand* in particular has been the focus of what Anna Boswell describes as a series of "richly nuanced interpretations" (47), referring explicitly to a number of angles on the text produced by academics Alex Calder, Simon During, Ian Wedde, and Jonathan Lamb, among others. Evans refers to the same group of names in his writing about patterns of biculturalism in New Zealand literary studies, while an exhaustive search of MLA Bibliography and SCOPUS databases confirms the significance of these names for *Old New Zealand* scholarship specifically. Given the characterisations of both Boswell and

Evans on the work of these scholars, and the lack of significant contributions by others, it can be safely asserted that recent *Old New Zealand* scholarship tends to be biculturalist in its assumptions, and that writings by Calder, During, and Lamb are characteristic of such work. Their analyses form part of a larger pattern of white settler literatures, wherein French literary theory and poststructuralism more generally is self-consciously adopted to produce a break with what Evans labels “an unquestioningly realist and New Critical past” in New Zealand literary scholarship (*The Long Forgetting* 24). What was produced was a thoroughly biculturalist New Zealand literary studies, in which key critical interest circles around the discovery and interrogation in literature of patterns of language, thought, and ideas that played a role in the shaping of contemporary ideas about race and racial identity in New Zealand. Critical work in this mould relies on making definitions and claims about aspects of identity such as “race” or “culture,” supported by evidence mined from contemporary and historical texts, both literary and otherwise. This section of my thesis addresses the writings of Calder, Lamb, and During in turn, explicating their principal lines of argument and positioning my own interpretation in response to each.

In contrast to the recent biculturalist tradition of New Zealand literary studies, this thesis takes a postcritical approach to minimise engagement in the either-or positionality of the bicultural debate. A precedent can be identified in Evans's vivid rejection of what he terms ‘official’ biculturalism. Evans develops a trajectory of New Zealand literary scholarship in which a self-celebratory literary nationalism slowly gives way to anxious self-criticism under the onslaught of “an intimidating critical technology that has laid bare the nature of [literary nationalism's] ideological construction” (*The Long Forgetting* 24). A significant component of this ideology is ‘official’ biculturalism—‘official’ on account of the form of its support and dispersal via governmental policy and practises beginning in the 1930s (*The Long Forgetting* 77–78, 80)—which relies on a picture of cultures as monolithic, intrinsically understandable entities that can be “weighed, understood, comprehended and explained in essential terms” (*The Long Forgetting* 80). This ‘official’ biculturalism is contrasted by Evans with “the genuine, if brief, biculturalism we saw up to and informing the Treaty [...] the kind of living, dynamic relationship of Māori and European some have seen typified in the lifestyle of [missionary] Henry Williams” (*The Long Forgetting* 70). These terms are readily applicable to Maning as well. So distinguished from twentieth century “official” biculturalism, the Pākehā-Māori biculturalism of Williams or Maning emerges in the embedded, exploratory interplay between

people who recognise that they do not share familiar forms of life. Within the encounters that take place across this difference, communication is not an always-already resolved matter of translation but a surprising, exciting, and fundamentally uncertain endeavour.

As Evans argues, the core mistake of 'official' biculturalism is its implicit assumption of an underlying and neutralising translatability between different cultures. With a withering tone Evans lists the features of this 'official' biculturalism before concluding that its core problem can be identified in its effective attitude of making-equivalent: "'official' biculturalism begins by placing the two cultures in the pans of an old-fashioned pair of scales and making them appear to balance" (*The Long Forgetting* 81). Actual differences between the peoples that represent and are represented by those cultures are flattened, with conflicts reduced to simple matters of translation. Political problems across the singular dividing line of difference are deflated to problems of accurate apprehension, comprehension, and transcription. As Evans has argued elsewhere, such a process necessitates the support of an implicit assumption "that what is visible to the dominant culture is far more important than any surplus on the other side, more important than any 'invisibility' of Maori culture" ("Pakeha-Style Biculturalism' and the Maori Writer" 14). Along related lines, Dominic O'Sullivan argues in the introduction to his critique of biculturalism that it

is inherently colonial. It positions Maori in junior 'partnership' with the crown and oversimplifies the cultural and political make-up of its assumed homogenous Maori and Pakeha entities. [...] Biculturalism inevitably promotes [undue reliance and] dependence [on the crown]. (3)

For both Evans and O'Sullivan, biculturalism demotes Māori forms of life to a subservient role, gaining value or meaning only when they can supply translations for Pākehā-managed systems of governance. What cannot be translated from Māori to Pākehā forms of life is thus officially lost, forgotten, or ignored. As I show in this thesis, by foregrounding uncertainty instead of translation, *Old New Zealand* demonstrates a productive way of approaching the "surplus" and "invisibility" that the assumption of translatability occludes.

Evans goes on to position Calder, During, and Lamb as drawing from *Old New Zealand* evidence for a fundamental *untranslatability* between Māori and European cultures. These writers, according to Evans, argue against the 'official' biculturalist problematic of translation, initiating a project that turns questioningly toward "the biculturalist assumptions of

recuperative writing" (*The Long Forgetting* 84). The latter is typified by Evans in Anne Salmond's excruciatingly even-handed revisionist history *Two Worlds*, in which various textual strategies are employed to "bring[] 'modernity' and 'the primitive' closer and closer until the distinction becomes almost meaningless" (Evans, *The Long Forgetting* 82). An example Evans supplies of Salmond's performative equanimity is her dating the arrival of Polynesian settlers in New Zealand "at its earliest plausible point [...] when European states can be described [at their least modern [...] [their] peasants forced to eat grass, acorns [...] and living in a world full of ghosts and witches" (Evans, *The Long Forgetting* 82). Salmond's efforts to balance Māori and European cultures are likely well-intended, but do nothing concrete to address the economic inequality of colonial power that persists even after the language of equality has been acknowledged and incorporated into "official" narratives of national being.

In place of the supposedly-levelling translatability of 'official' biculturalism, Calder, During, and Lamb find in *Old New Zealand* a source of evidence for its opposite. Maning's writing demonstrates, for these writers, "the grating of Māori and European cultures" (Evans, *The Long Forgetting* 84): a challenge to biculturalist assumptions of fundamental translatability. The trustworthiness of Maning's account, meanwhile, is evident

by the author's apparent self-awareness and particularly by the familiar sound of his narrating voice [...]. Like the classical Greek actor, he seems to know that the only 'authenticity' left is one that points to its mask as it moves forward (Evans, *The Long Forgetting* 84).

The foundational certainty of 'official' biculturalist assumptions about translatability are substituted, in the work of Calder, During, and Lamb, for a foundational certainty about the artificial nature of the process by which such assumptions are produced.

What Evans's account misses, however, is how, in focussing upon the conspicuous artifice of Maning's writing, biculturalist critics are no longer paying attention to the artifice of the notions of "Māori" or "European" that Maning's text also renders salient. The dominant strain of contemporary critique of Maning and of *Old New Zealand* rests on the foregrounding of the first kind of artifice, but it either neglects the second or, in During's case, explicitly suppresses it, as I show later in this chapter. Maning's narrator discovers culture—both his own, and those of his Ngāpuhi hosts—in absences: inaccessible orientations, opaque forms of life that yield astonishment rather than insight, and gaps where habits are expected. Culture becomes legible

only in embodied encounters with difference; further, that legibility is kept strictly partial by a tempering blanket of uncertainty.

By contrast, arguments that take as given the existence of two entities, “Māori culture” and “Pākehā culture,” before positing a fundamental untranslatability between them, simply shore up the same picture of cultures as fixed entities produced by ‘official’ biculturalism. When the textual excesses of *Old New Zealand* are made to serve, by way of poststructuralist literary theory, as indicators of a fundamental untranslatability between things Māori and things Pākehā, the key assumption of ‘official’ biculturalism has merely been inverted. Collectively and individually, the critiques of Calder, During, and Lamb do indicate lines of escape from the binary logic of biculturalism and the fixed notions of “culture” upon which it is constructed. It has proven difficult, however, for the individual critics to reliably identify and follow this path themselves.

By questioning more deeply what is at stake for critical engagement with Maning's rhetoric, Calder has come the closest to exiting the biculturalist orbit. Posing the question “just how funny is that?” to a joke Maning's narrator makes about cannibalism (“Accounting for Pakeha” 17), Calder becomes able to suggest that Maning is making fun of his (Pākehā) reader (“Accounting for Pakeha” 18). He argues that “Maning always invites us to see the funny side of a cross-cultural situation *his way*,” while noting a “fundamental instability in the humour” that immediately undermines precise determination of what, exactly, Maning's “way” might be (both “Accounting for Pakeha” 18). This is a development of a line of reasoning that Calder offered fourteen years earlier in the introduction to his own critical edition of Maning's text. After presenting by turns a “post-colonial” and a “crown” reading of the text, Calder's Introduction to *Old New Zealand* then places these contrasting readings to one side to discuss a supposed “central obviousness” to the text, which is “that Maori and pakeha have [...] fundamentally different cultures” (“Introduction” 10). For Calder, *Old New Zealand* is a puzzle wherein a clear dialectic—the “central obviousness” of the text—has been cross-cut, and thus muddled, by a narrator/author who actively resists the process of interpretation itself. The narrator's textual resistance to its restrictions reveals biculturalism's origins as a linguistic construction. In performing his earlier analysis, Calder does make gestures toward the incompleteness of both the “crown” and “post-colonial” readings in addressing what the text does in the reader's encounter with it. In his later analysis, this incompleteness is more explicitly acknowledged. In neither case, however, is the self-examination sufficient to escape the

ideological gravity of biculturalism itself.

Lamb shares Calder's interest in difference but pushes it further philosophically. Over a small but significant body of heady postmodernist theoretical essays, Lamb expounds a version of *Old New Zealand* in which its central significance as a historical document is drawn from its representation of the sublimeness of difference, or, equivalently, the sublime impossibility of just such a representation. That which for Calder emerges as centrally obvious or fundamentally unstable offers, for Lamb, a glimpse of the sublimity of history viewed through the lens of Jean-François Lyotard's theory of the *differend*. The point of interest where cultures meet in *Old New Zealand* is understood as a Lyotardian *differend*, rendered in literary form. Lamb identifies such a rendering in the text's performative evocations of its narrator's encounter and entanglement with *tapu*. In Lamb's account, Maning's narrative performs an escape from the humiliation of coming face-to-face with absolute cultural difference. Having experienced the sublimity of cultural difference, the narrator finds himself able to bring it under some degree of control by speaking it as "a chain of literary fragments and figurative substitutions that serves not to disguise but to emphasize the 'counter-memory' of the event" (672). The Foucauldian term "counter-memory" here acts as a token for Maning's own experience of encountering an utterly foreign "history": the point where British cultural assumptions, biases, and patterns of behaviour meet—or in this case, *fail* to meet—translatable equivalents in Māori culture.

In casting Maning's experiences as sublime, and by using the weight and complexity of French poststructuralist theory to do so, Lamb ropes them into a project that reifies and ultimately mystifies cultural difference. Like Calder, Lamb's central preoccupation is difference, and the profound unknowability and un-representability of the experiences of difference that, it is assumed, Maning himself lived through. Closing over Maning's ambivalent and ambiguous textual fragments in pursuit of the capturing and fixing of meaning, Lamb's theoretical exuberance seals and packages the affective products of the text as essentially unknowable entities. His reaching toward the sublime *differend* as a solution mirrors Calder's claim about "the central obviousness of Maning's text: that Maori and pakeha have fundamentally different attitudes to land, or as we would now say, fundamentally different cultures" ("Introduction" 10). In Calder's case the word "culture" seals the argument, offered without definition but fixed to the moment of production of Calder's text by the admission "as we would say now" ("Introduction" 10). For Lamb, it is the *differend* that plays the same role

of reifier of difference. In both cases a jargon term stands in for the singular *thing* that Maning's text seems, in the final calculus, to be all about.

The reification of difference shared across these arguments itself becomes a problem when analysing texts such as Maning's that centre encounters between people with different cultural backgrounds. Presenting for discussion the ways that difference appears in *Old New Zealand*, Simon During's essay "What Was the West" triggered a renewed interest in Maning's text in the 1990s, its responses including the text by Lamb discussed above. For his part, During positions *Old New Zealand* as "materially constructing the [New Zealand] nation-state's existence as *text*; it remains the central witness of the nation's border period" (772): a foundational document that marks the beginning of New Zealand literary culture as such. Arguing that Maning's text deserves attention for its textual encoding of processes of cross-cultural encounter, During suggests that such interactions should be viewed through a "postcultural" lens, defined as what happens

when, accepting that the construction of a non-modern cultural identity is the result of interactions between coloniser and colonised, of mutual misrecognitions and forgettings, one celebrates the productive energy that is released in the these processes. (During 767)

The argument being made is that because "one" (presumably: Pākehā) can have no access to a Māori cultural "identity" that is not mediated by processes of colonisation, "one" should instead accept the outcome of the process of colonisation as itself something valuable.

During's notion of a postcultural approach, wherein attempts to think about interactions in terms of fixed "culture" are placed to one side, does appear to offer a path away from biculturalist reification of difference, even if this promise does not seem to have borne fruit in existing scholarship. In During's vision, discussion turns on the ways that various entities might dynamically interact with each other in the absence of a certain fixing of what these entities might be. Processes of change and development are centred, rather than the definition and enclosure of difference. A picture of culture as a dynamic process emerges, along with some suggestions about how we might come to talk about it. The scholarship that follows in During's wake, however, fails to shake itself free from the difference-binding systems of biculturalism.

Unframing the Biculturalist Picture

The key problem with During's argument is that the cultural is made "post" by a process of epistemic violence. Postculturalism becomes possible in the "acceptance" (767) that any later conceptions of Māori forms of life pre-colonisation—reasoned as "non-modern cultural identity" (767)—must be "the result of interactions between coloniser and colonised" (767). Unfortunately, During's phrasing presents an ideal target for Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's criticism of epistemic violence as a quality typical of imperialist arguments about indigenous peoples. For Spivak, a key project of colonial thought is the "constitut[ion] [of] the colonial subject as Other," which is simultaneously "the asymmetrical obliteration of the trace of that Other in its precarious Subject-ivity" (Spivak 35). During's argument explicitly promotes the obliteration of this trace. In the postcultural language-game, "culture" pertains only to that which emerges from the process of colonisation itself. "Non-modern" cultural identity ceases to have meaning outside of a colonial context. History begins at European contact, with whatever came before rendered fundamentally inaccessible by the supposedly omnipotent processes of colonisation.

During's attempt to move past the impossibility of defining "culture" by expunging it from the conversation backfires for the same reason that Lamb's and Calder's arguments about *Old New Zealand* peter out in jargon. It is true that it is not possible to speak with certainty about the ways Maning's text represents the differences between particular cultures without also being certain, in some way, about what exactly those cultures are. However, it is not possible to define culture with certainty in any way that is sufficient to enclose the numerous, dynamic, and multifaceted activities that take place when people who are supposed to share a single culture interact with each other—let alone when those same people interact with others who are supposed to bear another culture. Where Lamb leverages postmodernist philosophy to identify the consequent impossibility of understanding the sublime gaps that open up between cultures, During suggests resolving the problem by excising all references to anything like culture from language. Lamb's approach leaves criticism unable to address the numerous appearances of cultural difference, legible or otherwise, that appear in *Old New Zealand* other than through a fog of complex philosophy. During's article precludes talk about what the differences might be differences *between*. Recalling the "central obviousness" of the text identified by Calder, "that Maori and pakeha have [...] fundamentally different cultures" ("Introduction" 10), neither

During's nor Lamb's approach is satisfactory. Lamb's is too complicated to explain something that, as Calder argues, is so obvious, while During's elides "cultures" and thus the possibility of discussing fundamental differences between them. The insufficiencies of Lamb's and During's approaches are, ultimately, an unavoidable product of scholarship that attempts to respond to biculturalism without simultaneously presenting a powerful counter-proposal for what "culture" might mean.

Lamb, Calder, and During's efforts to understand Maning through a biculturalist lens ultimately run up against the limits of, in Wittgenstein's terms, the biculturalist *picture* of cultural difference. The rules of the biculturalist language-game fix cultural identity within a frame that permits of only two sides, known a-priori, to any negotiation where cultural lines seem to be crossed. If miscommunication or conflict occurs, the rules of the biculturalist language-game enable a second-order perspective on the conflict, from which it can be explained as emerging inevitably from the fact of cultural difference itself, which in turn can be resolved by translation. Although Lamb introduces the *differend* to show what happens when such translation fails, his argument still fundamentally supports the biculturalist picture that renders translation an appropriate metaphor in the first instance.

In their efforts to escape "official" biculturalism, both Lamb and During simply reinvent it using different terminology. Lamb's *differend* can thus be neatly slotted into biculturalism at the point where translation fails, supplying a reifying model of difference that precludes talk about the specific conditions under which the difference might arise, instead pre-emptively binding such conditions to a state of sublimity beyond intellectual engagement. Some things are simply untranslatable, and nothing can be done about that. Indeed, in the biculturalist language-game at large it is precisely those instances of cross-cultural conflict—the moments of irreducible tension explicable only by reference to a sublime *differend*—that reaffirm the truth of biculturalism itself. Bolstered by the *differend*, biculturalist framing offers a conceptual mechanism that permits and even celebrates conflict, but only when it arises under acceptable conditions. Here can be identified During's postcultural picture: remove the "bi" from "bicultural" but retain the rest of its conceptual baggage, reframing the resolution of internal conflict as a process of mutual cooperation and celebration. Conflicts between cultures, resolvable or otherwise, are admitted as simple problems of translation. Internal conflicts within a single culture are excised from the biculturalist picture, reduced to mere differences of opinion that may or may not need resolution but not in any terms that the biculturalist

language-game equips speakers to talk about or take an interest in.

When the unity of one “side” of the biculturalist framework is brought into question, a key weakness of the biculturalist language-game becomes apparent. If an argument requires a definition of one or the other of the cultures, then it necessarily involves a (perhaps deferred) “claim[] to be the final determinant or the transcendental signified” (Spivak 35) over the culture or cultural identity about which the argument is being made. When considering the multiplicity of subjectivities and contexts that inevitably come into play when any group of persons interact with one another, it becomes clear that any definition of “culture” must of necessity be temporary, contingent, and context-bound. The transcendence or finality of a definition of culture, or its lack thereof, necessarily limits the (professed or implicit) transcendence or finality of the argument being made using the definition in question. This is a condition to which biculturalism is also subject. The transcendence or finality of the biculturalist language-game is bound to the way that it defines its cultures as the two entities, sublimely different yet thoroughly intertranslatable, inhabiting opposing sides of a fixed and legible dividing line. When, as happens repeatedly in Maning's text, this line itself is called into question in its role as the final arbiter of difference, biculturalism begins to unravel.

Old New Zealand offers as an alternative a picture that acknowledges and embraces the uncertainty inherent in encounters with people whose forms of life appear to differ from one's own. As the remainder of this thesis shows, acceptance of uncertainty is a necessary component at all levels of the process of acknowledgment that constitutes reading *Old New Zealand*. Uncertainty makes itself known as a necessary attitude toward the text from the outset, its presence already felt on the title page of the text, if not already in the paradoxical language of the title *Old New Zealand* itself. The ongoing presence of the narrator's voice itself breeds unanswerable questions about who he is, what he thinks or wants, and what his goals might be in telling his story the ways that he does, as well as how—if at all—the answers to any of these questions might be transferrable from the narrator to his author, Maning himself. The remainder of this thesis is concerned with outlining these patterns of uncertainty. It identifies their sources, shows how they might impact upon the reader, and describes in broad strokes the strategies a reader might use to acknowledge them. Acknowledging uncertainty means, in many case, accepting it as an irreducible part of their encounter with the text of *Old New Zealand*. Uncertainty thus becomes not something that it is necessary to overcome, but something which can simply be accepted on its own terms.

3. Uncertainty in the Approach to *Old New Zealand*

By the opening lines of the first chapter, the reader of *Old New Zealand* has already been subject to several uncertainty-produced devices that influence the ways that they apprehend the narrator and his story. The text's wryly contradictory title is joined by a winking misquotation on the title page to establish a mood of playful interaction with conventions of genre and literature. Assertions of truth in the preface thematise the unknowability of the relationship between the text and the beliefs of its author. Gestures of unpicking and making-unstable fall outside of typical patterns of Victorian textual production, presenting for Maning's contemporaries a powerful but subtle challenge to British assumptions about racial hierarchies, and obstructing efforts by twenty-first century readers to understand the text by reference to its historical context. This chapter works through these actions, drawing on paratextual, intertextual, and extratextual sources to demonstrate the resourcefulness with which *Old New Zealand* actively resists certain determination of how it might be best approached.

Novel or Memoir, Fact or Fiction

The genre to which *Old New Zealand* belongs is ambiguous. It presents itself as a memoir whose author's interest is limited to a desire to share the details of an evidently interesting life with an interested public. Internally, however, the text works consistently to undermine its own authority as a trustworthy non-fictional document. A pervasive ambiguity of genre makes it difficult for the reader to establish whether, for any given passage, its words should be treated as literal expressions of things that its author believes, as rhetoric indirectly encoding the same, or as fiction perhaps based on some indeterminate quantity of truth. Although this thesis considers *Old New Zealand* to be primarily a novel, other critics, such as Stafford and Williams in *Maoriland* and Terry Sturm in his role as editor of *The Oxford History of New Zealand Literature in English*, have treated it as a non-fiction text. The classification of *Old New Zealand* as a novel by this thesis should thus be considered neither final nor exclusive, and is not intended to dismiss the considerable ambiguity of the evidence involved. Over the following paragraphs the more salient features of this ambiguity will be analysed, showing how they obstruct determination of the exact nature of the text, and thus limit the certainty with which

its meanings can be read.

The ambiguity begins on the title page, where a deliberately misquoted epigraph as well as the title of the text itself participate in the establishment of a playful mood. The title, *Old New Zealand*, is a play on contradictory ideas of “old” and “new” that is substantiated within the narrative, in particular in the narrator’s efforts to relate Māori and British approaches to land ownership that will be discussed in Chapter 5. Below the title and author is an epigraph which misquotes Shakespeare’s *Othello* to suggest that *Old New Zealand* is a story “Of Anthropophagi, and men whose heads / Do grow BETWEEN their shoulders” (Maning, *ONZ* 91). The capital letters clearly signal the author’s awareness that, in the original text, the men’s heads bizarrely “grow beneath their shoulders” rather than between them (*Othello* 1.3.489-90). The term anthropophagi makes reference to Māori practises of ritual cannibalism, a trope that runs throughout the whole of *Old New Zealand* but which presents a topic whose complexity renders it beyond the scope of this thesis.

The epigraph serves three purposes. First, it establishes the author as a well-educated man, comfortably familiar with Shakespeare. Second, as a misquotation it is both a flex and a gesture of trust: an action that invites the reader to engage in textual play with the author as an acknowledgement of his wit, rather than holding him to account for his error. Third, it aligns the narrator with Shakespeare’s character Othello, an experienced traveller telling tales of their adventures, and the reader with Desdemona, an audience who would “come again and with a greedy ear / Devour up [Othello’s] discourse” (Shakespeare, *Othello* 1.3.494-95). This relationship between reader and narrator is playfully thematised throughout *Old New Zealand* in various ironic addresses to a named audience of “young ladies.” In concert with this latter purpose, the overt misquotation suggests an improvement over *Othello*: Maning’s tale promises to be free of the overtly fantastical. However, the act of establishing trustworthiness by positively comparing his text to a well-known work of fiction, while simultaneously aligning the narrator with a fictional character, foregrounds the problem of textual authority itself. The significance of this same problem, meanwhile, is undermined by the playful act of misquotation, signalling and thus thematising both the role and the problem of trust in any encounter between reader and text.

The text of *Old New Zealand* declares in several places that it is a true story, but none of these claims establish a firm obligation for the reader of the text to acknowledge them as such. The preface lodges a claim that “[t]he different scenes and incidents are given exactly as they

occurred, and all the persons described are real persons" (92). On the penultimate page of the final chapter, readers are advised by the narrator that they should "believe every word in [the text], as they ought, seeing that every word is true" (197). Because the genre of *Old New Zealand* is ambiguous, however, neither of these claims of truth establish a firm obligation for the reader of the text to acknowledge them as such. Despite the strength of the language and the insistence of the narrator, it is not possible for the reader to deduce with certainty the degree of authority that the text actually bears over truth.

The strident declarations of truth in *Old New Zealand's* preface do not establish its value as a truthful document, instead signalling to the reader that what they are reading is actually fiction, rather than fact. As John Frow argues with respect to the faux-editorial prefaces of each part of Daniel Defoe's ground-breaking novel *Robinson Crusoe*, prefaces are, within the generic conventions of the novel, already a part of the fiction of the novel itself. Although they may appear to be voiced by "the author speaking in propria persona, [...] they are of course embedded in the body of the text; the speaking voice is never named and has no extratextual existence" (Frow 97). *Old New Zealand* was published more than 150 years after *Robinson Crusoe*, when the generic conventions that mark the preface of a novel as part of the fiction were already well established. Whether the declarations of truth in *Old New Zealand's* preface therefore do any productive work in establishing authority for the narrative that follows depends entirely on a choice made by the reader in how they approach the text. If the text is treated as a memoir, the declarations have weight. If, however, it is treated as a novel, the declarations have no weight. The establishment of authority thus lies not in the pen of the writer but in the selection by the reader as to which genre conventions they will use to structure their understanding of the actions performed by the text.

By prominently declaring the truth of what is written within a text whose genre is already ambiguous, Maning playfully points out the irrelevance of declarations of truth to a determination of the actual truth-value of the stories—fictional or non-fictional—contained within any text. Certainty about whether what it says is true or not is revealed as a property not determinable from the text but located instead in the rules of the language-game(s) that govern the reader's encounter with the text. Maning thus anticipates Wittgenstein's theorisation of certainty as a mood that, on its own, cannot carry authority:

One does not infer how things are from one's own certainty. Certainty is *as it were* a tone of voice in which one declares how things are, but one does not infer from the tone of voice that one is justified. (Wittgenstein §30)

Certainty is not a logically determinable property of expressions but a by-product of the apprehension of an expression through the rules of a particular language-game. Its truth can only be verified by checking whether the rules of the language-game are being applied correctly, because “[w]hat counts as an adequate test of a statement belongs to logic. It belongs to the description of the language-game” (Wittgenstein §82). Even then, “[t]he truth of certain empirical propositions belongs to our frame of reference” (Wittgenstein §83). The truth of an expression only holds meaning within the language-game that renders that expression understandable as something that could be true. It cannot transcend context. In refusing to permit a ready determination of genre, Maning performatively short-circuits attempts by the reader to directly draw “facts” or “truth” from the text.

The Mind of Maning Himself

Without a clear determination of genre, the author's presence remains an unknown quantity. It looms over the text, threatening at any moment to break through the perilously-thin veneer of narrative pretext. Faced with a narrator who, as will be shown in Chapter 4, cannot be readily pinned down to any particular voice or perspective, knowledge about the author becomes significantly more important in building a stable foundation from which an analysis of the text may proceed. Given that *Old New Zealand* is significantly invested in describing its narrator's interactions with Māori people, that its narrator's and author's status as Pākehā-Māori is a rarely-encountered perspective in literary texts, and that questions of interactions between Māori and Pākehā remain as pressing a topic today as they were when *Old New Zealand* was published, it is therefore no surprise that critical effort in analysing the text often attempts to recover Maning's own attitudes toward Māori insofar as they can be identified encoded in the text. Unfortunately, as I will now demonstrate, numerous problems and uncertainties dog attempts to ascribe beliefs or opinions to Maning himself with any certainty.

At around the time of publishing *Old New Zealand*, it seems that Maning's opinions about Māori were undergoing a shift, itself a product of uncertain causes. Drawing on evidence from

letters that he wrote around and after the time of the text's publication, Nicholson suggests that by 1863 Maning's "early respectful and affectionate engagement with Maori [had started to transform] into smouldering and ugly distrust" (173). The former attitude is discernible in parts of the narrative of *Old New Zealand*, in particular in the attention and respect with which he describes Māori customs. It is also obvious from the details known about Maning's patterns of living in the 1830s and 1840s, and substantiated by accounts from "[Edward] Markham, [Norton] Jones and other independent observers [who] all tell of Maning's obvious enjoyment of, even preference for, Maori company" (Nicholson 174), including a report of his apparently anti-racist refusal to accommodate prejudicial talk against Māori from others. Although his opinion changed in the years following, it seems clear that Maning had held, at least up until a period shortly before the publication of *Old New Zealand*, warm opinions about Māori people and society.

That his attitude towards Māori turned cold is evident in Maning's private letters as the decades pass. From the early 1860s "and for decades to come [...] [h]e seemed obsessed with the necessity for bloody warfare of a very final and decisive nature" (Nicholson 172). In 1881, two years before his death, Maning wrote to his friend John Webster:

I have done with the Maoris for good and am now living in a nice house where there are people who know not the Maori and never did—and think less of them than dogs, as they ought to do. [...] I have done with the Maori and I shall never have any more truck with them except to shoot some of them if I get the chance [...]. (8 September 1881, cited in Nicholson 216, underscores in original)

Whatever positive or respectful attitudes toward Māori Maning might have had in his earlier life have clearly departed him by the time this racist diatribe was penned. With contextual clues, however, the intensity of the punctuation—taking note of the excessive underlines, each word of "know not the Maori" individually underscored—hints at a complex of unresolved emotions, perhaps even grief. The letter here cited was written in response to an announcement by Maryanne Leef, the Māori wife of the son of one of Maning's Hokianga neighbours, that she wanted to visit him in Auckland. Given the insignificance of its prompt, Maning's response is exaggerated, his pen betraying a more complex emotional response to the prospect at hand than simple bigotry.

One way to read Maning himself is as a tragic figure, the Pākehā-Māori life he evidently

loved cut short by the cruel machinations of colonisation. Phillip Steer has suggested that it is possible to identify in Errol Braithwaite's 1964 novel *Flying Fish*, set during the 1860-1863 Taranaki Wars, an "implication that Maori and Pakeha might eventually find common cause against the British" ("History (Never) Repeats" 123). It is easy to imagine that the earlier Maning, that triply colonial Irish/New Zealand/Pākehā-Māori and seemingly unwilling subject of British power, might have believed the same thing. The overly-emotional response in his letter to Webster thus betrays, perhaps, the grief of a man who has seen this potential stutter and fail. *Old New Zealand's* narrator, who "do[esn't] care a straw who wins" (ONZ 198), is then its hopeless vanguard. When he says that "[m]en *must* fight; or else what are they made for" (ONZ 198) the irony is palpable: a pained lament for the potential suffocated by the certainties of British colonial thought.

Regardless of what Maning himself may have believed about Māori, the complexities of *Old New Zealand* cannot be contained in an apprehension of Maning as a historical figure. As Calder rightly elaborates, although the opinions Maning variously expressed in his letters do

offer one essential key to the political and satirical intentions of his published writings, [...] it should be remembered that the published works are not reducible to the letters: it is the opinions on race and politics that are reductive. The writings are multi-dimensional. ("F. E. Maning, 1811-1883" 15)

Knowing about Maning's real-life opinions does not make the task of interpreting *Old New Zealand* any easier. The text is instead best viewed as an artifact whose open-ended and complex construction grants it remarkable power to escape its context of production. Questions will always remain about the extent to which this construction reflected Maning's own opinions towards race and cultural difference in New Zealand, and to his subsequent professional work as a Land Court judge.

Shortly after *Old New Zealand* was published, Maning was appointed a judge of the Native Land Court, marking his withdrawal from Ngāpuhi society and re-integration into white colonial New Zealand life. The Court had been established to issue formal titles that would enable the legal sale and alienation of land which, before colonisation, was collectively occupied by its Māori residents and not understood to be 'owned' in any way compatible with British law. According to Binney et al. the Court was "seen by many Māori as a wholly unjust imposition" (112), its reach was "almost impossible for Māori to avoid" (112), and the laws

created to service it “wrecked collective tribal control [of land] and created no mechanism to replace it” (116). Maning’s engagement with and opinions about the Court were, despite his waxing racism, ambivalent. As documented by Nicholson, Maning was often critical of the Court and the laws that regulated it, both publicly and privately, for the unjust consequences they heaped upon Māori (Nicholson 188). At the same time, he wrote approvingly in 1868 about how the Court “detaches [individual Māori] from tribal or national interests” (1868 *Report* 3), and seems to have ultimately decided that such a “machine [to] get the land out of the hands of the Natives in the first instance is just what we required” (letter to S. Locke, 11 July 1880, cited in Nicholson 186).

It is tempting to draw equivalencies from the racist outbursts that can be read in Maning’s later private letters with the devastation wrought by the Native Land Court, but such efforts find resistance in consideration of records of his own public and private criticism of the court, and in the conscientiousness apparent in Maning’s own words within the published Rangitikei-Manawatu and Te Aroha Native Land Court rulings of 1869 and 1871 respectively, over which he presided. Within the text of the Court rulings in particular, reference is regularly made to “Maori usage and custom” (Maning and Monro 109) or “Maori thought and action” (Fenton and Maning 103). Legal precedent for Maning’s obligation to do this can be identified in the Native Exemption Ordinance of 1844, intended to “exempt [Māori] in certain cases [...] from the ordinary process and operation of the law” (“Native Exemption Act 1844” 157), but the language in the text of the rulings suggests that this duty was substantiated by lived experience. For example, the Rangitikei-Manawatu ruling states that a seemingly unjustified act performed by members of one tribe upon another was considered justified by the Court because the supposed victims, “being Maori themselves, [...] would appreciate the circumstances of the case, knowing that they themselves would have done the same if in the same position” (Fenton and Maning 104). The breezy, conversational style, with its hint of conspiratorial irony, makes the complex intersubjective acknowledgment—that different forms of life encode different standards of judgment—feel self-evident. There is too much confidence and clarity in the writing to accept this as merely the following-through of a formal obligation on the part of its author.

It is thus clear that the experiences Maning had living with and alongside Māori in the decades prior, that both inspired and were woven into the narrative of *Old New Zealand*, played a significant role in guiding his decisions as a Judge of the Native Land Court. What remains

unclear, however, is whether they might have enabled him to limit the damage it wrought when it was under his control, or, conversely, whether his knowledge simply accelerated its devastating effects on Māori society. Nor is it clear whether he applied his unique knowledge conscientiously, or merely as a performance designed to produce an appearance of conscientiousness. In any case, a conclusive analysis that would enable a binding of Maning's own beliefs to the destructive potentiality and actuality of the Court's existence cannot be obtained with any certainty. Neither can such an analysis be performed toward the text of *Old New Zealand*, without disregarding the large amounts of evidence that complicate efforts to the point of impossibility.

Intriguingly, it seems that Maning began at some point to purchase all of the unsold copies of *Old New Zealand* that he could find, eventually destroying them on his Hokianga farm in 1869 (Nicholson 178; Hocken xi). Nicholson speculates that he might have been "embarrassed by its pro-Maori slant" (178), but this seems an over-simplification given the text's complex negotiations with bias and perspective. Instead, perhaps the increasingly public figure of Judge Maning, who was to be celebrated after his death in G. W. Rusden's 1883 *History of New Zealand* as "the Pakeha Maori himself" (Rusden 26), feared fallout from the explosive potential activated by the text's deliberate cultivation of uncertainty. From this perspective, the attempted destruction of *Old New Zealand* by the older Maning perhaps speaks to the text's incompatibility with the certainty and fixity of opinions required to maintain prejudice, and the threat the text might pose to one whose opinions have calcified: one who prefers not to be reminded of the fluid ease with which his younger self was able to navigate and thrive in an environment of constant difference and change.

Victorian Racism as Intersubjective Coping Mechanism

Maning's British coloniser audience had brought with them from Britain a swathe of imperial certainties about racial hierarchies, which served as the primary target for the disruptive fostering of uncertainty produced in the encounter with *Old New Zealand*. The text was published at a time when New Zealand's future as a British colony remained uncertain, particularly with respect to the possible consequences of the desires, capabilities, and actions of New Zealand's indigenous population on the ease or success of the colonist's aims of absolute control over the land. It was also published contemporaneously with the blatantly racist and

imperialist beginnings of the intellectual discipline of anthropology, in which, as Gillian Beer writes in her literary history of the discipline, “[d]evelopmental patterns are arranged with the white, middle-class European male as the crowned personage towards whom the past of the world has been striving” (77). The dominant current in ethnographical thought when Maning was writing tended to position Māori as certainly inferior to Europeans. Absolute convictions about evolutionary hierarchies led to assumptions that the successful colonisation of New Zealand, and the subjugation of its indigenous inhabitants, was not only inevitable but morally correct. But, as Beer argues, Victorian thought was not a monolith; even within its overt racism, other meanings can be discerned. To Victorian assumptions about Māori *Old New Zealand* can be understood as, if not a corrective, then a response.

Maning and his contemporaries held complex and diverging opinions about Māori people, with differing predictions about the future of their position in New Zealand. Maning himself may have believed that conflict with Māori was inevitable, but as Alfred Cox wrote in his *Recollections* of 1884, “he seemed to have failed to impress others with his conviction” (183). Maning’s contemporaries were instead inclined to assume that Māori would inevitably recognise the supposed superiority of British people, perhaps even yielding political power entire wilfully. Such an opinion is demonstrated by the anonymous “Settler” of a political pamphlet also published in 1863, who believed that when

[t]he Maori [...] sees our determination to subdue him [...] then, I say, he will yield. Does he not watch with anxious eye the moving troops, the escorts, the arrival of ship after ship [...]—he is lost in wonder to know from whence they come, and he will at last exclaim, “It is no use contending against the Pakeha.” (*The Waikato and Ngaruawahia* 4)

The writer here assumes a natural superiority of British people over Māori, which enables him to characterise them as ignorant and child-like, bound to submit once their supposed inferiority is made self-evident to them. The latter premise echoes Maning’s own beliefs that “when [...] our force, that is to say our power of destruction, is visably [*sic*], and palpably greater than that of the natives [...] [they] will have become a civilised people” (“The Native Question” 220, underscores in original). Until this point had arrived, he advocated for a constant wariness based on an understanding that the colonisation of New Zealand could, in a not-unlikely worst-case scenario, be rendered wholly unfeasible by armed Māori resistance.

By contrast, Alexander J. Johnston's "Notes on Māori Matters," produced for the New Zealand government's General Assembly in 1860 and anonymously published for the public the same year, avoids patronising Māori political reasoning. The pamphlet ultimately argues that the colonial government ought to breach the formal terms of the Treaty of Waitangi. The way that this argument is established, however, is significantly more nuanced than that of the anonymous Settler. Johnston's argument begins by proposing a "humane and just man" without any kind of prejudice, political or dogmatic commitment, or "personal sympathies or antipathies," who is also free "from the habit of viewing the question [of the relationship between Māori and colonisers] from one point of view only" (all 5). A prerequisite is established in which this person is to imagine how to rule New Zealand as a "wise, far-sighted, just and humane Sovereign" (6). To do so, after assimilating all of the (British, colonial) knowledge available about Māori people and the history of contact between Māori and European travellers and colonisers, they

would then look at the Treaty of Waitangi. And [they] would, first, make up [their] mind what each party to [the Treaty] probably meant in executing it, and also what each party must be taken to have known that the other parties meant,—so as to see what it was that all parties in common must have intended to agree to. (6)

The positioning Johnston takes in this paragraph is striking for its intersubjective reasoning. An acknowledgment in neutral terms is made that, by signing the Treaty, political judgment had been exercised with equivalent degrees of complexity by both sets of signatories, Māori and British.

Johnston's argument both admits of and, as the text continues, functions by virtue of the uncertainty inherent to intersubjective logic itself. The word "probably" in the first sentence permits of uncertainty, but with the phrases "must be," "what it was," and "must have," Johnston slyly converts uncertainty to certainty, from which, with some elaboration, an argument for breaching the Treaty can logically follow. That Johnston's argument is rooted in an uncertainty is testament to the role uncertainty plays in understanding encounters between people who lack a common cultural and philosophical history. That he could so quickly produce a certain conclusion from an uncertainty indicates gaps, wilful or otherwise, in the abilities of himself and his contemporaries to reason through the uncertainties inherent in communication across differing forms of life.

Victorian colonisers were, then, aware to some degree of the necessity for intersubjective reasoning in making sense of their encounters with Māori, but it is not evident that this awareness was in widespread practise. In their review of *Old New Zealand*, *The Press* establish a picture of the relationship between a Pākehā-Māori and his Māori host community as one between “a free born Briton [who] considered himself immeasurably superior to the Maori in every point of view” and a Māori chieftain who “equally despised him” (both “Old New Zealand” 2). The relationship of “mutual contempt and mutual benefit” (2) between Maning and his chieftain is already salient at the time of the text’s publication, serving as a reminder to British readers of “the original view taken of the Englishman by the Maori, and submitted to by the Englishman for his own ends” (2). A belief by Māori about their own superiority to Pākehā becomes something to which the Pākehā-Māori must subjugate himself to get what he wants. In Maning’s narrative the reviewers in *The Press* identify a timely reminder to British readers to curb their inclination to “fall into the heroics, and the Britons-never-shall-be-slaves style of thinking and talking” (2). Less than shoring up notions of British imperial superiority, this early review of *Old New Zealand* is not only aware of but also supports the opportunity the text offers for readers to re-think their own beliefs about hierarchies of race and culture.

Maning was not alone in addressing the possibility that common assumptions about the superiority of European peoples and cultures were in error. Although Victorian anthropological texts are often distressingly and blatantly racist, as Gillian Beer argues this racism was prompted by anxieties arising from the possibility that European superiority was, in fact, illusory. In their positioning of Europeans as “the full grown adult human form” of mankind, against which “all other races are at an earlier stage on the developmental scale, to be formed and controlled like children” (both Beer 80), Victorian anthropologists can thus be understood as responding to anxieties raised by the radical reduction of the theoretical distance between humans and animals that the theory of evolution had recently imposed, as well as to related questions about commonalities and differences between cultures, and concerns about cultural development and degeneracy more generally. Beer offers as an example a report by William Bailey Baker from 1861 about “Maori Popular Poetry,” wherein,

[i]n order to come to terms with the evident complexity, wit, and power of Maori imaginative life, [Baker] resorts to a degradationist argument: these are the last remnants of a former great race [...]. (Beer 85)

For Beer, Baker's claim of degeneration arises in response to his own acknowledgment that there was nothing about the Māori cultural practises he had observed that would enable him to comfortably position them as inferior to comparative European practises. Nestled within Victorian anthropologists' often-offensive ways of positioning the peoples about which they wrote can thus be read an acknowledgment of the concrete challenges that rendered imperialist assumptions of superiority uncertain.

Scientifically presented accounts of the existence of non-European forms of life, variously complex, rich, and unpredictable, thus entered into Victorian scientific conversations as interruptions that threatened to undermine the supposedly natural hierarchy crowning Europe as the model from which all other cultures could learn. Using Baker as an example, Beer proposes that

[i]t would, then, be false to suggest that Victorian anthropology offered only the affirmations of cultural imperialism: perceptions and their ideological contradictions were often held in equipoise—as in most periods of history. (Beer 85)

Baker's degradationist argument can be understood, therefore, as a buffering agent necessitated by the rules of the Victorian anthropology language-game, within whose logic the superiority of Europe was an immutable fact. This is not to say that Baker's argument did not itself participate in the production and maintenance of those same rules. The point is that Baker was required to wrap his observations with a degradationist claim in order to render them logically viable within, and thus legible to, the Victorian anthropologists' form of life. More generally the racism, claims about degeneracy, and ranking of cultures or peoples on scales that placed them further or closer to animals, emerged in Victorian anthropology as tempering responses to events which dramatically increased the plausibility of the idea that European culture was not objectively superior. Although the uncertainty produced by the appearance of detailed reports about cultural difference—even when hopelessly tainted by unacknowledged and unaccounted-for observer bias—was significant, the fledgling discipline of anthropology itself was undertaking at the time a “double and contradictory task: to shake itself loose from cognate disciplines and to establish antique authority for its enquiry” (Beer 77) and thus could not politically afford ambiguities or uncertainties. However, as Beer argues, these can still be recovered by reading between the lines of published scientific reports.

In *Old New Zealand*, by contrast, an acknowledgment and even a fostering of the

uncertainty and ambiguity inherent in encounters with different forms of life forms the backbone of Maning's narrative methodology. Understood thus as a counter to Victorian assumptions about the natural superiority of European cultures and races—assumptions which Maning believed left the fledgling colony of New Zealand dangerously unprepared for resistance from the Māori people upon whose land they were encroaching—*Old New Zealand* opens space for alternative orientations. It operates not as a source of particular ideas but as a destabilising force, counteracting the calcifying certainties of Victorian imperialist knowledge systems by which commensurability was imposed upon sometimes incompatible forms of life. As twenty-first century readers, shedding our own assumptions about Victorian thought and approaching *Old New Zealand* with an attitude of enlightened ignorance enables it to work these same forces on us.

Old New Zealand is not the only text by Maning that, through satire, effects a dislodging of Pākehā assumptions about Māori without providing a clear picture about what should take their place. Calder has characterised Maning's *History of the War in the North*, published one year before *Old New Zealand*, as “a warning to settlers who complacently underestimated Māori capacity to wage war” (“F. E. Maning, 1811-1883” 14). Independently, Anna Boswell argues in her analysis of the same text that casting its narrator as Ngāpuhi “enables the exposing and deriding of British follies, failings and ‘superior’ modes of understanding” (Boswell 54–55). A notable effect of this mode of storytelling is that

it draws sympathy towards Maori points of view. Rather than simply destabilising the European military interpretative framework, his text steers its audience towards understandings which have been excluded from dominant modes of historicising. (55)

In producing a fictionally Ngāpuhi Māori narrator, Maning both challenges the supposed superiority of British language-games and demonstrates the application of fictionalised Māori language-games that require wholly different orientations upon history. By writing history with a voice developed from Maning's own interpretation of Māori forms of life, his text “evades a straight satirical function, enacting a reversal of the dominant lexicon used to make sense of the conflict” (55). The narrator expressively combines “a shortfall of knowledge” about British forms of life (55) with superstitious interpretations of causality that nevertheless “supply a pervasive logic within the text” (56). Within the text a new and different form of life is produced as a fictional entity, which must be negotiated by the reader as part of their process of

acknowledgment. The consequent role-play shows how to interpret historical events from an orientation encoded by a non-British form of life, in which familiar words may mean unfamiliar things, and different systems of causation are not just plausible, but factual.

When the narrator is, as in *Old New Zealand*, a character whose biography more closely corresponds to that of F. E. Maning himself, the effect is perhaps surprisingly not to bring the narrator's orientation closer to Maning's, but instead to further multiply uncertainty about whose orientation it is through which the story is being told at any given moment. If Maning indeed produced the fictional form of life that can be found in his *History of the War in the North* with "satirical intent, providing for the lampooning of Maori ignorance and self-interest" (Boswell 58), the action of presenting it and the reader's acknowledgment called forth by this action ultimately "exceed[] Maning's intention [...] and it becomes unclear whose mouthpiece the narrator really is" (Boswell 55). In *Old New Zealand*, taking "Pākehā" and "Māori" as already-familiar orientations from which the speech of a given subjectivity can be readily understood, but the elusive, rare, and contradictory "Pākehā-Māori" is a dramatically unknown quantity which radically tempers certainty about how his words ought to be read. Moreover, bringing the identity of the narrator closer to that of its author serves to expand, rather than limit, interpretive possibilities. It may be orthodox, even appropriate, to ascribe consistency and certainty to a narrative figure. With an actual person, however, there is no guarantee that a cohesive orientation can be precisely determined.

By treating a historical text such as Maning's not as a fixed statement about Māori culture or Māori-Pākehā relations but as a textual action that produces uncertainty about the same, it becomes possible to think through its potential implications without being necessarily bound to what actually occurred. Pacific ethnographer Nicholas Thomas has written evocatively about the need to approach historical texts of colonial encounter as sites of uncertainty and possibility:

If [...] voyage encounters and representations are taken to be replete with contradictions and contradictory possibilities, if their uncertainties meant that other things easily could have happened, it is perhaps easier to imagine that other things can happen now. (Thomas, *Liberty and License: The Forsters' Accounts of New Zealand Sociality* 134)

The uncertainty that Maning produces in *Old New Zealand* introduces space for possibility

now, precluding its use as evidence for supposedly inevitable colonial domination. Accepting that our own knowledge about its context of production is correspondingly incomplete, and likely replete with mistaken assumptions, interpretive possibilities further multiply. To acknowledge these possibilities is to make space beyond what was or what is for what might have been, and thus, to what may yet come to pass. In this way the lessons about British colonial certainty that are woven into *Old New Zealand* can be brought forward and find relevance in our own time, showing us how to make space for the as-yet unknown potential of Māori self-determination.

4. Uncertainty in the Encounter with the Narrator

Old New Zealand professes to be, and often unambiguously is, a text about Māori people and culture, but it also a text that problematises the processes of representation that such a project entails. Scattered throughout its length are multiple quasi-ethnographic passages in which the narrator's subjectivity retreats, permitting glimpses of Māori life to be presented as if they were objective facts. Between these sequences, however, and occasionally within them, the text performs a rich and contradictory awareness of the problems involved in textually fixing "culture" with any certainty. Having ambiguously adopted the genres of guidebook and memoir, it works to undo the hierarchical relationships between reader, author, experience, and knowledge encoded in such generic forms. As Philip Steer correctly states, the text is "dominated from the start by the effusive presence of its narrator [...] [who] is prone to digression, has a lively sense of irony, and appears to have few moral qualms" (Steer, "Introduction to *Old New Zealand*"). During more overtly ethnographic sequences, the narrator's own implied experiences indeed "powerfully reinforce[]" the authority of his accounts (Steer, "Introduction to *Old New Zealand*"), but the way the narrative is told around and even within these sequences works to demonstrate to the reader the folly of trusting such authority. Under Maning's pen, first-person narrative voice is left unable to confer the authority that might otherwise develop logically from first-person experience. Scientific certainty is consistently undermined, in ways that demonstrate the author's awareness of the problems inherent in the process of textual representation itself. In this chapter I will demonstrate some of the different ways that the presence and behaviour of *Old New Zealand's* narrator frustrates clear resolution of meaning or intention, and thus show how uncertainty is cultivated in the reader's encounter with his voice.

A Theatrical Introduction to the "Good Old Times"

On the first page of Chapter 1, the reader is presented the opportunity to participate in a subtle self-interrogation about the functioning of interpersonal morality in an anarchic society, which takes form in a series of interruptions and self-corrections made by the narrator. The consistency of the text's narrative is undermined by the words its narrator speaks as he makes

a surprisingly nostalgic claim to anarchy as a lost golden age of New Zealand, while slyly inviting the reader to treat such a depiction as a serious matter:

But those were the times!—the ‘good old times’—before Governors were invented, and law, and justice, and all that. When everyone did as he liked,—except when his neighbours would not let him, (the more shame for them,)—when there were no taxes, or duties, or public works, or public to require them. (Maning, ONZ 93)

Punctuation guides the reader through rapidly shifting moods, behind which the author himself seem to lurk, injecting an uncertainty-producing counter-narrative into the stream of language ostensibly voiced by his narrator. The exclamation point in the first clause denotes a happy recollection, immediately clarified in scare quotes as similar in affective potential to what the reader might already know as “the ‘good old times.’” These are the words of a narrator warmly inviting his readers into his confidence, where they can share his feeling about a New Zealand that, as he seems about to show them, should already be familiar from prior experience.

As the sentence unfolds, the subject for nostalgia is revealed as not, in fact, a shared prior experience, whereby the intimacy presumed in the narrator's invitation is muddled. Governmental and legal institutions are introduced as if they were things “invented:” not the pillars of a society within which invention can happen, but new-fangled incursions into a context that pre-existed them and, indeed, has no need of them. The narrator seems convinced that the invention of these systems was bound up in whatever forces brought “the ‘good old times’” to an end. Simultaneously he seems strangely unaware how far his call for shared nostalgia is out of touch with the genteel reader to whom he is appealing. In this gap it becomes possible to sense, leaking through the warm invitation to share in the narrator's blatantly strange sense of nostalgia, a correspondingly warm invitation from the author. Building on the playful misquotation of Othello, the author further beckons his reader to join him on an adventure, the nature of which from the outset is to be characterised by uncertainty and contradiction but which promises to be, if nothing else, an interesting but perhaps perversely familiar reading experience.

When the narrator interrupts himself, a subtly sophisticated moral challenge is presented to the reader, that represents also a significant act of risk-taking by the author of the text. Asking his reader to simply accept that a functioning anarchy in far-flung colony of the British Empire, where British power remained far from secure, as “the ‘good old times’” (93) already stretches

credibility. When the narrator interrupts himself during this description to comment on the specifics of interpersonal morality, things begin to wobble. Describing the state of affairs as one where “[e]veryone did as he liked” (93) first offers an anti-social depiction of anarchy. The narrator’s self-interruption thus occurs, in the reader’s encounter with the text, as an impromptu realization of this anti-social quality. He backpedals, injecting the pro-social caveat “except when his neighbours would not let him” (93), before taking stock and re-orienting his moral compass once more toward anti-sociality by suggesting “more shame for them” (93): such neighbours ought to be treated with contempt. The choreography of moods and moralities voiced by the narrator in this passage is virtuosic, demonstrating Maning’s expressive and subtle power as an author. But because this power has been deployed in a blatantly risky way, it simultaneously enacts a reaching toward the reader for acknowledgment—not just of his power but of its contingency, and the instability of language itself as its substrate.

The rich sense of uncertainty and openness produced by the complex interplay of values allows the reader’s own morals to linger and play about the words. It seems that a myriad of truths might be possible, without the author, narrator, or reader needing to be bound to any fixed position to render any of these truths legible or valid. The three central statements made by the narrator—the declaration of behaviour, the moral backfilling, and the subsequent undermining of that morality—represent three different positions on the idea of a functionally anarchic civil society. The middle statement operates as a clarification: reasonable, just, and sensible. The final parenthetical injects gleeful chaos. The first statement bears no moral cues, thus acting retroactively as a vessel for the reader’s own response to the idea of free public behaviour absent the institutions of power that structure European civil societies. Morality sneaks up on the reader in the same way it seems to have snuck up on the narrator.

Recalling Moi’s dramatization of Flaubert’s writing practise, it is as if Maning the author has, upon re-reading what he has written, forsaken rewriting for concatenation. Rather than pruning language to precision in the pursuit of a unified narrative, he permits the run-on thought to persist, performatively disclosing the open process of writing itself. Moral speculation is encouraged, and space is made for different possibilities. As elsewhere in the paragraph, punctuation participates in the drama. The first interruption is offset by a comma and a dash, with the second wrapped in parentheses after a comma. Spoken rhythm is evocatively but indistinctly suggested: breaths, pauses, perhaps shifts of facial expression. The inconsistency of the punctuation prevents a clear hierarchy of values from forming between

the different orientations. It is difficult to say with any certainty which one Maning the narrator, or Maning the author, might choose is most true. Absent moral guidance, the reader is left to ponder the matter in their own time, if they so choose. The implication is that there is no clear answer: instead, the reader must think for themselves.

The “Good Old Times” as Textual Invention

The first page of Maning's first chapter suggests that what is to be narrated in *Old New Zealand* are “the ‘good old times’—before Governors were invented, and law, and justice, and all that” (93). According to its Preface the text constitutes an effort in the face of “a marked and rapid change in the manners and mode of life of the natives” to “place a few sketches of old Maori life on record before the remembrance of them has quite passed away” (both Maning, ONZ 92). Separately, both Ingrid Horrocks and Jane Stafford and Mark Williams have suggested that when Maning locates his subject in the past in this way, his text is left, in Horrocks's words, “(strategically) saturated in a sense of [...] [something] already lost” (Horrocks 24; see also Stafford and Williams 268). The Māori-ness of New Zealand that settlement threatens to overwhelm is, in their view, rendered by Maning as already comfortably historic. However, as I will now show, in its opening moves Maning's text in fact performatively severs its bonds to whatever common understanding of history its reader may presume to share with the author. With a playful anarchist spirit, Maning shows the folly of closing over the past from any singular orientation. Rather than a sense of loss, he produces an urgent uncertainty, encouraging his reader not to dismiss Māori but to be vigilant in refusing to take Māori for granted.

Rendering salient the linguistic bindings of history itself, *Old New Zealand* pre-empts efforts to enclose or bind Māori people or culture within the clutches of textual representation, radically tempering the functional value of the overtly ethnographic material that is presented later in the narrative. This effect is principally produced by two subtle but significant actions that also occur within the opening pages, which will be examined in turn over the following two paragraphs. The first can be identified in the narrator's exaggerated emotions about the passing of the “good old times.” When discussing the details of past states of affairs his voice is exuberant, even reckless:

Who cared then whether he owned a coat?—or believed in shoes or stockings? [...] I have seen [sovereigns] swapped for shillings, which were thought more becoming. What cared I? A fish-hook was worth a dozen of them, and I had lots of fishhooks. (Maning, ONZ 93)

In the dynamic environment of the “good old times,” a key resource is flexibility in ideas and values. In the narrator’s performance, elasticity of thought leads directly to abundance.

The present times, by contrast, are dull, dreary, and lamentable. The narrator’s descriptions, however, threaten to collapse into ridiculous self-pity, and are finally challenged by a “young Maori whelp:”

The very sun does not seem to me to shine as bright as it used. Pigs and potatoes have degenerated; and everything seems ‘flat, stale, and unprofitable’. [...] I am a melancholy man. I feel somehow as if I had got older. I am no use in these dull times. I mope about in solitary places, exclaiming often, “Oh! where are those good old times?” and echo, or some young Maori whelp from the Three Kings, answers from behind a bush,—NO HEA. (Maning, ONZ 93)

The narrator presents a picture of himself as a moping, useless, self-pitying man, with a degree of melodrama that verges on mockery. The reader has little reason to unambiguously feel pity for a narrator who makes such exaggerated claims about the strength of sunlight, or the degeneracy of farm animals or vegetables. They may pity him, but an equally justifiable response at this early point in the story is a jeering ridicule.

A derisive response can indeed be read in the closing words, “no hea.” This second significant action takes the form of the voice, in his own language, of a Māori figure—or, ambiguously, an echo—that closes and comments upon the sequence. It offers an orientation opposed to the pathetic figure of the narrator. The words are translated by Maning, in “a glossary [...] printed after the body of the text” (Calder, “Introduction” 15), in the following way:

No hea—Literally, from whence? Often used as a negative answer to an enquiry, in which case the words mean that the thing enquired for is not, or in fact is nowhere. (ONZ 93n)

Less than strictly explaining the answer/echo that Maning's narrator hears, the glossary entry complicates the actions occurring on this first page of the narrative proper. Upon rhetorically pining about where the good old times may have gone, the narrator is given an answer whose literal interpretation, "from whence," throws the question back to the questioner. Where did the good old times come from? They did not.

The reader is reminded that the "good old times" are an emergent property of the narrator's idiosyncratic orientation toward history. The echo suggests a self-interrogation, whereas the Māori speaker's position "behind a bush" cements the theatrical, performative nature of the scene first established by the quote from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, "flat, stale, and unprofitable," a characterisation by Hamlet himself of how the world seems from within a depressive mood (*Hamlet* 3.2.316-8). In short, the narrator is being overly dramatic. Commenting cheekily from an obscured location, the first representative of the Māori subjects that the book purports to describe thinks that he is talking nonsense. Alternatively, given that the Three Kings islands have been uninhabited since the 1840s (Hayward 149), this voice or "echo" could be a ghost, in a tangential reference to the apparition of Hamlet's father that in turn represents or prompts the narrator's or author's own conscience. Unlike Hamlet's ghost, the "young Maori whelp" does not drive the plot, instead injecting uncertainty. Within the resulting fog of theatricality it becomes impossible to judge with confidence whether the narrator is being serious, frivolous, or fraudulent. *Old New Zealand* thus opens with a performative doubt about whether it is even possible to determine the reliability of its narrator with any certainty. This performance in turn takes place against multiple reminders of the contingency of orientations and of the intersubjectivity of language itself. Given no further clues, the reader once again cannot cleanly resolve the uncertainty. They must simply accept it, and move on.

Learning To Distrust Certainty

Maning's text is saturated with a sense of playing with what truth means. As has already been demonstrated, *Old New Zealand* foregrounds in its opening pages the generic conventions of the novel, in particular the complex relationship between text and truth that the genre itself entails. These moves collectively prepare the ground for the reader's understanding of truth as a negotiable category. Among others, Calder has argued that when narrator-Maning asserts that his story is "a true story, not 'founded on fact' but fact itself" (Maning, *ONZ* 96), author-

Maning “undermines that assertion by showing how even the simplest statement of fact—‘I rowed ashore’—is liable to be hijacked in the telling” (Calder, “Introduction” 4). He expands his point elsewhere: “Rowing ashore, once the work of a few minutes, now takes the narrator all of chapters one and two to accomplish” (“Maning’s Tapu” 7). What emerges from Calder’s accounts is a tension between the aims of the narrator and the pen of the writer.

The gap that opens up between narrative processes and truth comes under maximal pressure during the clearly ethnographic sequences that appear throughout *Old New Zealand*, two of which will be analysed in the following paragraphs. During these sequences, the narrator’s playful theatricality and self-doubt fall away, replaced by descriptions, rendered authoritative by first-person voice. In an early sequence documenting the preparation of a fort for the arrival of a potentially hostile group, the narrator states that

I was in the thick of it, and worked all day lashing the fence; the fence being of course not nailed, but lashed with *toro-toro*, a kind of tough creeping plant, like a small rope, which was very strong and well adapted for the purpose. (Maning, *ONZ* 111)

A mass of physical details is offered in this sentence, granted authority by the narrator’s claim to physical presence within the activity being described. As the paragraph continues, the description grows to include numerous materials, sizes, quantities, and methods of construction. At the same time, the reader becomes gradually aware of the hulking mass of such details that remain uncatalogued, with a growing awareness of their own ignorance of the history and meaning of what is happening. The reader is reminded that, as Beer correctly states, first-person ethnographic narrative can only ever offer “a partial, possibly mistaken, certainly incomplete, interpretation of” events (Beer 80). All else is beyond the narrator’s ability to see or record, perhaps lost forever to history.

When the narrator’s “I” appears in ethnographic sequences, it reaffirms both the authority of his experience and the limits of his embedded orientation. At one point the narrator facetiously evades elaborating on details, offering the excuse that “I could tell you [more] if I had time, but I am half mad with haste lashing the pa” (Maning, *ONZ* 112). The excuse ostentatiously toys with literary form, collapsing narrating time into story time. The explicit use of “I” and the narrator’s claims of embeddedness within the events reduce the distance between the speaker and that of which he speaks, effectively increasing his authority. However, the playful binding of logically incompatible timelines demonstrates the artifice of the

language-game by which that authority becomes meaningful. The truth-value of first-person ethnographic narrative is thus revealed as a synthetic property emerging from the generic conventions within which the narration is embedded, rather than something that can be attached to narrator or author with any certainty. Recalling Wittgenstein's introspective consideration that "[c]ertainty is [...] a *tone of voice* in which one declares how things are, but one does not infer from the tone of voice that one is justified" (§30), Maning's foregrounding of narrative artifice suggests an analogous relationship between authority and truth. First-person voice may be an authoritative voice, but one does not infer from the first-person quality that its authority is meaningful.

The rhetorical touches that position the narrator's voice within the flow of action simultaneously undermine its ability to offer any kind of final determinant. At its publication, *The Press* celebrated Maning's narrative as having "a reality and originality in the descriptions of scenery and incident which could hardly have been assumed by one whose only acquaintance with the life of the Pakeha Maori had been second hand" ("Old New Zealand" 2). This quality of "reality," however, emerges in part from the expressive production of the narrator's voice in a wholly contextual—and thus limited—orientation. The narrator indeed saw what he states, but he saw it from a position embedded within the activity. His observations remain bound to his own orientation, partial representatives of larger patterns but insufficient to enclose the whole in which these patterns find expression.

Maning's text thus expresses a clear understanding of the problematics of recording and communicating ethnographic knowledge, at the same time as the scientific discipline of anthropology is just getting underway on the other side of the globe. Beer has commented on the "strange [...] privileging of first-person narratives by travellers [...] in a gentlemanly network of allusion" (79) that characterised Victorian anthropological texts. Underlying the anxieties encoded in Victorian anthropology that have already been addressed in Chapter 3 is "[a]nother, more pressing, question [...], one that only rarely finds utterance: what is the status of the writer himself?" (Beer 82). Something like this latter question underpins *Old New Zealand's* consistent undermining of its own stability. The artificiality of the narrator himself is rendered salient even while that same narrator is engaged in a process of first-person storytelling which, in anthropological research published contemporaneously to *Old New Zealand*, was pre-emptively granted an elevated status of verity.

Skirting the anthropological conventions for writing encounters with imperial Others,

Maning instead takes a literary approach wherein truth becomes ambiguous, and facts remain uncertain. Stephen Turner argues in an essay exploring the affective fallout of the colonisation of New Zealand that Maning's

account has the authority and persuasiveness of first-hand experience, but Maning himself is often unsure how to evaluate the 'facts' of his experience. [...] The affective knowledge of Maning's experience appears at odds with the means he has at his disposal for explaining it (whether it is anthropological or historical narratives that would ordinarily allow him to convert the experience into communicable cognitive knowledge). (42)

There is a disconnect between the experiences that Maning must have had and the words that he has used to write those experiences into *Old New Zealand*. For Turner, an uncertainty is revealed on the part of Maning-as-author. It seems unclear to Maning how he might be able to capture and share significant details of his experiences with his reader, and this unclarity becomes visible in the moments when narrative unity fails.

Turner's account, however, does not sufficiently account for the discontinuity of narrator and author. The uncertainty that he identifies emerges not from the author's failure but from his confident and successful violations of literary form. In so doing, author-Maning problematises the relationship between narrative and truth. His experience is indeed "at odds with the means he has [...] for explaining it" (Turner 42), but rather than making bumbling attempts to write it anyway, Maning turns his reader's attention toward the philosophical bases that produce "communicable cognitive knowledge" (Turner 42) as a plausible notion in the first place. In *Old New Zealand* a performance is underway, for the reader's benefit and acknowledgment, that demonstrates how to identify and productively distrust the certainty produced by whatever language-game is governing their encounter with the language in question.

When, subsequently, the narrator humbly re-evaluates racist certainties, the reader is presented a model of handling the incursion of uncertainty about people whose forms of life differ from their own, in the form of a parable that implicitly advises the reader against repeating the mistakes of the narrator. Adopting a serious tone, through his narrator Maning addresses Victorian racist assumptions directly:

I learned something that day; and I, though pretty well 'up' in the noble science of fortification, ancient and modern, was obliged to confess to myself that a savage who could neither read or write [...] could teach me certain practical 'dodges' in the defensive art quite well worth knowing. (Maning, ONZ 112)

The narrator openly concedes to his own short-sightedness. This admission is the product of the ethical struggle, revealed by the phrase "obliged to confess to myself," that was necessary to permit him to see the limiting forces imposed by his own familiar form of life. What he learns is twofold: concrete knowledge about defence, and emergent knowledge about his own short-sightedness. That the latter is disclosed by a confession shows the difficulty of attaining such knowledge. His prior certainty that "a savage who could neither reader or write" had nothing to teach him has been proven false, but this was not an easy discovery.

The revelation of the narrator's mistaken prejudices is a forewarning for Maning's contemporaries that can be adopted for politically liberatory ends in the twenty-first century. In Maning's time the risk of British colonisers ignoring Māori was, in his estimation, a mortal one. As his pamphlet "The Native Question" reveals, Maning feared that, "were any question of general interest to arise which would cause a unanimity of discontent [amongst Māori], [...] our present military force would be found quite insufficient" ("The Native Question" 217). Given the balance of power between Māori and non-Māori in the twenty-first century, such a material risk is difficult to imagine. Maning's efforts in *Old New Zealand* to suggest to his reader that their assumptions about Māori are likely underestimates born of prejudice are, on the other hand, unfortunately still relevant. If Pākehā can learn to be comfortably uncertain about Māori—not shy, not obsequious, but simply not certain—the possibility of making space for Māori self-determination radically increases.

The Narrator's Perilous Obliviousness

A defining characteristic of the Pākehā-Māori narrator is that he has better access to Māori knowledge than the implied British reader, but the narrative is structured to show that he is nevertheless a far from infallible source. Repeatedly throughout *Old New Zealand*, the narrator hints at vast and unreachable tracts of knowledge that are only partially available to himself, and often not all to the reader. These hints often arise, apparently inadvertently, during a

disclosure by the narrator about some other more concrete detail. Differences between Māori and British forms of life are explicitly presented as claims about the ways that Māori people supposedly think about particular things. Beyond the narrator's words, however, more significant gaps in knowledge become discernible in the ways that these differences are presented. The text seems to know more than its narrator, whose confidence may conceal a perilous naïveté.

The narrator's potential for ignorance is subtly thematised in a passage in which he claims certain knowledge over the interior monologue of a Māori chieftain who, having climbed aboard the ship Maning arrived in New Zealand upon, sees and subsequently desires to acquire Maning's gun. The monologue itself is extensive, but is worth quoting in its entirety, along with the introductory and closing remarks of the narrator:

The chief has got his eye on my double gun, which is hanging up in the cabin. He takes it down and examines it closely. He is a good judge of a gun. It is the best *tupara* he has ever seen, and his speculations run something very like this:—‘A good gun, a first-rate gun; I must have this; [...] I wonder what the pakeha will want for it! I will promise him as much flax or as many pigs as ever he likes for it. True, I have no flax just now, and am short of pigs, they were almost all killed at the last *hahunga*; but if he is in a hurry he can buy the flax or pigs from the people, which ought to satisfy him. Perhaps he would take a piece of land!—that would be famous. I would give him a piece quite close to the *kainga* where I would always have him close to me; I hope he may take the land; then I should have two pakehas, him and ----. All the inland chiefs would envy me. This ---- is getting too knowing; he has taken to hiding his best goods of late, and selling them before I knew he had them. It's just the same as thieving, and I won't stand it. He sold three muskets the other day to the Ngatiwaki, and I did not know he had them, or I should have taken them. I could have paid for them some time or another. It was wrong, wrong, very wrong, to let that tribe have those muskets. He is not their pakeha; let them look for a pakeha for themselves. Those Ngatiwaki are getting too many muskets—those three make sixty-four they have got, besides two *tupara*. Certainly we have a great many more, and the Ngatiwaki are our relations, but then there was Kohu, we killed, and Patu, we stole his wife. There is no saying what these Ngatiwaki may do if they should get plenty of muskets; they are game enough for anything. It was wrong

to give them those muskets; wrong, wrong, wrong!' After-experience enabled me to tell just what the chief's soliloquoy was, as above. (Maning, ONZ 98–99)

Focalisation within this passage makes a series of subtle transitions that complicate the extraction of a simple position upon the chief and his internal monologue. Beginning on page 98 in first-person with the narrator as focalizer, the sequence transitions over four sentences through third-person to a first-person internal monologue now explicitly focalized through the chief. The monologue is narratively bracketed at both ends with first-person comments focalized again through the narrator. The bracketing is reinforced typographically with quotation marks and preceded by a combination of colon and hyphen that clearly marks a shift in perspective. The combined effects of the bracketing and the transitions of focalisation is to produce a complex interplay between orientation and judgment.

The chief's internal monologue is rendered at a distance from the orientations of both narrator and reader, absent any effort on the part of the narrator himself to close these distances. For the reader, the monologue is offered as a discrete unit of text by the narrator. Despite having passed through the narrator's own faculties of interpretation and judgment, the present tense with which it is disclosed suggests that it has retained its autonomy, remaining external to both reader and narrator. It is long, with an excess of context-specific detail that has been rendered in an awkward, terse voice. Considerable effort is required by the reader to follow what this character is saying to himself. He is clearly embedded within dynamic and complex sets of social, historical, and familial networks, but certainty about these relationships, and the procedures with which that might be established or evaluated, is denied to the reader. There is a clear gap between what the chief takes for granted—in Wittgensteinian terms, the underlying logic that is simply a part of his form of life—and what the (Pākehā) reader is able to readily understand. Although this gap proves the presence of significant cultural difference, it does not make the nature of that difference any more legible.

When the narrator claims to be able to predict "just what the chief's soliloquoy was" (Maning, ONZ 99) this is a boastful expression of exaggerated certainty about something which, on closer examination, turns out to be not very useful. The few Māori terms in use are given brief explanations in the glossary appended to the text. However, absent an explanation or interpretation of what the chief is speaking about more generally—without access to, or knowledge of, the forms of life through which his words gain full meaning—his monologue seems to branch unpredictably, consisting of seemingly hasty and incomplete fragments of

thought, appearing at a disorienting pace. It is easy to underread the passage and thus dismiss the narrator's depiction of the chief's thoughts as simply the patronisingly racist reduction of an entire subjectivity to incomplete, child-like speech patterns. But to do so misses the complexity of that incompleteness, and the potential forms of life suggested by its unfamiliar edges. Like the outlines of an unfinished jigsaw puzzle, the gaps in the chief's soliloquy indicate the presence a massive but unseen body of knowledge. Unlike a jigsaw, the remainder is an uncertain quantity, inaccessible to the reader despite the narrator's boasting disclosure. Indeed, within the narrator's boast can be detected a lack of awareness about just how limited his knowledge really is. The reader may be inclined to underestimate the complexity of the chief's soliloquy, but the narrator himself seems perilously oblivious to it.

The narrator's mistake, and the reader's echo of it, constitute a satire of the absolute certainty with which Victorian racial theory positioned white men as the pinnacle of evolution. Numerous unprovable assumptions about racial hierarchies were necessary to support this certainty, which left many of Maning's contemporaries—and, unfortunately, no small number of people today—inclined to patronise or dismiss Māori people as inferior. When the narrator boasts about his certain understanding of the chief's soliloquy, or when he assumes, in the land deal sequence that will be analysed in Chapter 5 of this thesis, that he unproblematically "owns" land just because he possesses a signed contract in English, his maintenance of certainty despite evidence to the contrary itself becomes a target of satire.

Revealing both the depths of the narrator's ignorance and his apparent inability to see it, *Old New Zealand* works as a corrective to unseat simplistic assumptions about who or what Māori are. It may be a mistake to look to Maning's text for positive or progressive representations of Māori. Exposure to its efforts to unseat assumptions, however, retains its effectiveness as a pedagogical tool. Maning has produced, for a British audience, a narrative system designed specifically to undermine the tendencies of British forms of life to close over, and thus limit, conceptions of who or what non-Europeans—in this case, Māori people—might be. By satirising and undermining those tendencies, *Old New Zealand* makes space for different ways of thinking about the implications of the differences that emerge in encounters between Māori and British forms of life.

Affect and Scientific Rationality in Encounters with Difference

The narrator's own process of thinking through difference, and in particular his tendency to underestimate the complexity of the forms of life about which he is writing, is thematised in a late-chapter passage wherein the narrator is involved in a type of séance for a recently-deceased man. Cantankerous intellectual grumblings about what he sees as manipulative behaviour on the part of the tohunga leading the séance grapple with affects produced by his socially-embedded body:

Fires were lit, which gave an uncertain flickering light. The priest retired to the darkest corner. All was expectation, and the silence was only broken by the sobbing of the sister, and other female relations of the dead man. [...] I wished I had not come, for I felt that any unintentional symptom of incredulity on my part would shock and hurt the feelings of my friends extremely; and yet, whilst feeling thus, I felt myself more and more near to believing in the deception about to be practised. The real grief, and also the general undoubting faith, in all around me, had this effect. [...] The Spirit spoke again. 'Speak to me, the tribe!—speak to me, the family!—speak to me the *pakeha*!' The 'pakeha', however, was not at the moment inclined for conversation. The deep distress of the two women, the evident belief of all around him of the presence of the spirit, the 'darkness visible,' the novelty of the scene, gave rise to a state of feeling not favourable to the conversational powers. Besides, I felt reluctant to give too much apparent credence to an imposture, which at the very same time, by some strange impulse, I felt half ready to give way to. [...] A woman's voice now from another part of the room anxiously cried out—'Have you seen my sister?' 'Yes, I have seen her'. 'Tell her my love is great towards her and never will cease'. 'Yes, I will tell'. Here the woman burst into tears and the pakeha felt a strange swelling of the chest, which he could in no way account for. (Maning, *ONZ* 163–65)

Against a gothic setting that destabilises the dominance of rationality over affect, the narrator's intellectual and bodily responses vie for control. Further dramatizing the scenario with a brief reference to the "darkness visible" that "Serv'd onely to discover sights of woe" in John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (l. 63–64), the narrator seems driven by concern for the people around him to rescue them from what he sees as the negative influence of the tohunga, thus cast as a demon-

like figure. But the ties that he has built to this community of characters repeatedly prevent him from speaking out directly against what he sees as superstition, while adding weight to the affects produced by his bodily encounter with the situation itself.

A shift to third-person voice enacts an attempt by the narrator to take control of his own responses, but it backfires when the details of the story itself are revealed as ultimately uncertain. Responding to what he perceives as the voice of a deceptive tohunga, the narrator begins to ironically refer to himself not as "I" but as "the pakeha." He aims to reassert authority by demonstrating his masterful ability to react rationally, and playfully, to the production of affect. But the demonstration has the opposite effect. Third-person distancing, backed by the capitalisation of "Spirit," grants a mood of objective reality to the supernatural events. The narrator's desire for control starts to resemble the graceless wishes of someone too immature to cope with the discomfort of unfamiliarity. He is, by his own admission, embedded within a community of people who, aside from the tohunga, he clearly respects. Moreover he is sharing space with mourners, and thus obliged to act in any case with courtesy. The attempt to seize control thus appears desperate and ungracious, especially when his bodily reactions meanwhile indicate more appropriate responses to the situation. When "the pakeha felt a strange swelling of the chest, which he could in no way account for" (Maning, *ONZ* 165), the narrator's failure to account for empathy represents the failure of rational responses more generally to account for affect. His third-person self-address underscores the disconnect between rationality and what is occurring on the page. The language-game of scientific intellectualism, supposedly superior to superstition, fails in the encounter with a language-game that does not unnecessarily privilege rationality over intersubjectively-circulated affect.

When evidence of the tohunga's apparent exploitation of his community is presented, the struggle between rationality and superstition plays out in a social performance by the narrator. As the paragraph continues, the narrator senses an opportunity to demonstrate the superiority of intellect over affect:

The Spirit spoke again. 'Give my large tame pig to the priest, (the pakeha was disenchanted at once), and my double-gun'. Here the brother interrupted—'Your gun is a *manatunga*, I shall keep it'. He is also disenchanted, thought I, but I was mistaken. [...] An idea now struck me that I could expose the imposture without showing palpable disbelief. 'We cannot find your book', said I, 'where have you concealed it?' The answer instantly came [...]. In five minutes he came back *with the book in his hand*. I was

beaten, but made another effort. 'What have you written in that book?' said I. 'A great many things'. [...] Then suddenly— 'Farewell, O tribe! farewell, my family, I go!' Here a general and impressive cry of 'Farewell' arose from every one in the house. 'Farewell', again cried the spirit, *from deep beneath the ground!* 'Farewell', again from *high in air!* 'Farewell', once more came moaning through the distant darkness of the night. 'Farewell!' I was for a moment stunned. The deception was perfect. There was a dead silence—at last. 'A ventriloquist', said I!—'or—or—perhaps the devil'. I was fagged and confused.

Irony flickers in and out of relevance in the tensions between the continued reference to the capitalised Spirit and the third-person self-address, but quickly collapses as the narrator is "disenchanted" by the tohunga's blatant self-interest, which is apparently only visible to reason. As the sequence unfolds, however, the narrator's powers of reason prove no match for the context. He misinterprets the brother's behaviour, demonstrating that equivalent actions do not disclose equivalent thoughts. His attempts to expose the tohunga as a deceptive figure fail in the face of the tohunga's superior knowledge, demonstrating the insufficiency of logical processes in the face of uncertainty about what others might know. Finally, and most damningly, he fails to understand what is happening in physical reality.

When the voice of the spirit is described as emitting from impossible locations, it seems that the written word is insufficient to convey all of what is happening. Excesses of punctuation dramatize the narrator's struggle to reconcile his bodily experiences and his reasoning mind. Anne Salmond has noted in *Between Worlds* that Europeans "readily translated the rule of mind over matter into the rule of 'civilized beings' (with their [written] knowledge and laws) over ignorant, archaic 'savages'" (481). The narrator's failure to demonstrate this supposed superiority is a challenge to such assumptions. He initially presents himself as occupying a superior position relative to the tohunga and his audience, based on his access to knowledge and rationality that ought to enable him to overcome the superstition he sees as constitutive of the tohunga's power. However, when it is most needed this assumed superiority vanishes like the Spirit it is supposed to defeat, proving itself just as unreliable and uncertain a force as the supposedly inferior superstition. With the narrator's intellect overwhelmed by his bodily responses, the certainty of this superiority is called into question, and revealed as bound to context.

By leaving the struggle between intellect and affect unresolved, Maning's text suggests that

judging the relative merits of language-games which give different weight to affective and intellectual responses is senseless beyond the particularities of a binding context. Working against Victorian prejudices, Maning the author chose not to reassert in his narrative the supposed superiority of scientific rationalism. He could have resolved the ambiguous shift of power disclosed in the narrative by writing a textual action that dismissed or diminished its significance. Not only did he not do this, he used his power as a wordsmith to describe the power inversion in such a way that it is able to affectively leak through the page. The reader, in turn, is bound to acknowledge both the inadequacy of the narrator's response to his own experience, and the way that that inadequacy is communicated by the narrative. Despite the narrator's considerable effort to assert rational control over superstition, the outcome remains troublingly uncertain. If the narrator's faith in the superiority of his own powers of reason have been shaken by his experience, the reader is left with no assurance that this failure was merely momentary in nature, that it could be reliably predicted, nor even that it has been safely contained within the text. The lesson is that a scientifically rational orientation, even one that seems certain to prevail, can easily fail in an unfamiliar context. The certainty that reason may grant is insufficient to guarantee its success in an encounter with people whose forms of life differ from one's own.

5. Uncertainty in the Unfolding Narrative

As it undermines Pākehā assumptions about who Māori are, *Old New Zealand* simultaneously works to produce an image of what it might mean to know or understand Māori culture absent the fixing certainty that inevitably leads to misapprehension. Were the representations of Māori people and customs that appear in the text to fully close over the possible variations of their subject matter, they might give the reader an opportunity to emerge from an encounter with the text holding an obstructively certain mass of new assumptions. But they do not do this. Maning's text does indeed show that Māori culture is different to British culture in significant ways. The reader is not, however, presented any tidy formulation of Māori culture to occupy the gaps in thought left by the text's unseating of Victorian pictures of racial hierarchy—or, for twenty-first century readers, the remnants of such pictures. It is as if *Old New Zealand* performs the first half of a Derridean deconstruction of the Victorian anthropological picture that would oppose the imperial self with Māori as its Other. However, the subsequently necessitated reconstruction—critically characterised by Moi as a process wherein “[n]ew concepts [...] must be found to replace the old” that “also ha[ve] to account for all possible future mishaps” (both 69)—is not undertaken. No new conception of “Māori,” now freed of the imperial underestimations that Maning believed were so dangerous, is proposed. Ultimately, what is expressed by the text is less an assertion that Pākehā hold a mistaken picture of what “the Maori man” or “the Native” is, and more a rejection of the possibility of fixing such a picture in the first instance. As this chapter shows, Maning's text promotes, in place of certain characterisations, a productive attitude toward uncertainty about who or what Māori might be, or be capable of.

The Land Deal

An extended sequence that epitomises both the opportunities and the problems of interpreting *Old New Zealand* concerns the purchase of a block of land from a group of seemingly obstructive sellers. The narrator describes the process of negotiating a price and determining which parties are owed payment, as well as the way his status as owner came to be established, alongside legal proceedings that took place several years later whereby the sale came to be

formally recognised by the New Zealand colonial government. If the events written can be considered to any extent true, then the text appears to offer a recording of an early land transaction between Māori and colonist, the details of which have relevance to how contemporary New Zealanders might think about the absolute alienation of land from Māori occupation that was and remains a cornerstone of colonial tension. However, determining the extent of such truth with any certainty, given the richly overlapping irony through which the narrator tells it, is an impossible task. Over the following paragraphs this irony will be analysed through Marta Dynel's neo-Gricean theoretical framework, showing how it confounds critical engagement with the text. I show how questions about the truth value or reliability of the narrative can be circumscribed by treating the irony not as a puzzle to be solved but as an expressive action that calls for the reader's acknowledgement. The land deal sequence is revealed as a mechanism for fostering uncertainty, encouraging the flexibility that can arise once certainty is accepted as necessarily groundless.

The land deal sequence is structured as a play between different language-games against which it becomes difficult to construct a stable foundation for representational analysis. Between the sellers and the narrator, different ways of verbalising relationships to land are expressed, revealing sometimes bafflingly different logics for understanding the possibility of exclusive rights to its possession or occupation. The familiar language-game of British private property ownership, with its attendant terminology and institutions, is contrasted with a language-game, used by the sellers, that is presumably unfamiliar to the implied British reader. The rules of the latter language-game are not explicitly described, instead being exemplified in the behaviour of different characters as the sequence plays out. Although the different ways of thinking about land encoded in the different language-games appear incompatible, the successful sale of land suggests that this need not present an issue. Instead, what becomes target for satire in this sequence is the inability of the narrator to see beyond his own British legal orientation.

The British language-game is broadly adhered to by the narrator, while the latter, unfamiliar language-game is implicitly bound to the sellers of the land. The narrator's adherence to the former language-game is thematized by exaggeration at one point when, in Calder's words, in order

to dramatize the[] differences [between Māori and British ways of dealing with land],
Maning hurls a barrage of legal words at his reader. He mentions claims and claimants,

latent equities and provisos, evidence is affirmed, places are 'being, situated and lying.'
("Introduction" 8)

The effect of this excess of legalese is to demonstrate the binding between law and language in the British colonial language-game. However, in the narrator's encounter with the other, less familiar, language-game, this binding of law and language has no effect. The juxtaposition of these different forms of life shows the operation of representational processes themselves. The identification of a singular orientation from which a critique in terms of representation might find a foothold is thus obstructed, as it becomes increasingly unclear what, if anything, can be said to have actually occurred.

In the narrated encounter between language-games, complex structures of irony weave the narrator's voice into a broader textual tapestry of meaning and counter-meaning. The text first acknowledges the numerous different ways that a connection to land can become entangled in its sale or exchange by presenting its narrator's negotiations with the sellers as a series of individual stories, jostling for primacy. A chronicle model of historical processes is shown to be in operation, which is then explicitly connected by the narrator to British history, and subsequently used to challenge British common sense. Finally, in an account of the narrator's interactions with a colonial court, British customs of land ownership and sale are defamiliarized to strip them of any inherent value or superiority, expressing them instead in terms of convention and continuity. Throughout this process the centrality of the narrator's voice, and consequently the form of life from which it emerges, are challenged by elements of the narrative itself that appear beyond the narrator's own ability to see or comprehend. He speaks his own interpretations of the unfolding events, but it is clear to the reader that there is more going on beyond the narrator's orientation.

As the purchase proceeds, *Old New Zealand* demonstrates that the logic of a given verbalisation of ownership or connectivity to land is bound wholly to the language-game that is used to construct or interpret it. The narrator first describes the behaviour and conduct of the implicitly Māori sellers of his land, as presented from the eyes of an incredulous British participant—himself. He then narrates an engagement with the British court system that occurred at a later date, in which the legality and validity of the same land deal is contested, through similarly incredulous eyes. This time, however, the incredulity is directed not at the Māori way of doing things but at the British way. Through a defamiliarization effect the narrator's dealings with the colonial court are rendered as strange as his dealings with the

people from whom he purchased his land in the first place. Presenting both views through the eyes of an incredulous first-person narrator encourages the reader to adopt, by turns, a perception of both familiar and unfamiliar logics of land ownership as similarly disconnected from reality, but in quite different ways.

Invoking History to Bind Self and Land

The sellers of the land are described by the narrator as offering a sequence of overlapping claims to compensation for its sale, which ultimately have little bearing on its final form. Numerous positions and grounds are presented. Some overlap, some reinforce or contradict each other in complex ways, and some are highly unusual:

I now purchased a piece of land and built a “castle” for myself. I really can’t tell to the present day who I purchased the land from, for there were about fifty different claimants, every one of whom assured me that the other forty-nine were ‘humbugs’, and had no right whatever. [...] One man said his ancestors had killed off the first owners; another declared his ancestors had driven off the second party; another man, who seemed to be listened to with more respect than ordinary, declared that his ancestor had been the first possessor of all, and had never been ousted, and that this ancestor was a huge lizard that lived in a cave on the land many ages ago, and sure enough there was the cave to prove it. (Maning, *ONZ* 127)

Although the opening sentence pre-figures Maning’s narrator as emerging ultimately successfully from the negotiation, it is made clear to the reader that the precise terms of sale remain clouded by doubt. Over the following paragraphs I show how the narrator’s simultaneous success and failure is constructed through complex, interwoven layers of irony in this passage. The text destabilises the certainty of any particular reading of the proceedings as either a success or a failure, before presenting as an alternative a context-sensitive orientation in which judgments of success are bound to the contingent details of the encounter in question. This orientation, unavailable to the narrator, is implicitly presented in the construction of the narration itself, beyond whose bounds the narrator is unable to see.

The three principal claims made by the sellers in pursuit of compensation for the sale of their land emerge from a language-game that expresses a chronicle model of propriety.

Chronicle history grounds authority in ancestral ties, binding the self to a system of bloodlines and allegiances traceable back to historical and sometimes legendary figures. The first petitioner claims he should be compensated for the sale because, of those present, he can trace the longest, oldest line of descent to possession of the land, all prior owners having been “killed off” (127) by his own ancestors. The second petitioner argues using an opposing logic, wherein the shortest, youngest line of descent to possession should determine compensation—a “might makes right” position which privileges recent history over past events. The third petitioner lodges a surprising claim to supernatural ancestry in the form of “a huge lizard” (127), trumping the petty squabbles of humans with a boast of arcane ancestry. To bolster his story and bind it to the present, the third petitioner leverages the visible existence of a cave on the land where the lizard is supposed to reside. Although the narrator does not explicitly say so, this extraordinary claim seems to rely on the claimant, “who seemed to be listened to with more respect than ordinary” (127), tapping existing networks of support and alliance. Reptilian ancestry becomes, then, less a literal claim and more a metaphorical one: the respect with which he is held shields him from challenge, enabling more outlandish assertions of precedent.

Each of the claimants produces, in different ways, arguments based on historical precedents of possession and dispossession. Land title in their world depends not on the stability of a court system and rule of law, but on history—often violent—in combination with a particular claimant’s skill or bravado at narrating personal connection to the history being referenced. In the contrasting chorographic model, which displaced chronicle-based feudalism with the arrival of modernity in European nation-states, authority is tied to geography and exerted through anonymously-managed institutions holding exclusive domain over regions of the state’s territory. Maning’s sellers, however, are both unable and unwilling, to rely on the institutions enabled by a chorographic model of hierarchy, relying instead on their abilities to tell believable stories with reference to ancestral figures. In so doing, they express an understanding of land title which is markedly different to the modern British colonial understanding, but which parallels the feudal, chronicle-based system of land title which prevailed in pre-modern Britain.

A chronicle-based understanding of history is, in fact, already implicitly introduced in the opening sentences of the chapter, establishing an orientation from which the value of different systems of social organisation can be described in an ironic but no inaccurate way. When opening the chapter, the narrator performs several proverbial expressions before briefly

introducing the topic of difference, albeit with a deflationary tone:

“Every Englishman’s house is his castle,” “I scorn the foreign yoke,” and glory in the name of Briton, and all that. The natural end, however, of all castles is to be burnt or blown up. In England it is true you can call the constable, and should any foreign power attack you with grinding organ and white mice, you may hope for succours from without, from which cause ‘castles’ in England are more long lived. In New Zealand, however, it is different, as, to the present day, the old system prevails, and castles continue to be disposed of in the natural way [...]. (127)

An ironic chronicle understanding of contemporary British property law is thus established. In reproducing two proverbial expressions, “every Englishman’s house is his castle” and “glory in the name of Briton” (both *ONZ* 127), the narrator reminds the reader that contemporary British private property values can be rendered literally as matters involving archaic architecture in the form of castles, and that the origins of British nationalism in the glorious deeds of legendary ancestors relies on the similarly archaic logic of chronicle.

When, however, the narrator concludes the performance of proverbial wisdom with a breezy “and all that,” he robs the proverbs of any power they might have had to inflate what is being spoken of beyond that which is immediate and practical. Rather than acknowledging the details of each component of these proverbs, and thus ritually affirming them as inherited wisdom, they are brought under a single informal pronoun, “all that,” and summarily dismissed. Although Calder has argued that “the tendency of Maning’s satire is to place to Māori customary attitudes to land and land sales in a state of nature beyond the reach of civilization” (“Introduction” 7), in this sequence it is not Māori but British customary attitudes that have been placed into such a state of nature. By performing a dismissal of the proverbs, the narrator deflates the inherited wisdom they are supposed to contain.

The narrator’s deflation of proverbial knowledge blurs borders between past and present, offering a complex and subtle challenge to the picture of history as a progression from ignorance to enlightenment. When the reader is informed that “[i]n New Zealand [...] the old system prevails” (Maning, *ONZ* 127), this is not a judgment that the Māori way of dealing with land title is unacceptably archaic, “in a state of nature,” or “beyond the reach of civilisation” (both Calder, “Introduction” 7). For Maning’s narrator, the only real differences between British and Māori societies exist in the small, relatively insignificant details of day-to-day

happenstance. But the presentation of this stance can be read as ironic, by which interpretation the narrator comes to be understood as saying the opposite: that there are, as everybody is supposed to already know, deep and significant differences between British and Māori societies. To unpack and interpret this irony, the following paragraphs will first outline Dynel's neo-Gricean account of irony, before analysing both the literal and ironic meanings of the narrator's expressions. What is revealed in this analysis is that each possible interpretation—literal, or ironic—is similarly plausible. However, the reader has been left without sufficient clues to be certain about whether to interpret the passage literally or ironically. This uncertainty is in turn significant for the process of recovering meaning from this sequence. By bringing Dynel's account of irony to bear upon what the narrator says and how he says it, it becomes possible to also draw meaning from the uncertain position into which the reader has been manoeuvred by the text.

Dynel's account of irony develops Paul Grice's Ordinary Language Philosophy model of speech to show how irony can be understood only with reference to the ways that language is being used in a given expressive dialogue. Gricean analysis deploys a model of speaker intentions and hearer responses that is, due to its common ground in Ordinary Language Philosophy, wholly compatible with Moi's conception of writing as action and expression, and reading as a process of acknowledgment. Dynel's theorisation of irony follows Grice in deploying the jargon verb *making as if to say* to describe a verbal action in which what is *meant* differs radically from what is literally *said*, or as Dynel phrases it, "there is no speaker meaning coinciding with what is said" (Dynel 5). Dynel develops several models of irony, including one that she terms *propositional meaning reversal irony*, an ironic utterance in which "the speaker verbalises an overtly untruthful proposition by making as if to say, and thereby [...] implicates a proposition opposite to the one expressed" (Dynel 157). The Gricean jargon term "implicate" refers to "implicature," which can be glossed as a process of combining verbal, non-verbal, and contextual clues to recover what the speaker *meant* in cases where this may diverge from, or extend beyond, the words they literally *said*. For irony to function it is crucial that the hearer identifies the signals made by the speaker that they are not *saying* but merely *making as if to say*; otherwise, the irony will fall flat.

In the deflationary retelling of proverbs that opens the land deal sequence in *Old New Zealand*, the signalling by which the reader is supposed to recognise the irony is ambiguous, disrupting the process of recovering certain meaning by implicature. Because irony relies on

the reader detecting overt but non-explicit signals, an ironic reading exists in the form of a potential that lies dormant in the text until it is activated by the reader as part of their process of acknowledgment. If the signalling is ambiguous, as they often are in *Old New Zealand*, detection of the potential for irony is insufficient to determine with certainty whether the narrator or the author intended its activation by the reader. In such cases, ironic and literal meanings exist side by side until the reader chooses to privilege one over the other. On identifying the potential for irony, it thus becomes necessary to proceed as if both ironic and literal meanings are plausible, only afterwards making a decision about whether to interpret the words one way or the other.

If the narrator's comments on the wisdom of proverbs is read literally, he is found to be suggesting that British society does not possess any particular qualities that mark it as much different from, let alone better than, Māori society. British society is instead considered to possess a few small practical advantages, such as that "one can call the constable" to prevent one's property from being "burnt or blown up" (both ONZ 127). The sole upside is the decidedly practical outcome that "'castles' in England are more long lived" (127). The threat of foreign invasion appears initially in proverbial form as "I scorn the foreign yoke," before being comically reduced to an "attack [...] with grinding organ and white mice" (both 127)—probably, as Andrew Thompson suggests in an analysis of Italian influences on George Eliot's writing, a xenophobic reference to Italian immigrants (Thompson 129)—to which a person in England can merely "hope for succours from without" (Maning, ONZ 127). Again, the relative advantages that residents of England enjoy when compared to residents of New Zealand have been downplayed. The threat of foreign invasion is reduced to a threat from musical instruments and mice. English national defence is something that is not even guaranteed, but for which one can only hope. Simple, practical matters are discussed, presented with a tone that suggests they should be viewed as little more than annoyances, with minimal significance.

Coterminal to the literal reading is, however, an ironic reading, which can be activated by the reader if they decide first that the narrator is speaking untruthfully, and second that this is a signal that irony is intended. In the ironic reading the narrator makes as if to say that there are only minor differences between the way property is defended in New Zealand and in England, but what he implicates is the opposite: there are in fact massive differences that play out at the structural level of social organisation, a far grander scale than the practical concerns expressed literally by his words. This interpretation can only emerge when the potential for

irony in the narrator's expressions is activated, and it directly opposes the literal meaning of the words. However, because both the ironic and literal meanings are plausibly true if the rules of different language-games are applied to recover their meanings, it is not at all clear how the reader is supposed to finally decide which one to acknowledge.

Despite his deflationary language, the narrator nowhere states flagrant untruths, but the irony latent in his words calls for some form of acknowledgment—even if only a rejection. The problem for the reader is that, on the one hand, the stability of one reading can only be achieved at the expense of the other, while on the other hand, the plausibility of irony itself suggests that there might be a correct way and an erroneous way of acknowledging what has been written. If the author intended irony but the reader decides to interpret the text literally, the reader has failed an implicit test of their literary astuteness. If, however, the author intended a literal interpretation but the reader chooses to activate the latent irony, then the reader has also failed, this time by being too cynical or too suspicious in their acknowledgment of the text. It is not at all clear how to proceed with confidence.

Faced with the two possible interpretations of the paragraph, and absent further assistance from author or narrator, the reader is effectively asked to make an independent judgment about which to accept. The ironic interpretation positions England and New Zealand as places whose systems of property defence differ significantly. The literal interpretation focusses on the practical differences produced between these differing systems, which are represented as only marginally significant. While the ironic interpretation reveals fundamental differences at the level of abstraction and idealism, the literal interpretation implicitly deflates the importance of such abstractions, focussing instead on the practical effects, if any, that arise from their differing modes of operation. To resolve the contradiction brought about by the superimpositions of the literal and ironic meanings of the paragraph, the reader must decide whether to value major differences in abstract structures over minor differences in the practical effects of those structures. In Wittgenstein's terms, a choice must be made whether to play one of two different language-games, each of which will shape subsequent thought in different ways. Given the obvious truths present in both the literal reading and what is implicated in its ironic reversal, this choice cannot be made by the reader with any certainty. By denying the reader the possibility of a clean resolution of its ironies, the text undermines certainty itself.

Irreducible ambiguity encourages the adoption of a relaxed approach to logical contradiction, in which the possibility is accepted that the literal and ironic meanings of the

narrator's statements may both be true at the same time. Radically different kinds of abstract organisation are at play in British and Māori social systems, but when it is demonstrated to the reader that they themselves cannot tell whether this matters, their certainty about the significance of these abstract differences is called into question. Of course, it makes no sense to deny the scale and significance of the differences between the different language-games, but the structure of irony in Maning's writing suggests that it is not necessary—if indeed it is possible—to select one at the expense of the other. In colonial political terms, the assimilation of one form of life into the other cannot be justified merely by differences between the orientations that they privilege or require. At the level of the embodied and thus contextually-bound encounters that inevitably occur between the people involved, grand-scale conceptual schemas become insignificant against the jumble of ad-hoc resolutions that arise in response to situated, intersubjective problems. In the picture thus presented, it is senseless to desire certainty about a singularly correct way to understand something as abstract as property.

Invoking History to Ground Authority

To the British colonial eye, used to calcified hierarchies of structure power, it may be difficult to admit that a system of decision-making based on stories seemingly invented on the spot works just as well, but *Old New Zealand* shows just how British systems are, in fact, grounded in similarly arbitrary systems of storytelling, the contingency of which has simply been obscured in the everyday operation of the language-games with which they are performed. The following paragraphs show how the British court system is brought under scrutiny in *Old New Zealand* to make this claim. To undermine the idea that the British system is superior precisely because it offers a more durable foundation for carrying out affairs than the disordered procedures narrated in the land deal sequence, the narrative demonstrates that the British structures are in fact based on similarly contingent details. The structure of the narrative suggests that the British courts in fact exhibit the same chronicle patterns of authority as the indigenous New Zealand systems to which they are being compared. By deflating the differences between systems that are supposed to be alien to one another, the text further undermines the reader's certainty about the significance of the differences between the language-games at play.

The terms of Maning's attack on the supposed significance of differences in abstract systems are made clear when, later in the chapter, the narrator is called to appear before a

British-administered land court. Rather than the ordered, rational structures that the reader might anticipate, the court is rendered strange and inhospitable, composed of arcane systems whose structural organisation is shown to emerge from an archaic chronicle model of authority and hierarchy. As British subjects, both the narrator and the implied British reader share a form of life within which British authority can be spoken about as a naturalised reality, with deference to it a matter of course. Belonging to the British Empire in this context means subscribing to and internalising the chorographic understanding of history and authority in which, as a British citizen, one becomes both a part of and upholds the supposedly natural and obvious superiority of the institutions that give British citizenship its power and meaning. When British authority manifests in *Old New Zealand* in the form of a land court, however, the narrator unexpectedly shifts his allegiance. No longer purely British, he instead plays the role of the self-professed Pākehā-Māori, assimilated into Māori forms of life and thus seeing history not as a matter of institutional belonging but as a tracing of lineages. In this context he finds himself at the mercy of “Land Commissioners” (ONZ 129), written in the text with scare quotes as if to ward off the mystical power of the institution behind the language, “who were part and parcel of the new inventions which had come up soon after the arrival of the first governor, and which are still a trouble to the land” (129). The narrator clearly regrets the arrival of British institutional power, seeing its systems of management not just an annoyance, but a menace to the people of New Zealand.

As the narrative progresses, the narrator adopts an orientation from which he is able to render its proceedings as a conflict between warring tribal groups, using the word “tribe” to describe the Land Commissioners:

[I]f I had had no one but the commissioners and two or three hundred men of their tribe to deal with, I should have put my pa in fighting order, and told them to ‘come on’ [...]. But somehow these people had cunningly managed to mix up the name of Queen Victoria, God bless her! (no disparagement to King Potatau) in the matter. (ONZ 129)

The narrator here explicitly characterises his relationship to the court as one of tribal warfare. Simultaneously he performs a refusal to recognise the colonial authority that would, in ordinary circumstances, require his deference to their rulings. Although a characterisation of the authority of ‘Land Commissioners’ as intertribal conflict is absurd in the logic of the British colonial language-game, it is presented by the narrator as wholly rational. But because these

details are not explicitly argued, to understand what the narrator is saying the reader must temporarily adopt the same language-game that the narrator is using. By doing so they are able to find sense in the narrator's depiction of events. This experience leaves the reader's certainty prone to destabilisation. The distinction between the material immediacy of tribal conflict and the genteel abstractions of the court system degrades. Consequently, the reader is left able to question the certainty of the order and stability that the court, as British institution, represents.

The negotiation over land with its Māori sellers, and the subsequent handling of that sale under British colonial authority in court, together offer a uniquely non-essentialising perspective on cultural difference. Forsaking a predictable presentation of the colonial position on land ownership as naturally superior, Maning's narrative subsumes both the familiar British private property language-game and an unfamiliar Māori approach to relationships with land under a new language-game within which both systems are understood to be arbitrary constructions. The title "Land Commissioner" loses its implicit authority, understood instead as something that only functions inside the British language-game. Compared to the court system, tribal conflict becomes not merely plausible, but perhaps preferred, as a way of resolving conflict. When the narrator complains that "somehow these people had cunningly managed to mix up the name of Queen Victoria, God bless her! [...] in the matter" (ONZ 129), the animating logic of the court is revealed. Its authority is ultimately grounded in the same chronicle-based structures of lineage-tracing that the sellers in the land deal used to establish claims to compensation earlier in the land deal sequence. Although Māori and British ways of doing things can be understood as very different, they can simultaneously be understood as very much the same. Difference is no longer a defining characteristic of one side or the other, but simply a matter of orientation.

If the behaviour of the land sellers is strange, *Old New Zealand* denies this strangeness the dignity of becoming grounded in a stable system of representation. Ahmed has written about emotions as arising when bodies meet other bodies within "affective economies, where feelings do not reside in subjects or objects, but are produced as effects of circulation" (*The Cultural Politics of Emotion* 8). By narrating the details of the sellers' behaviour with a mood of ironic veracity, and then turning that same mood upon the British court system, the strangeness that emerges in the reading encounter with *Old New Zealand* is detached from any particular group. Strangeness is thus revealed to be a groundless quality that emerges spontaneously in encounters with difference. For a British reader, the certain assignment of strangeness to Māori

people as an Other is pre-empted. Instead, strangeness is to be understood in value-free terms as a product of one's own unfamiliarity with something that, for someone else, might be something completely ordinary.

The narrative inversion of Otherness invites the reader to adopt an orientation from which the sellers' behaviour is normal, and the narrator's is strange. The racial identity of the sellers thus loses significance. Their behaviour is not evidence of some essential racial quality: they are simply doing things the way things are done "in New Zealand" (ONZ 127). Instead, the strangeness which arises from the description of the sellers' behaviour finds balance in the strangeness of "the pakeha" himself. His third-person self-address deftly separates what is narrated from the voice narrating it, preventing the strangeness from becoming attached to the narrator in lieu of the sellers. It persists as a free-floating affect, wholly present in the encounter but never firmly bound to one side or the other. Strangeness is reconfigured as a property of encounters with difference that, on its own, has no value, but to which an appropriate response is respect and independent thought.

With their prejudices left weakened by exposure to contrasting orientations, the reader finds themselves in a powerful position from which to understand difference for themselves. The narrator has become an outsider to British colonial rule, subject to its systems against his will. The detached bemusement he expresses to the court matches the detached bemusement he expressed toward the various claims to compensation made during his attempts to purchase his land. Where he walks away from the latter with a general sense of satisfaction, his dealings with the court induce shock and outrage. As a site of bizarre but plausible tribal conflict, the court is left with merely a veneer of phoney gentility. Whether this perspective is *true* is beside the point. Instead, what becomes salient are the processes by which the reader is empowered to judge for themselves whether the court does, indeed, function though an archaic chronicle system, whose only differences to Māori forms of life are geographical or temporal, without reference to the limiting Victorian ideologies of progress.

The Arbitrary Grounds of Value

In negotiating the sale of land to Maning's narrator, the sellers argue for the right to compensation from multiple grounds using stories that overlap in sometimes contradictory ways. The narrator does not understand how to resolve the different stories into a singular

orientation upon the sale, and when he publicly admits of this the sellers quickly regroup to produce one for him. The narrator's failure to engage in their way of negotiating land exchange is resolved by the sellers adapting to his needs. The assumption and discarding of systems of value thus emerges as an activity contingent upon context, whereby the rules of whatever language-game is in play are modified in-situ to activate and deactivate different systems of logic. The following paragraphs describe this process in action first in the land deal sequence, and then in the narrator's musings about a *mere pounamu*. The latter analysis reveals how Maning's text performatively enacts a modification of the narrator's own language-game during his discussion of a *mere pounamu*, in the process demonstrating to the reader how they themselves can become more flexible toward their own systems of value.

"A Very Dirty Piece of Paper"

The sellers' ready adaptation to the narrator's needs contrasts with his inflexible requirement for the sale to be done his way, producing a satire of coloniser's efforts to force Māori to adopt their forms of life. The ease with which the transaction concludes after the sellers take up his approach can be read as a claim that this way of doing things is superior because it enables decisions to be made with a minimum of fuss. However, it can also be read as a derogatory comment about the paucity of the narrator's understanding: a ridiculing of his inflexibility and his inability to fully appreciate what he is getting himself into. The first reading reaffirms British superiority, but the second undermines it, ridiculing the assumptions by which British certainty about their own superiority is constructed. The second reading thus acts as a commentary upon the first. For the reader, a critical orientation is made available upon the events occurring in the narrative, to which the narrator himself does not apparently have access.

Until the sellers present him with a singular orientation through which to understand the current state of ownership, the narrator is unable to proceed, and he therefore becomes frustrated. His annoyance is visible in the description of the process by which the sale was finally concluded:

It took about three months' negotiation before the purchase of the land could be made; and, indeed, I at one time gave up the idea, as I found it quite impossible to decide who to pay. If I paid one party, the others vowed I should never have possession, and to pay all seemed impossible; so at last I let all parties know that I had made up my mind not

to have the land. This, however, turned out to be the first step I had made in the right direction; for, thereupon, all the different claimants agreed amongst themselves to demand a certain quantity of goods, and divide them amongst themselves afterwards. (128).

Notable in this passage is a lack of emotive language. The situation is presented as a puzzle, that Maning's narrator sets out dispassionately, albeit with growing impatience, to solve. Failing to find a solution after months of effort, he publicly declares the puzzle unsolvable. It is only when the sellers simplify their claims to cluster around a single point of negotiation that the narrator can proceed.

The combination of the seemingly bizarre nature of the claims for compensation and the sellers' lack of the supposedly common-sense understanding that proof of ownership ought to be a readily producible attribute of land can be read as a derisive commentary upon Māori attitudes toward land ownership. In his introduction to *Old New Zealand*, Calder sees in the sellers' behaviour a picture "calculated to bolster the impatiences and prejudices of settlers hungry for land" (7). The disparate grounds for compensation in this picture represent "the rag tag and bob tail of Maoridom [who] will of course discover a relation to the land in order to milk the hapless settler for all he is worth" (7). Maning's contemporaries would have certainly found much to disparage in the contradictory tales of murder, the giant lizard in the cave, the *wahi tapu* which seemed "of very doubtful authenticity" (128), and the apparent understanding of rats as "game" (127). From a British orientation toward land ownership, there does not seem to be any logic to the sellers' behaviour other than obstruction.

Although the simplification of the process appears as a triumph of reason over anarchy, by the second reading of this passage Maning is making fun of his narrator. Irony plays the self-evident strangeness of the events against the fixity of colonial beliefs and procedures. The solution of the narrator's problem was not obtained in a triumph of reason but discovered by accident, a full three months after negotiations had begun. Until this point the narrator fails to notice, or ignores, his own inability to follow the proceedings: either too short-sighted or too stubborn to find some other way of educating himself. By inadvertently forcing the negotiation to collapse to his simple terms, the narrator reveals his own inability to adapt. Victorian assumptions about race and intellect are here inverted.

Instead of the sellers it is the narrator who demonstrates a paucity of imagination, which manifests as an inability to think differently to solve his problem in contrast to the predominant

Victorian picture about the intellectual abilities of indigenous peoples. As Arjun Appadurai argues, the Victorian picture of “the native” was constructed around a “sense of physical immobility” (37) that effectively positions indigenous populations as “scientists of the concrete” (38): subjects of an incarceration imposing both physical and mental limits on what, it was imagined, they might be capable of. Such limitations, however, “probably never existed” for any indigenous group (39) in history, and indeed Maning during his time as a Pākehā-Māori would have had ample opportunity to see for himself the fallacy of assuming that Māori forms of life were so limited in their potentiality. In Maning's text the narrator operates as a representative of British colonisers unable to see beyond the limits of their own forms of life, taking on the characteristics of the Victorian native, “confined by what they know, feel, and believe [...] [and] prisoners of their ‘mode of thought’” (37). Tied to a restricted understanding of how people and land might relate, the narrator is incarcerated within his own form of life—a restriction that the reader must by no means share.

Given the complexity with which the sellers articulated their connections to the land in the events preceding this transfer, the narrator appears wilfully blind to the potential for misunderstanding and conflict caused by his unwillingness to understand the sellers on their own terms. When he is finally given what he wants, it takes the form of “a very dirty piece of paper with all their marks on it” (ONZ 128-9) upon which, he smugly declares, “I ha[d] written the terms of transfer on it in English to my own perfect satisfaction” (129). This sequence satirises Thomas Kendall and John Liddiard Nicholas's 1815 deed of purchase for land at Rangihoua, made in agreement with Te Uri o Kanae and countersigned with a reproduction of his moko by Hongi Hika. Salmond's analysis of this deed in *Two Worlds* makes clear the reasons why it might be deserving of satire:

This document was in English, which few of the local people understood. [...] The legal terms in the document, which denoted European notions about land as property and its transfer, had no close equivalents in Maori. Rangihoua was in a country run by Maori, not in England or in Port Jackson. The expectation that European law and ideas about property could be instated there by simply writing on a piece of paper was, in its own way, breathtaking. (506)

Like Maning's narrator, Kendall and Nicholson exhibit an inflexibility that betrays either profound arrogance or blindness. Also like Maning's narrator, they can be read as Appadurai's

“scientists of the concrete” themselves: unable, or unwilling, to accept that the systems of legal protection and enforcement that they are used to simply have no meaning in the context in which they find themselves. What for Salmond is “breathtaking” also offers evidence of a lack of imagination or intellect, arising from a sense of certainty that discloses a shortage of understanding or respect for difference.

When the sellers realise that the narrator lacks the faculties to engage appropriately, they quickly agree to radically simplify the process, seemingly for his benefit but more likely to theirs. Maning's narrator may indeed be “milk[ed] for all he is worth” (Calder 7) for the land, paying “about five and a half times what the same quantity of land would have cost [him] at the same time in Tasmania” (ONZ 129). But the fault is his own, arising from his inability to engage with his sellers at the level of sophistication they assume. He receives in exchange for payment “a very dirty piece of paper” (ONZ 128-9) as the deed to title, and still has to deal with a man who “demanded [several barrels of] gunpowder about once a month” for the next 25 years after the sale (128). His nevertheless “perfect satisfaction” (129) thus admits to a profound inability to see clearly what has happened.

The sequence produces an ambivalent view of the relative merit of the different ways of dealing with the sale of land embodied by Maning's narrator and the sellers of his land, respectively. For a reader with British prejudices, the reduction of complexity that enables the land sale to proceed shows the superiority of structures and hierarchies over the apparent anarchy and unstable grounds of intersubjectivity. But *Old New Zealand* simultaneously subjects its narrator to ridicule. By presenting him as foolish and bumbling against the complexity of discourse employed by his Māori negotiators, the narrative shows up British systems as inflexible, incapable of dealing with nuance. The sellers, meanwhile, perform a complex negotiation of values that, they seem to assume, the narrator ought to be able to follow. The ease with which they collapse their negotiation to a single point indicates the flexibility and adaptability of their approach, in contrast to the narrator's rigid and contextually ignorant demands. The dirtiness of the “very dirty piece of paper” (128-9) indicates an entirely appropriate contempt of the sellers for the narrator's simplistic and rigid way of articulating a relationship to land. The narrator may feel secure in his title, but his own words reveal that this is merely a product of his own sense of certainty, which the narrative undermines as not simply illusionary, but laughable.

Valuing the Mere Pounamu

At the conclusion of a stream-of-consciousness-like monologue that explicitly contrasts different values systems, the narrator performs a surprising pause and turn that first leverages the insincerity of a British cliché to cynically highlight the role of aesthetics in value systems, before abruptly inverting the critique and treating the role of aesthetics seriously as a way of acknowledging the value systems of others. A British proverbial cliché is evoked in an apparent attempt to give closure to the disorganised ramblings that preceded it. This effort fails when the narrator interrupts himself to reconsider the meaning of the cliché itself. As he walks through his own judgments a shift takes place that demonstrates to the reader how forms of life can change to incorporate new sets of values. At the same time, the narrative itself suggests that inability to do so is a personal failing, in an echo of the narrator's shaming of people unwilling to adopt an anarchist live-and-let-live attitude to the neighbours that was discussed in Chapter 4 of this thesis. The adoption of new systems of value is presented as a straightforward process and as a boon, and therefore as a habit that the reader obviously ought to acquire for themselves.

A stream-of-consciousness-like discussion of values, performed while the narrator seems to be about to drown, is concluded with a cliché about the inherent value of the British race, that is in turn interrupted with the interjection of Māori aesthetics. The narrator states that

I would not give one of your golden locks, my dear, for all the gold, silver, pearls, diamonds, *mere ponamus*—stop, let me think,—a good *mere ponamu* would be a temptation. I had once a *mere*, a present from a Maori friend, the most beautiful thing of the kind ever seen. It was nearly as transparent as glass; in it there were beautiful marks like fern leaves, trees, fishes, and—I would not give much for a person who could not see almost anything in it. (ONZ 105)

The phrase “one of your golden locks” refers back to the thought which triggered the narrator's stream of consciousness monologue, a musing on why “the Maori should come to give their sea nymphs or spirits yellow hair” given as they “know nothing about yellow hair; their hair is black” (both 104). *Old New Zealand's* glossary defines *mere pounamu* as “[a] native weapon made of a rare green stone, and much valued by the natives” (105n). The intimate “my dear” and the direct address which open the sentence thus suggest that, in another invocation of

Maning's audience of "young ladies," the intended recipient of the narrator's monologue is a blonde British woman, whose hair colour has been explicitly bound to race by the narrator himself. The narrator is attempting to make a claim that a scrap of blonde hair is worth more than all of the material riches he can think of. His attempt fails, however, at the moment the *mere pounamu* enters consideration as an object of value.

The hyperbole of the cliché is revealed as such when, during an enumeration of valuable objects which is supposed to prove that nothing is more valuable than a lock of a blonde British woman's hair, the narrator interrupts himself to suggest that a *mere pounamu* might in fact be more valuable. *Mere pounamu*, the reader is informed by the glossary, hold great value for Māori people. The narrator's self-interruption is thus racially charged, as the narrator has allowed Māori aesthetics to abort his ritual affirmation of the pricelessness of blonde British femininity. As the passage proceeds, the presence of "beautiful marks like fern leaves, trees, fishes" in the *mere* are named as grounds for the value (105)—motifs not typically associated with British visual culture. Cutting himself off in mid-thought, the narrator declares allegiance to an implicitly Māori aesthetics of value by stating that he "would not give much for a person who could not see almost anything in it" (105). By having his narrator express this claim, Maning elegantly and confoundingly uses the ability of any person to find value in this *mere pounamu* as, itself, a measure of their value as a person more generally. The combination of this expression and the glossary entry that clarifies the immense value of a *mere pounamu* to Māori people makes the narrator perform a dual-layered shift. Not only is the value of British femininity clearly finite and limited, Māori aesthetic values are shown to bear equal weight to British ones.

The reader is thus presented in this passage a demonstration of how to incorporate an unfamiliar system of value into their own thinking. The narrator's value shift emerges not as something pre-formed but from thought processes occurring in the moment. It begins with a self-interruption, set off heavily with punctuation: "—stop, let me think,—" (ONZ 105). The imperative usage of "think" foregrounds processes of reason, nudging the reader's affective response to the text toward a similarly reason-focussed mood. The reader bears witness in real time to the narrator's realisation that something in his value system is incomplete. His self-interruption is a performance of uncertainty that starts with the identification of a gap in his ideas. The expression "—stop, let me think,—" evokes the subjective experience of being confronted with new information that does not fit into an existing mental model. The calcified

system of truth symbolised by the cliché about “golden locks” is unsealed, enabling the modifications necessitated by new evidence. What was once certain has become uncertain.

Participating as a witness in a process of self-interruption and self-correction, the reader is given the opportunity to keep pace with the narrator. The opportunity becomes a challenge when the narrator binds the value of a person to their ability to perform judgments in the now-modified value system. A reader who has themselves stopped, thought, and admitted of the uncertainty required to shift values—generously offered as a shared experience by the narrator—is safe from the narrator's subsequent rejection of those who have not done so. People who cannot see the value of a *mere pounamu*, he declares, are worthless. Worse still, if they are in possession of one without also learning the value system associated with it, then they are fools, too. The only way to be immune to the challenge encoded in this narrative is to, like the narrator has done, admit of the inherent uncertainty of value calculus across different cultures. Doing so enables oneself to be altered by one's encounters with difference. By embracing different value systems, one learns how to identify value in different things. Moreover, this is not to be seen as an indicator of corruption or degeneracy, but as a strength, and one that grants the literal ability to see things that others cannot.

The ability to see outwards grants a heightened ability to see through the value systems passed on in? the process of inheritance that gives form to one's own cultural background. This is evident in the narrator's lament for his loss of possession of the *mere* which, as the passage continues, provides Maning the opportunity to turn his satire back upon British aesthetic values:

Never shall I cease to regret having parted with it. The Emperor of Brazil, I think, has it now; but he does not know the proper use of it. It went to the Minister many years ago. I did not sell it. I would have scorned to do that; but I did expect to be made knight of the golden pig knife, or elephant and watch box, or something of that nature (ONZ 105)

The absurd titles thematise the arbitrary basis of the aesthetics that mark authority, which the narrator is nevertheless bound to respect by the forms of life he continues to inhabit. The titles are delivered by the narrator in a flat voice that ironically discloses his awareness that they sound absurd, underscoring both their arbitrary nature and the powerlessness of both Maning and the reader to alter them in any way. After taking the aesthetics of the *mere pounamu* seriously, the narrator here presents British aesthetics as suitable for ridicule.

By adopting the values of others, the narrator gains access to new ways of understanding his own. Beer has suggested that, in the process of doing anthropological research,

[s]ome [scientific] writers grasped the ways in which ethnography casts light on the home culture. This led to ironic redescriptions of English assumptions and a shrewd recall of the parallels between observers and those remote groups they observed. (Beer 78)

In looking outward, the ethnographic orientation finds new ways of looking inward. When the narrator makes fun of honorary titles, as when he satirises the land court later in the text, he performs in Maning's stead the wry, ironic insight into his "home culture" (Beer 78) that experience with Māori culture has granted the Pākehā-Māori himself. Through his narrator, Maning demonstrates that he values the changes that his encounters with difference have wrought on himself. Presenting this one particular change as a performance for the reader, he generously shows us how we can benefit, too.

6. Conclusion

As this thesis has shown, a characteristic feature of a reader's encounter with F. E. Maning's *Old New Zealand* is the emergence of pervasive and sometimes disruptive uncertainty. Although published in the mid-1800s, the text behaves in ways that at times seem bewilderingly modern, even post-modern. On numerous occasions it demonstrates an explicit engagement with the process of textual production itself. To read *Old New Zealand*, especially as a New Zealander with limited exposure to historical texts, is to have one's assumptions and expectations challenged: about the sophistication of Victorian thought about colonisation, about the biculturalist myths that ground official narratives about race and identity, and more generally to the possibility of unrecognisably different histories of the colonisation of New Zealand, and the resistance of the same by Māori. Despite its status as a foundational text of New Zealand's literary culture, naïve expectation that it will therefore disclose the seeds of contemporary racial politics is quickly frustrated. Not only is it a struggle to identify such seeds in an encounter with the text, what occurs in that encounter instead often fosters uncertainty about historical formations that, beforehand, had seemed tidy and comfortably understandable. As this thesis has shown, a direct postcritical analysis of the text's actions to cultivate uncertainty casts light on why the text is able to counter expectations so profoundly. By treating the text's complex narrative structure not as an obstruction to analysis but as itself the primary subject for analysis, the uncertainty produced in a reading encounter with *Old New Zealand* is revealed to be the centrepiece of the text itself.

Productive Encounters with Uncertainty

This thesis has shown that the cultivation of uncertainty in the reader's encounter with Maning's text can be understood as the result of deliberate craft on the part of its author. Surrounded by contemporaries who were inclined to misjudge and underestimate Māori, Maning foresaw grave threats to the future happiness of the inhabitants of New Zealand, both Māori and coloniser, in the stubborn refusal to see past assumptions about racial hierarchies that were baked deep into the philosophical bases of European thought. Rather than countering these assumptions with logical argument, Maning instead performatively undermines them

with affect and uncertainty.

Beginning with an exemplary attack on the processes by which texts, including his own, establish authority over truth by adherence to generic conventions, Maning continues throughout *Old New Zealand* to unpick the authority that attaches itself to his narrator's voice, revealing the contingency and artifice of the processes by which such authority is constructed. In more complex passages this unpicking itself becomes a part of the performance, such as in the land deal sequence, where overlapping layers of irony are deployed to, in effect, eliminate entirely the possibility of a singular, stable interpretation of what might "actually" be happening. The combined result of these efforts is to saturate the reader's encounter with the text in a pervasive sense of uncertainty. As the narrator's voice highlights the artifice of its own construction, the sense of uncertainty thickens, until every aspect of the stories that he tells becomes a site of potential for alternative presentations and interpretations. Maning's text thus acts as a machine that helps its reader to learn how not to shy away from but to embrace uncertainty, and thus how to move forward with it.

What becomes increasingly clear in an analysis of the production of uncertainty in the text is that this production was a principal goal in its composition. *Old New Zealand* is, in this analysis, an advisory to colonisers to take Māori seriously, delivered not as a reasoned appeal to logic but as a literary encounter with difference the purpose of which is to shake up fixed assumptions that, in encounters with people whose forms of life differ from one's own, hinder understanding. The reader often finds themselves arriving at irreducibly contradictory conclusions about what its narrator is telling them. To move forward in their reading of the text, they must find their own ways to process and acknowledge what emerges from their encounter with the text. This includes acknowledging the uncertainty produced by the sometimes surprising, difficult, or challenging representations of events, people, and ideas that constitute the principal subject matter of the narrative itself.

The uncertainty fostered in the text that, in Maning's time, might have nudged British colonisers to, for their own protection, pay more attention and respect to the desires and capabilities of Māori is still available to twenty-first century readers of the text, for whom it can be redirected toward a different, but related, purpose. As the until-now dominant biculturalist racial politics of New Zealand becomes subject to increasing degrees of challenge—both from resistance borne of demands for self-determination from, for, and by Māori, and from growing awareness that its homogenising conceptions of "Māori" and "Pākehā" are inadequate—it

becomes increasingly clear that new approaches are needed. The cultivation of uncertainty in *Old New Zealand* produces a way of thinking that does not move to fix or enclose Māori culture or people under what Spivak might term a “final determinant or [...] transcendental signified” (35). Not only does this way of thinking avoid becoming “complicit in the persistent constitution of the Other as the Self’s shadow” (Spivak 35), it actively works to promote the opposite. Regardless of whether Maning would have agreed with Spivak, his text demonstrates ways of identifying and neutralising from the instincts to enclose, define, and finally-determine that saturate the European philosophical inheritance underpinning Pākehā forms of life, and instead make space for Māori self-determination. When the reader takes the same attitude of productive uncertainty that has been cultivated in their encounter with *Old New Zealand* to real-world situations where they might encounter unfamiliar forms of life, it becomes easier for them to abdicate whatever power they might have over the others in the encounter to determine signifiers. Doing so makes space for the needs and assumptions that different forms of life might logically produce, regardless of how opaque that logic might be to the orientations prescribed by their own.

From their encounter with *Old New Zealand* the reader emerges less with an understanding of “Māori culture” as a calcified object, and more with a memory of having noticed difference itself as a product primarily of the contingency of differing language-games, whose presence and effects must nevertheless be acknowledged. As Alex Calder rightly indicates in the Introduction to his edition of the text, although the narrative of *Old New Zealand* can often be tied to historical events or persons, “we cannot quite say they are represented as themselves [...]. This work [...] is a satire most of all, in which individuals appear as examples and events illustrate generalities” (“Introduction” 3). The representative passages in *Old New Zealand* are both less and more than representations, and constitute only one part of its expressive activities. The text encodes a destabilising vision that mixes uncertainty-fostering inquisitiveness with occasionally unruly excesses of irony, transcending the narrator’s own voice to demonstrate the contingency of representation itself. It leverages the “centrally obvious” existence of cultural difference (Calder, “Introduction” 10) as a narrative tool with which to empower its reader to question the conceptual bases of their own certainties about the world and the people with whom they share it. Maning moves beyond culture, and he does so by embracing the confusions of intercultural contact as the basis of a conviction that what happens when we encounter other forms of life is a complex, irreducible, affect-producing experience from which one can learn

something—both about oneself, and about the people that one encounters.

Becoming Postcritical to Move Beyond Biculturalism

Combining Moi's approach to literature with Ahmed's theorisation of affects as products of an encounter between oriented entities has proven highly effective to critically analyse *Old New Zealand*. The account presented in this thesis analyses the ways that the text performs actions and expressions, and the subsequent ways that the reader becomes bound to acknowledge the same in their encounter with it. This has enabled a discussion about the representative work that Maning's writing performs that avoids running afoul of the unruly ways that the narrative often unpicks its own representational systems. However, a paucity of other examples of Moi's approach makes it difficult to estimate the extent to which the same depth of analysis might be achievable with different texts. Determining its applicability to texts that do not engage so explicitly with the artifice of representational literary production itself remains a task for future research.

Drawing on Wittgenstein has also proven effective to address the appearances and problematisations of "culture" within Maning's text. Although the narrative does indeed employ what Calder has referred to as "a particular kind of relativism" ("Introduction" 8), it is a relativism which precludes the production of an overarching orientation from which relative positions can be collectively apprehended. By acknowledging Wittgenstein's insistence that "logic [...] belongs to the description of the language-game" (§82), insight into Maning's complex ironies can be attained, as well as their implications for articulating an alternative to biculturalism. Rather than belonging to fixed cultures, characters are shown as inhabiting and deploying forms of life which prefigure meaning and behaviour in ways sometimes inscrutable to others without access to those forms of life. Behaviour that is baffling can take place without the logic behind it being confined, as Lamb's analysis of Maning locates it, to a place of sublime inaccessibility. Instead, the missing logic is understood to be an internal property of an unfamiliar form of life, the details of which are simply unavailable—perhaps only momentarily—from the observer's orientation.

At the same time, there remains some unclarity about the limitations of applying Wittgenstein's ideas of *forms of life* and *language-games* to the study of literature itself. Texts make claims of genre; they adhere to or break from formal conventions; they behave toward

their reader in ways which can be understood through an ethical lens. It may or may not be appropriate to treat these expressions as themselves evidence for a form of life, distinct from that of the author or reader, through which the text speaks and makes itself understood. The insight gained by reading *Old New Zealand* in terms of its virtuosic production and performance of different language-games certainly suggests that such actions can constitute a significant part of the expressive activities performed by the text. Such an understanding of the activities of textual production and reception is perhaps distant from what Wittgenstein might have been thinking when he formulated these terms. Applying similar techniques of analysis to other texts will be sure to demonstrate whether such an approach promises broad or lasting value.

For example, the approach taken in this thesis may prove useful in analysing other texts from the same period as Maning was writing. Published in the same year as *Old New Zealand*, Edwin Hodder's *Memories of New Zealand Life* may offer a suitable comparative text, even if it lacks Maning's ostentatious challenging of literary form. Hodder announces that he has "endeavoured to tell a plain tale of everyday-life in a plain way, suited to everyday-folk, [...] to portray the social life in the colony as it really is" (viii), a project he sees as the production of, in contrast to the tendencies of contemporary writing about New Zealand, "a homely account of the place and people suited to general readers" (vii). A comparison with *Old New Zealand* may serve to reveal the differences in orientation toward his home country that Maning's experiences as a Pākehā-Māori might have produced.

Another thread worthy of further investigation can be identified in the reference made by the editors of *The Press* to the "light *chaffing* style of the composition" in their 1863 review of Maning's text ("Old New Zealand" 2). Their comments reveal that this style was a fashionable part of "the current small change of light literature" at the time of its publication (2). Research to recover what the writers might have meant by these terms may illuminate hitherto unexplored parts of the cultural context into which Maning published. Felski has written about understanding encounters with literature as opportunities to be "seduced by a style," by which she means "the possibility of an emotional, even erotic cathexis onto the sounds and surfaces of words" (both *Uses of Literature* 63). In the reader's encounter with *Old New Zealand*, the extent to which Maning's writing style participates or enables the production of uncertainty and self-interrogation therefore offers a potentially fruitful site for further analysis. If the "light *chaffing* style" identified by *The Press* indeed presents a meaningful connection by which to

explore other literature from the 1860s, then insights gained from analysing Maning's use of style may find application elsewhere in Victorian literary production.

Learning from the Pākehā-Māori Himself

By ascribing authorship to "A Pakeha Maori," Maning produces in *Old New Zealand* a narrating position that fosters not certainty but a potentiality that is as relevant today as it was at the time the text was published. If the Pākehā-Māori identity acted for the nineteenth century reader as a marker of authority and first-person experience of Māori peoples and culture, its incompatibility with the doctrines of biculturalism—in which Māori and Pākehā cultures are understood as permanently and irrevocably split by monadically-figured differences—acts to unseat certainty in the twenty-first century reader about whatever prejudice they may have about whether Maning's perspectives on Māori are trustworthy, honest, or reliable. By 1863, actual Pākehā-Māori had lost most, if not all, of the power that they held in the decades prior. Maning's decision to adopt this title is, however, revealed as richly significant in the obvious fascination expressed by the editors of *The Press* at encountering a text that "not only professes to be, but actually is, by a real Pakeha Maori" (2). Rather than positioning this status as a source of authority, however, Maning uses it in *Old New Zealand* as a source of potentiality. He offers in his text numerous interpretive possibilities as if they may be true, leaving it up to his audience to come up with their own arguments for or against the acceptance of it as such. The advantage of this approach is that, when the audience gleans an opinion from the text that corresponds to the author's, they are more likely inclined to believe it, depending on how invested they may be in their own arguments. It also leaves the reader with significant freedom to reach their own interpretations, which may or may not be advantageous. The author cannot predict the exact shape of the reader's own interpretation and, given the opportunity to decide for themselves, they may settle on an entirely different conclusion from what the author might prefer them to think.

Old New Zealand promoted, in Maning's time, a vigilance toward the potential for Māori resistance that might threaten the British colonisation of New Zealand. In demonstrating to its reader the misunderstandings and misapprehensions its narrator makes toward the actions and activities of Māori people, Maning's text shows the potential for disruption and failure latent in unchecked assumptions about people whose form of life are unfamiliar. Instead, the text

performatively fosters a mood of uncertainty towards such people, in the process implicitly questioning fundamental Victorian assumptions about racial hierarchy and the supposedly inherent superiority of white European peoples. Throughout the text representational systems are disrupted to demonstrate the contingency of certainty as a product of the application of a particular language-game. For a nineteenth century British reader, certainty about the inevitability of the triumph of the colonial project is undermined. Maning had already urged in *The Native Question* that colonisation could only succeed by the colonisers “never slumbering on our post, never ceasing to labour, never ceasing to think” (“The Native Question” 217). In *Old New Zealand* the argument is similar, but the mode of delivery is less direct: vigilance in thought is fostered by a performative unpicking of certainty that plays out in the uniquely literary encounter between reader and text.

For twenty-first century Pākehā readers, the text's unpicking of certainty is still effective, and can be repurposed to work toward the making of space for Māori self-determination. Maning's text demonstrates that when confusion emerges in an encounter with others, adopting an attitude of forthright uncertainty is a productive—even essential—way to proceed. Uncertainty enables the unfamiliar to emerge in an encounter without necessarily being obstructed by prejudice. A confused or astonished person who holds power relative to the others in the encounter can, if their confusion finds expression, significantly disrupt the proceedings. Tempering such emotions can, therefore, mitigate the undesired negative effects such power can impose upon others. This can be achieved if uncertainty is treated not as a problem to be solved but as a quality of shared space, the emergence of which is inevitable in encounters with people whose forms of life differ from one's own. When people who hold power learn to be comfortable with the unfamiliar by, as Maning's text requires, accepting and acknowledging as an urgent necessity the uncertainty that that unfamiliarity brings, the assumptions they hold are less likely to conspire with their power to become obstacles to Māori self-determination in their encounters with Māori people.

In their encounter with *Old New Zealand* the reader is simultaneously jostled out of certainty by unresolvable contradictions and ironies woven into the narrative, and implicitly trusted to reach their own conclusions about how to proceed. Confronted with irreducible uncertainty, the nineteenth century British reader is shaken out of a stodgy scientific racism. They are required to acknowledge Māori not as specimens or as facts but as people: complex, inconsistent, and as irreducible as themselves. The twenty-first century reader, meanwhile,

encounters a sequence of language with a clear Victorian British origin that nevertheless refuses to be comfortably contained by the familiar tropes of biculturalism, or by scientific-imperialist Victorian racism and its sediments, or by any other readily identifiable ideological formation. Ultimately, *Old New Zealand* surprises not because it breaks representative rules, but because it systematically destabilises the process of representation itself, leaving its reader to navigate what remains without the certainty normally assured by an overarching intellectual framework. In enacting his desire to show, as he expressed in a letter to his friend and later Native Affairs minister Donald McLean, “what sort of creature this Maori is who we have to deal with” (25 October 1862, cited in ONZ 213–14, underlines in original), Maning had to work to actively undo British prejudice, understood as sets of certainties about the superiority and inferiority of the self and others. Given that similar prejudices still dog twenty-first century opinions about Māori, Maning's textual performance still has something to teach readers today.

The rich, expectation-confounding voice of the narrator of *Old New Zealand* is a pedagogical tool that simulates Maning's own experiences of learning to negotiate difference. To understand what it is saying, and to see beyond it when what it says is mistaken or short-sighted, that reader must pass through a textual simulation of what Maning likely experienced as he adapted to the influence of Māori forms of life and become Pākehā-Māori. Requiring the reader to acknowledge this process is a powerful textual action. It may not teach the reader any precise or authoritative details about New Zealand in the nineteenth century, but what it offered instead is a demonstration of how to move beyond biculturalist pictures that reify difference, or critical methods that require definitions expressed with certainty, in encounters with different forms of life. In its performative embrace of uncertainty, and its consistent reminders of the contextual bounds that limit the reach of all forms of knowledge, *Old New Zealand* retains its power in the twenty-first century to teach readers how to better make space for difference amongst the people and events that surround them.

36448 words.

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