

## **Countering Colonization – Māori language revitalization in Aotearoa**

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### ***The socio-historical context of Aotearoa/New Zealand***

A recent Education Review Office (ERO)<sup>1</sup> (2012) publication examined a range of recent evaluations with a view to identifying recurring themes in education; focussing on priority learners, defined as those groups of students "...who have been identified as historically not experiencing success in the New Zealand schooling system" (p. 4). It is suggested that this is because aspects of the curriculum are being neglected due to the inherent racist underpinnings of colonisation.

This presentation is a discourse analysis around eurocentrism in Aotearoa/New Zealand as part of the great imperialistic project - important to unpack for Māori because it helps to explain the *why's* and the *how's* of colonisation and unequal power relations. In the case of Aotearoa this was achieved by getting a foot in the door, via the signing of a Treaty.

The Treaty unreservedly protected Māori sovereignty, Māori rights and interests. But it was dishonoured through a succession of settler government legislative acts in an illegal and dishonourable sequence of events. As Ballara (1986) argued,

*The Māori were to be treated as a sovereign people, and their ownership of all the soil of New Zealand was to be explicitly recognised. Yet, in the end, in spite of the treaty, it was to be the concept of the wandering savage who had no rights to land that was adopted and recognised by the settler governments once self-government was attained (p.36)*

The systematic undermining of the Treaty meant that the rights went unprotected. and the pre-emption clause was initially about **protecting** Māori land rights, that clause soon became **the trojan horse** of hostile land law.

#### *Neo liberalism in the Dominion*

Before I get far into this address, I want to define what I mean by neoliberalism - the privatisation and marketisation of everything - that is the overriding theme in neoliberal contexts - making money. Capitalism 'gone crazy' - in the name of progress. That's why Māori are often discoursed as a 'problem' to be got rid of because we '**get in the way of progress**'. Cannella (2011) discusses the neoliberal capitalist agenda and their antidemocratic *discourses of harm* to everyone but particularly the most vulnerable members of society; those who live in poverty, children and workers. We have 170,000 children living in poverty in this country, 60% of whom are Māori or Pasifika. That's shocking!

#### ***What I did***

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<sup>1</sup> ERO is an independent government department that reviews the performance of New Zealand's schools and early childhood services.

I look here at some destructive hierarchies of power through a discourse analysis of what people write about and which are published in a national newspaper, *The Dominion Post*. It traces the genesis of their discourses to the social organisation that was orchestrated through the colonisation process of Aotearoa.

I do so because it allows us to unpack our lives. As Cannella puts it "...recognition that it is almost impossible for individuals to function beyond the discourses within which they find themselves is important" (2011, p. 365).

### **Historical Myths still Current Discourses**

So I am looking at some of the historical discourses juxtaposed with how those same discourses appear today demonstrating how they have become internalised myths, perpetuated in public discourse and, uncritically, taught in schools.

*Myth One: He iwi kotahi tātou; We are one people but Māori are privileged!*

*Treaty Rights - R v Symonds*<sup>2</sup> established Māori rights to traditional land under customary law in 1847 (just 7 years after signing).

Basically it held that Māori Treaty rights be respected, and guaranteed Just 12 years after that case, 1859, put crudely by Henry Sewell, writing in his diary in 1859;

*the settlers, outnumbering the Maoris and stronger in a greater degree than the proportion of numbers, would not suffer their progress to be checked by an inferior race. They would, if necessary, take the land; the Maoris would resist and be crushed or exterminated (cited in Ballara p. 60).*

The fight was on with the settlers but the discourses around the validity and legitimacy of the Treaty which began in the early colonial period were powerfully incorporated into the consciousness of the settler government. And it got worse with the likes of Joseph Somes of the New Zealand Company maintained that it was the 'right' of the British Crown to the 'waste lands' of New Zealand. He said the Treaty was:

*made with naked savages by a consul invested with no plenipotentiary powers, without ratification by the Crown, [so that it] could [not] be treated by lawyers as anything but a praiseworthy device for amusing and gratifying savages for the moment (cited at p.36)*

So we mixtures of being inferior blended with savages, to naked savages and wrapped up in a privilege discourse; by those who insisted or who wished to deny that the Māori had any customary law. Māori attempts to retain land, to redress increasing resource imbalance and

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<sup>2</sup> *R v Symonds* (1847) NZPCC 387

injustices were deliberately reinterpreted to be seen as 'Māori seek privilege (subtext because they are inferior)', as argued by Ballara:

We have

*To Europeans, a symptom of Māori inequality was what they liked to call the 'privileges' enjoyed by the Māori people. In a debate in 1947 Sidney Holland ...pointed out that the Māori "enjoy many advantages; they enjoy special legislation; they enjoy special protection...While these conditions obtain there cannot be equality of Māori with pakeha. (Ballara, 1986, p. 114)*

So way back in 1847 - we have the privilege discourse (probably linked to the court ruling that year in Symonds's case which established Māori rights to traditional land under customary law which was not popular among settlers. The next major Treaty ruling was the following 1877 ruling by Prendergast CJ

He also found these lands to be a territory inhabited only by 'savages'; that because Māori were mere 'primitive barbarians';

*...Government must acquit itself...of its obligation to respect native proprietary rights, and of necessity be the sole arbiter of its own justice...[The Treaty] must be regarded as a simple **nullity**. No body politic existed capable of making cession of sovereignty... [placing Māori] on the footing of foreigners...Transactions with the natives for the cession of their title to the Crown are thus to be regarded as acts of State, and therefore are not examinable by any Court;*

So we have bound notions of Māori as inferior and privileged came to be tied together in an outlandish way; the underpinning thinking being 'how can you, savage, have so much land, especially when you have not paid for it? Talk of **land rights** or the **Treaty** is yet another demand for the privileges you are not entitled to. Therefore you (Māori) are a problem as you are working against the State; an enemy of the State to be abolished (or eradicated)'.

In the following current discourse we have the same privilege/inferior/eradication discourses

Quote from *The Dominion Post* 6/9/12

**Letter: Taxpayers must withdraw funding**

*At least former prime minister Helen Clark and incumbent John Key have something in common: "no-one owns the water". Now we have Crown-funded entities dictating that one very privileged group [Māori] does own the water - and everything else they [the Māori] consider is theirs.*

*Not much of what is claimed existed in 1840.*

*The Maori Council, Waitangi Tribunal and chief funder for the huge Treaty claim industry, the Crown Forest Rental Trust, aren't elected at large.*

*They are vested interest groups hell bent on destroying the country's unity with continued racist claims.*

*Many millions have been paid in Treaty settlements since 1920 and for what?*

*Nothing has changed for most Maori. Only the top 20 per cent is doing well as they entrench themselves into positions of favour and privilege at everyone's expense.*

*It's time we abolished the Maori seats, as well as the council, the tribunal and the CFRT.*

*They should be like any other clubs, supporting themselves at their own expense.*

*Then we might just have time to get back on to the Kiwi track and become one nation of peoples with the same rights and aspirations for everyone and a safe and secure future for all.*

So the thinking is ‘*Māori are savages, savages don’t have rights, any attempt to assert a rights claim means you (Māori) are anti-establishment, racist, destructive, terrorists even! Let’s efface so we kiwis (exclusive of Māori) can be safe and secure!*’

Here’s the Prime Minister’s recent take on the privilege issue

*And I think if you take the debate all the way back - my own personal view of this situation is that if you go back to 1840 when we signed the Treaty, the Crown as one partner agreed to preserve what would effectively establish property rights around land, forestry, and fisheries. What we also I think then said, well look, let’s also make sure that all New Zealanders enjoy the same rights of being a New Zealander - the same capacity to access those rights but I think at that time we also - let’s together, in partnership, build a modern day New Zealand, and so if you accept that view point then I think you have to accept that elements like water, and wind and sun and air and fire and all these things, sea, along with natural resources like oil and gas, are there for the national interest of everyone. They are for the benefit of all new Zealanders, not one particular group over another (TVNZ, September, 2012)*

The subtext – ‘*the Tiriti o Waitangi was made between the Crown and **all New Zealanders** (not you privileged Māori). Therefore all New Zealanders own everything and you [Māori] have no rights because the Treaty doesn’t even concern you*’. Here we have it - - the ‘trick of the Treaty’ *magic* by the Prime Minister – who just re-wrote history by making Māori disappear.

*Myth Two: Māori benefit from colonization; Māori ought to be grateful*

In the Foreword to Ballara’s book, Hiwi Tauroa wrote that behind the expression “‘You Maoris are lucky that we English took over’ is an unconsciously sown and carefully but continually nurtured attitude of the English culture that there is only one culture which expresses all that is good for ‘other’, and all people” (p. ix).

Ballara (1986) points out that in the 1960s and ‘70s the contention was popular; where there are two main cultures, one must give way. **Māori culture is primitive, intellectually stagnant,** and altogether unsuited to the twentieth century **and therefore must give way**, and while we are giving way, we had better acknowledge the benefits that have been bestowed on us (p.164); the sentiments of which can be seen in the following *Listener* article 40 years ago;

*The Māori has not yet left the seventeenth century. No wonder he is in trouble. He is trying to match seventeenth century concepts with twentieth century technology...We will not change to suit the Māori. He has to change if he wants to enter the twentieth century (p.164).*

So here the thinking is ‘*Why, Māori are practically Stone Age people’ and forever grateful* - The current quote is more of the same:

Quote from *The Dominion Post* 6/9/12

**Letter: How Irish and Māori histories diverge**

*...However, there are also significant differences between the two histories [Irish and Māori]. Ireland/Eire and its people were, in many ways, at least as "advanced" as the British and received virtually nothing of value from their oppressors. Maori, on the other hand [not advanced], have benefited enormously from a wide range of inventions and enterprise introduced from the northern hemisphere. So, though Maori justifiably seek redress for what was taken from them, it would be pleasing to occasionally hear some expressions of gratitude for the many benefits they've received from Pakeha. Or would they prefer that everything be just as it was before the foreigners arrived?*

Now we will look at discourses around economics. The popular idea promulgated in the earliest days of the colony's formation is that the British are the 'natural heirs' of New Zealand; and it should belong to them as exemplified in the following;

*...as the natural inheritance of Englishmen. The Natives subsist on the food we have brought them, pork and potatoes; and till we came, they wandered over a fair portion of the earth, without knowing the use of it. Before that the only animals they had to eat, except themselves, were rats, and their only fruit, poor wild berries (p.47).*

Sounds a bit like Hitler propaganda! Ballara (1986) argued that this was of course promoted to deny Māori rights and was in direct contrast to the realities of the time when in fact many settlers in Auckland and Wellington were dependent on the food supplies cultivated and brought to market by the Māori. **However, this recurring theme that it was the British who bestowed the economic value to land and its resources**, therefore Māori have no rights to any economic advancement (because Māori can just revert to eating rats and berries) is highlighted in the following complaint in 1911 regarding Māori rental properties "It seemed that to seek the most advantageous commercial terms was somehow disgraceful in a Māori, and could only be tolerated in civilised capitalists" (p. 80).

This same theme is highlighted in the following

*Quote from The Dominion Post 6/9/12*

**Letter: Government must reject Māori claims**

*OPINION: The Waitangi Tribunal has found that Maori have rights to water. Why? Because it has been 'commercialised' by passing through a power turbine. And why is commercialised water any different from other water? Maori didn't process water in 1840, so can't have had a customary claim to commercialised water. and it goes on... (very difficult to follow the logic)*

*Water that has been treated for human consumption is also commercialised. If Maori own water that is commercialised through a turbine, they also have a claim to drinking water. There is actually a stronger argument with drinking water, because it retains its commercial character, and doesn't become waste water straight away, as hydro-water does.*

*If Maori have an interest in water commercialised by others, it doesn't follow that they also have an interest in the power companies using that water. Or does the companies' brief use of 'Maori water' make that power company part Maori-owned? The tribunal apparently thinks so.*

*By its logic, Maori would also have an interest in water utilities and our own houses, because we all use tap water. The idea that anyone owns water, and that rights to water lead to rights to other property, is illogical and must be rejected.*

**So you can see how the public consciousness is ticking over.** The furore of this issue has been totally misrepresented in the public consciousness, that is Māori claims are an intrusion into the general public interest.

*Myth Three: No racism: No colour bar*

Historically, it has been argued by Ballara (1986) there has always been a colour bar in New Zealand albeit a de facto one; evident in the ways in which some theatres, bars and restaurants discriminated against Māori, how Māori were not welcome in Pākehā social institutions and so on; Māori women being discouraged from entering the public restrooms; community centres being regarded as a facilities for Europeans only; differing rates of pay and job opportunities; discrimination in the work place and so on. However, in spite of the frequency with which the reality of a colour bar in New Zealand was demonstrated, there has persisted a myth, and maintained officially, that New Zealand was a 'prejudice-free' country, in which two major ethnic groups lived together in peace and harmony; that colonisation was a benevolent undertaking because New Zealand is a fair minded, independent Nation.

This myth continued and has taken root and therefore it is simply not grappled with in terms of 'racism' to any meaningful degree, but here we have some colour discourse with the age old themes that you can recognise

*Quote from The Dominion Post 10/9/12*

**Letter: He has no right to use that word**

*OPINION: African-Americans earned the right to call each other "nigger". They earned it through suffering real oppression at the hands of die- hard racists. Mana Party leader Hone Harawira (Harawira's N-bomb directed at National MPs, Stuff, Sept 6) has no such right. He isn't black, he isn't African- American, he hasn't suffered anything like the same oppression. On the contrary, he's benefited from one of the most relatively benevolent colonisations of the 18th and 19th century. All he is a racist Maori serial complainer. He wallows in his perception of past wrongs because he doesn't have anything else to offer. He'll remain a gathering point for his, mercifully, few fellow travellers and a figure of repulsion for the rest of us.*

This, yet again, is about the politics of denial of our colonial history; a history not only shared by Māori but all indigenous peoples who have been colonised by the British.

*Myth Four: The Dying Race/The Disappearing Language*

It is *ethnocentrism* that describes what is common to prejudice against people of colour. It is a way of thinking

*which embraces at least the following tendencies: to see all people as divided categorically into homogenous groups or classes; to infer the essential nature of a person from a knowledge of what group he belongs to; to arrange all groups, and all people within groups, into hierarchies with the **strong** at the top and the **weak** at the bottom; to solve most moral questions by assuming that the good is what good people do, good people – in contrast to bad people – being those who belong to the same group as oneself (Ballara, 1986, p.2-3)*

Ballara (1986) asserts that it is ethnocentrism, or eurocentrism – the form of it to be found in Europeans – is discoverable in New Zealand, is part of our colonial history. It tells the story of land shift, language shift from te reo Māori to English through an inferior dying race, to a race disappeared.

In 1940 Sutherland is quoted to have said “*Taking all things into consideration, the disappearance of the race is scarcely a subject of much regret. They are dying out in a quick easy way and are being supplanted by a superior race* (cited in Ballara, 1986, p.83). This waiting game, waiting for Māori to finally expire, has been around for at least 120 years.

An inquiry into Māori land claims in the South Island in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, found that Māori were weary of the continual delay and that

*These postponements [of settlement of claims] seemed to indicate that the object was to delay matters until the Natives had all died out. Their old people had nearly all gone...it would seem that the object [of inquiries] was merely to pacify and amuse the people until they all died out. Probably this was the object of the periodical counting (taking the census): Government appeared to be desirous of ascertaining how long it would be before the race became extinct (p.84).*

All this talk of a dying race continued well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century but in 1896 Māori birth rate actually crept ahead of death rate. Furthermore, by 1910 it was obvious that Māori populations were increasing. This had been recognised in the press as early as 1906, and by 1922 the media were publishing such statistics as an increase in numbers of full-blooded Maoris. However, in spite of statistics the dying race theory refused to disappear. In 1930 one commentator wrote: “There seems to be no inherent reason why the Māori should fade away before the European. But their numbers are gradually growing less...Before the next century...they will, as a race, probably only be a memory” (cited at p.84) which is probably why the statement occurs with such regularity that “We don’t have any Māori children here”. Māori status shifted from a dying race to a disappearing race through integration (p.86) to a disappeared and totally invisible race in many current educational settings.

And with the dying race discourse, there is the dying language discourse - subtext ‘*so there is no need to incorporate Māori settlements, Māori anything, into the system – they are dying out*’.

*Myth Five: Indigenous Peoples (Māori) as Cannibals*

*Māori renaissance Countering Colonization through language: Pākehā backlash*

Pākehā reaction to a renaissance of Māori language and culture took various forms. One of them was a tendency to deny that there was any facet of Māori culture worth preserving as one correspondent asserts:

*This country owes everything to its European Christian inheritance. Shallow-minded humanists...wrongly imagine they can purchase social peace by the appeasement of minorities, particularly that which is infiltrating Government avenues of publicity in a tireless campaign to secure the absurdity of bilingualism and even recover control of the country via miscegenation (cited at p. 164)*

According to the latest Waitangi Tribunal Report (2012) for Kōhanga Reo (Māori language nests), among other findings, the Crown is

*failing to provide a sound policy framework that addresses the Crown's duty to actively protect te reo Māori in the early childhood education sector through support for immersion services, particularly kōhanga reo to whom the Crown owes Treaty obligations; (p. xvii).*

Having established that the health of te reo remains fragile at best, The Waitangi Tribunal (2010) turned to consider the Treaty interests and simply questioned whether the principles of the Treaty can ever be achieved if there is not a recognised place for the language of one of the partners to the Treaty. Simply put, there is a Crown obligation to take what steps are reasonable to assist in the preservation of te reo Māori. It must see Māori and te reo as not somehow external to itself, but a core part of the society it represents – and thus a key influence over how it conducts itself. Further, the Crown has now endorsed the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2010. The Tribunal argued for adequate resources to be made available to implement policies so that there is no gap between rhetoric and reality and stated:

*the Crown must therefore recognise that the Māori interest in the language is not the same as the interest of any minority group in New Zealand society in its own language. Accordingly, in decision-making about resource allocation, te reo Māori is entitled to a 'reasonable degree of preference' and must receive a level of funding that accords with this status (p. 52).*

The decline in Kōhanga Reo numbers and participation of Māori in immersion/bilingual education demonstrates the gap between the rhetoric and reality-all in spite of the fact that the Māori population is growing at a faster rate than non-Māori. (and it is a real concern, as the Honourable Tariana Turia mentioned yesterday, that our people are not choosing to support our Māori strand).

However, the following is a total mishmash of eurocentric myth-making. What is extraordinary, it is an example of the Pākehā backlash from the University of Canterbury's very own law lecturer, Mr David Round. Incredibly so, he undermines the very system of Westminster law he purports to uphold, rather like the bloke who shoots himself in the foot. David Round's reaction to the Waitangi Tribunal Claim for Māori language support is full of the embedded

with the age-old myths of eurocentrism found in the earliest days of colonisation and which endure to the present. It is a wonderful expose of myth-making that I call 'Eurocentrism in all its glory', interspersed with my critique;

*The Waitangi Tribunal's report on kohanga reo makes it clear why the Tribunal should be abolished, according to David Round, a spokesman for the Independent Constitutional Review Panel.  
The Tribunal is now clearly nothing more than a grandly-named Maori lobby group"*

A statutory body now a mere lobby group – how can that be?

*he said. "Its recommendations are pure politics." He pointed out that governments have poured over a billion dollars into kohanga reo over the last two decades, and that that was only a part of wider taxpayer support for the Maori language.*

Apart from the fact that this statement is fiscally inaccurate with the assumption that the wider taxpayer is exclusive of Māori (code for Māori are not part of the economy, we are privileged and get everything for free and do not pay taxes) it is bizarre – how can the recommendations of a legally constituted statutory body be anything but political. Of course they are. The core business of the Waitangi Tribunal is political; as is most everything else. Teaching itself is a highly political act (see 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed' by Paulo Freire). Round continues:

*"We might reasonably expect a word of thanks for this generosity. But instead the Tribunal complains that this funding is actually directed towards education rather than narrow Maori language immersion, and demands, not just more funding, but an apology for not doing enough."*

The myth of benevolence; Māori need to show gratitude for being colonized in a subtractive policy environment because Māori immersion is now 'narrow'.

*"Whether the Tribunal's recommendations are reasonable or not, it is absurd to claim that details about childhood education can be required by the 'principles' of the Treaty."*

Māori language education is not a Treaty right, in spite of legislation to the contrary!

*The Independent Panel has been established by a group of New Zealanders of diverse political backgrounds who share a common concern that an out of control Treaty industry has become a serious threat to New Zealand's prosperity and integrity as a viable nation.*

The myth that Māori are a threat to the nation because we signed a Treaty is bizarre.

*Mr Round said that the discovery and application of Treaty principles, even when carried out by judges, let alone the Tribunal, was a matter of personal opinion and political prejudice.  
"Treaty principles are vague enough to justify any recommendation anyone would ever want to make."  
"There are many instances of the Tribunal's bias and partiality to claimants. It is not even a reliable guide to what happened in the past, and has no more qualifications to argue for future policies than anyone else," he said.*

Even Judges, when they adjudicate, are espousing personal opinion and political prejudice. Fact: the Treaty principles came out of the historic Lands Case, 1987. The *Lands Case*

brought about a shift in attitude with acceptance of two Treaty texts; partnership (creating responsibilities analogous to fiduciary duties) between Māori and the Crown; clarification around principles and a renewed belief in the law<sup>3</sup>.

*"To demand an apology for not being more generous is not just ungracious and ungrateful, but downright arrogant. The tribunal is behaving like a greedy bully. If Maori want even more money and political changes to save a language which few of them care enough to speak, they should argue for those things on their own merits, not hide behind the increasingly threadbare façade of the Treaty", David Round said.*

These remarks were interesting both in what they expressed and in what they left out with the myth of colonisation as a benevolent undertaking being omnipresent and the sinister, harmful discourse of Māori as bullying enemy to be subjugated is covertly threatening. . Here again is a strange irony; he is attacking his own system and as Professor Margaret Mutu said yesterday those academics in the universities who oppose what it is we Māori are trying to do are those who are not operating according to their own academic standards. Who is the real bully (and ignorant to boot)?

Implicit in kaupapa Māori theoretical practices is a requirement to dismantle the patriarchal hierarchies of colonisation. Counter colonial readings of texts allow for alternative readings of the spaces we occupy. Just one day in the life of the Dominion – the 6<sup>th</sup> September 2012 – displayed a full two page-page foldout of eurocentrism extraordinaire, full of harmful discourses 'masking the power hierarchies' of colonisation (Cannella, 2011).

The seeds sewn on contact - in the very early days of the British Empire expansion project here in Aotearoa have not only taken root but have spread like gorse through the mountains, streams and the valleys of Aotearoa. Like gorse, introduced in the very early stages of British settlement, eurocentrism's spread and development was rapid - decimating Māori communities.

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<sup>3</sup> *New Zealand Māori Council v Attorney-General* [1987] 1 NZLR 641 at 668.

## *Te reo Māori in the curriculum*

*Ko te reo kia whai, ko te reo kia ora, ko te reo kia whaiora ngā iwi o Aotearoa*

Through our reo we can re-frame our minds. Te reo Māori has been incorporated into municipal law. It is time to fully incorporate it into municipal practice. As linguisticism meant that Māori children found it increasingly harder to verbalise their experiences of school and the wider world through their mother-tongues; Māori language re-vernacularization enables our children to interpret and verbalise their worlds through their ancestral language and thought. It allows different stories to be told. It provides the tools of critique - making it possible to consider other likelihoods. So yes, te reo Maori has to be as much a part of the education system as English is. Afterall, what are schools all about? What are we afraid of? Because some of our own as well who don't want to see it compulsory -

But schools help to shape communities and the public consciousness in as much as they are shaped by communities and the public consciousness. They are powerful institutions. They need powerful subversive leaders. Are our teachers up to the challenge? MacBeath (2006) argues that "...without deeply grounded morally subversive leadership teachers will collude with, rather than challenge, larger systemic corruption" (p. 247). We live with the legacy of systemic corruption.

This has been a discourse analysis about power, hierarchy, exploitation, harm, survival. How myths become internalised has been easy to illustrate. How we disrupt them perhaps not so easy but we **DON'T** have to tacitly, uncritically, accept the current status quo as *inevitable*, as natural or as normal. We **DON'T** have to accept that there is only a 'mono' way of viewing the world; or the narrow range of interpreting our lives. We **DON'T** have to accept narrow curricula **AND NOR** that homes and schools are not connected.

Historically, as with all the other myth-making which has gone on since the British expanded their dominion over Aotearoa, it has been argued that the place of te reo Māori is in private spaces, not communities. Some Māori have also come to internalise this myth. As Ballara argued,

*If the Māori continued to reserve the Māori language as the medium of prestige and cultural expression in Māori ceremony, thereby prolonging the situation in which it failed to realise its full potential as a language of daily use, the reasons were the lack of opportunity speakers of Māori have had to develop their language as part of the academic syllabus, and the disparagement of the language they have encountered outside the schools (p. 95)*

My concern here is for our very own tamariki/mokopuna. When they can hear te reo Māori utilised by a variety of media platforms; when they see it adequately taught as a respected and important part of the school curriculum; when they identify it to be a language of prestige

and mana, and when they know it to be the language used at all levels to discuss wider socio-historical, political and economic issues; and finally, when the intergeneration transmission of te reo Māori is ensured, then there will be some grounds for hoping that, as Ballara asserts, the tendency to acculturation introduced by the assimilative policies of the past will be in some measure reversed (p. 97).

Finally, there are parallel discourses in which the colonisation of Aotearoa New Zealand is viewed as a wholly positive thing that brought enlightenment and civilisation and an opposing discourse based on the view that colonisation was destructive and destabilising for Māori; a wholly negative thing. The words used in colonial discourses express the myth-making; the culturally different world views bound up with language; and also represent a struggle for power. Media discourse plays a major role in maintaining the myth-making and keeping those power struggles alive. But we have a Treaty – which guarantees our rights – signed in 1840. Whilst it took nearly 150 years to get a Māori Language Act that is a forward step. Another will be the official introduction of te reo Maori into all facets of municipal life, including education.

As the infamous Willy Jackson said recently on the topic of why te reo should be made compulsory after a discussion of a newly released Māori language music video by Maisey Rika;

*She is the reason why we need to make it compulsory because so many of us in te ao Māori know about Maisey Rika but the average Pākehā wouldn't have a clue who she is. That's how our language is treated. They have kiwi music week and Māori music week and no one has heard of it. This is why it has to be compulsory - because it will die...within 25 years, and I know the reasons why they say it cannot be compulsory - there are not enough teachers, not enough resources. That's why you have to make it compulsory. When you make it compulsory the Government has to prioritise it and put all the money into resourcing it - finding the putea! It is as simple as that...Every time you lot say no, we cannot make it compulsory, it just makes it tougher and tougher. Governments prioritise things when they know they have to do things - it is as simple as that (Marae Investigates, 22 September 2012).*

I am with you Willy. Our language is our life force; it nourishes our souls and feeds our minds. If we think of language as a taonga and a valued resource, then the growth of bilingual children will greatly enhance the nation's mana and wealth in a system in which both the official spoken and written languages are equally sanctioned, equally valued, equally loved, equally honoured; as was envisioned in Treaty claims leading to the Māori Language Act 1987.

If we do not accept our language as resource, as critical to transformational praxis, then we pass up the most vitally significant way of unravelling and understanding the dominant discourses of myth making. We have no other way of turning things around. Our language is our last defence. It houses our stories, our world views, our knowledge/s; it is our cultural archive.

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