



## Assessment 2 cover sheet

### 237.131 Conversations in Creative Cultures

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Problematic representation of the Maori people and culture are produced by the dominant European culture of Aotearoa causing marginalisation of the Maori. This is obvious through different art and design works. Such as Lester Hall's 'Remember Them' 2013 painting, Elizabeth Mitchel's 'Bro Town' character Pepelo, 2004-2009, and Louis John Steele and Charles F. Goldie's 'The Arrival of the Maori's in New Zealand' 1898. These Pakeha designs marginalise the Maori through the sexualisation of Maori women, the negative stereotypes of Maori men, and the indifference of the Maori culture. All working together to confirm Pakeha transgressions of problematic representation and marginalisation of the Maori culture.



Hall, Lester. Remember Them. 2013.

Maori women are marginalised by Pakeha artists through their problematic representation of them. During colonisation women were considered possessions of their husband's or father's in the European culture. While Maori women were more highly respected. Often attaining positions of leadership, or being warriors, Maori women held mana in their whanau. So during the colonisation of Aotearoa, as with many things, the Pakeha held different views on women to the Maori. Because of this difference in cultures Pakeha began to misrepresent the Maori women. In Naomi Simmonds academic writing 'Mana Wahine: Decolonising Politics' She agrees with this, stating that "The (mis)appropriation and (mis)representation of Maori knowledges historically and more contemporarily have, however, impacted on Maori women in specific ways." Simmonds acknowledges the effect that the Pakeha misrepresentation had on Maori women. They

were put into a category of 'home maker' and 'man pleaser.' This marginalisation however, wasn't just put to rest when woman gained the right to vote in 1893. The sexualisation of women continuing even today. Lester Hall's 2013 painting 'Remember Them' iterates this very statement. Hall attempts to honour those who died in wars through his artistic representation of a Maori women with tattooed texts on her body, drawing on wars New Zealanders have fought and died in. His success however, ends there. He encourages the marginalization of Maori women through his misrepresentation of them. The woman in his painting, is portrayed in a very sexual pose. Her curvy body, with one hand raised above her head, her (very non-Maori) garment sliding down her lower waist, with her second hand slipping inside, is a very sexual composition. Furthermore, her skin colour is more akin to that of Pakeha. While the feathers in her hair originate from the Native American culture rather than the Maori. The flaws continue through the arrows, as Maori are again not known for the use of bows and arrows. The only real references being her moko, pounamu and background patterning. This really shows the corruption that colonization brought to the Maori women, that even today they are so marginalised. Janet L. Fanslow, Elizabeth M. Robinson, Sue Crengle and Lana Perese comment on this when they state: "Maori women more frequently reported experiences of child sexual abuse than women from European and other ethnic groups." In their 'Child abuse and Neglect' book. They point out that Maori women are forced to encounter sexual abuse because of Pakeha's sexualisation of women, but also perhaps more so than Pakeha women because of their marginalization. Showing just the extent of the effects marginalisation has had on Maori women.



Mitchel, Elizabeth. Bro Town. New Zealand animated series. 2004-2009. Naked Samoans

Maori men are marginalised by Pakeha artists through their problematic representation of them. Even today there are strong stereotypes surrounding Maori. They are often considered loud, inappropriate, and even lazy. Because of this others treatment of them is influenced. Instead of being judged by the people they are, there is often this racist stigma surrounding them, going before them and influencing their lives. While there are encouraging improvements in equality there are other aspects that encourage these stereotypes. For example, the TV series 'Bro Town'

directed by Elizabeth Mitchell has excessive stereotypes throughout the entire series, as a main feature of the show. However, one specific character is shed in a particularly unflattering light; Pepelo. A Maori solo father with two sons, Pepelo is portrayed with no grip on his life. A lazy drunkard, who spends his time in a typical old singlet top and shorts, with a beer bottle and in front of a television. His selfish character embodies all vulgar stereotypes of Maori. Elizabeth Mitchell and the film team put effort into creating these problematic representations of Maori men trying to design a show full of laughs. Amanda Gregory perfectly sums this up when she says "The mass media contribute to and reproduce racism and marginalisation of Maori." She calls out a key problem, while Bro Town is created for comedy, not offence, it still encourages stereotypes with no thought to the effect it may have on the real world Maori. They fail to consider how the marginalisation of Maori can effect them personally, through the effect this has on them socially, politicaly, and culturaly. Kelly Holmes, Tamar Murachver and Donn Bayard comment on this in their 'Accent, appearance, and ethnic stereotypes in New Zealand' stating "Maori have been viewed as troublemakers, lazy, unintelligent, dirty, aggressive, easy going, and friendly. Whereas Pakeha have been regarded as successful, hardworking, intelligent and self-centred." There is very clearly a biased here. The Maori are painted in a completely different light to the Pakeha, while they recognize contrasting stereotypes such as 'easy going, and friendly' it does not justify having stereotypes and marginalising another culture as the Pakeha have done. Even the admittance to Pakeha being 'self-centered' does not allow for any justification to any kind of stereotype. Maori lives can be effected by these stereotypes; pre-formed ideas of people are very dangerous to personal lives. All this made me reflect on my own interaction with the media, while I do not consider myself racist, do I ever unintentionally encourage these stereotypes? Simply watching the portrayal of stereotypes is an acceptance and agreement to marginalisation of Maori. This made me realise I need to consider more carefully how I interact with the media and especially it's representation of other cultures.



Steele, Louis John. Goldie, Charles F. The Arrival of the Maoris in New Zealand. 1898. Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki

The Maori culture is marginalised by the Pakeha artist's problematic representations. From the beginning of colonisation in Aotearoa the Maori culture has been marginalised by the Pakeha culture. Whether by naivety, superior mindsets, or mixes of both, Pakeha artists are often found to misrepresent the Maori culture. For example, this is evident in Louis John Steele and Charles F. Goldie's 1898 painting 'The Arrival of the Maoris in New Zealand.'

Although it is an incredible painting through its detail, brush marks, and composition, it is also culturally offensive through its extreme misrepresentation. Goldie and Steele depict the arrival of the Maori to Aotearoa as an overly full, breaking canoe. They show the woven sails to be tearing and falling apart along with the canoes in imperfect condition. While the Maori themselves look to be starving. Thus marginalising the Maori as they are known for their skills in navigation as the Pacifica people traveled great lengths of the ocean exploring it. Furthermore, the Maori are shown pointing, as they spot the land of Aotearoa. However, this also is culturally insensitive to the Maori. Goldie and Steele do not put their attention and focus into capturing the reality of the discovery of Aotearoa, instead they are focusing on what will sell their painting. They are investing into the Pakeha market, how it will be viewed and received in Europe. Not how it will marginalise the Maori culture. Leonard Bell talks about this in his 'The Representation of the Maori by European Artists in New Zealand'. When he says: "Johannes Andersen classified Maori myth and legend as a 'mine of wealth,' the 'quarrying' of which, besides supply- ing 'the artists of New Zealand with ample rough material,' would 'enrich ... the world's art." This pointing out the enticement that the Maori culture held to the Pakeha. It wasn't about showing the Maori culture or the beginning of Aotearoa. Rather about the new exotic content they found in the Maori culture and how they could exploit this to their own advantage and create a masterpiece painting. The Maori culture has been marginalised for decades through art, as Pakeha continue to misrepresent Maori culture and use it to their advantage, very few give profits to the Maori community or even acknowledge their involvement. Rangihiroa Panoho states in his 'Maori: At The Center, At The Margins.' That: "With so much having been taken and so little returned, there is now a need to reassess the Maori role in a partnership that has increasingly marginalised us. In the cultural sphere – the arts – it is now essential for Maori to resume control, re-establish boundaries for appropriation and move taha Maori (things Maori) back to the centre." He points how this marginalisation of Maori culture needs to stop. This misrepresentation cannot continue, Maori need to have the final say on art from their culture in order to prevent any further misrepresentation and marginalisation of the Maori culture. This is something we all need to consider in our own art and design, if it includes aspect of the Maori culture, we need to be careful how we represent this and get Maori opinions to ensure there is no problematic representation and marginalisation of the Maori culture.

In conclusion it is evident through the problematic representation of Maori culture that the Pakeha culture marginalises the Maori culture. Through different artistic examples Maori have been marginalised for decades by naïve and ultra proud Pakeha. The Pakeha culture considers it's own to be superior to minor and marginalised cultures of Aotearoa. Producing a negative effect on the Maori people, effecting their job opportunities from racist employers who buy into stereotypes, it effects them socially as new 'friends' may pre-judge them from encountered portrayals or in the community for other members of the public to feel unnecessarily and offensively afraid. Or in other cases in the community when Pakeha consider this marginalisation and take advantage of Maori women. All throughout Aotearoa, Pakeha subconsciously effect Maori through this marginalisation. As set as this is in Aotearoa society and mindsets it needs to change. This can only happen through singular reflection on our own interaction with Maori. Through personal consideration of one's own design, the interaction with Maori on our own designs, and the refusal to support current marginalising arts and designs. Marginalisation of the Maori culture is not acceptable.

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