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'All the same family'?

Constructing and Embodying the “Pacific Peoples” Category in New Zealand

Aurélie CONDEVAUX

Until recently, New Zealand society was generally defined as being ‘bi-cultural’, i.e. based on two main ‘ethnic groups’: *Māori* and *Pākehā* (*Pākehā* being a *Māori* word used to describe the ‘white’ New Zealanders, see Grbic 2010: 144). While the anthropologist E. Schwimmer is said to be the father of the idea of biculturalism (Gagné 2008: 124), this concept was fostered by the political claims of the *Māori* people in the 1970s and 1980s. In this vision *Māori* and *Pākehā* are ideally considered as ‘equal partners’ (Grbic 2010: 127), bonded together by the Treaty of Waitangi. This Treaty was signed in 1840 between representatives of the British Crown and many (but not all) *Māori* leaders. Ignored for decades, this treaty was reintroduced into the political debates of the 1970s, which resulted in the creation of the Tribunal of Waitangi in 1975 (see Belgrave 2005). This legal jurisdiction aims to settle the grievances over contestable acquisitions of land and resources by European settlers. The settlements of the grievances at the beginning of the 21st century have encouraged the expression of strong political positions from right-wing politicians in particular, who question the bicultural foundation of New Zealand. Changes in the immigration policies during the 1980s were another challenge for this bicultural vision of New Zealand: the arrival of immigrants first from other Pacific countries, and then from Asian countries, led to a reconsideration of what ‘New Zealand society’ is. A ‘multicultural’ vision emerged, which sometimes tended to replace the bi-cultural one. As pointed out by T. Fitzgerald (1998):

In the multi-ethnic New Zealand context, the educational challenge will be to encourage a strong national identity while still recognizing a variety of different interest groups, ethnic styles and the persistent need for separate minority identities – albeit, identities which carry with them a degree of self-esteem, dignity and pride. This pattern of recognizing identities without separate cultures fits the official, though yet unrealized, goal of an emerging diversification of New Zealand society (261).

Tensions inevitably emerge from these contradictory attempts and opposing interests: on the one hand, if *Māori* people want to obtain political recognition, they must assert their differences in a state officially defined as ‘bi-cultural’ (Bell 2004 : 126-127; Sissons 1993; van Meijl 1999). On the

other hand, the recognition of the existence of a wide range of cultural communities by New Zealand public policy might be a threat to the political rights of *Māori*. As Gagné (2008) explains, in 2004, the overt rejection of policies based on the Treaty of Waitangi by the National Party leader Don Brash 'must be seen as part of a larger context in which ideas of multiculturalism or pluralism (rather than biculturalism), republicanism and of endowing New Zealand with a formal, written constitution were in the air' (127).

One of the officially recognised 'cultural communities' of the 'multicultural' New Zealand, is the 'Tagata Pasifika'. The expression 'Tagata Pasifika' is used by institutions to refer to 'Pacific Peoples', in a way that recalls the Polynesian origins of these migrants (*tagata* or related terms such as *tangata* mean 'men' or 'human being' in several Polynesian languages while 'Pasifika' is a neologism used for the Pacific, based on a Polynesian-like spelling and consonance). They are migrants from the Cook Islands, Tokelau, Niue, Sāmoa and, more recently, Fiji and Tonga (Goss et Lindquist 2000 : 392). They constitute a significant proportion of the New Zealand population : according to the 2006 census, 6.9% of the New Zealanders define themselves as 'Pacific Peoples'¹. Among the 400 000 'Pacific Islanders' who live outside their home country, 170 000 allegedly reside in New Zealand (Goss et Lindquist 2000: 398).

The government's drive to support the recognition of the Tangata Pasifika's cultural specificities is expressed, for example, in the fact that the New Zealand Curriculum Framework supports the use of Polynesian languages (Samoan, Tongan, Niuean etc.) – named 'Pasifika languages' – in schools. Such policies, which rely on a new social terminology (such as 'Pasifika' or 'Pacific Peoples') contribute to homogenize or freeze this category which, in reality, is very heterogeneous and diverse, especially culturally and linguistically. This homogenizing effect is further accentuated by national statistics, which like in many countries are interpreted in light of the residents' 'ethnic origins'. When taking part in demographic surveys, people are asked to identify themselves as belonging to one or several of these categories (called '*ethnic groups*'): 'European', 'Māori', 'Asian', 'Pacific Peoples' or 'Other ethnic groups'. The latter includes two categories: 'New Zealander' and 'Middle Eastern, Latin American and African'².

However, the action of ticking the 'Pacific peoples' box in a census does not necessarily

1 <http://www.stats.govt.nz/Census/2006CensusHomePage/QuickStats/quickstats-about-a-subject/culture-and-identity/pacific-peoples.aspx>

2 See <http://www.stats.govt.nz/Census/2006CensusHomePage/QuickStats/quickstats-about-a-subject/culture-and-identity/ethnic-groups-in-new-zealand.aspx>

indicate that members of this group constitute a 'community' or identify themselves as 'one'. This category conceals critical differences and variations in the life and cultural practices of these migrants, and does not give a fair sense of the actual social interactions and networks that exist amongst the Pacific immigrants.

The constructions of ethnic or cultural identities by Pacific migrants living in New Zealand, Australia and the United States have been the subject of recent anthropological and sociological attention (Fitzgerald 1998; Morton Lee 2003). As emphasized by Morton Lee (2003), cultural identifications in these contexts occur 'in response to the imposition of ethnicity onto the group by the host society' (5) as much as a result of subjective definitions. This is why in her analysis of the Tongan diaspora in Australia (2003) she stresses that the term 'ethnic identity' is as useful a concept as that of 'cultural identity': while the latter refers to Tongans' own understanding of what it is to be Tongan, the former is used to designate their responses to ideologies and practices of 'multiculturalism' that have emerged in postcolonial countries, 'in which ethnicity is represented in the public sphere primarily by the outward markers of cultural difference, such as food, music and dance, clothing, and so on' (5). Depending on the context, actors might shift from 'ethnospecific' identities, such as Samoan or Tongan to 'panethnic' identities, such as 'Polynesian' or 'Pacific Islanders'.

Many questions raised by Morton Lee concerning Pacific immigrants in Australia apply equally to New Zealand: how do migrants from Pacific archipelagos living in New Zealand cope with the imposition of this 'panethnic' category? Do they adopt this cultural label? If so, is it linked to political claims? These questions should be addressed while keeping in mind the specific historical context of New Zealand mentioned previously, i.e. the fact that the 'Pacific Peoples' category in New Zealand has emerged at the same time as the re-definition of New Zealand as a multicultural country. Analyzing the emergence and use of the 'Tagata Pasifika' category in dominant discourses and institutions is a way to understand the implications of the 'multicultural turn' for the political claims of *Māori* peoples, who are 'afraid of becoming just another minority group' as Gagné (2008: 127) reminds us.

This paper will address these questions using as a case study an ethnographic inquiry conducted in the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa in Wellington in 2008. This inquiry was part of a broader PhD project exploring tourist cultural performances in New Zealand and Tonga between 2007 and 2011. Interviews conducted at other cultural performances in New

Zealand will also be analysed. For six months between 2007 and 2008, a weekly cultural performance was evaluated at the Te Papa Museum. This performance was designed using a mix of different Polynesian dance styles, unlike most cultural performances in New Zealand (which are generally based on *Māori* dances and music performances only). As such it offers an unprecedented opportunity to understand how a national institution, which as will be demonstrated, echoes the government's objectives regarding the definition of national identity deals with the tensions between the definitions of New Zealand as either 'bicultural' or 'multicultural'. It also provides a new way to examine how a 'panethnic' social category is defined and given concrete existence through discourses, performing bodies and interactions.

Te Papa Museum in Wellington was founded in 1992, from the reunification of two distinct institutions: the National Art Gallery and the National Museum. C. McCarthy (2007: 169) describes this project as part of an emerging new museology, resulting from a decolonisation process. Located in the heart of Wellington, the building overlooks the port of the capital city. The outside architecture is composed of two sides: one represents the 'European' side of New Zealand, the other its 'Polynesian' side. First, in order to put the cultural performance mentioned above in the context of the museum policy, I will present an overview of the exhibitions and of the museum's objectives based on various documents produced every year by the institution (Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa 2006; 2007). I will then analyze the performance itself in light of the questions raised above regarding how migrants or second generation Pacific migrants in New Zealand cope with the label 'Pacific peoples' and how the category is constructed in this context. In doing so, I will take into account the role of bodily practices – in particular dances – in the construction of cultural identities.

In documents setting out the museum's objectives for three-year planning periods, such as the 'Statement of Intents 2007/08, 2008/09, 2009/10' or 'Statement of Intents 2006/07, 2007/08, 2008/09' the museum is defined as a 'forum for the nation to present, explore and preserve the heritage of its cultures and knowledge of natural environment, in order to better understand the past, enrich the present, and meet the challenges of the future' (Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa 2006: 1). The use of the plural 'for cultures' is critical inasmuch as Te Papa aims to represent all the different cultures of the various communities present in New Zealand. These are not limited to the *Māori* and the *Pākehā*, but also include other communities who arrived in New

Zealand more recently. The exhibitions and the performance hosted by the Te Papa museum are more specifically dedicated to the first of the 'Pacific Peoples'. Apart from the preservation of cultural heritages, one of the main concerns of the museum, as explicitly stated in the documents, is the exploration of New Zealand national identity (Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa 2006: 4). These documents point out that the definition of a national identity is one of the government's three main priorities for the years to come, and that the museum must contribute to these priorities (Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa 2006: 8). One of the main objectives of the Te Papa Museum is to encourage 'All New Zealanders to take pride in who and what they are, through [their] arts, culture, film and music, [their] appreciation of [their] natural environment, [their] understanding of [their] history and [their] stance on international issues' (Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa 2007: 9). Although 'culture' appears here in the singular, other sections of the document insist on the plurality of New Zealand society. For example, all employers are advised to take into account 'the ethnic and cultural diversity of the people of New Zealand, and the contributions they have made, and continue to make to New Zealand's cultural life and the fabric of New Zealand society' (Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa 2006: 5). They are also advised to 'endeavour to ensure both that the Museum expresses and recognises the 'mana' (a term generally translated as 'authority' or 'power') and significance of *Māori*, European and other major traditions and cultural heritages and that it provides the means for every such culture to contribute effectively to the Museum as a statement of New Zealand's identity' (Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa 2006: 5).

Recognition and respect for the Treaty of Waitangi are repeatedly emphasized as key values in the documents. The Treaty of Waitangi, after being considered as a tool of the colonial power and therefore rejected or neglected by *Māori* political activists, became one of the arguments on which the *Māori* ended up relying on claim political rights as 'peoples of the land'. From an administrative standpoint, the museum is organized according to a bi-cultural principle, reflecting its commitment to respect the Treaty (Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa 2006: 22). However, as mentioned above, the museum's primary goal is to valorize all the heritages of the various communities which make up New Zealand society, and to find a definition of New Zealand identity that goes well beyond the 'founding' binome, *Pākehā-Māori*.

The desire to contribute to the definition of a national identity runs through the exhibitions' contents and organisation. The museum is divided into four different floors. The fourth one is

dedicated to the cultural exhibitions. On one side is Mana Whenua, an exhibition devoted to the *Māori* people. *Iwi* (a term loosely defined by 'tribe' but whose meaning is actually more complicated, see for example Schwimmer [1990]) from all over New Zealand are successively invited to install temporary exhibitions dedicated to their own 'tribal' group. Visitors have to walk through Mana Whenua to access the museum *marae*³, named Rongomarearoa. On the other side of the fourth floor are the exhibitions dedicated to the '*tangata tiriti*' or 'people of the treaty', a *Māori* expression used locally to designate people who migrated to New Zealand at the time or after the signature of the Treaty of Waitangi. '*Tangata tiriti*' thus applies to migrants from Asia and Oceania as much as to those from America, Europe or anywhere else. In short, it is dedicated to those who cannot claim to be 'indigenous' to New Zealand.

In 2008, this section of the fourth floor was devoted to very different exhibitions: one was focused on Scottish migrants in New Zealand, another one on the wool industry (a key pastoral activity in the country), a third one was dedicated to the 'Pacific peoples', and a fourth to the New Zealand 'material culture'. These exhibitions converged towards a common message: all the communities who have settled in New Zealand after the colonisation of the country (*Tangata Tiriti*) have influenced and were influenced by *Māori* (*Tangata Whenua*, people of the land)⁴, giving birth to a unique and new culture.

As an example of migration and settlement, the 'Tangata o le Moana' exhibition was dedicated to the Pacific Islanders' migration history (Moana means Ocean in many Polynesian languages), up to their arrival in Aotearoa (name given to New Zealand by the *Māori* ancestors). It also gave a glimpse of their new life in their host country. The exhibition stressed the links between *Māori* and other Polynesian peoples. For instance, a wall label indicated that contrary to mainstream opinion, the arrival of 'Pacific islanders' in New Zealand did not start during the 1960s – which marks the beginning of large-scale migrations to New Zealand – but 200 years earlier, when Captain Cook accompanied by a Tahitian interpreter called Tupaia, introduced the *Māori* of New Zealand to the Tahitians⁵ (see van der Grijp 2009: 20). Furthermore, it was suggested that this

3 *Marae* are ceremonial spaces that stretch in front of an ancestral meeting house and where the public meetings and events takes place.

4 The date of the arrival of *Māori* ancestors in New Zealand is still a debated question. Although many give 800 C.E. as the most likely estimation, a recent publication [Sutton et. al. 2008] argues that small groups of population might have arrived before that. However, they agree that a significant demographic growth only occurred around 800 C.E. This, it must be noted, fits *Māori* oral histories quite well.

5 Tupaia, from Raiatea (today in French Polynesia), was brought by Captain James Cook aboard the

process has never really stopped: 'from the first settlers of almost a thousand years ago to the arrivals of recent years, people from the Pacific have made Aotearoa New Zealand their home' (wall label caption, Tangata o le Moana exhibition, Te Papa Museum). In this sentence, the arrival of the *Māori* about 1000 years ago is recounted alongside the contemporaneous immigration of other Polynesians. The artefacts exhibited further reinforced this idea. In the first exhibition area, axes, *tiki* (human shaped sculptures worn as pendants) and tattooing tools, made by *Māori* or other Polynesian peoples, were displayed side by side and accompanied by comments highlighting their resemblance. Several items or contemporary works of art (basketry, jewelry, dresses) also illustrated the singular cultural touch brought by the 'Pacific Islanders' to New Zealand, contributing to the creation of a unique national culture or identity. These artefacts were complemented by the following comment: 'Pacific styles contribute not only to New Zealand's cultural diversity but also to a unique Kiwi style that celebrates being part of the Pacific' (Wall label caption, Tangata o le Moana Exhibition, Te Papa Museum).

The 'Made in New Zealand' exhibition aimed to answer the following questions, addressed to the visitor right upon his arrival: 'What is our visual culture? How has it developed over time? What makes it distinct?'. The exhibition followed a chronological framework, taking the visitor through a journey encompassing different historical periods, from the first contacts between European navigators or whalers and *Māori* ancestors, up to the present day. The accompanying comments explained that the first 'era' was characterised by the existence of two distinct 'material cultures' which were suddenly brought together. As they went through the exhibition, visitors could observe a progressive hybridisation between these cultures, each one influencing the other. The end of the exhibition was devoted to the contemporary era, showing how the pop music produced today in New Zealand is influenced by various styles: the British and American ones, but also by local artists who, gaining confidence in their 'South Pacific Identity', create new styles mixing *Māori* and Pacific 'traditional' music with all forms of international music.

The fourth floor is thus clearly divided into two parts: one dedicated to the *Tangata whenua* (an expression used for *Māori* people), and the other one to the *Tangata tiriti*. The Signs of a Nation exhibition, introduced by a giant facsimile of the Treaty of Waitangi, creates a junction between these two areas. This exhibition deals with the settlement of claims put forward by some *Māori* groups against the British Crown regarding land and resource acquisitions. It creates a junction –

Endeavour in 1769 and helped as an interpreter between the crew and the *Māori*.

as much as the Treaty itself is supposed to have created one – between ‘*Tangata tiriti*’ and ‘*Tangata whenua*’. These exhibitions appear as being in search of a balance between the desire to represent New Zealand society in all its diversity and, at the same time, the desire to insist that a new identity and culture is emerging, and is shared by everyone. This philosophy shaped the cultural performance that took place at the Te Papa Museum between 2007 and 2008. This performance, called Taonga MataOra⁶ was performed for six months, every Wednesday night, after the museum closed. One of its distinctive characteristics was that it integrated different Polynesian dance styles, a rather unusual choice in the domain of tourist cultural performances in New Zealand. Indeed, most of the ‘dinner and show’ experiences in New Zealand – contrary to other Pacific destinations such as Tonga and Hawai’i for example – are based solely on *Māori* performances (*kapa haka*). These ‘dinner and show’ companies are owned and run by *Māori* entrepreneurs who want to present a part of the uniqueness of the *Māori* culture to their visitors. Thus, New Zealand has escaped the ‘Tahitization of Pacific-Islands music and dance’ (Stillman 1988: 161-162) observed elsewhere. Therefore, the choice made by the managers of the Taonga MataOra show to present not only *Māori kapa haka*, but also dances from the Cook Islands and from Samoa, cannot be viewed as neutral. From my point of view, it must be understood within the specific context of the national museum.

The messages conveyed by the show were similar to those delivered by the exhibitions. The show started with an adapted form of the *pōwhiri*, the traditional ceremony performed by *Māori* on a *marae* ground to welcome visitors, just like in other *Māori* tourist performances. This, in a way, was a means of underlining that *Māori*, as indigenous people of New Zealand, were the legitimate hosts of the evening. This status was verbally highlighted by the presenter. In addition, the first language he used to welcome the group of visitors before the *pōwhiri* started was *te reo Māori* (*Māori* language). He then shifted to English. While recognizing the indigeneity of *Māori* people in New Zealand, he also underlined repeatedly that they are Polynesians and have many points in common with other ‘Pacific peoples’. Several elements of material culture also reinforced this idea. The speaker commented on the use of the conch⁷ during the *pōwhiri*: once the ritual was over, he took the shell in his hands, presenting it to the audience as a symbol of the connections between

6 The speaker gave a literal translation of this name: in *te reo māori*, “taonga” means treasure, or something prized, “mata” face and “ora” life. As Alexeyeff (2008) explains, “mataora” is commonly used in the Cook Islands to describe pleasurable emotions, in particular the ones created by dancing.

7 A spiral shaped shell used as a wind instrument.

the *Māori* society and the rest of Polynesia, as according to him the instrument is used in all Polynesian societies. He also added that '*Māori*' was not a on a word used by/for first people of New Zealand onlut also by the Cook Islanders for example.

Later on, when visitors took their seats at the tables for dinner, they found a description of the dinner in a booklet accompanied by a map of the Pacific. The speaker used that map to illustrate his comments on the history of migrations accross the Pacific. He also explained that the *Māori*'s ancestors arrived in what is now known as New Zealand about 1000 years ago, probably from islands in eastern Polynesia. The choice of mixing staged dances from various countries also contributed to create a connection between the *Māori* from New Zealand and other Polynesian peoples. Samoan, Cook Island and *Māori* music and dance performances were all executed by the same group of dancers. The show was divided into three different sequences, each one corresponding to one style of dance. *Kapa haka* (*Māori* dance and music performance) came first, with different items: *waiata ā ringa* (generally described as 'action song'), *poi* (a dance using a ball attached to a rope) and *haka* (which is now sometimes described solely as a 'war dance' but was originally a broader category of performance [Karetu 1996]). Samoan dances came second. During the last sequence, devoted to the Cook Islands, female dancers wore *pareu* low on their hips, revealing the upper part of their thighs, hinting at stereotypical notions of exoticism and 'South Pacific' sexual Fantasies. It must also be noted that the Cook Islands' dances and style differ strongly from the *Māori kapa haka*. While both styles of dance use arm movements to illustrate the story told by the words of the songs, Cook Island dances resemble more the Tahitian dances in the sense that hips are used to beat the tempo in swaying movements.

The speaker's comments suggested that New Zealand is a nation made up of diverse communities harmoniously coming and mixing together. Before the performance started, as the visitors were guided through the floors up to the *marae*, they were stopped for a while at the entrance of the Signs of a Nation exhibition which, as explained earlier, makes a junction between the 'peoples of the land' and the 'peoples of the Treaty'. The speaker recalled the controversies surrounding the Treaty (the *Māori* translation does not have exactly the same meaning as the English version), and explained its role in the contemporary legislative context of New Zealand. Nevertheless, he chose to present this document as the founding act of the Nation, adopting a vision of the Treaty that has not always met with general approval. Indeed, A. Babadzan (2009: 24) stresses that *Māori* activists have for a long time considered the Treaty as a confidence-trick,

ironically using the nickname 'Cheaty of Waitangi' until the 1970s. The redefinition and requalification of the Treaty followed the opening of the Tribunal of Waitangi in 1975 and the first verdicts in favour of the *Māori* claimants. While in the Sign of a Nation area, the speaker also highlighted what the successive migrants have brought to New Zealand through the course of history. For each of them, he selected 'positive' aspects of their contribution to the nation-building process: Italian restaurants, Dutch coffee, Scottish bagpipes and English language introduced by British migrants and settlers. New Zealand in this description appeared as a peaceful mix of various cultures.

The comparisons between New Zealand *Māori* and other "Polynesian" groups, as well as the history of New Zealand as it was told by the speaker, can be interpreted in the light of the museum's philosophy mentioned previously. Together, the exhibitions and the Taonga MataOra performance gave the feeling that New Zealand is united beyond the cultural diversity of its 'communities'. Dances, objects or discourses all point to the mutual influences of these communities. The speaker himself embodied, in a way, these hybridisations. He wore a black suit adorned with red and white stripes evoking *Māori* 'traditional' motifs. Dancers' outfits also reflected their concerns for finding compromises between patterns clearly symbolizing a 'Polynesian' side and colours or materials symbolizing a 'Western' influence.

During the *kapa haka* performance, dancers wore bright orange t-shirts decorated with flames. The t-shirts were made from a mix of synthetic materials associated with the glistening and colourful materials used for the male costumes of Cook Islands' dancers. Taonga MataOra performers were not full-time employees of the Te Papa Museum; they were only hired for this performance. All of them were or had been studying at the Whitireia Polytechnic of Porirua, a town close to Wellington, where they were enrolled in a degree of "Pacific Performing Arts" which, as will be explained, might influence their sense of identity. Such bright colours and materials were quite rare in the tourist performances I attended both in New Zealand and in Tonga. Usually, performers try to use materials imitating the 'traditional' ones (such as plant materials and feathers), probably in an attempt to satisfy the desire for 'authenticity' or 'primitiveness' expressed by some tourists (O'Connor 2004: 161).

Finally, the dances called upon multiple sources of inspiration, in an attempt again to reconcile what could be defined as 'essentially Polynesian' and as an 'original work of art', both categories being critical for the dancers. The latter expressed very positive attitudes towards

'creation' and 'innovation'. For example, one of them explained how he enjoyed mixing hip hop gestures or techniques with 'Polynesian' ones. Teachers encouraged their students to be as creative as possible. Innovation was not, in their eyes, an obstacle to the preservation of the "essence" of Polynesian dances, as this young dancer argued:

We asked [the Cook Island dance master] this question: what is a traditional movement? And he replied "What is a traditional dance?". That's what he said, he said "what is a traditional dance?" And he asked, "Where is the creativity coming from if we do exactly the same basic movements?" You can take different elements of different dance genres but put it into a Cook Island aspect of dance. So the visitors are still getting the essence of the dance. (Interview, Porirua, 20/03/2008).

This show, like the 'theatricalized performances' of heritage mentioned by Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998), are not trapped in the past. They are mediums to discuss subjects such as cultural identities and the relations and/or antagonism between tradition and modernity in today's society.

These choices correspond with the identification processes at stake. Most of the young dancers had parents of different origins: at least one of their parents, sometimes both, were migrants from the Cook Islands, Samoa or Tonga, or were *Māori* from New Zealand. Many insisted on the similarities between 'Polynesians' from across the region, who were sometimes described as forming a 'big family':

Q: Do you think this kind of group helps to tighten connections between Polynesian groups in New Zealand?

Lina: Yes, definitively. I think it does. Because I think we're like all one group, no matter what culture you're from, you're from Polynesia. I think it's good to have your own culture in your own country and your family. But Polynesian people are all the same family. (...) The people that I've been with we call all of us *Māori*. We include *Māori*, Polynesian people, because by our ancestors we have stories that connect each other. Like in the Cook Islands, we have a legend about Paikea. Paikea came from Hawaii on a whale and, yes, so we've got connection like that. We have waka [canoes], *Māori* have the same waka. I think *Māori* people are part of it, yes. (Interview, Porirua, 26/03/2008).

One of her colleagues, who sees himself as a *Māori*, expressed a similar point of view:

Q: And do you think during the Taonga MataOara show, tourists are not going to confuse *Māori*, *tangata whenua* with other Pacific Islanders who are "*tangata tiriti*"?

Joe: (hesitation) I think it depends on how it has been explained to the audience. I think they're going to remember that *Māori* people are New Zealand and that Pacific Islanders are more like brothers and sisters, like cousins. Because we have a background that relates them to us anyway. We come somewhere from Malaysia, Micronesia, to Polynesia, Cook islands, Tahiti, Hawai'i, and we can relate through *te reo*, the language. Because the language is similar we can understand [each other]. (Interview, Porirua, 20/03/2008).

It is worth noting that this kind of viewpoint is not shared by all second generation Pacific migrants. Morton Lee's (2003) research on second generation Tongan migrants in Australia indeed shows that while some of them adopt the 'Pacific Islanders' or 'Polynesians' categories (245), others instead insist on their 'Tonganness'. In addition, the discourses quoted above diverge significantly from that of young *Māori* performers working for 'hāngī dinner and cultural concert' types of performance. These tourist performances include only *kapa haka* (*Māori* dance and music performances) and are generally managed and/or owned by *Māori*. Most of the performers involved in these shows that I was able to interview in Rotorua or on the South Island of New Zealand expressed great pride in their culture and identity. They stressed the uniqueness of the *Māori* culture:

In a world which is more Western driven, by the Western society, we try to keep in touch with our own culture so we have our own identity. Rather than saying we are Westerners or whatever, we're Europeans or whatever, we can say we are *Māori*. We've got our own identity. I suppose it's just the uniqueness of being *Māori*. (Interview, Queenstown, 13/12/2006).

According to them, tourist performances are a good way to demonstrate this identity. The manager of one of these performances also stressed that, from his point of view, the 'multicultural' vision of New Zealand is misleading:

I think it's where a lot of people don't understand, where their interpretation is wrong, when they think we are a multicultural nation, but we're not, we're bi-cultural. We are multi-ethnic, and we celebrate the diversity of our ethnicity, we are really celebrating it, but the essence of New Zealand is founded on bi-culturalism, which is *Māori* and English. (Interview, Christchurch, 16/04/2008).

In order to draw conclusions based on this comparative perspective, we can use Clifford's (1992) analysis of Canadian ethnographic museums. Even though he initially wanted to analyse Canada's West Coast local or 'tribal' museums only, Clifford realized that he had to include national museums in his analysis as well. Although national and local museums tell diverging histories about cultural vitality and struggle, they all display the same objects and are all linked to one another. On a comparable basis, the performance displayed at the national museum Te Papa Tongarewa in New Zealand can only be understood if we keep in mind the existence of other tourist performances – mainly *Māori* – around the country. While they differ in their content, they

echo each other because they tell different versions of a common history through the use of a similar artistic medium. The identities defined by Taonga MataOra dancers can only be understood in the specific context of this performance: it is probably because they interact everyday with second generation migrants from other Pacific countries – and because they practice a wide range of Polynesian dance styles –that even a *Māori* dancer-student such as Joe (see quotation above) insists on the ‘Polynesian’ connections of *Māori* people, unlike most performers of ‘*hāngī* dinner and cultural concerts’.

To conclude, the discourses of the people involved in the Taonga MataOra performance at the Te Papa Museum are coherent with the vision of New Zealand society depicted in the museum exhibitions. According to this vision, *Māori* and *Pākehā* (New Zealanders of European descent) are not the only two communities which make up New Zealand society. Various more recently settled communities have also helped to shape reciprocal cultural identities. This vision is not only displayed in the exhibitions, it is also embodied in the dance performance, which represents the diversity of Polynesian dance styles and techniques. In this context, ‘panethnic’ identities such as ‘Polynesian’ or ‘Pacific Islander’ are adopted. As Morton Lee stresses, panethnicities are generally defined within power relationships:

Panethnicity usually emerges as a result of externally imposed groupings – for example, in government classifications that determine the allocation of resources. This then encourages the ethnic groups to work within that panethnic categorization, and the panethnic group can also become a “political resource for insiders” (Morton Lee 2003: 247).

What does this case study tell us about the power relationships at stake in this context?

As in other postcolonial societies, the ‘museification’ of cultures in New Zealand raises specific issues, different from those raised in ethnographic museums in Europe for example. Collomb (1999) asks the question of how these museums manage to bring together disputed histories and territories. While the State and dominant groups tend to think of the Nation as homogeneous, minority groups think of the ‘nation’ as founded on differences and recognition of particular identities (Collomb 1999: 334). Pieterse (2005) asserts that, quite often, the vision of dominant groupswins. Speaking about museums from postcolonial countries, he says ‘in many cases nation-building is an ongoing process, national identity is privileged and marginalization – of minorities, tribals, ethnic groups out of favour – is often a harsh reality’ (175).

Some of these statements might not be totally relevant for Te Papa Museum, where museography is based on 'decolonising' principles (McCarthy 2007). Minority groups are given the opportunity to use this space to express their own views. Te Papa is sensitive to the idea of 'plurivocality' sometimes invoked and searched for in museums dealing with indigeneity. In this perspective, voices of all cultural groups concerned must be heard (Dubuc and Turgeon 2004: 11).

However, it can be argued that in certain museums in postcolonial societies, even in Te Papa for example, exhibitions tend to be framed according to the dominant groups' ideology and do not contest dominant groups' power (Pieterse 2005: 176). The choice, in Taonga Mataora, to favour a multicultural vision of New Zealand society over a 'bicultural' one can be interpreted as being influenced by dominant ideology. In his study of another New Zealand museum, the Whanganui Regional Museum, Butts (2006) has argued that the idea of multiculturalism is a way to minimize the political claims of *Māori* people. He argues: 'tolerant multiculturalism masks the denial of indigeneity and hence, in the New Zealand context, masks the denial of the group rights guaranteed to *Māori* in the Treaty of Waitangi' (Butts 2006: 92). This ideological choice is made even more visible when comparing this performance to the numerous tourist *Māori* performances in New Zealand. They are, as mentioned previously, used by *Māori* actors to express and display the uniqueness of their culture and their status as indigenous people.

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