Chapter Five

Dame Whina Cooper was, wrote Michael King, ‘the country’s best known matriarch’. An Otago Daily Times editorial after her death in 1994 lamented the ‘loss’ of ‘both a significant figure and an important symbol’, someone who in ‘this age of the celebrity’ satisfied the desire of ‘wider New Zealand, both Maori and pakeha’ for ‘a special figure to respect and love’. Cooper’s national prominence developed through her lifetime of struggle for Māori people and her visibility as a leader within Māoridom. It is such prominence, accrued through leadership and through social and political institutions, which is the focus of this chapter. Particularly from the 1970s, a number of Māori and Aboriginal women became nationally known in New Zealand and Australia for their leadership and activism. Some worked for change from within the institutions of the state, others sought it from outside them, and still others moved fluidly between these positions. In this chapter I explore print media representations surrounding those who struggled for the welfare and rights of Indigenous people, examining the lines along which framings of these prominent women fractured in a time of intense social and political change. I explore particularly the representation of these women as moderate voices or as radical activists, the gendered dimensions of such representations, the dubious distinction of receiving official honours for activist work, and the ambivalent relationships of these women with the feminist movement of the 1970s. Throughout, media representations of these women are interwoven with their own publicly articulated understandings of their lives and work. At the centre of the chapter is the figure of Cooper, who reached a level of fame far above that of most women involved in political activism or leadership roles.

Dame Whina Cooper and the Print Media

Born in the far north of New Zealand in the last years of the nineteenth century, Whina Cooper’s first act of protest occurred when she was only eighteen. Mudflats important to local Māori were leased to a Pākehā farmer, who began to drain the land. Her father looked to the official channels of the courts and Parliament to overturn the lease, but Whina Te Wake, as she then was, gathered a group of Māori to follow behind those digging drains, filling them in again. Although they were charged with trespass, the lease was withdrawn, after action was taken on the issue by two Māori Members of Parliament (MPs). Becoming a leader in the Catholic church and in the community, Cooper (then Gilbert) was

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an important supporter of Sir Apirana Ngata’s schemes for the development of Māori land in the early 1930s. It was her efforts in support of these schemes that led to her first being ‘noticed by the national press’, with one report referring to her as ‘the Amazon excavator’.\(^3\) She reached national prominence shortly after leaving the Hokianga region for Auckland, having been elected as the first Dominion President of the Māori Women’s Welfare League (MWWL) when it was founded in 1951. Following her resignation from this position in 1957, she continued to work as a leader in the community.

Figure 8: ‘Photograph of Whina Cooper at Hamilton During the Māori Land March’, 25 September 1975, Christian F. Heinegg.


Her greatest act of leadership, however, was still to come. As Michael King argued, Cooper made an ‘imprint … on the national consciousness’ during her leadership of the 1975 land march that ‘persisted for the remainder of her life’. 4 She had become the leader of a group formed to halt the loss of Māori land, Te Rōpū o te Matakiti (Those with Foresight). Aiming to draw Māori together and bring the alienation of Māori land to the attention of the Pākehā population, the group agreed on a march as the appropriate protest.5 The march began from Te Hāpua in the far north in September 1975, led by Cooper and her granddaughter. Almost a month to the day after they had set off, the marchers reached Parliament on 13 October. Cooper presented a memorial of rights and a petition with 60,000 signatures. Moving back to the Hokianga in 1983, she ‘reached her widest audience’ in 1990, speaking at the opening of the Commonwealth Games in Auckland.6 When she died at the age of ninety-eight in 1994, her tangihanga (funeral) was attended by ‘many thousands’ as well as being screened live on television.7

As a leader within Māoridom, Cooper’s relationship with the media was complex and sometimes mutually beneficial. While those campaigning for Indigenous rights were generally not backed by a publicity machine to the extent that those famous in sports or the performing arts were, the media remained a crucial marketing tool – the commodity being the message rather than the person. Cooper’s awareness of the importance of a working relationship with the media, and her ability to gain coverage for an issue or event, were noted by several of those who wrote about her life and work. Her biographer, King, considered that although her rise to national prominence while president of the MWWL was partly due to ‘the general newsworthiness of league activities’, it was ‘in even greater measure a reflection of the flair with which she dealt with journalists’.8 Denis Welch, writing in the New Zealand Listener, noted that journalists became accustomed to ‘being summoned for interviews – monologues, rather – that might go on for hours’.9 An obituary in the Dominion described her as ‘seldom reluctant to use news media’, as evidenced by the occasions when she ‘threatened’ to return the honours she received as a response to ‘government inaction’ on various concerns.10 One moment at which her ability to achieve media coverage was clearly demonstrated occurred mere weeks before her death. Newspapers across the country reported that she had called Sir Graham Latimer, the chair of the New Zealand Māori Council, to visit her in hospital because she wished him

4 Ibid.
5 King, Whina, p. 207.
6 King, ‘Cooper, Whina’.
7 Ibid.
8 King, Whina, p. 179.
10 ““Mother of Nation” a Battler From the Very Beginning’, Dominion, 28 March 1994, p. 7. The same obituary also appeared in other newspapers around the country.
to ‘inherit her place in Maoridom’. In the original story, *New Zealand Herald* reporter Heather Ayrton wrote that Cooper had asked her to go to Middlemore Hospital ‘to witness the passing of responsibility’. Yet despite Cooper’s media sense, her treatment in the media was not always helpful to her, at times arguably weakening her message through depicting her in racialised and gendered tropes.

### The Mother of the Nation? Framing Whina Cooper

When Cooper died in 1994, the *New Zealand Herald* reported that an estimated 30,000 people had gone to her tangihanga, which lasted several days. The Queen and Prince Philip sent condolences, and tributes from politicians and public figures were reported in all the major daily newspapers. The Prime Minister, Jim Bolger, was quoted describing Cooper as having ‘persuaded and pursued’ various Prime Ministers over the years ‘for the advancement of New Zealand’, and as having ‘always talked about one people, calling for them to work together’. Cooper’s advocacy for Māori was thus subsumed under her vision for the country as a whole. Some letters to the editor which were published after her death displayed similar understandings of her life and work. One, which included a tribute from the Auckland Multicultural Society, exhorted readers to ‘remember Dame Whina’s goal for our future’, quoting her statement that all ‘should live in harmony’. Another lamented that Cooper had ‘passed on without seeing her vision become a reality of us all joining together as a united nation’. A third referred to Cooper’s ‘dream’ that Māori and Pākehā would ‘live together as one people’, urging readers not to let ‘this great woman’s dream die with her passing’. In mourning for this universally loved figure, it seemed, Māori and Pākehā could come together as one, just as Cooper herself would have desired. Reading coverage of her death in New Zealand’s major daily newspapers, it would be easy to assume that this understanding of her life and achievements was universally shared. Particularly in editorial material, where opinion predominated over biographical detail, Cooper was placed as an advocate of assimilation, harmony and tolerance.

In the political hub of Wellington, readers of the *Dominion* were assured that while Cooper had ‘welcomed’ the Māori ‘cultural and political renaissance’ of

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12 Ibid.
the 1970s and 1980s, she had ‘never endorsed the rise in biculturalism that grew with it’ and which brought ‘the concept of one nation, two people’. Under the headline ‘A Maori for all races’, this editorial asserted that it was instead ‘the earlier pursuit of assimilation, the notion of one nation, one people’ that drove Cooper, and that her life had benefited all of New Zealand. Although Cooper had often spoken of the need for unity between Māori and Pākehā, however, she was not an advocate of assimilation. In 1982, she was quoted in the *New Zealand Woman’s Weekly* expressly stating that she ‘was always against assimilation’. In the south, the *Otago Daily Times* editorial was similarly focused on Cooper’s desire for Maori and Pakeha to live together in harmony. The editorial mourned the death of one who had ‘represent[ed] for many New Zealanders hope for Maori and pakeha unity’. Cooper had ‘refused to preach the separatist path’, it declared, and thus, ‘despite her role in the land march … and her outspoken views’ had ‘earned the respect of many “middle” New Zealanders’ through ‘her concerns for unity and her vision of people working together’. Wellington’s *Evening Post* pursued similar themes. Cooper had ‘eschewed confrontation’, its editorial stated, ‘her guiding vision’ being one of ‘a society in which the two major races lived in harmony’. She was praised for having been ‘adept at vigorously advancing Maori interests without resorting to antagonism or animosity’. This editorial did also acknowledge that there had been disagreement within Māoridom over Cooper’s approach. It was ‘too passive’ for ‘contemporary activists’, the editorial reflected, while being for Pākehā ‘the non-threatening side of Maori advocacy’. Cooper, it suggested, had been someone who ‘kept alive the hope that New Zealand could still be the bicultural showplace which, in more settled times, it genuinely seemed to be’. The Christchurch *Press* likewise depicted Cooper as a figure of hope, observing that she ‘lived [the] ideal’ of ‘racial tolerance’ and that ‘her example can continue to animate the nation’. The common focus on Cooper’s desire for Māori and Pākehā to live amicably together thus often worked to reinvigorate the myth of New Zealand as a place of racial harmony.

Not all coverage of Cooper’s death depicted her as a voice for racial tolerance. Her forceful nature and leadership were also acknowledged, as was her contribution to drawing attention to land rights through the 1975 land march. In Auckland, where she had lived and worked for many years, and where multiculturalism was perhaps a political necessity, an editorial in the *New Zealand Herald* focused upon her achievements and her determination rather than upon her dream of

unity, describing her as ‘a voice to be heard’. Nonetheless, the reiteration of her belief in living together harmoniously often took the place of her other aspirations as lessons were drawn from her life. Exhortations to continue her work for Māori welfare or land rights were conspicuously absent from much of the coverage of her passing. Māori media pioneer Derek Fox suggested in an editorial in Mana magazine that the politicians who responded to Cooper’s death by ‘applauding in public someone whose work they have opposed and whose dreams they are destroying’, and the ‘mainstream media’ who ‘wallowed in the spectacle’ of her tangihanga, had alike acted with ‘a … mixture of gall, ignorance and hypocrisy’. While Cooper had ‘argued for unity between Maori and Pakeha’, he wrote, she had seen ‘the path to that harmony [as] one along which Maori rights were acknowledged and restored’.

Interestingly, at least one obituary for Oodgeroo in Australia had also praised her for working towards unity, stating that ‘her dream was that everyone should live in harmony regardless of skin colour’. Framing such forceful champions of Indigenous rights in this way potentially limited the challenge that they posed to mainstream social and political formations. Moreover, if women such as Cooper and Oodgeroo had seemed to test received notions of (white) femininity through their vigorous advocacy, framing them as promoters of peace and tolerance after their deaths potentially re-imagined them as womanly, naturally peaceful and nurturing.

Media representations of Cooper after her death also often presented her as a larger-than-life figure. The Christchurch Press portentously stated in its editorial that Cooper’s death brought ‘together great themes that are fundamental to New Zealand’, such as ‘the coexistence of the races; the impact that an individual can make in our society; [and] the creation of a tolerant culture that is not simply transplanted but that draws definition from a unique and living tradition’. These were, claimed the editorial, ‘the things that this matriarch personified’. Much was made of her age, the writer stating that ‘great age was entwined with great events in the person of Dame Whina’, who had been ‘raised among Maoris who had had personal contact with the founding of European settlement’ in New Zealand. In a number of stories published around the time of her death, reference was made to her as the ‘Mother of the Nation’, or ‘Te Whāea o te Motu’, a title which the MWWL had bestowed upon her. This phrase was used to describe her in the press far more after her death than it had been during her life, and was part of a set of representations which developed around her particularly in the 1990s. During the Waitangi Day celebrations in 1990, New Zealand’s sesquicentennial year, Cooper was interviewed on television by broadcaster Paul Holmes. He

24 D. T. Fox, editorial, Mana, no. 6, July-September 1994, p. 1.
26 ‘Dame Whina Cooper’, p. 11.
introduced her as ‘one of New Zealand’s most respected people’ and ‘someone who could almost be the mother of us all’, and the interview which followed had ‘an almost reverential focus on Dame Whina herself’. After her death, the *Sunday Star-Times* described her in a headline as ‘the nation’s matriarch’. Depicted in these ways as an elderly woman cherished by the whole nation, a loved New Zealander, Cooper was no longer represented as an advocate of Māori rights so much as she was mobilised as a reassuring symbol that New Zealand race relations could still be the best in the world.

However, Cooper was a much more complex figure and during her lifetime was subject to considerable criticism, particularly from Māori. As King once observed, ‘no Maori leader has attracted more public praise from Pakeha people and more public criticism from sectors of Maoridom’. Writing in the *Sunday Star-Times* after Cooper’s death, Brian Rudman contended that there had been two different views of her in previous years, a Pākehā view and a Māori view. Pākehā had begun to take notice of her following the land march, he suggested, leading to her ‘near beatification’, while she had had a number of opponents among Māori. A common criticism had been that she was domineering as a leader. During her time as president of the MWWL, some members became unhappy with her ‘autocratic leadership style and … peremptory manner’. King believed that there was some basis to suggestions that Cooper’s ‘dictatorial style of leadership’ was a factor in the divisions which occurred at the end of the land march. For Māori, Cooper was not a figure to be uncomplicatedly celebrated or acclaimed as ‘the Mother of the Nation’.

Several authors suggested that the Pākehā celebration of Cooper occurred because she was a non-threatening figure. In 1980, she was quoted in the *New Zealand Herald* reflecting that ‘all the work I have done all along has been for both Maori and Pakeha races’. Eight years later, she was featured in the *New Zealand Woman’s Weekly*’s ‘Scene and Heard’ page, a space more commonly reserved for social notes and gossip, making a similar statement. Beside a picture of her smiling beatifically, the small piece stated that ‘Maori matriarch Dame Whina Cooper … has a message for us all: “We are one people”’. She had ‘spent a lifetime working for racial harmony in New Zealand’, it continued, and ‘at 93, still firmly believes Maori and Pakeha can live together happily and peacefully’. Statements such as these may have endeared her to Pākehā unsettled by the

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32 Byron, p. 19.
33 King, *Whina*, p. 228.
35 ‘Scene and Heard’, *New Zealand Woman’s Weekly*, 13 June 1988, p. 50.
upsurge in Māori protest activity since the 1970s. Ranginui Walker, professor of Māori Studies at Auckland University, was once quoted remarking that ‘the pakeha perception of her is all that lovely 1990s stuff’. He continued:

the pakeha has been feeling under siege for the past 15 years with the Waitangi Tribunal and all these land cases, and here is this apparent voice of reason, calling for calm and peace and reconciliation and for us all to love each other.36

Similarly, Rawiri Hoani suggested that Cooper had ‘had more universal appeal among pakeha than among Maori’ since ‘pakeha wanted to see a united Maori controlled by one moderate leader’.37 Indeed, in many portrayals Cooper the land rights campaigner was submerged under Whina the iconic mother of the nation. Without naming sources, Denis Welch observed in the New Zealand Listener that some people felt ‘her frequent calls for universal love and national unity … must have been music to the ears of politicians who found other Maori too problematic to deal with’.38 Perhaps there was some relief in depictions of Cooper as ‘the Mother of the Nation’ and a voice for unity.

Mothers, Matriarchs and Moderates

Rather than as a voice for tolerance and unity, Cooper was at various times during her life represented in the media as forceful and as a fighter. In a 1955 profile in Te Ao Hou: The New World, the magazine published by the Department of Māori Affairs, she was described as ‘a tremendous personality with few, if any, inhibitions and an “afraid of no one” complex’. The author, Melvin Taylor, noted that ‘the most conspicuous’ of the ‘qualities’ that had ‘brought her to the top’ were ‘those that single her out as a fighter – a fiery, hard hitting one too’.39 Twenty years later, a profile published in the Evening Post during the land march ran under the headline ‘Long-Time Fighter For Her People’. In the article, she was described as ‘a relentless fighter, a woman of no compromise where the rights of the Maoris [are] concerned’.40 Still later, when she received the Order of New Zealand in 1991, she was described by the Dominion not only as an ‘opponent of separatism’, but also as being ‘known for fiery oratory’ which had ‘made her one of Maoridom’s most visible and controversial leaders’.41

38 Welch, p. 29.
40 G. David, ‘Leader of Maori March is Long-Time Fighter For Her People’, Evening Post, 4 October 1975, p. 16.
Although not usually termed an ‘activist’, Cooper was sometimes referred to in terms which suggested that she was radical. At the time of the land march, Pauline Ray wrote in the New Zealand Listener that it might ‘seem somewhat improbable’ that ‘an old lady, albeit a surprisingly sprightly old lady’ had become the leader of ‘what is probably the most militant Maori organisation formed this century’, but observed that ‘Mrs Cooper has never been a conformist’.\(^{42}\) Even in the New Zealand Woman’s Weekly snippet which presented her ‘message’ as one of unity, the writer stated that ‘age has not doused the fire in Dame Whina’ and that she remained ‘as politically conscious as ever’.\(^{43}\) When she was made a dame in 1980, she was quoted in the Dominion saying that:

> I have worked with every government ... If I see some good in their policies I follow it. But I fight too, oh yes, I’m a fighter. And I’m still fighting.

> If it should be law I’ll obey the law. But I will fight the law if it’s not justice.\(^{44}\)

Such a statement portrayed a very different figure from the ‘Mother of the Nation’ who dreamed of peaceful co-existence, although the two were of course not incompatible. In an extended interview broadcast in 1978, Cooper commented upon newspaper descriptions of her as ‘fiery, forceful and fearless’, observing that ‘you’ve got to be fiery’ because ‘you got to be true in what you’re speaking about’. At the same time, she stated that her heart was ‘all love’, and that ‘I love my people, and I only wish, you know, I can do something for them while I’m alive’.\(^{45}\)

After her death, alongside the focus on her desire for unity, the Dominion’s editorial also hinted at this different view of Cooper, stating that in the past ‘her political views were as radical as her style and tactics’, although she later seemed ‘conservative’.\(^{46}\) As this suggests, such varying understandings of Cooper’s life and work can in part be ascribed to the passage of time. Cooper’s methods of seeking social justice sometimes seemed too conservative to a young, urban generation of protesters. Certainly a rift was evident at the time of the land march. Upon arrival at Parliament, a group of marchers remained camped outside, an action which Cooper strongly opposed. She sought to dissociate the campers from the rest of the march organisation, stating in telegrams sent to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Māori Affairs that the protest was the initiative of


\(^{43}\) ‘Scene and Heard’, p. 50.

\(^{44}\) ‘Whina Says Name Doesn’t Stop Fight’, Dominion, 2 January 1981, p. 5.


\(^{46}\) ‘A Maori For All Races’, p. 6.
Ngā Tamatoa and that the campers were not approved to use the organisation’s banner in their protest. On other occasions, too, she opposed the methods of protest adopted by the new generation of activists. She considered that physically pushing then Governor-General Sir Keith Holyoake at Waitangi was ‘a stupid way of protesting’ because it ‘set everybody against them’ and nothing was accomplished by ‘pushing around elderly people’.\(^{47}\) She was also, particularly at the time of the land march, occasionally represented in ways which framed her as being more moderate than other protesters, as was the case in much of the press coverage of her death and tangihanga. After the breakaway protesters set up camp in Parliament grounds, one article in the *Dominion* referred to ‘Mrs Cooper and other moderates’ involved in the march, in contrast to ‘militant’ members of the march.\(^{48}\) Such shifts underline the impact which generational differences may play in shaping representations. While Cooper continued to be depicted as determined and a fighter, she also came to be implicitly contrasted with the new generation of activists who emerged in the 1970s.

A representational divide between so-called ‘radicals’ and ‘moderates’ has been a common feature of media treatment of Indigenous peoples. In New Zealand, Sue Abel observed that television coverage of Waitangi Day in 1990 and 1995 placed Māori as either ‘tame’ (those seen as ‘supporting the status quo’) or ‘wild’ (and thus ‘marginalised and demonised in news coverage’).\(^{49}\) Outside the media, in submissions to the Human Rights Commission after the haka party incident at Auckland University in 1979, Raymond Nairn and Timothy McCreanor identified a mode of discourse in which Māori were divided ‘into “good” and “bad” sub-groups using a range of criteria’.\(^{50}\) Similar framings were evident in representations of Māori women who became well-known for their protest activity. One who was implicitly constructed as moderate in contrast to the new generation of activists was Te Arikinui Dame Te Ātairangikaahu, the Māori Queen. Dame Te Ata, as she was often known, was clearly depicted as a moderate and unifying figure in an article which appeared in the *New Zealand Woman’s Weekly* in 1990, New Zealand’s sesquicentennial year. It was reported that she had ‘a stern message for Maori radicals’ intending to ‘disrupt’ the celebrations, and she was quoted saying that those who did not wish to commemorate the year should ‘stay home’.\(^{51}\)

\(^{47}\) King, *Whina*, pp. 223-228, 236.

\(^{48}\) ‘Militant Marchers “Disgrace to Race”’, *Dominion*, 15 October 1975, p. 3. Cooper was quoted in the article referring to the campers as ‘a disgrace to their race’. ‘Militant Marchers’, p. 3.


\(^{50}\) R. G. Nairn and T. N. McCreanor, ‘Race Talk and Common Sense: Patterns in Pakeha Discourse on Maori/Pakeha Relations in New Zealand’, *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 10, no. 4 (1991), p. 249. What has come to be referred to as ‘the haka party incident’ occurred in 1979, when a group of engineering students from the University of Auckland performing a parody of a haka (traditional dance) were confronted by Māori and Pacific Island students.

Another implicitly depicted as moderate in contrast to many younger activists was Dame Miraka (Mira) Szaszy. Like Cooper a president of the MWWL, Szaszy devoted her life to Māori struggles. In an interview with Virginia Myers published in 1986, she reflected that she had become aware that ‘Maori were being put down’ and that this realisation had ignited her ‘determination to fight for the Maori people’.\(^{52}\) In coverage of her from the 1970s onward, however, she appears to have been usually constructed as moderate. Where her struggles for Māori rights were mentioned, they might be framed in non-threatening terms. For example, an article in Air New Zealand’s in-flight magazine, \textit{Pacific Way}, described her in 1993 as a ‘champion of civil rights’ who ‘remain[ed] dedicated to the cause of social justice’.\(^{53}\) Yet Szaszy herself more than once observed that she supported the goals of the new wave of activists, if not their tactics. She recalled in the interview with Myers that ‘some of our methods [in the MWWL] came under attack’ in the 1970s, and that ‘emerging radical groups’ such as Ngā Tamatoa were ‘very critical’ of the organisation, ‘which they saw as part of the system’ since it aimed for ‘gradual change in a peaceful way’. Of such groups, she reflected that she ‘agreed with their principles but not their strategies’. In ‘my own time’, she commented, ‘I think I was already a very radical person’.\(^{54}\)

In Australia, a similar representational divide between moderate and radical was often invoked in media representations of prominent Aboriginal women who worked for social and political change. Lowitja O’Donoghue became well-known through working from within the bureaucracy despite the frustrations she experienced. She held positions within the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, as the first chair of the National Aboriginal Conference, within the Aboriginal Development Commission, and as the inaugural head of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC). In 1985, after being chosen as the winner of the Australian of the Year award, the Adelaide \textit{Advertiser} reported that she ‘shuns the description “activist” in favour of “moderate’’.\(^{55}\) A decade earlier, Stewart Cockburn had observed in the same publication that ‘in working towards Aboriginal objectives, Miss O’Donoghue’s personal style is low key’. ‘She finds it more effective’, he stated, ‘to work her way around obstacles than to try to topple them’.\(^{56}\) O’Donoghue was sometimes represented as assimilated, and her life as demonstrating the success of official assimilation policies. Cockburn remarked that she had ‘helped explode an old, convenient but false white prejudice’, and had ‘demonstrated that, given a fair go, tribal Aborigines can not only be fully assimilated or integrated into white society in one generation, but can assume

\begin{itemize}
\item \(^{54}\) Myers, p. 241.
\item \(^{55}\) B. Parsons, ‘Why Tears Fell on Lois’s Happy Day’, \textit{Advertiser}, 30 January 1985, p. 2.
\end{itemize}
comfortable and undisputed leadership roles in that society’.\(^\text{57}\) Although media stories about O’Donoghue in the 1980s and 1990s sometimes depicted her as having fought for Aboriginal rights or fought her way to the top, she was also described in non-threatening terms. The *Advertiser* referred to her in 1988 as ‘a tireless worker for Aborigines’ in South Australia, and the Brisbane *Courier-Mail* observed in 1996 that ‘long before she became one of the nation’s most recognisable faces, she was already working to improve the lot of Aborigines’.\(^\text{58}\)

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\(^\text{57}\) Ibid.

Such depictions also carried gender baggage, reflecting a (white) conception of femininity that valued selfless work on behalf of others without seeking the limelight or needing reward. The *Australian Women’s Weekly* commented upon O’Donoghue’s having long been ‘a fighter for Aboriginal rights, but without publicity’, implicitly contrasting her with more vocal and visible activists.\(^{59}\) A similar perception of Cooper’s activism was evident in the *Dominion* editorial after her death. She had ‘led a turbulent life’, it read, ‘but her activism was born of selflessness’.\(^{60}\) Throughout the nineteenth century, many middle-class women found an outlet for their energies in charitable work; such selfless, unpaid work for others being widely viewed as compatible with the powerful ideology of domesticity that otherwise circumscribed women’s lives. Framing protest activity in this way thus potentially rehabilitated it as being compatible with such ideas of femininity.

At least once, O’Donoghue was explicitly compared to Pat O’Shane. Although O’Shane was also a prominent Indigenous woman working for Indigenous rights from within the bureaucratic and institutional structures of the state, she was often depicted as a more controversial figure than was O’Donoghue. O’Shane had begun her career as a teacher, studied law and become a barrister, worked within the public service and been appointed as a magistrate in New South Wales (NSW) in 1986. In an interview in 1991, she told of becoming involved in ‘the Black Military’ when she went to Sydney in the early 1970s, and of travelling to Canberra for the tent embassy protest.\(^{61}\) She was quoted in 1983, while head of the NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs, saying that ‘I see myself as an activist within bureaucracy’ and that she felt ‘it is incumbent upon people like myself to effect some change in attitudes’.\(^{62}\) Charles Perkins, a key figure in the 1965 Freedom Ride and a prominent public servant, had been quoted in the *Canberra Times* making a similar statement several years earlier, after his promotion to deputy secretary of the federal Department of Aboriginal Affairs. He would be, he had stated, ‘no less an activist or no less militant’.\(^{63}\)

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60 ‘A Maori For All Races’, p. 6.
63 ‘No Less an Activist, Says New Deputy Secretary’, *Canberra Times*, 8 September 1979, p. 13.
Figure 10: ‘Portrait of Pat O’Shane Taken at the Constitutional Convention, Canberra, 2-13 February 1998’, Loui Seselja.


Media portrayals often depicted O’Shane as fierce and controversial, despite her position within the public service and the judiciary. Notwithstanding her position of power within the legal system, she was described in one article in
the *Sydney Morning Herald* in 1993 as ‘a champion of the vulnerable and a foe of the establishment’.64 Throughout her career as a magistrate, many articles described her in terms such as ‘outspoken magistrate’ or ‘controversial NSW magistrate’.65 One story in the *Daily Mirror* in 1985 was headlined ‘Freedom Fighter’.66 In an extended profile published in the *Australian Magazine* in 1993, Kate Legge emphasised O’Shane’s fiery nature, referring to her among other things as a ‘fighter’, a ‘rabblerouser’ and a ‘stirrer’, as well as describing her as ‘full of fire’ and someone that ‘no-one wants to cross’. Legge compared O’Shane to ‘other successful Aboriginal women’ such as O’Donoghue, who was ‘not nearly as smouldering, although she has good reason’. Rather, O’Donoghue was ‘a quiet achiever’ and a ‘conformist who plays by the rules’.67 Although both women worked for change from within the institutional system, a divide was thus drawn between them in terms of their approaches and strategies.

In many of these depictions, gender was clearly important. The image of the mother was a recurring one. Echoing portrayals of Cooper, O’Donoghue was profiled in the *Sunday Age* in 1994 under the headline ‘Mother of the Nation’. Described as the ‘elder stateswoman of Aboriginal politics’, she was framed as having sacrificed (among other things) the chance to have her own children in order to work for Aboriginal people, and to have gained ‘a much wider family in place of the ordinary, a sort of motherhood which embraces her entire people’.68 Sydney-based Shirley Smith, an important figure in the Aboriginal community in Redfern, was better known as Mum Shirl. Occasionally depicted as a formidable woman or an activist, she was also often portrayed as caring, nurturing or motherly. One such description appeared in the *Daily Mirror* in 1984, where she was referred to as ‘the tireless Aboriginal welfare worker with the big heart’.69 Descriptions like this held far different connotations than did ‘activist’. Even in an article in which she was described as ‘swearing like a bullocky’, ‘yelling down the phone at bureaucrats’ and feeling ‘perpetual rage’, she was portrayed as a mother in that she was ‘fight[ing] for her oppressed “family” of Aborigines’.70 Such matriarchal rage was perhaps more acceptable than was the rage of younger activist women.

In New Zealand, older Māori women were often referred to in the press as ‘matriarch’ or ‘kuia’ (elderly woman). Cooper and Szaszy were frequently

67 K. Legge, ‘In the Case of Pat O’Shane’, *Australian Magazine*, 31 July 1993, pp. 9, 11-12.
described in these terms later in life. As the image of the mother is generally a moderate one, so too is the image of the matriarch. Reference was often made to Cooper’s age during the land march, and in many later articles about her. She was described by Gabriel David in the *Evening Post* in 1975 as a ‘rather amazing old Maori woman’, and as ‘this remarkable woman of 82’. The *Dominion* noted her ‘frail and stooped’ appearance as she led marchers to Parliament. She was framed as a grandmotherly figure in the *New Zealand Woman’s Weekly* in 1974, after she received the CBE (Commander of the Order of the British Empire), and she appeared in this light in a now-famous photograph which appeared in the *New Zealand Herald* in 1975, showing Cooper beginning the land march holding her granddaughter’s hand. Being framed as a mother, grandmother or matriarch often appeared to imply not merely family status or age, but also a moderate approach to seeking change. It was the very incongruity of an elderly woman leading a protest march which seemed to fascinate in many press reports of the land march.

**Radicals, Riots and Reformed Revolutionaries**

Evan Te Ahu Poata-Smith pointed out that the ‘intensity and momentum of Maori political activism has never been consistent’, with ‘upturns in protest activity’ being ‘followed by downturns in struggle and vice versa’. During the 1970s, there was ‘a dramatic upsurge in Maori activism’. In Australia too, an intensification of Aboriginal activism occurred from the late 1960s. As I have begun to suggest, many representations of Indigenous women who became known for their struggles for social change in this period constructed a divide between moderate campaigners and radical activists, which often also meant between older and younger women. A similar observation might be made of depictions of Indigenous men who campaigned for change in Australia and New Zealand during these years. Graham Latimer, the chair of the New Zealand Māori Council and a member of the conservative National Party, was often implicitly portrayed as moderate, in contrast to men such as Tame Iti, Syd Jackson, Ken Mair and Hone Harawira, who were regularly depicted as radicals and extremists. Moreover, as Sue Abel observed in relation to television news reports about Waitangi Day in 1995, the acknowledgement that there were

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justified grievances among Māori did not necessarily remove this rhetorical divide. She suggested that Māori were still constructed as ‘tame’ or ‘wild’ in terms of their ‘tactics’: those constructed as ‘tame’ might hold ‘radical views’ but nevertheless ‘work[ed] within the system’, while those constructed as ‘wild’ were those who ‘ignore[d] this way of working and use[d] confrontation and disruption’.\(^75\) Leonie Pihama has also identified ‘the activist/radical/excessive Other’ as one of the ‘dominant discourses’ about Māori ‘which have constructed limited notions of who we are, derived from colonial representations of Maori’.\(^76\) This representational divide meant that some prominent Aboriginal and Māori women who campaigned for change might more accurately be called notorious, at least in relation to representations of them in the media.

Women who were part of the new activist groups of the 1970s, in particular, were frequently represented as dangerous radicals. In New Zealand, one such woman was Titewhai Harawira, a prominent campaigner for Māori rights who was consistently depicted as radical and threatening, and who continues to be portrayed in such ways in the early twenty-first century. Another was Eva Rickard, who led the fight to have land at Raglan returned to Māori, and who later declared an independent state, Whāingaroa, in 1996. A profile of Rickard in the *New Zealander* magazine in 1981 described her as ‘a direct descendant of the ravaging chief Te Rauparaha’, one who had ‘rebellion in her blood’.\(^77\) Those seeking change through protest have often been marginalised and made to appear threatening both through the use of negative labels, and through media coverage focused upon their protest actions rather than upon their ideas.\(^78\) Rickard was sometimes described in terms that carried such negative connotations. Two articles shortly before her death in 1997 referred to her respectively as a ‘veteran activist’ and a ‘veteran Maori activist’.\(^79\) Likewise, Harawira was, and is, persistently described in such ways. In a variety of New Zealand newspapers in 1998 and 1999, she was termed a ‘Maori activist’, ‘Waitangi activist’ or ‘notorious activist’.\(^80\)

Both Harawira and Rickard have commented upon these labels. In an article in *Te Kaea*, a magazine published by the Department of Māori Affairs, in 1979,

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\(^75\) Abel, “‘Wild Māori’ and ‘Tame Māori’”, p. 36.
Rickard stated: ‘We knew as children who we were and where we belonged’. ‘But in the Pakeha world’, she continued, ‘it’s Eva Rickard militant activist, stirrer, gang-member, trouble-maker and all the other names thrown at me since the battle began’. In the *New Zealand Herald* in 1998, reporter Michele Hewitson observed that Harawira did not refer to herself as ‘a nationalist, a radical or a separatist’, and quoted her stating that she was simply ‘a very strong Maori woman’. Similarly, in the *Sunday Star-Times* in 1999, Harawira was quoted commenting ‘I’m not an activist, that’s a label’, as well as that she was ‘pro-Maori’ rather than ‘anti-white’ and that she was ‘a beautiful Maori woman with a very clear-headed political analysis who has been working tirelessly for constitutional change’, rather than the scary extremist portrayed in the media. In an interview with broadcaster Brian Edwards in the late 1990s, Harawira stated that the media had developed a certain image of her, and recalled once having been told by a reporter that her words would not be quoted because they did not match that image. When deployed in media coverage of Rickard’s struggle to regain lands wrongfully taken, or of Harawira’s actions and opinions, such negative labels could have a potent de-legitimising effect.

Before she became involved in business ventures and sought election to Parliament, similar labels were applied to Donna Awatere Huata (then Awatere). A key figure in protests against the Springbok tour of New Zealand in 1981, she was arrested and charged multiple times during the tour. Huata was also the author of a powerful text on sovereignty published in 1984, *Maori Sovereignty*. She remembered that in the late 1970s, when Prime Minister Robert Muldoon ‘announced a list of New Zealanders he considered dangerous subversives’, she ‘was at the top’, and that she ‘got seared into people’s memories as one of the causes of the worst violence of the Springbok tour’. She remembered being ‘called a Cuban-trained urban revolutionary’ after travelling to Cuba, although ‘we never considered those kinds of violent acts’ and she thought that the ‘Maori radical movement has been extraordinarily peaceful’. Throughout the rest of her career, allusions were continually made to her past involvement in activism. When she published her autobiography in 1996, when she joined the conservative ACT political party and entered Parliament the same year, and even when she appeared in the *New Zealand Woman’s Weekly* in 2003 apologising for claiming that she had lost weight by dieting when she had instead had her stomach stapled,

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82 Hewitson, p. G3.
her radical past was often referenced rather than her work prior to seeking election, which included formulating a reading programme for children and providing consultation on bicultural management for organisations. Peter Calder referred to her in the New Zealand Herald in 1997 as ‘the ACT list MP and one-time firebrand 1970s radical’, Rudman wrote of her in the New Zealand Listener in 1996 as a ‘former firebrand’ who was ‘once a scourge of the establishment’, and Mere Mulu described her in 2003 in the New Zealand Woman’s Weekly as a ‘former Maori radical’ as well as an MP. In Mana magazine, on the other hand, Tahu Kukutai detailed her various careers and described her as a ‘versatile achiever’.

Huata herself has spoken publicly about her press image. In 1982 in the Evening Standard, she was quoted stating that she was ‘not a Marxist, an activist, a radical’ because these were ‘simply labels which try to prove people to be isolates’ whereas she was rather someone who ‘articulates[s] the views of Maori people’. More than a decade later, she was quoted in Mana commenting that, while ‘proud’ of her involvement in Ngā Tamatoa, ‘it was at a cost’ because:

> I took a lot of flak and on one occasion was passed over for a job I was guaranteed of getting, because of my activist involvement. Even now people see me as Donna Awatere the radical, and have all sorts of mindsets …

Representations of her as a ‘wild’ Māori thus continued to have repercussions in her later life and career.

The transformation of erstwhile radicals into less threatening figures was made much of in media representations of some women as they grew older and their lives changed. Huata’s shift from being a key figure in protest activity to entering Parliament as a member of a conservative party was described by Caroline Courtney in Next magazine as a ‘stunning political conversion’ from being ‘a tigress of the 70s and 80s Maori activist movement, who railed against “white rule” and “white hatred”’, to ‘a right wing Act MP purring inside the parliament she once despised’. Ripeka Evans was also portrayed as having undergone a vast shift, having been a member of Ngā Tamatoa and one of those who had travelled to Cuba. When appointed ‘cultural and planning assistant’ to Television New Zealand director-general Julian Mounter, her prior incarnation as an activist

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90 Kukutai, p. 58.
was a major focus in a *New Zealand Woman’s Weekly* profile. The article began by drawing a parallel between her past ‘image’, when she was ‘portrayed in the media as a militant extremist’, and ‘the one [she] presents today’. The article noted that she had been included on a Security Intelligence Service list of ‘subversives’ and ‘radicals’ in 1981 and quoted another who was on the list, Don Carson, observing that his activist involvement did not generate the same level of ‘suspicion’ as that which surrounded Evans. Yet although the tone of the article was that such treatment of Evans was unfair, it remained an article about how a former militant now held an important and respected position. Similar representations appeared as recently as 2007 in a piece in the *Sunday Star-Times*. Evans was said to have ‘once … advocated bloody dissent’ and to ‘sound just like a terrorist’, but to have shifted to ‘fight[ing] for Maori from within the system’.

In Australia, although not always identified as Aboriginal, Roberta (Bobbi) Sykes was depicted as undergoing a similar transformation. In the early 1970s she was referred to as ‘a shapely black militant from Queensland’ and as a ‘militant Aborigine’ who was as ‘controversial’ in Australia as Angela Davis was in the United States. In 1994, the *Australian* commented that she was in 1972 ‘Bobbi Sykes – branded a ratbag militant, trampled by police and arrested at the Aboriginal Tent Embassy’ but had become ‘author, poet and scholar Dr Roberta Sykes – 1994 winner of Australia’s Human Rights Medal’. This focus on the transformation of activists sometimes gave the impression that they had left behind their political convictions as they matured. In New Zealand, rehabilitation of those who had disturbed the myth that race relations were the best in the world had the potential to reinvigorate that myth.

If representations of reformed radicals could thus marginalise their former selves, other rhetorical formations could also act to marginalise those involved in protest activities. Representations in the media are shaped at least in part by dominant news values. Protest activity was clearly newsworthy. Besides being active and involving conflict, it was frequently also expected. Abel observed that protests which occurred at Waitangi during the celebrations in 1990, New Zealand’s sesquicentennial year, ‘fulfilled many of the criteria for newsworthiness’, including being ‘predictable’. Because such activities had been reported in the past, they were recognisable to audiences, and journalists ‘had a ready-made format in which to tell the story’.

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96 Abel, *Shaping the News*, p. 67.
that in relation to the Australian Bicentennial year in 1988, ‘the international media were quoted as nominating the Aboriginal rights issue as the only really interesting angle they had’. In both Australia and New Zealand, criticism of media depictions of protest activity has included the charge that reports of protest activity were ‘sensationalist’ and often provided little information about the social, economic or historical contexts of the protests. While not necessarily deliberate, the continued deployment of familiar rhetorical frames in depictions of protest activity frequently led to the repetition of negative representations which had the potential effect of marginalising the protesters. Laura Ashley and Beth Olson have similarly observed rhetorical and structural ways in which women in the feminist movement in the United States between 1966 and 1986 were marginalised in the media. One such depiction of Aboriginal protesters in the lead-up to Australia Day in 1988, as noted by Turner, was ‘the construction of black groups as politically divided’ and the suggestion that their protest would be weakened by those divisions. Yet after a protest march was held in Sydney, media stories about it were ‘surprisingly positive’. Turner argued that the ‘obvious success of the march allowed media reports to emphasise its joyfulness, thus … limiting the extent to which it compromised the official celebrations’. Representations of protesters as holding extreme opinions or behaving in extreme ways, like representations of protest groups as internally divided, could deflect attention from their grievances and marginalise their protests.

In their examination of media representations of Aboriginal women at the time of the Bicentenary, Cathy Greenfield and Peter Williams also observed that depictions in the media could marginalise activists. Irene Watson, who made criticisms of planned laws about Aboriginal heritage, was depicted as ‘radically unrepresentative of the Aboriginal communities on whose behalf she [had] spoken’. Greenfield and Williams argued that the recurring depiction of Watson as ‘a strident and radical activist’ had ‘set the conditions for [the] particular marginalisation and dismissal of the policy criticisms she put forward’. Occasionally, prominent Indigenous women who were involved in protest activities were represented in similarly marginalising ways. Profiling Pat O’Shane in the Australian Women’s Weekly, Rosemary Munday wrote not unsympathetically of O’Shane’s views of the experiences and status of Aboriginal

100 Turner, pp. 85-86.
people. Discussing the impact of ‘the Queensland Act’ on Aborigines, Munday wrote that those ‘placed “under the Act”’ were subject to ‘rules and regulations that touched almost every aspect of their lives and created what Pat O’Shane regards as offensive limitations’. In this statement, what was perhaps an effort to write in a balanced way had the potential effect of marginalising O’Shane’s opinion.

Rhetorical devices could also have the effect of taming a forceful woman. An article by Catherine Martin profiling Mum Shirl appeared in the *West Australian* when she visited Western Australia in 1973. Quoting Mum Shirl as saying that ‘I am here to stir up the blacks’, Martin then wrote that Mum Shirl was ‘no trouble-shooter’, and that if she had been educated ‘beyond the age of 14’, she ‘might have preferred the word “inspire” to “stir”’. After Rickard’s death, an article published in the *New Zealand Herald* described major events in her life. Near the end of the piece, it mentioned that she had ‘found time’ to act in a Merata Mita film (*Mauri*) and to ‘float the idea of setting up an independent Maori republic in Raglan’. What was probably her most challenging act was thus depicted as an idea rather than an action, and as a matter of passing interest with little significance. Such a textual move did not make Rickard appear dangerous, but it glossed over uncomfortable aspects of her life’s work, thus retaining the celebratory tone of the article.

These depictions of prominent Indigenous women involved in protest activity were inevitably also shaped in terms of gender. Identifying one common construction of Māori in the media as that of ‘radical political activist’, Melanie Wall commented on the gender implications of such a stereotype. Besides working to ‘maintain the hegemonic status quo by delegitimising the political aspirations of Maori activists’, the stereotype also operated to ‘to further delimit and constrain Maori identity through masculine signifiers of a violent primitivism’. Thus, although Indigenous men involved in protest activity were also often represented as dangerous radicals, there were different implications when such depictions were applied to women. One such implication was perhaps that women who stepped outside accepted limits of behaviour to protest were more threatening than men who did so. When Deirdre Macken wrote in the *Age* in 1986 that O’Shane’s ‘radical politics’ had ‘finally split her marriage’, the image of activist women as unnatural was potentially underlined. Such

102 R. Munday, “‘If You Can Make It, Why Can’t 160 Thousand Others?’”, *Australian Women’s Weekly*, 8 August 1979, p. 11, my emphasis.
behaviour was not womanly. Indeed, being seen not to be an activist could draw praise for young women in the 1970s and 1980s. One profile of Tracey Moffatt in the *Advertiser* in 1988 stated that she was ‘a young Aborigine with plenty to say’ but ‘no flag-waving activist’.\(^{107}\) In other instances, being female could sometimes lessen the impact of an activist’s words. In a profile of Sykes in the *Advertiser*, Alan Trengove quoted her discussing ‘sexist’ reactions to her which downplayed her ideas. He described her a ‘militant Aborigine’ and as ‘black, beautiful, angry and articulate’, and wrote that he was ‘taking a lot of notice’ of her although ‘finding it impossible to overlook her gender’.\(^{108}\) When Rickard died, a number of articles referred to her as a ‘matriarch’ or ‘kuia’, as articles about Cooper had done at the time of her death. One referred to her as ‘one of the country’s most respected Maori rights matriarchs’.\(^{109}\) Another article noted that, as well as provoking Pākehā hostility, Rickard was ‘criticised by radical Maori’ for using the ‘Pakeha court system’ in the struggle to regain land at Raglan.\(^{110}\) In old age and death, it seemed, her rehabilitation from radical to respected matriarch had begun.

**Recognition: Honours From the Establishment**

The representational divide between those seen as radical and those seen as moderate was also sometimes recalled in media depictions of disagreements between those campaigning for Indigenous rights. One aspect of the divide appeared to relate to the degree of involvement in official institutional structures which campaigners were considered to have. Several stories reported that prominent Māori and Aboriginal women working for change through parliamentary and bureaucratic structures had been criticised as having sold out the cause by entering those institutions. Pat O’Shane was reported to be the target of such criticism on a number of occasions. While she was head of the NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs, the *National Times* quoted Paul Coe, who was described as ‘one of the country’s more radical black leaders’, commenting that she had ‘become aloof’ and that she ‘claims she’s the conscience of the Aboriginal people, when really she has lost contact with what Aborigines are thinking’.\(^{111}\) The *Sunday Telegraph* reported in 1983 that ‘her critics have claimed success has put her “out of touch” with aboriginal people, [and] that

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\(^{107}\) P. Hackett, ‘Tracey Wants to Picture Blacks in Right Light’, *Advertiser*, 22 March 1988, p. 16.

\(^{108}\) Trengove, p. 4.


\(^{110}\) Guy, p. A16.

she has failed to protect their interests”. O’Shane was reportedly ‘slated … as an Aunty Tom’ when she became a magistrate, being ‘accused of becoming part of the system’. Similarly, Huata ‘was branded as having sold out’ when she began a consulting company with another woman which advised government departments and ‘offered bicultural training’ to companies and organisations.

Huata herself was quoted in Mana saying that ‘in many ways I believe I’m still an activist because IHI [the company] is reinforcing my notions of tino rangatiratanga [self-determination or sovereignty]’, as well as because the company was helping to bring about ‘a real change of attitudes among the people who hold the power, the decision makers’. JOINING THE CONSERVATIVE ACT party was, as already observed, a further step from her earlier image as a radical activist. She was quoted at the time saying that ‘I believe we’ve made enormous strides’, which the reporter noted was ‘why she no longer believes in activist action’. Earlier, in 1994, she was quoted commenting that ‘I am very much committed to the idea of giving people back the responsibility for managing their own future’. Representing oneself as continuing to be an activist within the context of the institution was not only a contrast to depictions that suggested a transformation had occurred. It was also a response to criticisms of having sold out.

Similar debates were evident in the many stories about prominent Indigenous women who received state honours for their work campaigning for Indigenous welfare or rights. A number of these women received or were offered honours, and their reasons for accepting, declining or returning them were sometimes featured in the media. Particularly for those who had for many years challenged the settler state’s usurpation of land and sovereignty, the decision to accept or decline an honour could be fraught. Reasons for accepting honours were often related to ideas that the award would be an important recognition of an Indigenous woman, that it would be accepted on behalf of all Aboriginal or Māori people, or that it might increase the influence of the recipient in the future. O’Donoghue received the AM (Member of the Order of Australia) in 1976 and the CBE (Commander of the Order of the British Empire) in 1982 for service to the ‘Aboriginal community’, and the AC (Companion of the Order of Australia) in 1999 for ‘public service through leadership to Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians in the areas of human rights and social justice’, especially as ATSIC chairperson. She was quoted in the Advertiser in 1977 saying that she was...

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113 McGregor, p. 39.
114 Kukutai, p. 59.
116 Panckhurst, section 3, p. 5.
‘proud to receive’ the AM, ‘not only for myself but for the Aboriginal people’ and that ‘I have accepted the award on their behalf’. When Mum Shirl received the MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire), the Melbourne Herald quoted her saying that she considered refusing it, and that the award was not as significant a ‘thrill’ as she gained from providing help to those in need. The article reported that she was convinced to accept the award by ‘her 12-year-old granddaughter, Dianne, who told her it would be a great thing for Aboriginals and would “Give us some incentive to lift ourselves out of oppression”’. Szaszy was reported to have ‘done much soul-searching’ before accepting her damehood in 1989, because ‘her dedication to working for the honouring of the Treaty of Waitangi, and her belief that there is nothing to celebrate in New Zealand until that happens, left her in a dilemma’ about whether or not to accept. She was reported to have said that the ‘decision to accept … was, in the main, a tribute to the many people who earned it with her’. Gladys Elphick, whose achievements included being a founder of the Aboriginal Women’s Council, received the MBE for service to the Aboriginal community. Although she accepted the award, however, she was quoted in the Adelaide Advertiser commenting that the award of South Australia’s Aborigine of the Year in 1984 was ‘the one I wanted because it comes from my own people, and that makes it special’.

Rickard, on the other hand, reportedly declined awards. She had, as mentioned above, declared an independent state, Whāingaroa, in 1996. The declaration stated that it was ‘time’ for ‘the people of Whaingaroa’ to reclaim the ‘independence taken from them’, and that they ‘accordingly declare their independence as a sovereign state’. Rickard also sent a letter to Queen Elizabeth informing her of the impending declaration. A year later, after her death, a piece in the Waikato Times reported that her husband had revealed that she had declined offers of the QSM (Queen’s Service Medal), because she ‘didn’t want the gongs and titles of the British, whose troops stripped her tribe of their land’. While Whāingaroa’s declaration of independence was made only shortly before her death, it asserted tino rangatiratanga, and suggests that Rickard would not accept a medal from the state which had usurped that. Similar reference to history was reportedly behind Faith Bandler’s refusal to accept the MBE in 1976. Although not Aboriginal,

119 A. Pinches, ‘I Almost Said No – MBE Shirl’, Herald, 11 June 1977, p. 3. Various stories appeared about Mum Shirl’s acceptance of the MBE. Another was that she ‘said she had refused to accept honours from the Queen some five times, but finally, a grand-daughter accepted an MBE on her behalf’. M. Heary, ‘The Enigma Called Mum Shirl’, Woman’s Day, 21 July 1986, p. 19. Still another was that she ‘refused to accept the equivalent of a knighthood but she accepted an MBE from the Queen’. Brenchley, p. 14.
121 C. Hirst, ‘Aboriginal Honour For Aunty Glad’, Advertiser, 7 September 1984, p. 3.
Bandler was active in Aboriginal rights organisations and a key figure in the campaign for the 1967 referendum. Her father, as a boy, had been forcibly taken from Ambrym in Vanuatu to work on sugar cane fields in Queensland. Bandler was quoted in the *Sydney Morning Herald* in 1976 saying that: ‘I can’t possibly accept an award from an empire that kidnapped my father … and enslaved him as a cane worker’.[124] Almost a decade later, in 1984, Bandler accepted an AM, perhaps feeling differently about a uniquely Australian award than she did about an imperial one. Whatever the motives of those who had nominated these women for honours, they considered it impossible to accept an award from the state or empire against whose policies they had struggled for years.

Other women accepted honours at the time, and later chose to return them. One such was Oodgeroo Noonuccal, whose decision to return her MBE and change her name was discussed in Chapter Four. Another was prominent actress Justine Saunders, who returned her OAM (Medal of the Order of Australia) in 2000. Newspapers across Australia carried the story, reporting that she was returning the award in protest against claims by the Howard government that there had been no ‘stolen generation’. The *Sydney Morning Herald* quoted her saying that she would return the award ‘to the Government that has told me my past was a lie’.[125] The return of honours could thus be mobilised by recipients in their challenge to state policies and actions. Declining or returning honours was more powerful when publicised, a point which displays the complexity of activists’ relationships with the media. Sometimes marginalised by it, they nonetheless continued to need it.

During her lifetime, Cooper received several royal honours, beginning with an MBE in 1953. This was followed by a CBE in 1974, and she then received the DBE (Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire) in 1980 for her services to the Māori people. In 1991, she received New Zealand’s highest honour, the Order of New Zealand (ONZ). After her death, the *Dominion* reported that she had ‘delighted in the honours bestowed on her but regarded herself as a symbolic recipient only, on behalf of her people’.[126] An editorial in the *Auckland Star* at the time she received the damehood represented her in terms of her work toward racial harmony, the theme that was repeated so often after her death. The writer observed that ‘the title acknowledges life-long work for both Maori and Pakeha races’ and that ‘all New Zealanders will take pleasure from this’.[127] At the same time, the *Evening Post* reported the award under the headline ‘Dame Whina irked fellow marchers in land protest’. The story began with a description of her as having ‘plummeted from the Maori popularity stakes’ after

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126 ‘“Mother of Nation”’, p. 7.
her break with those who wished to remain camping at Parliament following the march, and the article quoted negative responses to her damehood from two men involved in the march. One, Barney Pikari, was quoted saying that Cooper had ‘become a yes person for the government’ and that had she ‘gone further than a land march and become radical she wouldn’t have got the award’, while the other, Tom Poata, was quoted saying that the award was ‘a reward for doing a job for the system’. Cooper was to be invested with her honour at Waitangi marae (meeting place), along with Latimer, who had been granted a knighthood. As King noted, the decision that the investitures be held at Waitangi marae, on Waitangi Day, was ‘more controversial’ than the honours alone would have been. Since its establishment as a public holiday in 1973, Waitangi Day had been ‘a symbolically contested event’. As elaborate official celebrations were held at Waitangi, some sectors of Māori opinion viewed the day as a moment for ‘reaffirm[ing] the sacredness’ of the Treaty, and others considered celebration inappropriate until the Treaty was honoured.

The investitures held at Waitangi in 1981 were attended by a group of protesters who intended to ‘peacefully disrupt’ them. Cooper later recalled that:

I heard the protesters shouting at me, but I didn’t look. Then one of them ran out and tried to knock my son over … I could hear the commotion. I just kept going and the Governor-General pinned my medal on me …

The incident was widely reported in the press, and the protest was depicted as a ‘full-scale riot’. In the Auckland Star, the headline screamed: ‘Police, activists brawl on marae’. In much of the coverage, the protesters were depicted as a fringe element, and their views marginalised. The Auckland Star story emphasised that they had attacked an elderly woman, observing that ‘frail Maori elder Dame Whina Cooper and her son’ were ‘almost knocked to the ground’. Another stressed Cooper’s status as ‘a fighter for Maori land rights’, potentially implying that the protesters’ disapproval of her actions was unreasonable. Nairn and McCleanor argued that in submissions to the Human Rights Commission on the haka party incident, Māori ‘dissent’ was ‘cast as the work of a tiny minority of congenital troublemakers who [sought] to arouse a wider Maori discontent

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129 King, Whina, pp. 235-236.
132 King, Whina, p. 236.
135 Ibid.
to further their own political ends’. After the disruption of Cooper’s and Latimer’s investitures, several newspapers reported Prime Minister Robert Muldoon’s view that the protesters were ‘pakeha-led and trained and a disgrace to Maoridom’. He was quoted in one such article saying that they were ‘given the customary and traditional privilege[s] of the marae’ and had ‘abused them in a pakeha-style protest’. Such statements not only claimed to define Māori-ness, but presented the protesters as not being properly Māori, which had the effect of de-legitimising their protest.

In the weeks before the investitures took place, several press stories discussed Māori opinions of the honours and the possibility of protest on the day. The Auckland Star reported that a group of protesters intended to ‘peacefully disrupt’ the investitures, as they considered it ‘wrong’ for Cooper and Latimer ‘to accept the honours’. The reporter observed that ‘many’ Māori did support Cooper and Latimer, seeing the awards as ‘genuine honours’. It thus presented Māori as divided (over the honours) rather than agreed (over issues such as land rights or the failure to honour the Treaty). Stories reporting the protests at Waitangi likewise often stressed the conflict between Māori. In its report, the Auckland Star quoted one of the protesters calling out to Cooper: ‘once you accept that declaration you become part of the State’.

Rickard was later quoted recalling that protesters at the investiture ‘chanted “sell-out”’. Harawira, who had been part of the land march in 1975, also considered that the failure of leaders such as Cooper to support the campers after the march was a sell-out. She was quoted in 1982 saying: ‘Hah! They both got knighthoods last year … The ones that get too close to the pakeha, they’re the ones that turn on us’. Cooper herself, however, saw the damehood in a different light. As she explained:

They should have just stayed with what they were originally protesting about, the treaty. They didn’t understand that I’d have more power when I’d been invested, more power to fight for them and for all the Maori people against the Government.

Cooper thus saw no contradiction between accepting the honour for her past efforts, and continuing to say what she thought about government actions in the future. Indeed, she considered that the honour would increase her influence in future campaigns for Māori rights. She had, in fact, reportedly threatened during the land march to return her honours if the group’s ‘demands [were] not met’.

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137 Nairn and McCreanor, pp. 248-249.
139 Staff Reporter, p. 2.
141 Welch, p. 29.
143 King, Whina, p. 236.
144 S. Gray, ‘If March Fails, Medals Returned’, New Zealand Herald, 27 September 1975, section 1, p. 3.
Press reports which focused on the divide among Māori about the honours, rather than on the wide agreement about land rights or the Treaty, failed to see that the contest over honours was in some ways merely a contest about what might be the best way to achieve widely desired goals.

O’Donoghue was also subject to criticisms for accepting an award. When she accepted the Australian of the Year award in 1984, another Aboriginal woman, Mary Cooper, was quoted in the Advertiser referring to O’Donoghue as ‘a Judas’ and ‘a traitor’ because she had accepted ‘a tin medal’ and with it the ‘bloodshed’ that followed the arrival of white people in Australia. O’Donoghue was quoted in the article responding to these criticisms by saying that she had foreseen some criticism, but that ‘I believe as a responsible citizen and a responsible Aboriginal I have a responsibility to bridge the gap between black and white in this country’. She was reported to have stated that ‘she was confident her decision to accept was right because she was deemed to have earned it as an Aborigine and a woman’.145 She was quoted in the Australian Women’s Weekly saying:

When I was asked to accept the award, I thought about Australia Day and its connotations but I also thought it would be a recognition of an Aboriginal and of a woman.

She added that ‘I don’t condone what has happened since 1788 but we are all here now and we have to solve our differences and live together as Australians’.146 In a report in the Advertiser which commented that there was a ‘danger of being perceived to have lost touch with the people back in the bush’ for those who were recognised in the white world, O’Donoghue was quoted commenting that such ‘criticism comes on occasions’, but that ‘if I wasn’t working at the local, State and national level in the way I have done all these years, they (the communities) may not be in the position that they are in now’. The headline of the report was ‘Why tears fell on Lois’s happy day’, and it presented Mary Cooper as having ‘tarnished’ the shine of the honour for O’Donoghue.147 In press reports which focused on criticisms made of those who accepted honours, the representational divide between ‘tame’ and ‘wild’ was thus sometimes reinforced.

**Feminism, Gender and Indigenous Activism**

While Indigenous men involved in protest activity were often depicted in similar ways to those outlined above, particularly in relation to the divide between radical and moderate, there were clearly also ways in which representations of

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146 Lyle, p. 27.
147 Parsons, ‘Why Tears Fell’, p. 2.
Indigenous women known for their activism were shaped by ideas about (white) femininity. Moreover, although many activist women appeared to consider issues of Indigenous rights to have primacy over issues of gender, they were nonetheless aware of the social and political positions of women. Much of Cooper’s most significant work before 1975 was done through a women’s organisation, the MWWL, and her position as a former president of the organisation was often referenced in articles about her in the press later in her life. In its early years, as Szaszy suggested in an interview, the centre of the league’s attention was ‘the home – the children and mothers’.

Cooper’s work was never restricted to the concerns of women, however. Because there was ‘no other national organisation’ to advocate for Māori, the MWWL ‘took up all issues to do with the Maori world’ and thus ‘went far beyond the original intention of the organisation’. Ray, writing in the New Zealand Listener in 1975, asserted that Cooper ‘typically, … discouraged the league from becoming a gossip ground for women’ and ‘fashioned it into a powerful pressure group’, thus implying that women’s groups had a tendency to become tea-and-biscuits groups. In Te Ao Hou in 1955, Cooper was described as having ‘dominated many positions where one would expect to find a man at the helm’. The Evening Post noted that she had, before her move to Auckland, ‘never hesitated to trespass into recreations and sports normally preserved for males’, citing as an example her presidency of a rugby union branch and her development of ‘tactical plans’ for matches. Cooper herself reportedly once said that her father ‘wanted me to be a boy so in a sense I became one; strong, a warrior, a soldier for God and for my people, our people’. Thus she appeared to represent herself in masculine terms, as outside her gender. After her death it was reported that among other controversial views, she had ‘called for women to stay home and look after their children rather than join protest marches’. Representations of Cooper as mother and matriarch were interwoven with representations of her as taking the place of a man, leading from the front with unusual strength and determination.

In itself, Cooper’s position of leadership had important gendered dimensions. As the Dominion phrased it after her death, perhaps recasting her as a champion of women’s rights: ‘on the marae she did not hesitate to break with tradition in speaking and taking the leadership role in tribal and racial affairs’.

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149 Ibid.
150 Ray, p. 18.
152 David, ‘Leader of Maori March’, p. 16.
155 “‘Mother of Nation’”, p. 7.
its editorial after her death, the *Evening Post* similarly observed that through ‘sheer force of personality’ she ‘rose above the customary limitations faced by Maori women seeking to assert themselves on the marae’ and along with Te Puea ‘established beyond all doubt the right of women to take a leadership role in Maori society’.\(^{156}\) Indeed, Cooper sometimes attracted criticism for being ‘a woman taking what many Maoris regarded as a man’s role, by standing up and speaking in public, and by taking the initiative on matters of Maori protocol’.\(^{157}\) Her response to these criticisms, quoted by King in his biography of her, was that:

> I knew some people were wild at me. They said things like, “Oh that woman. She’s taking the part of a man”.

However, she said:

> I’ve never stopped the men doing anything. I’ve been waiting for years for men to put the world to rights, and they hadn’t. Well – God gave me eyes to see, a head to think, a tongue to talk. Why not use them, why not share what I know?\(^{158}\)

In the *New Zealand Listener* after Cooper’s death, Welch suggested that ‘at least some of the hostility towards her arose out of wounded male Maori pride, unused to such female effrontery’. He quoted a younger woman, Kathie Irwin, stating that ‘the legacy she left young Maori women is absolutely tremendous’ since ‘she saw no barriers and just went for it, and her sex and her race were no reason for her not to be successful’.\(^{159}\) Age may have assisted Cooper in taking a leadership position. Szaszy once observed that ‘only when Maori women reached old age and were seen as no longer a threat to male domination, were they generally free from discrimination within Maori society, at least outside the marae forum’, and that ‘their age allows them to say things that really are listened to, even if they are not accepted’.\(^{160}\) Ironically, age also played a part in representations that placed Cooper as a non-threatening matriarchal figure who did not speak in challenging ways.

For some women who became known for their campaigns for change, struggling for social justice for Māori or Aboriginal people sat easily alongside supporting feminist concerns, as mentioned in Chapter One. Interviewed by Virginia Myers for *Head and Shoulders*, a book about successful women, Szaszy recalled having become aware of the oppression of women as well as of Māori when she began

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158 Ibid.
159 Welch, p. 32.
working in a government department, and having observed ‘job discrimination’ within the department.\textsuperscript{161} Similarly, O’Shane told Susan Mitchell in an interview for \textit{Tall Poppies} that she ‘could never accept the secondary status of women’ and that her parents ‘used to tell me that I was just as capable of achieving as the boys’. A strong supporter of both Indigenous and women’s rights, she observed that ‘amongst Aboriginal women I do my best to raise their consciousness both as women and as Aboriginals. Within the Aboriginal movement, she stated, she had experienced issues similar to those that white women experienced: ‘It was the same old line, “You can make the coffee but we’ll make the decisions and speak to the media”.\textsuperscript{162} O’Shane received much publicity for her judgement in what became known as the Berlei case. Five women were charged with having defaced an advertising billboard which they considered sexist. Although O’Shane found the charges proved, she decided that convictions would not be recorded against the women. After giving the verdict, she made a statement about violence against women in society, which was \textit{obiter dictum} (that is, it did not form part of the \textit{ratio decidendi}, or reason for deciding). A number of commentators appeared to miss this critical point. O’Shane was severely criticised by some observers, and it was reported in the media that the Director of Public Prosecutions in NSW wanted the decision overturned. Although she had not overstepped her legal powers in making the decision, an article in the \textit{Daily Telegraph Mirror} at the time of the case referred to her as a ‘crusading magistrate’ who ‘looks beyond the law’, implying that she had done so in this case.\textsuperscript{163} O’Shane was thus represented as a radical and controversial figure in terms of feminist issues as well as in terms of Aboriginal issues.

Some prominent Indigenous women also spoke against sexism among Indigenous men or within cultural practices, although this was often a problematic issue given that Indigenous cultures were historically criticised by Europeans as being oppressive of women. Szaszy was a strong advocate of Māori women’s concerns, as mentioned above, speaking in particular against the practice followed by some iwi (tribes) of not allowing women to speak upon the marae ātea (the courtyard in front of the wharenuī, or meeting house, on the marae, on which visitors are welcomed and issues debated). In the interview with Myers, she noted that she thought ‘the marae has become a symbol of the oppression of Maori women, because they are not allowed to speak on it’, and remembered that she had ‘experienced that I was not equal to men’ on the marae, although her ability to speak in Māori was ‘as good as if not better than that of the men I listened to’. Sensitive to the possible impact of making such concerns public, she recalled that for the most part she did not speak about these matters for twenty

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{161} Myers, pp. 238, 243.
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years, since ‘with the resurgence of Maoritanga’ she wished ‘to give the culture a chance of survival without undermining it’. In 1982, she spoke on the position of Māori women at the MWWL conference. The speech did not receive much support, being criticised strongly by both men and women.\textsuperscript{164}

Prominent non-Indigenous women who campaigned on feminist issues, like both male and female Indigenous activists, were often subject to stereotypical depictions and labelling in the media. This was particularly the case for those involved in the women’s liberation movement, or those who were perceived as the radical fringe of the women’s movement. Leading New Zealand feminist campaigner and author Sandra Coney once observed that ‘male journalists’ in the 1970s ‘had a field day with women’s liberation, lampooning, misreporting and showing such deliberate bias that there came a time when they were banned from reporting some women’s events’.\textsuperscript{165} Yet Szaszy appears not to have been represented as radical, as discussed above, despite being occasionally depicted as a determined fighter. Such a depiction often seemed to occur in relation to her advocacy of Māori women’s rights, particularly speaking rights on the marae. After her death in 2001, a \textit{Sunday Star-Times} obituary was headlined ‘Champion for Rights of Maori Women’. The author, Tony Potter, wrote that Szaszy had had an ‘often feisty career’, giving as an example that she was ‘regularly outspoken … about the practice of not allowing women to speak on the marae’.\textsuperscript{166} Her struggle for Māori women’s rights, however, could be considered non-threatening because it was a struggle against Māori men, rather than against Pākehā men or Pākehā institutions. Thus, although her campaign for speaking rights for Māori women on the marae was in some ways a radical one, it was not usually portrayed as such in the mainstream media, which tended to treat Māori society as backward in this respect and Szaszy’s views on the matter as simply common sense.

While some women were equally concerned with the causes of the feminist movement and those of Indigenous movements, others prioritised the latter. The women’s liberation movement, Szaszy thought, ‘seemed somewhat alien to most Maori women’.\textsuperscript{167} Te Awekotuku suggested that ‘so few Maori women join[ed] women’s liberation in its earliest days’ due to there being ‘so many other consuming struggles’, such as retaining land, language and culture.\textsuperscript{168} Huata became involved in the feminist movement through ‘a personal issue’, her mother’s ‘right to equal pay’. She recalled:

\begin{itemize}
  \item\textsuperscript{164} Myers, pp. 242-243.
  \item\textsuperscript{165} S. Coney, \textit{Out of the Frying Pan: Inflammatory Writings 1972-89} (Auckland: Penguin, 1990), p. 66.
  \item\textsuperscript{167} Szaszy, p. 80.
  \item\textsuperscript{168} N. Te Awekōtuku, \textit{Mana Wahine Maori: Selected Writings on Maori Women’s Art, Culture and Politics} (Auckland: New Women’s Press, 1991), pp. 10-11.
\end{itemize}
I didn’t see any conflict between the Maori and women’s movements at first but as time went by this changed. I expected the feminist movement to be more understanding and supportive of Maori issues.

She added:

I also felt that the conflict with men within the Maori movement was an issue Maori women had to sort out for themselves, and was not the business of Pakeha feminism.

For Huata personally, ‘the Treaty was and still is the number one issue’, and the right of women to speak on marae was not an issue she ‘felt strongly about’ since it was ‘one of our rituals’ and she felt ‘sentimental about’ these since they had been ‘shovelled about enough’. Depictions of Indigenous women involved in protest activity which focused upon their so-called radicalism could thus elide the ways in which they supported the upholding of traditional practices.

**Tent Embassies Across the Tasman**

Despite the persistent myth that New Zealand race relations were the best in any settler colony, and particularly better than in Australia, considerable parallels were evident across the Tasman both in relation to the surge in protest activity from the 1970s and in relation to the ways in which protesters were frequently represented in the media. At least one suggestion was made in the New Zealand press that those who camped outside Parliament following the land march were deliberately paralleling the Aboriginal tent embassy in Australia three years earlier. An editorial in the *New Zealand Herald* in 1975 commented that the protesters apparently thought that they were ‘following the example of the Australian Aborigines who set up a tent at Parliament in Canberra’, as well as of ‘the American Indians who seized various points in the United States’. However, it continued, ‘such actions have won little, if any, respect’ and ‘it would be far-fetched to claim that the position of these races closely resembles that of the Maoris’, who have ‘their own direct representatives in the Parliament they are picketing’.

In order to uphold the myth of superior race relations, the vocal and increasing protests of the 1970s and 1980s had to be downplayed or marginalised and could only be understood as the work of a few troublemakers. To acknowledge the grievances of the protesters would have been to disrupt the myth.

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169 Huata, pp. 120-123.
170 ‘Harming Their Own Cause’, *New Zealand Herald*, 16 October 1975, section 1, p. 6.
Creating a representational divide between radical and moderate allowed the appearance of liberalism in support of the grievances of the moderates, while denigrating the radicals as extreme. A focus on protest actions, personalities and divisions within the movement, deliberately or not, elided the ideas of protesters and masked the wide agreement which existed among many Māori people on issues surrounding the Treaty. Indeed, Nairn and McCreanor have suggested that blaming a small number of ‘stirrers’ in the late 1970s for the increase in protest activity implied that such ‘unrest’ was ‘an unpleasant aberration in an otherwise harmonious history’, and thus easily solved if the ‘stirrers’ would cease their disruptive behaviour. Depicting ‘stirrers’ as ‘a minority that [was] extreme in its views and of questionable mental status’ meant that ‘their actions and arguments [could] be dismissed from serious consideration in any reasonable discussion of social issues’, as well as allocating ‘blame for the deteriorating state of race relations to stirrers’ meaning that a solution to this could be suggested ‘without considering the possibility that many Maori are genuinely disadvantaged’.  

If there was no myth of superior race relations to uphold in Australia, there was nevertheless an important myth holding that all could have a ‘fair go’, and protest was an uncomfortable reminder that it had not been so for some within the population. Whether a deliberate strategy or not, representing protesters as extreme and dangerous radicals who could therefore be dismissed rather than listened to, or as moderate voices who could be praised for their desire to live in unity, allowed an avoidance of issues and perhaps of guilt. If race relations were different across the Tasman, even if they were better, there was nevertheless a similar resistance to acknowledging the grievances of protesters and similar representations with similar effects of marginalisation. Much of this chapter has focused on the period from 1970-2000. Prior to that, few ripples were allowed to disturb the calm pools of the myth of superior race relations in New Zealand, or of the country of the fair go, in which Aboriginal people were to be assimilated into white Australian ways of life.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has explored representations of those Māori and Aboriginal women whose fame, or sometimes notoriety, stemmed from their political activism or leadership in struggles for social and political change. Unlike those famous for their sporting achievements or their work in the performing arts, these women were generally featured in the media in relation to political issues, and media profiles of them focused on political issues. Representations often split along a line between those constructed as moderate and those constructed as radical, and

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171 Nairn and McCreanor, p. 254.
although such a representational divide was not limited to portrayals of women, gendered depictions were deeply implicated in the particular forms which it took. If radical activists were scary, radical women who also metaphorically transgressed gender boundaries were perhaps still more scary. Political movements, especially those seeking change, are never unanimous about either strategies or goals. As is evident in debates over honours, one critical but contested strategy for colonised peoples has been the creation of alliances with colonial authority. Media coverage which focused on divisions between Māori, as in relation to Cooper’s becoming a dame, rather than on the wide agreement about land rights or the Treaty, failed to see that the divisions were largely about what might be the best way to achieve widely desired goals regarding Indigenous rights. In Australia, too, the construction of a divide between so-called radicals and moderates obscured the wide agreement among Aboriginal people over goals, if not over the means for achieving them. In some way, all protest may be considered a radical activity and, to this extent, all these women were represented as unusual in outspokenness and determination. The women whose representations were explored in this chapter were rarely represented as being assimilated. Yet the tendency for those constructed as moderates who worked through institutional structures to be contrasted with those whose methods of protest were more unorthodox and challenging, and the wave of celebration for Cooper as ‘the Mother of the Nation’, suggests that the nation’s famous people were more easily celebrated if not threatening to that nation’s conception of itself.