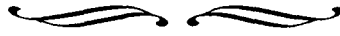


HULA AND HAKA: PERFORMANCE, METONYMY AND IDENTITY FORMATION IN COLONIAL HAWAII AND NEW ZEALAND¹



Each April in Hawaii, local attention is focussed on the Merrie Monarch Festival on Big Island. Every year, the foremost hula troupes of the various islands compete for prizes in a variety of disciplines, traditional and modern. The festival is a cultural event of considerable magnitude. For several evenings in succession local television provides live broadcasts of the performances lasting many hours. Two months earlier the Kapa Haka Festival in New Zealand enjoys similar attention from public and media alike as the country's Kapa Haka groups compete against each other. In both cases the indigenous culture of each country attains nation-wide media attention thanks to a performance form: the hula in Hawaii and the haka in New Zealand. While both forms had always enjoyed a certain popularity—the hula being almost synonymous with the image of Hawaii as a tourist paradise, and the haka representing not just the Maori people but also on occasions bi-cultural New Zealand as a prelude to All Black rugby games—the new prominence attained is certainly one manifestation of the so-called 'cultural renaissance' among Hawaiians and Maori alike.

In this paper I wish to explore what could perhaps be termed the roots of this new performance phenomenon as parallel developments in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The aim is to explore a particular nexus between colonial contact and identity formation.² Although this general question has been much researched in recent years, the field of performance is one area that has received little systematic attention, even though Polynesian performance forms belong to those cultural aspects that are, for outsiders at least, almost synonymous with these cultures. The focus is twofold: firstly, to demonstrate how two particular performance forms—the hula and the haka—became subject to a European strategy of folklorization and theatricalization. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, to indicate the way Hawaiians and Maori themselves adapted their cultural performances to meet an ever increasing ensemble of new functions ranging from the traditional to the tourist, from the religious to the political.

Whatever these new functions may be, where an indigenous people is required to perform for the colonial gaze, the

performance enacted tend to have in most cases the metonymic gesture of standing in for the whole of the respective culture. The interrelationship between performance and metonymy, or perhaps more precisely *performance as metonymy of culture*, needs to be prefaced by a few remarks on the concept of metonymy. As a figure of speech, metonymy is closely related to notions of inauthenticity and incompleteness. The dictionary definition—'the substitute of an attribute or adjunct for that of the thing meant'³—points to this disjuncture between a metonymic trope and the actual thing or the thing in its entirety. Viewed in this context, metonymy as a trope of cultural discourse carries with it more than just the signature of abbreviation typical of most figures of speech. It has inscribed in it already a discursive strategy symptomatic of colonial discourse: the penchant to circumscribe and contain. When Hawaiians or Maori perform for the (usually colonial) other, they are rendering themselves observable and definable. The whole tradition of folkloristic performance, which begins in the nineteenth century in Europe and is then exported to the colonies for adaptation by the indigenous peoples, is framed within the metonymic notion that performance(s) can stand in for the culture as a whole.

The link between metonymy and the very broad and often ill-defined concept of performance can be usefully focussed if we link it to the notion of theatricality as defined by Edward Said in *Orientalism*.

Said defines orientalism as a mode of representation and 'learned field', and notes that a field 'is often an enclosed space'. He continues:

The idea of representation is a theatrical one: the Orient is the stage on which the whole East is confined. On this stage will appear figures whose role it is to represent the larger whole from which they emanate. The Orient seems to be, not an unlimited extension beyond the familiar European world, but rather a closed field, a theatrical stage affixed to Europe.⁴

The discourse of orientalism, according to Said, 'theatricalizes' the East in the sense that it reduces and defines it, rendering it observable; it is as though the East or Orient were a stage on which a set of dramatic figures of the Orient make their exits and entrances for the delectation and edification of the Western beholder. Said's concept of theatricality is both metaphoric and metonymic. It is metaphoric in the sense that he invokes the old *theatrum mundi* simile. It is metonymic to the extent that the process he terms theatrical or theatricalization embraces more than the old trope. It designates a particularly Western style of thought which ultimately was brought to bear on most of the colonized world. Taking Said's use of the term one step further, we can postulate that theatricalization and colonialism are related phenomena.

Theatricalization carries with it a number of interrelated processes involving fixture and closure necessary for, or inherent in, any kind of *mise en scène*. The *mise en*

scène of a culture, country or ethnic group implies that this group can be represented by a finite set of mostly recurrent props, costumes and corporeal signs. Whereas theatricalization is primarily a spatial and visual limitation of culture, in the colonial context it is invariably accompanied by the temporal closure of *folklorization*. The discourse of folklorization, whether in a European or a colonial context, seeks to 'fossilize' cultural artefacts somewhere on an ill-defined but usually pre-modern, pre-technological time line. As we shall see, theatricalization and folklorization work hand in hand as concomitant processes in colonial and indigenous discourses which reevaluated and recoded performance forms for an altered cultural and political context.⁵

Dance is perhaps the form of expression the West most often used and adapted for the purpose of theatricalizing other cultures. In the context of Hawaii, the performance form of hula became synonymous with its dance component, which in turn came to stand for the indigenous people of the country. In the case of Maori, it was mainly the 'wardance', the haka, which from a variety of performance forms attained the metonymic force of representation. The process of colonization was concomitant with the theatricalization of the objects of colonization. The strategies of representation that Said terms orientalist are thus metonymic and theatrical with a few selected figures having to stand in for the larger whole of the Orient. In the

examples examined here—Hawaiian and Maori cultures—I will explore how the 'theatrical stage' of indigenous culture, while not 'affixed to Europe' in Said's terms, is nevertheless subjected to analogous processes of synecdochical limitation.

REINVENTING THE HULA

The history of hula in Hawaii runs in many ways parallel to the fortunes of the indigenous culture. In pre-contact times it was an integral part of the religious and cultural fabric of Hawaiian society. From 1820 onwards it was severely attacked by missionaries of different persuasions until it all but died out except in more remote areas.⁶ Under King Kalakaua, who ruled from 1874 to 1891, hula flourished again, yet within a fundamentally altered cultural context. When the 'Merrie Monarch', assumed the Hawaiian throne in 1874 he called *kumu hula* (hula teachers) to his court and revived the tradition of hula performers as part of the court retinue, as had been the case in pre-contact times. With Kalakaua begins what might be called a conscious reinvention of tradition for the purpose of cementing Hawaiian national identity and reinforcing indigenous political aspirations which were coming under pressure from the white settlers.⁷ Although the reintroduction of ancient hula as a form of court entertainment was initially conceived as a demonstration of indigenous traditionalism, it led ironically (or perhaps logically) to major innovations in the performance form itself; it 'became a

breeding place for change', as dance ethnologist Adrienne Kaeppler notes.⁸ These changes received dynamic public demonstration during the 1880s when Kalakaua staged large hula festivals. These celebrations were extensively photographed, and a large number of these photographic documents have survived. Analysing a selection of these iconographical documents I am particularly concerned to read the semiotics of hula costume as an indicator of the multiple cultural functions that the performance form was coming to assume.

Figure 1 dates from 1858 and is the earliest extant photograph of hula. By this time missionary influence had completely changed the costuming, which in pre-

FIGURE 1

Hula dancers, circa 1858. (Ambrotype, photographer unknown). Reproduced by permission of the Bishop Museum.



contact times had consisted of a skirt made of tapa cloth, necklace and head-wreaths, bracelets and anklets for both male and female dancers. There was, however, considerable variation in the costume depending on status, sex and type of dance. Early evidence, which is exclusively reliant on pictures and descriptions by European explorers and travellers, suggests that women danced bare-breasted, which was certainly one of the causes of missionary opposition.⁹ This earliest photograph of hula, an ambrotype, already prefigures the tradition of studio-produced studies for the tourist market. The floor has probably been retouched to give the appearance of sand. The costumes depicted here are also characteristic of one image of hula that was to persist throughout the nineteenth century. The wide cloth skirts, tightly buttoned blouses and fibre anklets represent the exact opposite of the scantily clad South Seas maiden of the popular imagination. This photograph was taken one year before the passage of legislation regulating public performances of hula. The dance was permitted provided it was 'not of an immoral character, to which admission is obtainable by the payment of money.'¹⁰ Against this background the picture seems to be conveying a double message. On the one hand an image of tightly buttoned respectability, where anything less likely to arouse immoral passions is scarcely imaginable. This certainly holds true for the photographic image and it is only this particular function we can study. On the

other hand, the dancers' kinaesthetic appeal, it would seem, is deliberately effaced in this static pose. The other implicit message is a commercial one. Here we have to take cognizance of the context and purpose of representation. Already hula was being manoeuvred into a context of commercial exploitation as the tourist industry in Hawaii began to grow in the second half of the nineteenth century. Further legislation was passed in 1865 and 1870 to remove most restrictions, opening the way for wide participation in hula performances throughout the islands.

Within this context photography had already begun to establish itself as a purveyor of commercial interests, particularly in the realm of theatre and performance.

The various guises under which hula was demonstrated and promoted can be illustrated by reference to its appearance in King Kalakaua's court, who, as mentioned, was chiefly responsible for revitalizing hula. Figure 2 shows hula master Ioane Ukeke with four of his troupe. Ukeke was responsible for staging

FIGURE 2

Ioane Ukeke and court dancers, circa 1885 (photographer unknown). Reproduced by permission of the Bishop Museum.



Kalakaua's festivals and earned the name 'Honolulu Dandy'. The dancers are clad in what has become regarded as 'traditional' attire. The costume closely resembles that of figure 1, with the calf-length dresses, long-sleeved voluminous blouses and head-wreaths. This set the fashion standard for 'traditional' hula, and it has persisted with slight variation until today. Ukeke presents himself in an intriguing mixture of top-hat, jacket, lei and cigar. The backdrop is a painted view of Waikiki beach and Diamond Head, Honolulu's

most famous landmark—quintessential touristland, even in the late nineteenth century. Thus we have a conflation of a courtly dance troupe, dedicated to the preservation and practice of hula, with a standardized, even stereotypical, vista and a somewhat hybridized Hawaiian male presence.

Figure 3 also depicts hula dancers against a stereotypical South Seas backdrop. The central figure is also a court dancer for Kalakaua, yet the costume could not be more different from that used in court

FIGURE 3

Court dancers for Kalakaua, late 1880s (photograph unknown). Reproduced by permission of the Bishop Museum.



performances. The grass-skirts and lei, commonly associated with Hawaiian hula, were introduced about this time. The origin of the grass-skirt is uncertain. It may have been introduced by visiting Tahitian troupes, from whom the Hawaiians certainly learned the famous hip-rotating dance, which has come to be known as synonymous with hula, but was in fact entirely unknown to ancient hula. Some scholars identify Gilbert Islanders, present in Hawaii as labourers, as the source of inspiration for what was to become one of the most famous dance costumes of all time.¹¹ The ukulele also became synonymous with hula, incorporated into the performance tradition by Kalakaua's court dancers at the time, along with hymn singing and band music. European music was refashioned and syncretized during these years to produce a distinctively Hawaiian music and dance tradition, which found acceptance by both Hawaiians and Europeans alike. They were introduced in one spectacular performance as Kaeppler notes:

In Kalakaua's court all these influences converged and at his jubilee celebration in 1886 a famous Hawaiian dancer appeared in a hula accompanied by ukulele and steel guitar. The new music was sanctioned by the King, teachers, and performers, and loved by the audience. Soon most new compositions were in this style ... This new idiom is now known as 'Hawaiian music.' In truth it has little indigenous Hawaiian music in it, but is uniquely Hawaiian in that it was developed in Hawai'i by Hawaiians out of a combination of

Western music ideas available to them in the second half of the nineteenth century.¹²

Both process and performance document a moment of cultural and performative self-fashioning as a response to heavy acculturative influences. The picture of the girls in grass-skirts with the ukulele reveals, however, the ambivalence of this process. Seen together, these photographs suggest that a multiplicity of images and performative identities had begun to evolve around the 'traditional' performance form. Under the putative strategy of reviving ancient hula, the court dancers created a modern form, incorporating new movements (Tahitian hip-gyrations), new musical instruments and idiom. Out of an initially folkloric impetus arose a highly inventive syncretic performance genre.

But what did this mean for the ethnographer or ethnomusicologist in search of genuine ancient hula? Where could it be found at the end of the nineteenth century? Their searches may have led them to the scene in figure 4, dating from 1899. In a grove of trees, two bare-breasted hula dancers (or are they dancers?) pose. They are accompanied by a woman in a sleeveless dress with a guitar and an elderly man in a loincloth playing a noseflute. In a single image, this photograph contains the multiple identities of hula at the end of the century, encapsulating a range of projections. The forest setting corresponds with the ethnographer's intuition that genuine 'old

hula' might best be found in a remote area, far from the madding crowd.¹³ The bare-breasted women correspond to the eroticized image of hula—an image, however, which had more to do with European, especially missionary projections, than with the actual costume codes of the form, whether ancient or modern. The guitar suggests that for Hawaiians, or for the European photographer staging the photograph, the instrument that was introduced by the Portugese in the mid-nineteenth century, had become synonymous with hula, to the point perhaps that it was inconceivable

without it. The old man playing the noseflute is a marker of the pre-contact period, indicated in both his dress and the musical instrument he is playing. However, in the context of this photograph, it is the guitar-playing woman who is at odds with its staged primitivism. The image is written over with the whole genealogy of European projections regarding hula: the contradictions and impositions. It is a composite image trying to cater for all these desires. It is perhaps the image that would have met with the ethnographer's approval, if he could have been convinced it was authentic.

FIGURE 4

Hula dancers, ca. 1899 (photographer unknown). Reproduced by permission of the Bishop Museum.



My final hula image (figure 5) dates also from the late 1890s. It is a snapshot (as far as snapshots were technically possible at the time) of hula being performed in a backyard, probably somewhere in Honolulu. Although this performance would certainly not have met with ethnographic approval—the urban setting alone would have been a great disappointment—it is 'authentic' to the extent that it appears to be an indigenous performance context. With the exception perhaps of the photographer, there are no European spectators. The dancers are clad in simple dresses without decorative wreaths (lei) or anklets. They are accompanied by two men playing calabash drums, a sign of *hula kahiko*, dances performed in a broadly traditional way.

The photographer has caught the characteristic but subtle sway and hand movements of ancient hula, as performed today. Of primary interest here, however, is less the question ancient or modern: we see that hula is part of a living tradition within the fabric of Hawaiian society. It is a formal occasion judging by the attire of the spectators—a birthday or wedding perhaps—and hula dancers have evidently been employed or invited for that special celebration. The dance is performed neither for the tourist gaze nor for courtly delectation and political self-representation. Here it appears to occupy a third space, somewhere between the private and the public, continuing some of its traditional functions, although in new clothes.

FIGURE 5

Backyard hula dancers, Honolulu circa 1890s (photographer unknown). Reproduced by permission of the Bishop Museum.



TAMING THE HAKA: ROTORUA 1901

Turning to a second example, I wish to extend some of the issues raised so far. If the hula is metonymic of Hawaiian culture, then the same function is assumed by the haka, the wardance of the Maori. This dance represented more than any other cultural manifestation of the Maori its dominant image in the mind of Europeans—both at home and abroad: the Maori as a fearsome warrior.¹⁴ That the Maori had almost defeated the mighty British army in the wars of the 1860s was still very much in public consciousness. It was thus only logical that for the 1897

Diamond Jubilee celebrations in London, New Zealand chose to send along with its pakeha troops a contingent of Maori soldiers clad in modern army uniforms. Those same soldiers then performed the haka in traditional attire at the Holborn Restaurant in London, watched on by the New Zealand premier Richard Seddon, the former New Zealand Minister of Labour and ardent imperialist William Pember Reeves and assorted British guests (figure 6). It is hard to imagine a more 'fitting' image of the construction of performance under the imperial gaze. The artist has individualized the guests of honour—

FIGURE 6

Maori warriors performing the haka at the Holborn Restaurant, London, July 1897 (J. Begg, London Illustrated News, 17 July 1897). Private Collection.



Seddon is recognizable (to New Zealanders at least) even without the legend—whereas the haka party vies for iconographic attention with candlebra and bowls of fruit. Nevertheless, their presence here is remarkable. The foes of yore were now providing delectation in an upmarket London restaurant on the eve of a large-scale colonial conference, where Seddon promoted, among other things, New Zealand's claim to annex various Pacific territories.¹⁵

The success of this performance may have perhaps planted the seeds for what four years later was to become the largest ever demonstration of Maori performance for Maori and European alike. In 1901, New Zealand and other British dominions were blessed with a royal tour by the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York, the duke being the grandson of recently deceased Queen Victoria, Empress of India and sovereign of many far-flung dominions. The tour was clearly designed to reinforce the symbolic claim to imperial sovereignty by the royal family after the death of its most important figurehead. While the royal party's reception by the white settlers was presumably never in doubt—'a thousand miles of loyalty' in the words of the official historian of the tour¹⁶—the same could not necessarily be said for his Majesty's Maori subjects.¹⁷ It is perhaps not surprising then that Maori participation was focussed almost entirely in one place: a three day 'carnival' of Maori performance culture in Rotorua from 13 to 15 June 1901. This *hui* (the Maori term for a

ceremonial gathering) brought together representatives from all the major tribes in Aotearoa, providing the royal party and each other with an unprecedented display of indigenous performance. The choice of Rotorua was not surprising. Rotorua could already boast an established touristic infrastructure dedicated to presenting Maori culture to European visitors.¹⁸ The local people, the Arawa, were also famous, or infamous, for having deliberately sided with the settlers in the Maori-European wars in the 1860s. The planning of the *hui* was in the hands of a Maori committee under the chairmanship of the Minister of Native Affairs, James Carroll, himself half Maori. The result was a gathering on an unprecedented scale with over six thousand Maori from all over the country in attendance.

The resulting meeting provided ample evidence of the *dialectics of spectacle*: that is the mutual desire to see and be seen in an aesthetically controlled environment. While Maori were certainly on display to the Europeans, the latter, especially the royal party, were equally on display to Maori and the Maori tribes were on display to each other. The uniqueness of this event was apparent to the participants, and subsequent historians of Maori culture have drawn attention to its importance in terms of scale and organization.¹⁹ The large Maori contingent camped together for about ten days prior to the actual ceremony. The camp was divided along tribal lines and the time was used for extensive rehearsals.

Our most comprehensive document of this event is the extraordinarily detailed account in the official history written by Robert Loughnan, a 'descriptive narrative', as he terms his lavishly illustrated book. His narrative is, not surprisingly, not only a descriptive account but also an ideological one. That the book is a paean in praise not just of the monarchy but also the whole colonial enterprise goes almost without saying at this time in the country's history. Within this unadulterated tribute to colonial discourse the account of the Rotorua *hui* is somewhat anomalous. Not only is it the most detailed section of the whole book, amounting to almost one hundred pages of densely written descriptions and commentary, but the usually clear monotone of the narrative voice is varied or perhaps fractured by the presence of other voices. As Loughnan admits in the preface, substantial sections of the chapter are from the pen of Sir Apirana Ngata of the Ngatiporou. With the exception of an interpolated poem by him, however, his voice is never made explicit. Rather we have the impression that Loughnan reworked extensive comments by Ngata into his own text. This is particularly evident in the detailed accounts of Maori performance culture, which stand beside racist views of the people themselves, sentiments which Apirana Ngata himself would scarcely have uttered.

In the following examination of what is an extremely multi-textured and complex

performative event I wish to restrict my comments to the question of how these extensive performances may have functioned as indicators of cultural redefinition for Europeans and Maori alike. This 'gathering of the clans', as Loughnan terms the coming together of the various tribal groups,²⁰ was certainly unprecedented in scale and form of interaction. As well as oratory, the main mode of communication was by means of haka and *waiata*, costume and *poi*. Perhaps the dominant chord in the plethora of information provided is the tension between the past and the present.

Loughnan's account stresses the occasion as an opportunity for Maori to rejoice in the glories of their ancient, pre-contact culture. Using a theatrical metaphor, Loughnan describes the preparations as a welcome chance to revive past grandeur:

Old scarred warriors waxed wrathful in heated debate over ancient war-dances to be used in mimic warfare at Rotorua, the almost obsolete *peruperu* that were wont to awake echoes in the New Zealand forests in the fighting-days of the past. Once more the Maori lived in the past. For a brief space the edge of the heavy curtain that screened it was raised, old memories revived, old chords were touched anew, and hearts thrilled and vibrated to the weird music of the dead ages.²¹

The Maori past is troped here as a stage on which a historical drama thematizing the 'dead ages' is to be produced. It is not the 'debased' Maori present that is to be unfolded before the royal visitors (and the

New Zealand politicians accompanying them), but an idealized version of an heroic and 'homeric' past.

Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately, theatrical performances only allow themselves to be stage-managed to a certain degree. Theatre, like culture, is always subject to the vicissitudes of time and change. This was nowhere more obvious than in the costuming for the event. Like the hula in Hawaii, the Maori performances were subject to precise control and conceptualization. The Rotorua performances saw a similar process of conscious and unconscious adaptation to the special requirements of the unusual event. Traditional clothing became increasingly refashioned as theatrical or folkloristic costume: at once a signifier of the 'dead past' and the cultural changes of the present. During the preparations for the arrival of the royal party, Loughnan describes the appearance of Maori in the informal situation of the camp:

There was a curious mingling of the old and new. Deeply tattooed warriors, some of whom had witnessed a cannibal feast, rubbed noses with young men who rode bicycles and pounded the big drum in the brass band. In the dresses an effective compromise was effected. Over a creaseless frock coat fresh from the hands of the pakeha tailor a Maori mat was thrown, and a belltopper surmounted the combination. A high-born lady decked in silk of bright hues yet wore a *piupiu* round her waist and a *heitiki* round her neck. It was one huge fancy ball, full of

fantastic anachronisms characteristic of a time of transition. The past was revived, and mingled with stately dignity in the whirl of the present, seeking to grasp the bewildering changes that a century of contact with civilization had effected.²²

While the quotidian, informal dress codes reflected indeed the cultural syncretism characteristic of most 'times of transition', the formal performances revealed much tighter control and conscious fashioning. Not only did each tribe adopt a special dominant colour, but most tried to emulate within the bounds of Christian propriety the traditional past that was eagerly sought by European and Maori alike.

The extent of this 'conscious fashioning' can be illustrated by comparing two photographs. Figure 7 shows the performance of a haka by members of the Ngati Kahungunu tribe of the East Coast region, welcoming guests at a wedding. The photograph is contemporaneous with the Rotorua festivities. Like the backyard hula, this is an indigenous performance context: Maori performing for Maori. With the exception of the figure right, all are dressed in formal, everyday European-style clothes. If we compare this image with a photograph taken of the Wanganui haka party at the Rotorua *hui*²³ (figure 8), all performers are now clad in traditional *piupiu*. The dominant impression is a move from clothes to costume. Although both occasions can be considered *hui*—ceremonial encounters in the Maori use of

FIGURE 7

Members of the Ngati Kahungunu tribe perform a haka, welcoming visitors to the wedding of Maude, daughter of George and Airini Donnelly, at Taradale, East Coast of the North Island. Early 1900s (photographer unknown). Auckland Star Collection. Reproduced by permission of the Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand, Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa. F-68581-1/2.



FIGURE 8

Haka party from Wanganui at Rotorua during Royal visit, June 1901. Auckland Star Collection. Reproduced by permission of the Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand, Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa. G-3142-1/1.



the word—the Rotorua gatherings are evidence of a new configuration of performative and cultural codes catering to the European gaze.

This conscious staging of anachronism by means of costuming was matched by careful attention to the type of weapons on display: 'They were admired by all who saw them—they and their good humour, and their vigour, and their weapons. No weapon was there, however, of European origin; no gun of any period from the time of Hingis [*sic*] wars ... no pouch, no belt, no tomahawk or axe of the whole fire-and-steel period of their wars.'²⁴ Already here we see a feature typical of folklorization of colonized cultures in general: the effacement of all signs of post-contact culture. All material signifiers of culture—costume and properties (in this case weapons)—were placed in the temporal frame of pre-contact times, the generic time of folklorized performance forms. At Rotorua we can speak too of a theatricalization of Maori people and their performance forms as they were adjusted to the new receptive code of a European desire for performed primitivism. The ineluctable logic of this discursive construction explains why Loughnan himself resorts to an extended theatrical metaphor at the 'climax' of his account:

The carnival had not lasted more than an hour. But for the spectators who saw it for the first time how many impressions had been crowded into that brief space! It was something to dream of. In no theatre in the

world could a sight comparable to it be seen. The broad glare of the sun played on stage and players; the stage might have been the whole world, and the players children of Nature, untutored, yet endowed with instinctive grace and the marvellous art of suiting word to action and action to word.²⁵

The theatrical performance being played out is, in Loughnan's interpretation, a kind of historical drama resurrecting 'the buried treasures' of the Maori past and celebrating 'the remnants of a proud race'.²⁶ The metaphor also carries a metonymic force for colonial peoples as a whole. When he claims that 'the stage might have been the whole world' on which 'children of Nature' perform for their colonial rulers, no sophistry is required to interpret this vision as one pertaining to all colonized peoples. In this sense the Rotorua performance is both highly specific and symptomatic of wider issues and processes pertaining to performance in cross-cultural colonial situations.

SUMMARY

Two cultures under heavy assimilative pressure—both threatened with cultural, if not physical extinction—resorted to a revitalization and redefinition of their performance traditions. In Hawaii, the hula revival dating from the late 1870s, and in New Zealand the new idea of cultural performance festivals after the turn of the century, resulted in a significant recoding of performance forms. The need to

perform one's culture to a cultural Other arose as a response to an altered cultural and political situation: the addressees are, on the one hand, the colonizing majority and, on the other hand, members of the same culture, with whom in pre-contact times intercourse would have been unlikely or problematic. Thus the sharing of performance traditions becomes a first step toward reorganizing cultural boundaries and creating new identity formations. In New Zealand, tribal groups gathered to share traditions in a new communicative situation. What today is deemed 'traditional' Hawaiian or Maori performance (the hula and haka) can in fact be located at a particular point in time, a moment of historical crisis, where the remedial strategies were performative as much as political, or indeed where the two merge.

These revisions include the strategic folklorization of King Kalakāua's court dancers who revived a putative traditional hula but paved the way for the commercialized touristic forms. The touristic manifestation of hula in turn reveals itself to be a curious composite, requiring the form be deliberately primitivized in a way in which it had never existed. Maori performance, particularly the haka, had by the end of the nineteenth century become subject to similar processes of revaluation. In Rotorua in particular, these performances had been discovered and refashioned for the tourist gaze. At the same time they continued to

fulfil important functions in their indigenous context. With the arrival of the royal party in 1901, Maori were called upon to present themselves to European guests in a theatrical mode. Dancing and singing and brandishing weapons of pre-European origin, they were induced to present a staged version of an earlier period of ancient vigour untainted by European influence.

Both hula and haka are quintessential cultural signs, acting as focal points for the cultural identity formation of their respective cultures. Of equal importance, however, are their functions as theatrical forms, acts of performance combining music, symbolic and mimetic movement, and, in the case of hula, narrative and lyrical poetry. The changing dress codes during these periods of change demonstrate that a clear binary of 'traditional' performance on the one hand and an 'inauthentic' touristic version on the other is extremely problematic. In terms of physical presentation hula and haka were subject to a complex dynamic of cultural borrowings and redefinitions that incorporated historical exigencies, aesthetic innovation and cultural identity formation. Performances always represent a particular manner of staging the body for a particular audience at a particular time and place. As such they are replete with cultural and aesthetic meanings that are invariably read differently by different spectators. This multivalency suggests, as I have argued, that performance is a

particularly productive place to study the complex cross-cultural exchanges characteristic of colonialism. ∞

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NOTES

- ¹ This essay is based on a paper given at the conference 'Adventures in Identity: Constructing the Multicultural Subject' held at the Goethe Institut, Sydney, 30 July–2 August 1998. It is part of an on-going research project funded by the German Research Council (DFG), within the framework of its interdisciplinary focus, 'Theatralität'. My thanks to John Döcker for encouraging me to rework the paper into the present form.
- ² Cf. particularly Jocelyn Linnekin and Lin Poyer (eds), *Cultural Identity and Ethnicity in the Pacific* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990).
- ³ *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p.747.
- ⁴ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), p.63.
- ⁵ For the notion of folklorization as 'fossilization' in the European context, cf. Marianne Mesnil, 'The masked festival: disguise or affirmation?', *Cultures* 3:2 (1976), 11–29. For a discussion of time in the anthropological context, cf. Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How anthropology makes its object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).
- ⁶ The history of hula, particularly its ill-fortune under the missionaries, has been extensively documented and need not be repeated here.

For different perspectives see (in chronological order) Nathaniel Emerson, *Unwritten Literature of Hawaii: The sacred songs of the hula* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1909); Dorothy Barrère, Mary Kawena Pukui and Marion Kelly, *Hula: Historical perspectives* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1980); Roger G. Rose, *Hawaii: The royal isles*, exhibition catalogue (Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1980); Adrienne Kaeppler, *Polynesian Dance* (Honolulu: Alpha, Delta Kappa, 1983); and, most recently, Elisabeth Buck, *Paradise Remade: Politics of culture and history in Hawai'i* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), esp. p.12ff.

- ⁷ The term 'reinvention of tradition' is used here in the sense defined by Hobsbawm and Ranger, although I am aware that it is a very contested term among Pacific scholars. As Hobsbawm and Ranger propose in their now classic definition, an 'invented tradition' is 'a set of practices ... of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition [and] ... attempt to establish continuity with ... a suitable historical past.' Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p.1. As the contributors to the volume show, this process is most effective in forms of ceremony and performance. For a discussion of the term in the Pacific context, cf. Jocelyn Linnekin, 'Cultural Invention and the Dilemma of Authenticity', *American Anthropologist* 93:2 (1991), 446–49.
- ⁸ Kaeppler, *Polynesian Dance*, p.23.
- ⁹ Cf. Caroline K. Klarr, *Hawaiian Hula and Body Ornamentation, 1778–1858* (Los Osos, Cal.: Bearsville Press and Cloud Mountain Press, 1996).
- ¹⁰ Barrère et al., *Hula*, p.41.
- ¹¹ For the origin of the grass-skirt, see Barrère et al., *Hula*, p.72.

- ¹² Kaeppler, *Polynesian Dance*, p. 24.
- ¹³ For an extensive discussion of the place of hula in European discursive and iconographical constructions at the end of the nineteenth century, see Balme, 'Dressing the Hula: Iconography, performance and cultural identity formation in late nineteenth century Hawaii', *Paideuma: Mitteilungen zur Kulturkunde* 45 (forthcoming, 1999).
- ¹⁴ For a discussion of the image of Maori as a warrior people as an invention catering to a European discursive construction, cf. the article by Toon van Meijl, 'The Maori as Warrior: Ideological implications of a historical image' in Toon van Meijl and Paul van der Grijp (eds), *European Imagery and Colonial History in the Pacific* (Saarbrücken: Verlag für Entwicklungspolitik Breitenbach, 1994), 49–63.
- ¹⁵ For a discussion of Seddon's imperial ambitions, especially in the South Pacific, cf. Keith Sinclair, *A History of New Zealand*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1980), pp. 217–21.
- ¹⁶ Robert A. Loughnan, *Royalty in New Zealand: The visit of their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York, 10–27 June 1901. A Descriptive Narrative*, (Wellington: John Mackay, Government Printing Office, 1902), p.v.
- ¹⁷ The relationship of the Maori to the British Crown has been and still is a vexed one, and cannot be easily summarized. In the nineteenth century, a number of Maori leaders still viewed the British sovereign as an impartial place of appeal for their conflicts with the white settler government.
- ¹⁸ Cf. Ngahuia Te Awekotuku, 'The Sociocultural Impact of Tourism on the Te Arawa people of Rotorua'. PhD Thesis (University of Waikato, 1981).
- ¹⁹ Cf. Jennifer Shennan, who points out the importance of *hui* for the exchange of performance ideas. 'Such gatherings may have sharpened an appreciation for the contrast between area styles and conventions within the dance forms, but there may also have been incentive for encouraging uniformity in some features'. *The Maori Action Song* (Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research, 1984), p. 23.
- ²⁰ *Royalty in New Zealand*, p. 63.
- ²¹ *Royalty in New Zealand*, p. 63.
- ²² *Royalty in New Zealand*, p. 74.
- ²³ The leader of the group is Mrs Kemp, wife of a Wanganui chief who fought with the New Zealand militia during the land wars of the 1860s.
- ²⁴ *Royalty in New Zealand*, p. 76.
- ²⁵ *Royalty in New Zealand*, p. 99.
- ²⁶ *Royalty in New Zealand*, p. 99.

