NEGOTIATING INDIGENEITY IN SELECTED NARRATIVES OF PATRICIA GRACE: A STUDY

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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MZU REGD. NO. 241 of 2013

Ph.D. REGN.NO. MZU/Ph.D./962 OF 26.05.2017

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND CULTURE STUDIES

SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND LANGUAGES

APRIL, 2023

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Submitted

In partial fulfillment of the requirement of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in

English and Culture Studies of Mizoram University, Aizawl.

CHAPTER 1
SITUATING PATRICIA GRACE IN THE PAN-PACIFIC LITERARY SCENE

This introductory chapter attempts to situate the selected author Patricia Grace in the contemporary trends and issues of Pan-Pacific writing and justify her selection for this study. It also attempts to understand the colonial and postcolonial literature written about the Pacific cultures and in particular the Maoris of New Zealand to foreground the necessity of indigenous writing. It also provides a study of the selected texts by Grace as they address the various issues that permeates indigenous cultures and writing.

Ronald Niezen states in *The Origins of Indigenism* (2003) that the term 'indigenous' refers to "a primordial identity, to people with primary attachments to land and culture, 'traditional' people with lasting connections to ways of life that have survived from time immemorial" (3). Indigenous peoples are the original or natural inhabitants of a country or region, and the literature produced by original or native peoples and their descendants may be defined as indigenous literature ("Indigenous"). One of the markers of indigenous literature is a revolt against the forces of cultural uniformity and against the appropriation of indigenous peoples' sovereignty by states, which has been brought about by globalization (Niezen 2). Stuart Christie claims that as a consequence of the colonization of freestanding indigenous traditions by specific mechanisms, including the English language, contemporary indigenous sovereignty has become effectively pluralized. He also states that contemporary indigenous literature effectively documents such an imagined plurality and points ahead to newer, imagined forms of community on behalf of indigenous citizens seeking to honor past traditions as well as to sustain present political enfranchisements (1-2). This chapter focuses on the indigenous literature of New Zealand and the narratives of Patricia Grace selected for this study. This study also attempts to understand the contemporary Indigenous literary scene in New Zealand and the Pacific by showing how its contact with the western world has shaped the literature produced from this region.

Literature written about the society of New Zealand and the indigenous community before the 1970s was what can be called colonialist literature. Colonialist literature, according to Elleke Boehmer, "revolves constantly, even obsessively, around certain key themes: the introversion of the colonial mission, or colonial drama; the masculine aspect of that drama, the representation of other peoples, and the resistant incomprehensibility or unreadability of the colonized beyond" (58). A hero in a colonial fiction bestows upon himself the responsibility of a civilizing mission and expansion of responsible authority. Colonialist writing also rejects the native and helps to sanction European power. Amongst the literature that promoted stereotypic reproduction of natives and European self-projection, G.A. Henty's *Maori and Settler: A Tale of the New Zealand War* (1891) is one of the most prominent. This prolific English author and war correspondent has been accused of glorifying British imperialism in his writings. Boehmer says that Henty's fiction functioned as an "information and instruction manual for future colonialists and English gentlemen" (74).

The persistence of a stereotypical projection of the Pacific Islands in European discourse is encapsulated in the words of Albert Wendt:

> There was no Fall, no sun-tanned Noble Savages existing in South Seas paradises, no Golden Age, except in Hollywood films, in the insanely romantic literature and art by outsiders about the Pacific, in the breathless sermons of our elite vampires. . . Our islands were and still are a goldmine for romantic novelists and filmmakers, bar-room journalists and semi-literate tourists. Much of this literature ranges from the hilariously romantic through the pseudo-scholarly to the infuriatingly racist. . . (*Inside* 52-3)

What can be deduced from this is that fiction writers have played a role in the continuance of cultural stereotypes about the inhabitants of the Pacific islands. In one of the earliest literatures written about the Pacific region, the term the 'South Seas' or the 'South Sea Islands' were ascribed to it. These terms were coined by European explorers and became synonymous with Romantic conceptions of the Pacific as a utopian paradise (Hau'ofa 395). In *Pacific Islands Writing* (2007), Michelle Keown states that the persistent image of the Pacific in European discourse was either the

"noble savage" or the "ignoble savage". On the context of the former, it went so far as to the different cultures and lands being called "paradisiacal", "gorgeous", "fertile", and "idyllic" (20-21). Bernard Smith points out that "the island became notorious throughout Europe in the popular mind as a land of free-love" (47). On the matter of the representation of the natives as ignoble, the genesis of this seems to be the writings of European explorers and Christian missionaries who wrote damning accounts of the 'primitive' tribes. The trope of the 'savage heathen', people who indulged in "abhorrent social practices such as cannibalism, infanticide and tattooing" was often applied to indigenous people to justify conversion to Christianity (Edmond 9). Given that these two approaches of the Pacific islanders are endorsed by European discourses about the region, it is not surprising that indigenous writers have mainly taken an opposition to these stereotypes.

The late eighteenth century is commonly taken as a starting point in analyses of European representations of the Pacific, largely due to the fact that an important new phase of exploration began in the region during this period (Keown 29). The foundations of Pacific ethnography were also laid during the late 1700s by the British explorer James Cook. The German-born scientist Johann Reinhold Forster and his son George, who were on Cook's second voyage, produced some of the earliest comparative studies of Indigenous Pacific Islanders (29). The discourses of Western writers such as Herman Melville and Pierre Loti in their Pacific narratives were marked by eroticism and exoticism (32). Melville, in his novel *Typee* (2001) gives an account of the central character named Tommo's stay with the Typee for a period of four months. Melville's ethnography of the Typee is heavily reliant on accounts by earlier visitors to the area that he read only after he returned from his Pacific travels (32). Rod Edmond indicates that the novel falls within "that Enlightenment and Romantic tradition which imaginatively appropriated the South Pacific in order to construct its case against the ignobility of civilization" (84). Michelle Keown states that Melville's *Typee* represents the indigenous people as a society living in a condition of utopian ease and abundance, enjoying a free and natural sexuality, and observing a marriage system based on female desire. The relationship between Tommo and the indigenous female character Fayaway alludes to the concept of the European 'fatal impact rhetoric' (32). Rod Edmond indicates that the relationship

incorporates the rhetoric within the cross-cultural romance, whereby a feminine indigenous culture gives itself voluntarily to a masculine, European, colonizing one which will later "abandon it on the beach, leaving it to wilt and die" (174-5). This rhetoric is found integrated in various European representations of the Pacific, almost always explicitly. A similar situation is seen in the novel *Le Mariage de Loti* (1878) by the French writer Pierre Loti. Loosely based on the author's own experiences on his visit to Tahiti, the narrator in the novel falls in love with and eventually leaves his fourteen-year-old Tahitian lover Rarahu. These disturbing romance narratives written by western writers have formed a satirical target in the work of a number of Indigenous Pacific writers (Keown 33). The Samoan writer Sia Figiel has represented in her novel *Where We Once Belonged* (1996) the character of Tommo as a voyeur. David Spurr states that one of the major tropes of imperialist authority in colonial discourse is the panoptic, controlling, and classifying gaze of the colonizer, who looks upon the colonized but denies the colonized the privilege of looking back (13). An incident from Melville's *Typee* where Tommo is unsettled when a Typee chief looks back at him and regards him knowingly is significant in this context as the trope of the colonial gaze is often employed by western writers in their discourses of the Pacific. In the light of this statement, it is unsurprising that Indigenous Pacific writers have expressed reinterpretations of western discourses in their creative outputs. Another feature of Western Pacific discourse is the varying attitudes toward religion. In Melville's *Typee*, there is a castigation of the Typee as a "back-slidden generation. . .sunk in religious sloth" (179). This statement is intriguing as there is, in the text, a chastisement of Christian mission work and accounts of mission hardships as 'pathetic', and stories of conversions and baptisms as 'misleading' (198). William Ellis' *Polynesian Researches* (1829) occupies a place of prominence amongst the published missionary accounts of the Pacific. The place of the missionary work was Tahiti, and it can be considered as an ethnographic description of Tahiti. It served as a source of information for many nineteenth-century Pacific discourses by writers such as Herman Melville and Wilkie Collins. The text established a paternalistic colonial paradigm which was to become a familiar tenet of subsequent European discourse on the Pacific (Keown 36). Rod Edmond states that Ellis' descriptions of Tahitian cultural practices are usually followed by vehement denunciations of the

immorality of these practices, suggesting that far from needing to be rescued by civilization, the Tahitians already have one (119). In *A Narrative of Missionary Enterprises in the South Seas* (1837), John Williams provides an account of his own missionary work in the Cook Islands and Samoa, which became an important source for European narratives. His text abounds with the description of the differences between a converted village called Arorangi with its "neat little cottages, chapel and tastefully laid out gardens" (92). This image is contrasted with an unconverted native settlement, described as lacking uniformity perpetuating the image of the savage and their need for domestication into the Christian faith (94). This model was emulated by R.M Ballantyne in *The Coral Island* (1857) thereby affirming the tendency of European discourses to perpetuate the image of the savage and the belief that they need to be civilized. The narrator Ralph in *The Coral Island* prays to God "to prosper those missionary societies that send such inestimable blessings to these islands of dark and bloody idolatry" (336). Rod Edmond states that in the works of nineteenth-century adventure novelists such as Ballantyne and W.H.G Kingston, the Pacific becomes "the prime fictional testing site and proving ground for the reconstructed manly boy of the public school-imperial axis", linking missionary and colonial 'civilizing missions' and prefiguring the consolidation of British colonial interests in the Pacific in the latter part of the nineteenth century (145).

According to Elleke Boehmer, since the 1970s, indigenous writing has emerged as "an important constituency located at once within and without existing forms of postcolonial self-expression" (221). It shares the vision and objectives of other postcolonial writing such as "the quest for personal and racial/cultural identity built on the spiritual guardianship of traditional laws; the belief that writing is an integral part of self-definition; the emphasis on historical reconstruction; the ethical imperative of reconciliation with the past" (221). But it has to carefully disentangle itself from postcolonial writing in the sense that indigenous writers see themselves and their land as still colonized because they are a minority in their native land. The white occupation is not just history as they find themselves submerged in a white majority land and positions of power are occupied by the descendants of colonizers. This wariness that pervades indigenous writing is justified as the implications of postcolonial writing do not always necessarily apply to them. The link with the land

and its effects on Indigenous notions of textuality may well serve as an interesting generator of change in all indigenous communities as writers from these societies seize the postcolonial means of communication in a different way from its appropriation in settler cultures. Indigenous writing has suffered many of the general historical problems of post-colonial writing, such as being incorporated into the national literatures of the settler colonies as an 'extension' rather than as a separate discourse. But, locked into the process of appropriation through which Indigenous groups write is an alternative metaphysic, as well as a political rage, which has proved a powerful creative stimulant (Ashcroft, et al. 143).

In settler colonies like America, Australia and New Zealand, the complexity of the relationship between the Indigenous and settler populations has to be taken into account. Writers like JJ Healy in *The Treatment of the Aborigines in Australian Literature* (1978), Terry Goldie in *An Aboriginal Present: Australian and Canadian Literature in the 1920s* (1984) and Leslie Monkman in *Images of the Indian in English Canadian Literature* (1981) have used the indigenous population in the settler colonies as literary subjects in their works. There has been an attempt by the settler writers, "in the process of 'constructing indigeneity', to incorporate or utilize a pre-existing aesthetic dimension identified with the Indigenous occupants of the country" (Ashcroft et al. 141). The valorization of the Pacific cultures against Western culture is also a part of much of the contemporary indigenous writing. To make significant interventions and indictments in colonial literature, indigenous writing continues to grow and expand and has achieved prominence. The growth and expansion of indigenous writing is necessary to reorganize the perception and reception of indigenous and native peoples. The Maoris, Inuit, and Australian Aborigines have developed a special type of literature/writing because they are marginalized by the colonizers as well as the white settler societies. Their position is unique as they are "pushed to the psychic and political edge of societies which themselves have experienced the dilemma of colonial alienation" (142). Because they experienced a double marginalization, they have a capacity to express and "subvert received assumptions about literature" that are much more effective and greater than the white settler societies (142).

The conceptualization of the Pacific as a constellation of tiny islands in a far sea, as highlighted by the Tongan scholar Epeli Hau'ofa, has been common among since the early days of European contact with the area. Hau'ofa acknowledges that many islands in the Pacific are geographically small and relies on foreign aid. He seeks to recuperate indigenous ways of understanding the Pacific by insisting that they seen as "a sea of islands in the totality of their relationships" (7). In the act of affirming the interconnectedness of the Pacific islands and their similar struggle against climate change and capitalism, it is necessary to assert their heterogeneity. This study can only claim to be a selective and partial one as it must make note of the fluidity of indigenous Pacific literature. Pacific literature is persistently amorphous in nature and does not just critically engage with European representations. Pacific writers draw extensively upon their pre-colonial oral, mythopoeic, and artistic traditions and not just 'write back' to the centre (Keown 7). Attention must be paid to the interrelationships between Pacific and other postcolonial literatures manifested in their vigorous anti-colonialism and self-determination. In order to avoid generalizing Pacific literature and to acknowledge its diversity, the uniqueness and changing preoccupations of writers must be noted. Michelle Keown makes a distinction between Pacific writers and divides them into three main categories: "the anti-colonial and polemical first-generation literatures of the 1960s and early 1970s; the post-independence shift to internal cultural politics; and the new wave of indigenous Pacific creativity- featuring increased numbers of diasporic and women writers" (10). Though this differentiation neatly categorizes Pacific writing, it is misleading to think that it is straightforward. It does not merely mirror socio-political changes, but exhibits specificities and incongruities. The narratives of Patricia Grace selected for this study therefore attempt to strike a balance between discontinuities and cultural contexts.

When talking about contemporary Pacific literature, Michelle Keown lays down three significant trends in particular: the shift in focus from anticolonialism to postindependence corruption; from realism to postmodernism; and from phallocentrism to gender inclusiveness (196). In the trend of anticolonialism and postindependence corruption, Albert Wendt edited three anthologies of Pacific writing *Lali* (1980*), Nuanua* (1995), and *Whetu Moana* (2003) indicating ideological

shifts from independence era to the twenty-first century. These anthologies are characterized by explicit anticolonial and nationalistic themes. This literary trend is characterized by the irreconcilable opposition of the colonial and the indigenous, a tragic and pessimistic vision of colonialism and a need to search for an original and unique take on perspective. It also refused to see benefits in colonialism or in fusions of the Indigenous and the foreign (Wendt, *NuaNua* 4). Like other writings from colonial countries, Pacific writing also could not escape the influences Eurocentric university education received by many first-generation Indigenous writers. The anticolonial stance exhibited in earlier literature shifted into an examination of the internal sociopolitical problems post-independence by the time Wendt's novel *NuaNua* came out in 1995. The corruption of post-independence political and social elites formed a satirical target in Pacific writing (Keown 197). Epeli Hau'ofa and Albert Wendt are two of the major writers who utilized their art to satirize worldliness, nepotism and fraud among the clergy and bureaucracy. Hau'ofa's critiques similar social problems prevalent in many post-independence Pacific societies by creating fictional places. Wendt's fiction and poetry satirizes corruption among political and religious figures, particularly within Samoan society. The corporeal image in its grotesqueness is employed by Wendt in his writings as metaphors for political corruption and the excesses of conspicuous consumption. Other writers in the Pacific anthology like Grace Molisa, Sampson Ngwele and Ruperake Petaia also articulate their disappointment and disillusionment with the new political set-up. Another trend of Pacific writing is the increasing experimentation with postmodernist literary modes such as magic realism, pastiche, parody and metafiction (Keown 199). They become increasingly dominant in Pacific literary works produced from the 1990s. Aphorisms, poems, rhetorical questions dominate the narrative (199). This trend was especially favoured by the Samoan writer Albert Wendt in his novels *Black Rainbow* (1992) and *Ola* (1991). Wendt has suggested that the emergence of postmodernist literary techniques in Pacific literature can be attributed in part to the influence of writers such as Jorge Luis Borges, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Italo Calvino, and Umberto Eco. He also argues that many so-called 'postmodernist' techniques can be traced back to pre-colonial Pacific oral, artistic, and philosophical traditions (199). He further asserts that

digression, metafiction, and pastiche are not borrowed from Western postmodernist fiction, but are instead characteristic of Pacific storytelling traditions, which contain a "rich mix of fantasy, parody, pastiche, poetry" (Ellis 84-89). The blurring of the boundaries between 'realism' and 'fantasy' has been a common feature of Maori literature in English. Witi Ihimaera has asserted that Maori historiography and storytelling have been influenced by the "frameworks of the unreal as well as the real" since pre-colonial times (53-54). His notable works such as *The Greenstone Patu* (1997), *The Makutu on Mrs. Jones* (1972) and *The Dream Swimmer* (1997) are indicative of this feature of Pacific writing. One of the novels chosen for the study *Baby No-Eyes* (1998) also contains magic realist elements where the spirit of a deceased child returns to trouble a living relative. Maori culture abounds with beliefs in animism and the existence of ghosts, but the examples aforementioned have caused discomfort amongst non-Maori critics, who have questioned the "extent to which Polynesian representations of the supernatural are appropriate to textual forms derived from a Western literary tradition" (Arvidson 121). Wendt's response to this is that notions of cultural purity are spurious, and cultural syncreticity should be celebrated rather than being preoccupied with notions of cultural origins and authenticity (Keown 200). Pacific theorist Subramani expresses skepticism about the relevance of postmodernist poetics to postcolonial literature, but concedes that contemporary Pacific writers have expressed dexterity in engaging with postmodernism while remaining aware of its reactionary politics and its indifference to local struggles (8). Patricia Grace succeeds in using postmodern poetics by interweaving it with serious socio-political critique as is seen in *Baby No-Eyes*. The elaboration of contemporary cultural issues with postmodern poetics in contemporary Pacific writing also engages with socio-political predicaments such as unemployment and domestic violence. Women poets such as Jacq Carter, Roma Potiki and Kathy Banngo explore male violence against women and champion female solidarity. This mode of writing has resulted in a significant increase in the documentation of women's issues by Pacific women writers since the 1990s. The politics of gender and sexuality is another trend in contemporary Pacific literature. Helen Tiffin has expressed the difficulty in theorizations of feminism in 'third world' and 'first world' women in colonial contexts. Analyses of third world women contest their double

marginalization under colonialism and under patriarchy in their respective societies; while analyses of 'first world' women investigate their own complicity in the colonial endeavour compromised by their own marginalization under patriarchy (101). As Western feminism operates from a Eurocentric bias, its relevance to the experiences of third world women was questioned by 'third world' feminist critics such as Chandra Talpade Mohanty and Gayatri Spivak in the 1980s (Keown 202). Spivak argues that the feminist theorist must learn to speak 'to' rather than 'for' third world women in order to circumvent the homogenizing imperatives of what she calls a UN-style universalist feminism that represents third world women as a victimized collectivity (361). Indigenous women in Pacific literature have been impacted by the international debates on gender and ethnicity (Keown 203). The Vanuatu poet Grace Mera Molisa became involved with the efforts to increase the involvement of Pacific women in post-independence political and public life coinciding with the process of decolonization in the 1960s and 1970s. Pacific women poets such as Jully Makini and Momoe Von Reiche, in talking about the concepts of beauty, sexuality and modern values through their creative work have contributed immensely to the debates of gender in the Pacific. But feminist scholars such as Selina Tusitala Marsh and Teresia Teaiwa argue that indigenous Pacific literature remain male-dominated (Marsh 343). Selina Marsh advocates a Pacific feminism based on local concepts rather than international theoretical models, thereby identifying universalizing tendencies of Western feminisms as critiqued by international scholars such as Mohanty and Spivak. Marsh proposes the argument that Pacific women's experiences have been overlooked by Indigenous Pacific writers and theorists such as Albert Wendt (343). It is appropriate that Patricia Grace's novels *Dogside Story* (2001) and *Baby No-Eyes* focus on the female Indigenous experiences thereby supplying a much-needed attention to female experience in Pacific writing. The hesitancy to address the expression of the female body and its functions; and the tendency to refrain from speaking out by women are articulated and challenged by Grace in these novels. The 1990s saw developments in new directions for Maori feminism and Maori women's literature in New Zealand. Aorewa McLeod and Nina Nola point out that Ngahuia Te Awekotuku's *Tahuri* (1989) brought a more intense focus on lesbian identity politics and represents lesbianism as an established and

accepted sexual orientation in Maori culture (16). This is a significant new direction amidst the publication of a range of polemical writing in the wake of the feminist and Maori Renaissance movements of the 1970s and 1980s (Keown 205).

There is an increasing internationalization of Maori literature resonating with a variety of developments in Indigenous Pacific creative arts since the 1990s. This is a result of the expansion of travel networks and global dissemination of information through the internet and other media sources. The contemporary Pacific cultural production is moving towards the transcultural, the post-national and the global (Keown 221). The effects of globalization overarch into the narratives produced by Grace as they resonate with the concept of the transnational and translational as put forth by Homi Bhabha (191). Spatial histories of displacement which is now accompanied by the territorial ambitions of global media technologies make the question of how culture signifies, or what is signified by culture a rather complex issue (191). This complexity permeates into the contemporary literature produced from the Pacific. However, the movement towards transculturalism and globalization in Pacific literature does not mean that indigeneity and cultural specificity have become marginalized within contemporary Pacific literature (Keown 222). Grace's text *Baby No-Eyes* proves that the global and the local, postmodern pastiche and indigeneity can exist alongside each other. *Dogside Story* stresses the importance of advocating and affirming a regional indigenous identity while underlining the significance of local traditions for Indigenous literature. Pacific writers are now commonly identified through pan-ethnic and regional labels such as 'Pasifika' and 'Oceania' drawing attention to the importance of the interconnected local, global, regional spatial formations that Epeli Hau'ofa has identified as a central aspect of contemporary Pacific literary production (222). This sentiment echoes Arif Dirlik's concept of 'place-consciousness' wherein conceptualizations of the local often focus on the attachment of Indigenous people to the physical environment and to the traditions associated with a particular place. According to Dirlik, the global has associations with abstract economic and political formations that are seen as a threat to the survival of the local (8). An underlying story in *Baby No-Eyes* is the protest by Indigenous people to reclaim land from the government thereby engaging the issue of the relationship between the global and the local. However, this opposition

between the local and the global is less refined when the local community prepares for and welcomes tourists in their village to make money. Their village has always been remote and untouched, but because of financial difficulties it has to welcome and accommodate outsiders. Such situations gear towards a reconfiguration of the global/local binary in which the local is no longer threatened by, or subsumed within, the global (Keown 224). In this context, Dirlik has come up with the term 'glocal' to explain formations in which the global and the local are seen as mutually dependent and interwoven rather than in hostile opposition (12). By this reasoning, the opening up of a community in *Dogside Story* has the potential to mediate or obviate systemic problems posed by the forces of globalization. Dirlik states:

> In their simultaneous attachment to places and local cultures, on the one hand, and their critical engagement with the global, on the other, social movements offer the most hopeful arena for a defence of place and a more balanced perspective between the global and the local. (12)

He further declares that this process "suggest ways for relearning and seeing communities as anchoring points for reconceiving and reconstructing the world from the perspective of place-based cultural, ecological and economic practices" (12). The narratives of Patricia Grace therefore suggest that place-centred politics are important in asserting identity for Indigenous peoples as they are vulnerable to global political and economic formations. The concept of indigenous identity does not just become an expression of creativity, it also happens to be a means of survival. The contemporary Pacific literature and the narratives of Grace in particular, are therefore a demonstration of the continued endurance and expression of indigenous cultures.

In New Zealand, the continuance and growth of a powerful modern tradition of Maori language usage sets up a challenge of a different kind (one more analogous for the Maori to the condition of a writer in a diglossic culture such as Africa or India with the possibility of language 'choice'). The *pakeha* (non-Maori) is, of course, only able to incorporate Maori elements as 'markers of difference' in the English text. But, as writers like Patricia Grace and Witi Ihimaera have shown, those Maori writers who choose to do so can both appropriate English to their own usage and as a result influence the discourse of New Zealand literature in a more effective way (Ashcroft et al. 143).

In this context, the theory of Felix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze propounded in their work *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* (1986) can be applied, with the language of Maori writers occupying the same position as that of a minor literature. According to Guattari and Deleuze, in minor literatures, language is "affected with a high coefficient of deterritorialization" (16). There is the "impossibility of not writing because national consciousness, uncertain or oppressed, necessarily exists by means of literature". Guattari and Deleuze state that Kafka gave the example of the Jews of Prague and "the impossibility of not writing, the impossibility of writing in German, the impossibility of writing otherwise" (16). What seems to be the implication here is that minor literature needs to deterritorialize to undo what has been done, so that it can reterritorialize or redo what has been undone suggesting a process of constant transformation. This is the plight of minor literature where it speaks a language cut off from the masses while simultaneously being a part of the larger society. In the process of deterritorialization, Kafka refuses to artificially swell up the major language with the use of "symbolism, of oneirism, of esoteric sense" as it implies a desperate attempt at symbolic reterritorialization" (19). The better way is to make a language, as arid as it is, "vibrate with a new intensity" (19). It thus proceeds by "dryness and sobriety, a willed poverty, pushing deterritorialization to such an extreme that nothing remains but intensities" (19). In major literatures, the individual concern joins with other no less individual concerns, the social milieu serving as a mere environment or background. But in minor literature, its cramped space forces each individual intrigue to connect immediately to politics. The individual concern thus becomes "all the more necessary, indispensable, magnified, because a whole story is vibrating within it" (17). A major characteristic of minor literature according to Guattari and Deleuze is that everything in it takes on a collective value (17). It is not possible to have an 'individuated enunciation' that could be separated from a collective enunciation. They write that "the political domain has contaminated every statement" (17). Because collective or national consciousness is often inactive in external life and always in the process of breakdown, literature finds itself positively charged with the role and function of the collective and even revolutionary enunciation (17). The deterritorialization that Kafka opts for is "to convert it into a unique and solitary form of writing" (25).

Kafka wants to "push it toward a deterritorialization that will no longer be saved by culture or by myth, that will be an absolute deterritorialization, even if it is slow, sticky, coagulated" (26). In acknowledging the emergence of Pacific indigenous literature, the regional characteristic of many indigenous writers have to also be recognized. Oral traditions and myths occupy a central position in indigenous literature. Without imposing a homogeneous singularity upon New Zealand Maori writers like Keri Hulme, Witi Ihimaera and Patricia Grace, what should be noted is that these writers experience their reality as a deeply compromised, polysemic state. Their literature admits that they have hybrid and conflicting cultural allegiances because their history is inextricably linked with that of the whites. There is complicity with the culture of their former colonizers even as they seek to redeem and affirm their cultural memories (Boehmer 222). Amongst these writers, Patricia Grace imaginatively explores national traditions to emphasize indigenous resilience and self-assertion.

The author selected for this study Patricia Grace was born on August 17, 1937 in Wellington, New Zealand. Born to a Maori father and a European mother, she is of Ngati Toa, Ngati Raukawa and Te Ati Awa descent, and is affiliated to Ngati Porou by marriage. Her first book, *Waiariki and Other Stories* (1975), one of the first books by a Maori writer, won a PEN/Hubert Church Award for best first book of fiction. Her next book was a novel, *Mutuwhenua: The Moon Sleeps* (1978), which examined a marriage between a Maori woman and a man of European descent (*pakeha*) ("Patricia"). The narratives of Grace selected for this thesis are *Baby No-Eyes* (1998), *Dogside Story* (2001), *Tu* (2004), *Small Holes in the Silence* (2006) and *Chappy* (2015).

Grace's other notable works include *The Dream Sleepers and Other Stories* (1980), *The Kuia and the Spider* (1981), *Wahine Toa: Women of Maori Myth* (1984), *Watercress Tuna and the Children of Champion Street* (1984), *Potiki* (1986), *Cousins* (1992), and *The Sky People* (1994). When Grace was honoured with the Neustadt International Prize for Literature in 2008, Joy Harjo, a noted Muscogee author, said:

> Every once in a while a storyteller emerges who brings forth provocative, compassionate, and beautiful tales, the exact story-food the people need to carry them through tough, transformative times. Patricia Grace of the Maori people is one of the people of Aoteora, and now to the world she is honoured as the twentieth laureate of the Neustadt International Prize for Literature. (34)

Patricia Grace's works have been acclaimed for their depiction of Maori culture in general as well as Maori diversity. She helps give a voice to her culture and to reveal to the larger world what it means to be Maori. Her narratives have a complex narrative structure and examine the different experiences of Maori characters. They are often set in small coastal villages and concern community and intergenerational family relationships. She presents a multiplicity of Maori voices, revealing much about Maori life and concerns.

The first text selected for this thesis *Baby No-Eyes* was published in 1998. It follows the lives of a Maori family as they narrate their experiences of loss, betrayal, heartache and misfortune. The story centres on a young woman Te Paania, who survives a car accident but miscarries her baby. When her Maori relatives try to claim the body of the baby, the hospital staff returns the baby with the eyes missing. Te Paania gives birth to another child, a boy, Tewara who forms a deep bond with his dead sister, and this bond between a living person and a dead person becomes the core of the story. In *Baby No-Eyes*, Grace constructs her own realities and maintains a sense of coherent experience. What is seen as an invalid colonial perspective is often supplanted by an indigenous perspective. Shane, the father of the unborn baby *in Baby No-Eyes*, questions why he is given the name Shane, a *Pakeha* (non-Maori) name, when he is a Maori. He says, "How can I be Pakeha with this colour, this body, this face, this head, this heart? How can I be Maori without…without…without what? Don't even know without what? Without what?" (27). This is the question that continues to haunt Shane. Even when his grandmother, Gran Kura, says that it is a name for today's world, a name that *Pakeha* teachers will like, Shane is unable to come to terms with his western name when he clearly does not look like one.

Grace shows the psychological effect of suppression and silence through the school and classroom atmosphere in *Baby No-Eyes*. The *Pakeha* teachers and principal forbid the native students to speak in their native tongue and expect them to speak in English. This is highlighted when Dulcie's little brother Waana is dropped off for his first day at school by their grandfather. When he refuses to let go of their grandfather and spoke in their native tongue, Gran Kura relates this incident:

> The headmaster came out and said in a loud voice, 'I'd like to remind you Mr. Williams that I don't allow any of that language in my school or in these school grounds.' We all got a fright because Waana's grandfather took no notice of the headmaster and kept talking to Waana. The headmaster became angry. 'I'm asking you to leave these grounds at once,' he said, 'Off you go and take your language with you. We're not having any of that in my school and in front of these children.' (37)

The native language of the students becomes equated with a sense of fear and despair and what Gran Kura says 'being good'. She tries to tell Riripeti, her little cousin to act and speak in whatever way the teacher wanted but finds herself unable to do so:;

> I wanted to whisper in our language so this teina of mine would know what to do, but I knew I wasn't allowed to speak our language. . .didn't know a glass was right for milk and a cup was right for tea. . .we didn't speak until we learned, didn't speak until we had to because we were afraid our bad language might come out. . . (31-33)

The inability to speak in a foreign tongue, that is, English, would result in a harsh punishment. The offender would be caned and Kura recalls one of the many days that Riripeti was caned because she was unable to speak English, "We all had to stand in our lines and watch this caning so we would learn how bad our language was. . .I thought what an evil thing our language was to do that to my *teina* (little sisiter)" (37). Kura internalizes her fear and accepts that her language is wrong. The psychological and physical trauma those Riripeti experiences at school become too much for her and she dies. Kura says that she was "killed by school" (38). But the

psychological trauma manifests in the other school children and Kura says that this is the secret that her generation has to keep, the fact that her little sister died and they knew the reason for it but were helpless to do anything about it. She says:

> My heart broke for my *teina*. Oh I cried. She was mine, she was me. She was all of us. She was the one who has died but we were the ones affected, our shame taking generations, to become our anger and our madness. . .It became our secret and our shame, it's a story that has never had words, not until today. (39)

Gran Kura has a sort of an awakening when her great-granddaughter dies at birth in a hospital. When the doctors tell her that they have "trouble locating" and have "misplaced" the body of a child, she is reminded of the death of Riripeti. While initially deciding to go back to her silence- her 'goodness', her granddaughter Niecy refuses to comply and demanded the baby's body be taken home for her funeral. In this moment Gran Kura feels the full shame of her evil silence and goodness:

> It took Shane to open my mouth and it took his sister to move me. It took the two of them to stop me being this woman of evil patience and goodness, to stop me waiting there doing what I was told, . . .to stop me listening to people who gave themselves their own authority, to stop me letting them not tell me why they'd stolen our baby's eyes. (65)

Gran Kura realizes the futility in holding onto shame, and in wrapping layers and layers round the core of her identity. She regrets hers sins of silence and goodness, and letting her past remain hidden. This results in her breaking free of her silence. She says, "Shane wanted his name, and though this comes too late for him, I have names to give. He wanted his stories and I have these to give. I speak to you now in the language that I haven't used since the time of Riripeti. I will never speak English again" (66).

The second text *Dogside Story* is set in a rural Maori coastal community. The main protagonist is Te Rua, a one-legged young man, and he lives at the edge of his Dogside community. His role in his community is to provide fresh fish and cray. He

battles for the custody of his daughter with his aunts and this battle threatens to split up the community. The custody battle and the reaction of the community throw light on familial relationships in the Maori community. The account of life in *Dogside Story* that emerges from Grace's novel is an account that presents sights, sounds, memories, verbal expressions, and awakenings from a young man's experience growing up in a Maori village. The story behind the name of the village is told at the start of the novel. There were two sisters- Ngarua and Maraenohonoho who fought bitterly over their brother's love and affection. When their brother died, he left behind a canoe which the sisters fought over. Maraenohonoho launched a heavy piece of wood and struck and destroyed the canoe while Ngarua was trying to escape with it. In anger, Ngarua swam to the other side of the river and never returned. Her husband, children and other villagers eventually joined her and they settled on the south side of the river. The northsiders and southsiders held one another in disdain because the northsiders thought themselves the stayers, the originals, the ones who stayed where their ancestors' bones were buried; and the southsiders in turn thought themselves adventurers, movers, changers and seekers. A number of churches were built on the north, which led to it becoming Godside; while the number of dogs on southside led to it becoming known as Dogside. The novel becomes one-sided as it favours Dogside. The novel then concentrates on the life of Rua, a twenty-four-year old man who is embroiled in a bitter custody battle over his daughter Kiri with his aunts – Amiria and Babs. Kiri is the daughter of Rua and Atawhai, who are cousins and they had conceived Kiri when they were only fourteen. This revelation of Kiri's paternity shocks the community. Atawhai had run away immediately after giving birth to Kiri, placing Kiri in the care of Amiria and Babs. The reaction of the village elders to Kiri's paternity could perhaps subtly raise doubts about the notion of justice towards women within their customary polity. Keeping aside their mistreatment of Kiri, Amiria and Babs were expected by the elders to hand over the custody of Kiri to Rua, because he was the father. Amiria and Babs refuse to give Kiri up, hired a lawyer, and went to court which greatly angered the village elders.

The third text titled *Small Holes in the Silence* is a collection of twenty one short stories. In this narrative, Grace depicts a world in which people struggle against

ageing, rejection, violence and betrayal. The settings for the stories are rural and urban New Zealand and also the world beyond. The stories have tribal and contemporary themes. The overwhelming feature found in these stories is Grace's sympathy for the underdogs, people who are unlikable and on the outside. The stories are centred on characters that more or less have lives that are unconventional. The characters belong to different age groups and are of different sexes as Grace tries to speak about intergenerational experiences of people in and outside her community. The characters are shown trying to navigate their sometimes solitary lives as they struggle to survive and make a mark in their own worlds. In the narration of the stories, Grace insists on the importance of story-telling, family ties and how much these two aspects figure in the determination and assertion of identity and difference. She also does not shy away from imbibing mythical and fantastical elements to add weight and colour to her stories. These fantastical stories are infused with the everyday realistic experiences of her characters. It is also a deliberate device by her to inculcate the indigenous Maori stories and myths in her narratives. Characters are shown accepting and at the same time questioning the fantastical elements. In the story 'Wendel', the inhabitants of a village are setting up an ancestral meeting-place with an ancestral figure, a *koruru,* to be set up at the apex of the roof. Grace suffuses the fantastical in the narrative through the character Wendel in his act of turning into a *koruru* as he tries to escape the police by hiding in the roof of the ancestral meeting-place. The element of fantasy is tied into the narrative by the narrator of the story who insists on Wendel's transformation, but the other inhabitants of the village question her claim as they think it is impossible. In 'Moon Story', Grace depicts the plight of a young mother Rona who is taken away by the moon after she flings curses at it. After a village raid, it fell in the hands of Rona to collect water and she curses the moon after she trips and falls on her way to the spring. Grace imparts myth into this story by narrating the story of the moon, and the hierarchy of the elemental gods. She also describes how myth is closely interlinked with how the community observes its seasons as she says Rona and the moon "collated the seasons and rolled and unrolled the tides" (*Small* 118). In 'Stepping Out', the narrative of an unnamed grandmother underlines the importance of family relationships and kinship, and the mythical and fantastical elements in story-telling. The grandmother tells the story of

how she met her husband. She says that "the trouble is (she) fell in love with the other one", enforcing her belief that she has always been able to see her husband's ghost from the moment she first laid eyes on him (25). The inclusion of this mythical element in an otherwise very stark story about survival is an interesting aspect of the narrative. The topics of the corporeal in terms of the representation of the diseased body and dysfunctional families feature in the story 'Eben'. Here, Grace touches on the aspect of the body as it is presented in colonial writings from a European perspective. The body of the protagonist Eben is "crooked", "out of proportion and malformed" (40-41) which is an indication of the presentation of the native body in colonial writings. Eben also is born in a dysfunctional family with different theories about his parentage which underscores the complicated and complex familial themes in Grace's writings. In 'Flash Story', the element of the supernatural is reiterated in the character of Tawhaki, who is seen able to change his form in the shape of an animal or go intergenerational, "swapping from young man to bent old fella in a second" (185). The story is narrated with an undertone of humour as Tawhaki is accompanied by lightning in whatever small tasks he performs – in the simple act of taking off his clothes. He grows up and becomes so handsome that every girl in the village would look at only him. The story shifts from the comical to the tragic as the other men in his village got jealous of the attention he receives and try to murder him. At the heart of the story is family, and how Tawhaki grew up an orphan and is resolved to find his mother who has disappeared. The plight of the orphan in a village community is one of the main aspects of this story. The story 'Manners Street Blues' presents the complications arising out of colonization in terms of one's identity. One of the characters, Elvis recounts how his parents had given him his name because they thought that it would make him loved. But he derides their intentions as he says that "colonization makes people's brains soft" (183). Another character Ani confesses that her parents had baptized her Anne "which was supposed to make me loved in heaven" (183). These observances serve to indict colonialism and its effects on the indigenous community and their struggle to validate their identity.

The fourth text is the novel *Tu* which tells the story of three brothers-Pita, Rangi and Tu and their experiences as soldiers during the Second World War. In this novel, Patricia Grace presents a searing indictment of the purpose of war and questions the participation of Maoris in a war which she does not think has anything to do with them. As she does in her other novels, Grace, in this novel, also talks about the Maori experience in an increasingly cosmopolitan New Zealand. She sets the novel in the capital of the country, Wellington. The protagonist and his family move to Wellington when the protagonist was a mere boy. The novel captures the complexity and difficulty the family faces on moving to a big city where people who look like them are a minority. The city is indeed a stark contrast from their small, rural hometown – repeatedly referred to with the word 'backhome' by the protagonist – where everybody knew everybody and the population was predominantly Maori. Their move was necessitated by the death of the father and the ambition of the mother to better the lives of her children, especially the protagonist Tu, whom she thinks could improve his life through education. After a seemingly settled life in Wellington for a few years, the Second World War breaks out and one by one the brothers – Pita, Rangi and Tu volunteer to fight in the Maori Battalion on the side of the Allied forces, while the sisters – Sophie and Moana, help in the war efforts back home. The novel is written initially in the first few chapters as a diary entry of Tu after he embarks on a ship bound to fight in Italy but this method of writing is dispensed with as Tu feels constrained by the specificity of dates. The novel also often includes the perspective of Rangi and Pita as they narrate their internal struggles and perceptions. The novel then takes the reader through the ugliness and tragedy of war, and sometimes the beauty of comradeship and humanity, narrated by Tu. Pita and Rangi die in combat in Italy and Tu is hospitalized because of an injury inflicted by his brother Rangi as Rangi believes one of them must go home to look after their mother and sisters. Tu goes home after the war ends carrying with him his demons as he suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder. He struggles for the initial years after the war moving from place to place and only able to communicate with other soldiers from his battalion. The novel ends with a glimpse of hope as Tu decides to settle down in their old village and make

plans to visit his brothers' graves in Italy with his niece Rimini and nephew Benedict who have been orphaned by the war.

Apart from descriptions of family, rural life and city life, the novel is predominantly concerned with war and what it does to human beings. In the light of the theme of war, Grace further questions the need for Maori involvement in the war through the musings of the protagonist Tu. Each of the brothers has their own reasons for volunteering to serve. Though Tu is at first caught up in romantic ideals of war and the need to prove his manhood, he later becomes disillusioned with their cause as he still experiences exclusion in the army. People still look at him differently because of his brown skin even when he fights for the same cause. In addition to the psychological effects of war, Tu realizes the futility of war and thinks that the community elders were wrong to think their participation would be a means of integration in New Zealand society. The Maori elders from his community had genuinely thought that if they prove their worth in battle, the white people would recognize and acknowledge their worth. The protagonist and Grace put forward the argument that entering and participating in war to achieve a semblance of kinship is pointless. To search for honour or try to establish a sense of community pride by engaging in the larger scheme of things is not advocated by Tu and Grace.

The fifth text *Chappy* traces the studying, learning and yearning of purpose and meaning in the life and experiences of Daniel, a young man born to a Danish father and a Maori mother. Daniel is of a privileged background with both his parents engaged in important occupations and as a result, he goes to the best schools, speaks multiple languages and vacations in the best places. But what Daniel seemingly lacks is ambition and purpose. His mother then decides to send him to New Zealand to live with her side of the family, specifically Daniel's grandmother Oriwia. The narrative then shifts to the lives and experiences of Oriwia and Daniel's grand-uncle Aki. The novel then becomes dominated by the recollections of Oriwia and Aki as they narrate their life stories to Daniel.

The title of the novel also serves as the name given to Oriwia's husband and Daniel's grandfather, a Japanese stowaway whom Aki had met on one of his first

voyages on a ship and taken home to be adopted by their village community, before the outbreak of the Second World War. Through the character of Chappy, the novel explores the themes of home, belonging and family. Chappy's real name is never known throughout the novel, and the reason he was a stowaway on a boat appears to be he has run away from the Japanese army because killing became senseless. He is informally adopted by the Maori community, marries Oriwia and starts a family. But with the outbreak of the Second World War, he runs away as he believes his presence would harm his young family. He moves from place to place avoiding detection but is captured and released, and eventually returns to Japan to take part in rebuilding Japan after the war. He is discovered and brought to Hawaii by Aki as Aki had settled in Hawaii with his own family by then. Though he very much wants to return back to his family, he decided that he has to do it legally- by becoming an American and legalizing the name Chappy Star- which Aki's family had given him. This phase of Chappy's life brings to light how important it is for him to belong to have a sense of identity and family. It is also a powerful demonstration of the ties that Māori communities have with the wider world.

Running parallel to the story of Oriwia is the story of Aki, who tells Daniel of his childhood and the disappearance of his little brother Marama, whom Aki calls Moonface. It is believed by the village that Marama was stolen by the fairy people. This suggestion brings in the element of myth in the novel. Aki finds employment in a ship and travels for long periods of time, meets a Hawaiian woman, marries her and becomes stepfather to her two sons. He keeps in touch with his Maori family and it is him who rediscovers Chappy in Japan when everyone had presumed he was dead. He shares a close relationship with Chappy as he was reminded of his little brother Moonface the first time he laid eyes on Chappy. After his sons' marriages and the death of his wife Ela, he returns to his hometown in New Zealand and lives a quiet, secluded life living off of his land. It is after his return to New Zealand that Daniel arrives for a visit and he begins narrating the story of is village and his family to Daniel. The novel is also infused with the subject of land and what it means to be indigenous. Land occupies a very important place in the structuring of identity and belonging in the novel. Grace often places her indigenous characters in rural areas

subsisting in agrarian livelihood or engaged in small businesses in small towns. This is not to paint a picture of the noble savage but to show what is in Grace's opinion, the reality of life for indigenous people. It is because of this lifestyle that Oriwia is fiercely ambitious for her daughters and insists on them getting good jobs and marrying well, even if it means she would not get to see them as much. The character of Oriwia and her daughters prove an insightful study into the strength and resilience of women.

Grace's characters- widows, children, mothers, husbands, brothers, grandmothers, and aunts- are recognizable in their emotions and their relationships with one another. They are defined by their loss and longing, their excitement and joy, and how they reflect their cultural universe. In her narratives, Grace blends reality with myth, engages with contemporary issues which make her an active commentator on social issues relevant to the Maori community. Her novels present the Maori culture from the inside, insisting on its rational organization and the coherence of its worldview. It is fitting that her characters represent voices that seek to account for Maori identity as raising consciousness is a necessity for them. Jacqueline Bardolph writes:

> In a country where the risk of a minority – ten percent, growing steadily- has been not so much in elimination as in fading out through assimilation, such an identity has to be deliberately claimed. At a time when lawyers and land surveyors are examining ways of compensating Maoris for the land and fishing rights unjustly taken from them, the whole country is aware that the issue involves not only restoring the economic balance between the two groups, but enabling those who want to claim their Maoriness, to identify with the piece of land and sea which is their spiritual home. (135)

Bardolph believes that the Maoris were present in literature before the 1970s only as foils to the pakeha (white) imagination: "ferocious cannibals, beautiful natives, a noble and dying race; lazy picturesque dropouts emerged successfully, mostly as negatives to the clichés the Anglo-Saxons had of themselves" (132). It is against this Patricia Grace writes powerfully about Maori identity and community, to speak and create an audience, and halt the monocultural perception of New Zealand.

Grace's fiction expresses conflicts within her characters which epitomize the clash of opposing values and perspectives (the west and Maori). She seeks to reclaim her cultural matrices within the boundary of another culture. She has to try to embrace what Boehmer calls "the inevitability of their impurity, . .exposing a disturbing legacy of social hardship" (222). Her narratives are therefore self-consciously peripheral as she uses the past as a source of identification while at the same time sensitive to the fact that she is writing in a postmodern, transcultural world. Literatures of the decolonized world inspire her narratives. She provides searing indictments of colonialism while at the same time propagating nationalist self-affirmation. As is in the case of Grace and other indigenous writers, they have to differentiate their literature from other nationalist writers because full political autonomy is not a reality for them. Their distinction lies in their hybrid status, arriving at a productive but uneasy terms with their ambiguity. Postcolonial critic Trinh T Minh-ha comments:

> For there can hardly be such a thing as an essential inside that can be homogeneously represented by all insiders;. . . questions like "How loyal a representative of his/her people is s/he?, or "How authentic is his/her representation of the culture observed?" are of little relevance. When the magic of essences ceases to impress or intimidate, there is no longer a position of authority from which one can definitely judge the verisimilitude value of the representation. . . "I" is not unitary, culture has never been monolithic. . . differences do not only exist between outsider and insider-two entities- they are also at work within the outsider or the insider- a single entity. (218)

In the attempt to talk about the myriad issues of Grace's writing like displacement, hybrid cultures, fragmented selves and marginal voices, it is important to note that there can be no simple same-different, insider-outsider distinction. To make this distinction would be to conform to the colonial structure of having a centre of power and civilization.

Ashcroft and others had stated that "the imperial education system installs a standard version of the imperial language as norm and marginalizes all variants and impurities" which results in language becoming "the medium through which imperial

power is perpetuated. However, such power is rejected when an effective post-colonial voice emerges" (7-8). Grace has consciously introduced Maori linguistic elements in her narratives. Her writings have attempted to resist the idea of a centre of culture or civilization, doing away with simple binary distinctions. She attempts to create an active, complex indigenous presence and identity through her writings. Grace attempts to produce fiction to depict the Maori world as heterogeneous, and evoke life and culture in New Zealand as it is actually lived and experienced. She documents the complexity of life and the struggle to survive and exist in the Maori society. Rob Wilson states:

> Whatever genre or mode of representing social reality in the Pacific may be employed, Pacific literature cannot simply be a space for passively recording social change in the region. Instead, it must be a space for the rigorous critiquing of colonialism and its aftermath. The principal goal of Pacific literature is to transform social reality in the Pacific in a way that empowers Pacific Island people towards dehegemonisation and the building of a "New Pacific". (Gegeo 479)

The emergence of globalization and multiculturalism has been accompanied by the promotion and exposition of region-specificity and the characteristics of the local area in which the symbols of identity, history and rootedness gain a new level of significance in the lives of individuals and communities. Every community has the right to be placed in its own historical, social and cultural environment; and writing is an important tool for expressing this. Reconstructing histories, rewriting geographies and creating realities through writing and documenting can overturn perspective imposed by European settlers. Keeping in mind the postcolonial mode of inquiry, Grace's narratives give a powerful insight into the cultural critique and sociopolitical transformation into New Zealand on account of her being a native of the land. Her intention, it seems, is to anchor cultural critique in her own people's way of knowing and doing things, and making literature responsive to their sense of identity.

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CHAPTER 2
GRACE AND NEGOTIATION OF INDIGENEITY

This chapter attempts to examine the different ways in which indigenous individuals and cultures in Grace's texts negotiate their identity and indigeneity. It also provides textual analysis of the selected texts and theoretical frameworks as they relate to the issue of negotiation of identity. It delves into the concepts of physical and temporal dislocation, relocation, diaspora and Third Space in discussing and exploring the identity of indigenous characters in the selected texts. It also attempts to indicate the impossibility of arriving at a 'pure' or 'original' identity and the unfeasibility of a simple insider-outsider dichotomy.

The indigene is "a semiotic pawn under the control of the white signmaker", writes Terry Goldie, and it does not matter whether the context is formerly colonized countries like Canada, New Zealand or Australia, as "the signmaking is happening on one form of board, within one field of discourse, that of British imperialism" (232). He continues, "Terms misapplied in the Americas became re-misapplied in a parody of imperialist discourse" (232). The obvious differences that exist between different indigenous cultures did not impede the misapplication of terms to indigenous cultures in colonialist discourse. Most of the Pacific Island cultures have been subject to some form of colonialism, with New Zealand still being characterized by direct European hegemony (Keown 3). There is a sense of shared colonial and neo-colonial experience among Pacific Island cultures which has intensified after the emergence of an indigenous Pacific creative writing in the early 1960s and 1970s (4). Sina Va'ai, a prominent academic at the National University of Samoa, states that the 'Pacific Way', a philosophy which emerged in the early 1970s, "recognized the commonality in developmental problems that required a unity in cooperation" to fight against "a common foe, the colonial powers" (32-33). This reasoning was thoroughly rejected by writers such as Albert Wendt and Epeli Hau'ofa who called the 'Pacific Way' philosophy a "shallow ideology" (Hau'ofa 394). This rejection is warranted as the philosophy homogenizes what must probably be very different experiences of colonialism. It is a futile effort to attempt a comprehensive coverage of a heterogeneous range of indigenous communities and their literatures.

Nevertheless, it is possible to identify commonalities in the experiences and literatures of the Indigenous Pacific cultures as they counter and contest European colonialism and the canon of English literature. This chapter intends to analyse seminal aspects of identity, land relations, dislocation and third space as examined in Grace's narratives.

The European logic in encountering indigenous communities in the Pacific was to 'settle' and 'improve' territory occupied by people very different from themselves, necessitating the need to take several courses of action, each with catastrophic implications for the indigenes. In his book *The Origins of Indigenism* (2003), Ronald Niezen emphasizes what he calls the two options of colonial encounter – the 'ethnic cleansing' option and the 'ethnocidal' option (53). Original inhabitants of a land who were considered inconvenient were conquered and put to the sword (the 'ethnic cleansing' option) and ethnocidal option entails the buying out, negotiating with, offer of benevolence, protection, and enlightenment of indigenous communities as they are shown the value of 'civilization' under new enforced political dispensations. The settler colony of New Zealand falls under the category of the ethnocidal option and though the approach was occasionally well intentioned, it has nevertheless proven to be a potent source of institutional abuse, wounded pride, collective suffering, and cultural nostalgia amongst the original inhabitants of the land (Niezen 53). The insidiousness of it is that it is manifested in policies or programs of 'assimilation' aimed at "eliminating stark cultural differences and rival claims to sovereignty that arise from first occupation of a territory" (53). The elimination of knowledge of, and attachments to, distinct and inconvenient ways of life are necessary goals in ethnocide. Ethnocide stems from the prevailing notion that cultures are malleable, that entire peoples are capable of guided transformation and regime totalization, and therefore that inconvenient or threatening attachments to differences can be peacefully disposed of through strategies of cultural reform. It has as its goal the removal of features that make indigenous peoples distinct (92).

In settler colonies such as the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, assimilation policies made use of what was referred to as the "tools of civilization"—"the schools of the state, the churches of the Christian faith, and the households of national families"—to eliminate the attachments of children to the

'backward' and 'uncivilized' ways of their families and ancestors (Niezen 55). The writings of European missionaries in the nineteenth century presented New Zealand Maori as hostile and aggressive in spite of their putative beauty and nobility (Keown 2). This representation had its roots in violent conflicts between Maori tribes and European explorers, as well as reports of inter-tribal warfare and cannibalism from European missionaries and travellers. These writings and reports influenced early colonial policy in New Zealand (2). As a result of lack of immunity to European diseases and increasing conflict that arose out of the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi, an increasing number of Maoris perished in the nineteenth century. This occasioned the restructuring of the Maori people as 'noble savages' facing certain extinction caused by the popularity of the fatal impact theory (Sinclair 203). Recent government statistics have indicated that Maori are disproportionately represented among the unemployed, criminal and socio-economically deprived sectors of the New Zealand society which prompted negative constructions of Maori as a violent and benefit-dependent underclass (Keown 3). Patricia Grace, like other writers of the Pacific Island region, has attempted to challenge these stereotypes and tropes of the Maori.

It is seemingly an impossibility to try to attempt and provide a comprehensive study in the expressions of identity and indigeneity across varying indigenous communities. There cannot be identical departure points and expressions in determining a heterogeneous range of indigenous communities that have experienced different forms of colonialism. Indigenous communities, much like postcolonial societies, are the "ever-changing syncretist outcomes of varied cultural formations and their writers of multiple ethnic, gender, communal and other backgrounds" (Thieme 2). The literatures of various indigenous communities do not just have cultural heterogeneity, they also respond to literary canons that are diverse and separate. This chapter attempts to explore the distinctive characteristics of indigenous writing in the narratives of Patricia Grace. It also attempts to examine the different ways in which Grace negotiates a central preoccupation of indigenous writing - the issue of indigenous identity and the complications inherent in reclaiming identity.

In her book *Alterity and Narrative* (2007), Kathleen G. Roberts asserts: "Identity negotiation in the twenty-first century is marked by both globalization and

provinciality….we live in a moment where 'identity and 'culture' are synonymous terms" (1). Identity as realized in the self is affected by a sense of cultural belonging. In her book *Identity and Culture*, Chris Weedon finds the issue of identity as something conditioned by the sense of cultural belonging: "Identity and culture are key issues in the 'post-colonial', 'post-modern'…world in which the legacies of colonialism, including migration and the creation of diasporas, along with processes of globalization have put taken-for-granted ideas of identity and belonging into question" (2). In his essay 'The Centrality of Culture', Stuart Hall remarks: "Our identities, in short, are culturally formed" (219). In another essay 'The Question of Cultural Identity', Stuart Hall identifies three different conceptions of identity: "the Enlightenment subject, sociological subject and post-modern subject" (597). To Hall, the 'Enlightenment subject' is based on the idea of the human being "as a fully centred, unified individual, endowed with the capacities of reason, consciousness, and action" whereby "the essential centre of the self is a person's identity" (597). This kind of 'individualistic' identity does not necessitate a relation to the society the individual inhabits. The idea of the 'sociological subject', as Hall describes it, reflects "the growing complexity of the modern world and the awareness that the inner core of the subject is not autonomous and self-sufficient, but is formed in relation to "significant others… the culture—of the worlds a person inhabits" and "identity is formed in the 'interaction' between self and society" (597). This concept of identity recognizes the importance of a person's relationship with the society and aligns the individual's subjective feelings with the objective reality of the society and culture of a person. The concept of identity in the final concept- the post-modern subject has no "fixed, essential, or permanent identity" and asserts that identity is "formed and transformed continuously in relation to the ways we are represented or addressed in the cultural systems which surround us. It is historically, not biologically, defined" (598). Hall clearly announces that "the fully unified, completed, secure, and coherent identity is a fantasy" (598).

The novel *Dogside Story* (2001) by Patricia Grace offers a study in which the idea of individual identity and cultural identity within an indigenous community is susceptible to change. The indigenous community in the novel is one that prides

itself in its homogeneity, with outsiders obviously regarded as suspicious and different. The sense of a binary structures the indigenous perception vis-à-vis the colonist who too works from his own cultural binary, for the fact lies that the individual native does not come to assert its special location within his/ her community the way the colonist would like to engage with or promote. The indigenous community in *Dogside Story* is a Maori community in a small village that is steeped in tradition and that proudly trace their ancestry to two sisters- Ngarua and Maraenohoho and their followers who had settled in the northside and southside areas of their village after a bitter disagreement. The village is close-knit and the power structure is constructed in such a way that important decisions regarding the village are made by the elders in the community. In this novel, Grace intimately narrates the complexities of familial relationships in a rural Maori community. The protagonist Rua battles for the custody of his daughter Kiri with his aunts - Amiria and Babs. Kiri's mother is his cousin Ani Wainoa who ran away from the community after Kiri was born, when both Rua and Ani Wainoa were just fourteen years old. The custody battle disturbs the seemingly peaceful family and the community, pitting family against family and forcing the community to take sides. Aside from the family drama, the novel deals with the issue of disruption and disturbance as the community decides to open up their village to outsiders in celebration of the New Year. This act, precipitated by financial necessity, changes the landscape and activity of the indigenous community to accommodate and attract outsiders. The custody battle ensues against the backdrop of the community's change and adaptation to outside forces and influences. The disruption precipitated by the coming of outsiders places the community in an unfamiliar cultural space. The community, before the incursion of outsiders, is evocative of a 'locality' as understood by Mike Featherstone in *Undoing Culture: Globalization, Postmodernism and Identity* (1995) where there is a particular bounded space with its set of "close-knit social relationships based upon strong kinship ties and length of residence" (103). The distinctive community forms a "stable, homogeneous and integrated cultural identity", which turns the location of their day-to-day interactions from "a physical space into a place" (103). After the advent of outsiders, the individual in the community also finds that there is less familiarity with his cultural space than before. This necessitates the adoption of new

attitudes and approaches in the individual and the community in order to adapt to the new cultural space, therefore changing the conceptualization of individual and social identity as something that is forming and transforming continually. This dimension of internal change and response to new situations is a natural process in native societies, the fact which has been regularly ignored even by writers and travellers of colonial mindset, if not with a professed agenda, but likely by their culturally coloured lens. These indigenous societies are presented as abjectly changeless and dying, thus needing timely infusion of precious civilization. This is the colonial reason for subjugating the native. Not that the native culture did not change, but it did not ensure drastic changes, which would adversely affect structural coherence of the society and behavioural patterns. In this sense, the culture is established by their forefathers and followed by the next generations. There is continuity in their love of the land and cultural bonds, with a genuine urge for change that would not throw them out of this structural belief, practices and the unspoken worldview. In his essay 'Introducing Identity', David Buckingham emphasizes that national identity, cultural identity, or gender identity implies that "identity is partly a matter of what is shared with other people" (1). In 'The Value of Difference,' Jeffrey Weeks asserts identity as the sense of self located in some particular cultural space but heavily dependable on social interactions for its articulation. He states that identity is about belonging, about what a person has in common with some people and what differentiates a person from others. At its most basic it gives a person a sense of personal location, the stable core to his/her individuality (88). This statement emphasizes the fact that complex involvement with others and social relationships play an important part in identity especially in the modern world where these have become increasingly complex and confusing (88). The indigenous community in *Dogside Story* also experiences an inevitable socio-cultural change to adapt to and accommodate its present condition and needs. Unsurprisingly, there are opposing sentiments and voices in the community especially amongst the elders to the disruption of their space with one elder of the community stating ". . .you let strangers on your land you never get them off" and that tourists will be "all over the place, lighting fires and being a bloody nuisance, tramping all over the *urupa* (burial site)" (Grace, *Dogside* 147). The opposition also stems from the community's past experiences with

colonialism and government policies that have only brought death and misery. The idea of celebrating the New Year, the millennium, was especially hard to accept. This sentiment is emphasized as one of the elders says:

> What's "New Year" to us- nothing to do with our people, our culture. If we want to be celebrating then we should celebrate our own survival in our own *Matariki* star time. Never mind all this other rubbish dumped on us by missionaries and colonizers- all eyes to heaven while they take the land from under your feet. We got to decolonize ourselves, unpick our brains because they been stitched up too long. (146)

This sentiment pertinently invokes the basic dualism of the colonizer and the indigene as good and evil that is often implied in colonial discourse. In 'The Economy of Manichean Allegory', the postcolonial critic Abdul R. JanMohamed asserts, "The dominant model of power-and interest- relations in all colonial societies is the manichean opposition between the putative superiority of the European and the supposed inferiority of the native" (63). The resistance of the elders is a subversion of this particular colonial trope, which is the opposition between the 'putative superiority' of the indigene and the 'supposed inferiority' of the white which is often implied in contemporary indigenous texts (Goldie 233). Here, the celebration of indigenous event occupies a place of precedence while that of the colonizer is 'rubbish'. But in spite of opposition, the general consensus amongst the community is that the preparations must go on because the issue of financial security was more pressing. In accepting the incursion of outsiders in their community, the original cultural space that had existed hitherto undergoes a change. This change induces the notion of transculturation as it "fosters an inclusive, rather than exclusive, understanding of culture as characterized by differences" (Nordin et al., x). Jan Nederveen Pieterse in his essay 'Globalization as Hybridization' observes that "hybridization is a factor in the reorganization of social spaces" (676). In this context, 'structural hybridization' or the 'new practices of social cooperation and competition', and 'cultural hybridization' or 'new translocal cultural expressions' are interdependent as "new forms of cooperation require and evoke new cultural imaginaries" (676). It is important to note that this cooperation does not oversimplify

one culture or identity as bad and another as good. Sander Gilman stresses in *Difference and Pathology* (1985), "Because there is no real line between self and the Other, an imaginary line must be drawn; and so that the illusion of an absolute difference between self and Other is never troubled, this line is as dynamic in its ability to alter itself as is the self" (18). Without completely abandoning its previous identity, the indigenous community in *Dogside Story* adopts new practices of cooperation to better their situation. Zygmunt Bauman emphasizes in his book *Identity* (2004) that identity is "not secured by a lifelong guarantee" and that it is "eminently negotiable and revocable" (11). The community thus negotiates its identity and indigeneity as it recognizes its constraints in its relationship with the new cultural space brought about by new practices of cooperation. In the collective effort to keep up with financial demands, there is integration into a new space. This evokes James Clifford's understanding of identity as 'conjunctural' and 'not essential' as he stresses, "Intervening in an interconnected world, one is always, to varying degrees, 'inauthentic': caught between cultures, implicated in others" (11). This statement is affirmed by Kobena Mercer when he says, "Identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis, when something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty" (43). This induces the idea that identity is not immune to change and can be negotiated by various determinants. In his essay 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora', Stuart Hall observes:

> Identity is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think. Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, which the new cultural practices then represent, we should think, instead, of identity as a 'production', which is never complete, always in process. (234)

The incompleteness of identity is also alluded to in *Imaginary Homelands* by Salman Rushdie when he states that identity is 'at once plural and partial' (15). The indication of identity as 'partial' suggests that the formation of identity is an ongoing process and is never a finished product. The narratives of Patricia Grace direct the reader's attention to this fact of change and continuity in the cultural identity. Grace brings to view the perspective of a vacillating or fluid raw material of existence brought about by interventions. The threat of dislocation to Amiria and Babs in *Dogside Story* is played out through their battle with Te Rua over the custody of Te

Rua's daughter Kiri. The community of Dogside sides with Te Rua in the battle as Amiria and Babs had often mistreated Kiri. It is revealed later in the novel that the obstinacy of the sisters in fighting the custody battle was because the rights of their land had been transferred by their unloving mother to whoever had guardianship of Kiri. In the context of cultural spaces, land is an important determinant of identity and cultures are specific to the reality of bordered territories. Belonging to a land or a territory – a cultural space that is unique in its values and customs - shapes or gives meaning to identity. Amiria and Babs fight for the custody of Kiri to hold on to their land, a signifier of their identity and their place within the community. One of the elders Atawhai assures them, "Before all the laws were made land was for everyone and people decided where they would build their houses. . .We here today know where your land is, where your house is. You don't need a piece of paper to show us" (Grace, *Dogside* 290).

Land features significantly among "a common repository of myths, heroes, events, landscapes and memories" in the construction of national identity (Featherstone 109). It is a crucial factor in the construction of identity as it interconnects people over time and space. In the case of the individual, identity is in a state of constant flux and always in process. In *Dogside Story*, the highly perceptive protagonist Te Rua's identity is in a state of constant oscillation between two spaces. The custody battle of his daughter with his aunts forcibly removes him temporarily from his community. In terms of the spatial, it is a marker of community and belonging. The legacy of the land was almost denied to Amiria and Babs which finds them going against their community in order to claim their rights to it.

The importance of land in the context of cultural spaces as a marker of identity brings to light the concept of dislocation. In the process of the negotiation of identity across cultural spaces, the sense of loss of a familiar cultural and community-specific space is understood as dislocation. Dislocation connotes a broader spectrum than displacement as it indicates not just a physical movement but the ideas of amongst other things temporality, memories, historical and spiritual consciousness. Lynn Staeheli states in her essay 'Place' that "place as a physical location is often contrasted with more abstract notions of space" (159). Whilst the

concept of place insists on grounded, concrete reality, Jamal Benhayoun says in his book *Narration, Navigation and Colonialism* (2006) that space is partial to individual perception as it "is literally a discourse of our own making" (154). Even though there might be the existence of a territorial border, the essence of cultural space is the unique customs and values of a specific community at a particular time. Benhayoun also states that "cultures have always been interpreted as articulation of difference and location" as cultures are specific to the reality of territorial borders (155). The existence of a territorial border is necessary in terms of spatial considerations, but border could also indicate the temporal separation of one historical period from the other. The temporal separation becomes especially significant in postcolonial and indigenous perspectives and realities as the history of colonization shapes the temporal and spatial borders of former colonized countries. Land gives historicity to identity construction and offers a locality to identity. Land or geographical location may have no speech, but it speaks its metaphors season after season, which holds human bodies intact, and inspires imaginary flights and abstract philosophies or structures. It is not an imaginary metaphor wandering randomly in the minds of writers or thinkers. Ironically, the European invaders and missionaries recognized the land as the primary factor of their settlement in a foreign place. Thus, Grace sensitively relates the indigene's attachment to land as his/ her identity maker/ marker. In *Borderlands* (1987), Gloria Anzaldua states, "Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish us from them. A border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge" (3). The presence of a border becomes imperative in the realization of dislocation as political independence in formerly colonized countries creates borders between the periods in the history of a country before and after colonization.

In the novel *Baby No-Eyes*, Patricia Grace contextualizes the concept of dislocation in an indigenous Maori community. The novel describes the intergenerational clashes and conflicts of a Maori family with the pervasive effects of colonization. It centres on the disappearance/misplacement of the eyes of Te Paania's newborn baby at a hospital by *pakeha* doctors and administrators. The family's trauma caused by their mistreatment suffered at the hospital awakens the pain of the

grandmother Gran Kura's childhood at a British school. The narrative often switches between Gran Kura's childhood, Te Paania's motherhood, Tawera's childhood and the fight for land ownership of the community- each digression in plot attempting to counter and contest the insidious effects of colonialism. Dislocation is contextualized in the main character Te Paania's husband Shane's struggle against his *pakeha/*English name. Shane calls his name "a movie name, a cowboy name" and "a name for a Pakeha, a name for Pakeha teachers to like. To make me be like them" (Grace, *Baby* 26). According to him, there is an incongruity between his name and what is in his heart. This is evident when he confronts the elders in his family about his given name – "How can I be Pakeha with this colour, this body, this face, this head, this heart? How can I be Maori without . . .without. . .without. . .what? Don't even know without what. Without what?" (27). In this context, the dislocation points to physiognomy as a binary space to identify oneself. This dislocation is not a naturally produced perception; it has deeper ramifications built upon a series of unidentifiable questions about real identity of a Maori. The colonist's insistence on all binaries as making or breaking identity cannot be the whole truth; the cases of indigenes would point to something more, somewhat inexpressibly beyond linguistic constructs, beyond intellectual conceptions. Therefore, the idea of identity as a process need not be taken for an endless marching toward an unknown destination. Identity may be understood as a process of continuous expansion and contraction, continuous invention and discovery, continuous play of meeting and separating.

In *Baby No-Eyes*, Gran Kura's dislocation is manifested in the trauma brought about by her experiences with her cousins at an English school she had attended as a child. Her trauma stems from the ill-treatment of her little sister Riripeti at school by *Pakeha* teachers and the guilt resulting from what she thinks was her complicity. When Riripeti did not answer the teacher's questions on her first day because she could not speak English, Gran Kura says she "wanted to whisper in our language so this *teina* of mine would know what to do, but I knew I wasn't allowed to speak our language so I made a little movement with my hands trying to tell her to stand" and that she did not "want (Riripeti) to be a girl so black that it would make the teacher angry" (31). When Riripeti is punished by the teacher and made to stand

in the corner of the classroom, Gran Kura expresses confusion- "But how was she to know she was bad? She had said no words that would make her bad, spelled nothing wrong to be bad, given no answers to be wrong" (32). Gran Kura feels complicit because even though she had been entrusted the responsibility of taking care of Riripeti by the family, she had not taught Riripeti the answers that the teachers wanted to hear. She says, "We didn't speak until we'd learned, didn't speak unless we had to because we were afraid our bad language might come out, but we became good at guessing the answers we had to give" (33). Since indigenous students at the school were forbidden from speaking their native language, Riripeti was caned when she called her big sister Gran Kura in Maori inside the school premises. Gran Kura remembers, "We all had to stand in our lines and watch this caning so we would learn how bad our language was" (37). Seeing Riripeti being caned Kura thinks, "I thought what an evil thing our language was to do that to my *teina*" (37). Riripeti started getting sick and wasted away in the end to be "killed by school" (38). The 'shame' of what happened to Riripeti, Gran Kura says, took generations "to become our anger and our madness" (38). Gran Kura's sense of dislocation in her own community and language arises from her secret and her shame over the death of Riripeti. The shame and the anger manifested in a deliberate distancing from the native culture and tongue by giving *Pakeha* names to Shane's generation. She expresses:

> We keep our stories secret because we love our children, we keep our language hidden because we love our children, we disguise ourselves and hide our hearts because we love our children, we choose names because we love our children. (39)

The indigenous community's fight against the City Council for ownership of a land that has historical and spiritual meaning is also another representation of dislocation in *Baby No-Eyes.* The fight for the re-taking of Anapuke, a land where the "bones of their ancestors" are buried (185), is mostly represented through the narrative of Mahaki, a friend of Te Paania. The ownership of the land has fallen to the Crown because "the Maori Affairs Act . . .made it compulsory for land not in use to be sold to the Crown" (153). The unfairness of the sale is evident when

representatives of the Council proclaim that "the Council holds records showing how and when this property was purchased. . .although we have found no record of payment being made" (153). The Council offers a government price if the community wishes to purchase the land the Council terms 'Block165G10' (153). To this proposal of the Council, the elders of the community protest, "Why are we letting them come here asking us if we want to buy our own land – land that was stolen in the first place?" (155). The dispute became so severe that it led to the community occupying Te Ra Park as a symbol of protest which pleased the elders as "they wanted the world to know the truth. They didn't like it when they were called bludgers and landgrabbers" (168). As the protest gained intensity, the protestors dropped the word 'occupation' from their vocabulary as "they weren't occupying land, they were resident on their tribal property – living there" (213). The reclaiming of ancestral land through protest against the Council engendered a renewed sense of self and community- especially amongst the elders. Mahaki observes that the sense of dislocation experienced by the elders because of the Council's ownership of ancestral land was addressed through the protest. He notices that the addressal of the sense of dislocation came down to "two things – whakapapa and whenua. Who, related to whom, from where", which in turn becomes "who am I and where do I fit in" (213). The land reclamation protest by the community prompted a sense of belonging and togetherness within the community, and Mahaki perceives 'the confidence of those who'd lived beyond fear, beyond ego, who couldn't be reduced by criticism, threat, or anything at all' (217).

Lawrence Grossberg states in the essay 'Identity and Cultural Studies' that "at the heart of modern thought and power lie two assumptions: that space and time are separable, and that time is more fundamental than space" (100). This affirms that temporal dislocation is not a mere abstract and theoretical undertaking, and does not necessarily mean displacement beyond a geographical border. An individual may feel dislocated in the cultural space of his/her own community in a particular period of its history. Temporal dislocation can manifest within a community's history and an individual may attempt to negotiate his/her identity in the history and cultural space of the community. The sense of dislocation as experienced by the indigenous

community in *Baby No-Eyes* is realized in the disputed ownership of an ancestral land by the City Council. Land is a signifier of identity and belonging for the indigenous community the loss of ownership of Anapuke makes them question their sense of self. They feel dislocated within their own cultural space as they do have ownership of land that once belonged to their community. The protest for land reclamation indicates a struggle within and outside the community to negotiate a sense of identity with their past and present cultural space.

In terms of dislocation, there is the also the sense of a physical displacement where an individual moves to another geographical territory outside the confines of his place of origin. An individual crosses the border/boundary of the cultural space of origin. In the novels of Grace, the movements of Chappy and Aki in the novel *Chappy*, Tu and his brothers Rangi and Pita in the novel *Tu*, indicate such dislocations as these individuals cross the borders of their nation of origin and move to a new cultural space. The issue of spatial dislocation is also presented metaphorically through travels to the spirit world in *Chappy* and *Baby No-Eyes*. Grace also depicts a sense of temporal dislocation where the experiences of Te Paania, Shane, Tawera and Gran Kura in *Baby No-Eyes* signify cultural spaces or periods in the history of a community or nation beyond a single contemporaneity. Grace's novels are interspersed with temporal dislocations as different characters move to the past through memory moving beyond their present as they negotiate their identities accordingly.

Dislocation as a physical displacement is a central feature in life of the titular character in *Chappy*. Chappy's life story indicates a physical displacement across the border of Japan, his place of origin to his relocation and community formation in New Zealand, another geographical territory. His geographical movement designates the concept of diaspora as it is often used to denote individual transnational movement and settlement. Chappy's departure from Japan, his cultural space of origin was provoked by his disillusionment with war – Japan's expansion across China. He ran away from the army because "he couldn't be a killer" and finds himself a stowaway on a ship that takes him to New Zealand (Grace, *Chappy* 93). In New Zealand, he is "a man without a country, without a family, without a name,

without goods or money, without papers" (93). His alienation from his cultural space of origin prompts him to adapt and negotiate a sense of self and an identity in a new cultural space. His identity in a new place begins to take shape when he is adopted and given the name 'Chappy Star' by a Maori family. This adoption and name-giving was occasioned by his marriage to Oriwia, a Maori girl and made possible because "no questions were asked by authorities about the little pale-skinned who spoke our language but couldn't speak or write English" (96). In *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* (2005), Avtar Brah opines that "it is the contradiction of and between location and dislocation that are a regular feature of diasporic positioning" (204). She reiterates, "The concept of diaspora refers to multi-locationality within and across territorial, cultural and psychic boundaries" (197). The titular character in *Chappy* therefore finds himself in a double positionality – occupying a position between the cultural spaces of his home country Japan and New Zealand, his country of settlement. His diasporic journey is unique as it is further punctuated by his temporary residence in Hawaii where he works to attain an American citizenship. Chappy undertakes a transformative second physical journey when the consequences of the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbour forces him to flee New Zealand in order to protect his young family. Finding himself in Hawai'i after many years in Japan, he imposes on himself the fierce need to earn an American citizenship because "he can't be a stowaway anymore, or a runaway, or an illegal alien. Can't be an outcast, bringing shame on you and the family in a country where Japan is not loved" (154). The desire for a sense of self and identity forces Chappy to uproot himself from Japan, and stay and work in Hawai'i while yearning for his adopted home in New Zealand. Chappy is physically and culturally displaced and dislocated several times throughout the novel in his quest for selfhood, providing him with experiences of different and unique cultures.

In the context of discussing the nature of diasporic experiences and their resulting identities, Avtar Brah affirms, "Diaspora identities are at once local and global. They are networks of transnational identifications encompassing 'imagined' and 'encountered' communities" (196). The formation of the diasporic identities of Chappy and Aki in *Chappy* is dependent on a consciousness of the heterogeneity of

the spatial and temporal cultural realities. Stuart Hall opines, "Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference" (244). As an individual is transplanted to a new geographical and cultural territory away from his place of cultural origin, his identity is understood as transformed because of cultural differences. The different cultural differences affect Chappy's identity not just outside the geographical boundary of his place of origin but within it as well. In the novel, the movement of Aki from his cultural space of origin to a new cultural space also necessitate a negotiation of identity and indigeneity. There was a hesitancy to accept Ela, Aki's wife after their marriage as she was a Hawaiian woman who would take Aki away from his "given responsibilities" (Grace, *Chappy* 103). He had been made the custodian of 'the old knowledge' by the elders of his community (103). There was a disbelief that a man with his obligations "would stay away from his land, his people, his language, for too long" (103). Aki's decision to uproot himself from his cultural space of origin and to relocate in Hawaii with his wife's community is aggravated in part by his childhood trauma of losing his little brother. As in New Zealand, the obligation of keeping and guarding the traditions of the community informs his experiences as "family health was tied to the land and sea" and the "old ways were important for keeping families together and the culture alive" (111). The dislocation experienced by Aki by his departure from New Zealand and resettlement in Hawaii is territorial but not necessarily cultural. He encounters cultural similarities as he undergoes acculturation amongst his wife's indigenous community in Hawaii. This affirms the argument that the process of negotiation of identity and indigeneity in a new cultural space is not always difficult or antagonistic. It is possible to draw parallels between the indigenous communities' experiences in New Zealand and Hawaii. Much like Aki's community, Ela's community "had been forced to leave their lands when large companies had come in and diverted water away from their gardens to use on their own ever-expanding cash crop"' (66). Like in New Zealand, Ela's community had also been subjected to unfair government policies that had robbed them of their lands. The effects of the foreign interference had been detrimental to the community as "the native men had to leave most of their uplands and plantations and move shoreward, where they attempted to live on fish and coconuts and whatever they

could grow" (66). The similarities of cultural experiences are marked by the effect of foreign rule and government interference in the indigenous communities of New Zealand and Hawai'i. After the death of Ela, Aki undertakes a final journey in which he leaves his adopted home of Hawaii and returns to New Zealand, his cultural space of origin. The novel also traces the journey of Oriwia's grandson Daniel, whose dislocation from Switzerland to his grandmother's place in New Zealand sets off the trajectory of the novel. Daniel is the son of Oriwia and Chappy's eldest daughter Daphne and her Danish husband. Daniel finds himself in New Zealand 'needing to piece (him)self together, hoping there could be attachments" (1). His arrival sets off the recounting of the story of his grandfather Chappy, Oriwia and Aki and the history of the indigenous community to which they belong. Daniel's journey of self-discovery also proves that not every movement beyond one's cultural space is confrontational. On his personal journey of discovery, he negotiates a sense of identity and belonging with the land and people in New Zealand realizing that "a man must find his own feet sooner or later doesn't mean he stands alone" and that "you have to be a people in order to know you are a person" (248).

An acculturation in multiple cultural spaces is a necessity in postcolonial and indigenous literatures as they represent a historically determined consciousness. Indigenous writers have used the metaphor of a physical or mental journey through dislocation to bring about an awareness of the limitation of the indigenous subject. Temporal dislocation is an abstract kind of dislocation as it is based on the perception of the individual. The temporal dislocation is caused by undertaking the act of recollection of the past or an escape to the spirit world. The frequency of the temporal dislocation does not necessitate a negotiation of identity. The individual might find the new cultural space more difficult or comfortable which affects the requirement of the negotiation of identity. When an individual is bound to a particular location, he/she perceives the world by a contemporary sense of the self. When he/she is dislocated, the perception of the world has to go through a reassessment to take the new location into the equation. Dislocation also frees an individual from the boundary of a confined, community-specific cultural paradigm.

In the act of offering freedom, dislocation stresses the individual's ability to cross the social and cultural borders of the familiar and adapt to new cultural spaces.

Gran Kura and Tawera in the novel *Baby No-Eyes* experience temporal dislocation by recounting the past and escaping to the spirit world. The degree of difficulty or comfort elicited by these acts affects the negotiation of identity. The temporal dislocation by Tawera is first indicated during his birth when he intuitively tells his mother Te Paania that he knows he is not an only child. "Now I see her", he says, "Shot. Two holes in her head" (19). Te Paania confirms this information saying, "You mean she has no eyes, you mean her eyes were stolen" (19). This sombre acknowledgement and acceptance of a tragedy between mother and son foreshadows the recurrent temporal dislocation of Tawera by his escape to and contact with the spirit world throughout the novel. When Tawera turns five, he understands the responsibility that he is his sister's sight because her eyes were stolen from her. He acknowledges, "The biggest thing of my life so far was to be my sister's eyes" (75). He feels guilt and shame when his sister accuses him of forgetting about her when he gives undivided attention to the physical world. The presence of his sister is also acknowledged by his mother when she accepts it as a normal utterance when Tawera says, "I don't forget. I always mean *we* even if I say I", and when she tasks the two of them to set the table for dinner (79). The temporal dislocation of Tawera is further realized when he has the ability to attest to the physical growth of his sister who had died at birth:

> Even though there wasn't a photo of my sister, she looked like some of the people in the photos, especially Shane. She was eight now, and tall. She had a long forehead and black holes from where her eyes had been stolen. Her long hair was caught up into a high horsy tail at the top of her head. She had big front teeth. The holes where her eyes should have been were like holes burnt through wood with a red-hot poker. (80)

The presence of Tawera's sister is also acknowledged by the elders in the family. In their opinion, the presence of her spirit is justified because of the tragedy of what had happened to her. Te Paania's grandfather reasons:

> She got to hang around for a while so we know she's a *mokopuna*, not a rubbish, not a *kai*. How do we know she not a fish if she don't hang around for a while – or a blind eel or old newspaper or rat shit. Huh. You don't expect her to go away, join her ancestors, foof, just like that. Not after all that business. (83)

The business that the grandfather refers to was the horrible act of stealing the baby's eyes by the hospital where she was born and died. It is not surprising that the mother, Te Paania affirms the baby's presence saying:

> I feel her against me as I lie awake in the dark, every breath, every shudder, every movement. . .I believe she needs me. I'll never get over what was *done*. What was done is worse than anything, far worse than pain, much deeper than loss. I need to make it up to her. She's owed? (119-120)

There is a firm and overwhelming acceptance and justification of the presence of Tawera's sister because of the circumstances of her death. The family believes she is wronged, and therefore has unfinished business. Her presence thus engenders the temporal dislocation of family members especially her younger brother Tawera. Tawera finds it difficult because of his temporal dislocation to see himself and his sense of identity as a separate entity from his sister. He questions, "What do you care, Mum? You didn't even have a very good reason for making me. It was only so I could babysit my big sister, keep her off your back, out of your hair, out of your eyes, your head, your ears?" (141). Tawera protests that the responsibility of acknowledging his sister's presence has been forced upon him by his mother, and that it is impossible for him to forge a sense of self beyond this imposition. Much of his childhood is spent with the presence of his sister's spirit felt keenly, ensuring the frequency of his temporal dislocation. The possibility of a negotiation of identity arises when Gran Kura promises to take the spirit away with her after she dies. In order for this to happen, Tawera must "chase it with (his) words. Gone" (240). The temporal dislocation of Tawera is put to a stop after his thirteenth birthday when he finally chased his sister's spirit away as had been suggested by Gran Kura. The life and experiences of Tawera become less varied and limited as the absence of temporal

dislocation inhibits him from travelling to and occupying more than one space. The transition from inhibiting two spaces to one is a distinct and challenging task for Tawera as 'there were times. . .there were great mountains of quiet, great mountains of time, great mountains of space to deal with' (274) and that time was "limping along, limping along. There were huge globs of it left over" (275). The absence of his sister's spirit leaves a wide space in his everyday reality prompting him to negotiate his identity in the new space.

In the novel *Tu*, the family of the titular character Tu relocate to Wellington in search of a new life after the death of the father. The relocation is impelled by the mother's desire for a better life for their family as she observes, "There's no money to get the land going and no future for us here. We're going nowhere" (77). Their decision to move from their hometown is accompanied by a need to belong and put down roots in a new place. The need to belong is manifested in their mother's preparation of them for their arrival by making them wear "clothes which would help them belong in this new place" (87). The oldest brother Pita encounters difficulty adapting to the new cultural space as he is constantly "afraid he could be taking up spaces belonging to others, or places that others may want" (114). The internal crisis of alienation and isolation of Pita amongst the Wellingtonians is evident as he describes his experiences:

> Even though he believed there were rules and he was afraid of breaking them, he didn't know what those rules were, which made him always careful. Outside of home and outside of the Club he kept himself quiet, being afraid of making mistakes, of breaking codes. It was as though his voice had gone. (115)

When talking about cultural spaces, Avtar Brah remarks, "If the circumstances of leaving are important, so, too, are those of arrival and settling down" (182). An individual relocates himself in a new cultural space after leaving the familiar and crossing the boundary or his cultural space of origin. The new cultural space may be strange and alien and the relocation might be accompanied by a feeling of vulnerability and powerlessness. The unfamiliarity of his trans-locational

positionality might bring with it a sense of alienation. The reaction to the newness of circumstances might evoke different reactions in an individual, but overwhelmingly the reaction might be to try and adapt to the new cultural space.

Pita's reaction to the new cultural space of Wellington is characterized by both a sense of alienation and a desperate need to belong and adapt to it. As he realizes the strangeness of his trans-locational positionality, he experiences a pervading sense of isolation. He observes the new cultural space surrounding him keenly and strategically resulting in a realization of the difficulties while interacting with a new cultural space. It also brings about recognition of the differences in the culture of origin and the new cultural space. The connection to the culture of origin is in some ways maintained through their affiliation with Ngati Poneke Club, "a home away from home for our people coming to the city" (Grace, *Tu* 44). This club is described as a place where "our (Maori) people can keep their customs and traditions, practise the songs and dances and arts of the Maori, learn from each other and be a comfort to each other in this new and different world" (44). For Pita, the club was a source of comfort and connection to his culture of origin as he observes that "belonging to the Club was like an end to starvation, somewhere to go where he didn't need to feel so backward, so ignorant, so up-in-a-tree" (114). The realization of the difficulties posed by a new cultural space is accentuated by "the thousand eyes that made the colour of his skin a shame" (194). Pita tries to strategize his position in a new space but often finds the new environment and space antagonistic. He stresses:

> It was the thousand eyes and the thoughts that went on behind them that halted him. Because he didn't know those thoughts, had no way of discovering them even through the talk that went on around him at work and about the city. What did words mean if they didn't mean what they said?. . .He hadn't learned to be offhand either, and didn't know whether or not people were having him on when they smiled and talked to him. (194)

Pita's decision to strategize and adapt in his new environment is prefaced by a feeling of passivity and distrust. The cynicism and wariness make him a keen observer of his new cultural space, making him differentiate between cultures whilst

enabling him to participate in the new space. In the context of negotiation of identity in new cultural spaces, Homi Bhabha comments:

> When I talk of negotiation rather than negation, it is to convey a temporality that makes it possible to conceive of the articulation of antagonistic or contradictory elements….In such a discursive temporality, the event of theory becomes the negotiation of contradictory and antagonistic instances that open up hybrid sites and objectives of struggle, and destroy those negative polarities between knowledge and its objects, and between theory and practical political reason. (37-38)

In his attempt to negotiate his identity in his new world, Pita often articulates the antagonistic elements hindering his acclimatization. This articulation of antagonism is possible because of the expansiveness of his feelings and experiences. He feels at odd with his own family who had "allowed the city to make its own shape around them" (Grace, *Tu* 194). At his place of work, oftentimes he "kept himself quiet and worked hard, hardly opening his mouth because he always felt conspicuous" (195). The antagonism in his new cultural space, on the other hand, does not dissuade Pita from the need to familiarize himself with it. There is an acknowledgement that it was impossible to return to the culture of origin- "But this was home now. He never wanted to return to the old place, so he had to shape himself into this new life, discover what it was that he had to do, find out who he had to be in this city of a thousand eyes" (195). In his book *The Negotiation of Cultural Identity* (1999), Ronald L. Jackson proposes: "Negotiation of cultural identity is a process in which one considers the gain, loss, or exchange of their ability to interpret their own reality or worldview" (10). The consideration of the life and opportunity the city had to offer makes Pita aware of the necessity to adapt to the new space. The conviction to stay and negotiate his identity is further strengthened by the presence of the reminders of his culture of origin in Wellington. On the day of the Centennial Exhibition at the Maori Court that had been planned to display their culture to the non-Maoris, he observes:

> On that day it was as though you didn't have to try to change who you were, because suddenly a place had been moulded to fit you. You didn't have to be aware of a thousand eyes, because the eyes were your own. On all of this concrete, on all of this land, which had once been thrown up out of the ocean by the dance of *Ruaumoko*, there was a space that was right for you and so you became fortified. (Grace, *Tu* 195)

In *The Location of Culture*, Homi Bhabha states, "The social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective, is a complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation" (3). The act of negotiation, then, in response to diverse contexts, initiates the process of cultural hybridization, which is a necessary step towards acculturation and assimilation. In the process of negotiation, Pita undergoes antagonistic reactions as the struggle to adapt is punctuated by reminders that he is an outsider in his new cultural space. What had started as a willing participation in the Maori Centennial Exhibition turned to disillusionment and he "couldn't do the performances any more" and "he began to feel more and more like a showpiece or a clown act" (212). He questions:

> Who were they now that all their people had gone, and now that their performances were no longer among themselves or for themselves? What were language, dance, movement, song- which was part of the sap of them all- to those who didn't know, deep inside themselves, what they were about? Who were they to these different eyes, the eyes of people who crowded their halls every night and applauded so generously. . .were these not the same eyes as those belonging to the men who didn't move over for him on the canteen bench, or who treated him like a boy, a sweeper, when he'd been a man all his life? (Grace, *Tu* 212-213)

Pita continues to be hounded by feelings of "not being real or of not knowing what was real" (217). He undergoes a sense of "being owned" and being a "performing monkey" (217- 218). The complexity and continuity of his negotiation with a

different culture is further amplified by need to be legitimized and recognized by the non-Maoris. It is with surprise and shock that Pita concedes:

> The worst of it was that he didn't know why, despite everything, he still had a desire to please these audiences, why there was the need to seek the acceptance and approval of those of the thousand eyes. What was it in him that made him want the applause, look for the reports in the paper, count up the encores, just as they all did? (218)

The chance and possibility to negotiate a way out of the antagonism with his new environment comes in the form of war for Pita and his brothers. In the novel, Pita and his brothers Rangi and Tu enlist in the army in the Maori battalion to take part in the Second World War along with much of the Maori men. The enlistment is seen as a way to negotiate their identity as one of the elders in the community observes, "Maybe fighting in their war will make the brown man equal to the white man" (219). Pita observes that even before the war was declared, there had been discussions about the formation of a Maori battalion which was met with apprehension by people who would say, "It's not our war", and "We've already given men to one war on the other side of the world. That's enough" (116). But the formation of the Maori battalion was met with excitement by the young men eager to "march to glory, take the honour of the people with (them)" (174). Their participation in the war enables the young Maori men to navigate the borders of cultural spaces as they represent a culture within which they find themselves different. This situation is indicative of what Homi Bhabha expounds in his theory of 'Third Space', which is a product of the interface, negotiations and exchange across the borders of cultural spaces. Bhabha opines that it is the 'Third Space', which though unrepresentable in itself, "constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew" (55). He further argues that "it is the 'inter'—the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the inbetween space—that carries the burden of the meaning of culture. . .and by exploring this Third Space, we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of our selves" (56). This 'Third Space' is an

'inbetween' position that does not exist before two cultural spaces intersect and their borders blur. Therefore, this can be seen as a kind of hybrid space, from where the individual can navigate both the cultural spaces and also becomes able to craft a new kind of identity for himself by incorporating a new set of cultural practices. Tu recounts the reason behind the Maori men's participation in the war – "But for all of us there was a desire to belong to something, be part of what was going on, perhaps be important and smart in a uniform, or to have excitement and to test ourselves" (Grace, *Tu* 369). The desire to belong and acclimatize in a new cultural space results in their occupation of the inbetween place that both account for their sense of alienation and also the yearning for acceptance.

The expression of cultural differences Tu experiences stems from 'liminality' and makes him aware of the heterogeneity of culture. It does not mean that there is a universalism in experiences but rather a coexisting of different forms of culture. The 'liminal' state of being that Tu finds himself in makes him arrive at the realization that construction of identity is a continuous process. As Tu becomes aware of the multiplicity of culture and society, he realizes that his location is static changing and open. The village his family left to start a new life is assorted as familiar and the city of Wellington as new and different. Tu begins the process of identification in this particular context by categorizing his location which enables him to reconceptualize and reimagine his sense of self and acquire a new sense of identity.

As Tu tries to relocate in the new cultural space, he prepares himself to face the challenges brought by his new situation after encountering stark contrasts in culture. The initial doubts and uncertainties over the issues of belonging, tradition and identity that Tu's family experienced after uprooting themselves from their culture of origin gradually lessen during relocation as they "become(s) aware 'belonging' and 'identity' are not cut in rock, that they are not secured by a lifelong guarantee, that they are eminently negotiable and revocable; and that one's own decisions, the steps one takes the way one acts – and the determination to stick by all that – are crucial factors of both' (Bauman 11). It is inevitable for Tu's family to undergo a reconceptualization of their identity as they navigate their lives in a new space and culture. They strive to negotiate their identity strategically by adjusting

their individual and cultural identity to a new cultural space whilst maintaining a sense of continuity.

After a profound reconsideration, Tu expresses a searing indictment of the war and the Maori participation by venting that they "took part in the most stupid and meaningless sector of the whole business" (Grace, *Tu* 391). He remembers "the uncle-from-parliament saying at the time the Battalion was formed that once the brown man had fought in the white man's war, maybe he'd be deemed equal" (393) and that it was "all about being true citizens, being equal, proving worth, having a prideful place" (394). But the hope for acceptance and legitimization in a new cultural space had been thwarted by the reality of being denied citizenship in their own land. Tu protests:

> It was our citizenship that was discussed by our elders, by Maori politicians, by Maori in authority in the cities or back in our home-places, round the gatherings of the time. . .but now the question being asked is, was the price too high, this price of citizenship of which our elders spoke? It's the price that has left our small nation beheaded, disabled, debilitated. (395)

The concept of hybridization as destabilizing can be applied to this context as Tu and the Maori community react against the hegemony of the non-Maoris. The authority to grant citizenship is a point of contestation as the community which "took full part in a war. . .haven't yet been able to take full part in peace" (395). The subversion of the hierarchy and hegemony in the new cultural space is partly realized when Tu tells the next generation- the children of his brothers "not to follow in our footsteps, your fathers' and mine" (398). This statement also serves as an affirmation of Tu's belief that nothing is owed to the authority of the new cultural space that is unwilling to accept them. It also brings about awareness that no culture is pure or complete as cultural hybridity enables Tu to question and realign established cultural hierarchies. John Mcleod stresses that in redefining the identity of a relocated individual cultural hybridity is a significant factor "as a way of thinking beyond exclusionary, fixed, binary notions of identities based on ideas of rootedness and cultural, racial and national purity" (219). He further states, "Hybrid identities are

never total and complete in themselves. . .Instead, they remain perpetually in motion pursuing errant and unpredictable routes, open to change and re-inscription" (219). Tu therefore occupies a space where he can constantly reconfigure his identity without the need to arrive at a totality. The concept of 'difference by identity' that Stuart Hall mentions in 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora' empowers Tu to experience identity through difference and not resort to absolutes as the concept defines the conception of identity as 'living with' and 'through' difference by hybridity (244).

When writing stories set in the culture and society of New Zealand with its colonial history, Patricia Grace recognizes the differences between pre-colonial and postcolonial cultural spaces. Robert Young states, "Hybridity in particular shows the connections between the racial categories of the past and contemporary cultural discourse" (25). This process of hybridization experienced by the characters of Grace deters them from a simplification of pre-colonial and contemporary cultural practices as opposites or antagonistic. There is continuity in the redefinition and articulation of identity by Grace's characters as there is an awareness of pre-colonial and postcolonial condition. The identification with a new landscape and culture displaces the centred position of a character's identity before as it challenges certainties and cultural identities. There is a presupposition of an identity beyond border because of hybridity as it enables a more flexible attitude to change and adaptation. There is a continuous reconfiguration of the self across multiple cultural spaces as temporal and territorial dislocation challenge a fixed sense of belonging.

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CHAPTER 3

LANGUAGE OF MYTH AND FANTASY IN GRACE

This chapter attempts to study the significance of the incorporation of the elements of myth and fantasy in the narratives of Grace. The different aspects of the elements of myth and fantasy are explored as are their significance in the political aspect of indigenous writing. The chapter also foregrounds the political and subversive aspect of indigenous writing by deliberating the implications of the subversion of colonial language and its appropriation by postcolonial and indigenous writers.

In *The Empire Writes Back* (2004), Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin propose two distinct processes by which post-colonial writing defines itself by "seizing the language of the centre and re-placing it in a discourse fully adapted to the colonized place" (37). The first process is 'abrogation' or denial of the privilege of 'English' which involves a rejection of the metropolitan power over the means of communication. The second process is the "appropriation and reconstitution of the language of the centre, the process of capturing and remoulding the language to new usages", which marks a "separation from the site of colonial privilege" (37). Ashcroft et al. also differentiate between three main types of linguistic groups within post-colonial discourse- monoglossic, diglossic and polyglossic (38). A settler country like New Zealand is populated by diglossic societies in which a majority of the people speak two or more languages even though English (or the colonial language) has been adopted as the language of government and commerce (38). The Maori writers that emerge out of New Zealand in the 1970s including Patricia Grace construct their difference and appropriate the colonial language as they possess the ability to speak the colonial language apart from their native language.

The colonial implications on the language of postcolonial writing are always a unique matter. When the issue at hand is that of postcolonial creative writing, it is usually pertinent to have an awareness of the cultural and historical effects of colonial rule on it. In *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* (1995), Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin write, "Language is a fundamental site of struggle for post-colonial discourse because the colonial process itself begins in language" (283).

The imperial power supplants the native language with its own to establish cultural and political control. In the act of displacing native language and setting itself up as the standard mode of expression, the imperial language creates a new reality where it subsumes the social, economic and political discourses. Ashcroft et al. further state that the responses to the dominance of the imperial language present themselves in the "decolonizing process- rejection or subversion" (283). A rejection of the imperial language would entail a refusal to submit to its political dominance and use for writing and an insistence on writing only in the native tongue. But this would only lead to failure as it cannot encompass the heterogeneity of human experience. The general result is an amalgamation of the colonial language and the indigenous language, with the indigenous writer experimenting with the colonial language. Christopher Balme writes "Language in a post-colonial institution is almost always linked to the question of power" (110). The dismantling of power of representation in formerly colonized countries is, apart from many other reasons, attributed to the seminal work of *Orientalism* (1979) by Edward Said in which Said asserts:

> To the extent that Western scholars were aware of contemporary Orientals or Oriental movements of thought and culture, these were perceived as either silent shadows to be animated by the Orientalist, brought into reality by them, or as kind of cultural and international proletariat useful for the Orientalist's grander interpretive activity. (208)

Balme further writes that "the discussion of post-colonial writing . . .is largely a discussion of the process by which the language, with its power, and the writing, with its signification of authority, has been wrested from the dominant European culture" (7). He asserts, "It is not possible to return to or to rediscover an absolute pre-colonial cultural purity, nor independent of their historical implication in the European colonial enterprise" (195-6). Noam Chomsky in his book *Language and Responsibility* (1979) says that "questions of language are basically questions of power" (191). The case is not that the postcolonial indigenous writer is perpetuating or promoting the colonial language; but rather handling the colonial language to express the experiences and sentiments of a diverse people. Patricia Grace locates herself in this space by writing about indigenous stories and characters who navigate

their minority status in society. The act of appropriation of language is a subversive strategy, "for the adaptation of the standard language to the demands and requirements of the place and society into which it has been appropriated amounts to a far more subtle rejection of the political power of the standard language" (Ashcroft et al. 284).

Gabriel Okara states, "Living languages grow like living things, and English is far from a dead language. There are American, West Indian, Australian, Canadian and New Zealand versions of English. All of them add life and vigour to the language while reflecting their own respective cultures" (Thiong'o 435). This perspective stems from the need to lay claims on the language of colonization by a native writer in the exercise of expressing a varied indigenous experience in writing. Language is a powerful tool in the promotion of internal cohesion and providing a sense of identity. It possesses the power to shape a community or society's values, and a sense of belonging. It is also an important determinant of power relations between dominant and subordinate groups. In postcolonial creative writing, the imperial language is appropriated to express the meaning and texture of a native experience. The postcolonial writers and speakers construct a form of the imperial language which is quite different from the standard colonial language.

To restore the cultural and creative integrity of the writer, there has been a rejection of the English language as a suitable vehicle for local expression, "asserting the incompatibility of local thought and English words, English syntax, English style" (New 303). Language affirms a set of social patterns and reflects a particular cultural taste, so native writers assume the task of modifying the colonial language and in this process generate alternative literary possibilities (303). Edgar Wright states, "Literature is still a prime medium for acting in the minds and imagination of readers in such a way as to make them understand through various experience customs, behaviour, emotions" (13). In the light of this statement, it becomes important to understand the role of English language in the development of culture and linguistic diversity of once colonial nations. Countries that have experienced colonialism appropriate the English language to express the ages of suppression while at the same time use it to enhance their own culture, roots and identity. Nancy

Bonvillain in her book *Language, Culture and Communication* (1993) argues, "Understanding meaning is necessarily contextual, situating speech in interpersonal and cultural contexts" (85). She further claims, "All culture provide rules for appropriate communicative interaction, defining behaviours that should occur, that may occur and that should not occur in given contexts" (85). The behavioural contexts of the people for whom and by whom the literature is written are important in order to create meaning out of a text. To create meaning and establish an identity that is unique to a person's ethnicity, the understanding of culture is important. It may prove an impossible task to separate an individual's identity from his language. Ben Rampton affirms this point:

> Linguistic ethnography generally holds that language and social life are mutually shaping, and that close analysis of situated languages can provide both fundamental and distinctive insights into the mechanism and dynamics of social and cultural productions in everyday activity. (584)

Further, it is important to recognize and understand the importance of language in the formation of identity that postcolonial writing insists on. It goes beyond simply being a means of communication; it indicates an expression of one's identity. John E. Joseph in his book *Language and Identity* (2004) opines:

> Language, in the sense of what a particular person says or writes, considered from the point of view of both form and content, is central to individual identity. It inscribes the person within the national and other corporate identities, including establishing the people's rank within the identity. It constitutes a text, not just of what the person says, but of the person, from which others will read and interpret the person's identity in the richest and complex of ways. (255)

The manifestations of the English language become multiplied and varied as it corresponds to the cultural heterogeneity of formerly colonized countries that it is impossible to identify with the formula of a single language for all. Terry Eagleton affirms, "Any actual language consists of a higher complex range of discourses,

differentiated according to class, region, gender, status and so on, which can by no means be neatly unified into a single homogeneous linguistic community" (4).

The Maori writer selected for this study Patricia Grace reveals through her writings the language politics of a formerly colonized country apart from the civil realities. The colonial past of a settler country like New Zealand and the atrocities it faced in terms of culture, language, literature and history find its outpouring in her literary works. She finds herself in a unique position to assert her creativity and identity as a Maori writer by appropriating the English language. Her writing is inspired by the Maori Renaissance which was a pan-Maori politico-cultural movement that targeted concerns about the socio-economic disparities between Maori and *Pakeha* (non-Maori) after the Second World War (Keown, *Pacific* 138-139). Her collection *Waiariki and Other Stories* (1975) was the first book-length fiction publication by a Maori woman writer (140). Grace's earlier stories engage with the immense social changes brought about by the post-war Maori migration to the cities. Her writing is also concerned with the politics of representation, challenging the Romantic and negative stereotypes of Maori written in *Pakeha* literature (Beavis 53). Grace's issues of representation are closely linked with concepts of self-empowerment. She links the position of the Maori writer with the social function performed by the traditional Maori artist to create cultural continuity by giving artistic form to the histories and values of the Maori people (Keown, *Pacific* 141). Her texts *Dogside Story* and *Baby No-Eyes* abound with references to Maori folktales and observance of cultural practices that ensure the continuity of traditions and inculcate in the younger generation Maori customs and stories.

In the act of engaging with Maori socio-political issues, Grace's writing has also focused on two key issues foregrounded since the Maori Renaissance- the alienation of Maori land and the decline and recent revitalization of the Maori language (Keown, *Pacific* 142). To foreground the revitalization of the Maori language by Grace, perhaps it is necessary to understand the decline of the Maori language. The historian Michael King points out that the end of the Second World War triggered a mass migration of Maori from small, rural tribal communities to *Pakeha*-dominated urban centres in search of employment and education

opportunities (473). This process of urbanization caused many Maori to lose contact with their tribal communities, which led to a decline in the observance of cultural practices and a huge reduction in the number of speakers of Maori as a first language (McRae 2). Michael King asserts that the adoption of an English-only education policy in the 1860s had done its damage to the transmission of the culture, and the damage was accelerated in the post-war period, when Maori children were urged by their families to speak English as a means of educational and social advancement (477). The Maori Renaissance also witnessed the emergence of a new tradition of Maori creative writing in English. The most prominent and prolific Maori writer of the 1960s was Hone Tuwhare. His collection of works focus on a celebration of the natural world informed by Maori values that emphasize love and respect for the land (Keown, *Pacific* 140). Patricia Grace continued in this grand tradition of producing works that engage with the immense social changes brought about by the post-war migration to the cities and issues pertaining to the representation of the Maori in writing.

It has been suggested that Maori writing of the 1960s and 1970s was nostalgic and romanticized in its representation of Maori life, and that Maori writers did not engage meaningfully with the socio-political problems and urban life of the Maoris until the mid-1980s (Keown, *Pacific* 141). Contrary to this belief, Grace's work engages with the political realities of the period. Her novel *Baby No-Eyes* focuses on a Maori woman named Kura who opposes the imposition of the English language and system of education on a generation of Maori children. The novel *Tu* questions the Maori's participation in a war for a country that marginalizes and discriminates against them whilst talking about the futility of war. The novel *Dogside Story* delves into the injustice of colonial incursion and the repercussions of land acquisition by a foreign rule. In this context, Grace emphasizes the importance of land to the Maori people not only as a material source of sustenance and subsistence, but also as a locus of personal and tribal identification (Keown, *Pacific* 142).

In discussing the writing of Patricia Grace, it is important to note the importance and influence of oral literary traditions in her works. She grew up speaking very little Maori and only achieved fluency in the language in adult life.

She has been preoccupied with the status of the Maori language throughout her literary career, and her incorporation of traditional elements in her writings can be used as instruments to advocate Maori cultural revival and self-determination (Keown, *Pacific* 166). Grace uses her indigenous language not only at a lexical or grammatical level, but also at a structural level by basing her narratives on the rhythms and patterns of Maori oral traditions. She makes frequent use of multiple narrators in her novels, approximating the Maori tradition of speechmaking in which individual orators take turns to offer individual perspectives on a particular event or events in the novel (172). In the novel *Baby No-Eyes*, various members of a Maori family and community choose to produce their own narratives as they battle against the injustices of government land policies and mistreatment by a hospital administration which brings about individual empowerment and a sense of shared cultural identity. In the novel *Chappy*, the saga of the titular character's journey from Japan to New Zealand, back to Japan and then to Hawaii and his final settlement in New Zealand is told from the perspective of relatives near and far, offering new and varied insights to Chappy's journey. The storytelling techniques especially in *Baby No-Eyes* are intimately linked with the *wharenui* or carved meeting house where the people of the community gather for various events. The carved ancestral figures record the place of particular ancestors within the history of the tribe and assume the symbol of a book which can be read by the people of the community. The figure of the spiral in the carved figures is a central motif in Maori carving and is used in Grace's narratives as a symbol of the storytelling process and of social history, which in Maori cosmogony is viewed not as a linear process but rather as a spiralling phenomenon (Keown, *Pacific* 172).

In the novel *Baby No-Eyes*, the spiralling pattern is integral to the narrative structure of the novel. The dispute and attempted negotiations over the ownership of land between the government and the indigenous community is written as a linear sequence of events, while the stories of the various narrators in the novel make continual temporal shifts that double back on each other. The novel opens with the characters Te Paania, Tawera and Gran Kura telling and re-telling the circumstances surrounding the mutilation of the dead baby's eyes and its devastating consequences

on the family. The flow of the narration is arrested by Mahaki's account of the indigenous community's struggle to reclaim their ancestral land. The seemingly incongruous accounts of different characters achieve synchronicity as the pain caused by mutilation of the dead baby's body is mirrored in the fear of desecration of indigenous ancestral land by the government. The process of narration by different characters in the novel enfolds and encloses the narrative back into the collective history of the community as evidenced in the story that has been passed on about the importance of the disputed ancestral land. In this context, Grace focuses on the spiral as a central symbol of the Maori oral tradition in the novel.

Apart from the conscious use of oral traditions, Grace's narratives also use myth and fantasy to examine the politics and complexity of writing. Michelle Keown asserts that the references to myth by a range of Maori writers are 'a means by which to reconcile Maori oral traditions with contemporary literary narrative techniques' (179). In the light of this statement, it is pertinent to point out that Grace's writing does not merely seek a space within the territory of *Pakeha* imaginations, but asserts her intentions of subverting western/colonial literary narrative techniques. According to Brian Stableford, myth is a "term derived from the Greek word for 'story', something once believed but now recognized as 'fiction'." Myths are "sacred narratives concerning the interaction of the human and divine worlds" and "stories that deal with the creation and divine administration of the world rather than matters of imaginary history" (298). The blending of Maori mythology with non-Maori mythopoeic discourses is to explore the relevance of Pacific oral traditions to contemporary socio-political realities. In the novel *Baby No-Eyes*, the metaphor of Baby's empty eye sockets and the emptiness Tawera experiences after the departure of Baby is understood through Maori mythology of 'space'. 'Space' represents Te Kore, which can be translated as 'the void' or 'the nothing' which existed before life began (Keown, *Postcolonial* 156). It is thus a paradoxical state which corresponds to the creation myths in Christianity in which the beginning is essentially a void. The creation myth is also alluded to in the novel *Tu* by one of the central characters Pita as he navigates life in his new surroundings. As Pita tries to assimilate and compromise his indigeneity in a new environment, he expresses his relief when he

finds that he does not have to change who he is among his fellow Maoris on the opening day of Maori Court at the Centennial Exhibition:

> You didn't have to be aware of a thousand eyes, because the eyes were your own. On all of this concrete, on all of this land, which had once been thrown up out of the ocean by the dance of Ruaumoko (the Maori god of earthquakes and volcanoes), there was a space that was right for you and so you became fortified. (195)

Grace deftly uses the link and connection to non-Maori mythical counterparts not only as a metaphor for the process of artistic creation, but to bring a balance to her community, complementing the journey towards self-sufficiency and strengthening the people's bonds with the mythical and ancestral past (Keown, *Pacific* 181).

In the narrative *Small Holes in the Silence*, the short story 'Moon Story' delves on the myth of the earth and the moon. The moon and the spirit it possesses are juxtaposed with the ordinary daily activity of Rona when she trips and falls and blames the moon for her accident on her way to fetch water from the village spring. Rona calls the moon "Pokokohua. Stupid Moon", as she says that "children will be crying for water" and "the dying grandmother will be parched" (117). But as Rona is lifted off the ground by the moon to what the village people think will be punishment for her disrespect, they eventually realize that she was "seated at Moon's window", "dancing in many rooms", and that "her hair had been coiled up into a chiefly topknot and decorated with tall combs" (118). Grace mentions, "They understood that Rona and Moon had become close companions, had become as one, as together they collated the seasons and rolled and unrolled the tides" (118). This particular story enhances the statement that myth is a 'collective construct' as the participation of the community is brought to the forefront as the story narrates what happens to the character Rona. There is no expression of incredulity or disbelief at what happened to Rona and the community fully participates in the myth.

In the novel *Tu*, the protagonist Tu finds himself in the midst of war, fighting for a country that does not consider him a citizen. To reconcile his feelings of disillusionment at the futility of his participation in the war, he thinks back to his

ancestral land. He narrates the myth of the mountain Tarana-ki and compares his predicament of the loneliness felt by the mountain:

> I think of my own home mountain, Tarana-ki, who is a lonely mountain indeed, a lover ousted from his tribe by a jealous brother whom he fought with red-hot boulders and rivers of boiling spittle. But in the end he had to flee, leaving his homeland and his heart behind, to stand alone, transfixed by the setting sun. (151)

Myth becomes an important component as it represents Tu's attempt to affirm his identity. Grace's use of myth in her narrative strategy in this particular context helps construct the individual and social identity of Maoris. There is a discerning of the Maori culture by Tu as he attempts to claim his identity amidst chaos and confusion of war. It reinforces his sense of self whilst resisting encroachments on his identity that disillusionment threatens to cause. He asserts:

> I am my mountain because my mountain is my ancestor, and by my mountain I am identified. My mountain too has his colours, his contours, his imposing presence. He is ever-present in my life. As though painted inside me, he is with me wherever I go. (151)

As evidenced in her style of writing, the function of myth in differing postcolonial contexts is examined by Grace. She does not try to contain or condense the resonant and symbolic quality of myths, but instead uses it as a mode of resistance to the hegemony of colonial narrative. The monologic form of colonial narrative does not allow space to articulate dissent. Grace offers a counter to the colonial monologic form in her use of myths in her novels as she engages with dominant power and discourses. In her fiction, myth contains and interrogates historical events, thereby exhibiting an ability to transform traditional images of society and culture into images of indigeneity. She introduces magical in the mundane, thus creating space for a marginalised input as reality is inadequate as it cannot portray the contemplation of the personal and collective unconscious. In this context, the indigenous writer attempts to create space in a reality where the narrative is taken by the dominant power.

The fact that myth possesses a principle of orality lends a certain fluidity and dexterity in the way Grace represents it in her narratives. Myth provides a structure for the formation of a community as it is rooted in the way language operates as a mode of communication. Claude Levi-Strauss states:

> Language is a social phenomenon; and, of all social phenomena, it is the one which manifests to the greatest degree two fundamental characteristics which make it susceptible to scientific study. In the first place, much of linguistic behaviour lies on the level of unconscious thought. When we speak, we are not conscious of the syntactic and morphological laws of the language. . . language, as a matter of fact, lives and develops only as a collective construct. (56-57)

Grace is aware that the language employed in myths is a result of the 'collective construct' because the communication of myths in Maori community possesses an oral nature. Grace appropriates the use of myth in her narratives as a form of communication of an ethos that is exclusively Maori. She also depicts a community that is formed to a large extent on the basis of myths – as myths stand as cultural products that build the idea of the supernatural.

Brian Stableford defines fantasy as "the faculty by which simulacra of sensible objects can be reproduced in the mind: the process of imagination" and states that "mental images formulated for which no equivalents exist is associated with fantasy because they represent fantasy at its purest" (xxxvii). Stories seem to exist in oral cultures independently of their tellers. Their tellers inevitably seem to be 'passing them on' or 'handing them down' as they assume the role of mere transmitters whilst surrendering their authority to the story itself. This logic sets up preliterate culture's stories as all set in the past thereby tying up their authority and value with their seeming antiquity as it imparts the apparent guarantee of their independence and power (xxxviii). This is significant for indigenous authors like Patricia Grace as it legitimizes her incorporation of myths and fantasy to her writings to counter dominant narratives.

The incorporation of fantasy in the narratives of Grace is also instrumental in the interrogation and undermining of dominant authority in writing. Fantasy as a literature of subversion has been examined and discussed by Rosemary Jackson in her monumental book *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion* (1981). She writes:

> Literary fantasies have appeared to be free from many of the conventions and restraints of more realistic texts: they have refused to observe the unities of time, space and character, doing away with chronology, three-dimensionality and with rigid distinctions between animate and inanimate objects, self and other life and death. (1-2)

In the light of this statement, literature of fantasy resists narrow categorization and definition, as "literature of the fantastic has been claimed as transcending reality, escaping the human condition and constructing superior alternate, secondary worlds" (2). It is produced within and determined by its social context. In the case of a postcolonial indigenous writer like Grace, it struggles against the limits of this context, and "articulates that very struggle" (3). It is important to note that Grace does not simply cook up a Maori myth or fantasy not only to counter the invader's presence but to also argue that Maoris are not void of a past, imagination and history before the intrusion of a foreign culture. Thus, a master narrative is subverted by an indigenous narrative, not to its irrelevance but to its blended harmony. According to Jackson, there are a number of forces in fantastic texts which intersect and interact in different ways in each individual work. It is therefore necessary to recognize these forces by placing authors in relation to historical, social, economic, political and sexual determinants (3). For Grace, the incorporation of fantasy and myths in her narratives relates specifically to the conditions of their production, the source of its generation and the particular constraints against which the fantasy protests, for "fantasy characteristically attempts to compensate for a lack resulting from cultural constraints" (Jackson 3).

The understanding of fantasy as "a literature of desire, which seeks that which is experienced as absence and loss" operates one way in a manifestation or showing of desire of expression in the sense of portrayal, representation,

manifestation, linguistic utterance, mention and description (Jackson 3). The absence or loss felt by postcolonial indigenous writers like Grace is evidenced in their literature as they bear a "particularly burdensome representational weight, usually encrusted with hard, jagged layers of colonialist misunderstandings" (Justice 6). The very act of producing literature by an indigenous writer is remarkable in this context as "literature as a category is about what's important to a culture, the stories that are privileged and honoured, the narratives that people- often those in power, but also those resisting that power- believe to be central to their understanding of the world and their place in relation to it" (20). The incorporation of fantasy in Grace's narratives becomes instrumental in the interrogation of colonial hegemony as the "fantastic traces the unsaid and the unseen of culture: that which has been silenced, made invisible, covered over and made absent" (Jackson 4). The 'telling of' and 'expulsion' of desire in fantasy the basis upon which cultural order rests "for it opens up, for a brief moment, on to disorder, on to illegality, on to that which lies outside the law, that which is outside dominant value systems" (4). Jackson further asserts:

> Telling implies using the language of the dominant order and so accepting its norms, re-covering its dark areas. Since this excursion into disorder can only begin from a base within the dominant cultural order, literary fantasy is a telling index of the limits of that order. Its introduction of the 'unreal' is set against the category of the 'real' – a category which the fantastic interrogates by its difference. (4)

In an indigenous postcolonial context, the collective unconscious and its realisations – archetypes which constitute myths, religions, fairy tales and folktales are proponents of indigenous cultures and communities. Carl Jung expounds the theory of the collective unconscious as he states that "the magic may be attributed to a mysterious sense of collective relatedness rather than to individual memories or dreams or visions" (183). Juliet Mitchell writes that "the necessary laws of human society is not so much conscious as unconscious – the particular task of psychoanalysis is to decipher how we acquire our heritage of the ideas and laws of human society within the unconscious mind" (xvi). As the indigenous literature of Grace is suffused with elements of fantasy, it seems fitting to understand its

significance with references to psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic readings as fantasy engages openly and overtly with unconscious material. Rosemary Jackson opines that "it is in the unconscious that social structures and norms are reproduced and sustained" and that "the redirection of attention to this area can lead to the perception of ways in which the relations between society and the individual are fixed" (6). In the incorporation of the magical and mythical in her writing, Grace signifies the overcoming of the limitations of the real world, human body and mind as a way of the liberation of the human experience. Postcolonial cultures' reliance on myths and local legends is an effort at decontamination, a process of freeing their cultures from colonialists' pervasive influence (Nayar 234). Jackson asserts:

> Themes of the fantastic in literature revolve around this problem of making visible the un-seen, or articulating the un-said. Fantasy establishes, or discovers, an absence of separating distinctions, violating a 'normal', or common-sense perspective which represents reality as constituted by discreet but connected units. . .It subverts dominant philosophical assumptions which uphold as 'reality' a coherent, single-viewed entity, that narrow vision which Bakhtin termed 'monological'. (48)

In the novel *Baby No-Eyes*, a lifeless Maori baby is returned to her family with her eyes mutilated by the doctors at a hospital. Patricia Grace interprets this incident as an index of various forms of cultural desecration and appropriation which have followed European colonial incursion into New Zealand (Keown, *Postcolonial* 149). In the case of the baby's mutilated eyes, she integrates the element of fantasy in her narrative as the mother of the dead baby Te Paania hears the baby's voice:

> People drew in about me, put their hands on me, washed my face and hands as though I was a child. There were voices, the sea roaring on the sand, and I fell into a dream-filled sleep where a limbless doll, strapped to my shoulder, said in a squeaky doll voice, "You have to find them for me". (Grace, *Baby* 72)

Grace mounts resistance through her language by injecting the supernatural to her writing. She disrupts the cultural and linguistic hegemony by invoking the element of

fantasy as the dead baby asks her mother to find her missing eyes. The fantasy is further extended as the baby's grandmother Gran Kura "took the piece of silk, wrapped the eyes in it and bound them round our baby's midriff. Stomach eyes. It's a strange place for eyes to be, but they seemed safe there" (Grace, *Baby* 73). The mutilation of the baby eyes evokes the concept of dismembered bodies in fantasy as espoused by Rosemary Jackson as it shows "the power of the fantastic to interrogate the category of character- that definition of the self as coherent, indivisible and continuous whole which has dominated Western thought for centuries and is celebrated in classic theatre and realistic art alike" (83). This concept acts on the one hand as a subversion of the "generally accepted concept of 'self' as a closed, unified structure" and "a reluctance to admit of the possible existence of partial or contradictory aspects of the self in literary practice" (83). On the other hand, it is a resistance of the one-sided, prejudiced presentation of the indigenous characters and culture in colonial writings.

To mark a further delineation between Maori and non-Maori attitudes, Grace uses the mutilation of the dead baby as a study of the differences in attitudes between Maori and non-Maori to death and the body. The *pakeha* (western) hospital staff in the novel describe and treat the child's body with clinical detachment, while the family of the deceased baby are horrified and grieved by the mutilation, especially when taken into consideration that the head is considered to be sacred in Maori culture (Keown, *Postcolonial* 151). The baby's mother Te Paania, the grandmother Kura and family friends believe that the atrocious act of the hospital staff betrays a disregard for Maori people and their culture. The hospital's failure to understand the indigenous community's perception of health and the body is represented by Grace as indicative of western cultural hegemony. To counter the reality and authority that the non-Maori have over their bodies, it is fitting that Grace subsumes the element of fantasy in this particular context to register her resistance and question the political structure that places the *Pakeha* on a position of dominance.

In the novel *Baby No-Eyes*, Te Paania's lawyer friend Mahaki investigates through his legal cases the desecration of indigenous burial grounds by scientists wishing to excavate indigenous grave sites. Grace signals this as symptomatic of the

tragedy of what happened to the baby as the family believes that the mutilation of the baby is an attempt to "experiment on us brown people" (Grace, *Baby* 84). Apart from the story of the mutilated baby and its effects on the family, the novel deals heavily with the fight between the Maori community and the government over ownership of land. The contested land has a cultural significance to the Maori community as they profess that it is a place where their ancestors are buried. There is a deep distrust of the intentions of the government by the Maori community over what would happen to their ancestor's remains. Grace herself makes connections between these various manifestations of cultural appropriation, suggesting that "what happened to the baby happened for the same reason that land is taken, or cultural items, or indigenous knowledge. It's a new area of colonisation" (Keown, *Postcolonial* 151). The fear of desecration of bodies that Grace conjures through the sentiments of the community is indicative of the element of dismembered bodies in fantasy theory already applied to the incident of the baby's mutilated eyes.

Throughout the novel *Baby No-Eyes,* the conversations and companionship that take place between the mutilated baby and her brother - Te Paania's second child Tawera - exhibit the presence of the element of fantasy. Tawera accepts that the presence of his sister's ghost is a part of his life. He says, "The biggest thing of my life so far was to be my sister's eyes. 'You can tell it all to me, everything you see,' she said" (Grace, *Baby* 75). After a particular instance where Tawera was taken to see an elephant and he forgot about his sister and did not speak to her, her sister reproaches him because she is unable to see without the help of Tawera. Tawera replies, "Well I didn't know then that I was your eyes" (79). The dependency of the baby on Tawera for sight is indicative of "one of the central thematic concerns of the fantastic: problems of vision" (Jackson 45). Jackson further asserts, "In a culture which equates the real with the visible and gives the eye dominance over other sense organs, the un-real is that which is in-visible. That which is not seen, or which threatens to be un-seeable, can only have a subversive function. . ." (45). Because the baby's eyes are stolen at the hospital where she died, she relies on her brother's eyes to experience and participate in the human world.

The ability of Tawera to converse with his dead sister also evokes the literary genre of the 'menippea' mentioned by Mikhail Bakhtin in his study *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1973). It is "a genre which broke the demands of historical realism or probability" as it "conflated past, present and future, and allowed dialogues with the dead" (Jackson 14). Bakhtin has stated:

> Characteristic of the menippea are violations of the generally accepted, ordinary course of events and of the established norms of behaviour and etiquette, including the verbal. . . Scandals and eccentricities destroy the epical and tragical integrity of the world, they form a breach in the stable, normal course of human affairs and events and free human behaviour from predetermining norms and motivations. (96)

The menippean characteristic of "lacking finality and its interrogation of authoritative truths and replacing them with something less certain" is one of its subversive traits. It is fitting that Grace integrates this function of fantasy literature in the fantasy elements in her novels to highlight the politics of her writing.

Rosemary Jackson deliberates the concept of evil when talking about literary fantasy. She states:

> In its broadest sense, fantastic literature has always been concerned with revealing and exploring the interrelations of the 'I' and the 'not-I', of self and other. Within a supernatural economy, or a magical thought mode, otherness is designated as otherworldly, supernatural, as being above, or outside, the human. The other tends to be identified as an otherworldly, evil force. (53)

She argues that "early romance fantasies define and confine otherness as evil and diabolic" and that "blackness, night, darkness always surrounded this 'other', this unseen presence, outside the forms and visible confines of the 'ordinary' and 'common' (53-54). The semantic shifts and radical shifts in the naming, or interpretation of the term evil becomes pertinent when applied to the characterization of Te Paania as 'evil' in *Baby No-Eyes*. The fantastical term and concept of 'evil' can be appropriated in this context to underline the naming of Te Paania as 'evil' by Gran

Kura. Te Paania is labelled evil in the light of her resistance against the hegemony of the non-Maori government in the indigenous community's fight for their ancestral land. The defeat of Gran Kura by 'goodness' – the hesitancy to dissent against western authority- is supplanted by Te Paania's courage to confront the unfair laws of the government towards the indigenous community. Gran Kura champions the 'evil' she sees in Te Paania because she has always regretted her docility and inability to challenge the subjugation of her community by non-Maori authorial figures. Te Paania refuses to toe the line but instead chooses to break free from generational shackles of obedience and assert herself to challenge unfair laws imposed on her community. Gran Kura witnesses the cycle of 'goodness' end in Te Paania's courage. The subversion of the term evil is realized in the character of Te Paania as she is essentially the 'other' from the outside who fights to dismantle conventional and established forms of power and authority.

In *Baby No-Eyes*, Gran Kura disrupts the chain of sequence of the novel by inserting the story of a 'ghost' from her childhood. As is the case in most of her novels, Grace features in *Baby No-Eyes* a "polyphonic narrative structure which approximates the patterns of Maori whaikorero or speech-making, in which different orators take turns to offer individual perspectives on a topic of discussion" (Keown, *Postcolonial* 152). *Baby No-Eyes* has the characters Te Paania, Gran Kura, Mahaki and Tawera offering up their different perspectives in his or her own distinctive account on the tragedy and shared trauma of the mutilation and the fight for ancestral land. The use of this narrative technique becomes the outlet of the politics of Grace's writing as the novel's political resonance is "located as much in its narrative and linguistic strategies as in its socio-political context" (Keown, *Postcolonial* 152). This seems to be a deliberate attempt by Grace to integrate facets of Maori tradition in her writing as the 'ghost' story has no significance in furthering the main plot. The 'story' is that of a man who has been ostracized from the community, whose voice was never heard at gatherings, with "no life in his face, no light in his eyes because he was a ghost" (Grace, *Baby* 179). When he died, his body was unceremoniously "buried without a minister", and the reason became apparent to Gran Kura that this man was a 'ghost' because "he was father of his niece's baby" and "because nobody

killed him" (183). The insertion of this story in the novel disrupts the narrative flow whilst also adding the fantasy element in the novel, hammering on its use of the genre by Grace for its subversive qualities. In dealing with themes of relation of self to other in fantasy literature, Rosemary Jackson states, ". . .fantastic narratives in this category tell of various versions of that desire, usually in transgressive forms. Sadism, incest, necrophilia, murder, eroticism, make explicit the unconscious desires structuring interrelationship, the interactions of 'I' and 'not I' on a human level" (51-52). This particular aspect of fantasy can be found in the story of the 'ghost' to talk about a 'taboo' subject like incest and how the community treats and responds to it. Gran Kura notes that because the 'ghost' has committed incest, he is ostracized by the community. He was "the man-who-was-always-a-ghost", "no one called him Grandfather" and when men in the community "didn't quite kill him" for his deed, "he was always a dead man after that" (Grace *Baby* 178,182-183). The marriage between Te Paania and the baby's father Shane shows another instance of incest as Te Paania learns after her wedding day that "Shane and I had the same great-grandparents" (21). She concedes, "If the old people had found out sooner about our close connections they may not have approved of the marriage" (21). The theme of incest is also visited in the novel *Dogside Story*. In this novel, Kid - the child at the centre of a custody battle which features prominently in the novel -is the product of incest between cousins Te Rua and Ani Wainoa. Even though the father Te Rua is heavily favoured by the elders in the community to gain custody, they are acutely aware of the repercussions the circumstances of Kid's birth would have on the court case as they observe, "Can't be told that there's a daughter come from a brother and sister. Outside of here it can't be told" (172). The backstory of Te Paania and Shane's marriage, the circumstances surrounding Kid's birth and the digressive account of the story of the 'ghost' provide examples of the elements of fantasy in Grace's writing whilst also providing commentary on the indigenous community's perception and treatment of social taboos.

In the novel *Chappy*, Grace employs the Maori pattern of speech-making in the narrative technique. In this novel, the main narrators are Oriwia and Aki – who offer up their own accounts of their community and the life of the titular character

Chappy – whose journey dominates much of the plot of the novel. Grace chooses to introduce Chappy in the novel through the element of fantasy as a 'ghost' as Aki recounts, "The first time it was just a glimpse I had of that ghost seeing me when some slant of light. . .slipped a sliver of moon onto that dark side where I walked" (17). Chappy was a stowaway on a ship where Aki worked and Aki thought him to be as ghost when he first laid eyes on him. The appearance of Chappy is connected to the sight of a ghost and tied up with the story of 'Moonface' – the family name given to Aki's younger brother Marama who had disappeared as a baby. Years later as Chappy recounts the night he met Aki the supernatural aspect of the encounter is brought up again:

> On the moonlit night of shadows when Aki walked the decks, the dark shape of a giant appeared and eyed him, too late for the ghost to hide himself. But the ghost slid himself down, out of sight. He watched in fear as the giant passed by. He saw that this creature was a large man, given extra height by a child he carried on his shoulders. Later, after the placement of water and food, Chappy, who had been contemplating going overboard, knew that he owed it to the giant and the child to survive. (40)

Chappy's account of this incident highlights the supernatural element as Aki was alone on the ship when he met Chappy. The presence of what could only be Aki's baby brother Marama's spirit adds the aspect of fantasy to this account.

The chronicle of the short life and disappearance of Aki's baby brother Moonface/Marama illustrates Grace's inclusion of fantasy most prominently in the novel. Marama was born to Aki's family as the youngest child. His disappearance on the day he accompanied Aki to the village spring where Aki fetched drinking water was attributed to his being stolen by "green eyed people with copper hair" (Grace, *Chappy* 58). The explanation provided by the elders of the community regarding the disappearance was that Marama was stolen by the 'fairy people' as the search party comprising of Aki's father and grandfather reported back that they saw "no more than the footprints" where Marama disappeared but that they "heard the singing. We heard laughter, like then laughter of children" (58-59). Aki's guilt and disbelief could

only be assuaged when his grandfather explained the situation with the authority of his position in the community:

> My grandfather spoke. His words were for me. 'The reason your little brother is no longer with us', he said, 'is because he never belonged to us in the first place. They came for him. Now he is where he belongs, with his own people. There are other worlds. Little Marama was always of a different world. (58)

This explanation affirms the community's belief and acceptance of the existence of many worlds. Aki's father, who had always expressed disbelief, has gone from "not believing in something, to thinking of possibility- because it was the only thing left to do" (59). The belief in the existence of many worlds is re-affirmed by Grace in the account of Noddy, Oriwia's cousin who had returned from war with severe post-traumatic stress disorder. The account of Noddy's struggle to re-integrate with the community culminates with his disappearance. The community explanation of this bizarre event was that "he'd gone with the mountain folk" (189). In the novel *Tu*, the titular character alludes to the existence of other worlds when he voices his fear in the battlefield that "it could be the *patupaiarehe* (a pale-skinned, fairylike, supernatural being) with their white skins, red hair and green eyes, come to steal us away and marry us" (130).

These multiple references to the existence of another world provide an example of another aspect of literary fantasy in the writings of Grace. It is evocative of the 'vision of escape' aspect, one of the key distinguishing marks of fantasy literature espoused by Eric S. Rabkin in his book *The Fantastic in Literature* (1976). Rabkin attests, "When we accept a world in which the make-believe is real, we participate in the fantastic. This participation is a form of escape" (43). He further states that in the literature of the fantastic, "escape is the means of exploration of an unknown land, a land which is the underside of the mind of man", and that in its mundane uses, escape "may be defined as emerge from restraint; break loose from confinement" (45). In the novel *Chappy*, Aki's father participates in the fantasy by changing his perspective from that of disbelief to eventual acceptance of the worlds of 'fairy people'. In order to reconcile with the disappearance of their loved ones and

their predicaments, the individual characters and communities in the writings of Grace participate in the aspect of fantasy. Grace infuses her writings with the elements of the fantastic in situations where reality cannot offer solace. Rabkin indicates, "The fantastic gives us the chance to try out new 'unrealistic' possibilities, and thus, perhaps, change seen reality" (216). He reiterates:

> Fantasy represents a basic mode of human knowing; its polar opposite is Reality. Reality is that collection of perspectives and expectations that we learn in order to survive in the here and now. But the here and now becomes tomorrow; a child grows, a culture develops, a person dreams.in every area of human thought, civilization has evolved a functioning reality, but he universe has suffered no reality to maintain itself unchanged. The glory of man is that he is not bounded by reality. Man travels in fantastic worlds. (227)

In her book *Rhetorics of Fantasy* (2008), Farah Mendlesohn categorizes the intrusion fantasy within the four categories of fantasy as a fantasy in which "the narrative leads always toward the acceptance of the fantastic, by the reader if not the protagonist" (115). The characters' "awareness of the permeability of the world – a distrust of what is known in favour of what is sensed" seems to be the basis of this fantasy (115). Grace's trust in her characters to test the limits of their reality by placing "faith in the sub-surface, the sense that there is always something lurking" (116) is suggestive of the politics of her writing to address and subvert conventional norms and contrast a 'consensus reality' (116).

The novel *Tu*, whilst dealing with the stark and haunting reality of war, is suffused with elements of fantasy with the mention of ghosts. In the midst of war in Italy, surrounded by the sound of gunshots, the titular character Tu attests that "it would be better to die out there where the action was rather than behind solid walls messing with ghosts- especially at night when these *kehua* were likely to be out roaming, stealing a man's spirit and leaving him spooked, with his eyes rolling" (102-103). In Maori lore, 'kehua' is an evil spirit or a ghost. Grace intersperses the tangible and concrete realities of death and war with Maori traditional beliefs through the ponderings of Tu:

> And because of our uncomfortable time spent among the dead- the long dead. . .we began talking about the kehua we had encountered. These were ghosts that we'd seen ourselves, perhaps heard knocking or calling. . .there were ghosts in the form of birds. . .which had eyes like onions and hung upside – down in trees outside an uncle's house. . .stories of apparitions at the time of death, of speaking lizards and squeaking owls; of men with bird's feet, wearing long cloaks, who came out of the mists to entice people deep into mountain forests where they became part of the bird-people tribe. (107-108)

The description of Tu's awareness of ghosts in this particular context invokes the concept of the 'uncanny' in fantasy as proposed by Rosemary Jackson. The concept of the uncanny is derived from Sigmund Freud's seminal essay on the psychoanalytic readings of fantastic literature 'The Psychopathology of Everyday Life' in which he states, "The uncanny. . .is undoubtedly related to what is frightening – to what arouses dread and horror . . . it tends to coincide with what excites fear in general" (Todorov 219). The uncanny can be read as "the effect of projecting unconscious desires and fears into the environment and on to other people" (Jackson 64). Stationed and fighting a war in a foreign land, Tu experiences fear and shock in the 'uncomfortable' time he spends amidst corpses of his fellow soldiers. The uncanny is produced by the hidden anxieties concealed in Tu, who then interprets the world in terms of his apprehensions. He conjures up images of apparitions (*kehua*) from his native place – "that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar" (65). The subversive nature of the uncanny is "defined by its relationality as it subverts any re-presentation of a unified reality" (68). Helene Cixous states that it is "a relational signifier . . . for the uncanny is in effect composite, it infiltrates itself in between things, in the interstices, it asserts a gap where one would like to be assured of unity" (Jackson 68).

The subversive nature of fantasy provides the validation of its use by Patricia Grace in her writings. The integration of the elements of myth and fantasy in her narratives is an attempt to reject the power structures prevailing in a post-colonial society whilst dismantling one-sided colonial representation of indigenous culture and society in colonial narratives. The monologic characteristic of imperialistic

narratives is discarded by Grace as she utilizes multiple narrators, untranslated Maori words, fantasy and myths in her narratives. The induction of these elements in her writing betrays what is lacking in imperialistic narratives as it resists the monologic voice of a narrator or author. The incorporation of multiple narratives also suggests the heterogeneity of the social milieu of indigenous communities. The exposition of diversity and plurality in indigenous narratives is a subversive act opposing the homogenisation of culture perpetuated by colonial power and narrative.

In her narratives, Patricia Grace depicts the contradictions and confrontations in a postcolonial indigenous community which offers resistance to the dominant ideology and power structure, whilst at the same time negotiating a place within it. The illustration of fantasy and myth in the narratives of Grace serve as signifiers of cultural experience that are untranslatable and assert the Maori sensibility. The subversive instinct is deeply ingrained in Grace's writing that is directed against colonial narratives. They promote the author's creativity as they draw sustenance from the Maori cultural context which underlines the politics of Grace's writing.

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CHAPTER 4

LOCATING THE FEMALE VOICE IN GRACE

This chapter attempts to explore the presentation and representation of female characters in the selected texts. It examines the limitations of the presentation of women in colonial and postcolonial literature. It also aims to explore the significance of the agency of writing amongst postcolonial and indigenous women writers and Patricia Grace in particular. The chapter thus attempts to locate the variety and complexity of female characters and their experiences in Grace's texts, highlighting the importance of the agency of writing amongst indigenous women writers.

Women in many societies have been relegated to the position of 'Other', marginalized and in a metaphorical sense 'colonized' which forced them to fight against imperial domination from such positions of no power or self-assurance, since they are fundamentally alienated from and yet ironically imbedded in the same hegemonic system (Ashcroft et al. 172). They share an intimate experience of the politics of oppression and repression with colonized races and peoples. This condition forces them to articulate their experience in the language of the oppressors as they urge to construct a language of their own became apparent, when the language of the colonizer was their only available tool (172). The language of the colonizer was acknowledged by the colonial system and exerted a systemic control of the expressive self. Postcolonial women writers utilize the important features of feminist theory like language, voice, concepts of speech and silence in their writings. Patricia Grace in this period of feminist awareness is no exception. The connections between literature and language, political activity and the potential for social change are also unique characteristics of their writing. Feminist critics reject the patriarchal bases of literary theory and criticism as they recognize that aesthetic value is not universal but is historically and culturally specific. They seek to subvert conventional bases of literary theory and criticism and show them not to be absolute or axiomatic, but relative (173).

The writing of women represented an unknown continent in both colonial and postcolonial nationalist discourses until the early 1970s (Boehmer, *Colonial* 215). This does not mean that women were absent from colonial activity, but that they were not canonized in the same way as were male colonial and postcolonial writers. Women travellers and writers like Mary Kingsley, Gertrude Bell as well as 'settlers' such as Louisa Lawson, Susanna Moodie and Phyllis Shand Allfrey shared colonialist attitude of stereotypical responses to Indigenous peoples. These women writers not only experienced different practical and discursive constraints from men in the colonial field, their work was also read and mediated in ways other than those associated with their male counterparts (215).

In contrast to the discrimination experienced by European women in the masculine colonial and postcolonial world, the native or subaltern women were "doubly or triply marginalized" (Boehmer, *Colonial* 216). In addition to their disadvantage on the grounds of their gender, they were also marginalized on the grounds of race, social class, religion, caste, sexuality and regional status (216). These forms of exclusion were reinforced by the pressures of national liberation after independence – gender divisions often the most prominent. The pressure of national liberation was an aggressive masculinity in the men to counter the feminization of colonized men produced under colonial rule. Women did not receive the same encouragement as men to assert themselves as agents of their own history, as self-fashioning and in control (216). The focal point of colonial and postcolonial narratives reflected a male-centred vision of national destiny featuring traditional images of women.

The essentialist and exclusivist stances of writing based on white, Anglo-Saxon norms which tended to marginalize other races or classes were slowly discarded in the 1960s and 1970s in favour of more complex, subversive positions and recognition of the principle of difference (Ashcroft et al. 173). The works of prominent women critics like Alice Walker and Tillie Olsen criticize conventional feminist theory for being middle class and Anglo-American in its assumptions which leads to the increasing prominence of intersections of race, class and gender within the discourse of feminism (173).

According to Peter Barry, the major effort of feminist criticism in the 1970s went into exposing the "mechanisms of patriarchy" - the cultural mindset in men and women which perpetuated sexual inequality (85). Combative and polemical critical attention was focused on books by male writers in which influential or typical images of women were created (85). The images of women in postcolonial writing began to change in the 1970s due to historical developments in the political and cultural initiatives taken by Third World women and minority women in the First World. These developments affected a shift towards women defining their own positions in relation to both nationalist and neo-colonial discrimination, and to Western feminism (Boehmer, *Colonial* 217). Postcolonial women discourses seek to reinstate the marginalized in the face of the dominant and sought to invert the structures of domination and substitute a female tradition in place of a male-dominated canon. They take a turn towards the questioning of conventional forms and modes, unmasking the foundational assumptions of canonical constructions and destabilizing them (Ashcroft et al. 173). Postcolonial women writers have re-examined conventional literature and demonstrated clearly that "a canon is produced by the intersection of a number of readings and reading assumptions legitimized in the privileging hierarchy of a patriarchal and metropolitan concept of literature" (173). The re-examination facilitates the possibility of reconstructing the canon not by simply replacing it in an exchange of texts, since they recognize that changing the canon requires more than changing the legitimized texts, but rather a change in the conditions of reading texts. According to postcolonial feminists like Chandra Mohanty, mainstream western feminism represents the other women as "a composite, singular, third world woman" (52). She states that this perception reflects an arbitrary construction. Western feminism homogenizes and systematizes the oppression of women without situating them in their specific culture, ideology and socioeconomic conditions which are different for different groups. Third world feminists raise serious objections to the consideration of women as "already constituted and coherent groups with identical interests and desires regardless of class, ethnic or radical location… The notion of gender or sexual difference or even patriarchy cannot be applied universally and cross culturally" (52).

The subversion of patriarchal literary forms is also an important aspect of postcolonial women's writing. Bill Ashcroft and others assert that this aspect might not be a conscious aim of the authors (174). This echoes Lisa Maria Hogeland's opinion about women writing in *Feminism and Its Fictions* (1998) when she calls it "a kind of literacy, a way of reading both texts and everyday life from a particular stance" (Lebihan 103). Cora Kaplan agrees in *Sea Changes: Essays on Culture and Feminism* (1986) that women writing are "a part of a political process of resistance, arguing that defiance is a component of the act of writing for women" (103). These statements by Hogeland and Kaplan serve as a rebuttal of the undermining of women's contribution to language. One example of this dismissal of women's writing is a chapter on 'The Woman' in Otto Jespersen's book *Language: Its Nature and Development* (1922) in which he states that women's contribution to language is "to maintain its purity through their instinctive shrinking from coarse and vulgar expressions whereas men's contributions are vigour, imagination and creativity" (Talbot 111).

When discussing the importance of writing in postcolonial cultures, Ashcroft and others state that the "presence or absence of writing is possibly the most important element" (81). They attest that "writing does not merely introduce a communicative instrument, but also involves an entirely different and intrusive (invasive) orientation to knowledge and interpretation" (81). In many postcolonial societies, it was not the English language which had the greatest effect, but writing itself. In this respect, they also state that "although oral culture is by no means the universal model of post-colonial societies, the invasion of the ordered, cyclic, and 'paradigmatic' oral world by the unpredictable and 'syntagmatic' world of the written word stands as a useful model for the beginnings of postcolonial discourse". (81)

The act of writing for women is an inescapable product of the ideological conflict that inevitably takes place in the text. Postcolonial women's writing has also witnessed a radical questioning of the basic assumptions of language and thought to disentangle polarized concepts in the dominant language "such as terms like Black and White, which some critics have argued install a false separation within the

women's collective" (Ashcroft et al. 174). It is perhaps appropriate to point out that Elizabeth Archuleta writes that postcolonial indigenous women use the "enemy's language as an arsenal to arm themselves and appropriate the tools of the enemy – creating a rhetorical site of power through the appropriation, reinvention, and use of the conqueror's language" to speak for themselves and dismantle colonial assumptions (89). Julia Kristeva posits that "modern breaks with tradition and the development of new forms of discourse are harmonious with the women's cause" while Gayatri Spivak cautions that "the unsettling of meaning per se will not necessarily promote a feminist future nor escape the historical determination of sexism" (Ashcroft et al. 174). The argument proposed by these two suggests that the practice of questioning the basic assumptions of language and thought is not without contention. There is a need for the deconstructive and the political to go hand in hand not just to reject the binary structures of patriarchal discourses but also to examine the political, social and ideological forces that drive such binary structures. Postcolonial women's writing opposes sexism which limits women as a biologically oppressed group but rather endorses feminism as part of a political project to raise and transform consciousness. It posits societies in which social and political hegemonic shifts have happened. This argument thus presupposes not just a disruptive reading of texts but also a disruption in society at large.

Grace's narratives serve as a powerful medium through which self-definition was sought as well as demands for legal recognition, identity and rights on the basis of sameness as well as difference. Postcolonial women critics and women critics of colour like Avtar Brah, Barbara Christian and Carolyn Cooper have challenged Western feminism's basis in liberal humanist thinking and its assumptions of a shared marginality in gender (Ashcroft et al. 217). The agency and rights were defined from a white American or European point of view with a stress on the individual and an emphasis on a common experience of oppression to the extent that significant cultural differences and varying experiences of powerlessness were ignored (218). Grace's narratives thus stress the diversity and layeredness of women's experience, and forms of self-expression and community absent in Western societies. Her narratives posit the argument that her writings demand a different

complexity of response than did the writing of Western women or once-colonized men.

The autobiographical form has been important for the purpose of self-representation but postcolonial women's writing has not been confined to studies from life. Grace's writing has attempted to reverse the presentations of indigenous women's experiences as uniformly degraded, passively oppressed or lacking in powers of self-determination. It is necessary to address indigenous women's writing as separate to avoid homogenization of the differences in experience. Like many other indigenous writers, Grace's writing is her primary vehicle for her participation in the articulation of indigenous experiences and expression. Her works become a medium for her to join in the conversations of indigeneity on the global stage. This very task brings with it its own complication and contradiction as specificity and particularity of indigenous experiences seem antithetical to universalism that a global stage entails. Trinh T. Minh-ha articulates the struggle by feminist critics to bring reflexivity in writing and speaking such that it is no longer possible to write or speak unthinkingly without being aware of the production of subjectivities that accompanies such activities (Stewart-Harawira 2). Minh-ha points to the 'triple-bind' of women writers of colour which is that no matter what position she takes, she will eventually be "made to feel she must choose from among three conflicting loyalties. Writer of color? Woman writer? Or woman of color?" (2). Maori woman academics also engage in the dilemma of "as whom do we write, and for whom?" (2).

When presented with the question of whether "Maori writing has to be political", Grace answered in the negative, saying that it need neither "engage in political theme"' nor "define Maori culture"', although she qualified this by suggesting that "in another way it always will define Maori culture", and that "in a way … all of our writing is political" (Fox 127). She acknowledged that she had felt 'some pressure' to write about issues of race relations, but thought it 'natural' to write about such issues because one wrote "from your own background and experience" (127). She noted more than once that she felt many representations of Maori produced by non-Maori writers had been problematic and that she wished to supplement them with different representations, while also wanting to address the

shortage of literature to which Maori could relate. Asked in 1994 if there were 'political themes' in her work, she responded that she had known when she began writing that "there were people who hadn't been written about" and "lives that hadn't been described", which she wanted to write about, but that she did not then view such writing as 'political'. However, she recalled that she "came to see that when you write about people who don't have power, whose *mana* (prestige or authority) has been eroded, then it is political". She concluded that although she had not "set out to be a political writer", she was "happy if people see my writing that way". As she explained, "Good writing needs to describe the human condition, and a writer will write from her own background, her own experience, her own standpoint, her own view of life, her own realities" (126). The 'act of writing back' is one of many important means for Maori to re-centre Maori ways of being and knowing as central. Thus, writing as a Maori woman becomes simultaneously an act of resistance and reclamation (Stewart-Harawira 2).

Patricia Grace's writing depicts the qualities of resistance and reclamation through the female characters in her novel. In the novel *Baby No-Eyes*, she delivers an example of a woman's self-assuredness and resistance in the character of Gran Kura. In the course of her tale, Gran Kura moves from a timid, fearful little girl constricted by her 'white' teachers at school to a resilient grandmother who refuses to speak the English language. Her experiences as a Maori woman navigating life in a white-dominated society combined with the experiences of other women in her family provide a significant dynamic of the experiences of minority women in the society. The novel centres on the mistreatment of Maori women in the education and health institutions where power lies with the *Pakeha* (non-Maori). The trauma and abuse that Gran Kura and her generation of Maori children underwent at a British school is hauntingly captured by the writer to show the spirit of resilience in Gran Kura.

The narrative style of Grace in the text *Chappy* is a deeply personal, even confessional tone which draws upon the life story of the female character Oriwia. In *Chappy*, Oriwia is visited by her foreign-born grandson Daniel who took upon himself the task of writing the life story of his grandparents Oriwia and Chappy.

Oriwia decides to take upon herself the task of writing and translating the stories after a while as she feels that the task is not properly performed. Oriwia hijacks her grandson's retelling of the family's history by taking upon herself the task of narrating and translating her life story. When asked by her grandson Daniel if she could tell the story of her family, she tells him, "I'll write it for you. . .Yes, tell it in my own way and have it ready for you by morning" (35). She then proceeds to write the story of herself and her community. This act of Oriwia is indicative of what Luz Maria de la Torre Amaguana proposes when she asserts it is imperative for indigenous women to adopt the power apparatus of writing in order to clarify their quotidian lifestyle and testimonial to elaborate their own discourse (Dulfano 83). Amaguana further asserts that writing may overcome invisible barriers to an indigenous woman's self-sufficiency and equality (84). As Oriwia recounts the stories of her childhood, meeting her husband Chappy, their struggles to keep the family together amidst war and prolonged periods of separation, she presents a story of a woman who has survived against adversities. The act of telling her story to Daniel and undertaking the task of writing and translating tie into the literary forms of orality and autobiography that is brought into a written story. It represents the feminist politics of taking into account the complex social history, economic struggles and political ideology that govern women's lives. It brings together the oral and written and creates a new mode of expression that "retains the vibrancy of heard speech and spoken idiom" of the narrator's language (Katrak 33). In the text *Chappy*, it is not just Oriwia who recounts the past and tell stories but Oriwia's cousin Aki as well. The two elders Oriwia and Aki tell their story to the recipient and recorder Daniel. The exchange of stories evokes Mikhail Bakhtin's emphasis on "the speech aspect of language" which explains the elements of orality in the text where multi-vocality is evident in dialogue amongst the characters in the text (33). Language itself, even if it means communicating with one's own inner voice, embodies that interaction to make meaning. Bakhtin's insights into language are important in this context as he states that "literary language itself is just one of these languages of heteroglossia" (33).

An important structure of postcolonial women's writing is the intermingling of forms derived from indigenous, nationalist and European literary traditions as it stresses on difference and variety of experiences (Ashcroft et al. 219). Audre Lorde stresses in her essay 'The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House' that differences in the experiences of women have been viewed as "causes of separation and suspicion rather than as forces for change" (26). She argues that acknowledging the variety of experiences and differences in women is necessary to move away from a mere tolerance and denial of differences – "for the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" (27). To simply answer to the need to educate men of women's existence and needs is a primary tool of oppressors to keep the oppressed occupied with the master's concerns and a tragic repetition of racist patriarchal thought (27). It would serve the cause better to acknowledge that the experiences of women across cultures are not homogenous and the variety of experiences has to be taken into account. The style of the presentation of experiences and facts in the postcolonial world is not usually the Westerner's cultural or individualistic mode. The postcolonial discourse points to a participatory, at times, interactive and co-evolving process. Patriarchal experiences are discriminatory; however, these discriminations cannot be always postcolonial in nature, to be precise.

Keeping in mind their background of different cultural contexts, postcolonial women writers practise what Gayatri Spivak calls the 'frontier style' which favours "cross-hatched, fragmented and choric forms" (Boehmer, *Colonial* 219). This is reflected in the writing style of Grace where her mode of story-telling is many-voiced, or interrupted and digressive in the manner of an oral tale. Grace's *Baby No-Eyes* employs a narrative form consisting of multiple narrators and perspectives, combining the voice of three generations or women in the form of grandmother Kura, Te Paania and Te Paania's dead daughter. The daughter of Te Paania participates in the narration of the story and lends a supernatural perspective to the narrative. The participative story-telling technique embraced by postcolonial women writers highlight perspectives that might have been overlooked by standard colonial and postcolonial Western writing. The techniques embraced by postcolonial women

writers like incantation, songs, dream-sequences and dramatic interchanges all work to counter the unifying viewpoint typical of European realism and 1960s nationalist novels by male writers (Boehmer, *Colonial* 219). Grace possesses what H.G. Gadamer calls "historically effective consciousness", which is a combination of historical understandings and traditions with particular sets of belief systems and values (28). This quality shapes the interactions of Grace's characters with the world in her writings which makes their understandings of events subject to their own conditionality.

The postcolonial women writers do not seek to generalize their existence and experience but rather give a social context and a specific texture to their writings. They focus on what Trinh Minh-ha calls their "distinct actualities" (72). This signifies a political commitment to acknowledge and validate women writers who have gone before them and served as inspiration. But it also indicates the increasing independence in their works and the retrieval of "suppressed oral traditions, half-forgotten histories, unrecorded private languages, moments of understated and unrecognized women's resistance" in their works (Boehmer, *Colonial* 220). In this way, postcolonial women writers add a sense of women's many-centred, constellated power, stressing the importance of diversity whilst articulating selfhood. Their writing is emblematic of postcolonial writing in the sense that it has addressed, redressed and stressed the historical legacy of compounded oppression and survival (220).

Helene Cixous writes in her essay 'The Laugh of the Medusa', "If woman has always functioned "within" the discourse of man. . . it is time for her to dislocate this 'within', to explode it, turn it around, and seize it to make it hers", as she feels that functioning within the discourse of man diminishes and stifles her different sounds (887). She further asserts that instead of containing her voice, she must take it "in her own mouth, biting that tongue with her very own teeth to invent for herself a language to get inside of" (887). This statement made by Cixous is indicative of what Patricia Grace has done in her narratives. She has taken on the task of validating the indigenous women's experiences. Her works fill the gaps, voids and silences that have never been articulated in colonial or male-centred discourse. In her

examination of the previously unexplored, she has unveiled, displayed and illuminated the indigenous women's experience. She writes in what Elaine Showalter calls a "double-voiced discourse" that "always embodies the social, literary and cultural heritages of both the muted and the dominant" (263). Cixous further sffirms:

> A feminine text cannot fail to be more than subversive. It is volcanic; as it is written it brings about an upheaval of the old property crust, carrier of masculine investments; there's no other way. There's no room for her if she's not a he. If she's a her-she, it's in order to smash everything, to shatter the framework of institutions, to blow up the law, to break up the "truth" with laughter. (888)

In postcolonial and indigenous women's writing, there has been a concerted effort to redress and de-romanticize the concept of the notion of 'strong women'. This notion of women was used as alienating symbols of the struggle for independence and an independent nation. To counter this limiting and inaccurate representation of women, postcolonial women writers have focused their art on imaginatively shaping their own lived experiences of "domestic space, sexual desire, agency, guardianship, leadership and so on" (Boehmer, *Colonial* 255). They have also been concerned with dismantling the concept of woman as the "overarching, universal sign of oppression" (255). This dismantling of these inapt representations of women evokes what is called "the rescinding of annulled space" propounded by Luz Maria de la Torre Amaguana (Dulfano 38). It means a transgression of the discursive and physical spaces by women that had been denied to them in the past. It is a countering and challenging of the stigmatized stereotype of poor, ignorant, abused and exploited indigenous woman. Amongst other things, it finds expression in taking up writing to transcend invisibility and silence and dissociating the indigenous from the pervasive process of degradation and effacement that curtails their responsibilities (38).

Janet Holmes asserts that the "predominant identity constructed by Maori women in their stories is a strong, self-secure, confident person, capable of handling difficult and challenging situations" (119). The young Maori often constructed a

rather feisty and somewhat socially subversive identity for themselves, telling stories of women who challenge social norms and female stereotypes. Their narratives reflect a strong interest in social issues – issues such as the way power is asserted and distributed in society, issues of legitimate authority, and strategies foe effective management. The stories presented by Maori women in their stories are often constructed as social or cultural problems rather than as individual, personal problems (119). Grace also incorporates this important function of the expression, construction and exploration of a distinct identity of Maori/indigenous women in society.

In *Baby No-Eyes,* Te Paania undergoes a personal transformation from a young woman stuck in an abusive marriage to a voice and representative of her indigenous community. Her transformation is witnessed through the eyes of her son Tawera. After the community's fight for their ancestral Anapuke land, Te Paania becomes a "speaker and a traveller" (276). Tawera accompanies her on one of her speaking engagements and he attests:

> Down she came from the lectern, leaving her papers behind, and there she was centre stage again. There she was wild, telling us about my sister. No more creaking and shuffling as she told about all that happened during that time while she was climbing back from the dead. After that she spoke about people's lives, and about different people having different knowledge of life, having different hearts and different understandings. She told it very well. (280)

Apart from voicing the indignities suffered by her community and claiming their rights, Te Paania also uses her new platform to talk about the injustices in her past. She finally attains the courage to question the motive of the hospital authorities in removing the eyes from her daughter's body. She believes that the reason for the defilement of her daughter's body was for scientific and medical research and that it would not have happened to them if they had not been who they were. She speaks for herself and her people "who don't like the idea of their life patterns being taken and owned by someone else: who don't want the essence of themselves being altered or

disposed of, or transferred into plants or to other humans" (280). Te Paania's journey from a timid, abused young wife to an outspoken representative of her people reflects a countering and challenging of the image of a poor, ignorant and exploited indigenous women. It also runs parallel to the journey of Gran Kura who also experiences an alteration of beliefs and perspective in the text.

The essence of Gran Kura's character in the beginning of her story is her silence. Her silence was rooted in her childhood which was spent at a school where it was ingrained in her that her language was 'evil' (Grace, *Baby* 37). The language that was enforced was English to the extent that the slightest hesitance to speak the language resulted in a teacher asking her, "Do I have to shake the language out of you, do I do I?" (34). She had to adopt a English name 'Kate' at school. When she wanted to help her cousin Riripeti answer the teacher in English because Riripeti did not understand the language, she "wanted to whisper in (their) language so her sister knew what to do, but she knew (she) wasn't allowed to speak (their) language" (34). She explains the apprehension and resulting trauma from their interaction with their teacher:

> Didn't know a glass was right for milk and a cup was right for tea, because at home we had enamel plates and enamel mugs for everything. We didn't speak until we'd learned, didn't speak unless we had to because we were afraid our bad language might come out, but we became good at guessing the answers we had to give. (33)

Silence in this context serves as an instance of what Ashcroft and others call the "silencing and marginalizing of the post-colonial voice by the imperial centre" (82). It indicates the control of the means of communication and the "gagging of the voice of the individual by the state" (83). The grounding of the relationship between native students and teachers in silence is crucial in the metaphoric design of the story. There is the impossibility of communication as the teachers in the school insist on speaking English while Riripeti has no knowledge of the language. The gulf of silence indicated by the muteness of both Riripeti and Gran Kura in the classroom, stands as the difference of the postcolonial text. It captures the profound silence

between cultures which cannot be traversed by understanding. What characterizes the catastrophe of this silence is not simply the history of colonial oppression or the intersection of languages, but the struggle for control of the word – oral and literate.

The imposed silence and self-censorship of Gran Kura is symbolic of the silence of indigenous women engendered by the effects of colonialism, imperialism and patriarchy. Elleke Boehmer in *Stories of Women: Gender and Narrative in the Postcolonial Nation* (2005) discusses the concept of silence as "negation – or as a fantasised potential, a not-yet-articulated fullness of speech" and describes it as:

> . . .one of the key distinguishing features of the postcolonial: the acting out of paradox, the conversion of imposed dumbness into self-expression, the self-representation of the colonial body of its scars, its history. As confirmation of this, in postcolonial nationalist narratives. . .images of the scrutinized, scored subject body have become the focus of attempts at symbolic reversal and transfiguration. Representing its own silence, the colonised body speaks; uttering its wounds, it strives to negate its muted condition. (131)

Ashcroft and others contextualize silence in postcolonial cultures and literature as a paradoxical situation where postcolonial writers must first fall silent in order to develop a voice (83). Even with the literal freedom to speak, they find themselves "languageless, gagged by the imposition of English on their world" (83). This is not to say that there is no speech possible within that double (literal and metaphorical) 'silencing', but that 'speech' can only demonstrate that neither the language nor the means of communication have been fully appropriated. This makes all postcolonial writing by definition a form of protest or a form of acquiescence, and writing must explicitly engage in resistance to the oppressive regime in order to fully avoid acquiescence (83).

In the light of these statements, the silence of Gran Kura, even though it is engendered by pain and trauma, can be read as a process not only of 'reclamation' but "self-articulation, reconstitution through speaking one's condition" (Boehmer, *Stories* 131). Gran Kura calls herself a woman of 'evil patience and goodness' because of her fear of speaking out and offending *pakeha* people. Her decision to

remain silent was first challenged by Shane who wanted to know why he was given a non-Maori name and accused her of robbing him of his name. Eventually, it takes the stealing of her granddaughter's eyes by hospital authorities to break her silence. She concedes:

> Shane wanted his name, and though this comes too late for him, I have names to give. He wanted his stories and I have these to give. I speak to you now in the language that I haven't used since the time of Riripeti. I will never speak English again. By the time I die I hope to be again who I was born to be. (Grace, *Baby* 66)

She further justifies her decision to let go of the secrecy and the shame that surrounded the death of Riripeti:

> It's a story that never had any words, not until today. Today the words were joined from my stomach by Shane, where they have been sitting for sixty years. They came to my throat, gathering there until the sun went down, when they spilled out on to the verandah in front of our children's children, who may not be strong enough for them. (39)

Gran Kura makes the decision to let go of her 'goodness' and silence. Her journey takes a surprising turn as she takes on the responsibility of helping teachers at her grandson's school with the Maori language. She expresses her amazement when the principal of the school had asked her to do that (Grace, *Baby* 79). Out of necessity and anger, she makes the decision to speak up and voice whatever had been trapped by her 'evil patience and goodness'. She comes to a realisation of the necessity to speak for the sake of hers and the lives of her grandchildren. Her acknowledgement of this necessity and the decision to speak up is emblematic of the indigenous woman breaking her silence to claim and express her voice.

In *Indigenous Feminist Narratives* (2005), Luz Maria de la Torre Amaguana calls for the appropriation of hegemonic tools and "a (re)signification, (re)semantization, and (re)symbolization of the Indigenous woman and the attitude toward her" (Dulfano 3). In addition to the proposition of Amaguana, the marked

efforts to challenge the stereotypes of indigenous woman have run parallel to their ambition of bringing women's physical suffering and pain into their narratives to express histories of displacement and discrimination. The writing of Patricia Grace and the characterization of her female characters articulate women's bodies as sites of protest and have helped in expressing the unspoken or withheld histories of struggle and survival.

In the text *Baby No-Eyes*, the female characters Gran Kura, Te Paania and the baby challenge stereotypical representations of women and offer points of discussion in the politics of women writing. Gran Kura recounts her childhood attending a British-run school where she and her schoolmates were all forbidden to speak their native Maori language but instead forced to speak English. The trauma from this mistreatment at her school carries over into her adulthood. When she and her family are denied her deceased granddaughter's body and eyes so they could give the baby a proper burial, she finally decides to let go of her "evil patience and goodness" and declares that she "will never speak English again" (64-65). This decision and declaration evokes what Ketu H. Katrak calls "the female protagonists use of their bodies to resist patriarchal and hegemonic domination via the use of silence, illness, voice, and so on" (32). Katrak extends the conversation of the bodily function of selective silence to the concept of the 'carnival' introduced by Mikhail Bakhtin in *Rabelais and His World* (1965). Bakhtin remarks that "carnival is a syncretic pageantry of a ritualistic sort" and hence it is "not anachronistic, but rather a symbolic network of concretely sensuous forms accumulating over a centuries-long tradition of popular festivals, carnivals, celebratory and seasonal rituals, market-place spectacles" (Patchay 46). This statement relates to the function of the female body to assert female agency as an "important means of liberating human consciousness from a verbal, hierarchical perception of the work to opening up the possibility for a horizontal understanding of change" (40). This statement supports women's 'carnivalesque' resistances located in their bodies– how the body operates in carnivalesque situations, which often happens to be their only means of asserting agency. Gran Kura's silence and refusal to speak English becomes a political tool as she reclaims power over her bodily function to challenge the cultural domination of

the English language and the institution that denied her her granddaughter's body. Her political act of refusing to speak English can also be said to be indicative of a deployment of her body as a "site of resistance" that effectively ruptures the "patriarchal ways of gazing upon and controlling the female body" (152). Biman Basu opines that "colonialism attempts to discipline the native and the technologies of reformation are applied at the most diverse points. The most tenacious point of implantation, however, the point of deepest penetration, is the body" (Patchay 152). It is thus fitting that the female body and its functions, in this case Gran Kura and her function of speech, should become a site of resistance against colonialism and patriarchy. It is not the case of Gran Kura having no agency in the text as she is one of the storytellers of the novel and thus has a voice from the beginning. But the transformation she undergoes in her cultural identity is marked by her decision no longer to use any language but Maori. Late in her life, Kura becomes aware that what she had to relinquish linguistically as a child has led to the loss of central constituents of her 'self'. Although her Maori culture has always given her roots, her adjustment to Western norms prevented her from perceiving herself as part of a tradition and as part of a story, which she only becomes by taking the stories into her own hands and thus acquiring a voice.

The legacy of imperial education is starkly exposed in the text through the education system that Gran Kura and the Maori children are forced to go through. Gran Kura testifies that she and other Maori children were "afraid our bad language might come out" at school, meaning the Maori language (Grace, *Baby* 33). They were taught to hate their native names and language and embrace the English language. The result of this mistreatment is felt most acutely by Riripeti, Gran Kura's younger cousin. The fear of school became too much for Riripeti that she died "killed by school" and "dead of fear" (38). Gran Kura internalizes this trauma, exclaiming "What an evil girl I was to let her die", pinning the shame on herself as she was assigned the responsibility of taking care of her *teina*, her little sister, by her elders. The loss of the life of a little girl because of the effects of imperialism parallels the loss of the eyes of Te Paania's dead daughter elsewhere in the text. Te Paania's baby has her body mutilated and her eyes stolen in a hospital, an institution which

represents a dominant power. The desecration of the baby's body and on a larger scale, the function of Te Paania's body can be read as an exploration of the connection between imperialism and gender violence. The female body and its functions are used as a metaphor for both the invaded geographical territory and the patriarchal incursion into women's lives. It invites an examination of the double violence endured by women who live in countries and cultures with a colonial past or present. Gayatri Spivak states in 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' that:

> . . . both as object of colonialist historiography and as subject of insurgency, the ideological construction of gender keeps the male dominant. If, in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow. (287)

Grace uses the mutilation of a dead baby and the violation of Te Paania's body function to show not only the violation of an indigenous body but also an aspect of violence associated with political hegemony that affects women specifically. The double burden of dealing with prejudices against race and sex is a legacy of what M.A. Jaimes Guerrero calls "patriarchal colonialism" (65). It indicates the impact of colonialism and patriarchy on indigenous peoples, especially on women as it manifests in the erosion of their indigenous rights. A deconstruction of patriarchal colonialism brings the understanding that it is a legacy of colonialism that brought over to colonized land Eurocentric notions of the inferiority of other non-white and non-Western races, and of all women in general, versus the presumed superiority of the Anglicized, Euro-American male (65).

Shannon Speed and Lynn Stephen state that "structural forms of settler power combine with recent juridical frameworks, security policies, and economic forces structure current expressions of violence in Indigenous women's lives and the means they may use to resist them" (3). They further claim that "gendered violence has always been a part of the genocidal and assimilationist projects of settler colonialism" (4). The European colonial project brought and imposed racial and gender tropes of the uncivilized, savage, and thus disappearing Indigenous woman (10). Shari M. Huhndorf and Cheryl Suzack state:

> For indigenous women, colonization has involved their removal from positions of power, the replacement of traditional gender roles with Western patriarchal practices, the exertion of colonial control over Indigenous communities, through the management of women's bodies, and sexual violence. (1)

The gendered violence of colonization was constitutive of the modern settler state, and the state is structured on that violence, at once generating it and normalizing it (11). The indigenous women's bodies have been historically rendered "less valuable because of what they are taken to represent: land, reproduction, Indigenous kinship and governance, an alternative to hetero-patriarchal and Victorian rules of descent" (Simpson 10). These assumptions made by imperialists construct Indigenous women as the inevitable subjects of sexual violence and control. Grace fictionalizes these tropes of the Indigenous woman in the novel *Baby No-Eyes* through the experiences of the Gran Kura, Te Paania and the dead baby.

The greatest injustice done to Te Paania in *Baby No-Eyes* is the theft of her dead daughter's eyes moments after she was born at a hospital. After inquiring the whereabouts of the baby, Te Paania's family is informed that the hospital administration is "having trouble locating the body" and that perhaps it is "misplaced" (61). The hospital administration initially returns the baby with its eyes missing but when the family demands that the eyes are returned, "the eyes were brought to them in a container inside a plastic supermarket bag" (64). The defilement of the baby's body is indicative of a violation of the reproductive function of a woman's body. It is symbolic of the mistreatment of an indigenous woman's body by a dominant power manifested in the authority of the hospital administration.

The theft of the baby's eyes also grotesquely re-enacts the bodily dismemberment and ritualistic eating of the opponents' body parts, especially the eyes, to demoralize the enemy and to confer additional *mana* (prestige) on the victor in Maori culture (J. Wilson 273). This dominated the ceremony of violent death. Gran Kura explains the ethos of revenge that justified such cannibalism:

> It meant death, especially of chiefly people, victors giving insult to the living by cooking and eating the flesh of their chiefly dead. It meant cutting the heads off of heads to destroy *tapu* (sanctity), the eating of the heart to demean, the swallowing of chiefly eyes – revenge turning on revenge. (Grace, *Baby* 110)

This official insensitivity towards the 'Other's' dead is compounded by the suspicion that the hospital was using Baby's body for genetic material. Bio-prospecting – seeking for the genetic bits of endangered peoples – is seen by Te Paania, and Makahi, an activist lawyer, as a potential threat to their autonomy and dignity (187–88).

In Frantz Fanon's writing, where "every scene of violence oscillates between two discursive attractors: the instrumental and absolute," violence becomes instrumental when the colonized rises up against the colonized to challenge oppression, to "wreck the colonial world" (31). Fanon provides a framework for identifying the different uses of violence in postcolonial Maori fiction. As Patrice Wilson argues, it reaffirms a claim to a residual identity, as a symbolic act of repossession, "recreated because that identity was under threat of destruction from an imposing colonial culture" (120). Fanon presents the absolute violence of decolonization which destroys both colonizer and colonized and makes way for a new beginning. The abused, battered body of the stillborn baby in *Baby No-Eyes* can be interpreted as metonymic of the disintegration of the essential, indigenous tribal body under colonial rule. On the other hand, desecration of the body's autonomy calls for recuperation: physical healing and psychic amendment. In suggesting the need for a new order, a change in the social sphere, these bodies appear as potential spiritual sources of agency.

Apart from violence meted out by institutions of power, Grace also broaches the topic of domestic violence through Te Paania and Gran Kura. Otto Heim observes that violence features powerfully in the structures of narrativization in contemporary Maori writing, and the use of ethnic bodies as sources of oppression or sites of subjugation is commonplace in the fiction of the 1980s and 1990s (50).

Whether originating in the public or the private sphere, acts of assault and physical violation creating dismemberment, fragmentation, severance, crippling or maiming, and leading to death or near-death states, dominate. Patrice Wilson notes that violence in Grace's fiction usually occurs off-stage, and its effects are reflected in the characters' actions and attitudes (14). In the novel *Baby No-Eyes*, Te Paania is married to Shane, the father of her stillborn daughter. She finds herself in an abusive marriage even though she married out of love. She recalls the signs of violence in Shane in the early stages of her marriage, "Most of the glasses had been smashed by Shane by the time our baby began to be obvious. Pots and pans were dented and bent and windows were broken, though nothing awful happened to me" (22). It is not just Te Paania who experiences domestic violence in the novel. Gran Kura recalls the abuse she suffered at the hands of her husband Jack Hepetema. She confides in her grandmother. "I don't like my husband. He gets drunk, gets on other women and comes home putting his fists into me in places where bruises don't show" (256). The suffering endured by Te Paania and Gran Kura highlight the plight of indigenous women who are victims of domestic violence. Their stories and experiences are symbolic of the double violence experienced by indigenous women as they are victims of western institutions and marital/domestic violence.

It is also interesting to note that much of Shane's anger and disillusionment with life comes from the meaninglessness of his name. He was given the name Shane, a *pakeha* name to fit in with his schoolmates and to make his white teachers happy – "a name for a Pakeha, a name for Pakeha teachers to like. To make me be like them" (Grace, *Baby No-Eyes* 26). Shane condemns his name as he is clear that he will never fit in with the white children but also never able to claim his Maori-ness as he does not have a Maori name. The pain and anger that Shane feels over his *pakeha* name is suggestive of the extensive detrimental effects of colonialism and imperialism. The female body thus become a site of violence perpetrated by the lingering effects of patriarchal colonialism.

According to Linda McDowell, gender and cultural studies discourses on the cult of the body. . . and on body politics" that are conceived metaphorically and in line with early Western political theory, or as "formulated by feminist movements as

a woman's right to control her own body, have positioned the body as a central object of personal concern, as well as a key social issue" (36). Bryan Turner points out, the control of bodies is still exercised mainly as the control of female bodies, any analysis of the body must also address issues of patriarchy and gerontocracy (233).

In the postcolonial context, analyses of the corporeal representations of female protagonists in literature are further complicated by the fact that in many countries women writers have encountered great difficulties when trying to address issues of sexuality, gender oppression and inequality (Loomba 229). Various critics have pointed to the different positioning and significance of the female body in a colonial and postcolonial context. Françoise Lionnet writes that ". . .in postcolonial literature the gendered and racialized body of the female protagonist is consistently overdetermined; it is a partial object on which are written various cultural scripts and their death-dealing blows" (87).

Throughout history, women have been seen as restricted to their bodies. Their bodies can be seen as the ultimate spaces of confinement, marked by the way they are appropriated, predominantly by men but also by their own families (McDowell 36). The ambiguity of 'body' space as a site of repression but also of resistance is reflected in the female characters of Grace. In Patricia Grace's work, the most powerful body is that of the pregnant woman: active, whole, and fertile, she functions as a natural principle of unity because her body is anchored within a space and time continuum. The maternal, productive, nurturing body is associated with Te Paania, in particular when the birth of her second child, Tawera, is described.

Grace's powerful women figures can be identified with other images of indigenous women whose bodies are strongly situated within their environments and whose consciousness is represented as an extension of the body. These concepts of the body contrast to Western and Eurocentric depictions of white middle-class women in which the mind dominates the body or, alternatively, exists without a body. The body is most completely situated when it is enclosed in the mother's womb. In the Prologue to *Baby No-Eyes*, the unborn infant, Tawera, reproduces the rhythmic pulsations of his mother's walk:

> The first thing I knew I was bumping along, the sound of my mother's feet going lap, lap, and breath coming and going fast in and out of her nose. Lap, lap over a hard smooth surface, such as a road. (8)

Swimming in the amniotic fluid, he reproduces baby talk:

> (My mother …) went to sleep while I went slow, slow swimming, hi-aa, heiaa, hi-aa, hei-aa, then curled myself and went to sleep too, karm, karm, all the way, all the day in the bus. (9–10)

The infant's immersion in the mother's body is represented stylistically in ways which resemble the Kristevan semiotic space, the prelinguistic chora. The 'semiotic or prelinguistic chora' as defined by Julia Kristeva, is the pre-socialized psychic space where a child is not aware of its distinctness from a mother's body (Choudhury 180). Grace reproduces a pre-verbal language of the unconscious which takes its rhythms, sensations and inflections from the movements of the mother's body. The disruptive dimension of this language defies the usual pattern of syntax and grammar in language. By this act of defiance, it dismantles the structure of the patriarchal/colonial language and the power structure of patriarchal colonialism. Through the voice of Tawera, Grace expounds a nonlinear concept of time to define the way stories mesh and overlap with successive retellings, becoming relevant to the lives of contemporary tellers.

The image of the centred, strong mother also emerges in the figure of the *kuia* or *koroua*, the grandmother, a source of wisdom and ancestral lore in Maori fiction. In *Baby No- Eyes*, Gran Kura assumes this role. Powerful mythic mothers and grandmothers who are repositories of knowledge, who collect and hoard memories in order to foster ancestral links with the pre-colonial past, feature in other works by indigenous women writers. In *Baby No-Eyes*, Grace creates an unbroken link with the past through Te Paania, her husband's grandmother Kura and the deceased baby herself, who returns to haunt the family. The chain of being is completed by the deceased baby as a liminal, ghostly presence. Together they create an unbroken link with the past, drawing on spiritual forces in order to unlock its traumas. The maternal domain of power stretches over three generations connected by kinship and marriage.

Female solidarity emerges from the grandmother, Gran Kura, her granddaughter-in-law Te Paania and Te Paania's stillborn daughter.

Lorraine Bethel comments, "Women have defied the dominant sexist society by developing a type of folk culture and oral literature based on the use of gender solidarity and female bonding as self-affirming rituals" (176). Such writing also insists on its otherness by introducing elements of magic, myth, and the supernatural, and by using disjunctive, non-linear narratives which are nevertheless grounded in the historical past. The supernatural interventions in the strongly realized real worlds of Grace are presented in ways that demand acceptance of both modes, so that neither takes precedence over the other. In the polyphonic narrative structure of *Baby No-Eyes,* Grace conveys the collective response of the community to events, implying that what is experienced by one is shared by all. The process of recuperation, founded in a contemporary politics of resistance, depends on another domestic image, that of the broken and maimed body. Through the image of wounding, the spiritual forces which the wise, intuitive but maimed child embodies, are able to intervene in the symbolic sphere.

Apart from highlighting transnational agendas, postcolonial women writers have kept the conversation of postcolonial nation going with an awareness of their position in it. The narratives of the lived experiences of women have conventionally been regarded as secondary in defining national myths. Postcolonial indigenous writer like Grace counters this mode of narrative by exploring the intricate interconnection of personal lives often of women with the nation's official history. Cixous states, "Woman un-thinks the unifying, regulating history that homogenizes and channels forces, herding contradictions into a single battlefield. In woman, personal history blends together with the history of all women, as well as national and world history" (882). Grace's writings often reveal how women occupy different spaces that diverge from a male-dominated homogenous space of the nation while sometimes overlapping with it. The space that thus arises as a result of the overlap marks an important shift in women's writing. Amidst the impersonal forces engendered by globalization which confines rather than amplify women's agency, the nation emerges as validated sites of political opposition where women can form

solidarities to counter such forces. While being critical of the policies of their homeland, Grace values her homeland as a space for cultural, ethical and emotional recovery amidst the impact of globalization. Thus, her writings bring the female space to a centre stage.

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CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

When talking about literature that engages in a countering of dominant discourses, Richard Terdiman refutes it as a mode that can offer 'genuine revolution' (15-16). Writing back to the canon inevitably engenders a relationship with the colonial past, and John Thieme argues that 'a genuinely revolutionary project would necessitate a cleaner break with English culture' (170). He also suggests that an encounter with English cultural baggage is unavoidable for the postcolonial subject, and thus a dialogue with its discursive hegemonies remains necessary to function as a metonym for the ongoing struggle to find alterative definitions of identity (170-171). He reiterates that it is almost impossible to suggest that there are pure national or communal spaces untouched by the West's discursive networks (171).

The inevitable cultural interaction between different groups is made ubiquitous by the participants' own use of English to mediate their alternative historiographies and the institutional and geopolitical locales from which they write (171). Postcolonial cultures thus find themselves inevitably caught in the dilemma of needing to make a decisive break with old and new forms of imperialism whilst finding themselves entangled in a network of hybrid cultural formations. The narratives of Patricia Grace, even though her international readership would have few problems interpreting her works, contain phrases and references that have particular resonances in her cultural context. These phrases and references, despite it being written in English, arguably add a dimension and distance her narratives from British English.

This thesis selects the works of Patricia Grace such as *Baby No-Eyes, Dogside Story, Small Holes in the Silence* and *Chappy* as they abound with indications of references to Maori oral traditions, folktales, fairy tales and myths. These deliberate inclusions seem to be a countering of the marginal representation in colonial literature of native cultures and traditions. In her narratives, Grace contextualizes the native side of the story to offer up possibilities for transforming identities. Grace attempts to achieve in her narratives what John Thieme calls a

"change of the ground of the 'original': to bring the supposed margins to the centre, to tell a plurality of stories, to break down stereotypes, to interrogate the very notion of individual source-texts" (172-173). The English canon's authority of telling a story through a unitary narrative voice is unsettled by 'a range of strategies that imply there are always multiple optics on any situation, multiple voices for telling any story' (173).

In the introductory chapter, the history of literature written about the society of New Zealand and the Pacific region is foregrounded. Much of what had been written about this region before the 1970s was what can be called colonialist literature because of its rejection of the native and sanctioning of the colonial power (Boehmer 58). On one hand, stereotypical projections of the Pacific Islands as a land of "noble savage"' and "utopian paradise" persisted in European discourse (Wendt 52). On the other hand, Christian missionaries and European explorers termed the inhabitants of the region as "primitive tribes" and "savage heathen" who practiced "abhorrent social practices such as cannibalism, infanticide and tattooing" (Edmond 9). The tendency of these discourses was to perpetuate the image of the savage and the belief that they need to be civilized. The late eighteenth century is commonly taken as a starting point in analyses of European representations of the Pacific, with the discourses of writers like Herman Melville and Pierre Loti whose narratives about the Pacific were marked by eroticism and exoticism (Keown 29). Given that these approaches were endorsed by European discourses about the region, it is not surprising that indigenous writers have mainly taken an opposition to these stereotypes.

Indigenous writing has emerged as "an important constituency located at once within and without existing forms of postcolonial self-expression" (Boehmer 221). But it carefully disentangles itself from postcolonial writing in the sense that indigenous writers see themselves and their land as still colonized because they are a minority in their native land. The Maoris, Inuit, and Australian Aborigines have developed a special type of literature/writing because they are marginalized by the colonizers as well as the white settler societies. Their position is unique as they are "pushed to the psychic and political edge of societies which themselves have

experienced the dilemma of colonial alienation" (Ashcroft et al. 142). Indigenous literature revolts against the forces of cultural uniformity and the appropriation of indigenous peoples' sovereignty by states (Niezen 2). It also documents an imagined plurality brought about by specific mechanisms of the consequences of colonization, including the English language (Christie 1). Pacific literature is persistently amorphous in nature and does not just critically engage with European representations. Pacific writers draw extensively upon their pre-colonial oral, mythopoeic, and artistic traditions and not just 'write back' to the centre (Keown 7). Pacific literature follows three significant trends in particular: the shift in focus from anticolonialism to postindependence corruption; from realism to postmodernism; and from phallocentrism to gender inclusiveness (196). Pacific writers are now commonly identified through pan-ethnic and regional labels such as 'Pasifika' and 'Oceania' drawing attention to the importance of the interconnected local, global, regional spatial formations that Epeli Hau'ofa has identified as a central aspect of contemporary Pacific literary production (222). The concept of indigenous identity is not just about an expression of creativity, it also happens to be a means of survival. The contemporary Pacific literature and the narratives of Grace in particular, are therefore a demonstration of the continued endurance and expression of indigenous cultures. Without imposing a homogeneous singularity upon New Zealand Maori writers like Keri Hulme, Witi Ihimaera and Patricia Grace, what should be noted is that these writers experience their reality as a deeply compromised, polysemic state. Their literature admits that they have hybrid and conflicting cultural allegiances because their history is inextricably linked with that of the whites. There is complicity with the culture of their former colonizers even as they seek to redeem and affirm their cultural memories (Boehmer 222). Amongst these writers, Patricia Grace imaginatively explores national traditions to emphasize indigenous resilience and self-assertion. The texts selected for this thesis are summarized in this chapter and their selection justified by pointing out their relevance to the study.

The stereotypical constructions of identity that abound in English canonical texts are challenged by role reversals and exchanges that demonstrate that identities are made and not born. A study of the specifics of her texts reveals that there are

many determinants that shape the construction of identity in Grace's texts, in the seemingly revisionist style of handling her stories. In *Dogside Story*, Grace introduces readers to characters who inhabit a small, rural Maori indigenous community imbued with allusions to both traditional Maori cultural practices and participants as citizens of the global world. The indigenous inhabitants of Dogside function as repositories of ancestral traditions as they observe and adhere to cultural traditions as they construct a meeting house, elders instruct the community regarding the actions taken as a community. On the other hand, they also strive to take part in the world of international global capitalism by the commodification of their land to attract tourists. Their identity as a community thus defies easy categorization and thus represents a challenge at attempts to arrive at essentialist or authentic constructions of the indigene. The polyphonic style of Grace in her texts functions as a representation of her traditional oral culture. On the other hand, the narrator Oriwia in *Chappy* and Gran Kura in *Baby No-Eyes* recognize the importance of preserving stories in the written form, an activity that seems to move away from traditional oral culture. The polyphonic style of Grace in her texts *Baby No-Eyes* and *Chappy* ultimately function as a mode and counter-discourse that subverts the practice of the English canon of telling singular stories.

It is seemingly an impossibility to try to attempt and provide a comprehensive study in the expressions of identity and indigeneity across varying indigenous communities. The second chapter explores and examines the different ways in which Patricia Grace negotiates the issue of indigenous identity and the complications inherent in reclaiming identity in her narratives. The indigenous Maori community in *Dogside Story* (2001) prides itself in its homogeneity, but because of financial necessity, they change their landscape and activity to accommodate outsiders. The disruption precipitated by the coming of outsiders places the community in an unfamiliar cultural space. Before the coming of outsiders, the community is evocative of 'locality', a particular bounded space with its set of "close-knit social relationships based upon strong kinship ties and length of residence" (Featherstone 103). The opening up of their community ensures the adoption of new practices of cooperation without completely abandoning their previous identity. Zygmunt

Bauman opines that identity is "not secured by a lifelong guarantee" and that it is "eminently negotiable and revocable" (11). The community thus negotiates its identity and indigeneity as it recognizes its constraints in its relationship with the new cultural space brought about by new practices of cooperation.

In the context of cultural spaces, land is an important determinant of identity and cultures are specific to the reality of bordered territories. It is a crucial factor in the construction of identity as it interconnects people over time and space. In *Dogside Story*, the highly perceptive protagonist Te Rua's identity is in a state of constant oscillation between two spaces. The custody battle of his daughter with his aunts forcibly removes him temporarily from his community. In terms of the spatial, it is a marker of community and belonging. Land as a marker of identity brings to light the concept of dislocation. Dislocation connotes a broader spectrum than displacement as it indicates not just a physical movement but the ideas of amongst other things temporality, memories, historical and spiritual consciousness. Even though there might be the existence of a territorial border, the essence of cultural space is the unique customs and values of a specific community at a particular time. Benhayoun also states that "cultures have always been interpreted as articulation of difference and location" as cultures are specific to the reality of territorial borders (155). In the novel *Baby No-Eyes*, Patricia Grace contextualizes the concept of dislocation in the main character Te Paania's husband Shane's struggle against his *pakeha/*English name. Shane calls his name "a movie name, a cowboy name" and "a name for a Pakeha, a name for Pakeha teachers to like. To make me be like them" (Grace, *Baby* 26). In this context, the dislocation points to physiognomy as a binary space to identify oneself. This dislocation is not a naturally produced perception; it has deeper ramifications built upon a series of unidentifiable questions about real identity of a Maori. The colonist's insistence on all binaries as making or breaking identity cannot be the whole truth; the cases of indigenes would point to something more, somewhat inexpressibly beyond linguistic constructs, beyond intellectual conceptions. Therefore, the idea of identity as a process need not be taken for an endless marching toward an unknown destination. Identity may be understood as a

process of continuous expansion and contraction, continuous invention and discovery, continuous play of meeting and separating.

Indigenous writers have used the metaphor of a physical or mental journey through dislocation to bring about an awareness of the limitation of the indigenous subject. Temporal dislocation is an abstract kind of dislocation as it is based on the perception of the individual. The temporal dislocation is caused by undertaking the act of recollection of the past or an escape to the spirit world. Gran Kura and Tawera in the novel *Baby No-Eyes* experience temporal dislocation by recounting the past and escaping to the spirit world. The degree of difficulty or comfort elicited by these acts affects the negotiation of identity. The concept of relocation is also addressed in this chapter through the journey of Tu's family in the novel *Tu*. The decision of Tu's family to move from their hometown is accompanied by a need to belong and put down roots in a new place. They relocate themselves in a new cultural space after leaving the familiar and crossing the boundary or their cultural space of origin. The new cultural space may be strange and alien and the relocation might be accompanied by a feeling of vulnerability and powerlessness. In their attempt to negotiate their identity in their new world, they often articulate the antagonistic elements hindering their acclimatization. This articulation of antagonism is possible because of the expansiveness of their feelings and experiences. But the antagonism in their new cultural space does not dissuade them from the need to familiarize themselves with it. Ronald L. Jackson proposes that "negotiation of cultural identity is a process in which one considers the gain, loss, or exchange of their ability to interpret their own reality or worldview" (10). The conviction of the characters in *Tu* to acclimatize to their new space is also brought by the acknowledgement that it was impossible to return to the culture of origin. The eventual participation of the three brothers- Tu, Pita and Rangi in the war enables the young Maori men to navigate the borders of cultural spaces as they represent a culture within which they find themselves different. This situation is indicative of what Homi Bhabha expounds in his theory of 'Third Space', which is a product of the interface, negotiations and exchange across the borders of cultural spaces (55-56). This 'Third Space' is an 'inbetween' position that does not exist before two cultural spaces intersect and their

borders blur. Therefore, this can be seen as a kind of hybrid space, from where the individual can navigate both the cultural spaces and also becomes able to craft a new kind of identity for himself by incorporating a new set of cultural practices.

In navigating their cultural spaces and minority status in society, indigenous writers like Patricia Grace appropriate colonial language as a subversive strategy. The narratives of Grace stress on the importance of language in the formation of identity that postcolonial indigenous writing insists on. John E. Joseph remarks, "Language. . .is central to individual identity. It inscribes the person within the national and other corporate identities. . .from which others will read and interpret the person's identity in the richest and complex of ways" (255). Grace's novel *Baby No-Eyes* focuses on a Maori woman named Kura who opposes the imposition of the English language and system of education on a generation of Maori children. Grace also incorporates myth and fantasy in her narratives to construct and affirm the individual and social indigenous identity. Grace's narratives use myth and fantasy to examine the politics and complexity of writing. Michelle Keown asserts that the references to myth by a range of Maori writers are 'a means by which to reconcile Maori oral traditions with contemporary literary narrative techniques' (179). Grace's writing does not merely seek a space within the territory of Pakeha imaginations, but asserts her intentions of subverting western/colonial literary narrative techniques. The blending of Maori mythology with non-Maori mythopoeic discourses in the novels *Baby No-Eyes* and *Tu* is to explore the relevance of Pacific oral traditions to contemporary socio-political realities. The fact that myth possesses a principle of orality lends a certain fluidity and dexterity in the way Grace represents it in her narratives. Myth provides a structure for the formation of a community as it is rooted in the way language operates as a mode of communication.

The incorporation of different elements and functions of fantasy like the concept of evil, ghosts, dismembered bodies and existence of multiple worlds in the texts *Baby No-Eyes, Tu* and *Small Holes in the Silence* is also instrumental in the interrogation and undermining of dominant authority in writing. The subversive nature of fantasy provides the validation of its use by Patricia Grace in her writings. In the novel *Baby No-Eyes*, the case of the baby's mutilated eyes allows Grace to

integrate the element of fantasy in her narrative as the mother of the dead baby Te Paania hears the baby's voice. It evokes the concept of dismembered bodies in fantasy as espoused by Rosemary Jackson as it shows "the power of the fantastic to interrogate the category of character- that definition of the self as coherent, indivisible and continuous whole which has dominated Western thought for centuries and is celebrated in classic theatre and realistic art alike" (83). The ability of Tawera to converse with his dead sister also evokes the literary genre of the 'menippea' which breaks "the demands of historical realism or probability" as it "conflated past, present and future, and allowed dialogues with the dead" indicates the existence of multiple worlds. (Rosemary Jackson 14). In the novels *Tu* and *Chappy*, the allusions to ghost stories serve as multiple references to the existence of another world which provide an example of another aspect of literary fantasy in the writings of Grace. It is evocative of the 'vision of escape' aspect, one of the key distinguishing marks of fantasy literature espoused by Eric S. Rabkin in his book The Fantastic in Literature (1976). These references point to an infusion of elements of the fantastic in situations where reality cannot offer solace. The integration of the elements of myth and fantasy in her narratives is an attempt to reject the power structures prevailing in a post-colonial society whilst dismantling one-sided colonial representation of indigenous culture and society in colonial narratives.

When discussing the importance of writing in postcolonial cultures, Ashcroft and others state that the "presence or absence of writing is possibly the most important element" (81). They attest that "writing does not merely introduce a communicative instrument, but also involves an entirely different and intrusive (invasive) orientation to knowledge and interpretation" (81). In many postcolonial societies, it was not the English language which had the greatest effect, but writing itself. In this respect, they also state that "although oral culture is by no means the universal model of post-colonial societies, the invasion of the ordered, cyclic, and 'paradigmatic' oral world by the unpredictable and 'syntagmatic' world of the written word stands as a useful model for the beginnings of postcolonial discourse". (81)

The act of writing for women is an inescapable product of the ideological conflict that inevitably takes place in the text. Elizabeth Archuleta writes that "postcolonial indigenous women use the enemy's language as an arsenal to arm themselves and appropriate the tools of the enemy – creating a rhetorical site of power through the appropriation, reinvention, and use of the conqueror's language" to speak for themselves and dismantle colonial assumptions (89). The fourth chapter delves into Grace's narratives as she seeks and demands self-definition as well as for legal recognition, identity and rights on the basis of sameness as well as difference. Her writing is her primary vehicle for her participation in the articulation of indigenous experiences and expression. Her works become a medium for her to join in the conversations of indigeneity on the global stage.

Patricia Grace's writing depicts the qualities of resistance and reclamation through the female characters in her novel. In the novel *Baby No-Eyes*, she delivers an example of a woman's self-assuredness and resistance in the character of Gran Kura. In the course of her tale, Gran Kura moves from a timid, fearful little girl constricted by her 'white' teachers at school to a resilient grandmother who refuses to speak the English language. The character Te Paania undergoes a personal transformation from a young woman stuck in an abusive marriage to a voice and representative of her indigenous community. To counter the limiting and inaccurate representation of women in literature, postcolonial women writers have focused their art on imaginatively shaping their own lived experiences of "domestic space, sexual desire, agency, guardianship, leadership and so on" (Boehmer, *Colonial* 255). This dismantling of these inapt representations of women evokes what is called "the rescinding of annulled space" propounded by Luz Maria de la Torre Amaguana (Dulfano 38). It means a transgression of the discursive and physical spaces by women that had been denied to them in the past. The imposed silence and self-censorship of Gran Kura also highlights the symbolic silence of indigenous women engendered by the effects of colonialism, imperialism and patriarchy. Ashcroft and others contextualize silence in postcolonial cultures and literature as a paradoxical situation where postcolonial writers must first fall silent in order to develop a voice (83). This makes all postcolonial writing by definition a form of protest or a form of

acquiescence, and writing must explicitly engage in resistance to the oppressive regime in order to fully avoid acquiescence (83). In the light of these statements, the silence of Gran Kura, even though it is engendered by pain and trauma, can be read as a process not only of 'reclamation' but "self-articulation, reconstitution through speaking one's condition" (Boehmer, *Stories* 131). The image of the centred, strong mother also emerges in the figure of the kuia or koroua, the grandmother, a source of wisdom and ancestral lore in Maori fiction. In *Baby No- Eyes*, Gran Kura assumes this role. Powerful mythic mothers and grandmothers who are repositories of knowledge, who collect and hoard memories in order to foster ancestral links with the pre-colonial past, feature in other works by indigenous women writers.

In her narratives, Grace brings to light themes that are related to the process of writing out social, political, gender and individual identity. She usurps the hegemonic tools of power- language and writing in the service of her community. Her narratives abound with women characters who are agents and protagonists in their life stories, who critically examine the foreign culture that are impinging on, surrounding, and shaping their world. She recognizes and dissects the structural barriers restricting indigenous identity. Her protest and resistance to structural barriers open new spaces for indigenous self-realization. Aída Hernández Castillo, Shannon Speed, and Lynn Stephen argue, ""Indigenous women's dissident discourse and actions can disrupt, challenge, and potentially transform oppressive power relations and the manner in which power relations become reconfigured and re-inscribed in new forms" (53). Through her narratives, she elaborates what Andrew Solomon defines as 'horizontal identity' - influences or values and preferences that an individual does not have in common with his/her progenitors (Dulfano 103). Through her narratives, she seeks to negotiate the cultural, political, economic, and biological attributes that define the indigenous community at birth and cultivate links to strengthen the individual and the collective. She seeks to build bridges and a sustainable world, transforming an oppressive past into an optimistic future.

Postcolonial indigenous women writers like Grace have kept the conversation of postcolonial nation going with an awareness of their position in it. The narratives of the lived experiences of women have conventionally been regarded as secondary

in defining national myths. Grace counters this mode of narrative by exploring the intricate interconnection of personal lives often of women with the nation's official history. Grace's writings often reveal how women occupy different spaces that diverge from a male-dominated homogenous space of the nation while sometimes overlapping with it. Amidst the impersonal forces engendered by globalization which confines rather than amplify women's agency, the nation emerges as validated sites of political opposition where women can form solidarities to counter such forces. While being critical of the policies of their homeland, Grace values her homeland as a space for cultural, ethical and emotional recovery amidst the impact of globalization.

The fictional narratives selected for the thesis – *Chappy, Small Holes in the Silence, Tu, Dogside Story* and *Baby No-Eyes* by Patricia Grace are fairly recent works with all but one published in the twenty-first century. There are still possibilities and scope for further readings and critical analyses of these texts. The thesis has engaged with these texts to study negotiation of identity and indigeneity. Grace's texts also abound with accounts of trauma experienced because of the effects of colonialism. They also contain portrayals of the disabled indigenous body that serve as significant symbols in her texts. The study does not perform a reading of the narratives within these contexts. These frameworks provide different lenses through which these narratives can be analyzed thus adding and contributing to the present dialogue and discourse regarding the works of Patricia Grace and the Pan-Pacific literary scene.

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled "Negotiating Indigeneity in Selected Narratives of Patricia Grace: A Study" written by Marlyn Lalnunmawii Sailo for the award of Doctor of Philosophy in English and Culture Studies has been written under my supervision.

She has fulfilled all the required norms laid down under the Ph.D. UGC Regulations 2016 of Mizoram University. The thesis incorporates the student's bona fide research and that no part of it has been submitted for award of any degree in this or any other University or Institute of Learning.

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DECLARATION

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I, Marlyn Lalnunmawii Sailo, hereby declare that the subject matter of this thesis is the record of work done by me, that the contents of this thesis did not form basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to do the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other University/ Institute.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the Almighty God for His blessings, guidance and keeping my health through the challenging journey of pursuing my doctoral degree, and for answering my prayers.

My sincerest gratitude goes to my supervisor, Prof. Sarangadhar Baral. It is difficult to put into words how grateful I am for his advice, wisdom, expertise and patience when undertaking my research, and the continuous support and understanding I have experienced as his scholar.

I would like to thank the faculty members at the Department of English and Culture Studies, Mizoram University for their invaluable guidance and advice and for giving me the opportunity to pursue my research. I also thank my fellow research scholars and friends at the department for always encouraging me and lending a helping hand whenever I need it.

I would also like to thank my family for their unconditional love and support and always keeping me in their prayers throughout my research. They are my source of inspiration and I am forever indebted to them.

I dedicate this thesis to my husband Dr. K. Vanlalhruaizela and my children K. Vanlalduhsaka and K. Vanlalhriatrenga.

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1. **List of papers presented in Conferences/Seminars:**

Sl.No.	Year	Title of Paper	Title of Seminar/Conference	Organizers and Place
1.	2017	"Cultural Politics and Identity in Patricia Grace's *Baby No-Eyes*"	International Conference on Religion, Literature & Culture	Higher Education & Research Society, Pune, India.
2.	2018	"The Transformation of Indigeneity in Patricia Grace's *Dogside Story*"	International Seminar on Indigenous Languages and Culture: Its Preservation and Dissemination	Centre for Languages and Cultural Studies, Gauhati University, Assam.

2. **List of Publications:**

Sl. No.	Year	Title of Chapter/Research Paper	Name of book/journal	Publication Details (Place/Publishers) with ISBN/ISSN
1.	2018	"The Female Expression and Experience in Banana Yoshimoto's *Kitchen*"	Ajker Jodhan (Special Issue) RN NO: 53025	Place: Jhargram, India. Publisher: Basudeb Mondal, Jhargram Raj College, India. ISSN: 0871-5819
2.	2018	"The Intricacy and Complexity of Time and Memory in Julian Barnes' *The Sense of*	International Journal of Interdisciplinary Research in	Place: Tamil Nadu, India Publisher: DV Publication,

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DATE OF ADMISSION	:	27.07.2016

APPROVAL OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL:

1. DRC	:	17.04.2017
2. BOARD OF STUDIES	:	26.04.2017
3. SCHOOL BOARD	:	26.05.2017
MZU REGISTRATION	:	241 of 2013
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EXTENSION (IF ANY)	:	NA

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NEGOTIATING INDIGENEITY IN SELECTED NARRATIVESOF PATRICIA GRACE: A STUDY

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THEREQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

MARLYN LALNUNMAWIISAIO

MZU REGD. NO. 241 of2013

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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND CULTURE STUDIES

SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND LANGUAGES

APRIL, 2023

NEGOTIATING INDIGENEITY IN SELECTED NARRATIVES OF PATRICIAGRACE: A STUDY

BY

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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND CULTURESTUDIES

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Submitted

In partial fulfillment of the requirement of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy inEnglish and Culture Studies of Mizoram University, Aizawl.

The negotiation of identity and indigeneity for indigenous peoples has attracted critical attention and analysis in recent times. It is important to understand with clarity who is considered 'indigenous', and whether indigeneity makes sense only if it is understood in relation to the non-indigenous. The author selected for this study Patricia Grace addresses in her narratives the issues surrounding the negotiation of indigeneity by the indigenous people of New Zealand. She was born on August 17, 1937 in Wellington, New Zealand to a Maori father and a European mother. She is of Ngati Toa, Ngati Raukawa and Te Ati Awa descent, and is affiliated to Ngati Porou by marriage. Her first book, *Waiariki and Other Stories* (1975), one of the first books by a Maori writer, won a PEN/Hubert Church Award for best first book of fiction. Her next book was a novel, *Mutuwhenua: The Moon Sleeps* (1978), which examined a marriage between a Maori woman and a *pakeha* (a man of European descent) ("Patricia"). The narratives of Grace selected for this research are *Baby No-Eyes* (1998), *Dogside Story* (2001), *Tu* (2004), *Small Holes in the Silence* (2006) and *Chappy* (2015). Her works have been acclaimed for their depiction of Maori culture in general as well as Maori diversity. They are often set in small coastal villages and concern community and intergenerational family relationships. Grace presents a multiplicity of Maori voices, revealing much about Maori life and concerns. She seeks to reclaim her cultural matrices within the boundary of another culture. She has to try to embrace, as an indigenous writer, "the inevitability of (her) impurity. . .exposing a disturbing legacy of social hardship" (Boehmer 222). Her narratives are therefore self-consciously peripheral as she uses the past as a source of identification while at the same time sensitive to the fact that she is writing in a postmodern, transcultural world. She provides searing indictments of colonialism while at the same time propagating nationalist self-affirmation.

Ronald Niezen states in *The Origins of Indigenism* that the term 'indigenous' refers to a primordial identity, to people with primary attachments to land and culture, 'traditional' people with lasting connections to ways of life that have survived from time immemorial. One of the markers of indigenous literature is a revolt against the forces of cultural uniformity and against the appropriation of indigenous peoples' sovereignty by states, which has been brought about by globalization (2). As is in the case of Grace and other indigenous writers, they have

to differentiate their literature from other nationalist writers because full political autonomy is not a reality for them. Their distinction lies in their hybrid status, arriving at a productive but uneasy terms with their ambiguity.

Literature written about the society of New Zealand and the indigenous community before the 1970s was what can be called colonialist literature. Colonialist literature 'revolves constantly, even obsessively, around certain key themes: the introversion of the colonial mission, or colonial drama: the masculine aspect of that drama: the representation of other peoples: and the resistant incomprehensibility or unreadability of the colonized beyond' (Boehmer 58). Amongst the literature that promoted stereotypic reproduction of natives and European self-projection, G.A. Henty's *Maori and Settler: A Tale of the New Zealand War* (1891) is one of the most prominent. Henty has been accused of glorifying British imperialism in his writings and his works have rightly been denounced as an 'information and instruction manual for future colonialists and English gentlemen' (Boehmer 74). Since the 1970s, indigenous writing has emerged as an important constituency located at once within and without existing forms of postcolonial self-expression. It shares the vision and objectives of other postcolonial writing such as "the quest for personal and racial/cultural identity built on the spiritual guardianship of traditional laws; the belief that writing is an integral part of self-definition; the emphasis on historical reconstruction; the ethical imperative of reconciliation with the past" (221). But it has to carefully disentangle itself from postcolonial writing in the sense that indigenous writers see themselves and their land as still colonized because they are a minority in their native land.

The first text selected for this study *Baby No-Eyes* was published in 1998. The story centres on a young woman Te Paania, who survives a car accident but miscarries her baby. When her Maori relatives try to claim the body of the baby, the hospital staff returns the baby with the eyes missing. Te Paania gives birth to another child, a boy, Tewara who forms a deep bond with his dead sister, and this bond between a living person and a dead person becomes the core of the story.

The text *Dogside Story* is set in a rural Maori coastal community. The main protagonist is Te Rua, a one-legged young man, whose role in his community is to provide fresh fish and cray. He battles for the custody of his daughter with his aunts

and this battle threatens to split up the community. The custody battle and the reaction of the community throw light on familial relationships and the Maori community. The account of life in *Dogside Story* that emerges is an account that presents sights, sounds, memories, verbal expressions, and awakenings from a young man's experience growing up in a Maori village.

The novel *Tu* tells the story of three brothers-Pita, Rangi and Tu and their experiences as soldiers during World War II. In this novel, Patricia Grace presents a searing indictment of the purpose of war and questions the participation of Maoris in a war which she does not think has anything to do with them. Grace also talks about the Maori experience in an increasingly cosmopolitan New Zealand. She sets the novel in the capital of the country, Wellington. The protagonist and his family move to Wellington when the protagonist was a mere boy. The novel captures the complexity and difficulty the family faces on moving to a big city where people who look like them are a minority.

Small Holes in the Silence is a collection of twenty one short stories. The settings for the stories are rural, urban New Zealand and also the world beyond. The stories have tribal and contemporary themes. The overwhelming feature found in these stories is Grace's sympathy for the underdogs, people who are unlikable and on the outside. Grace insists on the importance of story-telling, family ties and how much these two aspects figure in the determination and assertion of identity and difference. The incorporation of mythical and fantastical elements in this text is deliberate device by her to inculcate the indigenous Maori stories and myths in her narratives.

The fifth text *Chappy* traces the studying, learning and yearning of purpose and meaning in the life and experiences of Daniel, a young man born to a Danish father and a Maori mother. His mother sends him to New Zealand to live with her side of the family, specifically Daniel's grandmother Oriwia. The narrative then shifts to the lives and experiences of Oriwia and Daniel's grand-uncle Aki. The novel then becomes dominated by the recollections of Oriwia and Aki as they narrate their life stories to Daniel.

In her narratives, Grace engages with contemporary issues which make her an active commentator on social issues relevant to the Maori community. Her works

present a culture (Maori) from the inside, insisting on its rational organization and the coherence of its worldview. It is fitting that her characters represent voices that seek to account for Maori identity as raising consciousness is a necessity for them. The risk of the minority status of the Maoris has been not much in elimination as in fading out through assimilation, so their identity has to be deliberately claimed. The country of New Zealand is aware that the issue of deliberately claiming an identity involves “not only restoring the economic balance between the two groups, but enabling those who want to claim their Maoriness, to identify with the piece of land and sea which is their spiritual home” (Bardolph 135). It is against the trope of Maoris in literature before the 1970s as “ferocious cannibals, beautiful natives, a noble and dying race” that Grace writes powerfully about Maori identity and community (132). She speaks and creates an audience to halt the monocultural perception of New Zealand. In a way, her writings have a collective value as they can be interpreted as an expression of individuality and culture.

CHAPTER 1: SITUATING PATRICIA GRACE IN THE PAN-PACIFIC LITERARY SCENE

This chapter studies the indigenous literature of New Zealand and the Pacific, with special focus on the narratives of Patricia Grace selected for this thesis. It attempts to understand the contemporary indigenous literary scene in New Zealand and the Pacific by showing how its contact with the western world has shaped the literature produced from this region. It is important for indigenous writers to separate themselves from postcolonial writers because colonial occupation is not just history as they find themselves submerged in a white majority land and positions of power are occupied by the descendants of colonizers. This wariness of difference is justified as the implications of postcolonial writing do not always necessarily apply to them. Pacific literature is persistently amorphous in nature and does not just critically engage with European representations. Pacific writers draw extensively upon their pre-colonial oral, mythopoeic, and artistic traditions and not just 'write back' to the centre (Keown, *Pacific* 7). Pacific writers can be divided into three main categories: "the anti-colonial and polemical first-generation literatures of the 1960s and early 1970s; the post-independence shift to internal cultural politics; and the new wave of indigenous Pacific creativity- featuring increased numbers of diasporic and women writers" (10). But this differentiation is not straightforward as Pacific writing does not merely mirror socio-political changes, but exhibits specificities and incongruities.

Without imposing a homogeneous singularity upon New Zealand Maori writers like Keri Hulme, Witi Ihimaera and Patricia Grace, what should be noted is that these writers experience their reality as a deeply compromised, polysemic state (Boehmer 222). Their literature admits that they have hybrid and conflicting cultural allegiances because their history is inextricably linked with that of the whites with their history of being marginalized by the colonizers as well as white settler societies. There is complicity with the culture of their former colonizers even as they seek to redeem and affirm their cultural memories. In the attempt to talk about the myriad issues of Maori writing like displacement, hybrid cultures, fragmented selves and marginal voices, it is important to note that taking a simple native or non-native stance is impossible because to simply make this distinction would be to conform to the colonial structure of having a centre of power and civilization.

Like other writings from colonial countries, Pacific writing could not escape the influences of Eurocentric university education received by many first-generation indigenous writers (Keown, *Pacific* 197). Hindered by this disadvantage, it is significant that Grace has consciously introduced Maori linguistic elements in her narratives. She also attempts to produce fiction to depict the Maori world as heterogenous, and evoke life and culture in New Zealand as it is actually lived and experienced. She documents the complexity of life and the struggle to survive and exist in the Maori society, because Pacific literature cannot simply be a space for passively recording social change in the region. Instead, it must be a space for the rigorous critiquing of colonialism and its aftermath. The principal goal of Pacific literature is to transform social reality in the Pacific in a way that empowers Pacific Island people towards dehegemonisation and the building of a "New Pacific" (Gegeo 479). Thus, the underlying implication of Grace's writing is that literature written by a non-native writer is inauthentic. It becomes necessary to see and write from a native's perspective as reconstructing histories, rewriting geographies and creating realities through writing and documenting can overturn perspective imposed by European settlers.

CHAPTER 2: GRACE AND NEGOTIATION OF INDIGENEITY

Indigenous communities, much like postcolonial societies, are the "ever-changing syncretist outcomes of varied cultural formations and their writers of multiple ethnic, gender, communal and other backgrounds" (Thieme 2). Identity negotiation in the twenty-first century is marked by both globalization and provinciality where 'identity and 'culture' are synonymous terms (Roberts 1). Identity as realized in the self is affected by a sense of cultural belonging as identity and culture are key issues in the post-colonial, post-modern world in which the legacies of colonialism, including migration and the creation of diasporas, along with processes of globalization have put taken-for-granted ideas of identity and belonging into question (Weedon 2). The idea of individual identity and cultural identity within an indigenous community, and its susceptibility to change is studied by using the text *Dogside Story*. The indigenous community in the novel is one that prides itself in its

homogeneity, with outsiders obviously regarded as suspicious and different. The issues of disruption and disturbance are explored as the community decides to open up their village to outsiders in celebration of the New Year. This act, precipitated by financial necessity, changes the landscape and activity of the indigenous community to accommodate and attract outsiders. The disruption caused by the coming of outsiders places the community in an unfamiliar cultural space. The community, before the coming of outsiders, evokes the concept of 'locality' with its particular bounded space and its set of close-knit social relationships based upon strong kinship ties and length of residence (Featherstone 103). After the coming of outsiders, the stable, homogeneous and integrated cultural identity experienced by the individual and the community undergo a change as there is less familiarity with the cultural space. This necessitates the adoption of new attitudes and approaches in the individual and the community in order to adapt to the new cultural space, therefore changing the conceptualization of individual and social identity as something that is forming and transforming continually. The community negotiates its identity and indigeneity by recognizing its constraints in its relationship with the new cultural space since identity is "not secured by a lifelong guarantee" and "eminently negotiable and revocable" (Bauman 11).

Land as a marker of identity brings to light the concept of dislocation. In the process of the negotiation of identity across cultural spaces, the sense of loss of a familiar cultural and community-specific space is understood as dislocation. It indicates not just a physical movement but the ideas of amongst other things temporality, memories, historical and spiritual consciousness. In the novel *Baby No-Eyes*, the sense of dislocation as experienced by the indigenous community is realized in the disputed ownership of an ancestral land by the City Council. Land is a signifier of identity and belonging for the indigenous community and the loss of ownership of *Anapuke* makes them question their sense of self. They feel dislocated within their own cultural space as they do have ownership of land that once belonged to their community. The protest for land reclamation indicates a struggle within and outside the community to negotiate a sense of identity with their past and present cultural space. In the novel *Tu*, the difficulty to adapt to a new space caused by the relocation of Tu's family to Wellington causes internal crises of alienation and

isolation amongst the family. The strangeness of their trans-locational positionality allows them to observe the new cultural space keenly and strategically resulting in a realization of the difficulties while interacting with a new cultural space. It also forces them to accept the impossibility of returning to their culture of origin and by considering "the gain, loss, or exchange of their ability to interpret their own reality or worldview", they negotiate their cultural identity (Ronald Jackson 10). When writing stories set in the culture and society of New Zealand with its colonial history, Grace recognizes the differences between pre-colonial and postcolonial cultural spaces. This recognition assures the redefinition and articulation of identity by her characters as they are aware of their past and present cultural spaces. The identification with a new landscape and culture displaces the centred position of a character's identity before as it challenges certainties and cultural identities.

CHAPTER 3: LANGUAGE OF MYTH AND FANTASY IN GRACE

This chapter studies how Grace blends Maori mythology with non-Maori mythopoeic discourses to explore the relevance of Pacific oral traditions to contemporary socio-political realities and to dismantle conventional and established forms of power and authority. Myths are 'sacred narratives concerning the interaction of the human and divine worlds' and 'stories that deal with the creation and divine administration of the world rather than matters of imaginary history' (Stableford 298). In the novel *Baby No-Eyes*, the metaphor of Baby's empty eye sockets and the emptiness Tawera experiences after the departure of Baby is understood through Maori mythology of 'space'. 'Space' represents Te Kore, which can be translated as 'the void' or 'the nothing' which existed before life began. It is thus a paradoxical state which corresponds to the creation myths in Christianity in which the beginning is essentially a void. Grace deftly uses the link and connection to non-Maori mythical counterparts not only as a metaphor for the process of artistic creation, but to bring a balance to her community, complementing the journey towards self-sufficiency and strengthening the people's bonds with the mythical and ancestral past.

The incorporation of fantasy and myths in Grace's narratives relates specifically to the conditions of their production, the source of its generation and the

particular constraints against which the fantasy protests, for "fantasy characteristically attempts to compensate for a lack resulting from cultural constraints" (Rosemary Jackson 3). In the novel *Baby No-Eyes*, a lifeless Maori baby is returned to her family with her eyes mutilated by the doctors at a hospital. Grace interprets this incident as an index of various forms of cultural desecration and appropriation which have followed European colonial incursion into New Zealand (Keown, *Postcolonial* 149). By injecting the supernatural to her writing, Grace disrupts the cultural and linguistic hegemony as the dead baby asks her mother to find her missing eyes. The mutilation of the baby eyes evokes the concept of dismembered bodies in fantasy as it shows 'the power of the fantastic to interrogate the category of character- that definition of the self as coherent, indivisible and continuous whole which has dominated Western thought for centuries and is celebrated in classic theatre and realistic art alike' (Rosemary Jackson 83). This concept acts on the one hand as a subversion of the "generally accepted concept of 'self' as a closed, unified structure" and "a reluctance to admit of the possible existence of partial or contradictory aspects of the self in literary practice' (83). On the other hand, it is a resistance of the one-sided, prejudiced presentation of the indigenous characters and culture in colonial writings. The ability of Tawera to converse with his dead sister is evocative of the menippea, a fantasy genre which breaks the demands of historical realism as it conflates past, present and future, and allows dialogues with the dead (14). Its characteristic of lacking finality and interrogation of authoritative truths is one of its subversive traits and functions as a rejection of the power structures prevailing in a post-colonial society whilst dismantling one-sided colonial representation of indigenous culture and society in colonial narratives. The integration of myth and fantasy thus serve as signifiers of cultural experience that are untranslatable and assert the Maori sensibility. They promote Grace's creativity as they draw sustenance from the Maori cultural context which underlines the politics of Grace's writing.

CHAPTER 4: LOCATING THE FEMALE VOICE IN GRACE

This chapter examines how Grace's writing is her primary vehicle for her

participation in the articulation of indigenous experiences and expression on the global stage. This very task brings with it its own complication and contradiction as specificity and particularity of indigenous experiences seem antithetical to universalism that a global stage entails. Trinh T. Minh-ha points to the 'triple-bind' of women writers of colour which is that no matter what position they take, they will eventually be made to feel they must choose from among three conflicting loyalties – 'writer of color? woman writer? Or woman of color?' (Stewart-Harawira 2). When asked if she felt that Maori writing has to be political, Grace answered in the negative, saying that it need neither "engage in political themes" nor "define Maori culture", although she followed this statement with a suggestion that "in another way it always will define Maori culture", and that "in a way … all of our writing is political" (Fox 127). Thus, writing as a Maori woman becomes simultaneously an act of resistance and reclamation.

In the novel *Baby No-Eyes*, Grace delivers an example of a woman's self-assuredness and resistance in the character of Gran Kura. In the course of her tale, Gran Kura moves from a timid, fearful little girl constricted by her 'white' teachers at school to a resilient grandmother who refuses to speak the English language. Her experiences as a Maori woman navigating life in a white-dominated society combined with the experiences of other women in her family provide a significant dynamic of the experiences of minority women in the society. The novel centres on the mistreatment of Maori women by in the education and health institutions where power lies with the *pakeha* (non-Maori). The trauma and abuse that Gran Kura and her generation of Maori children underwent at a British school is hauntingly captured by the writer to show the spirit of resilience in Gran Kura.

In the text *Chappy*, the female character Oriwia decides to take upon herself the task of writing and translating the stories after a while as she feels that the task is not properly performed by her grandson. Oriwia hijacks her grandson's retelling of the family's history by taking upon herself the task of narrating and translating her life story. When asked by her grandson Daniel if she could tell the story of her family, she says to him, "I'll write it for you. . .Yes, tell it in my own way. . ." (35). This act of Oriwia is indicative of what Luz Maria de la Torre Amaguana proposes when she asserts it is imperative for indigenous women to adopt the power apparatus

of writing in order to clarify their quotidian lifestyle and testimonial to elaborate their own discourse (Dulfano 83). Indigenous women writers have also been concerned with dismantling the concept of woman as the 'overarching, universal sign of oppression' (Boehmer 255). This dismantling of these inapt representations of women evokes what is called 'the rescinding of annulled spaces' propounded by Luz Maria de la Torre Amaguana (Dulfano 38). It means a transgression of the discursive and physical spaces by women that had been denied to them in the past. It is a countering and challenging of the stigmatized stereotype of poor, ignorant, abused and exploited indigenous woman. In the novel *Baby No-Eyes*, Te Paania undergoes a personal transformation from a young woman stuck in an abusive marriage to a voice and representative of her indigenous community. She uses her new platform to talk about the injustices in her past and finally attains the courage to question the motive of the hospital authorities in removing the eyes from her daughter's body. She speaks for herself and her people "who don't like the idea of their life patterns being taken and owned by someone else: who don't want the essence of themselves being altered or disposed of, or transferred into plants or to other humans" (280). Te Paania's journey from a timid, abused young wife to an outspoken representative of her people reflects a countering and challenging of the image of a poor, ignorant and exploited indigenous women.

The narratives of the lived experiences of women have conventionally been regarded as secondary in defining national myths. Grace counters this mode of narrative by exploring the intricate interconnection of personal lives often of women with the nation's official history. Helene Cixous states that a woman un-thinks the unifying, regulating history that homogenizes and channels forces, herding contradictions into a single battlefield, and that in a woman, "personal history blends together with the history of all women, as well as national and world history" (882). Grace's writings often reveal how women occupy different spaces that diverge from a male-dominated homogenous space of the nation while sometimes overlapping with it.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

The concluding chapter summarizes the issues and factors at work in the

negotiation of indigenous identity, the politics of writing and the importance of locating the female voice in the narratives of Grace. It also attempts to offer a reasoned argument of the importance and necessity of Grace's writing. Literature that engages in a countering of dominant discourses cannot offer "genuine revolution" because writing back to the canon inevitably engenders a relationship with the colonial past and that "a genuinely revolutionary project would necessitate a cleaner break with English culture" (Thieme 170). Postcolonial cultures thus find themselves inevitably caught in the dilemma of needing to make a decisive break with old and new forms of imperialism whilst finding themselves entangled in a network of hybrid cultural formations. The narratives of Grace, even though her international readership would have few problems interpreting her works, contain phrases and references that have particular resonances in her cultural context. These phrases and references, despite it being written in English, arguably add a dimension and distance her narratives from British English. The presence or absence of writing in postcolonial cultures is possibly the most important element as writing does not merely introduce a communicative instrument, but also involves an entirely different and intrusive (invasive) orientation to knowledge and interpretation (Ashcroft et al. 81). Although oral culture is by no means the universal model of post-colonial societies, the invasion of the ordered, cyclic, and 'paradigmatic' oral world by the unpredictable and 'syntagmatic' world of the written word stands as a useful model for the beginnings of postcolonial discourse (81). The act of writing for women is an inescapable product of the ideological conflict that inevitably takes place in the text. Postcolonial indigenous women use the enemy's language as an arsenal to arm themselves and appropriate the tools of the enemy – creating a rhetorical site of power through the appropriation, reinvention, and use of the conqueror's language to speak for themselves and dismantle colonial assumptions. Grace's narratives seek and demand self-definition as well as for legal recognition, identity and rights on the basis of sameness as well as difference. They serve as a primary vehicle for her participation in the articulation of indigenous experiences and expression. Her works become a medium for her to join in the conversations of indigeneity on the global stage.

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