



<http://researchspace.auckland.ac.nz>

*ResearchSpace@Auckland*

### **Copyright Statement**

The digital copy of this thesis is protected by the Copyright Act 1994 (New Zealand).

This thesis may be consulted by you, provided you comply with the provisions of the Act and the following conditions of use:

- Any use you make of these documents or images must be for research or private study purposes only, and you may not make them available to any other person.
- Authors control the copyright of their thesis. You will recognise the author's right to be identified as the author of this thesis, and due acknowledgement will be made to the author where appropriate.
- You will obtain the author's permission before publishing any material from their thesis.

To request permissions please use the Feedback form on our webpage.

<http://researchspace.auckland.ac.nz/feedback>

### **General copyright and disclaimer**

In addition to the above conditions, authors give their consent for the digital copy of their work to be used subject to the conditions specified on the Library Thesis Consent Form.

---

**Spiralling Subversions:  
The Politics of Māori  
Cultural Survivance in  
the Recent Critical Fictions of  
Patricia Grace, Paula Morris, and  
Kelly Ana Morey**

**Ann Katherine Pistacchi**

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English**

**The University of Auckland  
2009**

---

---

---

# Abstract

---

---

The principal objective of this doctoral research is to examine the ways in which key contemporary (2000-2005) fictional writings by Māori women authors Patricia Grace, Paula Morris, and Kelly Ana Morey demonstrate “survivance” – a term used by University of New Mexico Professor Gerald Vizenor and Ohio State University Professor Chadwick Allen to refer to the ways in which indigenous authors use their texts as “a means of cultural survival that comes with denying authoritative representations of [indigenous peoples] in addition to developing an adaptable, dynamic identity that can mediate between conflicting cultures” (Allen “Thesis” 65). I argue that acts of Māori cultural survivance are manifested in the works of these three authors both internally, in terms of the actions of characters in their fictional narratives, and externally, by the authors themselves who fight for survivance in a literary publishing world that is often slow to recognize and value works of fiction that challenge traditional (Western) modes of novel form and style. Thesis chapters therefore include both extensive critical readings of Grace’s novel *Dogside Story* (2001), Morris’s novels *Queen of Beauty* (2002) and *Hibiscus Coast* (2005), and Morey’s novel *Bloom* (2003) as well as detailed biographical information based on my interviews with the authors themselves. The thesis emphasizes the ways in which each woman’s approach to writing survivance fiction is largely driven by her personal history and whakapapa.

The study also asserts that Grace, Morris and Morey are producing acts of indigenous literary cultural survivance that “imagine the world healthy,” something author and critic Maxine Hong Kingston demands that contemporary writers of critical fictions must do if they are going to convince the book-buying populace “not to worship tragedy as the highest art anymore” (204). Grace, Morris, and Morey depict the creative, generative, and “healthy” aspects of Māori cultural survivance as taking place in both the real and imagined communities which they live in and write about. Their texts offer hope for the ongoing survival – and survivance – of Māori culture in the twenty-first century.

---

---

# Acknowledgments

---

---

**Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi.  
Engari he toa takitahi.**

*My strength comes from many people and not myself as an individual.  
No one can survive alone.*

I was introduced to this whakataua<sup>ā</sup>kī by Dr. Te Tuhi Robust early in my postgraduate career, and it is an adage that lies at the heart of these acknowledgements.

I would like to thank, with great aroha,

- my primary supervisor, Prof. Witi Ihimaera, whose unfailing support, encouragement and advice lie at the heart of this study, and without whom the seeds of inspiration for both my MA and doctoral theses would never have come to fruition;
- my co-supervisor, Dr. Mark Amsler, whose knowledge of theory and editorial pen have been of invaluable assistance to me in the thesis writing process;
- my thesis advisor, Dr. Te Tuhi Robust, whose constant moral support, untiring willingness to answer my questions about Māori language and culture, and steadfast dedication to this project has help ground my work's sense of kaupapa;
- my proofreaders, my parents and my colleague Genevieve de Pont, who were members of a dedicated support team willing to read the words of this thesis when I was too close to see them anymore;
- my husband, Christopher Peck, whose constant emotional and moral support made four years of doctoral study possible.

Finally, I would like to thank the University of Auckland Scholarship Committee and the English Department Research Committee for the financial support they have provided throughout my doctoral study.

*Thank you, grazie, and kia ora.*

---

---

# Table of Contents

---

---

<b>Abstract.....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Acknowledgments .....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Preface: Finding the Cathedral Full of Song.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter One: Critical Fictions and Acts of Survivance – Defining the Field.....</b>	<b>6</b>
Finding a Kaupapa: The “Literature of Survivance” .....	7
What Does It Look Like? Literary Survivance in the Twenty-First Century .....	9
Exploring the Field and Identifying Gaps.....	13
Methodological Influences .....	18
Kaupapa Māori .....	23
Chapter Outline.....	26
<b>Chapter Two: Patricia Grace – Intra-Cultural Survivance .....</b>	<b>32</b>
Patricia Grace: New Zealand Icon .....	33
Placing Grace: Biographical Context .....	35
Placing Grace: Theoretical Context.....	45
Reading Patricia Grace’s <i>Dogside Story</i> .....	47
<i>Dogside Story</i> in an Ecocritical Context.....	47
Whenua me te Tangata Whenua - A Health-Based Homology.....	49
The Four Cornerstones of Māori Health.....	53
The “Despoiling of Eden”.....	54
“Discursive Nervousness” .....	58
Surviving the Trauma .....	62
Incest in <i>Dogside Story</i> .....	64
The Stories Surrounding the Incest.....	72
Rua and the Family Bed.....	74
Maina: Working Towards Whānau Survivance.....	77
Communicating: Pulling out the Splinters.....	85
Taking Custody of Land and Sea.....	86
Conclusion: Beyond Survival .....	90
<b>Chapter Three: Paula Morris – Survivance in Nepantla.....</b>	<b>92</b>
Paula Morris: A Seriously Good Writer .....	93

Placing Morris: Biographical Context .....	96
Placing Morris: Theoretical Context.....	103
Reading Morris: <i>Queen of Beauty, Hibiscus Coast</i> and “Rangitira” .....	107
Navigating Nepantla in <i>Queen of Beauty</i> .....	107
New Orleans: Representative Nepantla Borderland .....	112
Māori-Chinese Identity in <i>Hibiscus Coast</i> .....	120
Emma Taupere: Navigating Identity.....	124
Story-Blood and the Politics of Cultural Appropriation in <i>Hibiscus Coast, Queen of Beauty</i> , and “Rangitira” .....	133
Telling Stories From “The Inside” .....	147
Doing the Stories Justice.....	150
 Conclusion: “Hard Topics” .....	 152
 <b>Chapter Four: Kelly Ana Morey – Postmodern Survivance .....</b>	 <b>154</b>
Kelly Ana Morey: “A Good Little Māori Girl” .....	155
Placing Morey: Biographical Context .....	157
Placing Morey: Theoretical Context.....	167
Reading Kelly Ana Morey’s <i>Bloom</i> .....	168
<i>Bloom</i> : Morey’s “Māori” Novel .....	171
Tūrangawaewae .....	173
Whakamā .....	176
Whakapapa.....	181
Nanny Smack: Kehua and Kaumatua .....	185
The Lit Fire of History and Remembering .....	191
Nanny and the Hauhaus .....	194
Intertextuality in <i>Bloom</i> : Park and Morey’s “Uncle Pihopas” .....	200
 Conclusion: Writing “Canons of Survivance” .....	 209
 <b>Chapter 5: This is not a Māori – Truth Beyond Tragedy .....</b>	 <b>210</b>
This Is Not a Māori .....	211
Give Me Room.....	213
 <b>Glossary / Ngā Kupu.....</b>	 <b>215</b>
 <b>Works Cited.....</b>	 <b>218</b>