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**“A riddim resisting against the system”**

**Bob Marley in Aotearoa**

**by Tony Fala**

**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in  
Film, Television and Media Studies**

## Abstract

Bob Marley and his music have had an extraordinary impact in Aotearoa New Zealand. This thesis explores Marley's particular influence within Maori, Pacific Island and working class communities. The oral histories collected for this thesis trace (among other things) the growing interest in his music from the early 1970s, personal encounters with him during his visit to the country in 1979, and the emergence of local bands playing his music and adapting it to create new hybrid forms of local reggae. The main emphasis is on the extent to which the political messages in Marley's music resonated with local protest movements. The music became an integral part of Maori land marches and occupations, the 1981 anti-Springbok Tour movement, and a range of other political demonstrations. It was also a catalyst for the formation of alternative religious communities such as Auckland's 12 Tribes and the rural group of Rastafarians in Ruatoria. Themes of de-colonisation and community activism link these developments, and demonstrate the strong political dimension of Marley's music as it was interpreted by Maori and Pacific Island listeners and by local political groups.

The thesis is a study of reception employing an unusual combination of methods, some derived from the theorists Paul Gilroy, Edward Said, Linda Tuhiwai Smith and Donna Awatere-Huata. It also draws upon the student's own experience as a young Pacific Islander involved in street culture and political activism, who shared an enthusiasm for Marley's music with his peers. The thesis is an attempt to undertake a very different kind of research from the usual media studies 'reception' or 'audience' study. The interaction between Marley's music and local communities – understood here through the concept of spirals of culture – is so active that we need new ways of thinking about reception in relation to the complexity of local cultures. The strong 'spiritual' dimension of Maori and Pacific Island responses to Marley is also an aspect that reception studies have seldom been able to cover adequately.

The thesis offers some new insights into Marley and his music, and at the same time seeks to record some of the little-known oral history of under-privileged communities in Aotearoa. It is also an experiment in developing an approach that always puts the community first and proceeds with a strong awareness of the potential ethical dangers involved in academic research.

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# **Chapter One**

## **Literature Review and Methodology**

This thesis examines the influence of Bob Marley in Aotearoa. The work will focus on the oral histories of four communities who utilised the music of Bob Marley in their communal lives and projects.

There will be an initial chapter on the Aotearoa music business. This thesis is not concerned with industrial analysis, but at least a brief description of this context seemed necessary. Alongside the facts and figures, the chapter includes some oral history about musicians, the reggae genre, DJ work, and Bob Marley on television and in local documentaries.

The second research chapter will consist of oral histories of community organisers and activists from different parts of the country who employed the music of Bob Marley in their cultural labours between the years 1972-1982. This should provide a useful account of the influence of Marley during the early years of his journey into Aotearoa culture. His 1979 visit in person plays an important role in this chapter.

The third chapter is an oral history of the influence of Bob Marley from the perspective of members of the 12 Tribes of Israel Rastafarian faith in Auckland. This account begins in 1982 and the oral stories cover the group's history up to 2002.

The fourth chapter will document the value and importance of Marley's music to the political thought and community organising of a younger generation of community organisers between the years 1996 to 2002.

The final chapter will discuss the influence of Marley in the lives, community work, and de-colonising labours of the remarkable, indigenous, rural community of Rastafarians living in Ruatoria. The Ruatoria oral history will cover the years 1976 to 2004.

### **Aims**

This thesis is an attempt to document and explain the importance of Marley's music and influence in Aotearoa, with particular emphasis on the political interest in his work within Maori, Pacific Island, working class, and left wing communities. This includes the creation of alternative (Rastafarian) communities based on the spiritual as

well as the political aspects of Marley's work. The thesis uses oral history as the primary medium through which to understand his importance and influence. While focusing on Marley, it attempts at the same time to record some of the grassroots experience of these communities, important history that has rarely been documented. The thesis will record and seek to explain how this music came to be articulated with political protest, community activism, de-colonisation and alternative forms of spirituality. It will trace how Marley's work and influence were woven into each community and empowered them in various ways. Marley's music, life, politics, and spiritual beliefs came to be grounded in Aotearoa, and helped to inform local concerns about issues of identity, culture, history, religion, colonisation, healing and self-determination. It is a particular aim of this thesis to track the processes by which music serves as material for the construction of new forms of de-colonising and liberation culture. Marley's music connected deeply with many people in a range of ways, and this thesis will attempt to give voice to some of those experiences as oral history.

I have sought to allow the good people who speak in this thesis to 'own the floor' so they educate us not only about their enthusiasm for Marley but also about their community and their own activism. I wanted to investigate why he and his music have meant so much to the under-privileged people of this country. How did his life, music, and message become so important for those living on the margins of post-colonial Aotearoa? Why was his music seen as healing communities, validating lives, and inspiring political and cultural innovations? I wanted to find out how music can speak clearly and honestly to the everyday experience, pain, and resistance of people in grassroots communities.

I come from a Pacific people, and a street background, and I was deeply influenced by the music of Marley. He has meant much to Maori and Pacific Island youth since the '70s. In the '80s he was part of my generation's dreams and aspirations, disappointment and anger. Along with many other kids I invested Marley with great insight as a leader, teacher, revolutionary, and role model as a brown man. There is often a twinkle that appears in the eyes of Maori and Pacific Island people when the name of Marley comes into conversation. I wanted to understand why so many treasure his memory, with a political tinge that has to do with his role as a representative of marginalised and colonised groups. I wanted to account for the influence of Marley considering he only visited Aotearoa once during his lifetime. His

music came from a culture, history, and spirituality rooted thousands of miles away in Jamaica. This thesis seeks to explore these questions about how music can travel, empower individuals, and generate new structures of community, solidarity, and respect.

### **The audience of this thesis**

I hope this thesis can serve a wide range of communities and readers, since its oral history seems to me full of experience and inspiration. This history is certainly relevant to those who love Marley's music or have to live hard. The thesis is designed to be widely accessible so I have employed theory, technical terms and intellectual history with restraint, placing some material of that kind in footnotes.

While my first readership consists of the communities I have studied, I hope academic readers will also see the grassroots histories, lives and cultures in my thesis as valuable. My struggles with ethics and methodology may be relevant to others who undertake cultural or community research. But first and foremost, I hope that academic readers will listen carefully to these voices from the grassroots of Aotearoa. In other words, I hope the oral histories in this thesis provide a meeting place for academics and communities, so there can be dialogue and we can learn from one another.

### **Interviews**

I knew I wanted to talk to reggae musicians and Rastafarians about Marley but I had not had any previous contacts with these groups. I also wanted to speak to community workers and activists because I was interested in how Marley's music had become linked with their political activities. I had been an activist and had some contacts as a starting-point. (I was once an active member of the Socialist Workers organisation.)

The first person I interviewed was Roger Fowler who belonged to the same political organisation as me, but I had never met him prior to the interview. Roger had a long record of community service, and had played in a protest band in the early 1970s that performed Marley's music. He provided some rich oral history about the arrival of Marley's influence in Aotearoa in the early '70s. He introduced me to other people that he thought I should talk with, people who were on the political scene at the time and loved Marley's music. Through Roger I was introduced to a number of the

community workers who speak in the second chapter. Roger introduced me to Tigi (Tigilau) Ness, one of the most influential figures in the thesis, as a political activist, a community leader, and a fine musician. Tigi loved Marley and had been deeply influenced by his music and life.<sup>1</sup> He knew many people and made helpful suggestions about whom I should talk to, in exploring Marley's influence in Aotearoa. Tigi introduced me to all but one of the 12 Tribes members that I interviewed. His generous assistance (and mana) enabled me to learn much about this remarkable organization with its deep relationship with Marley and his music.

Tigi also made suggestions about musicians and music industry people I should interview, especially people who had met Marley during his 1979 visit to Aotearoa. Some of these speakers – who had precious oral histories to offer - appear in both the music industry and the community organisers chapters.

The Ruatoria Dread Rastafarian community are famous in Aotearoa because of their tattoo art and their spiritual faith. (They have also been subject at times to badly informed and provocative coverage by the mainstream news media.) I knew this was an important community for my thesis. Tigi introduced me to Bob Mita as someone good to talk to about Marley and the Maori community. Bob Mita enjoyed the interview we did and said he was happy to take me down to the Coast and introduce me to the Ruatoria Rastafarians. He introduced me to seven Rastafarians over a three day period in 2002. Each was a community leader, as well as a gardener, farmer, hunter, oral historian, and person of spiritual knowledge. The oral stories were profound as each speaker wove another part of the oral history of Marley in Ruatoria into life.

The interviews in the fourth chapter involved other community organisers (active from 1996). Although younger than those in the earlier group, each speaker had already had a significant career as political activist, community worker and organiser. They had been listening to Marley for many years. I chose to add these activists because they were continuing the work of the earlier political organisers and applying Marley's music to new situations. These speakers were of my own generation, and I

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<sup>1</sup> I should explain that I have (with full respect intended) used first names in situations where I felt that the use of surnames would have seemed inappropriately formal. I have also used first names only, or used adopted (Rastafarian) names for some interviewees in order to maintain a degree of confidentiality, if I felt this was the person's preference.

had worked with a number of them in political struggles. I approached a range of activists working in different areas of struggle.

Each speaker in the thesis had his or her individual story, but together their stories added up to a communal, oral history of Marley within Maori, Pacific Island, working class and left-wing communities in Aotearoa. Next to none of these stories had previously been recorded in any form. It may be argued that my emphasis on oral history and on the most politicised forms of reception has left large gaps in the overall story of Marley's influence in Aotearoa. However, no form of detailed research can cover every aspect of a large subject. I hope other researchers will be encouraged to undertake Marley oral history projects within other communities.

### **The oral and the visual**

With my oral or auditory emphasis, one area I did not attempt to cover is the visual representation of Marley – apart from some discussion of television and documentary coverage. I did not look at posters, album cover art, T-shirts or other merchandise because I am ambivalent about the commercialisation of Marley. His image is today frequently exploited by the mainstream media not only for financial profit but to generate a kind of 'feel-good nationalism.' I address this issue briefly in the music industry chapter, but it lies outside the main concern of my thesis, which is Marley's grass-roots and 'underground' influence. I would acknowledge, however, that it would be useful to have a visual history parallel to my oral history if someone were to document not commercialised, mass-produced images but home-made or graffiti-style grassroots tributes to this much loved musician.

I have strong feelings about the commodification and appropriation of Marley's legacy generally, but to analyse and challenge such developments calls for a different thesis from the one I have undertaken – which focuses on the margins rather than on the mainstream, on communities of resistance rather than on passive styles of consumerism. Media studies has sometimes in its more cynical moments sought to blur the distinction between those two positions, but I offer the data in my thesis as clear evidence that 'popular culture' can still function as a site of genuine grassroots resistance.

The next sections of the introduction provide a literature review, which leads in to a discussion of the methodology of my research and how that evolved.

## **Literature review**

This review describes the works that proved generally most useful for me. A number of other works that provided information relevant to particular sections of the thesis (rather than to the thesis as a whole) are not profiled here but are included in the bibliography. Literature that helped me in terms of theory and approach will be covered in the Methodology section.

### **Jamaican literature**

This first section of the literature review outlines sources from Jamaica that were valuable in terms of the specific aims of this thesis. This section has four parts, starting with a brief section on Jamaican history, and one on Rastafarian scholarship. The third section pays attention to reggae music scholarship, and the fourth and final section focuses on Bob Marley, addressing different facets of his history, life, art, music, and influence in a Jamaican and Third World context.

Other scholarship related to Jamaica, particularly to the music of Marley, will appear in the bibliography. Each text below has influenced the Jamaican side of my comparative approach, which counterpoints Marley in Jamaica with grassroots politics in Aotearoa.

### **Jamaican history**

Philosophy and opinions of Marcus Garvey, or Africa for the Africans was a useful introduction to the history of black self determination in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>2</sup> Compiled by his widow, Amy Jacques Garvey, this 1967 collection of Marcus Garvey's speeches and philosophy was a rich trove of history. The work collected in the book enabled this student to understand some of the history, hopes, and aspirations of black Jamaicans, Americans, and others in the Black Diaspora that Garvey represented through his life as an organiser, political leader, entrepreneur, and acclaimed public orator.

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<sup>2</sup> Full biographical details for all books can be found in the bibliography at the end of the thesis.

Garvey was a Jamaican, descendent of the Maroons, and an international figure through his work with the Universal Negro Improvement Association. He preached 'back to Africa' repatriation for all diaspora blacks in the West, even as he taught black people to love Africa and their black heritage. He pressed for economic, social, and political autonomy for black people in the new world through many initiatives, including his Black Star Line shipping company. Garvey's thought was to have great influence on the evolution of the Rastafarian faith in Jamaica. Many of the themes of repatriation back to Africa, love for one's history and culture, black self-determination, and economic political and social self reliance, would become critical dimensions of the Rastafarian spiritual faith following Garvey's death. Bob Marley's 1979 album cover Survival reproduces one of Garvey's best-known sayings: "A people without knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots."

Through reading this work, along with other information about Garvey, I was able to begin to understand the influence of this great man's life and thought as it was woven into the life experience of Rastafarians of Marley's generation in the ghettos of West Kingston. For Rastafarians today, Garvey is considered a prophet. It is well known that many Rastafarians considered his words "Look to the East [Africa] for there a King will come" as a prophecy predicting the 1930 coronation of Haile Selassie as Emperor in Ethiopia.

Marley would speak in a well-known conversation about how he considered Garvey to be a prophet. I also became aware of the depth of connections between the oral traditions of speech making and the oral forms of music making, as the insights and energies of Garvey were translated into new cultural forms. The most obvious influence in the roots reggae period concerning issues of black liberation central to Garvey, transliterated into Rastafarian prophecy, was the landmark Burning Spear album, Marcus Garvey. The single "Marcus Garvey", off the album, declares: "Marcus Garvey's words come to pass; Marcus Garvey's words come to pass". Marley would go on to pick up these issues

Walter Rodney was a famed doctor, activist, and writer from Guyana, who spent time in the ghettos of West Kingston talking to Rastafarian people about oppression, slavery, and capitalism. He died in tragic circumstances. He wrote a Marxist developmental study, How Europe Underdeveloped Africa, that has been of great use in my project. Rodney proposes that the entire history of European contact with

blacks in Africa from before 1500 through to 1971 has been characterised by social, economic, and political imperialism, colonisation, and neo-colonisation. Rodney develops a wide-ranging historical analysis and utilises many examples from all parts of the African continent to illustrate his case. His work in Chapter Four, concerning slavery, and the Atlantic passage or “middle passage”, made for harrowing reading.

The book was very important because it spoke, as Garvey had done years earlier, to the importance of Africa for those in the black diaspora in the West. While Rodney was writing his great work and speaking to ghetto sufferers, roots reggae artists such as Bob Marley were investigating the issues of slavery, the middle passage, Africa, injustice, and oppression in musical forms. So much of Marley’s work is enriched by a great historical awareness of the dispossession blacks have experienced in Africa and in the West, carried in his work in rich oral forms. I was adamant that the historical, political and cultural framework that I used to track the music of Marley from Jamaica to Aotearoa (in my reconstruction) would pay respect and tribute to the Jamaica that Marley came from.

### **Rastafarian history**

Barry Chevanne’s book, Rastafari: Roots and Ideology was a valuable and respectful ethnographical investigation into the foundations of the Rastafarian faith in Kingston, Jamaica. The book emerged from Chavannes’ PhD thesis, and he spoke in depth to many older Rastafarians about the early years of the faith, utilising oral historical interviews and discussions. The heart and soul of his work can be found in these grand oral traditions, emphasising the fact that grassroots Jamaica is an oral culture, with much knowledge passed on through stories and histories by word of mouth. Chevannes’ work on Prince Edward Emmanuel, leader of the Bobo Dreads in Bulls Bay, was particularly interesting.

I found this book helpful as I attempted to understand Rastafarianism as a common people’s faith with a great history of its own in Jamaica. In order to do justice to a discussion of Marley in his Jamaican context, I required some understanding of the Rastafarian faith and its rich history in Kingston, and the connections between (1) the oral histories of Rastafarianism and (2) the music of Bob Marley as oral form travelling through the music industry to transform people’s lives.

Leonard Barrett's book The Rastafarians was another valuable study. Barrett provides historical accounts of key events in the history of Jamaica, and tracks the evolution of Ethiopianist thought from the eighteenth century into the present. The book mixes ethnography with poetry, with critical analysis, and with personal memoir (where the author spoke about his experience of attending the funeral of Bob Marley). It is within these multi-disciplinary frameworks and rich historical contexts that Barrett assesses the faith, ideologies, and cultural beliefs of the Rastafarians in Jamaica. The work augmented and enriched my understanding of the history of Jamaica, and offered important resources for understanding the Jamaican 12 Tribes of Israel Rastafarian faith, the organisation Marley belonged to from 1974.

Chanting Down Babylon: The Rastafari Reader was an important interdisciplinary anthology relating to the study of Rastafarianism. The authors included university scholars, journalists, and Rastafarians. The anthology encompassed discussions of Rasta ideology; roots and historical impacts of the faith; the evolution of the music and art, both in Jamaica and overseas; and Rastafarian theology and biblical hermeneutics. Its multidisciplinary approach allows us to understand Rastafari in Jamaica from historical, musical, biblical, ideological, and cultural perspectives. The Bob Marley essay written by Roger Steffens - "Bob Marley: Rasta Warrior" - was particularly useful for this thesis. Again, one of the great strengths of the anthology is the constant reminder that Jamaican Rastafarian music, history, spirituality, culture, and theology circulates in live, oral forms and performance traditions. Perhaps the most important section in the book was devoted to the life, and spiritual leadership of Haile Selassie within the Rastafarian faith, a more important figure than Garvey for Rastafarians.

### **Reggae musical history**

Lloyd Bradley's Bass Culture: When Reggae was King is an important social history of Jamaican popular music from Ska to Ragga. Bradley spoke with many of the living artists, producers, and groups who made the music, and this oral history gives his work a great insight and strength. The heart of the book is the testimony of the people who made the music. Perhaps the strongest knowledge I gained from Bradley is the awareness that there was a close relationship between (1) the music being produced by artists, (2) the political and social realities the people faced, and (3)

political or cultural protest. What is most inspirational about this book is the real sense of community ethics and moral leadership artists attempted to emphasise in their music in order to uplift the poorest of their people. Such insights gave this student another means to understand Marley and his community service ethics. The insights into how music could travel to educate, heal, and empower also added depth to my labours in reception theory.

Some speakers in Bradley's account talk powerfully about how music travelling in oral forms brings news to the people and encouragement to their everyday lives, while criticising the government, police brutality or bad social services for the poor. The book speaks to the evolution of ghetto music travelling through sound studios and out to sound system public dances, without much airplay on Jamaican radio. I learned much about Marley's earlier work, the sound system cultures, the studios, and a situation in which music had to be accepted by people at the grassroots in order for an artist to survive.

Around this oral historical centre, Bradley adds rich social, historical and political information and analysis, so that the music may be understood as emerging from the distinctive Jamaican dynamics. His musical analyses are rich and add an extra depth to the stories he weaves together. Some fine photographs accompany the textual histories. Bradley also discusses the development of reggae music distribution in England, and there is an important chapter devoted to Marley. In order for me to develop a spiral motif connecting Marley to Jamaica, this important study offered a range of resources.

Chuck Foster's Roots, Rock, Reggae: An Oral History of Reggae Music from Ska to Dancehall was another important introduction to Jamaican popular music and the importance of oral history in helping to give communities moral ownership over their history, music, and culture. The work offered some fascinating insights into Marley's life when he was working with Clement 'Coxone' Dodd, actually living in a room at the back of the Studio One recording premises. The text is accompanied by some vivid photographs that add further depth to the range of oral accounts. The book served as another strand in my attempt to explain how this music travelled from Jamaica to Aotearoa, in a way that might respect the mana of Marley and his Trenchtown and Nine Miles origins.

Another book useful for an understanding of reggae music, social history, and the evolution of the sound up to the present day was Barrow and Dalton's Reggae: The

Rough Guide. This charts the evolution of the music from Mento through to Dancehall styles. The book has important discography sections on artists and groups and their single and album production. The book features both well-known and lesser well-known artists. The text has important sections on the development of the music in terms of instrumentation, reviews, and definitions of terms so that even a newcomer can make sense of the tradition. The book includes many photographs. As a social history and an introduction to the wider tradition beyond Marley, the work augmented and enriched my understanding (including my listening experience). It is important to understand Marley as part of this wider tradition, even if my thesis focuses on that individual and his particular role as a catalyst in the exchange between two cultures.

### **Bob Marley**

Timothy White's biography Catch A Fire: The Life Of Bob Marley was a valuable resource for the entire thesis. White's work rests on the author's personal interviews with Marley and his family, musicians, music historians, and politicians. The work centres on oral history, building a picture of Marley from his birth in rural Nine Miles to his death in Miami on May 11 1981. The author shapes these oral historical narratives in a prose style that reads like a novel, with many voices speaking simultaneously.

The book covers much ground, outlining political, social, cultural and religious issues relating to Marley, but the book never loses focus on the life of an extraordinary man, musician, ghetto fighter, father, husband, and finally third world superstar. The work also features a discography. The 1991 edition also considers issues surrounding Marley and his estate in the years following his death. This work helped me to construct a weave that placed Marley in the centre of Jamaican grassroots traditions.

Kwame Dawes' book Bob Marley: Lyrical Genius offers an excellent introduction to the Jamaican poetics of Marley's Island Records song-writing craft. Nearly all his songs during the years 1973-1983 are covered in analyses that root Marley's work to Jamaica, to the Black Diaspora condition in the West, and to the cultural, spiritual, and historical contexts that gave his music such resonance. Dawes weaves the story of each Marley song into the story of his own personal engagement with Marley through his life in Kingston Jamaica. (For example, he speaks powerfully about seeing Marley

playing soccer locally in Kingston, unaffected by his rising status as an international superstar.) This is a rich and careful exposition of Marley's work as a poet. Dawes also investigates the rhythm and rhyme schemes in Marley's poetics, even as he considers the relationships between song, music and the transposition of poetic lines into a musical format. Paying attention to the contexts within which Marley crafted his music, Dawes relates the songs to various stages of Marley's life. He pays considerable attention to some of the biblical, Rastafarian, and Jamaican historical and cultural references that empowered his craft. Dawes' insights are powerfully recreated in oral story-telling forms that weave the songs into a larger oral history. This book has enriched my understanding of Marley's song writing craft, and in connecting him so strongly to Jamaica, it helped me to develop my counterpoint between the traditions of Jamaica and Aotearoa.

Before the Legend: The Rise Of Bob Marley by Christopher John Farley was an important work that enriched the thesis as a whole. Farley reconstructs the early years of Marley's life through extensive research and interviews with family members and musician friends such as Bunny Wailer. One of the strengths of the work is the history woven into the prose narrative. The book discusses the yard culture that so influenced Marley, and speaks with musical mentors such as Joe Higgs who helped to hone the Wailers' sound and phrasing, as the band morphed through various line-ups in the early to mid-1960s.

The book provides a useful introduction to Marley's growth as a musician, song writer, performer, and band member in the years leading up to Catch A Fire, his first Island album in 1973. The book also offers insights into the making of this album and the deal Chris Blackwell of Island Records struck with the Wailers in London. The book speaks about the musicians, overdubs, sound engineering, mixing of tracks, and the overall thinking behind that first album.

In relation to this thesis, the work was an education into the earlier parts of Marley's career, extending my understanding not only of him but of Jamaican history, musical traditions and record production.

Ian McCann's Bob Marley Talking consists of excerpts of interviews Marley gave during his lifetime. McCann organises the book by theme, giving a year to each Marley excerpt, showing what he was thinking through different stages of his career. The book covers themes as diverse as music, religion, the media, politics, women, songs and song writing. The book is not long but it is a fine contribution to oral

history, because Marley owns his own words, stories, insights, critical comments, anger, humour, and seriousness – a clear demonstration of the broad range of his intelligence.

The section on songs and music is particularly interesting, and clarified Marley's relationship to his work and to his responsibility to bring teaching and healing to poor people in many countries. A sense of the complexity of the man emerges from his quotes, laden with humour, folk wisdom, irony, anger, toughness, and fierce love for his own ghetto people. This book offered very special resources because this is Marley speaking in his own words.

Every Little Thing Gonna Be Alright: The Bob Marley Reader, another valuable resource, has sections dedicated to his life with his wife Rita Marley; his emergence as a spokesperson for the Third World; his death; the issues with his estate in the courts; and his legacy through his children. It also looks at Marley in the music studio, in concert, in comic book forms, and in the memoirs of people who spent time with him at one point or another during his lifetime, such as members of his band the Wailers. Reggae music journalists, historians, Marley scholars, and fine creative writers such as Alice Walker all offer memorable contributions on his life and music. The strength of the work lies in the oral history via interviews, memoirs, and personal essays.

Marley Legend: An Illustrated Life of Bob Marley offered a valuable synopsis of Marley's Island production. The photographs of Kingston and of Marley with his family and band, along with posters and concert tickets, enriched my understanding of Marley in visual forms. I gained additional visual stimulation from films such as Time Will Tell and Legend, which helped me to develop my comparisons with Marley in Aotearoa.

### **Reggae since Bob Marley**

It is important to remember that reggae music existed before Marley, and to acknowledge that it has gone through a number of changes in the years since he died. There were significant developments in the 1980s and '90s involving the rise of dancehall music. These later tendencies are discussed in books such as Norman C. Stolzoff's *Wake the Town and Tell the People: Dancehall Culture in Jamaica* (Durham, Duke University Press, 2000). In this thesis, however, I have focused on

Marley and his music because it is this influence that I have tracked through various Aotearoa communities. While later music from Jamaica certainly continues to have an influence, it has not, to date, been so profound.

I am also aware that Marley's influence has sometimes been based on the actual historical individual and sometimes on the more complex, iconic, even spiritual figure associated with his recordings. Marley as secular, historical figure was complex-singer, songwriter, musician, band leader, music industry worker, husband, father, brother, Jamaican poor people's hero, international superstar, spokesperson for the Third world.

The spiritual Bob Marley was equally complicated- the musical prophet, the spiritual messenger of Rastafarianism, the natural mystic, and the Jamaican folk hero who remained staunchly loyal to the most socio-economically poor ( but culturally, communally, and spiritually rich) of the Jamaican community all his life. Since my thesis focuses on how "Marley" has been received and talked about, I have not always been concerned to draw fine distinctions of the kind that separate Marley the spiritual from Marley the secular figure.

There is another related issue that should also be clarified. Listeners sometimes speak of "Marley's music" as a shorthand term, even when they are aware that some of Marley's songs were written by others ( such as "Get Up, Stand Up" by Peter Tosh) and that the Wailers contributed to all of his music. The issues are complex- and after Marley's death, they led to legal disputes- but I have not attempted to unravel all the complexities of authorship, production or mythology associated with his musical recordings and his place in the music industry because my concern has been with reception.

I have left the communities to define their "Marley" in their own way. Some community members raised identity issues (such as some of the younger activists who may have seen the singer become a pop culture icon in recent years), while others do not. Both 12 tribes of Israel, and Ruatoria Rastafarian community members feature reggae singers, musicians, and performers- practitioners of the craft Marley practised. These multi-talented people, (like all other fine communities in this thesis) may still be aware of the above issues- but in my discussions with them they did not regard such nuances concerning authorship, and music industry mythologies surrounding Marley as important.

## **Aotearoa literature review**

The Aotearoa section of the literature review is divided into a number of parts: (1) musical history, (2) local Rastafarian history, (3) political history, (4) Maori history, and (5) Pacific Island history. This literature review will identify the sources that were useful for the thesis as a whole. As noted before, theory and methodology literature will be covered in a later section.

### **Music history**

John Dix's work Stranded in Paradise: New Zealand Rock 'n' Roll, 1955-1988 gave an excellent introduction to the history of rock and roll music in Aotearoa. The book charts the history of popular music from 1955 to 1988. Chapters are dedicated to different musicians, styles of music, and eras. Good photographs of bands and live performances add a visual history to the written narrative. The book is also laden with music industry material - labels, personalities and venues - and is full of the feel and energy of the music. Dix calls on all his experience as a music writer, promoter, band manager, and music industry insider to compile this very detailed history of Aotearoa popular music. The work includes an important chapter dedicated to Maori and Polynesian music, "Light of the Pacific", which touches on the story of Maori, Pacific Island, and Pakeha reggae bands in Aotearoa and their relationships to Bob Marley.

There are now valuable sections on the evolution of Maori and Pacific music into hip hop, rap, soul, and fusion styles, as the new generation moved into those forms. Both editions have been an invaluable source of information for my thesis.

### **Rastafarians in Auckland**

The 1983 Auckland University M.A thesis I'N'I Rastafari: Identity and the Rasta Movement in Auckland was an important resource. Gordon Hawkeswood participated in, and observed the evolving influence of Rastafarian thought on networks of young Maori and Pacific islanders in inner city Auckland from 1982. His eighteen-month sojourn as participant observer in Maori and Pacific Island youth culture was the basis for a politically committed ethnography, a work of great depth, with sympathy and concern for the situation of people at the margins of a post-colonial society. It offered critical resources for my chapters on the 12 Tribes of Israel and on the earlier political

organisers. It also provided a useful model, empowering my grassroots-up methodology and reception theory.

### **Rastafarians in Ruatoria**

Hitendra Patel's 1999 dissertation, Natty Dread: The Ruatoria Rastafarians was critical reading for my chapter on this Ruatoria community. Patel spent 6 days with the Rastafarians and wrote a study of their spiritual and cultural beliefs. Sections of his work outline the relationships of Rastafarianism to Jamaican contexts. He also discusses the significance of Rastafarianism in relation to Aotearoa, Maori religion, and the context of colonisation. He has important sections on the community's history, their faith, their use of the sacred Herb, their leader Kara, and their forms of indigenous resistance to colonisation.

Bob Marley is a significant figure to this community. I have sought to tautoko [support] the work of Patel, and to build my own chapter around – but also beyond – his research. With so few quality resources in terms of community oral histories from Ruatoria, this work was precious, offering contextual information and post-colonial insights. It was also crucial for the evolution of a special reception theory for the community that I developed in this thesis.

### **Political history**

The New Zealand Communist Party paper The People's Voice was a useful source for the difficult process of expanding and contextualizing the oral histories of speakers in the thesis. The paper provides an important chronicle of activist and revolutionary history, which can be examined week by week and year by year. I read copies of the paper between the years 1967 and 1989. The publication has consistently taken a grassroots-up, working-class, Marxist-Leninist position of solidarity with workers, Maori, women, and victims of imperialist wars in both national and international contexts.

The publication offered one vector against which I could understand the oral histories of community organizers from two generations, as they spoke of their relationship

with Marley's music in their work on problems of poverty, racism, police oppression, and capitalist pressure on communities and economic life. Reading this rich 23 year history also helped me develop the structure of my grassroots-up reception theory.

The Trotskyist publication Socialist Action was another resource that I utilized in order to understand the oral stories of speakers in the thesis. I read through many years of this weekly newspaper. It had a more cultural, community focus in its articles than The People's Voice. Again, I used it as an historical record to support the oral histories of speakers in the thesis. I never approached any of these oral histories without drawing on as much grassroots materials as possible in order to treat them with the respect they deserved, and this paper helped me greatly in grounding their work and Marley's influence in local community history.

I consulted the anniversary collection, Broadsheet: Twenty Years of Broadsheet Magazine, edited by Pat Rosier, as a counterpoint so that I could measure the oral histories of community organizers against the concerns of women as articulated in the book between the years 1972-1992. Broadsheet was a monthly publication which ran from 1972 to 1997. Of course, much of the proud history of community organizing and activism during the '70s and '80s involved women and women's issues.

Three books by Jane Kelsey have enriched the construction of this thesis. Each book has helped me to ground stories of community organizers in the political, historical, and cultural contexts associated with the radical changes that have occurred in Aotearoa since 1984.

The first is Rolling Back The State (1993), which explores the imposition of "free market" economic, social, and political policies (colloquially known as "Rogernomics"). The book tracks the disastrous social consequences. It is densely documented and footnoted, and travels with acumen through the details of economics, history, politics, and government policy.

The second Kelsey work is The New Zealand Experiment (1995) which extends the story to 1995. In this fiercely critical book, Kelsey questions the neo-liberal programme and considers how it was designed, instituted, and protected by successive governments, despite its devastating effects on the working class, Maori and Pacific Island communities with which this thesis is concerned.

Kelsey's third book is Reclaiming The Future: New Zealand and the Global Economy (1999), which considers the promotion of globalization as a neo-liberal economic strategy to expose Aotearoa's economy more fully to world markets. Kelsey discusses

foreign investment, free trade policies, the role of transnational corporations, and the challenges posed by global agreements and networks of power.

All these issues were important to the community activists in this thesis and influenced their understanding of the world in which they lived and organized. We will also see how the influence of a Jamaican singer becomes interwoven in complex ways with these new relationships and struggles in Aotearoa.

## **Maori history**

Te Ao Hurihuri, edited by Michael King, was a fine introduction into Maori matters. The work was originally written in the 1970s and features great Maori leaders from a generation no longer with us. There are articles by a range of Maori scholars from many tribes, on such topics as Maori leadership, death, tapu, the cosmos, Maori religious traditions, and Maori myths and legends. This work has been a constant companion in my labours because the scholarship rests, as so much Maori scholarship does, on profound oral traditions. It was my aim to get the oral traditions embedded in these fine essays to ‘talk’ to the oral traditions of Maori speakers all through the thesis. With this book I have been better able to support the stories of those Maori who speak about Marley in relation to indigenous traditions. The work was particularly useful for working with the good people of Ruatoria and offering support to that community.

Hirini Moko Mead’s Tikanga Maori has also been vital. The book is a great introduction to the nature of Maori tikanga [protocol], the principles and values of Maoridom, and the correct performance of the oral traditions that link Maori to ceremonies, land, knowledge, and peace agreements. The work gave this student a means to tautoko [support] Maori oral traditions, values, and cultural strengths when people in the course of this thesis were speaking about music in these contexts. The work was also a reminder that the reception theory and methodologies employed in my thesis had to have a firm Pasifika (as well as Maori) ethical basis. Moko Mead spoke for his own people and his own values; but I was required to protect the mana of each speaker in my work by designing a structure similarly based on good values, humility and community service.

The memoir Awatere: A soldier’s story was an important resource for making sense of the oral histories from Ruatoria. Arapeta Awatere was born close to Ruatoria and

had tribal lineage from both Ngati Porou and Ngati Hine. Awatere was a commander of the Maori Battalion who served in World War II. After Awatere died in 1976, his memoirs were collated and eventually published in 2003. His book encompasses memoir, letter writing, history, translation, poetic analysis, social history, and sporting commentary. The work was precious to me because Awatere evokes the Tai Rawhiti region with great spiritual power in living forms of oral storytelling. In trying to make sense of my experience of Ruatoria as a landscape, or as a community, or to understand the warrior traditions that emerged from that area, I found that Awatere offered a guide. It was a way to connect oral histories, Ruatoria traditions from an earlier time, respect for the land, genealogy, and other important elements, so that Marley's influence could be seen to join a rich weave. The book helped this student to think through the connections between the oral traditions, music, and cultural formations of Aotearoa and Jamaica.

Ranginui Walker's He Tipua: The Life and Times of Sir Apirana Ngata, was another important work that enabled me better to understand the East Coast and its traditions. The book is a biography of the legendary Ngati Porou leader, Sir Apirana Ngata, tracing his life, his training as a young leader, his educational achievements, and his service to his tribe and to his people. The Ruatoria community spoke about this man with enormous reverence. I wanted to learn more about him in order to support their stories and to assist me in my aim of developing new forms of de-colonizing scholarship based respectfully on oral history.

I also consulted the works of Ngata such as his Rauru-nui-a-Toi Lectures; and Ngati-Kahungunu Origins. This brilliant genealogy was above my head to understand, resting as it does on thousands of years of culture, spirituality, community and oral tradition. Maori genealogies are textualised in that work, whereas in Maori communities the traditions are remembered and recalled in oral forms. My aim in studying the work was to pay tribute to the oral history of the Ruatoria community. I sought to connect the Dread stories about Marley to other parts of the community's oral traditions and to compare them with the oral traditions of Jamaica. My reception theory for this community was built on the exchange between two oral cultures, within the spiral of life, death, and rebirth that each represents.

Ranginui Walker's compilation of papers and newspaper articles Land March helped me understand the complexity of organizing for the event that characterized 1970s

activism in Aotearoa. There were important stories here that I could use to support and weave around the stories of Marley associated with the 1975 Land March.

Walker's Bastion Point papers contained much information about the struggle at Takaparawhau, including pamphlets and other documents from the protest and its organizers, sketching out part of the great history of this struggle. I looked upon such documents as living treasures because they helped to bring Takaparawhau to life in relation to Marley. I utilized such material as part of the spiral weave of collective oral history.

Donna Awatere-Huata's 1984 text, Maori Sovereignty, was the first substantial history of Maori and their colonial and post-colonial experience told from an indigenous point of view. This extraordinary text is at times essay, poetry, history, political polemic, sociology, and spiritual and cultural manifesto. I have understood her work in these ways, not to mention using it to design a reception structure. I will have more to say about this work and the spiral motif that emerges from it in my discussion of methodology.

Ranginui Walker's 1990 Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou: Struggle Without End was the second history written by Maori from a post-colonial, indigenous perspective. This history is a landmark work, moving from Maori settlement in Aotearoa to early engagement hundreds of years later with the first European arrivals, through colonization, on to the post-colonial phase of European and Maori relationships today. The account is staunch in its view that Maori have always resisted, and always will resist, attempts to take away their land, resources, or dignity. Walker's book has offered this student a means to understand the Maori situation in Aotearoa since the Second World War. Many of the speakers in my thesis are Maori, and I have sought to connect their oral stories to Walker's history, his 'speaking text.' Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou has been a constant source of inspiration, offering resources for supporting both older and younger community organizers, both members of the 12 Tribes and the Ruatoria Rastafarians.

Aroha Harris's Hikoi: 40 Years of Maori Protest is a final important text I have used in this area. Harris's work pays tribute to Walker's path-finding scholarship, but also forges a new path in her own right. This is a forty-year history of Maori activism in Aotearoa, between the years 1964-2004. Each chapter introduces the reader to the key issues, struggles, and modes of organization during each period. The work has many great photographs so it is also an important visual history of Maori protest including

anti-Springbok Tour protests, struggles to protect the language, occupations, and land marches, including the 2004 Hikoī to Wellington. This work was important in understanding how each wave of community organizers made sense of the world they operated in. Bob Marley has influenced both of the two most recent generations.

### **Pacific Island history**

I was unable to obtain copies of the Panther Rapp, the paper produced by the Polynesian activist group of the early period, the Polynesian Panthers. As an alternative, I read and learned much from the first Polynesian and Maori community paper, Mana, published 1977-1978. One speaker in this thesis, Tigi, was a sub-editor. As an inner city Auckland weekly, the paper acted as a news source for community events before the expansion of Pacific Island media we see in Aotearoa today. Sections of the paper were dedicated to each Polynesian community, with parts written in Maori and in various Polynesian languages. This paper was a great counterpoint to my readings of The People's Voice and Socialist Action because of its emphasis on Pacific Island issues and histories. I was able to use it to support the oral histories of those Pacific Island people who spoke about Marley in the thesis. This paper also informed my grassroots-up reception theory because it dealt with aspirations and community links, and acknowledged all the different island groups in Aotearoa. To get a feel for the inner city through the eyes of the Polynesian community at the time Marley's music arrived, this paper was essential reading.

I also drew upon Michael Fonoti Satele's impressive study of the Polynesian Panthers, entitled The Polynesian Panthers: An assertion of Ethnic and Cultural Identity through Activism in the Seventies. This thesis was built out of rich ethnographic interview materials. I utilized this text by counterpointing its insights against the oral histories of the Pacific Island speakers in my own thesis, along with other sources such as Mana. It offered much precious historical substance when I was working on the structure of my grassroots-up reception theory.

I read the Polynesian Panthers: the crucible years 1971-74, edited by Melani Anae, late in the thesis project. The book is an important history of an organization set up in inner city Auckland in 1971 by Will 'Ilolahia to serve the Polynesian community. The work features memoirs, poetry, art, interviews, photo images, mainstream media coverage of the organization, and some analysis. The work includes contributions

from those who served alongside the Panthers in solidarity. This book was useful in documenting dates, people, and places. Three of the speakers in my thesis came from this organization, and another two worked closely with the Panthers and were also mentioned in the book.

R.L Challis's early study The Position of The Polynesians In New Zealand was another important text for enriching and supporting the oral histories from Pacific Island inner city Auckland. Challis discusses the new immigrants from Polynesia as they settled in cities like Auckland in the late 1960s and early '70s. His work is a valuable record of its time, focusing on the mood of hope many immigrants had when they came to the country. His work discusses where people settled, where they found employment, and what some of their aspirations were in the new country. This text supported the Pacific island oral histories in this thesis in profound ways.

## **Methodology**

The following works were useful to me in shaping my methodology, either in providing relevant models or in stimulating my attempts to develop a different approach better attuned to local conditions and priorities.

### **Resistance through Rituals**

Resistance through Rituals was a relevant selection of work associated with the Birmingham School (the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham). In 1976 this anthology emerged out of Northern England and was laden with concerns about youth 'sub-cultures', popular culture, theory and history. One striking aspect was its concern for the social, political, and historical position of those in working class communities who resisted but only through 'rituals'. The work offered innovative methods in ethnography, utilising participant observation in a phenomenological mode. The school developed a new form of historiography where history was written in a cultural studies framework and not as master narrative. Politicised theory - via Althusser, Marx, and later Gramsci - added other dimensions to the evolving cultural studies method of writing culture as ethnography, history, and theory, as a form of political, interventionist scholarship. Each of these approaches

framed the pre-interview phases of my research. I assumed they would offer me a framework through which to develop a 'reception studies' research design appropriate to the Aotearoa context as I assessed the influence of Bob Marley's music via interviews and other forms of research, but in the sections below I will illustrate how and why I came to move beyond the general Birmingham School approach.

The interviews concerning Marley that I conducted over a three-year period emerged as narratives of community, history, struggle, sacrifice, and in some cases spirituality. I had come from a street background, where stories are the prime mode through which precious local histories are kept alive. I had gone to speak with activists from West Auckland with whom I had spent time on the streets. When I interviewed these individuals I found that their responses always came back to stories, events, and histories of grassroots local culture with which the story of Marley in Aotearoa was inter-woven; and next to none of these histories or stories of grassroots culture had been previously recorded.

The process of the interviews transformed my awareness of how much of the precious legacy of community life - and Marley's influence - is held in oral history, in oral story form. There were relationships between Jamaica, Marley and grassroots Aotearoa that were evoked in living oral form during these conversations. I began to understand I would have to develop a comparative structure that could place this material within a framework that paid tribute both to the oral cultures out of which Marley's music came and to the oral cultures of communities in Aotearoa.

When I went on to interview people I did not know, I found myself asking questions about Marley, people, places, and times as if I were back on the street again, talking to the brothers about what everyone had been doing and where everyone was. I had left my academic outsider or interviewer persona behind. I also spoke freely about my politics, and how and why I wanted to utilise people's oral histories in my thesis, so that my work might support or be useful to their communities. I come from a colonised people so I had no need to disguise my thinking, or disguise how I hoped to attempt to serve communities through de-colonising scholarship.

I thus came to an early awareness that my work had to be written for both non-academic and academic audiences. I also realised that my approach and theory would have to be capable of standing in both worlds. If the thesis spoke only to an academic audience, the talk of de-colonisation and Bob Marley would be at best an interesting piece of university scholarship that built on community generosity, knowledge and

stories but failed to allow those communities strongly and instructively to present their own points of view.

My understanding of history and how to write it began to change as I became aware of the many oral histories emerging from the grassroots. I came to see that Jamaican oral and musical culture, and Aotearoa culture, history and spirituality were all richly woven together, with energy and creativity flowing from both sides. The secular, Birmingham cultural studies historiography did not map well onto this complex oral field representing a different kind of cultural landscape. Stories of Marley's influence were so intricately involved with Maori, Pacific Island and working class Pakeha oral histories that those contexts needed elucidation if an Aotearoa framework was to emerge. I will address some of the issues in more depth presently.

My understanding of culture began to evolve beyond the secular frameworks associated with the Birmingham School as I started to write about Marley's influence in Aotearoa as something living, as oral culture, as a catalyst for local music and politics, and as something linked with local spiritual traditions, in a land far from Birmingham. In none of these areas did I want to find fault with the Birmingham School and their fine, humble labours to serve communities in Northern England; but my experience raised deep questions for my research about how to understand culture, how to write about it, and where to stand when one spoke about it. I was uneasy about the particular ways in which Birmingham researchers used interviews and participant observation. They tended to interview people with pre-designed questions, and then mapped critical theory and cultural history from outside sources onto the ethnographic material they had collected. They also tended to construct grassroots communities as 'sub-cultures', a term that implied a particular set of intellectual assumptions. In some respects I felt that the end result was to translate the lives of grassroots communities into an academic discourse, with the form of the results too much pre-determined by a cultural studies paradigm. At its worst this could be seen as cultural colonisation of grassroots community knowledge.

As I carried out interviews, and began moving to my write-up phase, I started to think about the fact that in many respects I came from the same place, histories, and cultures as the people I was interviewing. I began to understand that these communities were speaking clearly in their own forms about theory, methodology, history, sociology, politics, religion, spirituality, music, aesthetics, culture, de-colonisation, and resistance, to name just a few of the themes on which they had much

to say on the basis of their own experience and thinking. They did so in grassroots forms, and in many cases within a spiritual framework. Their words belonged to cultural traditions that could not be fully accommodated within secular, academic frameworks and which were not clearly acknowledged in most of the academic literature about the reception of popular culture. Part of the evolution of this thesis involved the realisation that some interviews were not simply accounts of reception but at the same time community testimony, stories of survival, resistance, and spirituality – all parts of a rich and complex weave grounded in people’s lives and in local history and culture.

For several reasons, then, I came to view people’s stories not merely as secular interview structures to be slotted in to familiar academic frameworks. I felt strongly that academic frameworks should not get in the way of people speaking about the things important to them (such as their relationship to Marley and his music). Academic labours should support and enrich the rights of community speakers to own and fully express their own responses, aesthetics, politics, culture, and spirituality. As a start, I decided to include interview transcripts at some length. And my aim was to understand this talk in terms of the complex epistemologies that connect people to story, to place, to time, and to Marley’s music. I had to step back, to place oral histories and their associated cultural traditions at the centre of my project, and to build my framework round them so that Marley in Aotearoa could emerge from these voices. To do justice to these issues, I designed an alternative structure - the motif of the spiral, which I shall discuss later in this chapter.

I was forced to confront the fact that, in the Birmingham tradition, culture had been mostly theorised in terms of British contexts. There were dangers in primary data from Aotearoa being processed and packaged by what might be described as an imported theoretical apparatus shaped by overseas contexts. Obviously there were useful things to learn from that tradition, but – with colonization as a frequent theme in the interviews – it was important to ensure that my own study was basically Aotearoa-centred.

### **Stuart Hall**

The most useful Birmingham source for me was the Stuart Hall, Charles Critcher, Tony Jefferson, John Clarke, and Brian Roberts co-edited production, Policing the

Crisis: Mugging, the State, and Law and Order, a valuable introduction to the relationships between people, power, media, and ideology. Hall assesses the historical case of mugging in Handsworth through an interdisciplinary, multi-dimensional range of media studies - close reading, ideological and historical analysis. Working with a Gramscian critical framework he investigates how the phenomenon of mugging has been framed, contextualised, defined, and represented back to grassroots communities in 'common sense' terms by those in power - the courts, the media, and the police - to serve their own interests. One way of understanding Hall's work is to suggest that his complex analyses - linking the production of news, the ideological values encoded in news coverage, police and judiciary public discourse, and the public consumption of news - represent an innovative contribution to reception theory, in a highly public and politically charged form.

In the early phases of pre-interview research, I was still getting my head around Hall's work. But later, as I began to investigate new ways of understanding how Marley's music travelled to Aotearoa and was re-interpreted and re-positioned in this land, I returned to some of the fundamental coordinates in Hall's approach. I could see that his work was excellent on the production and circulation aspects of media reception, but his audience consultation was limited. He did not rap at street level with communities, to test whether they accepted, resisted, or ignored mainstream media and political messages that treated them as passive receptacles of 'public opinion'. He deserved respect as an organic intellectual in solidarity with communities, but in his analysis he put far too much weight on production and circulation. Important as Hall's work was, it was not fully adequate to study communities in Aotearoa which have developed their own complex histories, oral traditions, cultural and spiritual interests. How Marley's music travelled, was accepted, transformed, employed as a creative catalyst, and translated anew into local stories represented an audience at work that was far more active, in specific, indigenous ways, than the audiences described by books such as Policing the Crisis.

I decided then to re-contextualise each element, starting with the production of Marley's music - locating its origins in the grassroots oral and musical cultures of Jamaica - so that there could be a correspondence at the reception end with the grassroots oral and musical cultures of Aotearoa, which then (with Marley as catalyst) became a new centre of production.

At the same time, I remained alert to the material and economic operations of the recording industry, the production of Marley records and music, and the secular frameworks of circulation and consumption. I came to develop a contrapuntal understanding of the many dimensions of reception theory – from the secular to the religious, from the commercial to the resistant. Hall’s work provided a great education on a number of points during the evolution of the thesis, even though I moved towards finding ways to allowing speakers in the thesis to take on a more prominent position than that permitted by Hall’s approach. (In some respects his work tended still to keep audiences and communities at a distance.)

### **Adorno and Horkheimer**

Adorno and Horkheimer’s Dialectic of Enlightenment was another useful work I read in developing one side of my contrapuntal understanding of reception. The authors’ critiques of modernity, mass media dissemination techniques, mind control, popular culture and the role of popular music in pacifying a population within the capitalist system, are well known and justly famous. This work, with its pessimistic arguments written by two men living in the shadow of Nazism and Stalinism, offered help in understanding the commercial pressures Marley must have faced in order to get his message of liberation and de-colonisation out beyond the limits of the record industry, into more fertile fields of resistance at community level. Their work enabled this student to consider the relays between production and circulation modes, as music from Jamaica came to Aotearoa in commodity forms. The text made me think critically about the Aotearoa music industry, record production, and radio airplay, especially in an environment where Marley’s music was at first mostly excluded from the radio.

While I had to be aware of these secular music industry networks, however, my interest was focused on forms of influence and reception that existed outside the control of the music industry – that is, beyond the structures of domination discussed by Adorno and Horkheimer. Almost no one I interviewed spoke about Marley’s music as a secular entertainment product supplying pleasant melodies and lyrics, well-suited for relaxation. Instead, Maori, Pacific Island and working class communities were actively re-deploying Marley’s music in resistance struggles, or for alternative religious needs. While Adorno and Horkheimer’s text was certainly useful to me, it

constructed an audience that remained mostly silent and passive. Reception had to involve other dimensions.

## **Gramsci**

I had never read Antonio Gramsci's Prison Notebooks closely until most of the interviews were completed. I was of course aware that Hall and the Birmingham tradition had often acknowledged his influence.

Gramsci's political consciousness, geographical and historical awareness, and understanding of the power dynamics operating in culture was a great education. The work was sometimes hard to contextualise in Italian terms because it came in note form rather than as a polished text rooted in clearly stated contexts and concerns. But Gramsci's insights into culture, 'hegemony,' and 'organic intellectuals' were profound, and offered me a range of modes through which to approach culture, oral history, and the influence of Marley in Aotearoa. Employing his insights made my historical archive research more focused, more conscious of power relations in culture, and more aware of organic intellectual work as resistance. His work empowered my discussions within the Ruatoria Dread community by offering a critical framework within which to understand culture as resistance (and by extension de-colonisation), and I was therefore better able to connect Rastafarian stories about Marley to their other cultural practices of resistance.

On the theory level, his work offered a means to understand the production, circulation, and consumption of any form of culture (including music) as rooted in struggles concerning actual places, politics and histories, involving real people. His work broadened my understanding of Marley himself as a travelling 'organic intellectual'.

Gramsci also offered resources at the writing up stage. His work on hegemony helped me to conceptualise linkages between stories, and between Jamaican, Third World and Aotearoa activism and resistance. His work provided the means to develop a secular form of reception study, especially the concept of groups of organic intellectuals in Aotearoa employing Marley's work and influence to further their own interests through the shifting equilibrium of culture (for commercial or communal ends, capitalist or anti-capitalist purposes).

I moved away from Gramsci's work, however, when I considered that Marley's music came from a deeply spiritual framework in Jamaica. I began to grow disenchanted with the idea of utilising Gramsci's secular cultural aesthetics in order to frame the spiritual aspects of Jamaican reggae music, or Aotearoa's Maori and Polynesian traditions of spirituality. The divide lay in the theories of knowledge - secular and materialist on the one hand, holistic and spiritual on the other. I grew concerned about utilising what was arguably a reductive European approach. Speakers in the thesis discussed their relationship to Marley's music in terms of their own conceptions of aesthetics, spirituality, and history. It seemed to me imperative to allow people to speak from Aotearoa to Marley and to grassroots Jamaica with as few preconceptions and restrictions on my part as possible.

Gramsci empowered my gathering of community oral histories regarding Marley, and one chapter in particular bears the imprint of his influence (the chapter on 'The 12 Tribes of Israel'). But ultimately Gramsci seemed to take away from community voices their full freedom to advance their own theories, to be organic (or community) intellectuals able to follow their ideas wherever they led, including spiritual or cultural ideas that lay outside this theorist's interest.

Other theoretical insights from the traditions of Marx and Althusser were valuable as a starting point for my project, but I was forced to travel other roads after making the decision that all theory and methods had to be calibrated against the specifics of local grassroots responses. As I journeyed further into the thesis I became aware of the theoretical insights to be found within the oral histories that lay outside these traditions. In other words, the story-telling around Marley moved from being simply one part of the thesis to becoming its centre of operations, with its own cultural, theoretical and spiritual dimensions.

## **Geertz**

Geertz's Interpretation of Cultures offered a means to understand culture and reception different from the Birmingham school and cultural studies approaches. Geertz's essays in this 1973 collection offered an education in ethnography, anthropological interpretation, comparative cultural analysis, and the writing up of culture as 'thick description'. His notion of culture as a form of fiction to be textualised through analysis made interesting reading.

I did not draw directly upon Geertz's work, however, because it presented me with some difficulties. He spoke of interpretation without discussing how some interpretations have more power than others and can effectively misrepresent another people or culture. His whole paradigm of investigation assumed the cultural worker was an outsider working in an alien environment. In this thesis, I was partially insider and outsider simultaneously, something his framework did not seem able to account for. I began to have difficulties with his very rich interdisciplinary mode of reading cultures that utilised narrative, symbolic examples and analysis. Even though the range of thought was extensive and detailed, Geertz interpreted non-Western cultures back to Western readers through a set of norms, values, and sophisticated techniques that effectively silenced the very native peoples who empowered his research. He could still be accused of appropriating non-Western culture in the way he absorbed it into Western thinking. His work rested on Western epistemologies that were also secular. So his work did not shape the structure of my thesis, though I could see that it offered interesting ways to understand culture in a comparative framework. I felt I would have to develop comparative frameworks of a different kind to do justice to the communities I studied.

### **Later Birmingham Work**

So far, in discussing the work of the Birmingham school I have focused on classical texts of the 1970s. It is important to acknowledge that in later years the Birmingham tradition became richer and more diverse. Those who started out within this tradition but who went on to carve out their own paths include John Fiske, Ien Ang and Paul Gilroy. Their work has been useful to this thesis and I will discuss it in the following pages.

### **Fiske**

John Fiske's Reading the Popular and Understanding Popular Culture were valuable to me in my write-up phase. Fiske makes important contributions to the study of popular culture and cultural politics in both books. His work extends the Birmingham tradition by developing a politicised analysis of how people use popular culture in

order to resist capitalism and the culture industry in their attempts to commodify popular cultural materials for profit. I was impressed by Fiske's ability to locate popular resistance and the re-appropriation of cultural products in a variety of contexts. His history of the conflict between 'the culture industry' and 'the people' added an important dimension to his work, and he also stressed geographical factors. He conceived of a reception relay between cultural artefacts, people, and contexts that was important as I developed an Aotearoa 'grassroots up' understanding of reception. The popular culture aesthetics of 'raiding' and 'guerrilla resistance' introduced me to aesthetic processes very different from those discussed within the traditions of high art.

Unfortunately Fiske did almost no interviews, and consulted almost no one when it came to grounding the reception dimensions of his theory in actual communities. His work was strong on text analysis - and the text could be anything from a beach, to a shopping mall, to a street. His account of how people used popular culture was interesting and strong, but his work was thin in terms of discussing what audiences, communities or people actually thought or spoke. In contrast, community voices occupy the centre of my thesis.

I appreciated the way Fiske's reception theory travelled into geographical locations. I was required to consider Aotearoa geographies as Maori communities related their traditions to their landscape. I also valued the way Fiske grounded his aesthetics in the common people and everyday settings, as they utilised culture for resistance against capitalism. But ultimately I felt it necessary to design my own aesthetic and reception paradigm which involved more direct dialogue.

## **Ang**

Ien Ang's Watching Dallas contributed to the evolution of my grassroots-up reception study. Her study of the popular drama series Dallas produced a politicised reception theory which took account of the issue of pleasure within a broader debate about soap operas, women, and culture. She analysed the characters of Dallas within a feminist frame of reference, while striving to understand why Dutch television viewers (particularly but not exclusively Dutch women) enjoyed such a series. She developed a politics of television reception in terms of the way the medium might offer pleasure and resistance to the mundane in everyday life.

Ang based her argument on the letters she solicited through a newspaper advertisement. She read the letters symptomatically, and compared them with her own analysis of the key characters in Dallas. In the space between the letters and her analysis of the programme, she developed her understanding of women's pleasure and politics.

Ang's reception theory privileged the audience. Even if she never actually spoke to people face to face, her work was innovative because she moved the discussion of reception back out into the community so that a number of people informed her research. This approach would influence my own attempts to shift the reception of Marley back to the community level, within an egalitarian, comparative framework.

### **Gilroy**

Paul Gilroy's work The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double-Consciousness is a powerful study of the historical and cultural formation this great thinker calls the black Atlantic - Africa, Britain, and the new world of the U.S.A. and the Caribbean. Gilroy argues that black cultures in the new world are formed between the relays, historical exchanges, travelling cultures, intellectuals and artists that link disparate black diaspora cultures, communities and histories within the geography he calls the black Atlantic. His work connects many domains of enquiry - music, aesthetics, sociology, literature, reception theory, philosophy, cultural history, intellectual history, black identity formation, slavery, and the politics of race in the modern day United States.

I will comment on Gilroy in detail in later chapters of the thesis. At this point it is important to acknowledge that he has empowered my research at every stage. His work on music, aesthetics, performance traditions, identity formation, and diaspora has directly influenced my approach to reception. I have drawn on his ideas about diaspora time and space where black people live both inside and outside the temporal and spatial dimensions of secular, chronological, terror-laden modernity. At the same time I needed to design my own understandings of time and space rooted to the experience of people's lives in Aotearoa as they spoke about Marley's influence. Aotearoa is a colonised land, so I began to consider how some of its communities live in Aotearoa both within and beyond modernity in its local forms. These issues became

key concepts to develop if I was to create a reception structure that was rooted to landscape, culture and spirituality in Aotearoa.

Gilroy's work on terror, history, and memory has deeply influenced the way I have thought about the music of Marley. His work also influenced my ability to support stories of pain, anger, resistance, and de-colonisation as such stories emerged in oral story-telling forms.

Gilroy's ideas about performance aesthetics, antiphony, mimesis, and gesture as performance of cultural and historical identity are profound, and they have helped to revolutionise the field of reception studies as I understand it. His work on reception contexts – ranging from dancehalls, to communities, to individuals – clarifies how music has travelled into communities to enrich and support black people. His aesthetics have great depth and subtlety, connecting the body to the public sphere, to time and space, to history and terror, in motion around the black Atlantic. Gilroy's understanding of how and why black music travels - beyond the music industry, to heal, teach, bring news, and empower people so they can live their lives with dignity - was highly relevant to the reception of Marley in Aotearoa.

It is appropriate to honour him in this methodology section because his thinking empowered so many aspects of my work. I absorbed many of his insights, but also sought to adapt them to local contexts by developing the concept of interaction between two spirals of culture, one associated with Jamaica and the other with Aotearoa, able to mutually enrich each other. Among other things, this involved re-working Gilroy's ideas to fit Aotearoa grassroots traditions, including indigenous Maori frameworks.

Again, I combined his insights with those of Edward Said and Donna Awatere-Huata who appear in entries below. All supported my 'grassroots-up' approach, to ensure that community voices spoke from a position of authority and were not simply placed under the mana of this or that great theorist. This combination of influences produced a polyphonic approach somewhat different from the approach of each thinker separately.

## **Pacific Diaspora**

It is necessary to acknowledge that others have already applied the Birmingham tradition and the concept of Diaspora to the Pacific region, and have similarly found

that such Anglo-American work does not entirely fit the cultural and political particularities of local situations. Such work includes Teresia Teaiwa's essay "Native Thoughts: A Pacific Studies Take on Cultural Studies and Diaspora" in *Indigenous Diasporas and Dislocations*, edited by Graham Harvey and Charles D. Thompson Jr. (Burlington, Vermont, Ashgate Publishing Company, 2005, pages 15-35).

It is important to acknowledge Teresia Teaiwa, and her landmark work in this area. But while acknowledging the general importance of work of this kind, I will not discuss it in detail as the situations addressed by my thesis are different and my approach has different emphases. The work that has most directly influenced my thesis is that of Edward Said, David Hilliard, Linda Tuhiwai Smith and Donna Awatere, and I will end my literature review by examining their writings.

## **Said**

Edward Said's work influenced the methodology of this thesis. His text *Orientalism* examines France, England and the United States as three empires interested in knowing and then 'othering' the peoples, lands, and cultures of the Orient from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the present. The text examines how these Western cultures constructed, silenced, controlled, and 'knew' the Orient through military invasion, scholarly investigation, and institutional influence, all operating as forms of colonial discourse. Said studies and analyses an impressive array of texts, speeches, and creative writings from Western thinkers. Although some of his examples have subsequently been challenged, his central idea remains powerful - that culture, modes of aesthetic representation, and scholarship are framed within a knowledge/power nexus that has allowed the West to maintain a position of superiority.

His work was an education for the thesis in raising a number of problems even before I went out to interview people. Problems of representation, and who has the power to define and control how other people are seen or understood became central issues in my thesis. I had come to communities as an activist, with clear ideas about my work as de-colonising scholarship. But I began to understand this thinking was romantic when I became aware of the gulf that separated my work from grassroots communities.

I began critically to consider my role as researcher, working on behalf of academic culture. I began to ask myself whether my scholarship was supportive of communities

or whether I was the only one who gained from the acquisition of grassroots knowledge. The conflicts felt enormous as I sought to design a paradigm through which to allow Bob Marley, Jamaica, Aotearoa and local communities to speak to one another. The issues of representation, empowering others, and serving local communities were issues I had always accepted as part of my research design because of their instinctive importance to me as a member of a colonised people. But Said's work was a strong reminder of the obligations I was under not to 'other' these communities or their stories.

Said's essay "Travelling Theory" was very useful when I began to think about new ways of designing a reception theory rooted in Aotearoa history and geography. I was attempting to read the oral histories of each chapter closely and to position all theory around and under the mana of the speakers. I was struck by the notion of Marley 'travelling' down into the Pacific and meeting resistances, before gradually becoming accommodated into a new geography, context, and history. I had to consider exactly how music had travelled down from one historical and cultural formation before being woven into oral histories in grassroots Aotearoa.

Said's work was brilliant, but I could see one gap - he did not fully consider how the people who received a new idea or culture might reconceptualise it in practice, crafting an entirely new reception theory of their own. When I read the oral histories related to Marley, I became aware that many speakers understood his music, culture, politics and spirituality in terms of grounded, Aotearoa histories. Each speaker implicitly constructed an understanding of Marley's life, culture and music from a position where Aotearoa, not Jamaica, was the centre of understanding. What I am saying is that we need to deal with the complex ways through which music is understood and how it travels. An exchange between two equal cultures is different from the kind of interaction described in Orientalism when one power is dominant. A Jamaican understanding of Marley travelling down to Aotearoa will privilege Marley, whereas I have chosen to focus on an understanding of Marley's music from the grassroots of Aotearoa. While it is true that questions have occasionally been raised about Marley's influence in Aotearoa as a form of cultural colonialism, I see the give and take between the two traditions as a relatively equal dialogue.

What I did was translate Said's great concept and place it in counterpoint to Gilroy and his ideas on black music travelling. Then, I placed both these insights under the mana of the oral history in my thesis. Finally, I designed a 'travelling music'

reception framework built on the ideas of Maori scholar Donna Awatere-Huata to help root the project in Aotearoa. As the centre of all these labours, I have never forgotten my obligation to serve grassroots communities and to honour Bob Marley.

Said's Culture and Imperialism was an extremely valuable resource in the write-up phase. The author connects imperialism and colonisation to culture, aesthetics, control and resistance. The comparative framework was stimulating as I sought to place oral histories at the centre of my thesis. Said's approach that connected culture to geography, history, colonisation, and resistance offered a range of ways to place living stories in a broader and deeper intellectual structure without ceasing to give priority to local speakers and writers.

I was greatly influenced by Said's notion of comparative historiography (or the contrapuntal) as a way of contesting geography within a colonial or imperial context. I have had discussions with a friend, Jani Wilson-Fletcher, about multi-dimensional aesthetics. I began to consider how stories might be considered to weave up off the page and connect with a particular geography, history and culture. The grassroots stories about Marley – such as those of the Rastafarians in Ruatoria - were rich in references to local history, land, colonisation, and communal hopes and ambitions. This made the stories multi-dimensional and not simply flat prose as part of an academic study. I was obliged to create a multi-dimensional framework so Marley and Jamaica could meet the oral histories from Aotearoa in a respectful communion – where absorption did not mean either appropriation or cultural colonialism.

I made use of Said's notion of histories without an ultimate synthesis, weaving into and around one another. His "Permission to Narrate" offered a valuable way to understand narrative as a people's history. My role was to narrate each individual story and somehow to weave it into a communal oral history. This required me to combine multiple conceptions of time and space. Jamaica had its own geography, rhythm, and sense of time through reggae music, travelling laden with the energies of its culture. Aotearoa communities had their own energies. My work could not be situated only within linear, secular space and time.

I began to think that the best approach to designing a multi-dimensional reception theory lay in understanding each element as a type of narration. Marley travelled to Aotearoa through oral musical means and helped to stimulate a new set of oral histories (and new forms of music) in a new land. I began to understand that I could

approach the cultural formations of both Aotearoa and Jamaica as stories of de-colonisation. Said's work offered great resources for this labour.

I realised that I could add other forms of narration - commentary and analysis – around this cross-cultural weave. Aotearoa culture attached importance to genealogy, and I could add my scholarly version. I also came to understand that the oral history was rich with its own insights into reception theory. But my approach could only work if I had a clear understanding of the types of culture and narration involved in the stories I was recording. This required a respect for each community's values, including its spirituality.

## **Hilliard**

David Hilliard's *This Side of Glory: The Autobiography of David Hilliard and the Story of the Black Panther Party* is a very special book. The work is simultaneously an autobiography and a social history of the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California. Hilliard was a senior member of the organisation and a close friend of co-founders Bobby Seale and Huey Newton. The heart of the book lies in the rich array of oral histories that are woven into both the autobiography and the social history. The work is full of great political analyses, testimonies, confessions, and insights into one of the great political movements of the 1960s in the United States.

In terms of developing a grassroots approach and reception theory, the work provided a valuable model. Hilliard offered methodological insights for situating the thesis between the community and the university. Having come from a street background, but having also done political organising and community work, I was looking for readings and approaches that would allow the thesis to move beyond academia and to operate in that 'between' space.

Hilliard's book reminded me that if I did not tell these grassroots stories of communities that I was hearing, then many important stories would probably never get recorded. So much community oral history is ignored or discarded. Hilliard showed me that I needed a story-telling structure able to collect this kind of history.

His book was full of stories about people making sacrifices, people who mobilised, worked hard and offered leadership to their community. Each chapter in my thesis has sought not only to document people's enthusiasm about Marley and their political use of his music but also to document the related value systems of communities - the

practice of humility, solidarity and cultural generosity in the lives of people who share the culture of poverty. I was able to collect wonderful community stories in which people had used Marley's music to support protests, marches, occupations and communal projects – similar to the importance of music for the American civil rights movement or for later activism such as that of the Black Panthers. I wanted to design a work that still respected the university but encouraged it to come 'down to the hood' to share these stories of sacrifice and struggle, honouring the communities concerned as well as Bob Marley and his music. Hilliard's work reminded me that a thesis should be like a marae [Maori meeting house], a place where a variety of people could come to meet and talk, to share in the benefits of an old oral tradition.

Hilliard was someone I did not have to place under the mana of Awatere-Huata, because he did not promote particular theories that I felt a need to indigenise. Rather, he provided general inspiration, and I owe a debt to his work on many levels.

### **Smith**

Linda Tuhiwai Smith's Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples was an important influence in the design of this thesis. The book examines the history, politics, and institutional power of Western research in relation to indigenous cultures. Research has been implicated in the conquest and destruction of indigenous societies, and in the discourses of colonialism and neo-colonialism. A striking aspect of Smith's account is the way she weaves her own personal experience as a Maori woman into the larger history. She speaks profoundly about research that has the effect of silencing, oppressing and mis-representing the lives and experience of indigenous peoples. She also notes that many non-indigenous people have profited from research projects for which indigenous communities have received nothing in return. Her work on ethics and the indigenous control of research designs, structures and outcomes had a direct relevance to my own project.

The second half of the book introduces us to the story of how indigenous communities are beginning to utilise research in order to decolonise, liberate, heal, and enable communities to determine their own future. Smith links this story of new research within a narrative of indigenous communities around the world rising up and resisting through tent embassies, protests, marches, and occupations - and now indigenous research units in academia. Her work is powerful because she explains the potential

value of research to grassroots projects, and explores the context in which indigenous communities live partly outside modernity but can intersect with it in new self-determining ways.

Her work kept me aware that so many oral histories in this thesis spoke of indigenous self-determination and of histories and traditions outside modernity even while these communities were living simultaneously inside local forms of modernity. So many stories in this thesis were stories of survival, memory, hurt, struggle and celebration. Smith reminded me to serve these voices, support their stories, and provide them adequate space and ownership rights in this thesis. As a Pacific Islander, I have always felt a deep obligation to protect and support speakers from marginal communities. For the indigenous communities, in particular the Ruatoria community who have often come under attack, this obligation was particularly strong.

Smith's work also helped me to be aware of the positive work being done by the communities themselves – organising, mobilising, creating culture. Another dimension of research that seeks to empower is the assumption that the people one speaks to are telling the truth. Acknowledging their experience and mana, I saw that my work in adding analysis, footnotes, and commentary was basically to support the living stories I recorded and to build respectfully on them.

### **Linda Smith and Community Theory**

I need to make it clear that the distinction I am drawing between community stories and my academic theory and analysis does not imply that the community is itself lacking in theory or analysis. On the contrary, I see both activities powerfully at work within the everyday life of the community, and their strength should be clear to anyone who reads what they have to say. The Ruatoria community, to take one example, has developed a profound world view that constantly informs their discussions. The academic perspective is different, and it needs always to engage in dialogue with the community perspectives in a respectful spirit. I owe Linda Smith and her important book for these reminders about my obligations to local communities and their own rich array of skills and abilities independent of my own interpretations of their cultures.

It is also important to state that the oral histories in this thesis are more than community rooted theory. They are also personal and communal testimony, oral

narrative history and stories rooted to local geographies, spirituality, and the time and spatial structures within which speakers are situated.

I tried to draw upon Smith's ideas in many aspects of the thesis, but I should acknowledge that, not being Maori, I certainly do not claim that my own work represents an indigenous perspective, even though my Pacific background has helped me to respond strongly to her call for 'decolonizing' research.

### **Community permissions**

The ideas of Smith and Said offered strong support for the research ethics I wanted to follow. But above all I was influenced by my activist ethos, my sense that a cultural worker must serve the people from a grassroots-up perspective. In some respects my ethos was rooted in a radical awareness that if scholarship does not support local communities, then, however academically brilliant, it deserves to be rejected.

I saw community consultation as a basis for all of my theory, methodology, literature review, and oral history labours. So I decided to put myself on the line by giving communities the right to pull their oral histories, traditions, or insights from my thesis if they were not happy with the results. No work would go into the final thesis unless communities gave the go-ahead. I saw this form of ethics as being a truly de-colonising one, because if I came to the end of the thesis and each community rejected the work, I would have no thesis. This was a form of accountability that shifted power from the university back to grassroots communities.

I felt a great sense of responsibility about my power to define other people, and I wanted to return this power. I have often been disturbed by what seemed to me the arrogance of some scholars when they spoke about other cultures and traditions. I was saddened by the sense that many scholars utilised institutional power and resources, and built careers and reputations on the backs of people in the community. I wanted to deconstruct this framework and see if I could contribute to a more de-colonising methodology where everything had to pass muster with grassroots communities.

I returned thesis draft chapters to all the communities I had worked with, and all communities accepted my work. I explained my intentions and thinking to each community, and how I had designed each chapter. The 12 Tribes of Israel participants were relaxed about my work, and most chose not to read the draft chapter. The Ruatoria community closely scrutinised my draft chapter, told me what to delete,

corrected errors I had made, and made general comments about the status of the work. I visited with the community in 2002, and spoke to the people in person about what they felt about my work. They were generally pleased with the chapter. I gave Tigi Ness a draft of the chapter about the earlier community organisers to forward to all those who appeared. The activists were generally happy with my work, and none asked for me to pull their oral histories from the chapter. I got the same response from younger community organisers to their chapter. People were very busy but supportive of the work I was doing.

I am now waiting for approval of the final versions of chapters which I have returned to the communities. (The deadline for the thesis made it impossible to obtain this second round of approvals before submission.) If communities decide they do not approve of my work in final form, then I will withdraw their chapters and they will not be available in any post-examination version of the thesis.

### **Awatere-Huata**

Donna Awatere-Huata's book Maori Sovereignty was written between the years 1982 and 1984 as a series of articles for the Aotearoa feminist journal Broadsheet. It was then turned into a book, rich with photographic images. Each of the essays in the book is a rich contribution to understanding the position of Maori people circa 1984. This book was highly influential among political activists during the period when the influence of Marley's music was particularly strong.

Three quotations from the book have empowered me in shaping the methodology of the thesis. The first passage, from the essay "Beyond the Noble Savage," provides a conceptual comparison between a colonial sense of time and that of Maori culture.

In this [European] concept the present is all important. The dimensions of time have been collapsed into space. This occurred when time began to be measured and quantified. It was no longer tied to the cyclic rhythm of nature and to the ancestors' rhythm of life and death. Precise, mechanical time replaced cyclic and whakapapa [genealogy] time. Thus the present was put into a mechanical relationship with the past and future. Nature and genealogy were put aside.<sup>3</sup>

The second passage, from the essay "Alliances," speaks to the need for Maori to have a long term view in relationship to struggle.

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<sup>3</sup> Donna Awatere, Maori Sovereignty p.60. Note: The book was published under the surname of Awatere. Subsequently she has become such a well-known political figure under her married name of Awatere-Huata that I have used this surname when referring to her.

The Maori view of time differs from that of British culture. To the white, the present and the future are all important. To the Maori, the past is the present, is the future. Who I am and my relationship to everyone else depends on my whakapapa, on my lineage, on those from whom I am descended. One needs one's ancestors therefore to define one's present. Relationships with one's tipuna [ancestors] are thus intimate and causal. It is easy to feel the humiliation, anger and sense of loss which your tipuna felt. And to take up the kaupapa [cause] they had.

This means that the grievances of the past, of one's tipuna, are the grievances of the Maori person in the present. As real as though it happened just yesterday. You often hear Maori today say they carry on the struggle of their tipuna. Who say they are saying nothing new. Now that's true. When I heard that man [a Maori Rasta man speaking on the television programme Koha] saying, White Culture is a Force for Evil, I remembered what Te Kooti Rikirangi Te Turuki said: "Te Matauranga o te Pakeha..." – "The devious cleverness of the white man has been inspired by whom? Why, by Satan, of course".<sup>4</sup>

The third passage, again from the essay "Beyond The Noble Savage," is concerned with examining the concept of space in relation to Awatere-Huata's understanding of how Maori conceived of space before the coming of the European.

Before colonization we had *all* the land in communal lands. We had an abundance of food, a healthy, well-balanced diet. We had strong iwi, hapu, whanau and tribal support groups. We knew who we were in relation to each hill and tree and to each person in this country. We had warfare more *ritual* than bloody, before the musket. Actual deaths were low. Justice was mediated by the philosophy of reciprocity. Of utu [reciprocity] based on whakapapa. Whakapapa was the key to life itself. Through it we could trace ourselves back to the cosmos. We had prodigious memories, intellects trained in the oral tradition, in real lived history, in reading the stars, the trees, the cosmos, all the signs of nature. We got on well with the land. We were 200,000. Healthy. Fighting bloody fit.<sup>5</sup>

Awatere-Huata thinks of all these elements of Maori culture as inter-related, as part of a spiral. I did a great deal of reading and re-training in order to understand the points raised by Awatere-Huata. Some of this re-training happened during the time I spent with the Rastafarian community in Ruatoria. Other parts of my education occurred when I went on the 2004 Foreshore and Seabed hikoi, or engaged in voluntary labour for Maori communities. It became an important aim of the thesis to do justice to this alternative way of thinking about community, history, geography and ritual, and I was constantly reminded of its relevance in Maori community contexts. The concept of the

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<sup>4</sup> Maori Sovereignty, p 54.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid*, p58.

spiral became my principal way of grasping the complexity (or what initially seemed the complexity) of this approach.

### **The spiral motif**

The koru [spiral motif] is of course not unique to Aotearoa but it is a particularly distinctive feature of Maori carving (canoes and meeting houses) and tattoo designs. It is often associated with the shape and symbolism of the unfolding fern frond, and the double spiral is also a common motif. The spiral has a deep resonance in Maori culture. Some of the intellectual implications have been pointed out by A. Bednarek of Lincoln University in his paper “Library Classification and Biculturalism in New Zealand,” delivered at the 2005 Conference of the Library and Information Association of New Zealand Aotearoa:

[T]ertiary institutions and their attached academic libraries are Western institutions and, as such, embody and convey a certain set of prejudices and assumptions that inherently inhibit Māori access to library material. The main focus of my research in that respect is on classification systems; predominantly based on Francis Bacon’s knowledge tree they assume a way of thinking that has shaped European consciousness ever since the Enlightenment. The linear forward-upward movement of Enlightenment rationality is hugely different from the Māori spiral-form awareness of the indivisible unity of all being. The linear mode of classifying knowledge, expressed in all modern library classification systems, does not leave room for accommodating such notions, which, drastically speaking is a form of hidden colonialism.<sup>6</sup>

The ‘spiral’ approach, which underlies Awatere-Huata’s work, is holistic in its assumption that each element is part of a larger unity, linking the present to the past and the future, the individual to the community, and the community to its history and geography (for Maori are tangata whenua or people of the land). For many of the speakers in this thesis, spirituality is also part of the spiral.

Although the koru must be respected as a Maori motif, it provides a valuable way of thinking about all living cultures, particularly those with a strong oral dimension. I will use this motif in talking about the Jamaican oral culture from which Marley emerged, and the cultures of Aotearoa, particularly the Rastafarian community of

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<sup>6</sup> On the LIANZA website (consulted 1 February 2008):  
<http://www.lianza.org.nz/events/conference2005/programme/inform.html>

Ruatoria. It should also be emphasised that the spiral should be thought of not as a static shape but as something active, living and kinetic – like the unfolding fern. I will speak of culture spiralling out of Jamaica to meet that of Aotearoa. I will also suggest that transcribed oral history that is rich in cultural associations does not merely lie flat on the paper, or proceed in the linear academic way described by Bednarek, but may be thought of as three-dimensional, spiralling up off the page, linking up with an entire cultural complex.

At the risk of sometimes mixing my metaphors, I will also use the idea of weaving or inter-weaving – another important aspect of Maori tradition – to emphasise the complex interconnections that unite different aspects of a culture, or the rich give-and-take between compatible cultures.

I spoke with many Maori about the spiral and how the motif weaves through Maoritanga by way of oral narrative, art, tattoo design, spirituality, and thinking about Maori Sovereignty. They confirmed my sense that the spiral motif has profound significance. In its multi-dimensional form, this motif has become one of the ways in which I have learned to understand and respect the richness of Maori scholarship. The spiral emphasizes the connections between oral history, whakapapa [genealogy], culture, spirituality and Papatuanuku [mother earth]. All these complex and grave matters can be seen as woven together by the concept of the spiral as a way of understanding time and space, as an aesthetic structure, and also as a living force – as arohatanga [community love and respect], together with the warrior striving of a colonised people. The challenge in using this taonga [treasure] was to remain alert to its ever-changing shapes, and to use the concept with respect – never to use it merely for reasons of cleverness (as though to imply foolishly that one can understand Maori culture merely by an ostentatious use of this motif).

Awatere-Huata's work deepened and enriched the reception theory I had derived from the work of Said and Gilroy. As I worked with the spiral motif, certain aspects became particularly important for me. I will summarise them briefly.

### *Spiral as geography*

I utilised the motif as a means of weaving together the cultural geographies of Jamaica and Aotearoa.

### *Spiral as temporality and history*

Issues with time were interwoven with concerns for history. Communities spoke to me about their relationship to history in complex ways very different from the common academic assumption that history unfolds in secular, linear progression. Marley himself displayed a very sophisticated awareness of time and history in his music. The aim of my approach was simply to acknowledge that his music co-existed between multiple temporalities and historiographies. I was therefore required to consider issues of history and time from multiple points of view – that of Jamaican culture and that of Aotearoa culture, that of the academy and that of the local community, that of modernity and that of religious culture - to mention just a few of the perspectives. The employment of the spiral does not necessarily speak for indigenous understandings of time or history, but it does serve to acknowledge these complexities so that my approach can be supportive of oral traditions. In some chapters the spiral approach is more prominent than in others.

### *Spiral as oral culture*

I had given the oral history – the on-going conversation between many voices - a central position in the thesis. Theory and analysis are secondary, often added via footnotes.

### *Spiral as value system*

The spiral motif allows me to acknowledge the community values – such as aroha [love], service, and sacrifice - embedded in oral discussions about Bob Marley.

### *Spiral as storytelling weave*

The whole thesis is held together by stories from the grassroots. I utilised the spiral motif as a means of analysing the themes, ideas, and local traditions linked with the stories.

### *Spiral as production, distribution and reception*

I was not satisfied with the usual production, distribution (or circulation), and reception (or consumption) framework employed within media studies. The spiral approach was alert to more complex forms of circulation and reception than those normally discussed. (See, for example, my comments above about Adorno and Horkheimer, or the theorists of the Birmingham school.) I saw Marley's music as operating in some respects outside the record industry, initially circulating in some informal, 'underground' ways within Aotearoa communities. In exploring these aspects, my thesis moved far beyond either a Frankfurt 'ideological' model or an 'industrial' model of popular culture analysis.

### *Spiral as community*

I had designed each chapter around a community of voices. Each speaker wove their story out of their own experience, but it was my role to inter-weave these individual strands into a communal structure. The spiral motif helped me to consider each voice as individual yet part of a common fabric. The spiral implies a sense of community deeper than that associated with reception concepts such as 'interpretive community' or 'active audience'.

There is also a broader, international sense of community that emerges from the thesis. I have used the spiral motif to allow Marley, grassroots Jamaica, communities in Aotearoa, and the academic world to join in the same living conversation.

## Chapter Two

### Marley's music in Aotearoa

Marley is a significant and visible presence in communities all over the North Island of Aotearoa. Where Maori, Polynesian and other young people mix on urban streets, one will always find spray-painted representations of Bob Marley. At markets where predominantly Maori and Polynesian people meet – such as Otara in South Auckland, Avondale in West Auckland, Rotorua in the centre of the island, and Porirua in Wellington - one will always hear his music being played, and there will be stalls where one can buy home-made T-shirts, bags, jackets, and scarves emblazoned with a smiling Robert Nesta Marley. And of course his music is heard on car stereos and at parties all over the country.

Regional celebrations like the annual Pasifika festival at Western Springs, or the annual festival in Grey Lynn Park<sup>1</sup>, or summer concerts at the Wellington Botanic Gardens, all feature reggae, ska, or ragga bands that include some Marley numbers, received by large and appreciative audiences. At every level of popular culture, Marley is enjoyed and appropriated. Curiously he has even come to play an important part in the country's annual national celebrations. February 6<sup>th</sup> is a public holiday to commemorate the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, as a foundational document that set out the “rights and privileges” of Maori and European New Zealanders, negotiated between them in 1840. In practice the rights of the Maori people were largely ignored after the signing of the Treaty. Nevertheless, the Treaty was revived in the 1970s and the national holiday has been observed since 1974. Now February 6<sup>th</sup> is also Bob Marley's birthday, and it soon became common practice to have concerts of his music on the same day. The link between Waitangi Day and Marley's birthday has become so firmly established that each year on February 6<sup>th</sup> approximately 17,000 people gather in Auckland, and a similar number in Wellington, for a reggae concert in a local park. The Wellington event is known as the “One Love Festival” or “Aroha

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<sup>1</sup> One can often hear Tigi Ness (of the reggae band Pacific Unity) and Dilworth Karaka (of the Maori reggae band Herbs), playing together at such concerts. Both men will be featured in later chapters.

Tahi,” sponsored by the radio station Radio Active, and has been running since 1998.<sup>2</sup> Jamaican, New Zealand and Tino Rangatiratanga [Maori sovereignty] flags fly alongside one another. These are family events for all ages, with a variety of local roots reggae, dub, ska, and ragga acts, and all pay tribute to Marley. Many groups of people – Maori, Pacific Islanders, Asian and Pakeha New Zealanders - can be found listening to the music or browsing through stalls that sell Marley paraphernalia and reggae art, or promote environmental causes or the legalization of marijuana. (Popular Rasta MP Nandor Tanczos referred to the good vibes at these events to argue for the legalization of marijuana in his maiden speech in Parliament in 2000.) There are people from all walks and stages of life - with Black Power and Mongrel Mob gang members mingling in harmony with young Pakeha couples with small children. Marley holds a special and revered place in the hearts and minds of Maori and Polynesian people, and they are well represented at these events, from the poorest to the most affluent.

Waitangi events are held in many parts of New Zealand, and almost all tend to include Marley songs. Radio New Zealand (the national public-service radio network) broadcasts a Marley programme each Waitangi Day, and the Maori Television Service usually runs a programme with Marley connections. So thoroughly have Marley and Waitangi become inter-twined that some concern has been expressed in the Maori community that kids may know more about Marley’s birthday than they do about the Treaty of Waitangi.<sup>3</sup> These are serious concerns considering the importance of the Treaty of Waitangi to national history and the well-being of young Maori having a secure knowledge of their ancestors. The popularity of Marley’s birthday has certainly been used by conservatives to divert attention from the Treaty. The cartoon on the editorial page of the Herald (the country’s largest newspaper) on February 4 2008 showed a school-teacher questioning a school-boy (wearing a ‘hoodie’ which may imply he is Maori): “Wednesday (Feb 6) is a very special day... why??” The boy replies: “It’s Bob Marley’s birthday.” The teacher is delighted

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<sup>2</sup> For a typical report, see “One Love, one nation” on the front page of The Dominion Post, February 7 2008.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, *Rangikainga* No.2, Indigenous Media Network, 7 February 2006 (at TangataWhenua.com)

with this answer and says: “Exactly! Gimme 5!”<sup>4</sup> and shares a high five with his student.

It is clear that two very different versions of the man have come through to us today: (1) the Marley whose music and personal example have continued to inspire community activists and many others in political ways; and (2) the more recent emergence of Marley as a music industry icon whose familiar songs create a mellow mood that can – by sentimentalising the politics – be used to promote a feel-good sense of national unity. These two versions may come directly into conflict, although Lynn’s comments in the ‘Older Activists’ chapter remind us that the two can also co-exist, with Marley’s music helping to enrich personal culture and down-time as well as more political situations.

It can be confirmed that Marley was aware of indigenous struggles in Aotearoa because he talked with at least one Maori activist on his visit in 1979. Ama Rauhihi-Ness of Ngati Raukawa spoke to him about the Bastion Point conflict and the general problems of Maori and Pacific Islanders at that time. It was clear to her from his responses that this was no visiting celebrity with no time for local politics – he was immediately interested in and sympathetic to the need “to get up, stand up, stand up for your rights,” and he saw local struggles in an international perspective, from Jamaica to Auckland.

This thesis will emphasize the first version of Marley and the strong political messages his music carried when it first reached this country. At the same time, it will acknowledge the complex, spiral form of his influence as it meshes with local culture and history. Stressing the number of inter-woven strands will help us understand the exceptional richness of his music.

### **Overview of the chapter**

I was not primarily concerned in this thesis with the music industry but rather with the community reception of Marley’s music, particularly in political contexts, with an emphasis on the early years (though not only those years). As one context, however, this chapter will begin with some basic industry information. As is often the case with

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<sup>4</sup> New Zealand Herald, February 4 2008, p.A16 [cartoon by Emmerson].

the business of popular culture, precise information has been difficult to obtain, but a few general points do emerge:

(a) Marley and reggae music were initially perceived as foreign to the current regime of popular music formats. Radio programmers tended to be conservative, concentrating on what they knew – namely, the latest English and American hits. (New Zealand music was also scarce on radio in the 1970s.)

(b) Marley's music had huge appeal especially for Maori and Pacific Island listeners. And as his LP records started to circulate, and a few sympathetic DJs with less conventional taste began to play the music on radio, there was a groundswell of public interest that put him into the charts and forced the music industry to take notice.

(c) Marley's reputation has grown exponentially, as the above example of Waitangi/Marley Day suggests. Reggae has had a particular relevance for Maori and Pacific Island musicians, and this chapter will look back to the 1970s to the emergence of the first reggae bands in Aotearoa. In addition to these explicitly reggae bands, it can be said that much of the country's popular music has taken on at least a touch of reggae influence. Certainly that describes many of today's most popular bands, such as Salmonella Dub, The Black Seeds, Trinity Roots, Katchafire, and Fat Freddy's Drop. For many younger people, this has become the characteristic sound of our country's popular music, heard constantly at picnics, barbecues, parties and cafes. Typically, the reggae elements have been mixed with Maori and Polynesian (as well as rock and jazz) elements. At the same time, these bands also include Pakeha musicians.

All this represents an extraordinary growth of interest from the days when reggae records were scarce, with precious albums being passed from one person to another, and often associated at the same time with public controversies over dreadlocks, dope, and gang associations. As is often the case with popular culture, however, there is an intensity to the early phases that is in danger of being lost when music becomes a familiar part of the landscape. This thesis will focus primarily on that intensity – the music as a catalyst for political, cultural and spiritual changes in Aotearoa in the 1970s and '80s. Not that the intensity is necessarily doomed to evaporate – for some of the musicians I have interviewed, and for the Ruatoria Dread, Marley's work has lost none of its power and relevance.

## The music industry in Aotearoa

Like other areas of the country's economy in the 1970s, the importation of music was tightly regulated by a system of import licences and taxes. The '45s' and 'LPs' available were mostly produced in New Zealand under licence by a few multi-national companies (such as WEA, Polygram, HMV, EMI, and the Australian company Festival).<sup>5</sup> This limited the range of available music. But, as David Eggleton notes in Ready to Fly: The Story of New Zealand Rock Music, "The sound of reggae began to make its way to New Zealand in the early 1970s through records brought back by travellers".<sup>6</sup> (Later interviews will provide examples.)

Island Records was founded in Jamaica but re-located to England in 1962. Its records were marketed under licence in other countries. In Australia and New Zealand, Festival Records picked up the licence. Marley's first Island LP, Catch a Fire<sup>7</sup>, was given a worldwide release in 1973, reaching this country as an 'Island/Festival' recording.<sup>8</sup> It is frustrating to discover that Festival has not kept any information about album sales or any of the art and posters that helped to market and shape the image of Marley in Aotearoa<sup>9</sup>. This company had subsequently become Festival-Mushroom, then given up the rights to distribute Marley to EMI, who gave up the rights in turn to Sony, the company that presently holds the contract. I could not get any facts and figures out of Sony.

I discovered that the Association of Professional Recording Artists (APRA) had no information about Marley airplay time or Top Twenty chart performance from 1974 to 2002.<sup>10</sup> APRA's Arthur Baysting was apologetic and referred me to the Recording Industry of New Zealand (RINZ), which was able to provide information about gold

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<sup>5</sup> See John Dix 2005, p148, Stranded in paradise.

<sup>6</sup> Nelson, Craig Potton, 2003, p.135.

<sup>7</sup> Island Records owner and producer Chris Blackwell wanted an album from Marley, Peter Tosh and Bunny Wailer and gave them a financial advance to produce their first Island LP. All other reggae acts before this deal had produced singles. Blackwell wanted to market the band as a rock act producing albums. Blackwell mixed all the Wailer tracks and laid in overdubs to help the reggae music to cross over to a rock audience. Island Records also organised British night club tours, and television coverage. All of the above issues are discussed in some depth in James Henke, pp 26-31, in Marley Legend: An Illustrated Life of Bob Marley.

<sup>8</sup> The 'street' magazine Hot Licks which ran from 1974 to 1976 reviewed Marley releases in a sympathetic way.

<sup>9</sup> Phone conversation. Festival-Mushroom Records, May 28 2002, Auckland.

<sup>10</sup> Phone conversation. Arthur Baysting, Auckland May 27 2002, Auckland.

and platinum records. Recording companies whose artists have sold the required number of records can apply to RINZ for these to be awarded. Marley was issued with multiple awards during his 1979 visit here. A photograph exists showing three delighted Festival executives at the White Heron Lodge in Auckland issuing platinum records to a smiling Bob Marley for his sales in New Zealand.<sup>11</sup> Victor Stent who was a Festival Records executive in 1979 remembers the awards,<sup>12</sup> but RINZ can not find any record of them.<sup>13</sup>

What exactly did it mean for a record to ‘go platinum’? In New Zealand Music Charts: 1975-2000 Albums Dean Scapolo explains: “In 1978 gold and platinum sales were eventually certified on the charts, gold being 10,000 copies and platinum 20,000 copies.”<sup>14</sup> This may seem a small number by overseas standards but in New Zealand it is a huge number. Traditionally any recording - or book - that sells over 2000 copies in this country is considered to be doing very well, and over 10,000 is clearly a best seller. Of course any statistics made public by a record company need to be received with a touch of scepticism; but it is still very striking that a musician who was initially far outside the mainstream should have reached this level of sales by 1979.

Between the years 1976-1999, 14 Marley albums appeared on the New Zealand album charts: Rastaman Vibration, Kaya, Babylon By Bus, Survival, Uprising, Shakedown, Natty Dread, Chances Are, Confrontation, Legend, Rebel Music, Talkin’ Blues, Natural Mystic, and Chant Down Babylon<sup>15</sup>. Four sold in “platinum” quantities - Kaya, Uprising, Legend and Chant down Babylon - and six ‘went gold’ - Babylon By Bus, Survival, Natty Dread, Confrontation, Rebel Music and Natural Mystic<sup>16</sup>. It is interesting that only four of these albums charted in the same year as their release (1976 Rastaman Vibration, 1978 Kaya, 1979 Survival and 1980 Uprising)<sup>17</sup>.

We can also identify Marley songs that reached the singles charts (based on cumulative record shop sales). The first song was “Is This Love” in 1978, and there

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<sup>11</sup> The photograph was exhibited at Te Papa “Reggae X-plosion” event in 2002.

<sup>12</sup> Telephone conversation, Victor Stent. May 30 2002, Auckland. (He was then working for Mai FM.)

<sup>13</sup> Telephone conversation. Terrence O’Neill, May 30 2002, Auckland.

<sup>14</sup> Dean Scapolo, unpaginated, 2001 New Zealand Music Charts: 1975-2000 Albums.

<sup>15</sup> Dean Scapolo, New Zealand Music Charts: 1975-2000 Albums, Wellington, 2001.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

were 10 others in the next 17 years: “Could You Be Loved?”(which charted twice - in 1980 and in 1985), “Redemption Song”, “No Woman, No Cry”, “Reggae On Broadway”, “Buffalo Soldier”, “One Love - People Get Ready”, “Waiting In Vain”, “Get Up Stand Up”, “Iron Lion Zion” and “Keep On Moving”<sup>18</sup>. There is evidence that “One Love - People Get Ready”, “Could You Be Loved?” and “Iron Lion Zion” sold in ‘gold’ quantities.<sup>19</sup> Only one of the singles - “Reggae on Broadway” – was not an Island Records release.<sup>20</sup>

It is striking that only two of these singles - “Is This Love?” in 1978 and “Could You Be Loved?” in 1980 - charted in the same year that the albums from which they came were released (the 1978 Kaya and the 1980 Uprising albums). The other singles that charted did so some time after the respective album was released. This time-lag matches the pattern for albums. While it is risky to draw generalisations when the contextual information is so limited<sup>21</sup>, and the figures were cumulative, the delayed popularity does seem to indicate a slow but steady growth of interest at grassroots level. It is very different from the usual pattern for singles that sell strongly at the time of release, then quickly fade as they are replaced in the charts by the next burst of new releases. Another oddity in the figures is the fact that Marley’s visit and concert in Auckland in 1979 is reflected in gold album sales (Babylon by Bus and Survival), yet no singles made the charts that year. All one can say is that the pattern of his increasing popularity and influence is an unorthodox one, a slow rising curve over a long period of time that owes little to temporary fashion. The attention paid to Marley after his tragic, untimely death on May 12 1981 seems to have caused a burst of interest - the singles “Redemption Song”, “No Woman No Cry” and “Reggae on Broadway”, and the albums Natty Dread and Chances Are all charted during the subsequent six months<sup>22</sup> - but otherwise Marley’s popularity appears to have grown in an organic way, by word-of-mouth and personal discovery, rather than by release-

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<sup>18</sup> Dean Scapolo, New Zealand Music Charts: 1966-1996: The Singles.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> I cross-referenced the release dates in Scapolo’s useful statistics with the international release dates of Marley albums that can be found in Ian McCann’s Bob Marley: The Complete Guide To His Music.

<sup>21</sup> I communicated with Scapolo by email and asked him about the figures in his useful works. He told me that he had been given cumulative statistics by the record companies. There is no year by year statistics given out that would allow a researcher to track albums or songs over time and locations. (E-mail correspondence, September 3, 2003.)

<sup>22</sup> See New Zealand Music Charts 1966-1996: The Singles and New Zealand Music Charts: 1975-2000 Albums.

based marketing campaigns or heavy radio airplay. The musical seeds were scattered and, over time, yielded a rich harvest because the soil proved favourable.

This thesis will offer a great deal of anecdotal evidence. To offer just one example at this stage, Lawrence Wharerau is a distinguished actor, producer, anchor, and journalist from Northland. He remembers the excited response to Marley's music in small towns up North during the late '70s:

The first Marley album that I owned was Babylon by Bus. I used to wake up and just flick on the stereo, and it would go "Greetings in the name of..." I remember that so vividly, and I used to play it over and over again. Bob was huge [up North]. I first started hearing his music around 1976. And all the bros, all the uncles, everybody was into it, it was a huge phenomenon. I guess in the same way that rock and roll might have grabbed our parents and the like. The phenomenon would be that you could play "One Drop" [Marley song off Survival] 15 times in one night, and you would get the same reaction every time, and nobody would tire of it. Tony- Was that up in Kaitaia?

Lawrence- This was in Moerewa.

Tony- Stormtrooper country?

Lawrence- Stormtrooper country. [The gang] was just forming then. But his whole influence was such that Bob could easily have been born in Matawaia, or Tautoro [Maori towns in Northland], anywhere up there you know. I am not too sure what it was for other people, but for me it was the power of the lyrics.<sup>23</sup>

Maori communities – from young bros to old uncles - related to Marley as though he was someone local, part of the whanau [extended family]. This was a mode of grassroots response that had nothing to do with music industry fashion or publicity.

### **Music shops and radio**

As further evidence of the ephemeral nature of local popular culture history, I was not able to obtain any specific information from those who had owned record stores in the 1970s, although there were plenty of anecdotes to confirm the growing swell of grassroots interest in Marley during this period. There were certainly fans among both bosses and employees who would play his music frequently in their shop.<sup>24</sup>

The main problem for radio in the 1970s was the small number of stations, and these were mostly state-owned, operating on a 'public service' philosophy that took a paternalistic view of what young people should be listening to. The government controlled all broadcasting licences. Censorship was fierce. Records were banned

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<sup>23</sup> Personal interview. Lawrence Wharerau, May 13, 2002, Wellington.

<sup>24</sup> For example, the owner of Revival Records at 268 Karangahape Road in Auckland.

because of references to drugs and sex, or even (in the case of Jimi Hendrix) because of “excessive” guitar feedback.<sup>25</sup> The pirate station Hauraki went to sea in 1966 to break the monopoly, and was finally granted permission to broadcast from land in 1970. This competition forced Radio New Zealand’s ZM network to take its youth audience more seriously, and a few individual DJs started to sneak in some of their favourite music. Radio I emerged in Wellington in 1970 and in 1973 independent stations were established in other parts of the country: Radio Waikato, Radio Whakatane, Radio Otago, and Radio Avon (in Christchurch). Radio Windy joined Radio I in Wellington. Student radio was another important newcomer, with BFM or ‘Radio B’ emerging from ‘Radio Bosom,’ the underground station of the late ‘60s. Each campus was given a short-term license to broadcast for short hours during campus terms. This was extended out to the full-time stations of today.<sup>26</sup> Another important development was the emergence of iwi-based Maori radio stations all over the country from 1989<sup>27</sup>. Marley would become a favourite for many of these iwi stations.

In general, radio in the early 1970s was not a good conductor of new energies in music, or so I have learned from my reading on the period and my conversations with helpful and knowledgeable people such as Bryan Staff, Victor Stent, Danny Lemon, John Dix, Hugh Lynn, and Arthur Baysting. The problem was compounded – as Dilworth Karaka explained to me - when local reggae acts also could not get radio play.<sup>28</sup> It is interesting to learn that even in Jamaica reggae faced initial problems in being accepted. Bass Culture quotes a comment by Derrick Harricot, owner of the label Crystal, about Jamaican radio’s half-hearted support of reggae in 1969:

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<sup>25</sup> See “Record Censorship” in Owen Dylan’s “History of Recording in New Zealand” on the National Library website (<http://discover.natlib.govt.nz>), consulted February 2008.

<sup>26</sup> I have gained much knowledge about the above issues from Paul Day’s Voice and Vision: A History of Broadcasting in New Zealand.

<sup>27</sup> See pp.98-110 in ‘Te Wa Whakapaoho I Te Reo Irirangi: Some Directions In Maori Radio’ in Philip Hayward, Tony Mitchell and Roy Shuker’s North meets South: Popular music in Aotearoa/ New Zealand. Also one might consult, Voice and Vision: A History of Broadcasting in New Zealand. Maori radio started through Te Upoko O Te Ika in 1989, followed by Radio Aotearoa, then Radio Ngati Porou, Radio Tautoko, Te Reo Irirangi O Tainui, and Radio Te Arawa. By 1999 there were 21 iwi stations, the Mana news service that provided news bulletins to many of these stations, and Ruia Mai as well as Mai F.M. By 1993 there were 170 Maori stations - 48 AM, 108 FM, and 14 that were both AM and FM. Also see Ranginui Walker, pp.331-334 in his 2004 Ka Wha Whai Tonu Matou: Struggle Without End.

<sup>28</sup> Personal interview. Dilworth Karaka. November 15, 2000. Auckland.

The radio people were supporting the music to a point, but I don't think they were supporting it in the way they should. I always used to fight with them.... "You people should be playing Jamaican music- at least seventy [percent to] thirty [percent]." Other producers would have the same arguments, and the people at RJR and JBC would tell us they didn't have enough Jamaican music to even play three days of it. Which we all knew was a joke, as at that time there was plenty out there. We didn't think we were having much effect, but somebody must have been listening because at the end of the sixties there was a big uproar about a payola scandal. It was front page in the news over here in Jamaica and several people got fired from radio stations over it. All along they'd been taking money from the big distributors and those with licences to press American records. After that they played a lot more Jamaican music, but still not as much as they should have done. Maybe something like fifty-fifty. Which although it did quite a lot to help the homegrown music industry, the radio people were just biased against it, because next they come telling us, "We don't know if all-reggae would work". Of course it would. But they didn't try it until Irie FM launched in the 1990s and proved everyone wrong. It has been so popular now that all other radio stations have stepped up their quota of Jamaican music.<sup>29</sup>

The problems continued during the 1970s, judging by the extraordinary testimony of Allan Cole during the Cayman Music trial. Cole said: "Well, in those days, it was very difficult for Rastafarians to get airplay unless we were aligned to the big record companies. When I started working at that time as a manager, we went independent. So we had a lot of problems in the record industry getting airplay and things like that.... it was a difficult period in that time. And for us to get airplay, we had to put a lot of strength, what you call muscle, to get played from the various disc jockeys...."<sup>30</sup>

In Aotearoa the acceptance of this new kind of music depended not on "muscle" but on the presence of sympathisers in various organizations who seized every opportunity that came their way to pass on their enthusiasms. Arthur Baysting from APRA was generous with his time in pointing this student towards several people from the early period who had championed Marley's music. Bryan Staff is a DJ on 1ZM – and also a writer and music historian - who presented shows featuring Marley. It was part of 1ZM policy to play "alternative" or "minority" music, to help the station to justify its request to the government for a license to broadcast 24 hours.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Lloyd Bradley, Bass Culture: When Reggae Was King, Penguin, London, 2000, pp.210-211.

<sup>30</sup> See Timothy White, pp.372-373, in Catch A Fire: The Life Of Bob Marley.

<sup>31</sup> See pp.302-303 in Voice and Vision: A History of Broadcasting in New Zealand.

Staff was required, however, to confine his enthusiasm for reggae to late night or early morning slots.<sup>32</sup>

Another champion of Marley and reggae music in the '70s was Duncan Campbell on student station BFM. Each Sunday, Campbell ran a special interest programme of the type at which student radio excels. He also created a one-off reggae edition of the television pop music programme Radio with Pictures, and wrote about reggae in the early years of the magazine Rip It Up. As he continued to specialise in this genre through the decades, he developed an exceptional knowledge. Although others are now presenting BFM's reggae programmes, Campbell still travels to Jamaica to attend the Sunsplash reggae festival.<sup>33</sup>

It would require another thesis to document all the DJs who have played Marley since then, but I would like to profile one radio DJ and one club DJ as examples, who also serve to illustrate the cultural and political commitment that has tended always to accompany strong involvement with Marley's music.

### **Danny Lemon**

Danny Lemon has worked with Wellington's Radio Active (sponsor of the Marley One Love Festival) for at least 13 years. He started out in London where he was involved in the Anti-Nazi League. He recalls:

I was playing jazz funk and soul in London, but that was just a sporadic thing. Some friends of mine were involved in the pirate radio station Battersea, so I [joined them]. When I came to New Zealand, I knew that I had something to contribute - I had this record collection, I bought a lot of music with me on cassette, and I got involved in a local radio station here, and since then I have done radio work. Some in Australia and New York, but I have continued to do work in New Zealand. The main station that I have been involved with is Radio Active, though I have also done shows on BFM and all over. I have done a reggae show on Active every week for 13 or 14 years. This year I have taken a break and just do the odd specialist show, but I've got a show this afternoon. I have done general shows and soul shows but reggae is the thing I was driven to bring out to people.<sup>34</sup>

He is involved in producing the music of the Roots Foundation Sound System, one of the founding groups of the reggae scene in Wellington. Danny comments:

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<sup>32</sup> Phone conversation. Bryan Staff, May 30, 2003, Auckland.

<sup>33</sup> Personal interview. John Dix, May 20, 2002, Auckland.

<sup>34</sup> Personal interview. Danny Lemon, March 12, 2002, Wellington.

It's only recently I've started to feel like I have the knowledge to start producing music that's going to have that authentic sound to it. I feel it's taken me years to accumulate that knowledge and that sense of the feel. But in terms of playing records I realise that I have this calling - it feels like a calling - and it's a mystical thing to me, I feel I have to be doing it, and the more I become involved in reggae the more I understand how special it is when I see how people work together, the more I realise I am very privileged and privy to something quite unique in terms of a global energy. When I am playing music I want to be producing the best radio shows I can. I love radio, I love getting it across to people and when I'm doing my sets, I want to be giving, I'm just a catalyst. I won't compromise, I'll only play what I believe is the best in this genre. I want to give people a sense of what it's about. People will say "I don't understand it" but when they start feeling it in the dance, that's when they start thinking about what the music is about, and then people think about integration and unity and much more, you know what I mean. Bob Marley said "who feels it knows it," and it's true, the more I feel it, the more I feel I have to do this!<sup>35</sup>

The music of reggae has touched Danny's life in a number of ways. He uses the words of Bob Marley's song "Running Away" - "Who feels it knows it, Lord" - to sum up his DJ aesthetics<sup>36</sup>. He sees history as necessary, along with aesthetics ("the best in this genre") and educating people (through feeling rather than preaching). Values are central - this is not merely a job, it's a mission - to bring this positive "global energy" to the people of Aotearoa. His emphasis on "feeling" shapes his intuitive approach as a DJ, which he relates to reggae aesthetics:

I used to put a lot more planning into it but I have realised that a radio or DJ show is very organic. When you are relating to people, it's about keeping the feeling of flow, so for example if you have a Marley track from 1976-77, if it's a love song, it's good to be thinking "What other love songs do I have from that period that will fit, that will take it up to maybe a couple of years later?" It's an organic thing, running a set of music, and it's about knowing the music so well that you have a sense of arrangement - a certain style of track, what will work with another style of track - and I'll throw a whole lot of records together. But if you asked me to do another radio show with the same records it would probably come out in a completely different order, though I would still be able to maintain the flow. It's a more organic thing now, which is great because it feels a lot more natural. I used to write it all down, but when you try to keep things rigid, it sounds rigid!<sup>37</sup>

Danny was the curator for the 2002 "Reggae X-plosion" exhibition at the national museum of Aotearoa, Te Papa. The exhibition showcased memorabilia from the Jamaican and British reggae scenes, but added an Aotearoa dimension.

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> See Lloyd Bradley, pp.288-307, in Bass Culture: When Reggae Was King.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

## **Amelia (12 Tribes of Israel)**

The second DJ I spoke with is Amelia from Auckland, a member of the 12 Tribes of Israel community<sup>38</sup>. In her politically and spiritually conscious way, Amelia speaks here about Marley's relationship with local audiences, the craft of DJ work in clubs, and the DJ's potential role as teacher and spiritual guide. She has a particular interest in Marley's early work.<sup>39</sup>

Every now and then I play a lot of Bob. A lot of people request Bob in night clubs, especially the old Studio One sound, and Tuff Gong - that kind of selection, pure Bob that hasn't been touched, or scratched, or mixed, or remixed or anything. I have a better understanding of what he's saying now, and I use Bob a lot to teach the people some consciousness. That's what Bob teaches me - to be conscious of mind, conscious of the drugs and alcohol, of the bad-mannered people out there. So I use Bob a lot to give them conscious awareness, make them think about what they are doing. I do a bit of work down at the Box [a night club in central Auckland], and down on High Street it's like two hip-hop bars there. I got a little room where I just play the reggae. I get a lot of people come in and say to me, "it's so relaxing, so calm and soothing." A lot of people say when they come out of the hip-hop room, it's like going through a river of garbage then coming into a meadow of flowers or something, that's how they explain it. That's the main reason why I do it. To teach the people some awareness, you let the music speak for itself. With my clientele in the Box it's a lot of white people, various ages, mid-twenties, but definitely Maori and Polynesian - they really love Bob. Yeah, I was quite amazed at the white audience that [Marley's music] also draws within itself.<sup>40</sup>

Danny and Amelia are included here simply as two representatives of the DJs today that have a special relationship with Marley's music. There are many more. To mention just a few, Dubhead, Misteeq, and Antoine are part of the Yardwise crew who do reggae shows on Wellingtons 89FM. In the Auckland region, Marley is a strong presence on the Pacific Island radio station Niu FM, and an occasional presence on the Maori hip-hop and R&B station Mai FM. In rural areas and small

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<sup>38</sup> Personal interview. Amelia Taite, June 24, 2000, Auckland. Amelia appears in the 12 Tribes of Israel chapter.

<sup>39</sup> Amelia is talking about the work that Bob Marley produced at Jamaican music producer Clement 'Coxon' Dodd's Brentford Road Studio One. And she refers to the label that Marley organised in Jamaica that was one of his nicknames - Tuff Gong. For a useful discography that charts Marley songs and albums throughout his career, and through different producers and studios, one may consult Ian McCann and Harry Hawke, [Bob Marley: The Complete Guide to his Music](#).

<sup>40</sup> Personal interview. Amelia, 24 June, 2000, Auckland.

towns, many local Maori stations have reggae programmes. Later we shall discuss examples in Ruatoria where Light of the Trinity has done volunteer DJ work on her home station, Radio Ngati Porou. That tradition has been continued on the same station by DJ Tumanako Kururangi who plays reggae every day from noon to three.

### **Marley's visit**

Bob Marley's visit influenced many individuals who would go on to play an important role in the development of Aotearoa reggae. Hugh Lynn of Te Aitangi-A-Mahaki has enjoyed a distinguished career in the New Zealand music industry. He worked as a promoter for the Paul Dainty Corporation, before becoming a leading organiser of music tours for the Frontier Company. He also went on to manage the leading Aotearoa reggae band Herbs. Hugh, who was involved in security for Marley and the Wailers when they performed at Western Springs in 1979, recalls the experience:

[Promoter] Benny Levin brought Bob Marley, and we did the security for him, which means that we were backstage. At the time they were a bit strange to me, because they didn't seem like the other rock bands that I had seen - there wasn't the emphasis on partying. They wanted to play soccer. When you'd bring out other acts like Black Sabbath, they wanted parties with drugs and chicks, but here were a group of people that travelled the world in a more relaxed state - though I didn't recognise it as that at the time, because it seemed a bit lackadaisical, a bit inefficient, a bit laid-back - I found it strange. Later on I realised that they were actually travelling in a very special state of being, and it was easy to confuse that with not being efficient and not being electric, the pressure didn't seem to be there. The concerts didn't pull large numbers of people in terms of rock and roll shows - I think there were about 20,000 or 18,000 or something like that. The top figures were much higher than that, like 33,000. It's interesting that a lot of black artists have come to New Zealand and not really pulled huge numbers of people, when you consider [all our] Polynesians. The other thing I sensed about Bob [Marley] was a quietness [about Marley] and again I misinterpreted that because I was used to meeting rock stars who were more egotistical and more pushy. Here was this man almost in the background, much quieter than everyone else as far as rock acts were concerned.<sup>41</sup>

Lynn gives a powerful sense of Marley's humility,<sup>42</sup> the "state of being" of a band operating on a different wavelength to other acts of the period. Although Lynn admits

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<sup>41</sup> Personal interview. Hugh Lynn, 13 May, 2002, Wellington.

<sup>42</sup> Compare Lloyd Bradley's account of meeting a quiet and unassuming Bob Marley outside a night club in England, pp. 419-420, in Bass Culture: When Reggae Was King.

to being slow to understand this style, he could immediately recognize Marley's impact, particularly on Maori and Pacific Island people:

I think he unlocked something inside of people. I think if you actually took the music and analysed it - and they have got spectrum analysers now where you can measure the shape of the music, the electronic vibrations we can't see - it would seem at first that the rhythm is quite harmonious, something quite natural there - like the rhythm of the sea, or the rhythm of the wind blowing against the trees. That isn't the case for a lot of music today; it's quite jagged and hard, not natural in its rhythms. I think that probably because of the force of what was going on inside of Marley. [The music] captured that, and I remember at the concert people swaying and that sort of thing. What he did, I am sure, was to unlock something inside of them.<sup>43</sup>

In addition to this mellow, natural sound (like the sea or the wind in the trees), Lynn saw another aspect that was no less important – an underlying “tension”:

I suppose a lot of Maori and Pacific Islands people looked towards Bob Marley because he was black, because he was talking about the things that they wanted to talk about but couldn't express - maybe after they had smoked a joint, or had a few beers, when they became a bit relaxed at the pub, then they'd bring it out - there was this inner tension inside so many people, anger, disappointment, [the sense of] being humiliated out there - because you feel that. It gave them confidence, for if he could do that, then they could. That's what [the band Herbs] said and what they followed, but in a Pacific way, which was really exciting - I think that Herbs really opened the door for many other Maori and Pacific Island people. As we know our values and culture are passed on generation by generation, and it's taken a generation - you look at Che Fu now, he wouldn't be there without the experience of his father, without having lived in that environment, with his father having a close relationship with the creator, all of that - you can feel that quietness and gentleness when you are with Tigi - and so I think this will continue, this opening up, this flowering, that has started to go from generation to generation.<sup>44</sup>

The 1970s saw an upsurge of activism among young Maori in Aotearoa, and Lynn is suggesting that Marley helped to “unlock” these feelings through his particular combination of political intensity and natural sounds - a mixture more in keeping with local traditions than (say) the “jagged” edged style of British and American urban music. Lynn also offers a genealogy, from Marley's Jamaican music to Tigelau Ness of the “Pacific” reggae band I Unity, on to Tigi's son Che Fu who is a leading member of the hip-hop generation, creating original forms of rap that owe more to

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<sup>43</sup> Personal interview. Hugh Lynn, May 13, 2002, Wellington.

<sup>44</sup> *ibid.*

reggae/Pacific than to L.A. gangsta traditions. Che Fu has vivid memories of being taken by his father, Tigilau Ness, to the Marley concert in 1979.

### **Local bands**

John Dix, who became manager of the reggae band Dread Beat and Blood, has a vivid sense of how Marley's visit was a catalyst to the creation of new local reggae bands:

I look at it like when the Beatles came here in 1964. There were more bands formed in the 23 months following the Beatles playing in New Zealand than in any other time in New Zealand history. Kids just went: "Get me a guitar for Christmas!" People took up instruments – "Well, we can do this too, you know!" - And they did Beatles songs. I reckon that Bob Marley, 15 years later, had exactly the same effect on the Maori population. There were many bands, Maori reggae bands, formed in the 12 months after Marley played, because so many Maori could play a guitar....<sup>45</sup>

Dix notes that two of the reggae bands that emerged at this time were Cockroach, featuring Nga Puhī performers such as John Donahue, and Bamboo, a mixed Pakeha and Maori band who performed Marley covers at Auckland pubs.<sup>46</sup> As Dix was aware, however, some reggae bands had already formed before Marley's visit.<sup>47</sup> Unfortunately no one appears to have documented the history of reggae in Aotearoa in detail, but I have gathered information on some of the early bands. One of the aspects of this history that particularly interests me is the extent to which reggae musicians in this country have been highly active in political and community causes. To mention some of the groups:

Chaos, a Maori reggae band, was formed at Takapuwahia Marae in Porirua, Wellington, in 1973.<sup>48</sup> Chaos performed Marley covers during the 1970s and played an important part in expressing the anger and alienation of many younger Maori through musical means.<sup>49</sup> By the late '70s, Chaos had morphed into the band Dread Beat and Blood. This band brought their soul and spirit to a number of small towns in

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<sup>45</sup> Personal interview. John Dix, May 20 2002, Auckland.

<sup>46</sup> Personal interview. John Dix, May 20 2002, Auckland.

<sup>47</sup> See Dix 1988, p.333, in his Stranded in paradise. This is a useful introduction.

<sup>48</sup> The date comes from the Reggae-Xplosion exhibit. Dix gives a later date in the 1970s.

<sup>49</sup> See the film Keskidee Aroha for voice-over narration on this subject by Martyn Sanderson, at the very point in the film where Chaos is playing a Bob Marley song.

the lower North Island, playing to Maori and Pacific Island audiences.<sup>50</sup> Dread Beat and Blood produced their first album, Tribute to a Friend for Jim Moss and his Jayrem record label in 1985.<sup>51</sup>

In 1974 the Maori reggae band Uprising formed in the Taranaki region.<sup>52</sup> Band personnel were brothers Dave and Rewi Leef, Anaru Kemura, and Carl Perkins. The band got to know Marley's early Studio One Christian-inspired singles well before most New Zealanders became aware of that part of Marley's corpus.<sup>53</sup> The band composed, wrote, and sang their own music but unfortunately did not record any of the original material.<sup>54</sup> Carl moved to Auckland in the late '70s with Uprising, but then became involved with Mana, a band that formed in the mid-'80s. Two other bands emerged in Auckland during this time - the Revelation Steppers and the Dread Lion Band<sup>55</sup>.

The reggae band Unity was formed in Auckland in 1975 by Niuean Tigilau Ness and Maori Ama Rauhihi-Ness.<sup>56</sup> (They were partners at the time.) Band members such as Ness performed music at protests and other grassroots political events. He was often joined there by activist musicians such as his friends Roger Fowler and Lyn Doherty. Ness took the music of Marley to those involved in the 1975 Land March.<sup>57</sup> By 1980 Unity had changed its name to I Unity, playing a mixture of original tracks and Marley covers.<sup>58</sup> By 1982 members of the band were also performing with the musical ensemble of the 12 Tribes of Israel community.<sup>59</sup> I Unity later become Pacific Unity, and there is some vivid footage in Merata Mita's documentary Patu – a

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<sup>50</sup> Personal interview. John Dix, May 20 2002, Auckland. Dix managed the band Dread, Beat and Blood for a period in the mid-'80s.

<sup>51</sup> See Dix 1988, p.333, in Stranded in paradise.

<sup>52</sup> Carl Perkins, November 24, 2002, Auckland. I regret that I could only take notes as I had no tape recorder.

<sup>53</sup> Marley's "Judge Not", "One More Cup of Coffee" and "Simmer Down" are three well-known, Christian-morals-influenced ska tracks from his early Studio One career.

<sup>54</sup> Carl Perkins interview.

<sup>55</sup> Carl Perkins interview. Also see pp.120-131, in the 1985 article "Rastaman Vibration" by Nicola Legat, Metro magazine. The band Dread Lion is mentioned in this article, playing at their 12 Tribes of Israel "Nu Vision Trust House". Perkins can be seen in "The Wailers", an episode of the 1987 New Zealand television series Koha. He appears with members of Herbs in an episode that examines the influence of Bob Marley and reggae on Maori at the time. The Wailers travelled to Aotearoa to perform that year, and the programme includes an interview with the band and footage of their show at the Auckland Logan Campbell Centre.

<sup>56</sup> Personal interview. Tigi Ness, June 6 2000, Auckland.

<sup>57</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> A person can see I Unity performing in Merata Mita's 1981 film Patu. I shall speak about that sequence later in this chapter.

<sup>59</sup> Personal interview. Hugh Lynn, May 13, 2002, Wellington.

very important film about the protests against the Springbok rugby tour of 1981 - showing Tigilau Ness, Ama Rauhihi-Ness and Pacific Unity performing Bob Marley's "Survivors" to a group preparing for a protest action. In this context, Pacific Unity connects the struggles in South Africa to the struggles in Jamaica to the struggles in their own country against racism.<sup>60</sup> It is one of the many examples where political documentaries produced in this country have made powerful use of Marley's music.

Another example is Keskidee Aroha (1981), directed by Mita and Martyn Sanderson, documenting a tour by a black theatre troupe from London. The tour was organised in 1978, and Keskidee arrived in Aotearoa May 12, 1979 one month after the visit of Bob Marley the same year. Denis O'Reilly, a key organiser for the Keskidee tour, had visited Jamaica in 1977 on a Commonwealth Scholarship. He had witnessed the effects reggae music had in calming down a very tense political environment in 1977 in Kingston, Jamaica. O'Reilly also visited Trenchtown during his visit and returned inspired by what reggae music could do in building a sense of community. He returned to Aotearoa and with others began to organise the tour.<sup>61</sup>

Keskidee performed for various communities in Aotearoa (including groups in prison) to suggest that creative expression was a better way to deal with problems than violence<sup>62</sup>. Gangs such as the Stormtroopers, Headhunters, Black Power, Mongrel Mob, and King Cobras all hosted the visitors.<sup>63</sup> In one scene the reggae band Chaos performs a Marley song; but the most moving sequence is one in which we hear a recording of "No Woman No Cry" being played while members of the Head Hunter gang dance and sing the words in unison. Marley was popular with the gangs who had turned out in force for his concert. His music might be speaking for the disinherited

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<sup>60</sup> See Merata Mita's film, Patu.

<sup>61</sup> Personal interview. Denis O'Reilly, May 12 2002, Wellington. One could also refer to the fine report O'Reilly wrote concerning the Keskidee Tour. The report outlines the organising committees (which were national), and addresses funding and organisational issues. It vividly describes Keskidee as a theatre troupe (performing liberation theatre such as "Soweto" and "Lament for Rastafari"). This report is the perfect companion to the film Keskidee Aroha. A number of organisers for Keskidee will appear in other community chapters of the thesis.

<sup>62</sup> Martyn Sanderson makes this point through his narration through the film, and it was a point O'Reilly also made in a personal interview.

<sup>63</sup> Personal interview. Denis O'Reilly, May 12, 2002, Wellington. He was a senior member of Black Power at the time of the tour. We are introduced to a very young but already staunch Tame Iti during the film. In introducing the documentary, Laurence Wharerau made moving comments about participants who were active in community work at the time, including his whanaunga [relation] Bruce Absalom.

ghetto sufferer in Jamaica but it was seen as no less relevant to rural poverty, hardship, racism, and righteous struggle in Aotearoa.

This documentary had a memorable return screening at the “Reggae’s Doing Fine / Bob Marley Memorial” weekend in Wellington in 2002. Lawrence Wharerau was host (as the Film Archive’s kaitiaki [Maori guardian]), and most of the organisers of the tour were present at this screening: Tigilau Ness, Dilworth Karaka, Dennis O’Reilly, and Dennis’s wife Taape O’Reilly, who was on screen for an important negotiation with the Keskidee actors (who were finding themselves out of their comfort zone in some of the stops on the tour). This successful reunion – “Reggae’s Doing Fine” - was (among other things) a celebration of all that had happened in Aotearoa in the wake of Marley’s visit.

Certainly, the reggae tradition has strongly continued. The Maori band Aotearoa had strong connections with the Maori struggles of the 1980s<sup>64</sup>. Since the mid-‘80s, Brother Zebulon of the 12 Tribes has been a well-known figure in Aotearoa reggae, regularly performing with Tigilau Ness and Che Fu.<sup>65</sup> Maori women musicians such as Ama Rauhihi-Ness, Jules Issa, and Amelia Taite have played an important role in local reggae. These are but a few of the performers who have come through the 12 Tribes of Israel.<sup>66</sup> As we shall see later, Marley mingled during his 1979 visit with those individuals who went on to form the Tribes.<sup>67</sup>

This brief survey has not yet mentioned the most influential of the bands that developed a local version of reggae music. Dix has described its emergence around 1977:

Auckland reggae band Back Yard was a loose-knit collection of Ponsonby mates. The group’s nucleus was three Pacific islanders - vocalist Toni Fonoti, guitarist Spenser Fusimalohi and drummer Fred Faleauto - and rhythm guitarist Dilworth Karaka, a Maori.

Concentrating on reggae covers; this quartet and assorted friends played Ponsonby social functions and backyard parties, and in 1980 deemed themselves ready to strike out on the professional circuit. But first a name change: Pacific Herbs.

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<sup>64</sup> The band produced a fine single, “Maranga Ake Ai” [People Stand Up], and a mini album “Tihei Mauri Ora.” For an introduction to the politics of the period, one might consult Aroha Harris, pp.88-103, in her useful history, Hikoi: 40 Years of Maori Protest.

<sup>65</sup> Zebulon will appear in the 12 Tribes of Israel chapter.

<sup>66</sup> Others include Toni Fonoti, Bryan Fonoti, and Mighty Asterix. Personal interview, John Dix, May 20 2002, Auckland.

<sup>67</sup> Bob Marley and his relationship with people in Aotearoa who would go on to form the 12 Tribes of Israel will be discussed in the chapter of that name.

Pacific Herbs became Herbs, and if the line up still remained unstable, the band was at least making headway around town, including the occasional performance at the Gluepot (the ultimate Ponsonby gig!) and scored a manager in Will 'Ilohahia, a Ponsonby law student. It was 'Ilohahia who brought the band to the attention of WEA's Alan Galbraith and Mascot Studio owner Hugh Lynn.

Throughout 1980, Herbs was increasing its list of original compositions month by month. By year's end, they had a dozen classy songs, mostly written by Fonoti. It was time to go vinyl.<sup>68</sup>

Herbs were to perform as support act for touring British reggae act Black Slate in 1981.<sup>69</sup> Dilworth Karaka will be interviewed in a later chapter. As for many of the other musicians mentioned above, Marley has remained a central source of inspiration for him, in his political as well as his musical work. Will 'Ilohahia who was Herbs's first manager, and a great Marley enthusiast, was also the leader of the Pacific Island activist group the Polynesian Panthers.<sup>70</sup>

Two other milestones should be noted, the first consisting of the translation of a number of Marley lyrics into the Maori language. The talented brothers Ruia and Rania Aperahama, whose music mixes soul with reggae, made the album Waiata of Bob Marley in 2001.<sup>71</sup> Its tracks include "Arohaina Ra Koe" [Could you be Loved], "Nei Te Aroha" [Is this Love], "Umere" [Jamming], "Kaati e Hine to Tangi" [No Woman No Cry], "Naka I Puhi Te Apiha" [Stir It Up], "Matika, Maranga" [Get Up, Stand Up], "Toru Manu Iti" [Three Little Birds], "Makona Tamaroto" [Satisfy My Soul], and "Kotahi Aroha" [One Love]. The album reflects both the impact that Marley has had over the years on Maori musicians, and the upsurge in the use and teaching of Te Reo [Maori language].<sup>72</sup> That such an album has today reached the mainstream is the kind of event that could not have happened 30 years ago. The album gives tautoko [support] to all those Maori who have felt a deep affinity with Marley's music and have put it to use in ways that are local and imaginative.

A final milestone to be noted is "The Sound Splash Eco Reggae Festival" to be held over three days this February in Raglan (a location with strong Maori political associations). This is only one of many reggae festivals today but even a partial list of

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<sup>68</sup> See John Dix 1988, p.333, in Stranded in Paradise.

<sup>69</sup> John Dix, *ibid*, p 333.

<sup>70</sup> Tigilau Ness, Wayne Toleafoa, Ama Rauhihi-Ness, Dennis O'Reilly, and Dilworth Karaka among others spoke about the leadership of Will 'Ilohahia, and about his love for the music of Bob Marley. I was unable to get to talk to the man, one of the disappointments of this thesis.

<sup>71</sup> John Dix 2005, p.270 Stranded In Paradise.

<sup>72</sup> See Ranginui Walker, pp. 238-239, in his 2004, Ka WhaWhai Tonu Matou: Struggle Without End.

the names of bands performing at the festival serves to symbolise the rich, ongoing connections between Aotearoa, reggae, and political awareness: Katchafire, Unity Pacific, Little Bushmen, Open Souls, Salmonella Dub, Tahuna Breaks, Olmecha Supreme, Sons Of Zion, Native Sons, Goodriders, Mihirangi, Tenement Yard, An Emerald City, 1814, D.J Furyus, Grizzly Smooth, Hikoikoi, Grafta, Ras Drulux, Dubwise Soundsystem, Renegade Soundsystem, Jinga Jamboo, Kariori Rhythm Selection, Dubhead, Wicked Draw, Stinky Jim, Dubdoubt, AK Jugglin Crew and Cornerstone Roots.

### **Moving images**

The influence of Bob Marley has woven into the story of Aotearoa through other media. I have already mentioned the important documentaries Patu! and Keskidee Aroha. Below I introduce a very small selection of other television and film projects that have helped to weave Marley into local stories.

Lawrence Wharerau worked on the Maori television programmes Koha, Marae, and Waka Huia in the 1980's as researcher and on-camera reporter, and more recently has been an editor for the Maori Television Service.<sup>73</sup> When I had the good fortune to speak with Lawrence at the Reggae's Doing Fine conference, he spoke powerfully about the influence of Marley in his television work:

Tony- Have you come across pockets of people and individuals that have loved Marley, in your time as a Maori media worker?

Lawrence- Yeah. Bob's appreciation now is such that you can use his music in mainstream documentary, or you can use his music to sell products, and he is fully accepted right across the board.

Tony- Were you fullas using that music in your own documentaries?

Lawrence- Not so much Waka Huia, but any opportunity that I had to use Bob's music... To help further explain, and to draw in people who might not otherwise be attracted to the message I might be giving. Absolutely. Koha, Marae. Even some of the later documentaries that I have made. You just put it in there, and you grab everybody, everyone. Particularly Bob's music, particularly the "One Drop", particularly Bob!<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> One of many valuable episodes of Koha was Herb Sound which documented the reggae music of Herbs (discussed elsewhere in this thesis).

<sup>74</sup> Personal interview. Lawrence Wharerau, May 13 2002, Wellington. Maori film and television production is currently burgeoning in Aotearoa.

In 1996, Bob Mita and his mother Merata Mita worked on the 60-minute, Mita/TV3 production, Dread. This was a documentary portrait of the Ruatoria Rastafarians, their lives, faith, and culture. Bob Mita came into Ruatoria with a Maori film crew that demonstrated a deep respect for local protocols.<sup>75</sup> One important section of the film was devoted to Bob Marley and his importance to the Dread community. Marley was interwoven with the history, culture, and spiritual experience of the indigenous people of Ruatoria.

Another film about the Ruatoria Rastafarian community was Hitendra Patel's fine documentary Children of Zion (2002). Patel managed to obtain some wonderful archival footage of Marley's visit to Aotearoa, including Western Springs' concert footage of "Lively up Yourself." There is also a moving scene of Marley receiving a traditional welcome from the Maori people.<sup>76</sup> These sequences are embedded in a film narrative that places Marley in the context of politics, spiritual faith, and the contemporary labours in which the Ruatoria community is engaged. He is very much brought to life in this context as a teacher, historian and messenger of decolonisation.<sup>77</sup>

To cite just one example of on-going activity, Te Arepa Kahi - a Maori Television host who is also an independent film maker - is currently working on a film about a South Auckland young man's engagement with the music of Marley.

Each of the film, documentary, and television workers named in this chapter is today continuing to produce work for communities, on a range of issues grounded in local concerns. Marley is not the central or only influence in this fine cultural work, but he continues to have a presence.

This thesis focuses on Marley's music, and will not attempt to look in equal detail at the visual imagery associated with him. However, I trust that the above brief survey of moving image material will at least serve as a reminder that images of Marley, as well as his sounds, have had a powerful impact. While iconic images of the man appear on so many T-shirts and posters today that they may invite readings as

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<sup>75</sup> Personal interview. Bob Mita, July 2, 2000, Auckland. We will meet up with Bob again in the Ruatoria chapter.

<sup>76</sup> See Hitendra Patel's fine 2002 documentary, Children of Zion. These are powerful images of the contacts between Bob Marley and the indigenous people of Aotearoa.

<sup>77</sup> Children of Zion. In one sequence a Ruatoria Dread says, "Bob had a lot of answers for us."

superficial as (say) images of the great Che Guevera when he is treated as a fashionable poster-boy; nevertheless, particularly for Maori and Pacific Island people, there is still a deep resonance to some of the photographs - such as images of Marley here in Auckland receiving a Maori welcome.

## Chapter Three

### Community organisers from 1972

#### An introduction

The people who comprise this chapter were engaged in community work and activism from the year 1972. There are eight speakers who are the centre of this chapter, including two women. Most lived in Auckland but one lived in both Hastings and Wellington. Many of the activities people were involved in during these years were national in character so people travelled beyond their home cities. These stories will weave geography and history for us as they create a picture of Bob Marley as he was woven into the life of grassroots communities for a variety of purposes in Aotearoa during this turbulent period.<sup>1</sup>

Many of the speakers in this chapter worked together on projects and activist struggles and built solidarity and friendships based on common commitments, but some did not know one another. All speakers were engaged in important political events. The speakers will track their way through this period in a basically chronological order.

#### Kaupapa<sup>2</sup>

The Bob Marley we will meet in this chapter wove down from Jamaica into local communities, which then re-situated his influence within a corresponding weave of their own, articulating his music and personal example with their culture, community labours, political protests, and musical performance traditions.<sup>3</sup>

As Marley was translated into a new land he empowered stories of struggle here on the ground in Aotearoa. Not that he was himself the author of those narratives. He

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<sup>1</sup> The notion of stories as geography comes from a redeployment of Edward Said's ideas in Culture and Imperialism.

<sup>2</sup> The theme, agenda, or (in academic terms) the abstract for this chapter.

<sup>3</sup> I am drawing upon ideas from Donna Awatere-Huata's Maori Sovereignty, in counterpoint with ideas from Edward Said's "Travelling Theory" pp 195-217 in The Edward Said Reader.

spoke to activists and community workers in many different ways. He had something valuable to offer to all the speakers in this chapter, though he became problematic for some political organisers in later years.

I have attempted to respect the mana of each individual in this chapter by ‘giving the speakers the floor’ – giving them time to develop their thoughts, and a sense of personal ownership of their histories, experiences and wisdom. However, I have also sought to connect each individual voice to others in the chapter so a communal narrative can emerge to map out Marley’s importance during the period, while still remaining alert to differences within the group

### **The spiral motif**

I have utilised the motif of the spiral from Donna Awatere-Huata and her work Maori Sovereignty as a means of understanding how Marley’s music travelled as history, culture, spirituality, and political aesthetics from Jamaica down to Aotearoa. I am suggesting that the act of listening to Marley on radio or through recordings in Aotearoa took place within rich contexts where one culture engaged with another.<sup>4</sup> Once the music started to travel in performance or began to articulate with community work or cultural labour, one can see Marley being woven into spiral-shaped narratives that mesh his influence with Aotearoa’s own landscape and history. In symbolic forms, new relationships between Aotearoa and Jamaica were established as these stories also begin to travel back to Jamaica. All these exchanges far transcended the usual ‘music industry’ framework.

I am very concerned about the notion some people have had that Marley came down to Aotearoa, told people here what to do and how to do it, and then left. That would be a form of cultural imperialism. In contrast, I have sought to develop a contrapuntal mode of working that respects both Marley and grassroots Aotearoa. The point of such an approach is to allow two or more histories from different cultures to speak together without absorbing or silencing each other. As a mode of historiography this allows many groups to speak. I have deployed this mode to allow the voices of Aotearoa activists and Bob Marley to interact on the understanding that while they

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<sup>4</sup> I have been much influenced by the work of Paul Gilroy, and his section on ‘U.K Blak’ pp81-87, in chapter three of his The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness.

have come together in Aotearoa, both ultimately stand (or were born) in different worlds.<sup>5</sup>

It may seem strange to speak of Marley as weaving from Jamaica down to Aotearoa when one considers that many of his albums after 1976 were made while he was in England or touring the world.<sup>6</sup> It is important to acknowledge that Marley was a traveller - a travelling intellectual - influenced by much of what he saw outside Jamaica,<sup>7</sup> but his musical centre was reggae and his spiritual centre was his Rastafarian faith.<sup>8</sup> These influences, not to mention his love for his people, were rooted in the economically poorest (but culturally and spiritually richest) parts of Nine Miles and Trenchtown in Jamaica. I wish to pay tribute to Marley within his local contexts, as I pay tribute to community workers and activists in Aotearoa. As our speakers will show, there is much to be gained by connecting and comparing these two oral cultures, these two communities who have had to 'do it hard'.

### **A personal note**

I have done a certain amount of activism and community work. I have also been a street kid in my youth, and loved Bob Marley from an early age. I then went to University as an adult student with no school qualifications at all. I am saying these things to be humble. But I am also saying them so no one thinks my desire to emphasise grassroots contexts in Aotearoa and Jamaica emerges from a kind of academic romanticism.

In reading oral stories of people from an older generation, I feel a strong affinity with them and have drawn not only on my academic skills but also my own experience in order to support what I see as oral treasures from the grassroots.

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<sup>5</sup> Turangawaewae is the Maori concept of one's 'place to stand'.

<sup>6</sup> Kwame Dawes speaks about how a number of Marley albums were crafted outside Jamaica after Marley was shot in 1976. See Kwame Dawes, pp 179-192, in Bob Marley: Lyrical Genius.

<sup>7</sup> See Dawes, p.247. As Dawes notes, all the songs for the album, Survival were written when Marley was travelling in Africa. If I have privileged grassroots Jamaica in my work, it is to pay honour to Marley and his Jamaican 'sufferers', a community with which Marley always felt a deep connection. His songs are laden with references to them, for example in "Trenchtown Rock", "No Woman No Cry", and "Survivors" to mention three examples. But this is not to forget Marley did travel and was influenced by new places.

<sup>8</sup> Bob Marley's life and career as he travelled beyond Jamaica would have provided fertile resources for Paul Gilroy's thesis about travelling culture, intellectuals and the Black Atlantic that he speaks so powerfully about in The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness.

## Structure of the chapter

This chapter is divided into four sections. Section one will introduce the activists and focus on Marley's initial reception into Aotearoa from the early '70s up until 1975. Here, as in other sections, contextual information will be added to enrich the oral contributions.

Section two will pick up the story of how Marley came to be utilised in political work - in the 1975 Land March, the 1977 Bastion Point struggle, and other events of the period. The third section will discuss Marley's visit to Aotearoa in 1979, then speak about some of the concerns that secular activists began to feel as his influence began to have an increasingly spiritual emphasis. The final part of section three will discuss the impact of Marley's death, and then consider some of the new directions in which Marley's music was starting to travel out into the community. The fourth and final section of the chapter will speak of the 1981 Springbok Tour and the role of Marley's music during an extraordinary period of protest activity.

## Section One

### Roger

Roger is a pakeha activist who has worked on a number of grassroots community initiatives in the inner city Auckland area. Between 1971 and 1979 he was the co-ordinator of the People's Union, an organisation that did much fine work for the city's least powerful citizens.<sup>9</sup> He worked closely with other activist organisations and groups through the 1970s and '80s.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> For a useful introduction to the People's Centre work during this period, see Roger's narrative, pp 83-85, in *Polynesian Panthers: The crucible years 1971-74*, edited by Melani Anae, Luatofa (Ta) luli, and Leilani Burgoyne. One might also refer to Ranginui Walker, pp 277-279, in his 2004 edition of *Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou: Struggle Without End*.

<sup>10</sup> See Anae, *Polynesian Panthers: the crucible years 1971-74*. Many groupings worked closely together during this period, including middle class Pakeha organisations like Auckland Committee on Racial Discrimination (A.C.O.R.D) or the Citizens Association for Racial equality (C.A.R.E), Maori indigenous organisations such as Nga Tamatoa, community

Roger introduces us to Bob Marley weaving down from Jamaica into the ebb and flow of community work and secular political life:

We became conscious of Bob Marley music and reggae music in the early to mid '70s and immediately identified with his protest songs, like "Redemption Song" and "Get Up, Stand Up", and cottoned on to it - of course the Polynesian Panthers even more so than others, but we didn't see it as "That's for non-Pakeha" or anything like that. It was refreshing because this was new music, just really developed from that period, and obviously from struggle - from people fighting against poverty and oppression, against police violence, against being dragged into wars - all the same things we were fighting against, and so we had all those links straight away without having to read a book about it. Yeah, Bob Marley became one of the heroes of the protest movement in those days.<sup>11</sup>

Roger offers us a counterpoint between music emerging out of a Jamaican time, place, and political context,<sup>12</sup> and activism in Aotearoa. He speaks about the particular influence of Marley's music on the Polynesian Panthers, a young Pacific Island political organisation set up in 1971 in inner city Auckland to defend the Polynesian community.<sup>13</sup> We will be introduced to three members of this organisation in later sections. Marley's music came to empower the work done by this organization on food co-ops, community police patrolling, prison visitations, and resistance to the Vietnam War.<sup>14</sup> Roger was also a musician who performed and played at political meetings and rallies in the 1960s and '70s. The Red Flag Bush band was made up of

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activist groups like the People's Centre, and Pacific Island groupings like the Polynesian Panthers. Many groups formed international links of solidarity to struggles overseas, an issue that the book addresses in some depth.

<sup>11</sup> Personal interview. Roger Fowler, May 11, 2000, Auckland. I also interviewed Roger on May 18, 2000. I wish to thank Roger for generously allowing me to interview him over two weeks. Roger, like others in this chapter, has made outstanding contributions to political activism over many years, but it is also important to note that he uses the collective pronoun 'we' above, as he is speaking for a whole generation of battlers.

<sup>12</sup> See Lloyd Bradley, pp 457-481 in Bass Culture: When Reggae was King, for social, economic, and political contexts framing the music produced in Marley's Kingston during the middle '70s. After being shot in December 1976, Marley had to leave Jamaica and he did not return again until his famed performance at the "Peace Love Concert" of 1978 when he brought the Prime Minister and the leader of the opposition out onto the stage and made the men clasp hands. The peace and truce between the two parties that these leaders represented (and highly armed gangs who fought in support of each party) was not to last long, but for some months the killings in Kingston did abate.

<sup>13</sup> One should consult two sources when considering the history of the Polynesian Panther Party in Aotearoa. The first is a 1998 M.A thesis from the University of Auckland, written by Michael Fonoti Satele, The Polynesian Panthers: an assertion of ethnic and cultural identities through activism in Auckland during the 1970's. The second source is the important history mentioned above, Polynesian Panthers: The crucible years 1971-74.

<sup>14</sup> See pp 83-85, of Polynesian Panthers: The crucible years 1971-74.

people loosely associated with the People's Centre and included performers such as Lyn Doherty and Jim Gladwin.<sup>15</sup>

I was involved in a protest band if you like which was called the Red Flag Bush Band, and we would turn up at demos and rallies and sing a few songs, and there were more than a few songs [in which] we would utilise the reggae beat, and adapt or just straight out use Marley songs, or other derivatives, in particular Jimmy Cliff.<sup>16</sup>

Roger speaks to the task of translating Bob Marley and Jimmy Cliff into the dynamics of local protest. He also discusses the relationship between the political messages and the newness of the reggae style associated with Marley's music:

In those days it was really new, and quite powerful because of that. Not only the words were new, and expressed in a different way, but the music and the driving force of that music was new - but loose, and happy, not rigidly structured, you know - verse one, verse two, instrumental, verse three, song three minutes, boof! - You know, you had grown up with that sort of pop in the rock and roll era. Reggae had a sort of loose thing, which was probably much of its attractiveness - the loose, syncopated thing, whereas previously everything was quite rigid.

Roger is speaking about the form, structure, rhythm<sup>17</sup> and mood of this new music from Jamaica that blended well with the young people's aesthetics and spirit of social change in a far away country where people also struggled against conservatism and racism.<sup>18</sup> Marley weaves through this oral story to Aotearoa where his music joins a new cultural spiral, interwoven with local history by musicians of a particular type – those (like Roger) who tended to share both a deep commitment to local causes and a strong awareness of international issues.

## Denis

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<sup>15</sup> Personal interview. Roger Fowler, May 11, 2000, Auckland.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. Roger said in the interview that the 'Red Flag Bush Band' was made up of people loosely associated with the Ponsonby People's Centre, established in 1973. This band was to play at demonstrations all through the period including protests around the time of the 1981 Springbok Tour. It was made up of mainly Pakeha musicians and community workers such as Roger.

<sup>17</sup> Kwame Dawes offers a brief introduction to the one drop, non syncopated rhythm, and also discusses how this basic rhythm was beginning to change in the late 1970s in Jamaica. See p 279 of [Bob Marley: Lyrical Genius](#).

<sup>18</sup> Roger spoke about how conservative Aotearoa was in the early seventies. Public bars still closed early, and there was virtually no night life.

Denis was a senior Black Power member in 1974 and worked with the Te Kaha Trust, set up to get gang members of all colours into regular employment.<sup>19</sup> Denis worked as a community organizer with Maori, Pacific Island, and Pakeha youth during the 1970s on a number of outstanding community based projects in both the Wellington and Hastings regions.<sup>20</sup> He was later to travel to Jamaica in 1977 on a Commonwealth scholarship and gained an understanding of the value of reggae music in enabling communities to address their problems.<sup>21</sup> Marley had a huge influence on the gangs during this period. Denis was well situated to make comments about how he saw Marley travelling into Aotearoa along different paths from those described above by Roger in Auckland.

Tony- And I was going to ask, what was your take on Bob Marley as a phenomenon? And what it was doing for people?

Dennis- I reckon that it [Marley's music] reinforced what they already knew and experienced, and I believed it validated, gave voice in a contemporary, melodic, and very powerful medium to their expression. Because he operated from a colonial/post-colonial paradigm himself - Jamaican commonwealth and all that sort of stuff and the British experience - we knew the same stuff.<sup>22</sup>

Denis spoke of the relationship of Bob Marley's music to Jamaica, slavery and colonisation.<sup>23</sup> His korero counter-pointed the Jamaican situation (which he had seen at first hand) with the Aotearoa experience of colonisation.

## Lyn

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<sup>19</sup> Cf. the report The 1978 National Black Power Convention that Denis wrote to the Youth Initiatives Fund, 8 May 1978. Denis was an original member of the Wellington Black Power chapter in the early '70s. His wife Taape is from the Ngati Kahungunu people, so Denis spent time both in Wellington and in his wife's tribal area of Hastings.

<sup>20</sup> Denis was the organiser for the 1974 'Storm and Friends Tour'. Storm was a multi-ethnic rock band. In 1974 Denis and others organised a theatre troupe to perform alongside the rock band. Poets were added to the programme, and the ensemble toured venues from Wellington up to the far north. One could consult the 1974 report Denis wrote for the New Zealand Arts Council, entitled Storm and Friends Tour. The tour played in 19 towns across the North Island, in front of an estimated 15,000 people, between the months of December 1973 and January 1974.

<sup>21</sup> Denis was a key organiser for the Keskidee theatre troupe tour of Aotearoa in 1978. He talks about the influence of reggae on young Maori and Pacific Island people in the 1980 report he wrote for the QEII Arts Council - Keskidee Is Coming To Town. The Keskidee tour was discussed in the Music chapter of this thesis.

<sup>22</sup> Personal interview. Denis O'Reilly, May 12 2002, Wellington.

<sup>23</sup> For an introduction to the relationships between colonisation, history, slavery, and Rastafarianism in Jamaica, see Leonard. E. Barrett's The Rastafarians.

Lyn is of Ngati Porou, Nga Puhi, and Pakeha lineage. She worked with the People's Union in Ponsonby, and was a student leader at Auckland University. She was involved in the 1975 Maori Land March, the struggle at Takaparawhau [Bastion Point] in 1977, and the Springbok Tour protests of 1981. Lyn worked with a number of groups in the early '70s including Nga Tamatoa and the Polynesian Panthers.<sup>24</sup> In the later '70s up to the mid-'80s she was involved with the Waitangi Action Committee (W.A.C.).<sup>25</sup>

Lyn speaks about the importance of music and its many uses:

Tony- How did the music energise political struggle? Did Bob Marley have that type of influence?

Lynn- I think subtly it did. The relationship with music is more important for some people, and I find that in my work now through music, through even singing conversation - which is a way of community with certain children, more easily than speaking you know, even though you might have the same message. So I believe people have got different propensities to music, and then they are impacted differently by it. I think I found it very complementary to what I was getting involved in at the time. It was more part of my day-to-day routine<sup>26</sup>

Lyn speaks powerfully about an emerging aesthetics of music as the fabric from which community may be built<sup>27</sup>. She also evokes quieter, more intimate kinds of relationships to Marley's music to complement the way it empowered her activist labours.

## **Tigi**

Tigi is of Niuean heritage. He was involved with the Polynesian Panthers in the early '70s, and worked with a number of other political and community activist groups

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<sup>24</sup> See Polynesian Panthers: the crucible years 1971-74.

<sup>25</sup> For a useful introduction to the work of W.A.C., one could consult Walker's, pp 220-221, and 2004 edition of Ka Whawhai Tonu matou: Struggle Without End.

<sup>26</sup> Personal interview. Lyn Doherty, October 16, 2000, Auckland. I want to thank Lyn for a generous interview.

<sup>27</sup> For a comparative example of the relationship of reggae music to community, politics and culture in a Jamaican context, contemporary with the Aotearoa context described here, see Jimmy Cliff's powerful words in Lloyd Bradley, pp278-280, Bass Culture: When Reggae was King.

during that period.<sup>28</sup> Tigi, like Roger and Lyn has been a musician. He was an organiser for the 1975 Land March, played a role in the 1977 occupation of Takaparawhau, and was an organiser for the Keswidee tour of 1979. He was to play a key role as a leader in the 1981 Springbok Tour protests of 1981.<sup>29</sup> Some of his other community activities will be addressed in the 12 Tribes of Israel chapter.

Tigi speaks about his introduction to Marley's music in 1974 through a political activist friend bringing the album Natty Dread from overseas:

A couple of friends of mine had just arrived back from the States. Palagi [European] people, good people, and they were in a political activist group called C.A.R.E. [Citizens Association for Racial Equality]. One was a doctor; they were blond-haired, blue eyed. They came back really shocked one day. The Watts riots had just happened when they were over there, and we got to know them really well. Probably because some black people gave them a hard time about what it's like over there, and they felt they could let off some steam with me. Well, they turned me onto Bob, from one of their trips overseas. And they said, you have got to listen [to this], and they played me Bob. 1974. That's the one!<sup>30</sup>

It is important to observe how this music was travelling within activist networks as a means to build community and relate to fellow workers in struggle.

Tigi also spoke in moving words about being bought up a Christian. (This was in sections of interviews not reproduced here.) While working as a political activist and community organiser he held deep spiritual beliefs. He introduces us to some of the associated complexities as he explains his first engagement with the song "So Jah Seh" off the 1974 Natty Dread album.

So me and the Christian Bob Marley, I could identify with it. "So Jah Seh", [lines from the song] "Not one of my seeds shall sit on your side walk and beg your bread". Like I said, I was raised on the Bible, and here was this man singing about it and putting it into a context I could relate to. He is singing about the Bible, then he must know Jesus Christ. How come he is doing this? So I could relate to it.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> See Polynesian Panthers: the crucible years 1971-74.

<sup>29</sup> Tigi appears in leadership roles in the Merata Mita film Patu.

<sup>30</sup> Personal interview. Tigi Ness, June 6 2000, Auckland. I also interviewed Tigi on June 13 2000 in Auckland and on other occasions. His great generosity led to this student being able to speak to many other people.

<sup>31</sup> Personal interview. Tigi Ness, June 6 2000, Auckland.

Tigi uses the terms “relate” and “identify” in a powerful way to describe how the medium of song was the means through which he began to engage with a number of questions related to his status as a Pacific Islander living in inner city Auckland.<sup>32</sup>

Marley’s “So Jah Seh” is a beautiful song about brotherhood, community, urban city life, and the promises of God.<sup>33</sup>

Tigi speaks to other dimensions of the appeal of Marley’s rough-edged sound for those living in tough urban environments like inner city Ponsonby:

Well first of all, I listened to his voice, and I heard the lyrics, and I liked them instant. [It was] different, like something really wild, but not your conformist wild, like your Little Richard wailing you know. And it was [foregrounding] more guitars, it was what he [Marley] was saying, [something] natural. Because I listen to all sorts of music, and the person behind this, the front man for this music had an unnatural voice, kind of unique, sounded really wild. Not like your cultured western rhythm and blues - it was rough edged, set you on tension mode.<sup>34</sup>

Tigi speaks of his own immediate personal connection:

And trying to listen to what he [Marley] was saying, and not actually understanding any of it of course. But trying to listen [to the music] made me tune in even more, so everything filtered through. [The song] “No Woman, No Cry”, the lyrics and then the melody, again very simple, I could pick it up on guitar. I had been playing guitar for years, [it] seemed easy enough to play - and there was an instant connection.<sup>35</sup>

“No Woman, No Cry” is one of Marley’s most famous songs. In the next quote, Tigi speaks of the experience of listening to this music for the first time as “mystic”. In his words we can trace how the music began to offer an answer to some of his tensions, and the way back into a form of spirituality he was seeking.

As I listened to it more then I knew, something was happening. It was like a mystic revelation now. Because it [the music] got [related to] the Bible] and here I was just going through my anti-European, Malcolm X [political phase]. I felt exactly like that [angry towards European people], because [things on the

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<sup>32</sup> Marley spoke about this particular song and what it meant to him. See Ian McCann, pp 25 of his 2003 Bob Marley Talking: Bob Marley In His Own Words. This offers a way to counterpoint Marley’s Jamaican song against Tigi and Aotearoa.

<sup>33</sup> For a fine poetic analysis of this song, see Kwame Dawes, pp136-139, in Bob Marley: Lyrical Genius.

<sup>34</sup> Personal interview. Tigi Ness, June 6 2000, Auckland.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

political scene] were starting to get edgy, aggravating. And along come this man with this unique, captivating voice, and some lyrics concerning God, and the Bible. And I found eventually who Christ was, like looking at a book with different eyes. I realised that this [the spiritual message in Marley's songs] is for me and that God is showing me that this is another way. [Because] if you want to keep going the way you are going, you will end up dead.<sup>36</sup>

I have paid considerable emphasis to Tigi because he is a very influential figure who will (as we shall see) take the music of Marley along with him on much community and activist work.

### **Miriama**

Miriama (or Ama) is of Ngati Raukawa lineage. She moved from Palmerston North up to Auckland in the late sixties and settled in Ponsonby. She became a Polynesian Panther in the early 1970s, and was actively involved in organising the 1975 Maori Land March<sup>37</sup>, the 1977 struggle at Takaparawhau, and 1981 Springbok Tour protests.<sup>38</sup> She later became leader of the Ponsonby Black Women's political organisation.<sup>39</sup> In the early 1980s she became a founding member of the Rastafarian 12 Tribes of Israel community in Auckland.

In 1975, Miriama was appointed the first full-time social worker for the Polynesian Panthers. She speaks about Bob Marley coming into Ponsonby through her, then partner Tigi's, record collection. She mentions the importance of the 1978 Babylon By Bus album, and Uprising in 1980.

I started listening to Bob's music about 1975. It was Tigi Ness - the father of my oldest boy, Che [Fu] - who actually had a record collection of Bob Marley. [Tigi was] one of the first people in the know, in our crowd, in Ponsonby. [Tigi] had Bob Marley music 'cos it wasn't really down here at the time. That was when Marley started putting out his first albums like Babylon by Bus and

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<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> Along with other distinguished Maori activists such as the late Hana Te Hemara, Syd Jackson, Tame Iti, Grant Hawke, and others. For an introduction to the Land March see Ranginui Walker, pp 212-215, in Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou, 2004, or Aroha Harris, pp68-78, in Hikoi: Forty Years of Maori Protest. The second work pays tribute to the first and extends the analysis in addition to providing wonderful photographs of the march.

<sup>38</sup> Miriama can be seen in two sequences of the film Patu.

<sup>39</sup> Walker speaks about the Ponsonby Black Women's organisation, very briefly, on page 221 of his 2004 edition of the history, Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou: Struggle Without End.

Uprising. At that time we were right onto the political movement. Particularly from Ponsonby, there was a Ponsonby group called the Polynesian Panthers.<sup>40</sup>

Miriama counterpoints a history of local activism with the arrival of a relatively unknown Bob Marley as he begins his journey into Auckland through a single record collection. (As we shall hear, there were a few in other parts of the country.) Miriama's political reception of Marley would evolve as she later became a Rastafarian.<sup>41</sup>

## **Ricky**

Ricky is of Tongan, Maori, and Samoan heritage. He was a member of the Polynesian Panthers in the early '70s, and was involved at the struggle at Takaparawhau in 1977.<sup>42</sup> Ricky introduces us to the Pacific Island people of inner city Auckland. Many Pacific immigrants settled in the 1960s and early '70s in inner city suburbs like Ponsonby, Grey Lynn, and Herne Bay.<sup>43</sup> Marley spoke to the new generation of Maori and Pacific Island young people, living in the inner city.

Tony- How did you get involved in the Marley music?

Ricky- How I got involved with the music was probably Tigi, but then it just sort of happened that, while there was a lot of commercial stuff at the time, there was nothing we could relate to - there were Island sounds, but

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<sup>40</sup> Personal interview. Ama Rauhihi- Ness, September 8 2000, Auckland. Miriama gave this student a generous oral history and I am grateful to her for her oral treasures given to this student.

<sup>41</sup> We will get to some of these issues in the 12 Tribes of Israel chapter. I have separated Miriama and Tigi's largely (though not completely) political receptions of Bob in the '70s from their more spiritual receptions of Marley's music in the late '70s and early '80s.

<sup>42</sup> Personal interview. Ricky Noble, November 7 2000. Auckland. Ricky related the amusing story of going along with other Ponsonby boys to Takaparawhau and offering to act as security for the occupation. He and others were concerned about the abuse that protesters were receiving, and the threat of the Police. One leader of the struggle politely declined the boys' invitation, assuring them that the protest was a peaceful one!

<sup>43</sup> For an introduction to Pacific Island life in Aotearoa one should consult R.L Challis' 1970 book, The Position of Polynesians In New Zealand . It is important to realise the inner city of Auckland at this time was extremely run down and poor. For parents who had come from the Islands, Auckland suburbs such as inner city Ponsonby, Grey Lynn, and Herne Bay became the only places where affordable housing could be found. Challis explains why Polynesian immigrants from different Island groups came to New Zealand; where they settled; what inner city housing conditions were like; in what industries they found employment; and what their expectations were of the new society. The text is generally an optimistic account of the new immigrants' conditions in the late '60s and early '70s. There are fine black and white photographs of some of the suburbs, contemporary to the oral accounts presented here.

with young people you don't want to hear the old love songs, the old church songs - so when reggae came along it was totally foreign to us but a lot of the guys got into it. It was a very good beat, very good music; they had a lot of protest songs that were appropriate at the time. We read literature from the U.S. to do with the Black Panthers. Well, I myself read about Huey P. Newton, Eldridge Cleaver, and we also had posters and things like that.<sup>44</sup>

Ricky was a good friend of Tigi and was introduced to Marley through his record collection. He weaves the narrative of young people attempting to find cultural resources with which to make sense of life in inner city Aotearoa. Marley and reggae in general, entered the local context of Pacific Island love songs, church music, and commercial pop. And Marley meshed with the developing youth culture of protest. Ricky has more interesting things to say about the appeal of Marley's music:

Tony- What was it about Marley's music that was appealing to you?

Ricky- I [associate] it with Tigi. When I heard about reggae, I knew it was a different [matter] to actually understand this music. It's nice sounding, and good beat, and I could relate to that. Alec [Toleafoa, younger brother of Wayne and fellow Polynesian Panther] was a very good guitarist. Island sounds flamenco. As for Bob Marley, he had a message for a lot of people, and I could figure what his message was about, but I was more or less into his music rather than into the political side of it. With Marley the majority of his songs were protest songs, but he was less heard of than say Jimmy Cliff, who had been around. Bob Marley had just come onto the scene – maybe known elsewhere - but here he was pretty new to us in the early '70s. It was totally foreign; it was like hearing a new music being invented. But a lot of it you could relate to Island music too, and we found that really interesting. Plus you would hear church sounds, and not everybody could enjoy the church sounds.<sup>45</sup>

Ricky combines the sound and rhythm of music weaving down from Jamaica with his own story as a young man relating that sound to his urban environment. He also speaks to the translation process whereby Marley's music joined the local tradition of grassroots community guitar performance.<sup>46</sup> And he notes the “totally foreign” feeling that reggae had at first – though, for young Pacific Islanders, that was part of the appeal of the music, because it was in some respects so “new”.

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<sup>44</sup> Personal interview. Ricky Noble, November 7, 2000. Auckland.

<sup>45</sup> Personal interview. Ricky Noble, November 7, 2000. Auckland.

<sup>46</sup> The translation of Marley's songs into Aotearoa performance culture is one theme running throughout this thesis. Other speakers will pick up this theme.

## Wayne

Wayne is of Samoan heritage and was born and raised in Ponsonby. He was a Polynesian Panther activist and protest march organizer in the early '70s.<sup>47</sup> He was later to become a Policeman, a Navy Chaplain, and is now a Minister in the Methodist Church in Auckland.<sup>48</sup> He worked with Ricky, Tigi and Ama in the early years.

He offers a vivid account of the effects Marley music had on his home suburb of Ponsonby. He speaks to the importance of music in providing pleasure and social bonding for Polynesian communities.

Tony- What about Marley in the early 70's, was the music bringing the community together at the time?

Wayne- Yeah, lots of music brought people together. And I think that Marley music, it was very danceable, very singable, very memorable. [In the] dance halls, in the rugby clubs [and] the Rugby League clubs [such as] Richmond, Ponsonby. [If you were] going to Ponsonby parties, all you would hear was the reggae music, you know. The people might start off with something else, but they ended up with reggae music.<sup>49</sup>

Locations are important because the weave at community level connects Marley to people (here, the Samoan community), to place (Ponsonby halls and football clubs), and to performance traditions (guitar music).

## Dilworth

Dilworth Karaka is of Ngati Wai heritage. He is a highly respected musician and community worker of long standing in Aotearoa, particularly in Auckland's poorer suburbs. He has been involved in music and bands from the Vietnam protest days of the late '60s. He played active roles in the 1976 anti-Dawn Raid campaign, the 1977-78 Bastion Point land Struggle, was a supporter of the 1978 Keswidee tour to Aotearoa, and wrote songs about the 1981 Springbok Tour demonstrations.<sup>50</sup> He has also been a tireless ambassador for New Zealand music over than thirty years, and is one of the founding reggae musicians of this country. He has been a mainstay of the

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<sup>47</sup> See pp 60-63, in *Polynesian Panthers: the crucible years*. Wayne speaks of his Panther experiences in these pages.

<sup>48</sup> Personal interview. Wayne Toleafoa, November 12, 2000. Auckland.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

band Herbs, from its genesis as an inner city Auckland Maori and Polynesian reggae band, to its activism as 'Band of the Land' at Takaparawhau,<sup>51</sup> on to its national profile today.

Dilworth has also performed internationally for many years, and the music of his band Herbs has been very influential in the South Pacific. He is still to be seen performing reggae music and involved in community service around the country. He plays regularly with Tama Lundon, another mainstay of the original band, and with well-known friends and fellow musicians such as Tigilau Ness.

Dilworth recalls how memorable was the first time he heard a Marley song performed live:

I forget what year it was - the mid '70s. Charles Tumahai, Chas, he was playing in England at the time, with a top band, and his dad passed away, and he had come back to be with his family to farewell his father. After we farewelled his father we went down to the local pub in G.I. [Glen Innes], and it was the first time I heard 'No woman no cry' done live. I had heard it before on records I got sent to me from the U.K, so I was into Bob's music real early on, but here was the first time I had heard it sung live, and Charlie did it in tribute to his Dad. Well, that pub, you could have heard a pin drop. He did it so Bob-like, you know - just voice and guitar - the place was astounded, and from that moment on I don't know what it was, I knew then that Charles would go back to the U.K, then he would come back and reconnect with us in the band Herbs.<sup>52</sup>

Charlie Tumahai did indeed return from England, from the band Bebop Deluxe, to link up with Herbs in 1986 as their new bass player. His performance of "No woman no cry" showed Dilworth the power of a Marley song to build community, articulate sorrow, and celebrate cultural survival, in a spirit of life-giving aroha (love). He comments:

My favourite song has always been 'No woman no cry', not because of its early days but because of its whole concept of how he felt the life of a woman, and the life of his own brothers.... I think it was the soul in the man. His music was unusual - it was [and at the same time] it wasn't complicated music - you know, just very basic C, G minor, F, basic chords - but the way the man sung and the way he paid tribute - to wahine in 'No women no cry.' And as the years went on we played that song in bars and clubs, and they all had their little things to add like, hey chee chee, hey

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<sup>50</sup> Dilworth can be seen in [Bastion Point Day 507](#), the fine film of the struggle at Bastion Point. The song Dilworth's band wrote about the Springbok Tour was 'One brotherhood'.

<sup>51</sup> Personal interview. Dilworth Karaka, November 22, 2000, Auckland. Dilworth gave much precious oral history about Bastion Point, the music he and Herbs composed up there.

<sup>52</sup> Personal interview. Dilworth Karaka, November 15, 2000, Auckland.

mamma, you know, just little clichés that people added to them in Aotearoa, very unique, very neat - we had found a music that identified us, ourselves you know.<sup>53</sup>

Other songs have also been important for Dilworth such as ‘Get up, stand up’:

That great phrase, “Stand up for your rights” - I have heard that phrase so many times. When I hear that, I think, “Jah Bob.” It’s probably the most used phrase for people when the walls are coming in on them, but they are strong in their belief to stand up to have their say. It comes to that in the end, nothing will change until you actually stand up and do something about it - we can talk about it until the cows come home, but in the end we have to manifest!<sup>54</sup>

Community values founded in local political struggles frame his musical enjoyment of favourite Marley songs. He expands on the relevance this soul music has had for Polynesian and Maori people:

Bob opened that door for all of us. That’s why, Polynesians and Maori, we gravitated to the music, cos it’s like us - it is us. It’s something that sprung out of blue beat music, and maybe our grand parents had this identity themselves. It was nothing that they pushed but it was something that came from there. We *pretend* to be like them, but actually we *are* like them, it not until we start to apply ourselves, that is why we gravitate towards it, and why the young people gravitate towards it. It is the style of music that he brought for a level of people who struggled all their life, you know, especially where Bob came from, and that applies to us here in the South Pacific - we are no different, and as I said before, it gave us the opportunity to express ourselves in our own way. We have got our own struggles, just like anyone else in the world village - but ah, it was arising!<sup>55</sup>

Dilworth weaves a complex genealogy for us that joins a search for personal identity with recognition of the old people as forebears. Music also provided the cultural means to articulate struggle, a continuation of Marley’s global musical activism in the South Pacific. He functions as a spiritual and political, as well as musical, force that helped Dilworth to reconfigure and harmonise the fractures and disjuncture of being in his own South Pacific and Maori situation. Through this kind of influence, Marley and his music became part of the fabric of the post-colonial Maori and Pacific Island experience of history and their search for identity.

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<sup>53</sup> Personal interview. Dilworth Karaka, November 22, 2000, Auckland.

<sup>54</sup> The song ‘Get up, Stand up’ comes from the 1973 Island records release Burnin’.

<sup>55</sup> Personal interview. Dilworth Karaka, November 15, 2000, Auckland.

## Section Two

### The Land March, 1975

Maori had seen their relationship to Papatuanuku [earth mother] undermined by ongoing alienation of their lands.<sup>56</sup> The process of confiscation has had more than a hundred-year history in Aotearoa.<sup>57</sup> The pressure on Maori to sell lands against their will had led to wars between the British settler government and Maori tribes in the 1860s.<sup>58</sup> In a new surge of resistance, Maori decided to protest against this unresolved history by staging a Hikoi [march] to signify their outrage. An organising committee was formed, and preparations begun for a month long march from Te Hapua in the far North to the capital city of Wellington.<sup>59</sup> The marchers stopped at 24 different marae along the way. Runners ran parts of the route, while the rest was walked. The march was lead by acclaimed Maori leader, Whina Cooper.<sup>60</sup> The marchers set out to present the Prime Minister with a petition asking the government to stop taking any more Maori land.

The march united Maori from all regions, tribes and religious faiths, and all ages. The march also drew solidarity from many other people in Aotearoa. - Pacific Islanders and Pakeha, trade unionists, Marxists, church ministers, workers and students all took part.<sup>61</sup> Roger became a driver for the march. With his Polynesian Panthers, Tigi was an organiser of the march in Auckland. He was also a musician along the way.<sup>62</sup> Miriama and Lyn took part in the march, with Lyn acting as a runner and Miriama as an organiser. Miriama speaks about some of the logistics.<sup>63</sup>

And then I was with the first Land March that set the foundation for Maoridom, 1975. Whina Cooper headed [the Land March], and I was in. We did eight

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<sup>56</sup> See Ranginui Walker, 2004, Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou: Struggle Without End

<sup>57</sup> See Walker, op cit.

<sup>58</sup> See James Belich, The New Zealand Wars and the Victorian Interpretation of Racial Conflict.

<sup>59</sup> See Walker, pp.212-215, and Harris, pp.68-77.

<sup>60</sup> See Walker, p.212.

<sup>61</sup> See Harris, pp.70-74.

<sup>62</sup> See Polynesian Panthers: the crucible years 1971-74. The Panthers coordinated with other groups in Auckland, in supporting the Hikoi. Tigi also accompanied Miriama as she journeyed around the country organising arrangements with marae. Personal interview. Tigi, June 13, 2000, Auckland.

<sup>63</sup> Other organisers included well known activists such as Tame Iti, Hana Te Hemara, Syd Jackson, Hilda Halkyard Harawira, Joe Hawke (who was to become a leader of the struggle at Takarawhau two years later), and Tigi Ness, to mention just a few.

months on the road [organising for the march around the country]. And I set up all the marae around the country, every weekend after work. About ten of us every weekend for about eight months would go off to all the marae and take the taake [cause]. So they [the local marae] could cater for all the people. The march was a month and a half on the road. So [we] learnt a lot there, [and] saw the beautiful country that we do have. And [found out] about our people [that] we are warriors like your people [Pacific Islanders] and we are the only people who have stood up. [And] that's why you have still got your Islands.<sup>64</sup>

Miriama described the dynamics of people in motion - walking in sun, rain, wind, or cold on the roads, conversing, laughing, and arguing, as a community was built.<sup>65</sup> And Bob Marley's music had a role to play on this hikoi, in building spirit and solidarity. Tigi was an emerging Rastafarian at the time. He speaks about translating Marley's music from Ponsonby into the flow of the march, despite the initial opposition that some older Maori had about a non-Maori Rastaman spreading a message of faith at odds with their own forms of religion.<sup>66</sup>

First off I thought that the koro and kuia [male and female elders] weren't too happy with this Bob Marley, this deadlocked fulla coming in with this new religion. They [the old people] were very standoff[ish], because a lot of them were Ringatu and Ratana [and] their church was already there. And here's this dreadlocked [man], not even a Maori to boot, you know, that kind of thing. I kept it to myself and only when they [the marchers] went out onto the roads and [I] felt like bringing it out, then [I started] singing [Marley's song] "Get Up, Stand Up!" And the people would reply, "Get Up, Stand Up!" as we were marching. You know, that was the chant, and very appealing - "Get Up, Stand Up!" That's how it was, the older people were sort of mistrusting but the younger people saw it as a kind of rebellious attitude. [Older] Maori and Polynesians saw it as something new, probably suss [suspect]. But the words

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<sup>64</sup> Personal interview. Ama Rauhihi- Ness, September 8, 2000, Auckland.

<sup>65</sup> I saw these very dynamics of people in motion, aroha, and community service all in motion when I participated on the 2004 Hikoi to Wellington for three days. The 2004 march left from Te Hapua in the far north as the 1975 march had done. The march was led and organised by Hone Harawira. The aroha of people looking after one another, supporting and struggling alongside one another was for this student the most moving dimensions of my experience on the Hikoi in 2004. I have utilised these experiences in order to counterpoint my knowledge of mass mobilisation, in order to better tautoko [support] the words of our elders above speaking about the 1975 march.

<sup>66</sup> The Ringatu faith came from the great warrior chief Te Kooti from the East Coast of the north island and from the visions of the Archangel he saw while imprisoned on Wharekauri (Chatham Island) in the nineteenth century. The Ratana faith came from the west coast of the north island of Aotearoa in the 1910s, and the visions of a new prophet, from a different tribe, T.W. Ratana. For a short yet useful introduction to Ratana and the faith he founded one should consult Walker, pp 183-185. It is important to note these two indigenous Christian-influenced faiths still exist today, and offer hope and goodwill to those who continue to practice them.

“Get Up, Stand Up!” – Well, they just fell into line, you know. I called, they replied. It’s those kinds of lyrics, those types of songs, yeah!<sup>67</sup>

Tigi speaks about the construction of call and response patterns between marchers and singer in the shared performance of the march.<sup>68</sup> The lyrics of “Get Up, Stand Up!”<sup>69</sup> proved to be perfectly suited to a protest on behalf of Papatuanuku [earth mother]. Tigi speaks of the role music played in encouraging the protestors on their long journey.

Tony: And the Marley music on the Land March was it used to encourage?

Tigi: More or less to encourage, to give heart to people. At that time, it was only people like myself, not many other people were into Bob at that time. But we were taking it out [to the community]. Being in the city, of course we could get to the record shops.<sup>70</sup>

### **Bastion Point, 1977**

In 1977 members of the Ngati Whatua tribe occupied their ancestral lands at Takaparawhau (the English name for the area was Bastion Point). They did this to prevent the New Zealand government from selling their tribal inheritance to private buyers.<sup>71</sup> An action committee was quickly formed; a meeting house constructed, and gardens for food prepared for the occupiers’ sustenance. Solidarity and support came from many parts of the country. This protest continued the spirit of the 1975 Land March, and that momentum was later passed on to the struggle at Raglan in 1978. While the occupiers were eventually removed from Takaparawhau, and 222 people arrested, the struggle for the rights of Ngati Whatua would continue.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Personal interview. Tigi Ness, June 6, 2000. Auckland.

<sup>68</sup> Paul Gilroy speaks about call and response aesthetics on pages 77-78, in his great book The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness. I am speaking about another form of antiphony above connected to land, sky and people in motion.

<sup>69</sup> Timothy White makes mention of this incendiary song in brief, in pp 260-261, of his biography, Catch A Fire: The Life of Bob Marley.

<sup>70</sup> Personal interview. Tigi Ness, June 6 2000, Auckland.

<sup>71</sup> For a wonderful introduction to this taake [cause] one should consult the oral history edited by Sharon Hawke, Takaparawhau the People’s Story: 1998 Bastion Point 20 year Commemoration Book. One should also consult the film of the struggle, Merata Mita’s, Day 507: Bastion Point.

<sup>72</sup> The New Zealand government was to recognise the wrongs committed against Ngati Whatua and would pay financial compensation. The land the occupiers had fought to save in

Tigi, Miriama, Roger, Lyn, Ricky, and Dilworth<sup>73</sup> all participated in the struggle at Takaparawhau. Bob Marley's music had a part to play in the protest.<sup>74</sup> Three people will speak about their work at Takaparawhau, and how Marley intersected with the mood and cultural work of the struggle.

Dilworth offers us valuable insights into how the music, message, and dress associated with Marley appealed to young people, but shocked older Maori (as had happened on the Land March).<sup>75</sup>

Tony- What did the people at Takaparawhau reckon about Bob [Marley]?

Dilworth- It was mainly the younger people. The old people were struggling to come to terms with their version of a rock star - pretty, black or white, whoever it might be - not this rope head looking da da da, no shoes, hippie-ish looking - worse than a hippie! [Laugh.] Just dealing with all those elements, they [the old people] were confused; they preferred to look at a pretty fulla with all the money than to look at a fulla who hasn't combed his hair since he was born. I'm relating these things to you as things that were said to me at the time and that's just how generations are - my parents struggled with me and my musical ideals when the Beatles came along - that was it, they didn't like the Vietnam turmoil and the hippies - and it's just moved on and on, to where we are today. We tend to lend a more open ear to the new generation than what used to be.<sup>76</sup>

There are two valuable strands woven into Dilworth's narrative. One is the story of the old people trying to make sense of Marley in terms of their understanding of popular music, stars, and dress codes. In counterpoint to that is the story of Marley as a cultural force influencing younger people by both his musical style and his personal image.

Dilworth was part of a band that toured the country to raise funds for the taake at Bastion Point.<sup>77</sup> He gives us insights into the aroha, commitment and community team work involved in supporting the struggle.

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1977 was also returned to the tribe in 1991, and was thus saved from falling into private ownership.

<sup>73</sup> Dilworth appears in the Music chapter.

<sup>74</sup> See Taura Eruera, p25, in Takaparawhau The Peoples Story: 1998 Bastion Point 20 year Commemoration Book. This book speaks to an array of people performing music, song and poetry during the year long struggle. Marley played only a small direct role, (through his music), at Takaparawhau, but a larger role in the general protest movement around this event.

<sup>75</sup> For a visual record of clothes and hairstyles worn on the Point one could watch the Mita film Bastion Point: Day 507. I am suggesting these fine films offer many different kinds of resources for researching students on a decolonising mission.

<sup>76</sup> Personal interview. Dilworth Karaka, November 22, 2000, Auckland.

<sup>77</sup> There were many musical performances and social activities which used music to build the movement and raise money for this cause. One should consult the many oral histories of

We had a great bunch of people who artistically applied themselves, [and had] never done so before in their life. We found ourselves running outdoor concerts, setting up stage, fund raising, having entertainment, and then during the break [between music sets], have Joe Hawke, or Grant Rameka, (leaders of the struggle) or one of the speakers from Takaparawhau would address the crowd.... We played everywhere, where ever there was an opportunity. We played at Union meetings, at rallies, stop work meetings. I mean we, there was an instant audience you know, that's where the power of music takes over. [If you] play music the people like, and if the message was there... Some people didn't accept the message, but they liked the music, but we found there was more support for us than we realised. It wasn't actually a numbers sort of thing [simply dollars raised].... It was the support of kai [food], of putea, [money], [building] materials, just general overwhelming support. We...had a concert up at Mount Taratara, way up North [Te Tai Tokerau, or Northland] up in the Kao area. And then at Bastion Point the staging people got the job to put in a p.a. [public address system] and lights. And so, here we were, in a land struggle, we were actually putting our own road crew together, for an outdoor concert. We were very good at it, became very good, very efficient, and we actually organised a couple of outdoor concerts around the country.<sup>78</sup>

Dilworth documents the generous community support for the occupation. He also gives us part of the genealogy of his reggae band Herbs, which was shaped not only by its experiences in Ponsonby but also by political struggles such as Takaparawhau.<sup>79</sup>

Tony- Do you see Marley's music as a type of activism?

Dilworth- Ae [yes], it's an awakening, it's an uprising, spirit, you know, confidence, aroha. It awakens all those human qualities that are there in some people but haven't been awakened yet. Through the power of music, reggae has done that. [It has] touched the souls of people, good people, hard-working people, sharing people, gifted people, talented people. Because [these people] don't think of themselves first, they think of others. And that's what Bob Marley generated to me.<sup>80</sup>

Dilworth speaks powerfully about community aesthetics, as music from Marley's Jamaica comes weaving down to Aotearoa to connect with many communities. It begins a new narrative based on confidence, spirit, awakening, and uprising. We should also be aware of the Maori framework of values that Dilworth speaks to –

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people who were at the Point, for example in Takaparawhau the People's Story: 1998 Bastion Point 20 Year Commemoration Book.

<sup>78</sup> Personal interview. Dilworth Karaka, November 15, 2000, Auckland.

<sup>79</sup> See John Dix, p 333, in his Stranded in paradise: New Zealand rock 'n' roll 1955-1988.

<sup>80</sup> Personal interview. Dilworth Karaka, November 22, 2000, Auckland.

wairuatanga [spirituality], aroha [love], whanaungatanga [family relationships], manaakitanga [hospitality and generosity] and mana [prestige].<sup>81</sup>

Roger Fowler was also part of this community of musicians, cultural workers and activists (though not a member of Dilworth's 'Band of the Land'). He performed Marley music during the struggle at Takaparawhau. He has a purely secular perspective on Marley's music, including "Get Up, Stand Up."

Tony- Did you use Marley on demos? Was the music useful for concrete struggles?

Roger- Well, we would use them [reggae songs], so if there was a rally or anything like up at Bastion Point. Just like capitalism, we would adapt them [to our own needs]. In particular "Get Up, Stand Up."<sup>82</sup>

Roger speaks about the translation of Marley's music into a new context for new needs, for the struggle of a people far from Jamaica. He implies that capitalism's power to appropriate new energies can be matched by the power of protest to "use" cultural weapons from other struggles and "adapt" them to local purposes.

Tigi gives the example of how another great Marley song, "No Woman, No Cry," was translated into the spirit of the struggle at Takaparawhau.

When there were a lot of people for Hui, or meetings, or special things that were happening, entertainment was always musical. And every now and again one of them would play a Bob Marley song. And everyone could relate to that. "No Woman No Cry," the lyrics said: "I remember when we used to sit in a government yard", and we would change it to "Takaparawhau" instead of "Trenchtown", we would change it to "Bastion Point" [and we would sing] "And we used to sit in a government yard in Akarana" [Auckland]. You change [the lyrics] to suit. So these songs are like struggle songs, alright, they kept us warm, filled our time in, [and] kept us together.<sup>83</sup>

This kind of adaptation shows the spiral at work - music travels and becomes something fresh as it is woven into a new land, culture, and history. Tigi interweaves Marley's songs into the Aotearoa tradition of resistance music.

## Section Three

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<sup>81</sup> See Hirini Moko Mead, pp 25-33, in his Tikanga Maori: Living By Maori Values.

<sup>82</sup> Personal interview. Roger Fowler, May 18, 2000, Auckland.

<sup>83</sup> Personal interview. Tigi Ness, June 13, 2000, Auckland.

## Meeting Marley, 1979

Bob Marley and the Wailers came to Aotearoa in 1979 towards the end of a world tour. Dilworth explains how he and a number of friends camped out across the road from the White Heron Lodge in Parnell in order to meet the man in person before he performed his one-off Aotearoa concert.<sup>84</sup> Tigi, Miriama and Denis were others who met Marley there. Dilworth speaks about the inspiring nature of this meeting.

Tony- Did you get to the Bob Marley concert?

Dilworth- A bunch of us actually stayed with him around his hotel, the White Heron Lodge. Sleeping bags and all, we just slept out on the park under the trees, and he let us do that, you know, share with him. A friend of mine, he had his son on his shoulder - young Taraha - Denis O'Reilly, from down Hastings way, put this young fulla on his shoulder, and Bob was standing next to him - a beautiful photo, and I know this photo is quite a feature in Denis's home. Those were the things that inspired us. Then the concert went down. It was just like.... [Too much, no words here].

Tony- Ama [Rauhihi-Ness] was speaking about talking to him.

Dilworth- Yeah, he [Marley] gave us that opportunity, to sit, speak with him, just like we are sitting speaking here.

Tony- Was he aware of the struggle here?

Dilworth- Oh yeah, I mean the struggle was the world struggle, he saw that. I mean, when he went to America, one of the saddest things for Bob was how he was treated by the Black Americans, how they put him down - you know, he struggled with that. It's not really about money, it's about Wairua [spirit]. The money certainly has a part to play in it but it's never been the driving factor.<sup>85</sup>

Marley comes across as a humble, gentle man, gracious to those who came to visit him.<sup>86</sup> This generosity was reciprocated in Maori and Pacific Island forms of welcome. Marley was met and greeted by many people from these communities during his brief stay in Aotearoa. He was given a traditional Maori welcome at Mangere by a Maori performance group, a welcome that amazed him.<sup>87</sup> Dilworth continues:

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<sup>84</sup> Bob Marley and the Wailers came to Aotearoa drawing to the end of a world tour. The Wailers were to go on to shows in Australia after coming to Aotearoa.

<sup>85</sup> Personal interview. Dilworth Karaka November 15, 2000, Auckland.

<sup>86</sup> On Marley's relationships to community in Jamaica, see Dawes, pp.101-106, and White, pp.257-60.

<sup>87</sup> Part of Marley's welcome appears in Hitendra Patel's 2002, University of Auckland production documentary, *Children of Zion*. Marley was welcomed by a karanga [cry of welcome to visitors and to ancestors], a challenge, a traditional Maori song, then by a dance, and speeches. Marley was asked by a member of the New Zealand media whether he had ever had a welcome like the one he was receiving. He replied on camera, "No, never like this one" and it is obvious that he was much moved and very respectful. This short exchange was captured on film and appears in Patel's documentary.

Tony-What was your impression of Marley's performance?

Dilworth- [The concert was] an exhausting performance from Bob, he exhausted himself to come to a country where he met these people, Maori and Pacific Islanders, this whole way of life down in the South Pacific, a group he had obviously heard about but never bothered to step into that Polynesian triangle... and he was just blown away, the aroha, the parcels of food - you know what they're like. I mean, I know what Pacific Islanders are like, turning up with a feed, ha ha ha - man, it's a competition, you know! - And he was just overwhelmed. Talking about people that don't eat meat, and certain foods and all that - it never stopped them from other people participating, if you know what I mean. We cooked bacon and eggs, and he said "The pork smells good, man!" [Laughter]. "Man, them pork is cool, eh?" So you know, eh, he gravitated to it, you know.<sup>88</sup>

There is much mana [prestige] in Dilworth's words and we should be aware of how Marley comes to life through Maori values of aroha, manaakitanga and whakawhanaungatanga [family and community]. Dilworth speaks of this community of performers from another culture having values very similar to the indigenous values of Aotearoa.

Tony- What sort of man was he?

Dilworth- Ohh you know, 20 feet tall, beautiful, it's just being around him, sometimes you didn't even speak. I was there but I was listening. But when he talked to you it would be as close as this. A person serious and happy, and funny - he got serious when we got down to smoke a spliff, almost like a type of religious ceremony. There was quietness, there was humbleness, everyone spoke good of each other to other men, other women - you know, the korero was encouraging group talk, nobody spoke too much or not enough, if you didn't speak, they waited, you got to say something or something would come out. So there were obviously many sides to Bob. When he prepared himself he was locked, I think the band were locked too, they had a oneness... Know how Polynesians have got that eye connection, little mannerisms that nobody else might know them, but they go down then, and within that short period, within a day if you were on to it, which is what I tried to do, I tried to participate - instead I stood back, sort of picked up four things that were happening, house things, things that were going on amongst them - when to be seen, when not to be seen, respect all the respectful things - but because of the rock thing, if you get near him for some reason - and those other people couldn't, security and restrictions - he was in here, this tight [just a few feet away from Dilworth]. It was wide to get into the catchments of it, generous, yeah all of that.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Personal interview. Dilworth Karaka, November 15, 2000, Auckland.

<sup>89</sup> Op cit.

Marley's visit would have a profound influence on Dilworth's Aotearoa-centred reggae music, and on his commitment to resistance and activism.<sup>90</sup>

When Marley and The Wailers played their one concert in Aotearoa - at Western Springs, Auckland, on the afternoon of April 16 (Easter Monday) – they drew approximately 22,000 people.<sup>91</sup> Marley's music was strongly embraced by the gangs at this time, and gang-members were out in force. As a community organiser and gang leader, Denis O'Reilly met Marley at the White Heron Lodge, and attended the concert with members of his Black Power gang. Also present were members of the Mongrel Mob, Storm Troopers, King Cobras, and the Headhunters – some of them traditional enemies of Black Power. In recalling the concert, Denis has interesting things to say about how Marley's music could cool down such a tense situation. His perspective was different from that of Che Fu, the son of Tigi Ness, who was a child when his father had taken him to this concert. In a video that accompanied the 2002 Te Papa exhibition, 'Reggae Explosion', Che Fu had remembered the concert as very peaceful. What Denis remembered were the gang tensions.

Che [Fu]'s thing was there were all these different gangs there but the power of the music was such that everybody was dancing together. Well, that wasn't what I saw; we [Black Power] were by far the dominant force there. We were right up the fucken front with the flag and the whole works. Big trucks, fifty guys in a truck, can you remember those bloody...it was pretty powerful, wasn't it. Che's cut on that Marley concert was that the Blacks and the Mob were all dancing together, and it wasn't like that - it was very, very tense - but the power of the music was such that that was mitigated against, 95 percent.<sup>92</sup>

Denis speaks to the power of Marley's mana [prestige] with the gangs because there was no fighting that day. He also speaks to the power of the music to absorb tension, create calm, and build a fragile community, if only for the length of a concert, despite the traditions of warfare between rival gangs.<sup>93</sup>

### **Criticisms of Marley**

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<sup>90</sup> Personal interview. Dilworth Karaka, November 15, 2000, Auckland. Personal interview. Dilworth, November 22, 2000, Auckland.

<sup>91</sup> This is John's estimate. Personal interview. John Dix, May 20, 2002, Auckland.

<sup>92</sup> Personal interview. Denis O'Reilly, May 12, 2002, Wellington.

<sup>93</sup> For an introduction to some of the gangs at the time, one could view the film [Keskidee Aroha](#).

During the late '70s and early '80s protest organizations changed structure and focus.<sup>94</sup> Marches and occupations gave way to more focus on the Treaty of Waitangi as the '80s began. Some protest organizations of the '70s such as Nga Tamatoa and the Polynesian Panthers ceased to be active.

The influence of Bob Marley and his Rastafarian message was beginning to take hold, as some activists from the Polynesian Panthers became the 12 Tribes of Israel Rastafari (the Rastafarian group Marley belonged to). This entailed a new form of organization and a new range of priorities. This faith empowered new ways of understanding the problems of oppression and colonization. (We shall address some of those issues in both the 12 Tribes of Israel and the Ruatoria Dread chapters.) Marley's influence became inter-woven with those community cultures in new ways.

One would hope that spiritual, cultural, and secular understandings of Marley's music could continue to co-exist as activists worked together in a variety of situations. But some activists became concerned about the new importance being placed on the spiritual side of Marley's music. Although they had valued his influence in the '70s, they were suspicious of the growth of the Rastafarian faith. Lyn recalls some of her own concerns during the Keskidee theatre tour of 1979. She saw new priorities diverting people from grassroots political issues.

I am thinking of the time when the government sponsored Tigi for one person to go to London and make contact with Keskidee. For me it was the beginning of me sitting back and thinking how is this being used? The issues raised for me were around cultural imperialism, while for the people who identified strongly with Marley, [how did this relate to] the movement in northern Africa? What was the relevance for us here? If there is that relevance going back in terms of whakapapa - because I had the discussion with people at the time, for them there was an importance in whakapapa, going back beyond to the beginning - then that was a legitimate connection for those people. But in terms of it affecting culture, affecting the culture of young people who were activists, there was a degree of diversion, you know, because with the music came other activities that took people away from the activism. Maybe it was just my perception, but that's how I see part of it.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> One could consult Walker, pp.220-232, in order to track some of these changes. Or one could consult Harris, pp.88-103. For an examination of some (but not all) of the concerns activists had about reggae music, see Donna Awatere-Huata, pp40-41, in Maori Sovereignty.

<sup>95</sup> Personal interview. Lyn Doherty, October 16, 2000. Auckland.

Lyn speaks here of a variety of concerns. She saw Marley's influence shifting to issues of genealogy and origins, connected to Africa and Jamaica. The danger was that such concerns would carry people so far away from local issues that Rastafarianism amounted to a kind of cultural imperialism, the imposition of a foreign ideology or religion.

Roger also refers to some issues he began to feel were problematic, despite the positive potential of Marley's music.

In many ways reggae music for many of us became more irrelevant because it started to become, well, in many people's eyes, a diversion. In the early days it was part of the movement in helping to build up a progressive, optimistic, vibrant outlook and good attitudes, rejecting old ways and authority. But after a while I feel it wasn't useful to be worshipping at the feet of this new phenomenon, and becoming a subculture if you like, and elevating the Haile Selassie stuff. And though I respect the right of people to believe - and I still sing and love some of the songs - it became a diversion.<sup>96</sup>

Roger speaks powerfully about Marley's music connecting to the spiritual interests of people in the movement. He is respectful of people's right to believe, and also speaks to his continuing love for Marley's songs, but he also expresses his worries about the diversion of energies.

Wayne agrees that Marley's music can direct people away from political action, but he comes to the subject from a different perspective - a more Christian, spiritually-inclined involvement with the broad terrain of the post-colonial.

I never took [to] the spiritual qualities of [Marley's music] like some people did who become Rastas and others. Because I thought, "That's Jamaica, not here, and there has to be something that fits me, you know, fits the climate and fits here."<sup>97</sup>

Each speaker above raises important points about the ongoing use and relevance of Marley's music to the protest movement. The issues of cultural imperialism and a loss of critical perspective were serious questions to consider in the context of an overall struggle. Nobody was proposing a whole-scale rejection of Marley's music – it had become too much part of the local landscape – but there was a debate to be had between secular and religious uses of the music. We will be returning to this theme,

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<sup>96</sup> Personal interview. Roger Fowler, May 18, 2000, Auckland.

<sup>97</sup> Personal interview. Wayne Toleafoa, November 12, 2000, Auckland.

with the 12 Tribes of Israel and the Ruatoria Dread representing the religious side of the argument, and most of the young activists representing the secular side.

### **Marley's death, 1981**

Two speakers recall the effects of Marley's death (on May 11 1981) on communities in Aotearoa. Denis speaks first of the news reaching a Maori working class suburb of Hawkes Bay:

I was in Hawkes Bay. The Taradale Eagles went to play the Waipukarau Rams in Flaxmere, in this real poor suburb just out of Hastings. The two teams came along, they put a football in the middle of the field, and then they put a photo of Bob on the football, and then both teams bowed their heads and there was a minute's silence, you know. And when he died, the works guys walked off work in the freezing works. It was fucken amazing; it was fucken amazing, you know, we were gob smacked.... I remember that game eh mate, it was an amazing game, a fucken mean game actually too - but ah, yeah, he was just so... I mean can you imagine it - there's a rugby league game and this guy's died. Both teams, both clubs, not an issue of a doubt. Not a "Now look, our coach's mum has died, we are all going to wear black arm bands" – no, this was ... you know!<sup>98</sup>

In these powerful words a reader can gain some sense of the grassroots community appeal that Marley held for many young Maori of this period.<sup>99</sup>

Dilworth speaks about the news of Marley's passing in Auckland:

When Bob Marley died we [Herbs] had just finished doing our first album [Dragons and Demons], hence we wrote a song "Reggae's Doing Fine" in tribute to Bob, to his unfortunate and untimely death, and it was ironic for us because we had just finished our album, our first one, and we were looking for a heart-felt song, couldn't find it in our time in the studio, but soon as a tragedy happened we got together around a guitar and out it come. It was a tribute concert that we did with other groups in the Symonds Street ballroom, the Oriental. They recorded it to be sent back to Jamaica - if it ever happened, I'll never know - but we put a lot of work into that, everyone that played. The place was full. We had the police come in 'cos of a bomb scare, but nobody would

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<sup>98</sup> Personal interview. Dilworth Karaka, November 15 2000, Auckland.

<sup>99</sup> I still remember when the news came from Miami that Bob Marley had passed on. Many young Maori and Polynesian people of my own generation in West Auckland were saddened by this tragedy, and still remember the day. As part of my self-training in oral history, I went and spoke to six of the brothers who I spent time on the streets with in West Auckland during the early 1980's. I decided not to include this material in this thesis because each person in the chapter was a close personal friend, but all of these Maori and Pacific young people had vivid memories of the day as a significant event. His influence was still strong with that generation.

leave - it was just the feeling of heart in that whole gathering, the power of the love and respect for Bob Marley was too strong. People couldn't move, even if there was a bomb there. "Let it go, let it go, ring them up, tell them to let it off." We checked everywhere, and people didn't hinder the police from looking at the building, but otherwise we knew what it was for, because here was this whole group of people celebrating and giving thanks for what Bob did - in New Zealand, in our own society. [Some people were still] coming to terms with people who smoke marijuana, have different political beliefs, determined to put their case to the test, prepared to put themselves on the front line, prepared to demonstrate peacefully, and, you know, just very, very determined. I've been part of groups like that, and believe me, when you stand together like that, it's a very, very powerful feeling, it's obviously very spiritual. Like Takaparawhau. The power just seems to drive away any evil or unnecessary force that could prevail; it just has the power of pushing it away. Like I say, I've experienced it a couple of times where arms have been involved, but because of the power of the peace, the Wairua, has pushed those situations away.<sup>100</sup>

The effect of the news of Marley's death on many supporters of the man and his music is powerfully described. Activism, community respect, aroha, defiance in the face of a bomb threat, and a musical celebration are woven together in support of a man from Jamaica who had now become a loved part of the local culture. His death also inspires the creation of a notable piece of Aotearoa reggae, the song "Reggae's Doing Fine."<sup>101</sup>

### **A year later**

In the year after Marley's death, his music and his message continued to move through the community. Denis talks here (to his friend Hugh as well as to me) about some of the connections being formed between the music, the gangs, and the spiritual faith Marley had preached. Rastafarianism was growing within the spiral connecting Marley to Maori history and culture.

Tony- You were saying the other day about how there were Rasta up in Hastings, that were affiliated with the Ruatoria ones?

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<sup>100</sup> Personal interview. Dilworth Karaka, November 15, 2000, Auckland.

<sup>101</sup> The song, "Reggae's Doing Fine" is a slow ballad with a tender melody, with the refrain "reggae's doing fine". The song was sung by audience, and musicians, including Dilworth, and Tigi, at the conference Denis organised in 2002 to celebrate Marley's life and meaning here in Aotearoa. The conference itself was entitled, "Reggae's Doing Fine" in tribute to Dilworth and Herbs, and of course Marley. The conference dates held significance as well, because the conference began on May 11, the day of Marley's death, and then ended on the 13<sup>th</sup>.

Denis- No, it was the other way around, the guys in Hastings were well before the Ruatoria guys.

Tony- And what was the scene there with Bob Marley?

Denis- Well, I think again the music got through, and then they started to conscientise. Then you had the difficulty over the gangs - where you were either Black Power or Mongrel Mob, and you were cousin with this brother - and, fuck's sake, [the way to resolve these conflicts was to] go to a third, a third reality, to redefine the problem.

Tony- Was the Rasta thing big up in Hastings at the time?

Denis- Was the Rasta in Hastings big? Oh yeah, Turau Aroha and them. [To Hugh:] Hastings was the biggest concert you had for Black Slate, eh? [This black reggae band from England toured New Zealand in August 1982, with Herbs in support.] That Rasta thing was strong up there wasn't it?

Hugh- [agrees with Denis]

Denis- It was fuckin', it was powerful - when was it, Black Slate when you brought Black Slate to town - the town Napier fuckin' stopped didn't it, they stopped the whole mall, you know what I mean!<sup>102</sup>

By the beginning of the 1980s, the influence of Marley's music was moving in several directions, including a strengthening of its connections with the gangs on the one hand, and the growth of Rastafarianism on the other. Sometimes, as Denis suggests, the latter came from (and offered an alternative to) the former. Subsequent chapters will look at two important Rastafarian communities. But meanwhile the music continued to have a powerful presence in political activity, as evidenced by Section Four which will discuss the great upheavals of the 1981 Springbok Tour. It also became a catalyst for local music-making.

## **Making music**

As a musical model, Marley encouraged Dilworth to think about doing something for his own community:

Marley took all of these things on head, on himself, from his small comings in Jamaica, to the powerful influential musician he became, back to his people. You have to remember it was back to Jamaica, he always referred his wealth and knowledge back to Jamaica, to his people, to his religion, and that's what I wanted to do, I thought whatever talents I had left, if I was going to be good at it, at being in a band and playing music, if I could turn some of that back to Aotearoa, it would be my Oscar in a way.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Personal interview. Hugh Lynn, and Denis O'Reilly, May 13, 2002, Wellington.

<sup>103</sup> Personal interview. Dilworth Karaka, November 15, 2000. Auckland. Compare John Dix's account in Chapter Two.

There is something wonderful about Dilworth's humanity and humility. The new culture of music he helped to establish – most notably through his band Herbs - was only partly situated in the recording industry and its career structure. Primarily it was spiritual and cultural - built on music, the life of the musician, and service to the community.

Although the story of Dilworth's band Herbs takes us temporarily away from Marley, its importance in Aotearoa culture justifies a few pages on the subject, particularly as it illustrates vividly the way Marley's influence became absorbed into the spiral of Aotearoa. Grassroots cultures from Jamaica and Aotearoa, and musical styles met and mingled, creating a new kind of weave.

Dilworth recalls the emergence of Herbs around 1977:

It was a bunch of guys from the central Auckland area - Tony Fonoti, Fred Faleauto, Spenser Afusimalohi, South Auckland guy on bass Dave Po, and myself - and we were just a bunch of musos, a little bit different to what was happening out there - a couple of the guys had hair that wasn't the usual hairstyle, they had rolled their hair and were turning it into dreadlocks. World music was changing, a new style of music was coming and it was called reggae, and of course we took to reggae like ducks to water really. We found it very, easy for us to slip into reggae, we enjoyed it, so in between singing Bob Marley songs, and Peter Tosh, and other great reggae singers, in between we wrote a number of our own songs.<sup>104</sup>

Jamaican reggae music (always a touchstone to the Kingston sufferers and their conditions<sup>105</sup>) was the harbinger of wider international developments, whose energies were beginning to intersect with local Polynesian and Maori popular culture from hairstyles to musical expression. Herbs meant the establishment of an important Aotearoa reggae band with original material. Yet it is the ease of the cross-cultural fertilization that is perhaps most memorable here because it points to a profound level of connection between the colonial experience of a group of Maori and Polynesian musicians and the postcolonial Jamaican experience out of which Marley's and Tosh's music emerged.

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<sup>104</sup> Personal interview. Dilworth Karaka, November 15, 2000, Auckland.

<sup>105</sup> One should consult Lloyd Bradley's Bass Culture: When Reggae Was King, pp 280.

Jimmy Cliff quoted directly in an interview states: "Music in the West Indies has always been about the people, communicating how they feel to each other- it's perfectly true when they say that it is the ghetto's newspaper. Calypso and mento was about that; ska and rock steady highlight the rudeboy era. Reggae was celebrating the independence and the optimism of the time, then the Rasta movement and roots music showed up the general dissatisfaction at what was going on. It's the same today, the dancehall reggae directly reflects the mood of the people. Whether you think that mood is positive or not."

Wayne gave considerable thought to the question of whether the music they played was merely an overseas borrowing. He felt that through Marley he could actually find his own local voice in the creation of something new - Polynesian reggae. His words support the fine oral history of Dilworth:

I had always hoped that there would be a type of Polynesian reggae, if you like - a Polynesian Bob Marley. We used to have a group who used to play a lot for the Panthers, it was called Taba, they used to play heavy rock, just a drum, bass, and guitarist, they were starting to get interested in reggae music. But groups like Herbs represented a more mature reggae; it had more of a New Zealand flavour than Bob Marley. I appreciated that a bit more than the Marley music, it was trying to put it into a context. I feel the same way about hip hop - I think it would be better to hear an Aotearoa, Pan Pacific sound, rather than these guys borrowing purely from urban America, trying to import that into New Zealand.<sup>106</sup>

Dilworth offers an example of how the honour accorded to Marley could be a catalyst for Maori and Pacific Island community values:

Dilworth- The funny thing was, we [Herbs] used to have this backdrop [with many pictures of Bob Marley on it] that Tony [Fonoti] and his brother made on a drop bamboo curtain, and it was stolen on our first tour down in the South Island. Years later I got invited to a party in Invercargill, to this garage. I walk in, and in the place of honour in this house was this backdrop.

Tony- Did you say anything?

Dilworth- Oh yeah, oh yeah, because the guy who owned the house, he says "You remember that, eh, Dilworth?" "Yes I do". He said, "Well, have you come to take it back?" I said, "Well, it's obviously been in a place of honour amongst people who got it here." He told me the whole story - they loved it, they worshipped it, that's their connection to Bob. All around this Herbs backdrop is Bob everywhere - Rastafarian images - and they're not even Rastas but there for the music. Yeah, it was quite moving actually.<sup>107</sup>

Dilworth's acceptance of the theft of the backdrop and his respect for the way it had since been used illustrates in microcosm how a value system of community generosity founded out of the common Maori and Polynesian experience intersected with the same value system Marley privileged in his life and music. Dilworth's point is made again in a humorous anecdote about the practices of the Herbs band members:

Because the brothers used to give stuff away, and I mean give, give away, you know, in some of our absent mindedness, or alcohol - so free in giving stuff

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<sup>106</sup> Personal interview. Wayne Toleafoa, November 12, 2000, Auckland.

<sup>107</sup> Personal interview. Dilworth Karaka, November 15, 2000, Auckland.

away [laughter], ‘cos come the time, well, what are we going to play with now? [Laughter] And the powers, the faith, made them believe, but it was the dollar that bought it back again. If you feel like giving something away, give your shirt away or your tee shirt, so you know.<sup>108</sup>

The music itself was thus a catalyst for awakening community values and sensibilities.

Tony- Do you see the Marley music as a type of activism?

Dilworth- Ae, yeah, it’s an awakening it’s an uprising. Spirit, you know, confidence, aroha - it awakens all those human qualities that are there, but in some people haven’t been awakened yet. Through the power of music, reggae has done that, touched the soul of people, good people, hard working people, sharing people, gifted people, talented people, because they don’t think of themselves first, they think of others - and that’s what Bob Marley generated to me.<sup>109</sup>

This is a redemptive epistemology of musical affect, an egalitarian aesthetics of use, a compassionate montage of community, and an animated history of activist spirituality.<sup>110</sup> Dilworth offers a fascinating insight into the workings of Jamaican soul music on those in Aotearoa’s struggling communities whom the music embraced in a cross-cultural, post-colonial communion - awakening dormant community values essential for healing and emancipation.

Herbs performed plenty of Jamaican numbers but increasingly began to add songs of their own.

In between singing songs by Bob Marley and Peter Tosh and other great reggae singers, we wrote a number of our own songs, especially Tony Fonoti did – such as ‘Whistling in the dark’ and ‘Dragons and demons’. And after playing maybe two or three months at a local hotel in Onehunga, some people asked us one night after a gig: “‘Dragons and demons,’ who wrote that song? Dilworth, can we buy that one?” In our embarrassment, we said, “Well, actually we wrote that song.” We felt a bit whakama [to be shy, or feel embarrassed, or to feel shame] about pushing it, but we basically got talked into recording it. At that same time there were a couple of band changes that happened very quickly - the band took a different shape, I suppose we were preparing ourselves for the journey we were about to embark on, though we really had no idea where it was going to go. But we knew what we wanted to do. We set out to record a bunch

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<sup>108</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> Personal interview. Dilworth Karaka, November 12, 2000, Auckland.

<sup>110</sup> In a broad philosophical sense Dilworth seems to be describing ways in which Tangata whenua, and Pacific Island migrant community members found Marley useful in negotiating their relationship to modernity in a post-colonial Aotearoa context. Perhaps it is not too far fetched to suggest Marley was helping the construction of a counter-cultural, counter-modern, Tangata whenua, and wider Pacific Island migrant communalism strategically placed inside yet without Western modernity. For these thoughts I am indebted to Paul Gilroy and his landmark work, The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness.

of songs, 'French letter' being one of them, and I think that was our first recording, quite a challenge - it took us three weeks to record that tune. We had never been in a studio. After recording, we found we were struggling with ourselves; we were having a bit of an identity problem. Playing together in a hotel, in the ambience of people enjoying themselves, people being merry, we found all of a sudden, "Gee, I'm flat, I don't sound as flash as I think I do, amm, my guitar is out of tune, not playing in beat, the drums are this or that..." We struggled. But we had a record company that was prepared to give us time to go through that learning curve, and we were lucky that we came up with a tune like we did three weeks later. I suppose it's the longest time any one has taken to record a single. But as far as recording was concerned we learned a lot with the help of studio technicians, record company people. Out come 'French letter' and we were just so stoked, very vibrant with it, it was a good time to be bringing out music. The only thing was that it kind of knocked the rock industry, they weren't into political rock, and let's face it, most of the political rock bands were mainly dark, black orientated, bands. So I think the record industry had more of a struggle with us than we did with ourselves. After a while, our confidence grew, we were into our first album, then our second one. All of a sudden, things were changing, even the band started changing.<sup>111</sup>

Within these rich stories we may experience imaginatively the colour and energy of the times. At the centre of this story of personal and group development, we witness a group of young cultural workers finding their way to producing politically conscious music - an activity supported by many in the community but resisted by some in the mainstream of Aotearoa's music and radio industry. Asked whether Herbs got any radio airtime for their first album, Dilworth replied:

No, not at all, it all went underground for some reason. For the national radio stations to play 'French letter', they actually changed the title, the DJs, so they could give it airplay. In Auckland they called it 'A Letter to France', not 'French letter,' you know. We still do it today, play on words in relation to meaning and getting the message across.<sup>112</sup>

The resistance to their music tells us much about the conservative racial and cultural politics of mainstream radio at the time. But by playing with ambivalence and double meanings, Herbs' songwriters were able to compose song lyrics that could challenge the status quo on the airwaves in subtle ways. Dilworth refers again to this conscious method of 'double meanings' in an exchange about the early Herbs sound:

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<sup>111</sup> Personal interview. Dilworth Karaka, November 15, 2000, Auckland. New Zealand had long protested against nuclear testing- particularly in the Pacific. In 1973, the New Zealand government sent a Navy frigate up to Mururoa to patrol in protest against French Nuclear testing going on that year. There was a strong anti-nuclear protest movement in Aotearoa for many years through the 1960s and 1970s. Dilworth, and Herbs song 'French Letter,' is situated within a protest kaupapa on behalf of all the Pacific peoples.

<sup>112</sup> Personal interview. Dilworth Karaka, November 15, 2000, Auckland.

Tony- I was going to ask you about the Bob Marley connection in terms of your song writing. Did Bob Marley influence, 'Jah Sun' and 'Dragons and Demons'? Dilworth- Those songs were written in the very early stages of Herbs, from Tony Fonoti [who wrote and performed lead vocals on the 1981 release 'Dragons and Demons'], and Spenser Fusimalohi [who wrote the lyrics of and provided lead vocals for the 1982 release 'Jah Sun'], because of hearing Bob Marley at such an early stage - hence those songs. Throughout New Zealand, they are probably the two most played tracks of our early days, and we still play those tracks in our live set, and ahh, it's still great to experience the response and understanding. I know some guys who are now in the Rastafarian movement, and 'Dragons and Demons' was one of their favourite songs when they were out at their parties down Palmerston North way, and it wasn't until they joined their faith that they understood actually what the song was about. I put that down to Tony Fonoti being such a master of using words, using double meanings of words, a technique he is very good for.<sup>113</sup>

It is evidence of Herbs' craftsmanship in the way the lyrical complexity and cryptic qualities of the songs open doors for the music to be interpreted and used in a variety of grassroots situations. Marley's skill as a teller of stories that offer a range of potential meanings and applications has thus been continued in the song writing of Herbs.

Both the early songs 'Dragons and Demons' (written by Toni Fonoti) and 'Jah Sun' (written by Spenser Afusimalohi) were metaphorical, poetic, and deeply Rasta, philosophically inspired treatments of material and spiritual life in post-colonial Aotearoa. In the 1982 song 'Jah Sun,' many of the guitar riffs and rhythmic structures of bass and drums seem influenced by Polynesian melodies and drum rhythms. For an example of a song with more Aotearoa or Maori musical influence, one could refer to the later rhythm-and-blues infused classic 'Sensitive to a Smile' (1987). Its vocal harmonies and rhythmic beat seem more rooted in the tradition of Maori acoustic guitar performance. That the Polynesian influence was strong in early Herbs music seems to reflect the fact that the band then had a mainly Tongan and Samoan line up, with Dilworth being the only tangata whenua (people of the land, the indigenous people of Aotearoa) member. The band also had a superb Palagi bass player, Phil Thoms, for one album. By the late '80s the only Samoan or Tongan band member left was the Samoan drummer Fred Faleauto, who later left for family reasons. The band that still plays regularly as Herbs today is an all-tangata whenua line up.

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<sup>113</sup> Personal interview. Dilworth Karaka, November 15, 2000, Auckland.

Dilworth gives us his thoughtful perspective on the relationship between political issues and cultural work during this period:

In the late '70s early '80s, there was quite a time of turmoil in Aotearoa, in Tamaki-Makaurau, and one of the main ones that really got to us was the overstayer issue which was very horrific on the streets. It was a hard time and of course it caused a reaction on the youth, which I considered myself to be at the time, one of the younger people of Aotearoa. We set out to voice our opinion, and if necessary make the stand. The power of peaceful protest was something I learned over a year up at Bastion Point, and ah, incorporated in all that, that's where all our songs come from - you know, the struggle on the street, the struggle on the land, the struggle to survive. Here we were in a modern city - no running water, no electricity - but you know you get over those hardships and the power of the group took over. We moved into areas we were unsure of, but dedicated to, because of our beliefs. And sure enough the overstayer issue and the Springbok Tour split this country right down the middle. We wrote a song called 'One brotherhood' in relation to that - all about the goal posts and the game.<sup>114</sup>

## Section Four

### The Springbok Tour, 1981

In 1981 the National government decided to allow the South African Springbok Rugby team to tour Aotearoa. This was in spite of the agreement by all commonwealth countries to have no sporting contact with Apartheid South Africa. The protests against this tour were national in scope, mobilizing many groups of people. The police, given the task of defending the Springboks and rugby fans, and ensuring that the matches went ahead, took a very aggressive approach.<sup>115</sup>

Tigi, Miriama, Roger, and Lyn were not only involved in the protests but played leadership roles. Tigi and Miriama were leaders of the Patu Squad of protestors, while

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<sup>114</sup> Personal interview. Dilworth Karaka, November 22, 2000. Auckland.

<sup>115</sup> One could consult the Mita film, *Patu*, for an introduction to the size, and scope of these protests, not to mention the brutality of the Police response to those fighting against Apartheid in South Africa in this land.

Roger was a leader of the Biko squad.<sup>116</sup> In contrast, Wayne was a police officer by this time, and was on duty to enforce the policy of the government.<sup>117</sup>

Miriama recalls Marley's music being performed as a warm-up for Tour protests:

He had a revolution, his music was revolutionary, and it was soul-healing, pick-me-upping. And it was also dead strategic; there was strategy in his music as well, if you listen to it. Some things you need, you used it to meditate. Before the Springbok Tour, we used Marley to give us strength that was just the way we used to do things. [And later in my work as a musician], even before we would go and do a show, we always used it for a prayer, or to meditate, chill out. It [the music] gave us that spiritual power - not to be afraid of anything.<sup>118</sup>

Miriama weaves Marley's music into her grassroots political narrative. Music, performance, and a warrior wahine's [woman's] voice all speak loud in this quote. It is also interesting that Miriama finds "strategy in his music", acknowledging the information and ideas it contains as well as its emotional and "spiritual power."<sup>119</sup>

Tigi appears in the film Patu, walking alongside marchers, singing Marley songs. In another sequence in the film one can see him singing the Marley song "Survivors" with his current reggae band I Unity.<sup>120</sup>

Tony: And so the Marley music, do you think it was [helping] your activist work at the time?

Tigi: It was feeding [the activism]. I tell you, over the Springbok Tour, during the marches, and during the protests, because I was a singer, and in a band, I would say that I was on pitch. Being loud, I could sing loud, so on the marches, "Get Up, Stand Up". And when you see the video [Patu] of the dude singing, that's me, you know. [I] did that on the [1975] Land March as well. Because they were righteous songs, I used them.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> See Geoff Chapple, pp268-269, 1981: The Tour. Chapple does a breakdown of the squads Biko, Tutu, and Patu organised by protesters. This book is also a fine history of the Springbok Tour Protests.

<sup>117</sup> Personal interview. Wayne, November 12, 2000, Auckland. It is important to say Wayne never supported Apartheid, but he did express the view that he saw the Police job was to keep pro rugby supporters and protesters away from one another.

<sup>118</sup> Personal interview. Miriama, September 8, 2000, Auckland.

<sup>119</sup> Marley was known as Tuff Gong for his street fighting prowess in Trenchtown Jamaica. See Dawes, pp188, in Bob Marley Lyrical Genius, in relationship to Marley's exile, street name, and the great album made in London, Exodus. Even in the early Island albums, this sense of a Jamaican fighter emerges in songs such as, 'I Shot the Sheriff', 'Burning and Looting', 'Them Belly Full but We Hungry'.

<sup>120</sup> See Mita film on the Springbok Tour Protests, Patu.

<sup>121</sup> Personal interview. Tigi Ness, June 13, 2000, Auckland.

Here, the song “Get Up, Stand Up” travels beyond Ponsonby, the 1975 Land March, and the 1977 struggle at Takaparawhau, with the weave now extended to the 1981 Tour protests. In 1981 the song would be familiar to all the marchers and for many of them it would bring back memories of earlier protests.

Tigi was arrested and jailed for 12 months for his part in the Tour protests. Before going to trial he was held in the jail cells beneath the old High Court in Auckland. In the next quote, Tigi describes a very special performance of Marley – one that touched even the police who heard it:

But when me, and five other people went into the High Court there, the cells were grungy when we went in there. We sang “Chances Are”, “Get Up, Stand Up”, “So Jah Seh” - all those ones that we knew would feed us. The police were watching us, and they did not know how to take us, because what they’d seen on the screen about the protest. This was something different. They were thinking, this is another bunch of yobbos [violent males], and when we sang, it was like church. And the way we sung it was to keep our faith up, and we didn’t know what was going to happen to us - prison for sure - didn’t know for how long, and nobody outside had contact with us, we just sang Bob’s songs – “Redemption Song” - and that kept our spirits [up]. And I saw the police, it was almost like [they were thinking], “These fullas shouldn’t be here.” And singing these kinds of songs we were [suggesting to the police], “How can you do this to us?”<sup>122</sup>

Tigi refers to the famed acoustic Marley track, “Redemption Song”<sup>123</sup> as part of his attempts to transform an Aotearoa prison cell into a church. He also mentions the late ‘60s rhythm and blues influenced “Chances Are” as a song that brought comfort. Tigi’s story is one of those occasions when it would be hard not to treat the spiritual dimension of Marley’s music – “like church” – with seriousness and respect.

Twelve years later South Africa was to shed its Apartheid structures. Nelson Mandela became the first Black president of South Africa. Many of the Aotearoa politicians who had labeled Mandela a terrorist in 1981 rolled out the welcome mat when he came to Aotearoa for a state visit in 1996. Mandela met some of the 1981 protesters at the St. Matthews Church in inner city Auckland. Tigi was present for that meeting where Mandela personally thanked those gathered for their contribution in helping Apartheid to lose international credibility during the 1981 tour protests. Many New Zealanders from all cultures, classes, and geographical communities contributed to the

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<sup>122</sup> Personal interview. Tigi Ness, June 13 2000, Auckland.

<sup>123</sup> See Dawes, pp.307-312, for a reading of the great “Redemption Song” within a Jamaican, and Black Diaspora framework.

humble Tour Protest movement. I have focused on just a few of the many souls who committed to the cause of black emancipation in South Africa.

I was outside the church with a group of younger activists and saw a smiling Mandela emerge. Hone Harawira, who had been inside the church, emerged to perform the haka, “Ka Mate, Ka Mate” for a smiling Mandela. We activists standing outside joined in to support Harawira’s stirring solo performance for the common Aotearoa folk hero, Mandela. Not a Marley song on this occasion, but it was clear that Tigi’s labours during the 1981 tour and his imprisonment had not been in vain!

## Chapter Four

### Urban Rastafari

There have been formalised Rastafarian faiths established in Aotearoa since 1982. Miriama Rauhihi, a founding member of the 12 Tribes in New Zealand recalls that she was in Jamaica in 1983 as Sister Judah, and “less than a year” had passed since she had begun “functioning as Sister Judah”.<sup>1</sup> The influence of Rastafari had been active in Aotearoa for several years before this – there were pockets of influence outside of the cities in the mid to late 1970s and early 80s, but next to none of that history appears to have been recorded.<sup>2</sup> It was around 1982 that networks of inner city young people coalesced into organisational form.<sup>3</sup> The 12 Tribes of Israel Aotearoa International (as they came to be known) were mostly based in towns and urban areas - in Auckland, Levin, and Porirua - though their members came from all over the country. Many were Pacific Islanders, but some were Maori, and there were also some Pakeha and individuals from other racial and ethnic groups. Outside the cities, the Ruatoria Rastafarians grew into their faith in 1983, and a group in Hastings was emerging in the early 1980s, as Denis O’Reilly recalls.<sup>4</sup> The musical activities of these groups carried the Rasta message all over the country.

The present chapter will focus on the Auckland group, 12 Tribes of Israel, which has had a strong presence in inner city Auckland for more than a quarter of a century. Their first base was in Surrey Crescent, Grey Lynn (a suburb next to Ponsonby). The prophet Gad<sup>5</sup>, founder, prophet and leading theologian of the 12 Tribes of Israel in Jamaica, came to Aotearoa formally to open and bless this house in 1986. More recently the group has shifted to New Lynn in West Auckland.

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<sup>1</sup> Personal interview, Miriama Rauhihi-Ness, September 8, 2000, Auckland. NB: Miriama has already appeared in Chapter Two as an activist.

<sup>2</sup> I have spent several months searching in libraries for any documented material on New Zealand Rastafari in popular journals of the time, such as The Listener, North and South, and Mana magazines, not to mention a whole series of radical papers and journals. The Listener published a two-page article by Gordon Campbell in its January 17, 1981 issue, pp.18-19, on the Auckland development of Rasta culture: ‘Rasta in Aotearoa’.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. William Gordon Hawkeswood’s very informative 1983 University of Auckland MA thesis: “I’n’I Ras Tafari: Identity and the Rasta movement in Auckland”.

<sup>4</sup> Personal interview. Denis O’Reilly, May 12, 2002, Wellington.

<sup>5</sup> Vernon Carrington, better known as Gadmon or the Prophet Gad.

The Prophet Gad had founded the 12 Tribes in Trenchtown in 1969, before moving the headquarters of his group uptown.<sup>6</sup> He had experienced a series of visions that shaped the theology of the group. The 12 Tribes believe that the whole of the human race consists of the scattered remains of the biblical 12 Tribes of Israel, as spoken of in the book of Genesis, Chapter 49 Verses 1-33. As I was told by a local wise Dread:

The Bible talks about the 12 Tribes of Israel all the way through. It finishes up with the end times, which is like the end of an age of revolution in this world, and it finishes up with Christ at the head of that part of the organisation, the organisation made up of 12 tribes, based on the sons of Jacob. Well, whoever accepts and believes that each and every one of us on planet Earth comes from one of these tribes; [they all] have a chance.<sup>7</sup>

One way of identifying one's tribe is to go to the month in which one was born. Each tribe has its own spiritual gifts. Again, everyone is descended from the three fathers of all races on the earth - Noah's sons Ham, Shem, and Japheth, who are the fathers of what are now called the black, brown, and white races. As Miriama explained this to me:

If you go and check the Bible, when Noah went into the ark, the whole world was started again. There were only three sons and all their families. Ham was the black son, Shem the brown son, and Japheth the white son. Now this was before you had Indian, Samoan, Maori... It is in the Bible and you can read how

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<sup>6</sup> See Barry Chevanne's, 'Rastafari and the Exorcism of Racism and Classism', pp 55-71, in Chanting Down Babylon: The Rastafari Reader. The essay adds, on pages 59-60, "Rastafarian thought... [Has] developed over the years in phases. In the first two decades the movement centered on the identity of God, and propagating the teachings of the faith took the form of street meetings. Each preacher established his own "King of Kings" mission, which was attended by those converted at the public meetings. Ritual practices varied from mission to mission but included baptism, fasting, and celebration of special anniversaries, such as the coronation of Haile Selassie I, and the cultivation of head and facial hair according to the nazarite vow as set out in the Book of Leviticus. The second two decades, the 1950s, and 1960s, were marked by agitation for repatriation and by the rise to ascendancy throughout the movement of a radical trend that became known as the Dreadlocks. Repatriation is viewed as a divinely ordained act, depending on the will and action of God, not on humans. It is different from migration... The 1970s and 1980s were marked by three far-reaching developments. The first was the use of reggae music as the medium of expression of Rastafari sentiments and the mutual identity of the two. The second was the internationalization of the movement, due to the impact of reggae, to migration, and to racism in the metropolises of both the Northern and Southern Hemispheres... Third, but not yet fully studied, is the triumphant entry of Rastafari into the middle classes." [In Jamaica]

<sup>7</sup> Personal interview. Tigi Ness, 13 June 2000, Auckland.

we relate. [Originally] there was no such thing as white people, yellow people, red people or Red Indians - they were Shem people, or Japheths, or Hamites.<sup>8</sup>

## **Music and culture**

Auckland's 12 Tribes had a particularly large membership during the 1980s. Miriama and Tracey Gad described dances the organisation held during this period that involved hundreds of people. They also explained that one could identify 12 Tribes members by the dresses the women wore, since the colours matched up with tribal affiliations. In its first decade the group had a particularly strong spiritual focus on healing and support for those in difficulty. Members used to go house to house selling music tapes to raise funds and to engage in consciousness-raising. (I remember a Christian friend of mine complaining about how his neighbours were Rastas and he had to listen to them all the time singing hymns to Jah rather than Jesus!)

From the beginning, the 12 Tribes' house in Auckland was a centre of musical production and dissemination in the inner city. Three of the 11 original founding members of the 12 tribes - Toni Fonoti, Tigi Ness and Miriama Rauhihi - played for many years with the 12 Tribes of Israel band. The band has changed its lineup as members have come and gone, but it is still active, playing gigs for the benefit of inner city youth at its headquarters and other venues. A typical poster advertising a 12 Tribes gig says: "No alcohol, no bad vibes, and no tape-recorders." Music is an extension of their witness and of their belief that "God is the first power, music is the second."<sup>9</sup> The 12 Tribes are a popular presence at reggae concerts in inner city Auckland playing at venues such as Iguacu (in Parnell). They regularly perform at Bob Marley birthday celebrations and at national reggae events such as the "Reggae Explosion" exhibition at Te Papa. They are also involved in sound system work. Some members have gone on to notable solo careers, such as Che Fu. The continuous influence of the Rasta faith within Auckland's urban culture has been greatly reinforced by its strong musical dimension.

## **My research approach**

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<sup>8</sup> Personal interview. Miriama Rauhihi-Ness, 8 September, 2000, Auckland.

<sup>9</sup> Personal interview. Miriama Rauhihi-Ness, September 8, 2000, Auckland. Personal interviews. Peter Naera, 21 May, and 28 May, 2000, Auckland. Personal interviews. Tigi Ness June 6, and June 13, 2000, Auckland.

Even though I spoke with a number of members of the 12 tribes of Israel, my work does not speak for the 12 Tribes organisation. But I have developed an oral history of the organisation in this chapter built out of speaker's voices, in order to better situate the stories of Bob Marley within a rich spiritual and geographical historical context. What appears in this chapter is rich and important, but it is not a total history of the 12 Tribes, or a full account of their relationship to Bob Marley. But the work here is a valuable account of some amazing people speaking about Bob Marley and his value in their lives.

I met one speaker in this chapter, Peter Naera, and the very interesting conversation I had with Peter made me aware of Tigi Ness. Then an introduction from Roger Fowler, (discussed in the chapter on older community organisers), led to my first meeting with Tigi Ness. Tigi was then extremely helpful in introducing me or speaking on my behalf to the other Rastafarians who appear in this chapter so I could speak to them about the influence of Bob Marley on their lives.

I am aware that this way of working through a respected member of the community could, in some groups, limit the scope of the research being conducted, but I consider the advantages to outweigh the disadvantages. In a close group such as the 12 tribes (or, later, the Ruatoria community), the generous support of an influential person gave me access to other people in a way that enriched my research and helped to ensure that I was approaching the community in a respectful and appropriate way.

I saw this mode of approaching people as a respectful means of letting Tigi control access, and make decisions on which people I should, and should not speak to. After I spoke with Tigi and Zebulon, I went to meet other members of the 12 tribes of Israel at their head quarters in New Lynn, West Auckland over one weekend. Tigi and Zebulon thought it was a good idea for me to meet people in the organisation so I spent a few days with members of the organisation.

I did not go to the 12 Tribes as an organisation, to do in-depth ethnography but simply to gain an appreciation of their relationship with Bob Marley and his music while I was still interviewing members of the organisation as individuals. I had done some reading on their faith.<sup>10</sup> I had the pleasure of experiencing the deep fellowship there

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<sup>10</sup> For example, Barry Chevannes' Rastafari Roots and ideology. Chevannes only touches on the 12 tribes of Israel in his work. This text deals with the origins of the Rasta faith and is based on ethnographic work done for Chevannes's PhD dissertation. He offers useful

and the hot food shared with the Dread families who come to break bread. On the first night I attended there was going to be a sound system playing later in the evening. I also had the opportunity to “reason” with members, both as part of the Friday night fellowship, and after a Sunday church service, which was again accompanied by a delicious meal for everyone. Reasoning is an important activity for the Rastas - a free-form, frank discussion of ethical, social and religious issues, undertaken in a manner that respects each person’s individual views. (These values are clearly reminiscent of the traditional Maori Hui.) Rasta reasoning is sometimes accompanied by the sharing of ganja [marijuana]. I discussed with various individuals what I was attempting to do in my research, and had informal discussions about Rastafarian thinking in conversations. I met with nothing but acceptance from the people I spoke with on this brief meeting with 12 Tribes of Israel. Much of this may have been attributed to the fact I came with the blessing of both Tigi Ness and Zebulon, men who appear in this chapter. The experience of meeting the fine people from this organisation enriched the work I have done in this chapter immeasurably.

### **Personal stories**

In the next section I will introduce each member I spoke with as a means of allowing individuals to establish their presence, and to respect their personal stories of where they came from and how each of them was drawn to the 12 Tribes. Together their stories will inter-weave to create the story of how the Auckland community took shape. Bob Marley has a special place in each of their narratives. His influence spiralled down from Jamaica to mesh with the corresponding spiral of an Aotearoa community in which people from a range of backgrounds were searching for identity,

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information on the Bobo Dread of Bulls Bay, when its founder and leading theoretician Prince Edward Emmanuel was still alive. Lewis William’s [Soul Rebels](#) has a useful ethnographic section on the 12 Tribes in Ethiopia. One of the 12 Tribes’ core beliefs is that all members should repatriate to Africa, the motherland. William Spenser’s [Dread Jesus](#) offers useful insights into the theologically different positions of Rastafari in relation to God, Jesus Christ, and spirituality in general. Spenser argues there has been a considerable shift in 12 Tribes doctrine in relation to the divinity of Haile Selassie. Some Rasta groups do not identify with Christological readings of Haile Selassie at all. The Prophet Gad went on Jamaican national radio to declare that Christ and Haile Selassie were not the same. Timothy White’s [Bob Marley: A Biography](#), has a small selection on the 12 Tribe’s central beliefs. Other Rasta texts touch on the 12 Tribes in one way or another.

for a relationship to history, for spiritual and cultural sustenance, and for a sense of shared purpose.

I begin with two members of the 12 Tribes – Tigilau (Tigi) Ness and Miriama (Ama) Rauhihi - who were part of the very first generation, followed by five members who joined a few years later.

Tigi, who has already appeared in a previous chapter, is a well-known community worker, promoter, community political organiser, song writer, poet, musician, and teacher. He describes his early experience of life as a Polynesian (Niuean) New Zealander<sup>11</sup>:

Tigi- Fakalofa, Tony. I was born in Auckland, Pitt Street, of Niuean parents - the first generation born in New Zealand. Full employment for my mother and father because, as you know, the Polynesian people, the Island people, were brought over for a lot of the jobs that the Pakeha and Maori wouldn't do. I would say for a PI [Pacific Island] boy born in this place, [it is] a very subtly

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<sup>11</sup> The post-World War II migration of Polynesian communities into metropolitan Aotearoa had complex causes and effects. It was a function of neo-colonialism in the Islands (New Zealand's political and economic administration), limited resources and opportunities in the Islands for increasing populations, and the growth of the New Zealand industrial sector's need for cheap labour - among other factors. I have characterised the Niuean, Tongan, Samoan, Cook Island, Tokelauan, and Fijian migration to Aotearoa in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s as a specific form of Diaspora. The Maori Diaspora from rural to urban areas intersects with this Pacific migrant experience of Diaspora. I have picked up on themes of Diaspora within the oral accounts of one generation of urban Tangata whenua, and Pacific Island immigrants- that have to do with the spiritual, historical and cultural experience of exile, scattering, homecoming, healing, and new beginnings specific to the needs of this chapter. I am also inclusive of Pakeha in this chapter as well, and Pakeha experience as a form of Diasporic search for a home land, or a spiritual, and cultural centre. I have positioned these themes of Diaspora within a Koru shaped pattern in order to develop dimensions of a reception theory suitable for this community. This Diaspora reception structure is only partially sketched out in this chapter. Island people, who came to Aotearoa during these years to settle, were internally heterogenous from one another in history, geography, and culture and custom although all are part of the wider Pacific Island family. I wish to emphasise that my interpretation of Diaspora and the Pacific Island experiences I have historicised above,(in Aotearoa) are coloured by my own experience, and understanding. It is important to recognise there are many other ways of looking at Pacific Island migrant histories of people who came to Aotearoa. Maori are also a Polynesian people like other Islanders, but in Aotearoa they are Tangata Whenua. The literature on the subject of Pacific Island migration is considerable and fast growing. A useful older text examining the experience of the new migrants, their dreams, the inner city places they settled, and the work sectors in which they found employment is R.L Challis's The Position of Polynesians in New Zealand. For a useful overview of the Pacific Island migrant experience of Diaspora to Aotearoa from the vantage point of the present, one may consult Augie Fleras and Paul Spoonley's, pp.190-217, "Tagata Pasifika: No Longer Migrants" in Recalling Aotearoa: Indigenous Politics and Ethnic Relations in New Zealand.. The authors specifically mobilise a concept of Diaspora influenced by Stuart Hall late in their essay. I must say, however, that I am wary of the secular and very British analytical frameworks used to construct the concept of Diaspora.

racist country. I remember all my life, as I was growing up, the older people talking about it, a motu Palagi - which means a white country - so I was well aware who I was, and that this was a white man's country even though there were ethnic people here like Maori - still motu Palagi, New Zealand was a white country!<sup>12</sup>

In many ways Tigi speaks to being 'a stranger, in a strange land.' Tigi would feel a deep affinity with Marley's music, and it would serve as a catalyst for him to clarify his own sense of identity and outlook on life.

Miriama Rauhihi from Ngati Raukawa has been a musician, community organiser, and political activist for many years. An experienced singer, she is a personal friend of Rita Marley, Bob's wife, and a family friend of the Wailers. She linked the story of her childhood with that of her hapu [extended family group] and iwi [tribe]<sup>13</sup>:

I come from Ngati Raukawa, and my hapu is Ngati Whakatere, which is down by Palmerston North, Manawatu. Father [was] Rangatira [chief] of our hapu, when Nanny was still alive. The poukai [feast and fundraiser] was when King Koroki used to have poukai - but it was the hapu - he would go down and have a huge big feed, at least all his people ate well at least for one day in every year. That is, always giving gifts to keep the Kingitanga [King movement] going, to keep the structuring of our marae. That's why I think we are strong - the families and the iwi and the hapu are very, very political.<sup>14</sup>

Miriama then wove a new tale of the journey from roots culture to routes culture (to borrow Paul Gilroy's term)<sup>15</sup>:

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<sup>12</sup> Personal interview. Tigi Ness, 6 June 2000, Auckland.

<sup>13</sup> The Maori King Movement emerged in the 1850s as a central North Island political and social movement dedicated to protecting Maori land from the hands of settler communities and governments. It was a political pan-tribal movement that drew allegiance from Waikato, Raukawa, Maniapoto and Hauraki tribal areas, though other tribal groups kept their distance from the framework, particularly the tribes of Tai Tokerau (Northland). It had its own King and parliament whose role was - among other matters - to protect Maori sovereignty from the settler government, and Maori land from the encroaching settlers. Sadly the movement could not stop the loss of large areas. The fourth King of the movement was Koroki, who held regular poukai, (or Kingitanga social gatherings on each Kingitanga marae), so that political and social allegiances between the leadership and local communities could be nurtured. Literature on the topic is large. A useful though brief introduction to this issue is Robert Mahuta, pp. 143-152, in Maori Sovereignty: The Maori Perspective. For people with more interest in the area other work will appear in bibliography. One cannot understand the post-colonial realities with which contemporary Maori are living without understanding something of the events in colonial history that shaped them.

<sup>14</sup> Personal interview. Miriama Rauhihi-Ness, 8 September, 2000, Auckland.

<sup>15</sup> See Gilroy's books The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness and Ain't No Black in the Union Jack.

And so I came to Auckland in 1969. I was 19, and came up here to further my education and also to get away from the country - there were no jobs. It was very similar to when the islanders came here to New Zealand from their [country] - it was for a better life, basically for work, and so I have been here for about 40 years now.<sup>16</sup>

Such stories carry the experience of displacement and resettlement that accompany the Maori diaspora. It may be politically contentious for me to conceive of the 'Maori migration' into the cities as a Diaspora; and considering that Maori have had to fight for recognition as tangata whenua, as 'first people', there is a danger that such a concept might seem to elide their unique status and historical experience. That is certainly not my intention, and I do not intend to place Maori in the same category as all the later immigrants to this nation. Rather, I am arguing that the shift of Maori from the 'roots culture' of the rural lands to metropolitan modern cultures, into which they have to negotiate their 'routes,' can be usefully seen as a process of dispersal and of material and spiritual exile from their homelands. This sense of displacement can be strong even though some of the cultural roots may continue to hold fast and true.<sup>17</sup> Miriama, for example, was driven to the city by the struggle to find employment, but that meant losing the sense of community that she had known with Ngati Raukawa – a source of mutual support in hard times (Later, 12 Tribes would provide an urban equivalent.)

Tracey Gad has been a 12 Tribes of Israel Rastafarian for a long time. A family woman with children, she has been very involved in organic gardening. Her personal story serves to remind us that a Pakeha can have her own powerful experience of displacement and racial tension:

I grew up in an area in Porirua, down near Wellington you know. They sort of called it Shantytown. I grew up in a pretty funny time myself in the late '60s, everyone was into hippies. I was adopted by a Maori family over in Porirua, over in the pa there, and ended [up] growing [up] with them most of the time, and that's where you become aware of the grievances between the two, because

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<sup>16</sup> Personal interview Miriama Rauhihi-Ness, 8 September, 2000, Auckland.

<sup>17</sup> Ranginui Walker, 1990 edition, pp 197-247, Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou: Struggle without End uses this hermeneutic. I have been much influenced by Paul Gilroy's work in theorising these issues, though from a more spiritual perspective, and shaped around Aotearoa experiences of Diaspora as opposed to Gilroy's focus on the horror of slavery's middle passage for Africans.

you are the only Pakeha there. [It's] "Who's this honkie?" and "they did this and they did that." I actually really became ashamed to be a white person. Probably at [that] age you can't discern that it's not your fault, you didn't do it - you sort of take on the burdens of your ancestors.<sup>18</sup>

Tracey speaks of estrangement and sadness in the attempt to harmonise her Pakeha sense of identity and history with the Maori whanau in which she lived.

Loretta Joseph is from Ngati Kahungunu and has been a tireless worker for the 12 Tribes of Israel since 1986 (when she was 19). She had been listening to Marley's music before this, for over a decade, but did not "look to the lyrics" seriously until she encountered the 12 Tribes. Growing up in Wellington, she had felt restless and rootless as a teenager.

I didn't know anything about Rasta... I was looking, seeking for a place to belong. I never felt like I had that place as a child, so I was running around everywhere. I came north, I didn't have any direction to go, and I didn't know what I was going to do up here. The only person I knew up here in Auckland was a young Pakeha boy that I grew up with in Newtown. I knew that he was involved in the 12 Tribes of Israel, and I needed a friend, so I came up here looking for him at 12 Tribes [headquarters].<sup>19</sup>

Amelia Taite from Tainui – whom we saw at work as a D.J. in the Music chapter - is a long time member of the 12 Tribes of Israel. She speaks of indigenised spirituality as an important element in the well-being of her Maori whanau:

I have always come from a very strong gospel family. As well, [we] used to go to church every Sunday, get the little forms, and do verses and things like that, and I really enjoyed that.<sup>20</sup>

She sees spirituality as an integral part of Maori identity and survival:

Tikanga [custom and procedure] Maori? Yeah, I have enough respect and understanding of it. I don't speak Te reo [Maori, the Maori language] fluently but I have an understanding of it. The culture itself, I have no problems with it, and you have to respect certain things, especially when it comes to marae or hui,

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<sup>18</sup> Personal interview. Tracey Gad, and Loretta Joseph, September 24, 2000, Auckland.

<sup>19</sup> Personal interview. Tracey Gad, and Loretta Joseph, September 24, 2000, Auckland.

<sup>20</sup> Personal interview. Amelia Taite, June 24, 2000, Auckland.

because my mother is a very strong member and worker in the Maori community. You have to respect your roots.<sup>21</sup>

Amelia speaks of warm communal identity forged in the weave of Maoritanga with localised forms of Christianity and community politics.

Zebulon (Brian Taite) from Ngati Raukawa is a well-known musician, music producer, DJ, cultural worker, and Rastaman. Along with his wife Amelia, he has a fine family. He plays regularly with hip hop and reggae artist Che Fu (the son of Miriama and Tigi). He also plays reggae with Dilworth Karaka and Tigi. His life story is a narrative of spiritual and cultural exile darker than that of his partner Amelia.

Raukawa, that's where I am from. Te Rauparaha, you know, who wrote "Ka mate ka mate" [famous haka]. That's why my family was so hard on me, because my family is very [committed to Maori traditions]. See, at the time when I first went to Rasta, I couldn't explain myself - they asked me questions, I didn't know enough, I didn't know nothing.<sup>22</sup>

As a restless young man he had moved to Wellington and joined an inner city gang. In his case, his move to the city was partly to get away from his "roots", but he continued to feel unsettled until he became aware of Marley and the Bible:

Then I was down in Wellington being a real streeety – street-wise, walking around with shotguns. I don't know what I was doing that for, but I was doing it. Then I went to Levin, and the 12 Tribes of Israel were there. I left everything in the boot, I went in, and I heard a song, "One chapter a day." From then on, I started to read one chapter a day. Then I checked for Bob [Marley], and I noticed that Bob did a lot of the Bible, and then I searched the Bible, I was reading the Bible everywhere all over the place.<sup>23</sup>

Peter Naera is a singer, musician, and road crew manager who became a member of the 12 Tribes of Israel in 1990.

[I'm] a middle-aged Maori from up the Hokianga, up the far north. So my iwi, my tribal connections are Nga Puhi, and from the sub-tribe of Te Roroa - that encompasses [the area] around the Waipoua forest. I came from the country to the city. It was a big move, more for my parents, because of the generation they

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Personal interview. Zebulon, 17 June, 2000, Auckland.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid

were involved in. My grandparents were born and bred [in the country], lived there and died there – farmers who lived off the land, whereas my parents were the generation that started the exodus from the country in the 1950s. But as for me, I could identify with urban Maori immediately as I've spent the majority of my lifetime in the city - but also I do know my roots - I know where they come from.<sup>24</sup>

Although Peter could accept the city as his home, the move left him in some respects with a split sense of identity, a sense of unresolved questions.

I was looking, I looked in my culture, I looked in my church [Anglican], and there was no answer there, there was nothing that I could relate to, get my hands on. As soon as I spoke to this Rasta, I got involved – I learned more - I could understand the Bible, now I could relate to it.<sup>25</sup>

Some common themes are interwoven through these seven individual stories. First, a sense of dislocation features strongly. Moving from the country (or the Pacific Islands) to the cities of Aotearoa is the most frequent (though not the only) form of displacement. (Colonialism is the overarching narrative.) Second, one's sense of identity is an important issue and a problematic one. It is not easy to negotiate between traditional Maori 'roots' culture and urban, predominantly Pakeha culture, and racism makes that negotiation more difficult. Third, there are constant economic pressures as jobs are scarce even in the city. Fourth, there is the sense of isolation and marginalisation that results from all those pressures. These problems motivate the search for a sense of meaning and purpose, and the desire to discover one's own culture and community, a whanau that can offer good company and a sense of mutual support. For some, this is initially found in an urban gang – but what a gang can not satisfy are spiritual and philosophical needs. Along with scripture, the Rasta activity of 'reasoning' offers a way of figuring out who one is and what one's life is about. The 12 Tribes could satisfy these needs and also offer a base for political expression and a centre for cultural creation. Music is obviously important for the 12 Tribes, and Marley's work has served as a favourite starting-point. The next section will expand on the ways in which individuals became directly involved with these benefits of the faith, and will talk about how Marley's work inspired new forms of spirituality (which

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<sup>24</sup> Personal interview. Peter Naera, 21 May, 2000, Auckland.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

may – in the sense I have explained – be described as diasporan). As we will see, his influence went far beyond a conventional response to particular songs or albums.<sup>26</sup>

## **Marley and Rastafarianism**

This section begins by tracing the initial influence of Marley on senior members of the community. The stages of that influence include first contact with his music; first contact with Rastafarians (visiting Aotearoa, or encountered overseas); then Marley's visit to Aotearoa and his meetings with various individuals; and then the flow-on effects of his visit, leading to the creation of the 12 Tribes as an organization.

We have already had some details of Tigi's discovery of Marley's music in earlier chapters, such as being introduced to recordings by two CARE members returning from the USA in 1974, and feeling a deep affinity with Marley's particular perspective on the Bible (like looking at a book that Tigi knew well "with different eyes").<sup>27</sup> He then started to collect all the Marley records he could locate. In 1979, when he travelled to England to make arrangements for the tour of the Black Keskidee theatre troupe to Aotearoa, he mixed with Dreads in London, and decided to adopt their hairstyle. He recalls:

I was in London at the time, and my wife she wrote over to me, "Ohh, Bob's coming over to New Zealand, to Western Springs," and I cancelled what I had

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<sup>26</sup> In this sense my work follows landmark work by authors such as Ien Ang, David Morley and John Fiske in search of an active audience, matters already broached in the introduction. My work attempts to account for how distinct communities interpret and negotiate media products in the relay between text, community beliefs and ideologies, and the mediated active forms of production and consumption of such materials specific to these communities. At the same time I have tried to disrupt and deconstruct the analysis of belief simply as ideology, or the study of texts in terms of a secular process of production and consumption. I have attempted to add other dimensions of spirituality and living history to the analysis, and to complicate the usual distinctions drawn between politics, spirituality, aesthetics and the uses of music. My focus is on how oral history, spirituality, and narratives of exile construct a complex aesthetics in a postcolonial context. This aesthetics arises from the position of being simultaneously both inside and outside a dominant culture. I am in this position myself, being an Auckland, inner-city born Polynesian with a sense of displacement, who is at the same time not a Rastafarian. In one sense this is a complex position, but in another sense it is very straight-forward because it is at the heart of everyday speech and experience of life at street level. Yet this is a position that is not often clearly articulated in academic studies of reception. I am interested in what other people in a comparable position have made of it, and I see the 12 Tribes' stories - for example - as a rich and highly creative local response.

<sup>27</sup> Personal interview. Tigi Ness, June 6, 2000, Auckland.

happening over there, and came back hoping to catch the same flight they were coming on [for their] one-off tour of New Zealand. I was hoping to catch the same flight but I got here before him - I think he got in a day after - so me and the kid Che, who was going on five, we went out to the airport to watch him arrive, and someone from their entourage said the address they were going - White Heron Lodge in Parnell - so we zapped straight there, and watched them get a powhiri [Maori welcome], and up until then it was grey and going to rain, but as soon as the Maori people welcomed them, the sun came out, and Bob and all of them said "Jah!" The sun came out, and it was just right, yip!<sup>28</sup>

Tigi expands on his vivid story of Marley's visit, a life-changing event for him and for others (such as Dilworth) attuned to its significance.

I looked at him [Bob Marley], like you and me [just three feet away]. That was it, he didn't say anything, I just looked at his eyes and he looked at mine, and I could see an Ire line [in Bob's eyes], but he could see a lot of questions I suppose because I had Dreads. I went to London with an afro but came back with these Dreads. African women braided it, and I have never taken it out since then, since 1978 or '79.<sup>29</sup>

Miriama had an equally intense interaction with Marley and the Wailers. As she explained in an earlier chapter, she was familiar with Marley's music from the record collection of Tigi, who was her partner at the time. She related strongly to the music but felt distanced from the Rastafarian aspects because they seemed to her to belong to the priorities of Jamaica rather than those of Aotearoa – priorities such as Maori activism or groups such as the Polynesian Panthers, two areas in which she and Tigi were involved. She explains why that period in politics felt particularly urgent to her:

'Cos there was a lot going down in Jamaica at the time, as well with guns, and their political scene was going up in fireballs, and Brixton was going off as well, and we were going off here too. So, when we heard his [Marley's] music, it was like someone who talked to us, who understood what we were doing - he was doing it too. It was the kind of language, the way in which he wrote it and interpreted it, you could relate to it, and I know he didn't mean shooting people, but at that time that's where our level and our head was at.<sup>30</sup>

Miriama was well aware of Rastafarianism by the time of Marley's visit:

A brother came down from Jamaica. I reasoned with him, and I knew that he had the spirit. And this was before Bob came. Bob came [in April] 1979, and by

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Personal interview, Miriama Rauhihi-Ness, August 18 2000, Auckland. For a useful introduction to the social and political turbulence of 1970s Jamaica, see Lloyd Bradley's Bass Culture: When Reggae Was King.

then we were reading, and we and everyone were right on to his music, we had a couple of reggae bands - Herbs, I Unity, and Chaos in Wellington. There were only three reggae bands [in Aotearoa at the time]. We played mostly Bob Marley, these first reggae bands - Third World music and Bob Marley. What we liked were his lyrics.<sup>31</sup>

Miriama and Tigi were both members of I Unity, formed in Auckland in 1975. Chaos had been formed at Takapuwahia marae in Porirua in 1973, and Herbs in Ponsonby in 1978. Miriama was totally aware that Marley's music was linked with politics on the one hand and spirituality on the other – but she also knew she was more interested in the former. But Marley's visit changed her thinking. She speaks of the powerful sense of community that developed during the brief period that brought together the displaced children of Tangata whenua; Tongan, Samoan, Niuean, Tokelauan, Fijian, and Cook Island; Pakeha, and African Diasporas.

When Joseph Marley – ‘cos Bob is from the tribe of Joseph in 12 Tribes - when he came down, I went out to the powhiri for him, came back and rang up the hotel and asked for Marley, and they put me through, and I welcomed them to Aotearoa, them and their families. And as soon as I said my name is Miriama, they said “you come down here, right now, sis!” So then we met and we looked after them, took them to our house in Grey Lynn, and Tigi looked after Bob and the Wailer family. And then Bob was quite shocked that children had to pay to go to his concert - so was Rita [Bob's wife and backing vocalist]. They gave me their authority and gave me all their tickets, all their passes. Judy [Mowatt, backing vocalist] took these passes and went and organised it for all the children.<sup>32</sup>

This chance meeting led to another that would have a profound effect on her life:

Then on the last day I took them shopping - the sisters - they wanted disinfectant and New Zealand cheese, boxes of it, boxes of New Zealand butter, so I went in and battled with the authorities, ‘cos you had to be exporters - so I had to spend an hour at the Dairy Board company to get these boxes of butter, which we finally got. And then when I went to pick the ladies up for shopping, Bob came out - it was really dread, eh, [and said] “Sis, God!” He goes, “Sis, are you talking to me? Is there anyone else?” I went, “No, you don't ask me any questions!” And he goes, “I want to talk to you when you come back from shopping. I want to sit and reason, OK?” I said, “I will sit and reason with you.” ‘Cos then I was very pro Maori – sorry, pro-Polynesian - and nothing mattered to me except our cultures, you know. I'd read about Haile Selassie, but I wasn't into it.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Personal interview. Miriama Rauhihi-Ness, 8 September, 2000, Auckland.

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*

On her return from shopping she found Marley in a press conference:

And you could really feel the intensity of his spirit in the room - not in a bad way - it meant sitting there with him, being there with him. "This is really just a carcass, you know, this is going to decay and turn into dust. It's your spirit, that's [important], without your spirit this can't function, and it doesn't matter what race you are, what culture you are, it doesn't mean you are any better than anyone else" - that is what he was saying - "whether you are Rasta, you are no better than anyone else, love thy neighbour as thee loves thyself." Within five minutes he just got brassed off and kicked them out, he said "just get out, leave!" And so I got up to go, but he said "Not you, sister, you stay! I want to talk to you. The rest I don't want to talk no more." That is what he said, so out they went.<sup>34</sup>

Miriama has a Diasporic consciousness alive to the complex merging of Jamaica, Rastafari, and Aotearoa histories and culture, together with a strong knowledge of the Bible. She paints for us a Bob Marley living under constant pressures, attempting to navigate his way through the foolishness of people and retain his dignity and spirituality. (The press conference consisted of sensational questions - some of them tinged with racism - such as "Have you ever shot someone?" or "Why do you smoke an illegal substance?") When the journalists had gone, Marley as emissary of the 12 Tribes tried to reason about the faith with Miriama as a still reluctant but respectful listener:

And I thought, "Oh no, here we go!" And then he reasoned to me about [reading] a chapter a day: "Just read one chapter a day, the Schofield Reference Bible, just one a day from Genesis 1 to Revelation 22, and then when you have done that and when you have come back to the first chapter of each book, then you read the whole of the Book of Revelation, and then you seal it, it is sealed because it takes you three and a half years." Yes, that's what he did; he came down here to sow some seeds. "Well," I said to him, "you see, I really respect where you are coming from - but I am Maori." He just laughed at me. And I thought, you know, I wasn't into it. And Sis [Rita Marley] had reasoned to me also, and I didn't fight her or anything, I just listened to what she had to say - but it wasn't me. I thought at that time there was no way I wanted to become a Jamaican.<sup>35</sup>

It is important to note that Marley was very supportive of Tangata Whenua, and Pacific Island migrant political and social struggles. He asked Miriama specifically

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<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> *ibid.*

about Bastion Point, because people had raised that struggle in conversations with him in Aotearoa. Miriama explained this struggle for the land, and Marley said he was supportive of that struggle as the Rastafarians in Jamaica had had to fight for their rights during the 1950s.<sup>36</sup> In that sense Miriama's comment about being Maori suggested that she did not yet fully understand the implications of Marley's sowing of seeds, which would take new forms in the local soil and not simply reproduce the original Jamaican version. But despite their differences, Miriama describes this encounter as a warm and memorable occasion of sharing. Soon she would come to embrace the Rastafarian faith:

I thought about it after he had left - left it in me, definitely, him and the sisters, particularly him and Judy - and that was really everywhere he travelled with his music, at least he sowed a seed - like in terms of the faith [in] God - and probably other seeds as well. You know you can't save anyone, you can only save yourself - but you know he saved a soul. What I mean is, we're on about soul saving, and that was his message to me. And then it was a year later that he died, and the following year I was in Jamaica as Sister Judah first - that was 1983.<sup>37</sup>

In this way Marley communicated his faith to Miriama and to other tangata whenua, Pacific Island, and Pakeha who were searching for a sense of self and a spiritual home – a complex or hybrid sense of self perhaps, but one that resonated strongly with the exilic experience of colonial Aotearoa. As Miriama recalls, the message held particular appeal for members of the Polynesian Panthers.

Toni Fonoti, he was the Levi, bro, he was one of the founders. Before that, not long after Bob had left, it had sunk into quite a few people - the music and Rasta. [We] started the 12 Tribes of Israel in New Zealand. There were eleven of us, we came from the political scene - Nga Tamatoa (though not many from Nga Tamatoa), and Panthers (we nearly all went, we all Polynesian - it was mostly from the Panthers - men, women, and children).<sup>38</sup>

Miriama has a clear sense of Tangata Whenua, and Pacific Island migrant displacements, and poverty, as the main problems addressed by the new community.<sup>39</sup>

I mean I have video [and photographic] proof of how most of the people that came into the faith in New Zealand, all these people came from the bush, came from the country, [or] came from the islands - and all were the poor people -

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> See the early, January 17, 1981 article by Gordon Campbell, pp.18-19, 'Rasta in Aotearoa,' New Zealand Listener, for a brief yet important early insight into the influence of Rastafarianism on Auckland's inner city Maori and Polynesian communities.

and they came within two and a half years of starting the faith. We had done [a trip to Shashamane in Ethiopia], and people from all over had moved up here to come and check out [the Tribes of] Israel, to come and check out this God, and to come and check out Rasta. You have got other Rasta, Nyabinghi and Boomer Rasta, and groups like that, but the thing we have in common is Selassie. That's the key. Well, some have writs, and rites, but it is all in the faith. In our faith we are taught it is a heart function.<sup>40</sup>

The tension between Miriama's faith and her politics would never entirely go away, but she gave her best energies to the 12 Tribes community as a new vehicle for music, politics and community work, as well as spirituality.

Turning to members of the community who joined a few years later, Amelia Taite's history informs us how the faith enabled gang members to change the direction of their lives, offering an enlarged sense of Maori and Rastafari community.<sup>41</sup> Amelia had become very curious about the way her brothers, former members of the Mongrel Mob, appeared to have undergone a personal transformation once they had become involved with the 12 Tribes in Auckland.

When I first came to Auckland in 1983, I'd just known I had to get out of Raglan. Yeah, I did, 'cos [my brother's involvement] really attracted me to Auckland. I had two other brothers up here too, and they were Mongrel Mob. I was just really interested in where they were coming from and why they changed so much, so I came up to visit my brothers, to check out [Rastafarianism], and I really liked that inner calmness it gave me and just how many different kinds of people can come together.<sup>42</sup>

Amelia speaks of the climate of peace and good will within this new community in the inner city.

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<sup>40</sup> Personal interview. Miriama Rauhihi-Ness, 8 September, 2000, Auckland. One of the disappointments I had in writing this chapter was the inability to speak to Toni Fonoti, a founder of the 12 Tribes, and an original member of the Aotearoa reggae band Herbs. He now lives in Australia. NB: "heart function" refers to making decisions by and from the heart. The implication is that real faith is not by "writs and rites" but is a function of the heart.

<sup>41</sup> This point comes from Denis a speaker in the community organisers 1972-1982, who spoke of this matter in relation to the former gang members who became Rastamen in Hastings. (Personal interview, May 12 2001.) Bob Marley had a huge influence on the Maori and Pacific Islands gangs of the time. For a guide to the gangs of the period and the moral panic surrounding them, see Jane Kelsey and Warren Young's 1982, The Gangs: Moral Panic as Social Control.

<sup>42</sup> Personal interview. Amelia Taite, 24 June, 2000, Auckland.

Tony- Was it like a whole community of young people that were coming around the faith at the time here?

Amelia- Yeah, Tigi would have been in his late twenties, maybe early thirties, and it was the same with Miriama. A lot of people from the country came, I come from Raglan, there was some people that moved up from Levin, Palmerston North. But I really didn't have any concept of Rasta until I came to Auckland. You know, it's not just herb, getting stoned and sitting back to listen to Bob [Marley] - what Bob is actually trying to do is teach us - it has a deeper meaning than that. Dreadlocks is a form of identity, a lot of Rastas wear dreadlocks to identify themselves as a Nazarene and to take on the vow of a Nazarene.<sup>43</sup>

Peter Naera was on a spiritual quest when he encountered the 12 Tribes which gave him Marley as a new "text" or spiritual guidebook:

I made contact with 12 Tribes, then translated that across onto Bob's music. Bob became another text. He reinforced my belief, my outlook on things. To many people it's Bob the music, or Bob and reggae, or Bob and big spliffs [marijuana cigarettes], whatever. But to me, Bob was a 12 Tribes member as well. Rasta is higher again.<sup>44</sup>

Peter provides a useful differentiation of possible styles of reception for Marley's music. He speaks of a hierarchy of responses that start in the secular world of popular culture but spiral into "higher" spiritual dimensions where the prophetic, inspired aspects are also recognised.

Tracey Gad's journey to the faith emerged out of a convergence of events and friendly connections between groups – in particular, the Ruatoria Rastafarians and Auckland's 12 Tribes. Tracey's first contact was with the former.

I didn't understand who Rasta was, or understood who his Majesty [Haile Selassie] was, or where that fitted into the picture. And then my little family, we lived over in Tikitiki, over next to Ruatoria, and it was around that time when the Ruatoria Dread - I call them Buffalo Soldiers, because that album came out when we were down there, and that album was just them - and we mixed with Chris Campbell and a few of those people, but as we were down in Waipiro Bay, and Tony Simeon had sent down a poster - this was in 1983 for their first celebration of his Majesty's birthday - we went up, [thinking] these people might know about Rasta. "Let's go" - so we did. [My partner] said, "I know one woman up here and I bet she's involved."<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> Personal interview. Peter Naera 21 May, 2000 Auckland.

<sup>45</sup> Personal interview. Tracey Gad, and Loretta Joseph, 24 September, 2000, Auckland.

Tracey describes the first contacts between groups which would gradually grow in the service of sharing and strengthening alternative forms of knowledge, new interpretive communities, and de-colonising networks.<sup>46</sup> Marley's new (1983) album Buffalo Soldier was helping things along. Tracey also recalls her first contact with the 12 Tribes:

And we drove straight to Miriama and Tigi's place in Crummer Road, and funny enough, all these people there were going "Selassie!" and "Rastafari!" and it started coming out of my mouth, and everyone was looking at me a bit strange - but if your heart feel it, your heart feels it, yeah. Well, we came to the dance, and that felt good but strange because they seemed to be all Aucklanders at the time. I felt there wasn't many Japheth - many white people - at that time. But it was what was going on that sort of captivated me. And then we went to the meeting, no one said where to sit or anything, and then I sat in my seat, in the Gad seat, and I found out my tribe and everything. We just kept coming up monthly from Tikitiki - we were doing a lot of organic gardening down there - and the more we came up here, the less there was to come back to down there. The gravitation was very strong to come to Auckland, we just waited out our crops, and we haven't looked back since.<sup>47</sup>

Loretta Joseph narrates the story of a prodigal child on a journey to spiritual awareness. Feeling thoroughly isolated in Auckland, she had gone to the headquarters of the 12 Tribes in search of an old friend. She articulates some of the peace and soulfulness that she, as a wanderer searching for identity, found within this community of exiles who were busy establishing a spiritual centre on the margins of a post-colonial Babylon.

They were having a Sunday meeting, and I was there after the meeting and he introduced me to his friends, and they were all asking me about Rasta, and I didn't know anything about the faith, or reading a chapter a day, or anything. I was surrounded by dreadlocks, and all cultures - Samoan, Maori, Polynesian - and they all looked pretty rough and unkempt, but they were talking about the Bible, about Noah and his sons, like they knew him personally, like he was somebody down the road and that was just the way they were talking, and that it was like music to my ears. And then they were talking about what tribes they were - I didn't understand what they were talking about - they were praising Rastafari, really. I didn't know what was going on but I felt quite comfortable in their presence. I kept thinking these people look so rough, but what they are saying is really beautiful, from the Bible, and so I was attracted to them and

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<sup>46</sup> The Rastafari of Ruatoria will appear in another chapter. It was Tigi who told this student about how he met Chris Campbell in 1982, their friendship, and the links between the two communities of the 12 Tribes and Ruatoria.

<sup>47</sup> Personal interview. Tracey Gad, and Loretta Joseph, 24 September, 2000, Auckland.

yep, very quickly, I felt that I had been bought to the house, guided there. One of the brothers lent over to me and asked what tribe I was. I said “Ngati Kahungunu,” and he goes, “What tribe of the 12 tribes of Israel do you identify with?” I said I didn’t know what he was talking about, and he says what is your birthday, and I said February, and he said you are a Joseph then, and when he said that to me I just said yes!<sup>48</sup>

The sense of spiritual community among many people of differing backgrounds harmonised with her own sense of being an outsider, a theme that runs through many of the stories in this section. The ‘80s seems to have been a time of deep urban dislocation as young people from all ethnic backgrounds were moving to the city from the country and searching for new kinds of meaning in the heart of urban modernity. Loretta and Tracey, interviewed together, referred to Marley not only as musician but as harbinger of the faith:

Loretta- And then Bob’s music was always playing, and then [I started] really listening, and realising he’s a Joseph too, and becoming a Bible reader, and reading about Joseph’s place in history, and then realising what Bob had done here. The house grew pretty rapidly in those days – they were all brought in by Bob’s music, you know, that was the common denominator.

Tracey- Wanting to find out who Jah Rastafari is.<sup>49</sup>

Loretta and Tracey conceive of Marley as a teacher and guide who supplied new ways to interpret biblical figures such as Joseph - sold into slavery in Egypt by his brothers in the book of Exodus, yet saved in order to save them in a time of famine – and as a Jamaican prophet of the tribe of Joseph, “a fruitful bough” (in Genesis), whose tribal gift is imagination, the basis for his musical genius. It is the complex interweaving of a de-colonising hermeneutic, an awareness of history and Diaspora, and a recognition of the power of the biblical word become flesh that made possible for these women – as for others in the community - an aesthetics of reception of Marley’s music that was formed in Aotearoa at the grassroots but that opened up the possibility of new forms of international affiliation, politics, identity and culture.

### **Words and music**

The aim of the previous section was to describe how Marley and Rastafarianism entered the lives of those whose stories of exile and quest intersected with his music.

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

These stories show that an aesthetics that incorporates history and spirituality is necessary to understand the broad importance of Marley in diasporic Aotearoa. In this next section I propose to look in more detail at how such an aesthetics works in practice. Selecting a favourite song, various speakers add their individual contributions to a communal aesthetics based on appreciation of Marley's work,<sup>50</sup> an aesthetics that in my view is much influenced by notions of scattering, exile, and Diaspora. In footnotes I have added some contextual information for each of the songs or albums mentioned, in the hope of further enriching the weave.

In an earlier passage (quoted in Chapter Two) Tigi had described how Marley's music and lyrics had enabled him to critique his own attitudes, to question his own exilic stance that had been formed out of the violent ("edgy and aggravating") experience of racism. Tigi found in Marley, an aesthetics of liberation and a new spirituality that allowed him to re-visit the Bible "with new eyes".

So me and the Christian Bob Marley, I could identify with it. "So Jah Seh, not one of my seeds shall sit on your side walk and beg your bread". I was raised on the Bible, and here was this man singing about it and putting it into a context. He is singing about the Bible, then he must know Jesus Christ. How come he is doing this? So I could relate to it.<sup>51</sup>

Marley's plaintive "So Jah Seh," a song of faith and prophecy in a black Saviour who will not desert his children living in the ghetto in starvation, violence, and despair is a sublime example of the singer pleading change into being through the power of music. Tigi has provided a powerful reading of this song with an immediate relevance to the condition of Diaspora, the history of sorrow, and the hope for a better day in

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<sup>50</sup> "Marley" here includes song lyrics performed by him but written by others. The distinction is not important to the speakers here, or to this discussion of a collective aesthetic.

<sup>51</sup> Personal interview. Tigi Ness, June 13, 2000, Auckland. Unfortunately for reasons of length I had to edit a long section talking about Tigi's unpleasant experience as a poor boy from Ponsonby who was told by a Pakeha inner city Church Minister that he and other local boys should go to their own church – an experience of racism that alienated him from Christianity, and strengthened his resolve as a young political and community activist. Tigi was the Polynesian Panthers' Minister of Culture in 1974.

Aotearoa, a land far from the original context of the song. Below are the first sixteen lines, to allow a reader to engage imaginatively with Tigi's type of reception.<sup>52</sup>

**“So Jah Seh” [by Will Francisco and Rita Anderson]**

So Jah Seh,  
“Not one of my seeds  
Shall sit in the sidewalk  
And beg bread.”  
(No, they can't and you know that they won't!)  
So Jah seh,  
“Not one of my seeds  
Shall sit in the sidewalk  
And beg your bread.”  
(No, they can't, and you know that they won't!)  
“And verily, verily, I'm saying unto thee, 'I  
I-nite oneself and love I-manity.'  
'Cause puss and dog they get together:  
What's wrong with loving one another?  
Puss and dog they get together:  
What's wrong with you, my brother...?”

Tigi allows a reader to understand better the combination of anger and hope in Marley's cry. This saviour is indeed a man “with different eyes”, who understands everything that “Malcolm X” understood, but also knows there is “another way.”

Loretta Joseph speaks of spiritual yearning, complex inter-cultural negotiation, and her journey to the faith.

What it's given me is my identity. I was always searching for a place to belong. When I became a member of 12 Tribes, I felt like I had finally found my people. And when I went to Africa and I saw the land - and I am not talking about Shashamane [in Ethiopia] - I am talking about looking out of a plane down on Africa, I felt like I was home, and it was very deepening, and it overwhelmed me.<sup>53</sup>

She speaks of a spiritual and personal identity built in the interstices between living in a state of rootlessness and rootedness; between exile and homecoming. Loretta

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<sup>52</sup> For another thoughtful reading of this Marley song, see Kwame Dawes, pp.136-138, in Bob Marley: Lyrical Genius

<sup>53</sup> Personal interview. Tracey Gad, and Loretta Joseph, 24 September, 2000, Auckland.

speaks to aesthetics of identity that resolves these tensions privileging spiritual life and Africa consciousness. Loretta helps a reader to understand the special significance of a Haile Selassie speech to the United Nations against racism and colonialism in Africa, set to music in the form of Marley's prophetic "War"<sup>54</sup>

Loretta- I like "War", like the speech - that's what really grabs me - and that helped me to find out more about His Majesty as well. Here was this man who said these great words, and I love that song.<sup>55</sup>

Here are the first fourteen lines of the song in the structure of their singing by Marley. One can imagine the strands of Loretta's own life and thoughts making a rich weave around these lines.

**"War" [by Alan Cole and Carlton Barrett]**

Until the philosophy which hold one race superior  
And another  
Inferior  
Is finally  
And permanently  
Discredited  
And abandoned  
Everywhere is war  
Me say war,  
That until there is no longer  
First class and second class citizens of any nation,  
Until the colour of a man's skin  
Is of no more significance than the colour of his eye -  
Me say war....

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<sup>54</sup> Marley's one-chord anthem "War" emerged on the Rastaman Vibration album of 1976. One must see video footage of Marley performing this song live in order to fully understand his genius for phrasing a lyric, crafting it to music so the words of His Imperial Majesty are never overwhelmed musically. The Natty Dread album was Marley's fifth Island album. Marley was still resident in Jamaica and it is widely held that this album was an early attempt in his Island record days to become a hit in one market where his growing international status had not yet enabled him to find commercial success, the United States. This was one place he was never able to find success in his lifetime. Nor was he ever able to find support amongst those he most wanted to reach with his message- the black people of the United States. For a discussion on these matters, and the songs that were part of this important album, see the second chapter of Bob Marley: Lyrical Genius.

<sup>55</sup> Personal interview. Tracey Gad, and Loretta Joseph, 24 September 2000, Auckland.

Loretta focuses on a dimension of Marley's work that was central to her own labours. She speaks of him as a protest singer, but perhaps more deeply as a harbinger of a spiritual message that always under-pinned his songs of injustice. In her comments on Marley's work she also tends to emphasise references to place and home – the search for a good place where “war” is “no longer”. This is another important theme of the communal aesthetic.

Tracey Gad is very sensitive to the sublime but complex effects of a music that can be engaged with in many different ways:

For me it would have been the spiritual side because I have always been a peculiar person, from very young. When it comes to searching out, seeking out the word for myself - when I heard Bob's music, it was like hearing your very own music that's sensing you to listen to it. I was just able to hear it and understand it straight away. I mean, not able to understand the impact of the spirituality side so much, or who His Majesty was, but there's a lot of other messages in the music to relate to - a higher moral standard of thinking, a better way of treating one another, a lot of Bible teaching, and a lot of basic teaching things – and they are all what we should be basing ourselves on<sup>56</sup>.

Out of her words emerges a theory of art as “teaching” for life - not as a lesson that one simply learns by rote, but as an art containing many “messages,” many dimensions that one can “relate to”. Consider her way of reading the Marley song “Survival”.<sup>57</sup>

Tracey- There's that song on “black survivors.” I think that's a pretty awesome song, and if you don't think of it in terms of colour but look at the human element, we are the human survivors.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Personal interview. Tracey Gad, and Loretta Joseph, 24 September, 2000, Auckland.

<sup>57</sup> “Survival” emerged from the album of the same name in 1979. The song is rich with social commentary, biblical allusion, anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist critique. See Kwame Dawes pp.266-270, *Bob Marley: Lyrical Genius*. But nothing substitutes for listening to the song. This was the first Marley album for Island made up of entirely new songs written for the project. The title of the album had originally been “Black Survival”, but the name was changed to the shorter and less politically explosive *Survival*. Many of the numbers had been written in Africa when Marley visited the continent for the first time in 1978. He was at his incendiary best demanding the unconditional freedom of all Africans in the album. He was also a sick man by the time the album was released

<sup>58</sup> Personal interview. Tracey Gad, and Loretta Joseph, 24 September, 2000, Auckland.

Tracey is well aware of the message for black listeners, but, as a Pakeha survivor, she also likes to read the song through a non-racialised aesthetic of community care. Here are the opening fourteen lines:

**“Survival” [by Bob Marley]**

Yeah, yeah, yeah!  
How can you be sitting there  
Telling me that you care?  
When every time I look around,  
The people suffer in the suffering  
In every way, in everywhere  
Say: na-na-na-na-na (na-na-na!)  
We’re the survivors, yes: the black survivors!  
I tell you what: some people got everything;  
Some people got nothing;  
Some people got hopes and dreams;  
Some people got ways and means

Na-na-na-na-na ( na-na, na-na!)  
We’re the survivors, yes: the Black survivors!...

Tracey’s words allow a number of different aspects of Marley the artist to emerge: the teacher, the radical, the moralist, and the spiritual guide, all enveloped in Marley’s complex message of salvation, liberation, and communal healing through Rastafari.

Amelia Taite offers a vivid account of how her life has been enriched by Marley’s music and its messages of redemption, “the urge to seek”, and the need to develop “consciousness”. She has a many-faceted understanding of Marley’s work as it has intersected with her own life experience:

Tony: Impressions of Bob now?

Amelia: I listen to Bob for pure enjoyment, he don’t give me no buzz or anything, just pure enjoyment, pure consciousness. He doesn’t just sing about spirit, he also sings about depression, slavery and love, envy - he sings about a lot of things - awareness, personal growth. He has a portion [to offer]. He gave me that urge to seek, to look for a better way of life. He helped to open my eyes, and to read between the lines, kind of thing - saying one word in his lyrics but it means a lot of things and it’s really up to you as to how you interpret it. For

myself, he just really taught me to go for my goals, don't be afraid to make mistakes, just "get up, stand up." He just really inspired me in that sense.<sup>59</sup>

Amelia's aesthetic of "read between the lines" and "one word... means a lot of things" explains how Marley's music has been an on-going resource for mediating and reflecting on her dreams, hopes, and struggles. She puts forward an open and egalitarian aesthetics of reception that is tolerant of the many ways in which Marley can be interpreted. This is evident as she discusses a favourite song, "One Drop"<sup>60</sup>:

I mean "One Drop" works every time, I love the "One Drop," I listen to it because I have a better understanding of what he's saying now, and I use Bob a lot to teach the people some consciousness, to be conscious of mind.<sup>61</sup>

These words emphasise another characteristic of a diasporan aesthetic - it privileges consciousness or awareness as the first priority. That is the basis of Amelia's confidence that she should "go for [her] goals" and not be "afraid to make mistakes". By articulating the basic principles (or structures) of life, Marley's music is an awareness-raising, confidence-raising tool that can be fruitfully applied, by any individual who "feel[s] it," to the situation of their life in Aotearoa.

### **"One Drop" [by Bob Marley]**

Feel it in the one drop,  
And we'll still find time to rap.  
We're makin' the one stop,  
The generation gap.  
Now feel this drumbeat  
As it beats within,  
Playin' a riddim,  
Resisting against the system,  
Ooh-wee!

I know Jah's never let us down;

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<sup>59</sup> Personal interview. Amelia Taite, 24 June, 2000, Auckland.

<sup>60</sup> This song came off the Survival album of 1979. It links a basic reggae rhythm - the one drop (built around a ghost note, or dropped first note in a sequence, providing the syncopation in the rhythm) - with the generation gap, with black consciousness as it is memorialised in the feeling of the incomplete rhythm (like the missing people of the black Diaspora); with working against "the system", against the pressures of conformity, and with the confidence of Rastafari that Jah will not deceive them. This summary still only scratches the surface of a song that has many dimensions. One should recognise this song was written when Marley's thoughts were on Africa so the Black Diasporan dimensions of the "one drop" have a special poignancy in relation to that context. See Dawes pp.272-74, in Bob Marley: Lyrical Genius.

<sup>61</sup> Personal interview. Amelia Taite, 24 June, 2000, Auckland. Amelia was discussing her song in relation to her work as a DJ in this part of the conversation.

Pull your rights from wrong  
(I know Jah would never let us down)  
Oh, no! Oh, no! Oh, no!  
They made their world so hard (so hard):  
Every day we got to keep on fighting (fighting);  
They made their world so hard (so hard):  
Every day the people are dyin' (dying), yeah!...

Central to Amelia's aesthetics of consciousness is her belief that once one has discovered a life-giving force, one has a responsibility to share it with other people who would benefit from it as equipment for living. One is reminded both of Marley's sense of responsibility to the people he grew up with in Trenchtown and of Amelia's sense of social responsibility in her everyday work as a musician.

Zebulon incorporates Marley into a complex weave of Old Testament stories. He has an extensive knowledge of the Bible and sees Marley as a catalyst for the Maori people and others to start to read this book seriously.

With Brother Bob, when I did check the Bible and saw his blessings – ‘cos Brother Bob was a Joseph, he was from the tribe of Joseph, which is one of the 12 sons of Jacob, you know, ‘cos in the tie of Jacob's dying days he gave everyone a blessing to fall over them in the last days - and that's why you've got the 12 months of the year - and you've got one more sister which was Sister Dinah, which was the 13<sup>th</sup> month, and even in the Greek calendar in the days of old you will find that 28 days a month will give you 13 months a year - you see, that's here, it's supposed to come from Babylon - again that subtle time shift, you know, to deceive the people. They deceived the people so well they can't even remember where King David's throne is, but if you check in the genealogy you will get back to Haile Selassie. That throne there is the historical throne of King Solomon, the same throne as King David, you know, because of the promise that God made to David. He said to David, “I will never fail thee a king to sit on the throne” of King David, and that's why to this day His Majesty sits on the throne, but he died, and now His Majesty had a son, you see, which is that line that God made to the line of Israel - that he “will never fail thee a king to sit on that throne” - you see, that's where Bob has taken the people. Because some people can take the music and accept it, they happy to be a radical - and then there is some people who take the paths, the same paths as Bob, you know, to find the truth which is in the Bible, which is what the white man gave our people, but our people didn't read it. I believe our people didn't read it until our generation.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Personal interview. Zebulon, 17 June, 2000, Auckland.

The complex weave of Zebulon's korero, as he 'chants down Babylon,' links the deceptions of the kingdom of Babylon, to the biblical promises of David<sup>63</sup>, to the situation of the Ethiopian monarchy, to the multiple ways of reading and responding to Marley's message. World events and outlooks are richly interwoven with the Holy Kingdom of Jah in a diasporan awareness of multiple histories, genealogies and spiritualities. This enables him to develop an oral history that places his own Maori people as one chosen by Christ through the message of Robert Nesta Marley, as brother of the 12 Tribes and herald for the coming of the New Jerusalem. Underlying this is his hope of a spiritual rebirth for the Maori people, returning to a history from which they have been exiled.

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<sup>63</sup> A reader needs to be aware of Zebulon's biblical references. He is referring to the Old Testament history of the Israelite and Judah Kings, told in two parts, the first and second books of the Kings. He particularly alludes to 1 Kings, Chapter 2, Verse 4 - the promise of God to King David: "That the Lord may continue his word and which he spake concerning me, saying If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul there shall not fail thee (said he) a man on the throne of Israel." The Rastafari believe Haile Selassie to be the 225th descendent direct from the Davidic line from the union of Sheba, Queen of Ethiopia, and Solomon, son of David. One notes the emphasis on obedience in the promise of God to David, not just of a King to continue the line, but also for the people to obey the theocratic government of God, through compliance with the Ten Commandments. It is important to note how these histories are joined in complex and profound ways to Aotearoa history as hope for a new King and redemption for the Maori people living in this colonised land. What Zebulon is crafting is a diasporan history that is prophecy, cultural commentary and spiritual chant simultaneously. The story of Sheba and Solomon's union is to be found in two different places and forms, in 1 Kings Chapter 10, and 2 Chronicles Chapter 9. Rastafari interpreted the death of Selassie in different ways. For a discussion on this, see William Spenser's Dread Jesus. Bob Marley was to write the sing "Jah Lives" as a personal response to the news that Haile Selassie had been overthrown then murdered by a military coup in 1975. Zebulon's discussion on the deception of Babylon in terms of time emerges from the 12 Tribes' calendar which starts in the month of April not January, and also includes a special place for Dinah, the daughter of Jacob mentioned in the book of Genesis. One should consult Leonard Barrett, The Rastafarians for more information on this matter. The critical problem with this literature is that one must read it symptomatically and with a diasporan hermeneutic if one wants to articulate the talk of Jamaican Rasta with Aotearoa, as this hybrid history is brought to life in Zebulon's words. The issue of the right to shape or control time is a postcolonial issue in an age where time is measured in terms of business deals and is therefore commodified and reified. Zebulon is of course suggesting something else in his discussion of time here - divine time, biblical time, that encompasses and gives meaning to the lived time of mortal men - but is beyond their ken except for the wise man, 'I and I', who is in touch with Jah. Dinah is not mentioned when it comes time for a dying Jacob to bestow a blessing on each of his 12 sons, but she does have a special place in the structure of the 12 Tribes of Israel faith, and this is in tune with the democratic and woman-respecting position that the 12 Tribes have developed in Jamaica and other parts of the world. It is argued by Barry Chevannes in his, pp.66-67, "Rastafari and the Exorcism of the Ideology of Racism and Classism" in Chanting Down Babylon: The Rastafari reader, that one of the attractions of the 12 Tribes of Israel faith for middle class Jamaican women was its ongoing liberal doctrines concerning clothing and wearing of dreadlocks. Women tend to have an equal and respected role within the church of the house of Israel.

Tony- Which of Bob's songs is important to you?

Zebulon- "Rastaman live up," you know, "Keep your culture" - you know that's what he's saying there - "Don't be afraid of the vulture" - that's a very strong one for me, because when you look at the amount of Rasta men in the world, it's like a pinch of salt.<sup>64</sup>

For Zebulon, as for Amelia, the music gives confidence. Awareness nourishes courage ("Don't be afraid of the vulture"). Here are the first 12 lines of the song:

**"Rastaman Live Up" [by Bob Marley and Lee Perry]**

Rastaman, live up!  
Bongoman, don't give up!  
Congoman, live up yeah!  
Binghi-man doesn't give up!  
Keep your culture:  
Don't be afraid of the vulture!  
Grow your dreadlock:  
Don't be afraid of the wolf-pack!

Rastaman, live up!  
Binghi-man, don't give up!  
Congoman, live up, yeah!  
Bongoman, don't give up!...

Peter Naera speaks about the influence of a particular song in an indigenous context of grief.<sup>65</sup> Once again, the song is a tool to build consciousness. Emerging from a

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<sup>64</sup> Personal interview. Zebulon, 17 June, 2000, Auckland. "Rastaman Live Up" came from the posthumously produced 1983 Island album Confrontation. The song is an exhortation for the faithful Rastaman to live up to his faith, a soul man who is a drummer ("Bongoman"), an African ("Congoman"), and one of the black Africans dispersed through the West ("Rastaman"). See Kwame Dawes pp.342-45, in Bob Marley: Lyrical Genius.

<sup>65</sup> The Marley classic "Natural Mystic" emerged out of the February 1977 Basing Street recording sessions in England. It is a testament to the evil of the times in its prophetic and biblically apocalyptic vision; lyrical and empathetic understanding of human suffering, including the senselessness of human violence upon other humans. It calls for the people to look up and embrace the overarching presence of Jah Rastafari who moves over the plane of this earth in sorrow and understanding of the fallen nature of his people. The bass line is one of the most memorable in all of reggae, functioning as the underlying motor for this great ode to humanity. The song came from what is considered by nearly every rock critic to be a great album, Exodus - an album written, produced, and released when Marley was in exile from Jamaica after an attempt on his life in Kingston in December 1976. See Dawes pp.179-219, Bob Marley: Lyrical Genius. "Natural Mystic" is discussed on pages 192-94 of the same work.

deep experience of grief, it calls for a clear-sighted view of reality as the best way to find the courage and determination to go on.

Tony- You were saying that you played an acoustic guitar version of “Natural Mystic” at a whanau tangi?

Peter- Yeah that song in the film clips of Bob and in his funeral procession - that song plays in the background.<sup>66</sup> My uncle lost twins, both had cystic fibrosis, one died at 16, and two years later the other one died at 18. It was at the tangi of the second one that I actually played that song for them. Now that haunting bass line in it, that just kind of reverberated through the marae, and a lot of my relations enjoy reggae music as well, but it just seemed to touch the heart of my uncle, because afterwards he said “Oh! That was awesome!” That song, you know. In two years he had lost two of his children, and you have got to ask as a parent “why am I outliving my kids?” And not only that, you have lost children who for the length of their lifetimes - 16 and 18 years - they suffered every day, so this song spoke to what was present for my uncle at the time, which was “why?” And again “Natural Mystic” is bigger than the circumstances of the moment. There is something natural going on. I could look at my two cousins and say that each of them, even though they had this life struggle and suffering, they actually brought something to our family. You know, Nadia the first one, she just had this outstanding courage which she demonstrated in her last days by organising her own tangi – “I want this, and this, I want these men to carry me.” And you have got adults just absolutely grieving, how can this 16 year old be talking like this? But she had accepted that her end was near, she had accepted that and so she organised [her funeral]. Now that provided the example for her next sister, right, when it was her time - the same thing. And I always remember my uncle sharing this with me, he hadn’t seen this strength in his girls, and it just destroyed him. It was the final straw to break him, and all their response to him breaking down was to say, “Stop crying, you’re supposed to be a man here, its O.K.” And I guess when you take all that time, and you bring it all together at a tangi, and then somebody played this song of Bob’s....<sup>67</sup>

Peter conjures up a family tragedy and the place of grace that Marley’s song created as benediction, in the specific context of a tangi on a marae in Aotearoa. “Natural Mystic” functions as an expression of deep mourning, but equally as an expression of “courage” and “strength” matching that of the two girls. Once again Marley’s music provides a focus and release for the spiritual and emotional life of the community. “Bigger than the circumstances of the moment,” it sets the immediate event within a broad, spiritual perspective. It begins:

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<sup>66</sup> This refers to the documentary Time Will Tell which includes a video clip of Marley’s funeral cortège and funeral service, accompanied by the song “Natural Mystic”.

<sup>67</sup> Personal interview. Peter Naera, 28 May, 2000, Auckland.

### **Natural Mystic [by Bob Marley]**

There's a natural mystic blowing through the air;  
If you listen carefully now you will hear.  
This could be the first trumpet, might as well be the last:  
Many more will have to suffer,  
Many more will have to die- don't ask me why.

Things are not the way they used to be,  
I won't tell no lie;  
One and all have to face reality now.  
'Though I've tried to find the answer to all the questions  
they ask.  
'Though I know it's impossible to go livin' through the  
past-  
Don't tell no lie....

Like other Marley songs, "Natural Mystic" has a remarkable mood combining anger with empathy, emotion with clear-sightedness, the everyday with the spiritual.

### **Marley's legacy**

Since an earlier part of the chapter looked closely at the beginnings of the 12 Tribes, this final section will look at where things are today for those individuals and for their community. Is Marley still an important presence for them? In fact, the legacy of Marley (in his role as prophet, "angel", "messenger", martyr, soul healer, and model of the righteous man) continues strongly in their work and lives. In some cases, however, their relationship with the Rastafarian community has changed.

Tigi Ness is still an active and committed community worker in inner city Auckland. He teaches poetry to at-risk Polynesian youth at a Pacific Islands Education Trust once a week on Karangahape Road in Ponsonby. He is also active in reggae, and his band I Unity (now known as Unity Pacific) has just produced and released their second full length LP. Tigi regularly performs his original reggae at nightclubs like

Galatos, with I Unity band member Teina, and Dilworth Karaka from Herbs. His performances always include one set dedicated to Marley's music. In 2002 a band combining the members of I Unity and Herbs gave a particularly memorable concert in Wellington for the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of Marley's death. Tigi is honoured as the "grandfather of New Zealand reggae" but this title does not sit easily with him. He has also won the Polynesian of the Year award for his tireless work in promoting peace and goodwill throughout the Polynesian community. Though Tigi remains an extremely humble man, his many years of social work, his role in the founding of the Otaru Festival and other Polynesian festivals in Auckland, and his work to promote the Marley Birthday and other memorial concerts, have not gone unnoticed.

He has, however, moved away from the 12 Tribes. He came to feel that in its worldly activities as an organization it had lost some of its original spiritual energy and focus. He left in the 1990s, as did his son Che Fu; but both have retained a strong sense of loyalty to many individuals in the organisation. In terms of Marley, Tigi's enthusiasm remains undiminished:

I would say a prophet for sure, and I would say the type of person that he is, I would say an angel in human form, from the fact that he died the way he died. Everyone's got to go sometime, but its like Peter Tosh said, "It seems when he die, he live." Even so, more now, 'cos even younger kids – well, it's still happening - his words, his music, are still influential. I think it runs much the same way as my mother showed me, the principles haven't changed, Jesus is still King of Kings, you know, and Bob's sayings are not only to us who are poor, but also to us who are rich and wealthy. He became a great voice for down-pressed people. That is why he is who he is - a visionary, a healer - because Herb is for the healing of the nations. That is in the Bible. Bob more than any other in the western world has espoused herb, he took that mantle.<sup>68</sup>

Like others interviewed here, Tigi values Marley as a voice for the poor people of the world – though he adds that the "rich and wealthy" could also learn a lot from him. Tigi is also grateful for Marley's championing of Ganga, and the example he set in "the way he died".

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<sup>68</sup> Personal interview. Tigi Ness, June 6, 2000, Auckland.

There has always been a tension for Miriama between the priorities of politics and those of spirituality. She came to feel that “it was time to get out” for a while. She went to Australia for a while, and since her return has been a student. Like Tigi she has had a long and distinguished career as a community worker, as a leader of political groups (such as the Black Women’s Political Party in the 1980s), and as a musician with the 12 Tribes of Israel band. She is acutely aware of the complexity of the political situation today:

We pass this [legacy] on to our kids, and after fifteen years of it, [there is] quite a big gap. Like, intellectually, spiritually, and physically - that’s Maori and Polynesian - and this was even in the political scene, particularly in the Maori, among my peers - it’s become dog-eat-dog. My children are half Maori and half Niuean. My heart had gone out of it, there was a bit of white idealism, mixed up with Uncle Tom-ism. It was going around really big time, before I started losing respect for certain people. It was time to get out.<sup>69</sup>

Though she has stepped back, she retains her involvement in 12 Tribes music; and though she “started losing respect for certain people” in political and religious organizations, Miriama’s respect for Marley as a man remains undiminished:

His people loved him; he really fed people well - his music for the brothers and sisters. Every bus you get into in Jamaica is just pumping the reggae, and that is what keeps the people going, you know. It’s like healing, eating corn and feeding with corn – well, that is what his lyrics are. He gives, he gifts it out, and the best part is he has a spirit within the music, the way he executes it, his spirit is there. You feel his spirit, you know this man has done what he is talking about, so it’s so true what he said - he’s experienced it - but he still lives on old Joseph, very much so.<sup>70</sup>

Zebulon is a well-known Rastaman, performing music in a variety of contexts, from the 12 Tribes of Israel band to Che Fu and the Krates. He is also a reggae music producer and engineer, working out of a home-built studio next to his house in West Auckland. He stresses Marley’s spiritual aspect, linking it with the familiar theme of

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<sup>69</sup> Personal interview, Miriama Rauhihi-Ness, 8 September, 2000, Auckland.

<sup>70</sup> *ibid.*

how his music helps to build consciousness and confidence, as well as faith. Rastafarianism has also enlarged his international awareness, and as for others in the movement, travel has given him an increased sense of the deep “sadness” in parts of Africa and the Caribbean.

Zebulon- Bob lead me to the Bible, and the things that he sung about, well, that’s how I had to travel, beyond soft New Zealand... And so I go out to Jamaica, and I see sadness as soon as I hit there - Trinidad, Barbados. Sadness! Bob made me look at the world properly, but like I said, he just tickled my ear to search for God really, to find out who this man Haile Selassie is. Yeah, I think Bob was supposed to be an angel – well, he was a messenger really, he carried the message, and he carried it even when he was told to go home, and he didn’t go home. So they got him in Germany [where he died of cancer], they were after Bob for a long time, I know somebody took him out, by the hospital he ended up in.<sup>71</sup>

Tony- How do you relate to the music as an older Rasta?

Zebulon- Lots of times I am not relating to it, I’m making it, bro. The same message he carried is the same message I preach. I make a lot of my own music now - yeah I play all instruments - I play for the 12 Tribes of Israel band, I’ve played for Che Fu, all of those fullas because they are consciously aware, you know. It can get pretty racial, [so] best to play around environments of music that I like. That’s us, bro. Bob is a big influence, it’s our job to maintain what he started, and now with the confidence of God in our people we are not afraid to stand up and take the same status, ‘cos Bob is our brother from the 12 Tribes of Israel - Bob was a 12 Tribes member too - and there were a lot of Rastaman sects, but he was a 12 Tribes member. He saw 12 Tribes right, and that’s how it is, we give much thanks for Brother Bob Marley, but we have a duty to carry the same work here and make people consciously aware of God, because that’s what naturally makes us people, we [tangata whenua] always be consciously aware of God, even before reggae music came along.<sup>72</sup>

Amelia is still very active as an elder in the 12 Tribes. In the Music chapter she has already spoken of her regular DJ work in two nightclubs in inner city Auckland:

I use Bob [Marley] a lot to teach the people some consciousness. That’s what Bob teaches me is consciousness - to be conscious of mind, conscious of the

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<sup>71</sup> The Issels Clinic in Germany was a place for alternative cancer treatment. Marley actually died in Miami, Florida, en route to Jamaica, and was then transported home for his private funeral, and then for a state funeral in Kingston, before being laid to rest at his birth place in rural Nine Miles.

<sup>72</sup> Personal interview. Zebulon, 17 June, 2000, Auckland.

drugs and alcohol, of the bad-mannered people out there. So I use Bob a lot to give them conscious awareness, make them think about what they are doing.<sup>73</sup>

Loretta expressed a universal view that Marley was not only a great musician but important as a role model - a generous, “honest, straight-forward, simple man”:

I think he’s a great man, and I do believe that he was a messenger for the people. I know he helped loan 12 Tribes in Jamaica the money to build their first HQ, the HQ they have in Hope Road, which is a big place just up the road from Bob’s place. And he never wanted the money back; he didn’t want anyone to have any strings on 12 Tribes. So I think he tried to do good while he was around. All the interviews I have listened to, he seems to be an honest, straight-forward, simple man, whose love for the music, for the message, to get the message out to the people.... He had the greatest smile. Whenever I see photographs of him, he just makes me feel good, just gives me a peaceful, satisfied [feeling].<sup>74</sup>

Tracey continues her involvement in the spiritual faith that came to her partly through the music of Marley. Like other Rastafarians, her faith has given her a global perspective. She is optimistic about the continuing influence of his music, though she is aware that many members of the younger generation have turned from reggae to hip hop:

I belong to a group called Reggae Ambassadors World-wide, and so I am on a database, and can communicate with people. And you read the comments that came out, a lot of people didn’t like it but my comments on there were quite radical, ‘cos as far as I am concerned, a whole lot of people are listening to his great message, and it is a new millennium. Our kids don’t like reggae, they like hip hop, but if you can get them listening to the lyrics, it’s the message isn’t it - that’s crucial. I was listening to either Stephen Marley or Ky-mani Marley on international reggae day, I was listening to it on internet - they really feel their dad would be so happy, and I really feel that he would be too, I think he must feel so honoured that they’re carrying out his message - ‘cos his music is pretty special, and it crosses boundaries, and other music can’t always.<sup>75</sup>

Peter works at an employment training centre on Auckland’s North Shore. He has performed with New Zealand reggae musicians such as Mighty Asterix, and has worked as a member of the road crew for many national and international performers

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<sup>73</sup> Personal interview. Amelia Taite, 24 June, 2000, Auckland.

<sup>74</sup> Personal interview. Tracey Gad and Loretta Joseph, 24 September, 2000, Auckland.

<sup>75</sup> Personal interview. Tracey Gad and Loretta Joseph, 24 September, 2000, Auckland.

over the last 20 years. In terms of his spiritual life Peter has gone through a huge change. He has returned to the Anglican Church in which he grew up, and he and his wife now do church work in the community. But though he is no longer a Rastafarian, he still has great respect and love for the people he shared that faith with – a faith that brought him back to the Bible. Marley's music continues to have great power in his life. He speaks for many in this chapter as he sums up its special mix of simplicity and depth, its combination of “easy listening” with wisdom that can be “used and applied” in his, or anyone else’s, daily life.

I guess I totally agree [about Bob’s lasting importance], given his background and where he came from, and where the music came from - and that would be his resource - but he had this ability to tell a story in a very simple way that anyone could understand, and then on top of that, you add that particular music, reggae, and you have got all the ingredients. It’s easy listening *and* it’s meaningful - and it can be used and applied. I can take that totally, in its entirety, as a song, and slide it into my life, and say, “That’s where it fits!”<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Personal interview. Peter Naera, May 21, 2000, Auckland.

## Chapter Five

### Community organisers from 1996

#### Introduction

This chapter takes a look at younger political and community activists – aged between early 20s and early 30s at the time I interviewed them – with an interest in Marley. The interviews confirm strongly that ‘Marley lives’ – he continues to have an important influence in left-wing political contexts. At the same time changes in the nature of his influence serve to highlight significant changes in the cultural and political landscape since his influence first reached Aotearoa in the 1970s.

It is typically the case in popular music that each generation wants music different from that of its parents, music its parents may not understand. What happens, then, when Marley is the music that one’s parents loved? The contemporary situation is also very different in the sense that Marley’s music is now more widely dispersed. His sound is now so familiar that he has been assimilated into the mainstream, turned into an icon by the music industry, used as background music in cafes and as part of national celebrations for Waitangi Day. Has Marley’s music lost its street credibility as a result? In the late ‘70s, punk provided alternative rebel music, and in the subsequent generation, hip-hop has attracted many Maori and Pacific Island young people.

It is amazing to see how serious interest in Marley’s music has persisted, particularly among those who can ignore the packaging of the music industry and read through it to the powerful political messages in the lyrics. For many of the activists interviewed in this chapter, there was a gradual process of getting beyond the surface, learning to tap the politics and history stored in the lyrics. The only obstacle for some young listeners remains the Rastafarian, religious aspect which they associate with other forms of religion that have led progressive movements astray.

Obviously the political situation today is different from the 1970s, as I shall outline in the following section. But what Marley had to say continues to be seen as no less relevant to the problems of today’s corporate capitalism – such as its attacks on community and its relentless emphasis on self-centred individualism and consumerism. His songs are a continuing source of inspiration in the ongoing

struggles of the indigenous people of Aotearoa. Those are some of the issues that will be explored in this chapter.

### **Politics today**

In Aotearoa today, the inner cities of both Wellington and Auckland have become zones of gentrification, with poorer Tangata Whenua and Pacific island migrant communities being pushed out into the far suburbs of Auckland or the mini-satellite towns of Porirua or Hutt Valley in the Wellington area, as upwardly mobile middle-class professionals have poured into the inner city suburbs, renovated old villas, and pushed house prices far beyond the reach of the average person. Areas such as Ponsonby and Grey Lynn were once considered 'slums' but were in many respects rich in community life, providing the base for many of the musical and political activities described in Chapter Two. Many of the new locations of low-income housing in areas like South Auckland are arguably more fragmented, and have not yet developed that same community texture that held earlier generations of Tangata Whenua, Pacific Island migrants, and Pakeha together.

But the spirit and soul of the people in such communities remains deep and strong even if the unity and community solidarity is not expressed in open political activism as it was a generation before by groups such as the Polynesian Panthers and Nga Tamatoa. I lived in South Auckland in Mangere East, and the inner city in Ponsonby as a child, before moving out to West Auckland, another economically hard, (but spiritually and culturally rich) area of Auckland so my words come from my experience, and from talking to people at street level.

The youngsters who are starting to model themselves on the street gangs of New York, Chicago or L.A. see American 'gangsta rap' as a more relevant sound than reggae. But rap is broader and deeper than the gangsta rap genre, and rap continues to teach a new generation of P.I and Maori youth about life, hope dreams, suffering and oppression the same way Bob Marley did a generation before. Communities still survive strong, but their have been many pressures on the new generations, including social and economic processes such as gentrification- as poorer Maori and P.I families were forced out of certain suburbs in the 80s and 90s.

This process of gentrification was intimately linked to the social and political upheaval this country went through in the 1980s and '90s as neo-liberal (monetarist)

policies were applied to the economy, creating ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ with huge differences in wealth and life opportunities.<sup>1</sup> Those policies were part of a multi-national western trend towards less government intervention and more business intervention in all areas of society.<sup>2</sup> The effects on the social well-being of those in rural communities and the urban working class were catastrophic, as jobs were lost and living costs spiralled upwards. Marley’s messages about poverty tragically increased their relevance in Aotearoa through the ‘80s and ‘90s.

The fact that both the main political parties, Labour and National, collaborated in this onslaught made it difficult to mount an effective, unified opposition. The unions had their teeth pulled in the early ‘90s. Both Porirua in Wellington or South Auckland in Auckland has high proportions of Maori and Polynesians, but political activists seem thin on the ground. Many of the political activists in the region are middle class Pakeha [Europeans] who have respect for, but no special attachment to, the music of Bob Marley.

Groups of the 1970s such as Nga Tamatoa or the Polynesian Panthers are waiting to be reborn in this generation at a community level. But perhaps it is fair to say that in other respects, Tangata Whenua activism of a younger generation is in much stronger shape than Pacific Island migrant community activism. Tangata Whenua activism remains very strong with newer generations of activists emerging to take the place of earlier workers.<sup>3</sup> I speak to two such activists in this chapter. Times have been hard in Aotearoa since the middle 1980’s, but there has been continued resistance by communities and activists to challenge the neo-liberal agenda. We shall get to some of these issues in the chapter below.

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<sup>1</sup> For a useful history of the creation of wealth during these troubling times, (at the expense of making many lower income families much poorer socio-economically) one could consult Stevan Eldred-Grigg’s The Rich: a New Zealand History.

<sup>2</sup> For the best critical overviews of what happened to this country as a result of neo-liberal government policy, see Jane Kelsey’s The New Zealand Experiment. A World Model for Structural Adjustment? Auckland, Auckland University Press, 1995 (revised edition 1997), and Rolling Back the State: Privatisation of Power in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

<sup>3</sup> Teanau, and Te Tu, who appear in this chapter, are two examples of a new generation of younger Maori activists. One could consult Aroha Harris, Hikoi: 40 Years of Maori Protest, in order to track these new developments in the last ten to fifteen years. The 2004 Hikoi, indigenous struggles in 2007 in Ruatoki in Tuhoe tribal lands among other protests, have seen a new generation of Maori activists arise. Many younger Maori activists work across a range of issues, and many are specifically concerned with their own tribal issues. But there remains a strong pan Maori focus to much Maori protest activity even today.

Each of the activists interviewed in this chapter – Pakeha, Tangata Whenua, and Pacific Island migrant -belong to a range of political organisations and have done, and continue to do important community work.

Some of the activists interviewed here know one another, others do not. What unites them, to my mind, is the fact that each speaker has strong anti-capitalist and anti-globalisation politics, works against racism, sexism and class exploitation, and shares a firm commitment to the welfare of tangata whenua [the indigenous people of Aotearoa]. Hence, though the younger activists seem less closely linked together than the activists of the previous generation, they are involved in the same basic struggles, although their activism is played out in different social, historical and political situations, which call for different expressions, forms of organisation and everyday praxis. There are signs of a new united front – both national and international – taking shape around these global issues.

At present, however, most grass-roots political activities tend to be dispersed and locally specific, and so each activist tends to claim Marley's music for different community uses. And the voices in this chapter talk about particular songs from different parts of his career. This is not because the activists did not have knowledge of Marley's work as a whole but because we focus here on the individual uses of it.

I should add that two of the speakers –Te Tu, and Teanau – were interviewed together at a Hui of activists, organized for me by a friend in Wellington. (Some others also spoke at this Hui but preferred to be anonymous.) This situation worked well because each speaker seemed energised by the korero of the others.

### **The spiral**

Like earlier activists, they instinctively connect music with community, history, and politics - a grounded aesthetic that weaves Marley fully into the spiral of Aotearoa life. So the spiral motif is no less relevant in this chapter, with two differences. First, it is noticeable that most of the speakers in this chapter keep away from spiritual issues. Only one of the Maori activists expresses an interest in the spiritual dimension. So the spiral employed in this chapter is secular, though the pattern is still complex and multi-dimensional as the music weaves out from Jamaica and links up with various aspects of Aotearoa's land, history, and culture. There is also a second difference, the fact that the weave seems made up of more varied strands than in the

past – this is a coherent culture, but it is not as unified as that of the Rastas in Ruatoria or that of the activists of the ‘70s.

### **Other aspects of politics**

One area I have not covered is anarchism. This tendency is strongest in Wellington, with a couple of hundred members. Auckland’s anarchist activists are divided between two groups. When I was in Wellington I met many anarchists (from the ages of 15-35) involved with the Freedom Book Shop on Cuba Street, and saw them engaged in the youthful but committed culture of activist resistance – protests at Parliament Buildings, “anti-capitalism concerts” at Queen Victoria Square, and various political meetings on the campus of Victoria University, or in the suburbs of Newton and Cooktown. When I brought up Bob Marley, many of the anarchists showed an appreciation for his music and a respect for the man, but unfortunately were not willing to talk about him on tape.

I should also acknowledge that since I began collecting interviews for this chapter, a newer generation has started to appear. I had had the pleasure of talking with many young people at the annual Bob Marley birthday concerts, but the idea of formal interviews with a tape recorder has not been popular with kids focused on enjoying the music. The other possibility for interviewing teenagers would have been through the volunteer work I have done with community groups (such as helping cook food for families on low incomes), but this has not felt appropriate. This thesis has at least been consistent in concentrating on the response of established activists and community workers. Other researchers can take up the challenge of making a more general survey of teenagers and the politics of their taste in music. (There have, for example, been studies of hip-hop in Aotearoa such as the work of Dr Kirsten Zemke-White, lecturer in Ethnomusicology at the University of Auckland.)

### **The activists**

The five activists interviewed in detail in this chapter are Teanau, Te Tu, Vaughan, Grant, and Kane.

### **Teanau**

Teanau shares Maori and Pacific Island (Cook Islands) ancestry. He is a distinguished community worker, educator, translator, qualified lawyer, political activist, and community organiser. He was the Wellington organiser for the 2004 march to parliament that saw 30,000 people (many of them Maori but also some Pakeha, Pacific Island, Asian and members of other ethnic groups) protest against the Labour Party's Foreshore and Seabed Act. In more recent years Teanau has been a community worker in both his Cooks Islands and Maori communities. He is a founding organiser for the indigenous collective Conscious Collaborations. He represents a new generation in terms of his IT expertise, and he is actively involved in web design for indigenous communities.

Teanau- Where am I coming from politically? Working class Pacific Island/Maori, pretty much spent most of my time kicking around in South Auckland, spent time in the islands, as well as small towns and big cities, travelling around a lot. Politics is Te Tino Rangatiratanga<sup>4</sup> [or] anti-capitalist, indigenous self-determination - all that shit! [Laughter]<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Te Tino Rangatiratanga means the exercise of Maori chieftainship and of sovereignty over Maori affairs, communities, and lands. The term is foundational to the Maori version of the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi, where Maori chiefs were promised, in writing, that their chieftainship over their people, land, resources, and culture would be guaranteed to them for life. The terms Te Tino Rangatiratanga were used in the document when speaking about Maori chiefs, and their authority over the land, people and culture. The European government said it would exercise kawanatanga, or government on behalf of the Maori people. The English version of the Treaty guaranteed sovereignty to the British Crown, and government to the Maori- this is made clear when the English language term sovereignty and the term government are translated into Maori. Clearly there were major discrepancies between the Treaty versions, and major misunderstandings between the European and Maori who signed the treaty when it was first promulgated in February 1840 at Waitangi, in Tai Tokerau (Northland). All the chiefs who signed the Treaty at Waitangi in 1840 did not speak English and were dependent on the Missionary translator, Henry Williams for his translation work on the Maori version of the Treaty. The Maori chiefs signed the version of the Treaty translated into Maori, though a few Maori in different places in Aotearoa signed the English language version after the Treaty was taken around the country so other Maori not at the inaugural signing at Waitangi could sign up. Since this time, Maori have seen breach after breach of Treaty promises by first the British Crown, then successive New Zealand settler governments. Maori since the time of contact with the Europeans have strived for self determination, chieftainship, return of their lands confiscated or stolen from them, and a true, and legitimate partnership of equality between Maori and European people in Aotearoa. Maori have done this through means of war, through peaceful protest, through political agitation, through negotiation for the last one hundred and seventy years since the treaty's signing in 1840. Teanau's politics follow in the footsteps of his tipuna, in seeking justice for his people, a return of land, self determination for Maori over their land, culture, and power to self determine their own lives- in equal partnership with Europeans so all can live together in justice and peace. Teanau is part of the modern Maori activist movement, following in the line of people

Teanau is typical of activist members of his generation in having a very global perspective, and he has already seen much of the world – a 21<sup>st</sup> century politics in motion.<sup>6</sup> At the same time he retains strong roots in this part of the world. His spiral interweaves Pacific Island migrant, and Tangata Whenua communities living in the inner city of Auckland, in rural towns, and in the Pacific Islands, on to indigenous communities in many other parts of the world.

The period of the middle nineties was a time of flow in Maori activism in a number of land struggles (Takahue School; Waikaremoana; Pakaitore) and political and economic struggles (the fiasco of the Sealord deal in the early 1990s, and the debacle of the ‘fiscal envelope’ in 1995).<sup>7</sup> All of these struggles took place against a growing

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like Hana Jackson, Titewhai Harawira, Syd Jackson, Hone Harawira, Tame Iti and many others. It is important to state that some Maori tribes did not sign the Treaty at all, (for example the Tuhoe people) and considered that they exercised Te Tino Rangatiratanga as of right. Maori Sovereignty is often cast as separatism, race hatred, and associated with violence in mainstream colonial Aotearoa media. But the modern movement in its diversity is about justice, honouring the Treaty, returning confiscated land, resources, and money to Maori tribes, and building a future where past injustices against Maori can be dealt with so Maori and European can move forward in peace and justice together. Those who claim Maori activists and the activist movement are separatists, haters of Europeans, and have no right to protest are usually those in Aotearoa who want to teach people in this country to forget our history, and to ignore the many injustices Maori continue to struggle against even today.

<sup>5</sup> Personal interview. Te Tu, Teanau Tuiono, August 1, 2001, Wellington.

<sup>6</sup> For an understanding of Maori protest as it has evolved through recent decades, one can consult Evan Poata Smith’s useful essay, pp.97-116, in “He Pukeke Uenuki Tu Ai: The Evolution of Contemporary Maori Protest”, in Patai: racism and ethnic relations in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The point I want to emphasise is that the late ‘90s saw the coalescing together of many different activist groups into broad united fronts to combat the menace of globalised capital - in areas of environmental concern, indigenous rights, women’s rights, and workers’ rights, to name but a few. A new internationalisation of protest has become possible through the advances of Internet technology. Hand-held video footage can be passed between activists and groups. There is also a new internationalisation of protesters moving and supporting international struggles by travel. New Zealand activists have been part of protests against the IMF, World Bank, G7, and World Trade Organisation, in a number of cities overseas. These large meetings and the equally large protest movements levelled against them have occurred in places such as Seattle, Washington, Melbourne, and Genoa. These global organisations are seen as non-democratic forums for dividing up the world anew in the interests of big business. Teanau’s remarks about Tino Rangatiratanga politics (indigenous self-determination) need to be seen in this large, contemporary context.

<sup>7</sup> There are many introductions to Maori protest activities including Ranganui Walker’s Ka Wha Whai Tonu Matou, Donna Awatere-Huata’s Maori Sovereignty, and a later overview history of Maori protest, the fine 40 Years Of Maori Protest. Dun Mihaka’s Whakapohane: 1990 is an account by one activist and his form of protesting on behalf of his Maori people. One could also consult the fine Auckland University M.A thesis by Tiopira McDowell, “Riria te riri, mahia te mahi: The politics and development of modern Maori activism, 1968-78

disquiet about the economic situation in the country, and the creation of new affluent, Maori elites that were no longer in contact with the majority of their people. Prominent in the evolution of Maori activism has been the global networking of activists with other indigenous groups voicing concerns for First Nation peoples in all countries, in new forums and conferences.<sup>8</sup> Tino Rangatiratanga<sup>9</sup> concerns are intimately connected with concerns about globalisation driven by trans-national capitalism that targets indigenous land and resources. In these ways the struggle for self-determination is coalescing into a united front, global as well as national, although the process in Aotearoa is not yet fully completed. Since 2003 there have been many ongoing local protests against Crown injustices against the tangata whenua, including the Foreshore and Seabed Act and the Police so-called “terrorist” raids on Tuhoë tribal lands in Ruatoki. Activists such as Te Tu and Teanau, have been at the heart of many of the most effective protest activities

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(History thesis, 2007). This is a very important and brilliant contribution to the field that introduces innovative methodology and historiography to the topic of Modern Maori activism. Much of my historical and cultural analysis has been enriched by contact with this brilliant indigenous historian.

<sup>8</sup> For a useful insight into how Indigenous people are networking internationally, one need only look at the global mobilisation to get the Charter of Indigenous Peoples’ Rights approved and signed by international states. Only four nations refused to recognise the charter - New Zealand, Australia, the United States, and Canada. For a useful introduction to the confluences and synergies that are occurring between indigenous peoples, see Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s *Decolonizing Methodologies*. One point I am trying to make is that there is a rich local tradition of indigenous protest which today’s activists are augmenting in new forms, in the same way that Marley’s influence continues with some natural adjustments to today’s situation.

<sup>9</sup> Te Tino Rangatiratanga means Maori Sovereignty. The term is understood by different Maori to mean different things. For some it means spiritual, cultural, historical, cultural and social, and economic self determination for Maori people. I have drawn on the work of Donna Awatere and her *Maori Sovereignty* as the primary source for understanding the term from a Maori activist perspective. But more business minded Maori have utilised the term when discussing corporate business affairs, and Maori economic advancement- a very different understanding of the term. A useful introduction to various Maori viewpoints on Maori Sovereignty is Hineani Melbourne’s *Maori Sovereignty: The Maori Perspective*, (Auckland, Hodder, Moe, Beckett, 1995). Melbourne interviewed 17 Maori leaders in different fields, and settings, in order to find out what they understood of the term, Te Tino Rangatiratanga within their own organisations, lives, and community, and academic work. I have spoken to Teanau and worked with him on many occasions. The chapters most useful to supporting Teanau’s definition of Te Tino Rangatiratanga would be chapters two, and ten in Melbourne’s work. It is important to note that Te Tino Rangatiratanga as defined by activists does not mean non-Maori must leave Aotearoa, or cannot be part of the nation- a racist misreading of genuine Maori issues that is popular in the mainstream non Maori press. The Maori call for a return of land stolen from them, for cultural respect, for historical grievances to be recognised and settled is a call to Pakeha Aotearoa to address its colonial past; do the right thing to the indigenous people of Aotearoa; so all people can move forward as one nation.

When did Teanau first hear Marley?

My old man was into Bob Marley. Well, when Bob Marley came to town, he taped the concert - it was on TV, then on videotape and we kept on watching it. Cheesy, yeah! He was from Ponsonby.

Whereas the previous generation had to work hard to track down their first reggae records, Marley has become like whanau [extended family] in the Ponsonby community, his music as accessible to tamariki [children] as their favourite toys and books. Teanau's father was a contemporary of those activists we met in a previous chapter who were quick to recognise Marley's relevance. Not only reggae but popular music generally has become a much larger part of the landscape for Teanau's generation; and he has a sophisticated understanding of it which has enabled him to distinguish between its superficial aspects (such as "retro" fashion and a musician's try-hard hairstyle) and the genuine politics of rebellion that underlies the best of it:

Some of the lyrics you know, even when you are not political, you can hear it...I was talking to an African friend of mine about roots reggae, Rasta music – it's the music of the revolution, music of the oppressed. If you are talking revolution in Africa, you are talking reggae roots music, all that sort of thing, because it puts itself in opposition to the 'shitstem' - that's what Peter Tosh calls it, the 'shitstem'. You get modern artists like Michael Franti [lead singer of the San Francisco-based reggae/hip-hop fusion band Spearhead], he's heavily influenced by Bob Marley, he's got the dreadlocks, even his samples [include] Bob Marley's music, so you've got even modern dudes - but they are [just] not as big as Bob Marley, Like Michael Franti or Ben Harper [African American slide guitarist and musician], because they come from America and not from the Third World, so you know Bob Marley [to them] is retro '70s shit. Nothing else has been as big. Bob Marley has been gi-normous! [Enormous]

Teanau gives us a fast-paced, highly energised perspective on Marley music and its circulation as the international music of the oppressed. It is unfortunately all too easy today for Marley to be seen as "retro '70s shit" and part of the culture of the oldies - or at best as something to sample as a way of adding "retro" colour to one's hip-hop. Such attitudes are widespread in our fashion and youth-obsessed culture, but Teanau sees through them completely.

Tony- You was saying Survival was a favourite for you.

Teana- If only it [included] “Natural Mystic” and “Time will Tell.” I’m not talking about all the bootlegs, I am talking about the official ones, not talking about the live versions, not talking about any of the re-mixes, I am talking about all the official recordings. If it included those songs, Survival would be the best Bob Marley album ever. It’s got a lot more political punch; I reckon it’s talking about revolution in Zimbabwe. The song “Zimbabwe” is all about revolution and celebrating the overthrow of Rhodesia. If you listen to the lyrics it gets a bit more complicated, a bit more specific about the ideas behind revolutionary struggle. “Ambush in the Night” is sort of like how your own people can turn on you just because they’re fucken hungry, or for a whole lot of reasons, so that’s a song about revolution. But it’s a lot more specific, it’s about certain set examples, and “Babylon System is a vampire.” It’s like Babylon is the multinationals and the vampires are like the white supremacist, capitalist system, yeah that’s what I thought, and I saw in actually in the Red X Files [Canadian film of 1992 charting the life and death of Peter Tosh]. That’s what Peter Tosh says the vampires are like - the multinational companies - and the Babylon system is the capitalist system. Capitalism is explained in this metaphoric, freaky, Rasta way, but you know that’s what the people are feeling!

Teana’s korero is fast-paced, almost bullet-like in its quick bursts of ideas. He again shows his wide-ranging knowledge of popular culture and his ability to take it seriously – he reads Marley or Tosh lyrics as seriously as a previous generation might read a book by Marx or Mao, and is completely at home with their poetic style, their shifts between general and specific, between realism and metaphor. In terms of a metaphor used in earlier chapters, Teana weaves Marley and Tosh songs into the tapestry of people in struggle.<sup>10</sup> He reads the lyrics literally, and then contextualises them into broader historical and political situations, translating the “freaky, Rasta” metaphors into political issues as relevant to Aotearoa as they are to Africa. Music is an art with the power to convey “what the people are feeling” as well as the nature of the “system” and the potential for “revolution”. Teana’s is a politics with room for poetry and feeling as well as revolutionary strategy.

In the album Survival Marley is an educator on Pan-Africanism and political unity, and, as Teana suggests, his music offers lessons in how people may betray one another in struggles. Marley’s song, “Ambush in the Night” was his artistic response to the attempt on his life, in 1976, and his miraculous survival. “Babylon System” offers a way to interpret the geo-political realities of trans-national finance and observe the insidious threat it offers to oppressed people around the globe. The songs

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<sup>10</sup> See ‘Bob Marley in Zimbabwe: the Untold Story’ in Every Little Thing Gonna Be Alright: The Bob Marley Reader, pp.225-30. This piece was adapted by Ree Ngwenya, from Bob Marley: Songs of Freedom (by Adrian Boot and Chris Salewicz).

certainly contain political information of that kind and Teanau is very alert to it. What he does choose to ignore, however, are the spiritual, Rastafarian implications of good and evil – for example, Babylon is not merely the secular force of market capitalism but also the Biblical whore of Babylon. This evil may have a physical presence in today's world but as a metaphysical evil it may not be defeated until the second coming of Christ.

In discussing this album, Teanau makes strong connections between the global and the local:

A lot of people in the '70s are talking about land rights, fighting against the system. You know its real shit, you can see yourself reflected in it, you can see personal struggles that we are struggling for here in the Pacific reflected in the music - he's not just singing about some shit in Jamaica or some shit over in Africa - he could quite likely be singing about stuff that's coming from here. It's why people [here] get into it, and I think that's why he was played at the protest [in Wellington]. It's like the Africans said roots music is the music of the revolution [whereas] in Europe it's probably Punk rock - different strokes for different folks!

Teanau's next words are provocative and insightful on the on-going use of the music in his own whanau and political work. This is not "new" music but music always on hand for times of "resistance". Pakaitore became a site of Maori protest in 1996 when local tribes reclaimed an area of Whanganui City they felt had been stolen from them. The struggle lasted a number of months, and many Maori from all parts of the country – including Teanau - journeyed to the town to support the protesters in their just cause.<sup>11</sup>

Tony- What do you think of the sound of Marley? The sound so earthy, that bass is like Polynesia to me. Some people I rapped with loved it because it was wild when it first arrived on the scene in Ponsonby - like Tigi [Ness].

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<sup>11</sup> For a fine visual and written account of the struggle at Pakaitore, one could consult Aroha Harris, *Hikoi: 40 Years of Maori Protest*. It is important to contextualise how Bob Marley's music has been a presence in Maori protest in Aotearoa since at least the 1975 land march to parliament. Other speakers in other chapters in this thesis attest to Marley's importance to actual political protest movements in keeping peoples spirits high, building community, energising activity ( in terms of bands) and generally tying international and Jamaican struggles Bob spoke about to Aotearoa contexts and concerns. In this respect, Bob, his poor community and Aotearoa communities of strugglers have come together through song when Bob has been sung, chanted or spoken whenever good people have stood up for their rights and protested in Aotearoa.

Teanau- How old was he when he heard it?

Tony- 23, maybe

Teanau- Different from our generation! When you heard it, you were four, five years old - that's the shit your parents listen to. Well, that's what it was for me, the shit my Mum and Dad listened to, but I like it myself too. It's not like this new thing, it's like this old thing that's been around my whole life. I reckon it would be the same for dudes like Che Fu – it's not new for me, it's not “new” reggae or Rasta music, it's been around forever. And it's really big, like in Pakaitore when that land occupation was on; a lot of people were singing Bob Marley songs like “Natural Mystic”, “Time Will Tell”, they would get out the guitar. It's all about resistance, and fighting back, even though you are outnumbered and outgunned - Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Wretched of the Earth - all that sort of Paulo Freire, Frantz Fanon shit. You know it's the music of those people. It's the music of the ghetto

Tony- I was speaking to Tigi about the land march, he didn't play it at the marae, but when they hit the road hardcore, then “Get up Stand Up”. At Bastion Point he said they changed the lyrics of “No Woman No Cry” to: “I remember when we used to sit in a government yard in Auckland....”

Teanau- Dreadlocks and nasty tattoos on their faces when they were singing it too! You know at Pakaitore, “Fuck the police”... [Laughter] Oh yeah, good singers too.

Marley has been a common link for at least two generations of struggle for Maori land rights. He was a strong presence on the 1975 Land March and at Bastion Point in 1977, to mention just two events. Two decades later, Teanau speaks of his presence at a new struggle – all part of the same weave. In each of these situations, the local people play Marley's music and take on board its many aspects as a performance that is rich in gestures, recognitions, new variations, awareness of a wider world as well as local history (the music has “been around forever” as has the struggle) - all part of the art of de-colonisation here in Aotearoa.

Yet Teanau's next words also warn us not to turn the music into a kind of Holy writ – it is only music after all, only a starting-point for action:

Tony- In terms of political usages, are their different ways of taking something out of this music?

Teanau- If you go to a lot of Maori meetings, Maori parties, somebody chucks the Bob Marley on, the joints go around, and people just start talking about how fucked off they are with the government. It just comes out it's like a call to action if you like; no one really plans for it. But [along the way] we are going to amp ourselves up with some Bob Marley, it just kind of happens, people get in the mood and it kind of happens

Tony- Do you think it switches people into an alert mode?

Teanau- In a lot of parties, boozy, Once were Warriors [style]<sup>12</sup>, you have a few moments of clarity - like you are talking political shop, and the music comes on, and for some brief moments it's like, "Oh yeah, I really should do something about that!" You see it light up in a couple of those people's faces.

Tony- I remember Blackie Wilson, an old mobster, he had a gangster take on Marley.

Teanau- I think there is not a kind of encyclopaedia of ideology sitting in the lyrics, it's just telling you how it is in the ghetto and who the enemy is, and spelling out some basics. To people who [think], "Bob Marley said this so I'm just going to go and do it," [I'd say] "Come on man, get a grip, you've got to do some smarter thinking and contextualise it. You see yourself reflected in the music [but] I think you've got to think about a whole lot of other things, you got to get in deeper, more concretely into what you are doing what you are fighting against. You know it's not the be-all and end -all, by itself."

Teanau's words above are complex here, piloting us through the turbulent waters between song, social occasion, and the politics of liberation. Marley's music does "spell out" the "basics" but "you've got to...contextualise it." The music is functioning here in a number of different ways - as social cement; as commentary on the everyday ("how it is in the ghetto"), and as political consciousness-raising ("who the enemy is" and "do something about that"). But the particular place and historical moment add "a whole lot of other things to think about". Praxis has to be attuned to changing grass-roots political realities. The history of the American '60s and the "love generation" of the hippies will always stand as a reminder that there is a limit to how much music can do on its own to change the world. But Teanau still sees that there is an important role for music in social change, particularly any music that has come out of poverty and oppression (and therefore has more potential for being woven into political praxis, as Marley's music has been).

At the end of the day it's just music - the music is a political tool - but it's not the only tool you got in your political toolkit, just one among many. But I think I've got another theory on music in general - if you look at all the real popular music, music that comes from - you know - the wretched of the earth (Frantz Fanon), if you look at it all - like heavy metal, punk rock, reggae music, rock and roll even jazz, even fucken' Mozart in his time - it's all music from the ghetto, it's all music where people have to struggle to survive, and a lot of the time they're living hand to mouth, food to mouth, a day to day sort of existence. And if you think of all those types of music, that's where all the good stuff comes from, that's the music that changes people's lives, you know, or if it doesn't change their lives [at least they'll say] "Hey, I was influenced by a

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<sup>12</sup> Teanau refers to a well known Aotearoa film, made by a mostly Maori team of film-makers and actors. The film tracks the experience of a Maori family living in an urban environment and their problems with drinking, violence, and family.

song.” It’s usually one of *those* types of songs - it ain’t New Kids On The Block or Britney Spears – it’s gonna be Nat King Cole, it’s gonna be Bob Marley, it’s going to be NWA, it’s going to be Mozart if you were born 500 years ago, or it’s Iron Maiden playing to disenfranchised, white, petrol heads in Melbourne. So I think that that says something about music that comes from the ghetto, it’s the music of human struggle, and because Bob Marley is the biggest Third World Ghetto superstar the world had ever seen, then he has had more of an impact than most.

In these words we see an organic intellectual developing a “theory” about popular music (an area he obviously knows well), distinguishing the creations of the music industry from work that has arisen – or erupted – from the ghettos of the world. While reminding us that music is “just music”, he sees Marley as the leading representative of “the music of human struggle”. This is a powerful theory with an international scope, although some of the activists we have interviewed would see its strictly materialist perspective as not able to deal with some of the subtle aspects of musical influence associated with the word “spiritual”.

Teanau’s perspective has been partly shaped by his international travel, witnessing the relevance of Marley’s music for the oppressed in many countries, but also seeing the complex and paradoxical ways in which that music is sometimes appropriated:

Oh yeah, fuck yeah, definitely in every single Third World country that I have gone to, they are listening to Bob Marley. One place in Thailand, in a village, every third house was playing Bob Marley. Africa of course, everybody wants to be Bob Marley. Rastas are alive and well in South Africa, in all the communities, black and white. But there was one freaky thing - there was this white Afrikaner guy who was into Rastafarianism, but he hated black people absolutely. Black people from Jamaica [were OK] but the black people from South Africa...[laughter] You get some weird shit like that, eh, completely into Bob Marley, you know, Marley's the king, but those black bastards from South Africa.... Even when I was in Cuba, years and years ago, some dude had dreadlocks and was singing the songs all wrong, in very bad English - it was undeniably Marley he was trying to sing – everybody else is doing salsa, and this dude is in there singing Marley! Doing salsa you [can be] doing revolution. And London, of course, Bob Marley is always going to be big there, ‘cos if you look at where the whole reggae buzz came from, it’s like it came out of ska - you know how ska was really a Jamaican English thing. It never took off in America. If you look at what happened to ska in towns like Birmingham, it was like the original skinheads where people shaved their heads because they didn’t want them to get caught in machines - those were the original skinheads and they were black and white - and then ska sort of diversified and one side went reggae, Bob Marley took it reggae, and groups like Madness and the Ramones took it to punk rock. Originally [reggae] was all ska beats – like the open notes of “Is this love” – and if you speed it up you got punk rock, you know, because punk also comes from ska. That’s when it gets interesting, you know, when The Clash [punk group] met with Bob Marley and the Wailers. That’s when

Marley wrote that song “Punky reggae party.” It’s got that Birmingham, Brixton, working class feel to it. [Or bands like UB40], every race under the sun, that’s the way they were brought up. In America you had a lot of black and white people, all sorts of working class people, but it never really took off because it’s quite a segregated society - white people live here, Chinese people live there, black people live here.

Someone has claimed that reggae is the music of the ruling class, music of the bourgeois – fuckin’ bullshit! No way can it be the music of imperialism, no way; it’s impossible it’s just so honest, so brutal and out there as it is. It’s crystal clear that it is the music of the ghetto, the music of the oppressed, [and] the music of the resisting working class!

In many respects Teanau’s densely packed narrative above is powered by an internationalism and range of experience seldom available to activists of previous generations. His spirit of radicalism and his rich vein of observations and theories leap across continents, cultures and historical periods, in further developing his broad conception of what music is and what it can achieve. Teanau speaks about how Marley’s music will always be part of ghetto communities, even if people in mainstream society attempt to co-opt its messages for profit.

## **Te Tu**

The next exchange introduces the second interviewee, Te Tu, who is a Maori activist, Maori language translator, and educator who has lived for a number of years in the Wellington region. He is a great friend of Teanau and they have worked together as educators and translators. Teanau speaks first, drawing on his sophisticated interest in the importance of image in politics and popular music to help explain why Marley has received such deep acceptance in this country.

Teanau- I think a lot of Polynesians and Maori are into Bob Marley because he was brown. Like we were saying earlier, I have uncles that look like Bob Marley. It’s the same with people in Thailand and Malaysia. I was in Malaysia and walked into this reggae bar with this other Maori fulla, and we both said, “That bartender looks like Bob Marley!” Sure, he was going hard out to look like Marley, but the dude was Malaysian. So in a way Marley bridges all those multicultural gaps - if you’re brown and Latino looking, you are going to fit in to Asia which is a big part of the Third World, and you’re going to fit in to Latin America which is a big part of the Third World, but if you’re black - because he’s half white and half black, politically he’s black, so he’s going to be

accepted in Africa. But because he's also half white, all the fringe people like Nandor Tanczos can identify with him as well - so you can see, he's got that multi-cultural cross over appeal, because politically he's black, but actually there's a whole lot of other things people can see themselves in him. He looks like people's relatives - I know fuck loads of Maori that look like him, they all live in Ruatoria and up North as well. They don't look like Peter Tosh!

Te Tu- Yeah, 400 years around the world, but only 160 here in New Zealand. And when you get the music that springs from that source, 400 years, the end product is the revolutionary resistance music coming out, and then as soon as you get the opportunity to listen to that - when you haven't listened to anything like that before - you are going to jump at it. Among Maori, I reckon if you go to all the marae in the country and you get up and sing your Bob Marley waiata, everyone will know the words, but if you pick a Maori song you will have to pick "Hoki Mai"<sup>13</sup> [laughter].<sup>14</sup>

Te Tu's observation that Marley's lyrics are better known on the marae than almost any Maori song is a powerful way to sum up the strength of his influence. Teanau adds a vivid account of how the figure of Marley has been accepted into colonised communities simultaneously on multiple levels. Despite the differences between their approaches, both speakers share a communal, indigenous perspective, as each weaves Marley in his own way into tangata whenua culture.

Teanau gives a historicized account of how Marley is taken into the lives of people internationally. It is at the level of identification with Fanon's "other" that the disenfranchised, colonised peoples of the world - both in Aotearoa and elsewhere - are able to see their collective humanity reflected and acknowledged in the physical likeness and welcoming look of Bob Marley, this brown face from the Third World.<sup>15</sup> The appeal of a "brown" Marley in Aotearoa is significant and part of the aesthetics of whakawhanaungatanga [family matters], a community acceptance of one's own people that Maori people practice in their culture. A work like Anne Salmond's 1972 classic *Hui* helps to explain how deeply the issues of recognition, acceptance and community aroha [love] run in Maori communities. Our speakers' comments are rooted in this rich understanding. Te Tu and Teanau complement each other as they offer us ways to understand how the music emerging from the 400-year struggle against the slave trade might resonate with those living with the effects of 160 years

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<sup>13</sup> Te Tu refers to a popular Maori song, used for welcoming home Maori soldiers home, at the end of the Second World War. The Howard Morrison Quartet's version became a hit. There have been many new versions, such as "Baby don't go" by Urban Pacifika's Phil Fuemana.

<sup>14</sup> Personal interview. Te Tu, Teanau Tuiono, August 1, 2001, Wellington.

of colonisation in this society, whether in battle or in the more comfortable confines of the marae.

As part of the discussion I raised the issue of potential cultural colonialism - criticisms I had heard made by others about an uncritical acceptance of Marley's music in the lives, political work, and spiritual beliefs of Maori today. These people, most of who do not appear in this thesis, had expressed to me the concern that his influence might be a colonising force.

Teana- Rastafarianism is Christianity twisted and used for something else, but Ringatu and Ratana [modern Maori religions] are the same thing. It's just an indigenous interpretation of biblical stuff.

Te Tu- Bob's something that everyone can relate to because everyone speaks English now.

Teana- I don't know what [the critics] are pissing and moaning about.

Te Tu- Not everyone's tipuna [ancestor] was Te Kooti, not everyone's tipuna was Ratana. Everybody's got their own mana. [Prestige]

Teana- Like, Bob Marley's huge in Ratana. I mean this year Ruia and Rania [Aperahama, brothers, and musicians] and [others] are going to translate all of Bob Marley's songs

Te Tu: You just got to put it into context with all the other ideologies we are bombarded with from every other angle every day. [Bob's] is "One Love," and it rings through true.

Teana- But it would be good if the Ratana people and the Ringatu people had some good music. The fact is that it's just not catching the generations, you know, and I am into Te Kooti and into Ratana. But if you I mean that some religions are rooted here, I think of the way Te Kooti and others transformed [Christianity], made an indigenous interpretation of a lot of biblical things. So why can't we have an indigenous interpretation of Rastafarian things?

Te Tu- I think it's very similar anyway, it's [based on] nature. Have you seen The Countryman? [A 1982 reggae film that included music of Bob Marley] All of those [Marley] albums just rotate [around the same themes].

Teana- I told him Survival is my favourite one. I bought it three times, gave it away as a present heaps of times. The reason why it's so popular is it's just a happy music. In the Pacific, in the Cook Islands for instance, there weren't settler colonies happening, it was an outpost for religious missionaries to do their thing. People like myself, we see ourselves as part of a whole tradition of resistance to British imperialism. When I listen to the sunny beats in Marley I [associate them] with the Pacific, but I also see that tradition of resistance reflected in the words.

Teana and Te Tu weave a complex picture of Marley working across the topography of Maori and Pacific Island cultures. Both take a questioning yet tolerant view of the place of religions within indigenous cultures (from Jamaica to Ruatoria). They

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<sup>15</sup> The classic account of the politics and the phenomenology of Blackness in a colonial

understand that “ideologies” are involved, but respect the fact that biblical traditions have been given an “indigenous” slant. And some of those traditions have “good music.” Teanau is sceptical of the spiritual dimension but his comments here are relaxed and broad-minded. It may be said, however, that Te Tu is drawn to a more holistic view that incorporates ideology and spirituality in addition to the material aspects of politics. The two men follow-up with a comment about Marley’s image that is both playful and serious at the same time:

Te Tu- I sort of see Bob Marley as the Elvis Presley of the Third World. Elvis was like the king in the First World as Bob was in the Third World.

Teanau- And I think he’s got a Che Guevara thing about him, too, bro.

We should remain alert to this iconic understanding of Marley as both a vibrant popular culture figure (like Elvis) and as a martyr-like figure, the revolutionary who died young in the service of the revolution (Che Guevara in Bolivia). Marley’s reception in Aotearoa has incorporated both kinds of mana, both forms of musical appeal – both “the sunny beats” and “the resistance” (in Teanau’s terms).

When Te Tu expanded on what had drawn him personally to Marley’s music, his greater interest in the spiritual aspect became clear:

Te Tu- He’s just a prophet, he just speaks the truth everyone can understand Inspirational music, and he talks about there being a rhythm of a people, a people moving, you know, and that’s the proletariat, that’s not the bourgeois people he’s talking about. I think he summed it all up for me when he sung for Zimbabwe in 1980, a whole song of Third World liberation. We’ve ended that phase of international politics in Aotearoa - we are pushing for Fourth World liberation - but we’ve got all that Third World experience to learn from. So those words still ring true for me.

Teanau- Karl Marx was a boozier; he was just another dude at the end of the day. Bob Marley is just a dude. You don’t take religiously what any one says, you know, whether it’s Haile Selassie, Bob Marley, Karl Marx, Lenin, or Anarchist Joe, you got to contextualise it all and see where they’re coming from.

Te Tu- That’s at a discourse level, but there is a music level, and I connect on that level too.

Teanau- But do you connect with Haile Selassie?

Te Tu- I heard that Bob denounced Haile Selassie towards the end of his days, just like Darwin denounced his theories of evolution. But if anyone was going to be worshipped religiously, I would say make it Bob, let it be Bob! [Laughter]

Tony- How does that tie into your politics?

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context is Frantz Fanon’s [Black Skin, White Masks](#).

Te Tu- I think that the divisiveness of religion today is so entrenched that we should start a new religion dedicated to Bob Marley called the Bob Marley movement.

Tony- In what ways?

Te Tu- You have got the Bible, the Koran, and every other religious ideology you can conceive, but then there isn't a real ideology for indigenous people - there is only reality. It's a different level; it's just tied into nature and everything around you. [It is] a [new] political, ideological framework to build. Fuck, why not? Why not the whole world pump [music of] Bob and smoke fucken dope, why not One Love?! [Laughter]

Te Tu would not be the only one to see Marley as having the potential to provide not merely an addition to the existing scriptures but a positive replacement for them. He speaks with enormous reverence about Marley as a unifier and bringer of hope. The relationships between peace, love, music, community and the sacred herb are interwoven through Te Tu's words.<sup>16</sup>

## **Vaughan**

The next speaker is a Pakeha who became attuned to the Maori struggle through Marley's music. Vaughan is a Polytechnic tutor, art historian, journalist, editor, political activist and trade unionist. He lives in Northland and is involved in grassroots community organising and activism in both Auckland and the Northland region. He gives us access to another community of Aotearoa in the '70s and '80s, Whangarei in Northland of the North Island.

In Whangarei, things were very polarised between Maori and Pakeha, and still are. You've got a Pakeha population that are into farming, fairly well to do, and then you've got a Pakeha population working in the city, perhaps in business jobs, owning small businesses - then you've got a Maori population very much part of the working class, [but many put out of work by] the closures of the freezing works up north. You've also got a Maori population with ties to the land that still own communally owned land. Into the 70s and 80s, the Maori population has been increasingly living on the benefit. There are very separate areas where the Maori population and the Pakeha population are living. One of the main Maori areas is Otangarei, and when I was growing up, I wouldn't have

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<sup>16</sup> There are complex relationships between Christianity and ancient Maori spiritual beliefs, along with music and traditions of resistance. See, for example, Judith Binney's Redemption Songs. One may draw analogies between Ratana and Ringatu and Marley's Rastafarian faith in Jamaica. The work of one scholar who does this - Hitendra Patel - has been mentioned in the Ruatoria chapter.

had very much to do with that area at all. But I went to a boys' school, Whangarei Boys, which had everybody. I think I always had a sympathetic left politics, but not really formalised, nor did I act on it in any way.<sup>17</sup>

Vaughan gives us a vivid, documentary-like picture of the area of Northland where he grew up. Today he is able to include a structural analysis of the ways that colonialism has left its mark on control of resources, class, wealth distribution, urban planning, and employment markets.<sup>18</sup> He speaks about his politicisation into a revolutionary Marxist politics and an understanding of “the Maori struggle”:

Working around the country, I was working in petrol stations, I was a baker for a year - real dead end jobs, and I think a lot of my class consciousness comes from that period, pissed off with who you're working for, getting treated like shit, getting paid crap, you start to wonder what the hell you are doing. So I pursued art studies as an adult student coming back, a lot more politicised. And then I bought a few Bob Marley CDs and that sort of thing - and then perhaps I got a deeper appreciation, a lot more sympathy for the Maori struggle, a lot better understanding of it and a lot better understanding of the history of it as well. Those things really started to take off again, as soon as I came back into the University environment. I'd seen the level of exploitation for people stuck in the old jobs. Going back to University was an option for me but it's not an option for everyone.

It is against the backdrop of hardship in this young working man's life, and a growing political awareness emerging organically, that we can understand how the investigation of Bob Marley's music became the catalyst for his new empathy for the Maori oppressed. Vaughan's story weaves together race relations, musical genres, local communities, and their politics.

One thing that sticks in mind in terms of Bob Marley - I found a Marley cassette tape when I was about 12, I remember playing it and for the first time being made aware of reggae songs like “Get up Stand Up”, and “Buffalo Soldier,” and just loving the sound of this songs. Looking back on it now, I think I was probably aware that it was music associated with Maori people up north. I remember talking about it with friends, saying I have got this Marley tape and really liking it, and my Pakeha friends saying that Maoris liked it, it [Marley's music] was associated with Maori. [People] You also got hip hop music that Maori listened to, so there was the same kind of antagonism to rap.

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<sup>17</sup> Personal interview. Vaughan Gunson, November 18, 2000, Auckland.

<sup>18</sup> See Evan Poata Smith's ‘The Political Economy of Inequality between Maori and Pakeha’ in The Political Economy of New Zealand ed. Rudd Chris and Roper Brian. Maori have always been disproportionately represented in unemployment statistics in times of economic upheaval as many Maori depended on working class manual labour to support their families. During the re-structuring of the ‘80s, Maori were hit particularly hard in small towns and rural areas.

Despite its Jamaican origins, the music of Marley could help to focus Vaughan's nascent awareness of the racial barriers and inequalities in his own community. It enabled his political consciousness to cross over from John Lennon singing about the white working class to Marley singing about their non-white equivalent.

Tony- What were Pakeha into?

Vaughan- Stuff off the radio, the Top 20.

Tony- What did you enjoy about Marley's kind of music when you first heard it?

Vaughan- [the 1984 album] Legend - the sound of it, the rhythms and the voice, but also just the powerfulness of the lyrics. There is a kind of simplicity about the lyrics that you can instantly get into, or feel a part of, or respond to at some way, and I think at that age you kind of ...I was a huge John Lennon fan and there's probably lots of similarities between a lot of John Lennon's songs and that tape of Bob Marley, as well a level of political consciousness as well. Also music that's appealing but outside some sort of popular 'love' kind of lyrics. It's talking universal themes and so that was appealing.

The music has the ability to transcend the commercial sphere of the music industry and to build community via its "universal themes". Particularly striking here is the coming-of-age story of a young man expanding his personal enjoyment of music which is carrying him on to an awareness of other cultures and the oppressions they have experienced. Vaughan was developing an aesthetics that had many dimensions – the pleasure of music, rhythm, voice, the lyrics and their political implications and grassroots contexts. For such a listener, music can cross colour, ethnic and class lines. But Vaughan has gone on to develop a sophisticated understanding of how "universal themes" have to be combined with a "very specific understanding" of particular local histories to create a meaningful response to oppression. This politics will be not merely a form of identity politics (such as Black Nationalism) but it will retain a keen awareness of "what is best in different cultures".

Tony- What do you make of the Marcus Garvey connection and the politics of emancipation?

Vaughan- That aspect is part of Bob Marley music, it's so inspiring. "War" [a Marley song based on a speech by Haile Selassie] struck me as a hugely powerful type of statement, combined with the passion of Bob's delivery and music. At one stage you feel that you empathise with it, you want to be a part of it, you're listening specifically to something about black struggle, 'Black is

Beautiful' - there is something really appealing about that if you're sympathetic to it, you put yourself there. There is a little bit of the universal element to the lyrics of Bob Marley, but then again, as my politics has become a little bit more sophisticated, then I might say that just that politics in the end will not be successful in the end, if it's only black people being told to "Get up Stand Up" or "Black is beautiful." Now I see that there need to be links between indigenous people, black people around the world, and Pakeha, and the working class in New Zealand. The links need to be made between ALL the oppressed, but it must be done in terms of what is best in different cultures so it's got to be done on those terms. So struggles in New Zealand get to go forward, but never without the very specific understanding of what has happened to Maori in this country.

Vaughan starts with a discussion of one song, "War",<sup>19</sup> to acknowledge the power of this music to appeal to the deepest parts of human existence. But the second part of his korero features a more distanced, materialist approach to international politics. He sees that the deep, affective qualities that articulate Black Redemption in Marley's music need to be considered critiqued and mobilised within a materialist analysis. What is also striking, however, is his insistence that such 'united front' activity must still remain sensitive to particular local histories such as "what has happened to Maori in this country" – thus avoiding the sweeping universal categories that activists have sometimes tried to impose on complex political situations. Vaughan's belief that Marley is a useful starting-point for post-colonial analysis is an example of the new ways in which younger activists in Aotearoa are making sense of today's political and social terrain, and looking for ways in which popular culture can support and augment revolutionary struggle. In this sense, Vaughan's ideas are similar to those of Teanau whose view of Marley is extremely positive yet still critical and discriminating. Committed to a Marxist materialist politics, they are cautious about the spiritual dimension of the music, but both are aware of the emotional importance of that spirituality within the community. Vaughan has a clear sense of how this music can empower revolutionary work:

Tony- Do you see a role for Marley's music in activist struggles here?

Vaughan- There is a huge history of that type of music. I think it rises around the struggles of any group; it comes out in the art. Art is about responding to the situations in your life, so I think that music is very important in inspiring people, or maintaining a level of enthusiasm, of uniting people in struggle. So you could ask how many people are listening to Bob Marley music around the world. It's a common reference point for a number of indigenous cultures, to get

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<sup>19</sup> From the 1977 album Exodus.

a sense of shared solidarity amongst different movements, so they can see that their fight is also somebody else's fight. There are other aspects to Marley's music - people need someone they can identify with - as long as that's put in perspective. If you're involved in struggles today, if you're driving around, you like to be a part of something, and if you feel that you have had a good day in the struggle, so to speak, then the music can be a kind of celebration of that. It just exists now as a resource to use and to live by. Reggae developed from different people and Marley was not the founder of reggae anyway. It [the music] is just there to be used.

Asked for his view on Marley as an icon, Vaughan again has a broad, many-sided view, aware of both the negative aspects of celebrity and the positive ways that symbols can create solidarity:

Tony- What do you make of the iconography of Marley - in his albums, on posters, or whatever?

Vaughan- It's consistent with a sense of pride, and the music putting out the message. It's sort of looking back in order to move forward - that's what iconography is in a way - you find symbols, and symbols usually develop over time. It's hard to create a symbol that can have a whole lot of relevance to a whole lot of people. Movements often need to draw from the past in order to give strength and solidarity to the group in the present, because it's hard to think what the future might be without linking it to the past.

Tony- What about some of the images on his albums?

Vaughan- I think in a sense he became slightly self-conscious, it has an effect, the pressure [from] commercialisation to being raised to the level of a deity. The imagery of some of the albums is quite saint-like, which I am probably a little critical of. But then again he was a focus, he became aware that he was a focus of a lot of aspirations, and there were a lot of pressures on him, so in terms of packaging himself - or other people packaging him - there is [still a] kind of pure motive there. But also he's selling records, and record companies want to make a buck basically as their bottom line, and you can see that in the way Bob Marley has been packaged after [his death]. [It is] all part of the [social] contradictions. [When you are] trying to assert yourself as a culture, a set of beliefs, which don't try in the end to structurally change the conditions of society, [and you have] has to face the difficulty of being absorbed by [that society] and being repackaged in a way that was not the first intention. The early music was macho, the later stuff softer with women, a bit more commercially accessible, and [it] softened as well.

Vaughan offers thoughtful opinions on the image-making process. (He is himself involved in art history and art-making, creating and exhibiting digital "icons".) Like other younger activists he knows a lot about popular culture and understands both its importance and the ways in which the industry can appropriate the energies and symbols that spring up from the grassroots. He does not cite any specific images, but one may recall various saint-like depictions of Marley such as the album cover of

Confrontation which has the singer on a white horse, like Saint George spearing a dragon, or the cover of Uprising where he is a mythic, god-like figure emerging organically from the ground. Vaughan understands the use-value of such representations, as images of a revolutionary hero and leader, but he also positions his analysis within a broader political framework which remains aware that images and icons can be exploited as commodities. His final words bring together those two aspects.

Tony- What do you make of the legacy of the man as a political figure, as an icon?

Vaughan- I mean there's just a history there that people can respond to, and it empowers people to think about the world that they live in - whether that world can be changed, or whether that can be a better place. Also there's a commercial element there, with those Bob Marley tee shirts, but that does not take away a lot of those other figures - iconicised some might say and being held up as more important than they are but....

He leaves his last sentence incomplete, but there is no doubt about his belief that Marley's music has a strong, on-going relevance in political work, as something that will continue not only to "empower" oppressed people but also to encourage white listeners to "think about" black (or Maori) history and experience – which is the way the music worked for him when he was a teenager.

## **Grant**

Grant Brookes is a qualified nurse, journalist, editor, community worker, trade unionist and political activist, with many years experience in both the Auckland and Wellington regions. He introduces us to his history:

I grew up in a middle-class, white family in Dunedin. [I went to] primary school in the '70s. It wasn't a political family at all - I don't even know what my parents voted for actually - but I suspect they weren't Labour supporters. In 1978 I was in Standard Four, it was the election year, and the kids were in the playground playing mock political rallies, and there was a guy obviously from a Labour Party family who he would go around with a Labour card and make speeches and stuff, and then there was some National Party kids, and I didn't line up with either of those groups - I found a Social Credit newsletter, and I suspect I don't know why I took to Social Credit at the time – except, when I look back on it, it's a kind of

reaction to being in a middle-class family that was feeling the squeeze of the recession of the '70s - a lot of them did look to Social Credit.<sup>20</sup>

This is a story from the deep south of the South Island during the oil-price crisis of the 1970s. Later, Grant developed a Marxist revolutionary politics:

My revolutionary politics consist of six or seven things, an understanding that capitalism is a system that creates inequalities, and is very unstable, and goes into crisis periodically, and breeds war - and also an understanding that this system is based on the robbery of most of the world's people, robbery of workers and what they create, and more than that, systematic and brutal colonisation of non-European countries and the theft of land, resources and the enslavement of the tangata whenua, the indigenous peoples of the non-European countries. So that is an understanding of capitalism, and my politics are you can't reform the system, you must overthrow it, and the principle is workers' power - those who create the world's power have to have a say in how the society runs - and hand-in-hand with that [is the principle of] internationalism, support for struggles here at home, and around the world against capitalist exploitation and colonialism.

In this very concise analysis, we see a contemporary working-class Marxism that is internationalist in solidarity but also fully attuned to the history of colonisation in Aotearoa. Grant's initial reception to the music of Marley makes an interesting story because it reflects a new decade in which punk had become the hard-edged genre of rebel music for young Pakeha listeners:

Tony- [Which bands were you listening to in the] early '80's?

Grant- I was a big fan of Duran Duran. As I say, I have some embarrassing things to talk about today!

Tony- And you were saying that you really hated Bob Marley at that time?

Grant- Yeah, what I remember of Marley from the early '80s, I remember seeing "One Love" on Ready to Roll [music video programme on television], and shortly after that there was "Buffalo Soldiers," and I really didn't like them. And I remember there was some graffiti on the wall near the Southern Motorway - this would have been early '80s - and it said, "Bob Marley lives", and I remember reacting negatively, I remember saying "No, he's dead, ha, ha, ha!" - You know, that was the way I was thinking at the time.

Tony- Why did you dislike Marley's music?

Grant- I don't know, I didn't like "One Love", I thought it was part of the New Romantic stuff that was [replacing] the punk stuff in Britain. There were different strands of punk bands like the Clash who were very supportive of struggles in Britain and internationally, and then on the other hand you had some fairly nasty punk bands like the Sex Pistols who would wear swastikas on stage, and they sang that song "Belsen was a Gas" making light of the Holocaust, and from that strand of the punk tradition you get the skinheads and

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<sup>20</sup> Personal interview. Grant Brookes, October 12, 2000, Auckland.

the boot boys, the Nazis. But listening to the punk stuff, I thought that “One Love” was a bit soft. But of course that’s not all that Bob sang about.

Tony- Do you see a cultural difference between Pakeha who were into punk rock and Maori and Polynesians who were into reggae?

Grant- The middle-class white culture is very individualistic - and the sense of “one love”, the unity, the solidarity, and the collective spirit that that song expresses, as well as being a religious thing – yeah, it was alien to middle-class Pakeha.

Grant’s words map out some of the same community tensions that Vaughan outlined earlier in his Northland topography. Grant has come to understand and appreciate the aesthetics that connects Marley’s Jamaican music to the collective spirit and solidarity that exist in Maori and Pasifika communities.<sup>21</sup> His early dislike of Marley needs to be placed in context - in the predominantly white community of Dunedin which, in the early ‘80s, was a thriving centre of alternative rock music with a punk influence. (This music was known as ‘the Dunedin sound’ and was the basis of the important record label Flying Nun.) What changed Grant’s appreciation of Marley? He speaks of the experience of international travel and living in poor communities:

I didn’t have much exposure to Bob after he died in the early ‘80s. There was a string of big hits but then Bob pretty much disappeared from the charts, so he disappeared from my life. I never really came across reggae that much, but started coming back to this sort of stuff 15 years later. Over in England, I heard a BBC documentary series on the radio, week after week, talking about the history of music, and I have always really hated rock and roll music in terms of the Elvis Presley bullshit, but listening to this documentary made me realise that the rock and roll we listen to today is a sanitised, white version - the stuff you hear on the top charts. I was starting to look at the black musical tradition again, and I remember coming back here to Auckland, in ‘97, I was flatting with a woman who was a Bob Marley fan, an Ngati Porou [woman], and she had a documentary called Time Will Tell, and I watched that video and I was absolutely blown away. This was 15 years later and I’d gone through a lot of poverty in the meantime, and now it started to make sense.

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<sup>21</sup> Grant combines aesthetics with politics in the texts he writes for a community of activists and thinkers. See, for example, his review “Cracks in the Empire,” in the April 2007 issue, pp121-127, of Unity. Many grass-roots activists make thoughtful contributions to this journal, and Marley is mentioned from time to time in relation to community politics and aesthetics.

Grant describes his journey to understanding the revolutionary potential inherent in this music – insights that had not previously been part of his Marxist, materialist critique of the music industry. This was an epiphany - his new understanding of the music industry's suppression of the revolutionary energies within black music and other forms of grass-roots rock and roll. As Grant went on to re-visit Marley, he found his "Pakeha" perspective shifting:

I went through Bob's entire musical career, and not just the big hits at the end - for all I had really come across were the big hits after he died. And I also put the music into a context. The video had music footage [but also] news footage and interviews he did. "No Woman, No Cry" was another song I had known when I was young, in my early teens, and my negative attitude to Marley had skewed my interpretation of that song. I didn't understand what it was about, I thought it was about how a man has got to be a man, and women are the source of problems in the world. I hadn't listened to all the words, I just knew the chorus - not realising that the song was not really about that at all, it was like talking to his wife and saying "Don't cry, it's going to be okay" - because he had cancer at that stage, didn't he?

Tony- It was based on events in his life.

Grant- And realising it was about events in his life, [I saw] it wasn't an anti-woman song. By this stage by the late '90s I was involved in revolutionary politics, and seeing Bob's involvement in the struggle in Jamaica, and then the fight for the down-trodden after independence, what really hit me was that he sung the song called "Revolution" - it came out in '74 I think, and that was two years into the left-wing, Social Democratic government in Jamaica [Michael Manley's People's National Party government, 1972-1976], and things had not got a lot better, and Bob was coming to the same conclusions that I would draw in that situation, which was "It's going to take a revolution to make a solution." And so it just opened my eyes to what Bob was singing about, seeing the video, thinking again about the songs that I had shelved in the back of my mind for 15 years, and being exposed to his earlier stuff as well. So I have started really getting into Bob Marley and seeing it with fresh eyes - rather than a Pakeha, middle-class kid's eyes.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> The songs, "No Woman, No Cry," and "Revolution" came out of Marley's 1974 album Natty Dread. Both songs also featured on the documentary that he mentioned above, the 1985 Island production Time Will Tell. One of the most striking sequences is a studio version of the song "Revolution". The documentary makers intersperse shots of Marley performing the track with footage of the terrible poverty of Kingston, alongside footage of the People's National Party's leader Michael Manley on the campaign trail in the middle '70s. In this way the performance of the song becomes a commentary on the images of poverty.

Grant's revolutionary humanism leads to his re-interpretation of "No Woman, No Cry."<sup>23</sup> His new reading of the song "Revolution" conceives of Marley as a Jamaican organic intellectual using the medium of music to provide a cogent and daring political analysis.<sup>24</sup> An understanding of how Marley can empower the activists of this generation speaks clearly in Grant's sense of the music's connections with periods of struggle and resistance, not only those of the singer's own time, but those of the future. He goes on, in this extremely rich weave, to link the music to Marx, to union songs, to the British miner's strike, to the Cuban Revolution, and to many other aspects of social struggle:

Marx said capitalism creates its own gravediggers, creates a working class which resists the workings of the system, and the working class are pretty deprived of culture - these are people who don't have record deals or control the music industry or the newspapers - so they, I mean we, are fed a [capitalist] culture by and large, but at times the germs of working class culture start to sprout. We have got some great union songs which have come down, though very few people know them these days. Good old Willie Jackson [Mana Motuhake Minister of Parliament] sings "Solidarity Forever" down at Parliament, that's fuckin' marvellous, that's the sprouting seeds - that song is a sprouting of working class culture - but the cultures of resistance have taken off on a more rounded way because of mass struggle, and so you have the miners' strike in Britain, 1984, it's where [singer and song-writer] Billy Bragg got his politics, and he was singing to the miners on strike and writing about what he was seeing, and this is the development of a working class, activist musician. And I see the same thing in Bob, in Kingston in the late '60s, and of course in 1960 you have the Cuban revolution, which was an enormous inspiration for the poor in Jamaica, for the black majority - and you had the anti-colonial struggle in Jamaica against British rule - and reggae was coming out of this cultural ferment. Jamaica was a pretty hot place in the '60s and '70s, there was a lot of action, and that led to music like Bob's, music of resistance that can gain a wider following in times of mass struggle.

Grant expands on the issue of art emerging out of concrete struggle in dialectical synthesis:

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<sup>23</sup> The song was not written by Marley but was performed as early as 1974, a few years before he first contracted cancer. Marley may very well have performed the song in later years for his wife as he became ill.

<sup>24</sup> This is what makes his aesthetics, and his appreciation of Bob Marley a uniquely Aotearoa reception. Like other Marxist speakers in other chapters (like Roger Fowler) Grant constructs a rich understanding of music when it is placed in relational status to historical experience from many other lands. For a marvellous introduction to a form of Marxist aesthetics, one should consult the Georg Lukacs' masterpiece, History and Class Consciousness. Frank Kofsky's, Black Nationalism and the revolution in music, a Jazz history examines Jazz, its

Tony- I was speaking to Bob Mita about the Maori struggle here, and how when Bob Marley came, he was the right person for the right time, how music can awaken revolutionary impulses.

Grant- I think it's a bit more dialectical, I think revolutionary struggle can give rise to art forms and culture of resistance on a wider scale, and there is always a culture of resistance during periods when the ruling class is on the front foot in New Zealand. In the '80s it was horrible time to be around - a lot of the culture of resistance was very insular, very inward-looking. Some of the punk bands [seemed] in despair of any hope of mass struggle. Like, "wear the right t-shirt and that is your revolution." But in times of mass struggle, the culture of resistance can be more revolutionary, and it can have wider appeal. In turn, it can help bring people into the struggle. For me, it was not that Bob was building the struggle, it was [the fact that] the struggle here was rising. Bob Marley's music was around, and that in turn helped broaden the ideas.

Grant offers us a useful thumbnail sketch of the environment in which he and other activists of his generation were growing up - the dark times of Rogernomics. Unlike older activists such as Tigi Ness and Roger Fowler, some of this generation came late to Marley, after there was an upturn in political struggle. In this sense Grant's analysis has proved correct since Marley's music has had an increased presence as part of the recent upsurge in Maori protest activities. Grant also gives an example from another area, the campaign to legalise marijuana:

I was editing the Socialist Workers paper in 1998, and a report came in from Christchurch - I've actually just fished it out - it was against the criminalisation of dope, and this was June 13, there were a thousand young people gathered in the square in Christchurch and it was called "smoking out the squares", an act of civil disobedience - they would line up and defy the law - and the cops turned up to this, as they do, but when the police went to make the first arrest, they were met with shouts of "no victim, no crime." By the time the police were making their third grab, the people had decided to resist collectively. They dragged back the person the cops were trying to arrest and linked arms to keep the police at bay. The struggle lasted twenty minutes and ended when one cop well-known for his thuggery tried to strangle a guy. Then the crowd shoved the entire police platoon of 15 cops over on their asses. And the cops got up to their feet again and but they realised there were a thousand young people there and only fifteen of them, and the people were angry and they weren't going to go peaceably, so the police decided to say OK, we are just going to have to let this happen. And then the thousand young people started to break out into a victory song, having just fought the cops off and foiled their attempted arrest - and the song they chose to sing was "Get Up, Stand Up"! That to me shows how music can work in a protest, you know, and it was a spontaneous thing when they started singing "Get up, stand up, stand up for your rights" - that was exactly

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relationship to Black Power politics, and the relationships of black people, music, and politics to the wider class struggle in America and beyond.

what they were doing - taking this song from Jamaica in the mid-'70s, making the connection themselves. It gave a sense of collective struggle because when everyone joined in, singing about what they were doing, bonding together as they were singing - so I guess this is the potential for music, you know one small example.

Here, in a South Island context, music, aesthetics, community, and political struggle are all woven together in a multi-dimensional way. Of course, Marley's defence of marijuana use, on spiritual grounds, is also part of the spiral. Asked how he would sum up the singer's significance, Grant saw a future for the music as part of the next wave of revolutionary politics:

I think it is all a matter of history actually, that Bob's music has been taken up by people in struggle. I was delighted to read about the Zanu P.F guerrillas listening to Bob before they went into battle, and I think it's the burden of history, on balance, that his music has said something to people involved in struggle. I think that the suppressed nature of resistance will re-emerge as the level of class struggle rises again, and I think that Bob will come back as part of that.

At the same time, as a materialist Marxist, Grant is – like other contemporaries - sceptical of the spiritual aspect, and is careful to distance himself from any transformation of Marley into a kind of messiah:

Tony-What do you make of that Uprising album cover? It's the one with Marley coming out of the ground.

Grant- It's an interesting image, that cover of Uprising conveys coming up out of the ground like a bursting forth, like a natural process, but at the same time it is an individual coming up out of the ground, it's not *people* coming up out of the ground, so I guess that's the religion coming out. An individual reaches up for enlightenment, not the collective liberating themselves and one another.

These words carry a hint of regret for art that is inspiring yet limited in its ability to generate mass action, to inspire collective groups to “uprise”. At the same time, however, it is possible to read this image in other ways – not as a direct representation of struggle on some post-colonial battlefield – but spiritually, as a metaphysical search for knowledge – or politically, with Marley as the symbolic representative of all black or all oppressed people rising up.<sup>25</sup>

## **Kane**

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<sup>25</sup> Certainly that is the way I have personally read the image.

The final speaker tells how involvement with music – including Marley’s - helped “change” his “whole life around” after a period of teenage alienation when he was “doing shitty things for no good reason”. Kane is now a talented musician, music promoter, activist, community worker and organiser. He has recently moved to Australia, where he is continuing his involvement with grassroots politics. He was raised in Palmerston North, a west coast city in the lower North Island:

I grew up in Palmerston North, right on the edge of a suburb called Calvin Grove. Highbury was your really broken area, where you had big blocks of flats, concrete block houses - and Calvin Grove had a similar feel to it. There were a few more white kids in it and there were no gang problems or anything like that, but Palmerston North is a city that was hit pretty hard by the ‘80s. I can remember when it, Rogernomics,<sup>26</sup> happened, an almost overnight thing. The community was building houses, then all of a sudden the houses that were being built never got painted, all the families divorced and split up. A lot of hard living....

I was pretty much the only white kid on my street, the odd Pakeha family was jotted around that area, but certainly the majority were Pacific Island families – Tongan and Samoan – or Asian. It was the sort of area where you didn’t have too much choice, you just lived there and that was the deal. The Highbury area was settled a lot earlier and it was mainly Pacific Island people, whereas the Kelvin Grove area was quite a new place, so it bought in some of the new influx of immigrants from all over the show.<sup>27</sup>

Marley’s music was an everyday part of this environment in the early ‘80s:

Tony- When was it that you first started listening to Bob Marley?

Kane- Well, my old man’s got a nice Babylon By Bus, I always wanted to steal it

off [of] him, so yeah, even when I was real little, it’s always been there, and I love that album Babylon By Bus, it’s one of my favourites, all the hits in it for sure, and in the area I grew up it was blasting out of the speakers through the windows of the houses in the weekend.

Tony- On a musical level, what do you think of Bob?

Kane- I absolutely love Bob, I mean he’s got a lot to say. This is not just a religious song - he’s talking about what it says in the Bible - but it’s just human rights that we don’t have, you have got to “Get up, stand up,” and “The Babylon System is a vampire”. All those things connected with me

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<sup>26</sup> Rogernomics was the colloquial name given to the neo-liberal social and economic policies brought in by the fourth Labour government between the years 1984-1989. These policies brought social and economic hardship for working people, the very constituency the Labour Government said it represented. The chief architect of the new policies (along with others, including senior Government Ministers Richard Prebble, Michael Bassett, the New Zealand Treasury, big business, and senior civil servants in government) was Finance Minister for the fourth Labour Government, Roger Douglas.

<sup>27</sup> Personal interview. Kane Forbes, January 4, 2001, Auckland.

just like that. I was listening to them on the back shed when I was 11 - listening to Bob, to Burning Spear, to songs about the Brixton riots [1981], things like that, and the music that came along with them.

Marley was one of the few community-building influences in this socio-economically depressed (but culturally, and communally rich) neighbourhood. His music was at work raising a boy's consciousness, even if the politics were not yet fully conscious. In his teenage years, however, Kane's politics developed in angry and un-directed ways that were starting to lead him to pointless forms of violence.

Tony- So you were a sparkie [electrician] by trade, then you went to university, and then you got involved in politics. How did the political thing come around for you?

Kane- I guess I've always had a lot of anger towards policy, I always knew that someone was pulling the strings. You know, the old man couldn't earn a decent wage any more. I guess there was a working-class buzz - you knew you were going to be screwed over by these people - by the bosses, by the cops. In my area, nobody liked the cops. We didn't really talk about the role of the state, or the police, we just knew they weren't on our fucking side, that's for sure. So I used to define myself loosely as an anarchist. I sort of hated everything that existed. I wanted to see change but I would do stupid things, you know, go and smash a telephone box, or spray paint something on the wall, so my political awareness was pretty shallow.

Kane tells his tale of community life, and the kinds of political consciousness that emerged from it, with candour and energy.<sup>28</sup> The social and political realities of the day were harsh for many young people, including Pakeha.<sup>29</sup> Then music started to be an important outlet for Kane's energies:

Where I grew up in Palmerston North, there was a place called The Stomach - it opened up when I was 13 or 14 years old. I was the sort of kid that started to kick around with a hard crew, staying out late. I was heading down the path where I would have been doing over my local school from time to time, just a bored poor kid, doing stupid things, and I went down to The Stomach when it

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<sup>28</sup> For an understanding of anarchism in Aotearoa one might consult the Anarchist Federation of Aotearoa's paper, No 1, April 26, 2000, p.2, The Jolly Roger for this definition: "Anarchism (Libertarian Socialism) is the philosophy of people seeking a society in which all individuals have the greatest choice in the way they live their lives. Therefore we work towards the creation of a global network of communities formed on voluntary agreements and based on the collectivisation of capital." However, the forms of anarchism Kane is describing range from anti-social activity for the hell of it, to the kinds of rebel energy embodied in rock music.

<sup>29</sup> These are matters that Jane Kelsey speaks to when she talks about the impact of Rogernomics on vulnerable communities in Aotearoa, in her Rolling Back The State.

opened up - the Creative Sounds Music Centre - and met a guy there called Dave White and a lady called Claire Pernel - and they said you should spend some time learning to play the guitar instead. This kind of saved my life in a lot of ways. I was lucky enough to hook up with some people, who were listening to a lot of political music, the Dead Kennedys [American punk band] and others like that, and I started playing punk rock which generally has pretty solid political arguments, and again most of that was tailing in to the anarchist in me at the time. A lot of the Punk rock had an anarchist feel to it, starting with Johnny Rotten, the Sex Pistols, and them moving on to more Syndicalist politics [Trade Union politics associated with Georges Sorel among others.] I started talking about the working class, and of course I connected with that, being a tradesman.

As we have seen earlier, the rebel music of the period included both punk and reggae, and Kane's involvement with music also led him back to the Marley music he had enjoyed years earlier:

There's two things, on a personal level, for a long time now - punk rock and reggae. There is a lot of cross-flow between them. It was basically a toss-up between who I was kicking around with at the time, whether I was going to be playing in punk rock bands or reggae bands. Basically I just happened to know more musicians who were into punk rock than reggae at the time, but I would have been in either for sure, or in both. Certainly for me the music changed my whole life around, [stopped me] going down and doing shitty things for no good reason, or going out and having fist fights. [Instead I was] playing guitar and learning to write songs like that. The music centre was started on that kind of premise, and you know Palmerston North without The Stomach, its crime rate would be up, the kids would be doing god knows what, there were no jobs, no decent jobs, no future for the kids - so they get to go down and play instead. Yeah, I guess that was what reggae was all about. When it started, everyone got together and jammed and sang about life and its problems, or whatever.

Kane is an example of how music can help to empower young people from a depressed area. His words extend and enrich the perspectives of Te Tu, Teanau, Vaughan, and Grant. He talks about the importance of popular music for his generation, while acknowledging the music's dual appeal as escapism, (under the hegemony of the music industry) and as a force to "unify people around issues" (in progressive political contexts):

Tony- In terms of politics, do you see music as part of a liberation process?

Kane- Yeah, I've thought about it. I think music can be quite de-politicising, it can end the conversation, and it can lead things into just having a good time, and I think that's something you've got to be cautious of. One of the comrades used to come down to the paper sale with a ghetto blaster, and then he could never talk to anyone. But then again some of the people would come just because of the music. There are possibilities and dangers with music, just like

everything politically. I think that “Rock Out versus Capitalism” showed what can be done, because we got 300 kids into a room and spoke to them about the World Economic Forum, as well as them just having a good time. There you go, you’ve got the possibilities, and you’ve got to take the circumstances as they stand - sometimes music is going to be inappropriate and it’s not going to help you out - but the youth of today love music, love to dance, and this is where these things can come in and lend a hand. I always think about the Anti-Nazi League’s carnivals against racism, where they get thousands and thousands of people right across Europe, and that’s amazing - it shows how music can unify people around issues that are important, and it doesn’t need to be a stuffy debate - politics can be a good time!

Kane is particularly positive about Marley’s ability to transcend the commercial limits of the music industry:

How many people have heard Bob say “Get Up, Stand Up,” you know, condemning Babylon - it’s time to stop, it’s time for total change. How many times have kids heard those words, and they are so true, and would that have happened without Bob’s music? No, I don’t think so. It’s incredible that people release the stuff, you know, ‘cos they’re caught by it. They’ve got to sell what’s selling because otherwise someone else will - that’s capitalism, the market, for you – and at the same time they must be shivering ‘cos they’re whacking out all this stuff about destroying the very system that supports them. That’s pretty choice, you know!<sup>30</sup>

Kane refers to one of Marley’s most powerful live albums, the two-record 1978 Babylon By Bus, recorded during a world tour. He also speaks to two other famous songs, the classic 1973 rude boy ghetto cry, “Get Up, Stand Up” (from Burnin’), and the 1979 “Babylon System,” from the Survival album that was the result of Marley’s travels to Africa. Kane’s story of his life-changing commitment to music illustrates aesthetics of young people, poverty and politics coming together with music-making, in a new cultural weave.

Kane has a particular perspective on Marley that picks up the theme of the Survival album:

Tony- There is different ways to listen to Marley - what energised your reading?

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<sup>30</sup> The Rock against Racism carnivals and festivals were begun in Britain in 1977 as a musical and public way of educating the community about the dangers of Nazi groups. They were also a response to Eric Clapton’s 1976 announcement that Britain was too overcrowded. The carnivals drew huge crowds of supporters and the organisers worked in closely with the Anti-Nazi League. There was a second wave of such events in 1994 after a new surge of fascism in Europe. Here in Aotearoa, the “Rock against Capitalism” concert on Karangahape Road was part of an August 2000 anti-capitalist weekend. Those who attended said the event produced an unusual degree of unity among activists from various organisations.

Kane- I'm a survivor, I guess, I mean that's what I used to think, like, I'm a poor person, I come from a poor family. I guess I wasn't paying too much attention to the idea of "black survivors", what I was listening to was: "we are the survivors". I was empathising with the other people, the black people who were surviving, and thinking by extension about all the other people, but I related to a lot of it on a personal basis. When I met people later, a lot of people would try to claim Bob [for themselves], and say, "What are you listening to it for, Pakeha?" I just don't bother with that. Bob was singing about his personal experiences, he was singing about people being taken from Africa and brought to Jamaica to do all this horrible work, talking about getting through, singing about unifying and surviving. He [Marley] wasn't saying, we are the only people that have survived. Vadana Shiva, who was speaking at the World Economic Forum protests, she quoted Bob Marley, and said "Well, they are the survivors. The unemployment lists, the housing shortage, the health crisis, the student loan – these are all the things you guys have created – you, the World Economic Forum, the top 1000 multinationals." And she says "The people outside are the survivors, and yeah, it's hard getting by, for just about everyone."<sup>31</sup>

Kane's final words in this section speak for themselves:

Tony- What do you think of Marley as a man?

Kane- A very great person, amazing musician, he could write a song and he could sing, and politically speaking the guy was pretty well in touch with a whole bunch of stuff. I guess he has survived the test of time, because if Bob wasn't on track in a lot of ways we wouldn't be having this conversation, he wouldn't be around for 20 years, he'd have come and gone like Engelbert Humperdinck....

Tony- As a revolutionary, do you see Marley's music, as being useful in terms of praxis?

Kane- I guess you have to talk about love, we have to give a shit about each other, it can't be just scientific, it can't be that distant or that abstract. Why am I a Socialist? Because I care about human beings, you know I really love human beings, and I really hate the idea that they are not going to be getting a good deal. That's why I live in the city, I like to meet people. Maybe that's what Bob's message is, we need this inspiration, that's one of the biggest contributions he's put on the table of politics, 'cos if you sliced up the songs and just kept the political bits, would they be as impressive? Maybe not.

Tony- I was thinking more about praxis - can the music be something that you can take with you as you move forward?

Kane- Sure, I mean the application is always the sticking point – OK, we've got these resources, but how to apply them in the best way? How are we going to use this music? There are practical things like fundraising concerts, Anti-Nazi League, and practical things you taking from it. You can read about Trotsky or

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<sup>31</sup> Vadana Shiva is a well-respected political activist, environmentalist, and scholar from India, part of a radical tradition of activists and writers (such as Susan George, George Monbiot, Naomi Klein, Jane Kelsey, Noam Chomsky, and others who continue the tradition of marrying intellectual work with political and social activism, articulating concerns related to undemocratic forms of globalisation).

something, but maybe if you listen to one of Bob's more political albums, you might get the same out of it. Look how long it takes to get through one of those old guys - Trotsky or Lenin - and learn all those lessons. A lot of us who are workers, we don't know that stuff inside and out, and couldn't even explain it, but I know for sure that music politicised me with a combination of real life experience and the ideas I was hearing in the music. I would not be a political activist without those people I was listening to and the ideas I was getting from them.

## Chapter Six

### Ruatoria Dread: An introduction

**Ko Hikurangi te maunga,    Hikurangi is the mountain,  
Ko Waiapu te wai,        Waiapu is the river,  
Ko Ngati Porou te iwi,    Ngati Porou is the iwi,  
He uri no Porourangi      A descendent of Porourangi<sup>1</sup>**

#### **Te Tai Rawhiti, ‘The side where the sun shines’**

[Geographically, the East Coast of the North Island of New Zealand, around from the shoulder of Te Ika a Maui (the fish of Maui) at Whakatane, east to Hicks Bay, and south to Uawa, Gisborne and beyond.]

Tony- I thought it was quite powerful last night when you were talking about the karakia of the ancestors, keeping that true - true to the prayers of the old people, old times.

Te Hoku Whitu- Yeah, because we are a product of those old times, we are, they prayed for fullas like us. Lord, don't let there be a dark day when no one's here to look after the whenua or to keep the light going.<sup>2</sup>

#### **Whenua Ruatoria**

Ruatoria, ‘the kumara pit of Toria’,<sup>3</sup> is a place of ancient significance in Maoridom<sup>4</sup> located on the isolated and beautiful East Coast of the North Island of New Zealand.

Embedded in the heart of Ngati Porou tribal boundaries,<sup>5</sup> the town and its hinterlands are home to the fiercely independent and proud people of the illustrious ancestor Porourangi<sup>6</sup>. The sacred Mountain Hikurangi looms almost due east of the town,

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<sup>1</sup> Ngati Porou aphorism, as quoted in Ranginui Walker, p.17, He Tipua: The Life and Times of Sir Apirana Ngata.

<sup>2</sup> Personal interview. Te Hoku Whitu, Light Of The Trinity, Bob, February 22 2002, Ruatoria.

<sup>3</sup> This sacred place is named after a revered ancestress of Ngati Porou, who had a kumara pit in the area.

<sup>4</sup> See Anne Salmond, p. 165, Hui: a Study of Maori Ceremonial Gatherings. She mentions Ruatoria specifically as a place rich in traditions and history, woven living into the words of learned Maori orators, who speak to these matters on marae in this area.

<sup>5</sup> The Northern boundaries of Ngati Porou are at Potikarua, the Southern at Toka-a-Taiu Tuamotu, the Western at Kereruhuahua, and the Eastern at the Pacific Ocean - and the Sun. I have drawn this information from Ranginui Walker's map of tribal boundaries, p.26, in his biography of one of Ngati Porou's greatest modern sons, Apirana Ngata He Tipua: The Life and Times of Sir Apirana Ngata.

<sup>6</sup> Porourangi is considered the great human ancestor of the tribe that bears his name. Some of the story of Porourangi is told in Eruera Stirling's "Book of the Ancestors", in Eruera Stirling, and Anne Salmond's, Eruera: The teachings of a Maori elder. Ruatoria is a modern town today with a population of around five hundred Pakeha and Ngati Porou descendents. Some are unemployed, some work in forestry, others in farming, but all, whether Maori or Pakeha,

towering behind equally sacred Mount Aorangi. The river of the tribe, Waiapu, runs parallel to this fine rural farming town. These are landmarks whose names remind an outsider of the ancient, continuous occupation of these lands by Ngati Porou.<sup>7</sup>

I had never visited the town, nor felt the power of this ancient place and its people in person until 2002. But I had become aware of the presence of the Ruatoria Rastafarians as intertwined in the oral stories of other communities influenced by Bob Marley. Other communities wove the Dread to life in stories that spoke of their dignity, the strength of their culture, and the importance of Marley to their community<sup>8</sup>.

I was also aware through other media of the importance of Marley to the Rastafarians of Ruatoria. Bob Mita and a Maori film crew produced Ngati Dread, a one-hour

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are gifted hunters, fisher people, horse people. For a useful and supportive account of the Waiapu region, including a valuable settler history of Ruatoria, one should consult Charles Rau's excellent, 100 years of Waiapu. The text has its limits, because while it crafts an important narrative of the Pakeha settler history over a one hundred year period, it does not interlace with it the Maori history of the same area and era, in contrapuntal harmony. An unsuspecting reader would never know that two communities, Maori and Pakeha, have made Ruatoria into the place he historicises between the years 1893-1993. In other words the Maori history of this period is only barely touched on, and only in relation to the Pakeha settler history. Still, it is a fine piece of scholarship written by a local resident with real concern for the people he wrote for and about. One thing Rau mentions is the fact people in the community have had to live hard, not only after the downturn of the forestry industry in 1986, but the aftermath of Cyclone Bola which hit the East Coast in 1988, doing enormous damage. He speaks to the fact that governments up until 1993 had turned their backs on rural communities and left the people facing great hardships. Those hardships still exist into the present time, as noted by Hitendra Patel in his fine 1999 Honours dissertation, pp.3-4, in Natty Dread: The Ruatoria Rastafarians. But people like the Dread of Ruatoria are working to turn this social hardship around.

<sup>7</sup> A reader should consult Eruera Stirling, and Anne Salmond's Eruera: The Book of the Ancestors. In this chapter her kaumatua Eruera Stirling, of Te Whanau-a-Apanui, Ngati Porou, and Ngai Tahu lineage, orally crafts tribal memories into text. Some of the ancient histories of this land are fragments of genealogy told in an oral, Maori storytelling mode that interlaces family history with tribal history, personal reminiscence with tribal anecdote, humour with the most profound pathos, as he tells stories of life and death, peace and war, struggle and rebirth on Te Tai Rawhiti. A reader of his storytelling is constantly struck by how ancient and how rich the connection is between the places, the people and the events that occurred on the land. It is my wish that people read this material not for knowledge as much as to recognise that the links between people and places in oral forms are ancient and the surfaces of this rich culture are barely scratched even by kaumatua Stirling. Likewise, my work with the Dread only scratches the surface of the depths of culture and history, and some of those depths should remain undisturbed or told only by the people themselves.

<sup>8</sup> Bob Mita, Dilworth Karaka, Tracey Gad, Tigi Ness are just some of the people who spoke respectfully of the Ruatoria Dread, when speaking about their own community responses to Marley. In this respect, one could argue that in some ways many of the communities that comprise this thesis are linked to one another by a kind of storytelling genealogy, with Marley as a central force in the weaving.

documentary on the Ruatoria Dread, in 1993, shown on TV3 that same year. This was produced overall by Bob Mita's mother, the acclaimed Maori filmmaker Merata Mita, in close consultation with, and with the support of, the Ruatoria Dread. One key section of the documentary was devoted to the influence of Marley. After watching this documentary I was convinced of the importance of including the Ruatoria people in my project, though I was apprehensive about how to go about contacting the Dread. My research methods in the field were based on principles of respect and deference but I was aware that scholars of old had gone into indigenous communities without invitation, without true respect, without giving people space and room to decide whether they wanted to be "researched"<sup>9</sup>. Such researchers had colonised people's traditions and knowledge by translating living indigenous culture into texts not only to broaden the Western knowledge archive but also to extend colonialism.<sup>10</sup>

One meaningful challenge to invasive methodologies was to propose new approaches built around genuine dialogue, consultation and cultural respect. I kept these matters firmly within my critical horizon from the start of my field research. Genuine respect required that I should never approach communities without the support and respect of

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<sup>9</sup> These issues are always contentious, but I am thinking of researchers like Elsdon Best who worked with the Tuhoe people. I have felt great sadness reading his two volume, 1976 edition of Maori religion and mythology: Being An Account of the cosmogony, anthropogeny, religious beliefs and rites, magic and folk lore of the Maori folk of New Zealand, recognising how much Best took away from the people in order to *explain the natives* to the settlers of his time, a form of scholarship ensnared in concerns of Empire and colonialism. He was taking a snapshot of a dying culture before it 'passed away'. For a good genealogical history of this concern about the ethics and politics of fieldwork, one can consult Linda Tuhiwai Smith's Decolonizing Methodologies.

<sup>10</sup> I have been much influenced by the work of Edward Said, as I shall explain in the next section on theory. He constantly reminds any worker concerned with imperialism and colonisation of the ongoing need for honesty. Said calls for de-colonising workers to situate their research within the imperial and colonial power relations that enable University scholarship in ethnography to be done in the first place. I have tried by every means possible to disrupt and challenge these colonial relations in the way I have approached communities, the way I have tried to let their stories come to life by themselves, and the way I have tried to let the people control the process by consultation. But this does not change the fact my work is still situated in relations of power where I am a representative of the University; and my scholarship, no matter how supportive and respectful of the Dread, takes its place within the archives of Western knowledge. The Said text that has most challenged my thinking in this respect is "Representing the Colonized: Anthropology's Interlocutors," pp. 293-316, in his anthology of essays, Reflections on Exile: And Other Essays. The reason I proceed anyway, despite these tensions, is because I do believe that work like my own will offer a challenge to the academy because it situates the words of indigenous communities at the centre of the work, so they can speak truth to power directly, as it were. My hope is this challenge will lead others to challenge the ethics and politics of fieldwork, so scholarship can become what it truly should be *for the people and of the people*, not above them.

someone closely related to the group in question, with permission being first obtained by this person for the project to go ahead. This gave the community the choice of saying either yes or no to my project, in the privacy of their own homes; to someone they knew and trusted.

I was not prepared to force an introduction to the people of Ruatoria, not even if such a study was not possible. It was luck or fate that brought this student to Bob Mita, a young Maori filmmaker with close links to Ruatoria and the Dread. I had been introduced to him through the endorsement of a man I had interviewed in Auckland who knew him well. Through this interview Mita extended an invitation to come down the Coast with him to meet the Dread. I thank Bob warmly, not just for this opportunity, but also the wealth of information on the oral traditions of Te Tai Rawhiti that he provided to this student on the way to Ruatoria in late February 2002<sup>11</sup>. I also thank him and his family for the privilege of staying with his people in Ruatoria while the interviews took place.

I came prepared to meet people by telling them about myself and the vision I had of the project, and what my methods were. Processes of genuine dialogue and consultation required me to be honest about myself so the people could feel safe about being honest with this student. Part of this was showing my face and being open, not a researcher who hid his true purposes from the people who had welcomed him into the community. But this was most importantly about showing the people that they matter as people with history, and that comes first even if the community turns down the research project, and the researcher is unacceptable.

I was guided by Bob Mita to speak with seven Ruatoria Rastafarians over a period of two days during the first time I visited in late February 2002. Each person and each

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<sup>11</sup> I realised after speaking with Bob Mita on some of these issues that it was inappropriate to take away many of the oral riches offered to this student on matters concerning Ruatoria, genealogy and so forth. I see this silence on my part as a key aspect of decolonising work, recognising the need for silences and absences in work, so treasures stay within the locale from whence they came. I have followed the same protocol in editing decisions - some suggested by the Dread, some woven into the text by myself. I have become more aware of the need for silences as a critical part of research as I myself come from a colonised people. I better understood this principle after my visit to Ruatoria. And I have been most recently reminded of this need for silence, as loyalty to the community, by the work of Edward Said, in his essay, "Representing the Colonized: Anthropology's Interlocutors" in Reflections on Exile And Other Essays. This is a matter scholars do not like talking about but the ethical dimensions of the need to protect has to be at the centre of truly de-colonising research when speaking to communities who have endured a long history of colonisation. No one respects an informer at grassroots level, and too many researchers have become just that in my opinion, giving away secrets about other people's culture that they had no right to take.

conversation is etched into my memory. Some chose not to be recorded on audiotape, whilst others were comfortable with this intrusion into their conversations after I had spoken honestly about whom I was and why I wished to speak to them. I spoke with Te Ahi O Te Atua, Morning Star, Te Hoku Whitu, Light of the Trinity, Mechezedik, Te Kopu, and Booties,<sup>12</sup> along with Bob Mita, in a variety of locations and times. Four of the people I spoke with are closely associated with the Kirikiritangi Charitable Trust. There are other Dread in Ruatoria and just outside it that I did not speak with, not just because of time restraints but also because I felt it should be Bob Mita's choice as to whom I saw or didn't, so the community as a whole had as much protection as possible. What will emerge in this chapter is an important and rich history of the influence of Bob Marley; and while it is still only a fragment, it is one that I feel privileged to have gained insight into.<sup>13</sup>

I must admit that I felt like a person thrown into a very deep, cold pool of fresh water during these consultation processes and the reasoning sessions that followed<sup>14</sup>. Perhaps because I feel myself to be from a colonised people, in exile in Aotearoa, I was overwhelmed by the spirit of these people who are so sure of whom they are and where they belong. The Dread's generosity<sup>15</sup>, cultural strength, and rich language root them to the ground like ancient kauri trees. I say this so readers can be aware of how badly out of depth I felt during these reasoning sessions, even though I came armed with decolonising methods and principles and what I felt was a well developed understanding of Bob Marley and his influence in other parts of Aotearoa<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> I have chosen to introduce the Dread by their sealed sacred names, so their God is honoured, and their identities are protected (part of my de-colonising methodology). I have further chosen not to identify leadership and other personal characteristics of people interviewed, though I did that in a previous draft that the people of Ruatoria saw and gave expert comment on.

<sup>13</sup> It is important to recognise that some of the Dread are tohunga, healers and farmers schooled in deep oral traditions. I therefore feel gratitude to these people for allowing me to learn from them.

<sup>14</sup> Hitendra Patel speaks about being in awe of this community in his Natty Dread: The Ruatoria Rastafarians.

<sup>15</sup> It must be noted that Dread hospitality is abundant, generous, and formidable, in line with the ancient traditions of Ngati Porou. All reasoning sessions were carried out with cups of tea and coffee, food, and goodwill. I wish to thank Te Ahi O Te Atua, Morning Star, Light Of The Trinity, Te Hoku Whitu, and Bob for their collective manaakitanga (hospitality).

<sup>16</sup> My understanding of Bob Marley's music had been enriched, not just by listening to much of his musical corpus, but also by crucial groundwork done by reggae music historians, such as Lloyd Bradley, who wrote the first comprehensive Jamaican music history of Ska, Rock Steady, Reggae, Dancehall, and Ragga in his fine text Bass Culture. Kwame Dawes' book Bob Marley: Lyrical Genius was an important text in the way it situated so many Marley

Something of the people, their spirit and their life-ways always eluded my understanding and had a subtle effect on the dialogue that developed. The mystical quality of the people to whom I spoke, influenced how I chose to read and interpret the oral taonga [treasures] the community presented on audiotape at a much later point. My awareness of the mystical was heightened as I journeyed with Bob Mita to pay respect to some of the sacred meeting houses important to the Ruatoria Dread<sup>17</sup>. Visits to sacred places occurred on Saturday morning (after Friday night introductions, but before most reasoning sessions, which occurred Saturday afternoon, Saturday night, and Sunday morning) and were accompanied by guidance and expert insight from Bob Mita. We travelled to Whakapaurangi five or so kilometres South West of the township of Ruatoria, and came to the Ringatu<sup>18</sup> meeting house Te

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lyrics within the Jamaican, and Black Diasporan contexts from which his music emerged. One of the unique qualities of his work is the way Dawes relates the songs, Marley's life, and his authorial experience as a black youth bought up in Kingston Jamaica into a well crafted narrative tale that does not separate personal or Marley biography from cultural or historical analysis. Poetic writing sits comfortably alongside political and private interpretations of Marley's songs. In consequence there is a permeable relationship between the boundaries of scholarly analysis and personal feeling. Chapters which analyse each of Marley's main Island albums are woven together in a narrative full of poetry, anecdote, reminisce, and political historical and cultural analysis, held together (I feel) by the joy, sorrow, and sense of exile that is the experience of many of the Black Diaspora, an experience that Marley spoke to (calling his people out of the cursed land of Babylon into the Promised Land, moving the people out of the condition of Diaspora to homecoming). It is this shifting, poetically constructed story that provides vivid testimony to how Marley has become his people, as his spiritual songs have been woven into the fabric of their lives. I had also spent two years speaking to people around the country about Marley, so felt that I had some experience under my belt before speaking to the Ruatoria Dread. But even with all this preparation, the Marley I was introduced to in Ruatoria was someone I did not recognise, testimony to the Dread and their acceptance of Marley within their world, which is unique and special in this country.

<sup>17</sup> I have made the decision not to include geographical maps in the body of this work because I wish these places to lodge in the imagination of people without recourse to immediately accessible diagrams such as maps. The places have direct bearing on some of the Dread's words concerning Bob Marley, so it is important for their words to weave places into being rather than as lines and dots on maps. But, for those interested in following this issue up, there is a fine map of Te Tai Rawhiti rural meeting houses on page 58, of Anne Salmond's book, Hui: A Study of Maori ceremonial gatherings. This map features the meeting houses at Hiruharama and Whareponga, though the marae at Whakapaurangi is not included. Her map allows a reader to understand that Maori culture, as expressed through the establishment of meeting houses, flourishes in the region even if there is still much economic hardship and travail.

<sup>18</sup> Ringatu means upraised hand in Maori. It is the name for the spiritual faith established by the great Maori anti-colonial freedom fighter and prophet Te Kooti in the latter nineteenth century. Part of acknowledging one's relationship to God in Ringatu services is to raise the open hand as one says prayers as a gesture of faith to God, and it is from here the faith gains its name. Te Kooti founded his faith in the midst of a colonial war in New Zealand in 1865, when his tribe Rongowhakata was suffering unjust and cruel confiscations of land at the hands of a settler government. Te Kooti fought back, and led settler government troops and

Aowera. Here, in this quiet place close to the meeting house lie the last earthly remains of Jah Rastafari, or Kara, fallen leader of the Ruatoria Rastafarians<sup>19</sup>.

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their Maori allies a merry chase over much of the lower North Island for fifteen years, between his 1868 prison escape to his 1883 royal pardon by the Queen of England. His story is one of legend in Aotearoa, and he formed relationships with many tribes during his travels not just through his military exploits and his daring escapes, but by establishing and building meeting houses, to insure the people always had a place to stand during a time of colonial invasion. I was told Te Kooti never came into Ngati Porou lands to found the marae at Whakapaurangi, but the meeting house stands as living testimony to his influence amongst the people of Ruatoria. Te Kooti was multi-talented. He was a prolific, gifted composer of songs, many written for a faith founded out of confiscation and exile, but always underpinned with the hope the Maori people would be redeemed and returned to the land of their ancestors when a prophet, who would follow Te Kooti, rose up to lead the people out of colonised misery back to the promised land. He left many prophecies as part of his ongoing legacy, prophecies sourced out of the hardship he and his people endured during his time of exile and the time of confiscation of land that had previously been theirs. Te Kooti demanded that many of the sacred texts and songs of the Ringatu faith be memorised to be recited orally, as was the traditional Maori way of retaining and transmitting knowledge to the community in oral form (although some of the traditions were later textualised with his permission). While he used the Bible in his services - and thus interwove Jewish, Christian, and Maori traditions into one - the language used was always Maori. A reader should consult Judith Binney's fine biographical history of Te Kooti, Redemption Songs: a life of Te Kooti Arikirangi Te Turuki to gain understanding of his remarkable life, and the foundations of the faith he created. It is ironic that the author uses the title of a famous Bob Marley song to frame the life of Te Kooti. There are also important appendices in her book that chronicle the many rich and varied songs Te Kooti wrote over a long life. Wi Tarei, pp.138-43, author of the chapter, "A Church Called Ringatu," in Te Ao Hurihuri: Aspects Of Maoritanga, provides a warm autobiographical telling of one man's journey to the faith of Ringatu that complements Binney's text from the position of an insider to the faith of Ringatu. He emphasises oral learning, and recitation of key components of the faith, as at the heart of what it means to be Ringatu pp.139. Tarei also speaks to the fact that Ringatu services are in Maori, paying homage to Te Kooti for his visionary ability to see that the language would come under threat from the Pakeha, hence it was necessary to find ways of retaining it through the very structure of the services themselves, see Tarei, pp.142. These issues were raised by Te Hoku Whitu in Ruatoria, in a reasoning session which will appear in a later section of the chapter. Finally, it is important to note Te Kooti's people were the Rongowhakata people of Te Tai Rawhiti, closely related to Ngati Porou by genealogy and geographical proximity.

<sup>19</sup> Jah Rastafari looms large in the history of the Ruatoria Rastafarians, and his life, tribulations and death are crafted living in oral reasoning sessions by the Dread so his spirit lives on amongst them. I was introduced to Kara first in the story of Tigi Ness from Auckland, who knew Kara in the early 1980s as an impressive and fine young man at the time. Personal interview. Tigi, June 6, 2000, Auckland. The Dread will speak of him in sections to follow which weave him into life, so I will provide just a bare outline of his rich life and legacy here. Kara was Dux of his school, a gifted boxer, an indigenous land rights activist, who fought his way out of the gangs and into the faith of Rastafari. Kara was the man who brought the Rastafarian faith into Ruatoria in 1982. Personal interview. Te Ahi O Te Atua, Morning Star, Bob Mita, February 23, 2002, Ruatoria. He was tragically killed in a shooting incident in 1990, only 34 years old, with a wife and child left behind. It is fair to say that Ruatoria experienced much social tension in the '80s and '90s, matters that have been reported publicly in New Zealand in ways that do little to help an outsider understand what really happened in the town during those years. One could consult articles such as Rosemary McLeod, 'The William's of Ruatoria: Living on the edge', in North and South, October 1988, pages 64-79;

We then travelled south five kilometres to the sacred meeting house at Hiruharama, the Maori name for Jerusalem. This sacred place also had a profound effect on my sense of the people and the town, as I was introduced to its quiet majesty by Bob Mita, a direct descendent of its founder.<sup>20</sup> The Rastafarian faith sprang up from men closely associated with these two meeting houses and their respective areas,<sup>21</sup> so I was made aware of the significance of my visit in later reasoning sessions with the Dread. Because of time restraints I was unable to visit the third marae in the Jeru<sup>22</sup> apex, Te Poho O Materoa, at Whareponga<sup>23</sup> on the Coast South East from Ruatoria Township. The feeling of history, and cultural richness I experienced at these places affected the reasoning sessions profoundly. Some of these places were woven into stories about Bob Marley and about times of sorrow, hardship and joy experienced within the crucible of this land. Places and the redemptive oral narratives within which they were named and situated came to life and became flesh in my imagination, and song and land were transformed into genealogy.<sup>24</sup>

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or Kim Paterson, pp.11-13, 'Trial by Fire,' New Zealand Women's Weekly, March 9, 1987. But a reader should be forewarned that these stories provide a poor context to the town's troubles at the time, and are simply not reliable. Jah Rastafari was a victim of the town's tensions. Kara appears and reappears all through the Dread's thought. I have chosen in this chapter to include one section on Jah Rastafari, but I have kept back many of the words spoken about him out of respect for the Dread's privacy. Also so many words spoken of him take the form of lamentations, and these are too precious to record here, though they appeared in previous drafts when I was not as careful as I should have been in protecting these taonga.

<sup>20</sup> Bob Mita is the great-great-grandson of the Te Aowera chief who founded the house and community at Hiruharama, Tuta Nihoniho. Personal interview. Bob Mita, February 23, 2002, Ruatoria.

<sup>21</sup> Personal interview. Te Ahi O Te Atua, Morning Star, Bob Mita, February 23, 2002, Ruatoria. Both these areas are part of the wider area known as Jeru.

<sup>22</sup> Jeru is a name used colloquially by locals to speak about Jerusalem as the Southern and South eastern region outside Ruatoria from Whakapaurangi, to Snake Gully, through to Hiruharama, and over to Whareponga on the Eastern Coast. This area has sub-tribal family groups who are traditionally associated with it. I was given a very generous thumbnail sketch of these complex relationships that define Maori loyalties in the town to different allegiances, but have chosen to remain silent on these local matters out of respect for the people's privacy.

<sup>23</sup> Whareponga is the place where warriors of Te Aowera hapu of Ngati Porou were trained in the ancient Maori warrior school, before the ancient training was set aside just before World War Two. Personal Interview. Te Ahi O Te Atua, Morning Star, Bob Mita, February 23, 2002, Ruatoria. For a fine account of this area that touches on this warrior school, one should consult the book written by one of the last warriors trained under this system at Whareponga itself, Arapeta Awatere - his memoir Awatere: a soldier's story. The book brings the Coast to life from the perspective of one of its greatest warrior sons of the modern era, the commander of the Maori Battalion in World War Two. Te Ahi O Te Atua's mother is the younger sister of Te Moananui a Kiwa Ngarimu of Whareponga, the only Maori winner of the Victoria Cross (posthumously) in World War Two.

<sup>24</sup> I will expand on this important idea later.

In many ways I felt my own academic training was useless here so it was better to go with the flow and work by instinct. I was required to ask analytical, community-centred questions about the influence of Marley in Ruatoria in terms of albums, Rasta culture, politics, spirituality and history, in order for the interviews to qualify as a thesis. But it was my foremost wish that the people challenge and ‘question my questions’ by speaking according to their own cultural protocols, and thereby bring to life a Bob Marley that transcended the one I was suggesting in my line of enquiry. The very mode of storytelling the Dread employed, and my experience of the people and the land, ensured that these concerns became part of a liberating methodology, even though a number of my questions continued to be posed stupidly. Above all, I wanted people to speak about Marley without being circumscribed in their responses by prefabricated questions that assumed I already knew what I wanted. I was helped by my experience as a Polynesian that if one shuts up and shows humility and respect, one can actually learn something new, and people are not coerced into saying anything they do not wish to say.

The reasoning sessions were potent with rich offerings, layer upon layer of meaning, biblical metaphor, scriptural proverb, whakatauki (Maori proverb) and pepeha (tribal sayings). Trying to work with these words became a daunting task in the months and years that followed. This chapter is composed of three such reasoning sessions involving four Ruatoria Dread and Bob Mita, with this student<sup>25</sup>. Each recorded reasoning session took no less than two hours to complete. Two took place in the home of Te Hoku Whitu, and his wife Light of the Trinity, and developed as group discussions with Bob Mita and this student participating. Both Te Hoku Whitu and his wife are in their thirties, and on both occasions we spoke on their back porch with

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<sup>25</sup> One of the Dreads, Te Kopu, was happy to talk about Bob Marley, but preferred not to be recorded on audiotape. I got only brief notes from a rich, short fifteen minutes of conversation with him, but they were memorable. I have not included Te Kopu in the text because my notes from the talk were shorthand, and I could not write fast enough so I could enable his voice to stand alone without mine getting in the way. Te Kopu spoke about how grieved he and his young school friends were in 1981, when the news of Marley’s death first came to Aotearoa. Te Kopu is a fine carver, and I was shown one of his carvings “Spirit of the Waiapu,” in his garage on Saturday morning. I also spoke to Booties, another Ruatoria Dread, though we did not really get a chance to speak about Marley on a busy morning. The other Dread I spoke to was Melchezedek whom I met briefly at the home of Te Hoku Whitu and Light of the Trinity. He was another strong-spirited man whom I regret not being able to speak with in depth as he had to leave after a short visit. It should be obvious to a reader that there were many other Dread in Ruatoria I did not speak with, some living just outside Ruatoria, like Melchezedek, or beyond in Snake Gully around the flanks of Mount Hikurangi. I spoke with a number of Dread closely associated with the Kirikiritangi Charitable Trust.

their two fine boys playing in the back section. There was a spirit of group democracy and equality always present in these discussions, yet Light of the Trinity chose to speak less than her partner, though she spoke with great dignity and wisdom. It was clear to this student that all shared a deep and abiding respect for Bob Marley and what he had offered the dread community in Ruatoria. It was obvious the seed of this message bought by Marley had fully flowered.

The third recorded group reasoning session was created at the home of Te Ahi O Te Atua and his wife Morning Star on the Saturday evening of my visit. Te Ahi and Morning Star are somewhat older than Te Hoku Whitu and his wife, and it was from them I learned about Ruatoria and Bob Marley in early times, rich information that does not seem to be recorded in any texts. Again the conversations developed organically, with Morning Star adding rich embellishments, but, like Light of the Trinity, mostly choosing to listen and support the talk of her husband. When she did speak it was with an authority and dignity like those of her husband. Marley was brought to life in narratives that spoke of his ongoing value to the works of faith the people are still planting in Ruatoria for the benefit of their young.

The next section of the chapter will explain how I tried to come to terms with this profound oral testimony.

### **Kia Ora to the whanau in Ruatoria**

I have written what follows as if I am talking to you. I am, because you are the most important audience. I am talking to other readers also, but you are the first audience in my spiral. My work speaks to you, then to my friend and supervisor Roger Horrocks, and then the narrative weaves up and out to audiences in other parts of the spiral in Aotearoa. I see this form of address as an important way of showing you respect and bringing you into the spiral of academic work. I am talking at this moment, but it is your words in your stories that will speak and educate us, as they move out to those who value your words outside Te Tai Rawhiti.

In trying to take great care, I have thought much about how to write the final draft of this community chapter for your whanau. For me, everything is ultimately related to colonisation. Each technique I use, each style of writing, all the structures employed, work either to help your community or to hinder it. Your community carries the can for my work, so my work must serve. You are my friends first, and a community of

battlers first. It is on this front that I engage as ally. The issue of a PhD is valuable to me, but less valuable than your concerns and community wellbeing. I have never seen my work in support of your community in anything less than combat terms, combat against what you have suffered. If you accept my work, and the University fails it, I will still have passed the most important test: serving the community.

I have employed Maori concepts in many of my chapters so I should start by saying something about them. I am not myself Maori, so I must explain what I know, and how I am employing terms because colonisation or recolonisation is at stake even in such small matters. I have used the concepts as a means to shape, position, theorise, and structure an interpretation of your Bob Marley, as told through your stories. In this way I have sought to place my work inside the world of Te Tai Rawhiti and its sky, moon, sun, land, and rivers.

The second section will discuss the concept of the spiral. Then I will introduce the main section ('The Spiral Weave') which is in three parts. At the centre of this section will be your stories, talking for you, and your community.

### **The values of community and the values of study**

Working with your community taonga involved respectfully using words and concepts drawn from Te Ao Maori. I have employed terms such as whakawhanaungatanga [inter-relationships], manaakitanga [hospitality], aroha [love], hui [gathering], mana [prestige or spiritual power], and rangatiratanga [self-determination]<sup>26</sup> throughout the thesis. (Of course, these brief English translations give only a superficial sense of the Maori meaning of the terms.)

I was a recipient of your manaakitanga in Ruatoria. Hospitality, care, kindness, concern, food, time, effort to speak with me, and the generosity of sharing oral taonga when I was down in Ruatoria gave me a deeper understanding of concepts of this kind

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<sup>26</sup> Hirini Moko Mead's Tikanga Maori is a useful introduction to these terms and how they are structured by community knowledge and expertise. Mead skilfully discusses how these concepts emerge as a distinct philosophy of Te Ao Maori. He also examines how both the historical experience of the community (an experience the people draw upon in order to understand a concept) and the philosophy behind the concept, structure the employment of the concept in communal practices as its third dimension. There are spiritual dimensions to the practice of such concepts under the ever-seeing eyes of the Tipuna or ancestors; and as I understand it, such practices root people to selfhood, community, land, hill, sky, tipuna [ancestors]. For an analysis of these relationships see Donna Awatere-Huata's Maori Sovereignty.

as they structure the lives of those who live true to Te Ao Maori. Such staunch values have held Maori communities together against the power of colonialism in this country<sup>27</sup>. After much time and retraining I have come to understand that these values run river-like through your rich stories, themes, structures, whakatauki [proverbs], pepeha [sayings] - adding life, shape and beauty to the landscape - including the communal stories of the influence of Bob Marley in your Ruatoria<sup>28</sup>. The values are multi-dimensional – including a spiritual dimension - and hold the many parts of your world together, weaving people to hill to land to sky to ancestors, in one living, holistic pattern. I will talk of spiral patterns because I wanted to find a motif that had mana in Maori tradition. Among the many people who have discussed the spiral is Donna Awatere-Huata, one of your whanaunga, in her Maori Sovereignty. I hope the spiral motif - based on my aroha for you as a people - will add to your mana and also, in its design, help to respect and protect the wholeness of your way of life. The Bob Marley that is part of your taonga should wear ta moko<sup>29</sup>. Getting my bearings from your words, my experience of your land, my readings in Maoridom, my

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<sup>27</sup> Refer to Linda Smith, Decolonizing Methodologies. I have augmented my understanding of this reality by activism and community work in Maori communities. On the 2004 Hikoi, it was values of community, resistance, staunchness, courage, and aroha that saw many poorer Maori march the length of the land to express their outrage at the Labour Government's last land grab, the Foreshore and Seabed Bill. I have seen this strength in your community, how you practice values even in extreme hardship and suffering. And I have read about such community staunchness through the works of people like David Hilliard in his, This Side of Glory: The Autobiography of David Hilliard and the Story of the Black Panther Party. In other words, through life, activism, and academic works, I have sought an historical understanding of how values such as manaaki, whanaungatanga, and arohatanga offer such strength in the face of colonialism because they are living values that hold communities together.

<sup>28</sup> I will seek to explain these connections, and the metaphorical leaps that connect the different dimensions of your lives later in the chapter. It is of course easy metaphorically to sound as if one understands complex processes, spiritual realities, people's histories, when one really knows nothing. Their lives, history and culture lie like Hikurangi on a misty day, its grandeur hidden by mists that hide its mana and power. The mana and strength of the community stand beyond my academic scaffolding, and only the local community can fully define these matters. I would add that texts that have influenced my thinking on this issue include Edward Said, pp. 436-452, 'Travelling Theory Reconsidered' in Essays On Exile, Donna Awatere-Huata's Maori Sovereignty, and Aroha Harris' A History Of Maori Protest; but perhaps the greatest influence has been the music of Bob Marley, especially the words of the female vocalist who sings 'Pass It On' (the Bunny Wailer song writing contribution, to an album dominated by Bob Marley song writing contributions) from the 1973 Wailer album Burnin': "Be not selfish in your doings pass it on/ live for yourself you live in vain/ live for others you live again." Now there is a motto for de-colonising and community-based research!

<sup>29</sup> A Maori tattoo.

love of Bob Marley, and my activism and community work, here is my tribute to your community and your stories.

As a student I grew tired of academic, 'top down' methods of analysing oral culture, analysis dominated by theory. Instead, the centre of my chapter will be your oral korero [speech]. I have built an intellectual structure around, below, and in front of these fine words but my basic method is to move from the grassroots up, taking the truth of your words - their philosophy, their decolonising warrior history, anecdotes, genealogy, and spiritual history<sup>30</sup> - words that are your own and stand in the world of Te Ao Maori beyond my analysis. I have connected these words to my experience of your land, the environment of Ruatoria from where the stories emerged. I have moved most of my commentary and analysis to the footnotes. In speaking of the spiral I want to constantly keep in mind the way your culture is interconnected or interwoven with your land and your ancestors. When I employ the spiral I do so not merely as an academic using a conceptual tool but also as a son of Polynesia, connected to ocean, sky, and ancestors of my own.<sup>31</sup>

I have taken oral taonga away from your community, but in return I want to replant them in soil fruitful to the growth of your stories, in a framework based on an understanding of Te Ao Maori. I am an outsider, even as a distant relation from Te Moana Nui A Kiwa, and I have never made the mistake of thinking that my understanding was the same as yours, or had the same value, history and genealogy. But my replanting is done with respect for your taonga, in support of your community, and in solidarity with your struggle to resist colonisation. The values, practices, and

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<sup>30</sup> These are interpretations of what I have seen and felt not only in meeting you and seeing your community, but also in thinking about and working alongside the actual words the community speaks. Works such as Api Mahuika, pp.43-63, in his 'Leadership: Inherited And Received' in Te Ao Hurihuri: Aspects Of Maoritanga, have introduced this student to a small part of the Ngati Porou heritage in regards to genealogy. I have also consulted Apirana Ngata's, Rauru-nui-a-Toi lectures; and Ngati-Kahungunu Origins. For an introduction to Maori songs, music, and culture I consulted two Margaret Orbell texts: South Pacific oral traditions, edited by Ruth Finnegan and Margaret Orbell, and Margaret Orbell's Waiata: Maori songs in history: an anthology. I have heard many Maori songs and spoken with many Maori about oral traditions, genealogy, history of music and culture. This is not to suggest that I am an expert - my readings here are light – and I mention them to you, the Ruatoria community, simply so you are aware that I have tried to understand your words and place them in a framework of respect.

<sup>31</sup> I am talking about my personal, ongoing efforts to locate my studies between activism, community work, the academy and Pacific heritage in a way that can enrich all these areas. Edward Said, pp. 173-186, 'Reflections On Exile,' in Reflections on Exile And other essays is one work that has suggested to me possible ways of moving between these worlds.

structures of Rangatiratanga, the warrior culture, your manaaki, your whanaungatanga, your aroha, are woven into complex forms in your stories, and they provide central strands in the weave that holds your narratives together. I see this pattern of values as a spiritual centre around which are gathered your stories of community redemption, exile, diaspora (a scattering like the children of Israel), hope, the return to Zion, Ruatoria - loss, death, renewal, and the re-healing of the land, the people, and the community. The larger curves of the spiral connect you to tipuna, to land, to spirit, to Zion.

I am of course only speaking from my own experience which may be child-like in comparison to your traditions; but I am hoping that, even if I can make only metaphorical connections, the work will be community-centred in your own mana, and you can see more of yourselves reflected in the respectful way I have understood your Bob Marley.

My footnotes seek to connect the weave of your words to other rich international traditions. Bob Marley wove his pattern from Jamaica to Aotearoa, and in this part of my labour I seek to connect the words, spoken of Ruatoria to other times and places. My comments touch upon ideas of how music travels, how people understand music, and how they use it for de-colonising purposes (reception theory). I have augmented your words with the ideas of Donna Awatere-Huata, Paul Gilroy, Edward Said and a few other thinkers. I have moved in and out of local issues, connecting specific grassroots concerns with more general issues, such as notions of modernity, Maori ideas of Space and Time, and the healing of the land. I sincerely hope that these connections will not overload or smother your stories. I see them as underlining the richness of your words by pointing out a few of the many connections opened up by your history, philosophy and spirituality. It is my hope people who read this thesis will realise it is indigenous communities - not scholars like this student - who matter most and have most to teach.

All the theory, in the footnotes, sits beneath the mana of your words. My work returns always to upholding your community mana - not only out of loyalty to you, and your generous trust in me, but also out of a grassroots-up politics of service. I struggled in my work with questions such as: Is it possible to construct an approach to community taonga so that the method is rooted first in community strength, then in one's own experience, then in academic forms? Can methodology be contrapuntal or multi-sited - not centred only in the University, only in the community, or only in activism, but

somewhere that is between all three? Can such an approach serve oppressed communities? I set out to try to develop such a methodology because otherwise I could not make sense of the spiritual experience I had in Ruatoria. I felt the only way to situate your taonga was to locate your words under Te Tai Rawhiti, sky, sun and moon, while simultaneously shifting my structuring process from the university to community-based understandings of academia. I wish to pay tribute to Linda Tuhiwai Smith's Decolonizing Methodologies for encouraging me towards these insights.

I also experienced your rangatiratanga when in Ruatoria. I saw you choosing to self-determine your futures, reconnect to your past, and make sense of your present through lifestyle choices - the care of your land, your families, and your inheritance from your ancestors. I have felt your ihi<sup>32</sup> in your presence and the spirit of Rangatiratanga in your staunch resistance to oppressors. I have seen the practice of Rangatiratanga in your community leadership, community self-development projects, and in the ways in which you have attempted to offer direction, hope and self-employment to your community. Standing under your own mountain, your own river, amongst your own tipuna, and on your own whenua, you are centred in your own world. I have seen and felt the Rangatiratanga in your humble yet staunch narratives of Bob Marley. I have heard the themes that emerge from your stories - the search for hope, for a way out of colonisation, to return to your culture, to find your spirituality, and to fight against your oppressors. For me, your living story of Bob Marley is as indigenous as it is international, for this is a story about how your community has held fast to its spiritual centre, to the values of Te Ao Maori [the Maori world] and its warrior traditions.<sup>33</sup>

I have stood in different places in my life - as academic, as Polynesian, as activist, as community worker in Auckland - but from wherever I stand, I see your ideas as something to support and empower. At the same time I want to reassure you that in my approach I have never implied that I am a member of your community. My

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<sup>32</sup> See Rev. Maori Marsden, pp.117-137, 'Maori A World View' in Te Ao Hurihuri: Aspects Of Maoritanga, edited by Michael King. Marsden defines ihi as psychic energy, the physical and mental force of a person, their personality, and strength. Ihi is something given to each individual. Ihi differs from mana, prestige or authority given by the Gods.

<sup>33</sup> I have also experienced (and been humbled by) such cultural values in my work for the Maori Party, and in other community and political activism involving Maori people, and in the work of distinguished Maori scholars such as Rev. Maori Marsden, Hirini Moko Mead, and John Rangihau. See Marsden's 'God, Man and Universe: A Maori View', Mead's Tikanga Maori, and John Rangihau, pp. 183-190, 'Being Maori'.

approach draws on Te Ao Maori but does not claim to be indigenous, nor does it ever seek to control or impose on your words, your knowledge.<sup>34</sup>

It was my hope that if I employed these values in appropriate ways, your own stories would tell themselves, so to speak, while the added commentary helped to theorise the stories within the same world of values. Perhaps this is a strange way of working but it is my belief that the best way to understand or interpret your stories comes not from academia, or my activism, but from you, your lives, your land, your ancestors, and the stories themselves – if we can learn to see them from the inside looking outwards.

These are matters I have agonised over as I wrote and rewrote endless drafts of this final chapter since the last time I saw you. I hope this final version works for you and that you are able to see how and why I have written it. I await with interest your response as to whether this replanting has mana in your eyes.

## **The Spiral Weave**

I have designed the rest of the chapter as a three part structure. The first section weaves together your community labours as an introduction to the varied community services you perform. This is the first part of a larger spiral that connects you to land, to history, to culture, to community service, and to Bob Marley (who is part of the overall weave of your community labours). The section ends with some general comments on music as part of everyday life.

The second weave of the spiral is built around your oral histories relating Marley to your land, to genealogy and to history. This is a rich section where you educate us on how Marley came to Ruatoria, how he brought change, and how you have woven him into your lives in many profound ways.

The third weave of the spiral concerns quotes where you spoke about his music, your reception of his sound, and how the music weaves into your lives. Here we are introduced to your understandings and knowledge of his music and lyrics. The section

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<sup>34</sup> The bottom-up approach comes from my Marxist and community politics. In simple terms it means standing in a place where one supports those who possess the least goods but have the most to offer the world. It means not only standing underneath to support someone else; it also means actively working alongside those people to help them in community-based service. I learned this mode of working from activism, from participating in the 2004 Hikoi, and being involved with the Maori Party as a volunteer. I have employed this thinking as I engaged with methodologies and thinkers that I found in academic books in order to counterpoint their work against my own.

ends with you relating Marley to your hopes and joys, your spiritual lives and ongoing works of faith for your community.

This structure is not a rigid framework – at times it circles back over a previous theme to remind the reader that all the dimensions of your lives are parts of a larger pattern.

I have not added any photographs or images because your images are your own. And I have not added any maps to stop people defining you in map coordinates. Rather, it is my aim that Ruatoria as a place, a people, a spirit, and a community will come to life from the weave of quotes. Your spoken words stand up in their own right, and I hope the analysis and footnotes woven around them enrich and support your community as the centre of its world.

### **Section One (Spiral Weave One)**

The Dread has set up the Kirikiritangi Charitable Trust in order to do work for the community on a non-profit, Te Tino Rangatiratanga, and grassroots-up Ngati Porou kaupapa<sup>35</sup>. You, the community have trained as permaculture specialists, organic gardeners, earth-mud-brick home designers and builders. The Dread also operate a boxing gym to enable local youth to gain fitness and build self-esteem. When I was last in Ruatoria, you the community were trying to set up an art gallery focusing on local artwork by people in the wider Ruatoria community.

Your community work is centred simultaneously in the earthly and the spiritual realm, and after my visit to your community I began to realise that you stood both inside and beyond the modernity you resisted so fiercely. The spiral motif I have woven into this chapter is also made out of your love for your families and community, and the principles of whakawhanaungatanga, manaakitanga, arohatanga that hold rural Maori communities together, even though they suffer terribly. Bob Marley is lived in your community through these values and experiences. As I speak in passing about such matters, I certainly do not assume knowledge of their deeper aspects. The Bob Marley that emerges in the rich patterns of your lives is an enigma, a mystery to this student. Nevertheless, in the work to come I have tried to pay tribute to this figure, and sought

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<sup>35</sup> Kaupapa [agenda]. One might consult Hitendra Patel's Natty Dread: The Ruatoria Rastafarians for a discussion of some of the Dread's fine community work.

to connect his influence, the journey of your faith, and your deep knowledge of his music, to the other dimensions of your lives<sup>36</sup>.

Each of your labours is rooted in the self-determination of an indigenous community, and in spiritual and emotional healing (by bringing people closer to Papatuanuku [mother Earth]), in addition to providing self help and employment opportunities. The community is well versed in understanding its own needs and desires, and has a fine group of organisers with the skills, energy, and commitment to get activities done.<sup>37</sup> Your community work is remarkable. It is important for outside readers to understand that your labours are services to empower a rural, indigenous community that has had to struggle with poverty, social hardship, and land loss over many generations. Your house building projects are a response to health concerns and protection of the physical environment, as well as unemployment. And your work is equally part of a wider, holistic programme that ties your work to your faith, your community, and guardianship of the land<sup>38</sup>. Later we will also learn how music is linked with all these areas. You – Te Hoku Whitu and Bob Mita - bring these issues to life for us in the rich discussion that follows:

Bob- Like the bro mentioned last night, horticulture, permaculture, was another one of the things getting certified. Permaculture, you know, the organic farming and all that. That was another thing the bros have all got now.

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<sup>36</sup> The point of all this labour is to serve. One thinker who has reminded this student of the need for scholarship to serve indigenous communities is Linda Tuhiwai Smith. Her book, Decolonizing Methodologies is a reminder that indigenous communities still suffer and struggle to survive. I have also learned something of the need to serve from my supervisor Professor Horrocks.

<sup>37</sup> After I visited your community I became aware that all your fine conservation work, protection of the land and soil was a fine, indigenous contribution to the international permaculture movement. (Permaculture is agriculture and design based on the ecological principles of nature.) Hitendra Patel speaks briefly about your gardening techniques and permaculture, in his Natty Dread: the Ruatoria Rastafarians. For a useful introduction to permaculture design, philosophy, practice one could watch David Holmgren's conference presentation 'What Is Permaculture?' on the DVD Fuelling The Future (from the "Fuelling the Future" conference, June 2005, Kinsale, Ireland). In a time where oil reserves are running down and where people will be forced to renew their relationships to land, food production and environment - as oil runs out, so will employment as we know it, the ability to mass-produce steel and transport goods internationally in large commercial volumes – you, the Dread community, are among the leaders in inviting the world's people to return to a respect for the land. For discussion on peak oil and prospects for energy alternatives, one could consult the documentary Fuelling The Future, and watch the Colin Campbell presentation, 'The End of the First Half of the Age of Oil'. Of course, for the Dread, permaculture and land conservation are framed within Maori protocols, needs, and alongside ancient Maori conservation practices and gardening skills.

<sup>38</sup> Issues raised in Natty Dread: The Ruatoria Rastafarians.

Te Hoku Whitu- Certified in design.

Bob- Where we were last night [Crossroads, Te Ahi's home] there is an actual permaculture farm, and so there is an earth brick house there I pointed out to you, but it was dark. But the music, the stone that the builder refused [on the basis of the Bible and Marley's song, 'Ride Natty Ride'] - a lot of those things, they're all kind of the same, eh bro, it all ties in with what he [Marley] says too, Rootsman, eh.

Te Hoku Whitu- Earth builders, they all come back, eh - permaculture designers, yeah, Dread, and we didn't do it for [any] thing, we did it because it needed to be done, we had to wait to sort it out for the people, because we had to retain the skills now. In time to come, one can teach one hundred, a hundred can teach a thousand. But it's like now they reckon \$65 bucks an hour for a permaculture man, for a designer, it's a real big thing, but it's not big here because no one knows about it - but you step out into the big world. [Still,] it's just another skill like skinning sheep, eh. We got a lot of other things we need to learn - see, our idea is to create a skill-base amongst our own people. Bring in baldheads from Bubbleland - Gisborne - and we got plumbers here, builders here, we got designers, everything, we got fitters, sparkies - just ring up A.J Dreadlock, "Got a mahi [job] on, eh" - so you, old Dread, ring up bro number two, "Mahi apopo [tomorrow]", you know, "Too much, bro" and we sort of orchestrate it eh, we can see who is best suited for the positions because we are representing it from grassroots level, so we don't lose autonomy concerning our kaupapa. And we said to government last year that we wanted to represent our case to government, we wanted to go up and put our case forward because they won't carry the same zeal as we would. All it might need is one sentence to slip in, then it hammers them eh, one line and it switches their whole former thinking, but it's just getting in the right korero. I said "Look at all the other whanau, the whole coast is under full assimilation, go cotton picking, wine picking, whatever picking they can do." But we saying, "Nah, nah," furiously we are saying "Get thee hence" [as Christ said to the deceiver Satan]. We can be in bro, [but] the root of all evil is the love of money, eh.<sup>39</sup>

The brethren and sistren have persevered through trials and tribulations on the land and through their difficult history, and have widened their skills base to help liberate the whanau [extended family]. The protection of the whenua and the people lies at the heart of the work, employing whanau structures that are already within the hearts and minds of the people, for liberating and de-colonising effect - not work driven merely by "love of money".<sup>40</sup> The courage to go to the government and present the plan is

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<sup>39</sup> Personal interview. Te Hoku Whitu, Light Of the Trinity, and Bob Mita, February 23 2002, Ruatoria.

<sup>40</sup> In some ways the programmes of the Dread for community survival could be compared to the survival programmes put into effect by the Black Panther party for self-defence in Oakland in black communities in the 1960s and early to middle '70s, which were themselves influenced by Mao Tse Tung's philosophy of guerrilla warfare and the proper treatment of peasants by the army of liberation in China in the 1930s and 1940s. The Black Panthers set up free breakfast for children, free shoes, and food parcels for the needy in the black community,

part of the kaupapa to end the government's inappropriate meddling in the affairs of the people.

Te Ahi, you add to Te Hoku Whitu and Bob's introduction by adding your own whakaaro [thoughts] about the community developing projects:

Te Ahi- So we bought a man up from Nelson, the old engineer, who swung around site- testing our soils, eh, whether mud was alright for brick.

Bob- Sweet as.

Te Ahi- Yeah, he reckoned perfect, eh, everywhere we tested from Tikitiki right back to Jeru, a bit further than Jeru - perfect, so choice, so laughing, so we just turn up, scrape apart all that soil under the topsoil, scrape a pile up, turn it into brick, and these, yours, bring in the crew to do all the foundation work, and yeah, in two weeks start to finish because once there, we'll just jack it up with all our mates who got those portable sawmills, eh, and all onto the flows of timbers. Start dealing with them, start cutting good pieces for our buildings, if we get buildings. Go down to cut the price down, save by using old King Benchmark or King Tumu timber, going through into their kingdom. When you look at it, the mud brick, the sawmill business, eh, too much!<sup>41</sup>

Te Ahi, your comments speak to a community with an array of skills who read their terrain, assess their needs, and network with many others so that this grassroots-up, locally self-determining labour can be given energy and direction<sup>42</sup>. The vision is to get all the whanau involved in collective self-reliance and community building. As you educate us further on these issues:

Tony- Are you doing a lot of harvesting at the moment, bro, vegetables and things?

Te Ahi- Yeah, fishing when the sea's right. But old Brother Butch [another Ruatoria Dread] got a big garden eh, that's why we started getting this one out [in the backyard of Te Ahi's place] because by the time we finish this one, well, it will be the start of next week if it doesn't rain, and then Butch's man, he's got a huge bugger, too big, a huge one, he's got two of these potato patches. Man, that pile of potatoes will be bigger than your fulla's house, big, big piles. But he was cunning, eh, I looked out all the cultivations, he was cunning 'cos he planted late, and everybody was moaning about waterlogged potatoes, eh, and the bro's one is just plumping fine. Too much, too much of Brother Butch, he's the man!

Tony- Are you fullas doing much exchange with the bro with the vegetables? Like, is it keeping everyone going?

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and also educational facilities. Of course, the Dread's plans run deeper than simple survival, as they explain to us all through this chapter. But comparisons can be drawn.

<sup>41</sup> Personal interview. Te Ahi, Morning Star, and Bob Mita, February 23 2002, Ruatoria.

<sup>42</sup> Your work is part of an international movement of indigenous self determination, cultural renewal. At least, that is my sense of it. I have drawn these ideas from Linda Tuhiwai Smith and her Decolonizing Methodologies.

Te Ahi- Yeah, yeah, and if people you know drop in - some of the old fullas come in - you load them out. But it wasn't a real good garden this year, actually it was a sad one, but I am taking the sign, when things come small like that, then that's not for eating, that's strictly for seed eh. They bought our seed, fed half of Ruatoria, they going down to Ruatoria, would be half of Ruatoria had the black potato, right through that mangu [black].

Tony- Rich soil here? For growing vegetables, it looks rich.

Te Ahi- Mekemeke [type of plant]. There is no volcanoes over here, eh. Mount Hikurangi is not a volcano. See all those other mountains are volcanoes, they hot heads, they blow their tops, but Mount Hikurangi is a solid rock. Yeah, that's our saying: Ko Hikurangi a maunga kore nekeneke, maunga tu tonu - "Hikurangi is a mountain that doesn't move", it's a mountain that abideth forever, same as Mount Zion. It's like, those that trust in the true living God shall be like the holy Mount Zion which cannot be removed but abideth forever. And that's the whanau's, Ngati Porou's, saying - Hikurangi is a mountain that cannot be removed.

Tony- Do you do a lot of hunting, bro?

Te Ahi- Yeah, oh nah, not really, fish eels. I get too lazy to go up and chase pigs eh, because might go for the biggest walk in the world and nothing, eh, and you go ahh! I knew I should have stayed home! Where's those cows! It's only huntings when boys go cows, drop a cow, not a lot lately, not often lately, but get into the sea, get a bit of crayfish and pauas, and go out with a net to the river mouth, pull in the kahawai there on the fishing lines, snapper, shark, gurnards, you name it. Caught quite a few varieties on the lines, you know, and if the sea's rough and I still want to eat from the water, well, I just grab my gaff and hook and go and pick old Shiloh up and "Come on Dread, lets go down to Tuki and gaff" - so him and I go down and thrash the drain, eh. Last time we got ten good size ones too, the mothers would be up to my waist, and the water would only be up to my ankle high, and it's awkward because the banks are straight up like this.<sup>43</sup>

Engaged in organic gardening for healthy crops, healthy soil, water management and protection, the community has become the backbone of the town. When I was there, the community was harvesting potato crops. The people are involved in many food growing, hunting, and fishing activities that enable them to be self-sufficient. As the quotes illustrate, these are everyday activities, carried out in a relaxed fashion, and spoken about with humour and warmth, but also with profound knowledge. The harvesting of the land, the fishing, and the self-sufficient lifestyle that enables families to be fed and supported is seen as part of a larger communion the people have with protecting and serving the sea, the land and the community, in a reciprocal spiral.

### **Music as part of everyday life**

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<sup>43</sup> Personal interview. Te Ahi, Morning Star, and Bob Mita, February 23 2002, Ruatoria.

Te Hoku Whitu, you speak to the important place that music has in connecting you to the community, to your mountain, and to the economic hardship that many indigenous communities suffer from:

Tony- Do you fullas play music?

Te Hoku Whitu- Yep, we are all musical, but we are poor fullas, otherwise we would have had all the gear. The King's rhythm would be flowing from the mountain. But [we are kept busy] sword fighting with the government agents, and by the time we get home it's been a long day, but, yeah, we will get there one day!

You speak about the community labours that prevent you from expressing the King's rhythm, music to honour Haile Selassie. But your work as an historian of local music is one of your community skills. Bob and Te Ahi, you speak to the development of a musical culture that enriches and supports your community in your homes and whanau. Your words weave the story of reggae, collections of music and performance as part of people's lives in an everyday, relaxed setting. (A reader should be alert to the colour, humour, and power in your words.<sup>44</sup>)

Te Ahi- Old Bob [Marley], he was part of the household, eh, the household furniture, and still is today.

Tony- Do you fullas listen to it a lot on albums, or is it mainly CDs now?

Te Ahi- Yes, well, we got a big pile of albums from years back, collections and CDs. Sometimes all those tourists and hitchhikers that come around say, "Oh bro, you fullas want anything from overseas?" We tell them, "Oh yeah, go and get us I Jah man Levi, 'cos you can't buy them on the shelves now, eh, imports like those Haile I Hymns and Mount Zion...."

Tony- Did you fullas do a lot of exchanges of records among the brethren, like build up big record collections and then pass the albums around?

Te Ahi- Yeah, well, you know everyone had their own persies [personals], but you know old Kara had the main one, because he had the biggest stereo [laughter], you could hear right down at the bowling green, right down the road there, doom doom, doom, this place always used to have reggae blasting out all the time, first thing in the morning, night time, his big stereo, reel to reel, and he had all the Brother Bob albums on those reel to reels, and we'd just sit there and play them.

Tony- What's a reel-to-reel?

Te Ahi- A [kind of] tape deck. We had five of his albums on one reel so you didn't have to get up and keep changing it, just sit back and – pssh! [smoke herb] - and watch a cowboy film. [Laughter]

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<sup>44</sup> Serious scholarship sometimes forgets that a sense of humour is very much part of the everyday quality of the life of a community. In many of these comments there is warmth and humour as well as staunchness. Hitendra Patel's Natty Dread: The Ruatoria Rastafarians also documents the humour.

Tony- I was talking to Tigi up in Auckland, and he was saying the brethren come around the house and there was a lot of exchanging of [reggae] records among a couple of people because they had the biggest collections. But I heard that lots of people had big collections down this way too - maybe you fullas didn't need to do trading?

Te Ahi- My sister, and old Whare, and them, got the albums. A lot of mine, we just hand them over to [the people].

Tony- As gifts?

Te Ahi- They got the machines, but me, I got none, not even my car stereo. I been stereo-less for a few years now, I only got a little AM/FM radio like that one there. I've been meaning to get me a car stereo mounted up so I can fit it into the solars [solar power].

Tony- Were you fullas picking up a lot of your stuff from Gizzie [Gisborne]?

Te Ahi- No, 'cos those collections were worked on for years, most of them come from Wellington you know - a lot of collecting from down Wellington over many, many, years. Those collectors' items, one of Bob's collectors came here.

Tony: Were you fullas getting rare cuts like the Studio One stuff?

Te Ahi- With Bob, we just normally listen to the main ones, from his 'Catch A Fire' right through to 'Confrontation', 'Buffalo Soldier', yeah, 'Uprising'....<sup>45</sup>

In this rich quote, Bob Marley enters the land of the Rainbow through certain technologies (such as the reel-to-reel tape recorder), fostered in certain spaces (homes) as an alternative to the influence of television, helping to build a sense of sonic community (between Marley, Jamaica, and the indigenous Ngati Porou). He becomes a presence in your whanau, part of everyday culture and relaxation, as well as spiritual life. Obviously love of music does not depend on being able to afford expensive equipment.

Te Ahi, you also speak to the importance of Marley's albums for the Island label, as opposed to his earlier production for Studio One, Leslie Kong, or Lee Scratch Perry. Before imports became more readily available, there were the Island albums. They were released in this country at the same time as many of the events discussed in this chapter by the Dread – from Island albums circa 1973 such as Catch A Fire, to Confrontation, released posthumously in 1983.

In 1988 Radio Ngati Porou was set up to serve the needs of the Ngati Porou tribe. This radio station, located on the main road in Ruatoria, was established and run by volunteers such as members of the Ruatoria Dread community. Light of the Trinity educates us about D.J. work, the spirit of volunteer mahi [work] for a community

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<sup>45</sup> Personal interview. Te Ahi, Morning Star, and Bob Mita, February 23, 2002, Ruatoria.

radio station, and on the reception of reggae and Bob Marley by the youth in her community.

Tony- Do you play reggae a lot on Ngati Porou radio?

Light Of The Trinity- Oh yeah, we have weekly reggae on our radio station.

Tony- Do you [Rasta community] do the D.J. work?

Light of the Trinity- We used to, when we set it up, we used to run it. But when it went all establishment and not voluntary, we stepped aside.

Bob- They play a lot of reggae down here, eh?

Light of the Trinity- Yeah, everyone's right into reggae music and the youth around here love the music, eh, love the music. Still love the roots. It's way up there with all that hip hop. And you know, there's a great lot of youth coming around asking for Bob Marley. There's not much to look at around here so your ears are more open than your eyes, and what you hear around, you like. Everyone up the streets, all around here, they're blasting their music.<sup>46</sup>

Light of the Trinity, your korero tells us about a rich tradition of radio work and community service. And you confirm that Marley's legacy lives on in the latest generation.

Meanwhile, the music and message of Marley continue to be heard on the airwaves of Te Tai Rawhiti in new commercial settings. Hiruharama and the Whareponga region beyond it are the side of town where the Rastafarian movement in Ruatoria first sprung up. Manutahi is the central town part of Ruatoria, and is associated with different marae and hapu traditions than Whareponga and Jeru. Te Ahi explains the politics of radio play according to hapu, region, and marae loyalties<sup>47</sup>:

Tony- They were saying there is still a lot of reggae and Marley playing on it?

Te Ahi- Oh yeah, it just depends on who's the D.J. If it's a D.J. from our side of town - from the Jeru or Whareponga side - you'll get a lot of reggae, and up to date music too. Reggae's good in the morning, eh?<sup>48</sup>

## **Section Two (Spiral Weave Two)**

In this section, the Dread will introduce us to Bob Marley as he wove into their land, culture, history, and project of decolonisation. It is my hope that a reader will place each quote below in a spiral that connects the knowledge of Bob Marley to other parts of their world - he is so richly woven into this community's life. A reader should also

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<sup>46</sup> Personal interview. Te Hoku Whitu, Light Of The Trinity, and Bob Mita, February 23, 2002, Ruatoria.

<sup>47</sup> Bob Mita spoke about some of these issues February 24 2002, on the road to Whakatane.

<sup>48</sup> Personal interview. Te Ahi, Morning Star, and Bob Mita, February 23, 2002, Ruatoria.

remember that these words come out of a vibrant oral culture (and are not merely a transcribed text flat on a thesis page). The reader should try to symbolically lift these rich quotes off the page and return them to the spiral, to Ruatoria, the landscape of the rainbow.

Te Ahi and Morning Star, within your oral history below, you place Bob Marley's musical influence in a spiritual context that pays tribute to nga atua, nga tipuna, nga tangata and the whenua.<sup>49</sup>

Tony- Bob [Mita] was showing me around today to some of the places in Ruatoria where the Dread was first picking up. And it reminded me a little of Te Kooti going on his journey, and talking about a pilgrimage through the land, and how the journey was reclamation of the land.<sup>50</sup> Does that make any sense to you, bro?

Te Ahi- Yeah, yeah, because you know, after brother Bob died he left us all his living testimony. And from there on, going right through it, and then suddenly we got to a point where, at the end of that testament, we walked into this other testament, our own one. So we're writing our own one now, it's us that are doing the writing, the authors of the same song that brother Bob was writing. But now it's come into a new Kura [school], for us, eh, whereas from brother Bob it came down from Haile Selassie.

Morning Star- To here, to the Dreads.

Te Ahi- Through Brother Bob, he came along, he reminded us of Te Kooti, because the spirit, eh, the spirit was the same.

Morning Star- Whakapono [the faith or beliefs].<sup>51</sup>

Te Ahi and Morning Star, you describe how Marley's music travelled from a particular spiritual context in Jamaica into a new, rich, spiritual context in Aotearoa. Brother Bob is the harbinger of the de-colonising song of freedom for which you, the Ruatoria Dread, are writing a new verse, a new waiata [song] of liberation in the Maori culture and tongue. When you speak about Marley as "testament", you are simultaneously educating us, the readers, in your sense of Marley's music as a sacred, biblically-supported, and culturally-centred genealogy that moves from Haile Selassie to the music's point of origin, Jamaica<sup>52</sup> - and then has woven down to Aotearoa and

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<sup>49</sup> God, ancestors, the people, and the land.

<sup>50</sup> See footnote 18, for details of the life of Te Kooti.

<sup>51</sup> Personal interview. Te Ahi, Morning Star, and Bob Mita, February 22 2002, Ruatoria.

<sup>52</sup> In my talk of the spiral, I seek to give you credit for your rich understanding of Marley as he has travelled in Ruatoria, and also for the way your words structure an understanding of Marley at his point of origin in Jamaica. You speak of him as singer, songwriter, brother, spiritual presence, and prophet, as well as supporter of your de-colonising mission to rewrite your own new testament. Some of these insights went beyond my academic means to comprehend and analyse. I have retrained myself so I can place these insights into a different

been introduced to another multi-dimensional complex. Multi-dimensional because the music weaves people to their land, culture, history and ancestors and God. I want to give you credit for enabling this student to understand Marley's music in this way, as it intersects with a people's culture, combines with their spiritual values, and weaves into their lives, into the whole spiral of their world. Your words speak to a Marley operating in the history and time of the atua and the tipuna, travelling not only in the world of physical reality but also in spiritual contexts. These issues certainly transcend any conventional talk of the music industry - where music exists in a secular circuit of production, distribution and reception, bounded by economics – and transcends any stylistic analysis of the music, or any orthodox sociology.

From this perspective, Marley's music did not emerge only from individual genius, although he was a massively talented artist, songwriter, and performer. The music came from a people, a tradition, a faith; it spoke to a life of exile, the faith of the Rastafarian world view, and the Black Diaspora experience<sup>53</sup>. The music carried this history and political consciousness in its rhythms (some believe, for example, that the 'one-drop' rhythm, with its conspicuously absent first beat of the bar, signifies the sense of historical loss associated with the Middle Passage), its lyrical themes (the roots themes of the middle seventies - the concern for the rights of the ghetto poor, the history of slavery, the struggle for de-colonisation, and the spiritual emancipation message of Rastafarianism), the vocal stylisations (Marley's 'wailing' tenor, raw emotion, passion, anger), and the spiritual and historical contexts of production and

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structure. You introduced me to a Marley who is multidimensional, related to the spiral that connects you to land, hill, sky, ancestor, oral histories and community service. This gave me a new sense of Marley within his Jamaican context, as well as the Aotearoa context - I could now read him as part of a Jamaican spiral, linking his music, his history and his love for his people, to his land, his people, his culture, the spirituality of redemption against Babylon, and the war against oppression and slavery of all kinds. I came to understand that your words offered a means to look at Bob in a very different way, travelling outside the spheres of secular, academic analysis, beyond the music industry, and beyond the years 1973-1981 when Bob was most productive working with Island records. Your words speak to a Marley operating in the history and time of the Atua and the Tipuna, and travelling beyond the world of material reality into the spiral connecting you to your faith and spiritual culture. You, the Ruatoria community, have empowered my own scholarship in unusual ways. If I have at all succeeded in this, it is you, the Ruatoria community that should get the credit, because you have developed a new, enriched way of understanding Marley in his Jamaican context.

<sup>53</sup> These general points are made in much writing about Bob Marley in historical, sociological, and journalistic frameworks. One useful collection of essays is the anthology Chanting Down Babylon – in particular Roger Steffens's essay, pp. 253-265, 'Bob Marley: Rasta Warrior'. I am trying to take such analysis and map it onto a larger framework that gives serious consideration to its spirituality. The spiral approach then allows for a broader de-colonising perspective.

consumption (the ghettos of West Kingston where music and lyrics were composed in yards, recorded in music studios, and played back to the community in live sound system shows or live concerts, speaking of a higher plane of existence linking the ghetto poor to God, to an exiled chosen people).

Your sense of Marley acknowledges these origins but sees the music in an even bigger picture, as an evolving or expanding spiritual tradition of “testimony” and “testament.”<sup>54</sup> For you, Marley’s music is a ‘new kura’ (new school). You speak with aroha about your community (writing a new communal song) and its reverence for the land, with a keen awareness of history (the place of Te Kooti), and genealogy (from Haile Selassie to Bob Marley, from Marley to Ruatoria). The central strands of the spiral of your story are your arohatanga [love and respect] for your people, your fierce warrior spirit, and your awareness of the force of history upon a colonised people who struggle to de-colonise. These values are exemplified in your community works, your gardening, your house-building projects, your faith, your tikanga [protocol], your oral histories, and your relationships to Papatuanuku - weaves in the spiral, connecting you to all aspects of your environment. At the same time I can see the deep affinities between Marley’s values and yours. He lived and died, but lives on in the way your own ancestors do, as a living presence in the community. His creativity and faith have become part of a new “song”, a people’s “testament”. It is “our own” yet “the same song” – Marley is not left behind.

One of the issues I am trying to address here is the fact that much academic work is premised on a modern historiography where past, present, and future are strictly secular and chronological – one phase replaces another, as the living distance themselves from the dead. In contrast, it moves me to hear how you, the Dread, speak about Bob Marley and your leader Kara as if they are still alive. Te Kooti is also a living presence.<sup>55</sup> You speak of how they wrap around your lives and affirm your

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<sup>54</sup> I have taken these biblical allusions, and phrases and placed them within my four dimensional structure in this thesis chapter. I see your korero as living stories that map over the land, the land of Te Tai Rawhiti Ruatoria and its hills, whenua, spirit, and rainbows. I learnt much about spirituality when I visited the land of Ruatoria for the first time in 2002. Books such as Arapeta Awatere’s A Soldier’s Story continue to remind me of the spirituality of your land.

<sup>55</sup> For an understanding of Te Kooti and his importance to Te Tai Rawhiti guerrilla warrior traditions, one should consult Ranginui Walker’s fine history, Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou. Also see Judith Binney’s Redemption Songs: A Life of Te Kooti Arikirangi Te Turuki. This text has important sections on the birth of the Ringatu faith on Wharekauri, and the visits of the archangel Michael in visions to an ill Te Kooti on Wharekauri. This book also includes

manaakitanga [hospitality] and whakawhanaungatanga [inter-relationships], as they journey alongside you, through your lives. You walk this history for us backwards<sup>56</sup>, but at the same time weave it forwards into a new song. That is, the spiral circles both forwards and backwards – the past is the present is the future – destabilising the discrete categories of secular modernity<sup>57</sup>. I hope to follow your example. Your community stands proudly between Te Ao Maori and the world of western modernity, weaving elements of both together in an holistic, multidimensional way. Marley’s “testament” has created living links of solidarity between the peoples of the South Pacific and the peoples of Jamaica in ways that transcend secular categories of the local or the global.

Te Hoku Whitu, Bob, and Light of the Trinity, in the next oral taonga, you introduce us to relationships between spirituality, land, ancestors, and the warrior traditions of guerrilla fighting:

Te Hoku Whitu- He [Te Kooti] comes from our blood, and he comes from our whenua, and the whanau took sides concerning the matter, one against the Queen’s appointed [Ropata Wahawaha and whanau], and the other was anointed [Te Kooti, anointed on Wharekauri by Jehovah]. You know we put aside all these different things, eh, the messengers, and look at the message [which] was the same you know. Te Kooti was saying what Bob [Marley] was saying, because he spoke about the time, eh, old Te Kooti, Te Kupu Whakaari [the words of prophecy transmitted orally to him by Jehovah, and also recorded in written Ringatu sacred texts] - concerning the times to come.

Bob- He [Te Kooti] was an awesome composer of waiata [songs] too, eh.

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important appendices which outline the many varied and rich waiata and oral poems that Te Kooti wrote in the course of a long life. It is important to understand that the Dread claim both Wahawaha and Te Kooti as tipuna [ancestors], who while enemies in their lifetimes, were both in their own ways trying to protect the land. Ropata Wahawaha fought for Te Aowera hapu, one hapu of Ngati Porou to which the Ruatoria Dread are closely linked. Te Kooti came from the closely related Rongowhakata tribe. Both men tried in differing ways to protect the mana of Te Tai Rawhiti and their respective tribes. As an outcome of colonial oppression and war they became enemies. Both tribes, Rongowhakata and Ngati Porou, are linked closely by blood, close land ties, and by geographical proximity. For a useful, and sympathetic introduction to the Ringatu faith (although its nascent post-colonial analysis is embedded in arguments which are still implicated in the process of assimilating Maori to Pakeha culture and society, although very progressive for its time, 1942), one could consult William Greenwood’s The upraised hand, or, The spiritual significance of the rise of the Ringatu faith.

<sup>56</sup> See Donna Awatere-Huata’s Maori Sovereignty for the idea of a Maori sense of time that involves advancing into the future facing backwards. This is a motif that occurs in other cultures.

<sup>57</sup> My motifs (spiral, weave) may be seen merely as an intellectual scaffolding, a means of artistically and poetically situating your notions of history and time – but I hope those designs do help to convey something of the richness and coherence of those notions.

Te Hoku Whitu- Well, how do you restore, how do you store, history in a form where... You know, like I see the wisdom on how those old people wrote moteatea [songs of lament], and haka [action songs], because stories upon stories are stored up in one song. And so what he did, concerning the Psalms, eh, and the himenes [hymns], because they are all kiriputues [scriptures]. All scriptures, the whole lot of them, eh, given to him under the vision of the Archangel [Mikaere (or Michael) in the Ringatu traditions] who came and let him see a few things.

Light Of The Trinity- Yeah, he was in prison.<sup>58</sup>

Within this korero are living genealogies and histories of the tipuna - remembered, relived and reinterpreted within the spiral of past, present, and future - as a means to understand the present. Marley is a living force here, weaving through your stories, offering prophecy and de-colonising truths as his music moves through your four-dimensional spiritual realm, where his music is linked to the Bible, to indigenous knowledge, to genealogy.<sup>59</sup>

And Te Kooti was also a great song-writer. You, the Dread community, appear to read his waiata in the way Te Kooti may himself have read them, not only as food for the soul, but also as survival strategies and ways of retaining history, Maori spirituality and culture in a time of guerrilla fighting against Pakeha colonisation and land confiscation. You, the Dread, are still at war with colonisation. In this way the spiral of the past weaves into the concerns of today, helping the people to weave into a living future.

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<sup>58</sup> A korero with Te Hoku Whitu, Light of the Trinity, and Bob Mita, February 22 2002, morning, Ruatoria.

<sup>59</sup> You, the Ruatoria community, educate us, the outsiders, on the multidimensional relationships that connect you to music, to land, to cosmos, and to ongoing struggle. Part of our being as Pasifika-wide peoples is rooted in spirituality, in the connection to our lands, ocean, and ancestors. I am saying you educate us about these relationships in your oral histories. I am saying, in more general terms, that there is an intimate, spiritual relationship between many indigenous communities in their musical appreciation, their histories, and their culture. When music from outside the community travels inside that new cultural space, the music will enter the weave of other musical frameworks (performance traditions) and aesthetic awareness (music as de-colonisation, music as a link to the spiritual realm) and the relationship of people to their ancestors, their whanau, their history and their environment. In other words, if music is read in this broad perspective of indigenous cultures and de-colonisation, it is not merely an imported product but a very complex communication needing to be discussed in what I have called a four-dimensional way. Hence I have placed these taonga of yours, the Dread, outside conventional notions of aesthetics (from Kant, Nietzsche, Lukacs, Adorno, Horkheimer, Ang, Fiske, and others) into a completely different context, the spiral connecting you as people to your land, to space, to time, to culture. I have sought to root this structure in your community's oral histories and stories of Bob Marley, as the basis of a grassroots-up study of how (as you say) "stories upon stories are stored up in one song."

I have learnt much from you about the relevance of music to spirituality, to identity, to retaining whakapapa, oral history, living links to the past. You speak to a community rich in oral traditions that weave all the way back to Papatuanuku [mother earth], whakapapa [genealogy of ancestors], whanau [the group and its history], and Nga Atua [your Gods]<sup>60</sup>. You suggest how a colonised people's culture can be "stored" and "restored" in indigenous forms (waiata, moteatea, haka) and biblical ones (psalms and scriptures) as community memory. As stories and songs are passed on, they offer living support and tools, to uphold the mana of the old people and to continue the de-colonising struggle into the living future.<sup>61</sup>

## **Kara**

Kara, known as Jah Rastafari, is an ancestor and leader, alive in the weave of past as present as future. He lives as a force of nature woven through your stories, your joys and sorrows, your prophecies and visions for a brighter future. Kara was the first leader of your community, the harbinger of the faith of Rastafarianism into Ruatoria in 1982<sup>62</sup>. He was a crucial part of the story of how Marley became part of your faith. In this korero, Te Hoku Whitu, you spoke of the fact that Kara was the first of the Ruatoria Dread to have his moko [facial tattoo] done:

Te Hoku Whitu-You know from Major Ropata Wahawaha, his actions, what he done to cover our whenua, to preserve it you know. Wahawaha could only do that 'til his time, 'til his tag came up, which was A.T Ngata [Apirana Turupa Ngata] who flew protection over the land again. Ngata put the land into consolidation Acts, which meant that no individual could sell the land - that's why it's so hard to access Maori land, because of multiple ownership. And it was good because it protected the whenua, because the government couldn't

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<sup>60</sup> I am attempting to place oral taonga in a multi-dimensional framework so the stories stand up and 'walk' as it were, speaking to a reader as a living conversation. Similarly, Marley's work was grounded in the oral folk and biblical traditions of the communities from Nine Miles and West Kingston. The work of Hitendra Patel, Natty Dread: The Ruatoria Rastafarians, has helped in my understanding of these issues.

<sup>61</sup> I am speaking about an analysis that can weave beyond the fine Black Atlantic Modernity and Double Consciousness of Paul Gilroy, and the notion of grounded aesthetics, or music as a critique and aesthetics of performance grounded in the terror of modernity and the experience of slavery. I have sought to deepen Gilroy's analysis by placing his insights into the weave of Donna Awatere-Huata's spiral.

<sup>62</sup> A point Tigi Ness made in conversation. Personal interview. Tigi Ness, June 6, 2000, Auckland. There is an important if brief section dedicated to Kara in Hitendra Patel's Natty Dread: The Ruatoria Rastafarians.

come up to the one person and say, “Well, we’ll buy out all that whenua there”, because there was more than one owner, there were a lot of families in ownership. But then after A.T. Ngata died, because he done his bit, there was supposed to be one coming after him [a new leader of Ngati Porou]. And when they saw Jah Rastafari, because that was his written name, written across here [Whare gestures to his forehead], Jah Rastafari, or Kara. And when you hear the brothers talking about Jah Rastafari, eh, you know who we are talking about, because he was the first man who walked up on this creation and writ it right across there.

Kara had his sealed name, Jah Rastafari, tattooed on his face. I am aware that this man was a land rights activist, skilled boxer, shearer, and gardener from a high Rangatira family in Ngati Porou. He died in a shooting incident in 1991 at the age of 34. I heard about him from a number of people who met Kara during his lifetime, people who had fine things to say about him as a leader, a friend, and a community worker before his untimely death. When I visited your community I was given stern advice to speak of Kara by his sacred name as he continues to be held in high esteem and respect by your community. It was through Kara that the Rasta faith and Marley’s music came together as an indigenous value system - as culture, history, de-colonisation and community healing. We need to see Kara as the ancestor who lives on not only in community projects (such as the house-building) but in the whole Ruatoria spiral of being. To you, the community, I am aware that the pain of his passing is still a great injury, so I speak of him with enormous respect and a strong awareness of how his legacy and spirit are being carried in your life and work. I seek to replant his memory within the garden of your stories with special reverence.

Te Ahi, Kara speaks in living form through your genealogy<sup>63</sup>. You speak about Kara as a great visionary leader, drawing connections between his indigenous situation and Marley’s music:

Te Ahi- And from Brother Bob, it come down to Jah Rastafari, the first tattooed moko in our generation, the first. He’s the first son eh, the Matamua [first born child or first warrior in a taua or war party], he’s the first-born in this line of ours from Te Aowera, you know. And we are a line of priests and warriors, our family line, and all around here, round Mount Hikurangi - and he was the first born son. His wananga [house of knowledge] was Jah Rastafari, and his schooling was Bob Marley you know. And that was the front you know, the total, the Bible, Brother Bob, and our culture.

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<sup>63</sup> I am speaking here about each quote weaving a small spiral that is part of a larger pattern or spiral, the story of Bob Marley in Ruatoria.

Morning Star- Whakapapa, eh.

Te Ahi- And that was backed up and supported. Like Jah Rastafari aided and abetted by staking his life on the whole thing, and then gave his life, you know the whole thing to prove it was truth. It was the thing to put your life on, eh, so we all staked our lives on it by giving our lives totally, by doing this to ourselves to show our people we have contracted ourselves to God - we've got his name on our foreheads. And we've taken on the tikanga of our ancestors to surround the name of the living God with culture. And now they [the Ruatoria community] understand where we're coming from because before they didn't understand. They knew Te Kooti, but what happened was the old Ringatu church, and they dwindled, eh, they scattered, they died off. You know, it was an old people's church; it wasn't from an ancient time with an ancient truth because that ancient truth was just yesterday's talk of today. It was [others] that carried the korero, that speak the word, you know. There are words and words - and then there are those that can speak the word, and it's just that they have the word, you know.<sup>64</sup>

In the King James Bible the first verse of Chapter 14 of the Book of Revelation says: "and I looked, and lo, a lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred and forty-four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads." The act of wearing the ta moko with the Rainbow seal on the forehead, as a witness of the faithfulness of Rastafari to God, is sacred. So is the act of Kara walking upon Zion or Mount Hikurangi, recreating the walk of Adam over creation, or Christ before the transfiguration - not to mention recreating the walk of Maui from his stranded canoe Nukutaimemeha. The actions of your leader Kara display revolutionary courage, reclaiming the whenua for you, for those who suffer the tangata whenua. You bring Kara to life as a great visionary and Bob Marley as a messenger on a spiritual voyage to empower your community far from Jamaica. It was Kara who made the connections. Within your korero, Kara takes his place as ancestor, leader, martyr, prophet within the land of the Rainbow. You place Marley's music as a house of knowledge within an indigenous structure of sacred lore, including the Bible as you read it in the historical (but also living) context of Ruatoria. Marley's music becomes a compass by which to chart a de-colonising, healing journey.

I can not hope fully to understand the depth of your understanding of Marley. I am satisfied to tautoko [give my support] and show respect for your thinking that goes beyond any intellectual system of thought I am trained to understand<sup>65</sup>. You have

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<sup>64</sup> Personal interview. Te Ahi, Morning Star, Bob Mita, February 22 2002, Ruatoria.

<sup>65</sup> I am unable to follow or comprehend much of your korero because it is above my head. But I have attempted to humbly trace out some of the exchanges and ideas I see at work in it.

knowledge that should never be plumbed by outsiders; but even in this brief quote you allow us a glimpse of Marley's significance in the spiral of Ruatoria. It is humbling to see how Marley's music brings people of the Black Diaspora in the West together with a de-colonising people thousands of miles away in Aotearoa, woven into the same spiral.<sup>66</sup>

Te Ahi introduces the whakapono [faith] of Rastafari as de-colonising prophecy and as history fulfilled by scripture and by events on the whenua [land] within his lifetime. Above all, a reader is introduced to a time of blessing and joy as a new faith was found, tested and proclaimed.

Tony- And did you fullas start reading the word at that time?

Te Ahi- Yeah, well, you know...

Bob- The word was there.

Te Ahi- It was always the word was there, but when we started reading it all together, reasoning, see, when Chris came back with the reasoning that God was going to come again,<sup>67</sup> but not as a lamb to a slaughter but as a conquering lion - with the titles King of Kings, Lord of Lords, and the conquering Lion of the tribe of Judah - so the boys got out the encyclopaedias and checked it up. Yes, it is true! Out with the Bible – check it, yes, it is spoken! And like brother Bob says, what more do they want, that him a come as a white God? You know the titles are there, the man is there, the Bible says it, the encyclopaedia is there to support it, it's their book of facts, eh, and when you look at it right back in the tie of Kaya - you know, that was when the Herb sort of came in too you know, it, now, now it all came in at the same time, the Herb, because at that time it [Ruatoria] was just another old growing area, eh - it was an old growing era then, it was an old school of growers you know.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> In this footnote I want to speak to a few ideas that have empowered my poor attempts to make sense of your work. Edward Said and his essay, "Traveling Theory," in The Edward Said Reader pp.195-217, speaks about how a new idea or theory travels to another time, another place, where it is introduced, resisted, acclimatised, and at last partially accepted into a new structure of knowledge. Said's argument is a useful one for understanding where Marley's music came from, how it travelled, and then what resistances it met as it came to a new land. I am trying to change the structure of this relationship somewhat in the work here. I am suggesting that you, the indigenous community of Ruatoria, were quick to make sense of the many dimensions of this Jamaican, spiritual art, and to create your own understanding of what this music was, where it had come from, and how it had travelled. Marley's music had come from a rich culture with its own mana, and I have tried to reconstruct the exchange as a multi-dimensional dialogue between Jamaica, and Ruatoria.

<sup>67</sup> Chris Campbell became Kara.

<sup>68</sup> Personal interview. Te Ahi, Morning Star and Bob, February 23 2002, Ruatoria. The Ruatoria area had for many years been a growing area for Herb [marijuana], right back to the 1960s when hippies brought it from the cities to enhance their alternative lifestyles. Non-Maori, brought marijuana into Ruatoria. For a discussion of Herb and the way it helps the Ruatoria Dread in spiritual, philosophical, de-colonising, and Maori cultural ways, one may consult Hitendra Patel, pp.40-45, in his, Natty Dread: The Ruatoria Rastafarians.

Harbinger of a Black Christ in a new, more liberating aspect (no longer a lamb for the slaughter<sup>69</sup>) comes Kara, backed up by a quote from Bob Marley about the new Messiah as a Black God. Te Ahi, you offer us a way of appreciating Marley's 1978 album, Kaya, as analogous to holy writ, one text amongst others to liberate and spiritually refresh. This album was inspired by, and dedicated to, Herb, or in street terms, Kaya, the wisdom weed of Solomon. (Marijuana was said to grow freely on the grave of King Solomon.) Following the album Exodus, with its songs about wars of liberation ('The Heathen'), repatriation and deliverance from Babylon ('Exodus'), people felt that Marley was going soft politically on the new album<sup>70</sup>. Kaya appeared to be a mixture of love songs ('Is this Love' or the magnificent yearning ode to lost love 'Misty Morning') and songs about the value of Herb ('Kaya' the title track, 'Easy Skanking,' and the incantation 'Sun is Shining,' which appears to be inspired by the smoking of Herb). If we listen carefully to your words, Te Ahi, we can see the music of the album in a new light.

You speak of Marley's Kaya as part of a revelation, a sign on the land, witness to the sowing of the Herb over the whenua. This album was cut after many years of Marley

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<sup>69</sup> See the King James Bible version of the Book of Revelation chapter 5, verse 5, And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep Not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof." I do not know the mysteries of the faith of the Ruatoria Dread, as this was not my aim when I had the privilege to reason with some of them. But with respect, it could be suggested that a black Christ of liberation might have more relevance for people seeking to liberate and de-colonise than a Christ meek "as a lamb to a slaughter".

<sup>70</sup> This judgement was unfair. Marley had good reasons for lightening up on this album - he had survived an assassination attempt in 1976, and felt if he put out another hard-edged political album in 1978, even from his new base in London, then he, or people back in Jamaica he knew might be killed. The album began as out-takes of the Rastaman Vibration album, but was held back for two years to be produced and released in 1978. It is fair to say many people in Jamaica saw reggae music of the time as living commentary on the Jamaican situation socio-economically. In this sense Marley's lyrics were seen as direct commentary in support of Michael Manley's Jamaica National Party's position of Democratic Socialism. Thus any political lyrics could be seen as direct criticisms of Edward Seaga's Jamaican Labour Party. In a land where political disputes were settled with the gun, a hard-edged political album in 1978 might have got Marley killed. He said as much years later. One should see Kaya as a very spiritual album also, certainly not a tough political album, but it spoke of Rasta philosophy, the wonder of Solomon's wisdom weed, and the joy of simple love in ways that are no less deep or important to understanding the faith of Rastafari than any of Bob's other albums. The music itself, some of the horn lines, such as the one on 'Misty Morning', or the bass line and keyboard on 'Sun is Shining', are to my mind some of the finest arrangements in his whole body of work. The lyrics in this album as a whole are profound, philosophical, and thought provoking for any individual who takes the time to listen to them. The album Kaya was released in 1978 to coincide with a Marley and the Wailers world tour that kicked off that year.

struggling through sound studios, band line-ups, song-writing transitions, and a difficult personal history. The album was full of philosophy in its enigmatic, layered lyrics about love, nature, the environment, poverty and hope – with the sacred Herb as its central theme<sup>71</sup>. The album was founded on the rock of Marley’s Rastafarian faith and world-view. He saw his job as performer, recording artist, and visionary as expressing the faith of Rastafari and an awareness of Black suffering, sharing them with a world-wide audience. Music is sacred - as the Bible says, blessed are the music makers - and a necessary force in a world fallen into wickedness<sup>72</sup>. Kaya, like other Marley albums, travelled through the recording industry, the mechanisms of musical production and distribution, and the sales and marketing arms of Island records – but we need to understand this album not only in industrial or musicological or consumer terms, but as standing simultaneously in the spiritual context of Babylon versus Zion, and the other spiritual worlds in which Marley’s music was at home. The Dread understood this profoundly.

There have been thoughtful commentators on Marley’s Jamaican context who help us to understand the spirituality, aesthetic force, and history carried within this music. Consider Kwame Dawes’s comments on the two albums Marley wrote when in exile in England:

What draws me to these two albums, then, apart from the confidence and maturity of the writing, apart from the beautiful poetic range that he demonstrates in theme, mood, style is the very idea of exile and how exile shapes the way an artist faces the world.

Beyond that, though Exodus and Kaya are ultimately quintessentially black narratives. Black because they understand the state of perpetual exile that has come to shape the mindset of the New World black over the last several hundred years.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> See Kwame Dawe’s, pp.179-242, ‘Exodus and Kaya’ Bob Marley Lyrical Genius for an examination of this album.

<sup>72</sup> See Verena Reckford, pp. 231-252, in ‘From Burru Drums To reggae Riddims’. Reckford makes her point on p. 242. The essay comes from the anthology, Chanting Down Babylon The Rastafari Reader. Reckford offers a way of understanding the links between Rastafarian faith, music, and life. ‘Rasta music is sometimes played for what the brethren call “hearticle” reasons (strictly for pleasure). Most of the time, though, for the individual and for the group, the music serves a highly religious purpose. The music is regarded as the most appropriate way of giving “thanks and praises to the Most High Jah, Ras Tafari, Haile Selassie I, Lion of Judah.”’

<sup>73</sup> Kwame Dawes, pp.192, Bob Marley: Lyrical Genius.

Dawes' comments are secular but they are powerful. I am appropriating his comments by widening the framework, positioning them within a more spiritual, Zion-framed aesthetic. In that context we might talk about Kaya as an album in which Marley is speaking to people in spiritual as well as political terms about loss, diaspora, exile, suffering, and the experience of Black people after the middle passage. There is also much beauty in the album, but it is in the context of the world as Babylon.

If we return to your quote, Te Ahi, you speak about how the album Kaya was part of a season of spiritual awakening and time of joy. Your words take the sorrow, the spirit of exile in Kaya, the experience of Black people in the new world, but you also acknowledge its beauty and take the music in a whole new spiritual direction, transforming the album by situating it in a Maori framework. A new form of liberation aesthetics comes into being as the spiral of Marley meets the spiral of Ruatoria<sup>74</sup>. Your korero has unfolded this new landscape for us.

The arrival, then acceptance, of the Rastafarian faith was occurring in different parts of Aotearoa such as Auckland, Hastings, Northland, Rotorua, and Wellington<sup>75</sup>. Te Ahi, you speak to a community awakening by reading signs on the land, against the revealed word, against the witness of your leader Kara. Your korero is a spiral that connects these signs to the locality of Ruatoria - the message of a new Christ and a new hope, activating 'the word' that was 'already there' in the community.

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<sup>74</sup> These sound like complex issues but they are not - they simply require us to work from the grassroots up. I am working to connect oral culture with community voices and the spiritual dimension of music, and to construct a new design so that the indigenous community is served. I have learnt much from the work of Linda Tuhiwai Smith. And here I also want to pay special tribute to the work of a young Maori scholar, Jani Wilson-Fletcher. The idea of multi-dimensional aesthetics came from Jani. I have employed this term in my own work as shorthand as I developed a hybrid theory of a moving totality made up of many intersecting parts. I wish to pay tribute to Jani Wilson-Fletcher as a fine friend and brilliant young scholar for her initial idea. I wish also to thank indigenous scholars of brilliant insight who are also good friends, Tiopira McDowell, and Kane Te Manakura. Good Pasifika friends, Wesley Fifita, Chris Leaifi, and Sitilemani Lolohea, have added to my insights, as has good Chinese Kiwi mate, and brilliant scholar, Ye Miao, to all theoretical labours in my work. No work is done in a vacuum; all is done with help from amazing people, people who believe in humbly serving their own communities.

<sup>75</sup> In terms of other locations, I spoke to Lawrence about the importance of Bob Marley in Moerewa, one town in the region known as Te Tai Tokerau, or Northland in the English language. Personal interview. Lawrence Wharerau, May 12, 2002, Wellington. I spoke to Denis O'Reilly and Hugh Lynn, about Marley's influence in the early 1980s in Hastings, and Wellington. Personal interview. Hugh Lynn, and Denis O'Reilly, May 13, 2002, Wellington. I spoke to Tigi about Marley in Auckland. Personal interview. Tigi Ness, June 6, 2000, Auckland.

Bob Marley is a witness to the coming of a Black, not white, God.<sup>76</sup> He offers testimony to a new de-colonising spirituality where Christ is associated with liberation and hope, and no longer with missionary teachings, racism, or land acquisition at the expense of the indigenous peoples of the world. At a more everyday level, Bob's encouragement is part of a communal awakening. His album Kaya, received on this spiritual wavelength, proclaims the Herb as an ally of spiritual healing. Spirituality takes many forms and can be woven into many aspects of life. I have gained this knowledge from working with many community oral histories related to Bob Marley and his influence. The thesis incorporates many differing yet complementary conceptions of spirituality.

### **What Marley brought to Ruatoria**

Te Ahi, Bob and Morning Star, you speak of a time when new hope walked on the land and in the community:

Te Ahi- It was just like he was a part of the family, a member always there, because everywhere we went those tape decks would be there, blasting Brother Bob out, and that's why right back from the early days - Kaya, Survival - we used to be hard, we were bought up on them eh, hard out.

Tony- What about the posters, tams and things that went along with it?

Te Ahi- That early time, it was like a whole blossoming went down, just everyone up Ruatoria street would have a tam on, and the whole street would be like red, gold, green, like a tree when it flowers, and it blossomed up and it went too much, until heat started, eh.

Bob- You would come across twenty horsemen, rallied up - flag red, gold, and green, eh.

Te Ahi- Yeah, but even before that, it was like it was brand new, and when you got something brand new it was awesome, it was sweet, it was full of life.

Tony- Was it a connection back to Te Whiti?

Bob- Te Kooti.

Te Ahi- Oh, not so much then, you know, the bros were all like homeless, they were all like violent fullas, you know.

Morning Star- All seeking for something.

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<sup>76</sup> It is one of the most important tenets of the Rastafarian faith that Haile Selassie is the 225<sup>th</sup> King in the line of King David of Israel. One might consult Eleanor Wint, in consultation with members of the Nyabinghi Order, in the collaborative article, pp.159-165, 'Who Is Haile Selassie? His Imperial Majesty in Rasta Voices', in Chanting Down Babylon: The Rastafari Reader. Of course, this book and its rich insights emerge from Jamaica, while you, Te Ahi, speak in your own right as indigenous Ngati Porou Rastaman.

Te Ahi- Sleeping in the cars and all that. at that time it was a whole lot different, like young fullas going out of home because of Dad. You don't see it now really. I don't know, it might still be there.

Bob- Different now, different generation now, different.

Each part of this kupu [talk] opens out to us an aspect of community that is “a whole blossoming,” to use Te Ahi's fine words. Images of colour and beauty from the spiral are woven into a korero that helps us understand the reception of the music and the culture of Rastafari that Marley embodied, in terms of organic renewal and growth.<sup>77</sup>

Te Ahi and Morning Star speak to a Bob Marley who not only gave music but performed staunchness and rebellion as an example in life:

Tony- So what was it - though it sounds like a dumb question to ask - what was Bob Marley bringing to the Coast when you fullas were first hearing him?

Te Ahi- He was staunch, eh; he was just like how the brothers were then - staunch fullas, eh. I don't know what it was - all rebels, eh, the whole town was just rebels, you know, we prided ourselves on [rebellion] because no way were we going nine to five. The whole explanation, the saying of how we felt, it all fitted perfectly - he showed up at the right time 'cos we were growing up into that age of wanting to know things.

Morning Star- He was the light, eh, the light of the world.<sup>78</sup>

You tattoo Marley's story within the rich moko of your genealogies, resistance struggles and oral narratives. He becomes part of the broader story of your spiritual awakening, youthful rebellion and warrior staunchness. 'Staunchness' and 'rebellion'

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<sup>77</sup> The Album Kaya was released in 1978, the album Survival emerged in 1979. Although each album was released only a year apart, they embrace differing themes and concerns. Kaya, as has been noted, is a meditative study of Ganga and the simple pleasures of life such as loving, and being loved. The 1979 album Survival was a much more political album. Originally conceived as Black Survival, Chris Blackwell of Island records abbreviated the title so as not to alienate part of the public. In some senses the album Survival can be seen as Marley's attempts to come to terms with the problems of the Third World outside Jamaica and make the struggle for liberation international by bringing all of the concerns of the colonised and oppressed into one. Songs such as “Babylon System” as a global force “sucking the blood of the sufferer” achieve this brilliantly. Many of the songs on that album were ones that made a conscious connection to Africa and its struggles. Songs like “Africa Unite”, “Zimbabwe”, “One Drop”, and “Survival” took the concerns of Africa as needing to be carried by all Blacks of the Black Diaspora of the middle passage. The themes of repatriation, survival and resistance, black history, Africa as the motherland, the philosophies of Marcus Mosiah Garvey and his back-to-Africa campaign, and the necessity of struggle run through this powerful album. For a discussion of the above Marley albums, one could consult Kwame Dawes's Bob Marley: Lyrical Genius. My concern here is to counterpoint the Jamaican context against the rich Maori context laid out for us by the words of the Ruatoria Dread rather than against the African context.

<sup>78</sup> Personal interview. Te Ahi O Te Atua, Morning Star, and Bob Mita, February 22, 2002, Ruatoria.

are points of reference within the spiral that connects you to land and tipuna. When these terms are placed in that context (where the world of Te Ao Maori and modernity meet), staunchness is no longer simply a physical or mental virtue that indigenous people practice in order to defend their lives. Nor is it only Jamaican ‘rude boy’ physical staunchness. Staunchness is part of a broad spiritual inheritance, because it links indigenous people to their ancestors and the history of the struggle against the colonization of their spirit.

These stories are woven against, and through the moving account of the language loss for a generation of your community:

Te Ahi- It was back in the ‘70s, eh, the middle ‘70s, about 75 or 76, way back then, and just hung around right through the whole time, but you know, it might have missed our generation. Our oldest brothers were a bit older than Bob, eh. He come in underneath our eldest brothers and before the youngest. Our older brothers can speak the reo, and then there is a gap, then there is no one speaks the reo.

It is common knowledge in Aotearoa that if the Maori language is lost in one generation, that it requires three generations of people to get the language back. When the language is in decline, many aspects of the culture start to shrivel. Te Ahi, you educate us on the value of Marley’s music as good water with which to quench the thirst of a tree lodged with its deep roots in the soil of the people’s culture history, and sorrows:

Tony- You were saying before, the ways were already here with the people, already living on the land, but you fullas were waiting for some thing

Te Ahi- In the end we knew we wanted our culture ‘cos in those days, you could walk up the street and no one would, you know, press your nose, and if you started to hongī<sup>79</sup> you know your fellow man would shy away and think you were strange - you know, “What the hell’s going on!” – ‘cos we had drifted away from our culture. But at that time there was a generation of battle axes coming out you know, that was under our Tuakana, a battleaxe generation and that was the generation that picked them up, and bought ‘em through, ‘cos you see all the Black Power came up through Brother Bob. And then you know things didn’t work out for them; they were still looking for it. They thought that Black Power was going to be it, because unity to the people, unity to the Maori people, with Brother Bob’s chantings and that - but it wasn’t meant for them because where they had missed it was because they had never carried what do you call it the Paipera, the gospel of Jesus Christ, yeah.

Morning Star- The Rainbow.

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<sup>79</sup> Traditional Maori form of greeting by pressing noses and thereby exchanging the breath of life.

Te Ahi- So it [happened] after them, because at the end of that Black Power era, there was a lot of battleaxes going around and hits going down, on the white man you know - that was when Chris got caught up in the burglary and he went to jail for must have been 14, 15 months, for ripping off Kevin Brown's freezer....

Bob- That was old Kauri and them, Doc and that, those old Blacks....

Te Ahi- Yeah, yeah.

Bob- Old whanaunga [blood relations].

Morning Star- Old Billy Brown.

Te Ahi- But our old people supported them because they had the korero about a group, a generation was going to rise up, so any generation of young people, they had to support it - except when it came to us, they didn't support us. They supported the Black Power, they allowed it to a degree, but for us they were nowhere.

Morning Star- The colour, the force was only in the colour.

Te Ahi- We were different because we had passed that phase of battling colour, eh. We weren't colour blind, but you know at the same time we didn't charge when we saw red.

Morning Star- The rainbow.

Te Ahi- You know, it's just a matter of trying to locate who we were, eh, and where we were on the land - how it fitted in with everything, eh, with our old people and with our parents, with our marae, with the community. We knew we belonged but never had ownership papers saying "this belongs to so and so", you know. In the end brother Bob just came through, and his was the signalling, you know, that led to the whole turning point. Otherwise the coast would have been just the evil wicked generation [that] would have [been] all of us because the way the Black Power were going, they were going evil, eh, until they ended up killing one of themselves, and they had to snap out of it and back off because they killed one of their own fullas in their blood thirst,

Morning Star- They put their patches [gang insignia] away.

Te Ahi- They put their patches away and never pulled them out since.

Morning Star- They are just starting to go about now.

Te Ahi- Well, they are trying to you know, but it's too late, none of them got the form, none of them are willing to bring these young fullas in. That fulla, Whati Whatuira [young Black Power brother killed by Mongrel Mob members in Wanganui, 2002] was standing on guard and got a .22 shot in the head.

You speak to the influence of Marley on the East Coast during a time when many Maori rural and urban communities were struggling for survival. Many turned to the gangs for support and community.<sup>80</sup> Marley was important to the gangs but they

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<sup>80</sup> One member of the Older Activist chapter, Denis, was a former member of the Black Power in Wellington. The story of Bob Marley and his relationship to gangs such as The Stormtroopers, Mongrel Mob, Black Power, King Cobras, or the Headhunters cannot be told in this thesis. But one can witness the importance of Marley's music to the gangs by watching Mita and Sanderson's film, Keskidee Aroha. For a sympathetic and supportive account of the rise of the gangs, one could read parts of Ranginui Walker's, Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou: Struggle Without End.

“missed” the spiritual dimensions of his music, which could have helped them “fit in with everything.” If a reader stood simply in the world of pakeha academic scholarship, one might misread these powerful words as simplistic sociology. That would be to neglect its particular aesthetics which relates music to prophecy, to de-colonising resistance, to community healing, and to the re-locating of a people in their land and culture.

Te Ahi, Bob and Morning Star, you speak to a music coming into the lives of a people dealing with poverty, violence, and hardship as a “turning point” that can lead to healing, community, and spirituality rooted in indigenous culture.

In the next rich quote you remind us of the great journey your community embarked upon – from fighting within the tribal group (‘ngati’), to an awakening, to cultural and spiritual awareness.

Bob- [The Herb] wasn’t widespread amongst the coast at that time.

Te Ahi- It wasn’t until our time got hold of it, and started putting it everywhere [laughter].

Bob- Before the helicopters, you know, when you could plant crops.

Te Ahi- You could plant and not even think about helicopters and planes coming over, yeah, that wasn’t even thought of then, but then all of a sudden - oh well, just the times - you gotta change and keep up with them. At the same time we were all inclined towards our culture, you know being staunch, tuturu [genuine], being Ngati really, whatever that was, you know, and apart from thrashing each other well we didn’t have any other meaning of being staunch - being Ngati, just thrash each other, eh, that’s it, “Yes, you bastards!” But then brother Bob brought [something] more meaningful because you know it only took one spark from him, and once you got lit by that spark a lot more of what he said would become more and more visible in your life - what was going on, and understanding it - because we were wanting to go back to our culture all at the same time, see, we wanted to go back to the God of our ancestors, the culture of our ancestors - and then brother Bob had that word, because our Matua had gone down to different denominations - you know, like the truth of an ancient kind - Brother Bob was telling us this is what you are looking for, guys, look for this truth young, know you go on that roadway and then you’re sweet. Don’t worry if people start trying to kill you and thing you, eh, because if you’re not wrong, then everything is all right [lines from Marley’s song ‘Exodus’]. And you know, we started seeking the truth of the ancient kind with Brother Bob guiding us - ‘cos we are the paddlers and he’s the steersman, he’s the man at the back who steers our canoe; he’s the poropiti, the prophet.<sup>81</sup>

Marley is a complex and important figure here. We should be alert to the many culturally specific ways he is being understood and interpreted here - for instance, as

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<sup>81</sup> Personal interview. Te Ahi O Te Atua, Morning Star, Bob Mita, February 23, 2002, Ruatoria.

the steersman of a canoe, and as poropiti or prophet. His words – such as his lines from the 1977 song “Exodus” take on a new dimension, a new shape, and new relationships, within a Maori aesthetics.

Te Ahi and Morning Star, your knowledge of the Bible is wide-ranging. The story of the Pentecost and the transformation of the people with the coming of the Holy Spirit are transposed into a story that speaks to the earth, sky, ancestors and God of Rainbow country, Ruatoria. Simultaneously, a Maori genealogy enriches the biblical narratives. At the same time, your korero is a generous conversation with this student, an outsider in an everyday setting. Bob Marley lives through all these contexts.

You educate us below on the difference between Marley as prophet and the missionaries of colonial history:

Morning Star- He’s the light of the word eh, Berhane Selassie [Aramaic name given to Bob Marley by the Ethiopian Episcopical church before his death in 1981].

Te Ahi- And you see a lot of what Te Kooti was about - it is Bob Marley today, a modern day. Te Kooti, if he had all the modern conveniences he’d give it across just like brother Bob gave it.

Morning Star- Yeah, like Christ, eh.

Te Ahi- Brother Bob was the man nominated by Jah to come and speak to all of us.

Morning Star- In this time.

Te Ahi- Because he’s our brother, not our uncle, not our father. God sent a brother down to the brothers.

Morning Star- Brought to the flesh, peace.

Te Ahi- So the message could be real to them. Otherwise if he’d come to Jesus in that form you know, we might have missed him - because the missionary man with the clean white collar gave it across that we didn’t know anything, if it wasn’t through his [the missionary’s] way<sup>82</sup>.

Bob Marley is woven into living relationships of whakawhanaungatanga and manaakitanga in your words.

Te Ahi, you further link the biblical and Maori traditions:

Te Ahi- Between Bob, Te Kooti, Jah Rastafari ( Kara’s sacred Rastafarian name), it was like Jesus, Moses and Elijah, you know, and in the same context, or the same cloud – to put it that way - and from there he delivered it. See that’s why we’re saying we lived and ate with Jah Rastafari, because you know our old poropiti [prophets] were always saying, you got to look to the East, because God was going to come from the East, from the rising of the sun you know, and that’s how culture had always been spoken because that’s why all our houses

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<sup>82</sup> Personal interview. Te Ahi O Te Atua, Morning Star, Bob Mita, February 23, 2002, Ruatoria.

face the East, and all our graves face the East, because the man is going to come from the East, as our people were saying - exactly like brother Bob - the most high comes, eh, but he's going to come not as one, he's going to come in a family, a whole family of people, from a certain generation, and each whenua of tangata whenua people, he's going to bring it up out of each people and every land, there will be a spring well coming out. The people all start thinking you know, how like Brother Bob, how brother Bob keeps them in line of thinking, he'll keep those Rasta men over the water over there in line of thinking, so when we meet, we're not going to kill each other, because we are one under brother Bob, our minds are of the same family, because you know with brother Bob it's a family affair, eh, its like her [Morning Star], and his word is like a big brother's word, and that's what goes.<sup>83</sup>

Your words give us a means to begin to understand this new culture of liberation associated with Marley's music, that unites various prophecies and truths from Maori traditions [graves facing east toward Ranginui Te Ra] and the Bible [the transfiguration of Christ, Mathew 17, verse 1-12]<sup>84</sup> with Rastafarian traditions [Garvey's prophecy "Look to the east," taken as truth by Rastafari in Jamaica in 1930 when Haile Selassie was crowned King of Kings and Lord of Lords]. When art, community history and prophecy combine, the weaving is powerful.<sup>85</sup> The allegory linking the transfiguration of Christ (where Jesus, Moses and Elijah were revealed together) to the coming of the three prophets Te Kooti, Jah Rastafari ( Kara) and Bob Marley on Te Tai Rawhiti locates Marley's life and music within a sacred tradition. When you speak of the land of your ancestors in this quote, I have grown to realise you are also speaking about the land of the present, where developers and land agents are fighting against the attempts by the local people to reclaim what they have lost. This rift must be healed by the faithful so that not only time as Maoritanga (past as present as future) but also space as Maoritanga (the whenua, and the people's links to what is theirs) can be healed and woven together. Marley has had a role to play in bringing together an understanding of ancestors' land with an understanding of the

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<sup>83</sup> Personal interview. Te Ahi, Morning Star, and Bob Mita, February 22 2002, Ruatoria.

<sup>84</sup> Christ is transformed in the Mountain after seeing and speaking with Moses and Elijah. A voice speaks from a cloud to the terrified disciples: "This is my Son in whom I am well pleased". And for Rasta faithful, the coming of Haile Selassie is announced in Psalm 68, verse 31: "Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God".

<sup>85</sup> The connections between the biblical verses, Maori genealogy traditions, and Bob Marley speak to a faith and a world-view framed in a sense between worlds. This is the experience of all who must live simultaneously between the world of modernity and the world of Te Ao Maori. For a vivid introduction to this aspect of being Maori one could consult John Rangihau, pp.183-190, in 'Being Maori', a marvellous short essay in, Te Ao Hurihuri: Aspects Of Maoritanga.

land as holy Zion. In this deeply spiritual world view, as you have expressed it, Marley is an important link in healing the rift created by colonisation. Geography becomes a form of spirituality that connects people within the same weave.

The story does not end at the boundaries of Aotearoa. When you speak of indigenous people coming into a new faith in many lands, you craft a living relationship with other communities around the world. Bob Marley plays a critical role in guiding them and ensuring that when they meet they are “not going to kill each other”.<sup>86</sup>

### **On cultural and spiritual aspects of genealogy**

Your community have their own genres within which to position your truths and I have introduced some of these forms in previous quotes. Genealogy is one of the more powerful oral forms that structure your relationships to figures such as Bob Marley, because genealogy is about descent lines<sup>87</sup>, the importance of ancestors, and understanding the present as past as future. This understanding is advanced by relating a genealogy to the circumstances of the speaker, to the living context (on this occasion, you explaining the relationships of Kara and Marley in your community to me as an outsider), to the poetic skill of the speaker as custodian of a living history, and to the power of genealogy as a form of indigenous story telling. Genealogy differs from tribe to tribe, hapu to hapu, and whanau to whanau. It may be spoken with differing emphases, emphasising the lives and deeds of particular ancestors, depending on the teller and the situation and the politics of the telling. Your Ruatoria genealogies are wonderfully rich in the way they combine and re-weave the Maori world, the Bible, cultural history, and lines of whanau descent into living relationships, one with another. Adding to the richness, Marley is structured into your genealogy, woven into the story of the Rainbow in Ruatoria. In the same way, your genres of poetry, prophecy, and communal history are special contributions to the oral traditions of Te Ao Maori. Each genre carries the values of manaaki and

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<sup>86</sup> For a reading of Rastafari that takes on board the notion of the faith as it has travelled into Europe and the South Pacific one could consult Frank Jan Van Dijk, pp.178-198, ‘Chanting Down Babylon Outernational: The Rise of Rastafari In Europe, the Caribbean, and the Pacific’ in Chanting Down Babylon: The Rastafari Reader. In spite of the author’s best intentions, however, his work regarding the Pacific is light, and he has no awareness of how Rastafari has been woven into and against the experience of indigenous, Pacific Island, and Pakeha experience of Rastafarianism in this country.

<sup>87</sup> One might refer to Api Mahuika, and his fine article on Ngati Porou lines of descent, pp.42-63, ‘Leadership: Inherited And Received’, in Te Ao Hurihuri: Aspects Of Maoritanga.

whakawhanaungatanga as it carries the community narrative forwards. You have ownership and mana over these taonga.

Te Ahi, Morning Star and Bob Mita, you have spoken of how Bob Marley came to be part of your spiritual genealogy. Marley carried the prophecies of Marcus Garvey and the messages of Haile Selassie in his spiritual art form<sup>88</sup>. You speak to the line of descent, and the linkages between the spiral of Ruatoria and the spiral of Jamaica when you speak about Marley's relationship to the living witness of your prophet and leader Kara. You draw upon indigenous genealogies for Kara and his relationships to Te Ao Wera, Hikurangi, and the art of Ta Moko; biblical genealogies for the prophetic relationships obtaining between Marley and Kara and a Ruatoria community genealogy of community service. All this is a powerful means of understanding the relationships that bring these figures and elements together within the same spiral. Where Marley's Black Atlantic meets the Brown Pacific a new circle of life begins in a new land. Marley's figure takes on a unique form within such a weave, connected both to the secular life (lived within the continuum of Modernity) and to the world of prophecy, lived in the world of the spiral.

I am aware that Kara was the first Rastaman to invite the brethren to go back to the soil and the gardens<sup>89</sup>. I am also aware of Kara's role in understanding colonisation of Maori people as Babylon, a spiritual and cultural force in the West. Te Ahi, you speak of Kara as first inheritor of the faith, and first descendent in the spiritual genealogy issuing from Bob Marley. In these cultural and spiritual convergence zones the Black Atlantic, Marley's music, modernity, experiences of slavery and colonisation, exile and diaspora meet in living, spiral-shaped exchange<sup>90</sup>. Marley is structured into your

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<sup>88</sup> For a useful discussion of Marley's music as an emerging spiritual art form, one could consult Roger Steffens 'Bob Marley: Rasta Warrior' p.257, in Chanting Down Babylon: The Rastafari Reader. Steffens is talking about Marley's evolution as a songwriter after he became a Rastafarian, and came under the mentorship of Rastafarian Elder, Mortimo Planno.

<sup>89</sup> See Hitendra Patel, Natty Dread: The Ruatoria Rastafarians.

<sup>90</sup> I have been influenced by the work of Paul Gilroy and his marvellous and ground breaking work on Modernity, the Black Atlantic, black music, black aesthetics, identity formation, and Diaspora as theorised and articulated in the memorable The Black Atlantic Modernity and Double Consciousness. For a fine critique that labours to illustrate Gilroy's brilliance, as well as some of the problems with his Black Atlantic labours, see Laura Chrisman's, pp. 73-88, "Journeying To Death: Paul Gilroy's The Black Atlantic", in Postcolonial Contraventions: Cultural Readings of Race, Imperialism, and Transnationalism. I have struggled hard to bring hi-tech theory and method back down in order to 'indigenise' valuable insights into an Aotearoa grassroots-up methodology and theoretical approach that serves the Ruatoria community. The point in all this labour is to illustrate how it is the Dread (rather than this student) who are creating rich and valuable links with international communities, scholarship,

korero as a wananga [house of knowledge] so that all his music, life example, lyrics and songs become part of an indigenous school of learning stimulating new forms of Maori knowledge. He appears here in multiple forms and guises in your story, a living tipuna, someone whose laws will prevent the tribes from waging war on one another. As your people move back to the land and to this faith, the rift between time and space created by colonisation can be healed and the spiral can re-connect your people from their land, culture, spirituality, and history<sup>91</sup>.

### **Section Three (Spiral Weave Three)**

What happens to music when it is woven into a people's spiritual relationships? Aesthetics, reception theories, and methods of interpretation all need to be re-thought. Music is sacred in the world of Te Ao Maori. Waiata and oriori [songs and chants], moteatea [laments], and haka [ceremonial dance] are performed and understood as linking the living to the dead, and to those yet to be born<sup>92</sup>. Psalms and himenes [hymns] are forms of sacred music that speak to the creator, to Te Atua. As we have seen, they stand in the spiral of Te Ao Maori and connect you to ancestors such as Te Kooti, to your history, to your land, and to your spirituality. Maori musical forms have rich contexts and specific histories of composition, performance, and meaning, depending on family, community, tribe, and geographical and historical circumstances. But as these traditions are performed by new generations, they are open to improvisation and new interpretations and variations, even if the original version is still revered and remembered.

Marley's music was at first something new, but it was read through the spiral of life in Ruatoria and the particular history of your community. In a previous quote, Te Hoku Whitu spoke about the relationships between the message of truth and the messengers

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and aesthetics in their own right. I am simply pointing out those facts so the community gains mana for the scope and power of their own knowledge.

<sup>91</sup> I feel Donna Awatere-Huata's profound analysis in Maori Sovereignty owes a great debt to the work of Georg Lukacs and his pp.83-222, famed essay, 'Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat' in History and Class Consciousness. But in some respects Awatere-Huata's work transcends Lukacs'.

<sup>92</sup> I have augmented my reading of Maori oral culture with the understandings of time, space, and culture laid out in Maori Sovereignty. I have also found Rev. Maori Marsden's "God, Man and Universe: A Maori View", in Te Ao Hurihuri: Aspects Of Maoritanga, pp.117-137, a rich introduction.

Te Kooti and Wahawaha. Te Hoku Whitu also made the connection between Marley's sacred music and the spiritual-cultural genres of himene, haka, psalm, prophecy and scripture; and he spoke of the guerrilla resistance tradition of Te Kooti through which the music of Marley was understood, interpreted, and incorporated within your spiral of life.

Such comments speak of a community with a rich understanding of music as sacred, as forms that remind people who they are and where they come from. Underpinning this awareness is a whole value system of whakawhanaungatanga, manaakitanga, a concern for history, for the ancestor's stories and songs as necessary for your community as it walks backwards into the future (as Donna Awatere-Huata would say). Music is a spiritual act performed across the veil that connects the living to the ancestors, to Nga Atua, the gods.

### **Marley's albums**

Marley's albums are accompanied by a rich korero that embraces farmer traditions, biblical parable,<sup>93</sup> the growing of the herb in the context of scriptures and decolonisation,<sup>94</sup> and practical faith for the whenua of Ruatoria.

Tony- And it was through Brother Bob that you fullas came back to the prophets, back to the history of the lay of the land down this way?

Te Ahi- Yes, well, you know he was speaking exactly what we were thinking and feeling at the time. And unbeknown to me, 'cos you graduate with Brother Bob, through his albums, and your life becomes a part of his albums, like Moses's books, like one of the Pentateuch, like Exodus or Catch A Fire.

Morning Star- The spirit is the same, eh.

Te Ahi- There was a time we caught a fire, the whole lot, eh, at that time of Catch a Fire, that's what brought us into it, eh, because brother Bob said we got

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<sup>93</sup> See King James Version of the bible, and New testament book of Luke, chapter 17, verse 6, 'And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this Sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and it shall be planted in the sea; and it should obey you.'

<sup>94</sup> Rastafari use many biblical scriptures, which are well known, to justify the growing of Herb as a holy activity in line with the most high Jah Rastafari. For a good discussion on the significance of this act of reclaiming the land in Ruatoria, situated in a useful discussion of the contexts of colonialism and Rasta spirituality, a reader should consult Hitendra Patel, pp.40-45, in Natty Dread: the Ruatoria Rastafarians.

the Herb. You know, even though your faith may be as small as mustard seed, you know you put that down in the dirt and bring along a whole difference.<sup>95</sup>

You draw comparisons between the five books of Moses, Bob Marley's albums, and your life journeys. The notion of 'catching a fire' as spiritual message, is rewoven into Aotearoa as a living story. Albums, key themes within them, and key lines (like that from the song "Slavedriver", are linked to biblical scripture (the five books of Moses - Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy) and become living forces. It is said the Apostles were struck by the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, Acts 2, verses 1-4, and "caught a fire" literally with the Holy Spirit.

Te Hoku Whitu, and Bob, you connect Marley's sound, to his rhythms, to his spirit – and the lyrics are constantly connecting to everyday life:

Te Hoku Whitu- He's like the tree, like the grass, he's like us, he's around, eh, it's like timeless, it's like the scriptures. Timeless rhythm that don't lose its value, you know, 'cos every day you bound to see one of those enemies there - whether its vanity....

Bob- Or jealousy, eh.

Te Hoku Whitu- Jealous, yeah. The abundance of water yet the fools are thirsty.<sup>96</sup>

Te Hoku Whitu, you speak to a community who can appreciate and understand Bob Marley on many levels simultaneously<sup>97</sup>.

Tony- So do you fullas listen to the whole lot of Bob Marley, depending on mood?

Te Hoku Whitu- I mean Babylon by Bus, when we got to Babylon by bus we know everything. And the Survival album - we all survivors, eh.

Bob- "Ambush in the Night".

Whare- We can fit into any part of it; we can fit into the whole lot of it. It's just where people's level of understanding is at - so we don't give them meat when they are only meant to be sipping on milk - concerning the word, and the prophecy - whatever they are listening to.

Tony- Do you fullas keep all those old albums?

Te Hoku Whitu- The sistrens [do].

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<sup>95</sup> Personal interview. Te Ahi O Te Atua, Morning Star, and Bob Mita, February 23, 2002, Ruatoria.

<sup>96</sup> Te Hoku Whitu, you allude to a biblical verse from the book of proverbs in the Bible in your final words above. And you speak simultaneously to these lines utilised in the 1976 Bob Marley song, "Rat Race", emerging off the Natty Dread album.

<sup>97</sup> Bob Marley weaves through your stories concerning down-time, prophecy, and history, just to name a few ways the music is situated in the culture of Ruatoria. The unique ways through which Bob Marley is woven into your life is owned by your community.

Tony- Do you fullas see the albums as sacred, or just the music?  
Te Hoku Whitu- It's the message, eh, got to be the message, because you can have the gunniest sound and you can hear it right to the end of the song - shit, yarr!! - so it has to be the content, it has to be.

### Marley's reasonings

Tony- Do you have some favourite Marley reasonings, bro?  
Te Hoku Whitu- Well, it's all valuable, the whole lot, there are a lot of reasonings – it depends what frame of mind you are in, eh, if you want to “Duppy Conqueror” [off the Burnin' album, 1973]. We got “Duppy Conqueror” lines eh, but yeah Bob is a worker in the field, his work and the lights in his words are still there.  
Tony- Did you fullas go to Bob Marley's concert when he came here?  
Te Hoku Whitu- Poverty usually stops us going anywhere, bro - the boundaries of the Rawhiti.  
Light of the Trinity- We always listen to the music when it come through.  
Te Hoku Whitu- I mean a lot of people listen to it, but who adheres to it and uses it? That's the difference - you might hear it and like the sound and you might not even understand it until one day that same scenario sits on your lap and you are wondering how to deal with it, and Brother Bob has been singing to you all these years about it.  
Light of the Trinity- You might listen to the rhythms then later on you might actually start to hear it, eh, relate it to the rest of your life, especially when you fit into what he's singing about. You must have been walking the same walk.<sup>98</sup>

Te Hoku Whitu and Light of the Trinity, your comments complement each other and together give us an understanding of the seriousness of your commitment to the values in Marley's lyrics. You have taken the music deeply into your lives, your struggles and your thinking.<sup>99</sup>

Tony- It's inspiring to hear people that are still reasoning with brother Bob.  
Te Hoku Whitu- See, bro, God's heart has not forsaken them - they have forsaken him, that's how it is in the end you know, he's faithful and true, he will not abandon - but the people, they're the ones that turn and walk away. You know, in the beginning when Jah created creation eh, and he said well let there

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid. The song “Duppy Conqueror” was a song written by Bob Marley in the late sixties after he was arrested, and briefly jailed for smoking Herb. It was to appear later on the second 1973, Island Records Wailer album, Burnin'. In Jamaica a Duppy is an evil spirit. Rastamen do not hold to beliefs such as Duppies, because they have a different cosmology of faith. In the song Marley sings, he likens himself to a Duppy Conqueror as he says he will prevail over the forces of Babylon, or, the evil Duppy of Babylon, represented by its stand over forces like the Police. Whare's korero appears to follow this train of thought in a postcolonial, Aotearoa context where a new struggle against Duppies, Babylon, and colonisation is taking place now.

<sup>99</sup> It reminds me of how, in the Maori tradition, proverbs, waiata, and haka provide everyday sustenance and personal orientation. Maori warrior culture has always given an important place to poem and song in the struggle against colonization. I think of Te Kooti, as documented in Judith Binney's Redemption Songs: A Life of Te Kooti Arikirangi Te Turuki.

be the firmaments and those things, and then when he said, “Let there be light that ruleth the day, let there be light” and there was light, and the first place in this creation according to the book of Genesis, we [are] the first place in this creation, eh Dread, to see this new day, see this new light, because Zion is his throne, eh. So we know that it was with the spoken word, bro - he said it and it was done, it was so, it became.

Tony- And brother Bob is part of the spoken word?

Te Hoku Whitu- Yeah ‘cos he was Bob the brother. If he was still around, we’d tell him, man. Hey, the man walk up – hey, come up and check the bros out! - ‘cos we’re the staunchest allies he got on this fish [Te Ika-a-Maui<sup>100</sup>].

Te Hoku Whitu, and Light of the Trinity, you explain the particular kind of prophet that Marley is – his status as prophet does not diminish his closeness.

Te Hoku Whitu- Ae, Bob is a brother, he is a worker like others, like us you know, we are workers. There is one father in heaven so therefore we are all brethren. Now to those who want to see him as a prophet, we are all workers towards the same salvation plan, and we see him like a brother eh, one of the brethren because those reasons that Brother Bob reasons brethren today, we reason the same words, plus other words that Bob didn’t get to see.<sup>101</sup>

Light of the Trinity- He [Bob Marley] can be a mentor, he can be an inspiration, a vision, he can be something just to relax your mind.

Whare- Well, yeah, but no doubt his work, his class of work was in a higher level of understanding and in a higher place, where Jah sit with the highly and sit with the lowly, and just to show the people that the living word is fulfilled concerning those things because him, Jah, sit with the highly and him sit with the lowly.<sup>102</sup>

The emphasis on the humility of the messenger should not be lost here, for in the Bible Christ comes to save the dispossessed and the outcasts, not the rich and powerful who oppress the poor.

Te Ahi makes similar points about relevance and commitment:

Tony- Are there particular songs that have been special for you or is it the whole thing?

Te Ahi- Every song is every song; every line in the song has its own time in your life as the guiding voice, as the time of explaining where you’re at in the work with the most high God Jah. But it’s you who has to truly believe, you have to stake your life on it, you have to stake your life on it. If you don’t stake your life on it, well then, nah boy, not good enough.

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<sup>100</sup> Maui’s fish, the North Island of Aotearoa.

<sup>101</sup> Personal interview. Te Hoku Whitu, Light Of The Trinity, and Bob Mita, February 23, 2002, Ruatoria.

<sup>102</sup> Personal interview. Te Hoku Whitu, Light Of The Trinity, and Bob Mita, February 23, 2002, Ruatoria.

## **Final remarks**

### **To the community**

My time spent with your community has been an unforgettable experience. As I reflect on this time, one song comes to mind that I feel exemplifies your spirit, community aroha, and your lives. That is “The Heathen”, a song from the Babylon by Bus album. The lock-step bass line, Marley’s chanted cry, and its associations with the guerrilla struggles of the black man, reminded me of your own struggles and fierce resistance.

Rise up fallen fighters,  
Rise and take your stance again,  
‘Tis he who fight and run away,  
Live to fight another day.

I have grown to understand something of your lives, your community labours, your ancestry, your faith, your relationships to the sacred land and rivers of Ruatoria, and your appreciation of the prophet Bob Marley. These are all part of one rich, complex spiral that weaves in and through you. In this spiral, colonial time and space are being deconstructed.

I have been much influenced by the notions of Maori space and time before colonisation as expounded by Donna Awatere-Huata in Maori Sovereignty. I began to think through the implications of how contending notions of space and time can co-exist after reading Paul Gilroy’s work on diaspora time and space in The Black Atlantic. I became obsessed with studying this topic because I could feel the land hum under my feet when I visited Ruatoria in 2002. It was obvious to this student that the ancient relationships between Maori, land, space, culture, and time still exist.

In your community those bonds are being rewoven into life. Your stories about Bob Marley are laden with your brilliant awareness of time and space, as operating according both to Western chronological time and to Te Ao Maori and to genealogy. Your community has learned to exist between times and worlds, as did Bob Marley.

## **My academic work**

I value Gilroy's insights into what black popular music is, how it travels, whom it speaks to, and how it moves and influences many peoples. But I am also trying to suggest something beyond Gilroy in arguing that there is an indigenous spirituality here in Aotearoa that has created an even broader understanding and de-colonising use of Marley's music. And I have sought to theorise this new intellectual structure from the grassroots up.

First I went to the Ruatoria oral narratives on Bob Marley. Next I wove in ideas from other thinkers. I do not see my labours as superseding or erasing other work on music or travelling culture, or the music industry and its effects (like the work of Adorno). But the centre of this new relay system - whereby music and spirituality travels, enriches, and is enriched in a new place, time, and culture - is Ruatoria, and my thesis seeks to give all mana to them for their relationship to and understanding of Marley's music. These are taonga that they have created, that they own. I see my role here simply as a facilitator expressing my respect for their culture – and for the example set by the Ruatoria community in the way it lives them out.

## Chapter Seven

### Conclusion

The influence of Bob Marley at grass-roots level in Aotearoa has been deep and wide-ranging. Communities around this country have found Marley to be a source of inspiration, strength, and hope. Of course, an even wider group has responded to his work simply as a source of musical pleasure, but my research has focused on the influence of his work as something much more than that – as an accompaniment to political activity (and there is now a rich tradition of the performance of Marley’s music in protest situations in this country, in the same way certain kinds of music became associated with the civil rights and black power movements in the U.S.A.), and as the basis of alternative communities such as the 12 Tribes in Auckland and the Rastafarians in Ruatoria.

Marley only visited this land once in person, but his visit had an enormous impact on a number of activists and people who had been grappling with difficult questions of culture, identity and spirituality. His music began to exercise influence in the early 1970s, and then the man himself arrived in 1979. In terms of progressive politics the ‘70s was a crucial decade for Aotearoa (more so than “the sixties” which was more important in some other countries), bringing a wave of political activity when Maori, Pacific Island, and working class people of all cultures struggled to address long-lasting injustices and to self determine their own futures. In the ‘70s and early ‘80s, Marley spoke for a generation particularly of young Maori and Pacific Island people. His music was both deeply familiar in some respects (because of the affinities between Jamaican culture and that of Aotearoa, between ‘the Black Atlantic’ and ‘the Brown Pacific’), and new and unfamiliar in other respects (so that some members of the older generation were disconcerted by him because he seemed so different even from the pop stars of contemporary youth culture).

His work came here as part of the storm surge of revolution and protest powered by the energies of Jamaica and the Third World; and it was met by another surge of activism rising up from the grassroots of Aotearoa - people in motion, resisting, protesting, trying to make sense of who they were and what society they wanted to

build. It has been inspiring to read so many stories that speak of how Marley came at just the right time, in the right form, with the right kinds of inspiration, so people could link his legacy with their lives, with the weave of local culture. It served as a catalyst for new local forms of music and community which then spiraled back out into the world.

The complexity and richness of Marley's music is revealed in this thesis not only by textual analysis but by seeing how the music functioned in everyday life. The music helped to persuade gangs not to fight one another, and led some individual members to shift from gang values to those of the Rastafarian community. It empowered protest and struggle, but also added to the building of community bonds, the sense of aroha and pride. I have been continually amazed by the deeper readings that people make of Marley's work, far beyond my own understanding of him as a secular, political figure. They link him with Maori and Pacific Island traditions of spirituality. So many people in this thesis speak of the epiphanies they have experienced while listening to him. Seeing the way his music was articulated to their deepest spiritual beliefs and indigenous cultural traditions forced me to re-think my approach to the understanding of reception. I have spoken with political activists who remained skeptical and critical of the religious aspects of Marley's music, but personally I was very struck by the evidence in other interviews of how music can weave into the deepest, most profound, and intuitive parts of human experience and give voice to those dimensions. I was therefore forced to develop a more multi-dimensional understanding of aesthetics, which also taught me to listen to Marley in different ways.

Today, though the genre of hip hop competes with reggae for the allegiance of young people in Maori and Pacific Island communities, ( and the best of the politically and socially conscious Hip Hop music also continues the political and spiritual work of Marley in another key to a new generation of Maori and Pacific Islanders) Marley continues to inspire a number of individuals who learn to read between the lines of his lyrics and to make contact with the history and politics they carry. His music continues to be heard on the picket lines.

The chance to learn from so many people has taught me much. Their oral stories are precious, not only as a record of Marley's arrival in Aotearoa, but because so much grass-roots experience is associated with those stories. I was very conscious that when

some of the good people in the thesis pass on, much of this important local history will be lost. This gave me a sense of urgency and obligation to record stories for

posterity – to document as well as to analyse, and to document broadly so that some of the texture of community and individual life could be put on record. This also gave me a new awareness of the rich nature of oral tradition. The stories in my thesis are not merely anecdotes but evidence of a grassroots aesthetics, value system, community ethics, and a humility that brings grace to so many of the oral stories.

This also made me reflect more deeply on the exchange between Jamaica and Aotearoa as a rich, complex exchange between two sets of oral tradition. Hence my images of weaving and spirals. Marley wove down from Jamaica to become part of a weave rooted in this land and in its people. In order to grasp this meeting of cultures I was forced to speak of the meeting of various spirals. I have moved beyond academic reception theory by adopting this theoretical design, which includes a spiritual dimension. I needed a whare [house] big enough to accommodate the stories of Marley interacting with grass-roots communities in Aotearoa. Even now, I am not sure whether I have been able to do justice to all the fine voices that speak in so many different ways, and in terms of so many different traditions, about how his work influenced them.

From an academic point of view, I have sought to document and analyse, and to develop a different kind of theoretical framework to do so – deeply influenced by thinkers such as Gilroy, Said, Smith and Awatere-Huata, but at the same time modifying their work for the specific requirements of the fieldwork I was doing within particular Aotearoa communities. I have also come to see the community lessons I have learned from my research as more important than the academic ones. I was always humbled by the sheer generosity and good will of the many people who wanted to share their stories. It has been through values of compassion, humility, community service, righteous anger, and righteous self determination, that Marley became woven into their lives. I must say that these are lessons more important than any intellectual lessons I have learned in my University education. I hope my thesis serves and honours many people in the community, including the memory and music of the late, great Robert Nesta Marley and his Jamaican people.

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