CHAPTER SEVEN

HISTORICAL SOURCES

How they viewed us was tied up in their own need to assume authority over the whole world. It had little or nothing to do with us.  

Introduction

The importation of race, gender and class ideologies to Aotearoa is one part of a wider more complex hegemonic process. In order that such ideologies take force within the communities and lands of Indigenous Peoples there must exist a context that supports such a development. That context includes not only ideological but also spiritual, physical and material elements. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to engage the multiple sites within which such ideologies gain their force and also are resisted, however it is important to acknowledge clearly that the complexity of racist, sexist, classist discourses are grounded within a context that is both multiple and overlapping. This can be seen in the ways in which Māori people have been represented in historical documentation.

Much of the representation of Māori since colonisation has been controlled by Pākehā. This has been the case since the documentation of those such as Abel Tasman and Joseph Banks who gave the first recorded observations by non-Māori.  

Anne Salmond notes that early contact between Māori and non-Māori can be traced to the arrival of Abel Tasman on December 13, 1642 and two Dutch ships the Heemskerck and the Zeehaen. This documentation brings to the fore the assumption on the part of the colonising empires to represent 'others'. Mistakingly believing they had the right to re-name these lands, Abel Tasman noted the name 'Staete Land', later to be referred to as Zeelandia Nova or New Zealand. The name Zeelandia Nova relates directly to the Dutch province of Zeelandia or the land by the sea. For Tasman, this 'newly discovered' land was the 'new' land by the sea. Interactions between the Dutch and Māori were limited although there was an exchange at Taitapu where deaths occurred.

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1 Philip-Barbara, Glenis 2001 personal communication
2 Mead, L.T.R. 1996 op.cit
3 Anne Salmond notes that the term Stäten Landt refers to South-land and was used by Tasman in following another Dutch navigator Le Maire who had earlier named the coast of Tierra del Fuego by the same name. She notes that the change to Zeelandia Nova was probably done by Blaeu the Amsterdam map-makers. Salmond, A. 1991 Two Worlds: First Meetings Between Māori and Europeans 1642-1772, Viking, Penguin Books, Auckland
4 Recently a friend, Ingrid Huygens, came and told our children the meaning behind the name 'New Zealand'. What is ironic is that the monolingual nature of Pākehā education in this country means that few people have any real understanding of the name 'New Zealand', and yet there is an avid protection of the name as 'the' identity of this country. I have also heard of Māori activists who while travelling to the Netherlands invited the Dutch to 'take back' the name.
There is also documentation that Anne Salmond notes is quite probably referring to the arrival of Tasman. Written by Mohi Turei of Ngāti Porou, scribe for Pita Kāpiti there is description of those on board as follows:

They were turehu [fairy people], punehunehu [misty looking], ma [fair], ma korako [pale, like albinos], whero takou [red, like ochre] - that was the way their faces looked...
The local people knew that these were turehu [fairy people], patupaiarehe [fairies], aparangi [evil gods], atua kabukahu [still-born spirits], kowhiowhio [whistling spirits].

Anne notes that not only was little about Māori life learnt from that voyage but that the European records about Zeelandia Nova fell silent for 120 years. However, the belief in Aotearoa as a part of 'Terra Australis Incognito' and the publishing of "various bowdlerised versions of Tasman's voyage" in travel anthologies saw the beginning of the re-presentation of the land and people. The arrival of James Cook to Aotearoa in 1769 broke the silence that followed Tasman's voyage. Whilst not the first arrival of non-Māori, it is significant in that it marks the commencement of what was to become a process of systematic colonisation. The reflections of Horeta Te Taniwha give us some indication of how our ancestors responded to the arrival of the Endeavour to the harbour of Whitianga. He describes Pakehā as follows;

When our old men saw the ship they said it was an atua, a god, and the people on board were tipua, strange beings or 'goblins'. The ship came to anchor, and the boats pulled on shore. As our old men looked at the manner in which they came on shore, the rowers pulling with their backs to the bows of the boat, the old people said 'Yes, it is so: these people are goblins: their eyes are at the back of their heads; they pull on shore with their backs to the land to which they are going."

According to Anne Salmond the reflection by Te Taniwha was located within his own understandings of the world and that the descriptions of Pakehā as 'goblins' can be viewed within the context of Māori assumptions. This too was the case for Pakehā observers. Those who voyaged from Europe to Aotearoa carried with them their own understandings, values, assumptions, beliefs, as Anne notes those travelling on the Endeavour 'mirrored' their own society in both their accounts and the ways in which they interacted with Māori. Joseph Banks, a botanist, acted as recorder aboard Cooks ship the Endeavour, and according to Linda Tuhiwai Smith provided detached observations of the land, flora and fauna and the people, giving comparisons between Māori and other 'islanders' he had observed. Banks along with others on the Endeavour sought to record as much about the islands in the South as

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5 Ngāti Porou are a tribal group on the East coast of Te Ika a Māui, the north island.
6 Written by Mohi Turei, scribe for Pita Kapiti, Transcribed by Reweti Kohere from 'Te Pīpiwharauroa' 1911. ATL MS189, File 63. Translated by Anne Salmond and Merimeri Penfold in Salmond, A. 1991 op.cit.:62
7 ibid:84
8 ibid:87-88, refer also Caselberg, John 1975 Māori Is My Name, John McIndoe Limited, Dunedin
9 Anne Salmond gives depth discussion to the background in England, which locates those upon the Endeavour within their own cultural experiences and understandings. ibid:89
10 Mead, L.T.R. 1996 op.cit.:127
they could, in fact Banks had himself invested large sums of money in both equipment and personnel.\footnote{\textit{op.cit.}}

The role of the ethnographer in early documentation has been influential in the construction of discourses pertaining to Māori women and our place in both Māori society and in a wider colonised society.\footnote{Yates-Smith, Aroha. 1998 \textit{Hine! E Hine! Rediscovering The Feminine in Māori Spirituality}, Unpublished Doctorate of Philosophy thesis, University of Waikato, Hamilton} Early writers saw that it was a part of their role to record traditions, Elsdon Best comments;

The Māori himself will never record such data, will never preserve his own traditions; it remains for us to do it to the best of our ability.\footnote{Best, E. 1924 (a) \textit{The Māori As He Was: A Brief Account of Māori Life as it was in Pre-European Days}, Dominion Museum, Wellington :xiv}

As discussed in the previous chapter there has been a consistent reading of Māori society through the lens of the coloniser. Those readings have been highly influenced by the cultural, racial and gender beliefs of those in control of the process of documentation, the following comment is an example of this, again from the writings of Best.

\begin{quote}
I have known Māori bush-workers, when they had the misfortune to break a timber-jack, return to their camp in a state of despondency for the balance of the day. European workmen, under similar circumstances, would have condemned their luck, but would have worked the harder to make up the loss. To sum up: in conditions of steady continuous work, demanding strength, endurance, and steady application, the Māori is not equal to the European settler. The discipline that produces these qualities is the product of more advanced civilizations, and is not a feature of the lower planes of civilization.\footnote{ibid:6}
\end{quote}

Here Best draws upon his own cultural knowledge to interpret what is happening. In doing so he assumes that the decision to not continue with the work is a reflection on levels of endurance, application and discipline. However, a reading from a Kaupapa Māori base would raise the point that in the event of a misfortune occurring in such work our people would take the time necessary to reflect on why that had occurred and what protocols had not been correctly followed. What we have, however, is an early documentation that would later take the form in dominant representation of Māori as 'lazy' and 'undisciplined'.

What this chapter also highlights is that the writing of history is not an objective activity. Trinh T. Minh-ha suggests that History is a process of reconstruction, she writes;

\begin{quote}
the historical analysis is nothing other than reconstruction and redistribution of a pretended order of things, the interpretation or even transformation of documents given and frozen into monument. \footnote{Trinh T. Minh-ha 1989 \textit{Woman, Native, Other : Writing Postcoloniality And Feminism}. Indiana University Press, Bloomington:84}
\end{quote}
This is a powerful statement that moves the notion of History from being considered objective documentation to one that reveals the constructed nature of how things are ordered and interpreted. The way in which History has been produced, recorded, discussed is a set of social and cultural constructions or reconstructions. Historical analysis and therefore the discipline of 'History' can not be taken for granted but is both contested and struggled over.

The way in which History has been constructed in Aotearoa has been highlighted by a range of writers. Judith Binney writes that we should not be surprised by the idea that the colonised and the coloniser have different perceptions of the past, she does however express concern that it has taken many historians some time to realise that is the case.\textsuperscript{16} What Judith Binney raises in her writing is a point that the construction of the past and even the notion of the past is both socially and culturally bound and therefore the presentation and representations by the colonised and the colonisers can not be expected to be the same but there can exist not only contradictions but also conflicts. More recently Linda Tuhiiwai Smith\textsuperscript{17} has provided a depth analysis and critique of the Western constructions of History. She argues that indigenous people have for some time provided critique of the way in which History, and often their histories, have been told from the perspective of the coloniser. In her discussion Linda also highlights that the notion of history is important to Indigenous peoples however the construction of what that is, of what it looks like differs considerably from the Western ideas of what constitutes history.\textsuperscript{18}

Early historical representation has shaped many understandings regarding Māori. To understand the relationship between race, gender, class ideologies and their expression within historical representation I examine in this chapter some selected representations of Māori women. Examining documentation provides some indication of how discourses related to Māori women are articulated. I am not trying to outline a comprehensive literature review, but rather have selected particular writings as examples to highlight that many dominant representations of Māori women are sourced in material that is over one hundred years old. The extent to which we have internalised dominant notions is an indication of the powerful hegemony at play through colonisation. Hegemony that was supported and reproduced through much of the historical data presented to us.

\textsuperscript{17} Mead, L.T.R. 1996 op. cit.
\textsuperscript{18} Linda identifies nine key elements that she notes are integral to the foundation of Western modernist ideas of History. These elements are; the idea that History is a totalising discourse; the idea that there is a universal history; the idea that History is one large chronology, the idea that History is about development; the idea that History is about a self-actualising human subject; the idea that the story of History can be told in one coherent narrative; the idea that History as a discipline is innocent; the idea that History is constructed around binary categories; the idea that History is patriarchal. The ways in which Indigenous Peoples 'histories' are written are often constructed within these notions each of which are problematic. ibid
Ethnography and historical representation

Trinh T. Minh-ha cautions us in our consideration of the works of ethnographers. In her film 'Reassemblage' Minh-ha brings powerful statements to the discussion of how the ethnographer sees 'himself'.

Filming In Africa means for many of us
Colorful images, naked breast women, exotic dances and fearful rites.
The unusual
First create needs, then, help
Ethnologists hand the camera the way they handle words
Recuperated collected preserved -
The Bamuun the Bassari the Bobo
What are your people called again? An ethnologist asks a fellow of his19

With this in mind, this chapter gives insight into the constructedness of the ethnographic material provided by Elsdon Best, in particular, and the consequent recycling of those understandings by other authors.

In the preface to 'Polynesian Mythology' Grey uses the following terms to describe 'the native race' - 'heathen'; 'barbaric or semi-barbaric'; 'savage'. The traditions of which were described as 'puerile'; 'barbarous mythological systems'; 'superstitions'; 'cruel and barbarous rites'.20 Elsdon Best varies in his descriptions from regarding Māori as possessing a 'vertiable genius' when referring to 'myths'21 he maintains the dominant descriptions of Māori as 'savage', 'barbaric', 'uncivilised'.22 In his own discussion of early writers, Best provides a range of reflections, commencing firstly with his own reflection as follows;

Our own point of view differs so widely from that of neolithic man that we must ever experience considerable difficulty in understanding his views with regard to the supernormal. Behind this fact lies the cause of all such difficulties and differences - namely, the gulf that lies between the mentality of the Māori and that of our own folk. It is not a case of differing degrees of intelligence, for the Māori is a remarkably intelligent person; but of difference in outlook on life, on matters normal and supernormal, especially the latter. With regard to ordinary affairs of life no one is more shrewd than your Māori; but when any transaction or activity impinges on his superstition, it is then that you see revealed the peculiar mentality of the neolith, the undisciplined mind of barbaric man.23

Other comments made by early writers are documented by Best as examples of views of Māori intelligence, which, in order to further illustrate how Māori were perceived more generally by early

20 Grey, G. 1922 Polynesian Mythology and Ancient Traditional History of the New Zealanders, George Routledge and Sons Ltd., New York: pp vi-xiv
21 Best, E. 1924 (a) The Māori As He Was: A Brief Account of Māori Life as it was in Pre-European Days, Dominion Museum, Wellington:xii
22 Best, E. 1924 (c) Māori Religion and Mythology, Part One, Dominion Museum Bulletin 10, Wellington
23 ibid:34
ethnographers, warrant discussion here. According to Best, observer William Brown considered Māori wanting not because of being inferior but because of requiring knowledge. Shortland, he states, stressed that Māori motives were quite different from those of Pākehā and that the colonist needed to understand that. Also, Best writes, Shortland saw Māori as having limited knowledge of the abstract. Rev James Buller is regarded by Best as narrow minded and drawing a 'deplorable' picture, highlighting the following excerpt as an example of this;

Their moral side was a dark picture; it was relieved by only the faintest gleams of light; selfishness, in some form or other, was the base-line of it. Their conversation was sensual, their ideas filthy, and their language obscene. Chastity was rare, if known at all. They were given to sorcery, witchcraft, murder.23

Best notes that Colenso regarded Māori as intellectual however also referred to Māori intellect being 'stunted', 'warped' and 'debased' through 'customs', 'habit' and 'strong or unrestrained animal propensities'.25 Best, himself, is contradictory in his statements in regard to how he views Māori. At one point he notes that Māori are 'mentally acute' and possess 'remarkable powers of comprehension'26 and then goes on to say that sustained effort is not of appeal to Māori and that many of the failings of Māori is an outcome of irresponsibility, lack of training, lack of discipline. Yet he cites the example of one kaumatua from Tuhoe reciting 406 waiata. This alone shows the ridiculousness of such statements.27

It is not only Pākehā men who viewed Māori in such ways, but equally Pākehā women documented a similar view. In the preface to 'Lady Missionaries in Many Lands' E.R. Pitman outlines the lack of impression made on Māori women by male missionaries due to their lack of access. Pitman states that it was the role of 'Christian women' to teach the 'heathen women'.28 In discussing the missionary work of a Mrs Margaret Cargill Pitman notes her first impression of arriving in Aotearoa on the way to Fiji.

On landing at the Bay of Islands New Zealand on the 2nd day of January 1834, Mrs Cargill saw for the first time some specimens of the dark and depraved heathen people amongst whom she had to labour. Both men and women presented a wild and savage appearance, while almost everything reminded her of the fact that she was a last in a thoroughly heathen land.29

The fact that ethnographers readings of Māori society are influenced, and in some cases blinded, by their own cultural and political understandings is not a new contention. In her book 'Victorian Attitudes to Race', Christine Bolt highlights that through the mid 1800s there was contention in terms

24 Rev. James Buller cited in Best, E.; ibid.:35
25 These are descriptions given by Colenso as cited in Best, E. ibid:35
26 Best, E 1924(c) op.cit.:8
27 ibid.
28 Pitman, E.R. (n/d) Lady Missionaries in Many Lands, Pickering and Inglis Ltd., London
29 ibid:170
of how journeys to other lands were being documented. She notes that writer, Sir John Lubbock identified that any judgement in regard to race was "at least as much on the character of the writer as on that of the people".30 Other writers, such as Max Muller and Alfred Haddon, argued that it was critical that anthropologists spend time amongst those they are documenting in order to work against the possibility of misrepresenting what they saw. This however, Bolt states "long remained simply an ideal".31

This relates to the notion described by Linda Tuhiwai Smith as 'The construction of History as innocent'.32 This concept locates discipline of History as objective and devoid of power relations. It assumes that facts speak for themselves and historians merely assemble facts. This idea denies the existence of power relationships and who controls the discipline. It also denies that Historians bring with them their own perceptions and interests to their writing. This idea denies the existence of power relationships and who controls the discipline. It also denies that Historians bring with them their own perceptions and interests to their writing. As Fritz Stern notes:

To the cultural differences must be added the human factor, the obvious individual differences among Historians. These differences are decisive in determining the writing of History, even after the discipline of History has been firmly established and even after it has made its uniform demands on Historians. In the last analysis what will shape a particular history is the historians' conception of the past, whether or not he (sic) is fully conscious of it.33

The concern over representation of colonised by their colonisers is held by many Black and Indigenous peoples around the world. Vine Deloria Jr. writes that

For most of the five centuries ... whites have had unrestricted power to describe Indians in any way they chose.34

This point is further explored in the anthology 'Native and Academic: Researching and Writing about American Indians', where Devon Mihesuah brings together a collection of writings that not only challenges early documentation from white historians and white academics but also brings an extensive discussion of many of the works that continue to influence more recent writings about Native American peoples. What is evident in reading this collection is the extent to which white historians have documented American Indian life with little or no consideration for what the people themselves have to say or contribute. Another point that is significant is that of the current thrust by white anthropologists to discredit Indigenous accounts. In terms of Native American history Vine Deloria notes that the collection edited by James A. Clifton titled 'The Invented Indian: Cultural

31 ibid:2
Fictions and Government Policies' is one example of this. Key to his challenge of the collection is a discussion of the notion of objectivity.

The first point which we must consider in reviewing any set of essays that pretends to offer an objective point of view regarding Indian affairs is that there never has been an objective point of view regarding Indians and there never will be. Conflict between red and white has been the predominant characteristic of race relations for half a millennium and will continue to influence all efforts to bring about an interpretation of what the invasion of this continent has meant - to both Indians and non-Indians.  

Where there are many examples in Aotearoa of this perhaps the most prolific ethnographic writer was Elsdon Best who held a belief that Māori were natives that were worth studying. In his Introduction to 'The Māori As He Was' Elsdon Best wrote;

Among existing races of the barbaric plane of culture we have probably no more interesting people to study then the Māori of New Zealand.  

This comment was because of what Best saw as the achievements of Māori in the past, in particular migration, exploration and skill in seafaring. Another point of intrigue for Best was his belief that Māori ideas of 'mythopoetic conception' and religion set a pathway that indicates that Māori religion was in a stage of development that was leading to monotheism. Māori therefore in his terms were capable of moving toward a religion that encompassed "two distinct spirit worlds", in other words were seen as moving toward a religious framework that was more consistent with his own. The comparative made by Best between Māori spirituality and European religion is important to observe in that the dualisms of European religion significantly influence his reading of Māori contexts and knowledge. This occurs throughout Best's work even though he himself states that for Māori dualistic notions such as good and evil are not a part of Māori understandings. The contradictions inherent in Best's interpretations of Māori narratives is evident in the following quote where Best defines the relationship between Tane and Whiro in oppositional terms, however again contradicting earlier statements he extends further to note that the dualistic constructions between good and evil are not Māori.

Now there came about the first great contest known in the world - the fierce, long-continued struggle between Tane and Whiro. This is but another version of the old Persian myth, wherein Ormuzd and Ahriman strive for mastery, the one personifying light and goodness, the other darkness and evil. In Whiro we have the personification of evil, darkness and death; while Tane represents light and life, but he cannot be said to personify goodness. The clear contest between good and evil was not a Māori concept.  

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35 ibid:66
36 Best, E. 1924 (a) op.cit.:xiii
37 Both Tane and Whiro were engaged in the pursuit of bring three kete of knowledge back to earth from Iomatua-kore.
38 Best, E. 1924(a) op.cit.:36
The dualisms that arise from Best's recital of the relationship of Tāne to Whiro are many: darkness - light, evil - good, death - life, Rarohenga - Te Ao Mārama. These are each in line with a world-view that has at its own centre opposition and dualistic relationships. As Best hinted in the last sentence of the previous quote such constructions are not of a Māori world-view. He did, as I have noted earlier, have a fundamental belief that Māori were on the way to developing such a world-view. Best asserts that Māori had developed a belief in two distinct spirit worlds and that this would in time have evolved into a 'heaven and hell' scenario. To support his contention he notes that both good and evil went to the underworld but some also went to Io and there was no evil there. The division into a dualistic structure appears important to Best in that he continues to state that although there did not exist the notion of punishments or rewards in death he argues that the development of a heaven and hell was unavoidable. In order to more fully appreciate the contradictions with which Best writes in this area it is worth quoting him directly.

Now, the Māori had never evolved or borrowed the belief in punishment of the human soul after death, neither does he appear to have developed a clear, universal role of ethics. Hence there was no system of rewards and punishments in the spirit-world, nor were there separate realms for the spirits of good and evil persons. Yet the belief in two spirit-worlds existing, while in the underworld forces of evil existed under a personified form of evil. Thus the Māori had advanced far in his search for knowledge in this direction, the destination and fate of the human soul. Greater power in priestly hands, and better recognition of the forces of good and evil, would probably have given him a hell and heaven such as ours.39

A critical element here is the issue of definition of Māori people through the construction of dualisms. Binaries are constructed that locate the colonised and coloniser relationship. Some examples of this are;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discovered</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
<th>Illiterate</th>
<th>Literate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Savage</td>
<td>Civilised</td>
<td>Inferior</td>
<td>Superior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the Dark</td>
<td>Enlightened</td>
<td>Myth</td>
<td>Fact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immoral</td>
<td>Moral</td>
<td>Heathen</td>
<td>Christian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each of these binaries locate colonised peoples as consistently lesser than their colonisers and provides justification for ongoing subjugation. Such binaries are constructed as a result of a colonial need to locate themselves as superior and therefore enable them to argue their responsibility and obligation to govern over others. Furthermore, in order to sustain ideologies of dominance the colonising forces required the development of a whole raft of understandings and beliefs that would undermine Indigenous peoples positioning whilst simultaneously ensuring their dominance. A system of binary oppositions proved to be what was required to accomplish such a task. Furthermore, the impact of binary constructions influences the ways in which the roles of Māori women were defined and recorded, or not recorded.
The marginalisation of Māori women in accounts by anthropologists and historians has been a critical element in our representation of Māori women. Aroha Yates-Smith has provided depth discussion in regard to the ways in which early ethnographers marginalised Māori women's position and status.⁴⁰ Aroha argues that this can in part be attributed to the ignorance of early writers to the ways in which Māori society was structured and therefore who did not have a basis from which to comprehend Māori social relations. Furthermore, not only were Pākehā ethnographers ill equipped to compare Māori society but they created their own mythologies by making assertions from their own frameworks. Ethnographers were operating within their own cultural and gender frameworks.⁴¹ Aroha continues throughout her doctoral thesis to raise key issues in regard to the influence of Pākehā ethnography on the ways in which Māori history has been constructed. It is her contention that although original informants were Māori and some original material was written in Māori by Māori, the publication of that material was done by Pākehā men which raised two key major problems, that of interpretation and censorship. She argues that both the processes of interpretation and censorship severely distorted the picture presented of Māori women and atua wāhine in particular: For example, aspects of kōrero that were viewed as extravagant by those recording were altered so that different stories resulted which are now considered authentic.⁴² The Preface of George Grey's 'Polynesian Mythology' gives an indication of the deceptive ways through which documentation took place. Grey notes that in collecting writings for this publication he undertook a range of processes that were problematic but which served to provide a collection conducive to the 'European reader'. Commenting on the particular needs of Pākehā readers Grey noted:

It is almost impossible closely and faithfully to translate a very difficult language without almost insensibly falling somewhat into the idiom and form of construction of that language, which, perhaps, from its unusualness may prove unpleasant to the European ear and mind, and this must be essentially the case in a work like the present, no considerable continuous portion of the original whereof was derived from one person, but which is compiled from the written or orally delivered narratives of many, each differing from the others in style, and some even materially from the rest in dialect.⁴³

Aroha Yates-Smith critique of such manipulation of kōrero Māori is essential in a process of seeking to identify historical sources of mis-representations of Māori women. She asserts the argument that the cultural and ethnocentric focus of the early recorders of Māori history operated against the interests of Māori women in the expression of our status and in the maintenance of knowledge about our atua wāhine.

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⁴⁰ ibid:40
⁴¹ Yates-Smith, A. 1998 op.cit.:pp 44-45
⁴² ibid:27
⁴³ Grey, G. 1922 Polynesian Mythology and Ancient Traditional History of the New Zealanders, George Routledge and Sons Ltd., New York:xii
As noted previously, dualisms abound in Best's writings. Throughout his texts we are continually exposed to statements that are based within oppositional constructions. As I have outlined in Chapter six this then creates a situation whereby Māori women's roles are viewed in opposition to those of Māori men, and where assertions are made based upon the construction of dualisms that in fact have little relevance to tikanga Māori. This is further highlighted in the ways in which Best discusses the events that took place between Hine-nui-te-pō and Maui, when Maui sought immortality. Best expresses that as being a "context between light and darkness, but the darkness of death triumphed". Hence, Hine-nui-te-pō is constructed as the 'darkness of death' which is further related to the notions of good and evil, with darkness located alongside the realm of evil. What it says about Māori women is disturbing in that it locates Māori women in the realm of evil. This construction fits neatly in the context of western notions of gender and women as immoral. Māori women are repositioned into the colonisers' conceptualisation of women as evil. The assertion of the underground as essentially evil is noted by Best, however this is contradicted in his recitation of the kōrero regarding Mataora. According to Best, Mataora meets Niareka, described as a Turehu from Rarohenga, but he beats her and she leaves him. Mataora follows Niareka to Rarohenga to ask her to return to him, however he encounters Uetonga who is engaged in Tā Moko. The people of Rarohenga object to the treatment of Niareka by Mataora and question the beating of women. Best goes on to quote the 'native informant' as saying:

Observe well the words of Uetonga. Here in the upper world alone are evil deeds known; this is truly the realm of darkness. As to the underworld, no evil is there known, nor darkness; it is a realm of light and rectitude. And this is the reason why, all of the spirits of the dead, from the time of Hine-ahu-one even unto ourselves, no single one has ever returned hither to dwell in this world.

This raises two critical points, firstly that the underworld was not considered 'evil' and that in fact it was the 'upper world' within which 'evil deeds' were considered located and secondly that the beating of women was seen as unacceptable. The underworld realm of Hine-nui-te-pō is regarded here as the realm of rectitude not a realm of evil as is the dominant representation. The dominant colonial representation of Rarohenga is one that assumes a comparative with the western notion of 'hell' and as a consequence early writers construct Māori concepts in line with their own beliefs in 'hell' as 'evil'. Best outlines the obsession with identifying two realms with the following statement;

Māori religion, again, was in a very interesting stage of development in relation to the concept of a Supreme Being, the initial step taken toward monotheism, and the expressed and half-developed faith in two distinct spirit-worlds. The graded group series of gods, as suited to different mentalities, and the peculiar control of the cult of the Supreme Being, by means of

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44 Best, Elsdon 1924(b) The Māori, Volume One, Memoirs of the Polynesian Society Volume V., Published by the Board of Maori Ethnological Research, Wellington:43
45 Best, E 1924 (a) op.cit.:63
46 Rarohenga refers to the underworld.
47 ibid:48

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which the purity of the concept was conserved, are matters of deep interest to anthropologists, and throw light on the evolution of religions.\footnote{ibid: xiv}

Alongside the assertion that Māori were moving to a two-tiered spirit world, Best also emphasizes the existence of a singular supreme being and within his writings that being is clearly defined as male, in line with western Christian beliefs in a singular male God. Best finds the notion of a Supreme Being as a 'remarkable achievement', clearly because he is able to locate such a notion in line with his own beliefs in a patriarchal driven religion. The construction of Io as Supreme and male is identified throughout Best's writings of which the following is one example.

Here then, among a barbaric and cannibal folk living at the ends of the earth, we encounter a remarkable concept of the Supreme Being. He is called Io the Parentless because he was never born of parents. He was Io the Parent because all things originated from him, or through him, albeit he begat no being. He was known as Io the Permanent because he is eternal and unchangeable, and as Io-te-waiora because he is the welfare of all beings and all things in all realms.\footnote{Best, E., 1924(b) op.cit.:235 The italics are mine to emphasize Best's gendering of Io as male.}

In regard to the status of Māori women, Best is explicit in his belief that Māori women have 'less mana',\footnote{Best, E., 1924(a):92} that Māori women destroy tapu,\footnote{ibid:182} and that Māori men only are referred to as rangatira and ariki.\footnote{ibid:88} However, as already identified contradictions appear consistently through Best's writings. We would be hard pressed to find a more explicitly contradictory statement in regard to Māori women than that made in regard to tohi.

As a rule such honorific treatment was not accorded to female infants, but only to the more important males. Occasionally a female child of rank was so honoured.\footnote{ibid:101}

Best's rejection of Māori women as rangatira is also contradicted in his own writings. Examples of this being his own noting of wāhine tapairu, the first born female of high ranking families; Mareikura, women of high ranking in Ngāti Kahungunu and his own abundant references to atua wāhine. He also refers to the role of women in Tuhoe who were prominent fighters with Te Kooti.\footnote{ibid:129}

In a more general reflection on Māori women and warfare, Best notes;

A remarkable feature in Māori life was the fact that women accompanied warlike raids and in a few cases are said to have been energetic fighters.\footnote{ibid:129}

In yet another context, that of the handling of a new net, he notes that a 'ceremonial feast' was held with two fires where at one fish was cooked for the 'tapu men' and at the other for 'influential
women. The choice of language used by Best illustrates his own thinking in regard to Māori women. His descriptions of Māori women are done in such a way as to diminish the importance or position of Māori women. The example given here in regard to the new nets is indicative of this approach, Māori men are referred to as 'tapu' and Māori women as 'influential'. In regard to atua, female atua are, on the whole, described as 'assistants' to male atua. Again contradictions abound. In Volume One of 'The Māori', Best notes that the ocean is personified by Hine-moana, but is 'controlled' by Kiwa, also that Tangaroa controls the tides and is 'assisted' by Rona. However, in the publication 'The Māori As He Was' Best associates the role of assistant to Tangaroa.

In his writings Best locates Māori women as lesser and inferior to Māori men. This, he states, is part of Māori thinking and he seeks to locate it within Māori cosmology. In 'The Māori Volume One', Best discusses a Waikato rendition in relation to the origins of people, within this discussion it is noted that Papatūānuku descends from Te Pō, and that Ranginui descends from Te Ao Mārama.

Taking this kōrero, Best then places his own eurocentric dualistic reading as interpretation, he writes;

The crediting of light to the male line, and of darkness to the female line, is quite in accordance with Māori views, forever in native myth and belief the female sex is given an inferior position. Woman is allied with misfortune and inferiority as among other barbaric races. The word Po is explained below, while ao denotes day, to dawn and as an adjective, bright.

Here light, as associated with maleness, is presented as day and bright, it infers a superior positioning to that of darkness. Darkness, as associated with femaleness, is then relegated to the inferior. These descriptions of female and male positions are more in line with dualistic western christian patriarchal beliefs, than those of Māori. In a further attempt to locate a patriarchal hierarchy within Māori cosmology, Best also argues that Māori have seen women as inferior since Hine-ahu-one, he writes;

We are told the pagan semites identified the active force in Nature with the Sun, and the passive force with the earth. This is precisely the Māori concept, but ever he deemed the female sex somewhat inferior to the male. The male sex originated with the gods, is of supernatural origin, but the first female of the ira tangata was fashioned from a portion of the Earth mother; ever does woman bear the brand of her inferior origin.

This particular statement is loaded with colonial assumptions in particular the notion that male is godly and therefore superior, and consequently dominant, and women are of inferior origin. This is based upon an assertion that the male sex originated 'with the gods', a fundamental flaw in this argument being that Best locate men with originating from the 'gods' however it is not the case as all ira tāngata originate from Hine-ahu-one and therefore males are of no more 'godly' origin that females. The view held by Best also appears to be linked to the idea that all children of Papatūānuku

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[56] ibid:249 Hinemoana, Kiwa, Tangaroa and Rona are all atua associated with the oceans.
[57] Best, E., 1924(b) op.cit.
[58] Best, E., 1924(a) op.cit.:47
[59] ibid:93

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and Ranginui were male, and that the extension from that in Best's writings is that all things male are more godly than female. The problem with such a position is that it disregards the existence of atua wāhine. There is a critical question that needs to be explored more fully in future research in this area, which is; if all the children of Ranginui and Papatūānuku were male where did the atua wāhine originate?

In denying the existence of atua wāhine Best denies the status of Papatūānuku, instead he regards Papatūānuku as a 'passive force', not of godly status and therefore inferior. This position disregards the centrality of Papatūānuku within Māori society, not only is Papatūānuku of the atua realm, she is also simultaneously the nurturer, giver of life and the claimer of life in that all living things return to Papatūānuku. The term whenua clearly articulates the relationship of Papatūānuku to life, whenua is both land and placenta. The connection between life and land is synonymous with references to Papatūānuku. However, in these roles Best further locates Papatūānuku as passive, or in his words;

... the whare moenga, the receptive female element acted on by the fertilizing-power represented by Tane.60

The whole construction of Māori female sexuality here is disturbing, but again in line with colonial Victorian notions of the woman as sexual servant, there to be 'acted on'.61 Such notions serve to place Māori women in not only passive roles but as subservient. Ngahuia Te Awekotuku argues that the impact of colonisation on the construction of sexuality has had a significant impact on how Māori perceive ourselves. Ngahuia, who has worked to make visible Māori lesbians and gay men, has highlighted the detrimental effects on Māori of colonial Judaeo-christian beliefs.

The practice, the carrying through, the acting out of one's inner self, even the very acknowledgement of it without the acting out, has mean too often shame, condemnation, dismissal, hatred, ostracism, hopelessness, and despair. The Judaeo-Christian legacy of guilt and punishment, of judgement and mortification has flourished on these islands. Despite the indigenous traditions of the Māori, despite those old, old beliefs, despite their continual rebirthing. Over the decades of colonization the homosexual, and more certainly the lesbian, became invisible.62

Clive Aspin, in his doctoral research, also comments on the impact of colonisation in the defining for Māori sexuality. He argues that colonisation had such a profound effect that among many Indigenous cultures the diversity of sexuality has been actively suppressed. As such Clive notes that any deviation from a colonial defined sexuality, i.e. heterosexuality, was promoted as sinful and profane.63

A similar contention is made by Stevan Eldred-Griggs in the publication 'Pleasures of the Flesh', who

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60 Best, E., 1924(c) op.cit.:88
61 Discussion of the 'domestication' processes of colonisation is provided in the following chapter on Native Schooling
62 Te Awekotuku, N. 1991 op.cit.:37-38
also highlights that sexuality as constructed through Victorians value systems differed significantly from that held by Māori and that through colonisation missionaries actively disrupted the 'sexual code' of Māori society in their view that Māori morality was 'devilish'.

The colonisers redefining of what was deemed appropriate sexual behaviour and relationships is a part of the wider gender reorganisation that was integral to a colonising agenda to transform Māori society. It was also influenced by racial notions of sexuality where Indigenous expressions of diverse sexuality was consider uncivilised and savage.

Patricia Johnston and I noted that the intersections of race and gender are visible in early descriptions of Māori women as sexually promiscuous and as objects available for the sexual gratification of white men. A colonising drive to redefine sexuality of Indigenous Peoples is founded upon each of the oppressive ideologies of race, gender and class. The notion that capitalist expansion is reliant on labour-power means too that such expansion is reliant on the maintenance of the heterosexual, colonial nuclear family structure and any expression of sexuality that challenges that structure is actively attacked by white, colonial, supremacist, patriarchal institutions. This then adds further context to the works of Elsdon Best as a lead writer for the colonising forces. The marginalisation and attacks on the roles and positions of Māori women fit neatly into the race, gender and class agendas of the colonisers.

Throughout Bests' writings these processes of marginalisation and dismissal of Māori women are evident. In discussing the system of Whare Wananga, Best refers to Māori men only. Rangatira are referred to as 'Chiefs' and any general reference to rangatira is male. This is done consistently even in light of evidence to the contrary. For example in asserting that men are considered superior, Best then states that the term tapairu referred to women of superior rank and that in Ngāti Kahungunu the term Mareikura also denoted women of rank.

As in most other barbaric lands, we find that women were looked upon here as being inferior to men. At the same time, a woman endowed with initiative could acquire influence, and some of superior families have attained commanding positions. Children possessed an interest in land derived from both parents, so that added somewhat of dignity to the position of the women. Rank also was transmitted through both parents, and consanguineous relationship counted through both. On the whole, the Māori leaned to agnatic filiation, the male he possesses greater mana that does the female, for is not man descended directly form the gods, while woman had to be created from earth.

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64 Eldred-Grigg, Stevan 1984 Pleasures of the Flesh: Sex & Drugs in Colonial New Zealand 1840-1915, A.H. & A. W. Reed Ltd., Wellington
65 Aspin, C. 2000 op.cit.; see also discussions by Anne Salmond in terms of how early Pākehā arrivals to this land viewed Māori women and their expression of sexuality. Salmond, A., 1991 op.cit.
67 Best, E., 1924(a) op.cit: 88-89
68 The explanation mark is from the original text indicating Best's denigration of Māori women's status. ibid:93
In regard to birth Best diminishes Māori women by stating that the tapu of Māori women is somehow a negative form.

In this connection tapu may be said to be equivalent to the condition termed 'unclean' in the Scriptures. A woman was tapu in this sense when giving birth to a child, and for some days after, hence she was segregated for a certain period.69

Examples of the process of diminishing Māori women's roles pervade Best's work such as his description of Maui's attempt to claim immortality, by entering the vagina of Hine-nui-te-pō, as a 'contest' between 'Light and Darkness'.70 The 'Darkness' being Hine-nui-te-pō, the female element. In regard to haka,71 Best notes that both women and men were involved, however he again presents Māori women in a derisive manner, stating:

Old women were often very prominent in these performances, and few uglier sights could be imagined than these old hags when leading a haka or war-dance.72

This for Best extended also to tohi ceremonies that occurred at birth, again however the contradictions are self-evident.

As a rule such honorific treatment was not accorded to female infants, but only to the more important males. Occasionally a female child of rank was so honoured.73

Given that rank was considered important in determining particular rituals and that the tohi was performed in relation to rank we could well expect that the nature of a female child being honoured in such as way was 'occasional'. It is apparent in Best's work that the way in which tapu is defined plays a key role in the positioning of Māori women within the documentation. Best regards tapu as

Prohibition, a multiplication of 'thou shalt not'. These may be termed the laws of the gods and they must not be infringed.74

Māori women he regards as being able to 'pollute' and therefore 'destroy' tapu. That becomes the basis for an argument for the 'restriction' of Māori women in certain situations. Best makes the following contentions;

In regard to waka75;

No unauthorised person was allowed to visit the spot. Should a woman visit the place it meant a serious pollution of tapu and the gods under whose aegis the craftsmen were working, would at once abandon the place.76

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69 ibid:93
70 ibid:99
71 haka is referred to by Timoti Kāretu as "a generic name for all Māori dance". Kāretu, T. Haka: The Dance of a Noble People, Reed, Auckland:24
72 ibid:134
73 ibid:101
74 Best, E. 1924(b) op.cit.:251
75 waka refers to canoe
76 ibid:255
In regard to tapu persons;

Persons who were heavily tapu ate their meals alone. Even ordinary persons when under special tapu, such as that pertaining to war gods, would not eat with women.\(^{77}\)

The process of whakanoa or the lifting of tapu was also regarded as Best as a negative, destructive force, which was held by women.\(^{78}\) What is also evident is that the way in which Best regards tapu is altered when it is Māori women who hold tapu. Tapu in relation to childbirth is defined by Best as 'unclean'.\(^{79}\) Again there are serious contradictions in the ways in which women's roles are discussed. The role of ruahine is noted as essential in many situations of lifting tapu. The rituals of which Best describes as 'elaborate' and 'spectacular'. In important ceremonies of lifting tapu Best states that the tapu is transferred to the ruahine who

Represents the tapu spirits of ancestral beings. A woman was always the first person to cross the threshold of a new and tapu house during such a rite. The very fact of a woman passing over a tapu spot would pollute or destroy its sanctity, for such is the effect of that sex.\(^{80}\)

In this description Māori women are simultaneously regarded the embodiment of the ancestors and a form of pollutant. Tapu and noa are positioned in a negative opposition and in locating Māori women as destroyers or polluters of tapu, Best effectively places Māori women as oppositional to the notion of tapu. Manuka Henare argues against such a positioning. He states that tapu originates from the gods and that tapu is a state of 'being' not of 'having'. According to Manuka all people have their own intrinsic tapu and that in social terms tapu may be regards as follows;

As potentiality for full realisation; to have influence, to evolve, to control, that is to be more Māori, more human.\(^{81}\)

Noa, he describes as 'freedom' from tapu and 'normality'. What Manuka provides in his discussion of noa is a definition that locates the process of whakanoa as one that works to prevent the extension of tapu to people, rather than one that opposes intrinsic tapu. This he states is a difference that has been lost in past interpretations.\(^{82}\) It is without doubt one that is lost in Best's interpretations. Utilising the interpretation provided by Manuka, noa is viewed as a form that operates to serve the benefits of being in enabling a use of tapu objects. In this interpretation it is not the intrinsic tapu of objects that is removed but the possibility of the extension of that tapu to people. Here too, the role of women is written in a substantially different vein to that of Best.

Women are especially powerful in making things and activities noa. Women have a particularly important task in ensuring that the extension of tapu on buildings does not apply to the users. They therefore make buildings safe for use or habitation. This is the mana and tapu

\(^{77}\) ibid:256  
\(^{78}\) ibid:182  
\(^{79}\) ibid:104  
\(^{80}\) ibid:261  
\(^{81}\) Henare, Manuka 1988 op.cit.  
\(^{82}\) ibid
of women, in that they have the ability to free areas, things and people from restrictions imposed by tapu. Women are not noa, as is often thought, but they are agents to whakanoa - to make noa. This is their tapu, and they are tohunga because of their own specific areas of activity.  

Rangimarie Rose Pere presents definitions of noa that do not support such representations of Māori women. Rangimarie writes;

The influence and power of noa is very significant to the physical well-being of people by freeing them from any quality or condition that make them subject to spiritual and/or ceremonial restriction and influences. The concept of noa is usually associated with warm, benevolent, life-giving, constructive influences including ceremonial purification.

What Rangimarie presents is a discussion of noa that is directly related to our wellbeing and that is a constructive and necessary part of Māori life. To accept such a definition is then to call into question the dominant representations of Māori women. Such a position has been taken by an increasing number of Māori women, who will no longer abide by the notion that Māori women are considered somehow inferior to all others. An example of this is provided by Ani Mikaere, who argues powerfully against such constructions by deconstructing documentation that locate Māori women as 'common' 'profane' and in doing so challenges the notion that Māori women are inherently 'destructive'. To further illustrate the powerful roles of Māori women, Ani recalls the story of the actions of Te Rangiokaea.

Being pursued by some of his Waikato enemies, Te Rauparaha sought the assistance of Te Heuheu at Taupō. On Te Heuheu's advice, he went to Rotoaia and there asked Wharerangi to help him. Wharerangi told Te Rauparaha to jump into a kūmara pit, over the mouth of which he sat his wife, Te Rangiokaea. When Te Rauparaha's pursuers arrived and asked whether their enemy had been seen, Wharerangi replied that he had been and gone. The Waikato ope nevertheless conducted a thorough search of the area, led by their tohunga who chanted karakia to assist the search. They approached the kūmara pit, but the karakia were rendered powerless by the presence of Te Rangiokaea sitting over it. Te Rauparaha therefore remained undetected, hence the composition of the haka, a celebration of his surviving an extremely close brush with certain death. There are at least two possible interpretations that can be placed on the role of the woman sitting over the pit. One is that her presence made the tohunga's karakia noa, and therefore ineffective. But another is that her presence over the pit made Te Rauparaha tapu, and therefore placed him beyond the reach of the tohunga's karakia and the keen eyes of the rest of his pursuers.

The intention of this discussion is not to entirely reject the writings of Elsdon Best, as there is much valuable information provided in the writings. Rather it is to highlight the need for critical readings of these early writings and the interpretations that are provided within. Elsdon Best has had a major influence on the ways in which discussions of Māori women's roles and status are framed, through

83 Māori, M. 1988 op.cit.
84 Pere, R. 1982 op.cit:38
influencing the creation and maintenance of discourses about Māori women. The writings of Berys Heuer provides a definite example of the influence of the types of discourses promoted by Elsdon Best, in particular her publication 'Māori Women'.

**Berys Heuer 'on' Māori women**

The dominance of early ethnographic constructions of Māori women continues in the works of anthropologists and ethnographers that followed the first wave of Best, White, Smith and others. Pākehā women writer Berys Heuer provides a prime example of the unproblematic acceptance and use of those writers. Heuer opens her work 'Māori women' with the assertion that sex permeates all aspects of Māori life. Drawing on terminology in te reo Māori she seeks to demonstrate her belief in the inferiority of Māori women and superiority of Māori men within Māori society. For example, Heuer argues that the terms taitamawahine (east coast tides) and taitamatāne (west coast tides) indicate a gender inferiority of women because the east coast seas are calmer than the west coast.

Heuer's approach to Māori sexuality is best noted in her response to whakairo and the representation of both Māori women and men. She describes whakairo as follows:

> Symbolic sexual representation was commonly found in carving motifs. House and fortifications were decorated with figures representing men and women with grotesquely distorted sexual organs.

The conservative nature with which Heuer views Māori society is clearly identifiable within this statement and permeates throughout her work. Heuer describes Māori women as 'subordinate'; 'defiling'; 'unclean', each of which is based upon her own cultural readings of how Māori society operates and her definitions of sexuality and what is deemed appropriate sexual expression. Heuer locates her assertion of the inferiority of Māori women within what she describes as the 'mythological origins' of Māori women. She outlines the role of Tāne in seeking the female element whilst disregarding the role of atua wāhine in particular Papatūānuku from whom Hineahuone originated. Heuer states that creation stories such as this act as indicators of male superiority. She writes:

> This account shows the culturally all-pervasive conception of man as provider of the creative fertilising elements, the life spirit. Concomitantly woman is seen as the passive shelterer and nurturer, the receptacle of whare moenga, of the life principle implanted by man.

Māori women are referred to as 'passive recipients', whilst simultaneously being presented as destructive forces. Heuer refers to the story of Hinenuitepō to example the destructive element.

In the continuation of the legend, Tāne married Hīne-ahu-one, the woman he had created, and later married their daughter Hīne-Titama. The latter inquired one day as to the identity of her father and, on learning the truth, fled horrified to the underworld to take a position at the

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86 Heuer, Berys 1972 Māori Women, Published for the Polynesian Society by A.H. & A.W. Reed, Wellington
87 ibid: 9
88 ibid:10
doorway through which all of her earthly descendants would eventually pass. In this portion of the legend come the emphasis upon woman as destructive. The concept is most clearly illustrated in the actions of the demi-god Maui who attempted to conquer Hine-titama (or Hine-nui-te-pō as she became known after her flight from her incestuous union) but who was himself defeated and killed. Thus death and destruction were brought permanently into the world. The female reproductive organs were termed whare o aitua or whare o te mate, house of misfortune and disaster.  

The interpretation given by Heuer again echoes the western colonial thinking of women as lesser and inferior. Furthermore, she advances women as destructive and in doing so demote women to the realm of evil and creators of misfortune. An interpretation of Māori women as powerful is beyond comprehension in such works, yet as Ani Mikaere reminds us there are interpretations that would locate the power of women's genitals as central to these stories rather than as destructive. As with the writings of Elsdon Best, Heuer promotes contradictory example all the way through her text. In regard to Māori women and tapu, on one hand she notes Māori women stepping over a man or boy was a danger, associated with womens 'incautious' actions, whilst on the other hand she provides the example of Māori women stepping over men as a means of avoiding danger. These contradictions then bring rise to a need for much more complex analysis to be undertaken. It can not continue to be argued that Māori women are destructive when we have clear indication that being women brought a powerful force for change and transformation that is fundamentally about clearing danger.  

Māori women's clothing and resting places are considered by Heuer as 'unclean' and 'defiling' due to menstrual flow. Māori women's bodies and reproductive cycles are deemed destructive and unclean, all this within a culture that values whakapapa as a critical element in societal relations, which relies heavily upon the wellbeing of Māori women. Inherent in the writings of Berys Heuer is the continued defining of Māori women's roles through a Pākehā women's worldview. If we invert the meanings of menstruation to be more in line with the value of future generations as is a part of whakapapa and whanaungatanga then we do not view menstruation as some act of 'defilement'. Times of menstruation are then viewed as tapu, given the flowing of blood. There is no doubt that within creation stories Māori women's genitals are presented as powerful. This is presented in the exact stories that Heuer refers too, but which she however choses to interpret solely in line with her own race and gender beliefs. To view menstruation as a powerful time for Māori women, because Māori women give life, is much more in line with a society that depends upon whakapapa. This is also discussed by Huia Jahnke, who argues that the writings of Berys Heuer are reliant on victorian

89 ibid:10  
90 Mikaere, A., 1996 op.cit  
91 Heuer, B., 1972 op.cit.  
92 Refer Mikaere, A, 1996 op.cit. and Jenkins, K., 2000 op.cit.
interpretations presented by white male ethnographers and economists. As such she argues that Heuer maintains colonial views of Māori women. Furthermore, Huia contends that Heuer’s work is reliant on generalisations that deny the diversity of Māori women within hapū and iwi. Those generalisations also deny the many leadership and central roles carried by Māori women, she writes;

Generalisations by Heuer about the position of Māori women in customary society not only overlook important tribal differences but are described in gendered terms embedded in Western patriarchal assumptions. Her descriptions of Māori women as ‘passive receptacles for the dominant male spirit’ or as being ‘responsible… for the greater number of Māori wars [sic]’, and highborn women are ‘not eligible for leadership’ do not account for the life and works of women such as Hinematioro or Ngāti Porou, Makareti of Te Arawa or Te Puea Herangi of Waikato.

This statement from Huia reflects assertions made by Native woman writer Marie Anna Jaimes Guerrero, who argues that the presentation of the role of her women does not at all relate to her understandings of their roles and status. Commenting on the representation of Native women she asserts that western paradigms have been unable to provide an understanding of Native People’s histories or the roles of Native women. She argues that there has been a ‘clouding’ and ‘erasing’ of Native women’s roles both inside and outside of their tribes. This in effect is what is presented by Berys Heuer, a clouding and erasing of Māori women’s roles inside and outside their whānau, hapū and iwi, through a process of locating Māori women as inferior and destructive whom are positioned within subjugated roles.

The influence of Berys Heuer can be seen in more recent literature. In her discussion of the history of girls schooling, Ruth Fry states that in colonial times Māori girls a range of obstacles to deal with. Drawing on the writings of Heuer, she writes;

Not only were they, together with their brothers, at least a lap behind Pakeha youths in their families’ acceptance and understanding of formal education; they were also bound by long-established tribal traditions which prescribed what a woman could and could not do. In Māori attitudes towards a woman’s place, there was, on the surface, little conflict with the Victorian espousal of a limited domestic sphere.

Following Heuer, Ruth Fry then makes a range of conclusions about the role of Māori women as subjugated, overworked and unable to enter whare wānanga. Here sweeping generalisations are made and presented as factual representations of Māori women’s roles and status. These included the

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94 ibid:pp97-98
assertions that girls were not admitted to whare wānanga; that girls were to acquire 'certain attitudes' towards childrearing, and it is implied that Māori girls and women have a domestic role in the whānau similar to that of Pākehā girls and women. Ruth Fry's opening statements regarding Māori women illustrate the ways in which dominant discourses pervade. As an academic working in the area of gender analysis she does not, in her chapter regarding Māori girls schooling, provide critical reflection on earlier works. But the influence of the works of Elsdon Best and students of his work, such as Berys Heuer, is not reproduced solely by Pākehā academics, but appears also in writings by Māori. This is indicates the strength of the ideologies that underpin such writings, that as Māori people we can also internalise and recycle dominant beliefs.

Recycling colonial discourses

An example of the influence of the work of Berys Heuer can be seen in the writings of Māori author, Witi Ihimaera, specifically the book 'The Matriarch'. 'The Matriarch' is a book that received some sharp comment from Māori women critics, in particular Atareta Poangana who referred to the book as misogynist. In reading the publication, elements of Berys Heuer are clearly included, again with little critical reflection. The point being made is that dominant discourses are privileged within dominant society and as a consequence can become integrated into our own representations. Ani Mikaere reviews a range of literature in regard to Māori women, tapu and noa. What she finds is that there is an often uncritical usage of early definitions of Māori women's roles and status, as defined by early ethnographers.97 As shown in the previous chapter, dominant discourses are maintained through the power of their articulation. In such an analysis the author themselves are not necessarily the focus, rather the focus is upon the discourse. This is no doubt the case in regard to the representations related to Māori women and the ongoing perpetuation of anthropological and ethnographic understandings that marginalise the role and status of Māori women.98 As an undergraduate student in Anthropology I too reproduced such notions, arguing in one assignment that the relationships of Māori women and men are inherently complementary and therefore Māori women speaking rights are defined within that construction. It is a simplistic position to take, given the differing roles of Māori women in different hapū and iwi. However, it was an acceptable one to take at the time. What disturbs me most about that is the apparent ease with which such beliefs are maintained and the role that Māori academics can play in the reproduction of beliefs that in fact require much more indepth analysis. An example of this appears in the writings of Māori academic and spokesperson Ranginui Walker.

97 Mikaere, Ani 1996 op.cit.
98 ibid.
Ranginui is one of the most prolific Māori academic writers of the past 20 years. He has actively engaged critical issues pertaining to Māori throughout the various resistance movements from the 1970s through to the present time. His contributions are not only significant to the academy but provided, weekly columns to what may be deemed 'mainstream' magazines such as Metro magazine, and The Listener. Where these magazines can not be seen in the same vein, each reach a large number of people in Aotearoa. As such, articles written by Ranginui Walker have often reached people who are not necessarily supportive, or knowledgeable of, Māori struggles. This has been an important contribution.

As a Māori academic, Ranginui has been active in putting forward radical Māori voice in the academy and in the wider community. He has been key in the articulation of Māori issues and dissatisfaction with the ongoing acts of colonisation perpetuated by successive governments. This is highlighted in his two books; *Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou: Struggle Without End*\(^{99}\) and *Nga Pepa a Ranginui: The Walker Papers*.\(^{100}\) In each of these publications Ranginui meticulously deconstructs many myths that have become dominant regarding Māori history. The myth of the 'great migration' as articulated by writers such as Percy Smith are dismissed as absurd and more complex discussion of migration and the inter-relationship between various groups of Māori is presented. The need to undertake processes of deconstruction and reconstruction is apparent in Ranginui's writing as it is insufficient to deconstruct such mythologies if we are not going to provide alternative explanations and understandings. This is clearly a Kaupapa Māori agenda. However, what is missing in these writings is a critical reflection on the positioning of Māori women within the colonial mythologies. Where other aspects receive active critique the colonial mythologising of Māori women remains intact.

In Ranginui's discussion of mythology, is a rendition of Māori epistemology. We are reminded that Te Ao Mārama is the third stage of existence, moreover it is expressed that the act of bringing light to the world was analogous to biblical notions. As Ranginui writes,

> Letting light into the world brought with it knowledge of good and evil and was the analogue to the biblical tree of knowledge and its forbidden fruit. The binary opposition of good and evil is one of the central themes underlying Maori mythology. The gods played out this theme in their disagreement over the separation of their parents.\(^{101}\)

The locating of Māori themes as binary oppositions effectively places both the writing and reading of Māori stories within such a paradigm. This has major implications for the ways in which we locate ourselves. As has been outlined previously the construction of binary oppositions serves the interests

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\(^{101}\) Walker, R. 1990 op.cit.:12-13
of those in dominance. It has also been a means through which colonisers have been able to redefine the world views of Indigenous peoples, through processes of simplification into binaries rather than engaging the complexities of, in this case, Māori relationships. In this discussion each of the children of Papatūānuku and Ranginui are male. The key sources for this rendition are the works of Governor George Grey. This is itself problematic given the colonial beliefs of Grey. The issue is not only one of the gendering of all the children, when there is no indication that all are in fact male, but also the way in which the construction of maleness is represented. The descriptions of Tanemahuta, Tawhirimatea, Tangaroa and Tūmatauenga are sufficiently aggressive and violent to indicate the fervour by which the natural forces can reek havoc on the land, and indicate the knowledge of our ancestors of those forces. There is a danger however in then attributing these characteristics directly to people, and in this instance to Māori men. The following paragraph highlights such a problematic;

Tu as the god of war and ancestor of fierce man encompasses in his name the aggressive characteristics of the warlike nature of human beings. Tumatauenga sought utu from his brothers for leaving him to face Tawhirimatea alone. First, he attacked the children Tane and asserted his mana by debasing them and converting them to common use. From trees and vines he fashioned spears and snares to kill and trap Tane’s birds. He also made nets and canoes to catch the children of Tangaroa. By his actions of using the children of his brothers as food and common objects. Tumatauenga negated their tapu, thereby making them noa. In this way the basic dichotomy in Māori life between the sacred and profane came into being. Tu’s assertion of mana over his brothers was the rationale for the superior position of human beings in the natural order.

Here we are presented with the notion of the ‘fierce man’ that links to the discourse of Māori men as ‘warrior’ and inherently aggressive, and the idea of the dichotomy of tapu and noa as binary opposites of sacred and profane. This construction, of tapu and noa, has particular impact on Māori women and Māori men and the ways in which our roles and relationships are represented. We are further presented with a rationale that tangata are inherently superior to all other beings. This rationale denies the teina status that we as humans hold in relation to our environment and the tamariki of the many atua wāhine and atua tāne. The positioning of Māori in relation to all other beings is important in that an interdependency exists with all whānau and whanaunga. This is common to many Indigenous Peoples. Winona La Duke refers to the Native American term ‘all our relations’ when exploring the complex interactions between people, all living things and our environment. According to her writings it is the interconnectedness of all living things that ensures our survival. We are all related. The personification that is critical to our tikanga also challenges the notion that we as people are superior, rather we are constantly in relationship with all beings.

102 La Duke, Winona 1999 All Our Relations: Native Struggles for Land and Life, South End Press, Cambridge, MA
103 Ibid
What is evident throughout Ranginui Walkers discussion of mythology is that Māori women appear primarily as an adjunct to Māori male characters. Whether it be Tāne or Maui, the Māori women in those stories are the acted upon or deceived or passive. The knowledge of Māori women is rarely validated and is often diminished comparatively to the Māori men in the korero. As such there is little movement beyond the dominant Pākehā telling of such stories. Ranginui Walker does refer to the manuscripts of Te Rangikaheke, however this tends to be in a context of defining what constitutes an act of 'sin' on the part of our tūpuna. Given the biblical definitions of sin and the powerful discourses the are a part of the construction of what is sin and who is sinful, it is highly problematic to begin to define actions in Māori history as being examples of 'sin'. Such a process moves the discussion and interpretation into strictly Western colonial definitions that have nothing to do with the fundamental values of Māori society. The re-telling of Māori 'mythology' in such as way continues the marginalisation of Māori women and the reproduction of gendered notions that have been defined by the colonisers of this country.

The construction of leadership as a male domain is articulated throughout these writings, with the occasional exception to the rule being referred to more often than not in passing. Most of the Māori women referred to are included as 'the wife of' and few are given more than the slightest mention. The marginalisation of Māori women in writing such as this is not unexpected given that early writers were both eurocentric and androcentric in their representation of Māori. In 'Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou' the way in which Māori women are written about, as much as the content, has an impact that is disturbing. Māori women are located continually as passive recipients, where tikanga is almost 'done to' them and that there is no real active participation by our women, or that our women have ever really had any choice in the kinds of interactions and alliances that were developed between groups. I find this extremely hard to contemplate. I can not believe in an idea that our tūpuna wāhine were passive, there are too many indicator to say otherwise. What we have in Ranginui's writings is a androcentric view of Māori society that does not attempt at all to question how gendered ideologies may have both informed the anthropological work that is referenced and influenced the way in which Māori women are written into the work. There are numerous examples to draw upon. In discussion of social rank Ranginui writes in terms of status

At the head of the rangatira class was the ariki, who was the first born in the senior male line. His teina, or junior brothers, were the rangatira. As ariki was respected for the qualities of tapu, mana, ihi and wehi (awesome power) which he inherited from his ancestors. However, these qualities could be increased by prowess in war, wise rule and generous behaviour to his people. On the other hand, they could easily be diminished by mean behaviour or unwise rule. A first-born female in the senior line was known as an ariki tapairu. She had certain ceremonial functions attached to her high rank as well as being the custodian of some rituals. Like the ariki, she was an extremely tapu person and was accorded the respect that one would associate with a princess or Queen. In some instances, a chief's daughter was also accorded the status of a puli maiden, a virgin princess. Her virtue was guarded day and night by female
attendants. This made her more desirable as a bride when her father sought a political alliance with a powerful chief.\textsuperscript{104}

In this example Māori women, including ariki tapairu are passive recipients of a system that virtually denies their existence in terms of notions of status, or when status is recognised the real value is placed in an idea of virginity. Not unlike the virgin Mary one could argue.\textsuperscript{105} The position of the ariki tapairu is diminished to purely ceremonial with the possibility of holding 'some' rituals, but fundamentally for the 'chief's daughter' the role is maintaining virginity for the future sexual gratification of Māori men. There is some relief later in the chapter where Ranginui mentions that some "headstrong women escaped betrothal" citing Hinemoa as one example. Irrespective of this however, the ceremonial, objectified 'available to be traded' Māori woman that appears in earlier writings of, Elsdon Best and Berys Heuer also appears here. What is most disturbing about this is that much of the writing that appears alongside this statement can be considered anti-colonial work, this then makes the statements regarding Māori women all the more problematic as they are more likely to appear authentic. The tohunga is also represented as male, although this is more indirectly done through the use of the male pronouns 'he' and 'him' and through statements such as

Women and children were prohibited by tapu from going near tohunga whakairo while they were at work.\textsuperscript{106}

Tapu is also represented in ways that focus on Māori women though little explanation is given and we are left with examples, which echo particularly androcentric ideas. Ranginui argues that tapu has three dimensions of (i) sacredness: such as people of rank or sacred places, (ii) prohibition: women and children prohibited from being near tohunga whakairo and (iii) uncleanness: Māori women during menstruation being kept away from gardens or tohunga tā moko as blood would flow during the process. Given ideas of rank have been articulated as male, we have little that provides Māori women with any specific place in terms of tapu, this is further exacerbated by the statement made that anything that is not considered tapu is noa. Noa is defined by Ranginui Walker as "common or profane". Ranginari Rose Pere strongly rejects the notion that menstruation is places Māori women as 'unclean', stating:

Some written research suggests that the Maori concept of menstruation likens it to the Jewish religion of being "unclean and contaminated". This likeness is quite incorrect. Within the Māori context, the continuity of descent-lines and the flow of ancestral blood through the generations is of the utmost importance. Any suggestion, therefore, of the tangible evidence of ancestral blood as "contaminated and unclean" is quite incongruous with Māori thought. If a woman conceives then the menstrual blood remains in the womb, and has a vital role in the development of a future ancestor. The expression 'he tapu, tapu, tapu rawa atu te wahine' refers to the very special quality that women have in regard to their role as "whare tangata"

\textsuperscript{104} ibid:65-66
\textsuperscript{105} This notion was engaged in chapter Six
\textsuperscript{106} ibid:67

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(houses of humanity). A healthy culture and economic activity are dependent on the total health and well-being of the people.  

In regard to Māori womens roles in pōwhiri, Ranginui Walker has, as shown in other examples, constructed Māori women as in opposition to Māori men and he also contends there are dual powers held by Māori women that are indicated in the positioning of a female figure on the lintel above the door. This positioning he writes is to ensure that any tapu remaining after the pōwhiri process is negated by Mana Wahine, that is by people moving into the whare under the female figure. Furthermore he states;

This binary opposition in the female genitals is conceptualised as te whare o te tangata (the house of men) and te whare o aitu (the house of death). The womb and the female sex are the house that both created and destroyed the culture hero Manu.

Not only do we see a redefinition of tangata as 'men', which is in line with dominant gender discourse of the time, but the position of Māori women is viewed solely in relation to Māori men. The primary roles of Māori women are, it appears, to birth or kill Māori men. As a mother of two Māori boys I find these particularly unbelievable and the perpetuation of it quite unacceptable. If we are to accept such constructions then the prime focus for Māori women is defined in terms of sexual relationships to Māori men, whom we create or destroy. These notions are based upon definitions of women's role proposed by Best, Heuer and others.

The supposed control over Māori women is further expanded in a discussion of utu. Utu is also related to in terms of Māori women, this time in regard to ideas of ownership and control. Here Ranginui describes utu as a process of compensation and in the case of a transgression between hapū he writes;

Utu between sub-tribes and tribes by making war was one way of regulating their relationships concerning territory and rights over the reproductive power of women. That these were the major 'take' or causes, of war, is emphasised in the proverb that 'women and land are the reasons why men perish.'

Firstly, there is quite a substantial leap between talking about territory to that of 'rights over' women, and in the context of the discussion this seems to almost appear from nowhere. The whakatauki

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107 ibid:26
108 pōwhiri refers to the process of welcome and ritual encounter.
109 Walker, R. op.cit.:74
110 ibid:69-70
111 Whakatauki refers to proverbs or sayings however Waiiriti Norman states; "when defining meaning from an actual Māori term, 'whakatauki' can be so rendered as to seem to set something down and bring it to rest 'whakatau', in speech with 'ki' taking the meaning of speak, talk or tell; to say or utter something, so that the saying, the proverb may be remembered in the oral record of an iwi for generations to come." Norman, Waiiriti 1992 He Aha Te Mea Nui in Smith, L.T. (ed) Te Pua, Vol. 1. No. 1, The Journal of Te Puawaitanga, University of Auckland, Auckland pp1-9
that is referred to at the end of this quote is that which states 'he wahine he whenua i ngaro ai te tangata'. The translation and interpretation of this whakatauki is highly problematic. I state this in recognition that it is not only Māori men who translate this whakatauki in the way that is noted above. This example raises critical questions about translation and the ways in which the English language has impinged upon Māori understandings and interpretations of our own language. The strength of whakatauki is in the need to interpret, to gain meaning from drawing upon a wider philosophical knowledge. In an article published in 'Te Pua' Waireti Norman identifies a range of versions of this whakatauki as follows;

- **He wahine he whenua i mate ai te tangata**
  For women and land men die

- **He wahine he whenua i ngaro ai te tangata**
  Women and land are the reasons men die

- **He wahine he whenua a ngaro ai te tangata**
  For women and land men will die

- **He wahine he whenua ka ngaro te tangata**
  For women and land men die (are lost to the tribe)

- **He wahine he oneone i ngaro ai te tangata**
  Women and the land (the earth) are the reasons men die

- **He wahine he whenua i ea ai te pakanga**
  By women and land the battle is assuaged\(^{12}\)

Where Waireti outlined how the interpretation of this whakatauki varies she also indicated that each construction of this whakatauki remain contextually the same. In engaging the interpretation Waireti showed how that variation is highly influenced by gendered beliefs and the ways in which people translate certain kupu Māori\(^{13}\). The interpretations did not for Waireti provide a view in line with her understandings and beliefs pertaining to the powerful role of Māori women or the power of Papatuanuku, which in turn led to her contention that a more appropriate translation would be

Without women, without land mankind would die. **He aha te mea nui, he wahine, he whenua.**\(^{14}\)

The complexities of translation and interpretation are located in this discussion as central to the misrepresentations of Māori womens positions. For example one of the kupu used in the translations provided that is clearly challenged by Waireti's interpretation is 'tangata'. Within each of the translations given the term 'tangata' was translated as 'man' rather than as 'person', the consequence of

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\(^{12}\) ibid.

\(^{13}\) kupu Māori refers to Māori words.

\(^{14}\) ibid:9
this is the reconstruction of gendered relationships. The translation of the word 'tangata' as 'man' denies and negates the position of Māori women by focusing on Māori women again as reasons for destruction, and in this case the reason for the loss of Māori men. The re-interpretation of terms such as tangata do have real impact on Māori social relations in that this process redefines relationships and roles. Further examples can be seen in the discussion Waireti provided in regard to the terms 'te whare aitua' and te whare mate'. In a challenging of the fundamental belief that such terms 'prove' an inferior position of Māori women Waireti noted definitions that move beyond such constructions. She highlights the following complexities as follows:

In its traditional context, this 'whakataukii' conjures up quite powerful negative images of death, the 'wharemate' or 'whare aitua', the houses of death and misfortune, and Hine-nui-te-po, female guardian or kaitiaki of the night realms, 'nga po', who symbolises death. This image is reinforced by the act of copulation between 'taane' and 'waahine', male and female, where, in particular, the male reaches climax. This moment is described by men as the 'moment of death', hence the momentary loss of the senses to the outside world; to 'te whare o te mate' (in reference to the female organs). The traditional belief is that this is also the moment when conception is likely to take place. 'Mate' in connection to 'te whare o te mate' the term commonly known as death, has many other abstractions; it can for example mean ailing with an affliction of some kind. 'Mate waihine', a further example, refers to and describes a man who greatly and most fervently desires a woman, similarly, its antonym, 'mate taane' or 'waihine mate taane' describes a woman who greatly and fervently desires a man. 'Mate' also acts as an intensifier on certain verbs eg; 'mate kai', hunger or 'e mate ana au i te hiakai', I am really hungry.\(^{115}\)

Linda Tuhiwai Mead\(^{116}\) refers to processes such as this as 'dis-ordering'. Colonisation, she argues, has dis-ordered Māori relations in ways that have been highly detrimental to the positioning of Māori women. In responding to the disordering, the colonial disruptions and disturbances, Waireti provided a powerful example of deconstruction that indicates ways of reading or interpreting events and beliefs which affirm Māori women rather than diminish our status.

**Summary**

This Chapter has focused on identifying processes by which dominant discourses pertaining to Māori women are grounded in historical sources. Where it may be argued that the author of the discourse is not as critical as the discourse itself, it is necessary when examining the representation of Indigenous Peoples, by our coloniser, to recognise that the author does indeed have a particular interest in the perpetuation of certain discourses. The importance of this to the thesis is that for Māori women to engage fully the reproduction of colonial ideologies there must be challenge of the perpetuation of those discourses within existing literature. The sources identified here provide examples only, they do

\(^{115}\) ibid:pp6-7, I would add that 'mate waihine' could also refer to a woman desiring a woman, and 'mate taane' a man desiring a man.
not constitute the only authors that have documented in such ways. The argument here is that we can trace origins of particular discourses to sources that have been constructed in ways that are often oppositional to Māori expression and beliefs. As such those sources must be read critically and can not be privileged over and above Māori understandings.

The works of Elsdon Best and Berys Heuer as two Pākehā scholars highlight the problematic of documenting one world view through the understandings of another. There are fundamental flaws that underpin not only the content but also the attitude towards Māori women, our roles and status within Māori society. The fragmentation of the documentation further brings into question the validity of many of the findings in regards to our tāpuna wāhine. To assert ideas that Māori women are common and profane are abhorrent to me. Such assertions have been made in line with colonial patriarchal misogyny that has disregarded the many examples that not only contradict such statements but which totally reject them. It is critical to the notion of Mana Wahine that in asserting our rightful positions as Māori women that we ensure that the colonial beliefs are not only dispelled but are actively resisted. This chapter has highlighted the entrenchment of colonial constructions of Māori women through indicating that there continues to be uncritical use of such material by contemporary academics. It is argued that those works must also be analysed and challenged in their reproduction of beliefs that are fundamentally colonial and have no basis in Māori understandings.

Where the sexualised positioning of Māori women by early Pākehā male, and later Pākehā female, anthropologists continues to influence Māori writings, including those of radical Māori male academics, many Māori women have actively called for Māori men to reflect on their historical and contemporary compliance with white patriarchy. Linda Tuhiiwai Smith highlights the historical cooption of Māori men by early Pākehā male missionaries and colonial administrators. The imposition of white patriarchy was to be maintained through not only the domestication of Māori women and men into dualistic gendered roles but through an undermining of the fundamental structures of Māori society and the denial of Māori women access to key roles that were in fact theirs. Where this chapter has provided some examples of the construction and reproduction of dominant discourses regarding Māori women, the following chapter outlines one site in which those discourses were further entrenched, that of native schooling.

117 Smith, L.T. 1992(a) op.cit.