

The Poetics of Bilanguaging: an Unfurling Literacy
Ngā Toikupu o Ngā Reo Taharua: e Tākiri ana te Aroā Pānui

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At some distance,
reflecting upon reflection,
he adds words from another source,

his other language
and their translations
. . . mokopuna, whanau . . .

- Moana Nepia (187)

Cultures overlap and interweave and we participate in the interweaving of our lived experiences by pulling in language and cultural implications, association, and connotation in order to communicate our lives. Albert Wendt argues in ‘Towards a New Oceania,’ that this coming together is not only a coincidence of social interactions, but a fundamental element of society: “the life-blood of any culture is the diverse contributions of its varied sub-cultures. Basically, all societies are multicultural” (14). As such we traverse contact zones: between our various genealogical ties and our upbringing within the cultures of our families, and between inherited cultures and those of colonial legacies and globalisation. The path of cross contact is one of melding and blending rather than dividing or forcing identities to fit into unchanging definitions: it is the rejection of choosing one culture over another. Keri Hulme explains that for those with dual heritage, Māori and Pākehā, “when the frightened seek to erect a fence between two peoples, we are on both sides of it. Such fence-making tries to separate yourself from... yourself” (294). This essay is an investigation into how writers and artists in Aotearoa New Zealand interplay cross-cultural and cross-linguistic elements in their work. There is a rich and broad literary and artistic canon of cultural and linguistic convergence in Aotearoa and I propose Walter Mignolo’s concept of ‘bilanguaging’ as an appropriate framework for reading that creative canon.¹ Bilanguaging is a technique used by writers and artists who ‘blend’ two languages and cultural systems, in this instance English and te reo Māori, alongside Pākehā and Māori cultures. Translation or added contextualisation is not necessarily presented alongside the combination of languages and cultures as there is an expectation that the reader will have a knowledge-base relating to the context and the language invoked with which to understand the text. Bilanguaging is

therefore couched in the porous, amorphous space of overlapping cultures and languages where blending is cultivated. Cultural and linguistic blending is produced both actively and as the latent consequence of living within multiple cultures and languages. Bilanguaging acts as an ideological construct. It is as a method of reading that draws attention to cultural and linguistic blending. Bilanguaging enhances reader understanding of what these texts are and what they embrace and therefore increases reader engagement with these ‘bicultural’ worlds and their authors. Reading using bilanguaging as a construct acknowledges and celebrates creative endeavour that blends and fuses cultures and supports fluid identities.

Similarly, bilanguaging is a method of reading that is born from the literature and art it proposes to read. Literatures create their own readers by teaching and supporting the literacy that created them. The method of reading is broad and “bilanguaging readers will produce their own trajectories across and among ... possible connotations, allusions and associations.” (Allen, 168) The agency of bilanguaging is with both writers and readers. As such, bilanguaging shifts the hegemonic centre from a Western European-based literary and artistic canon to these spaces between and overlapping in what Ngūgĩ wa Thiong’o calls “a move ... towards a pluralism of languages as legitimate vehicles of the human imagination” (*Moving*, 10). The recentering of indigenous languages and accompanying cultures makes bilanguaging a decolonising literacy.ⁱⁱ As a bilingual Pākehāⁱⁱⁱ academic and poet, I am drawn to the overlap of cultures and the linguistic links and breaks between English and other languages. My own poetic work traverses English, te reo Māori, Scots and Scots Gàidhlig, though I am a beginner speaker in all but English. I am fascinated by how the acquisition of indigenous languages has broadened my understanding of the cultures involved, cultures that I thought I had at least a basic knowledge of, having been raised within a Scottish family in the multicultural city of Auckland, New Zealand. Ngūgĩ states “to know a language in the context of its culture is a tribute to the people to whom it belongs” (*Moving*, 35). Thus to study the converging multi-linguistic exploration and cultural interplay in poetry and artwork produced in Aotearoa New Zealand is to honour, support and cultivate those who actively blend their cultures to assert their own identities. Bilanguaging is a method of reading that encourages and nurtures artistic, literary and linguistic self-expression and pushes at the boundaries of cultural and linguistic identity. Further, it acknowledges the multiplicity of intentions and situations behind bicultural and bilingual choices made in creative endeavour: active resistance and political protest; a reflection of lived experience; by choice or by default. Thus it extends the malleability of boundaries and, in particular, acknowledges every contributing element as having equal weighting. Bilanguaging is, as Hulme notes, a way of reading “writers of double beginning, inhabiting both Te Ao Māori and Te Ao Pākehā, but writing for Te Ao Hōu” (296).

Elements of Bilanguaging

There are two intertwined components of bilanguaging: biculturalism and bilingualism. Biculturalism is generally defined as when two cultures co-exist within one country or region. The ‘co-existence’ of biculturalism does not necessarily give equal weighting to the cultures involved. There are two relevant aspects of biculturalism of interest here: as experienced by the individual; and as experienced by the society. For the individual, how the two cultures come together is ideally largely determined by agency. Yet that coming together

is also significantly influenced by the wider society's formation. Thus even when focusing on the individual agency of those involved, there must be a conscious effort to acknowledge the power dynamics of each culture. In Aotearoa New Zealand, it was not until the Māori renaissance of the 1970s and 80s that there was any acknowledgement within the public consciousness and the political sphere that the Māori culture might be an equal player in the cultural identity of the nation. Only in 1988, when Koro Tuhoē Wētere, the then Māori Affairs Minister, submitted a policy paper *He Tirohangaranga – partnerships perspectives*, did the idea of New Zealand as a bicultural nation enter political discourse (Hill). Biculturalism is widely regarded today as official policy by all government bodies, with most official documents and policies outlining an acknowledgement to 'the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.'^{iv} However, 'unofficially' the weighting each culture has in the wider cultural consciousness is still far from equal. To take a concrete example, the national attitudes towards the Māori language can be used as an indicator of cultural acceptance and stature within Aotearoa New Zealand. A Māori language day was introduced in 1972. In 1987 Māori became an official language of the country under the Māori Language Act. And yet the 'Kia Ora Controversy' in 1984 was repeated thirty years later in 2014. The 'Kia Ora Controversy' was an incident whereby a telephone exchange operator Nadia Glavish (Ngāti Whatua), was demoted for greeting callers with 'kia ora.' According to *nzhistory.co.nz*, "not everyone was keen to hear 'kia ora' used commonly." Glavish was reinstated to her original role only after the intervention of Prime Minister Robert Muldoon. A similar incident occurred in 2014 when Monet-Mei Clarke from Te Tai Tokerau who worked at 'Kiwi-Yo,' a frozen yogurt outlet, was instructed she could no longer greet customers with 'kia ora' (Newlove). These incidents, thirty years apart, demonstrate the hostility within Aotearoa towards the Māori language and by association the Māori culture. As Tove Skutnabb states; "attitudes towards languages are very often, if not always, impossible to separate completely from attitudes towards speakers of those languages" (95). While public opinion in 2014 was strongly weighted towards being free to say 'kia ora,' the fact that there was any contention at all demonstrates how ingrained the Pākehā hegemonic culture is at the expense of the Māori culture and in contradiction to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.

An opinionated public entrenched in the hegemony maintains the contention regarding speaking in te reo Māori. This is evidenced in the 'Kia Ora Controversy' and in complaints made to 3 News regarding presenter Kanoa Lloyd's use of Māori words during the weather report in early 2015 (Cook). These attitudes carry with them the expectation that the language should be revitalised outside the mainstream, that te reo Māori should be relegated to the Marae or Māori TV channels, suggesting that Māori should speak Māori, but not in public.^v Poet Sam Jackson draws on the societal and cultural expectation of how language plays a role in being Māori:

Being Māori is
an expectation from others
that you are fluent in English (or you're dumb)
and Māori (or you're not a *real* Māori)
[emphasis in original] (122)

It is expected that all those with Māori ancestry should speak te reo Māori without regard to the institutional, historical and public bias against the language, and often without regard to

the cultural affinities and experiences of the speaker. The expectation is double edged as it comes from those outside the Māori culture, as well as those within it. Expecting Māori to speak Māori while also insisting that it is not spoken publicly is an attitude designed to deny the colonial role in the degeneration and weakening of the indigenous language and places the blame directly at the door of those whose language was lost: blaming Māori for the loss of their language. Ngūgĩ explains that “to [...] annihilate a language is tantamount to destroying that people’s collective memory bank of their past achievements and failures, say their experience over time, which forms the basis of their identity as people” (*Writers*, 57). As the hegemonic culture rejects the growing inclusion of te reo Māori it thus rejects revitalisation of the language. In doing so the entire culture and cultural livelihood is also dismissed.

People who belong solely to the Pākehā culture are able, largely, to live outside and away from the Māori culture, other than the All Blacks’ haka and other popular, palatable manifestations. In contrast, Māori are by and large unable to avoid Pākehā culture as it pervades public life and legislature. There are also those whose identity is vested in both cultures by their dual heritage, for whom policies and attitudes of two distinctly separate cultures is problematic. However, it is important not to attribute those with dual heritage as being simply ‘hybrids’. As Albert Wendt describes it, hybridity “is of that outmoded body of colonial theories to do with race, wherein if you were not pure Caucasian or ‘full-blooded’ Samoan or what-have-you, you were called ‘half-caste,’ ‘quadroon,’ ‘mixed race,’ ‘coloured,’ ‘a clever part-Maori,’ and inferior to the pure product” (Wendt, ‘Tatauing’). Quantifying cultural heritage and ancestry is problematic and this essay is not concerned with quota or a hybridisation that denotes worth or assigns value or percentages to complex identities. Rather, it is interested in the navigation within the cross-contact of cultures in Aotearoa New Zealand by writers and artists whose identities incorporate both Māori and Pākehā in self-determined form.

Ben Brown’s poem ‘I am the Māori Jesus’ confronts cultural purity, cultural stereotype and the agentic choices regarding one’s own culture alongside the asymmetrical pressures weighted against those choices. The poem is a riposte to James K Baxter’s romanticised Māori character in his poem ‘Māori Jesus.’ Brown’s poem begins:

i AM the Māori Jesus
And i don’t like
mussels and parāoa
Give me fish ‘n’ chips
with tomato sauce
Fresh white bread
and loads of butter
Butter makes
this country great
So feed my whenua
to the cows
for all i care (48)

In contrast, the following is an excerpt of Baxter's poem:

I saw the Maori Jesus
Walking on Wellington Harbour
He wore blue dungarees,
His beard and hair were long.
His breath smelled of mussels and paraoa. [sic] (347)

Brown's capitalisation of 'AM,' especially against the lowercase 'i' challenges the identity Baxter describes in 'Māori Jesus.' It questions the validity of the external portrayal of what makes a Māori person *Māori* and relegates that description to stereotype by producing a contrary image of the Māori Jesus, one who doesn't eat mussels and parāoa. When the speaker states he doesn't 'like' mussels, rather than just conveying that he doesn't eat them, he also demonstrates the importance of choice in identity. The poem asserts the agency of participating in cultural norms and the activity of identifying with what fits and what suits the individual and their community. But with the mention of dairy production to feed the speaker's taste for butter on his white bread, the poem turns to the asymmetric power structures at work and the influence that hegemonic cultural norms have on the indigenous culture. Namely, that forced cultural integration and assimilation overrides Māori values: "so feed my whenua / to the cows / for all I care." (Brown, 48) The choice of the word 'whenua' incorporates a greater cultural significance than the English word 'land.' While whenua is the translation of land it incorporates the meaning of the afterbirth or placenta which is ritually returned to the earth and signifies the closely intertwined relationship between people and the earth. The relationship dates back to Papatūānuku as the ancestral mother. So the phrase "feed my whenua / to the cows" can also be read as feed me, or my people, or my ancestors to the cows. Whenua also links into a sense of identity which is gained from the land in te ao Māori. The whakataukī "Toi tu te kupu, toi tu te mana, toi tu te whenua" (without the Māori language, without the mana and without the land the essence of being Māori would not exist) demonstrates the importance of land for Māori. Thus the statement 'for all I care' counteracts with the deeply felt connection the Māori culture has with the land. These few lines highlight how the power dynamics of Pākehā culture influence personal choice, and thus demonstrates why the hegemonic power structures of the wider society must be acknowledged when considering how the individual determines their identity.

Bilingualism commonly refers to people who speak more than one language. My use of the term bilingualism also encompasses the terms 'translingualism,' and 'code-switching' which are both tools for talking about bilingualism as well as tools for analysis of bilingualism. Min-Zhan Lu and Bruce Horner in their paper *Translingual Literacy and Matters of Agency* define the translingual approach as the use of multiple languages "not as something we have or have access to, but something we do. It centres attention on languaging: how we do language and why." Translingualism refers to how someone operates between multiple languages. Code-switching can refer to the borrowing of words from one culture to another due to the associations the dominant culture has of the culture from which the word is taken.

For example, the term ‘tumeke’ from te reo Māori is often used today in an English speaking context to mean ‘too much.’^{vi} This is a borrowing from a Māori word to give it a new meaning based on its aural similarities to English. *Wakareo* gives multiple meanings of the word in te reo Māori ranging from ‘take fright’ to ‘astonish.’ These meanings feed into and broaden this new meaning as something that is so much that it might astonish or frighten. It is used in place of ‘too much’ with added connotations in an English sentence. But code-switching goes beyond borrowing to include the use of alternating or moving between two or more different languages in a singular word event (such as a poem, painting, or a conversation) in a way that is practiced with agency by those who have a command and cultural connection to the languages they use. For the purposes of this essay, the focus will be on the use of te reo Māori within poetry written primarily in English, though it will also consider moments of linguistic exchange. Linguistic exchange refers to the use of terms which are borrowed and subsumed from one language to another, such as Sam Cruikshank’s use of ‘tiwi’ as a transliteration, or ‘loan word’ from the English ‘T.V.’ (51). This also applies to terms in general usage, such as ‘pāua,’ which have become part of the New Zealand English vernacular; words like ‘lavalava’ and ‘tatau,’ from Samoan and other Pacific languages. Linguistic exchange also refers to the exchange between other languages such as, ‘whakawhetai’ meaning ‘to give thanks’ which has been become part of te reo Māori from its Tahitian origins.

Linguistic exchanges are the spaces in which the boundaries between languages are blurred and broadened by the co-existence and cross contact of multiple languages. The movement between the languages is fluid and bound to what feels most appropriate to the speaker who takes into account the context, situation and audience. In this regard “the text becomes a social document, a reflection of social reality” (Mendieta-Lombardo and Cintron, 565). It can also transcend the “everyday linguistic choice” (565) of oral code-switching to imagine a potential audience to whom the code-switching would make sense beyond the spoken. Broader opportunities for the language in a poem are opened up to include alternative and multiple meanings and associations. Further, it opens up opportunities to introduce language to a reader who may not know the terms but who can find ways to interpret and translate the text through the context of the surrounding words.

The poem ‘Ends and beginnings,’ by Keri Hulme, utilises loaded cultural terms alongside linguistic exchange to explore a dual identity. In this short excerpt from the beginning of the poem there are two key and contrasting instances of bilingualism:

Where do I come from?
I do not ask the why of myself
at dusk:
then I make kits of green flax
to hold the bleeding silverbelly eels
the way my tūpuna did (116)

The use of the term ‘kits’ is an example of linguistic exchange in the form of a confluence of languages. The English word ‘kit’ has a long history as a container but the aural similarity of

the word and its function to the Māori ‘kete’ combine and tangle the words. The New Zealand specific dictionary definition of a “basket plaited from flax” was added to the *Oxford English Dictionary* in 1933, with textual examples of both ‘kit’ and ‘kete’ given with equal validity. The term ‘kit’ has a cultural context specific to Aotearoa, and thus it is a manifestation of colonial contact: it grew out of the cultural and linguistic contact between the British and Māori. It is a bicultural word, a transliteration, an influence of Māori on the English language and vice versa. A linguistic hybridity becomes inherent when the speaker uses this term. ‘Kit’ is used in conjunction with ‘tūpuna,’ a word not limited by its English translation. While it can be translated as ‘ancestors,’ this definition does not carry with it the cultural implications and importance of ancestors in Māori culture. In English, the term is disassociated from a speaker; the *Oxford English Dictionary* includes in its definition, the term ‘ancestor’ is “usually said of those more remote than a grandfather.” As such the word denotes such a distance that the term is often consigned to extended genealogy and archaeological study. But in Māori, an ancestor has direct and relational impact on the descendant no matter how many generations removed. One’s identity is directly tied to one’s ancestors. In addition, the term ‘tūpuna’ is also used for very recent ancestors, grandparents and great grandparents. The English version of the word is far less personal. Further, ‘tūpuna’ is dialectal. The variant is tūpuna which is from the Eastern dialect, whereas tūpuna is from the Western dialect.^{vii} Hulme’s iwi are Kai Tahu and Kāti Māmoe, both of which are from the South Island where the dialect is distinctly different from the North Island. In 1981, when her piece ‘Mauri’ was published, Hulme stated that “my Ngai Tahu dialect is practically extinct today” (295). There has been a strong movement to revitalise the dialect, and today’s language courses throughout the country include learning and acknowledging dialectal differences including those of Kai Tahu.^{viii} One of the key differences is the use of a ‘k’ in place of ‘ng,’ as is demonstrated in Kai Tahu versus Ngāi Tahu. Such distinct differences of Kai Tahu are not present in ‘tūpuna.’ Kai Tahu uses this term which is otherwise known as being from the Western dialect.^{ix} Nevertheless, the use of a word which has dialectal variation is an assertion of identity, an identity rooted in place. The poem begins “Where do I come from?” which places identity at the forefront of the poem. The speaker asserts that she does “not ask the why of myself at dusk,” the dusk being the time that she is collecting eels. Her reason for not questioning the ‘why’ of herself at this time is explicitly related to the code-switching. Utilising culturally charged words locates and asserts her identity as dual.

Walter Mignolo in his book *Local Histories/Global Design* coined the term ‘bilanguaging’ to refer to the power structures of languages in colonial spaces. Mignolo states “it is not a grammatical but political concern as far as the focus of bilanguaging is redressing the asymmetry of languages and denouncing the coloniality of power and knowledge” (231) thus advocating for the use of languages bilingually as a way of speaking back to the hegemonic powers that dictate language use. Bilingualism is specifically directed at the imperative to use the language that aligns with the hegemony to the detriment of local languages. He elaborates that bilanguaging is “a way of life between languages: a dialogical, ethic, aesthetic, and political process of social transformation rather than energeia emanating from an isolated speaker” (265). The process of bilanguaging is fluid; it has its roots in the interactions within a community, the principles of that community, the sense of what fits, what feels right and seems right to both the speaker and the listener thus emphasising the role of language as

communal activity. Using multiple languages influences the vernacular of the community and places more emphasis on the polycultural needs of a nation. It is not just the action of a single speaker as there are no single speakers, rather there are speakers and listeners: bilanguaging is communal.

The concept of bilanguaging was further developed by Chadwick Allen in his chapter on 'Indigenous Linguaging' to acknowledge the cultural and linguistic space within which creative work is made. His focus was on an 'artistic empathy' for how a work is influenced from living within bilanguaging. Allen summarised and extended the bilanguaging definition to be "thinking, speaking, and writing *among* two or more languages and cultural systems, fully cognisant of the politics of their unequal, often asymmetrical relationships within (post)colonial linguistic and social hierarchies" [italics in original] (146). I extend this definition further to encompass a method of reading and posit that to bilanguage is not only to produce text but also to interpret and participate in a text. Bilanguaging is a method of close reading informed by the knowledge that the text was produced in a polylinguistic and polycultural space. Bilanguaging is reading biculturalism and bilingualism in a text and to interpret by drawing on and researching the various combinations and meetings of the two cultures and languages in question. The focus here is specifically on Māori culture and language alongside the hegemonic Pākehā culture and the English language (as well as the plethora of other cultures and languages in Aotearoa New Zealand). A bilanguaging reading of these combinations addresses the asymmetrical relationship between the cultures and languages as well as the multi levelled and rich epistemologies explored and extended by the creative work.

Bilanguaging Close Reading

The aim in a bilanguaging reading is to look for multiple avenues of contact and exchange between Māori and Tauīwi, between te reo Māori and English, and to interpret the implications of those combinations in order to open up "bilingual and bicultural effects that enrich the [work's] potential meaning and amplify its aesthetic power"(Allen, 146). *The Indefinite Article* by Michael Parekowhai (Ngā Ariki, Ngāti Whakarongo and Pākehā) provides a rich example. It is a sculptural text made up of five tall and free standing white letters which spell out 'I AM HE'. Taking into account both the text of the work itself and its title, *The Indefinite Article* can be read in multiple ways. The sculpture can be interpreted using both English and te reo Māori with many different implications including a commentary on language, artistic canon, and the bicultural identity of the artist. The work alludes to Colin McCahon's painting *I AM*, whose work, in turn, refers to "before Abraham was, I am" (*King James Bible*, John 8.58), a passage from the Bible attributed to Jesus. The interpretation of this phrase differs among Christian denominations but interpretations include (among others) the existence of God before all else, or the infinite nature of God's plan and the role of Jesus within that. McCahon's use of 'I AM' similarly addresses existence: the existence of himself and the artwork, both in the context of a predefined world that is a fixed concept and by an infinite God. The 'HE' in Parakowhai's work is three fold. That 'He' is how God is referred to throughout the Bible, naming McCahon 'He' to refer to his prominent artwork, frames McCahon as having a godly presence in New Zealand art. The third 'he' is the grammatical meaning of the English personal pronoun which is potentially

ambiguous. Through all of these references, Parakowhai is wrestling with the position of himself and others in relation to these great precedent influences. Rob Garrett comments that “it is possible that every New Zealand artist since McCahon wrestles with his ghost in some way when using words in their art” (46). In this work, Parakowhai is addressing McCahon directly, both to revere his great influence on ‘descendent’ New Zealand artists but also to undermine his ever-pervading presence and authority in the art establishment, which calls on that same haunting Garrett describes as being dogged by his ghost.



Michael Parakowhai, *The Indefinite Article* (1990). Wood and Acrylic Paint, 248 x 609 x 35cm

At the same time, Parakowhai is weaving into the existing canon, the tapestry of creative endeavour in New Zealand: the whakapapa of creativity. This is a concept I will elaborate on later in the essay. The term ‘he’ is also, as the title says, ‘the indefinite article’ in te reo Māori. But it does not behave in the same way as the English indefinite article ‘a’, as it can also mean ‘some.’ In having a grasp of te reo Māori and its grammatical rules, the artwork can now be read as “I AM HE,” “I AM A,” and “I AM SOME,” thus fleshing out the implications of Parakowhai’s relationship to McCahon and the artist canon as multiple and varied. As Hulme also explains in her essay ‘Mauri,’ the Pākehā side of many Māori artists is often ignored. Parakowhai’s ‘I AM HE’ is missing only the C and the L to be an anagram of his own name; this is a comment on his bicultural identity. Of course these letters are not part of the Māori alphabet. Garrett explains this aptly; “Parakowhai simultaneously asserts and displaces his Māori identity, thus expressing that sense of ambiguity felt by many Māori

with Pākehā ancestry.” Without the C and the L, it is not his name and cannot encompass his identity as both Māori and Pākehā.

However, a bilanguaging reading does rely on the knowledge-base of the audience. In his article ‘Walking with letters,’ Rob Garrett conflates the term ‘he,’ the indefinite article, with the term ‘hī,’ which Garrett describes as the “triumphant Māori exclamation at the end of many haka.” This error comes from a misunderstanding as to how Māori words are pronounced. The ‘i’ is pronounced more like an English ‘e’ as we would say it when listing the letters of the alphabet, while the ‘e’ in Māori sounds more like the vowel sound in ‘peg.’ Garret’s reading is therefore nuanced by his Pākehā disassociation with te reo Māori. And yet, Garrett’s reading of the extended vowel sound from he to hī opens up another possible reading, that of a pun in te reo Māori being played out in ‘I am he’ through the conflation of ‘he’ and ‘hē’. The extended vowel sound transforms the word from a grammatical particle to a verb that means to be wrong or mistaken. The text of *The Indefinite Article* can thus be read as ‘I am wrong,’ though the stative meaning of the word gives a further meaning ‘to be made wrong’ or ‘to be troubled’ by some external agent. This interpretation casts Parakowhai as a self-conscious artist who is concerned his work is wrong in some way, or as an artist troubled by how his work fits into the artistic canon.

So what about audiences and readers? “Most of the writers in [the *Into the World of Light* anthology] have had to create an audience, both Māori and Pākehā, for their work. The fact that publishers and a bicultural audience now exist is more a matter of tenacity than luck” (Long and Ihimaera, 1). Creative works, especially from marginalised communities, construct their own readers. Writing and visual media either teach readers how to read them (thus producing a new literacy), or utilise pre-existing work (in order to tap into an existing literacy). That is not to argue that work isn’t produced without an audience in mind. One of the biggest questions for a postcolonial reader of Māori literature might be, why is it written in English? Ngūgĩ wa Thiong’o’s argument surrounding language choice is driven by issues of access: “If a Kenyan writer wants to speak to the peasants and workers of any one Kenyan community then he should write in the language they speak and understand” (*Writers*, 58). Here, the intended audience is the focus.

For Māori almost 80% are not fluent enough in te reo Māori to read texts written exclusively in the indigenous language.^x Therefore, if the intended audience is Māori (and/or Pākehā), it is imperative that the text be written in English which is the language they use and know. But in writing in English, te reo Māori and the Māori culture are relegated to the background. Ngūgĩ states that language has two purposes. The first is to communicate. The simplicity of that requirement means that English easily fulfils it. But the second purpose comes from the first: “communication between human beings is also the basis and process of evolving culture” (*Writers*, 58). A language acts as a repository and a carrier of the history of a culture of a people. A people’s language is developed through the demands of their culture in order to explain, describe and communicate their experience: a “language becomes the memory bank of [its people’s] collective struggles. Such a language comes to embody both continuity and change in their historical consciousness” (*Writers*, 58).

Te reo Māori may not currently be the most efficient tool of communication, but it is the carrier of a culture. While English is used for the purposes of communication, when a writer or artist uses Māori words and concepts, they are calling on ancestral histories and cultural implications which are carried in those terms that an English word cannot contain. Further, when these words and concepts are used, for those who do not have the prior knowledge to understand them, the text is producing a new literacy which aids and builds audiences. Of those, many will be Pākehā Māori who, through reading literature which is written in English, will be broadening their knowledge of, and relearning and reclaiming the Māori side of their heritage from a useful vantage point. The literacy being created is also for Pākehā whose horizons can be broadened. Witi Ihimaera and D.S. Long note in their 1982 introduction that “Māori writing has also assisted in halting New Zealand’s mono-cultural perception of itself and it has helped force a reconsideration of the national identity of both Māori and Pākehā cultural heritages.” While this was written in the early 80s, the sentiment is relevant today.

The growing interest in Māoritanga by a greater number of New Zealanders, enabled by the greater proliferation of Māori literatures and arts, is broadening our national identity. Perhaps only a little at a time, but such a move aids the revitalisation of te reo Māori and promotes the importance of the Māori culture in Aotearoa long term. One of Allen’s key variations from Mignolo’s description of bilanguaging is that it happens ‘among’ the languages and cultural systems, rather than ‘within’ them. Allen’s definition highlights how influential contiguity can be. To my mind this is especially true for readers who will use the surrounding text to aide their understanding of the cultural or linguistic hurdles they face in a poem or artwork.

Supporting an Aotearoa New Zealand Literacy

It was not until the early 1960s, and via written English, that
Māori literature began to unfurl the views of the people. (2)

- Witi Ihimaera & D.S.
Long

Bilanguaging is an unfurling of the writing that comes from within and among multiple languages and multiple cultures. It is an unfurling of the koru frond that reveals the intricacies within. This is not a new method of reading; many readers will engage in this practice instinctually. Either because they have a knowledge-base to support their reading, or because they have developed the habit of searching for information outside of a text in order to understand it. It is this habit or mode of reading that bilanguaging encourages. It is a way of reading that provides opportunities for people to encounter, discover and to better educate themselves. This applies to Pākehā with only a surface level knowledge of te ao and te reo Māori, as well as Māori who are rediscovering and nourishing their knowledge of the culture and the language, and anyone whose cultural and linguistic knowledge places them outside te ao Māori. Bilanguaging is a space of active learning. In their article on code-switching in post-colonial writing, Gordon and Williams explain that “by obliging readers unfamiliar with the Māori language to extend their knowledge in order to appreciate the text’s full meaning [bilanguaging] encourages the inclusion of such readers” (88). This is not always a congenial act. It can be explicitly confronting, with demands being made on non-Māori readers “to

make the same efforts in respect of Māori culture that Māori have been obliged to make in respect of European culture” (85-86). As such bilanguaging is a part of a wider movement towards a more inclusive and diverse New Zealand. Witi Ihimaera explains that “if you do not know these words then you are maintaining a monocultural bias in your lives. [...] If you really do want to become bicultural, then you have to begin to do some research of your own and find out these things for yourself” (176). Ihimaera is advocating for active bilanguaging, for participatory reading that involves acknowledging the multiple cultural and linguistic components to a text and then encourages you as a reader to read more widely. Thus, reading through a bilanguaging lens helps support bicultural thinking and as such it supports a growing Aotearoa New Zealand literacy for bilingualism and converging cultures.

Bilanguaging is a direct challenge to the hegemonic culture and language whether by explicit intent on behalf of the writer or artist, or whether it is unintentional and read into in this way by the reader. Mignolo explains that “bilanguaging reveals the ideology of monolingualism (and particularly the idea of national languages in the imagining of the modern states) that is of speaking, writing, thinking *within* a single language controlled by grammar in a way similar to a constitution's control over the state” (252). Therefore, bilanguaging as a reading method is supporting a bicultural growth in the country. This is a slow process as “the linguistic landscape of New Zealand is characterised by considerable monolingualism” (Boyce, 86). The dominance and normalcy of monolingualism means that “code-switching is seen to require justification” (Gordon and Williams, 92). The examples of public outrage at the use of te reo Māori in public spaces attests to this. Therefore, a growing use of te reo in bilingual contexts aids the familiarisation of hearing multiple languages and thus normalises its use. Gordon and Williams state that “Māori words have been introduced and given wider currency by Māori writers and speakers in the course of making their voices heard. As a result, they are now encountered more frequently in the media, in articles, reports, public statements and notices.” Bilanguaging is part of that normalisation.

Literary Whakapapa

A bilanguaging reading draws on a broad cultural backdrop which includes the literary and artistic canon with other influences on the text. Intertextuality is a literary discourse of the Western tradition and it would certainly be easy to discuss this within bicultural poetry and art in Aotearoa. However, to limit discussion of that translation of ‘literary whakapapa’ to ‘intertextuality’ as purely an instance of intertextuality would be to ignore the cultural implications within a Māori context. Rather, manifestations of allusion, dedication, pastiche and so on, can be discussed as evidence of whakapapa: the interrelationship between and beyond texts. In the introduction to the latest anthology of Māori literary work, *Puna Wai Kōrero*, Robert Sullivan and Reina Whaitiri assert that “everyone and everything, including poetry, has whakapapa” (1). Whakapapa is not just a translation for intertextuality. Whakapapa extends beyond the bounds of literary and artistic texts. Hōne Sadler (Ngāpuhi) describes whakapapa as a tool for analysis: it is a “system and philosophy [that] attempt[s] to understand and explain ... the world.” It is a method for understanding the world by linking together all elements and phenomena. Sadler’s whakapapa theory addresses interpreting and understanding new phenomena specifically. This can be extended as a way of reading artistic endeavour; it is part of acknowledging the influence and inspiration of a piece of work,

whether or not it is intended or acknowledged by the author. Sadler states “all new phenomena arise from at least two other antecedent phenomena,” and then from acknowledging those antecedents, to look beyond them to find the grandparent phenomena and so on and so forth, drawing out a genealogical tree for the development of an idea, the forming of an emotion or the manifestation of something concrete. Its path of creation can be clearly defined. Sadler’s examples are specific to Māori colonial experience as a way of understanding how the events of colonisation have influenced Māori life, such as: when “Deceit cohabits with Alcohol, [...] the children that are born are ‘The Signing,’ ‘The Selling’ and ‘The Drunkenness;’” or “Landlessness + The Saddened Heart = Lethargy.” Therefore, whakapapa is a tool that can give a wider and fuller understanding of the text being read. Sadler notes that “by understanding the relationship between the ... parent phenomena and that of the child, we can form an understanding of the phenomena itself.” We can therefore read the whakapapa of poetry and art in order to see what created it, by acknowledging a whakapapa of creativity.

While karanga, waiata, haka and mōteatea continue to progress and flourish as their own media, the influence of oratory tradition on poetry is an important component of literary whakapapa. Contemporary poetic forms link back to Māori language compositions. Allen explains that “Māori vocal performance customs such as the karanga and the haka – evoke contemporary Māori connection to the ancestral” (153). A pepeha is a proverb-like expression which lists your affiliations: river, lake, ocean, mountain (or other notable landforms); iwi; hapū; waka; marae and so on and so forth. The pepeha is a formulaic composition that has found resonance for many contemporary poets navigating their identities within te ao Māori and te ao Pākehā. A pepeha often includes whakataukī or regional sayings, and an extended or complete pepeha will include a listing of your whakapapa. Pepeha are a way of introducing yourself to others as the affiliations attribute to your identity. Therefore, it is an ideal format in which to explore identity. ‘Privilege’ by Mahingārangi Tocker (Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Tuwharetoa, Ngāti Maniapoto, Hebrew and Celtic) juxtaposes the navigating of city life with lines from the speaker’s pepeha:

I walk the maze
of streets
in crowded thought
 ko Tongariro tōku maunga
And catch
a blaze of sun
through sky
high concrete
 ko Taupō tōku moana (334)

The lines of Tocker’s pepeha in the poem are interlaced with the experience of finding a foothold within an urban landscape and thus contrast with the simplicity of stating affiliations and affinities. Calling on what was once a stable way of determining your identity, the pepeha, the juxtaposition with the unknown highlights the difficulty in knowing one’s identity in the modern age. Using Sadler’s whakapapa paradigm the equation might read: the

pepeha format + an unsure identity = the contemporary poetic pepeha that questions and re-establishes identity.

One of the overt manifestations of whakapapa in poetry and art is the direct invocation of ancestors, whether they are Pākehā or Māori, or both. Importantly these ancestors are not just writers and artists, they are also rangatira, leaders, tīpuna and atua, ancestors, some specific to iwi, others like Tane Mahuta or Maui are more pan-iwi; tohunga, (in this context) experts or people revered for their skills and talents and kaiwhakatūtū, activists and advocates. Parekowhai invokes McCahon in his work *The Indefinite Article*, who in turn invokes Jesus. Similarly, Parakowhai invokes Gordon Walters in *Kiss the Baby Goodbye (Marquette)* which is a kit-set cut-out of Gordon Walters' well-known 'koru' series from the 1950s onwards, in particular the 1968 piece *Kahukura*. Walters' designs went on to be used as the New Zealand Film Commission logo. His work was hotly argued as breaching cultural intellectual property rights in utilising and reproducing Māori visual heritage without culturally attributed authority. The form of Parekowhai's kit-set is one of replication; it can be easily manufactured. In producing Walters' work as something easily manufactured, Parekowhai commodifies it and thus highlights a long tradition of commodification of the Māori visual heritage. When considered through Sadler's whakapapa analysis tool, *Kiss the Baby Goodbye* is 'begat'^{xi} by the coming together of Parekowhai, an artist with Māori ancestry who is aware of cultural intellectual copyright contentions in Aotearoa and the antecedent existence of Walters' work. In turn Walters' koru works were born out of Pākehā perspective and interest in Māori motifs and Māori visual culture. Thus a reading of *Kiss the Baby Goodbye* gains its meaning from understanding its antecedents.

Both of these examples from Parekowhai demonstrate a 'talking back,' or a discussion between artworks across generations. A carefully played out tradition within 'the art world,' literary works take on different variations of this form. For example, in dedications like "For Rowley Habib, who asked the question" as seen in the dedication to Hulme's poem 'E ngā iwi o ngāi tahu,' or by direct address such as in Ben Brown's poem *Chur Bro* that begins "Hey Hone." The interplay between poets and artists linking into past works and creative practitioner ancestors is rich and varied. A whakapapa analysis of poetry and art follows the weave of pre-existing narratives or methods of story-telling to acknowledge a generational, or layered, interconnectivity between all creative endeavour.

Again, this interrelationship can easily be read in the form of Western 'intertextuality.' But the activity of weaving into an existing tapestry is built into the tikanga of Māori culture. Whakapapa is an extension of the way Māori view time, which as Moana Jackson explains, "turns back on itself, to bring the past into the present, and then into the future." As such, Whakapapa intertextuality is the acknowledgement and tautoko of where you have come from as much as where you are going. It is a circular perspective which has eyes on the past in order to form and work towards the future. The whakapapa of creativity can be described as an ongoing and never ending weaving with threads stretching from the beginning of time providing root threads into which generations add their voices, pulling in strands like birds weaving nests. The weaving produces an identity with patterns developed from incorporating different elements and components of the lived experience and amalgamations of ideas and

identities. Each weaver is born with threads and given and gifted threads over a lifetime with which they weave. In this sense, the interweaving of Pākehā and Māori cultural components, alongside a multitude of other cultures and ideas, are interwoven with their identities taking the form of a multitude of threads. These threads stretch back to, and include, roots or origin points. The root threads are interwoven by active participants who maintain and acknowledge past weavers. The poem 'A Third Migration' by Jean Riki (Te Arawa, Ngāpuhi, Irish & Scottish) describes the generational rifts caused for generations whose ties to their ancestors have been cut by colonial influence. The ability to weave from the past has been removed:

Stories are silenced
For the sake of children
And in doing so
Future journeys are seeded

I'll unweave your mystery
And it stings because
There is nothing to hold,

Existence in story and anecdote
Exposed and unfolded (244)

The stories the speaker describes as silenced are those pertaining to her Koro, her grandfather. "For the sake of the children" evokes the cessation of speaking te reo Māori at home 'for the sake of the children', for the sake of their English. This lack of te reo in the home was imposed with the belief that to succeed in a Pākehā-dominated world, children should speak only English. This belief was instigated and compounded by The Native Schools Act of 1867 that ruled all school instruction would be given only in the English language. This is a colonial influence that cuts off ancestral ties to the past. The speaker describes the pain, the 'sting' at having 'nothing to hold,' nothing to be able to weave back into.

Hinemoa Baker (Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Toa Rangatira, Te Ātiawa, Ngāi Tahu, German & English) also describes this colonial obstruction to being able to weave into the past in her poem 'Te tangi a te rito.' While Riki's poem describes the threads of the weaving as stories of her grandfather, for Baker the weaving threads are the voice of te reo Māori. The poem's speaker states "My throat / has not woven the call. My throat / has not yet spoken the harakeke" (Baker, 12). The title of the poem can be translated as "The cry of the (harakeke) shoot" and refers to the whakataukī that begins "Hutia te rito o te harakeke, kei hea rā te kōmako e kō?" (If you were to pluck out the centre of the harakeke, where would the bell bird sing?) This whakataukī centres on whakapapa with the outer leaves referring to tūpuna (ancestors), the inner leaves as mātua (parents) and the centre shoot, the rito, is the tamaiti (child), the future generation. As such the proverb suggests that "without the sound of children in the world, mankind would not survive" (*Pa Harakeke*). The speaker in Baker's poem is lamenting that her voice is still not heard, her voice has not been woven in. The lack of a Māori voice as a child, suggests implications about the survival of the Māori language

and the culture: the Māori people. Ngūgĩ states that “in writing one should hear all the whispering and the shouting and the crying and the laughing and all the loving and hating of the many voices gone and those will never speak to a writer in a foreign language.” (*Writers*, 58) ‘Te tangi a te rito’ is both a reference to the sound of children, and to the sorrow of not being able to join in with the sounds and history woven into te reo Māori.

Colonial attitudes to the past mean that the image of the weaving of creativity into one’s heritage is one that can be extended to imagine a contrasting method of weaving: a colonial, European based tapestry which does not leave intact the source weavings from which threads are taken. This colonial kind of weaving is intertextuality. Threads are taken from another source and woven into a new source. Whakapapa however does not remove the context of creation. Instead it keeps intact prior weaving. In this sense, each and every poem and artistic endeavour is being woven into a rope of creative history; it is a communal text that is always being added to. The following section ‘Weaving with Hōne’ will look at examples of how a whakapapa of poetry is one which is in dialogue with the poetry that has come before it.

Weaving with Hōne

Hōne Tuwhare is a poet who is continually woven into new poems. Tuwhare can now be seen as an eminent forefather of New Zealand poetry and was the first Māori poet to be published in New Zealand with his collection *No Ordinary Sun* in 1964. His legacy is ongoing and far-reaching. Ben Brown (Ngāti Paoa, Ngāti Mahuta) directly addresses him in ‘Chur Bro’ and weaves Tuwhare anew, addressing his contribution to the poetic canon as well as the political and social implications of his work. The poem in its entirety reads:

Chur bro
Hey Hone
Where’d y’ get those lips
From up north somewhere eh
They lover’s lips man
I hear you had the touch too eh bro

Mind you
All you wahanui fullas
Talk it up
Got the gift eh

Anyway
What brings you down
This way bro
Muttonbirds and oysters
Maybe
Cooler women
Greyer seas
Both more enigmatic

I like your hat too bro
 Ka pai te pōtae
Styley man
 A hat says
 A lot
 About the head that
 Wears it

 Statue bro
 Stink joke eh
 But a mighty poem
 Yeah that's you alright
 Standing in the
 Valley freezing your
 Balls off
 Brass monkey
 Bronze brother
 Unmoved by all that birdshit
 Critics and seagulls eh bro

 That's a neat trick too man
 Turning the Pākehā's
 English into a
 Reo all your own (54-55)

The colloquial address to Tuwhare in 'Chur bro' expresses a familiarity. This easy communication with a past writer asserts the speaker's own place in the literary weaving. By addressing Tuwhare, the speaker is opening a discussion with and drawing on his elder's contribution to the cultural and literary canon. Tuwhare is woven anew into the whakapapa. The invocation is a resurrection of Tuwhare and shows how the ancestor lives on through the current generation of writers, a form of homage, but also a form of identifying oneself by relating to who has come before. The speaker in 'Chur bro' is affirming their identity by calling on an ancestor. The initial comment to Tuwhare is in relation to his appearance, "where'd y' get those lips," and conjures up for readers an image of Hone Tuwhare who had a distinctive appearance with prominent lips and a large open smile. The comment on his appearance is first linked to his personality, or rather his reputation as a ladies' man: "they lover's lips man." The poem draws on associations in relation to appearances and stereotypes. To relate this physical attribute to being a ladies' man draws on the old stereotype of 'the other' as sexually promiscuous which links in with other colonial attitudes to the black body and specific characteristics as being related to animals or savages such as 'juju lips' that might be invoked by 'big mouth.' The turn, "mind you," uproots that stereotype, rewriting the association of his 'big mouth' to his great oratory and poetry, thus re-orientating the image from a Pākehā cultural association to a Māori one, realigning the physical association to his appearance from one which is judgemental of his character, to one which highlights his successes: "Got the gift eh." And yet, while rejecting Pākehā English connotations, this line

draws on the Pākehā cultural colloquialism ‘the gift of the gab’ which has its origins in Scots.^{xii} The use of the word ‘wahanui’ is particularly interesting. Actively using a Māori word couches the image in a Māori perspective, rather than one with a history of racialised ideas of the black body. In this way the use of a Māori word here subverts these ideas by not allowing them to be part of the discussion. The poem is actively embracing and rejecting cultural associations and implications with agency, rather than simply rejecting one culture over another.

A direct translation of ‘wahanui’ is ‘big mouth’. In line with the above associations, the English term ‘big mouth’ also means blabbing, telling secrets and speaking up when you shouldn’t. And so while using ‘wahanui’ instead of ‘big mouth’ disallows the Pākehā connotations, knowing the translation of the term means being aware of these ulterior meanings. In particular there is a political connotation here: the English translation would refer to his role as a political activist-poet, someone who speaks up (Edwards, 30). Tuwhare’s poetry and his activism are regarded highly within a Māori cultural worldview. The same terminology within different cultural contexts gives a different perspective on his activities. However, as the word chosen for this poem is in Māori, the Māori meaning is weighted as more important: “Linguistic choices are seen as more than skilled performance, they are considered a strategy for accomplishing something” (Mendieta-Lombardo and Cintron, 566).

‘Wahanui’ is also the Māori word for a type of tropical marine mollusc “with a robust spiral shell.” The appearance of the conch is also big mouthed with a flared lip, producing a metaphor likening Tuwhare’s appearance to that of the conch. A wooden mouthpiece is attached to the shell to form the musical instrument known as a pūtātara, or a ‘shell trumpet.’ “The ‘voice’ of a pūtātara can be blown over many miles;” it propels the voice (*Tahaa: Ta Moko Studio and Māori Arts Gallery*). Therefore, ‘wahanui’ refers to a big or well-heard voice, in this case, a well-known poet. The *Tahaa* website describes that “when played by a tohunga [...] the instrument can produce a remarkable range of sounds, easily described as out of this world.” This source translates ‘tohunga’ as a ‘priest.’ However, the word has a far wider meaning that encompasses experts or skilled persons “chosen by the agent of an atua and the tribe as a leader in a particular field because of signs indicating talent for a particular vocation” (*Te Aka Dictionary*). Thus, using the term in this fashion, Tuwhare is a tohunga whose mouth is a wahanui accomplishing “a remarkable range of sounds” (*Tahaa*). In Māori legend, Tāne gifted a pūtātara to his father Rangi-nui when he returned from the heavens after he was given Te Kete o Te Wananga, the baskets of knowledge. Thus a wahanui is known as a gift, a koha. In choosing ‘wahanui’ to describe Tuwhare, Brown implies that Tuwhare’s oratory and his poetry are a gift to the people. ‘Wahanui’ is also a reference to a renowned Māori activist, Wahanui Huatere, who was a Ngāti Maniapoto rangatira born in the early 1800s. Wahanui Huatere was a revered leader who was well-known for standing up to Pākehā institutions and the government in the mid-1800s. He was “a distinguished orator, poet and debater. Many of his sayings became proverbial,” (*Te Ara: The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*) just as Hone Tuwhare’s words are oft repeated and quoted. The invocation of Huatere through the use of his name, ‘wahanui,’ likens Tuwhare to another well-known

Māori orator, thus the weaving that is ‘Chur bro’ pulls in threads from a detailed history, invoking an activist whakapapa alongside a literary one.

‘Chur bro’ also directly invokes a poem by Tuwhare, ‘To a Maori figure cast in bronze outside the Chief Post Office, Auckland,’ (338-339) first published in 1972. The poem is invoked in the fifth strophe beginning ‘Statue bro.’ When spoken aloud the line begins to sound more like ‘zat you bro?’ or ‘is that you, bro?’ while simultaneously conjuring up Tuwhare’s ‘statue poem.’ Brown’s poem re-engages the discussion in Tuwhare’s poem: a negotiation between the ways in which people are revered for their accomplishments in different cultures. ‘To a Maori figure’ addresses the Pākehā tradition of erecting a bronze figure in reverence which the speaker of ‘Chur bro’ describes as a ‘stink joke.’ ‘To a Maori figure’ certainly paints the idea of being relegated to the urban valley of Queen Street as a poor way to acknowledge someone as it removes the ‘realness’ of the person: “all hollow inside” The statue laments “if I could only move from this bloody pedestal.” He is stuck in a very specific remembrance typical of a Pākehā way of remembering someone, present in image but easily forgotten or ignored. ‘Chur bro’ offers the poem, and oratory by extension, as a way of revering someone instead. Tuwhare’s ideas are engaged with and he is spoken to affectionately and familiarly thus rendering Tuwhare’s memory as ‘still alive’ rather than cast in bronze. A literary whakapapa is not just about weaving into past voices, but also into past poems. It builds a conversation between poets as well as between poems.

The colloquial vernacular and easy-going tone of Tuwhare’s poem is imitated and extended in Brown’s poem ‘Chur bro.’ This enacts a homage to Tuwhare’s work, but also demonstrates his far reaching influence on contemporary writing. A greater understanding of contemporary poetry in Aotearoa is enriched by reading the work of Tuwhare. Brown incorporates new colloquialisms to continue Tuwhare’s legacy of opening up the world of ‘elite’ poetry to ‘the people’ via colloquialisms and writing as we speak. Brown’s colloquialisms are specific to the youth-culture in Aotearoa. For example, ‘chur,’ is kiwi slang for cheers, thanks, cool, hello, good bye. It is a versatile term specific to Aotearoa New Zealand. Its etymology is owned equally by both Māori and Pākehā. All meanings of the word are appropriate here. Though the most relevant is the meaning ‘thanks.’ This strengthens the poem’s position as a homage to Tuwhare, thanking him for his contribution and the passing on of his strength as a poet to future poets to learn from and develop from, as well as to all those inspired by his words.

In the final strophe, “That’s a neat trick too man / Turning the Pākehā’s / English into a / Reo all your own,” Brown refers again to Tuwhare’s skill in bringing poetic language to the people, and in his bending of English to be able to encompass Māori experience. Brown has taken this activity further in replicating not just the verbal register of the everyday person as Tuwhare did, but to manoeuvre English into the sound structure of te reo Māori, bringing unique qualities to written language to replicate the speech of English speaking Māori: Māori-English. It is a homage towards what Brown sees as Tuwhare’s language that was ‘all his own.’ Māori-English takes on Māori attributes in order to better encompass the lived experience of its speakers. As Chinua Achebe describes “the price a world language must be prepared to pay is submission to many different kinds of use” (433). English has been

morphed into so many dialects and variations, so it is easily manipulated from its stress-based rhythm to one more closely related to the rhythmic formation of te reo Māori. Paola Della Valle explains that “Māori is mora-timed – a rhythmic pattern more akin to syllable timing than to stress timing” (171). In mora-timing, each syllable has a similar length which gives it quite a distinct aural aesthetic. This syllable-timed rhythm gives Māori English a distinct sound which is replicated by many poets in their work, including Ben Brown. ‘Chur bro’ simulates this sound using enjambment, line breaks and contractions. This timing can potentially give words and phrases alternate meanings, such as the alternate meaning of ‘Statue bro’ when read with strictly similar weighting on each syllable to mean ‘is that you bro?’ The poem asks ‘Is that you?’ before answering ‘Yeah that’s you alright.’ In contrast, within a Standard English stress rhythm ‘statue bro’ is simply an exclamation that acts to invoke the Tuwhare poem, although with ‘bro’ as a part of the phrase it becomes difficult to say with a stress-rhythm, as ‘bro’ is so tied in with the dialectal rhythm associated with Māori English.

The frequent use of ‘eh,’ which is “an addressee-oriented pragmatic device” (Valle, 171) also contributes to the mora-timed rhythm, but it also encompasses another reference to te reo Māori. While ‘eh’ is used by most New Zealanders, it is used almost three times more often by speakers of te reo Māori when speaking in English, than it is by non-Māori speakers. This is because ‘eh,’ for Māori speakers, functions in English the way ‘nē’ does in Māori. In Māori it has a number of variant meanings and associated particles such as rā or hā. Depending on the inflection and context it could mean ‘is that so?;’ ‘isn’t that so?;’ ‘isn’t he/she?;’ ‘won’t you?;’ ‘really?;’ etc. Despite its similarities of use, *Te Aka Dictionary* does not define nē as a direct translation of ‘eh,’ probably because it is used far more widely, for far more meanings than encompassed by ‘eh.’ Therefore the use of ‘eh’ in bilanguaging can have far more meanings than if it was being used in a strictly monolingual context. Additionally the use of ‘eh’ contributes to the mora-time rhythm.

The language is adapted and morphed to take on Māori attributes in order to better communicate and express experience. Both the English and the Māori is important, alongside the morphings and adaptations. Powhiri Wharemarama Rika-Heke explains,

Māori writers writing in the dominant language English use literary strategies which ensure that our texts are transmitted in the way we want them to be. Many Māori poets...writing in English, incorporate aspects of oral literature into our texts or use the various genre of oral literature as a foundation for contemporary texts.' And/or write either completely in te reo Māori 'often without translations for monolingual Anglophones' or deliberately code-switch and/or 'relexify' and topsy-turvey English into our own language.

These activities are driven by agentic choice incorporating two languages and two cultures: drawing on both to express live experience effectively, and to challenge or support readers.

Concluding Remarks

Creative endeavour that participates in the interplay between and among cross-cultural and cross-linguistic elements embrace a bilanguaging readership. Bilanguaging is a space of active learning and the method of reading opens the discourse for research and discussion for all readers. Those readers can then, in turn, support the art and literature being created that engages in bilanguaging. A bilanguaging literacy is built from living among multiple languages and cultures and developing an interest and knowledge-base through research and partnership with those cultures. It acknowledges and celebrates difference and self-determined identities.

Given my own limited fluency in te reo and te ao Māori, I acknowledge that mistakes will be made like that made by Rob Garrett, mentioned in the section ‘Bilanguaging Close Reading.’ Whether I have made mistakes here or whether I make them in future readings, they are part of the discussion of bilanguaging. It is a method of reading that encourages learning through understanding difference. In the process of formulating this contribution to the discussion of bilingual and bicultural art and poetry, I have made a number of incorrect readings that I am aware of which I later reassessed with added information. My mistakes led to a greater understanding every time. A lot of information is gained in utilising google, but it cannot be underestimated how important it is to exchange knowledge with people, particularly those with cultures and languages different to your own. The support from my Māori language tutors, Makere Sikisini and Tuatahi Pene, during this process and my ongoing journey with te reo Māori, has been invaluable.

The close readings in this essay have been focused on single word choices and their contexts, but there is much more research to be done into the implications of longer phrases and components written in te reo Māori. Further research into the wider influences of traditional oratory would also benefit a bilanguaging readership to better understand those forms and to champion traditional compositional forms, and for those forms to take an equal footing with traditionally Pākehā structures. Ongoing exploration through a bilanguaging reading method will continue to inform the cultural identity of the nation. Likewise, an ongoing contiguity with code-switching and bilingual behaviours will support a growing acceptance and developing celebration toward te reo Māori and aid revitalisation.

Bilanguaging is a way of writing and reading for te ao hōu, the new world, which is a combination, a blending, an authenticity as it is created and lived by those involved. Sam Jackson describes in his poem ‘Being Māori’ that “being Māori is finding the balance” (122). It is that balance that is embraced and supported by bilanguaging. Once again, to quote Hulme, bilanguaging is a way of reading “writers of double beginning, inhabiting both Te Ao Māori and Te Ao Pākehā, but writing for Te Ao Hōu” (Hulme, 296).

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ⁱ The term ‘canon’ is used to refer to a collection of literary and artist work, rather than works that might be considered ‘canonical.’

ⁱⁱ Although the concept of decolonisation has connotations of returned sovereignty and self-determination, it is important to note that this is not the case in Aotearoa New Zealand. Therefore decolonisation can refer only on a societal level in relation to agency of self-expression and not at the level of political self-determination.

ⁱⁱⁱ My claim to being Pākehā is in itself an act of bilanguaging in that the term situates me as being tauwiwi (non-Māori, i.e. with genealogical heritage from abroad), born and raised in Aotearoa New Zealand.

^{iv} While Te Tiriti o Waitangi is that treaty that should be acknowledged, given *Contra proferentem* (a contractual term also known as ‘interpretation against the draftsman’), Te Tiriti has not been ratified in law. Therefore, for the purposes of addressing what the crown has agreed to in the statutes of law, the principles of the treaty are the bare minimum of what should be acknowledged and honoured.

^v Research into national attitudes towards the Māori language support this claim, as the majority of non-Māori speakers participating in the research agreed with the statement “people should not speak Māori in the presences [sic] of non-speakers of Māori” (Boyce, 98).

^{vi} Although ‘tumeke’ retains its multiple meanings in te reo Māori, according to native speaker Tuatahi Pene, for younger native speakers of Māori who went through the Kura Kaupapa education system, the Māori-English interpretation of the word dominates. This may be due to its prevalence in Maori-English.

^{vii} Tīpuna and tūpuna, with macrons are plural, i.e. ancestors. Without the macron, tipuna, tupuna, the meaning is singular, i.e. ancestor.

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- ^{viii} It is easy to gloss over this revitalisation of the Southern Māori dialect (as it is also known). While there is a resurgence, the variations on the language were considerable and a huge amount has been lost in the process of the standardisation of te reo Māori that began when William Colenso printed the Bible in Māori in the Ngāpuhi dialect in the 1830s.
- ^{ix} This is interesting given that Kāti Māmoe was originally from the East Coast, near Hastings, and moved from there to the South Island. This would suggest that the version 'tipuna' would be the dialectal difference that found its way to the South Island.
- ^x According to the 2013 Census results 21.3% of Māori speak te reo, (and 3.1% of the total population speak it). (*Statistics New Zealand*)
- ^{xi} Genealogical terminology is inherent in Sadler's language, as demonstrated in 'cohabits' and 'begat,' which highlights the basis of whakapapa ideology in genealogy links.
- ^{xii} While the phrase is widely recognised, the key component 'gab' is a distinctly Scots term and first appeared in poetry by Robert Burns in 1786. The US version of the phrase is 'gift of gab' though this interpretation seems to identify 'gab' is a person or giver of the gift, rather than gab in its Scottish meaning, 'talk'.