

Article:

Ka Whawhai Tonu Mātou: Indigenous Television in Aotearoa/New Zealand

Jo Smith and Sue Abel

As our title suggests, the establishment of an indigenous television channel in Aotearoa/New Zealand has only come from what Māori broadcaster Tainui Stephens describes as “three decades of agitation by Māori” (Stephens 2004: 113). Nevertheless, New Zealand’s first indigenous television channel, Māori Television, finally succeeded in going to air on Sunday 8 March 2004. Since its arrival, Māori Television has posed a challenge to established television culture in this contemporary settler nation. Previously dominated by a screen culture that has privileged a mainstream and predominantly Pākehā (New Zealand European) audience, the arrival of Māori Television has signalled a new era in New Zealand broadcast culture. The channel’s programming asks New Zealand society to take seriously the viewpoints of non-Pākehā. International documentaries and other global programming links Māori issues with global indigenous political concerns and life-style shows throw into relief the monocultural offerings of other programming providers. However, indigenous broadcast culture within a contemporary settler nation such as Aotearoa/New Zealand, involves substantial tensions between indigenous aspirations and the larger history of settlement, tensions that condition New Zealand’s contemporary socio-political milieu. In this chapter we examine the emergence of Māori Television, we outline the contestations over the role and function of the channel, and we assess the channel’s ability to present a counter-narrative of New Zealand national identity that challenges the orthodox representations of this contemporary settler nation.

The History of Māori Television’s Emergence

Māori Television emerges from a long struggle to bring about Crown recognition and acceptance of the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. The Treaty forms the bicultural basis of this nation and subsequently fuels intra-national claims to indigenous sovereignty, an appeal for authority and power-sharing capacities that have implications not only for New Zealand broadcast culture, but also for ways of understanding New Zealand national identity. Long-time Māori broadcaster (and ex-CEO of Māori Television) Derek Tini Fox puts it like this:

The Treaty, signed in 1840 between the British Crown and the chiefs of Aotearoa, guaranteed to the Māori people *tino rangatiratanga*, or absolute authority over all their resources; and a large number of Māori communities are currently reclaiming, under the Treaty, land which has been stolen from them over the last 150 years. Like the land, the public broadcasting system is a vital present-day resource, and as such Māori are legally entitled to an equal share of it (Fox 2001: 260).

Yet the Treaty remains an incomplete project in terms of its alleged promise of power sharing between Treaty partners. The State infrastructure remains determinedly based upon forms of governmentality inherited from British imperialism (in the form of a Governor General, a House of Parliament and High Court), and while many aspects of Māori culture are incorporated into the existing infrastructure, little systemic change has occurred (Fleras and Spoonley 1999: 239). A key characteristic of this contemporary settler nation is its ability to regulate intra-national tensions such as Treaty obligations using a rhetoric of pragmatism that asks that New Zealanders “get the past behind them” so that the nation can compete with a united front in an increasingly globalized economy. Māori culture has a significant symbolic value on the global market, a value that the present Labour government utilizes for its own ends. The promotion, activities and achievements of Māori Television must be understood within this larger context.

Māori access to the means of media representation has also been much less than the bicultural balance promised by the Treaty agreement. According to Fox, in 1993 the amount of television programming with content of relevance to Māori was less than one per cent of the total broadcast time (Fox 2001: 261). In addition to the small volume of Māori content on air prior to 2004, those shows that were of relevance to Māori were most often scheduled at non-commercial times. Writing before the emergence of the Māori Television channel, Tainui Stephens notes:

One of the usual reasons given by broadcasters for their lack of support for Māori television [on mainstream channels] is that it is not commercially viable. It is no accident that most Māori programming is seen on Sunday mornings. This is currently the only non-commercial time on the weekly schedule. This continued relegation to Sunday morning transmission is viewed by many as an insult (Stephens 2004: 110).

One must understand the emergence of Māori Television in 2004 in light of this longer history of Treaty neglect. Treaty rights were mobilized in relation to broadcasting concerns in the mid 1980s when the fourth Labour Government instigated neo-liberal reforms and set about deregulating media industries. When Radio New Zealand Ltd. and Television New Zealand Ltd. were established as State-Owned Enterprises in 1986, the New Zealand Māori Council and *Nga Kaiwhakapumau i te Reo* (Guardians of the Language) took a claim to the Waitangi Tribunal arguing that under the Treaty the Māori language was a *taonga*, and that therefore the Crown had a responsibility to protect by, among other things,

ensuring its presence on the settler nation's airwaves. Because of Crown intransigence, Māori took this claim (at considerable cost in terms of time and money) to the Privy Council in London. The Crown's eventual recognition of the significance of te reo led to the establishment of the funding agency Te Māngai Pāho in 1993 which is charged with allocating funds for the promotion of Māori language and Māori culture. This did not, however, immediately clear the way for Māori television. Ranginui Walker has documented both the bureaucratic impediments and the illwill from a considerable section of the non-Māori public throughout the 1990s and early 2000s (Walker 2004). This illwill was fuelled by continual critical scrutiny of Māori media initiatives by mainstream media, drawing on and furthering a long-established discourse of Māori inability to manage institutions and their finances, resulting in "a waste of taxpayers' money". A key development here was what long-time Māori broadcaster Debra Reweti describes as (with considerable understatement) the "interesting experiment" of the establishment of Aotearoa Television Network (ATN) in 1996 (Reweti 2006: 184). ATN was described by the Crown as a pilot scheme for a Māori television channel, and was set up to run for 13 weeks. Many commentators have suggested that it was also set up to fail because of the time frame and the budget allowed (see Burns 1997; Fox 2001; Burns 2004). Its very publicized money troubles and its closure in 1997 nonetheless ultimately tainted the reputation of Māori programme makers. Indeed, due to mainstream press coverage of ATN, this initiative is best remembered for CEO Tukuroirangi Morgan's clothing expenditure rather than the high-quality Māori language programming it produced. The eventual emergence of Māori Television in 2004 would also be characterised by intense scrutiny from news media outlets focused on the potential failure of the channel rather than its aspirations and intentions.

Many roadblocks prevented the channel from achieving its initial intention of going to air in mid-2002. In 2001 Minister of Māori Affairs Parekura Horomia introduced the Māori Television Service Bill which would enable the establishment of a new channel dedicated to te ao Māori. This was not finally passed until May 2003, which meant that in the meantime there was no legislation to support and enable the newly appointed Board of Directors to actually function effectively. During this time of legislative inertia, the board was asked to appoint a CEO (the now notorious Canadian John Davy who turned out to have no legitimate qualifications for the position). While the Māori Television board struggled with the logistics of functioning in the legislative vacuum of 2001 to 2003, media coverage of the efforts of Māori Television avoided deeper analysis of the board's situation and instead, focused with relish on the past failures of ATN, the John Davy fiasco and later, the departure of Derek Fox as CEO at the end of 2003.

The stereotype of Maori initiatives as a waste of taxpayers' money surrounded the emergence of the indigenous channel. In 2003, prior to Māori Television's launch, Marc Alexander, broadcasting spokesman for the conservative political party United Future, conflated the accountancy problems of a Māori production house with the viability of a Māori channel. Citing the financial woes of Aroha Films Ltd., as "just another nail in the coffin of Māori TV", Alexander went on to criticise a channel dedicated

to te ao Māori by stating that, “You simply cannot expect people to make competent business decisions for an enterprise that relies on ideologically driven agendas rather than on market need” (Alexander 2003). However, the question needs to be asked: how does one production company’s financial woes get to impact so soundly on the broader initiatives of a Māori channel? What symbolic value does this failure generate for the wider non-Māori community of Aotearoa/New Zealand? These kinds of public discourses feed in to a long history of Pakeha/Māori encounters where Pakeha label advocates of Treaty rights as somehow against the notion of the nation, (or as “haters and wreckers” according to PM Helen Clarke (Press 2007), or as part of a ‘Treaty-grievance industry’. These kinds of public outcries betray an established purview of the nation that relegates Māori to the margins and as somehow a threat to the notion of nationhood.

Despite such ideologically charged press and political reception, the kaupapa that drives Māori Television has resulted in a fiscally responsible organisation that has produced a hitherto unseen vision of life in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The unexpectedly high core viewership per month (of which at least 60% is estimated to be Pākehā) suggests that Māori Television has proven that there is an eager market for public service television and that tikanga and te reo Māori have a pivotal function to play in not only te ao Māori, but also the nation as a whole. Yet it is not quite clear at this stage what effects this pivotal function will generate. As the Crown’s recognition of the important role played by broadcast culture in the revitalization of te reo Māori suggests, (and as Māori have long argued for) the focus on media industries highlights the increasingly central role that audiovisual culture plays in the negotiation of community relationships, social power and cultural survival. Indeed, as part of a global indigenous media movement, Māori Television has a role to play in disrupting the hegemony of New Zealand settler society and in affirming an indigenous form of social agency. Epifanio San Juan argues (in the context of US racial politics, but also applicable to the cultural politics of New Zealand), “racial politics today is no longer chiefly mediated by biological and naturalistic ascriptions of value, but rather by symbolic cultural interpellations [...] pivoting around the affirmation of a ‘common culture’” (San Juan Jr 1998: 131). The mainstream press coverage of ATN and of Māori Television’s emergence suggests that technologies of representation have long been in the hands of settler-centric media producers that have defined what is “common” about New Zealand culture. Pakeha resentment over the funding of Māori broadcasting initiatives has relied upon arguments concerning taxpayer rights and “special privileges” based upon racial difference. Yet for the first 20 years of New Zealand broadcasting, when Māori were paying taxes, programming content of relevance to Māori was almost non-existent. In light of these embedded discourses of nationhood and Māori /Pakeha relations, how might Māori Television dislodge these narratives via their own symbolic cultural interpellations? Can these largely symbolic processes help to open out our understandings of cultural belonging in this contemporary settler nation?

The Role and Function of Māori Television

As we have established, the emergence of Māori Television is driven by the rights to representation as guaranteed by the Treaty of Waitangi. The Act that established Māori Television states:

The principal function of Māori Television is to promote te reo Māori me ngā tikanga Māori [Māori language and customs] through the provision of a high quality, cost-effective Māori television service, in both Māori and English, that informs, educates and entertains a broad viewing audience, and, in doing so, enriches New Zealand's society, culture and heritage (Māori Television Service Act 2003).

The channel's mandate is to promote the cultural revitalisation of te ao Māori while at the same time to inform, educate and entertain a "broad viewing audience". To maintain cultural integrity, the channel has a Kaunihera Kaumātua, or Māori Elders Council, who meet quarterly and provide cultural advisory support to the channel in terms of both te reo and tikanga. The channel's Employee's Manual states: "Through this Kaunihera Kaumātua we are able to receive independent guidance on how we are operating the channel from the perspective of those who contributed to its development" (Māori Television Employees' Manual). Māori Television's tactic of naturalising te reo and tikanga Māori extends itself to every level of the channel's organisation, including its station promotion. The channel's tagline (mā rātou [for them]; mā mātou [for us, but not them]; mā koutou [for you]; mā tātou [for everyone]) addresses an array of possible viewers that includes Māori and non-Māori, native speakers and non-native speakers. Accordingly, while Jim Mather (current CEO) sees the core audience as being fluent Māori speakers, Māori Television must also attract a broader audience that might be attracted to the language and/or the culture. Mather describes the channel's strategy as one of offering high local programming content, including public service programming and grassroots level sports (Mather 2007). By creating rating 'spikes', viewers tune in to a popular programme and then are more likely to browse, or view other programming content placed alongside these popular programmes. The main intent is to 'zig' where other channels 'zag' and a prime example of this strategy is Māori Television's all-day schedule of programming for Anzac Day in 2006, a day that commemorates war veterans and which has a significant place in the construction of New Zealand's national imaginary. A more recent example of Māori Television's ability to 'zig' where others 'zag' is the 2007 advent of current affairs show *Native Affairs* at a time when news media in this country are under severe threat.

Other strategies for nurturing te reo Māori and attracting a broader audience can be seen in the popular sporting programme *Code* which features Māori athletes and role models. The show is set in a sitting-room-style environment, where its 'laid-back Māori manner' can ease its audience into its content. While an English-language show, one segment of the programme is titled "Wai's Word" and involves Wairangi Koopu introducing Māori League vocabulary (e.g. 'poumuri' is the Māori word for

'backs'). Thus, while capturing an already established audience of sports fans, the show also models, incorporates and plants a language 'seed' that might encourage non-Māori speakers to the language and to te ao Māori .

Māori Television's ratings success to date has been because, as Māori Television's GM Programming Larry Parr has pointed out, "the channel has attracted disenfranchised [Pākehā] viewers from the mainstream channels, who like Māori Television because of its public service broadcasting and minimal advertising". This, he says "has come at the expense of our own rangatahi" (Parr 2007). In order to honour its commitment to its core constituency of Māori-speaking viewers, Māori Television is taking advantage of a recently established digital platform to launch a second, and complementary, channel. This new channel will screen 100 per cent te reo programming between 7.30 pm and 10.30 pm and will be free of advertising. With the second channel, Māori Television will exceed the amount of te reo they are required by statute to broadcast. In addition, the main channel may go from the current mid 50 per cent spoken Māori content to about 60 per cent once content from the second channel is repeated with subtitles on the original channel. It is hoped that the second channel will also provide the opportunity for iwi access, a feature that would guard against the risk of Māori Television producing a pan-Māori identity at the expense of different iwi.

Under such conditions, Māori Television asserts its ongoing contribution to not only Māori culture, but to New Zealand's national culture in general. Indeed, as the popularity of the channel's Anzac Day coverage suggests, the station is quickly becoming the channel that the nation turns to, to view material more traditionally associated with public service television. Nevertheless, there are questions that need to be asked. These revolve around the role that Māori Television plays in the construction of New Zealand nationhood and its presence within a socio-political milieu that is informed by the history of colonisation. That is to say, we have to remember that Māori Television functions within a wider mediascape where Māori differences have often sustained, enhanced and demarcated the national differences of New Zealand on the global market (think here of the internationally successful film *Whale Rider*, the All Black haka and the koru sign that adorns the nation's air carrier).

This domestication of indigenous cultural difference is an established mechanism of colonial and contemporary settler governance. The present successes of Māori Television might well serve the Labour government and their particular brand of benevolent biculturalism that on the one hand incorporates things Māori into an otherwise beige nation state without making more structural changes to existing forms of governance. There are issues then for Māori Television. Might Māori Television contribute to a sense of national identity in which reo and tikanga are "normalised" and more non-Māori have some understanding of te ao Māori, but which conceals the more structural inequities that are the result of colonisation? To what extent might there be pressure on Māori Television to present a domesticated form of Maori cultural difference (one that affirms a harmonious sense of nationhood) in

order to sustain its own viability as a capital-intensive broadcaster? These questions arise from recent shifts in the promotional discourses surrounding Māori Television.

Counter-narratives of Nationhood?

A recent promotional advertisement for the channel begins with an archival image of a Māori family (including women and children) participating in a peaceful protest by blocking a railway line development at Mangapehi in 1910. The next image includes a close-up shot of Mahatma Gandhi in the year that India gained its independence from British colonial rule. The third image takes us to 1964 with a still image of Martin Luther King and the passing of the American Civil Rights Bill. King's image is quickly followed by that of Nelson Mandela, depicted placing a ballot in the box for the 1994 all-race elections in South Africa. To complete this prestigious line-up, the final black and white photo includes the Prime Minister of New Zealand (Helen Clarke) with two prominent Māori figures (including Huirangi Waikerepuru, a key player in the Te Reo claim to the Waitangi Tribunal in 1985). The caption notes the 2004 launch of Māori Television. Accordingly, the syntagmatic structure of the advert works to link early non-violent protest by Māori with the success of world famous leaders – Gandhi, Martin Luther King and Mandela – all of whom have achieved political success for their people against colonial and/or settler oppressors using non-violent means. When the final image of the launch of Māori Television appears, the audience is given strong cues as to the historic import of this local initiative on a global stage; the viewer is invited to make links between contemporary Pākehā/Māori relations and international strategies of reconciliation and social justice that have been achieved by these world leaders. Yet where Mandela, King and Gandhi are pictured as single individuals responsible for watershed moments in history, Māori Television's image features an image of Pākehā/Māori unity, a vision of bicultural bliss if you will.

Where the first image of land protest in 1910 acknowledges the historic oppression of Māori, the final image of this promotional advertisement positions Māori Television as the result of Māori and their successful partnership with the State. Likewise, the State is presented as an equal partner in the establishment of Māori Television. While there can be no doubt that Māori Television is the result of State-sanctioned bicultural initiatives, this advertisement generates many ambiguous and ambivalent effects. The image of a successful launch stands in close proximity to historical examples of social progress and reconciliation as *already achieved states*. Yet, in the same year that Māori Television was launched, the Foreshore and Seabed hikoi occurred and the independent Māori Party was launched in response to the government's refusal to honour the recommendations of the Waitangi Tribunal. While evidence of Māori protest does feature in the advertisement, this form of activism is formally placed safely in the past. Accordingly, the advertisement masks over not only the long-term resistance of the State to the establishment of Māori Broadcasting, it also elides larger issues of Māori sovereignty the

persisting forms of settler governance. In this advert, the New Zealand nation is presented in bicultural harmony *as an achieved state*, with the PM playing a significant part as the face of this benevolent bicultural nation.

Yet, as we outlined above, while the voices that spoke out against the channel before it was established may have subsided, it needs to be remembered that it took dogged political activism on the part of Māori to get any Māori broadcasting at all. One long-time Māori journalist has suggested: “Basically the Government had no choice but to set up Māori Television, and now if you listen to Parekura Horomia he is basically taking credit for this wonderful thing called the Māori channel. The Government is quick to fudge the whole background and history of Māori Television. It took a Court Case and then the Government defending it to the tune of what I’ve heard rumoured as around \$50 million to try and cut [Māori Television] off at the knees.” In light of these contentions, we must be suspicious of any uncritical celebration of the channel’s achievements.

The second example of Māori Television’s nation-building agenda can be seen in the subtle shift in the channel’s tag-line from ‘Mā rātou, mā mātou, nā koutou, mā tātou’ to an emphasis on ‘Mā tātou’. This latter version of the tag-line can be seen on the channel’s website where viewers are welcomed with the following:

Mā Tātou - for everyone

Māori Television is New Zealand’s channel
– we have something for everyone.

You’ll see New Zealand life, New Zealand stories and
New Zealand people.

The earlier and longer tag line suggests a diverse and variegated audience. For example, the distinction between ‘mātou’ and ‘tātou’ are important markers of difference. ‘Mātou’ refers to an ‘us’ which means ‘you and me, but not those over there’, implicitly suggesting an Other. ‘Tātou’, on the other hand, means ‘all of us, together’. Any notion of diversity, of differences between groups, disappears when the longer tag-line is abbreviated to simply ‘Mā tātou’. The diminution of difference continues in the body of text below. The term ‘Māori’, a group seen by Māori Television as their core audience, is significantly absent here. Instead, the audience is interpellated as ‘New Zealanders’ and the repeated use of ‘our’ solidifies this construction of national identity. Accordingly, cultural differences become just another demographic difference such as that between ‘old and young’.

How might we read this strategy of inclusiveness? As Māori Television inserting Māori into a previously settler defined and determined sense of nationhood? Could Māori Television be taking the lead in constructing a sense of nationhood for the nation, but on Māori terms? Or is this simply a marketing strategy that seeks to elide difference in order to better appeal, as per the statutory requirements set by the Government, to a “broad audience”? One way to think about these shifts in promotional discourse is to think of the idea of Maori Television as a tool of decolonisation. Māori Party MP Te Ururoa Flavell, an early supporter of Māori Television as a tool for decolonisation, now sees the channel as having the *potential* for decolonisation. He argues that programming in te reo does not in itself “free up the Māori mind” or educate Māori about the position of Māori in Aotearoa/New Zealand today (Flavell 2007). Is there some way, then, in which Maori Television offers us a tool for decolonising the mind, and thus shifting the default setting of New Zealand mediascapes from one that privileges a settler-centric purview?

Wayne Walden, until very recently Chairman of Māori Television, suggests that the management team “have purposely positioned Māori Television as ‘the face of Aotearoa New Zealand’” (Walden 2006). If this is so, then the nation building agendas of Māori Television might not return the same-old homogenous notion of national identity that is the current orthodoxy. If we pick up on Te Ururoa Flavell’s point that what Māori need is a decolonisation of the mind, then we could ask: do non-Māori also need a decolonisation of the mind? What might a decolonisation of the mind like? Does a decolonised mind think from the viewpoint of difference as an ethico-political stance? If so, whose differences might one think *from* and how are these differences accessed, understood, negotiated and translated? More generally, we could ask, how is a critical and thus political notion of difference articulated, maintained, and proliferated in this contemporary settler nation and what role does Māori Television have in contributing to this critical consciousness? John Hartley argues that television can act as a teacher of cultural citizenship and that television has a pedagogical function that can introduce an audience to other ways of being and becoming (Hartley 1999). The question is then, what kind of cultural citizenship does Māori Television model, perform and demonstrate and how might these strategies get taken up within the wider social context of Aotearoa/New Zealand? By focusing on Wayne Walden’s notion that Māori Television acts as ‘the face of Aotearoa New Zealand’ we can examine how the channel constitutes another kind of ‘worlding’ that departs from established national orthodoxies.

First off, one must approach the term Aotearoa/New Zealand as a conjunction of signs that demarcate the endlessly contested nature of this settler nation. ‘Aotearoa’ refers to an iwi-based nation and ‘New Zealand’ is that which demarcates the settler nation and those who come after tangata whenua. The slash or gap between these two terms is the site that holds in doubt, suspension and fine balance, the potential unity of the two. Accordingly, a critically conscious approach to this conjunction might see

Aotearoa/New Zealand as designating a site of endless contestation over what and who gets to count as the nation.

By focusing on the gap or slash between the two terms we can identify the differences between a Māori and non-Māori audience that Māori Television might seek to appeal to. But we cannot forget that Aotearoa/New Zealand is also a name that appeals to the dual identity of Māori within this settler nation. Numerous Māori scholars and commentators have pointed out that Māori possess a dual identity not available to other New Zealanders: they are both members of an iwi and citizens of the state (See Maaka, 1994; O'Regan, 2001; Walker, 2004; Bargh 2007). While Walden's claim that Māori Television seeks to provide "the face of Aotearoa/NZ" does suggest a nation building agenda similar to that of settler society (where the nation is premised on a bicultural relationship between Māori and Pakeha), one can also read Walden's statement as an address to the dual identity of Māori who are both citizens of New Zealand and iwi members of Aotearoa. This latter mode of address privileges the differences *within* the category 'Māori'. Such recognition suggests a critical form of difference not domesticated by a national orthodoxy that privileges the settler perspective. This is perhaps the critical and pedagogical function of Māori Television: to bring to light hither-to unseen visions of Aotearoa/NZ; to see with 'iwi eyes' the shape and contour of the nation's scape. These internal or immanent forms of difference get played out, not only in the station's original logo ("mā rātou, mā mātou, mā koutou, mā tātou"), but within the range of scheduling that Māori Television provides and in the very content of the programmes screened on the channel.

To give some sense of what Māori Television offers, we could examine the popular 'agony aunt' show *Ask Your Auntie*, hosted by Ella Henry who is joined by a rotating panel of 12 women from various iwi. These women model a style of public sphere debate that recognizes the differences in opinion between each panel member even while the panel expresses a shared sense of whanaungatanga and community. They also offer solutions which come directly from their experiences both as members of a culture with its own and different tikanga, but also of a marginalised indigenous group. Again, the tensions of Māori Television's positioning within a settler-dominated mediascape persist. *Ask Your Auntie* could be perceived as a show where one can voyeuristically consume the pains, problems and everyday ordeals of te ao Māori (the commodification of Māori differences). But it is also a show that models public sphere debate, mana wahine Māori, diversity and a critically conscious form of difference. These tensions between commodification and criticality cannot be resolved, and indeed, we should not try to find a resolution. Instead, the function of *Ask Your Auntie*, and the wider role of Māori Television in a settler-dominated mediascape, is one that tries to dramatize, demonstrate and model the endlessly contested nature of everyday articulations of national being and becoming. More generally, Māori Television asks us to reconsider the meanings surrounding Aotearoa and New Zealand and to privilege the many different ways there are of understanding cultural and national belonging.

Accordingly, Māori Television constitutes a worlding of Aotearoa/NZ that speaks in a multiplicity of difference voices. This multi-directional mode of address might at one point invoke 'mā tātou' in a nation-building gesture reminiscent of settler strategies, but we must remember that this gesture is rendered in te reo Māori, which requires that the non-Māori audience begin to understand this address in ways that differ from established orthodoxies. If, earlier we have asked: what kind of cultural citizenship does Māori Television model and what is its pedagogical function, one could say that the channel asks its audience to think from the viewpoint of difference in ways that might change the orthodox frameworks we use for talking about national identity and social belonging. As a pedagogical project, this is no easy task: and indeed, it should not be.

This is the work that media scholars face today. In an era of increased indigenous media content we must struggle to think beyond binaries, and work to develop site-specific ways of talking about the work of culture and to come face to face with the ambivalences and ambiguities of indigenous media within a contemporary settler nation. When the more iwi-based second channel is launched in 2008, Māori Television will further complicate established binary thinking.

Some cautionary observations

We have called this paper *Ka Whawhai Tonu Mātou* (Struggle without end). As we write this in late 2007, Māori Television continues to face a range of challenges. But whereas before its establishment on air such challenges came predominantly from Pākehā, now rumblings come from Māori sources. The strategies that Māori Television has used to attract a "broad audience" are not always appreciated by Māori viewers. Anecdotal evidence tells of older Māori who say "We did not go on a hikoi for *Ask Your Auntie*". Professor Tairahia Black, Massey University's head of Māori Language, has publicly challenged Māori Television: "Māori TV must be reminded and held accountable so Māori can access quality Maori language options to build Māori language proficiency and knowledge about ourselves to increase the status and use of te reo Māori. Isn't this what Māori TV was established to do in 2004, based on the premise te reo Māori is a taonga (treasure) to be protected and promoted as a living language?" (Dykes 2007). And as we noted above, Māori Television's GM Programming, Larry Parr, has himself expressed misgivings about what he sees as the growth of a Pākehā audience *at the expense of Māori*.

There are tensions, then, in trying to meet both of the objectives set out in Māori Television's enabling legislation. Sonya Haggie, Māori Television's Director of Communications, responded to Black's challenge by stating "Under the Māori Television Service Act we are required to broadcast in both languages" (Dykes 2007: 3). While this is correct, it only highlights the problematic nature of the role that Māori Television is required to play in this settler state.

It may be that the proposed second channel will mitigate these objections. But in the meantime the channel's address to a broad array of viewers (mā rātou; mā matou; mā koutou; mā tātou) also runs the risk of the channel being co-opted by interests that do not advance the rights of Māori. One such interest could be a Government invested in supporting a world-class indigenous channel that can contribute to an affirmative and yet exclusively *cosmetic* bicultural brand both national and internationally. We need to remember the history of the channel's emergence, and we must also remember that in the same year that the channel was launched, the Government passed the Foreshore and Seabed Act, which ensures state ownership of land positioned below the high-tide mark. By declaring this land Crown-owned, the Government prevented Māori from exercising their rights as guaranteed by the Treaty of Waitangi. These larger issues of sovereignty and governance cannot be separated from the phenomenon that is Māori Television.

Note about the contributors

Jo Smith lectures in Media Studies at Victoria University, Wellington. She is currently researching New Zealand media cultures in relation to narratives of settlement, native-ness and migrancy.

Sue Abel is a lecturer at Victoria University where she teaches critical analysis of the news media, wider issues of cultural identity and the media, and is convening a conjoint paper 'Māori and Media', taught as both a Māori Studies and Media Studies paper. She is Ngāti Pākehā, with iwi links to Nga Ruahinerangi

Bibliography

Alexander M (2003) 'Maori TV should have the same future as the Moa' Press

Release April 14 <http://www.marc-alexander-mp.org/2003/030417.htm>.

Accessed October 1 2007

Bargh M (2007) 'Māori Development and Neoliberalism' in Bargh M (ed)

Resistance: an indigenous response to neoliberalism 25 -44 Huia Publishers

Wellington

Burns D (1997) *Public money private lives: Aotearoa Television-the insider story*

Reed Publishers Auckland

Dykes M (2007) 'Maori TV hits back at Massey Head' *Manawatu Standard*

September 18 3

Flavell T (2007) 'Interview' August 21

Flavell T (2007) 'Opening address to Ngā Aho Whakaari National Conference'

Rotorua New Zealand June 22-24

Fleras A & Spoonley P (1999) *Recalling Aotearoa: indigenous politics and ethnic relations in New Zealand* Oxford University Press Melbourne

Fox D (2001) 'Honouring the Treaty: Indigenous Television in Aotearoa' in *New Zealand Television: A reader* Farnsworth J & Hutchison I (eds) 260-269

Dunmore Press Palmerston North

Hartley J (1999) *The uses of television* Routledge London

Maaka R (1994) 'The new tribe: conflicts and continuities in the social

organisation of urban Māori' in *The Contemporary Pacific* Vol 6 No 2

Māori Television Employees' Manual/He kaimahi pukapuka arataki (undated)

Māori Television Services Act (Te Araratuku Whakaata Irirangi Māori) Act (2003)

Government Printery Wellington

Mather J (2007) 'Interview' July 20

O'Regan T (2001) 'The evolution of the tribe: the challenge for an old culture in a new century' Freilich Lecture May 31

Parr L (2007) 'Indigenous goes Digital' Panel 'A New Future for Broadcasting'

Conference New Zealand August 27-28

Reweti D (2006) 'Māori and Broadcasting' in Mulholland M et al *State of the*

Māori Nation: Twenty-First-Century Issues in Aotearoa 179-186 Reed Books

Auckland

San Juan Jnr E (1998) *Beyond Postcolonial Theory* St Martins Press New York

Stephens T (2004) 'Māori Television' in Horrocks R & Perry N (eds) *Television in*

New Zealand: Programming the nation 107-114 OUP Melbourne

Walden W (2007) 'Chairman's Review' in *Māori Television Annual Report 2006*

www.maoritelevision.com accessed 1 October 2007

Walker R (2004) *Ka Whawhai Tonu Mātou: Struggle without End* 2d edition

Penguin Auckland