

at any rate that your Maata is the genuine article, and that she has the MS. There are two psychological points where I differ. I state them but I am not pressing them. I don't think that Maata's reluctance is a matter of Tapu. My experience is that if a Polynesian has possession of something unique he is most jealous about giving it to others, even in part. I could back this with chapter and verse from my island experience, but I will spare you. I think your main danger is that Maata may destroy the letters and MS when she thinks she is near her end. The other point is that I do not agree there was an overlap with Maata and Prelude. K.M. was a rebel here in New Zealand; she left in that frame of mind and I think it continued until her brother came to her in England. Maata was surely identified with that rebellion and I don't wonder that her teachers and her family were worried about Maata's friendship with K.M. and Chaddie. It was only those few weeks with her brother that brought K.M. home again—made her forgive the clipping of her wings here, with which process both New Zealand itself and her own family were concerned. Then he was killed and Prelude came out of her agony. She said so herself. From then on she wrapped New Zealand in phantasy as a sort of glorification of her dead brother. This being so I don't believe she touched her work on Maata again—it was identified with her period of rebellion, now over for ever. I say again that this is my own view of it, and I may be wrong.

'Reading this over I perceive that I have devoted most of my space to being critical. Don't get any impression that I am in any way disappointed with this book. On the contrary, I have enjoyed myself thoroughly with it and within the limitation of copyright I don't see that you could have made it any more convincing. I sincerely hope that I am wrong about the possibilities of getting Maata into a different frame of mind, but seeing that she, in spite of all her troubles, has never endeavoured to turn her treasure into cash I am really afraid that what she values is the feeling that she has something priceless which she can at will either destroy or turn over to the world, and if that is true the odds are against you.'

There is logic in what Morris has written.