

profile. I could not, in all conscience, allow people ever to consider my work was the definitive portrayal of the world of the Maori. In my attempts to help, I considered I had created a stereotype. Of warm caring relationships. Of a people who lived in rural communities. But what *was* the reality? The reality in 1975 was a hardening of attitudes on both sides. Of inflexibility. Of infighting. By 1975 I felt my vision was out of date and, tragically, so encompassing and so established that it wasn't leaving room enough for the new reality to punch through. I made a conscious decision to stop writing. I said that I would place a ten year embargo on my work. It was the right decision to make. I am, *he tangata, he tangata, he tangata*. A man, a man, a man.

Since then, it has seemed to me that New Zealand has been in the throes of some massive nervous breakdown. Something has been going wrong out there. Instead of looking outward, we are increasingly turning inward. We feel under siege. We feel defensive. Our first response is distrust and outrage at any attack on the fidelity of New Zealand. We have become divided. We have started to withdraw into our own divisions. We have become autistic. Totally withdrawn.

That doesn't mean that we haven't been struggling to repair ourselves. In the Maori world, this has meant vociferous exchanges, most often bitter, but *no dialogue*. We are either too tired or too hardened to listen to each other. One of the heartening aspects, however, is that the literature, as it applies to race relations, is developing a most commanding voice. I welcome the development of this literature of race relations. It has a role in making the connections, perhaps even better than with fiction about Maori life as mine has been, and reaching across the empty spaces between Maori and pakeha in a more hard-hitting and realistic fashion. How well it has succeeded will only become obvious to you when an anthology entitled *Into the World of Light* is published later this year. The anthology collects the work of Maori writers over the last decade about Maori life and race relations between Maori and pakeha.

For the future, what can we say about the kind of people we have become? About us? Who are we? We are Maori. We are Polynesian. We inhabit a minority space within a majority framework. We are the unemployed, the social time bomb. About eighty per cent of us live in city areas. Half of us are under the age of 19 and without skills in our culture. Our world is beset with pressures from within and without. We are against the Springbok tour but we have also agreed to welcome the Springbok team on Poho-o-rawiri *marae* in Gisborne. We are the dispossessed, the under-educated. Yet it saddens many of us to see the Race Relations Conciliator to all