

coming a national sense of inferiority in almost every field; for the Maori, at least as I judge it from John Waititi's narrative, it is a light-hearted celebration, where victory is without triumph, and defeat without sting.

Te Rangatahi II is much broader in scope, and the stories, as I need hardly remind any student here, much longer and in language, more complex. Our world now is not only the tiny microcosm of Hata's household; by the activities initiated by Hata, we move into modern Maoritanga as a whole. The first two episodes, Eeling and Sheep-Shearing hardly add to our knowledge from the first volume, but with *Chapter III, Mourning*, we see Maoritanga⁴ in action, not so much by the rites themselves, which Pakeha law now regulates precisely, but by the total atmosphere of ritual grief, which at once accepts loss and transcends it, in a manner that has disconcerted some of our students. We are sad at funerals; our ladies make tea and offer cakes with great devotion. We are well thought of if our grief is not too obvious, and if we break down under stress, we are led quietly away, that our emotion shall not shatter the unnatural calm of the mourners. Unless we are convinced Irish Catholics, we have no framework in which our grief may be contained; death comes like a natural convulsion, causeless and meaningless. But a Maori tangi allows the fullest expression of grief, accepting death as part of life, and also acknowledges that tears must be followed by laughter, as a life-proclaiming explosion. Thus the end of the funeral of Hata's grandson, carefully presented to us as an unexpected and seemingly arbitrary event, shows Rewi chaffing Tamahae for his tears, not for the departed, but because, through greed, he has missed out on the funeral baked meats. "Anyone would think you were mourning for the corpse!" shouts Rewi, to Tamahae's discomfiture. The tangi is as festive an occasion as an Irish wake; grief is real, loss is real, but life must be renewed symbolically by food and laughter. *Tangihanga* gives a sensitive account of it.

Te Kaha, as we know, is an isolated community, but one twitch of the chain of Maoritanga, and it instantly rouses itself to communal action. Thus when Wiremu Whata is offered a scholarship to India,⁵ Hata at once enrolls the town in fund raising activities to supplement the scholarship. And everyone who attends the card games, auction, knows quite well that the object of the exercise is to be properly fleeced in a good cause. Thus a pair of second-hand shoes, 9/- (90 cents) new, on Woolworth's counter are auctioned at 15/- (\$1.50); a jar firmly marked Brylcream is stuffed with jam, and various lively characters blandly cheat at cards. But the cause is good and unquestionable; Wiremu has £83 (\$166.00) more, to send him on his way.

I found a poignant and delicate sense

of parody in the *Chapter 8, Te Haerenga ki Rotorua*, where the School Committee sends the children out for a tourist expedition. We all go to Rotorua, too, for what we imagine is a feel of the very heart-beat of Maoridom; we drop pennies over the bridge at Whakarewarewa for the kids to dive for, pace over Tikitere and The Buried Village. We are there for the sights, where the young people of Te Kaha went to reclaim a mythical landscape. To us the legend of Hinemoa and Tutanekai has a poignant throb, similar to what we remember of Romeo and Juliet, except that these young lovers were not doomed; but to Tamahae, Tutanekai is a brave ancestor, who can stride in his imagination like a god-hero. He claims him perhaps too readily; John Waititi has a good deal of quiet fun at the expense of those Maoris who instantly enroll Maori athletes as close relations; at the time when George Nepia was the best full-back in the world, notes a sardonic observer at King Koroki's Coronation, he was related to every Maori in New Zealand.⁶ But this is simply a comic aspect of something very deep in Maori life: the sense that any achievement, in any field, is a contribution to the entire iwi;⁷ the sense also that failure in any field, lets the whole iwi down.

This brings me to what I found the most moving passages of all in *Te Rangatahi*, exemplifying both of these attitudes. Hata's foster-son, Hukarere, returns to Te Kaha, a failure because he has dipped out of Teachers' College and taken up what he feels equipped for, truck-driving. Hata is deeply hurt by his defection from *te matauranga o te Pakeha* (Pakeha education) but as Hukarere tries to explain he wasn't cut out for it. I doubt whether there would be any such explosion in a Pakeha community; all right, Jimmy is no good for teaching, so let him take up mechanics. The stars don't stop in their courses; the heavens don't fall. But Hata feels, and Hukarere is certainly made to feel, that he has let down the whole community. Then he gets married, and the wedding speeches suggest that Hukarere has all the virtues with which a man can properly be endowed, and Rewi comments, in his mischievous way: "That's the Maori way. For a feast or a death, a man is spotted."⁸

When in the last chapter,⁹ Tamahae goes off to secondary school, he is exhorted by Hata, with the weight of the whole community, to pursue knowledge relentlessly and steadfastly. A good deal of Hata's money has been laid out on his education; it is like the initiation of a mediaeval knight. And again the parting counsels: "Pursue Pakeha knowledge. Don't imagine that the road to knowledge is an easy one" and so on. And these exhortations are reinforced by the headmaster in his welcoming speech to the new recruits.

I find all this worrying. We know, most of us, what a heap of useless lumber

most Pakeha knowledge is, the log-jam of centuries of cultural driftwood; only we could say, perhaps, knowing this, that education consists of what you remember when you've forgotten everything you've learned. Tamahae enters Tipene with the burden of the whole of his hapu¹⁰ on his shoulders, and I hope your relief was as great as mine, that he made the grade. I read recently, in an article in *Focus*,¹¹ that Maori elders expect far too much of their young people and lay at their door a failure of character which may often be no more than a difficulty in responding to European conventions and idioms. I knew once a young Maori, highly thought of in his home town, who began a medical course and gave it up in despair after two terms; he never showed his face in his home town again. I devoted a whole play, *Awatea*,¹² to this theme; my medical student, Matt Paku, constructs an elaborate myth and ritual to bypass the disapproval of his *tipuna*¹³ and hapu for a failure that was not his responsibility. We concede our young people the right to fail, and their lives are not blighted by a false start. Sylvia Ashton-Warner says, in her remarkable book *Teacher*¹⁴ that it is not a teacher's concern ever to criticise the contents of a child's mind, only to find out what's in it. These words should be hung in letters, if not of fire, then of gold, outside every educational institution in the country. When we learn them and live them, perhaps the Maori people will be released from what seems to me an intolerable burden.

If I have to criticise any of the themes of *Te Rangatahi*, I confess that I find the attitudes to animals revealed in several stories, not very attractive, but then, in a country whose prosperity depends on wholesale slaughter of animals, I don't find Pakeha attitudes very winning, either. Mutton bird may be, for all I know, never having tasted it, a very succulent dish, but the manner of its capture, as told in *Te Mahi Titi*,¹⁵ makes me hope I never taste it. Birds and pigs are shot without compunction in *Te Rangatahi I*,¹⁶ Tamahae in a moment of frustration beats a cow in one of the examples,¹⁷ and Hata vividly recalls the death of a whale, in which he casually notes that, after harpooning, the water of the bay was covered with blood.¹⁸ It may be that, in defusing the electrical circuit which lit up the whole natural world of Maoridom, we have released the Maori imagination to look on animals as we do, as things without rights. The ancient Maori was as ready as William Blake to declare that "all that lives is holy"; the Maori seems now to have adopted our motto towards the animal kingdom that "all that lives is wholly mine and in my power."

Te Rangatahi has three main characters, Hata, Tamahae and Rewi. Pani, the wife, hardly exists, except to drudge and scold. We know nothing of how he