

George Chamier and the Native Question

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THE SOUTH-SEA SIREN



Figure 1. A still from *Moana (or The Love-Life of a South Sea Siren)* [1926]. (Reproduced by permission of The Robert and Frances Flaherty Study Center, Claremont School of Theology, Claremont, California.)

I begin with an image of the paradisiacal abundance of the Pacific: a still frame from *Moana* or *The Love-Life of a South Sea Siren*, directed by Robert Flaherty of *Nanook of the North* fame and filmed in Samoa. It has become a commonplace that the European imagination was drawn to the South Seas through versions of this conventional image, one that promised a Golden Age in which accommodating “natives” in a state of nature amid and identified with an amenable Nature await the arrival of European settlers (Pearson 19-20). Its promise is seen to lie in its sublime profusion.¹

Nature and natives have seldom been envisioned as quite this amenable in Australia or Aotearoa/New Zealand: in Australia pretty much never, and in New Zealand, on which I will focus here, perhaps only in the kind of boosterist and triumphalist discourse in which Pākehā (white) settlement is naturalised, by which I mean normalised and presented as a *fait accompli*, a given. Still, there are no Māori in the boosterist “Land of Plenty”—it is all “honey peaches feeding waddling pigs waiting to be killed” and the like, as Miles Fairburn puts it, or in the South it’s pasture waiting for sheep (39). Alternatively, in triumphalist discourse Māori are benign bystanders assimilated to settler ideals; amongst other spear-carrying roles, they are:

- a. guides to the country with local knowledge and know-how;
- b. natural warriors (and “princesses”) or capitalists;
- c. pseudo-peasants providing a picturesque local touch; or
- d. dying out, in accordance with Social Darwinist wishful thinking.

Thus, if Māori are identified with Nature in this view, it is with Nature domesticated or naturalised—*natura naturata*, to borrow Spinoza’s term (whereas the Nature of the boosterist Golden Age seems to the settlers “*unnaturata*,” not domesticated). It should not be forgotten that Māori were for most of the period of intensive Pākehā settlement called “the New Zealanders” and identified with “New Zealand” as it was found or “discovered.” But when Nature is seen as neither domesticated nor benignly abundant, it seems strangely over-abundant (profusely sublime in a negative sense perhaps) and alien or otherworldly. It is *natura naturans* or “nature naturing,” properly (negatively) sublime—Blanche Baughan’s travellers’ tales of the dense bush and the “uncanny country” of the so-called thermal wonderland spring to mind here. And settlement becomes a violent and alienating encounter: Māori are seen as savage, as completely other to the settlers, non-human or fanatic, and inviting violence. Table 1 schematises these relations.

TABLE 1
NATURE AND THE NATIVES

the uncanny country	the Pacific Golden Age Land of Plenty boosterism		triumphalism
-			+
sublime proper	profuse sublime		picturesque
	Pacific	New Zealand	
Nature otherworldly	Nature abundant		Nature domesticated
<i>natura naturans</i>	<i>natura "unnaturata"</i>		<i>natura naturata</i>
natives completely other	natives	natives	natives as settled
settlement violent/alienating	settlement a given/naturalised		
otherworldly	worldly		

This picture of white settlement will be not unfamiliar to Australian readers, especially its uncanny aspect. It is perhaps commonplace to note that an exemplary postcolonial reading of Australian society, like Ken Gelder and Jane M. Jacobs's *Uncanny Australia*, which is concerned with "the [uncanny] way in which Aboriginal sacredness manifests itself in the public domain of a modern nation" (xi), mines a vein that reaches back to original—or originary—white accounts of the sublime encounter with the place that became Australia and its peoples. "What are we to make of it?" they ask.

THE "NATIVE QUESTION"

For Pākehā politicians, lawmakers and writers during the New Zealand Wars of the 1860s, *Te Riri Pākehā* (the White Man's Anger), during which North Island Māori resisted forced Pākehā settlement, the question was more blunt: what are we to do about "our" natives? For some later New Zealand politicians resistant to joining the Australian Federation in the 1890s, the Native Question—which had become the question as to the

place of Māori in the New Zealand to come—marked an important point of difference with the Australians.² The stance of Frederick Weld, Native Minister (1860), later Premier and architect of the land confiscation policy (1864-66), is typical. His *Notes on New Zealand Affairs* divides Māori into two camps, “the friendly natives” and “the fanatics” (38). His prescription seems benignly paternalistic: we ought to be “firm but fair” with Māori, but it is very much a case of they are for us or agin us—if they’re agin us, we’ll take their land by force or the force of law.³ Settler policy has always come down to pragmatism, or what F. E. Maning, judge of the Native Land Court in the North and author of *Old New Zealand*, in his article “The Native Question” calls “temporary Expediency” (216).⁴ But the situation looks totally different in *Te Wai Pounamu*, the South Island—or the “Middle Island” as it was then called. For most settlers there, native stuff always happened someplace else and was somebody else’s problem (except as it affected their pocket).

This seems true of George Chamier (1842-1915) in his novels of settler society in Canterbury in the 1860s, *Philosopher Dick: Adventures and Contemplations of a New Zealand Shepherd* (1890) and *A South-Sea Siren: A Novel Descriptive of New Zealand Life in the Early Days* (1895). Chamier lived and worked in Canterbury from 1859 to about 1869, first as a cadet on a sheep station, then as a local government official and surveyor; he spent most of the rest of his life living and working as an engineer in Australia—and writing and painting on the side. Lawrence Jones has written, “Chamier spent only a decade in New Zealand, but from that stay emerged what may be considered the best New Zealand novels of the nineteenth century” (“Chamier”). Though he became *de facto* an Australian, Chamier has been written back into New Zealand literary history by Jones and Joan Stevens as a forerunner of what they take to be the New Zealand tradition of “critical realism”—a settler critic (Jones, “Novel”; Stevens 327).⁵ His only Australian novel, *The Story of a Successful Man: An Australian Romance* (1895), was serialised in Adelaide but never published in book form and remained largely unknown until recently (see Franklin). Except for contemporary reviews, his novels have gone unnoticed in Australia, probably because the published novels are set in Canterbury and do not use Māori as a drawcard, as do novels of the New Zealand frontier like G. A. Henty’s *Māori and Settler* (1890) or Rolf Boldrewood’s *War to the Knife* (1899). Chamier seems like a typical “Middle Islander” in his attitude to native matters in the novels: the frontier is elsewhere—“the red-jackets march off to the front to fight—or rather, not to fight—the Māories” up north in Auckland (*Siren*

256), natives are poisoned or potted in Australia or America (*Siren* 169; *Philosopher Dick* 252), and the Native Question is debated at length in the Legislative Council and the “Government organ” of the press off in the city (*Siren* 56).⁶ I say “seems” because it is not what he says about Māori that’s important, it is what he doesn’t say—or rather, what he says about what we don’t say about ourselves. I say “he” (rather than “the novels”) because in the novels Chamier looks at himself and asks: “What is it about us settlers that we write off everything that doesn’t fit our picture?” In the words of the Mercer/Arlen song, we never fail to “accentuate the positive / eliminate the negative.”

Chamier’s two Canterbury novels centre on Leithfield or “Sunnydowns,” his *South-Sea Siren*, at that time a hub of Pākehā settlement in North Canterbury known as “the Sanatorium of Canterbury.”⁷ *Philosopher Dick* takes place in the back country on the sheep station of Horsley Downs, called “Marino Station” in the novel, where Chamier worked as a cadet from about 1860 to 1863; Horsley Downs was part-owned by his cousins, the Lances, one of whom did the lithograph, below, of the homestead at the station, which appears as the frontispiece to Lady Barker’s 1870 *Station Life in New Zealand* (see Figure 2).



Figure 2. *A Sheep Station in Canterbury, New Zealand 1870*. Henry Porcher Lance (1870). (Reproduced by permission of Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.)

A South-Sea Siren takes place in the front country at Leithfield, called “Sunnydowns” in the novel, where Chamier worked as a clerk and surveyor from about 1863 to 1866. Figure 3 shows his sketch of the township in 1863.

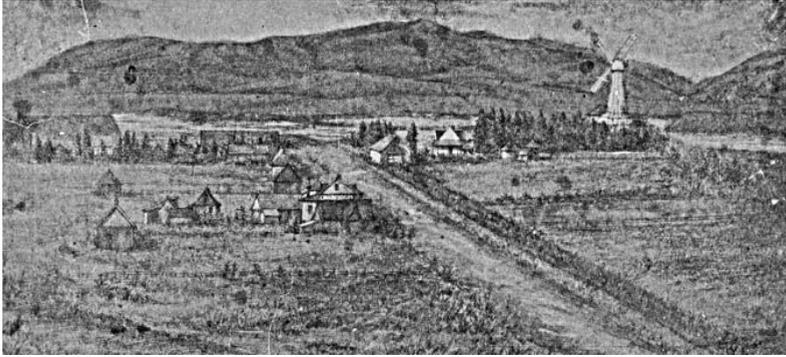


Figure 3. *Leithfield, Canterbury*, from a pencil sketch by G Chamier (c. 1863). George Chamier (1863?). (Reproduced by permission of Christchurch Public Libraries, Christchurch, New Zealand.)

And Figure 4 is a watercolour by Chamier from two years later and a different angle (it was at one time attributed to Weld, whose estate, “Brackenfield,” was near Leithfield).



Figure 4. *Leithfield, New Zealand* by George Chamier. George Chamier (1865?). (Reproduced by permission of Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.)

Looking at these images, the question that springs to mind is: where are the Māori (or more correctly, where are the Kai Tahu, the Southern Māori)? There is none of your usual Māori guides or warriors or picturesque *pā* (stockade or “village”) scenes. Neither are there any settlers, but still

the landscape is markedly Pākehā: the mill, the houses, the road, the eucalypts.

This is the *Where's Waari?* problem, to borrow the title of Witi Ihimaera's *History of the Māori Through the Short Story*, itself a play on the title of the *Where's Wally?* children books. Māori remain a hypothetical presence in these images, as they are in Chamier's novels. This could be because there weren't many around the place—there seems to have been about two or three thousand Kai Tahu in the whole South Island in 1840 (*Ngai Tahu* 183)—or it could be because the focus is on settlers (of which there were many times more)⁸. At first sight, both hypotheses seem true, and settlement does usually come down to a numbers game. But this doesn't tell the whole story.

WOODHENS AND WARRIES

If we go back to the image of Horsley Downs station, there *is* a mediated Māori presence here—in the rat-proof *whata* or raised storehouses, the design probably borrowed from Kai Tahu (see Figure 5).



Figure 5. Detail of *A Sheep Station in Canterbury, New Zealand 1870*. Henry Porcher Lance (1870). (Reproduced by permission of Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.)

Likewise, Chamier's novels illustrate the way settlers appropriate and naturalise Māori and native elements. They become local touches, normalised but still marked in some way as exotic (at once “worldly” *and* otherworldly).

To look just at the first novel, *Philosopher Dick*, there are borrowed and renamed flora and fauna: woodhens or *weka* (13, 70); the native or “colonised,” that is, acclimatised pig (164) and rat; “flax-bush[es]” and “native flax” (20, 71), by which he probably means *kiakia* or *toetoe* (205; see also 522), and *harakeke*, “native holly” (540); “native reeds” or *raupo* (137); lots of bracken or *rauaruhe* and speargrass or *taramea* (167)—all of which aren’t called by their Māori names, the only exception to this rule being the *mānuka* or tea-tree (205, 275). The *weka* are significant: they stand for the back country or “the close places of nature” (180), uncanny refuges for someone or something standing in for the owl in mock-Gothic style. There are also renamed geographical and meteorological phenomena, the most significant of which is the nor-west “buster,” *Te Māuru e tāki nei*, known as *Te Hau Kai Tangata*, the cannibal wind (268), which interestingly retains its negative character. And there are borrowed names, which are usually pronounced differently, like “warrie,” from *whare* or dwelling, which for Pākehā meant a rough, often thatched hut or communal living and sleeping quarters on a rural property (192). (Chamier often uses quotation marks to suggest that the name is a local touch, as with “warrie.”) Of a wholly different ilk are the local and imported native stereotypes and tropes, for example, racist epithets and anecdotes about “nigger[s]” or “black[s]” (11, 23-24), “savag[e[s]” (159, 180; see also 164) and hunting the Indians (252)—always, bar once, from the mouths of characters other than the narrator (see 195-96).

Two passages in *Philosopher Dick* stand out as illustrating more productive engagements with Māori cultural practices. One passage contrasts Māori and Pākehā attitudes to nature using the example of the pig (Chamier mockingly presents pigs as the very example of “natural settlers,” whom we would do well do emulate [162]): Māori productively co-existed with pigs; Pākehā hunt them, or try to at least, native pigs being mythically elusive (162).⁹ In another passage, the narrator suggests that, rather than watch local settlers polka, “nothing would have pleased him more than to have contributed an *obligato* in the accompaniment to a Māori war-dance [haka]” (311). These local touches are entirely typical of the settler novel, even if Chamier’s narrators seem relatively “enlightened.”

Then again, taking account of such mediated representations is just the first step in doing justice to a Māori presence, to the “long history” of the place in which Pākehā settlement is an intrusive footnote (Turner n. pag.).¹⁰ To borrow a term from Hirini (Sidney) Moko Mead, the

place called “New Zealand” is *whenua tautobetobe* (contested land), not land settled by *raupatu* or *abikāroa* (conquest or long occupation).¹¹ New Zealand is also—or still—*Aotearoa*. *Māoritanga* (Māori stuff) has a real presence—one way is how Māori ideas often make better sense than Pākehā ones in understanding what happens here, if we can put aside what Mead calls our *mate whakabihī*, our pathological narcissism (*whakabihī* means arrogant—and enterprising, oddly enough). Mead talks about this *mate* (sickness) as giving rise to our superiority complex and monopolistic culture—though I would say paranoia and exclusivity or “autoethnocentrism.”¹² It is at work in models of settlement, like Edward Gibbon Wakefield’s “systematic colonisation” outlined in *A View of the Art of Colonization*, which assume a settlement can be created from nothing upon a real or imaginary *terra nullius* (7). Without re-enacting the debates of what became Australia’s “history wars” (see Macintyre and Clark), what we will end up with here is a very “Australian” picture, to put it crudely, perhaps because the initial conditions were similar: the sophisticated so-called hunter-gatherer habitus of Kai Tahu—mobility and multiple settlement, seasonal food management and harvesting, and so on—resembles the “Aboriginal” habitus as it has often been understood.¹³ This type of model is different from North Island and later New Zealand models that are more “Māori” in nature—*tautobetobe* (contested), as Mead would have it (240). It is far more difficult to imagine a *terra nullius* when the land is so clearly settled, that is, historied and contested (which for Māori is perhaps the same thing), as it was in the North. So the Native Question runs deeper than woodhens and warries. And it is not what Chamier says about Māori that’s important, it’s what he doesn’t say. To get at that we need first of all to know what he says about settlers.

CHAMIER VERSUS THE SETTLERS

The diptych formed by Chamier’s Canterbury novels presents a very different sort of settler paradise or utopia from the best known “local” examples: the bureaucratic squattocracy of Wakefield or the Darwinian dystopia of Samuel Butler’s *Erewhon*. For a start, his vision is more placed, more “real.” He offers a dystopian critique of settler society as he saw it. His narrators and narrator-protagonists—all of whom are autoethnographical—are exemplary critics of blinkered settlerism. The

chief protagonist and sometime narrator of the Canterbury novels is Richard Raleigh, the eponymous Philosopher Dick. He functions as a kind of “inside outsider,” whose social role is to be the dissenting voice—“the ‘philosopher’” (*Siren* 19)—in settler society and on whose push-pull relationship with that society the novels turn. Raleigh/Chamier is critical of the autoethnocentric (exclusive) settler worldview, which is defined by its pragmatism: by a one-eyed materialism and a morality seemingly untroubled by questions of legitimacy but fixated on keeping up appearances. Settler society is positivist in two senses: it is progressive (think positive!) and no-nonsense (stick to the facts and what you know!). His narrative alternates between critical engagement with the other settlers and alienated withdrawal or exclusion from society. What the other settlers call his “cynicism” or “misanthropy” he calls “disillusionment” (*Philosopher Dick* 29, 76), whether he is “cast adrift on the world” by himself or the others (*Siren* 301). Raleigh’s critique (and Chamier’s by implication) has ethical purchase because he is an outsider and his ethical criteria are legitimacy and inclusivity, or what he calls “sympathy.”¹⁴ To put it in psychoanalytical terms, the novels turn on the question: what can be put in the place of the illegitimate and exclusive Good of the settlement? Chamier gives us no simple answer. For despite their critical purchase on settler society and relative lack of open ethnocentrism, his novels seem just as exclusive as other less worthy visions of settlement so far as Māori are concerned. The space that Chamier’s inclusive ethic leaves for Māori is foreclosed—Māori are closed out of Chamier’s settler dystopia—in a way that is illustrative.

It is tempting to engage in some mock-Hegelian mental arithmetic here. If the triumphalist settler equation reduces to

$$(\text{empty}) \text{ land} + \text{settlers} = \text{the new place,}$$

on a “postcolonial” reading

$$\text{land} + \text{settlers} - \text{the others (Māori)} = \text{the new place.}$$

While Chamier doesn’t turn that negative into a true positive, he adds an unknown quantity, an “x” to the first simple equation “land + settlers = the new place” in the form of the hypothetical Native Question (“x”):

$$\text{land} + \text{settlers} + x = \text{the new place.}$$

This move foreshadows what Slavoj Žižek, borrowing from Hegel, has called “tarrying with the negative” in the ideology of nation. It is Chamier’s point of difference as a settler critic and grounds all his work.

WHERE'S WAARI?

Usually this Question is imagined in legal or political terms, but not so for Chamier. Knowingly or not, he foregrounds the *psychology* of the Native Question—though this psychology does have “political” significance, in Fredric Jameson’s sense of the term. To borrow Jameson’s idea of the “political unconscious,” settler fictions, like other practices of settlement, present political fantasies of foundation which tend to become pathological, that is to say, paranoid and repressive. (This recalls Raleigh’s criticism of the settler worldview as autoethnocentric or exclusive—as thoroughly positivist.) At bottom, this is because settlements pretty much everywhere are founded on cleared ground, that is, in somebody else’s place. If the locals haven’t cleared out, they must be cleared out. Put plainly, an ideology is needed to imaginatively legitimate practices of settlement; practices of settlement always need a way to repress the unsettling problem of their own legitimacy. They do so chiefly by problematising the native, making it questionable. The story goes: they do not fit in, they don’t fit with our way of doing things, but it’s not us that have the problem, it’s them—they threaten the Good of the settlement. What’s not said is that they really show it up for what it is, show up its *mate whakahīhi*, its pathological narcissism. In psychoanalytical terms, such avoidance behaviour enables settler society to sublimate its collective aggression toward other peoples.¹⁶

The upshot of this problematisation of the native is twofold. First, the Native Question becomes a rhetorical occasion and a problem to be solved *for* Māori: the paternalistic question as to what to do about “our natives.” Second, Māori stuff always seems to happen someplace else and be somebody else’s problem, as if to say, we’re good to our natives and there’s no violent exclusion going on down here. And, then, there is a third aspect: the problem of what are we left with when “the natives” and their example of how to dwell in the place are excluded from the settlement, imaginatively “eliminated” in the sense of put out of bounds. Not only is the place of the future settlement cleared out, emptied of other peoples, leaving what seems like a *terra nullius*, but also it is left seemingly emptied of meaning. The country seems uncannily deserted—abandoned and desertified (hence the disillusioned talk of settlers, like Raleigh/Chamier, who don’t get what they expected to from the place); everywhere, that is, but the new settlement. Thus, positivist settler society is founded on negation.

To return to the schema outlined in Table 1, this process of imaginative exclusion can be thought of in terms of the sublime—or rather, sublimation in the sense of “making sublime”:

- a. sublimation as *emptying* creates a sublime void of meaning (this is the sublime as the awesome, a *negative* sublime of sorts), in the face of which the settler worldview has little purchase; and
- b. sublimation as market *capitalisation* tries to fill that void by creating a market for economic and intellectual capital (this is the sublime as the lofty, a variant perhaps on the sublime as the profuse, a *positive* sublime).

This produces a familiar symbolic geography: the bubble—the South Sea Bubble perhaps—of the settlement inflates as the Māori world is pushed down and out. Chamier uses the metaphor of the “mushroom” township (*Successful Man* XI, 58; *Siren* 100). This puts in place a clear differentiation between this world and the “otherworld”—the “back” and the “front country” he calls it—and between what’s in and what’s out. It’s like light and dark: this world is (seemingly) enlightened, social; the other world is savage and “antisocial.” And this otherworld is where Raleigh goes when he withdraws or is excluded from society; it is also where most of *Philosopher Dick* takes place—the station serves as the outmost node of “civilisation” centred on Leithfield and an alternative centre for the outsider Raleigh’s haunted ramblings (see Figure 6).

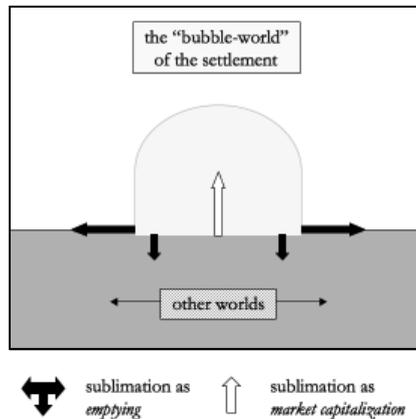


Figure 6. A symbolic geography of the settlement.

So how do the settlers experience this other world? They get uncanny returns, so to speak, in the “negative” symptoms of settlement. These

symptoms seem to appear most often on the outskirts of the settlement, in isolated and abyssal places (in places at or beyond the limit), in extreme psychological states, and when they're least expected. Chamier foregrounds these uncanny returns in various ways:

- a. in Raleigh's frequent mock-Gothic encounters with apparitions and other occult happenings;
- b. in his experiences of the sublime in nature (the sublime proper or true negative sublime in Hegel's sense—though on my reading these uncanny returns are *all* really experiences of the negative sublime);¹⁷
- c. in what Raleigh calls his “melancholy” at his alienation (*Philosopher Dick* 95)—because he's not a good settler;
- d. in his death wish before the abyss, his desire for self-abnegation—to be what he is not—which climaxes his alienation from other settlers (*Philosopher Dick* 234-42); and
- e. in the unsolvable Native Question.

In these symptoms, the longer history of the place—the history of first settlement (by Māori)—makes itself felt imaginatively.

Though these returns can't be identified with Māori stuff (the other world is not the Māori world), they don't need to be. The problem is our problem as latecomers. Such imaginative returns shape the settler worldview as stuff that doesn't fit, points of difference, both threatening and potentially liberating—that is, therapeutic or really enlightening. They happen in fiction, as here, in seemingly occult happenings like apparitions (*taniwha*) and accidents (*aitua*), some might even say in environmental disasters like floods or threats of extinction. (As Žižek might put it, in such symptomatic stuff the repressed settler “thing” returns in an inverted or monstrous form.) We settlers normally make sense of such returns by historicising them in various ways:

- a. they're “historical”—which is another way of saying they're history; or
- b. they're curious—where curiosity (like Aristotle's *thauma* or awe [A. 2, 982b12-13]) is frequently the first motivation for settler historians and ethnographers: curiosity about the landscape now and how it was then, about what used to happen here, and how the old world emerges (it is hard to think beyond that); or
- c. they're mysterious or mystical—for settler (and Māori) positivists they're atavistic and need to be eliminated.

And then there is still another way:

- d. to accept such stuff as natural and *really* historical, to take it as writ.

But why accept such stuff as real? Because this process of exclusion leaves its mark on settler society.¹⁸ The effort of sublimation so saps settler energy that settlers end up with its flipside, with the effect that Miriam Dixson has called the “flat imaginary” in Australia (98), the flattening of national affect, in everything from Antipodean accents to what Jennifer Rutherford calls “horizontal identification”—the ideology of democratic meritocracy (115)—in its Australian and New Zealand variants.

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

So is there, or can there be, a solution to the Native Question? I’d say no: it’s unanswerable. As New Zealand Prime Minister Michael Joseph Savage was recorded as saying in 1936 in response to Orakei Māori, who questioned the Māori Land Court Chief Judge Jones’s rejection of their claim, “the Native question had a happy knack of coming back at one. He wished the government could get two or three men who know the Native question from beginning to end—who would settle the issue” (qtd. in “Acheson Inquiry”). But the Native Question cannot be forcibly settled by law or otherwise. Likewise, at the end of Chamier’s Canterbury dyptich, it remains unanswered. Raleigh goes off *to write about it*—he has written “a couple of articles on “The Native Question”” for a newspaper (*Siren* 314) and it’s his ticket out of Canterbury. This move serves as a neat aesthetic solution, all-too-effectively bracketing the Native Question—it’s a classic “vanishing mediator,” to borrow Jameson’s term (25). Perhaps it’s only possible to solve such issues aesthetically. But I also read this as a tacit owning-up to his stake in the process of settlement, given that Raleigh—and perhaps Chamier by implication—profit from Māori. In psychoanalytical terms, when the native *per se* becomes a question, a rhetorical occasion, it ceases to be real, a thing, and becomes a subject of discourse (symbolic) and ideology (imaginary). The real thing is eliminated—it comes to lie beyond the limits of this world. Just as settlers imagine invasion to be discovery, to look for an answer to the Question becomes a quest for something that lies beyond, to rediscover something or other. This is at bottom an empty and narcissistic endeavour. And anyway, there’s no question that Māori stuff is right there in front of us. Chamier’s novels are exemplary in that they illustrate the way settler society is founded on negation *through* Raleigh’s reflexive “tarrying with the negative.” I’d say that the only way to overcome this settler bind (that

settlers seem to be fated to resettle) is to accept that we just have to live with it—it cannot be solved. It can't be cut like the Gordian knot; we—settlers and Māori, that is—are tied together.

ENDNOTES

- 1 The phrase “sublime profusion” is Voltaire’s, in his “Avertissement” for his *Précis de l’Ecclesiaste*. For Edmund Burke, profusion characterises the magnificent sublime (ch. 2, sec. 13), for Longinus, the rhetorical sublime (ch. 12).
- 2 On 11 February 1890 at the Australasian Federation Conference in Melbourne, Captain William Russell explained that it was unlikely that New Zealand would join the Australian Federation because the “Australians” had taken a fundamentally different approach to the administration of “native affairs” (1890 *Convention* 42, qtd. in Evans 144). See also Alexander Mackay, “Report on Middle Island Native Question.”
- 3 As Evelyn Baring Cromer records: “In one of the first speeches he made for the Legislative Council he said: “The rule for managing the natives resolves itself into a simple axiom which I will give you. At all risks be just; at all risks be firm” (91; see Lovat 109).
- 4 In “The Native Question,” Maning suggests that the Question has two parts. First, there is “the Question of temporary Expediency”—we should manage the natives through commerce, government and/or force by “the devious and erratic track of expedient policy” (216, 220). And, secondly, there is a question that is more ideal than practical: “How . . . to render the native race . . . British subjects”—their native intelligence and lore must be civilised by being legalised in order to secure person and property (216). For Maning, professionally and personally, this proved impracticable (see Alex Calder’s introduction to Maning’s *Old New Zealand*).
- 5 Nelson Wattie is more careful in his evaluation of the novels: “Chamier . . . wrote the two most substantial nineteenth-century novels *set in New Zealand*”; “the two novels are major milestones in the history of *antipodean literature*” (100; emphasis added). Chamier’s novels were published by T. Fisher Unwin in London, but Chamier struggled to find a distributor in the Australian colonies; Angus and Robertson of Sydney finally agreed to distribute *Siren* in small quantities after 1897.
- 6 I quote throughout from the more readily available second edition of *A South-Sea Siren* (1970).
- 7 Advertisement for Leith’s Hotel, reproduced from the *Southern Provinces Almanac* 1865 (Stapleton 6). According to his initial contract with T. Fisher

Unwin, Chamier was to call the novel *Sunnydown, A South Sea Siren*, which indicates that the original focus of the novel was the settlement itself rather than the Siren, Celia Wylde (see Letter 13 June 1951 from Ernest Benn Ltd to P. J. Wilson in the Wilson papers).

- ⁸ The *Ngai Tahu* report suggests that population estimates are very difficult to calculate and evaluate due to “limited source material” and the fact that “the accuracy of the various [contemporary] censuses . . . is questionable” due to “mixed parentage” and “Ngai Tahu’s continual movement about the island” (182).
- ⁹ Linda Hardy—after Ian Wedde—has called the repression of the morally ambiguous or invasive origin of settler society “natural settlement” or “occupancy” (213; see Wedde 12).
- ¹⁰ The status of this “long history” in Māori historiography is addressed in Danny Keenan’s “Predicting the Past: Some Directions in Recent Māori Historiography.”
- ¹¹ *Whenua tautobetobe*—from *tautobetobe* or argument—is contested land (Mead 235), also known, perhaps more accurately, as *whenua matewaka kamehameha* or “highly prized lands”—literally it means land “lacking a tribe [that is, *waka* or canoe crew]” and “priceless” (“Ngati Haka Patuheuheu” 17). It is like a band of land marked out by an inner and outer boundary; it is unsafe for settlement or cultivation (though resources may be gathered there), as against land settled by *abikāroa* or *raupatu* (long occupation or conquest). Elsewhere Mead suggests it could be argued that all land was or is *whenua tautobetobe* to be defended and disputes as to its ownership were or are solved by conquest or treaty (240).
- ¹² See Mead on *Pakehā mate whakabihī* or “the sickness of suffering delusions of vanity and grandeur” (111), which takes the form of: (a) “a need to feel superior and indeed to be superior over the native people” (102), and (b) “monopolistic support of European or Pākehā interests and values” (104).
- ¹³ In “Imagining Our Pasts: Writing Our Histories,” Michael Reilly borrows the term “*whenua tautobetobe*” from Mead to characterise “a ‘debateable history,’ a two-way traffic [between] tribal and Western-trained historians” (15).
- ¹⁴ Their distantiation is akin to what Paul Willemen has called “outsideness” (201): the “sense of non-belonging, non-identity with the culture one inhabits [that] is a precondition for ‘the most intense and productive aspects of cultural life’” (201, quoting Bakhtin 6).
- ¹⁵ This requires a reinterpretation of Hegel—in mediation, the thinking self must destroy an immediate unity, a living whole, to arrive at a mediated one. In *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, he presents the negative as what is isolated by thought from the living whole, a dismembered “moment” or aspect:
 [T]he life of Spirit is not the life that shrinks from death and keeps itself untouched by devastation, but rather the life that endures it and maintains itself in it. It wins its truth only when, in utter dismemberment, it finds itself. It is this power, not as something

positive, which closes its eyes to the negative, as when we say of something that it is nothing or is false, and then, having done with it, turn away and pass on to something else; on the contrary, Spirit is this power only by looking the negative in the face, and tarrying with it. This tarrying with the negative is the magical power that converts it into being. (19, sec. 32)

An alternative and apposite translation of “tarrying”—for “Verweilen” in the original—is “dwelling” (Hegel, *Phänomenologie* 26; *Phenomenology of Mind* 93). In other words, you have to learn to live with the negative.

- 16 The individual (*Philosopher Dick*) and social (*Siren*) pathology amount to avoidance behaviour or sublimated “aggression to alterity both in the self and other” (Rutherford 11). To paraphrase Jennifer Rutherford, despite its own ideology of inclusivity, a moral Good or ego-ideal is necessarily exclusive inter- and intrapersonally and manifests itself in hatred of the other outside and inside; it is driven by the fantasy of the lack of a lack; so the collective “fantasies of the good provide a camouflage for aggression at both a national and local level: an aggression directed both to an external and an internal Other” (Rutherford 10). Rutherford’s analysis of the Australian Good has three aspects: (a) “the fantasy of a good and neighbourly nation”; (b) “a sustained aggression to alterity both in the self and other”; and (c) repeated reference to “a subjective and symbolic zero point—an encounter with the void” (11), that is, “a symbolic fragility or inequality to the task of representing this nothingness, that fantasy has never been able to occlude” (12).
- 17 In his reading of Thomas Weiskel’s *The Romantic Sublime*, Martin Donougho describes Weiskel’s distinction between a “positive” sublime, like Wordsworth’s egotistical sublime or Hegel’s (false) pantheistic sublime, and what for Hegel is “the true, or ‘negative’ sublime,” a feeling of alienation which “exacerbates the distance between inner and outer, subject and fallen nature” (915). In Hegel’s negative sublime, the spectator remains in this painful position, denied the pleasure of returning to the security of their moral self, which for Immanuel Kant is the upshot of the feeling of the sublime (see Hegel’s *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics* 82-84, ch. 5, sec. 3a and Kant’s *Critique of Judgement* 129-32, pt. 1, div. 1, bk. 2, sec. 27).
- 18 A question that often comes up is: if all peoples do it, where is the harm in it? Does the issue just come down to demographics and politics, that is, the efficacy of democracy and the law of nations, as Jock Brookfield would have it? And can we make sense of European settlement in Māori terms (ultimately Mead says no, because these are Māori laws [230-31])? European settlement mirrors Māori settlement significantly: the land was acquired under false pretences (*take kore*)—by treaty and alienation—so it is in effect acquired by force (*ringa kaha* or *toa*): it is *whenua raupatu* (conquered land). But it is treated ideologically as *whenua taunaha*

(bespoken land), land claimed and named by right of discovery, and is effectively now *whenua papa-tipu* (ancestral land), Pākehā ancestral land vested by the Crown. Of course, the issue is still who got here first.

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