

A Postmodernism of Resistance: Albert Wendt's "Black Rainbow"

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IN HIS MOST recent novel, *Black Rainbow* (1992), Western Samoan writer Albert Wendt examines the same postmodern and postcolonial impulses as in his novel *Ola* (1991) and his projected, partially completed sequel to *Black Rainbow*, "The Guide to Whistling." *Black Rainbow* is a futuristic novel that borrows techniques from science fiction and thriller detective fiction and emphasizes the constructed nature of narrative and identity. Wendt creates a novel that is self-reflexive and predicated upon intertextuality, collapsing the boundary between popular and "high" culture in acknowledging as antecedents such films as *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*, *Bladerunner*, and *Star Wars* alongside texts by Franz Kafka, James Joyce, and Albert Camus. He also invokes multiple art forms created by South Pacific peoples, including works by acclaimed Maori artist Ralph Hotere, whose series of *Black Rainbow* lithographs protests nuclear testing in the South Pacific. *Black Rainbow* is about other texts, constantly calling attention to its status as fiction and to the processes of representation.¹

So striking is Wendt's use of postmodernism in *Black Rainbow* that it demands a re-examination of Wendt's earlier texts, which have been received as works of social realism but which anticipate these overtly postmodern techniques. Though the early texts do not emphasize intertextuality or their own construction, they do focus on the processes by which identity is produced, from the elliptical assemblage of chapters that present an unnamed Western Samoan protagonist in *Sons for the Return Home* to both the self-fulfilling, self-creating narratives told by Tauiloapepe, Pepesa, and Galupo in the context of the Western

Samoa represented in *Leaves of the Banyan Tree* and the myths (many of them invented) that are crucial to Wendt's depiction of contemporary South Pacific cultures. Wendt's early fiction focusses upon creation of identity in the face of received, hegemonic conceptions of individual and culture, challenging the principles of Western thought that Lyotard terms "metanarratives" of emancipation, liberation of the workers, or unity of knowledge.

In *Black Rainbow*, Wendt uses postmodern and indigenous South Pacific modes to explore the construction or assemblage of cultures. Without celebrating or idealizing imperial or indigenous forces, he depicts how the two interact. Wendt employs a series of myths that align themselves with the Samoan tradition of *fagogo*, a style of storytelling that radically mixes genres and forms and resists fixed centres. *Black Rainbow* employs South Pacific discourses—indigenous, imported, and invented—to create a postmodernism of resistance, revealing the power of performance.² The shifting centres against which he employs a postmodernism of resistance include New Zealand, the United States, various British and German colonial legacies in Western Samoa, and local elites in the South Pacific.

A provisional definition of postmodernism in this context points to a style, a frame of mind, related to but not necessarily limited to the terrors and the pleasures of global capitalism: ubiquity of mass media and reproducible images, as well as potential disruption of local cultures. Such a definition avoids teleologies implicit in some Marxist analyses of postmodernism and demands recognition of social and historical forces instead of self-referential (Occidental) celebrations of it, as in other prominent theorists' work. While he does not give a simple endorsement of either the methods or the cultures that give rise to the concepts, Wendt borrows modes from *fagogo* and from postmodernism to destabilize received ideas about cultures, colonized and colonizing. Because he neither denies complicity nor accepts capitulation on the part of South Pacific peoples, but instead shows how traditional forms respond to and refashion other contemporary practices, his depiction is crucial.

Black Rainbow, written since Wendt's 1987 move from teaching positions in Samoa and Fiji to New Zealand, depicts a totalitarian

government that proclaims itself a "utopia" and attempts to erase any source of difference by controlling all forms of history, culture, and expression. Programming and reprogramming of inhabitants is fundamental to the regime, which prescribes the process of "Dehistorying" to create ideal citizens. The opening of the novel depicts the protagonist, who goes unnamed for most of the text, relinquishing his history in accordance with official demands. He is then granted a Final Reference to attest to his consequent high status in the "utopia" before undertaking the Quest set for him by the ruling Tribunal—to find and be reunited with his wife and children. The regime forces him, on pain of death, to pursue the Quest in order that it might legitimate its control by televising his reunion with his family.

In the remainder of the novel, the Quest takes the protagonist through New Zealand, allowing him to confront the physical country and the literary landscapes that have helped shape perceptions of the nation. In the process, the narrator re-invents his history and the history of the country. He re-reads the mapping of New Zealand, questioning topographical and ideological constructs or maps that attempt to reify culture and erase difference, in a movement towards reclaiming a sense of connection to the land and its first inhabitants and re-inventing tradition that has been forcibly wrested from him and stored in the government's data banks.

The protagonist/narrator of *Black Rainbow* embodies the novel's intertextuality and examination of how culture becomes created and authenticated.³ The narrator, a bank clerk, is "another character out of fiction rooted in Franz Kafka's faceless nightmares" (229). That anonymity has been imposed on him by a hegemonic, centrist regime run by "otherworlders," who have completely appropriated any ethnic identity that is different from their own. The narrator is surprised when his future wife tells him, "'You're brown too.' And I noticed, for the first time, that she was brown. And so was I" (193). Wendt critiques the authoritarian displacement of difference and the manufacture of uniform citizens. This "utopia"—a dystopia that extends the implications of George Orwell's work for colonial situations—programmes its citizens in a manner that strips Donna Haraway's

theoretical cyborg of its ability to critique capitalism and militarism and institutes the combination of human and computer.

Resistance is enabled by a challenge to constricting ideals of uniformity and cultural purity. Wendt articulates this concept in a metaphor of mapping and remapping in his essay "Pacific Maps and Fictions(s): A Personal Journey," where he describes how the individual is subject to the imposition of multiple cultural and social co-ordinates. He foregrounds the integral role various maps play in determining how to "read" places, people, oneself:

[M]aps emerging out of the Pacific, maps brought in and imposed, maps combining the two, maps which are deliberate erasures and replacements; maps which reveal the rivers, mountains and geography of a people's agaga/psyche; maps used to perpetuate fictions/myths about ourselves; new maps, new fusions and interweavings, outer maps which reflect inner maps and configurations; maps which are the total of our cultural baggage, and in which we are imprisoned. (60)

As in his fiction (though he acknowledges his essays as fictions, too), Wendt does not advocate doing away with maps, an impossibility, but instead that they be viewed as constructs, part of the process by which culture is created and, sometimes, in the case of indigenous cultures, colonized through cartography.

Wendt attempts to make these co-ordinates visible. One crucial method is his consistent use of oral texts and performative qualities alongside written antecedents. He relies on methods of improvisation and invention in Polynesian storytelling, which he identifies here as similar to the postmodern: "All I know is, postmodernism isn't new if you look at the oral literature of Polynesia, wherein the teller and her personality become the story, and so forth" ("Pacific Maps" 61). In his statements and art, Wendt uses postmodern techniques to amplify rather than overwhelm the *fagogo* method of storytelling, thereby confronting the controversy about whether or not postmodernism is a further colonizing force that threatens to erase indigenous cultures. While he hardly celebrates late capitalism, Wendt shows how Polynesian practices anticipate postmodernism. By extension, his fiction can be read as an examination of how cultures are created, how various syncretic forms emerge and can be shaped

in crucial ways to affirm rather than deny the vitality of new forms taken by traditional cultures.

In *Black Rainbow*, Wendt's postcolonial re-readings of the country emphasize the extent to which maps have been imposed, structuring and reinforcing the colonial occupation. The narrator threatens the very basis of the utopia (97) partly because of his ability to read the labyrinth below the city. His contacts, indigenous peoples who live beneath the city, inform him of the already-written nature of maps, which form a sort of palimpsest: "A city is layers of maps and geographies, layers of them, centuries of it" (134). Wendt does not illustrate Leonard Wilcox's assertion that postmodernism in a New Zealand context is viewed as "liberating *per se*, the path toward an authentic indigenous culture" (118) that, as Wilcox acknowledges, implies some sort of essence that can be disclosed. Rather, Wendt reveals that authenticity is itself a concept that has been used to dismiss contemporary practices of South Pacific cultures.

Black Rainbow allows the questioning of whether or not a national culture should be designated, specifically in terms of a national literature. It allows an analysis of New Zealand and South Pacific texts, emphasizing the close connection between history and fiction in a mode that shares some of the qualities Linda Hutcheon ascribes to historiographic metafiction. The narrator meets Jake Crump, "the stereotyped cow-cocky-cum-good-keen-man out of much of New Zealand realist fiction" and other "characters [who] were coming straight out of bad Frank Sargeson, Ian Cross, Maurice Gee, Maurice Shadbolt, Fiona Kidman, and the grey fifties" (66, 67). The lines between different texts vanish as, for instance, characters from Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and Janet Frame's *Faces in the Water* appear to torture the narrator on behalf of the government. In Wendt's text, these characters even criticize the authors who depict them for supposedly misrepresenting them. Frame's fictional representation of her experience in a mental hospital, where she was administered electric shock therapy after being misdiagnosed as schizophrenic, provides a New Zealand forerunner of contested totalitarian authority. Like Wendt, Frame in-

scribes many Foucauldian questions about how the knowing subject is constituted in relation to shifting locations of power.

An expanded New Zealand literary tradition shapes the narrator's experience in the mythical city Taniwhanui, where he finds "a strange but fabulous blend of fact, fiction, and fantasy," from "Hollywood or the out-of-print historical novels of Morerice Boltshad laced with a bit of Wittie Ishmael and Kerrie Me Home" (202).⁴ These texts, like Wendt's, represent a protest against fixed models of history, nationality, ethnicity, or gender. The narrator's text joins those fashioned by prominent Maori writers Witi Ihimaera and Keri Hulme to become a "text about all the other texts about invasion, oppression, racism and totalitarian reordinarination" (158). The narrator's reading of New Zealand's texts emphasizes how the national myths in any country can become exaggerated and established as determining factors in politics and policy.

Further lists of authors allow Wendt to delineate much of the tradition that he is exploring, calling into question the creation of a national literature by creating a supranational pastiche of New Zealand literature, criticism, and popular culture and other sources such as westerns and science-fiction films. By implication, selection and creation of a national literature is a further colonization, a deliberate fiction regarding the identity of a land and its inhabitants. Wendt's fiction suggests the extent to which Nation itself is narration, a complex series of discursive forms and narrative texts.

Wendt employs the category of "author" to shake up assumptions about the stability of nationalism and of literature's meaning. In "The Writer as Fiction," an essay that anticipates many of these questions about identity and fiction, Wendt declares, "[a] writer is, in a basic way, a work of fiction seen through what he writes," and "[a] writer, like other artists, is a trickster, a *faito-gafiti*" (40, 41). Wendt's description of writing as a game prefigures his depiction of the Game of Life in *Black Rainbow*. He cites the Polynesian trickster/demi-god Maui as "central to my game," and Borges's work as another important series of texts signifying that "I'm a player in your novel/story/poem/song, and you're a player in mine" ("Writer" 42, 43).⁵ Texts regarding both Maui

and Borges are crucial to the narrator in *Black Rainbow*; they help propel him towards an understanding of history and fiction, which he can use to disrupt the boundaries of representation instituted by the "utopia." The playful frames that Wendt places around human experience are infinitely receding and singular, resisting any imposed, prescribed order. His text demands recognition of individual and community experience, rejecting a paradigmatic, national approach.

In *Black Rainbow*, Wendt invokes multiple art forms created by South Pacific peoples. Some of these include traditional Maui myths of the Tangata Maori (the Maori people) and the fictional Tangata Moni (encompassing many Polynesian peoples and which Wendt "translates" as "the true ones"). These myths are integral to the personal and cultural history that the narrator begins to reclaim. When the narrator acts out Borges's short story "The Meeting," he changes the ending so that his opponent dies. The narrator's increasing ability to change the received readings of texts threatens the utopia, which places its "most strict taboo" on mythology like that which surrounds Maui (100), partly because his quest involving Hine-nui-te-Po (the Maori goddess of death) concerns death, which the Tribunal has vanquished.⁶ The myths speak for a culture opposed to the Tribunal's culture.

The figure of Maui challenges the myths established by the President and the Tribunal. Part of a worldwide network of 12 Presidents, these authorities maintain peace and banality through their monopoly of multinational corporations. They use mass media to produce bland bulletins that contain the world's only news—good news—and, inevitably, the popular culture sanctioned by the government reinforces their myths about how unnecessary history is: "*Don't listen to historee/ That's all guilt and insanitee*" (37). The commodified images and messages of mass culture control and define the realm promoted by the government. The narrator's children perform in television advertisements; his wife refuses to watch live rugby games because they are "more real" on television and "reads" the televised games as texts; and the government televises the narrator's Quest, informing him at his trial for treason and sexism, "'[y]our life's been a hit show on TV'" (71, 72, 246). Celluloid images and arrayed

signs and slogans praise the utopia and its President, and human experiences are appropriated and replicated for mass viewing to support the government's agenda.

Wendt resists rigid concepts of cultural identity, borrowing postmodern techniques to escape imposition of "high" culture and advancing a complex conception of indigenous culture. He articulates these ideas in an early form in "Towards a New Oceania," arguing against the past colonial propagation of values regarding indigenous cultures (whether viewed as romantic and noble or as primitive and savage).⁷ While he characterizes pre-*palagi* cultures (Pacific cultures prior to contact with Europeans) as powerful and integral to a cultural recovery, he cautions, however, that those cultures were neither perfect nor static. His statements explicate the postcolonial "attempt to understand colonialism and what it did and is still doing to us" and represent the postmodern, as when he contends, "[i]n the final instance, our countries, cultures, nations, planets are what we imagine them to be" (49). Since there is no central monolithic "essence" of culture, "usage determines authenticity," and contemporary culture can be created as much as represented in the art that Wendt sees as compelling a "decolonisation" (60). A crucial extension of his ideas is the concept that there is no cultural purity or isolation, but instead collisions of admittedly asymmetrical cultures that modify one another in unpredictable ways.

Wendt allows no easy closure in *Black Rainbow* in an attempt to avoid establishing any more centralizing myths. That postmodern technique of resistance supports Wendt's statements about how he tries to destroy "some of the stereotypes and fallacious myths" about the South Pacific without replacing them "with other misleading ones" ("Writer" 45). In *Black Rainbow*, Wendt focusses on the role myths play, both in reinforcing received ideas and in allowing freedom to re-interpret culture according to contemporary needs. The mythopoeic impulse in his writing, which Ken Arvidson and others have identified,⁸ posits a sense of play and invention in the creation of myths and culture. His texts invoke a series of myths that, far from moving towards closure as in some high modernist practices, are performative and inventive. In his fiction, Wendt emphasizes the

agendas that might direct such invention, for example, the myth that Tauilopepe creates in *Leaves of the Banyan Tree* to try to achieve his formula of "God, Money and Success." In *Sons for the Return Home*, the unnamed protagonist must confront a largely mythical Samoa that his parents have created in their stories in an attempt to retain cultural identity. "The Coming of the White-man," in *Flying Fox in a Freedom Tree*, addresses how *papalagi* products and apparel are mythologized by a character that desires power. Further, in "Daughter of the Mango Season," from *The Birth and Death of the Miracle Man*, Wendt depicts the problematic conjunction of a traditional Samoa of *atua* (the word for ancient spirits) and of a *papalagi* Christianity, examining how the disparate sets of myths and the agendas they support do not always accommodate one another. Wendt repeatedly examines the kind of culture invention⁹ that so informs *Black Rainbow*.

Suggesting how integral the sense of process and invention is to *Black Rainbow*, the narrator compiles random lists in an attempt to recover the personal history that the Tribunal has tried to erase, as it has obliterated any cultural history that does not fit with its own. The lists grow almost of their own accord, implying that history can be suppressed but not destroyed. The narrator re-creates his story (history) with these lists, each of which "blossomed and ballooned and became a fabulous character which I then pinned up on the kitchen wall. By midnight the lists were wallhangings written in my new calligraphy" (188). The technique impels the recognition that his story may involve creation as well as recovery. It also underscores the connection between history and fiction. The narrator's history is inevitably, in the terms of this novel, a story and cannot write itself outside the boundaries of literature:

[I] established connections I'd not been aware of before, between my characters, until the walls were crisscrossed, bridged, connected with arrows, talk balloons, crossings-out and insertions, analogies, metaphors, similes, speculations, curses of frustration. My story, a collage history, contained in the ever-moving present. (189)

The resulting "collage history" connects the narrator to the present moment, but does not involve a denial of history. Rather, the narrator recognizes something similar to the Maori proverb that suggests that your past is always in front of you.

In *Ola*, Wendt concentrates similarly on the creation of a life and a novel, emphasizing through metafiction the constructed nature of both. With a focus upon assemblage, the editor rearranges Olamaileoti Farou Monroe's letters, diaries, poems, and accounts from a travel-narrative about the Holy Land, attempting to reconstruct a life of Ola and hence creating the eponymous novel. This novel, too, is overtly intertextual. Wendt makes reference in both *Ola* and *Black Rainbow* to his own previously published works, and *Ola* incorporates two entire stories—"Crocodile" and "Hamlet"—from his collection *The Birth and Death of the Miracle Man*. In *Black Rainbow*, which takes its title from a Ralph Hotere work (and is dedicated to Hotere, a Maori artist who has exhibited his art internationally), Wendt works out an even more complex relationship of intertextuality.

The Hotere lithograph *Black Rainbow* haunts the narrator's waking and sleeping thoughts throughout the novel, depicting a countdown to some indeterminate event. The countdown may represent history, recovery of memory, decline of the utopia, or renewed connection with the land. When the narrator climbs Maungakiekie and buries the icon, he invokes the earth as "ele-ele," the same word for blood and earth. He also puts his wife's spirit to rest. (In the opening pages of the novel, before being co-opted by the Tribunal, she uses the Hotere lithograph to call to the spirits of the original inhabitants of Maungakiekie.) Reference to Hotere's work immediately helps evoke for readers the presence of the original inhabitants, since Hotere is so widely recognized as an accomplished Tangata Maori artist. His work forms a crucial subtext in *Black Rainbow*, one of the many maps Wendt addresses. By situating the Hotere work in his text, Wendt explores the relationships that arise among different art forms, different forms of protest. In an interview with Michael Neill, Wendt describes how Hotere adds to his *Black Rainbow* series every time the French explode nuclear devices on Mururoa.¹⁰ The Hotere series represents events that are another enduring legacy of colonial imperialism and decimation of land and culture.

In his treatment of the Tangata Moni, the President demonstrates the assumptions of cultural and moral superiority that

underlie colonialism. Before the narrator kills the President (in accordance with the government's plan), a computer reveals the narrator's entire history. The sequence emphasizes how fluid identity is: the narrator's current name and identity, Eric Mailei Foster, bank clerk, is only one of three with which he has been programmed. The narrator had been born as Patimaori Jones, a Tangata Moni, an "incurable confidence trickster," son of an unknown father and Patricia Manaia Graceous. The President, an authority on "reordinarising" Tangata Moni and other deviants, vows to control his disruptive tricks. Patimaori's interactions with the government replay the experience of many colonized peoples. In a manner that overtly adopts colonial methods, the President decides to exploit his shame about his illiteracy: "'The magic of the printed word will tame him, convert him to civilisation, make him thirst for our cargo, like primitives in the past'" (226).¹¹ The President's remark demonstrates the colonialist assumptions that privilege written over oral literatures.

In keeping with the rewriting of literary maps and the protest that they have been produced in ways that eliminate or silence different voices, Wendt represents many oral and performative texts in his novel: the stories told by the housekeeper, the performance of history and fiction offered at Taniwhanui, the stories (histories) narrated by the narrator's Tangata Moni friends. Also significant is the open-ended way in which these stories refuse to conclude, anticipating the way the novel itself resists closure and offers multiple possibilities for ending(s), including any that the reader might improvise.

In "The Don'ts of Whistling," from "The Guide to Whistling," Wendt begins to delineate a sequel to *Black Rainbow*, suggesting ways in which he will continue to explore many of these questions about cultural and individual identity. He adopts similar post-modern strategies, creating a narrative comprising brief achronological sketches, scattered with references to commodified products that erase the boundary between popular and "high" culture. Michael's favourite toothpaste is "DICKENS," he borrows some of his father's "GEORGE ELIOT" aftershave, his mother uses "CARSON MCCULLERS" perfume, and when she cleans she uses "Flower Adcock Air" aerosol. These postmodern games do have a

serious component, viewed in conjunction with the emphasis Michael's father (in his annual visits) places upon versions of myths, memory, and the natural world. As in *Black Rainbow*, Maungakiekie and Maungawhau resist the imposed maps. Both texts present serious play of cultural and historical signifiers, shaking up received maps and modes of thinking and identifying the processes that construct new ones.

Wendt's postmodernism of resistance is striking because it foregrounds the mythopoeic play behind so much of his work, a focus as important to his *oeuvre* as the determinism/free will divide¹² and the Existentialism that is evoked by the lava fields of Savai'i. His work shares many of the concerns of postmodernism in a New Zealand context—an emphasis on fragment and process rather than complete product, a flattening or rupture of the frame that once supposedly enclosed content and meaning in a secure, separate realm—articulated by Wystan Curnow, Roger Horrock, and others in *Parallax* and other postmodernist journals such as *AND* and *Splash*. The collection of “new” New Zealand short stories, *The New Fiction*, edited by Michael Morrissey, also provides part of the context for postmodern theory and art in New Zealand.¹³

Postcolonial theorists and artists sometimes resist identification with postmodernism, which could be viewed as asserting a hegemonic, paradigmatic model.¹⁴ Wendt's employment of postmodern and traditional techniques to attempt a decolonization of artistic and cultural realms suggests one way in which postcolonialism can modify postmodernism. This tactic allows for a revision of Simon During's formulation—that when postcolonial thinkers resist postmodernism, they employ the ideas that postmodernism most doubts (in his terms, “representation, history, evaluation” [369]). Resistance may occur by using these forces, but it can be enabled by a postmodern critique of how they are constructed. *Black Rainbow* balances postcolonialism and postmodernism, articulating the forces of history and memory (through Wendt's mythopoeic movements) in a way that accommodates postmodern play, calling attention to the constructs that impel the art and theory of both modes. Wendt achieves a fission and a fusion of the postcolonial and post-

modern impulses, advancing a postcolonialism and postmodernism of resistance in the New Zealand context.¹⁵

NOTES

- 1 I wish to thank Ralph Crane, Michael King, Hirini Melbourne, and especially Ken Arvidson for their assistance with my Fulbright-sponsored research in New Zealand. Ken Arvidson and Jay Clayton provided helpful comments on an earlier version of this article.
- 2 The phrase "postmodernism of resistance" has been used by theorists such as Andreas Huyssen in *After the Great Divide*, bell hooks in *Yearning*, and Henry Giroux in *Postmodernism, Feminism, and Cultural Politics*. While it is a useful phrase, it must be established in a social and cultural context and examined in relation to other crucial arenas, such as postcolonial struggles.
- 3 The process of creating literary texts is partially revealed in an examination of the earlier published forms of two chapters of *Black Rainbow*. In the novel, Wendt places a greater emphasis on postmodern techniques in the chapters, whose titles remain the same as in their short-story form. See "Monopoly" and "No History/Herstory."
- 4 Ralph Crane provides a discussion of Shadbolt's fictional rewritings of the colonial New Zealand Wars in "Tickling History: Maurice Shadbolt and the New Zealand Wars."
- 5 See also Wendt's comments about the appearance he made in a short story by Australian writer Frank Moorhouse, whom he threatens to portray as a "has-been Aussie rules' player" ("Writer" 43), for a hint at what Wendt carries out in *Black Rainbow*, where Michele Leggot, Alistair Campbell, Keri Hulme and many other New Zealand writers figure.
- 6 The narrator of *Black Rainbow* begins to recover a sense of Maui's irreverence and energy through remembering the myths themselves, which are as much a gift as Maui's other bequests to his people. Part of what compels the narrator to examine his own story are the tales told by the housekeeper, a strange figure who has herself experienced a Maui myth revisited: she involuntarily crushed a former lover between her thighs, killing him. Her self-referential stories spur the narrator to uncover his own.
- 7 This older binary model allowed various colonial representatives of Britain and of Germany to idealize or denounce Pacific peoples, leading to studies with titles such as *Our Maori* or even Margaret Mead's depictions of untroubled Samoan sexuality, which Wendt, among others, has criticized as romanticized and distorting.
- 8 Ken Arvidson, "Sons of the Father."
- 9 For an anthropological discussion of culture invention, see Hanson. Suggesting a Derridean play of signifiers as a model for social reproduction and culture invention (which is similar to social reproduction but serves an agenda), Hanson proposes that the crucial focus must be on the process whereby these constructions become authenticated.
- 10 Wendt describes how Hotere presented him with one of these prints in 1986. The print inspired a "Black Rainbow" short story, which grew into a *Black Rainbow* novel ("Albert Wendt" 106).
- 11 The "conversion" does proceed, and Patimaori joins the political machine, emerging as Supremo Jones, "son" of the President and a Grand Hunter for the system; but he retains enough of his Tangata Moni ideas to pose a threat and thus is reprogrammed as Eric Mailei Foster.
- 12 In *Black Rainbow*, the narrator wrestles with this philosophical problem, deciding that even though his family and his Quest have been programmed, he has shared

- genuine experience and love and he has been able to decide how to achieve the predetermined conclusion.
- ¹³ If, as Leonard Wilcox asserts, postmodernism in a New Zealand context has ever been "pastoral," because it does not represent the reification of commodified images, with *Black Rainbow* it moves away from a pastoral and towards interrogating a commodified product realm.
- ¹⁴ See, for example, the discussion of postcolonial art and theory in relation to postmodern movements by Ashcroft et al. in *The Empire Writes Back*, 155-80. In "Postmodernism or Postcolonialism?," Simon During summarizes the postcolonial resistance to postmodernism where he writes, "[t]hey [postcolonial discourses] may be thought of as turning on a desire to enter the otherness which will allow postmodernism to be recognized not as decentred, but as centred. They wish once and for all to name and disclaim postmodernism as neo-imperialist" (369).
- ¹⁵ Portions of this paper were presented at a comparative literature symposium, organized around the issue of "After Empire: Writing and the Choices of Displacement," held at the University of Tulsa, USA, 24-27 March 1994.

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