

SALT OF OUR BLOOD

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements) nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or any other institution of higher learning.

Candidate's signature

Mary Elsmore-Neilson

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Abstract

My creative work of the heroine's journey in *Salt Of Our Blood* originated when I noticed the absence of independent strong matriarchal characters and realized the predominance of the stories of patriarchal male heroes such as James Bond and Superman. Both are larger-than-life cartoon characters of the contemporary western world and possess mythical powers.

These powers emulate the legends and mythical characters of yesteryear, e.g. Homer's Achilles, the half-god son of a sea nymph and hero of the Trojan War in the *Illiad* while Greek hero Jason, who appears in *Medea*, leads the Argonauts in their quest for the Golden Fleece.

The introduction of my exegesis highlights my concerns of: those who have no voice in society, or on the marae and what happens to a society when the myths are lost, and what replaces them? A brief synopsis of my novel *Salt of Our Blood* is followed by the fact that the sea and human blood, sweat and tears inexplicably share the same proportion of salt. I also review my fascination for boats, seafarers and their tales, the myths of mankind and the history of trade (rats on ships spread disease world-wide) and exploration (Captain Cook, Darwin, Admiral Anson, Magellan) and mankind's eternal battle to overcome the vagaries of Mother Nature.

Discovering the work of the theorists who enlightened me and had an eureka effect on my work are: Joseph Campbell's *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* and Robert McKee's *Story: substance, style and the principles of screen writing*. Those whose contributed to my understanding of

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Boehmer (1995), *The Post-colonial studies reader*, edited by Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, (1997), *The Empire Writes Back* by Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin (2001), and *Post-colonial Literatures in English* by Dennis Walder (1998).

The influence of post colonial writers that I have long read and loved: *The Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys (1968), *God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy (1997), *Disgrace* by John M. Coetzee (2009), *Tangi* by Witi Ihimaera (1974) and *Baby No-Eyes* by Patricia Grace (1998) cannot be underestimated in the development of my style and the content of *Salt of Our Blood*.

The exegesis will elaborate on the research process and development of the understanding of my life experiences which have contributed to the near-completion of this fifth draft of my novel.

Acknowledgements

Writing my novel has been a long and winding road. Thanks to the patience of AUT's Master of Creative Writing lecturer James George's gentle guidance it is now nearly complete. Writing my exegesis has turned me inside out and around, made me look into places where I've never before been, to find out what impelled me to weave together these strands of the stars, the rocks, and the fish in my life like the woven tukutuku panels inside a Maori Meeting House which record stories related to mythologies, mythologies that shape each iwi, each clan, that speak of the people's history.

Thank you Annie Dillard, (1989) author of *The Writing Life*, for your beautiful description of a moth which drowned in front of your eyes (p. 48). I rewrote this story as a Godwit flying over the Pacific Ocean for my novel *Salt of Our Blood* (p. 119).

Dedication

I have been very blessed in my life to have known three strong women, my muses, whose deaths I mourned this year during my Master of Creative Writing 2012:

Whaea Rose Barber, *Ngai Tahu* who as a young woman walked in the Maori Land March,

Jan Nigro, possibly New Zealand's finest artist, and

Susan Yoffe who saved part of our history, the Rangitoto Baches, as her thesis for her Masters.

These women, in different ways, have each inspired me in my life and will now read my novel from over my shoulder.

I also dedicate my work to my lost first-born Joanne.



Disclaimer

Please note: Although *Salt of Our Blood* uses historical events and real people, it is important to remember that this novel is essentially a work of fiction. Some events names, characters, businesses, places, events and incidents have been changed in the telling of the tale. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, (unless named) or actual events is unintentional or may be regarded as poetic license which has contributed to this work of fiction.???

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SALT OF OUR BLOOD

Exegesis

Pilgrimage

“There is pleasure in the pathless woods;

There is rapture on the lonely shore;

There is Society where none intrudes,

By the deep Sea, and music in its roar:

I love not Man the less, but Nature more.”

Childe Harold (Lord Byron) (iv, p.178).

INTRODUCTION

As exegete I will define and examine my novel *Salt of Our Blood*, my creative work, by explaining the framework in a brief synopsis; with an overview, both conceptual and factual, that describes my intention and process and also positions my approach to my tale within wider contemporary historical and literary contexts. One central area of influence has been post-colonial literature.

Post-colonial writing will often deal with the conflicts between colonizer and the colonized, the suppressed Other. This branch of literature challenges the dominant patriarchal culture and may question the concept of established authority in an attempt to give voice to the Other.

The post-colonial narrative includes a number of stylistic factors

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in an attempt to disorient and subvert the colonizer. Mimicry, irony and parody are effective tools which allude to the high ideals of the mainstream, yet allow the marginalized to give voice to their experience, thus reclaiming their identity. Also intertextuality, where a text is shaped by the meanings of other texts, is identified as part of the tool-box of post-colonial writing.

Duality of meaning, speaking with a forked tongue and focusing on the discourse of the subjugated peoples has helped post-colonial authors find and re-establish lost narratives, whilst redefining a middle pathway into and through the language of the colonizer.

Salt of Our Blood concerns the alienation of individuals, those with no voice found on the outside of post-colonial societies who are influenced by Victorian paternalistic values and attitudes to class, race and gender. The novel also explores myths, the traditional stories narrated by groups of people world-wide to sustain their cultural values. What happens when myths are lost as a result of a society's or an individual's dislocation?

And what replaces the fireside stories and myths in a post-colonial era where migrant myths swamp the voice of the colonized, the Other-then are shaped by each other, then shared, all in the dialogue of the migrant colonist?

Loosely based on real events major characters in my novel are fictitious, whilst names identify those with whom we are familiar. The fictional elements and characters are derived from different people met, sailing adventures, and my over-active imagination which considered, “what if?”

Throughout this exegesis, my personal experiences, accumulated

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knowledge, and political orientation, supplemented by wide reading will unfold in a fragmented, stream-of-conscious narrative which mirrors the post-colonial style and intent of my creative work.

Synopsis

In, *Salt of Our Blood*, protagonist and yachtswoman Martina-Ace, who has never recovered from her Mother's self-immolation (was it my fault?), wants to instigate New Zealand's first challenge for the America's Cup. The thirty-four year old heroine, who inherits her father's North Shore marina and Takapuna Beach apartment (Auckland, New Zealand), faces relationship issues and gender biases of the 1980s (of course The Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron and Cobweb Corner are the epitome of a male bastion) as she pursues her quest for the bottomless silver chalice.

Martina knows much is at stake; her reputation, her livelihood, the marina, and her home. With her best friend Gill's support, she tries to persuade Aucklanders to engage in her dream to bring home the trophy. Media and fellow sailors scorn her efforts and quote *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* as New Zealanders slowly rally to endorse the challenge.

Matt, a young Maori orphan, whose narrative parallels and intersects Martina's first person point-of-view faces his own issues, which include drug use and the racial prejudices of the era. Martina and Gill's friendship develops as Kiwis strive, using the Number Eight Wire philosophy, to "Slay the Beast" and prove Martina's belief that New Zealand has the *best* sailors in the world.

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New Zealand in the 1980s was deeply marked by cultural exclusion and divisions where disenfranchised groups such as Maori, women and the gay community were voices on the periphery of the post-colonial society. These groups, particularly Maori, borrowed some concepts and vocabulary of the dominant culture from which they were trying to disassociate themselves whilst trying to create something new: tikanga Maori.

Te po; Te po	It's dark; it's dark
Te ao; Te ao	It's light; it's light.

(Part of the Maori creation myth)

The decade of the 1980s was a story, a pivotal time, of alienated voices seeking to be heard, to come in from the dark: the Homosexual Law Reform Act; the bombing of the *Rainbow Warrior*; Prime Minister David Lange's anti-nuclear stance which gave New Zealand another identity removed from the primary narrative of the Gallipoli sacrifice, and the light: a deregulated economy of cheap French Champagne and entrepreneurs who reshaped the financial landscape with glass-towers; the share-market frenzy; the developing myth of the All Blacks and the excesses of the America's Cup as Kiwis stepped up and into the global arena.

A basic education in the sixties, university study in my mature years and close family ties to Maori with similar backgrounds, coupled with the demonstrated interest by English and Americans (as above) towards Maori and the lack of interest towards Aboriginals by Australians, “some states have still to recognise Aboriginal land rights” (Neilson & Collins, 2008, p. 14),

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made me question contemporary commentaries of universal cultural post-colonial misinterpretations and the influence of colonization which contributed to attitudes towards women in the 1980s (my experiences as a newly divorced working Mother) and Maori, (my whanau who found a voice to speak to me of their life experiences) and the demeaning of the narratives of other disenfranchised societal groups (feminist, gay, impoverished), all of which became strands for my tukutuku.

Text To Self

In the late 1990s I sold berths at Auckland's Bayswater Marina to international clients who were enthralled by New Zealand's lifestyle and culture. I met my 'Heroes' Sir Peter Blake and John Bertram and experienced the behind the scenes excitement of the America's Cup.

My well-travelled clients, fascinated by Maori culture, helped me realise, aided by my Maori studies, the unique position of Maori in New Zealand and their assertiveness in confronting historic issues and debating ideologies prevalent in contemporary society.

The importance of setting and verbalizing goals in my sales and marketing career, the diverse yachting tales heard when sailing Zeddie class yachts and racing catamarans on Wellington Harbour in my teens, then boating in Auckland's Hauraki Gulf and the Bay of Islands in the 1970-1990s, were threads that knotted and started to weave through my mind, could this be a story, my tukutuku?

I studied Maori history, my migrant history, (Scots dis-

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empowered by the Land Enclosures Act, late 1700s, and Huguenots persecuted for their Calvinistic beliefs, 1700s) and considered my background of growing up on an island where every Kiwi lives within 130 kilometres of the world's longest coastline. I determined that the genre of my novel was popular fiction, when I read the history of the America's Cup and the title of my tale appeared from John F. Kennedy's speech, September 14th 1962 at the New York Yacht Club, Newport Rhode Island, to the crew of Australia's *Gretel* and the American crew of *Weatherley* that, “as the sea has the same proportion of salt as human blood, so, they race against each other, but they also race with each other against the wind, and the sea.”

After selling over \$14,000,000 of marina berths in a competitive patriarchal environment I was offered a part-time position as Events Coordinator, (typical feminine stereotyping of the late 1990s). Refusing the position I moved to Mother England (1998-2004), a coming-home for me after childhood literary experiences (see Text to World) and also because New Zealanders, us of the 'New Country,' are fondly regarded by the English.

The British concept of the Kiwi lifestyle of relaxed barbecues, boating, surfing under balmy sunshine skies, free of societal restraint imposed by centuries of upper class rulings and beliefs, and of Maori, an amalgamation of the Victorian image of the Noble Savage and the conflicting violence of Jake's character in, *Once were Warriors*, was one of sustained interest for the English.

In Europe and England I found huge fascination for the comparatively recent development of Gondwanaland and our unique flora and

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fauna dating back to Captain Cook's naturalist Joseph Banks, botanical illustrator Sydney Parkinson, and artist William Hodge, the Victorians and philosopher Rousseau. I realised this from study of the seed collections and drawings in the Industrial age glasshouses at The Royal Botanic Kew Gardens, and while working for Princess Margaret's Lady-in-Waiting tending precious antipodean plants in her Victorian glasshouses (the word glasshouse was emphasised, they were not greenhouses).

The antipodean 'Number Eight Fencing Wire' attitude, raw natural environment and our athletes were also highly regarded. The fact that my accent did not denote class allowed me to work within the hallowed realms of the aristocracy. Visually captivated by layers of history and the literacy legacy of a vastly different society, yet one that was oddly familiar (The Queen, language, politics), I read avidly exploring the United Kingdom, Europe, my origins.

I determined that my novel's framework would be the 'Heroine's Journey' as undertaken by my protagonist, Martina-Ace, with the purpose and aim of providing a platform for my largely fictional depiction of the enormous tale of what was required to have New Zealand participate in the world arena. The story of how a country of three and a half million people using the 'Number Eight Fencing Wire' attitude (an area New Zealanders excel in, possibly because our location and history equal limited resources) managed to underwrite and participate successfully in the international arena of the America's Cup.

My rationale, in *Salt of Our Blood*, was to encompass attitudes of

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the era towards Maori who called for acceptance of Maoritanga and acknowledgement as the tangata whenua (people of the land), as guaranteed by the Treaty, and towards women like Germaine Greer and Jan Nigro. In 1972, Germaine, who exhorted New Zealand women to burn their “hideous symbols of male oppression, bras,” said that we could do anything, then was arrested by the City Fathers for saying “bullshit” and “fuck” whilst artist Jan dared to paint nudes with pubic hair, to the approbation of the Fathers of the Auckland art world who refused to hang her work. Both women and Maori challenged post-colonial values as do my characters, Martina and Matt.

I realised the purpose of my novel was to synthesise, link all of the above (including the pain and struggle endured by my lost elder daughter which became Matt's drug and gang experience) lives-turned-into story into a rational, inspiring, ironical tale entwined with the notion that the person we are is influenced by our family/societal perceptions, our myths, our gods, and our Mothers and Fathers who may or may not fail us. Thus I was inspired to turn ribbons of life into a story, a discourse weaving through the structure of our society to either bind or fray apart, to create a novel encompassing both fictional and non-fictional elements.

Text to Text

Wide and varied reading which ranged from the journal of the First Lord of the Admiralty *Anson's Voyage Round the World*, written by Richard Walter in the 1700s, *Howard Pyle's Book of Pirates*, Captain Woodes Roger's 1889 journal of *Life Aboard a British Privateer in the Time of Queen*

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Anne (my ancestor was a privateer for Elizabeth the First) to Ronald Carter's *Little Ships, New Zealand's Yachting Fleet* furthered my interest in yachting, provided Martina's father's past-life as a privateer and more threads for my tukutuku.

I realised that mankind requires a set of values, a narrative of ethics, a framework to live his life by. Raised in The High Church of England, with traditional values (the Ten Commandments) I live by, yet have largely overlooked, I found values in Maori mythology common to my beliefs, such as mystical happenings and explanations on how man is created (The Immaculate Conception), the Maori Goddess Papa/Papa-tua-kuku (Eve) plus taniwha-a snake (the serpent) and heroes like Maori God Maui.

With artistic, often scientific, reasoning in the genealogy of earth and sky, I understood that most cultures have developed and continue to develop explanations of the evolution of the gods and their human descendants which speak meaningfully to contemporary experience.

Today, it seems these structures are being over-ridden by the global pop culture which brings instant flashes of meaning via digital communication and media to a vast group of people usually defined by age or gender, e.g. Facebook and the pop-song industry.

Efforts to preserve and nurture the Celtic songs and language to keep alive traditions, the roots of an ancient culture which bequeathed value and pride to a group of people and my understanding of Euripides' *Medea* where the meaning of myths often has moral value, where explanations were given on how mankind came into being and where woman had no voice

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(women in Greek theatre were usually heard, not seen on stage and Maori women never spoke on the marae).

In his preface to *Folktales of the Maori*, Grace (2003)., compares Maori myths as “leaping to a mental altitude as high” (p. 1) as Greek mythology. In *Maori Legends* Alistair Campbell (1969), notes in his introduction,

“the creation myths of Maori are singularly interesting in that they go back much further into the void of pre-existence than do the myths of any other races.” (p. 4).

He also notes that many Maori myths seem to mix a tradition of Mid-Victorian (colonial) sentiment as with the Romeo and Juliet appeal of Hinemoa who, forbidden to meet her love on another island, braves the night-chilled water to swim to his side (p. 4).

A turning point for me was reading my Turkish flat-mate's esteemed copy of mono-myth '*The Epic of Gilgamesh*,' the world's oldest epic (written 4000 years ago). In Tablet Nine, after Enkidu's death, Gilgamesh understands that his life is in the hands of the Gods and as he is tested again and then again in the mythical archetype of near-death (which I have used in *Salt Of Our Blood* when Martina, Ophelia-style, attempts to die in her crucible. p. 155) in his quest to find Utnapishtim.

Gilgamesh realises that the life he is seeking he may never find which, further developed my interest in myths, legends and gods and conveyed to me the relevance to all societies (from Gilgamesh's inception) of strong narrative ethics. Ethics that have wound throughout my travels, studies and experiences structuring or binding my world into a personal narrative.

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(i) Texts that have influenced my thinking:

Colonialism: a civilizing imperialistic mission which suppressed indigenous cultures, “an agnostic space” (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin 1995, p. 9) and Post-: the ongoing pervasive effects of division both internal (within the indigenous community) and external (political and Pakeha sensibilities) relate to racial, linguistic, social, political and religious discriminations breeding resistance and dislocation which results in disenfranchisement and reconstruction of indigenous cultures such as Maori, Aboriginal, Native American and Indian. Post-colonial literary theory has “emerged from the inability of European” to fully comprehend “the complexities and varied cultural provenance of post-colonial writing” (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2001, p. 11).

Captain Cook's artist, William Hodges, initially depicted the New Zealand landscape as wild and dramatic, e.g. *View of Cape Stephens in Cook's Straits New Zealand with Waterspout* and used extremes of pale and dark to reflect the harsh light, influenced by no doubt by early Christian judgement that 'untamed' country was 'an immoral wilderness.' Missionary Richard Taylor saw the North Island's Volcanic Plateau as "a world blasted by sin" (Phillips, 2010 May 5th).

The seeming absence of inhabitants, but the knowledge they were there, added to the European predefined image of mythological savages and monstrous aliens, the different and strange that earlier explorers spoke finding in the Orient which led to fear and perpetuated alienation.

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The Enlightenment philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau proposed (*Social Contract*) that mankind evolves through stages to a civilized being, that one who 'fences his land' and lives according to an institution of law as prescribed by the general will; is freed from the wild laws of nature.

The Noble Savage (understood by Victorians to be the degenerate stage of evolution) who is happy and dignified when living in an unspoiled environment, influenced the landscapes of German artist *Caspar David Friedrich* with uplifting images, symbols of mood and spiritual experience. By the late 18th century this aesthetic, known as Romantic, was embraced by the English overwhelmed by the polluted darkness of the Industrial Revolution.

The Romantic movement of Coleridge's poetry, the paintings of Turner and Constable influenced Hodges (when back in England) to paint *A view in Dusky Bay* which portrayed an exotic atmosphere of dramatic sunset, water, trees and snowy mountains peaks framing a noble Maori warrior. Evoking a sense of the sublime, the solitary image is intended to emphasise man's vulnerability and inadequacy when confronted with the "power of nature and the wonders of God's creation." (Phillips, 2011).

These Romantic images were used to persuade immigrants, those who chose, that New Zealand was a *Land of Milk and Honey* (the award-winning song from the 1960's musical about Israel's fight to become an independent nation) haven, a splendid place of harmony, peaceful Maori, no class system and much available land.

The reality was vastly different. Romantic European landscapes were replaced by wild bush and Maori, who with no recognisable colonialistic

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structures or morals and often warlike, were perceived as the “Other,” (Bhabha, 1985, p. 34), supposedly inferior beings who often aspired to the mores of the settler.

The Other, Maori were influenced by the Mother Culture, the foreign, religious goddess, (often portrayed by Adolphe Bouguereau's 1883 painting *The Motherland*, with her dependent colonial off-spring as the absent hegemonic Mother Culture) as typified by Queen Victoria, a remote force (softened by her female aspect) who ruled wearing her patriarchal mantle and values; send the troublemakers to the colonies.

Therefore the perception, reinforced by the New Zealand landscape, was one of preconceived images bestowed by patriarchal colonials on indigenous peoples as different, wild and uncivilized, and needing to be fathered or as with Queen Victoria, mothered, to be shown the right way.

In *Salt of Our Blood*, Matt's Grandmother Lilly tells Matt that her bible (the Holy Father) showed her the way (p. 130). Matt, minus a strong father figure, loses his way and Martina opposes the patriarchal culture, the right way, as espoused by her Father.

I understood subaltern as associated with the sea, an officer below the rank of lieutenant but now discover it describes someone whose history is told from below, is socially, politically, and geographically outside the hegemonic power structure. Someone who feels disempowered and without voice as she/he has no history. (Ashcroft et al., 1995. p8).

In *No Time Like The Present* (2012), Nadine Gordimer writes that language can be a tool of emancipation, not just of communication and her

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character Jabu recalls her father repeating Gandhi's maxim

"It is unfortunate we use the language of the oppressor to speak for our freedom." (p.37).

Sexual differences in a phallogentric world puts the female subaltern in a more difficult situation as she is "even more deeply in shadow." (Spivak, 1995, p. 28).

In *Salt Of Our Blood* Lilly, a Maori woman speaks,

"She looked real good, blonde hair, navy blue suit and high heels, nice figure. I hadn't even put the key in the ignition or started the car. She reversed into me and she told them that I drove into her."

Despair weighted her voice as she continued,

"They believed her those men, they listened to her lies and now I have to pay her \$500. And repair the front of my car, and pay all the costs as well." (p.105).

Also, I had the experience of being dismissed by the aristocracy in the United Kingdom where roles reversed I experienced being treated as badly as a poor black female with no voice. Various articles and front page stories in *The Daily Mail*, *The Times*, *The Daily Telegraph* and, *The Dominion* referred to me as a 'middle aged cook from the colonies' Reuter 1999 with titles like *The Lady*, *The Duck and The Cook*. Limericks and columns were also published about the saga. (Please see following newspaper cuttings.)

I was not guilty, but traditional prejudices regarding those from the colonies and female servants prevail for many of the patriarchal English upper classes. My factual documented evidence, signed by Lady Astor who stated that I had "forged her signature" (sic) was denied and witnesses whom

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I'd never met, testified with untruths before a tribunal of three of whom only one was impartial. I finally won for the fact was Lady Astor had broken the law.

The Light and The Dark.



There was no comment about my statement in court that the grill was faulty.

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Cook who asked how to turn on the



Mary Neilson: worked for the family for just 10 days

LADY Astor of Hever sacked her cook after finding the duck intended for dinner was still raw 10 minutes before the family meal was due to be served, an industrial tribunal was told yesterday.

She said that she saw the six portions when she went to the kitchen and was asked: "How do you put the grill on?"

But Lady Astor, who went on to cook dinner herself, was ordered to pay £250 compensation over the dismissal. The tribunal ruled that she had broken the law by failing to give notice to Mary Neilson, 50, when she dismissed her in April.

Ms Neilson, a New Zealander working in England on a four-year visa, claimed unfair dismissal and compensation for loss of earnings and accommodation. She said she had been ordered to leave her accommodation with the Astor household at French Street, Westerham, Kent, by lunchtime the following day after just 10 days as cook.

Lady Astor, who presented her own case at the tribunal at Ashford, Kent, said: "I was amazed when Mary asked me, 'How do you put the grill on?'". She added: "I returned to the dining room, served the family drinks and told them they would have to wait an hour. I then put on my apron and cooked the dinner."

"She was just not up to the job. Her timing wasn't good, her cooking skills were minimal. The meal was Parma man with melon, which doesn't need cooking, duck with red cabbage and beans, and cake, which we had to send back twice."

"After the meal, I told Mary, 'Sit down, we need to have a talk. You are not up to the job. I'm asking you to leave as soon as you can'. She told me, 'I am just not used to this

By AJ Mellor

type of cooking'. I believe you are either able to cook or you are not. I found her to be very demanding. She asked whether she could have the left-over newspapers because she liked to read and she asked for the vegetable choppings because she liked to keep soup."

"In my house staff are always on a month's trial. I had told her this, saying that if she didn't like us she could leave and equally if we didn't like her she would leave. No hard feelings. That was the arrangement. I can't understand why she is

their part-time housekeeper, told the hearing that the household was "informal, relaxed and friendly".

She said: "Lord Astor is a very charming man but he likes his meals at one o'clock and eight o'clock — those are his only requirements."

Describing Lady Astor as a good employer, she added: "She tries to treat everybody fairly. She is generous and tries her hardest to meet staff requirements. What she wants in return is a good level of service."

Ms Neilson told the tribunal: "When I started I did ask about a contract and we sat

down in the sitting room and discussed it but it was never signed."

She said that after having to leave her job in April she had waited until July for a cheque for £500 but had felt this was not enough to compensate for the loss of accommodation and her "poor treatment".

On the advice of the Citizens' Advice Bureau she took the case to the tribunal which found yesterday that Lady Astor had broken common law. The £250 award was a week's wages in lieu of notice. The tribunal chairman, Valerie Cooney, said Lady Astor would be well advised to complete the contracts for her three staff — a nanny, a housekeeper, and a new cook.

Ms Neilson, who now works for a family in London, said she was pleased with the outcome. "I was left in a very difficult position because that job also provided my home. I was also very distressed about the comments made by Lady Astor about my cooking. My references support my ability."

Lady Astor, who is the peer's second wife, has two children and a stepdaughter.



The family home of Lord and Lady Astor in Kent

But Lady Astor is told to pay £250 for sacking her

aggravated. All my other staff were absolutely aghast." She said she understood the four-week trial was for each side to decide whether they suited each other.

Ms Neilson, who was hired through a recruitment agency, was sacked the day before she was due to cook lunch for Lady Astor's stepdaughter, Tania, and her friends to celebrate her 18th birthday. The tribunal heard "there had been some problems from the start" and that none of the staff working for Lady Astor had written contracts. Barbara Crouch, the family's former cook, who is now



Lady Astor arriving for the

ews

4M THE TIMES FRIDAY OC



Neilson, who got the sack after ten days as Lady Astor's cook

The lady, the cook, the six bits of raw duck, and the sack

LADY ASTOR OF HEVER, who sacked her cook after just eight days, was told by an employment tribunal yesterday to pay her compensation and issue contracts to staff in future. Mary Neilson, 50, a New Zealander working in England on a four-year visa, had said that she had been told to leave late one night and be out of her accommodation by lunchtime the following day.

Lady Astor told the tribunal at Ashford, Kent, that she had gone to the kitchen ten minutes before dinner was due to be served and saw six pieces of raw duck on the counter. "I was amazed when Mary asked me: 'How do you put the grill on?' I returned to the dining room, served the family drinks and told them they would have to wait an hour. I then made the dinner myself."

Ms Neilson was claiming unfair dismissal and seeking compensation for the loss of earnings and accommodation. Lady Astor's former cook had stayed on to show Ms Neilson the ropes, but Lady Astor said that on the night of the meal fiasco Ms Neilson had said: "God help you."

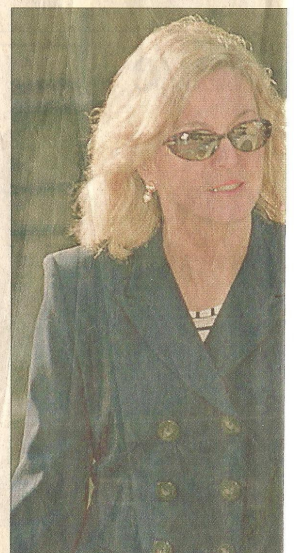
Ms Neilson said: "When I started I did ask about a contract and we sat down in the sitting room and discussed it, but it was never signed." She left after just ten days in April and waited until July for a cheque for £500, but she had lost her home and felt she had been poorly treated and through the Citizens' Advice Bureau took the case to tribunal.

Lady Astor, who was not legally represented, called only one witness: her former cook, Barbara Crouch, who said the Hever household at Westerham, Kent, was "informal, relaxed and friendly". "Lord Astor is a very charming man, but he likes his meals at one o'clock and eight o'clock — those are his only requirements."

Ms Crouch, who now works as part-time housekeeper for the Astors, said that Lady Astor was a good employer. "She tries to treat everybody fairly, children are a major part of the family, she is generous and tries her hardest to meet staff requirements. What she wants in return is a good level of service."

The tribunal found that Lady Astor had broken common law by failing to give notice and ordered that she pay another £250 to Ms Neilson — a week's wage in lieu of notice. Ms Neilson, who now works for a family in London, said: "I think it was clear in the tribunal that Lady Astor had no experience of staff contracts. I was left in a very difficult position because that job also provided my home. I was also very distressed about the comments made by Lady Astor about my cooking — my references support my ability."

Lady Astor had told the hearing that she had a nanny, a housekeeper and another cook, but she had still not got around to issuing formal contracts to her domestic staff. "After this incident we addressed the problem but have not finished the job yet."



Lady Astor of Hever arriving for the hearing yet

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Please note: The *Daily Mail* realised only Lady Astor's comments were reported by the press at the time. The paper supplied French champagne for an interview with myself where a chauffeur in a limousine took me shopping, and I recreated the Duck meal for the reporter, camera man, make-up artist and myself. Although the Daily Mail interview told from my perspective, paid me handsomely for my story, it was a very difficult time. I negotiated full editorial rights over the final article in the *Femail interview* October 21st 1999.

(ii) Texts that have influenced my craft/style:

In my novel I became obsessed with layering, arousing questions, stirring depths to give appeal to a broad and global audience. Author Melissa Kennedy (2011) notes in *Striding Both Worlds, Witi Ihimaera and New Zealand's Literary Traditions*, that in *Tangi*, Witi's character Tama says,

“The world I was growing up in was a pakeha one, ...it was difficult to retain my Maoritanga.” (p. x).,

and makes the point that the Maori world is interior, one naturally acquired by learning from the world around the self through whakapapa, a discourse that establishes identity, whereas the pakeha world is an exterior one learned from books and education.

The divisions of culture, social and economic created chasm between the two peoples, which meant Maori, either left behind their

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whakapapa to ease into the pakeha world as did my whanau (and my character Lilly) in the fifties and sixties because of the colonial belief that integration of cultures was the way forward, or Maori straddled, lost his way, with only a small understanding of Maoritanga, as per my character Matt. Disease (formerly unknown to Maori) and the move to major economic centres for work fostered further decline in Maori until the seventies (1975 Treaty of Waitangi Act) and the eighties which marked a renaissance of Maoritanga and the beginnings of government policies which recognized biculturalism in New Zealand.

Witi Ihimaera (Kennedy, 2011) refers to the Maori view in literature as writing from the “inside out” (p. x), as exemplified by New Zealanders Hone Tuwhare and Patricia Grace. 'Inside out' also describes the style in my novel *Salt of Our Blood* to express Matt and also Martina's point of view.

Kennedy (2011) mentions that Ihimaera refers to the Western linear structure of story telling as against circular, multiple or oral story telling structures where myth and metaphysical animism challenge the Western concepts of fantasy, sex and realism (p. x).

Tangi written by Ihimaera in 1973, hailed as the new voice of Maori fiction (I was then a 22 year old new mother), also describes a community influenced by dominant settler European values and Maoritanga's struggle.

I determined in my novel to give a Maori perspective but could do so only through my dislocated Pakeha eyes and it took (dare I say), like

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Katherine Mansfield, a moving away from the confusing messages of New Zealand's post-colonial environment before I was confident enough to voice my perceptions. Creating Matt, who came to me as a strong voice, was a concern as I was conscious, actually most concerned about him becoming a stereotype. I was advised by my mentor that the use of standard English would bequeath validity to Matt's character. This further reinforced for me the post-cultural dilemma of whose voice is Matt's?

When John McCrystal (2011) in his Listener on-line review of *The Parihaka Woman* (whose protagonist is also a woman Erenora, on a quest) notes Witi's interest in opera, and how Witi draws on European and other influences I realised that my world view, which encompasses Maori whanau (my extended family) was valid. The process of defining and writing my exegesis has been invaluable in making this and other distinctions as I explore and critically define my novel.

I have drawn on songs and lyrics to provide subtext. These myths of our contemporary world influence different groups, different genres such as pop songs for teenagers and young adults, rock and roll for rockers and the songs of their youth and the crooners of their parent's day for mature individuals.

Coleridge's mythological poem *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1817) perpetuates the myth of women as being unlucky at sea, of which sailors constantly remind Martina, in *Salt Of Our Blood*.

Yankee Doodle impels Martina's quest while the *Kookaburra Sits on the Old Gum Tree* is a melancholic and ironical voice when the Australians

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are beaten in the boat race, while Stevie Wonder's song, *Ebony and Ivory*, creates a subtext of post-colonial values, light and dark, alongside the life-size cardboard cutouts of the All Blacks (reinforcing and perpetuating their mythology). Wonder is blind and Matt and Martina at times cannot see what is in front of them as with the exhausted Godwit in *Salt of Our Blood* (p. 119) and the flying fish fleeing a big fish who doesn't see the bird which gobbles it up (p. 70). I have also used nursery rhymes to identify familiar sub-texts, often ironical as when Martina refers affectionately to the men in her life as the *Three Little Pigs*.

My discussion of critical literary theory to contextualize my novel is that a theory is critical when it seeks to emancipate human beings from enslavement and allows human beings to create their own history. This aligns with my understanding of lives-turned-into-stories or narrative ethics that provide a person or people with a range of possible ways of being that are or could be considered models of appropriate responses to life situations or circumstances which may enslave them.

I would go as far to state that, when these narrative ethics are lost or withheld from a group of peoples of any race, culture or creed, loss of identity and the breakdown of societal values and morals occurs.

My personal values and morals, loosely based on traditional beliefs essential to maintaining the values required to support differing and individual cultures, is centred predominantly on my personal interpretation of the end of the last century's society and culture. Not from my heritage.

With my knowledge of the humanities, and an early interest

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(1960-70s) in Samoan author Albert Wendt's (1939) *Sons For The Return Home* (a tale of living in New Zealand whilst straddling two cultures) and 1960s anthropologist Margaret Mead's 1928 book *Coming of Age in Samoa* study of primitive youth in Samoa, which considered the cultural, biological, linguistic and historic aspects of human nature as opposed to the scientific (Darwin, survival of the fittest), which drove the paternalistic Victorian colonialist's view-point, I understood that my New Zealand temperate, isolated island, Calvinistic influenced Western ethical standards of courtesy, modesty, sexuality and manners differed widely to that of warm climates, and the cultures of Other peoples.

Certain motifs emerged in my exploration of myth and legends, which are elaborated, then rounded out as people tell and retell stories that catch and hold the interest of new generations.

Thus themes that are accurate and universal are kept alive, Rain is the tears of Rangi the Sky Father God, The Taniwha is the River God who may be an ominous force or device to protect from danger or to protect an area from being overfished, whereby the food source and environment are safeguarded.

In *Words Chosen Carefully* (S. Harvey, 2010), Peter Wells, voices/identifies my feelings that from the 1980s on, the push towards the creation of a bi-cultural or multi-cultural world has been so strong that the world in which I grew up which was dominated by a Pakeha/paternalistic view: where the only acknowledged Maori was a Social Welfare boy Jimmy with no shoes who stole my school-lunch; and our homework was drawing Maori canoes and whares (a token to multi-cultural education); where my parents

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stopped me seeing The Beatles (too dangerous); reading (discreetly) the outrageous D.H Lawrence's novels *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, and *Sons and Lovers*: where girls disappeared for nine months after sex, AIDS was unheard of, purchased tampons and condoms were put into brown paper bags, bugger was a swear word unfit for TV, and innocence and happy families abounded in the media, (e.g. radio-*Dexter Dutton*, television-*My Three Sons* and *I Love Lucy*) has essentially sunk, like a leaky boat, to the bottom of the ocean.

The opening of *Te Maori*, the first world-wide exhibition of Maori artefacts, at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, in September 1984, immediately endorsed the status and perception of New Zealanders, both at home and internationally because The Met. is synonymous with, and central to, art the world over. Maori art had emerged from the darkness of primitive contextualisation, moved out of the closet, away from anonymity and obscurity and freed like a bird, flew from a limited intellectual climate into the world arena.

The narrative process between the triumvirate of author, reader/listener and characters bestows responsibilities upon all participants through the text. Just as an author will speak for a child character using language that is not childlike to describe an experience or their perception, Rimmon-Kenan (2002) in *Narrative Fiction* identifies this as focalization of the experiencing self which may be an external dialogue, e.g. *Tom Jones* in Fielding's epic poem or my character Matt's internal narrative.

“I shivered when those wicked old spirits visited me. And then that Kuri-dog was beside me warm. He'd wipe my snot with his hot old cloth-tongue. And he licked my sores until they dried and went

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hard. I picked the scabs and got happy with the fresh shiny purple skin underneath.” (*Salt Of Our Blood*, p.129).

A character's sustained view point turns the character into the narrator or focaliser. The language may be defined as verbal or non-verbal communication. All the character's perception and experiences are determined on the page by space, time and description of sight, hearing, smell, touch and emotions.

Martina's first person narrative as a unreliable narrator contains both mimesis and diegesis and sometimes she relates events in an attempt to guide the reader's perception, and other times uses metaphor as a language tool or figure of speech, to infer meaning to the reader, which she is unaware of doing.

Author Eleanor Catton in her talk at AUT on 27th August 2012, stated that a metaphor is a symbol which is an invocation of an image. Although it is not actually located in the scene, it will enlarge, illuminate, give mood to the scene and in particular the character's internal processes and impressions.

Metaphors filter experiences in emotional time, as against a chronological time, that are mythological and metaphoric. In *Salt Of Our Blood* metaphors have been used as I wanted to open the eyes of my reader.

I have used thematic metaphors (fire, alcohol) where the sequence itself is symbolic of a key theme in my novel, and therefore the meaning over-arches the character's conscious understanding. Although Martina appears to have control over what she says, the narrative, diegesis, may still infer more than Martina is consciously giving away.

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The Auckland Art Gallery, Toi o Tamaki April 2006 exhibition of Frances Hodgkins: *Leitmotif*, art which featured recurring motifs of; jugs, bare trees, still-life's with calligraphic lines, and milky temperate colours, highlighted for me the power in themes and repetition, as in Beethoven's Fifth Symphony's repeated first four notes, or the pantomime where baddies are identified by music which like the ring of a doorbell, signals the overall system of thematic metaphor to the reader and therefore the pattern signifying the subtext beneath the text.

Native birds appear in my novel as leitmotifs: Martina's first yacht is named after the endangered Storm Petrel, a mantle of gloom, the Albatross, (subtext of her childhood) hangs around Martina's neck, the Godwit who dies (*Salt Of Our Blood*, p.119) when New Zealand seems against Martina and her quest.

Other leitmotifs are fire; which consumes her mother, the fire deities of Rangitoto, suttee as practised by Indian women (forbidden under post-colonial rule making the women damned if they do and damned if they don't), smoking; a society killing themselves; alcohol; used to deaden pain, Martina's comfort when things are tough and, the drugs Matt uses to escape his confusion.

The language may be neutral, e.g. "the concrete path led to the gate which opened on the road where cars headed to the city," (an uninvolved objective view-point) or be coloured to describe a subjective involved view-point, e.g. "the cracked concrete path covered in weeds and moss led to the broken unpainted gate where cars tooted in their rush to the demanding city."

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In England I worked for Zoroastrians, an ancient religion (6th century) into which one is born a Parsi. Known for leaving their dead on 'towers of silence' for vultures to consume, they worship fire as a sign of divine purity and see the conflict between light and dark as goodness above and as evil below. Again the light and the dark as per my earlier Maori quote in this document (p. 12).

The more I examined the writing of my novel I realized the wild partying, sex of the eighties, were the result of birth-control, (the pill was developed in the 1960s, abortion was legalised) and technological developments (the automatic washing machine, availability of transport), which affected traditional gender roles.

Women could choose between roles of wife, mother or a career, which Martina does. Fighting for her place in a man's world the alcohol she consumes with careless disregard for self, creates a mask, a façade which prevents her and others from seeing the looming reality of financial excesses reflected in the insubstantial mirrored buildings. Sex in the eighties was possibly a commodity, that reached a plateau (before AIDS), like the shares being traded so promiscuously, before the 1987 crash.

As Martina's journey in *Salt Of Our Blood* progresses, her understanding of what is required in a relationship deepens and she moves from sexual gymnastics in the bedroom to experiencing humour, tenderness and trust with her loved one.

While on the subject of sex I learnt its value (was riveted by) when studying the Romans; the barbaric sexual practices which generally

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involved women in the Colosseum. Of interest also is Chinua Achebe's, (1995) discussion of his bilingualism, where he says that he has spoken the most words in his mother tongue but has written more words in English and is often asked in which language does he dream? More recently he was asked

“In which language do you orgasm?”

“Which would settle the matter if I knew.” (p.190).

His response aroused, for me, questions of the assimilation of a culture within the other to create the self, each individual therefore having a unique response, meaning or understanding to every situation no matter the ethnic group, the culture, the creed.

“Could the concept of meaning itself be Eurocentric?”

(Ashcroft et al., 1989, p. 185).

Another comment of interest is Isobel White's (1992) discussion that although Aborigine's hold their myths and ceremonies in great regard, playfulness and laughter are often demonstrated during story telling around the camp-fire at night. White notes one occasion where copulation was simulated, “not in the '*missionary*' position” by women acting the role of men as newly weds (p. 254).

My question then became, which was first, the missionary or the missionary position? Post colonialism put to bed.

Which brings me to Anthony Alpers's (1996) statement that the nouns and verbs connected with sex for Polynesian's are not “charged” (p. 9)

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with the same meaning as for the Western world. Taboo, or tapu is the cooking of food and the act of eating, “not what comes out of the body but what goes in” (p. 9). Greek mythology considers the head sacred as evidenced in the wearing laurel leaf crowns or tiaras for royalty or blue-bloods (*Salt Of Our Blood*, p. 95). To call a canoe “full of warriors a food bowl (Alpers, 1996, p. 10) is a profane statement. Lilly tells Henry the Yank, when he lives with Martina, that the head is sacred and tea towels are washed separately from clothes. (*Salt Of Our Blood*, p. 90).

(iii) Texts that have influenced my approaches to characterization--not just as an element of craft but as a representation of roles and identity issues and conflicts in society:

Robert McKee (1999) states that “story-telling is a ritual surrounding a metaphor for life” (p. 186), which allows the audience to react according to their beliefs and experiences. My novel's genre is contemporary fiction therefore my first task was to create a believable protagonist and multi dimensional characters of the era. Initially Martina was a cardboard character to whom things happened, she wasn't involved in her story.

I realized the way to Martina's voice was to use metaphors to create her back-story, to go back in time to her background: the difficulties with her Mother (a universal condition), the loss of her grandfather (death of a life-style), coupled with the inevitable loss of endangered species, e.g. her grandfather's safari hunting expeditions,

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“the glass eyes that followed me down the tiled hall to my room. The head lay, mouth open. Sharp yellowing teeth up and down. Lifeless. Granddad's tiger shot on safari, skies of velvet studded with twinkling jewels, cigar smoke and Glenfiddich around the fire, cooking clean-up as staff prepared breakfast and lunch for the next day, four course meals with Zebra stew and Baobab jelly,”

(*Salt Of Our Blood*, p. 100).

bar-stools covered in whale foreskin, her broken doll (*Salt Of Our Blood*, p. 4), her passion for the sea, where she did her best thinking (p.122), wanting to be a mermaid with reference to Kingsley's *The Waterbabies* (p. 8), and her Ophelia try-out to join her lost ones (p. 223).

Unknown to herself, Martina is searching for love though unfulfilling liaisons, and success through a bottle shaped mirage in the form of a chalice, a trophy with no bottom, a useless cup that can't hold anything. Martina's alcoholic dependency veils her self-belief, stops her finding, seeing what love is and blinds her to the duplicity of other narratives, e.g. the men in her life, Henry, Warren and Laurent.

My secondary character of young Maori boy Matt, which won first prize in the inaugural 2012 Christine Cole Catley Short Story Competition, (interestingly, the judge Judith White was sure a male had written *Matt's Story*) developed through metaphor to explain his background and life choices. As he is disenfranchised from the tenets of his culture, he is confused as to his path in life for there is little support from his relevant discourse, largely over-ridden by the values of colonization.

Fascinated with the Maori art and essential skill of weaving, which I have referred to in this document as tukutuku, I have attempted to

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unfold a narrative, weave a tale in *Salt Of Our Blood*. When young women learn the skill of weaving, necessary because of the need for clothes, ropes and snares to fish and catch food with and containers for food, there is initially a sacred or tapu ritual, “to belong to the school of weaving of Hine-te-iwaiwa,” the Goddess of weaving and plaiting (Riley, 2005). Martina further explores her thoughts, threads to weave in her life

“And it'd seemed to me that LoVe came in different strengths, the difference between gossamer thread for embroidering fine silk, coarse brown string to wrap cardboard boxes or the heavy rope that was attached to chains to sink the anchor down deep” (p.9).

Also Martina learns of Warren's infidelity

“My voice was low, strangled by the knowledge thread twisting and weaving around my gut,” (p.79)

and the oblique reference to strangulation, when

“we dragged ropes of kai (food) into the dinghy” (p.84),

and again when Martina visits the Free-mantle Prison after a one-night stand

“The Hangman's Noose, a game Tomas and I played with me usually winning when the stick figure, neither male or female, complete with eyes, ears and a mouth, was swinging from the thick rope.” (p.298).

Arundhati Roy (1997) in *The God of Small Things* uses metaphors to create each character, e.g. Rahel's toy wristwatch with the time painted on it, (p. 37) represents her ambition to own a watch, a Western tradition, a way of fitting into the world of post-colonialization, the only world she has known.

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Also Velutha, a Paravan (Untouchable), Ammu's lover, killed by his father for crossing the line of class segregation, holds a red flag, red being considered the colour of courage as demonstrated by (Mary, Queen of Scots and her defiant red petticoats when she was to be beheaded after being betrayed) or sin (Mary Magdalen's red hair played by Martina as a child, (*Salt Of Our Blood*, p. 9) and Warren's red skirted Jezebel (p. 37).

Roy illuminates the predicament of those who converted to Christianity, giving up their caste so they are neither one nor the other after Independence, vilified by all. Roy also discusses the over-laying connotations of English when the twins are fined for speaking Malayalam and made to write lines, 'impositions,' "I will always speak in English" (*God of Small Things*, p. 36) repeatedly and have to learn an English car-song (*Rejoice in the Lord*), when they meet their English cousin.

The Kathakali men in the temple, whom Roy describes, tell the stories of the Gods and Rachel understands that "the Great Stories are the ones you have heard and want to hear again," "They are as familiar as the house you live in," (p. 229) but the traditional tales are often pushed aside by western ways of ambition to be bus-conductors and clerks.

The dislocated abandoned Kathakali men are angry, have no position in society except to keep on telling stories, take drugs, then go home to beat their wives (p. 231) which also echoes in Matt's and Martina's disjointed, non-sequential narrative of reliving previously suppressed, painful memories which is often expressed in short sentences.

Given that boat-racing emulates the sea-battles of yesteryear

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(*Battle of Lepanto*, see **Text to World**) and in Ted Turner's actual words, he says:

“Sports is like a war without the killing,” drawled Ted Turner dragging out words as though to emphasize the battle aspect of the next few weeks. I opened my mouth but, old war-dog Huw with his eye-patch replied,

“That's the beauty of sports, isn't it Ted?” replied Huw (*Salt Of Our Blood*, p. 185).

The style or voice used in my novel and emulated in this exegesis, has been identified as similar to that the post-colonial writer, e.g. Robin Hyde, Keri Hulme, Janet Frame, Witi Ihimaera, Arundhati Roy and Jean Rhys.

I relate to the bitter-sweet, the light touch where I laugh when something is tooth-achingly poignant but caught in a fine net of humour or irony eg; Robin Hyde (1989) in *Wednesday's Children*, “looking like his own wraith ('How handy that he won't need a winding sheet when he dies,' thought Mr. Bellister)” (p. 70).

My study of Jean Rhys's (1966) novel *Wide Sargasso Sea*, concerning post modern and post colonial values, affected me deeply. The study of Antoinette's situation, the intimacy and the hatred between herself and her servant Christophine, caught in a oppressive patriarchal society (an arranged marriage because of her inheritance, her value, an exchange similar to the previous state of her slaves who were demanding their freedom) where she is neither a white European nor a black Jamaican, highlighted themes of racial inequality, what it means to be displaced and the difficulties of assimilation (Maori and Pakeha) as taught to me in the 1960s. The settler reaffirms his superior position which requires his subordinates, the Other to see him as

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master which affirms his dependent position as Master (Ashcroft, et al., Eds., 1995).

The heat in Rhys's (1966) *Wide Sargasso Sea*, the burning of Antoinette's home, the parrot in flames and her burning of Mr Rochester's home, represents the powerlessness of the oppressed, and the dilemma of suttee where a Hindu widow cremates herself on her dead husband's funeral pyre, banned, as suicide is against the beliefs of post-colonial rule therefore she is vilified by her own people. I also noted how Rhys uses the metaphor of hair to portray a character's psyche, state of mind, e.g. madness or sanity which was considered a contribution to the academic study of this classic novel.

I have used lists in *Salt Of Our Blood* to open an instant portal into the character's psyche and to allow a subconscious image to build for the reader, e.g. the contents of Gill's handbag when she drops it (p. 76), Martina's musical cigarette holder with her six treasures (p. 23), and the description of the food and the kindergarten where Martina's birthday party is held (p. 20).

Like Jane Eyre and Antoinette, Martina had a troubled childhood and is counter culture, outside of the normal culture. She discards her father's name, the patronymic values of her world, is a female individualist often disillusioned and contemptuous of male conduct whilst being sympathetic to Maori. In my novel Lilly, a mature Maori woman (confidante to Martina, Aunt to Martina's initial partner Warren and Matt's Grandmother) straddles her ideology, as much of it as she has been able to understand later in life, and that of the post-colonial narrative. Whereas Matt, an important character in *Salt Of Our Blood*, is a dark counter balance to Martina's light and perceived frivolity.

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Maori youth Matt, dislocated from the values of his people grows up confused because of the different voices that have influenced him. His Aunt wants him to have a traditional moko and speak Maori, while his angry Father wants Matt to embrace the pakeha way in a predominantly pakeha world, so denies his son the Maori voice. Matt's grandfather wants to combine Western concepts and practices and traditional culture to create tikanga Maori (something new).

Joseph Campbell's *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* (1968) illuminated for me how mankind's inspirational myths can further our 'journey'. And how flawed character Martina, in her journey hampered by her myths of old overcomes her weaknesses by constructing new myths to overcome and achieve her dream. Matt becomes the nemesis or the darkness within us all as he struggles in the middle of an unjust world..

Anthropologist Campbell states that there are stages in the mono-myth, e.g. Christ, Osiris, God of the Afterlife, Star-Wars, summarised as follows,

“A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man.” (Campbell, 1968, p.30).

Myths often trace the hero/heroine's descent into the Underworld, which may result in depression, hysterics, nightmares, even coma, then dismemberment and death may occur with the final stage depicting the integration of a new persona and great significant teachings, all of which

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follow the recommended trajectory for the plot of a novel as I have emulated in Salt Of Our Blood.

Text to World

New Zealand's primary school curriculum in the 1950s included 'Janet and John' readers which exhorted British values, e.g. pride in the importance of being a part of the pink Commonwealth on the world map (Martina as a young girl, wonders why men painted a pink Commonwealth?) and sweeping the leaves of deciduous trees for the Guy Fawkes bonfire whereas the reality of a Kiwi Guy Fawkes bonfire, was a cold summer's night in a paddock of gorse, planted by settlers with native pungas and manuka bent by the wind.

Slogans promoting “Buy British it's Best,” notions of Princesses and Queens (not gay) (Patheway News reels at the beginning of movies, where we stood for the Anthem God Save the Queen) showed hatted and white gloved royalty meeting their Princes, reinforced by pantomimes of *Cinderella*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Alice in Wonderland* (where with Shakespearean overtones the Dame was always a man) which portrayed subliminal messages of rags to riches, scheming men who were wolves, and the absolute power of the Queen.

Standard reading for New Zealand *girls* in the 1950-60s were Grimm's fairy-tales *Rapunzel* (let down your golden hair to be rescued) and the *Frog Prince* (Martina comments on 'kiss the frog who'll turn into a prince' and

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you'll live happily forever) and Hans Christian Anderson's *The Little Match Seller* (suffering of girls), *Hansel and Gretel* (evil is around the corner), *The Princess and the Pea*, (princesses have comfort), which again reinforced European concepts of tradition and values.

In the south of England, Henry the Eighth built a line of fortresses for protection from French invaders, (my ancestors) and the ancient ships *Mary Rose* and *Nelson's Victory* created images which were enhanced by my visits to English coastal villages, the homes of sailors including: Whitby-- Captain Cook, Devon--Raleigh and Drake; then north to Caithness, home of my relatives, descendants of the Picts and the Norse, and the Shetland islands, home of the best sailors, who were press-ganged most often and where the land is bare for the trees were felled to make boats for fishing and exploration.

In Moscow an exhibition of old Russian paintings which depicted the straight tall trees of Siberian forests, felled to use as masts to explore and find wealth for Catherine The Great's (possibly the first feminist) coffers, now the snowy barren deserts of Siberia, identified that mankind, not just the Colonials and Maori, have decimated the world's natural habitats. The world's fascination with exploration was apparent when I found some of Captain Cook's South Pacific artefacts in The Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg.

I visited the Spanish ports of: Valencia (America's Cup where I was invited to watch the races along with the wealthy who paid 500 Euro for the privilege) and Barcelona where great galleons were built (The 1571 Battle of Lepanto, The Holy League Christians against the Ottomans, possibly the

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biggest turning point in naval history).

Maritime museums in England, (National Maritime Museum where John Harrison solved the problem of longitude and keeping accurate time at sea), Denmark (restored Viking long-ships, built 10th Century used for war and exploration), Hong Kong (The Opium Wars and Spice trade) Holland, (exhibition depicting the history of the The Dutch East India Trade Company) and Spain (The Royal Dockyards, Reials Drassanes the world's largest, 13th C shipyard, where elderly artisans recreate votives (replicas of ships of old--offerings made to God by sailors if they are saved from death) furthered my understanding of the history of trade, exploration, colonization and the resulting consequences for people living under a foreign power that resonates today in New Zealand and my novel.

The 1980s decade of excess was a story, where we all assumed that everyone was living the champagne lifestyle in the glass-windowed (the buildings of Chase, the fairy-tale royalty of the times, who went bust, and Richwhite, wealthy beyond dreams yet accused of insider trading) mythical houses of cards. Perhaps the reality is it was just a part of a story that supplanted other stories, in the same way as Matt saw the America's Cup narrative supplant the myths of his own Maori history.

Salt of Our Blood's America's Cup narrative, in tandem with Prime Minister Lange's Oxford Union Speech (1st March 1985), acted out in *Salt Of Our Blood* by the Top Twins (iconic New Zealand lesbian comedians) busking in *Free-mantle* (where Martina finally becomes unshackled from her past), gave New Zealanders a new and separate identity in the global arena, one

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that moved away from the association of sacrifice within the eternal Galipoli narrative, and the All Black mythology, widely promoted for the recent 2012 World Cup, similar to the gladiators fighting in the Colosseum, or the Greek Gods hurling arrows at each other.

In summation: Both Martina and Matt are members of minorities in an era struggling to move away from oppressors such as post-colonialism and traditional biases and prejudices of the time. The eighties was a pivotal time of people trying to break away, change the accepted order--minorities such as women, the Gay movement, Maori Renaissance (I am uncomfortable with this European term, but can find no other word to for the rich revival of a culture, a dying race which Goldie the New Zealand artist faithfully recorded for posterity) as the world tottered on the brink of globalisation--a glimmer of which I have portrayed in *Salt of Our Blood*.

Woven through my tukutuku are threads of relationship Maori, all New Zealanders and those of other post-colonial groups share, as we try to make sense of the fast-moving, perpetuated by digitised and computerized globalised tentacles that threaten to strangle, no, intertwine us in a vast polymorphic tutkutuku world.

I want to leave the reader of *Salt of Our Blood* with the question; Why does Matt attack the symbol, the trophy? Is it because of powerlessness and the feeling that he can't attack the root cause of his dislocation?

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