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## Abstract

Land and place figure heavily in official narratives about nationhood. They act as a framing device for stories that speak to a territorialized sense of belonging and citizenship in the modern nation state. In post-settler societies where indigenous groups maintain unresolved claims over the land, however, the nation’s geographical imagination and memory of itself is underscored by deep-seated anxiety and unease. In these contexts, land is associated with “home” but also with dispossession and violence. Within these unsettled landscapes, the tribal geographies of indigenous young people and their everyday place-making activities are often positioned negatively by the state as a form of cultural disruption and resistance to official memory regimes.

Drawing on previous research, this chapter explores how indigenous young people are positioned within official national identity discourses and argues that in post-settler societies, historical constructions of land and childhood converge in ways that directly exclude them from many contemporary notions of citizenship. One of the responses that indigenous young people have to these exclusions

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from formal state narratives is to mobilize a range of cultural and geographical imaginaries located within their own readings of history and culture which provide a basis for territorialized memories and identities that sit outside dominant state discourses. This chapter concludes with the argument that indigenous Māori young people in New Zealand “speak back” to their exclusion from official state narratives by constructing their own cultural memories of place and belonging. These territorialized memories offer alternative spaces for the development of a sense of cultural belonging in the present.

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**Keywords**

Indigenous children • Nationhood • Land • Place • Māori

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## 1 Introduction

Post-settler nation-building often involves a complex series of negotiations about the conflicts and unresolved tensions of the past. At the heart of many of these conflicts are competing claims over land and land tenure. In societies where indigenous groups have experienced land loss, land confiscation, and land alienation in their dealings with the state and its agents, contemporary discourses about national unity tend to be fractured, partial, and incomplete. Yet tropes of the land are central to official memory regimes; they signify notions of home, place attachment, belonging, and citizenship for many different groups of people (Chang 2010). Where unreconciled and contested memories about land and place persist in the present, however, and where historical injustices against indigenous groups remain in contention, the geographical imagination of the nation moves uneasily between land narratives that are remembered by some groups but rejected or forgotten by others. Within the body politic, this weaving between social memory and collective amnesia about land, people, and place can in itself serve as a kind of connective tissue between groups with competing frames of reference, but more often, unresolved conflict over land and all that it symbolizes disrupt official narratives about the past. Elazar Barkin (2001) argues that when historical identities and national identities encroach on one another and compete for the same spaces and resources, different groups must negotiate with each other and mediate between different versions of history in order to find a way of coexisting. Certainly, in societies where indigenous and post-settler populations lay claim to the same physical territories, deep rifts are exposed in the story of the nation as an imagined community bound by “a deep and horizontal comradeship” (Anderson 2006, p. 7).

Panelli et al. (2008) contend that complex readings of ethnicity are embedded in the social and spatial significance of land and argue that in this respect, power relations are heavily implicated in struggles over place. This is particularly the case in post-settler societies where nation-building narratives are overlaid by highly ethnicized representations of land and landscape (Kong and Yeoh 2003). These intersecting ideas have their origins in colonial interactions where land was a ubiquitous presence in the unfolding national saga. Indeed, in many former

colonies, land narratives sit at the heart of stories about early indigenous-settler encounters. It is portrayed variously as having been fought over and lost by some groups while claimed by others. At the same time, it provided a source of sustenance and the means of survival, as well as marketable resources for imperial economies. It is also represented as the site of ancestral tribal homelands and a place of settlement or refuge for groups who had left their “motherlands” (Valenčius 2004).

In many ways, these colonial era stories are still being rehearsed today, and it is within these contexts that many indigenous young people develop their own sense of memory and place. This chapter examines how post-settler representations of indigenous and Anglo childhoods reflect widespread and long-standing anxieties about land and national memory regimes. In particular, it explores how tropes of land and childhood converge in ways that racialize, essentialize, and exclude the everyday geographies of indigenous children and young people in the present. One of the responses that indigenous young people have to these exclusions from formal state narratives is to mobilize a range of cultural and geographical imaginaries located within their own readings of history and culture that provide a basis for territorialized memories and identities that sit outside dominant state discourses.

This chapter is divided into four parts. In the first part, notions of post-settler place belonging and place exclusion are explored. This is followed by a discussion about place exclusion and indigenous children who, placed at the center of the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century colonial enterprise, were included in the nation-building narrative as “honorary white” citizens-in-the-making at precisely the same time that many indigenous communities were experiencing widespread alienation from their ancestral or tribal land base. The third part of this chapter examines the construction of post-settler childhoods and the associated erasures of indigenous place identities from nationalist narratives at a time when post-settler relationships with nature, the “wilderness,” and the “frontier” were changing. The chapter concludes with the argument that indigenous Māori young people in contemporary post-settler states “speak back” to their exclusion from official state narratives by creating their own cultural memories of place and belonging and that these territorialized memories offer alternative spaces for the development of a sense of cultural belonging in the present.

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## 2 Land, Belonging, and Exclusion

Trudeau (2006) argues that when people form affinities with distinct territories from which they draw meaning, identity, and a sense of continuity across time and space, belonging becomes “inherently spatial” (Trudeau 2006, p. 423). He contends that the notion of territorialized belonging is central to understanding the control of social space, since belonging and exclusion are integral to the “production of social spaces such as landscapes and place” (Trudeau 2006, p. 423). It is in this way that material “places” acquire symbolic significance and can be woven into national memories. As Edensor (1997) following Boyarin argues, the mapping of “history

onto territory” (Edensor 1997, p. 175) is central to the construction of official remembrance and identity that sits within the nationalist project.

In many post-settler nations, the relationship between landscape, memory, and nationalism, however, is complicated by the marginalization, erasure, or official “forgetting” of indigenous claims to land. Panelli et al. (2008) argue that in New Zealand, for example, the representation and mythologizing of rural land and its associated place identities is often highly racialized. In this regard, “history is mapped onto territory” in ways that forget the indigenous groups that came before. They contend that the construction of a romanticized “white” landscape is not simply a matter of emphasizing the occupation of land by “white” ethnicities; it is also a means of silencing other ethnicities. Correspondingly, Cerwonka (2004) contends that in Australia, “[t]he aesthetic production of the landscape was a useful method for mystifying the colonial appropriation of land underway in Australia. Turning the Australian continent into an English countryside and farmland helped erase the physical evidence of Aboriginal presence and influence on the land” (Cerwonka 2004, p. 66). In America too, Anglo-American identity and citizenship at the turn of the twentieth century was expressed, in part, through pastoral imagery of men who had conquered the wilderness and transformed it into pastureland and gardens. Domosh (2002) argues that this imaginary of an American arcadia was incorporated into state representations of national identity that provided an ideological justification for the expansion into the West that ultimately led to Native American land alienation and subsequent resettlement by Anglo-American pioneering families.

These colonial representations of the land as being an unoccupied and “ownerless” space prior to European settlement are closely associated with the doctrine of *terra nullius*. The concept of *terra nullius* as it was applied in Australia, for example, effectively expunged indigenous history and place-making practices from the official colonial record by providing a rationale for the colonial government to claim ownership of the continent (Buchan and Heath 2006; Kelly 2011/2012). Similarly, the colonial notion of *terra nullius* underscores contemporary readings of the Canadian “wilderness” that portrays the land as a pristine environment untouched by humans. Dent (2013) argues that this framing of the land negates the indigenous landscapes and place-making activities that existed prior to European contact and which, in many cases, were maintained long afterwards. In this respect, the “spatialisation of public memory” (Johnson 1995, p. 63) in post-settler societies, and the deployment of heritage landscapes and rural iconographies, plays a pivotal role in constructions of the nation as a site of racialized inclusions and exclusions that disguise or marginalize the claims of indigenous groups.

At the same time, as the romantic pastoral discourses that underpinned nineteenth-century imperial expansion were providing a way of imagining land as a series of material and symbolic spaces that could be secured for colonial administrations, cultural understandings of childhood were undergoing a similar and related transformation in the rapidly industrializing nations of Western Europe. Taylor (2011) argues that in these increasingly urbanized environments, the “romantic sublime,” the notion of a pure, unpeopled bucolic landscape, was

conflated with changing attitudes and beliefs about childhood. She notes that the eighteenth-century French writer and philosopher, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, was highly influential in bringing together these ideas about nature and childhood in his book, *Emile*, a story about the development of a child raised in an idealized state of nature away from the “corrupting” influence of society. Taylor (2011) contends,

The most radically pure and separate form of externalized nature, consecrated wilderness becomes the moral compass against which human actions can be judged. From the wilderness example it is easy to see how the moral authority of essentialized nature can and has been deployed to naturalize particular social and cultural understandings of childhood. (Taylor 2011, p. 427)

This view of childhood as a form of moral authority that is equated with “goodness,” innocence, and vulnerability has been described as “the last refuge of unexamined essentialism” (Crain 1999, p. 553). Here, childhood is conceptualized as intrinsically “good,” but at the same time, it is also conceived in terms of ontological incompleteness, a blank slate upon which experience shall eventually be written (Katz 2008). In this respect, childhood comes to be seen as a space of possibility and futurity that is overwritten with ideals of moral virtue, but in colonial contexts, it can also be represented allegorically as a form of terra nullius, something that can be shaped, defined, and ultimately possessed by others. These tropes are embedded in the cultural politics of childhood and are played out in contemporary post-settler citizenship narratives in particular ways. For example, James (2011) argues that these cultural politics are critical to understanding how citizenship and nationhood are experienced by children and young people in any society. She contends that although they vary from nation to nation and there are also significant *within*-nation modalities of childhood, the representation of childhood as a form of morality, a tabula rasa, and as citizenship *in potentia* continues to exert a powerful hold on the imagination.

In a sense, however, children’s inclusion in national histories and colonial narratives is always partial because of the persistence of representations of children and young people as potential citizens rather than full members of society. In this regard, colonial children, like colonial representations of the “wilderness” and the “untamed” rural landscape, exist largely outside the nation’s authority except as a conceptual space that can eventually be shaped, defined, and reconfigured by the mores, values, and priorities of adults. On the other hand, the presence of indigenous children and young people confounds these narratives and exposes their ethnicized nature. This can be seen most clearly in the colonial response to the “native question” which, in many countries, was to place indigenous children and young people at the center of the “civilizing” mission and, in doing so, bring them more completely under state authority in order for the reshaping and reconstructing process to take place. In British colonies during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this was carried out through an assimilationist agenda whereby citizenship for indigenous groups was envisaged as a process of absorbing native peoples into colonial society. Integral to this ideological practice was the expectation that they would relinquish their languages and cultures of origin and fully embrace

Western values and lifestyles. Belich (2001) argues that in the New Zealand context, this involved the desire to reinvent indigenous Māori as “honorary whites” or “brown Britons” (Belich 2001, p. 189).

Insofar as indigenous children were concerned, they were considered to be “honorary white” citizens-in-the-making, and as such many colonial administrations instituted a series of measures intended to accelerate the “civilizing” mission. In Australia, for example, government authorities took legal guardianship of all Aboriginal children and ordered the brutal and systematic forced removal of those children from their families and communities (van Krieken 1999). Elsewhere, in North America and Canada, indigenous children were placed in racially segregated residential or day schools away from their communities of origin where they were expected to adopt Western cultural mores and ways of life (de Leeuw 2009; Ellinghaus 2006). In other countries, such as parts of Africa, village-based native schooling systems were established. These kinds of “village-based” colonial interventions, where indigenous children remained in their tribal communities during their early years of schooling, reflected a more hegemonic form of state control whereby authority was exercised through strategic alliances with carefully selected native networks rather than by direct and overtly violent means (Mamdani 1999). The native school system in New Zealand, from its inception, was directly linked to the government agenda to “civilize” Māori children and prepare them to take up citizenship roles in New Zealand society as quickly as possible (Barrington 2008). In this respect, village-based native schooling provided a vehicle for the colonial government to enact assimilationist policies within tribal contexts. These ideologies ultimately had a far-reaching and devastating impact on many Māori communities, particularly as the number of Māori language speakers decreased and these numbers have never recovered. Thus, it is clear that while Anglo colonial children were represented symbolically within the nation-building narrative as a form of terra nullius, or as tabulae rasae awaiting some form of “cultural inscription,” indigenous children were seen as requiring a much more elaborate preparation for colonial citizenship – one that involved the erasure, and in some cases the complete eradication, of native cultures, languages, and ways of life.

These attempts at the regulation and control of indigenous lives, and in particular the lives of indigenous children and young people, sit right at the heart of an “ontological unease” that besets post-settler nations (Bell 2009, p. 145). Here, there is recognition that the apparently benign romanticism of nineteenth-century representations of colonial land and indigenous people carried with it a deep racist and evolutionary premise that resulted, in many instances, in atrocities and injustices perpetrated against native populations (Bell 2006). Accordingly, in cases where the conquest of native populations is a foundational event in a nation’s history or where unresolved historical injustices are carried across generations, official “forgetting” about conflict bolsters the “illusion of the nation’s historical innocence” (Huhndorf 2001, p. 11; but see also Scheckel 1998). However, where these injustices remain in contention, Bell (2006) argues that the history of Anglo settlement becomes “an increasingly problematic ground to assert a sense of cultural identity” (Bell 2006, p. 256). In this respect, place identities in post-settler

contexts are complicated by the unfinished stories of the cultural encounters of the past, but the centrality of land in national narratives continues to frame these unsettled relationships in the present. With regard to children and young people in post-settler societies, these discourses are overlaid by intersecting discourses about land and childhood that affect the way that citizenship is conceived and put into practice. The enactment of these perspectives in contemporary state narratives involves negotiating between nostalgic depictions of land and childhood as they figure in national imaginaries and the highly racialized sentiments that underpin those notions. This can be seen in state educational policy relating to young people and post-settler readings of the “outdoors” as is discussed below.

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### 3 Young People and the Racializing of the “Wilderness”

One of the central ideas that cuts across nineteenth- and early twentieth-century colonial thought is the trenchant belief that native populations would inevitably die out as a direct result of contact with European “civilization.” Brantlinger (2003) refers to this as “extinction discourse,” a distinctive aspect of the closely connected creeds of imperialism and racism. He argues,

A remarkable feature of extinction discourse is its uniformity across other ideological fault lines: whatever their disagreements, humanitarians, missionaries, scientists, government officials, explorers, colonists, soldiers, journalists, novelists, and poets were in basic agreement about the inevitable disappearance of some or all primitive races. This massive and rarely questioned consensus made extinction discourse extremely potent, working inexorably toward the very outcome it often opposed. (Brantlinger 2003, pp. 1–2)

Extinction discourse (sometimes referred to as “fatal impact”) became part of the colonial mindset in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as indigenous populations around the world sharply declined in the aftermath of contact with Europeans. There were many reasons for this; Brantlinger (2003) cites war, violence, genocide, and the introduction of diseases into populations that had not yet had time to build immunity. In colonial societies around the world, however, the rarely questioned notion that indigenous peoples were inevitably doomed as a result of their encounters with “civilization” gave rise to a nostalgic or “sentimental racism” (Brantlinger 2003, p. 1) whereby native races were at once mourned, eulogized, and ultimately ennobled and valorized as the innocent victims of a tainted and degenerate Western civilization.

At the same time as these extinction discourses were playing out, settler anxieties about the loss of indigenous wilderness spaces were also intensifying. Massive clearances of land for agricultural use in places like New Zealand and Australia led to the widespread destruction of native habitats as forested areas made way for pasture or, as Dominy (2002) describes, “the telltale patchwork quilt of European settlement” (Dominy 2002, p. 15). Native flora and fauna served as much a psychological and aesthetic need for settlers as it did a commercial one, however,

and as the long-term environmental effects of these practices became apparent, it seemed to them that indigenous landscapes and indigenous peoples were destined to die out altogether (Star and Lochhead 2003). These regrets combined with a guilty, “sentimental racism” inflected colonial discourses about childhood, ethnicity, and the indigenous wilderness that were positioned together and reified in state narratives of the colonial era.

In many respects, these backcountry tropes continue to be deployed in contemporary state education narratives that extol the wilderness as a place that offers sanctuary and respite from city life for children and young people. For example, the “wild” is often portrayed as a place of healing and therapy for urban young people who have been identified as “difficult” or “troubled.” Certainly, wilderness therapy programs for “high-risk” adolescents have long been connected with other kinds of outdoor education programs such as adventure therapy, Outward Bound courses, forest schools, wilderness education, as well as military-style boot camps designed for young people deemed to be “at risk” (Rutko and Gillespie 2013). It should be noted here that although the positive impact of these kinds of programs is often assumed by educators, social workers, and wilderness therapists, their overall efficacy is under-researched and, as such, open to debate (Ungar et al. 2005).

Yet children and young people are constantly given messages about the need to directly experience and engage with the land, especially when it comes to rural or wilderness environments. Indeed, since the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, outdoor youth movements involving activities such as scouting, hiking, and camping have been closely associated with representations of the wilderness and the construction of social meanings about nature. Early twentieth-century rural landscapes were conceived in this way by adults who saw these spaces as ideal sites for place-making activities that were designed to educate children and young people as well as regulate and monitor their leisure and recreation experiences (Cupers 2008). Implicit in these ideas was the conviction that children would mature into healthy adults if they developed a strong and sympathetic relationship with the natural world (Armitage 2007).

These perspectives were linked to early twentieth-century public discourses about nature and its importance to children’s spiritual, moral, and physical development, but they were eventually incorporated into state education policies and became part of official narratives about nature and childhood that underpinned the nationalist rhetoric of that era. This came about because many early twentieth-century nature study advocates were closely aligned with the emerging progressive education reform movement that actively supported outdoor learning programs. In England and Wales, for example, school nature study organizations had sprung up at the turn of the twentieth century and their claims about the value of putting urban children in touch with nature dovetailed with broader pedagogical concerns about fostering young people’s engagement with science education through increasing their knowledge and awareness of the natural world. In 1905, the Board of Education included a new regulation that British primary school children should be given “observation lessons and nature study” (Jenkins and Swinnerton 1996). These ideas



were widely adopted in the British colonies and were eventually included in school curricula across the British Commonwealth of Nations.

Similar initiatives were introduced in North America in the early years of the twentieth century as the increasingly influential nature study movement successfully argued for the introduction of science into public schools (Kohlstedt 2010). These ideas were also behind the school garden movement that operated in many parts of the United States from the 1890s until the mid-twentieth century (Kohlstedt 2008). Many of these nature study programs reflected the way that proponents of progressive education viewed child development. In particular, they associated the domain of childhood very closely with the natural world, believing that adult intervention was needed in both areas either to protect and regulate or to exalt and enhance them (Kohlstedt 2008). However, these ideas were also shaped by the racial and ethnic discourses of the time. This can be seen in the way in which the progressive educational movement was bolstered by programs developed specifically for children and young people that aimed to connect them with nature and the wilderness. For example, at the turn of the twentieth century, “nature”-oriented youth movements in America had become an important part of many Anglo-American childhoods that were closely associated with the nostalgic ideal of a quietly vanishing world, the colonial frontier.

The League of Woodcraft Indians (later known as the Woodcraft League of America), for instance, was an outdoors club for white American children established by Ernest Thompson Seton in 1902. Seton believed that industrialized urban society had weakened the moral and physical well-being of American children and their families. In response to this, the League of Woodcraft Indians was a youth program that offered boys the opportunity to spend time in the outdoors hunting, camping, and learning frontier skills. Seton looked carefully for exemplars of moral virtue and physical “purity” to serve as a model for the young people who joined the League, and he ultimately turned to American Indians as epitomizing his desired standard of ideal goodness for urban youth (Armitage 2007). To this end, Seton wrote, “the ideal Indian, whether he ever existed or not, stands for the highest type of primitive life, and he was a master of woodcraft, which is our principal study” (Seton 1907, p. 3). Here, constructions of native peoples as noble “primitives” acted as a vehicle for lessons given to white American children about physical and moral virtue, and this was not uncommon in youth programs at the turn of the twentieth century. At the same time, as these activities were taking place, however, real Native Americans were experiencing the devastating impact of the 1851 Indian Appropriations Act that had sanctioned the creation of Indian reservations forcing many tribal communities to surrender large areas of land to the state (Goldstein 2008). It was in this way that a fatal impact model of cultural encounters came to be embedded in an educative process whereby “Indians” could be conceived as poetical ennobled peoples only after the so-called Indian problem had been eliminated and replaced by the notion of native populations as a landless and dying race – victims of the onslaught of civilization and the colonial hunger for land.

Similarly, the early twentieth-century scouting movement in North America also relied heavily on nostalgic notions about the wilderness which was posited as an ideal environment for white American children. The place-making activities of organizations like the Boy Scouts of America during this era took place at a time when the American frontier had closed and notions of the wilderness were being transformed as the modern American city was making incursions into the material landscape and gaining dominance in the national imagination. Cupers (2008) comments that at the same time as learning wilderness skills, boy scouts were also introduced to an invented tradition of “Indianness” that drew on heavily Westernized versions of stories about native American customs and lore. These highly romanticized and ahistorical “traditions” were a feature of many of the social activities that took place in scout camps that involved songs, games, and dressing up as “Indians.” In this respect, indigeneity was reinvented in these contexts as a proxy for Anglo-American masculinity but entirely disconnected with actual native struggles over land that were happening at exactly the same time. As Cupers (2008) notes, the establishment of the National Parks system in the United States forced many native communities off their ancestral lands, but it was also in these same places that scout troops regularly came to set up camp and dress up as “Indians.”

In this respect, the presence of actual indigenous people with real histories of struggle and protest serve as a disruption to these idealized, fetishized, and highly racialized narratives about land acquisition, national histories, and childhood. They fade in and out of official memory according to whose politics and renderings of the past are being summoned. Philip Deloria (1998) has commented on the reliance of Anglo-Americans on native peoples to define their own national identities arguing that “[s]avage Indians served Americans as oppositional figures against whom one might imagine a civilized national Self” (Deloria 1998, p. 3). This idea can be applied more broadly to other post-settler nations where indigenous peoples are frequently positioned ambiguously in national narratives. On one hand they are necessary for the validation of Anglo national identities, but on the other hand, they are largely invisible in pioneering and early settler tales about the acquisition of the land.

In post-settler environments, the nation-building project invokes difficult and frequently unanswered questions about the control of space including questions about who belongs and who is excluded. Cutting across these narratives is a discourse about childhood and place and the racialized nature of the geographical imagination in post-settler memory regimes. At the same time, however, the narrative of the colonized landscape, like the narratives of colonial and indigenous childhoods, is never absolute. There are multiple possibilities involved for children and young people in their reading of these ideas. Moreover, adult constructions of childhood, land, and indigeneity, while constituting very powerful influences in children’s lives, are also partial and cannot ever fully represent the spectrum of young people’s perspectives on these matters. Smith et al. (2002), for example, argue that despite adult constructions of land, place, and childhood dominating public narratives, young people are very adept at reading the world on their own terms and are able to negotiate and construct place identities in their own way. In a

similar vein, Nairn et al. (2003) assert that it is important to speak directly with young people themselves in order to discover their views and experiences of their everyday environments. They argue that young people invariably provide a highly complex and nuanced picture of their engagement with place and public space that can easily be overlooked if others speak on their behalf. A fuller understanding of the way that indigenous youth interact with physical spaces has yet to be developed, and this is an area where further research is needed. However, some of the elements that could potentially be incorporated into future studies, at least in the post-settler context of New Zealand, are explored in the section below.

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## 4 Indigenous Māori Youth Geographies in New Zealand

Frantz Fanon once wrote that “[f]or a colonized people, the most essential value, because it is the most concrete, is first and foremost the land: the land which will bring them bread and, above all, dignity” (Fanon 2001/1963, p. 34). The primacy of land in colonial encounters has ongoing repercussions in contemporary post-settler nations where historical injustices against indigenous peoples are in the process of being formally addressed. In these societies, conflicting memories about the past often rise up in unexpected and uncomfortable ways making it difficult to establish and embed national narratives about harmonious cultural relations in the present. In this respect, cultural identities also have spatial and historical dimensions that shape the way that memory, place attachment, and belonging are articulated within both public and indigenous discourses. Craib (2000) argues, however, that when spatial constructions of identity are historicized and acknowledged, we can begin to conceptualize the cultural and spatial understandings that preceded and coexisted with the colonial enterprise and explore the ways that these perceptions influence contemporary identity formation. This is an important step in thinking about how indigenous young people construct cultural place identities within post-settler spaces.

In the New Zealand context, the centrality of the landscape is deeply ingrained in narratives of national identity. Perry (1994) argues that New Zealanders mobilize and read these images differently from societies whose wealth and well-being do not rest upon agricultural or agrarian economies. These narratives of place have come to be focused on an iconic wilderness, a vast topography of volcanic plateaus, mountains, forests, lakes, and glaciers upon which national imaginaries rest (Le Heron 2004). But the modern New Zealand nation was also built on the colonial acquisition of land held by Māori tribal communities, and tensions continue to simmer as a result. Indeed, the landscape itself has become a metaphor for many of these tensions and silences (Le Heron 2004). This can be seen in the way that the past is represented in the repositories of national memory, such as Te Papa Tongarewa, New Zealand’s national museum, where Māori and Crown conflicts over land are portrayed as a historical concern that has been resolved rather than as a contemporary problem that is still in bitter contention (Labrum 2012; Macdonald 1999). In practice, Māori experienced extensive land loss throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and the subsequent impact on Māori tribal identity, which

is inextricably tied to ancestral and cultural links to particular territories, has been profound. As Smith (2007) notes, “[r]ecovering identities from forced removal has been a long-term intergenerational battle for many” (Smith 2007, p. 70). These intergenerational battles continue to be played out in the present, and this has a considerable impact on the way that many Māori young people engage, and often disengage, with state-sanctioned histories about land and nation.

Consequently, cultural relations between Māori peoples and the Crown are far from reconciled and continue to be the subject of ongoing negotiation and heated debate. Many of these debates now take place within formal state mechanisms that have been specifically created to address Māori grievances against the Crown. These mechanisms have been in place since 1975 when, as a response to growing Māori anger and protest about the colonial “land grab,” the New Zealand government established a Tribunal, known as the Waitangi Tribunal. The purpose of the Waitangi Tribunal is to investigate breaches of the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi – an agreement made between Māori tribes and the Crown which is considered by some to be the founding document of the modern New Zealand nation. It was established at a time when Māori anger about the massive loss of tribal lands threatened to spill into wider civil unrest and the government feared that the protests would take a more violent turn that could not easily be curbed (Celemajer and Kidman 2012). The creation of the Waitangi Tribunal was therefore an attempt to contain that possibility and establish avenues whereby Māori could seek some form of resolution and redress for claims over land and other forms of historical injustice in ways that were less likely to lead to civil disorder (Poata-Smith 2004).

Given these circumstances, New Zealand Māori have become very familiar with historical discourses relating to land and dispossession, yet even those who have experienced tribal deterritorialization either firsthand or as an intergenerational memory continue to draw meaning from places. Nowadays, the majority of Māori young people are located in urban areas at a distance from their tribal homelands, and because of this, many of them do not have day-to-day contact with their tribal communities (Kukutai 2013). Even so, many young people continue to feel a strong sense of affinity with their tribal origins which provides them with a sense of belonging, continuity, and place (Andrews et al. 2012; Hokowhitu 2013). These affinities are particularly important because most Māori young people have direct experience of interpersonal and institutional racism and cultural stigmatization in their daily lives, and this is partly the reason why tribal homelands have such significance as a place that they can call home (Webber 2012). In many ways, these are cultural geographies that sit beneath Māori young people’s everyday sense of place and location which offer them a means of resisting, or at least managing, racism, and stigmatization insofar as they provide a tribalized politics of place. In this regard, young people’s ascription of meaning to tribal homelands can be seen as being much more complex than a nostalgic desire to reinvent cultural traditions that have been lost – these expressions of tribal identity have become a key component of contemporary indigenous identity discourse for Māori children and young people who seek a form of cultural expression that provides them with a territorialized sense of belonging (Kidman 2012).

In addition, Panelli (2008) argues that the construction of homescapes is an important source of resistance for minority groups. She adds that different groups deploy notions of place and home that “provide safety, support, and expression of identity and sustenance of lifestyle” (Panelli 2008, p. 803). In line with this, Coombes et al. (2012) contend that the “spaces for Indigenous belonging and reconciliation are fleeting and tenuous rather than consensual and certain” (Coombes et al. 2012, p. 695). They suggest that because of this ambiguity, the hope expressed by some postcolonial commentators that the recognition of indigenous agency might lead to a greater spirit of reconciliation and belonging always needs to be balanced against the ongoing realities that exist within what they describe as the “persistent geographies of marginalization, disadvantage and desperation” (Coombes et al. 2012, p. 694). The kinds of tribal place identities that are available to Māori young people are discussed below.

#### 4.1 Māori Tribal Place Identities

The importance of the land in maintaining sui generis tribal identities that are reflected in a wide range of Māori cultural and tribal practices cannot be underestimated. For example, the customary forms of greeting that are used at formal gatherings of Māori communities also reflect people’s unique tribal affiliations with particular territories. On these occasions, highly ritualized introductory oratories are delivered that involve a recitation of one’s genealogy (known as *whakapapa*) and an account of one’s tribal area including geographical references to tribal locations such as mountains, rivers, and lakes. Salmon (2005) writes,

One of the most interesting features of Māori oratory is its setting in a mythological landscape, one which would be quite unfamiliar to other New Zealanders. A totally different concept of the country and its history comes into play, and unless the listener roughly knows the landmarks of this landscape, he is liable to get lost. Places are called by their Māori names in direct preference to European equivalents [. . .], and places that are hardly noted on European maps become extremely important. Focal points of Māori settlement, such as Ruatahuna, Ngaruawahia, Ruatoria and so on, are insignificant communities in size and wealth, yet rich in history and *mana*, and they dominate the “Māori” map. Large cities on the other hand, are relatively unimportant, since they are European creations, and recent ones at that. (Salmon 2005, p. 165)

For some Māori young people, these practices offer a way of understanding the natural world that is different from what they learn at school and which legitimizes their connection with particular “spaces.” Māori tribal place identities are also formulated through many other kinds of multigenerational connections with physical territories. Kawharu (2000), for example, contends that a particular form of land guardianship, known as *kaitiakitanga*, is closely associated with Māori tribal identities and it has “a centrality in Māori kin-based communities because it weaves together ancestral, environmental and social threads of identity, purpose and practice” (Kawharu 2000, p. 349ff). In this respect, land and tribal identity are fused into

every aspect of cultural practice relating to the care and custodianship of the environment. At the same time, she argues, the ethic of *kaitiakitanga*, as a form of intergenerational land custodianship and “resource management,” is also becoming more widely used in Māori political claims relating to Crown breaches of the Treaty of Waitangi. Accordingly, contemporary cultural and tribal claims about the care and management of land no longer simply relate to a series of cultural practices. Rather, they have entered political and legal discourse as an assertion of what it means to be Māori in the twenty-first century, although Kawharu (2000) notes that the principles of land protection and conservation tend to be more heavily emphasized in these contexts than other aspects of the ethic which involve spiritual, philosophical, and ethical matters.

The concept of *kaitiakitanga* has also been introduced in many schools although it often appears in a heavily anglicized form. For example, it is frequently cited in environmental education and sustainability programs that focus on people’s civic responsibilities and obligations toward the environment (Tarrant 2010). In this regard, Māori cultural meanings have recently begun to be referenced in a range of education policies and practices, and *kaitiakitanga* is one such concept that has been adapted for use in New Zealand classrooms. The reasons that educators give for wanting to incorporate these elements of Māori cultural meaning into the curriculum often relate to their beliefs about biculturalism and civic and professional responsibilities to reflect bicultural perspectives in their teaching practice (see, e.g., Cosgriff et al. 2012).

In the New Zealand context, biculturalism has become a focal aspect of nationalist discourse, and it carries strong redemptive overtones. Since the 1980s, this discourse has centered on the idea that the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi between Māori peoples and the Crown gave legitimacy to the Pākehā [*New Zealanders with settler origins*] presence in New Zealand. Accordingly, the Treaty of Waitangi is represented as the foundation document of New Zealand and is widely perceived as the basis of a unique relationship between two parties, namely, Māori and Pākehā, who are portrayed as the founding peoples of the nation (Bell 2009). Nationalist rhetoric since the 1980s has focused on the notion that a “partnership of equals” exists between Māori and non-Māori. This partnership is seen by many as defining New Zealand as a modern nation that is at peace with its “Treaty partners” – namely, indigenous Māori people. The strong nationalist overtone in the language of Treaty partnership has since entered into educational policy and practice where it is often referred to as an actuality rather than as a highly aspirational goal for future cultural relationships.

While biculturalism has become the default narrative of state policy makers and educators, it has also been challenged by many Māori scholars and political activists. For example, O’Sullivan (2014) describes the instatement of biculturalism as “a state-initiated strategy of containment which understates the extent of indigenous aspirations” for self-determination (O’Sullivan 2014, p. 30). In a similar vein, Bell (2009) argues that although the nationalist rhetoric of biculturalism was brought in as an attempt to solve the problem of representing the past, the issue

still remains because in practice, bicultural discourse tends to reify Pākehā identity as the dominant one (Bell 2009).

Here it can be seen that despite Māori young people being positioned within curriculum policy and practice as “bicultural Treaty partners” and as legitimate “citizens-in-the-making,” these perspectives emerge from a state imaginary that acknowledges the violent past but insists that cultural reconciliation has taken place. In the official story of the nation, we are all now “equal” partners who are depicted as sharing common goals and concerns and committed to a common future. However, in the face of ongoing Māori struggles for recognition and autonomy, this notion does not touch the reality of many Māori children’s lives, nor does it address the very real disparities in Māori health, education, economic, housing, and employment outcomes. For this reason, tribal place identities that sometimes, at least, manage to sit outside of state power relations continue to hold a great deal of appeal for Māori young people who, to borrow a term from Paul Goodman (1960), are “growing up absurd,” in the trenches of state-organized systems.

But if tribal narratives hold meaning for young people and provide them with a sense of belonging, there are also dilemmas associated with these kinds of identity-making practices. Sissons (2004), for example, argues that some forms of identity construction can limit and constrain options for indigenous peoples. In the New Zealand context, he argues that post-settler nationhood has permanently changed the cultural landscape for both Māori and non-Māori alike, and for that reason, manifestations of contemporary cultural identity continue to be heavily influenced and shaped by power relations. He notes that, “[w]hereas settler nationhood required Māori to become Pākehā, post-settler nationhood requires Māori to become Māori” (Sissons 2004, p. 29). Likewise, Castree (2004) contends that indigenous and nonindigenous groups alike may fetishize “place” in order to support their identity claims by valorizing “local knowledge,” “subaltern” identities, and “place-making projects” (Castree 2004, p. 140). He notes that while these identity claims may well be intended as a form of empowerment, the “various geographical imaginations that local actors and institutions have deployed to command their home ‘turf’ have often been chauvinistic, essentialist and exclusive, as opposed to ecumenical, open and inclusive” (Castree 2004, p. 141).

Māori youth geographies are indeed situated within the politics of the subaltern. But in nations where history has disobliged indigenous groups and rendered indigenous young people silent or invisible within the wider nation-building project, and when tribal histories and memories of loss and dispossession are denied or glossed over in official state depictions of the past, young people’s construction of tribal place identities can also become an expression of resistance to these official narratives, and as such they can be seen as acts of conscientization and politicization (see, e.g., Kidman 2012, 2014). These tribal place identities can therefore provide young people with a means of “speaking back” to historical and contemporary injustices at a time when official state discourses have closed down other kinds of spaces for debate to take place. It could well be that young people’s

articulations are sometimes partial, incomplete, and messy, but they are also a way of responding to power relations that have disrupted Māori “spaces” over time, and in this respect, it is within these contexts that new kinds of decolonizing youth geographies may well have the potential to emerge.

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## 5 Conclusion

Across the British empire, romantic and pastoral imagery of colonial childhoods, combined with idealized colonial conceptualizations of wilderness, landscape, and scenery, positioned cultural relationships between indigenous groups and the state in highly oppositional terms. These oppositional relationships were, in any case, the basis of power struggles that took place over land and territory over time. But the conflation of ideas about childhood and land mirrored the racialized nature of colonial understandings about land and indigenous peoples that came to be embedded in modern nation-building stories. In many post-settler societies, these perspectives denied or marginalized indigenous peoples and their place-making activities, histories, memories, and cultural practices as well as their claims to land.

In the New Zealand context, continuing silences about the cultural encounters of the past disrupt national stories that speak of race relations as being resolved and harmonious. The “ontological unease” (Bell 2009) that is produced by these unsettled histories has also provoked a response from many Māori young people who are beginning to find new ways of responding to ongoing tensions over the control of social space. As has been discussed in this chapter, some do this by adopting cultural identities that give them a sense of belonging, acceptance, and place attachment, and this is a form of tribal identity and place-making that carries meaning even for those who reside at a distance from their tribal base. When they adopt these tribal place identities, people can “speak back” in ways that may potentially open up spaces for the creation of redemptive geographies that decolonize and emancipate although much more work is yet to be done if we are to understand the complexities, challenges, and nuances involved.

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