POLYFEST POSTPONED: PERFORMING 'US' IN CHRISTCHURCH IN 2019?

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ATTENDING CHRISTCHURCH POLYFEST, 2019

On 16 March 2019, I was particularly interested in attending Christchurch Polyfest. I was at the time supervising the Honours project of Feleti Pesefea, a postgraduate student who for many years has acted as a mentor for young people within the city's Samoan community, and who has directed their annual performances in Polyfest. He was then in the process of devising a group performance for his Honours project, working with twenty young people to adapt elements of traditional Samoan ensemble song and movement to tell stories of the Mau Movement for independence in Samoa in the 1920s. The

intentions of the project were twofold: first, to enable young New Zealand-born Samoans to learn of the history of their own culture, and second, for them to create performance to speak of the Mau Movement to a local Christchurch audience a century later. I wanted to see how his work had emerged out of Christchurch Polyfest, a performance phenomenon of which I had remained largely unaware, despite some twenty years' residence in the city.

In Auckland, Polyfest is a big event, an intense and competitive celebration and showcase of Maori and Pacific dance in which hundreds of performers from a wide range of high schools participate. It originated in Hillary College in Otara, in 1976, and has evolved into a major celebration of community through diversity in Auckland, the Pacific city with the largest Polynesian population (see Figure 1).

FIGURE 1: PROMOTION FOR POLYFEST 2019. IMAGE: WWW.ASBPOLYFEST.CO.NZ.

Christchurch Polyfest is a much less competitive and corporate affair that has been staged in the city since 2001. Having never previously attended Polyfest, neither did I, in the end, attend on 16 March 2019. I wish to give here an account of what transpired in that postponement of Polyfest, of how that particular performance of community and diversity, and the hope and resistance engendered by the schools' climate strike taking place at around the same time, were both derailed. They were derailed by an act of extreme hatred, intended to affirm white supremacist identity – a calling on identity in its narrowest and most violent sense. I also wish to give an account of how the city responded to that act. I intend to do so by trying to retrace my path through the particular histories and haecceities of the city at that time. Questions were raised then that continue to be raised. Who gets to be included in the 'we' and 'us' of a city – and within the various communities that make up a city? Are there different levels of inclusion, some more grudging and contingent than others, some, in fact, barely inclusion at all? Does inclusion within the term 'us' necessarily depend upon the exclusion of others categorised as 'them'? These questions relate very much to more widely prevalent contemporary political crises: the policing of identity in the refugee crisis playing out at the borders of the Global North, the rise of identity as inward-looking nationalism and populism, and a supposed crisis of assimilation of 'other' cultures within self-proclaimed progressive nation states.

HOSPITALITY AND HOSTILITY

At the core of these questions is the ethical relationship with the stranger or other. Derrida has articulated the often impossible tensions of this relationship as a paradox of hospitality and hostility. In *Acts of Religion*, he coined the neologism 'Hostipitality'[1] to articulate what so often becomes the double-edged sword of hospitality and hostility. The one who offers hospitality always does so with strings attached; the one who is offered hospitality becomes bound by ties of obligation. In fact, both parties become bound by such ties. In French, this becoming caught up in mutual obligation is captured in the word 'hôte' that can mean *both* 'host' and 'guest'. Derrida, drawing on the work of Levinas, goes back to Old Testament sources to expose how in 'unconditional hospitality' one must utterly efface oneself to become truly hospitable, to the point of injury, or even death. This opens up the contradictions of the relationship of hospitality through an acknowledgement of the impossibility of absolute hospitality. On a more pragmatic and everyday level, this revelation of the radical nature of hospitality exposes the shallowness of many forms of contemporary 'ethical' initiatives toward inclusion, and perhaps deconstructs the implicit hostility underlying such attempts. One example of this, within my own field of experience, is the professed desire of governments, funding and arts organisations to include people with disabilities in contemporary theatre. This is often no more than the urge to tick boxes, to cover backs, to appear progressive and inclusive without wishing to pick up the tab of the ongoing support, training

and equitable recompense that would comprise a meaningful welcome and inclusion for people with disabilities into the institutions of theatre.

I wish to give an account of moving through Otautahi/ Christchurch in mid-March 2019, moving through a city reconstituting itself, a city unfinished, in various states of transition. Christchurch is a city of different tribes and communities, but how easily and readily do they connect? The city is a palimpsest composed of layers of colonialism and postcolonialism, and, at the same time, subject to the pressures of globalism and global movements of peoples, transactions and ideas, some welcome and some most unwelcome. I need to acknowledge that this will be an awkwardly performative account. It will be awkward and prone to detours and mis-steps in the confusion of the city under reconstruction. It will switch between the personal, the scholarly, and various other voices. This is partly because the events I speak of define who 'I' am in this account. They define my positionality and privilege as well as my desire for deep emotional engagement with these events. Any account, however, always misses, or is inadequate to, personal and shared experience. My account is other to me in two ways: first in that others always already speak through my voice, and second in that the account always misses the experiences of others that I cannot share, however great my desire to sympathise, to empathise and to identify. In addition, this account is awkwardly performative because the events that occurred seemed to prompt, and continue to prompt, the performance of a response that

could unite 'us' that could comprehend, or heal the rift in the social bond, but to date all such responses seem inadequate.

In *Monolingualism of the Other*, Derrida locates the paradox and aporia at the root of a whole constellation of intersubjective and interpersonal relations around the ideas of giving, giving hospitality, and forgiving:

> At bottom, nothing is more vulgar and impolite, even wounding, than to obligate someone by telling them 'I forgive you' which implies an 'I give you' and already opens a scene of acknowledgement (reconnaissance), a transaction of gratitude, a commerce of thinking that destroys the gift. Similarly, one must never say 'I grant you hospitality' or 'I invite you'. When one says 'I invite you' it means: I pay and we are inscribed in the circular commerce of the most inhospitable exchange possible, the least giving.[2]

I wish to use Derrida's deconstruction of the hospitality and hostility in the processes of giving and forgiving to expose some of the tensions inherent in the meanings of inclusion, of community, and of 'we' and 'us' across a range of performances of identity in Christchurch in mid-March 2019. To refer again to Derrida:

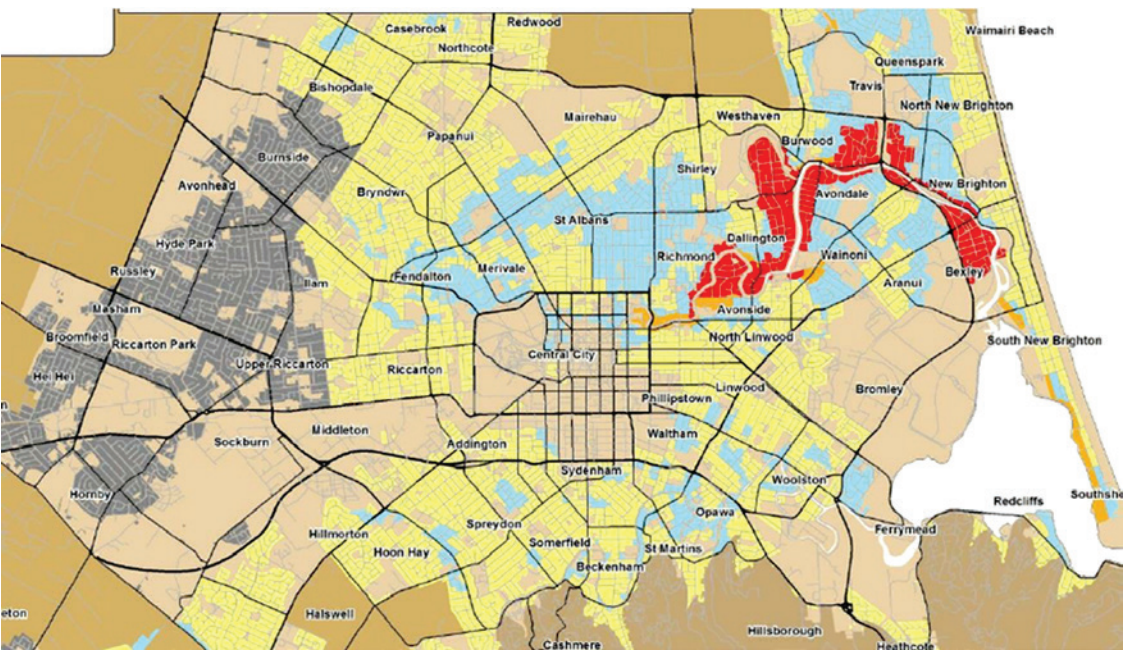
> Our question is still identity. What is identity, this concept of which the transparent identity to itself is always dog-

matically presupposed by so many debates on monoculturalism, or multiculturalism, nationality, citizenship, and in general belonging?[3]

THE PLACE OF POLYFEST IN CHRISTCHURCH

On 16 March 2019, Christchurch Polyfest did not take place. It did not take place at the corner of New Brighton Road and Locksley Avenue in the 'Red Zone' of the city.

FIGURE 2: CHRISTCHURCH'S AVON RIVER RESIDENTIAL RED ZONE, AS DEPICTED IN SUZANNE VALLANCE AND PETER TAIT, 'A COMMUNITY-LED, SCIENCE-INFORMED CONVERSATION AROUND THE FUTURE USE OF THE AVON RIVER RESIDENTIAL ZONE', JANUARY 2013, LINCOLN UNIVERSITY. IMAGE: PETER TAIT.



The Red Zone (Figure 2) was originally a public exclusion zone set up in the state of exception of the immediate aftermath of the major earthquakes in 2010–11. It is an area in which 7,000 homes were destroyed. The earthquakes temporarily reduced the Red Zone to the inhospitable marshland that the Anglican colonists in the 1840s gifted themselves in front of the Ngai Tahu of Te Wai Pounamu.[4] Ten years later, the map still no longer corresponds to the terrain (Figure 3).

FIGURE 3: QUEENSBURY STREET AND REABY STREET IN THE RED ZONE, AS DEPICTED IN WILL HARVIE, 'AMONG THE GHOST HOUSES: WALKING CHRISTCHURCH'S RESIDENTIAL RED ZONE', *THE PRESS* (17 NOVEMBER 2018). IMAGE: GOOGLE MAPS.

The organisers of Polyfest 2019 were sending an invitation for people to repair to the Red Zone to reclaim, however temporarily, that land, to celebrate, however temporarily, community. Polyfest

Christchurch grew out of its origins in high schools in 2001 to occupy the Town Hall in 2010, went into hiatus due to the earthquakes in 2011, re-emerged in the CBS Arena (now the Horncastle Arena) in 2012–13, ran into financial difficulties and returned to high schools in 2014, went outdoors to Westminster Park for the first time in 2015, and remained there until 2017; the switch to the Red Zone started in 2018. Who is invited to participate? In recent years the meaning of 'poly' in Polyfest has been extended to include Filipino groups and others, although it is by no means as polycultural as in Auckland where, in 2017, students from Avondale College alone performed songs and dances from 'the Cook Islands, Fijian, Tuvaluan, Filipino, Niuean, Chinese, Samoan, Maori, Thai, Japanese, Tongan, Sri Lankan, and Indian cultures'.[5] While reaching toward a much wider definition of 'poly' as in polycultural, both Auckland and Christchurch Polyfest remain to some extent 'other' to the many who identify as New Zealand European, or who could be termed by others or themselves as Pakeha or Palagi.[6]

Polyfest is not the only celebration of Pacific culture in Otautahi/ Christchurch. Pacific Underground have staged ten Pacific Arts Festivals in the city since 2002. Pacific Underground were founded in Christchurch in 1992, in the words of Tanya Muagututi'a, to 'represent Polynesian culture in a white bread city'.[7] In 2017, they collaborated on a Maori and Pacific Festival held over three nights at the Court Theatre, which markets itself as Canterbury's[8] professional theatre. The uncertain relationship of Pacific Underground to the

wider community and an indication of the continuing separation of communities within the city, however, is implicit in the blithe acknowledgement of this separation in *The Press* newspaper's preview of this event: 'many Cantabrians remain unaware of the group's significance to the city'.[9] Pacific Underground and Pacific culture are on some level welcomed into the city's theatre of record, but on rather limited and special terms, not visible to the 'many Cantabrians' who constitute a majority or mainstream. The city has for many years given hospitality to Pacific Underground. Perhaps it is the grudging hospitality on offer to a special interest group, a minority, or specific set of minorities who need to be included to celebrate a mythical wider coalition of community. How significant is it that the region defines itself with the tropes of the Southern Man (it is always most definitively a 'man') and the One-Eyed Cantabrian, the blinkered and partisan supporter of the local provincial Super Rugby franchise, the Canterbury Crusaders?

THE MAU MOVEMENT AND THE *TALUNE*

The influence of both Polyfest and Pacific Underground is evident in the emergence of a new wave of Samoan performance in Christchurch. This includes Sela Faletolu-Fasi's Tulou Productions and Albany Peseta's Y Not, both of which have been invited to present co-productions and collaborations with the Court Theatre. In 2019, the theatre staged a Samoan play on its main stage for the first time.

This was Oscar Kightley's *Fresh Off the Boat*, directed by Pacific Underground's Tanya Muagututi'a and featuring actors from this Samoan New Wave. The original production was developed by Pacific Underground at the University Free Theatre in the Arts Centre in 1993. On the one hand, it is an achievement that the work moved to the Court Theatre's main stage; on the other, it might have been more relevant to present there a new work by Pacific Underground or other Christchurch-based Samoan artists, rather than a twenty-six-year-old revival. Perhaps the Court Theatre felt that its hospitality should be tempered by the obligation to present work that had been previously tried and tested, was written by Oscar Kightley, the co-creator of the television series *Bro Town*, *Naked Samoans* and several successful films, and that would, therefore, prove less of a financial risk. Some others are easier to include than other others.

Feleti Pesefea's work also emerges out of an apprenticeship with Christchurch Polyfest. It is work that is deeply embedded within the small but artistically active Samoan community in Christchurch, centred around the EFKS Church. Pesefea is attempting to inculcate the values and traditions of Samoan performance and culture to young New Zealand-born Samoans. On 7 November 2018, I attended a rehearsal of the group's performance of the Mau Movement. This rehearsal took place one hundred years to the day after the arrival of the New Zealand passenger and cargo ship *Talune* in Apia.

FIGURE 4: THE SS *TALUNE* AT THE NAPIER BREAKWATER IN 1928. IMAGE: ALEXANDER TURNBULL LIBRARY, REFERENCE 1/2 080543-F.

In a dreadful confluence of colonialism and 'hospitality', the Provincial Government of New Zealand allowed the *Talune* to harbour in Apia, even though the ship had been quarantined in Fiji. (I am writing this in the shadow of the Covid-19/ Novel Coronavirus outbreak.) The *Talune* itself harboured the influenza virus. The effects of this colonial granting of hospitality were catastrophic:

> The disease spread rapidly through the islands. Samoa's disorganised local health facilities and traumatised inhabitants were unable to cope with the magnitude of the disaster and the death toll rose with terrifying speed. Grieving families had no time to carry out traditional ceremonies for their

> loved ones. Bodies were wrapped in mats and collected by trucks for burial in mass graves.
>
> The total number of deaths attributable to influenza was later estimated to have reached 8,500, or 22% of the population.[10]

The Mau Movement, about which Pesefea's community troupe have made such engaged and beautiful performance, was itself a movement of peaceful resistance to New Zealand colonisation that eventually emerged in the wake of the influenza epidemic. Pesefea had taken the expressions of island pride and the more show-off elements of Polyfest and turned them into a gentler and perhaps more durable form, a narrative told *by*, *through* and *for* a younger generation of Samoans, born and brought up in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Witnessing the development of this work, and the emergence of Christchurch's Samoan New Wave of theatre and performance, prompted my stepping out of the white bread comfort zone of the Christchurch theatre, to which I had become accustomed, to attend Polyfest 2019.

THE STRIKE IN THE SQUARE

On the day before Christchurch Polyfest did not take place, 15 March – *The ides of March are come.* – *Ay Caesar but not gone* – I

went into Cathedral Square to witness a different kind of assembly and performance of identity and community. Inspired by the young Swedish activist Greta Thunberg, groups of young high school students were taking part in a school strike for climate change, joining a global movement and the tens of thousands of students who had gone on strike that day from secondary education in some forty demonstrations across New Zealand. I took cellphone video and photos as the young people entered the city's still visibly quake-damaged heart.

VIDEO CLIP 1: CLIMATE CHANGE PROTEST IN CATHEDRAL SQUARE, 15 MARCH 2019. PERSONAL FOOTAGE BY AUTHOR.

They gathered and chanted in front of the symbols of colonial Christchurch: the gaping wounds of the Anglican Cathedral and the statue of John Godley that had been knocked over in the quakes but

was now back on its pedestal. They gathered and chanted in front of a recently constructed symbol of the postcolonial city: Tūranga, the new central library. The building has been greeted in many quarters nationally and internationally as a place of community that celebrates Māori design elements and aesthetics:

> the inspiration of Harakeke in the façade, depiction of Paikea by Riki Manuel and Morgan Hales on the Colombo Street façade, Fayne Robinson's stairway Pou carving as a light box, the rooftop native gardens pointing to Aoraki, the Peninsula, Maungatere Mount Grey …[11]

The building won the Best in Category and the Supreme Award at the recent Property Council New Zealand Rider Levett Bucknall Property Industry Awards, a fact which the design company involved, Architectus, celebrated on its website. However, postcolonial tensions remain: Rhys Head of Matapopore, 'the mana whenua voice in recovery', condemned the erasure of Māori input into the award-winning project:

> Without the assistance of Matapopore this Auckland and Sydney architecture company would have been bereft of inspiration … come on Architectus at this point it is appropriation of indigenous design. As a Trustee it is disappointing our team have received no acknowledgement from the core project team.[12]

Young people gathered to take collective action to seek a redefinition of the relationship of the human to the land, the environment, and the planet in front of the vestiges of nineteenth-century colonialism crumbling into postcolonialism, or possibly decolonisation. They also gathered in front of a site of postcolonial tensions over how the manaakitanga, or hospitality, extended by tangata whenua[13] ends up erased and commodified through cultural appropriation and exploitation.

In the Square on 15 March, I grabbed lunch at a food cart run by recent immigrants. I considered following the procession of the demonstration, but for some reason decided against it. Perhaps this was a residual anxiety of being in public spaces in central Christchurch, the affective aftershocks that from time to time still visit those of us who experienced the earthquakes of September 2010 and February 2011. The All Right? Campaign, evident in the many posters on the streets of Christchurch and on the backs of buses, was launched in February 2013 to assuage this anxiety.

FIGURE 5: ALL RIGHT? CAMPAIGN POSTERS IN CENTRAL CHRISTCHURCH. IMAGE: WWW.SMCCARTHY.CO.NZ/ALLRIGHT.

I took a Lime scooter via the diagonal route back from Cathedral Square to NASDA (National Academy of Singing and Dramatic Arts) at Ara Institute. The tag on my last photograph tells me that I left the Square at 1.21 p.m. I must have arrived at Ara sometime between 1.30 and 1.40 p.m. When I got there, within a relatively short time, all staff and students present became temporary hostages in the institution. We were put in lockdown – something with which we were familiar only from Hollywood movies, or the latest news footage of school shootings coming out of the USA. I discovered that the room in which I teach Theatre Studies is the drama school's designated 'panic room'. Instructions and updates that were texted and emailed to us warned us to stay away from windows. Those who didn't obey these instructions caught sight of units of the Armed Offenders Squad making their way across the campus. Unlike others in the city at that time, a few streets from us, we were, however, safe.

At 1.32 p.m. Brenton Tarrant, an Australian, who had recently been living in Dunedin, emailed his manifesto entitled 'The Great Replacement' to New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and seventy other politicians and media outlets. A few minutes later, he started to livestream his journey by car to Al Noor Mosque. At 1.40 p.m. he entered the mosque and opened fire. He used five guns: two semi-automatic weapons, two shotguns and a lever-action firearm. There were more than two hundred people answering one of the Friday calls to prayer. According to eye-witness accounts, he spent

about six seconds shooting people in the women's hall, then turned his attention to the men's hall. He then went to his car to get another weapon and returned after about two minutes. He next spent two minutes firing shots into bodies already on the floor. At 1.48 p.m. he got back into his car, some nine minutes since he had first started shooting. He drove through town to the Linwood Mosque, where eighty people were praying, and continued shooting. It took him about seven minutes to drive the three miles between the two mosques. Christchurch is a small place.

The shooter was greeted at the door of the mosque by Haji Mohammed Daoud Nabi, a seventy-one-year-old man from Afghanistan, whose words have been variously reported as 'Hello, Brother, welcome' or 'Welcome, brother'. He was the first to be shot dead by Tarrant. He died with the words of hospitality on his lips. He himself was a refugee who had sought and gained asylum in New Zealand in 1977. Other accounts say that his act of hospitality on greeting the shooter saved another, younger man's life.

FIGURE 6: HAJI MOHAMMED DAOUD NABI, AS DEPICTED IN *NEW ZEALAND HERALD* (19 MARCH 2019). IMAGE: OMAR NABI.

'DISORDER OF IDENTITY'

In his later writings, Jacques Derrida, a Jew who grew up in a predominantly Christian French culture in a predominantly Muslim Algeria, and who described himself as a 'Franco-Meghrabian' his own particular 'disorder of identity' (*trouble d'identité*)',[14] devoted two major seminars to hospitality. These were 'la question de l'étranger' (fourth seminar, 10 January 1996) – the question of the foreigner, or stranger, or, as it has also been translated, 'the foreigner question' – and 'pas d'hospitalité' (fifth seminar, 17 January 1996), a phrase which has both positive and negative connotations, meaning either or both: 'the step of hospitality' or 'no hospitality'. These seminars are included in the book *Of Hospitality*,[15] in which his seminars are in dialogue with Anne Dufourmantelle, philosopher and author of the *Power of Gentleness*,[16] who died attempting to rescue two children from drowning in July 2017, sacrificing herself in an ultimate act of hospitality toward others. An act akin to that of Haji Mohammed Dauod Nabi at the entrance of Al Noor mosque as he addressed the heavily armed shooter with words of hospitality.

In 'Hospitality', Derrida writes not only of 'unconditional hospitality' but of unconditional forgiveness: 'If forgiveness is possible then it must forgive the unforgivable'.[17] What he terms the arrogance of forgiveness may render forgiveness an impossibility. To be truly and unconditionally forgiving effaces the act of forgiving just as to be truly, unconditionally hospitable I must utterly efface myself in the interest of the other or the stranger. Haji Mohammed Daoud

Nabi practised unconditional hospitality at the entrance to Al Noor Mosque. Farid Ahmed practised unconditional forgiveness. His wife was killed by the shooter as she was trying to save others, yet his words of forgiveness echoed in the aftermath of the massacres: 'I have forgiven him and I am sure if my wife was alive she would have done the same thing … I hold no grudge.'[18] These examples feel in some ways unbearable, unattainable, unfathomable, almost an affront to any possible human commonality to which I might aspire – performances of such spiritual virtue that beggar belief. Such behaviour, such practice, render the formulas of hospitality and forgiveness in their profoundest meaning and efficacy. They are speech acts and performative utterances of the deepest intent.

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On 16 March 2019, we did not get to repair to the Red Zone for Polyfest. It was postponed because New Zealand was on its highest state of alert. When Polyfest did eventually take place, on 4 May 2019, it was at the Riding for the Disabled Indoor Equestrian Centre in Curletts Road. It was, perhaps inevitably, a slightly muted affair.

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On 29 March 2019, we repaired to a memorial for the victims of the mosque shootings, in Hagley Park. This park, planted with trees and landscaped by the Anglican colonists in 1855 and modelled on Hagley Park in Worcestershire, the estate of Lord Lyttelton, was the same place to which we had repaired to commemorate the dead of the earthquakes.

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In the immediate aftermath of the earthquakes of 2010–11, the Al Noor Mosque had opened its doors to survivors and those without shelter. Haji Mohammed Daoud Nabi's act of selfless hospitality is part of a culture of hospitality. He is the cousin of the grandmother of a former student of mine. Christchurch is a small place. Five times each day, the Christchurch mosques send out calls to prayer in words of hospitality and obligation.

THIS IS NOT WHO WE ARE/ YOU ARE US

In the immediate aftermath of the terrorist shootings at the mosque, social media posts and hand-made cards outside the mosques and at other public sites in the city proclaimed 'This is not who we are', disavowing any sense of identification with the shooter and his white supremacist ideology. New Zealand historian Dame Anne Salmond, among others, pointed out that the fact the shooter was Australian and not a New Zealander did not let the country 'off the hook' in terms of its history of racism, that includes the Land Wars of the 1800s, the 1974 Dawn Raids on alleged Pacific 'overstayers' – those deemed to have exceeded the terms of hospitality – and Christchurch's longstanding harbouring of neo-Nazi white supremacists.[19]

It was the haka performed spontaneously by groups of high school students in Hagley Park opposite the Al Noor Mosque that seemed to offer the most immediate and heartfelt performative and communal response to the atrocities.

VIDEO CLIP 2: HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS PERFORM HAKA IN HAGLEY PARK, OPPOSITE AL NOOR MOSQUE. VIDEO: *PBS NEWSHOUR* (19 MARCH 2019).

The city's desire to grieve and to empathise was most often expressed through the haka of the tangata whenua. The haka is itself a powerful mixture of hospitality and hostility, a greeting ceremony within which the tension between hospitality and hostility is acknowledged and expressed from the first encounter with strangers. This led to some extraordinarily potent intersectional and intercultural actions and images:

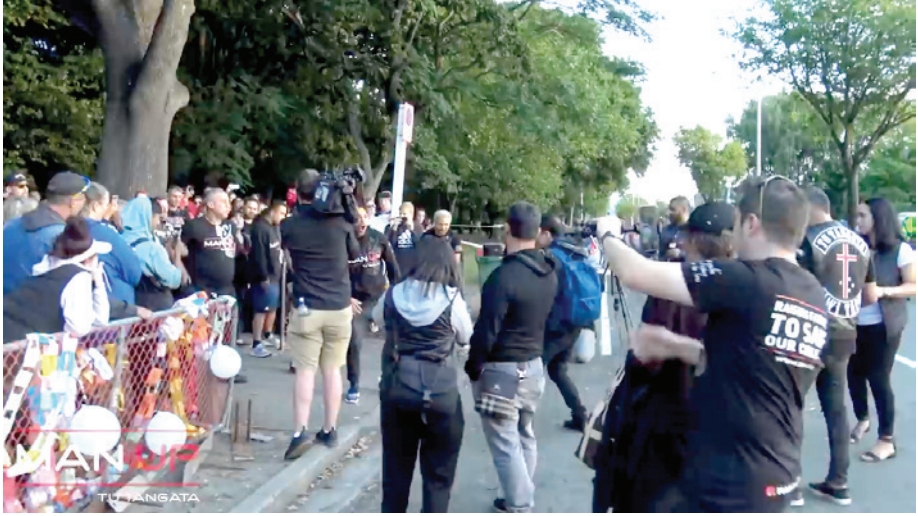
FIGURE 7: HAKA FOR VICTIMS OF THE MOSQUE MASSACRES DRAPED IN THE FLAGS OF NEW ZEALAND AND PAKISTAN. IMAGE: *THE PRESS* NEWSPAPER.

In the public and private rhetoric of grief and reconciliation, Te Reo Māori and Arabic intertwined: *kia kaha* and *aroha nui* with *salaam alaikum*. One week after the massacres, *The Press* devoted its cover of 22 March 2019 to the single word 'Salaam' (peace) in Arabic script and the names of the victims. The Muslim call to prayer was broadcast throughout New Zealand ahead of two minutes' silence. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern consoled the families of victims wearing a veil – an image of which was later projected on to the Burj Al Khalifa in Dubai, the world's tallest building.

FIGURE 8: IMAGE OF NEW ZEALAND PRIME MINISTER, JACINDA ARDERN, PROJECTED ON TO BURJ AL KHALIFA. IMAGE: CNN NEWS.

MAN UP, DESTINY CHURCH: 'THIS IS NOT US!'

That tensions remained underlying this desire for identification and reconciliation is manifest in the sequence of reactions of one particular group, the Man Up movement of Bishop Brian Tamaki's Destiny Church. In the immediate aftermath of the shootings, the group had responded with a haka of distinctive vehemence:



VIDEO CLIP 3: HAKA FOR HOPE MEMORIAL, PERFORMED BY MEMBERS OF MAN UP TU TANGATA IN HAGLEY PARK. FOOTAGE BY YEAHNAH PRODUCTIONS (UPLOADED TO YOUTUBE ON 21 MARCH 2019).

At the memorial to the victims of the mosque massacres in Hagley Park on 29 March 2019, Man Up members were prominent in offering their support to members of the Muslim communities:

FIGURE 9: A MEMBER OF MAN UP CONSOLING A MEMBER OF THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY AT THE MEMORIAL IN HAGLEY PARK. IMAGE: *THE PRESS* NEWSPAPER.

For the Man Up movement and Destiny Church, however, this support and obligation of hospitable treatment to the foreigner or stranger had its limits. Within a week of the massacres, members of the church were once again in Hagley Park opposite Al Noor Mosque, but this time they were shouting at the Muslim worshippers that 'Jesus Christ is the true God':

FIGURE 10: 'A MOB OF PENTECOSTAL CHRISTIANS RALLIED OUTSIDE CHRISTCHURCH'S AL NOOR MOSQUE ON THURSDAY TO DECLARE "JESUS CHRIST IS THE TRUE GOD"'. IMAGE AND CAPTION: *DAILY MAIL* (26 APRIL 2019).

Bishop Brian Tamaki posted on social media:

> We can not accept the proliferation of Islam in our country and think just because you're tolerant, accepting and inclusive that we won't end up like Great Britain, South

> East Asia and most of Europe with violence, loss of the host country's identity, their values and culture destroyed, and Sharia law enacted.[20]

A mere six days after the massacres, he offered his own spin on the disavowal of the shooter's actions, the oft-repeated phrase 'this is not us':

FIGURE 11: BISHOP BRIAN TAMAKI'S POST ON TWITTER @ BISHOPTAMAKI (21 MARCH 2019).

It could be argued that Man Up and Destiny Church are an unrepresentative minority within Christchurch and New Zealand. This may be the case, but they do represent a remarkable example of how swiftly and vehemently hostility may emerge out of the bonds of hospitality.

THE FESTIVAL OF 'US'?

In 2019 in Christchurch, Polyfest was postponed, overtaken by events that exposed to the very core the city's 'disorder of identity'. Should I have identified with those who marked themselves 'safe' on social media after the attacks? In this particular Christchurch disaster, there was no danger that I would have been unsafe: the attacks were carried out exclusively on Muslim worshippers in the city's mosques. The Christchurch Arts Festival, however, did take place to schedule. Within the Festival we were invited to repair to the Commons, land appropriated for common use after the earthquakes, for a hangi on a huge scale. The major artists of the Festival were Maori and Pacific. There was as yet no place in the Festival for artists and performers from the Muslim population of Christchurch. This is not because of out-and-out hostility. This is not because of inhospitality. Perhaps we do not yet know how to be hospitable, we do not know how to align different codes and different obligations of hospitality. Perhaps we do not yet know how to accept the bonds of the absolute and unconditional forgiveness that was expressed so unbearably and so movingly by the relatives of those killed in the massacres.

There was as yet no place in the Festival for Muslim artists perhaps because of the relatively recent arrival of refugees and others in the city. The learning disabled performers of Different Light Theatre, with whom I have been working for fifteen years, did take part in the Arts Festival. While they were devising that performance the shootings happened, a few streets away from rehearsals. Christchurch is a small place. The performers could not but feel the impact of the massacres, while at the same time remaining isolated from the worshippers at the mosques, within the limited orbit of their own learning disabled community within the wider community. How is it possible to create 'we' and 'us' across those particular networks that 'we' find ourselves in?

The Different Light Theatre performers wished to make some kind of response to the massacres in the performance they were devising, *The History of Different Light* – an attempt at their own distinctive history of the fifteen years of the company. At the end of the performance, they addressed the audience. Isaac Tait expressed a desire for identification: 'Al Noor is the Arabic word for light. A different word for light. A different light.'[21] Another performer aligned their own anxiety with the ethical anxiety of many in the city: 'We are not the Muslim population of Christchurch. It's not our place to speak for them. But maybe it is our place as well.'[22] Matthew Phelan's response spoke of his firm Christian faith and patriotism: 'In the bonds of love we meet'[23] – lines from the national anthem – but perhaps these words also hint at the obligations of love, and of hospitality, and of manaakitanga[24] that

are at their utmost extent unbearable, and that also encompass the need to forgive the unforgivable.

How is it possible to seek refuge and comfort in the various forms of 'us' to which I can turn? As Nancy articulates it in *The Inoperative Community*: 'Community is at least the *clinamen* of the 'individual' … There has to be an inclination or an inclining from one toward the other, of one by the other, or from one to the other.'[25] At the same time, do I need to ask what price is paid by others for my taking refuge in 'us'? Do I constantly need to take account of the import of Levinas' epigraph to *Otherwise than Being*: '"That is my place in the sun." That is how the usurpation of the whole world began. (Pascal's *Pensées* 112).'[26] Islamic codes of hospitality have been described by Rustom Bharucha as the 'radical antithesis' to the 'paranoid nationalism' of John Howard and other Australian politicians that 'can be more closely aligned to Aboriginal perspectives on the ethical imperative to embrace other people in their need'.[27] Manaaki in Te Reo Māori is not only 'hospitality' but also care-giving and compassion; it emphasises the mana of the stranger or guest – mana encompasses force power and spiritual strength – and manaaki seeks to 'uphold the dignity and well-being of a person or persons'.[28] Both of these cultural perspectives go far beyond the box-ticking and back-covering of what is understood by contemporary 'ethical' practices of inclusion and respect for diversity.

Christchurch Polyfest is an annual performance of identity that, while reaching out to a wider sense of community, remains to a

certain extent marginal within the city. The climate change strike calls on a redefinition of 'identity' and 'community' across the borders of nation states in the face of a planetary emergency. In some senses it is a viral movement in the face of which the consolidation of national borders may prove as ineffective as it has with coronavirus. The mosque attacker holds on to the 'us' of a cyber-community and a myth of racial purity. The response to the attacks in the city of Christchurch are still, as we head into the one-year anniversary of the event, to some extent confused and unformed. Older and newer divisions appear and reappear like fault-lines in the fabric of the city.

FIGURE 12: GRAFFITI ON THE STREETS OF CHRISTCHURCH. 'WE LOVE YOU, WE ARE YOU AS SALAAM ALAIKUM' IS SPRAYED OVER IN RED PAINT BY THE WORD 'CRUSADERS'. IMAGE: *THE PRESS* NEWSPAPER.

'Us' is always a performance, held together in the contingencies of particular places and times, when the need for identification or solidarity

is particularly pressing and urgent. Community is likewise always a performance, for there is no community without myth. According to Nancy, a myth 'speaks of an origin and an end'.[29] 'Self' is likewise always a performance. The festival of 'us', of community and of identity as self, speaks of a myth of an origin and an end. Derrida has traced the etymology of another word for 'festival': gala. The Hebrew word *gala* encompasses disclosure, uncovering and unveiling, and it was rendered in Greek by the Church Fathers as *apokalupis*.[30] The festival of 'us' is a festival of an apocalyptic unveiling; ultimately, it deconstructs 'us'.

NOTES

1 Jacques Derrida, *Acts of Religion*, translated and edited by Gil Anidjar (New York and London: Routledge, 2002) 356–421.

2 Jacques Derrida, *Monolingualism of the Other or The Prosthesis of Origin*, translated by Patrick Mensah (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998) 14.

3 *Ibid*.

4 In Te Reo Maori, Ngai Tahu are the tribe or iwi of Te Wai Pounamu, the South Island of Aotearoa/ New Zealand.

5 Vaimoana Tapaleao, 'Polyfest 2017: Celebrating Culture Through Leadership', *New Zealand Herald* (15 March 2017).

6 Pakeha is a Te Reo Māori term for New Zealanders primarily of European descent. The term is also applied to fair-skinned persons, or to any non-Māori New Zealander. Palagi is Samoan for a white or non-Samoan person.

7 Peter McLennan, 'Pacific Underground Profile', *Audio Culture* (25 June 2015), online: https://www.audioculture.co.nz/people/pacific-underground.

8 The city's name is taken from Christ Church, the Oxford college. The province of Canterbury is derived from the central see of the Church of England. Many of the roads in the CBD are named after the Anglican sees of the British Empire: Armagh, Madras, Colombo.

9 Vicki Anderson, 'Going Underground: Life at 19 Wattle Drive', *The Press* (5 August 2017).

10 'Influenza in Samoa', URL: https://nzhistory.govt.nz/culture/1918-influenza-pandemic/samoa (Ministry for Culture and Heritage), updated 20 December 2012.

11 Rebecca Kiddle, 'The Buildings Are "Uniquely Aotearoa", Their Māori Designers Are Ignored', *The Spinoff* (24 June 2019), online: https://thespinoff.co.nz/atea/24-06-2019/the-buildings-are-uniquely-aotearoa-their-maori-designers-are-ignored/.

12 *Ibid.*

13 Tangata whenua is Te Reo Māori for 'the people of the land'.

14 Derrida, *Monolingualism of the Other*, 14.

15 Jacques Derrida and Anne Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality: Anne Dufourmantelle Invites Jacques Derrida to Respond*, translated by Rachel Bowlby (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).

16 Anne Dufourmantelle. *Power of Gentleness: Meditations on the Risk of Living*, translated by Katharine Payne and Vincent Sallé (New York: Fordham University Press, 2018).

17 Derrida, *Acts of Religion*, 356.

18 Anna Leask, 'Christchurch Mosque Shootings: 'I Forgive Him' – Survivor's Message to Gunman Who Killed His Wife', *New Zealand Herald* (18 March 2019).

19 'Kiwis Saying "This Is Not Us" in Wake of Christchurch Attacks Is "Letting Yourself Off the Hook", Academic Says', *Tagata Pasifika*, TVNZ (2 April 2019), online: www.tvnz.co.nz/one-news/new-zealand/kiwis-saying-not-us-in-wake-christchurch-attacks-letting-yourself-off-hook-academic-says.

20 Apostle Bishop Brian Tamaki, Facebook post, 13 June 2019, online: https://www.facebook.com/ApostleBishopBrianTamaki/posts/i-love-all-people-and-let-it-be-known-ive-walked-over-40-years-with-the-love-of-/1559953297475542/.

21 Different Light Theatre, *The History of Different Light*, Performance, 1–3 August 2019, NASDA Theatre, Christchurch Arts Festival.

22 *Ibid.*

23 *Ibid.*

24 See Rand T. Hazou, 'Performing Manaaki and New Zealand Refugee Theatre', *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance* 23.2 (2018): 228–41.

25 Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community*, translated by Peter Connor (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1990) 11.

26 Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, translated by Alphonso Lingis (Dordrecht: Springer Science and Business Media, 1991) [front matter] 1.

27 Rustom Bharucha, *Terror and Performance* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014) 177.

28 Hazou, 'Performing Manaaki and New Zealand Refugee Theatre' 229.

29 Nancy, *The Inoperative Community*, 11.

30 Jacques Derrida, 'Of an Apocalyptic Tone Newly Adopted in Philosophy', in Harold Coward and Toby Foshay (eds), *Derrida and Negative Theology* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1992) 25–73.