

Student 2: High Merit

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supposedly gave both parties equal opportunities to find a collective voice in hopes of as fighting was happening Zealand land. Many issues fair amount of conflict, and this in early colonial art work. century were still reflecting this of this is Charles F Goldie's "Good Joke" pictured here.



This portrait merges a smiling wearing a pounamu earring including a pocket watch, all naturalistic form and style.

identity is still an ongoing process today as some people still argue inequality and that the Maori are still being discriminated against with modern day racism.

finding peace between them over the ownership of New were not resolved without a artists of the time reflected on Many artists in the twentieth process, and a good example 1910 chromolithograph "A

Maori chief with full-face moko and European clothing painted in traditional European This defining of a post-colonial

Postcolonial Theory and Contemporary Artists

In New Zealand and parts of the Pacific, postmodern and contemporary artists of the 1980s and 1990s dealt with the post-colonial condition to construct a new visual cultural identity [3]. More often than not, these art works are narratives that include traditional Maori and European practices, the two conflicting religious systems used by both ethnic groups, the Maori spiritual connections to the land, people, iwi and whanau, and the historical account of colonisation. These artists make works from the perspective of the Maori people as a critique of the dominance the British Crown had over them, and to comment on the effects that colonisation had.



One example of a contemporary artist dealing with the post-colonial condition is Maori artists Shane cotton. His oil painting "Needlework" of 1993 (alongside) deals with land ownership issues, by metaphorically representing New Zealand as a pincushion (a European craft-making item) and having various pins, flags and a fence running through it. It is painted in traditional European style,

with sepia tones that not only make the painting look older than it is but are also similar to the natural earthy tones of the land. The European and Maori tribal flags stuck into the pincushion ② show how both the Maori and European people took claims in New Zealand during and after the 18th century colonisation. It is more of a historical account of the land issues that arose with colonisation rather than a critique of it, but since it is more influenced by European art it arguably could be a critique of how the British benefitted more from the Treaty and post-colonial debates and a questioning of the so-called 'equality' between the two ethnic groups. Cotton himself said about the work "It is really about the maintenance of tradition and the way that can sometimes be eroded due to outside influences and things that intimate change.

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Shigeyuki Kihara being a multimedia artist uses a variety of diverse postmodern practices to discuss postcolonial theory in her work. One of these practices is performance, and in *Taualuga the Last Dance*, 2006 (alongside) she highlights the historical colonisation through dance. Her work is a “tribute to the many leaders and people of Samoa for their resilience in the struggle against modernisation and globalisation”

In the Samoan language, a *Taualuga* is a dance that is often used to convey political ideas as a form of negotiation or celebration. Kihara appropriates this form of dance to traditional Samoan music while wearing Victorian mourning dress. By combining European dress with Samoan dance and music she is merging two different cultures – the colonised with the colonisers as a reference to the historical settlement and to construct a new visual identity. The performance starts off with just the sounds of some kind of flute and Kihara just standing there – no dancing, no singing – it is very peaceful. To me this was a representation of the peaceful Samoan communities before the German settlers arrived and took over. The strong shadow behind Kihara in the performance looks visually similar to the way a puppeteer pulls the strings on his puppets to mimic his own movements. This could be a reference to how the Germans took over. And much like how the British used the Maori people for free labour, the Samoan people would have been under the control of the German colonisers – like a puppet to its puppeteer. Kihara uses her dance to represent the issues that arose with colonisation and to provoke thoughts of its repercussions in today’s globalised world.

Conclusion

Cotton, Parekowhai and Kihara use their diverse range of practices in their work to reflect on the post-colonial condition and to provoke thoughts in the viewer of colonisation in today’s modern globalised world. They use post-colonial theory to discuss their views on colonisation and to reclaim a voice for the indigenous people of Samoa and New Zealand who had their “exotic, primitive, inferior” cultures completely disregarded by the colonisers, which has had lasting effects today. All three artists merge both the indigenous and imported cultures to construct new bicultural identities for their countries. Cotton’s narrative works discuss the legacies of colonisation in the 21st century. Parekowhai’s work comments on the way of embracing Maori culture (see *The Bosom of Abraham*), Kihara critiques the colonial gaze and highlights the history of colonisation and its effects on Samoan culture through a range of diverse practices. These artists are postmodern as they appropriate art forms and practices from both the imported and indigenous cultures – the colonised and the colonisers. Because of this, their works are a reflection of colonisation and in relation to post-colonial theory places where the artists reclaim a voice for marginalised groups in society. Their works provoke conversation and thoughts about post-colonial condition among communities and other groups that inevitably change the way we as society view colonisation and shape us as citizens of colonised multi-cultural countries.