

folktales, legends, anecdotes, jokes, folksongs, ballads, proverbs, and proverbial sayings. Most countries in Europe, Asia, and the Americas hold large folklore archives in which collections of oral tradition are kept and organized according to international standards, such as Arne-Thompson's "The Types of Folktales", a classification scheme for some 2500 tale types of international distribution. A step towards modernization of this traditional source of folklore studies is the inclusion in the archives of historical and modern media such as reading material and popular imagery (that is, magazines, novels, cartoons, comics, moving images). Other traditional areas of investigation are customs, beliefs, and popular religion. A broad area of folklorists' competence is in people's material culture: housing and dwellings, agriculture and forestry, mining, crafts and occupational folklore, folk art, food, clothing, folk costumes, and folk medicine. New fields of folklore studies include organization of leisure time, tourism, associations, and sport. To stay with the latter, I had great pleasure in reading an article by Ron Palenski on the recent All Blacks success in the Bledisloe Cup in the *Dominion* of 22 August 1996, in which he said: "John Hart ... will forever be in rugby folklore as the man who guided the All Blacks through an incredible 1996".²

A very original society developed during early colonial settlement. Now however we are being globalised. Scholarly attempts at dealing with the 'important question of what in fact comprises a New Zealand culture and how a national identity can be based on it' are beginning to appear.³ Otherwise, apart from Maori Studies, not very much has been done for the investigation of New Zealand culture in New Zealand. We could almost speak of New Zealand as a 'developing country' in folkloristic terms – a New Zealand Folklore Society did exist for a short period in the 1970s and produced a few issues of a journal.⁴ However, scholars are increasingly coming to terms with the fact that the country has distinctive peculiarities in the way its people live, in the way the country looks. As Kurt Sanders puts it: 'There's more freedom, we're more open, we discuss things, we tolerate more and a wider range of lifestyle is accepted'.⁵

For the discipline of folkloristics, New Zealand offers a wide range of investigative possibilities which could contribute to a better understanding of the way New Zealand was, both by better awareness of the past and of its changing identity, and by accepting the process of internationalization which is on its way. In spite of this process, which means New Zealand will increasingly become a greater entity than merely Aotearoa, more than a Pacific rim country, there is enough evidence of a specific Kiwi culture. Maybe, through the eyes of a European visitor, it appears more obvious. Certainly, there is a growing trend towards conscious-

ness and concern for the traditions and specifics of Kiwi lifestyle, as I found in such books as *A Man's Country?*, *New Zealand! New Zealand!*, *New Zealand's Traditions and Folklore*, and *Putting Our Town On The Map*.⁶

To conclude, I feel the time has come for the institutionalisation of folkloristics as a discipline in at least one of New Zealand's universities. The main focus for folklore studies to be initiated in this way would be 'knowledge systems ... to be built up to show what is happening to people, especially in the day-to-day conditions they ordinarily experience'.⁷ A department of folklore would contribute to ongoing debates about what is distinctive in the New Zealand identity, a matter that becomes the more urgent as internationalisation of economics and communications proceeds apace.

NOTES

- 1 Robert A. Georges and Michael Owen Jones: *Folkloristics. An introduction*. Bloomington/Indianapolis 1995, p 1.
- 2 Cf. Geoff Fougere: 'Sport, Culture and Identity: the Case of Rugby Football'. In: David Novitz and Bill Willmott (eds): *Culture and Identity in New Zealand*. Wellington 1989, pp 110-122.
- 3 Bill Willmott: Introduction. In: Novitz/Willmott (see note 2) pp 1-20, quotation from p 2.
- 4 *The Maorilander*, Journal of the New Zealand Folklore Society 1-6. Wellington 1970-1972. Cf. Frank Fyfe: *A Shanty or Two*. Wellington: New Zealand Folklore Society, 1970.
- 5 Kurt Sanders: *The Way We Were*. Auckland 1996, p 7.
- 6 Jock Phillips: *A Man's Country? The Image of the Pakeha Male. A History*. Auckland 1987, revised edition 1996. Stephen Bennett/Richard Wolfe: *New Zealand! New Zealand! In Praise of Kiviana*. Auckland 1969. Gordon Ell: *New Zealand Traditions & Folklore*. Auckland 1994. Claudia Bell/John Lyall: *Putting Our Town On The Map. Local Claims of Fame in New Zealand*. Auckland 1995.
- 7 Steve Britton/Richard Le Heron/Eric Pawson (eds): *Changing Places in New Zealand. A Geography of Restructuring*. Christchurch 1992, p 2.

COMMENTARY

Rau-mata-nui's waiata

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From the seminar 'The Tapu Geography of Raukawa (Cook Strait)' given at the Stout Research Centre in September 1996.

Thousands of songs recorded by 19th-century Māori writers form a rich poetic heritage from which much can be discovered about traditional Māori experience, values and aesthetics. Landscape and the ocean are constant presences, inseparable from the events and emotions of which the poets speak. In a group of songs composed mainly in Te Upoko o te Ika (the southernmost part of the North Island), Raukawa (Cook Strait) appears as a barrier that separates the poets from their relatives – or husbands, or lovers – who have made the voyage over those dangerous waters and are now far away in the south.

Geography and history were in many ways inseparable in traditional Māori thought and experience. According to one tradition, the early ancestor Kupe cut through Maui's fish soon after it was brought to the surface, creating in this way the wide dangerous waters of Raukawa (Cook Strait). He then established two tapu landmarks that stand there still, far apart, bearing witness to his exploit. Both these landmarks are near the South Island. One is Nga Whatu (The Brothers rocks); the other is Te Au-miti (French Pass), where a spectacular tidal rip surges through a narrow channel between the mainland and Rangitoto (d'Urville Island).

In a cavern near Te Au-miti, Kupe placed a taniwha, Tuhirangi, whose task is to guide and protect the waka of travellers venturing into this place. Another guardian, Te Kawau-a Toru [Toru's shag], stands close at hand, turned to stone and with one of his wings broken by the currents; some say he was put there by Kupe, others that he was the pet of a voyager, Potoru, who had sailed to Aotearoa from Hawaiki but whose vessel, *Te Ririno*, was wrecked in those turbulent waters. And there were those who said that in the early days a man named Manaia, captain of the *Tokomaru*, stalled Te Au-miti there to block the passage of his enemy, Nuku-tama-roro.

In regions along the northern shores of Raukawa, poets sang about the straits and their landmarks. Sometimes they did so in lamenting the absence of relatives who had crossed those waters and were now far to the south. One such song was composed by Rau-mata-nui, a woman of Ngāti Kahungunu.

She speaks first of a south wind that comes from her kinsfolk, bearing their greetings. Next she makes a traditional comparison between the people and their tribal mountains, the Tararua Ranges: while the mountains are unchanging, the humans experience misfortune and are lost to sight. (Yet in saying this, Rau-mata-nui is at the same time celebrating the existence of the Tararua and their continuing relationship with humans.)

She then speaks of Te Au-miti. Just as Tuhirangi was abandoned there by Kupe and lies hidden in his den Kalkai-a-warō, so Rau-mata-nui's relatives are isolated and lonely across the water. Addressing Tuhirangi, she recalls how he was put there to assist waka sailing through Te Au-miti. She speaks of the fates of Pōtoru and his shag, refers to the early voyager Manaia and his enemy Nuku-tama-roro, then again laments the absence of her relatives, likening them to Toru's Shag. They are as distant and lonely as that creature.

He aha rawa ra te hau

He aha rawa rā te hau e koheri mai nei?
 He hau tonga pea, kikihi rawa ki taku kiri.
 Tēnā rawa pea te iwi ka wehe i a au.
 Maunga tū noa Tararua,
 Ka ngaro whakaaitu koutou, e koro mā ē!
 Ko te ngaro pea i a Tuhirangi ki roto o Kaikai-a-warō –
 I waiho ai koe e Kupe hei rāhiri waka
 Rere i Te Au-miti, i raru ai Pōtoru,
 Koia Te Kawau-a-Toru e roha paihau tahi noa mai rā
 I te au rona, i te au miro, i te au whakaumu
 I waiho ake ai e Manaia hei tupa i a Nuku-tama-roro.
 Ko te rite i a koutou e ngaro nei i ahau –
 E mānuka noa nei au i te rā roa o Te Malua roa o Te Ōrongo-nui.
 Auē ki a au, e kui mā ē!
 E mahue rawa te wā kāinga ki ngā motu,
 Ko wai rawa hei rauwiri mai i a au ei?

Why does this wind

*Why does this wind blow so strongly upon my skin,
 A south wind sounding so loud?
 It must be my people who are parted from me.
 The Tararua Mountains will stand forever
 But you, men, are lost through evil fate,
 Lost like Tuhirangi in Kaikai-a-warō –
 When Kupe left you there to care for waka
 Sailing through Te Au-miti, where Pōtoru came to grief
 And Toru's Shag now stretches his single wing
 Into the swirling currents, the whirlpools, the dangerous currents
 Left by Manaia to bar the way to Nuku-tama-roro.
 It is the same with you, lost to me here –
 How unhappy I am through the long days of summer.
 Alas for me, women,
 I am left behind in our home, far from the islands,
 And who will shelter me*

The words of Rau-mata-nui's waiata were given to T.W. Downes some time before 1914 by an unnamed rangatira of Ngāti Kahungunu, along with a whakapapa that shows that she lived eleven generations previously, perhaps early in the 18th century. Her song had been treasured by her descendants, and probably many others, as giving expression to their own knowledge of Raukawa – the separations it brought, its dangers, and its tapu. T.W. Downes published the song, with other material, in an article, 'Pelorus Jack: Tuhi rangi,' in the Journal of the Polynesian Society volume 23, pp 176-80.

