

Revisiting Colonial Memory and Deciphering Political Chaos in Witi Ihimaera's *Woman Far Walking*¹

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ABSTRACT

Witi Ihimaera's *Woman Far Walking* (2000) is a prominent play which depicts the political history of New Zealand during the 19th and 20th centuries. To reflect the political turbulence triggered by colonialist attempts on the island, Ihimaera fictionalises a magical realist atmosphere on the stage where Tiri, a 160-year-old Māori woman, and Tilly, a young woman in her mid-thirties, set out a journey to the colonial past through her memories. Tiri's birth on the day of the Treaty of Waitangi (1840), which was signed by the British Crown and the Māori people regarding native sovereignty, enables the audience to follow the supervening political chaos till the turn of the 21st century. Her memories not only indicate the alienation and exploitation of the Māori people during these chaotic periods but also reveal the influence of colonial memories on the Māori people. In this regard, this study aims to examine the colonial past of New Zealand through an old woman's memories in *Woman Far Walking* and to analyse the impact of colonial memories on the Māori people who are part of the political chaos in today's New Zealand.

Keywords: Witi Ihimaera, Memory, Magical Realist Drama, Postcolonial Chaos

Witi Ihimaera'nın *Woman Far Walking* Oyununda Sömürge Belleğini Yeniden Okumak ve Postkolonyal Kaosu Çözümlemek

ÖZET

Witi Ihimaera'nın *Woman Far Walking* (2000) adlı oyunu, 19. ve 20. yüzyıllarda Yeni Zelanda'nın siyasi tarihine ışık tutan bir oyun olarak öne çıkmaktadır. Yakın tarih boyunca adada uygulanan sömürgeci faaliyetlerin ve baskıların tetiklediği siyasi çıkmazları gözler önüne serebilmek etmek için Ihimaera, 160 yaşında bir Māori kadını olan Tiri ve otuzlu yaşlarının ortalarındaki genç bir kadın olan Tilly'nin bellekleri aracılığıyla sömürge geçmişine doğru bir yolculuğa çıkabildiği büyümlü gerçekçi bir atmosferi sahneye taşır. Tiri'nin, İngiliz Krallığı ve Māori halkı arasında yerlilerin egemenliği için imzalanan Waitangi Antlaşması'nın (1840) imzalandığı gün

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doğması ve 21. yüzyılın başına kadar süregelen tüm somürgeci faaliyetleri aktarması izleyicinin günümüz Yeni Zelanda'sındaki siyasi çıkmazları ve sebeplerini kavramasına olanak sağlar. Tiri'nin belleği, bu kaotik dönemlerde Māori halkının yabancılaşmasını ve sömürülmesini göstermekle kalmaz, aynı zamanda sömürge anılarının Māori halkı üzerindeki etkisini de ortaya koyar. Bu bağlamda, bu çalışma, *Woman Far Walking* adlı oyunda büyülu gerçekçilik ile kurgulanan yaşlı bir kadının belleği aracılığıyla Yeni Zelanda'nın sömürge geçmişini incelemeyi ve somürgeci faaliyet ve zulümlerin, günümüz Yeni Zelanda'sındaki siyasi kaosu bir parçası olan Māori halkı üzerindeki etkisini analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Witi Ihimaera, Bellek, Büyülu Gerçekçi Tiyatro, Postkolonyal Kaos.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The unnerving reverberation of colonial memories indispensably plays a part in moulding political chaos in postcolonial spaces where collective consciousness of the native harbours not only their indigenous political, societal, and cultural structures, but also the destructive impact of colonial imposition on them. The colonial governance intervened in those political, cultural and economic structures of the indigenous and attempted to reshape their identity through glorifying Eurocentric perspectives but ignoring the indigenous, which built a hierarchy designated by colonial ideology. Despite the decolonization or specific treaties promising sovereignty for natives in ex-colonies, the rooted colonial hierarchy maintained its domination and beget oft-repeated political turbulence in postcolonial spaces. Hence, political tumults in postcolonial spaces cannot be just examined, focusing on current dysfunctional political mechanisms, but they should be comprehended, reckoning with the impact of colonial memory where legacies of colonial impositions intertwine with factors triggering the ongoing instabilities and current political chaos.

Witi Ihimaera, the first Māori writer to publish *Pounamu Pounamu* (1972), a collection of short stories, and *Tangi* (1973), a novel, in English, is one of the most prominent indigenous literary figures of postcolonial New Zealand. Previous literary pieces tended to otherise the Māori people through the perspective of Pakeha, a Māori word for European. In contrast, his literary stance decentred Eurocentrism and prioritised Māori mythology, contributing to a tradition that functions as the collective memory of colonial period and its legacies. While his such novels as *The Matriarch* (1986) and *Whale Rider* (1987) attempt to revere the Māori identity and culture marginalized by Pakehas, his only play, *Woman Far Walking* (2000), regards the chaotic historical incidents of the 19th and 20th centuries as the legacies of colonization and orientates the audience to empathise with the Māori, who are the natural side of the political chaos in today's New Zealand. Through magical realism which allows the occurrence of supernatural and the disruption of time, space and identity, the play revisits the legacies of colonization with the memories of Tiri, a 160-year-old woman, and provides a chronicle of colonial New Zealand during the 19th and 20th centuries. In this context, this study aims to examine the colonial memory of the Māori people through the

magical realist personification of the postcolonial space in *Woman Far Walking* and to analyse its impact on the political chaos of the 21st century in postcolonial spaces.

2. MAGICAL REALISM

Magical realism is a literary mode that seeks a solution to the problems that cannot be solved empirically. It offers alternative fictional settings which are identical to the ones in realistic literature but also different from those where reason and logic are always a powerful reference on the credibility of events. It originated in Europe, developed its theoretical framework in Latin America and evolved into a worldwide literary mode embraced by any indigenous culture where reason and logic are not enough to understand life. Bhabha accentuates the relationship between native authors and magical realism, remarking that it has become the “literary language of the emergent postcolonial world (2003, p. 9). The alliance between colonialism and Eurocentrism has promoted indigenous writers to challenge the hegemony of Eurocentric rationalism and to regenerate surrogate epistemologies so as to deal with the dynamics of their societies having organic bond with local norms, myths, and belief systems through magical realism (Scarano, 1999, p. 11). While the opposition to the Eurocentric literary tradition has enabled integration of indigenous locality into narratives, it has also become a means of revolt against colonialist discourse, which helps magical realism become a literary mode through which indigenous people realize their identities.

Magical realism is renowned for its combination of the supernatural or extraordinary with realistic characters and settings. Its essential characteristic is the inclusion of the supernatural which “is something we cannot explain according to the laws of the universe as they have been formulated in Western empirically based discourse, that is, according to logic, familiar knowledge or received belief” (Faris, 2004, p. 7). However, the occurrence of the supernatural is not enough for a literary text to be labelled as magical realist, but it should support the sense of reality through realistic descriptions because “if the supernatural [is not] accepted within the text by others,” the narrative fails to build a coherent code and it can be regarded as “a hallucination or mere fantasy” in a realistic narrative (Asayesh et al. 2017, p. 396). Through a realistic framework which is constructed with “a matter of fact” tone and abundant in realistic descriptions (Bowers, 2005, p.3), a magical realist text aims “to create a fictional world that resembles the one we live in” (Faris, 2004, p. 7). Thus, magical realist texts fictionalise phenomenal worlds where the supernatural manifests itself in realistic settings identical to the one people experience. To increase the credibility of the phenomenal world, the narrative also requires “authorial reticence” which refers to “absence of obvious judgements about veracity of the events and the authenticity of the world view expressed by characters in the text” (Chanady, 1985, p. 57). By means of authorial reticence, the supernatural is not questioned in accordance with an empirical understanding, and it becomes ordinary in the phenomenal world of the magical realist texts (Özü, 2009, p. 30). The amalgamation of the natural and supernatural in magical realist texts creates realms or perspectives excluded by Western thought, and there are no strict borders separating those realms, such as the ordinary and the

extraordinary, the past and the present, life and death or European religions or indigenous belief systems. Thus, the disruption of the perception of reality in magical realism stimulates “a confrontation between real-world norms and other worldly, supernatural norms” since it positions authors “at the intersection of two worlds, at an imaginary point inside a double-sided mirror that reflects in both directions” (Faris, 2004, p. 7). Moreover, magical realism often objects to traditional concepts of linear time, immutable space, and constant identity because the confrontation of various realms and perspectives with authorial reticence inevitably begets multiplicity, which enables magical realism to “disturb received ideas about time, space and identity” (2004, p. 23). Hence, as a literary mode having originated in Europe, magical realism has become a versatile instrument due to its capability to undermine conventionalities through the combination of the supernatural and natural, and indigenous authors have preferred it to demonstrate epistemological resistance to colonialism allied by Eurocentrism in postcolonial spaces.

2.1. *Woman Far Walking* as a Magical Realist Drama

The collaboration between magical realism and postcolonial studies catalyses indigenous writers to deal with social, cultural, economic legacies of colonization. In his experimental *Woman Far Walking*, Witi Ihimaera attempts to re-invent “a dramatic genre in a totally different mode” in which he transforms “the dramatic genre into that of a historical epic” by designating it as “a cross between a play and a novel” (Maufort, 2005, p. 222). The play centres on the life story of a Māori, Tiriti o Waitangi Mahana, a 160-year-old woman, who was born on the day when the Waitangi Treaty was signed. The treaty was crucial to perceive both the colonial history of New Zealand and the current political chaos there because “[t]hrough this Treaty signed in 1840, the British, under the pretence of protecting the Māoris, actually confiscated their lands” (p. 223). The play opens on the day when Tiri celebrates her 160th birthday in 2000 and dives into the depths of her memories mirroring social, cultural, and military struggles of the Māori against colonialists. The figurative embodiment of the survival of Māori culture through Tiri’s extraordinarily long life span renders possible the magical realist analysis of the play. Her first hand experiences of historical events affecting the Māori directly, such as “the Land Wars of the 1860s, the First World War and the Spanish influenza epidemic, the protest movement of the 1970s, the 1990 visit of the Queen and finally, her birthday in 2000” turn her life story into “a magical realist story where neither the realistic nor the symbolically magical is privileged” (Riemenschneider, 2004, p. 218). Initially, Ihimaera designs the magical realist structure of the play through characterization because not only, Tiri, a native who has lived 160 years, but also the other Māori character on the stage, Tilly, a woman in her thirties, answer to the first and foremost definition of magical realism: the occurrence of the supernatural. The only information about Tilly is that she is one of the quests at Tiri’s first wedding, but she has witnessed all Tiri’s memories from her birth to 160th birthday. In contrast to Tiri, who has grown old in 160 years, Tilly is an ageless woman who is always in her 30s but who also witnesses Tiri’s memories for 160 years. Moreover, the magical realist structure is reinforced by the supernatural capabilities of these native women because they are

capable of communing with death or defying mortality. When they are forced to migrate in winter by colonialists, an illness occurs due to the harsh conditions of the season and probable poisoning of water sources by colonialists. The dialogue between them reveals the occurrence of the supernatural in the play:

TILLY: All of a sudden I was aware that somebody had come into the room. As soon as I saw him, I knew he was Death.

TIRI: He was dark and he came and sat down beside me on the bed. He started to speak to me, but I was trying to cope with staying alive so I said-

TILLY (laughing, to audience): You know what she said?

TIRI: Haere atu! Hoki mai koe ki ahau i te toru tekau tau! Oh, go away! I'm too busy right now! Come back in thirty years! (Ihimaera, 2000, p. 48)

These two Māori women whose ages and ability to communicate with death demonstrate that the play consists of characteristics which cannot be understood with empirical Western thought. These extraordinary characters also live in the phenomenal world of the play where not only death wanders as if it is a character, but indigenous mythology also elucidates the past and culture. In the prologue, while Tiri introduces herself and her country to the audience, she clarifies the appearance of her ancestors on the island and how indigenous mythology has shaped life on the island: “[m]y ancestor, Paikea, came to these islands riding a majestic whale. The sky was a man and the earth was a woman — and I still greet them both” (p. 9). Her explanation demonstrates the relationship between mythology and life in understanding the Māori culture which clarifies the beginning of life and belief system on the island through mythology. Besides, the struggle of the Māori to preserve their indigenous traditions is also symbolized by weaving cloaks that leaders of the Māori wear. Those cloaks are woven by the natives whose only responsibility is to weave them and who are not allowed to touch any food or drink:

TIRI: They wove magic all around that old house. They called the rainbows over the valleys, through the mist and into the sacred work so that the aho tapu, the sacred thread, would be in the weft of the weave! (p. 22)

In addition to extraordinary features of Tiri and Tilly, those traditional cloaks which are woven by summoning rainbows over the valleys, taking their colours through mist and handling them on the cloaks through magical threads contribute much to the magical realist structure, and the world of the play becomes a space where the supernatural is an uninteresting part of daily life.

The occurrence of the supernatural is not enough for a literary piece to be regarded as magical realist, but it should also create a space similar to the real world through realistic descriptions of actions, settings and characters. Realistic descriptions build “a realistic framework that constitutes the primary difference between magical realism and pure fantasy” and the framework should also be improved with many realistic descriptions of

man and society” (Chanady, 1985, p. 46). Thus, those realistic descriptions construct “the phenomenal world” which measures up to the real world but harbours the supernatural as an ordinary part of daily life (Faris, 2004, p. 14). In *Woman Far Walking*, Ihimaera constructs the phenomenal world of the play through not only the realistic description of the setting, characters, or actions, but also the realities of the Māori society. The two characters of the play, Tiri and Tilly, in contrast to the extraordinary characteristics of their ages and capabilities, are described as common native women wearing traditional clothes. While Tiri sits in a wheelchair and frequently gets up with the help of two walking sticks due to emotional outbursts triggered by her memories, Tilly accompanies Tiri on the stage and reminds her of the bothersome memories of the Māori. Not only realistic descriptions of their physical and behavioural characteristics but also of the village where the indigenous people live comply with the realistic framework of the play. The village is in a valley “near the sea where there were no roads” and the Māori’s house is “a small whare, and way over the other side of the paddock [is] the kauta, the kitchen, separated from the sacred work of the weaving” (Ihimaera, 2000, p. 21). The realist framework is also supported by the names of the regions which are the names of real regions in New Zealand and of the names of Tiri’s progeny and husbands who are, in fact, the names of the Māori tribes or leaders. Furthermore, the most significant factor contributing to the phenomenal world of the play is the bridge that Ihimaera builds between the colonial memory of the Māori and Tiri’s individual past through real historical incidents:

Within this world, five incidents form a recurrent motif. The first incident occurs in childhood when, as a six-year-old girl, she is told by her mother to go with two weavers to cook for them: she is always waiting for her mother to come to take her home and, in the end, at the age of thirteen runs away. The second incident is when she is forty-two and a member of Te Kooti’s rebellious army fighting the Pakeha in 1888; she survives the Ngatapa killings. The third incident is the flu epidemic, 1918, when she is seventy-eight, the only elderly woman to survive and to look after four remaining children of her tribe. ‘Why me?’ she asks. The fourth incident is the Springbok Tour, 1981, when she is 141 years old. The fifth incident occurs in 1990 when her beloved valley — the place where she was taken by the weavers and which was left to her in their will — is subject to land development. (Ihimaera, 2000, p. 2)

The identification of Tiri’s individual past with the colonial history of the Māori through real historical incidents forms completeness with the realistic descriptions of the characters and setting, thereby creating the phenomenal world where the supernatural are blended with realistic descriptions.

In a magical realist text, the author’s approach to the supernatural plays a critical role in accepting the contrariness to the Western empiricism, and since the judgemental or explanatory attitudes will impact the credibility of the supernatural, the author assumes a neutral attitude which neither judges nor clarifies the supernatural, but just narrates without comments to increase hesitancy on the audience. The “authorial reticence” is implemented

through “absence of obvious judgements about veracity of the events and the authenticity of the world view expressed by characters in the text” (Chanady, 1985, p. 30). Since explaining or judging the supernatural in terms of empiricism or rationalism underlines “the strangeness or even impossibility of certain events and beliefs,” the authorial reticence is essential for the supernatural to be “brought down to the level of reality by being juxtaposed with a perfectly natural occurrence” (1985, p. 149). In the play, Ihimaera never questions credibility of the supernatural or attempts to explain how or why it is extraordinary. Even though the play demonstrates the traits of self-reflexivity enabling Tiri and Tilly to direct their sorrows or hatred to the faces of the Pakehas among the audience, neither Tiri nor Tilly comments on, judges or explains the supernatural. Due to the authorial reticence, the supernatural which is experienced in a setting similar to real world increases the sense of reality, or at least does not seem to be eccentric.

The phenomenal world of magical realism often features the amalgamation or proximity of empirically divergent realms, which breaks conventional perceptions of time, space, or identity. The occurrence of the supernatural and the exclusion of rationalism render possible “the closeness or near-merging of two realms, two worlds” and provide “a confrontation between real-world norms and other worldly, supernatural norms” (Faris, 2004, p. 21). The phenomenal world becomes a place where those dichotomies, such as the ordinary and extraordinary, the past and present, the life and death, metamorphose into merging realms. The phenomenal world of the play is such a space where those realms co-exist by means of the supernatural. While the extraordinary traits of Tiri and Tilly’s ages converge the past and present, their capabilities to converse with death merge the realms of life and death. Besides, the culture of weaving magical cloaks in the valley where the natives summon rainbows, extract their colours through the mist, and handle them into cloaks with magical threads juxtaposes the dichotomy of traditional and modern. Even though the valley stands for the tradition of the Māori, it turns into a modern village with “a pub, a place where you can rent videos and a Lotto shop up there now” (Ihimaera, 2000, p. 78). Hence, the supernatural, articulated through cloaks woven in an extraordinary way, merges the realms of traditional and modern. Merging realms conducted by the supernatural also “disturb received ideas about time, space and identity” (Faris, 2004, p. 23). Ihimaera’s supernatural metaphor for the tradition of the Māori underlines the disruption of identity, alienation of the Māori, because he presents the traditional and modern simultaneously to highlight their transformation in the phenomenal world of the play. He also undermines the traditional ideas about time through two indigenous women’s characterization. While Tiri lives for 160 years and does not die despite her collapsed body, Tilly does not get older and always remains in her thirties. Ihimaera’s characterization offers two indigenous women neither of whom lives in accordance with the conventions of linear time. Briefly, Ihimaera’s *Woman Far Walking* becomes prominent as an example of magical realist drama through the inclusion of the supernatural which is not checked by European rationalism, through realist descriptions which reflect the supernatural as a part of daily life, through authorial reticence which encourages the audience to believe in the

supernatural and through merging realms which undermine conventional ideas by gathering dichotomies which are ostensibly disparate.

3. COLONIAL MEMORY AS A SOURCE OF POLITICAL CHAOS

In *Woman Far Walking*, Ihimaera propounds the detailed chronicle of colonization in New Zealand, fictionalising two native women who revisit Tiri's memories on the stage. Her individual past parallels with the political, economic, and social turmoil triggered by the Waitangi Treaty. As a native woman who was born on the day of signing, she has witnessed the legacy of colonialism during her extraordinarily lengthy life span. Ihimaera's effort to "reclaim, rename and reinhabit" the postcolonial Māori land underlines his role in endeavouring "to recover a national past from the misinterpretations of imperialist discourse" (Dalley, 2012, pp. 222-223). Tiri's magical realist embodiment of the colonial history of the Māori presents her as a character who has accumulated not only the incidents but also their impacts on the natives in her memory. Those incidents "show the persistent nature of Tiri's trauma and reveal how her personal suffering is deeply connected with the broader history of her people" (Can, 2025, p. 1943). In accordance with flow of the play which centres on the act of remembering, she functions to remind the contemporary Māori generation of the colonialist political, social, cultural, and economic impositions. Her memories aiming to incite the Māori can be categorized into two groups: The ones revealing the tyranny of colonization and the ones indicating the ignorance of the Māori for their indigenous culture. Even though those memories depict different dimensions of colonization, Ihimaera utilizes them to build awareness and sensitivity among the young Māori, and her memories become a catalyst of political chaos where legacies of colonization beget the political impasses in the postcolonial New Zealand.

In the play, Ihimaera writes the chronicle of colonization through Tiri's memories and aims to shed light on the violence and the cultural impoverishment performed by the Pakeha. Ihimaera reads the relationship "that Māori have with contemporary New Zealand society" through "Māori sovereignty asserting Māori rights" and thus he is "concerned with Treaty redress, recuperation of culture and history, and the process of articulating grievances over the devastating impact of colonization and Pakeha assimilation policies" (Kennedy, 2011, pp. 47-48). With an allusion to Saleem Sinai, the protagonist of *Midnight's Children* by Salman Rushdie, who was born on the night when India got independence, Ihimaera employs Tiri as a native woman who was born on the day when the Treaty of Waitangi was signed in 1840 and lets her individual past to transform into the history of a nation. The name of the treaty, in fact, clarifies its impact on the country because Waitangi, the name of a river in the West part of the country, means "river of lamentation" (King, 2003, p. 178) and it really becomes the touchstone of colonization that Ihimaera laments. The Treaty of Waitangi is not only the one generating colonization in the region, but also the source of postcolonial chaos in New Zealand due to the confusion it creates in the English and Māori versions:

In English it ceded to Britain the sovereignty of New Zealand and gave the Crown an exclusive right of pre-emption of such lands as Māori wished to sell. In return, Māori were guaranteed full rights of ownership of their lands, forests and fisheries and other prized possessions... Only thirty-nine chiefs signed this Treaty in English language, however. Most signed a Treaty in Māori language. (Orange, 2010, p. VII)

Thus, in accordance with the local meaning of the Treaty and colonial legacy built with the help of the confusion it causes, Tiri's memory metamorphoses into a mirror reflecting the lamentable colonial history of New Zealand. The play obviously refers to the foundation of colonial settlement ensured by the sovereignty that the Treaty bestows on Britain through stage directions, writing "[t]he lights begin to flicker light and shadow and, on the soundtrack, comes a sound like a bulldozer mixed in with the other sounds symbolising the history that Pakeha settlement has brought with it" and the European settlers become concrete when Tilly says "look! More pale people, coming down the road. Settlers. Pale faces. Putting up fences. Pale riders upon pale horses. Towns sprouting up all around us. Pale, pale, faces. Replacing our godsticks with their surveyor's pegs" (Ihimaera, 2000, pp. 31-32). Since colonial settlement is against the Treaty that Māori chiefs sign in their local language, a civil war, called Land Wars, between the Pakeha and Māori breaks out, and Tiri's memories mirror each detail of the war with the names of the warriors who are Tiri's sons and daughters and of local places. Her memories not only depict the violence performed on the Māori in their lands, but also underline how the domination that the Pakeha achieve over the Māori through colonization converts the Māori into soldiers of the Crown in the World War I. Even though Tiri expresses that it is not their war, but the one "the Pakeha fight the Pakeha. Goblin against goblin," she loses one of her sons, Moanaroa, the name of a local region representing the Māori having died in the war (pp. 64-65). In addition to the direct violence the Māori are exposed to due to wars colonization has caused, Tiri's memories also highlight the indirect calamities begot by colonization through Spanish influenza having killed thousands of Māori after the war and the nuclear tests having been conducted by the French government in the region (p. 76). Revealing all types of exploitation performed in her lands, Tiri reflects her memories "within the play's openly aggressive stance, in which colonial history and the Pakeha are blamed for Māori social and cultural impoverishment" (Kennedy, 2011, p. 101). The aggressive tone is often consolidated with clarion calls stressing the necessity of war against the Pakeha, and this desire to wage a war is not only verbalized on the stage by Tiri, who frequently yells war cries on the stage, but is also performed through frequent haka dances. Though "contemporary haka performances take place in a wide range of contexts such as celebratory events like weddings, tourist events and football matches," the haka is originally "a war cry and war dance" performed "by warriors before combat" (Sturman, 2019, p. 2347). The haka dances in the play are not only the performances that indicate Tiri's aggressive reactions to the exploitation of Māori culture and land, but they become an embodiment of cultural heritage that Tiri bequeathed to her ten-year-old descendant, Jessica, ensure its survival. She expresses her trust to Jessica, suggesting that "only [her]

moko, Jessica, [will] protect [her] from everybody” (Ihimaera, 2000, pp. 31-32). Tiri foreshadows the political turmoil in the postcolonial New Zealand when she encourages Jessica to protect the Māori culture with the haka which is the indicative of incoming war:

TIRI: You remember the women’s haka? Ka Panapana?

JESSICA: Yes, Nan.

TIRI: It is your song, moko. For as long as you breathe, sing it out loud. For as long as you live, fight to keep our valley forever and ever. You must be the keeper of the fire —

JESSICA: Yes, Nani. Ake, ake, ake —

TIRI: Now, you. It’s time we had it out. We have some unfinished business to settle. (In a low, purposeful voice) You wanna fight? (p. 92).

Tiri leaves a legacy, the haka which not only symbolizes the indigenous culture of the Māori, but also refers to its performative aggressiveness, to Jessica, who represents the young generation in the 2000s. All incidents of colonial history are transferred to Jessica with an aggressive and provocative tone, and she transforms into a native who cannot stand the idea of being a New Zealander and threatens those who define her as a New Zealander. The impact Ihimaera attempts to engender at the end of the play reveals through the stage directions just before Jessica’s final words indicating her feeling about being a New Zealander because Ihimaera writes that her “voice sounds as if it is coming out of the future. Her voice is joined by other young children’s voices” (p. 100). The purposeful impact generated by the stage directions and her final words clarify the roots of the political chaos in the postcolonial New Zealand: the colonial memories including political exploitation have created Jessicas who are the natural part of the chaos with their aggressiveness on the problems of legitimacy.

The embodiment of colonial history through Tiri’s individual past also reveals the cultural exploitation the Māori experienced after the foundation of colonial settlement in the region. The cultural exploitation is reflected through the valley where the Māori weave magical cloaks that tribe chiefs wear. In Tiri’s childhood, the valley is the place where cultures of the Māori are experienced in the magical realist world of the play. She becomes one of the residents of the valley and contributes to the process of weaving because she is supposed to be the one maintaining the indigenous culture, by being “the keeper of the fire” in the valley (p. 21). However, then she leaves the valley and gets married. Since those weavers cannot touch food or drink, they die, and the traditional cloak weaving comes to an end. This refers to the death of the Māori culture. Ihimaera is critical of the ignorance of the Māori for their traditions and, in fact, he accuses of them not preserving their culture through Tilly, who blames Tiri for ignoring the maintenance of culture due to her focus on pleasures of life. Ihimaera lets Tilly to announce the death of the Māori culture and responsibility of the Māori for it when she scolds Tiri:

There was no going back, after that, to a valley where rainbows were called to come every morning. So don't try to make out that there was some other high and mighty reason why you didn't go back to those old weavers. Tell the truth! (p. 30)

The valley where the Māori used to weave magical cloaks and protect their culture turns into a Western town where traditional houses of the Māori are destroyed by the modern bulldozers of the Pakeha and shops such as “a pub, a place where you can rent videos and a Lotto shop up there now” are built (p. 78). Ihimaera's obvious accusation not only reveals the alienation of the Māori culture through the transformation of the valley, but also elucidates the aggression and motivation of Tiri in her struggle for the maintenance of the Māori culture. With the help of Tiri's feeling of guilt, while Ihimaera imposes the responsibility of the alienation of culture on the indigenous, he also motivates the new generations, as descendants of those who could not fulfil their responsibility, to protect the Māori culture. Hence, it becomes the duty of those, Jessicas, who are fond of their tradition, to ensure maintenance of the Māori culture. Shortly, in addition to political impositions on the Māori and their lands, Tiri's colonial memory also presents the cultural alienation of the Māori through the image of valley, and while it incites them to expand their awareness for their indigenous culture, it also forces them to be a party to the political chaos in the postcolonial New Zealand.

4. CONCLUSION

Woman Far Walking epitomizes magical realist drama with the occurrence of the supernatural narrated with a matter-of-fact tone, the phenomenal world described realistically, the authorial reticence contributing to the credibility of the supernatural and the merging realms rendering possible disruptions of time, space and identity. Since magical realism is often preferred by postcolonial authors as a literary mode to resist legacies of colonialism, the play complies with the magical realist tradition pioneered and reinforced by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, who deals with the turbulent colonial history of Latin America in *A Hundred Years of Solitude*, and Salman Rushdie, who reflects legacies of colonization in India in *Midnight's Children*. Witi Ihimaera also mirrors the political history of colonization and its consequences on the Māori culture in *Woman Far Walking*, in which he personifies the colonial history of New Zealand with Tiri whose individual past illuminates the colonization of the region after the Treaty of Waitangi and its alienating impact on the Māori culture. Even though the play often laments for the loss of the Māori land and alienation of the indigenous culture through requiems in the native language, the play's aggressive stance consolidated by frequent combat propagandas and haka performances demonstrates that it is not a play of passive lamentation, but of active aggression. The death of Tiri and her testacy of the haka, a symbol of both the Māori culture and their aggressiveness, to Jessica establish a bond between the colonial memory and the generation y of the Māori. The end of the play not only indicates that the generation y of the Māori attributes importance to the Māori culture, but also proves their aggressiveness towards the Crown and the idea of being citizens of New Zealand. Hence, in accordance with the increasing significance of indigenous cultures and identities in postcolonial spaces,

Woman Far Walking, written in 2000, foreshadows the current political chaos in today's New Zealand where the Pakeha and the Māori cannot agree on the presumption of legitimacy. Furthermore, the play also implies that political chaos in postcolonial spaces cannot be resolved by ignoring the colonial memories, on the contrary; it should be comprehended by focusing on the expectations and desires of the indigenous.

Statement of Research and Publication Ethics

In all processes of the article, the principles of research and publication ethics of Manisa Celal Bayar University Journal of Social Sciences Institute was followed.

Authors' Contribution Rates to the Article

The entire article was written by the author.

Declaration of Interest

The author has no conflict of interest with any person or organization.

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