



'HER'STORIES ROBIN HYDE – HEROINE OR HERETIC?

**REVISING THE INFLUENCE OF ROBYN
HYDE ON NATIONAL IDENTITY IN MID
20TH CENTURY NEW ZEALAND**



INTRODUCTION: ROBYN HYDE, AKA IRIS WILKINSON, 1906-39

- WRITER, POET, JOURNALIST, COMMENTATOR, EDUCATOR, PR PRACTITIONER, FRONT LINE WAR REPORTER.
- DEAD BEFORE HER 34TH BIRTHDAY, A VICTIM OF GENDER BASED HARASSMENT AND ABUSE BY MEN FROM A COUNTRY THAT PRIDES ITSELF ON ITS EGALITARIANISM AND INCLUSIVITY.
- THIS PRESENTATION WILL EXPLORE THE FORCES OF CULTURAL PRODUCTION THAT FACILITATED SUCH HOSTILE MISOGYNY.
- HYDE WAS NOT MERELY THE VICTIM OF GENDER BASED ABUSE, BUT OF A GOVERNMENT BACKED CAMPAIGN TO CREATE A NEW, EXCLUSIONARY IDENTITY FOR NEW ZEALAND AT THE POINT OF DECOLONISATION THAT PRIORITISED THE WHITE, WORKING CLASS MALE.



THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK...

- USES RAYMOND WILLIAMS AND JAMES BELICH TO DEVELOP A CULTURAL MATERIALIST AND POSTCOLONIAL FRAMEWORK WITH WHICH TO EXAMINE NEW ZEALAND JOURNALISM AND CULTURE DURING THIS PERIOD.
- THE COUNTRY'S TRAJECTORY OF CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTITY FELL INTO THREE DISTINCT PHASES OF CREW, CORE AND COUNTERDISCOURSE INTERLOCKING CULTURES.
- THE MARGINALISATION OF HYDE'S WORK WAS NOT DOWN TO HER BEING THE "LASSIE" OR "GIDDY GEL" THAT GLOVER DISMISSES HER AS, BUT DUE TO A GOVERNMENT FUNDED NARRATIVE LAUDING MASCULINE ENDEAVOUR.



BRAND NEW ZEALAND...

- HOLT (*THE PRINCIPLES OF CULTURAL BRANDING, 2004*) ARGUES THAT BRANDS EMERGE THROUGH A STORY TELLING PROCESS WHICH FILLS THE BRAND WITH MEANING.
- IN THE FIRST HALF OF 20TH CENTURY, THIS WAS ACHIEVED FOR 'BRAND NEW ZEALAND' THROUGH A WIDE RANGE OF LABOUR GOVERNMENT SPONSORED 'CREATIVE COMMUNICATIONS' INCLUDING:
 - GOVERNMENT INFORMATION FILMS
 - OFFICIAL PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT
 - JOURNALISM, MAGAZINES AND COMMENTARY
 - FICTION FILMS FOCUSING ON THE 'NEW ZEALAND' EXPERIENCE
 - POETRY, NOVELS AND SHORT STORIES SERIALISED IN NATIONALISED MAGAZINES
 - PEN (POETS, ESSAYISTS AND NOVELISTS) NETWORK AND AUTHORS WEEK
 - PROVIDING GENEROUS AWARDS AND PENSIONS FOR THOSE WRITERS AND MEN OF LETTERS DEEMED WORTHY OF CONTRIBUTING TO THE ACT OF 'WRITING THE NATION.'



WHO WAS ROBIN HYDE?

- BORN IN CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA, AND BROUGHT TO NEW ZEALAND AT SIX MONTHS.
- GREW UP IN WELLINGTON, BEGAN HER JOURNALISTIC CAREER AT *THE DOMINION* AT 16.
- IN THE COLONIAL LANDSCAPE OF NEW ZEALAND, A WRITER WAS A JOURNALIST, PUBLICIST, ADVERTISER, FILM MAKER, NOVELIST, ESSAYIST, POET, COMMENTATOR AND EDUCATOR.
- WROTE TEN BOOKS OF POETRY AND PROSE, AMONG THEM THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NOVEL *THE GODWITS FLY*, TWO DOCUMENTARY BIOGRAPHIES FEATURING NEW ZEALAND GREAT WAR VETERAN DOUGLAS STARK, *PASSPORT TO HELL* AND *NOR THE YEARS CONDEMN*, AND THE TRAVEL BOOK *DRAGON RAMPANT*, AS WELL AS MANY ARTICLES AND LETTERS.
- HER EXPERIENCES AS A JOURNALIST AND WRITER CONTRIBUTED TO HER TREATISE ON JOURNALISM IN NEW ZEALAND, *JOURNALESE*, PUBLISHED IN 1934.
- FURTHER VOLUMES OF POETRY, AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND JOURNALISM PUBLISHED AFTER HER DEATH IN 1939.



REBEL OR HERETIC?

- IN THE LATE 1920S HYDE WORKED FOR *NEW ZEALAND TRUTH*, THE *CHRISTCHURCH SUN* AND THE *WANGANUI CHRONICLE*, INSERTING CONTROVERSIAL INTERVIEWS OR SUBVERSIVE COMMENT INTO THE SOCIETY OR SHOPPING COLUMNS.
- SOCIAL COLUMNS OR WOMEN'S PAGES WERE THE MAIN CHANNELS AVAILABLE TO WOMEN JOURNALISTS DURING THE PERIOD BUT HYDE REFUSED TO CONFORM, INSTEAD FINDING OUTLETS FOR HER SOCIAL CAMPAIGNS, FEMINISM AND POLITICAL ACTIVISM.
- A BRIEF LOVE AFFAIR IN ROTORUA LEFT HER PREGNANT AND IN APRIL 1926 SHE SAILED FOR SYDNEY, WHERE SHE GAVE BIRTH TO A SON, NAMED ROBIN HYDE, WHO DIED SOON AFTER AND WHOSE NAME SHE TOOK AS HER PSEUDONYM. HER LOVER HAD SAILED TO ENGLAND WHERE HE TOO DIED.
- SHE RETURNED TO NEW ZEALAND AND AGAIN FOUND WORK AS A JOURNALIST.



REBEL OR HERETIC?

- SHE SOON BECAME PREGNANT AGAIN TO A MARRIED JOURNALIST WHO SUGGESTED SHE PAY HALF THE COST OF AN ABORTION: "WELL," SHE WROTE, "YOU CAN'T SAY WE HAVEN'T GOT SEX EQUALITY ALL RIGHT."
- SHE GAVE BIRTH TO A SON, DEREK CHALLIS, IN 1930.
- RUMOURS REGARDING HER SEXUAL CONDUCT LOST HER THE WHANGANUI JOB AND SHE RETURNED PENNILESS TO HER FAMILY IN WELLINGTON, SMUGGLING HER SON ONTO THE FERRY IN A BASKET.
- HYDE NOW GOT A JOB AS LADY EDITOR OF THE *NEW ZEALAND OBSERVER*. AS THE GREAT DEPRESSION WORSENER, SHE WROTE ARTICLES ON VAGRANT WOMEN AND SOUP KITCHENS WHILE REPORTING ON FASHION AND BALLS IN THE SOCIETY PAGES AND WAS PRESENT AT THE QUEEN STREET RIOTS IN 1932.



HYDE THE PUBLICIST...

- SHE WROTE POETRY, FICTION, BIOGRAPHY AND AUTOBIOGRAPHY AS WELL AS SUBMITTING ARTICLES TO *NEW ZEALAND RAILWAYS MAGAZINE* WHICH PUBLISHED A LOCALLY WRITTEN SHORT STORY EACH EDITION.
- SHE ALSO WROTE TOURISM BROCHURES AND PUBLICITY MATERIAL FOR THE NEW ZEALAND TOURIST DEPARTMENT, SUCH AS RAILWAY EXCURSION GUIDES.
- AT ONE STAGE SHE EVEN SCRIPTED THE SCREEN TITLES OF A NEW ZEALAND TOURISM DEPARTMENT FILM ADVERTISING MT COOK AND THE DELIGHTS OF SOUTHLAND FOR AMERICAN VISITORS.
- HYDE WROTE ARTICLES FOR ARTHUR MESSENGER AT THE PUBLICITY OFFICE IN THE LATE 1920S AND EARLY 1930S AS WELL AS WRITING FURTHER SCRIPTS FOR SILENT FILMS DEPICTING NEW ZEALAND FOR DISTRIBUTION ABROAD.



HYDE THE FEMINIST...

- SHE WAS A PROLIFIC SOCIAL CAMPAIGNER, SOCIALIST AND PROPONENT OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS.
- WOMEN HAD NATIONAL VOTE EARLIER THAN ANY OTHER COUNTRY AND NEW ZEALAND HAD ONE OF THE FIRST GOVERNMENT PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICERS IN THE WORLD, LEO FANNING (1879-1971).
- BUT THE GOVERNMENT DIFFERENTIATED BETWEEN MALE AND FEMALE JOURNALISTS:
 - "THE PRESS GALLERY PROPER IS RATHER COMFORTABLE, EQUIPPED WITH SWING CHAIRS, SPECIAL TELEPHONES, A DECENT VIEW OF THE HOUSE. THE WOMEN'S PRESS GALLERY (SO CALLED) IS A DAMNABLY UNCOMFORTABLE AND NARROW LITTLE BENCH IN FRONT OF A PUBLIC GALLERY TO WHICH ALL WOMEN ARE ADMITTED... IF YOU WANT TO KNOW FOR CERTAIN THAT YOU BELONG TO AN INFERIOR, YES A MOST INFERIOR SEX, SPEND AN ALL-NIGHT SITTING CRAMPED IN THE WOMEN'S PRESS GALLERY." (HYDE, 1934, P71)



HYDE THE ACTIVIST...

- IT WAS NOT UNTIL 1932 THAT THE FIRST WOMAN, ELIZABETH MCCOMBS, WAS ELECTED AS AN MP, AND HYDE COMPLAINED THAT EVEN SHE WAS INDIFFERENT TO THE CONCERNS OF OTHER WOMEN AND CHILDREN, PARTICULARLY POOR ONES:
 - “WOMEN WAGE EARNERS, PENSIONERS, WOMEN WITH TINY INCOMES, COULD ALL BE TAXED ON PRACTICALLY EVERY PENNY THEY EARNED. NO GOVERNMENT RELIEF, SAVE A CONTEMPTIBLY SMALL EKEING OUT OF CLUMSY AND INADEQUATE CHARITIES, WAS AVAILABLE FOR THE UNEMPLOYED WOMEN AMONG US.” ([HYDE, 1934, P. 71](#))



HYDE THE OUTSPOKEN REFORMER...

- SHE RECORDS THE EFFECT OF SUCH LACK OF PROVISION IN *JOURNALESE*, WRITING THAT SHE WAS TAKEN TO SEE AN OLD WOMAN IN AN AUCKLAND SLUM BY THE INSPECTOR OF ONE OF THESE CHARITIES:
 - “SHE’D BEEN ALONE, A PNEUMONIA CASE, FOR SOME DAYS... WELL THERE SHE LAY, NOTHING TO EAT IN THE HOUSE, GAS AND ELECTRIC LIGHT BOTH CUT OFF, HER NIGHTGOWN VERY GRIMY, A DIRTY CUP OF STAGNANT TEA ALL THAT WAS LEFT TO REMIND HER OF PAST GLORIES... SHE WAS A RATHER GENTLE OLD LADY, AND THOUGH SHE COULDN’T SIT UP OR SAY MUCH, THE TEARS RAN DOWN HER FACE BECAUSE HER ROOM WAS ‘IN SUCH A MESS.’”
- HYDE ASKED HER MALE NEWS EDITOR FOR PERMISSION TO WRITE ABOUT THE WOMAN’S PLIGHT AND WAS TOLD THAT PEOPLE DIDN’T WANT TO HEAR ABOUT “THINGS LIKE THAT” BECAUSE THE WOMAN WASN’T “VERY RESPECTABLE.” HYDE, WITH CLASSIC INDIGNATION, RETORTS:
 - “STATE MURDER IS A UGLIER AND MORE COLD-BLOODED SORT OF SIN THAN PRIVATE ADULTERY CAN POSSIBLY BE IN ANY WALK OF LIFE.”



1930S WOMEN'S MEDIA...

- JESSE MACKAY - JOURNALIST, WRITER, POET AND COMMITTED FEMINIST. A STAFF REPORTER FOR THE *OTAGO WITNESS* SHE REPORTED ON THE BIRTH OF THE IRISH REPUBLIC FROM DUBLIN FOR THE *CHRISTCHURCH PRESS*. SHE WAS THE 'LADY EDITOR' OF THE *CANTERBURY TIMES* BUT SPENT MOST OF HER LIFE CAMPAIGNING FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE, FAIR POLITICAL REPRESENTATION AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS.
- ESTHER GLEN – NOVELIST, JOURNALIST AND WRITER. COLUMNIST FOR THE *CHRISTCHURCH SUN* WHO ALSO WORKED ON THE 'WOMEN'S PAGE' AND AS CHILDREN'S EDITOR. SHE WROTE THE FIRST EVER CHILDREN'S BOOKS IN NEW ZEALAND BY A NEW ZEALAND AUTHOR.
- NELLE SCANLAN – WROTE FOR THE *MANAWATU TIMES* NEWSPAPER WHEN THE MALE JOURNALISTS ENLISTED FOR WORLD WAR I. IN 1921 SHE ATTENDED THE ARMS LIMITATION CONFERENCE IN WASHINGTON, D.C. - THE ONLY NEW ZEALAND JOURNALIST THERE AND THE ONLY WOMAN. SHE WENT ON TO WRITE THE FAMOUS PENCARROW SERIES OF NOVELS BETWEEN 1932 AND 1939.



AND HOW THEY USED IT....

- WHAT ALL THESE WOMEN HAD IN COMMON WAS THAT THEY WERE FORCED TO WRITE WOMEN'S PAGES AND SOCIAL COLUMNS; OR IN HYDE'S WORDS TO "SUFFER FOOLS SADLY."
- AGAIN, HYDE RAILED AGAINST SUCH A WASTE OF WOMEN'S TALENTS:
 - "NOW, WHILST EVERYONE WANTS TO BE A JOURNALIST EXCEPT THE JOURNALISTS (AND THEY, POOR DEARS, WOULD RATHER BE WRITERS...) I NEVER YET HAVE MET ANYONE WHO DEFINITELY OWNED UP THAT SHE WANTED TO BE A SOCIAL WRITER, GOSSIP WRITER, LADY EDITOR – CALL THE HORRIBLE TASK JUST WHAT YOU PLEASE."
(HYDE, 1934, P. 10.)
- SHE RESPONDED BY USING THE PLATFORM ALLOCATED TO HER, MEAGER AS IT WAS, TO PROPOSE HER OWN VISION OF A FAIRER, MORE INCLUSIVE NEW ZEALAND.

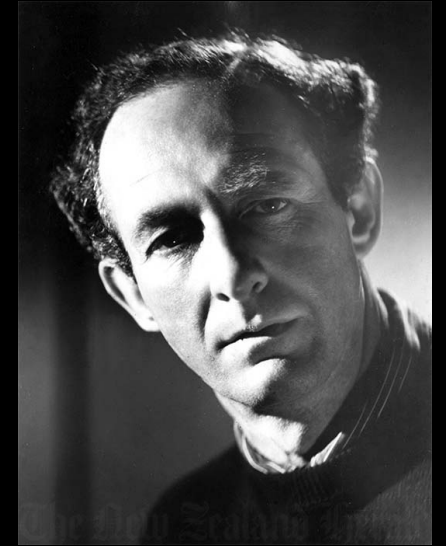


HOW NEW ZEALAND'S 1930'S MEN OF LETTERS RESPONDED...

- CRITICISM OF HER WORK WAS WIDESPREAD AND ROUTINE. THE “LASSIE” OR “GIDDY GEL” PORTRAYED BY WRITER DENIS GLOVER IN HIS POEM ‘THE ARRAIGNMENT OF PARIS’ (1937) WAS A THINLY VEILED DEPICTION OF HYDE.
- WRITER FRANK SARGESON’S CRITICISM OF WHAT HE TERMED THE “MINOR TRADITION” ([SARGESON, 1938](#)) IN NEW ZEALAND CULTURE WAS AN EFFECTIVE MEANS OF EXCLUDING WOMEN FROM ANY POSITION OF CENTRALITY IN THE DECADE’S NATIONALIST MOVEMENT, AND THUS, ARGUES MURRAY, “...FROM THE GROWING AWARENESS AND EXPERIMENTATION SURROUNDING THE IDEA OF WRITING THE NATION;” ([MURRAY, 1998, P. P. 166.](#))



HOW NEW ZEALAND'S 1930'S MEN OF LETTERS RESPONDED...



- THIS WAS A VERY PUBLIC AND PROLONGED ATTACK AGAINST HYDE, PLAYED OUT IN NEWSPAPER AND MAGAZINE COLUMNS AND LETTERS PAGES.
- REX FAIRBURN COMPLAINED TO GLOVER ABOUT HYDE'S "MENSTRUAL SCHOOL" OF WRITING. ([EDMOND, 1981, P. P. 95](#))
- SARGESON "CONTROLLED" CULTURAL OPINION IN NEW ZEALAND FOR AT LEAST TWO DECADES AND WAS VOCIFEROUS IN HIS CONDEMNATION OF HYDE, WRITING PUBLICALLY TO GLOVER IN 1937 THAT "I'VE TOLD IRIS BLUNTLY THAT BEING HYSTERICAL ON PAPER ISN'T WRITING." ([J. WILSON & KIMBER, 2013, P. 135.](#))



HYDE STRIKES BACK...

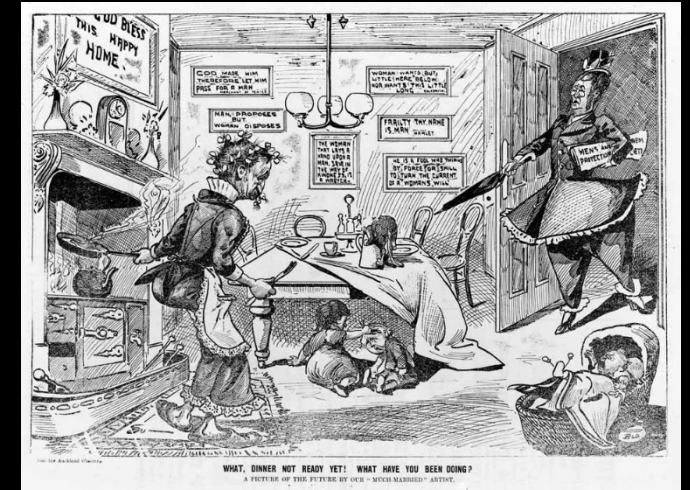


- FOR A TIME SHE HELD HER OWN AGAINST THIS ONSLAUGHT, WRITING IN 1934:
 - “NOW ALL THE PRETTY BOYS WHO’VE BEEN TO ENGLAND ONCE... INSIST... WE MUST... DEVELOP A PURELY COLONIAL STYLE... [WITH] LOCAL COLOUR LAID ON AS THICK AS... GREASE PAINT. SIT ABOUT SINGING TO TUI’S AND BABBLING OF BELLBIRDS FOR THE TERM OF YOUR NATURAL LIFE, BUT IF YOU HAPPEN TO THINK OF SOMETHING THAT MIGHT HAVE OCCURRED JUST ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD OF MAN, WOMAN AND CHILD, KEEP IT DARK. I HATE THESE AGGRESSIVELY INSULAR NEW ZEALANDERS. I THINK THEY MENACE JOURNALISM IN OUR PERFECTLY DECENT LITTLE COUNTRY.”
([HYDE, 1934, P. 12](#))
- BUT JENSEN SUGGESTS THAT HYDE’S EXCLUSION FROM THE NEW MOVEMENT OF CULTURAL NATIONALISM EMERGING IN NEW ZEALAND MAY HAVE HASTENED HER DEPARTURE FROM THE COUNTRY, AND ULTIMATELY “...CONTRIBUTED TO THE STATE OF MIND WHICH LED HER TO COMMIT SUICIDE IN LONDON IN 1939.” ([JENSEN, 1996, P. P. 104](#))



DRAWING THE BATTLE LINES...

- THIS VERY PUBLIC AND PROLONGED ATTACK WAS EMBLEMATIC OF THE CONFRONTATION BETWEEN DIFFERENT NEW ZEALAND CULTURES THAT EXISTED SIMULTANEOUSLY AS THE COUNTRY STRUGGLED INTO EXISTENCE AS A NEW DOMINION.
- IT WAS PART OF A PROCESS INVOLVING DIVERGENT CULTURES THAT FORMED AROUND A NARRATIVE OF RACE, LAND, CLASS AND GENDER THAT CREATED A HIGHLY NUANCED SET OF INTERLOCKING NEW ZEALAND IDENTITIES.
- THESE CO-EXISTENT, OVERLAPPING FORMATIONS ENCAPSULATE THE EXPERIENCE OF SEVERAL GENERATIONS AS NEW ZEALAND EDGED TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE FROM GREAT BRITAIN.



INTERLOCKING CULTURES...

- THE EARLY PART OF THE 20TH CENTURY CAN BE CHARACTERISED AS A PERIOD OF CULTURAL DECOLONIZATION AS NEW ZEALAND SOUGHT TO ESTABLISH A UNIQUE IDENTITY SEPARATE FROM MOTHER BRITAIN.
- USING RAYMOND WILLIAMS' WORK ON CULTURAL MATERIALISM TO PROVIDE A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK, I ARGUE THAT THESE INTERLOCKING CULTURAL FORMATIONS ARE REPRESENTATIVE OF SIMULTANEOUSLY EXISTING DOMINANT, RESIDUAL AND EMERGENT CULTURES.
- THE FIRST TWO OF THESE GROUPS OR THEMES DRAWS UPON THE TERMS THAT POSTCOLONIAL HISTORIAN JAMES BELICH ASCRIBES TO THE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF NEW ZEALAND DURING THE EARLY STAGES OF ITS SETTLEMENT AND COLONIZATION ([BELICH, 2001, P. P. 21.](#)) THE THIRD THEME UTILIZES MICHEL FOUCAULT'S DEFINITION OF DISCOURSE.



INTERLOCKING CULTURES...

- CREW CULTURE - WRITING ABOUT GROUPS OF ITINERANT MEN WHO UNDERTAKE THE PHYSICAL WORK OF CULTIVATING A DEVELOPING COUNTRY, FORMING RELATIONSHIPS AND A SENSE OF IDENTITY THROUGH WORK. MOST WRITING FROM THE 1930s AND 1940s NEW ZEALAND CULTURAL NATIONALISTS ROTATES AROUND THIS THEME.
- CORE CULTURE - WRITING ABOUT FAMILIES WHO PLAY A ROLE IN DEVELOPING PERMANENT SETTLEMENTS, TOWNS AND CITIES IN THE EMERGING NATION, AND THEIR STRUGGLES TO CREATE IDENTITY IN AN EVER CHANGING SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT. MOST WRITING THAT IS REJECTED BY THE CULTURAL NATIONALISTS, INCLUDING HYDE'S WORK, ROTATES AROUND THIS THEME.
- COUNTERDISCOURSE - WRITING ABOUT THOSE TRADITIONALLY EXCLUDED FROM THIS NEW SOCIETY BY ITS 'PURITANICAL' ELEMENTS, SUCH AS HOMOSEXUALS AND THOSE VIEWED AS INSANE, AND THE RESPONSE OF THOSE WHO ARE MARGINALIZED BY SOCIETY AS A RESULT. THIS RESPONSE FREQUENTLY RESULTS IN A DESTABILISING INVERSION OF THE STEREOTYPES REPRESENTED IN BOTH CREW AND CORE CULTURE FORMATIONS AND IS FURTHER DEVELOPED IN ANOTHER PAPER.



CREW CULTURE...

- CREW CULTURE WAS, BY ITS VERY DEFINITION, COLONIAL.
- IT WAS CHARACTERIZED BY LARGE GROUPS OF MEN WHO LIVED AND WORKED IN TEAMS AND, FOR THE MOST PART, DID NOT MARRY OR SETTLE DOWN AND RAISE FAMILIES.
- AS SUCH, THEY DIFFERED SIGNIFICANTLY FROM OTHER SECTORS OF NEW ZEALAND SOCIETY AND MOVED FROM PLACE TO PLACE AS DICTATED BY THE AVAILABILITY OF WORK.
- BETWEEN THE 1880S AND 1920S, THE IMPACT OF CREW CULTURE ON NEW ZEALAND SOCIETY WAS SO PRONOUNCED THAT BELICH ARGUES IT WAS THESE “MOTLEY CREWS” WHO WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE COLONIAL PAKEHA’S HIGH RATES OF DRUNKENNESS AND ASSAULT.
([BELICH, 2001, P. P. 19](#))



CORE CULTURE...

- CORE CULTURE WAS THE NOTIONAL OPPOSITE OF CREW CULTURE.
- IT WAS A PRODUCT OF WHAT BELICH TERMS “PROGRESSIVE COLONISATION” OR “...THE MOST RAPID FORM OF CULTURAL REPRODUCTION – THE MAKING OF A NEW PEOPLE FROM OLD – IN HUMAN HISTORY” ([BELICH, 2001, P. P. 17](#)). HE ARGUES THAT:
 - “SETTLED CORES WERE PEOPLE WHO STAYED IN ONE PLACE, OR WHO HOPED OR PRETENDED TO HOPE TO DO SO. THEY STRUGGLED TO GENERATE LOCAL COMMUNITY AGAINST THE DE-SOCIALISING TIDES OF IMMIGRATION, EMIGRATION AND GEOGRAPHIC MOBILITY WITHIN NEW ZEALAND” ([BELICH, 2001, P. P. 19](#)).
- CREWS CREATED THE ROADS, INFRASTRUCTURE AND MATERIALS NECESSARY FOR SUCH A PROJECT. IT WAS FOR THE PURPOSE OF BUILDING THESE “SETTLED CORES” THEREFORE THAT CREWS HAD FIRST EXISTED.



CULTURAL MATERIALISM

- USING RAYMOND WILLIAMS' TAXONOMY OF DOMINANT, RESIDUAL AND EMERGENT CULTURES, I ARGUE THAT, IN THE EARLY PART OF THE 20TH CENTURY, A COLONIAL 'CORE CULTURE' WAS THE DOMINANT CULTURAL FORMATION IN NEW ZEALAND.
- AS THE COUNTRY STRUGGLED TOWARDS DECOLONISATION IN THE AFTERMATH OF WWI, NEW CONSTRUCTIONS OF NEW ZEALAND MASCULINITY BECAME FIRST AN EMERGENT, AND THEN A DOMINANT CULTURE BY THE 1930s.
- FED BY THE NEW UNIVERSITIES AND EMERGING PUBLISHING HOUSES, AND UNDERPINNED BY GOVERNMENT PROJECTS TO ESTABLISH A NEW NATIONAL IDENTITY, THIS NEW FORMATION CAME TO BE DOMINATED BY A GROUP OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATED, LEFT LEANING WHITE MALES WHO CALLED THEMSELVES 'THE CULTURAL NATIONALISTS.'



THE CULTURAL NATIONALISTS...

- THESE CULTURAL NATIONALISTS GLORIFIED THE CREW CULTURE OF AN EARLIER AGE, IMMORTALISING A NEW CONSTRUCTION OF NEW ZEALAND IDENTITY CENTRED ON THE 'ORDINARY KIWI BLOKE' AND REPUDIATING ALL OTHER CULTURAL CONSTRUCTIONS OF NEW ZEALAND IDENTITY, WHICH THEY REGARDED AS 'FEMINISED' BY ASSOCIATION WITH 'MOTHER BRITAIN.'
- THE CONSTRUCTION OF MASCULINITY DEPICTED BY CREW CULTURE HAS HAD A LASTING EFFECT ON NEW ZEALAND SOCIETY. AS ALISTAIR FOX ARGUES, THE PAKEHA "KIWI BLOKE" PREVAILING MYTH CONSTRUCTS THE NEW ZEALAND MAN AS:
 - "STRONG AND TOUGH, SELF-SUFFICIENT BECAUSE OF HIS PIONEER HERITAGE, A BOOZER LOYAL TO HIS MATES, A RUGBY PLAYER IN PEACE, A FEARLESS SOLDIER IN WAR, DECENT, STOICAL, AND A GOOD PROVIDER FOR HIS WIFE AND FAMILY." ([FOX, 2008, P. P. 11.](#))



THE EXEMPLARS...



- BOTH MAJ. JOHN MULGAN AND L. C. DENIS GLOVER WERE CONSTRUCTED AS EXEMPLARS OF NEW ZEALAND “POPULAR MASCULINITY” AS MUCH FOR THEIR PHYSICAL AND MILITARY PROWESS AS FOR THEIR WRITING ([JENSEN, 1996, P. P. 8.](#)).
- UNIVERSITY EDUCATED FIRST-CLASS SCHOLARS, COMPETITIVE, ACCOMPLISHED SPORTSMEN, BOTH MEN WERE CAMPAIGNERS FOR SOCIAL EQUALITY THROUGH LITERATURE, JOURNALISM AND COMMENTARY AND SUBSCRIBED TO THE POLITICAL LEFT, ROMANTICIZING THE WORKER AS THE EMBLEM OF HUMAN DIGNITY.
- THEY WERE EVERYTHING HYDE WAS NOT – HIGHLY EDUCATED, POWERFUL, INFLUENTIAL AND WITH ACCESS TO THEIR OWN MEANS OF PUBLICATION.



GLOVER'S PUBLICITY WORK...

- LIKE HYDE, DENIS GLOVER ALSO PARTICIPATED IN MASS OBSERVATION FILM PROJECTS FOR THE NEW ZEALAND FILM UNIT, WRITING THE SCREEN PLAY FOR CECIL HOLMES' 1948 FILM 'THE COASTER;' NEW ZEALAND'S VERSION OF "NIGHT TRAIN." [HTTPS://WWW.NZONSCREEN.COM/TITLE/THE-COASTER-1948](https://www.nzonscreen.com/title/the-coaster-1948)
- BUT WHILE GLOVER'S CONTRIBUTION HAS BEEN IMMORTALIZED BY NZONSCREEN, HYDE'S FILMS ARE LOST FOREVER.
- GLOVER ALSO COMMEMORATED THE LAUNCH OF TEAL AIR IN 1957 (LATER TO BECOME AIR NEW ZEALAND) WITH A SPECTACULARLY AWFUL POETRY COLLECTION ABOUT FLYING. EG *TO THE PLANE:*
 - *SKY-RIDER, SWEEPING YOUR WINGS AGAINST
THE COBWEB CLOUD, ASKING THE SUN'S PROXIMITY, YOU INTIMATE OF THUNDER,
WHAT RICH PLUNDER
DO YOUR INSTRUMENTS PLUCK FROM THE SKIES?*



HYDE VS MULGAN & GLOVER...

- UNLIKE HYDE WHO FOCUSED ON DOMESTIC CONCERNS AND CAMPAIGNING FOR THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN, MULGAN AND GLOVER TURNED THEIR ATTENTION TO THE SOCIALIST IDEAL AND THE FUNDAMENTAL FLAWS OF THE SETTLER CONTRACT.
- AND YET HYDE WROTE ABOUT BOTH WAR AND THE DOMESTIC SPHERE.
- YES, SHE WROTE SHOPPING COLUMNS AND REPORTS OF VIRTUOSO PIANO PERFORMANCES, BUT SHE ALSO WROTE EXTENSIVELY ABOUT THE EXPERIENCES OF NEW ZEALAND'S DISPOSSESSED WAR VETERANS AND CONFUSED WORKING CLASS CHILDREN, STRUGGLING TO UNDERSTAND THEIR PLACE IN A DISQUIETING, POSTCOLONIAL WORLD.
- FOR EXAMPLE HER BIOGRAPHIES OF JOHN DOUGLAS STARK, 'STARKIE,' IN *PASSPORT TO HELL* AND *NOR THE YEARS CONDEMN*.
- IT IS THIS RANGE OF WRITING THAT, I ARGUE, ENSURES HER VALUE TO NEW ZEALAND'S CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE EARLY PART OF THE 20TH CENTURY.



ESCAPE AND EXILE...

- HYDE, AS MURRAY ARGUES, WAS WRITTEN OUT OF ANY POSITION OF CENTRALITY AS “...HER CONCEPTION OF NEW ZEALAND APPEAR[ED] SO AT ODDS WITH MANY OF THE MALE WRITERS” OF HER DAY.
- SHE COMPLAINED OF BEING BULLIED OUT OF NEW ZEALAND BY HER MALE PEERS, AND HILLIARD NOTES THAT AN ENTIRE GENERATION OF WOMEN WRITERS IN NEW ZEALAND WERE EFFECTIVELY SILENCED BY THE HEGEMONY OF GLOVER AND CURNOW ([MURRAY, 1998, P. P. 166](#)).
- HYDE ISSUED A HEARTFELT PLEA TO HER TORMENTORS IN *JOURNALESE*, SAYING:
 - “I SAY ONLY TO CRITICS, SEARCH VERY CAREFULLY FOR WHAT IS BEAUTIFUL AND WORTH PRESERVING AMONG WHAT HAS ALREADY BEEN DONE, FOR TIME WILL PROVE MORE SURELY, IF MORE GENTLY, A DESTROYER OF THE UNESSENTIAL THAN ANYTHING YOU CAN POSSIBLY SAY OR WRITE.”
([HYDE, 1934, P. 77](#))



HYDE AS WAR CORRESPONDENT...

- DEPRESSED AND FRUSTRATED, SHE TURNED TO POLITICAL ACTIVIST AND FELLOW NEW ZEALAND WRITER REWI ALLEY FOR PATRONAGE AND SUPPORT, ARRIVING IN HONG KONG IN FEBRUARY 1938.
- AT THE TIME, MUCH OF EASTERN CHINA WAS UNDER JAPANESE OCCUPATION AND HYDE TRAVELLED EXTENSIVELY SENDING DESPATCHES BACK TO THE NEW ZEALAND PRESS.
- SHE VISITED CANTON AND HANKOW, THE LATTER OF WHICH WAS THE CENTRE OF CHINESE RESISTANCE TO JAPANESE OCCUPATION, BEFORE MOVING NORTH TO VISIT THE BATTLEFRONT AND WAS IN HSUCHOW WHEN JAPANESE FORCES TOOK THE CITY ON 19 MAY.



HYDE AS PRISONER OF WAR...

- DEMONSTRATING INCREDIBLE BRAVERY, HYDE ATTEMPTED TO FLEE THE AREA BY WALKING ALONE ALONG THE TRANS-SIBERIAN RAILWAY LINES, KEEPING AHEAD OF THE INVADING ARMY.
- SHE WAS EVENTUALLY CAPTURED BY THE JAPANESE AND TAKEN TO THE PORT CITY OF TSING TAO WHERE SHE WAS HANDED OVER TO THE BRITISH AUTHORITIES, ARRIVING IN SOUTHAMPTON IN SEPTEMBER 1938.
- WHILE MULGAN'S DISPATCHES FROM WORN TORN EUROPE WOULD BECOME FUNDAMENTAL TO THE 'MAN ALONE' MOTIF TAUGHT TO NEW ZEALAND CHILDREN AS THE CENTREPIECE OF NEW ZEALAND SELF-IMAGINING, HYDE'S REPORTS FROM THE JAPANESE FRONT WOULD BE DISMISSED AS "... A RATHER EMBARRASSING RECORD OF DANGEROUS LIVING AND OVERSTRETCHED AMBITION" ([BERTRAM, 1985, P. P. 17.](#)) – A SURPRISING EPITAPH FOR A WOMAN WHO BECAME THE FIRST WAR REPORTER TO REACH OCCUPIED CHINA.



THE END...



- BRUTALISED BY HER EXPERIENCES IN CHINA, HARRIED BY HER CRITICS IN NEW ZEALAND AND LIVING OUT HER FINAL MONTHS IN EXILED POVERTY, HYDE TOOK HER OWN LIFE BY BENZEDRINE POISONING IN AUGUST 1939.
- FULL OF REMORSE FOR HIS ACTIONS, HYDE'S CHIEF PUBLIC NEMESIS, FRANK SARGESON, LET HIS GARDEN SHED OUT TO ANOTHER 'MAD, HYSTERICAL' WOMAN WRITER.
- HYDE CARED JUST AS MUCH FOR NEW ZEALAND AS THE CULTURAL NATIONALISTS AND TRIED TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE CREATION OF A UNIQUE VOICE FOR HER BELOVED COUNTRY.
- HER LAST PUBLISHED WORK *NOR THE YEARS CONDEMN* ENDS IN THE STREETS OF DEPRESSION WRACKED AUCKLAND. TERMINALLY ILL AND SLOWLY FADING, THE WAR NURSE BEDE COLLINS, HEROINE OF THE RETURNED VETERANS, INVOKES THE TRUE VOICE OF NEW ZEALAND FROM THE BACKBLOCKS BEYOND THE CITY:
 - WE'VE STILL GOT TO FIND OUR OWN SONG. IT ISN'T GOD SAVE THE KING. IT ISN'T THE INTERNATIONALE, IT ISN'T THE MARSEILLAISE, IT ISN'T EVEN DARLING TIPPERARY. I DON'T THINK IT'S MAY GOD DEFEND NEW ZEALAND, ALTHOUGH SOMEBODY WILL HAVE TO SOON... IT'S BACK SOMEWHERE IN THE HILLS, WAITING; OR ONE OF THESE MEN HAS IT IN HIS THROAT. ([HYDE, 1938, P. P. 262](#))

