



Scott tells me that the title comes from some English Lord, who at the time of Heke's first assault upon the British Flag pole at Kororareka condescendingly acknowledged it as the action of a grass skirted yokel - a country hick. Placed in this context, Scott's ventriloquism of Heke seems even more factual and aggressive. The appropriation is now doubled and what was once a simple operation of Scott voicing himself through Heke is now complicated by the acts of the outsider looking in. This outsider of course is also us, the viewer. The action in the title, "Hone Wiremu Heke Pokai agrees, I'm a country hick" allows Scott to carefully construct the viewership of his work in the show. A tactic enforced by the raised ridge at the doorway which we must step over in order to enter into the show. Which is a different procedure from that of the English lord who from so far away concluded that Heke's actions posed no viable threat. This disinterested observation in which one is occluded from responsibility is looped back in through the titling of the show. Steeping into the situation of the show puts us at odds with what simply believing the declaration of the title would enable us to do. Instead we are forced to come to terms with our own judgements but then with all the ventriloquism going on we can't help but be called a liar or at the very least feel incredibly self-conscious about such a possibility.

In history's ongoing contestation, Heke functions as a rallying point of declaration about the way in which we approach the cultural production of the "New Zealand" state. Claimed as a

traitor, a savage, a hero, a villain, Heke can be numerous things, but then so can anyone else. The man charged with pursuing him, Colonel Despard is just as equally a hero, villain or detrital emblem of Empire depending on which History you want to produce. I think in Scott's case, Heke stands out as a figure of dissent, in his own moves to negotiate a regime of power Heke provides a model from which to base observations about the nature of the work in his own show. The most obvious parallel between Heke and Scott's work is the attacks upon Nation flags. In the video work, though Scott destroys all the nations' flags whilst Heke is deliberately after only the one. What they do share though is a desire to negotiate the process of dissent in order to settle a more amicable relationship. In Heke's instance, his attack upon the flagpole was never about the expulsion of a foreign presence, which is reflected in his hoisting of a United States flag upon the stern of his waka after his second attack on the flagstaff at Kororareka. Rather Heke's actions were always about the negotiation of the settlement of power and act as a challenge to the British monopolisation and regime that was increasingly shutting down his self-autonomy.

In the wake of the Treaty of Waitangi agreement, Kororareka and surrounding regions went from a multi-power region of interaction towards the increasingly monopolistic British administration system that was imposing the conditions of trade and subsequent power relationships within the region. F.E. Manning described this transition in his book *Old New Zealand*:

After the first Governor, came the second Governor, but the towns and numerous pakeha traders we expected did not come. We heard of a town at Waitemata being

Ventriquilising the shift from bipolar to multi-polar monopolisation....

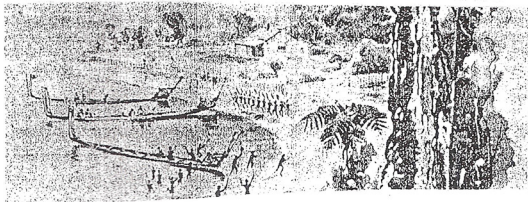
There is a sense of self-acknowledgement in Scott Flanagan's title that needs to be teased out. "Hone Wiremu Heke Pokai" is just one name among many for that infamous character of Aotearoa / New Zealand history. Heke (which is the version I'll try to stick to throughout) himself knew this when he wrote in reply to Governor Grey as 'Hone Heke Pokai hou' (the "new" Hone Heke Pokai). Heke was forever deploying different versions of his name, switching carefully and tactfully between English and Maori with any combination of Hone / John, Wiremu / Williams, Heke, Pokai. Scott's use of the name Hone Wiremu Heke Pokai, is equally strategic, his patterning, Hone / Wiremu / Heke / Pokai disrupts the immediate



acknowledgement that "Hone Heke" would enable in an attempt to move beyond that clichéd version that fuses the action of 'cutting down the flagpole' with the caricature of the "Maori-warrior". Scott's tactic affords Heke a full designation but then postures a voice of his own inside: 'Hone Wiremu Heke Pokai **agrees**'. It's here that the self-awareness starts to kick in, the sentence defers to the power play of contested histories. I titling his work around Hone Heke, Scott enables the viewer to articulate ideas about dissent that have for so long now been rife

within the overbearing cultural productions called "nations" that so easily contest and negate that myth of the autonomous "self".

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A CHART of NEWZELAND
OR THE ISLANDS of
AEHEINOMOUWE and TOVYPOENAMTU

Lying in the SOUTH SEA.
By James Cook, Commander of the Endeavour 1770



built, and others farther south; but in our part of the country there were no new towns, and the pakeha did not increase in numbers, but, to the contrary, began to go away ... Tobacco began to be scarce and dear; the ships began to leave ... we inquired the reason for this, but the few pakeha traders left amongst us told us different stories. Some said that the reason tobacco was scarce and dear was that the Governor would not let it be brought on shore until he was paid a large price for it... Others said that the reason ships did not come as frequently as formerly was because the Governor made them pay for coming to anchor in the ports. Some said all the evil was by reason of the flagstaff which the Governor had caused to be erected at Maiki, above Kororareka, as a rahui and that as long as it remained there things would be no better; others, again told us the flagstaff was put there to show the ships the way into the harbour; others, that it was intended to keep them out; and others said that it was a sign that this island had been taken by the Queen of England, and that the nobility and independence of the Maori was no more.

Some of the responses of the British administration to this was to drop custom duties in the Kororareka area. Another tactic was to forbid the flying of any other flag but that of "New Zealand's". Yet still, courts followed out punitive actions against "offenders" and interfered in proceedings that if given governorship or self-autonomy should rightfully have remained the decisions of Maori. As such, Heke's actions against the flagpole can be seen as declarations of independence, and act as signals of dissent to a ruling faction which continues to impose its will. It's



this parallel, more than any other that chases after that ventriloquism of the title.

Very amusing.
But what is
your point
exactly?

The fish has
woken up and
begun to swim,
Captain, towing
Maui's canoe
behind it...



DYLAN HORROCKS