

## **Fire Inna Aotearoa**

### **Reggae and Hip Hop in Aotearoa New Zealand**

Martina Berg, Vienna, 2005

*Fire Inna Aotearoa* explores the ways in which rhizomic, diasporic flows of cultural expressions from the Caribbean correspond to the formation of syncretic subcultures and how African (and/or African American and/or Caribbean) arts convey social meaning to self-determination and resistance. This paper focuses on the local indigenisation of Caribbean sounds of resistance in the context of Aotearoa<sup>1</sup> New Zealand; and on how global solidarity against cultural imperialism and neo-colonial structures is generated.

The notion of the 'rhizome' as developed by Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987) is aptly applicable to Reggae, Hip Hop and Rap culture. In philosophical terms, a rhizome is comprised not of units but of dimensions, or rather directions in motion. It has neither beginning nor end, but always a middle (milieu) from which it grows and which it overflows (ibid.: 21). Caribbean, respectively African or African American derived musical expressions have rapidly become globalized and transplanted into different cultures throughout the world. The rhizomic, diasporic flows of these kinds of sounds correspond to the formation of hybrid subcultures (Mitchell 2001). Roland Robertson (1995) speaks of 'glocalized' forms, in which supposedly global musical forms become indigenised. They are localised responses to global phenomena<sup>2</sup>.

This process is exemplified by the work of various Reggae, Rap, Hip Hop and Dub formations in Aotearoa New Zealand.

#### **Ngati Dread: Rastafarianism and Tino Rangatiratanga**

One of the earliest examples of a 'glocalization' of musical styles and philosophies deriving from the African Diaspora by Maori, is the weaving of Rastafarian culture into the local historical framework of Aotearoa.

The universal appeal of Reggae beyond the Caribbean as a source of indigenous renewal and resistance has been explained by Neil J. Savishinsky (1994: 272-274) by its spirituality, its anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist stance, its demand for deliverance from poverty and oppression, its assertion of a dignified self-image and identity, its emphasis on knowledge of indigenous traditions and culture, and its espousal of a return to a more natural way of life. These aspects have been embraced and promoted by people in the biblically prophesied "four corners of the earth" (Savishinsky 1993) and resulted in a large spectrum of individuals and communities who feel affiliated to Rastafari, including people of various ethnic backgrounds.

A number of Maori have joined the rally against Babylon with a nexus of Maori traditions and Caribbean philosophies, incorporating aspects of

<sup>1</sup> Aotearoa, 'land of the long white cloud,' is the Maori designation for New Zealand. Using Aotearoa instead of, or on an equal footing with, New Zealand often signals a political and cultural respect for the tangata whenua, the 'people of the land,' i.e. the Maori people.

<sup>2</sup> c.f.: Gilroy (1987) on the ways in which Black culture becomes a global culture with its style, music and images crossing a range of different national and regional sensibilities throughout the world and thereby triggering a plurality of 'localised' responses.

resistance and the Maori concept of tino rangatiratanga, i.e. of self-determination and autonomy.

To discuss the history of Aotearoa here in appropriate detail would unfortunately go far beyond the scope of this publication. Therefore, I have to summarize an extremely complex diversity of histories and would like to stress that it is essential to take pre-European history into account in order to achieve a first step of understanding. In this paper, I can only pick up a few traits that are directly related to contemporary Hip Hop and Reggae contexts.

One of them is the overall fact, that Western concepts of history have often completely ignored the history of Aotearoa before the first Maori-Pakeha<sup>3</sup> contacts<sup>4</sup>. As DLT (u.d.: 3), one of the founders of the Upper Hut Posse, has put it in an interview with Black Dog Bone,

Maori people do spend a lot of time trying to cover the tracks, so to speak, of the ignorant. As it is, Maori people are not included, you're not there, you're not in the history books, you're a jerk. Second class citizens in your own land...

Yeah. Here's a couple of examples: a great ancestor of all Polynesians, his name was Maui Tiki Tiki Atarin. This man fished of the land we live on, he invented rope planting, he invented the art of tattooing, he invented the dog, he invented the shark, he done everything. He is called 'mythology' in New Zealand history books, and this man named Captain Cook who came here in the 1700's is called 'the discoverer of New Zealand.' [...] I went to college right to the end and was told nothing but lies...

The deprivation of their own history, together with the severe oppression under colonial rule and its remnants, makes the Maori iwi share a common fate with others who have to retrace and revitalize their histories and makes them part of a global community, the 'Nation X' (c.f.: Zips and Kämpfer 2001).

Throughout the world, oppressed people have frequently tended to identify with the biblical Israelites and with Zion. In an Aotearoa context, such attempts reach back as far as to the times when movements such as Ringatu 1867, the Iharaira, followers of the Tuhoē prophet Rua Kenana 1906 (King 1996: 31), or the Ratana church 1925, emerged. Prophetic movements, like the Ratana church, identified Maori as 'God's chosen people' and provided answers in a leadership vacuum that had occurred in some Maori communities during the early years of the twentieth century (ibid.: 166). As Robert Curd (2005) has reasoned in a private email conversation,

Christian missionaries were very much afraid Maori would identify themselves with the lost tribes of Israel because of their colonisation and disenfranchisement [...] and perceive the colonisation process as unjust, based in greed, amoral by biblical standards and not based on the will of God - in other words they would figure out that missionaries interrupted the bible.

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<sup>3</sup> The term Pakeha mainly refers to New Zealanders of predominantly European ancestry.

<sup>4</sup> In the *Oxford History of New Zealand*, for example, the first millennium gets 24 pages, while the last 500 years are covered on more than 500 pages. This ratio is far more favourable to the earlier years than in previous general histories (c.f.: King 1996: 37).

Critical voices challenging the Christian mission, as well as the belief in the spiritual connection to Zion are kept up by Rastafarian communities in Aotearoa today (c.f.: Legat, 1985; Mita 1999, or Turner 1991). One of them is the community of Ruatoria. The community, who lives on the East Coast of the North Island, is also referred to as *Ngati Dread*, with *Ngati* meaning 'descendant of' in the Maori vernacular *te reo*<sup>5</sup>. The Rastafari of Ruatoria combine Rasta faith with the teachings of Te Kooti. Ringatu, the 'upraised hand,' is a faith developed by Te Kooti Arikirangi Te Turuki of the Rongowhakaata Iwi of Turanganui during his imprisonment in the mid nineteenth century. On his escape he staged a successful guerrilla war against land alienation through confiscation by Pakeha settlers. Many of Te Kooti's teachings made his people identify with the story of the Israelites in the Old Testament, as the doctrines of Ringatu promised release from bondage and the return to the promised, ancestral lands in a biblical sense. According to Binney (1995: 1) in her book *Redemption Songs*, "Te Kooti was a martyr, unjustly imprisoned by a colonial system which brought war to Maori tribes in order to dispossess them of their land."

Today, the Ruatoria Rastafarian community still intensively merges Maori cultural elements with Rastafarian beliefs. The *moko*, for example, the traditional Maori art of tattooing, is incorporated into Rasta concepts: "My *moko* is my number plate by which Jah will know me when he returns for his chosen few," as the late Stryker Bonecrusher Lavender Marijuana Kupenga Jones, elder of the Rastafarian community at Ruatoria, explained (Quintessential 2004: 30; c.f.: Woods and Quinn 1998).

Rastafarian culture with its distinctive characteristics has not only played an important role in Maori Rastafarian communities - it had become a relevant element to identification processes on a broader base ever since the 1970s. As Robert Curd (2005) has put it in an email conversation with me:

Moving forward to the 1970s it was a low point and we've had some low points but it was pretty grim, the land had largely been taken from us, the language was close to death, the arts were close to death, whole new generations of our people were growing up in the city in poverty, bereft of identity, living with systems such as the educational and judiciary ones, which either overtly or covertly worked against us. Basically, and excuse my language, we lived in a country which fucked us and then condemned us for being fucked. And then there was this music with it's call for social and political justice and it's promise that faith would heal the wounds and so of course it appealed to some of those urban disenfranchised, pained exiles from the main stream, and some of them became Rastafarian.

The parents of Maori Niuean Hip Hop musician Che Fu, one of New Zealand's most successful male vocalists today, were with The Twelve Tribes of Israel in New Zealand, and were actively engaged in the struggle for justice, especially in the context of the Springbok Tour in 1981 and the Hikoi, the Maori land marches. In his 2001 song 'Catch One' on the *Navigtor* album, Che Fu speaks of his mother, "holding her banner [...] marching for our people's rights." Tigilau Ness (McLennan 2003: 2), the father of Che Fu, recounts: "That was a time of upheaval. Bob's music and Reggae came along at just the right time."

Ever since that 'right time,' Maori people have made enormous achievements. With their powerful struggle and their claims for *tino rangatiratanga*, as agreed on in the Treaty of Waitangi (1840), they have achieved a 'place to

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<sup>5</sup> *Te Reo Maori*, or short *te reo*, is the ancestral language of the Maori people. Today, it is one of New Zealand's official languages.

stand' in the society of Aotearoa New Zealand. However, it had been a long and painful way to go until Queen Elizabeth II (1990) admitted on Waitangi Day 1990 that "the Treaty of Waitangi has been imperfectly observed." A racially-biased division of Aotearoa New Zealand's society is still evident in many contexts today.

Waitangi Day, which celebrates the tiriti, is also Bob Marley's birthday. I had just arrived to Aotearoa in order to participate in a Museum Studies programme at Te Putahi A Toi/Massey University, when I got the great opportunity to join the Waitangi Day festivities on the Palmerston North Square on the 6<sup>th</sup> of February, 2004. Nesian Mystik, an Aotearoa Hip Hop act uniting a remarkable diversity of Polynesia in bringing together Maori, Tongan, Samoan and Cook Island roots, paid their tribute to Bob Marley, who they referred to as 'Uncle Bob.'

During the hard days, when Maori were deprived from expressing themselves in their own language, it was people like Bob Marley who spoke for them. Bob Marley still plays a crucial role in a Maori context. Bob Marley appeared only once in the Pacific, on his *Survival Tour* in April 1979 - however, his impact carries on until today. In a feature on te tiriti o Waitangi, the *Gisborne Herald* refers to Bob Marley in a prominent article, thereby suggesting that the 'Messenjah' is considered an integral part of Maori history. The article holds that:

Marley's 1979 tour saw him break new ground for Reggae music internationally as he brought his 'Movement of Jah People' to Maori, Australian Aborigines, Samoan, Tongan and other islanders of the South Pacific. In his wake several politically engaged Reggae groups, such as native rights activists Herbs and Australian Aboriginal band No Fixed Address, were formed. [...] His signature music continues to strike a chord with the world's indigenous peoples - all of whom - have been affected by colonialism and racism.

Anonymous 2006: 1

When Bob Marley died in 1981, some factories had to close for the day, because Maori workers would not come to work as they were mourning over their icon's death (Dix 1988: 333). The year of his death also was the year of the controversial Springbok tour which, together with the increasing struggles for land rights, put further fuel into the fire of Maori resistance. With the 1981 Springbok Tour, the long-lasting conflict over racist policies of Apartheid that had been imposed in the sporting rivalry between Aotearoa New Zealand and the South African Republic reached a head and the ensuing public protests polarised the New Zealand population (c.f.: Chapple 1984).

The impact of Bob Marley among Maori is still evident today: When *The Bob Marley Exhibition*<sup>6</sup> toured Aotearoa New Zealand in 1995/6, it attracted a distinctively large number of Maori visitors (c.f.: Interview with Ross Mitchell-Anyon, Trustee at the Sarjeant Gallery 2004) and also made its contribution to reducing barriers for specific ethnic groups to institutions of fine arts, in providing exhibitions on issues these audiences strongly relate to.

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<sup>6</sup> The *Bob Marley Exhibition* was produced by Exhibit A /London and featured photographs, graphics, films and recordings documenting the life of Bob Marley. The exhibition, commissioned by Island Records and The Bob Marley Estate, toured Australia and New Zealand from 1994 to 1996. The New Zealand Tour was organised through Exhibitour, NZ and was shown at museums and art galleries across the country.

Ever since the 1970s, a large number of Aotearoa Reggae bands has emerged. Among them are the Herbs, Ruia & Ranea, the Black Seeds, Katchafire, Southside of Bombay - just to name a few. Today, a number of Dub-formations, such as Salmonella Dub or Trinity Roots are following their tracks and have achieved international reputation.

There are two musicians from the Aotearoa Reggae scene who especially give testament to the influence of Bob Marley and the Wailers in the Pacific: Ruia and Ranea. The Aperahama twins are best known for their Waiata of Bob Marley (2001; 2002), in which they sing Bob Marley anthems in te reo. Te Reo Maori, the vernacular language of the tangata whenua, the people of the land, is regarded a cultural treasure (taonga) under the Treaty of Waitangi. In the late 1970s, re-vitalisation was of critical importance, as the Maori language was at a perilous state (c.f.: Smith 2000). The survival of te reo as a living language had especially been under threat since the movement of the Maori population to urban communities in the 1950s. During the 1970s, so-called kohanga reo, 'language nests,' were implemented and te reo was revitalized as an important aspect of identity construction. In 1993, the Te Mangai Paho, the Maori Broadcasting Funding Agency, was established under the recognition of the Crown's responsibilities regarding the Maori language and culture in broadcasting. It makes funding available to providers of the production of TV programmes and music albums, singles, or videos in te reo, and to the national network of Maori radio stations (Te Puni Kokiri 2005). However, in the 2001 Census Results, only some 9% of Maori adults could speak Maori 'well' or 'very well,' while a further 33% said they had some Maori language skills (New Zealand Statistics 2002; Te Puni Kokiri 2001).

The pioneer of promoting te reo in popular Aotearoa music was the late Dalvanus Prime, a Maori cultural leader and versatile artist. His work with the Patea Maori Club and their breakthrough single and album *Poi E* (1982) celebrated te reo as a cornerstone of Maori culture and as a platform for Maori cultural development. The project of Ngoi Pewhairangi and Maui Dalvanus soon became an anthem of a new generation.

### **Stand Proud and Represent! - Aotearoa Rap and Hip Hop**

The Wellington based Upper Hut Posse was one of the earliest bands to follow the footsteps of Dalvanus Prime in using te reo in their lyrics. The Upper Hutt Posse started off as a Reggae band in 1985, inspired by the historical influences discussed above. But soon, a new set of prophets landed in Aotearoa: US Rappers with their critical voices began to 'light a new fire' in the Aotearoa music scene.

Not until 1988, did the Posse come out with their own Rap album, which was the first Rap recording to be commercially released in Aotearoa: the bilingual, highly political *E Tu*. Ever since, the Posse and its members have released a number of songs in either te reo or containing bilingual lyrics. Dean Hapeta's *Doin Damage in his Native Language* (c.f.: *Doin Damage in my Native Language* by Zimbabwe Legit 1992; Mitchell 2001) refers to the various social and political aspects of the resistance vernacular.

Many musicians have followed the example of the Posse and it is common in the Aotearoa homegrown music scene to express pertinent issues in the native Maori language. Mitchell (2001: 53) in her speech held at the 'Trans/forming Cultures Conference in Sydney/Australia on Prospects for Transnational Solidarity' in 1999 has argued that producing tracks that are entirely in te reo Maori meant "risking virtually no radio or TV airplay, as the national media in New Zealand still regard the Maori language as a threat to its Anglophone hegemony." In this context, the choice of a local 'resistance vernacular' within the framework of an (African-) American inspired musical genre becomes an act of cultural resistance. With the aim

of the preservation of ethnic autonomy, cultural practitioners have developed modalities of indigenization and syncretism which go far beyond simple appropriation of US- or African-American cultural idioms.

"Upper Hutt Posse aren't a symptom of the recent rise in Maori activism, they're a cause," says Stephen Zepke (1995:1). Since their inception as a Reggae band, Dean Hapeta, aka D Word, aka Te Kupu and the Posse have been linking the force of Maori culture with the struggle of Black Nationalism to fuel consciousness and controversy (Buchanan 2000: 1) and to commit a radical break with the legacy of colonial domination.

Maori Rap musicians began to explore the affinities of Rap music with indigenous Maori musical and rhetoric forms. This direct approach is illustrated by the way concepts such as *patere* (Rap), *whakarongo mai* (listen up) and *wainua* (attitude) are easily assimilated into a Hip Hop discourse.

Many people in the distinctive Aotearoa Hip Hop scene have discovered 'Black Outernationality' or the collective struggles of the oppressed (ibid.), and a large number of Maori and Pacific Islanders youth have become part of the global/glocal Hip Hop Nation. Best and Kellner (1999: 2) have explained the global dimensions of Rap and Hip Hop as follows:

... it knocks down borders between musical styles, absorbing every (possible) type of music, Rap crosses the national borders of the world, becoming the key (part) of global culture. Rap is currently rocking the casbah and the ghetto, rolling across the mountains and the deserts, hopping across oceans, and becoming hip to cyberspace and the new technologies, bringing sound and attitude into digital space.

With the support of new technologies, which have rapidly developed during the last 20 years, music images propagating Hip Hop's posture and styles have spread throughout (youth) communities worldwide. They have become glocalised by the active mixing and blending of the American inner-city expression with different local cultural expressions, lived experiences and musical traditions.

Asked about why "Rap caught so big in New Zealand," Brotha D (2001:24), one of the CEOs of the Auckland Hip Hop label *Dawn Raid Entertainment*, reasoned on the strong identification process of Maori and other Pacific Island youth with Hip Hop in an interview by the US Rap magazine *Murder Dog*:

Put it this way, if you grow up and your skin's brown and you see people doing music and they look the same as you, skins the same colour as you and they are talkin about the struggle, you're gonna follow what you relate to. I think it had a big effect in the eighties with break dancing and all that, all the young Maori kids and Polynesians had big afros just like the Jackson 5. [...] So they related to the image of the African. And they gravitated towards Rap and made their own thing.

Dean Hapeta and Upper Hut Posse and other Maori and Pacific Island Rap musicians have developed the ability to weave Pacific cultures, languages and political demands - from land to fishing rights to economic inequality - within the style and context of Black American Hip Hop. As Hapeta stated, "Although I love and respect Hip-Hop, being Maori I only take from it what doesn't compromise my own culture. But in spite of this I have found them both very compatible" (Frizzell 1994: 48). By employing *mana mutohake* or *tino rangatiratanga*, Maori concepts of self-determination and the power to choose one's own destiny, many artists have achieved what may be referred

to as 'the Power to Define' (c.f.: Berg 2003). They are the ones to choose what aspects they want to incorporate into their culture.

Rapper Danny Haimona (Russell 1997: 18) of Dam Native sees the popularity of US Rap more critical and doubts that the Power to Define can always withstand commercialism. He perceives gangsta Rap and R&B amongst young Maori and Pacific Islanders in Aotearoa as a threat to their appreciation of their own culture expressed in local indigenous Hip Hop:

There's such an influx of American stuff, and we need to quell it, and we need to give these kids some knowledge on what's really up. Kids don't want to be preached to, so what I'm trying to do is put it on their level, and take all the good influences from Hip Hop, and bring it close to home. There is a good vibe out there for New Zealand Hip Hop, but it's being poisoned by the Americanisms - the Tupacs and the Snoop Doggy Doggs. You have to have a balance, and Dam Native are trying to help kids work out that they have their own culture, they don't have to adopt Americanisms.

On the other hand, a similar discourse has appeared in the context of the immersion of Black culture via Hip Hop into the global domain. While for Decker (1994: 111) it "reverses a history of Western economic dependency and cultural imperialism by placing a distinctly African value system at the centre of the worldview," African American Hip Hop commentators (Bynoe 2000) contest his position by arguing that the appropriation of Hip Hop by middle class youth only serves to perpetuate stereotypical views of Black youth. It negates the protest and social commentary that is the basis for Rap music and Hip Hop culture. If we bring the two discourses together, the need for awareness of the possible impacts of commercialised Hip Hop, or gangsta Rap on local Hip Hop communities becomes evident.

Aotearoa Hip Hop musicians and their followers "appear to have embraced hip-hop's optimistic core, while acknowledging the potential for political opposition" (Zemke White 2003: 125). Tony Mitchell (2001:53) has noted that there is an indication of the strong position traditionally held by women in Maori and Pacific Island societies that the misogynist aspects of US hardcore Rap are totally absent from its Maori and Pacific Island appropriations.

However, some of Aotearoa's most influential Hip Hop artists have fuelled controversy by linking the force of Maori culture to concepts of the Nation of Islam. While the title of the Upper Hut Posse's 1996 album *Movement in Demand* still evoked the memories of great Maori leaders and Malcolm X, the Wellington Posse was approached by the son of Elijah Mohammed, the man who had banished Malcolm X from the NOI, to perform at a Nation of Islam event. The UHP performed in Detroit, met the Nation's leader, Minister Louis Farrakhan<sup>7</sup>, and impressed African American audiences by the fluency and force with which they drew links between Malcom X and Maori leaders like Hone Heke (Buchanan 2000: 1).

With artists such as the Deceptikonz, Dam Native, DLT, Che Fu, Scribe, P-Money, or Nemesis, Hip Hop in Aotearoa appears to be the further syncretisation of an already syncretic form - but it is one that is capable of having strong political, musical and cultural resonances in Aotearoa, rather than being a mere cultural appropriation (c.f.: Ziff and Pratima 1997). Pacific elements expand into African American genres and result in

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<sup>7</sup> Farrakhan's anti-Semitic remarks and controversial views on racial separation have sparked heated debate. Islam is promoted among former Maori gang members, especially in prisons, and the Nation of Islam is gaining a foothold (c.f.: Jake the Musslim' in The Sunday Times, 2004).

'glocal' styles which are implemented as educational tools in terms of 'Global Education.' Hip Hop is utilized as a medium that allows young people to explore the global dimensions of their lives and to react to them from the 'places where they stand.'<sup>8</sup>

One of the recently launched, innovative projects of the Aotearoa Hip Hop community is *The Next*, - "an Impression of Hip Hop Expression - [it] recognizes the connections that exist between marginalised and indigenous youth globally. While this project is based in Aotearoa New Zealand, it aims to make the links explicit between the lives of young people/rangatahi locally and those globally" (The Next 2005). The Next provides a network for people interested in the Hip Hop discourse and supports community youth projects on a local level. The concept is similar to the utilisation of Rap tropes and core features by Aotearoa Rap artists. As Keren Zemke White (2005) has pointed out, New Zealand Rappers 'keep it real' by keeping it 'real local.' The core Rap referent 'the hood' signifies place, ownership, and belonging and is also the place, where projects such as The Next are put into practice.

Aotearoa Rap manages to be authentic to the original Hip Hop culture by representing core tropes, but also by maintaining the whole Hip Hop culture, which is translated into local contexts: "This is not mimicry, but the tropes themselves allow for localised expressions which reflect unique cultural and diasporic identities" (Zemke-White 2005: 1). 'The whole culture' refers to four core elements: Rapping or MC-ing (Emceeing, the word), breaking or b-boying/b-girling (dance), DJ-ing or turntablism (music), graff (graffiti/aerosol arts). Graffiti Artists often use Maori patterns & designs in their tagging.

### **Re-mixing Cultural Identities - A Conclusion**

Aotearoa Rappers are joined by Dub and Drum'n'Bass artists, such as Salmonella Dub, Trinity Roots, Fat Freddy's Drop, Shapeshifter, or Rhombus. They are not only musicians who are remixing roots Reggae and waiata Maori - they are agitators in a cultural project of re-mixing cultures; of de-constructing colonial, post- and neo-colonial structures.

I had the great opportunity to see Trinity Roots perform at the Wellington Town Hall in August 2004. The building, which is a fine example of late Victorian municipal architecture, was packed with a young Kiwi<sup>9</sup> crowd, from Maori to Pacific Islanders, Asians and Pakeha, who all danced to the group's funky grooves and listened to their critical, socio-politically charged lyrics. The positive atmosphere the band created in this historically charged building allowed a glimpse into a future where indigenous rights to *Home, Land and Sea* are respected, as suggested by the title of the band's latest release by the same name (2004).

*Fire Inna Aoteraoa* offers a little insight into the music-scene of the 'Land of the Long White Cloud' and shows how artists convert globalized, African-, African-American- and Caribbean-derived musical styles to suit local struggles. Glocalised forms of Reggae, Hip Hop and related musical styles bear the potential of empowerment of marginalised groups and can serve as their mouthpieces.

Such developments allow for the creation of social, political and artistic alliances between marginalised communities worldwide, and by placing this paper in the context of a publication based on the 9<sup>th</sup> Interdisciplinary Caribbean Conference of the Society of Caribbean Research, which was held

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<sup>8</sup> 'A place to stand' is a common phrase in an Aotearoa context and stands for turangawaewae, a Maori concept similar to 'homeground.'

<sup>9</sup> Kiwi is a nickname referring to all New Zealanders.

in Vienna in 2005, literally at the opposite side of the planet from Aotearoa, I hope to contribute to the networking of people engaged in the anti-imperialist struggle.

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Dr. phil. Martina Berg, \*1974, is a social and cultural anthropologist who studied at Vienna University and at Hebrew University/Jerusalem. She recently returned from Aotearoa New Zealand, where she was enrolled in the Museum Studies Programme at Te Putahi a Toi School of Maori Studies at Massey University. In her work she focuses on African American and Jewish Diasporas, as well as on the construction of ethnic identities and on repatriation. She is currently working in the fields of cultural management and culture & development.

**Abstract**

*Fire Inna Aotearoa* explores the ways in which rhizomic, diasporic flows of cultural expressions from the Caribbean correspond to the formation of syncretic subcultures, focussing on the local indigenisation of Caribbean sounds of resistance against cultural imperialism and neo-colonial structures in the context of Aotearoa New Zealand.

The ways in which Maori have 'glocalized' (c.f.: Robertson 1995) musical styles deriving from the African Diaspora, such as Reggae, Rap, Dub and Hip Hop, are put into a historical framework and discussed under the aspects of resistance and tino rangatiratanga (self-determination, autonomy).

Not only did Maori incorporate codes of Caribbean art into their struggle against (post)colonial oppression - also life-styles and beliefs rooted in Africa have actively been merged with Pacific culture. Attempts of identification with the biblical Israelites reach back as far as to the times when movements such as the Ratana church emerged and are carried on in the spiritual link to Zion claimed by Aotearoan Rastafarian communities today.

In times of the renaissance of Maori culture, we witness a flourishing combination of traditional Maori waiata and Caribbean-, respectively

African- or African American-, derived musical forms. Reggae, Hip Hop and Dub have become speaking organs of Maori and this process has led to the development of distinctive 'Aotearoa Stylez.'

The music of groups such as Ruia and Ranea, Katchafire, Trinity Roots, or Che Fu - just to name a few - is often characterized by the incorporation of te reo, the Maori vernacular language, and has become part of a cultural project of self-determination which links itself with a global Diaspora of indigenous ethnic minorities' social struggles through music.