

A 'mallow' view of nationhood

New Zealand's cultural identity has a lot to contend with.

We are in constant flux over what it is to be a Kiwi.



Marc Checkley

With an unrelenting bombardment of British, American and Australian popular culture infiltrating Godzone, forging ahead with our own collective identity has been a hard battle to win.

This week I was perusing the shelves of my local supermarket

and in desperate need of a sweet treat I found myself in the biscuits section.

Scanning the rows of cookies, slices and other sugary edibles I chanced upon a packet of Marshian's, Arnott's version of the humble Mallowpuff.

On closer inspection, I was horrified to see that not only was an Australian company taking on New Zealand's favourite treat, but these insipid imposters were undercutting our puffs by 73 cents!

Why, after all these years of peace, does Arnott's feel a need to invade our shores with a competing puff?

You may think I'm making mountains out of marshmallows but where is all this leading?

New Zealand has always been in the shadow of our Australian cousins and it has been a constant struggle to expunge the thought that we are the seventh state of "Terra-Australis".

With the re-branding of many of Auckland's malls into Westfield Shopping Towns, leaving the city looking somewhat lego-fied, one could be excused for thinking we're just a replica of suburban Sydney or plastic fantastic Surfers Paradise.

In 2002 the *Dominion Post* gallantly announced that we had finally won the battle of the pavlova.

The dessert is credited to the ladies of the Wellington Terrace Congregational Church who published their recipe for meringue cake in *Terrace Tested Recipes* in 1927.

Eight years before a woman's group in Perth laid claim to it. This unfortunately did not put an end to our trans-Tasman battles.

It is still commonplace for musicians or actors, deemed mildly successful here, to be inevitably snapped up by those across the ditch and claimed as their own.

Just for the record, Russell Crowe was all their doing.

I'm all for free trade and a global marketplace but some lines should not be crossed, some cultural icons should not be contested, some puffs should not be popped.

There's nothing mellow about this puff, Kiwi products are being pushed to the nether regions of our supermarket shelves or sold off to the most cost-efficient manufacturer.

Today it's Aussie-puffs, is it hokey-pokey ice cream from Abu Dhabi tomorrow?

We need to hold our Mallowpuffs high and fight the scourge of these alien invaders. No matter how they may undercut New Zealand's original tea-cakes.

These ooey-goey-chocolaty-puffed treats are ours and we need to send these Marshians packing – back from whence they came.

Is the further corrosion of nationhood worth a saving of 73 cents?

Stop the talking, start the doing

We're dole bludgers who kill our babies. We're gang members on P. We spend all our money on alcohol instead of investing in the lives of our children. We beat up our wives, live in the past, get too many "privileges" and protest too much.

We are Maori.

Of course there is more to the story. But all these stereotypes, labelling and accusations are true.

So face it. Stop trying to pull out some excuse to justify the disturbing actions of a people full of no-hopers, pill-pushers and drunks.

Hearing this may give you a sudden urge to scream.

To face the cosmos with eyes shut, head flung back, and release the melodic tones of a sharp shriek.

This ear-splitting influx of information may seem like the most racist of opinions, but sadly it's fact.

Between 1990 and 2001, 48 Maori children were killed in family violence.

That's almost half of the total number of child victims in New Zealand.

And not to mention the Kahui twins. In fact, let's not mention them, that issue has

already been way overdone by the more intelligent of columnists.

Statistics show that over the years, Maori women have accounted for 46 per cent of refuge clients, and the top three reasons for spousal abuse are alcohol, financial and drug problems.

It's not a coincidence that the largest users of methamphetamine live in Northland, where a vast population of Maori just happen to reside, nor is it a coincidence that this area also has one of the highest unemployment rates.

Heck, only one in four of us speak our own language, and most of this linguistic population is made up of school kids. So New Zealand, who do we blame?

I know, let's blame the white man who subconsciously corrupted the minds of the natives.

They brought these substances to our clean, trouble free shores and forced them down our throats.

Maybe it's our "warrior gene" that ignites this inexcusable anti-social behaviour.

Or how about the Government, it's always good to point the finger at for soci-

ety's problems.

Everyone seems to think we need to find a culturally appropriate solution for the struggles of this lower class race.

Why not just stop being "PC" about it all and let the opinions rip?

It may turn some heads and start changing things.

Why not just look to ourselves for a change.

I know I'm guilty of turning a blind eye or two when I see an aunty roll up a tinny and intoxicate her young children with the fumes of her hydroponic helium.

Or when a relative, who suffered the loss of their only son, sells P, consequently killing more of this country's teenagers.

Or even when I give up on trying to convince my cousin to leave her abusive boyfriend.

We Maori cover up all our indiscretions because we refuse to give those middle-class Pakeha nationalists the satisfaction of being right.

But by doing this, we are just reinforcing that they are.

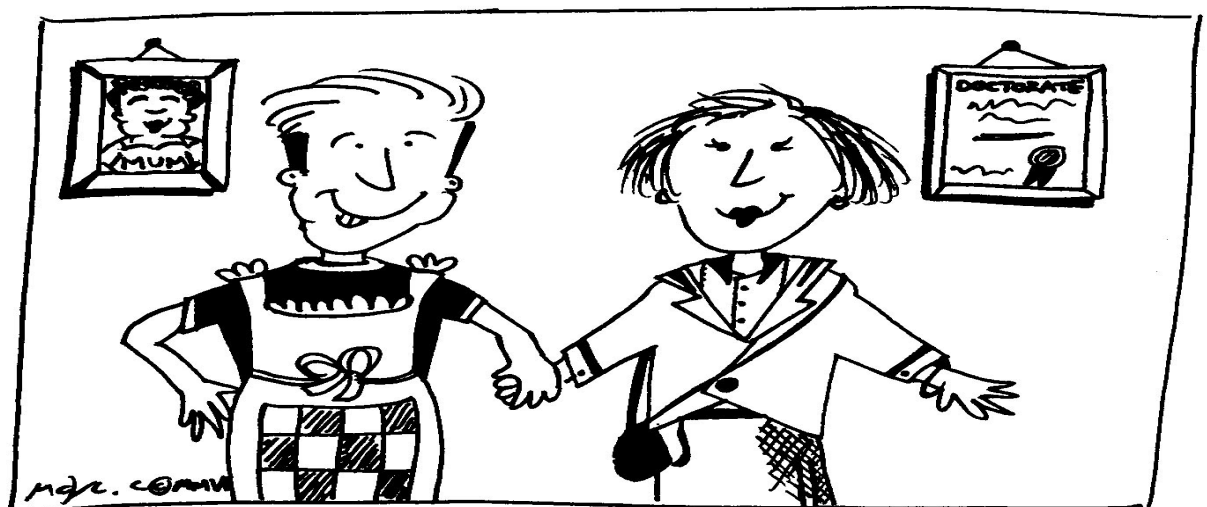


Qiane Corfield



Amanda Snow

Academia and the male drought...



A new paper by the Institute of Policy Studies shows up to 40 per cent more women than men are enrolled in tertiary education.

This will have far reaching consequences for the future as we know it.

Although just how far that "reach" would be is not specified in the report.

Numerous references are made to retention, achievement and academic levels at university.

But, as a mature student, I don't think people have a right to mention my retention rates – which admittedly haven't been the same since having children.

Less pay, limited education, and more time at home with the kids is the type of future facing men while the opposite is true for the now vast number of high achieving women.

But, according to the research, highly paid women apparently have fewer children than their poorly paid counterparts, which would mean (conveniently) there may not be any children for our men to stay at home with.

It seems women, famous the world over for their multi-tasking abilities (as I write, I'm washing the dog, making breakfast, and knitting a scarf) can juggle countless tasks simultaneously – but aren't good at

being paid high incomes and having babies at the same time.

It's an ill-fated oversight, on our highly educated part, to have evolved to the point where earning big bucks and bearing babies have become mutually exclusive (darn it!).

The research fails to point out that a world of adults and no children would have even further reaching consequences for the future – there wouldn't be one.

The paper's co-author, Dr Paul Callister, says law, medicine and dentistry – traditionally the domain of men – are just a few of the higher courses now dominated by women.

About 30 per cent more women than men are enrolled in bachelor courses (perhaps time for a name change here?) while a whopping 40 per cent more women than men are enrolled in post graduate study.

We have brainy women everywhere – but so few men.

Which begs the age-old question: Where the hell are they?

According to the Institute of Policy Studies, they can be found toiling away in apprenticeship courses or "industry training" (the report doesn't specify which industry).

Dr Callister, presumably male –

although given the newly released statistics he may not be – should be ashamed for shifting our focus on such a fearful future for the brotherhood.

Because here's what's really being said – that men will spend the rest of their lives undereducated (dumb), on lower incomes (broke), and will be the chief caregiver (on the couch a lot).

It's insulting.

And even worse, highly educated women may be forced to "marry down" to them.

Wow – great times ahead for us all!

Precious little is being done to entice the average Kiwi male (who is now the below-average male) to seek a higher education. And perhaps this is no accident.

Any intelligent man, Dr Callister included, on the campus of a female infested tertiary institution will be basking in the male-deprived harem of women. And he ain't gonna wanna share. And that's the money shot right there.

In order to lure our boys back to the lecture room it's time for universities to take a stand and play their glaringly obvious trump card.

Perhaps a slogan, something simple – such as: "Guys, this is where the girls are!" (Now watch them flock!).