

**‘Er war ein Berliner!’:
Hone Tuwhare in Germany**

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Among the many immediate reactions to Hone Tuwhare’s death early this year was a headline in *The Dominion Post* characterizing him as ‘one of New Zealand’s towering literary figures’. (Burgess and Easton) Certainly, the emphasis on the poet’s stature as icon was appropriate. The same newspaper also classified him as ‘New Zealand’s ‘best-loved poet’ – Hone as national treasure, as living taonga – thus underlining the man’s approachability, his human touch. Many were struck by, and have recorded, the warmth of Hone’s personality, inimitably combined as it was with a fun-loving sense of mischief, but few have captured it as memorably as Lauris Edmond, in a poem posing as an open letter to him penned the day after a convivial event they had both attended the night before:

Each of us lives in the body differently.
Yours is a total occupation. Full House
to the last crease and capillary, the quick
of the smallest toe-nail, each follicle and fibre,
to the fingers that tingle with mischief
and magic as they move the pen
over your own page, your poems.

Yes, you’re yourself all the way through,
the breathing radiator I’ve often stood near
in a spell of hard weather of the heart,
warmed by some great buzz
of laughter and love at the centre.
(Edmond 182)

The poem, entitled 'Sober Truth', is not only addressed to, but expressly dedicated in the sub-title to, or to be precise, *for* Hone Tuwhare. It could well stand as an epitaph, capturing as it does the larger-than-life quality of this man, his physical reality combined with his symbolic significance. Maybe this deeply empathetic pen-portrait of a deeply empathetic man could even be seen as the verbal equivalent of the iconic photograph by Robert Cross showing Hone in front of his house, above the apt caption 'Thine own hands, mate': an image which could perhaps be summed up as 'Big Man, Little House'. (O'Brien and Cross 53) In O'Brien's words: 'Tuwhare lives alone in a tiny cottage....' (58)

Numerous posthumous tributes have been and are being paid to this great writer and great human being but it is one of the many indicators of Hone's impact that from quite an early stage in his career so many writers already felt moved to dedicate work to him during his lifetime.¹ It so happens that my own introduction to Hone and his writing was effected, albeit indirectly, through one such dedication, in this case a dedication by Cilla McQueen to a poem in her first slim volume *Homing In* (1982).²

This first, memorable and fateful literary encounter took place in Germany, where I had been living and working for nearly twenty years. Though employed as a university lecturer in English Studies, my awareness of any literary activity in the 'Antipodes' was, I regret to say, on the same low level as many standard reference works of the time, relegated to a sort of catch-all supplement under the heading: 'Commonwealth Literature'. But then, around January 1988, human nature changed. It was fully compatible with my cultural horizon at the time that I didn't realise the significance of that year for New Zealand literature until the New Zealand Embassy in Bonn sent me a complimentary copy of the official Ministry of Foreign Affairs desk diary for the year: *The 1988 Katherine Mansfield Diary* – a publication which was, as the subtitle informed me: 'Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of Katherine Mansfield's birth in New Zealand'.

In 1988 Cilla McQueen was in Germany. Having spent some months based in Berlin (on a Goethe Institute scholarship, as one result of which she ultimately published her *Berlin Diary* in 1990), she gave readings at a number of German venues including one I was privileged to attend, at my home university, Aachen, which was co-hosting with the University of Liège the XIth Annual Conference of Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies in German-Speaking Countries. Impressed by Cilla's original and appealing take on New Zealand, I began to devour her work. It was on this steep learning

¹ One recent example is Patricia Grace's collection of short stories *Small Holes in the Silence* (2006), the title of which is a much-quoted line from Hone's poem 'Rain'. The book is also dedicated: 'For Hone Tuwhare'.

² Graciously, Hone 'wrote back' with a poem entitled simply 'Cilla' (1992: 45).

curve that my clumsy pioneering feet stumbled across an intriguing poem entitled ‘Saturday Afternoon in Provence’ (1988: 16) and dedicated to somebody called ‘Hone’, of whom, to my shame, I had never heard. In fact, I didn’t even know that Hone was a Māori name. Left to my own ignorance, I would probably even have pronounced it to rhyme with the English verb ‘to hone’, as in ‘to hone one’s skills’. Only later did I discover that this name was pronounced with *two* syllables, that it was the Māori equivalent of the English first name John, and that within the New Zealand context it had to refer to the one and only Hone Tuwhare – already universally acknowledged even at that time (twenty years ago) as the Grand Old Man of Māori poetry. Universally acknowledged – but unknown to me. An embarrassing clutch of discoveries.

The next exciting discovery for me was that Hone himself had already visited Germany a few years before Cilla, and that he had made a great impact there, not only by virtue of his persuasive reading and performance of his work but also because of his appreciative openness to the culture and language of his hosts and their country – becoming in this process one of the very few Anglophone poets from a Commonwealth country to actually write poems evoking, invoking and even using the local vernacular. Indeed, he paid two visits to Germany – the second mainly because he had enjoyed the first so much and so thoroughly. As Isabel Halverscheid, a student of mine, put it: ‘Good to know somebody actually *wanted* to come here, as opposed to having been forced, ordered or punished to do so’. (10)³

Hone first visited West Germany, at the suggestion of Bill Manhire, in June 1982. He was invited to participate as a New Zealand writer in an annual conference on Commonwealth literature (with a focus on poetry) held at, and sponsored by, the University of Kiel under the combined august auspices of the German Federal Press Office, the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the New Zealand Literary Fund. His reading at that event was followed by a reading tour of the country, taking in half a dozen further venues in major cities, among them Berlin, Stuttgart and Munich. His second visit, in 1985, triggered by his own request, took him primarily to Berlin, where he was based for the whole year as a ‘resident artist’, handsomely funded, as he himself appreciatively reported, by the German Academic Exchange Service DAAD (*Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst*).

Janet Hunt devotes two chapters (out of a total of twenty-three) of her 1998 biography to Hone’s ‘German period’ – one is on the brief 1982 visit, one on the much lengthier 1985 stay. Entitled as all her chapters

³ Isabel was brought up bilingually in Germany – her mother being English. To her as to many students, getting to know Hone’s poetry – with the resultant very satisfying feeling of also somehow getting to know Hone as a person, as a (very special) human being, as a *mensch* – was a bracing experience.

are with lines from Hone's poems (in this case: '19: i can't read the score from here, must be in german' and '21: dear brown bear city, i love you'), these headings already give the flavour of the ensuing text. Janet Hunt begins each of these chapters with the full text of the poem in which those lines occur: 'Street scene from Olshausenstrasse, Kiel, West Germany' and 'Tour bus minutiae, and commentary: West Berlin, 1985' respectively. (Hunt: 156; 164)

Hone responded to the German experience on various levels, namely: the literary, the linguistic, and the physical or sensual – which is not to say that these levels were always clearly separated. On the contrary, as usual in his work there was considerable interplay and interpenetration between them. He wrote poems based on, and set in, Germany – neat, bright vignettes of the German scene as they revealed themselves to an open and eagerly enquiring mind (it is perhaps not without interest in the present context to note that the German for 'curious/inquisitive' is *neugierig*, literally: 'greedy for what's new'). He learned the language – and indeed incorporated and integrated (elements of) it into his poetry. And he left behind a legacy, in the form of a sheaf of manuscript translations of his earlier, pre-Berlin work into German – a *Nachlese*, or spin-off of his time in Germany, as it were, published under a German title, *Was wirklicher ist als Sterben (Straelener Manuskripte)* ['What is more real than dying'].⁴ Hunt reproduces the first page of the *Straelener Manuskript 3*, with the texts of 'Prelude?' and 'Muscle and Bone of Song' and their respective translations (169). On the facing page (168), there is some background to the Straelen project, mainly consisting of information supplied by Hone himself.

Hone worked on these texts personally with the translator, Irmela Brender, under the auspices of an ongoing project at the European Translators' College in Straelen, a little town in North-West Germany. There are thirty-one poems⁵ in all, taken from five collections: *No Ordinary Sun* (1964) (e.g. 'Muscle and Bone of Song'/'Muskel und Bein des Lieds'); *Come Rain Hail* (1970) (e.g. 'Rain'/'Regen'); *Sap-wood and Milk* (1972) (e.g. 'Love Pome'/'Liebeslied'); *Something Nothing* (1974) (e.g. 'Walker'/'Fussgänger'); and *Year of the Dog* (1982) (e.g. 'Sun-Rise'/'Sonnenaufgang'). In each case, the original poem is on the left-hand side, the translation on the right. This form of presentation does ensure that the original is not lost sight of, while on the other hand underlining the status of the translations as aids to understanding rather than poems in their own right. Unfortunately, it has to be said that Hone's

⁴ And *not*: 'What is better than dying?' – the 'loose' translation offered by O'Brien in the interview already quoted (58) is in fact a *mistranslation* on two counts: *wirklicher* means 'more real' ('better' = *besser*) and the original title is a statement, not a question. But Hone does not contradict him.

⁵ Hunt gives the figure as thirty-three – assigning fourteen (instead of thirteen) to *No Ordinary Sun*, and eight (instead of seven) to *Come Rain Hail*. On the other hand, unlike O'Brien, she does translate the title of the collection correctly.

poems do lose quite a bit in the translation, and sometimes the translations leave something to be desired. On the whole, they lack lustre – a quality the originals have in abundance. At some points, they are infelicitous, inaccurate or just plain wrong. To take the titles alone: ‘bone’ is a classic false friend for *Bein* (= ‘leg’). *Liebeslied* is a completely standard equivalent of ‘love song’, not quite the same thing as ‘love poem’ and even less the same thing as ‘Love Pome’ – the connotative force of the misspelling disappears without trace. And *Fussgänger* (‘pedestrian’) is the most pedestrian way possible of translating the polysemous – and eponymous – ‘walker’, which after all is also the name of the speaker. Among other things, it enables no palpable semantic link and hence no word play with *Seiltänzer*, the normal, dictionary equivalent of ‘tightrope walker’ – quite the contrary in fact, thus losing many of the implications of the controlling metaphor.

As far as the most ‘basic’ level of response (the physical, sensual) was concerned, Hone was already known to his fellow-Kiwis as a man who really loved food, both as consumer and as cook. And whilst his gastronomic tastes had doubtless been conditioned by his bicultural nurturing on traditional Anglo-Māori fare (not for nothing did he write a poem about the poetry of Aotearoan New Zealand food: ‘My Pork & Puha Anthem’ (Wendt, Whitiri and Sullivan: 242), his culinary interests and appetites knew no bounds of nationality, ethnicity or region. With what was literally a gut reaction, he tucked into the supposedly stodgy Teutonic cuisine – an experience he also recorded with equal relish. As Isabel Halverscheid puts it: ‘He was overjoyed at having another opportunity to murder the German language while heartily tucking into good, meaty German chow’. (10) ‘Chow’ does seem to be a peculiarly apt choice of word in the present context. Janet Hunt rounds off her second ‘Germany’ chapter with an almost whole-page text box on the subject of ‘FOOD!’, introducing the subject by saying: ‘Tuwhare is a connoisseur, a lover of the rich, juicy and especially meaty. [...] In Germany he found many kindred appetites.’ (170) Not just kindred *spirits*; and appetites in both the literal and the figurative sense(s). Whatever the hemisphere, Hone embodies the physical *and* the spiritual, in all their inseparability. He has, as Judith Dell Panny observes, the ‘capacity to bring together the colloquial and the exalted in a manner that gives both dignity and earthiness to a poem’. (337)

Back-to-back with the ‘FOOD!’ box Janet Hunt places a full-page facsimile from the set of poems in German translation already mentioned that were Hone’s spiritual legacy to this land flowing with eels and dumplings. And she records him writing in his ‘Berlin’ diary:

I loved the German borsch with potato dumplings [...] and gosh the supermarkets full of food, you know, fish like eels wriggling round in the

bloomin' tanks! You get invited to the German homes, all the smoked eels –
'Aale, Aale, Aale' – that's eels in Deutsch. [...] I love it, love the Germans,
they're very practical when they eat, no 'beg your pardon' and I thought, 'Oh,
you beautiful people.' (Hunt 170)

The connoisseur might object that borsch is Russian rather than German – but then again, Shakespeare's mistaken assumption that Bohemia had a coastline is not normally held against him. It is at any rate endemically European and therefore, from the point of view of a visiting Kiwi/Māori, eminently exotic, whereas eels were already familiar to Hone from back home, as his poem 'Friend' lip-smackingly testifies: '*Oyster-studded roots / of the mangrove yield no finer feast / of silver-bellied eels, and sea-snails / cooked in a rusty can*'. (Tuwhare 1964: 19) Characteristically, the not-so-appetizing receptacle does nothing to spoil the gourmet's anticipation. As for the attitude of those consuming the food, could it perhaps have been the non-British directness of the Germans – their lack of that puritanical uptightness that is the common heritage of both Brits and Pakeha – that appealed so strongly to Hone, this honorary Berliner? Ignoble thought! Be that as it may, there is more than enough food (with and without thought) in the poem 'Monika':

Johannes, you like strong German beer, ja?

Ja! Strong German women, too, mit hairy mussels
smoked Aale, raw herrings: wunderbar!
Bring mir Alles, bitte – mit Salat. Ich liebe dich.

Ja, ja . . . Johannes. Ist schon gut.

(Tuwhare 1992: 21)

Originally published in *Short Back & Sideways* (1992), the poem was reprinted in a special edition of *Chelsea Hotel* (59), an arts magazine published in Germany. This issue, offering a very substantial and representative cross-section of New Zealand literature incorporating work by a good twenty-five authors, Pakeha and Māori (partly in the original English, sometimes in parallel English and German, mainly in German translation), was designed to introduce a German readership to a hitherto unfamiliar subject.

Hone's easy integration into German society is reflected by the way the waitress/barmaid 'translates' his name into the local lingo (an explanatory footnote about this is supplied with the *Chelsea Hotel* version

for the benefit of the German readership: ‘Hone = John = Johannes’). He was demonstrably aware of the linguistic and cultural relativity of given names, including his own – an awareness reflected in the very title of his poem ‘Fifteen Minutes in the Life of Johannes H. Jean Ivanovich’. (Wendt et al: 239)

The passage from ‘Monika’ quoted above gives a good sense of the technique Hone employs in his ‘German’ poems: The speaker plausibly imitates the way English-speaking Germans may be influenced by the syntactic patterns of their native language (syntactic interference): ‘you like strong German beer, ja?’; the speaker himself interlards the English text with German words (lexical code-switching) – somewhat arbitrarily in terms of semantic necessity, perhaps more for ‘exotic’ effect, cheerfully and often humorously mixing the two vocabularies: ‘smoked Aale [‘that’s eels in Deutsch’]; ‘women [...] mit [= ‘with’] hairy mussels’. There is presumably an interlingual play on ‘muscles’, allowing the speaker to allude to two different kinds of appetite at the same time. Unusually, the word-play would work in German too (*Muscheln* vs. *Muskeln*). This brings me to wonder whether Hone’s knowledge of the vernacular extended to familiarity with the very similar-sounding *Muschi* – childspeak for cat and at the same time playful (male) adultspeak for vulva (cf. ‘pussy’). Suffice it to say that one would hardly be surprised. Hone’s taste for a rather jolly, comic species of bawdy is certainly well documented in other poems, witness, for instance: ‘Well – I – never’ (1992: 16); ‘Mother of very earthly gods’ (2001: 55); not to mention more or less every other poem in his very last, suggestively entitled, collection *Oooooo.....!!!* (2005), the cover of which just happens to feature a mussel – of the green-lipped variety. And for those who still haven’t quite got the double-entendre, there are abundantly clear words of exegesis between the covers, in an item entitled ‘A paean of praise for the succulent bounty from our Sea-God Tangaroa (*I repeat: raw*)’ (2005: 44). To return to Germany and ‘Monika’, the seamless transition from the very idiomatic, authentic German gastrospeak of: ‘Bring mir Alles, bitte – mit Salat’ [‘Bring me Everything, please – with a side-salad’] to: ‘Ich liebe dich’ might suggest an erotic subtext, glossable or ‘translatable’ as: ‘I want it all! – with knobs on’. This subtext may be reinforced by the non-standard upper-case status afforded to the indefinite pronoun ‘alles’ (or it may simply be a grammatical mistake).

When we discover that: ‘Hone recalls that when he read a new poem to a Berlin barmaid “She was so chuffed I got a free beer”’ (Lennox: 11), it is tempting to suspect co-reference between this real person and the eponymous Monika of the poem. Certainly the setting of ‘Monika’ (‘in the cosy Yugoslav Kneipe [= pub] in Nachod Strasse’) is almost definitely Berlin – that ‘Dear Brown Bear City’, in Tuwharese. There really is a *Nachodstraße* in Berlin – it is also one of the settings of ‘Tour Bus Minutiae’ – and it is located in the area frequented by Hone during his stay there. The speaker really does sound, in Bill Manhire’s spot-on classic definition, as if he is in church and in the pub at the same time. (Alley and

Williams: 188) And it would not have been exactly uncharacteristic for Hone to use poetry in the service of chatting up a waitress he fancied.

Hone seems to have thrown himself with zest and – well, *Lebenslust* – into the ordinary everyday life of his host country. Total immersion (including the modern language-learning connotation of that term) was his apparent aim. No matter how different, distant and remote this environment might have been from his usual stomping-ground in all the conventional factual and geographical senses, Hone's sensitive antennae were such as to register many good vibrations wholly consonant with his innate tendency to home in on the homely basics. Clearly, he felt utterly at home in Germany. A letter of 14 January 1983 to Bill Pearson explains:

I am making some contact with German friends. I'd love to visit Europe again and Germany (West) in particular. I was there so long it seemed, that some friendly wit wondered if there wasn't 'some corner of a German beer-cellar that is forever tapu. (Hunt: 159)

The allusion to Rupert Brooke's 'The Soldier' (Hayward: 420) may remind us that 'The Old Vicarage, Grantchester' was written in Berlin '(Café des Westens, Berlin, May 1912)' – a city of which it offered a pretty *unflattering* portrait and from which the poet's 'real' home, Cambridge, looks that much more attractive – a place 'Where das Betreten's not verboten'. Hone even echoes Brooke's mix of native and local language: the two key-words (*tapu* and *verboten*), whilst virtually synonymous, each have strong connotations of cultural *difference* and ethnically defined mentality. Thus they produce the opposite value-judgment, and arrive at an opposite conclusion. Home from home, as opposed to wallowing in unrequited nostalgia. Some of Hone's appreciative impressions of the simple but significant details of his temporary home found their way into diary entries and private correspondence, such as the following (to Lauris Edmond, 1 September 1982):

There's some charming touches here, which you may have experienced in South of France; Italy. They light candles when the evening meal is laid. More common in South Germany. Cyclists (motorless) have their very own pedestrian footpath – about four feet wide – and the balconies (to each flat unit) are a dazzling sight. A veritable hanging garden of flowers. (Hunt: 157)

The last scene sketched in that passage is elaborated in the poem ‘Street scene from Olshausenstrasse, Kiel, West Germany’:

The sunflowers fan the still air creating a small
hurricane. Why, they’re conducting a symphony

orchestra of lime trees responding to them from
below: bowing, scraping – and clashing gummy

green leaves together, I think, tinnily. I can’t
read the score from here. Must be in German.

Visually, all the movements are just so full of glitter.
It’s too intensively rural – and urbanised – for

Wagner. The sunflowers take another bow. Separately,
I reach for my pen: my hand nudges a bottle.

(Hunt: 156)

The visiting English-language poet has deposited his cultural baggage with its Keatsian/Shelleyan clichés at the left-luggage office: Enter Wagner, the supposedly obvious figure in the German musical context, here cast as intruder: the synaesthetic association of flowers with music nevertheless becomes a leitmotif (or, to restore the correct spelling of the word: *Leitmotiv*) in the original (German!) sense.

Hone also wrote poems about his experiences of and in (the) German (language). Metalinguistic poems, as it were. At least one of these poems has a German title (‘*Für mich der Vogel schön singt*’ [‘For me the bird sings sweetly’] (Hunt: 158). Actually, it is couched in somewhat idiosyncratic German: German verbs don’t *always* go to the end of the sentence; and the inflectional ending ‘-st’ goes with the second person singular, not the first. It’s surprising that all those subsequent editors and publishers have enshrined the master’s original version, warts and all. But we shouldn’t allow such pedantries to deflect attention from the delightful playfulness of this poem. Among other things, Hone is playing with the German language. He is also making little cross-linguistic jokes for insiders such as transliterating the location (*Olshausenstrasse*, shared with the previous poem) as: ‘Old Houses Street’.

Janet Hunt comments: as in Samoa and Bougainville, he revelled in the sounds and meanings of a new language, the excitement of words not known before and freshly absorbed into his own vocabulary'. (158) And in Hone's own words (to Lauris Edmond in the same letter quoted above):

To improve my German, I had a crack at a couple of poems translating them with the help of a German grammar book & dictionary (limited to 10,000 words). But it had the effect I wanted, in charming the author – whom I met in Berlin, & whose paintings I admired more, after I did the translations. (Hunt: 158)

Far from being a fish out of water – as so many foreign visitors would be – Hone was in his element. He thrived in and on the cross-cultural cross-currents provided by residence abroad. His renowned continuation of the time-honoured ancestral oral tradition and his performative prowess were clearly complemented by an exceptional *aural* ability – in other words, he had a good ear for language, and languages, which chimed well with his temperamental empathy with others and with other cultures. Reporting on the enthusiasm with which Hone planned his second visit, Janet Hunt writes:

Tuwhare refreshed his German and was delighted anew by pronunciation equivalences with Maori, especially the separate weighting given to every vowel. He wrote to Barbara Richter: 'I have been having a secret affair with a linguaphone set borrowed from the Public Library and listening to cassettes: Deutscher Kursus Lektionen . . . I really want to be able to converse with ease in the German language. (165-66)

Not many non-Germans would say that – and then really do something about it.

In his entry for Hone Tuwhare in *The Oxford Companion to New Zealand Literature* Terry Sturm pinpoints one of the author's characteristic vehicles, namely the dramatic monologue, the classic exemplar of this being one of his best-known poems, 'To a Maori figure cast in bronze outside the Chief Post Office, Auckland', which is:

remarkably rich in its edged allusions to the political, economic and class contexts of race relations in New Zealand, and in its imaginative play with formal and colloquial English and Maori idioms, and with the cultural meanings carried by particularities of location in urban and suburban Auckland. The

assumption of a familiar context shared unselfconsciously with his New Zealand readership is crucial to the effect of this poem (as in all Tuwhare's mature work); because of the density of local allusion and idiom almost every line would require annotation for overseas readers. (Sturm)

This in itself is quite some achievement, but paradoxically enough – and this is a much rarer achievement – Hone also manages to create just such an extreme 'locality' of reference in a foreign cultural environment, in the opposite hemisphere to his own, at the other end of the world of all places – *am anderen Ende der Welt*, a phrase which of course would normally be used to refer (back) to Hone's home Aotearoa New Zealand. The 'richness of [his poems'] sense of location, and their highly inventive use of New Zealand demotic idioms' (Sturm) has been unexpectedly transferred, transposed, 'translated' to the German location and to the inventive use of German demotic idioms. Nowhere is this more successful and satisfying than in the poem with which he pays homage to Berlin – 'Tour bus minutiae, and commentary: West Berlin, 1985':

I have felt the bite & crunch of winter winds, the sudden
stir of snow hunched around the corner waiting to pounce
on you. I'm envigoured by it. It's called: Berliner Luft:
Duft, Duft, dufte! Loverly!
(Tuwhare 1992: 28)

It is a declaration of love to foreign parts, appropriately using sophisticated interlingual word-play to make its statement. Berlin air (*Berliner Luft*) is proverbially light and clear, clean and bracing – and emblematic of the whole atmosphere and feel of the city. The idea is enshrined in popular mythology and in a popular song, which already makes use of the rhyme between the German for 'air' (*Luft*) and the German for 'scent' (*Duft*). And *dufte!* is a slightly dated colloquial epithet of enthusiastic approval for which the big-city Cockney 'Loverly!' is an almost perfect cultural equivalent. Hone is speaking 'their' language. But at the same time he is speaking his own language. The combination is inimitable (as mixtures often are) – inimitably Hone:

Dear Brown Bear City, I love you. Ach, ja! You're a bloody wonderful ache. (Tuwhare 1992: 29)

The whole poem radiates a lightness of atmosphere and mood which it took the rest of the world a further couple of decades to discover – when Germany hosted the World Football Championships in 2006.

In the sleeve notes to the CD *Tuwhare* (2005), a collection of Hone's poems set to music by a wide variety of artists – itself vibrant testimony to the breadth and emotional intensity of the poet's inspirational appeal and influence – Waana Morrell Davis (Chairperson of Toi Māori Aotearoa) refers to Hone Tuwhare as:

our most revered Māori poet, playwright and author of short fiction. He is held in the highest esteem in both Māori and Pakeha culture. He writes from a Māori perspective, one that reveals his in-depth experience, understanding and knowledge of being Māori. Yet this conglomeration of attitudes and perceptions is universally identifiable. I believe that all people can personally relate and respond to his writing. It is this skill that makes him so very special.

This man, with his 'great buzz / of laughter and love at the centre' (Edmond: 182) was all things to all men, he was a man to whom nothing human was foreign, a man who could instinctively find the locus of humanity anywhere on the globe and home in on it. Hone Tuwhare was, in a word, a *mensch*.

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