

*Assimilation Through Translation: Linguistic Colonialism in The Piano*

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As film continuously portrays the colonization of nations throughout history, the languages of these nations are rarely shown on screen. Similarly, the women who are often privileged within the societies of these same films are the ones who follow the predetermined rules and language of society- ones which have been set for them by the men of the dominant culture. In *The Piano*, the dominant culture is Scottish - predictably European - and anything else is driven to assimilate through cultural practices, but especially through language. The Maori people, colonized by the Scottish, are forced to learn English and their own languages are ignored by the European people they interact with throughout the film. Ada, similarly, is asked to give up her own voice as well as having it forcibly taken away from her in order to join the culture of her husband and the women around her. Through both of these examples, the film illustrates the violence of stolen language as well as the colonialistic cycle which is responsible for these languages being destroyed.