MASCULINITIES, MILITARISM, AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER IN CONTEMPORARY FIJI: PERFORMANCES OF PARODY AND SUBVERSION AS FEMINIST RESISTANCE

Tui Nicola Clery
Independent Researcher

THE PERFORMANCE OF MASCULINITIES, GENDERED IDENTITIES, and norms has become inextricably linked with a broader culture of militarism in contemporary Fiji. Militarism is a creeping, cumulative process by which "a person or a thing comes to be controlled by the military or comes to depend for its well-being on militarized ideas" (Enloe 2000, 3). Intersecting influences contributing to cultures of militarism in Fiji include established cultural connections celebrating the role of warriors in Fiji, patriarchal cultures that celebrate rigid and highly militarized notions of maleness, Fiji's colonial history, Fiji's history of post-independence coups, and increasing levels of militarization.

Militarism as an ideology helped British colonial powers to establish the idea of Fiji as a cohesive, unified nation state to which all Indigenous Fijian's belonged, and which should inspire loyalty and sacrifice from its members. The military in contemporary Fiji is a formidable social and cultural force. In 2005, the standing army was estimated at ten thousand, making Fiji the most militarized[1] nation in the contemporary Pacific (Teaiwa 2005, 202). Many people in the indigenous Fijian community have extended family members with military connections, and indigenous families can almost invariably trace connections to the Fiji Army or Navy, the British Army, or to UN peacekeeping forces. In addition to involvement in more established military forces, Fijians have built upon their militarized

reputation as warriors, loyal and brave soldiers, and friendly peacekeepers, to become increasingly involved in the potentially lucrative but high-risk private security industry.[2]

Militarized notions of masculinity are particularly associated with what it means to be an indigenous Fijian man. In 2000, it was estimated that 3,163 Fiji citizens were involved in Fiji's military forces and that less than 0.44 percent of the military population were from nonindigenous backgrounds (Teaiwa 2008, 117). Because the military in Fiji is dominated by indigenous men, it is reflective also of the fact that the vast majority of this population are Christian. Teaiwa (2005) notes the complex intersections between Christianity and the military in Fiji. She argues that because of the conflation of these two institutions, Christianity plays a core role in moulding the "military psyche" in Fiji, and consequentially the military is often "unquestioningly invested with the aura of a Christian mission" (Teaiwa 2005, 211).

This article emphasizes the ways that that cultures of militarism and masculinity have been constructed during the course of Fiji's colonial history, assuming that gendered identities and norms are historically situated and culturally determined. Gendered identities are performed on a daily basis through embodied acts, discursive practices, and in relationship with others (Butler 1990). The ongoing impacts of history on constructions of masculinities in contemporary Fiji are essential to understanding the complex links between cultures of militarism and the construction of gender in Fiji. This paper begins by considering the enduring cultural relevance of the idea of the warrior in indigenous Fijian epistemology. It then explores how indigenous masculinities have been imagined in direct opposition to masculinities among the Fiji-Indian population during wartime.

Cultures of militarism are involved in the social construction of both masculinities and femininities. Growing cultures of militarism and militarization also impact upon the construction of femininities, delineating gendered possibilities for Fiji's women and girls. The second part of this article acknowledges the many silences surrounding the impacts of militarization on women; exploring some of the ways in which women have been impacted by cultures of militarization, and the multiple layers of structural and interpersonal violence that have been a consequence of Fiji's coups (Emberson-Bain 1992). By foregrounding gender as a lens for considering women's resistance to cultures of militarization in Fiji, I assume that a "gendered analysis of militarism can create unique opportunities for comprehending militarism and its effects" (Teaiwa 2011, 3).

Finally, this article presents a case study of the play *Takeover, Takecover*, which addresses deepening cultures of militarism in Fiji. The play was

written by the feminist Civil Society Organisation (CSO), Women's Action for Change (WAC), and performed to diverse audiences across Fiji in 2000. Performances of *Takeover, Takecover* explicitly sought to expose gendered norms and to resist simplistic binary notions of masculine and feminine. The play highlights the farcical and constructed nature of male militarized power and challenges militarization and militarism as inevitable features of Fijian society. The play is a localized strategy of resistance and subversion that seeks to provide audiences with spaces in which to become aware of the militarization of everyday sociocultural norms, thus enabling them to critically reflect on current realities and to imagine alternative and more peaceful possibilities.

WAC uses performances as a catalyst for dialogue within and between communities. Performance is an important peace-building tool, which has the potential to expose the constructed nature of dominant social and cultural norms and to increase understanding and empathy between people. Through reflecting on this performance, this paper contributes to a process of "re-membering" (Hooks 1995, 64) feminist activism in Fiji and to exploring the ways in which women have exposed and challenged cultures of militarism.

Performing Militarized Masculinities—Quick March!

To illustrate how militarized norms are enacted within local communities, I would like to begin by sharing an everyday story about the performance of gender in Fiji. It was a Sunday afternoon in Tailevu in June 2011. Church was finished and our stomachs were full. I was sitting with my *ka rua* (sister-in-law) and a variety of nieces and nephews in the shade of the village bus stop, waiting for transport to take me back to Suva. I was also, inadvertently, waiting for a lesson in masculinities and militarization.

As we relaxed together in the shade, my ka rua delighted in her youngest child. Her firstborn son was around two years old on my last visit to my husband's village. Treasured as the first baby boy in the family, my nephew's small body was dressed impeccably in his Sunday best—a colorful bula shirt and formal *sulu vakataga*, a mini replica of the clothes worn to church by adult men in Fiji.[3] After a few words of instruction and encouragement from his mum, my nephew's body went stiff and straight. His face took on a serious expression as he obediently started to perform a military style march, finished off with a salute. The adults gathered nearby responded with great amusement and delight, their attention and compliments providing my nephew with an immediate reward for this military play.

As a student of peace and conflict in the Pacific, I was struck by how fluently and accurately gendered and militarized norms were being performed by this little boy, who was still less than steady on his feet. Also, I reflected on the process of socialization that led to military culture being accorded such weight and value and the complex ways in which women have become complicit in ideologies of militarism. Teaiwa (2005, 205) argues that militarism has become a form of "cultural logic" among the indigenous Fijian community, and as this story reveals, militarized norms are reinforced and enacted in complex ways, by both men and women in Fiji's society.[4]

Militarization has become so widespread in contemporary Fiji, that militarized norms for men and boys are often unquestioningly accepted. Alexander (2008) argues that militarization as a tool for cultural governance often operates at a subconscious level. Militarization involves not only the disciplining of bodies and social relationships (Enloe 1990) but also a less than conscious process of "making people accepting of military values without their necessarily being aware of what is happening" (Alexander 2008, 75).

Incrementally, militarism in Fiji has "seep[ed] into fundamental aspects of social and cultural life" (Teaiwa 2011, 2). Militarized norms are embodied and performed with such frequency within Fijian society that these constructions are often "naturalized" and rendered invisible. Efforts to expose, problematize and defamiliarize (Miner 1956)[5] militarized norms in Fiji, such as those presented in the play *Takeover, Takecover* are, therefore, increasingly necessary.

Militarism, Histories of War, and the Construction of Masculinities in Contemporary Fiji

The participation of indigenous Fijian soldiers in the First and Second World Wars played a significant part in accepting militarism as an ideology, supporting colonial processes that sought to unify diverse and often conflicting cultures and epistemologies within precolonial Fiji. Accounts of Fijian culture and society prior to European contact and colonization acknowledge violence between different parts of the *vanua* (Clunie 1977; Durutalo 1986). Masculinities in contemporary Fiji are influenced by the traditional role of the *bati*[6] or warrior in indigenous Fijian epistemology, and these ideas continue to be upheld and celebrated.

The bati were traditional warriors in Fiji's precolonial society. The bati were respected, skilled, and "elite freemen" (Halapua 2003, 46), who were paid for their services to communities. The role of the bati was explicitly

to protect the chief and, therefore, to safeguard the entire traditional system of production and distribution (Halapua 2003, 47). "The ideology of a warrior people [is] epitomized by the *bati*" (Halapua 2003, 50). Teaiwa (2005, 212) argues that an enduring "*bati* ideology" (Teaiwa 2005, 212) in contemporary Fiji forms a cultural rationale for militarism.[7]

Warrior identities have been reclaimed and reasserted in complex ways in contemporary Fiji, giving them a strong and enduring cultural resonance in the present. The responsibilities of the bati have been redefined to involve defending not just the chiefly system but also the idea of Fiji as a nation state.[8] Indigenous Fijian military service to Britain in World War I and World War II on behalf of Fiji as a nation resonated with the call to the bati to defend their chief:

> [T]he warrior, the *kshatriya*, is the one who struggles with the forces of chaos or order in order to maintain cosmic order. The modern mystique of the military corps, living still, with its music, uniforms, and parades, is a leftover of a faith like that. The warrior is the nobleman, the knight, the representative of power in the service of authority (Panikkar 1995, 31).

Militarism in contemporary Fiji is significantly impacted by histories of military service in colonial and postcolonial Fiji. The construction of a culture of masculinity based upon either participation or lack of participation in the Second World War has enduring impacts in terms of masculinities. Differences in communal identities, histories, and allegiances were embodied and made explicit through action during wartime. Communities who might have been united by their shared experiences of colonialism were instead constructed as enemies and opposites. In postcolonial Fiji, these identities continue to be popularly defined largely through opposition to one another (Leckie 2002a, 257).

The "ideal" Indigenous Fijian man went to war to defend the nation and Indigenous Fijian culture, and ways of life have been constructed in direct opposition to notions of what it means to be a Fiji-Indian man. Because Fiji-Indian men were generally prevented from or chose not to participate in direct combat, they have been constructed as disloyal, selfish, and unpatriotic (Sutherland 1992, 61). However, fighting for the British Empire was counterintuitive for many people in the Fiji-Indian community, who had been brought to Fiji as indentured laborers by the British colonial government, and who regarded involvement in the war as "fighting to uphold a system that was oppressive and humiliating" (Lal 1992, 123). Their involvement in the Second World War was understandably "unenthusiastic and conditional" (Lal 1992, 120).

Fiji-Indians were in fact prevented from directly participating in war in a number of ways. Training the Fiji-Indian community in warfare was seen as risking future governance problems for the colonial administration (Lal 1992, 122), who nervously connected the Fiji-Indian community to political events in India at the time. This included growing Indian nationalism and protest and Gandhi's anticolonial Quit India Campaign. With this in mind, colonial powers were very reluctant to give military training to the Fiji-Indian community, a population who already had a history of organizing strikes and protests in the Fiji context.[9] Instead Fiji-Indians were instructed to contribute to the war effort by working to increase food production (Lal 1992, 122). Fiji's sugar industry continued to be heavily dependent on Fiji-Indian labor. To ensure that production continued, strictly enforced regulations and contracts prevented more than a two-month absence from work, thus making it extremely difficult for Fiji-Indians to participate directly in war (Lal 1992, 123).

These divisions in terms of what was popularly seen as either a willingness to fight to defend Fiji and Fijian culture, or as a lack of patriotism, helped to fuel hostility between the indigenous Fijian and Fiji-Indian communities in the postwar period. Fiji-Indian men's "reluctance" to take part in the war effort led to the emergence of sentiments and stereotypes about Fiji-Indian men as cowardly or weak. Men in the Fiji-Indian community were constructed in direct opposition to "strong" and "brave" indigenous Fijian men. Playwright and filmmaker Larry Thomas explores the social impacts of these stereotypes in the play *Men, Women and Insanity*:[10]

> Joeli: Mukesh, you call this your country but when you come to think of it you didn't die for this country. You people didn't go to the war. You people were scared. The Fijians were soldiers and fought hard in the war.
> Mukesh: Why do you have to bring that up? I know the Fijian men were good soldiers and everyone admire them; no one is arguing with that. But what you say is not very nice. If the Indian men were told to go to the war then who's gonna work in the cane fields? Somebody have to stay behind and do the dirty work. Who would plant and harvest the cane? You think my grandfather like to get up at four o'clock in the morning and go out and work in the fields . . . The soldiers lost their blood for this country but don't forget those men in the cane fields, they lost their blood too. Their blood is the sweat, the sweat that help build this country (Thomas 1991, 203).

Constructions of Fiji-Indian men as "other" helped to create a sense of community, uniformity, and unity among the indigenous Fijian community that was an essential to successful colonial rule. Colonial stories about binary oppositions between the indigenous and Fiji-Indian communities were used to "maintain hegemonic control and support" (Pritchett 2005, 15) for colonial power structures in Fiji, as part of well-established strategies of divide and rule. Alexander (2006, 7) notes that creating an Indian other also functioned to reduce the diversity, complexity, and divisions within indigenous Fijian communities, thus imposing "an assumption of Fijian unity" on the indigenous population, which in turn was crucial to forming the idea of Fiji as a nation state.[11] The reality, however, was not cultural unity or uniformity but incredible diversity, involving competing power relationships.

In the colonial process of integrating and unifying diverse warring tribes across different parts of the vanua, certain stories and cultural expressions were privileged and came to dominate, because chiefs from the east of Fiji were successfully co-opted by colonial powers. "Polynesian"-influenced cultural traditions from eastern Fiji were standardized, written, and enforced by the colonial administration, and these particular ways of knowing and being were upheld as the model of "tradition" for indigenous peoples across Fiji, thus silencing cultures and stories from the West. This unequal distribution of political power has continued implications in Fiji's postcolonial history. Allegiances, structures, and power relations formed in the colonial period continue to be significant sources of conflict and division. Alexander (2006) argues that, rather than ethnicity being the major source of conflict and coups, local struggles for power and resources and the militarization of social and political disputes have been central to conflicts in contemporary Fiji.

Women, Militarization and Post-Coup Violence

Fiji's postcolonial history and politics is littered with a persistent "embarrassment of coups" (Nandan 2009, 166). In these stories of political conflict, men are usually the characters and the authors, and the stories of women and girls are often silenced. Drawing on the work of Caplan, Alexander (2008, 77) argues that one of the consequences of "patriarchal militarism" is that it encourages men to create images of women as devalued others. Dualistic and binary constructions of masculine and feminine are used to enhance male violence, often at the expense of women.

Despite being largely written out of militarized accounts of Fiji, women have been particularly affected by militarization and Fiji's coup culture. In

her reflections on the first Fiji coups of 1987, Atu Emberson-Bain (1992) documents the multiple impacts of coup-related violence and conflict on women and girls. Her gendered analysis of the impacts of conflict and militarism is equally applicable to the socioeconomic aftermath of the coups of 2000 and 2006. The coups all impacted upon Fiji's broader political economy, leading to multiple consequences for women including job losses in the tourism and garment industries, pay cuts, redundancies, and a devaluation of the Fiji dollar relative to the increasing cost of living (Emberson-Bain 1992, 146).

The economic consequences of the 1987 coups also were felt acutely by Fiji's children, many of whom were kept home from school because increasing levels of poverty meant that families were struggling to cope with the costs of school fees (Emberson-Bain 1992, 149).[12] In a patriarchal society such as Fiji, which often assumes that it is men's role to be the primary breadwinners in families, and when a decision has to be made about which child or children should be educated first, research shows that it is often girl children who lose out in terms of access to education (UNFPA 2008, 50).

Emberson-Bain (1992, 149) juxtaposes Fiji's expenditure on social welfare services with the colossal budget of Fiji's military forces during the same period. Welfare provision rose from $2 million to just $3 million between 1986 and 1991. In contrast, the budget of Fiji's Military Forces during the same period leapt from $16.3 million to a staggering $31 million. These numbers illustrate that militarism is clearly a national priority and point toward structurally embedded acts of violence manifested through the negligent budget allocated to the welfare of Fiji's poorest people. Many families living in the most extreme poverty are female-headed households. A survey by the government of Fiji and UNDP in 1996 found that one in seven of the poorest households are headed by women (UNFPA 2008, 7).

The impacts of wage reductions and job losses after the 1987 coup, combined with a general increase in all forms of violence in Fiji's society during this time, have been causally linked by many Fiji feminists and NGOs with increases in family violence, violence against women, and instances of rape and sexual assault (Emberson-Bain 1992: 153–54; Griffen 1988 as cited in De Ishtar 1994, 127). Instances of interpersonal and structural violence are intimately interrelated, "linked in a continuum" (Cockburn and Ensloe 2012, 552) of violence. Patriarchy supports acts of violence through assigning binary qualities to men and women, thus reinforcing power inequities (Crittenden and Wright, 2012) and connecting "militarized femininities to militarized masculinities in a way that sustains the domination of certain brands of masculinity, while keeping women in their assigned spaces" (Cockburn and Ensloe 2012, 223).

The popular and stereotypical association of men with war and women with peace functions to maintain notions of essentialized differences between genders (Andermah, Lovell, and Wolkowitz 1997, 195). Pacific women have often been constructed as peacemakers, building upon conventional notions of women as caretakers and homemakers. Pacific women have repeatedly taken important roles in peace-building processes at local levels; however, such spaces for peace building are often possible "precisely because they are women." They are operating in a patriarchal system, which distances them from power structures (Alexander 2008, 80), and despite intentions to challenge and change patriarchal norms, women's role as peace builders at the local level often works within the confines of patriarchy as a social system.

Parody and Subversion, Performing Fiji's Coup Culture: *Takeover, Takecover*

We have seen that women and girls have been substantially impacted by Fiji's coups and increasing militarism in the country. Women's marginal position in relationship to patriarchal and militarized power structures in Fiji has often meant that their peace-building work has not been widely remembered or acknowledged (Alexander 2008, 80). The final section of this article considers some of the ways in which women have asserted their agency in the face of ever-increasing militarism, through a case study of some of the work of feminist theater company WAC during the aftermath of the 2000 coup in Fiji. This case study contributes to remembering women's peace-building work and documents an innovative and creative way that feminist women in Fiji have enacted forms of resistance to militarization, seeking to challenge and to reveal militarized norms.

In times of national crisis such as the coups of 1987, 2000, and 2006, public emergency regulation were put in place that severely limit freedoms of speech, assembly, and association in Fiji. This has, in turn, impacted on CSO's and women's organizing. Peace-building work undertaken at these moments in Fiji's history takes on additional layers of risk, as activists attempt to find ways to continue working for change and social justice amid a myriad of constraints. Much dynamic peace-building work occurs within, around, underneath, and in spite of the risks involved in peace work within Fiji's shifting political landscape (Clery 2013, 15). WAC's play *Takeover, Takecover* (P. Moore 2001, unpubl. data) is an example of such transgressive peace education work at the local level.

Artists as activists in Fiji occupy positions of both risk and possibility. Insights found within the creative arts, in forms such as poetry, plays, and

novels; and those that are embodied and enacted through forms including theater, music, dance, and festivals can contribute alternative understandings of conflict and possibilities for peace. In response to Fiji's militarized and masculine coup culture, the feminist theater company WAC used performance[13] to challenge militarism and male dominance after the 2000 coup, seeking to bring the stories and experiences of women and children back to center stage.

WAC was founded in Suva in 1993.[14] This feminist, community theater organization uses theater as a tool for initiating dialogue in communities. WAC focus on empowering marginalized women and girls to share stories, and to explore commonalities in their gendered social and cultural experiences. These processes of critical reflection and the relational networks that are often created as a consequence form a basis from which Fiji women and girls can enact change in their lives and societies (Clery and Nabulivou 2011, 166). WAC recognizes that working toward the empowerment of women and girls necessarily involves men and boys.[15] WAC's creative director Peni Moore described men as often being at the root of issues affecting women and girls, and emphasized the need for men and women to work together to achieve social and attitudinal change (*Talanoa*, P. Moore, 4 March 2010, unpubl. data).

WAC has developed and adapted a variety of feminist, participatory, and embodied theater-based peace education processes for working with communities. Their pedagogy assumes that people learn best through doing, through being actively involved in education (Clery 2013). WAC's peace-building praxis is influenced by the work of Brazilian activists Paulo Friere (1972, 1998) and Augusto Boal (1992, 1995, 2000, 2006). In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1972), Friere reconceptualizes education as a tool for sociopolitical liberation and community empowerment and as a catalyst for social change. Building upon Friere's ideas of education as a tool for liberation, Boal developed *Theatre of the Oppressed* (2000), a body of theater-based techniques that seek to reveal and disrupt dominant power structures. Boal's processes and techniques use theater as a practical tool for creating spaces for dialogue. Dialogic processes, in turn, can assist communities in rehearsing and acting for individual, communal, and social transformation (Clery 2013, 276).

The feminist values and pedagogies enacted by WAC resonate closely with the philosophies and practices described by Friere and Boal, sharing values, goals and processes. Rather than being a passive response to power imbalances, these approaches all seek to "wage conflict non-violently" (Shank and Shirch 2008, 220). WAC's post-performance processes within communities[16] encourage audience members to think critically, to "take

apart our world, examine invisible assumptions, and view cause/effect relationships" (Armstrong 2005, 174), and to use play as a tool for rehearsing for social change. In theater that challenges both actors and audiences to become active citizens through the creative process of exploring stories, perspectives, solutions, and possibilities, neither actors nor audiences are mere spectators. This kind of drama enables and prepares participants to become "change makers" in a holistic approach to education as a means of preparing people for social life and citizenship (UNESCO 2002, 22).

WAC's process of community-based theater involves offering scripted performances to set the scene and to provide a basis for talking about contentious social and cultural issues. The "fictional" nature of performances enables the discussion of issues in a way that is playful and somewhat distanced from daily realities but with a frame of reference that speaks to the everyday. The playful, metaphorical, and imaginary nature of performances can help communities to begin talking about issues that are difficult, divisive, and silenced or *tabu*. The assumption that stories are somehow "not real" when they are performed can help to enable direct speech about the issues raised within them, making the risky business of engaging in peace talk less direct and overtly confrontational (Clery 2013). Performances can provide "safe" spaces for reflection and dialogue; however, speaking out is always a complex, risky, and political act, despite the cloaks of metaphor and playfulness that may help to enable expression (Clery and Nabulivou 2011; Clery 2013).

In the case of *Takeover, Takecover* (P. Moore 2001, unpubl. data) the depiction of reality was so close to the lived reality in Fiji that audiences were left in little doubt as to the place and time in which the conflict being portrayed was occurring. The play involves audience in a process of defamiliarization, using shock tactics to reveal gendered and militarized norms as social constructions and challenging the status quo. *Takeover, Takecover* (P. Moore 2001, unpubl. data) was performed to audiences around Fiji.[17] The storyline of the play reverses Fiji's male-dominated power relations, imagining a military takeover with women as the aggressors. This "incredibly subversive and transgressive" (*Talanoa*, N. Nabulivou, 23 February 2010, unpubl. data) performance used playful techniques of parody and subversion to challenge and reveal masculine, militarized power.

Tired from years of violence enacted against them, female characters in the play make the decision to overthrow the government and reverse gender privileges. Reflecting the realities of life for Fiji women after the 2000 coup, men are told to remain in their homes during curfew periods and await further government directives or risk violent consequences. With men contained at home, the streets are now declared safe for women and

children. In the following section from the play, the female-led military government announces the new realities of life to the public in Fiji:

> Good evening Nation. I am sure there is fear in the hearts of many men as they wonder what is to become of them. Do not worry you have a right to be fearful. The Viola Women's Party has taken over the Government and we have had no opposition . . . all army, navy and police personal are under our control . . . you have no option but to listen and obey. Indeed, if you obey it may be possible to return to democracy in the near future.
>
> Women have taken over because there was no other way. We women are going to ensure that there are no more violent assaults on women and children. That decision making will be by the women until men are capable of making decisions that are good for the whole community not just them.
>
> If men voluntarily give up this power game of raping and assaulting women and refusing to share power, then the Viola Women's Party will be able discuss shared power with men on an equal footing. But until we can return to normalcy, the following regulations are to be placed on all men.
>
> The curfew remains in force for men. From now on men will be responsible for household chores and minding the family, as women are far too busy running the country. If both the husband and wife are working, then a child minder must be organized by the husband. As the leader I am in charge of the Ministry for Justice, and the Minister for Finance will be the wife of the last Minister. Men don't know how to budget.
>
> It would be wonderful to see men change their behaviour and stop all forms of violence against women and children, and to see men learn how to communicate in a way that enables transformation of conflict and decision making by consensus, then we could stop these drastic measures, but until then ... men beware (P. Moore 2001, 5, unpubl. data).

This atmosphere of vague but tangible threats, combined with continuously emerging and unpredictable regulations affecting the lives of the total population, mirrors the multiple decrees that have been an everyday part of life under coup governments in Fiji. Playing with the limits of possibility, *Takeover, Takecover*[18] challenges audiences to reflect on gendered relationships and the impacts of the increased militarization on Fiji's women and children.

This less than subtle reversal of militarization in Fiji was clearly intended to shock, to act as an overt form of resistance, and to take audience members through a process of defamiliarization, jolting them out of internalized militarized norms.[19] The play subverts dominant assumptions about gender roles (N. Nabulivou and P. Moore 2008, 29, unpubl. data). Within its imaginary, the constructed nature of gendered power relationships is revealed. The revelation is direct and confrontational but also uses humor.

As in many theatrical and carnival traditions, authority figures are ridiculed and parodied. Through play, power structures are challenged and subverted in ways that would not be possible in everyday life. *Takeover, Takecover* (P. Moore 2001, unpubl. data) depicts an alternate reality in which "the high is made low and the world is temporarily turned upside down" (Sinavaiana 1992, 195).

Humor is achieved through an obvious subversion of the realities, gendered boundaries, and power relationships within which people live. Also, the play satirizes the political rhetoric surrounding the coups, which is often communicated through the media. Sorenson (2008, 185) argues that the use of humor in oppressive situations can have wide-ranging impacts on community perceptions:

> [b]ecause of its irrationality, humour has an ability to affect relationships in surprising and unpredictable ways and undermine traditional sources of power, such as the police and the military, which are firmly based in rationality. Because the serious mode is the common form of interaction and communication, dictators generally expect to be taken seriously. Symbolic actions, including the use of humour, can have a profound influence if they manage to change people's perceptions of a situation.

There were a range of audience responses to the reality depicted within *Takeover, Takecover* (P. Moore 2001, unpubl. data). Some men were so disturbed by the subverted power relations being portrayed that they were unable to watch the play, heckling the performers, and sometimes walking out of performances. In contrast, WAC actor/facilitator **Pita** Raloka remembered one male audience member speaking with him and reflecting on the need for men to share "women's work" (*Talanoa*, P. Raloka and B. Ramode, 25 January 2010, unpubl. data). Although it is clear from this audience member's comment that gendered constructions endure, his comment also reveals a perceptual shift toward a recognition of women's labor in the home as "work," which should be acknowledged. Another WAC actor/facilitator, Litiana Suluka, also remembered male audience members talking

about the need for greater equality in home-based work (*Talanoa*, L. V. Suluka, 16 February 2010, unpubl. data).

Also, women audience members reacted strongly to the play, often laughing and clearly enjoying the reversal of power and gender roles (*Talanoa*, P. Raloka and B. Ramode, 25 January 2010, unpubl. data). Female members of WAC Theatre Unlimited also spoke about how much they had enjoyed taking strong leading roles within this alternative version of reality. In contrast, men within the collective spoke about struggling with feelings of injustice that were generated by playing men in a society where their freedoms of movement and association were extremely curtailed and in which they were bullied by women (Clery 2013).

Conclusion

Performances enable expression, dialogue, and gendered resistance in otherwise restricted conditions for Fiji's women and girls. Fiji is a highly militarized, patriarchal, and gerontocratic nation, and the voices of women and girls are often marginalized or remain unheard. Theater performances and post-performance processes can enable spaces for dialogue between men and women of all ages, thus helping to involve communities in reflective dialogues around gendered and militarized norms.

Takeover, Takecover (P. Moore 2001, unpubl. data) is a bold form of resistance to militarized power, which intends to shock audiences into recognizing the sociocultural norms that have been so widely accepted that they are often rendered almost invisible in contemporary Fiji. Remembering the performance and the impacts of this performance is a way of reflecting upon the diverse ways in which the women's movement and feminist activists in Fiji worked creatively to challenge militarization and violence at the community level in the aftermath of the 2000 coup.

This article has argued that remembering women's acts of resistance, and considering how alternative messages have been enacted creatively in the public sphere is important to remembering Fiji women's activism and peace-building work. Remembering has a further purpose however. Although honoring the work that Fiji women and girls have undertaken, it also integrates the past with the present in a way that builds the work women have undertaken for change into the narrative of possibilities for Fiji. Such work provides examples for current and coming generations, illustrating both that women can effect change and that there are alternative and counter-narratives to militarism.

WAC's theater initiatives emphasize the performative qualities of gender through performance; creating opportunities for communities to reflect

upon themselves, to examine rigid gender constructions, and to consider how these intersect with processes such as militarization. The medium of performance enables audiences to critically reflect on militarized patriarchy as a social construction, highlighting that militarized notions of masculinity are themselves forms of performance. Through acknowledging gender as constructed and performative, creative approaches allow us to glimpse the possibility of a new and alternative script, contributing to the creation of imaginative narratives of becoming.

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NOTES

1. Militarization refers to the processes by which a society organizes itself for military conflict and violence and involves privileging military concerns.

2. Bolatagici (2011, 9) argues that "[h]istorical and contemporary politics of race and representation, when coupled with a war economy that relies on cheap labour, tend to suggest a de-valuing of the lives and deaths of black bodies. This combined with the economic vulnerability of the Pacific region, has led to a contemporary problem in which Fijian bodies have become increasingly commodified."

3. The sulu was introduced to Fiji by Christian missionaries; it has become "synony-mous with the institutions that regulate life in the indigenous community" and a key signifier of indigenous values and identity (George 2008, 177). The sulu features as part of the school uniform for boys. Also, it is a part of police and military uniform, generally worn on more formal occasions. George (2008, 177) notes that "[a]mong the indigenous establishment, the sulu is the formal garment of choice, worn in public by Methodist Church ministers, indigenous parliamentarians, and members of Fiji's Great Council of Chiefs.

4. Teaiwa (2005, 206) highlights the multiple institutions with militarized dimensions that are aimed at recruiting young people in Fiji. This includes the Boy Scouts, high school cadet programs, and a general "parading of regimented bodies at national events" as clearly indicative of "the social value placed on militarized and masculinized discipline in Fiji."

5. Miner (1956) describes defamiliarization as a process of coming to recognise the oddity and particularity of one's own cultural norms and rituals. Through presenting the "strange and exotic" orally obsessed culture of the Nacerima tribe (Nacerima is American spelled backward), Miner uses humor, subversion and parody as a strategy for exposing and challenging ethnocentrism in the discipline of anthropology.

6. Literally meaning teeth (Capell 1991, 5).

7. Militarism is the idea that a formal military force is necessary to defend and promote national interests.

8. One example of this is the way in which Rabuka invoked and extended the bati ideology as a culturally situated reason for overthrowing the labor government in Fiji's 1987 coups. Rabuka asserted that as a military man and member of the bati clan from his province, it was his duty to defend not just his chief but the whole chiefly system (Teiawa 2005, 212).

9. Indian resistances to colonial rule took the form of strikes over working conditions in the cane fields in early 1920. Striking workers were calling for better working conditions, justice, political representation, and equality (Rakuita 2007, 34).

10. *Men, Women and Insanity* (Thomas 1991) was performed at The Playhouse in Suva in 1991 and at the California Lutheran University in 1992. Also, both performances were directed by the playwright, Larry Thomas.

11. Enloe (1990, 45) defines a nation as "a collection of people who have come to believe that they have been shaped by a common past and they are destined to share a common future." Crucially, she argues that such beliefs are "usually nurtured by a common language and a sense of otherness from groups around them. . . .Colonialism is especially fertile ground for nationalist ideas as it gives an otherwise divided people such a potent shared experience of foreign domination."

12. A survey by the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre (FWCC) in 2001 showed that the 2000 coup also had significant economic impacts for Fiji women. Seventy-two percent of women who were in paid employment before the 2000 coup lost their jobs or had their working hours/salaries reduced during this time (FWCC 2001, as cited in UNFPA 2008, 7).

13. Feminism is explicitly concerned with the quality of spaces between people, challenging us to reexamine the values by which human beings live (Bell 2007, 47). Feminism is a contested term. It has been critiqued as Eurocentric by Pacific women who recognized that there is no specific or single perspective on feminism and that feminism is often oversimplified to refer to the idea of women enacting power over men, rather than embracing a concept of gender equality as being liberating for both men and women (De Ishtar 1994, 238).

14. WAC finally closed as an NGO in December 2013 because of ongoing difficulties in obtaining funding for their creative peace-building work.

15. Male actor/facilitators form a core part of WAC's work with communities. They model alternative masculinities and nonviolent methods of conflict resolution, a key part of working with young men, because Fiji remains a gender segregated and patriarchal society (Clery 2013, 222).

16. During my PhD research in 2010–11, WAC travelled to perform to a variety of communities across Viti Levu, Fiji's largest and most populated island. Their performances during this time were primarily to audiences in schools, to students in further

education and vocational colleges, in informal settlement communities, and to inmates in Fiji's prison system.

17. Peni Moore wrote *Takeover, Takeover* in 2001 and the play was performed four times during that year. In 2008, the play was "touched up" and performed at a meeting of the National Council for Building a Better Fiji (NCBBF) (*Talanoa*, P. Moore, 12 January 2010, unpubl. data). Commodore Frank Bainimarama, the current/interim Prime Minister of Fiji, was one of the audience members who watched this performance (*Talanoa*, N. Nabulivou, 23 February 2010, unpubl. data).

18. There were a total of forty-eight school- and community-based performances of *Takeover, Takeover*. Audiences included secondary and vocational schools (where the majority of students are male) across Viti Levu and Vanua Levu, Labasa Prison, Suva Maximum Security Prison, and Korovou Prison. Performances took place at the National Council for Building a Better Fiji (NCBBF) where senior military officers formed a part of the audience, and at Fiji Women's Crisis Centre (FWCC) as part of a regional counselling training programme (N. Nabulivou and P. Moore 2008, 29, unpubl. data).

19. Leckie (2002b, 164) argues that Pacific women's resistance and expressions of agency are often covert and indirect, reflecting the paucity of political and structural space for women's expression. Leckie questions whether such indirect expressions of resistance at the everyday level can affect broader sociopolitical change.

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