SPEAKING REFLECTIONS: *WHAIKOORERO* (SPEECH MAKING) AND *KARANGA* (WELCOMING CRY) IN RECENT THEATRE BY MAAORI WOMEN

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This essay suggests that contemporary Maaori/bicultural theatre is becoming a potent site for the articulation of Maaori women's aspirations and concerns. Drawing on Maaori women's biographical *koorero* from four plays performed between 1986 and 1997, the essay presents a kind of "vocal kaleidoscope." This vocal kaleidoscope reflects the complexities of balancing a contemporary existence with a traditional past. Rena Owen's *Te Awa I Tahuti*, Riwia Brown's *Roimata*, Renee's *Jeannie Once*, and Briar Grace-Smith's *Ngaa Pou Waahine* render audible gender and cultural identity issues pertinent to Maaori women. Pieced together, the reflective voices of these waahine koorero help locate points of symmetry and refraction in Maaori women's experience.

> It is a strange place the one I inhabit. I am that terrible place we have run from and I am this place. I am the town and I am the Mahia. For a long time I was neither one nor the other but now I know I am both. (*Jeannie Once*, Act 2, Scene 6)

Since February 6, 1934, when it was first officially commemorated, New Zealanders across the nation have participated in annual ceremonies recognizing the 1840 signing of the Treaty of Waitangi[1]—a document that lays the foundation for the social, political, and economic relationship between the indigenous Maaori and British Crown in Aotearoa (New Zealand). Annually on February 6, Maaori and Government officials meet to discuss their relationship and remind each other of Treaty obligations.

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Conventionally, the focus of these meetings has been a *poowhiri* (welcoming ritual) held at the Northland home of the signing of the Treaty, *Nga Puhi's* (Northland tribe) Waitangi.

Poowhiri rituals are commonly performed on *marae* (meeting area of a tribal group) and are often used to initiate official *hui* (meetings or gatherings). They form the base of many bicultural events in Aotearoa and more importantly have for centuries been the traditional format for the welcome/greeting between Maaori tribal groups. Unsurprisingly then, a poowhiri forms the crux of the official activities on Waitangi Day.

The poowhiri at Waitangi, in line with traditional practice, runs in accordance with Nga Puhi dictates. Tribal groups in other areas of Aotearoa follow varying protocols depending on their distinct *kaupapa* (philosophy/strategy) and histories. With few tribal exceptions, Maaori women are not permitted to perform the *whaikoorero* (speeches of welcome) that construct the centrepiece of the poowhiri. Maaori *tikanga* (custom) and *kawa* (protocol/ceremony) dictate that the public speaking arena of the *marae paepae* (sacred area in front of the meeting house) is reserved for Maaori *men*, who through title of their gender can use their voices in whaikoorero to represent their people. While delivering whaikoorero, men "expert in the art of oratory" (Barlow 1991:85) simultaneously reflect upon and construct their identities. From the paepae's public platform, male elders recite the *whakapapa* (geneaological line) of the local *iwi* (tribe/people); recall tribal histories; explain the significance of proverbs; and declaim ancient chants, each recitation a vocal chromosome in the geneaological body of Maaori identity. In a majority of iwi throughout the country, Maaori women have developed recognition that whaikoorero is a form of articulation prohibited to them because of their gender. Nga Puhi is not alone in this exclusionist gender practice. On many marae in nineteenth-century Aotearoa and certainly today, Maaori women were not "permitted to occupy a place on the *paepae*, the reason being that [they] may diminish the *mana* (integrity/prestige) and standing of the elders who are expected to protect their families in times of war and peace" (Barlow 85).

Added to the gender controversy associated with poowhiri is the generally contentious nature of recent Waitangi Day commemorations. Frequently at Waitangi, conflict occurs between the Crown's representatives and sectors of the Maaori community. These political tensions receive major media coverage. Consequently, politicians have found that a smooth, convivial meeting with Maaori at Waitangi can raise their political profiles and court Maaori favor. Similarly, Maaori pressure groups realize that Waitangi Day commemorations form a useful site for the public airing and extended circulation of grievances. A *New Zealand Listener* article describes through

the eyes of a Maaori *kuia* (elderly Maaori woman) the shattered progression of events during Aotearoa's 1998 Waitangi Day commemorations:

> The way Kawera Sydia Marsh saw things, it happened like this. She had made the karanga that welcomed Helen Clark onto the marae at Waitangi, where the Labour leader had been invited to speak. Three men spoke in welcome. Then Marsh began to speak again. "E *hine* [woman/lady], I'm the one that paves the way for you." But, as Clark rose to reply, Titewhai Harawira interrupted. Labour MP Tariana Turia heard her say, "You, sit down." Karewa: "Harawira, she stood up out of turn and time. She and her daughter walked halfway down the floor. She said, 'No way am I having a *Pakeha* (white New Zealander) woman to speak before me.'" (Watkins 1998:24)

Tim Watkins rather dramatically describes how the formal rituals of Maaori poowhiri were, in 1998, interrupted and temporarily halted by Titewhai Harawira and members of the activist group Te Kawariki. Harawira's reasons are clear. She wanted to highlight to male elders of Nga Puhi their blatant, hypocritical disregard for Maaori women's voices. By making special allowance for the leader of Aotearoa's Labour Party, Helen Clark, a woman of *Paakehaa* ancestry,[2] to speak from the paepae, the male elders were (according to Harawira), relegating Maaori women to the lowest point on the vocal scale. Harawira's actions[3] called attention to the selective muting of Maaori women's voices and the hypocritical preference for and fostering of the voices of Paakehaa men and women.

In addition to raising awareness about the gender divide inherent in the poowhiri ritual, Harawira's actions cast reflection on contemporary sociopolitical issues. Upon signing the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, Maaori became subjects of the British Empire and were forced to exist under colonial rule and law. A common argument in Maaori feminist circles suggests that since this time, Maaori women have been afforded fewer privileges than their male counterparts have. In other words, the social status commanded by Maaori women in traditional Maaori society—in terms of rights to land ownership, chiefly title and so on—has suffered since the social changes wrought by the signing of the Treaty. It is thus not surprising that, with the rise of Maaori feminism and the increased consciousness of the colonial condition, traditional Maaori practices performed during the process of formal welcome onto marae have been the subject of question and controversy. Feminists, historians, artists, critics, anthropologists, politicians, activists, journalists, and academics have attempted to explain, and to counter, the current gender rigidity that still pertains to these rituals.

Among the myriad forms of artistic expression pursued by Maaori women in an attempt to address this perceived gender imbalance, theatre—especially over the last twenty years in Aotearoa—has gained much prominence. This essay suggests that Maaori women are using contemporary Maaori/bicultural theatre as an alternative site for public, formal performances of whaikoorero and karanga, thereby exploiting theatre's potential to function as a powerful site for the articulation of aspirations and concerns.

In what follows, the crossovers, mirrorings, and blendings of Maaori women's voices, *marae tikanga* and theatre, are observed and analyzed. First, the cultural protocols associated with the gendering of whaikoorero and karanga practices in poowhiri rituals are explored. Following this, some of the implications of these gendered practices on Maaori women's communication and expression are presented. Finally, Maaori feminist work is reflected upon and set alongside a close-analysis of four plays performed between 1986 and 1997. Reflective fragments from Rena Owen's (Ngati Hine) *Te Awa I Tahuti* (1986), Riwia Brown's (Ngati Porou, Te-Whanau-a-Apanui, Nga Puhi, Taranaki) *Roimata* (1988), Renee's (Ngati Kahungungu) *Jeannie Once* (1991), and Briar Grace-Smith's (Nga Puhi, Ngati Wai, Scottish) *Ngaa Pou Waahine* (1997) are laid alongside each other to resemble a vocal kaleidoscope. This piece-by-piece reflection renders audible gender and cultural identity issues pertinent to Maaori women. Fixed together, the reflective voices and associated cultural, social, and political issues help locate points of symmetry and refraction in Maaori women's experience.

The vocal kaleidoscope metaphor serves several purposes. Immediately, the image evokes the refractory relationship between the *vocal*—Maaori oral traditions—and the *kaleidoscopic*—the spectacle of theatrical and ritual performance. Maaori culture is an oral culture, but the translation of Maaori mythology, legend, folklore, whakapapa, whaikoorero, karanga, and *waiata* (song/song poem) for the stage depends upon a vibrant alchemy with the visual/dramaturgical. Framed kaleidoscopically, the voices extracted from the plays suggest a shattering and reordering of discourses that have previously kept Maaori women contained. The symmetrical repatterning of these individual voices into a chorus provides a delicate and carefully structured looking glass through which the articulation of Maaori women's culture and gender identity issues can be closely scrutinized. In its containment of free-floating and loose particles of speech, this kaleidoscopic essay intimates the possibility of recurring, ad infinitum configurations of the voices contained within. The essay presents only one possible arrangement of the reflective voice fragments. As with a kaleidoscope, there is the potential for the voices to be fitted together in any number of alternative patterns or formations. More abstractly the fragments of marae-tikanga encompassed by the visual

kaleidoscope—particularly the practices of whaikooreroo and karanga—work in a hybrid combination rather than as distinct, separate parts of a larger ritual, thus producing new, alternative expressive modes. Finally and perhaps most importantly, the image also encapsulates the possibility of continually changing social patterns and assemblages through the refraction of marae practices, Maaori women's voices, and theatre.

Somewhat restrictively, the vocal fluidity alluded to through the kaleidoscope imagery cannot be applied to the gender roles in the poowhiri ritual. One of the most frequently cited reasons for the continued gender division pertaining to the poowhiri ritual is based on Maaori concepts of *tapu* (sacred/forbidden) and *noa* (free from tapu) and on the perception of Maaori women as *whare tangata* (house of humankind/womb). According to most tribal conceptualizations, the platform from which male elders speak, the paepae, is sacred. Situated to the side of the *marae-atea* (sacred forecourt in front of the meeting house), it represents the realm of Tumatauenga (god of war), and traditionally women, as whare tangata, place themselves and the future of the tribe at risk by speaking in this realm. Rather than speak there, they must wait until they enter the safer realm of Rongo (god of peace). Therefore, speech making in the sacred realm of Tumatauenga has by and large been the provenance of Maaori men. In her MA thesis, Annabel Mikaere (1995) elaborates on Maaori women's role as whare tangata, suggesting that the gender restrictions around whaikoorero were not because women were perceived as less capable or worthy than men but rather:

> It was in recognition of the fact that they were the *whare tangata*, and that by exposing themselves to possible harm on the *marae-aatea*, the future of the *whaanau* (family) and *hapuu* (extended family/sub-tribe) might be endangered. The dread of the *whare ngaro* (empty/lost house/childless) and the belief that it was often the result of *maakutu* (curse/magic) reinforce the suggestion that the crucial factor in the non-participation of women in the *whaikoorero* was the need to protect the *whare tangata.* (67)

Even if it is the case that Maaori women's whare tangata status requires protection and therefore their presence on the paepae puts the iwi at risk, what still remains unclear is the privileging of the male-centered whaikoorero over female forms of articulation such as the welcoming cry, or karanga.

The *kai-karanga* is the female performer of the karanga. Highly spiritual and ritualistic, the karanga forms the initial vocal contact between the *tangata whenua* (local people) and the *manuhiri* (guest/visitor), acting as a vocal pathway connecting these two bodies of people with their respective

ancestors. During formal welcoming procedures the women's voice in the throes of karanga is among the first to be heard. The intonated, lyrical call between female hosts and manuhiri acknowledges the ties linking past, present, and future, it addresses living and dead, in a voiced remembrance of the ancestors who watch over proceedings. Barlow says "women are the well-spring of tears. They bear the burden of sorrow for the pain and suffering experienced in life." He likens the women's karanga to "the cry of a woman when she gives birth to her child" (39). Often described as mournful and haunting, the karanga functions in gendered terms as the feminine moment in the poowhiri ritual. Women are responsible for demonstrating and reflecting the "pain and suffering," the emotional and spiritual burdens of their iwi.

It is crucial to realize that along with the whaikoorero, karanga can also play important roles in the shape and structure of poowhiri proceedings. Maaori feminist Ngahuia Te Awekotuku (1991) reflects on the power inherent in the female call or karanga and in so doing reinscribes karanga with oratorical and performative significance. She describes the role of the kai-karanga as "the chanter, the mourner, the composer; the female voice which lifts the tone, and sharply defines the intention of a gathering, the focus of a ritual" (107). Karanga, waiata, physical gestures, and silence are also often employed by Maaori women to counter the centrist power of whaikoorero.

Mikaere argues that, while in precontact Aotearoa Maaori society maintained greater balance between genders (where for example, the karanga in its complementary role with the whaikoorero helped maintain the gender balance implicit in everyday Maaori life), present day Aotearoa resembles a heavily skewed set of scales. Commentators argue variously that with the introduction of patriarchal, Judeo-Christian ideologies, the mana of *waahine* (females/women) Maaori was diminished and consequently the karanga devalued. A powerful and important form of expression open only to Maaori women, the karanga was superceded by a contemporary focus on male whaikoorero.

Because the value placed on female vocal practices is reduced, dialogue around restoring power to women's voices and extending women's articulation in marae proceedings often becomes a discussion of the restrictions and limitations faced by women in relation to whaikoorero. This unbalanced focus has been so pronounced that those in favor of making Maaori women's voices more audible in marae proceedings have only recently shifted their debates from the preeminent place of the whaikoorero to detailed examinations of alternative vocal and nonvocal options available to Maaori women. Personal, autobiographical anecdotes about women's alternative expression on marae are now receiving attention, and are being recorded in research papers and theses where they are received by a wider audience.

Over the last fifty years in Aotearoa, with a rising social consciousness, the blossoming of *mana waahine Maaori* (Maaori feminism),[4] and the achievement of a more equal footing between the genders, and due to the diminishing numbers of competent Maaori male orators, space has been created for waahine Maaori to question the dominant role *tane* (males/men) have gained as spokespeople for the Maaori community. Mikaere quotes Kathie Irwin (1992:17), who notes the hypocrisy in the rigid interpretation of the male's place in whaikoorero:

> the changes continuously being made to *marae* show Maaori women…that our culture can and is being changed daily, and that many of these changes accommodate the needs of men[5] and the links that they have with each other across cultural boundaries. The role and status of women remains petrified, like a slab of rock, unchanging, immobile, inflexible, whilst everything around us in our culture is rapidly changing.

Although once the formal welcome is over, men and women receive equal speaking time in the safety of the *wharenui* (central meeting house), the tendency for the poowhiri ritual to become a symbol of the whole of Maaori culture creates outsider perceptions of gender imbalance. This tendency to view poowhiri as a metonym for Maaori culture has forced a dangerous slippage of the gender patterns played out in *marae kawa* into everyday Maaori life. Mikaere says

> Maaori women's inability to employ a particular form of speech, the *whaikoorero*, during one particular part of the *marae* ritual is broadened into an almost blanket silencing of Maaori women. (153)

In the early 1980s, several Maaori theatre practitioners exploited the implicit understanding that the marae and its associated rituals were interpreted as symbolic representations for the whole of Maaori culture. They launched attempts to recapture the physical and spiritual essence of the marae inside traditional, Western theatre venues.[6] This type of theatre was given the label marae theatre. Audiences and performers were expected to participate in selected parts of marae kawa. The shrill cry of the karanga would accompany audiences as they entered the theatre space. Often, waiata would be sung. Significantly, in being adapted for a theatrical context, the process was often abbreviated so that a performance of the play occurred where once the whaikoorero would have begun. After removing their shoes,

the audience would take their places in a renovated theatre space, which was usually made more intimate by placing the seating in a circular fashion. In this way the traditional forum for Maaori performance—the marae atea and paepae—were transplanted to a new space in which rules from both venues worked in tandem. Marae theatre ushered in a relocation and reconsideration of traditional marae kawa. Oftentimes the strict gender divisions usually practiced in relation to marae kawa and poowhiri protocol had the potential to be subverted. By creating a halfway zone between the theatre of the marae and the theatre of theatre, Maaori women playwrights, directors, actors, and characters are able to communicate using hybrid forms of whaikoorero and karanga. They exercise their voices in a blending of the two most dominant forms of public performance during poowhiri, thereby reformulating them into a discourse that is powerful for Maaori women.

Three of the four plays that provide the impetus for this paper are descendants of this marae tradition. Although only one play, *Nga Pou Waahine*, considers a reconstitution of the paepae and wharenui in the theatre space, each of the plays carries significant remnants of the marae into the performance. Written and performed in the 1980s and 1990s, the plays have their base in Maaori theatrical aesthetics and practices of that time. Rena Owen's *Te Awa I Tahuti*, Riwia Brown's *Roimata*, and Briar Grace-Smith's *Ngaa Pou Waahine* follow on from the playwrights' involvement with Maaori theatre practitioners interested in marae-style theatre. Through a similar network of acquaintances, both Brown and Grace-Smith have been influenced by the blend of Western theatrical tradition and marae kawa.[7] Owen has worked as an actor alongside Brown and her brothers; her work draws on legend, waiata, and *haka* (fierce rhythmical dance). Renee's play on the other hand is written in a conventional, social-realist mold, and is more directly feminist in its leanings, incorporating moments from Aotearoa's social history. Her plays highlight the personal, domestic lives of women during different periods of Aotearoa's history.[8]

Propelling the narrative of *Te Awa I Tahuti*, *Roimata*, *Jeannie Once*, and *Ngaa Pou Waahine* are the voices of Maaori women. In a kaleidoscopic patterning and borrowing from the traditional oratorical skills of the whaikoorero and the pain and suffering reflected in karanga, dialogic reflections in the plays are re-visioned and revoiced.

In *Te Awa I Tahuti* a Maaori woman prison inmate, Toni, receives counseling from a Paakehaa, Mrs. Bottomley: she reveals a past torn apart by an abusive father and the suicide of her older brother, Frankie. Toni uses *koorero*, karanga, waiata, and haka to prepare herself for her imminent release. The play ends with Toni telling Mrs. Bottomley of a dream about her recuperation, and the restoration of her mana waahine Maaori.

Unlike Toni in *Te Awa I Tahuti*, the eponymous heroine in *Roimata* has lived most of her life in her East Coast home. The play follows the relationship between Roimata, the country bumpkin, and her half-sister Girlie, the townie. Roimata's relationship with two Maaori men—Eddy, a gang member, and Kevin, a Salvation Army Cadet—serve the playwright's exploration of cultural identity and gender.

In a feminist rewriting of Aotearoa's pioneer history, Renee's work *Jeannie Once* recasts the commonly accepted histories accompanying settlement. It examines the universal reassignment of gender roles wrought by the new demands of settler society and tangentially the social relationships developing in Aotearoa between an immigrant people and their indigenous counterparts. As it comments on the enforcement of nineteenth-century Judeo-Christian practices, it portrays the results of social restrictions upon newly immigrated colonials and indigenous women of the time. Martha's story is developed in one of the play's subplots, its narrative placement underlining the marginal existence of Maaori women in nineteenth-century Aotearoa. In her bid to surmount the impact of imperialism in early colonial Aotearoa, Martha's voice becomes a foreboding precursor of the enigmas of cultural identity expressed in the other three plays.

Grace-Smith's *Ngaa Pou Waahine* uses a series of monologues delivered by six different characters to tell the story of two waahine separated by time. Waiora is a woman of myth and legend, an exponent of the Moa People and a strong role model for her descendent, Kura. Kura lives in an urban, 1990s Aotearoa. As she struggles to remember her past and parentage, she uses the voice of a newer urban generation, a generation of *tamaiti whangai* (adopted child) attempting to re-establish whakapapa and genealogical connections in an increasingly forward-looking world. In narrative form and design, *Ngaa Pou Waahine* is the most stylized of the four plays.

In all the plays the characters explore, in various vocal, physical, spiritual, and emotional ways, their social, political, and cultural positions in Aotearoa society. Upon resituating themselves in the public arena of the theatre, the playwrights, actors, and characters use koorero to inform the audience of women's presence, and the relevance and insistence of their issues.

Martha's Cave

In *Jeannie Once* (1991), Renee tries to map out how the privileging of male-centered koorero impacts on the Maaori servant girl Martha. As Martha takes cover in a seashore cave she attempts to reconcile the divergent geographies that map her compound identity. She acknowledges she is a sort of hybrid,

an intersection between the "terrible" town and her ancestral/Maaori home, the "Mahia," a melding of a place she fears and a place she believes she will grow to love. Her reflective speech reveals a threshold existence precariously balanced on the sharply mirrored edge of in-betweenness.

Along with Martha are two Paakehaa companions, Jeannie Brannigan and Alec McPherson, who have become willing accomplices in Martha's escape from her puritanical guardian, Reverend Charles. Jeannie and Alec become an audience for Martha's koorero (speak/talk/quotation/narrative) about her identity: through their presence Martha's erstwhile private, internal contemplation, her autobiographical koorero, transforms into an outward expression, a self-representational performance or proclamation. Theatrical allusions are fitting here. Through this scene, Renee sets up a tidy analogy between Martha's cave and the inherent freedoms and functions of theatre space. Martha, albeit briefly, takes center-stage for a small audience of two. While her autobiographical koorero is not immediately a public utterance, it is the implications of her speech and the intent behind it that will eventually receive public attention. The cave's transitional location provides a safe forum for Martha to articulate her thoughts—just as marae theatre in its flexible, assemblage form allows Maaori women to speak and thereby break from rigid interpretations of traditional practices. Martha's declarations are communicated to Jeannie and Alec—Paakehaa/non-Maaori—who in the theatre analogy are proxies for the audience. Because of their location in the cave and their willingness to attend to Martha's speech, Jeannie and Alec are recipients of previously withheld insights. The shared experience of Jeannie, Alec, and Martha (or read in keeping with the theatre analogy, the audience and the spectacle) reshapes understandings about Maaori/Paakehaa relationships and Maaori cultural identity. Listening to Martha's speech, and placing themselves in Jeannie's and Alec's position, the audience is keyed into issues of hybridity, alienation, and dislocation that constitute Martha's identity. Upon leaving the safety of the cave, Jeannie and Alec (the audience) can reflect upon Martha's articulations and share them more publicly with others.

Martha's koorero from the cave usefully illustrates the way privileged, liminal, unbound spaces and the promise of the public reception of ideas combine to produce an effective oratorical medium for the articulation of Maaori women's voices. In Aotearoa, especially since 1980, the apparently limitless representational promise of drama and the theatre space have been used by Maaori women playwrights to counter the gender and cultural restrictions commonly presented to them by patri-centered Paakehaa and Maaori worlds. The theatre has become a platform from which Maaori

women—be they playwrights, actors, or characters—can use their own forms of whaikoorero to articulate their ancestral connections, their sense of belonging to both Maaori and Paakehaa cultures, their specific, personal experiences and the allegiances these foster between Maaori women. Through the permissible promise of theatre, Maaori women playwrights and performers employ multifarious expressions in the process of recasting and replacing the gender rigidity that has become a contentious and dangerously resounding echo of the poowhiri process.

Martha's choice of the cave as a refuge, and also as a safe place for public proclamation, is both physically and psychologically appropriate. The cave, like Martha, rests in "a strange place." It is on the threshold between the outskirts of the town and the edges of the beach, providing a natural platform for the contemplation and articulation of her existential quandaries. As a location on the threshold, the cave becomes a potent site, a "space of one's own" to house Martha's oration. From the cave's liminal space, Martha is at her most vocal and most revealing. Within the shelter it affords, she is free from the cultural and gender restrictions associated with her Dunedin birthplace and her marae destination. Because it rests on the intersection between Martha's two worlds it becomes a boundary-less site. Its liminal geographic location makes the cave a veritable womb of potentialities, a site within which the birthing, growth, and expression of her newly developing identity can be safely and confidently explored. In Martha's case, the cave's "nowhereness" is the perfect place in which to practice her own form of whaikoorero—a blend of the pain and suffering expressed in karanga and the identity-strengthening content of formal Maaori oration. From a place where she is free from societal restrictions, she can more powerfully inform the members of that society about her psychological and physical plight.

As already intimated, theatre—and more specifically marae theatre—contains the transformational qualities so valued in Martha's cave. In theatre contexts, Maaori women's voices are buttressed by the representational liminality or in-betweeness proffered. The following "spoken reflections" from the four aforementioned plays conform to the idea that theatre provides a space where conventional, traditional gender performances can be reformulated and reframed. When arranged thematically and placed side by side, significant fragments from Owen's, Brown's, Renee's, and Grace-Smith's plays demonstrate how theatre—dramaturgically and thematically—fosters the development of strident women's voices that undercut and question patriarchal, imperial, marginalizing discourses. The "spoken reflections" demonstrate how characters can employ multiple expressive modes such as whaikoorero, karanga, and waiata to negotiate their understandings about

identity and belonging. Marae theatre and its descendents, including the four plays analyzed below, complicate traditional, marae gender patterns by erecting a threshold where mores, rules, and kawa can be appropriated, disregarded, subverted, and importantly opened up for critical inquiry.

Mothers and Fathers

Kei hea te maatua?: *Where are the parents?*

Traditional Maaori society sustained families in which *tamariki* (children) would consider their grandparents, aunts, and uncles to be the equivalent of parents. Tamariki brought up by their grandparents were known as *whangai* and more often than not were seen as privileged.

Post-1840 Aotearoa saw the steady encroachment of colonial laws and policies upon traditional Maaori practices such as whangai adoption. Increased urban dwellings and strict enforcement of state adoption regulations normalized the concept of the nuclear family to the detriment of traditional Maaori *whanau* structures. The negative results of such blanket practices are evidenced in the plays' whangai figures—Roimata from *Roimata*, Martha from *Jeannie Once*, and Kura from *Ngaa Pou Waahine*. Their explicit confusion over, and debilitating desire to locate, birth parents signals a sad deconstruction of traditional Maaori concepts of *whanaungatanga* (relationship/kinship), through a cultural normalizing of Paakehaa family structures. Paradoxically, the characters tend not to embrace whangai status but rather see the discovery of birth parents as an answer to the location of self and more largely, the solution to confused connections with Maaori culture.

In addition, whangai experience complications because of Paakehaa/Maaori relationships. Roimata, Toni, Martha, and Kura (who has surrogate parents in her Aunt Lizzie, who is Maaori, and Uncle Walt, who is Paakehaa) deal with the difficulties of bicultural relationships. In their kooreroo they express a cultural confusion that obliges them to question their belonging. The playwrights' concerns to lead their characters to their *turangawaewae* (home/standing place) and an acceptance of self as Maaori, albeit in a Paakehaa-dominated world, speak for many Maaori women in contemporary society who are dealing with fluctuating identifications.

Separated from her parents at a young age, Roimata is raised by her grandparents. Although she loves life with her Nan she also spends desperate moments with her inquiring about the secrets of her father's past, hoping that her own will be revealed. In Scene One, Roimata quizzes her grandmother about her parents' relationship and about how she fits in:

ROIMATA is…interested in pursuing this conversation about her father.

Nan: They were different, he was a Paakehaa.
Roimata: Because he was a Paakehaa?

Pause. NAN senses her interest, tries to make light of it.

Nan: No. He wasn't Maaori. He couldn't live here. He took her to the city. You know what I think about the city.
Roimata: What about Dad?
Nan: No mountains, no rivers, no trees.
Roimata: Nan, what about my father?
Nan: No God.
Roimata: Nan.
Nan: They went to the city and got married.
Roimata: Then what?
Nan: Then you. I went to get you to bring you home. Your mother, she argued but she wasn't very well. The city is no place for a child or anyone.
Roimata: When did she come home?…
Nan: Your mother, she came home to die.
Roimata: What about my father? (167–168)

Roimata's half-sister Girlie has been brought up by her birth mother but knows that she and Roimata share the same father. However, as an only child in a single-parent family she is acutely aware of the stigma attached to her birth. In Scene Two, Girlie reveals her disdain and unhappiness at the lack of a true father figure:

> They had me before dad married Roimata's mother. So I'm his bastard. Not as big a one as that father of mine. When he died, he explained it all in his will. My mum knew all about it, but she didn't say anything. When she did talk, she said Roimata's mother was a sick woman and it would only be time before dad [*sic*] would come back. (170)

Although in *Te Awa I Tahuti* Toni's formative years were spent in a village atmosphere with her whanau and members of her hapuu ever present, tensions exist in her relationship with her Maaori father. Toni's description of her father is nostalgic and proud:

> Beautiful. Proud Maaori. He's a big man. Everyone knew J. K. Spoke at all the social functions. He was a Maaori Elvis Presley in his day. (151)

Sadly, these romantic constructs are shattered by her later revelation that she is "scared of him" and that he said she'd "never get anywhere" (154).

Jeannie Once's Martha, like Roimata, must cope without birth parents. With her father a Paakehaa whaler and her Maaori mother buried, she is left in the care of a Paakehaa couple, Mrs. Charles and her husband the Reverend. Prominent in Martha's mind is the lack of any real whanau:

> My mother died and my father told Mrs. Charles a whaling ship was no place for a child. I don't know what happened to him. I only know that Mrs. Charles said my mother was from the Mahia. (30)

Finally, in *Ngaa Pou Waahine* Kura experiences the pain of separation from her birth mother and the difficulty of surviving in a household where parental love is at a minimum. Although in Scene Two Kura's Uncle Walt expresses his great love for her, she believes that not knowing her birth parents means that something is missing. Speaking of her Aunt Lizzie and Uncle Walt she says:

> I see them now as complete strangers, the same way you see someone you pass on the street, or waiting for the train….I need to know about my mother, about my home. I need to know. (20)

Along with her own experience, Kura's words reflect the combined parental longings in Girlie's, Toni's, and Martha's lives. Kura's emotionally succinct expression reveals the cursory and transitory connection she has with her adoptive parents. Added to her perceived expulsion from her whanau is her desperate demand to learn about her mother and her home. Her koorero is an obvious indicator of the confused genealogical terrain she currently inhabits. Her experience as a tamaiti whangai and Girlie's, Toni's, and Martha's experiences of violent or absent parents leaves these waahine with troubled notions of belonging and whakapapa.

Home and Away

Locating the papakainga *(original home)*

In Owen's, Brown's, Renee's, and Grace-Smith's plays, relationships to and distances from the papakainga provide an accurate measure of the distances

that must be bridged before characters feel assured about vocalizing their identities. In an authorial strategy that locates Girlie, Toni, Martha, Kura, and Lizzie (respectively) in dramatic, physical and psychological territories ripe for exploring gender and cultural identity, the characters develop and learn from the geographic dis/location, transition, and migration they experience. Spiritually and physically separated from their papakainga and their understandings of originary identities, the waahine, through geographical and critical distance, are given permission to koorero themselves into their own understandings of where they belong. Through their koorero they fashion audible calls that facilitate a psychological and physical relocation of their cultural identities. The binding powers of karanga become evident as, through expressions of grief, suffering, and healing the women unite the dichotomous worlds they inhabit.

During her rehabilitation Toni admits that since she left at the age of eighteen she has not returned home:

> Left my village when I was eighteen. I lived in the city for four years. Auckland. I arrived in London beginning of 1980. I ain't seen the sun for five years. (137–138)

As she reveals more about herself through autobiographical koorero, her descriptions of an idyllic Northland childhood reveal that her understanding of Maaori identity is umbilically connected to ideas of home:

> Every weekend we used to go to the beach—the whole tribe. Nine kids in my family. Five boys, four girls, all a year apart…Beautiful beaches—clear blue sky…
> …
> Bottomley: Sounds idyllic. [slight pause] Was it always like that? [pause] Nine children. That's a big family.
> Toni: Maoris—that's how our culture survives. Catholics as well.
> Bottomley: Things must have been difficult with so many of you?
> Toni: We had each other. Ngapuhi, that's my tribe. The winterless north. We lived on the land and seas. They don't care about what I've done. Just want me to go home. They still love me. (137–138)

Roimata leaves her East Coast home and ventures to Wellington, a place her Nan despises. In Wellington Roimata attempts to piece together the remnants of her identity by accessing memories of her father through her half-sister Girlie. Roimata permanently carries her papakainga with her as she adjusts to city life. Synonymous with traditional papakainga values,

Roimata is a mother, caregiver, and cultural storehouse, presented as a twentysomething kuia. Conversely, Girlie, who has lived her life distanced from any notion of papakainga, only learns of the rural home through Roimata's stories. Girlie's meeting and subsequent koorero with Roimata, and the pain and personal experience they share become a catalyst for Girlie's reassessment of her staunch urban identity:

> Roimata: She gave me a good home.
> Girlie: The one that dad left you? What's it like?
> Roimata: It's not flash, but it's home. You should come and see it sometime.
> Girlie: Maybe I should come and suss it out. (172–173)

> Roimata: When I read your letter to nan she said you should come back home.
> Girlie: Did she?
> Roimata: Yes, she did.
> Girlie: She was a wise old lady. She brought you up okay.
> Roimata: Why don't you? You said you wanted to. Just for a look?
> Girlie: Maybe I should. There's nothing keeping me here. (217)

Martha superimposes her experiences at her papakainga, the Mahia, on her assumptions about her mother's people. As with Toni in *Te Awa I Tahuti*, a synchronicity exists in Martha's psyche between ideas about the land and the people who inhabit it. Her feelings about belonging and origins are formulated around this blend. As she speaks, she talks herself closer to the Mahia and closer to her mother's people. For Martha, this simple articulation gives voice to the space between what she sees as a restrictive, marginalizing Paakehaa existence and a spiritually and culturally accepting Maaori one:

> I felt as if the land and the sea had been waiting for me. It was the strangest feeling. Everything, the white sand where the shellfish bury themselves, the rocks, the little pools, all seemed so familiar. *She stops, brings herself back to the present.* (30)

She "want[s] to go back to the Mahia. To [her] mother's people" (40).

Lizzie has spent a large part of her adult life attempting to divorce herself from her papakainga. Her self-imposed distancing and ambivalence towards the sterility, dryness, and uncompromising nature of home stem from a rejection of her Maaori identity. The dominant discourses of Christianity and consumer capitalism have bred self-loathing in Lizzie. She views home and any associations with it negatively.

> I'll never go back home. WETAS. All I can see are the wetas. The ground's like hard clay and full of cracks…It's backward there and so are the people. If I stayed I'd have turned out the same. (14–15)

In her first speech in *Nga Pou Waahine*, Kura locates herself in a void-like hallway, lacking in any originary anchor points or stable identificatory signs. Although she desires to return to her original home in the hope of rediscovering the essence of who she is, her koorero suggests that goal is drastically remote:

> I have this dream. I'm only little and I'm in a hallway that never ends. Questions. I have so many questions. But how long do I have to wait for the answers? (20)

A common theme traced in the plays then is the tension between a traditional rural existence, where whanau ties and community are strong, and what is represented as an alienating urban existence. In all cases the papakainga becomes an icon for a lost, distant or yet-to-be-discovered sense of self. However, it is too simplistic to suggest that for all these women the rural home provides an idyllic retreat. The plays address the difficulty Maaori women experience in attempting to navigate the terrain between the romantic ideal offered by "home," the often-restrictive, oppressive, negative physical and psychological boundaries home erects and the difficult, alienating effects of city life. Once they leave the papakainga, the women achieve a critical distance. They inhabit a zone in between their rural and urban identities. It is only in this space that they can begin to koorero about how they fit in. The urban spaces foster the discovery of a separate, individual voice (the voice of the "I"), and the papakainga represents the space for the voice of the "we." Upon returning to the papakainga, the waahine are more prepared vocally to deal with the restrictions and boundaries that may exist. Their newly developed voices contribute to renegotiations of the gender and cultural vocal relationships practiced at home.

The representational layers of theatre, the fact that the shadowy embodiments and real-life concerns of female actors and playwrights lie just beneath the characters' on-stage presence, mean that the plays' representative canvas extends beyond the obvious level of character. Heard as a joint chorus, these public orations concerning a paradoxical love for and ambivalence towards the rural papakainga encourage a wider reassessment of social assumptions regarding Maaori identity. Read together as a series of diverse attempts to navigate the terrain between the rural and urban, old and new identities, the voices expose a complex division and encourage a renegotiation or reconsideration.

Colonialism and Mana Waahine Maaori

I taenga mai o te Paakehaa: *The arrival of the Paakehaa*

Although the plays, excepting Renee's, are set in the 1980s and 1990s, the characters' social conditions reflect the state of affairs faced by Maaori women in the 1970s world Te Awekotuku describes:

> Maori woman in New Zealand society…suffers a multiple dilemma…being female is enough…usually she is working class. She forms the major part of an unskilled and underpaid factory labour force; she must meet daily the economic demands of raising a larger than average family, and supplementing her husband's comparatively low income…setting up a house in a new housing development, and coping with the pressures of being away from the whanau. (46)

Te Awekotuku describes a skeletal, sinewy existence. For the most part, the plays depict a contemporary society extant atop crumbling social foundations. A great deal of pain articulated in the plays stems from negative domestic experiences. As they embody these women's experiences, the actors vocalize (in karanga fashion) the effects of colonial values, ideologies, and practices upon their domestic and family lives.

The whanau relationships represented in the plays detail the dysfunctional, isolating, economically and socially stressful lives of urbanized Maaori women. The plays expose and reflect upon the demanding position Maaori women face within family structures. Mixed parentage, confused notions of what constitutes whanau, the dismantling of traditional *hapu* and iwi structures are obvious concerns voiced in the waahine's koorero. Significantly, all the plays transfer their koorero from the restrictive, private, closed-door, domestic domain, into a public space. As they karanga, the waahine enact a plea for reassessment of their own conditions and those of Maaori as a whole.

In all four plays, along with recognition of mana waahine, are examples of an extreme power imbalance between men and women. Sociological flukes and ideological value systems mean that identifying as Maaori and woman ensures a marginalized, relatively powerless social status. In the stories of Roimata, Toni, and Martha, men are responsible for psychological and physical abuse. The plays pose questions about the gendered distribution of power. By communicating their stories in the social realist mode, using contemporary situations, the plays enact and the characters embody a critical

space. They become the site of revision and question, allowing for analysis of daily domestic situations and gender relationships.

Te Awa I Tahuti reflects an ironic state of affairs highlighting a modern-day shift in gender dynamics. As mentioned earlier the whare tangata status of Maaori women prevented them from performing whaikoorero in marae situations. However, this gender-determined denial was considered a form of protection (waahine were to be protected from the potential danger associated with speech making in the realm of Tumatauenga). Although by shifting outside of these strict Maaori structures Toni has successfully developed a voice, her position is precarious. Too often, her newly found vocal power must be employed in expressions of the consequences of lack of protection and lack of tane Maaori respect for the mana of waahine Maaori:

> By the time I was five I had pulled all my hair out—I could never do anything right. So unpredictable…Never knew where you stood…I was such a hysterical child…I wasn't sure how to be. Felt like I was in the way. Like I should be sorry for being born…Everything's wrong with me, it's my fault. I wanted to be close to him, yet I was so scared of him - …I couldn't figure out what was right, wrong, good or bad…Ah. He said I would never get anywhere. I guess he was right. (154)

Both Eddy, a gang member, and Kevin, a Salvation Army recruit, live by codes that demonstrate institutionalized forms of cultural belonging. Brown has located Roimata outside the trappings of institutional codification so that she is in a position to remind Eddy of the damage his mindset causes. Roimata negates his judgmental assumptions by reminding him of her ancestral connections and whakapapa. Eddy's ability to reason calmly with Roimata is limited; instead he is reduced to making physical threats in an attempt to silence her. Roimata's vocalization of her sensitivity, spirituality and cultural knowledge produces a powerful barrier against Eddy's threats of physical violence.

> Eddy: I'm not afraid of anything. Not like that Pakeha in brown skin.
> Roimata: What's that supposed to mean? At least he turns his dreams into reality. I've grown up with our people and most of them are hard-working, good family people. They would identify more with Kevin than you.
> Eddy: You don't know what you're talking about. You better go before I do something I regret. (208)

In her life with Reverend Charles, Martha is located at the lowest point of a social hierarchy that privileges white men and seriously undermines the position of women and Maaori. In the Reverend's eyes, Martha's inferior social position stems from her gender and is inseparable from the inferiority connected with her race. The Reverend's treatment of Martha as nothing more than a servant and his daily attempts to convert her to Christianity undercut the foundations of her identity, exacerbating her already troubled self-image. After she is wrongly accused of burning Reverend Charles' bible, Martha flees from the home to find support from women she has only just met. Importantly, while highlighting Martha's conflicted existence, Renee also places in her dramatic shadow, Mrs. Wishart, a Paakehaa woman suffering from male domination.

> Martha: The Reverend mustn't find me!
> …
> Martha: He has accused me of burning his Bible! He says I will be locked up because I burned it! He says only mad people burn that book!
> Jeannie: My God Martha, you didn't.
> Martha: I did not! But Mrs. Wishart just stood there and said nothing!
> Jeannie: Hush Martha, hush.
> Martha: Large, small, pain is all. That is my world. (40)

By replacing the language, by reformulating originary myths and legends and by denying waahine any redress for the misappropriation of land, colonial practices contribute to the desecration of mana waahine Maaori. The plays combat colonialism's continued effects through invocations of female whakapapa. Rather than making formal, highly embellished orations about their female lineage, the waahine in the plays recite parts of their whakapapa using everyday language. Understandings about mana waahine are joined with daily experiences enabling the women to illustrate knowledge of an illustrious line of female *tupuna* (ancestors). The plays also reflect the broader social responsibility women must assume to ensure the survival and continuation of the whanau, and by extension, Maaori cultural practices, tikanga, kawa, and values. Toni, Roimata, and Miro express in varying degrees their roles as cultural *kaitiaki* (guardians) and their umbilical connection to their female tupuna.

Toni takes it upon herself to provide some cultural education for Mrs. Bottomley, asserting; "I'm a Maaori. I have mana—pride. Spent most of my

life understanding your culture. About bloody time you understood mine" (134). She also recalls the strength of her Paakehaa mother, who despite a violent husband raised her children as best she could:

> Thinking about my Mum…Always there. I used to feel sorry for her. Never talked a lot…She worked morning till night. At the end of the day, we'd rub her head, brush her hair, rub her feet. She loved it, until Dad came home. I'm never gonna have a life like my Mum's. (151)

In addition, Toni remembers her grandmother's home and the feelings of safety she experienced with her:

> My grandmother spoke very little English. Hard like the ground. She knew the land like the back of her hand. (149)

While learning about each other, Girlie and Roimata also learn about their Nan. Again, the safety and security of home are made synonymous with the strength and mana of a female descendant:

> Girlie: Dad? He talked about you all the time to my mum. Used to really piss her off.
> Roimata: He never tried to see me.
> Girlie: He probably did, but that Nan of yours wouldn't let him, I bet. Look at that letter I wrote, she held on to that for a couple of years at least.
> Roimata: She would have done what she thought best. She gave me a good home.

Meanwhile, Kura slowly unravels Miro's stories: these help her ascertain a sense of self and also key her into the whakapapa that has for years been kept from her. Kura's female ancestor Waiora becomes a central figure in Kura's understanding of her strong Maaori lineage:

> Miro: Aae, too aataahua hoki, just like your tupuna, Waiora. She was magic, Kura. She had a mane of red hair that danced around her waist and she had fairy's eyes. She lived in a time when the Moa People walked this land. They were a tall and proud people, an iwi full of kings and queens…Ko te wairua o te moa too raatou kaitiaki, and they had nothing but respect for those great birds…Waiora… grew to become a clever girl who loved to play tricks and dance.

> But her greatest gift was foresight…And when their enemies would attack, Waiora kept the Moa People safe. (25–26)
> …
> That is you, Te Atakura. One day you'll understand. (38)

Kooreroo and Karanga

Kia waiata ahau i tooku waiata: *Singing my own song*

At least ten years separate *Te Awa I Tahuti* and *Ngaa Pou Waahine*, but these two plays both tap in similar ways a unique, powerful mode of storytelling and articulation that remains distinct to Maaori culture and that is predominantly a female practice. I have mentioned the female prerogative to draw on silence, waiata or physical display as alternative modes of expression. Hiwi and Pat Tauroa in *Te Marae: A Guide to Customs and Protocol* (1986) note that in order to shape the passage of the poowhiri, Maaori women may in extreme circumstances interrupt a man in whaikoorero by initiating a waiata to cut short his oration. Waiata have a notable historic prominence for Maaori women's expression. In the past and now reverberating through popular forms is the practice of transforming topical issues into waiata as expressions of protest, agreement, and so on.[9]

In *Te Awa I Tahuti* and *Nga Pou Waahine* waiata embellish and underline the narrative themes. The essential importance of the waiata in these plays is that they are delivered in Maaori. The logistics of performing in *te reo Maaori* (Maaori language) and the contentiousness surrounding the gender restrictions on whaikoorero are partially addressed when waiata are used to articulate opinion and emotion. Additionally, through their lyrical and musical content, waiata successfully perform the pain and suffering, the cyclical emotion tied to birth and death, otherwise expressed through karanga. In effect, waiata become the voice of the threshold, helping playwright, actor, and character alike to use an indigenous voice for the articulation of multiple emotions and positions.

Toni breaks into waiata at several times in *Te Awa I Tahuti*, each waiata moving her closer to a reconciliation of the isolation she has experienced since leaving her village, and the togetherness she knew as a child in her Northland home. Waiata are psychological restoratives: they voice what is presented as an unspeakable divide and carry her back home while allowing her to dwell elsewhere.

In *Ngaa Pou Waahine*, Kura's ancestress Waiora sings an opening lament welcoming the audience to a space, which might be seen as resembling a skeletal wharenui and paepae. Throughout the play songs emphasize

and reintegrate the profound importance of a female lineage, as well as the threads of strength, mana, and dignity retained in the waahine genealogical line. Two waiata, one sung by Waiora and the other by Kura's birth mother Miro, karanga to the ancestors, address the iwi and enhance the restitutive motifs running through the play. For example, Miro sings

Auee taku whero/Alas my dear one
Ka huri taku mata ki aku tuupuna/I turn to face my ancestors
E okioki mai ana/in the final resting place
Maaku rawa koe e tuku/It will be me that will send you
Kia tapu ai i raro ngaa tohunga o Ngaati Kookoowai
/To learn among the knowledgeable ones
E noho taha i too puna wai/To grow beside the spring
Te awe o Te Waiora/the origin of Te Waiora
E tohu nei e ngaa tae/that indicates the colours
Kei runga i te ao/upon the earth
Ara ake ana Te Atakura/Rise Te Atakura
Mai te puna ao roa/from the very depths
Ki te ao maarama/into the world of light.

Importantly, waiata in both plays are being used to prompt the audience. Punctuating the play, the waiata shift the language and register from a colloquial, fundamentally English discourse to one that is deeply historical, cultural, and spiritually rich. Barlow details the centrality of waiata in Maaori thought and learning:

> Waiata was one of the principle methods of teaching and learning in the *kura waananga* or school of sacred knowledge. It ranked along with genealogy and incantations as a principal means of disseminating prized knowledge. (151)

Because women sing waiata to the audience and simultaneously give themselves voice in the worlds of the plays, they directly reclaim the genealogical and educational functions of whaikoorero. In addition, the pain and sorrow reverberating through the high-pitched call of the karanga is seamlessly reflected in the often mournful music at the root of these songs. Although many of the waiata are especially composed for the plays, they reflect and extend a Maaori tradition steeped in cultural history. They are audible signs that carry tribal, mythological detail while encapsulating and performing some of the functions of karanga and whaikoorero. Ultimately, they communicate with the audience in ways that transport them beyond simple dialogue.

Koorero mai!

Speak!

Spread over a period of eleven years and performed at different theatres in Aotearoa, Toni's, Roimata's and Girlie's, Martha's, and Kura's koorero, karanga, and waiata have only ever been heard as solo performances, never as a chorus. The vocal kaleidoscope presented in this paper re-presents their voices as a fragmented chorus, in the hope that the joint aspirations and concerns underlying the koorero are revealed. A central refrain reflected in the plays has been the desire to achieve recognition of cultural and gender identity through vocal communication. In *He Reo Hou* Roma Potiki (1991) says:

> Maaori drama is about communication, about learning to communicate with our own people. Maaori playwrights decide on the story they want to tell, work on that content, and then share it with Maaori and others. (11)

Given Potiki's statement about the fundamental communicative purpose of Maaori drama, it is clear that these speaking reflections project, in addition to the contemporary social concerns raised, a vital need for Maaori women to locate and exploit new sites for vocalization. Read together, the voices encourage transgression of cultural boundaries and an employment of alternative forms of communication in spaces outside of marae contexts. In an interview with John Huria (1997), the playwright Hone Kouka comments on the powerful blend between Maaori tikanga and the theatre. He acknowledges that the theatre will develop:

> by way of people who have a strong knowledge of Maaori concepts. This knowledge enables abstraction from a social practice, rather than straight representation of a social practice. It leads to a less mimetic performance, almost expressionistic in its focus on an essence seen through the ritualised lens of tikanga and kawa. (4)

But, how do stylization and abstraction of marae tikanga and kawa assist with Maaori women's articulation? In some ways the partial transplantation of the marae into the theatre space contributes to a re-culturation. In this transposed, truncated form, the marae is rendered less functional, less traditional/conventional, and in being released from its original function the object is partially denuded of its cultural relevance. Its function becomes

artificial, too extrapolated from its traditional purpose, making the ritual enacted in its new site less potent. On the other hand, the semitransplantation and the stylized abstraction release the marae from accompanying contingencies and restrictions and the conventions of gender and cultural performance. Re-presenting substantial fragments of the marae complex, tikanga, and kawa in a theatre venue frees up modes by which the marae can be formulated. In being open to new interpretations, the marae maintains its important function as vocal platform, but becomes flexible and accommodating, allowing Maaori women to articulate important political, cultural, and gender phenomena in a contemporary, public context. Viewed by Maaori and non-Maaori audiences, these new gender patterns alter the previously restrictive metonymic relationship between marae tradition and perceptions of Maaori culture. Rather than a dangerous slippage occurring between the rigid gender roles observed in traditional poowhiri and general Aotearoa society, the fluidity of marae practice in the theatre space encourages a positive perception of Maaori social interaction.

NOTES

1. Barlow says "The Treaty of Waitangi is the founding document of this nation: it signified the bringing together of two people—the indigenous Maaori tribes and the British Crown—into one nation. The Treaty was signed on 6 February 1840 at Waitangi in the Bay of Islands" (1991:134). Every year since, this date has been set aside for celebrations commemorating the signing.

2. According to Barlow the name Paakehaa "was given by the Maaori to the white-skinned immigrants who came from the United Kingdom and settled New Zealand" (1991:87). For an analysis of Paakehaa identity in contemporary New Zealand society see further King 1985 and Fleras and Spoonley 1999.

3. For reports on Harawira's actions during the 2000 Waitangi Day commemorations see *The New Zealand Herald* (2000), 28 Jan. p 2; 31 Jan. p 10; 2 Feb. p 8; 4 Feb. p 3; 5 Feb. p 3; 7 Feb. p 3; 18 Feb. p 11; 27 Nov. p 8 and *Listener*, 21 Feb. 1998, p 24; 29 Jan. 2000, p 24.

4. Although the roots of mana waahine Maaori are embedded in traditional Maaori mythologies and social practices, only since the mid-1970s has it developed as a strong, political Maaori feminist movement. Maaori filmmaker Merata Mita describes mana waahine Maaori in the following way: "a Maaori concept which exceeds the boundaries of feminism and incorporates a dimension of spirituality emanating from the primary element of Hine-ahu-one. I am Maaori, I am woman, I am family, I am tribe…" (Mita, 1994). For some valuable discussions of mana waahine Maaori and other issues pertinent to Maaori feminism and society within a postcolonial frame see further Hohepa 1993; Irwin 1993; Jenkins 1988 and 1992; Kupenga et al 1993; Nepe 1992; Pere 1982; Pihama and Mara 1994; Smith 1992; Smith and Taki 1993; Sykes 1994; and Szaszy 1993.

5. Irwin (1992) is referring to adaptations made to marae protocol in order to accommodate Paakehaa men and non-Maaori speakers. It is not uncommon to witness Paakehaa men on the paepae using speech notes and speaking in English, while competent female Maaori speakers remain silent.

6. On marae style theatre see Nelson 1963; Samsoni 1986; and Balme 1993 and 1999.

7. Riwia Brown's brothers Rangimoana and Apirana Taylor are strong advocates for marae style theatre. Apirana Taylor's writing featured as part of *Te Rakau Hua O Te Wao Tapu*, an Arts Festival program in Wellington, March 1990. Grace-Smith, after an early career in acting, worked with He Ara Hou in the development and production of Roma Potiki's *Whatungarongaro* (1990), which was performed in adapted-marae style.

8. *Jeannie Once* forms part of a trilogy of plays focused on three generations of women in different moments in Aotearoa's social history. The plays *Wednesday to Come* (1985) and *Pass It On* (1986) complete the trilogy.

9. Waiata were not only used during the poowhiri but were a part of many formal and informal occasions. Grace-Smith's plays often contain waiata specifically composed to reinforce on-stage action. For a more comprehensive presentation of waiata in traditional contexts, see Ngata 1980; McLean and Orbell 1979; and Orbell 1991.

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