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AROHAS GRANDDAUGHTERS

REPRESENTATIONS OF MAORI WOMEN

IN

MAORI DRAMA AND THEATRE

1980-2000

by

Mei-Lin Te-Puea Hansen

A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree
of Doctor of Philosophy in English,
University of Auckland, 2005.
ABSTRACT

This thesis explores representations of Maaori women characters in plays written by Maaori between 1980 and 2000, arguing that, as the level of self-determination in Maaori theatre has increased, these representations have become less stereotyped and more reflective of a range of Maaori women's realities. The thesis suggests that waahine dramatists in particular represent contemporary Maaori cultural identity as flexible, diverse and changing.

The Introduction gives reasons for the thesis' focus on Maaori women and outlines three major influences which have determined the approach to close-readings and analyses of waahine characters in the body of the thesis: an early Paakehaa representation of Maaori women, an increase of Maaori dramatists and the emergence of Maaori women's feminism.

The thesis comprises a further six chapters.

Chapter One contextualises the play analyses which appear in Chapters Four, Five and Six by describing a Maaori theatre and drama whakapapa that stakes a significant and influential place for waahine theatre practitioners. Chapters Two and Three explore tino rangatiratanga/self-determination and marae-concept theatre (respectively), arguing that between 1980 and 2000 these aspects of content and form have created theatrical conditions which facilitate Maaori women's representation. Chapters Four, Five and Six show that, as Maaori women such as Renee, Rena Owen, Riwia Brown, Roma Potiki and Briar Grace-Smith have become more active in the Maaori theatre whakapapa, contemporary representations of Maaori women have become more complex and diverse.

A set of bibliographic appendices provides detailed lists of first productions of plays mentioned in the thesis.

Throughout, the thesis maps the increased visibility and presence of Maaori women on the New Zealand stage, showing how in the years 1980-2000 the theatre has become a potent site for expression and exploration of Maaori cultural identity.
[...] when and where do we, as Māori women from [...] different spheres of our communities, meet to enjoy each other’s company and to share our works – to celebrate mana waahine?

Wherever and whenever we can...we meet, touch, laugh, talk, sing, sometimes screech!

Telling about what life is like for us, in our diversity, makes our stories visible.

(Kathie Irwin, Toi Waahine: The Worlds of Māori Women)
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NOTES ABOUT REO MAAORI

Rather than macrons, double vowels have been used to indicate the long vowels in Maaori words. I have chosen to mark the long vowels to assist with meaning and pronunciation. Quotations taken from texts which include Maaori words have only been adjusted for the double vowel if the long vowel is marked in the original. In other words, if the author has not used a macron or double vowel system to refer to long vowels, I have not used it either and the word in the quotation appears in the same form in my text. Similarly, if macrons or double vowels have been used in play titles, they are replicated as a double vowel in my text.

Wahine/waahine and tane/taane
I use the kupu 'wahine' (singular) and 'waahine' (plural) to refer exclusively to Maaori women and the kupu 'tane' (singular) and 'taane' (plural) to refer exclusively to Maaori men.

Maaori words that are judged to be part of the common vernacular such as whaanau, marae and Paakehaa are not translated while other words are translated upon their first appearance. Proper names are not translated.

Definitions of Maaori words are based on three main sources:


NOTES ABOUT DATES

Plays that appear in the text are referenced according to production date. If a play has been published it will be followed by the production date and then the publication date (where available). If plays have not yet been performed I refer to the date they were written.
...us Maori fullas put on this show for you Paakehaa fullas all the time. I’m sure you would’ve seen it before. Let me do a bit of a dance for you.

(Amiria, Act One Waiora)
In Act One, Scene Two of Bruce Mason's landmark New Zealand play, The Pohutukawa Tree (1957), two young Paakehaa, Sylvia Atkinson and George Rawlins, celebrate their recent nuptials at a reception held in their honour. Guests, anxious to express their joy and keen to add to the celebratory tone, sing "fortissimo and prestissimo [...] For they are jolly good fellows" (67). An impatient female guest, "springs forward [...] like a choir-mistress" (68) and does her damndest to lead the company in a fervent rendition of 'God Defend New Zealand'. Braver guests make a few garbled attempts to take up the tune. Sadly however, they falter and retreat into a hopeless silence, unable to remember the words. Feeling the weight of collective embarrassment, Mrs Atkinson, the mother of the bride, makes a quick bid to keep the party running smoothly. In an excited moment, she calls expectantly, "Where are our Maoris? We want our lovely Maoris" (69).

It is then, at the scene's climax, that Aroha Mataira, a kuia/elderly Maaori woman and head of the Mataira whaanau who live and work on the Atkinsons' orchard, steps forward, taking centre-stage. She performs a rescue for the gathering in the form of a waiata-aroha/love song, the cadences of which move "through the most delicate intervals, archaic, splendid" (70). Aroha's confident and flawless articulation of emotion woos the wedding guests into an awe-struck silence. The Paakehaa characters' awkward social fumbling and stuttering is offset by Aroha's dignified and self-assured performance. It is as if, without Aroha's performance, Mrs Atkinson and the assembled guests are unable to obtain the sense of spirituality and emotionality they seem to crave.
According to Mason, the moment when Aroha Mataira sings at the Atkinson-Rawlins' wedding is one of "the best moments [he] achieved in [his] Maori theatre" (qtd. in Dowling 263). Aroha's innate sense of "ritual occasion" (ibid), her humble and powerful ability to use her voice in answer to Mrs Atkinson's desperate, needy plea, is a theatrical articulation of Mason's belief that "it is only the Maori people who give our country tang and savour; without them we [the Paakeha] would simply be the most boring and unheavened lump of consumerdom in the world" (ibid 268). Although seemingly positive, this romantic, idealised drive to represent Maori as the "bolster for an unsettled New Zealand identity" (Calder 172) effectively restricts Aroha Mataira's representation. She is almost entirely limited to performing a role that signifies the "ambience" and "grace [...] the grandeur of the Maori people" (qtd. in Dowling 268), and that symbolises the passing of traditional forms of Maori life. While there are elements to Aroha's character that prevent an entirely simplistic or glib representation of a kuia (Aroha has a complicated and contradictory personality), her portrayal is ultimately determined by Mason's view that Maori culture as he knew it was doomed.

This is most obvious at the play's conclusion. Several months after the wedding, a tired and embattled Aroha lies on her death bed. She faces the hopeless predicament of rejoining the members of her tribe and becoming a "laughing clown" like the rest of them, or going "proud down to [her] death." Already certain of her future, Aroha pronounces

Live. Live! How shall I live! You want me to go to Tamatea; grow fat and swing pois. You want to see my race a lot of laughing clowns and I an old clown with them. I will not. I will not! [...] I will go proud down to my death, for that is all I have left (Act Three 107).

Rather than live in a world that demands she forget her people's "greatness [and [...] history" (ibid 96), in the face of 'inevitable' Paakehaa dominance and destruction, Aroha wills herself to death.

Aroha Mataira is an important reference point for this examination of representations of Maori women in Maori theatre and drama between 1980 and 2000: she is the first Maori woman character to have a central role in a serious New Zealand drama and, because The Pohutukawa Tree has been produced more than 180 times and continues to feature in New Zealand high school

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1 See David Dowling, Every Kind of Weather (Auckland, New Zealand: Reed Methuen, 1986) 262-263. Mason says this in a letter to Michael King 29 November 1977. More detail on Mason's Maori-themed plays is provided in Chapter Four.

2 See Dowling, 263-268. This is part of a paper Mason presented to the Forty-Second International P.E.N. Congress, Sydney, in December 1977.

3 See Alex Calder, "Unsettling Settlement: Poetry and Nationalism in Aotearoa/New Zealand," Literature and the Nation, ed. Brook Thomas (Tubingen: Gunter narr Verlag, 1998) 172. Calder says that "Maori identity [...] grants an emergent Pakeha identity the handsome promise of a lack fulfilled, but only on condition that Maori are lost from history as an "unprotesting memory", and that the processes of settlement are misremembered as a "shallow occupation".
and university syllabi, she enjoys an almost iconic status. Moreover, Aroha is a sort of theatrical grandmother, a wahine ancestor from whom many and varied theatrical mokopuna/descendants have sprung.

However, this latter role is not unproblematic. After all, her creator was a Paakehaa male who believed (rather patronisingly) that, when it came to representing Maaori in drama, it was for “Paakeha [to] prepare situations or scenes that simply would not be locked in a Maaori imagination” (Mason, qtd. in Dowling 263), and as I have already discussed, she is somewhat constricted by her function as a symbol. Nevertheless, she represents an obvious starting point for tracing the differences in representations of Maaori women in plays.

Almost 40 years after The Pohutukawa Tree, the central wahine character in Briar Grace-Smith’s 1995 play Ngaa Pou Waahine, has a decidedly confident future. An “MWA [. . . ] Maaori with Attitude” (Scene 2 18), Te Atakura is free from the representational burdens of her theatrical tipuna/ancestor, Aroha. The prospects of growing fat and twirling poi or perhaps even worse, of willing death, do not register for Te Atakura.

Well, get that girl, not shy, not a problem for her to have three plates of bacon bones and puha [. . . ] Yeah, Te Atakura’s well and truly on her way and once that girl starts moving, everybody better stay clear ‘cos she’s gonna be scary. True. (Tia, Scene 8 40)

The change evident between Aroha and her theatrical mokopuna, Te Atakura, parallels a broader shift that has occurred for wahine playwrights, directors and actors in the decades between 1957 and the turn of the century. For example, while in the past Mason could comfortably claim that it is for Paakehaa to “prepare situations or scenes” which “show in dramatic action that the broken [Maaori] culture” given “the chance [. . . ] will reveal [a] grandeur of spirit” (qtd. in Dowling 263), more recently, wahine playwright, director and actor Roma Potiki can make a determined claim for Maaori women’s place in New Zealand theatre by confidently asserting that “Maaori drama means Maaori people telling their own stories, including the stories women have to tell” (Potiki, Confirming Identity 154).

This thesis examines a range of Maaori playwrights’ and performers’ creations and representations of wahine characters. Waahine characters are analysed often in the context of production of plays and with a concern for implications beyond as well as within the theatre, to show that, as the level of Maaori self-determination in Maaori theatre has increased, not only are representations of Maaori


5 In Chapter Four, these issues are discussed further.
women less stereotyped, but that also, they are more complex and more reflective of a range of waahine (and Maaori) realities. It suggests that Maaori dramatists, in particular, represent modern Maaori cultural identity as flexible, diverse and changing. It highlights Maaori women’s inclination to show waahine and Maaori identities as fluctuating and responsive “to a host of new realities, new circumstances and new perceptions of the world” (Matthews 117).

Mindful of the social effect of the increased visibility and presence of Maaori women on the New Zealand stage, I explore how certain socio-political events are given expression in Maaori drama through waahine characters. The thesis also highlights the influence “truly gifted and utterly individual” (Caro “Toi Whakaari Home page”) waahine actors are having on the range and types of characters created by Maaori dramatists. In particular, I examine the impact waahine actors have had on plays by taane writers, especially on the sorts of waahine characters taane create. By querying the boundaries around cultural identity and perceptions of waahine identity, Maaori drama is gradually introducing alternative perspectives of Maaori life to the New Zealand stage. I describe the innovations Maaori women have made to drama and theatre in order to make plays reflect more truly their experiences.

**From Maranga Mai to Woman Far Walking**

My core focus is on representations of Maaori women in plays by Maaori written and/or performed in the years 1980 to 2000.

More profoundly than any preceding it, *Maranga Mai* (1979/80), a landmark, agit-prop play, was able to effectively expose, for Maaori audiences especially, the political power of Maaori theatrical expression.⑥ *Maranga Mai*, traced the history of colonialism and Maaori protest in Aotearoa, indubitably connecting Maaori drama with its role as an expression of te ao Maaori/the Maaori world.⑦ *Maranga Mai*’s vociferous opposition to Crown injustices and its open use of counter-historical discourse, highlighted several philosophical and cultural rifts in New Zealand society. For Roma Potiki, an early member of the Maranga Mai troupe, the play had a social, cultural, political and educative function: “politicised urban Maaori and some cuzzies from the country” moved “around marae to let [...] our old people know what we felt and what we were doing and what

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⑥ Te Raukura: The Feathers of the Albatross (1972, published 1974) and *Death of the Land* (1977, published 1991) preceded the first productions of *Maranga Mai*. Given that there was an early season of Te Raukura performed at the Mercury Theatre, Maaori audiences for the play were probably limited. *Death of the Land*, which included three waahine characters, reached many Maaori in the North Island but did not receive the same wide public attention as *Maranga Mai*.

⑦ See Sebastian Black, "New Zealand," *Post-Colonial English Drama*, ed. Bruce King (Great Britain: Macmillan Press, 1992) 133-149. Black notes that 1980 is the year in which Greg McGee’s *Foreshirk’s Lament* was also written. According to Black, this play, which is an “examination of the state of the nation” encouraged “aspiring writers, who might previously have thought of writing in verse or prose, [to turn] their thoughts to the stage” (143). It also led playwrights to “challenge myths about the country” (141).
actions had been taking place” (Potiki, Interview 7 Dec. 2002). The content of the play was simultaneously supported and criticized for its representation of Māori society. Providing a powerful indication of Māori theatre’s representative power and its potential revolutionary and revelatory capacity, Mervyn Wellington, Minister of Education at the time, took the drastic measure of banning performances of the play.

_Maranga Mai_ is a significant marker because it uses an elderly Māori woman figure – a _kuia_ – as its narrator and as a symbol of the longevity of the Māori struggle against the Crown. Indeed _Maranga Mai_ was the first play to acknowledge the potent role played by Māori women in historical and contemporary struggles against the Crown.

Twenty years later, in 2000, the New Zealand International Festival of the Arts included a showcase section of commissioned works by New Zealand dramatists and theatre practitioners. Among the six acts which comprised _Outstanding Aotearoa_, the “centrepiece for the international arts event” (Dale, _Outstanding Aotearoa_ 36) was Witi Ihimaera’s _Woman Far Walking_.

Like _Maranga Mai_, Ihimaera’s play positions a _kuia_ at the heart of Māori political and social struggle. _Tītī O Waitangi Mahana_ – a 160-year-old Māori woman born on the same day as the Treaty of Waitangi was signed – is the play’s narrator. Like the _kuia_ in _Maranga Mai_, Tītī retells the long history of Māori/Pākehā relations from a Māori perspective. Whereas _Maranga Mai_’s “raw [. . .] amateur” (Hapipi, Personal letter 29 May 2002) presentation of Māori social and political concerns was staged at marae around New Zealand, Ihimaera’s play first appeared at Soundings Theatre – a venue housed by Te Papa Tongarewa/Our Place, the Museum of New Zealand. Rather than facing the threat of a ban, the play was “warmly anticipated” (Dale, _Outstanding Aotearoa_ 39). Its predominantly Pākehā audiences “eagerly awaited” a play written by a Māori novelist (with an “enormously high” status) and a production which included “highly acclaimed” professional Māori performers (ibid).

This thesis takes _Maranga Mai_ and _Woman Far Walking_ as markers of several significant shifts that have occurred in the representation of Māori women in Māori theatre and drama. Those shifts include: the changing contexts of Māori cultural expression, the development of a powerful theatricality by Māori dramatists, new explorations of Māori/Pākehā relationship issues and the profound and powerful respect for the presence and participation of Māori women in the communication and construction of Māori cultural identity.
Why Maori women?

The initial impetus to explore representations of Maori women in Maori plays came from an observation that, over the two decades between 1980 and 2000, there has been a clear shift towards the use of Maori women as central characters in these plays. Notably, since the 1980s, it is through figuration of Maori women that cultural identity issues (in particular, the tension that develops between traditional and modern concepts of identity) are being played out.

Maori women's emergence from stereotyped and archetypal figuration to complex, multifarious representations in New Zealand drama is largely attributable to a synchronous shift from waahine being represented by Paakehaa and taane playwrights to waahine playwrights' own representations of Maori women. In the 1980s, as more Maori women began to write plays, more waahine appeared as pivotal characters in dramatic texts. Unlike theatre produced by indigenous groups in India, Africa, Australia and the Caribbean, where male playwrights such as Bidal Sircar, Wole Soyinka, Jack Davis and Derek Walcott (respectively) are well-known and "female playwrights are seriously underrepresented" (Crow and Banfield 166), Maori theatre now claims a strong line of female dramatists. As well as writing however, Maori women's involvement in theatrical craft has become commensurately more emphatic. Waahine are also strongly involved in the areas of acting, cultural advising and management. This increased participation of Maori women in theatre praxis has had a significant effect on the range of waahine experience represented in plays.

Historically, the dramatic representation of a range of waahine experiences was limited because few plays that appeared on the New Zealand stage included waahine characters. Roma Potiki recalls that

'[...] for me when I was younger, doing a little bit of acting, there weren't roles for Maori women. I would get offered to play the barmaid, the affair that someone's having, an Italian maid in a farce, [...] a bit of [...] exotic colour [...]" (Interview 7 Dec. 2002).

According to kapa haka expert, choreographer and educationalist Keri Kaa, a possible reason for the lack of waahine roles lay in a bias for male characters and points of view in most representations of Maori life:

Most of the stories were about men [...] Maori men all feature, if you read all the myths and legends very few of the leading characters are female, they're all about blokes [...] and I suspect it's because some chumpy recorded the first myths and legends and probably wrote them from a male point of view. If you have a look at all the stuff that's ever been presented anywhere it's all about men. [...] But women have a place too. We've each got a role, I think women have a significant place because women are actually the storytellers
and the nurturers, women are the pataka, they’re the storehouses of knowledge (Interview 18 June 2002).

Kaa’s observation about male bias in storytelling spotlights a patriarchal, imperialistic framing of Maaori women that renders their bodies, stories, expressions and opinions almost invisible. As well, it points towards Maaori women’s lack of representational control that stems not only from European males’ figurations of waahine, but also from a privileging of taane as public representatives and spokespeople for iwi Maaori/Maaori people.

New Zealand theatre of the 1960s and early 1970s reflected this male bias by marginalizing or ignoring Maaori women’s experiences. Apart from The Pohutukawa Tree, Mason’s ‘Maaori-themed’ plays were written specifically for performance by the opera singer Inia Te Wiata. Awatea (produced for radio in 1965, for stage in 1968) tells of the final years of Werihie Paku, dealing in particular with Werihie’s relationship with his son, while The Hand on the Rail (produced for stage in 1974) investigates Hingawaru Karani’s bid to locate his son Rangi who has gone missing in the city. Swan Song (produced for radio in 1965) follows James Smithson, an ailing kaumātua, who, on his death bed, transports himself back to his youth in Italy and the first true love of his life, and Hongi Hika (produced for radio in 1968) dramatises Hongi’s meeting with Queen Victoria. Other plays perpetuated this male focus. At the centre of Douglas Stewart’s The Golden Lover (1967, published 1962) is Whana, a man of the faery, capable of luring unsuspecting women away from their intended sweethearts. Harry Dansey’s Te Raukura (1972, published 1974), the first play by a Maaori playwright to be published, retells the stories of taane prophetic leaders, Te Ua Haumene and Te Whiti-O-Rongomai. It is only since the 1980s that waahine have begun to appear as symbols, spokespeople and representatives of Maaori struggle, survival, spirituality and knowledge.8

Rather than being adjucts to the action, or even worse, being ignored, in Maaori plays written from 1980 to 2000, waahine are often central figures. Not only have their appearances become more frequent, but characterisations have also become more complex, nuanced and diverse, in other words, more reflective of the experiences of Maaori women, and Maaori in general. Plays written from the late 1980s also represent the complications and joys of modern, post-colonial identity. Consequently, in plays such as Te Awa I Tahuti (1987, published 1991), Roimata (1988, published 1991), Whatungarongaro (1990, published 1999) and Ngaa Pou Waahine (1995, published 1997) Aroha’s granddaughters are indeed asserting their presence on the stage.

8 Some exceptions include James K Baxter’s The Wide Open Cage (1959) which includes among its roles, Norah, a Maaori woman who is alienated from her Maaori home and sceptical about the aroha of the marae. And, Nyra Bentley’s Skin Deep (1964) in which Mary King, a Maaori, contends with racist Dutch immigrants in her job as a District Nurse while also trying to curb the attentions of a Paakehaa boy, Andy McLaren.
Grace-Smith’s *Waiata* (1996) and *Purapurawhetu* (1997, published 1999) pair male and female characters to examine the construction of traditional and contemporary identities. Her plays also engage with debates about the gender roles assigned to Māori artistic practices such as carving and weaving. Hone Kouka’s *Home Fires* (1998) depicts two sisters whose contrasting attitudes towards tradition, home and the city are the product of sibling rivalry and the death of a loved one. More recent plays which fall outside the immediate scope of this thesis maintain this focus on *wahine*. Albert Belz’s *Awhi Tapu* (2003), Grace-Smith’s *When Sun and Moon Collide* (2000) and *Potiki’s Memory of Stone* (2003) and Kouka’s *The Prophet* (2004) depict *wahine* characters grappling with difficult social issues in Māori contexts. Importantly these newer plays are more representative of a range of Māori experiences. Increasingly, such plays are speaking to Māori (especially Māori women) about their various realities, provoking a deeper “interest in, and [...] a respect for, the socio-political world” (Kershaw 246) and validating and reinforcing views which may not always conform to the “dominant socio-political order” (ibid).

**Contextualising the research and identifying gaps**

This research adds to existing literature on contemporary Māori theatre and drama in three respects. It traces a Māori drama and theatre whakapapa that claims a prominent place for Māori women in the development of contemporary New Zealand drama and theatre; it has a concentrated focus on close-readings of Māori women characters in Māori plays; and it provides a collection of first and second production details (where available) of plays by Māori playwrights (mentioned in this thesis).

Material by New Zealand theatre historian Howard McNaughton, Roma Potiki, and post-colonial drama theorists such as Helen Gilbert, Joanne Tompkins and Christopher Balme have provided the impetus for the current study.9

**History, content and processes**

Christopher Balme’s (1989/90) “New Māori theatre in New Zealand” provides a brief historical overview of Māori theatre. Balme describes the “emergence over the past decade of an autochthonous Māori theatre” and suggests that it is “arguably the most significant development in New Zealand theatre since the establishment of the professional community theatres in the 1970s” (149). The overview assigns Māori theatre a place among the “theatrical cultures of [...] post-colonial societies” (ibid) and scrutinises the marae performance elements of Hone Tuwhare’s *In the

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9 In Roma Potiki, “A Maori Point of View: The Journey from Anxiety to Confidence,” *Australasian Drama Studies* 18 (1991): 59, Potiki highlights the need for “Māori people [...] to do a thesis on the subject” of a “Māori theatre whakapapa” or the development of Māori theatre.
Wilderness Without a Hat (1977, performed 1985, published 1991) and Paul Maunder's Te Tutakitanga a Te Puna (1984) and Ngati Pakeha (1985). However, attention to these three plays restricts the scope of Balme's history. Although it is clear that he is exploring forms which make Māori theatre distinct – namely its engagement with marae architecture, ritual and performance – in choosing to focus on Tuwhare's and Maunder's work, Balme denies the important role of Māori women in the development of a Māori theatrical voice.

In the 'Drama' section of The Oxford History of New Zealand Literature, Howard McNaughton places Māori drama in the broader context of New Zealand writing for the stage. He provides a thorough survey of scripted and published plays, with brief analyses of selected texts, in the context of an account of the shifting trends and themes in New Zealand drama.10 Referring to Māori theatre post 1990, McNaughton suggests that the development of Taki Rua was "the most significant evolution of a venue" (Oxford History (Rev) 380).11 McNaughton claims a central place for waahine playwrights Renee, Rena Owen and Riwia Brown identifying their works, especially the plays they wrote for Taki Rua, as crucial in the emergence of a Māori theatrical voice. He states that "the input of women playwrights at Taki Rua, was clearly influential" in the expansion of themes explored in Māori plays (Ibid 387): the foci on "cultural loss, urbanization, and family fragmentation" common to plays by these waahine were so dominant that they "were being overworked almost to the point of cliché" (ibid).12

The history provided in this thesis explores McNaughton's propositions more fully. With a concern to provide deeper and broader discussion of Māori identity crises, whanau disintegration and the impact of urbanization in contemporary Māori plays, Chapter Five includes detailed analyses of work by Renee, Owen, Brown and Roma Potiki and assesses the extent to which these playwrights have influenced the current focus on identity construction and cultural boundaries in plays by writers such as Kouka and Grace-Smith.

A range of commentary on the practices of Māori theatre – the peculiarities of its production and performance – is scattered through various scholarly journals and the introductions or forewords to published play scripts. The current study has benefited from this material. Reviews by academics


11 Taki Rua is a theatre production company discussed more fully in Chapter One.

12 There is congruence between McNaughton's thought and an earlier observation by post-colonial critic and cultural historian Adam Shoemaker in "Paper Tracks: Indigenous Literatures in Canada, Australia and New Zealand," New National and Post-Colonial Literatures: An Introduction, ed. Bruce King (Oxford, United Kingdom: Clarendon Press, 1996) 251 that in theatre institutions which tended to foster the work of men "female indigenous playwrights in New Zealand have [. . .] redressed the balance".
such as Sebastian Black, David Carnegie, Judith Dale, Mark Houlahan and Joanne Tompkins, provide short but clear analyses of several plays. In addition, John Huria's introduction to Purapurawhetu is a detailed and insightful reading of Grace-Smith's play. As well as evidencing the value in paying detailed critical attention to the form of Maaori drama, Huria emphasizes the need to scrutinize content too.

The most insightful material is written by the Maaori theatre practitioner, Roma Potiki. For example, Potiki's introduction to He Reo Hou - the first collection of Maaori plays - is among the earliest pieces of writing by a Maaori which, as well as providing the beginnings of a history of Maaori theatre (by naming some of the major theatre troupes, playwrights and directors), identifies some of the key thematic concerns of 'Maaori drama'. A later piece, "Confirming Identity and Telling the Stories", which appears in Feminist Voices: Women's Studies texts for Aotearoa/New Zealand, is most useful for its provision of first hand experience of the creation of Whatungarongaro. In this and other writings, such as "A Maori point of view" in Australasian Drama Studies, Potiki identifies the types of subject matter that define Maaori plays. Her concern is to distinguish Maaori theatre from non-Maaori theatre and to establish a firm approach or methodology for Maaori theatrical representation. She argues that "Maori theatre must deal honestly with what has happened and is happening to Maori people" (A Maori Point of View 63) and that "all work must have political self-awareness and be able to speak to our deepest emotions" (Confirming Identity 157).

Potiki's and McNaughton's observations that cultural identity issues are prevalent in Maaori plays prompted me to a closer exploration of these issues, just as Potiki's insistence that Maaori plays provide honest reflections of different Maaori realities and that they do so with "integrity" (ibid) encouraged me to examine the variety of representations of Maaori lives in the plays.

In "Confirming Identity" Potiki develops a feminist perspective which exposes and politicises women's and girls' status in whaanau structures. She suggests that in Maaori plays there should be "more roles that include strong sexuality for older women" and that present "younger women [. . .] as more than just lovers, or obedient things" (160). This thesis addresses these sorts of waahine concerns and explores the way waahine whaanau roles are depicted in Maaori plays. In its analysis of the changes in representations of Maaori women, it also assesses the extent to which Potiki's call for more considered representations of older and younger Maaori women has been addressed.
The indigene, post-colonialism and syncretic theatre

In his 1986 article in Australasian Drama Studies, "Indigenous Stages: The Indigene in Canadian, New Zealand and Australian Drama", Terry Goldie examines onstage appearances of "indigene characters" and addresses the vexed issue of "non-Other portraying Other" (white actors portraying brown/black characters) (Indigenous Stages 5). Goldie's analysis of plays from New Zealand is relatively scant. However, his reference to The Pohutukawa Tree as one of several plays "about indigenes" (Indigenous Stages 10) which use realism as a dramatic form is illuminating. Particularly interesting is his observation that twentieth-century Canadian and Australian drama about indigenes (and New Zealand's The Pohutukawa Tree) has a fairly predictable format:

The most common scene is a small set which represents a living room or kitchen, or perhaps a confined outdoor space close to the same type of humble rural dwelling. The tendency is to confine the cast to a group similarly small, usually a family. Miscegenation and assimilation are recurring themes, with either a white family, of which one member has a relationship or potential relationship with an indigene, or an indigene family, in which the generation gap is heightened by a daughter attracted to a white culture [. . .] (ibid).

As well as assessing the form of twentieth-century plays about indigenes, Goldie identifies the character types that appear in such plays. Goldie refers to the "treacherous redskin" and the "Indian maiden" as examples of indigene characters who embody "violence and sex [. . .] and also [. . .] the emotional signs of fear and temptation, of the white repulsion from and attraction to the land" (ibid 6). While these character types receive some attention in Goldie's article, they receive more attention in his 1989 book Fear and Temptation: The Image of the Indigene in Canadian, Australian and New Zealand Literatures, which proved useful in my conceptualisation of waahine characters in Māori plays. Goldie identifies the "Indian squaw" and "Indian maiden" (Fear and Temptation 72) as recurrent types in Canadian plays and I was interested to apply modifications of these Indian types to similar 'Māori types' – namely, kuia and kootiro/young woman. I also wanted to test the possibility that The Pohutukawa Tree, given its primacy, its obvious use as a reference point for some Māori playwrights, and its figuration of kuia and kootiro, had a not insignificant influence on some of the waahine characters that appeared in plays that followed.

Helen Gilbert's and Joanne Tompkins's 1996 Post-Colonial Drama and Christopher Balme's Decolonizing the Stage, published in 1999, both discuss Māori drama within an international context and incorporate examples from Māori plays to reinforce their respective arguments about the thematic content and form of post-colonial drama. Because Gilbert and Tompkins compare several post-colonial nations, the extent to which they can provide extensive critical attention to plays by Māori is limited. The close-readings of plays in this thesis elaborate on Māori playwrights' engagement with some of the post-colonial themes Gilbert and Tompkins identify in
their study. For example, the appearance of traditional enactments, non-English languages and counter-historical narratives in scripts and productions are given special focus, as is Gilbert's and Tompkins's suggestion that post-colonial theatre allows for the sounding of polyphonic voices. Modern Māori drama illustrates Gilbert's and Tompkin's argument that theatre understands the "agency of the colonised as well as the coloniser" (83) and that colonised subjects can employ post-colonial elements as tactics for maintaining cultural difference and rendering their own ideas about identity.

Like Gilbert and Tompkins, Balme also admits that post-colonial drama highlights a current global condition of "cultural multivocality" (Decolonizing the Stage 11) and that it shows the difficulty of claiming "clear lines of demarcation between cultures" (ibid 10). Balme's suggestion that contemporary post-colonial theatre (he terms it "syncretic theatre") questions "the very idea of firm, homogenous cultural identities" (ibid) encouraged me to look for the differences between Māori women's experiences in plays.13

Unlike Gilbert and Tompkins however, Balme is less concerned with the themes of post-colonial drama and more interested in the form in which post-colonial drama is presented. Although Balme's conceptualisation of Māori theatre as a type of syncretic theatre raises issues about the limits and potentialities of marae-theatre, and explores the productive use of ritual (especially hul) in marae-theatre space, his examination overlooks the tapu around gender that limits the speaking rights of women on the marae and that therefore could still apply in the theatre setting. For example, in his analysis of In the Wilderness Without a Hat and Te Hokinga Mai (1988, published 1990) Balme does not consider the way women's roles are circumscribed or reinvented by the use of marae-theatre. I have attempted to address this omission in Chapters Three and Four.

Two other post-colonial critiques which have also guided my research include Adam Shoemaker's 1996 "Paper Tracks: Indigenous Literatures in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand" and Chadwick Allen's 2002 Blood Narrative: Indigenous Identity in American Indian and Māori Literary and Activist texts. Shoemaker's "Paper Tracks" links the "creative expressions" of indigenous writing from Canada, Australia and New Zealand with each nation's initiation of "agendas for change [. . .] founded upon cultural pride and distinctiveness" (245). Shoemaker makes the pertinent observation that the "visual, performing and literary arts are vital to the identity of native minority

13 See Christopher Balme, Decolonizing the Stage: Theatrical Syncretism and Post-colonial Drama (Oxford, United Kingdom: Clarendon Press, 1999) 2. Balme defines syncretic theatre as the utilisation of "the performance forms of both European and indigenous cultures in a creative recombination of their respective elements, without slavish adherence to one tradition or the other". He contends that "an internationalized world of mass communication and information exchange" means that people are producing "less definitive interpretations of themselves and others and that this has contributed to a more fluid and changing conceptualisation of cultural identity".
groups" (ibid) and then provides some commentary on the theatre movements in New Zealand in the early 1970s. However, in drawing a conclusion that anthologies of indigenous writing are "politically useful, culturally representative and symbolic of communal, co-operative work" (262), he neglects to mention the collection of Māori plays He Reo Hou.

Allen’s Blood Narrative also explores connections between socio-political movements such as the Māori renaissance (paying special attention to allegories of the Treaty) and Māori literature. Allen’s emphasis is on short stories and novels by Māori (post-WWII), although he does mention one play, Te Raukura. Allen approaches the texts with the scholarly, literary attention they deserve and provokes further thought about the “parameters in the battle over the representation of contemporary Māori identity” (Allen, Thesis 143).

**New Writing**

Since I began research for this thesis (in 1998) two new texts, specifically focused on Māori theatre and drama, have been published: Janinka Greenwood’s monograph History of a Bicultural Theatre: Mapping the Terrain (2002) and Marc Maufort’s Transgressive Itineraries (2003) an examination of “hybridisations” (Transgressive Itineraries 12) of dramatic realism in plays by Canadian, Australian and New Zealand playwrights.

Greenwood’s monograph contains a history of the emergence of (what she calls) bicultural theatre in Aotearoa. She aims to develop the term bicultural as a more fitting descriptor for drama produced by Māori and Paakeha or Māori and non-Māori. The monograph maps the progressive development of a theatrical aesthetic that embraces both European and Māori traditions and is particularly useful because it produces “a sense of the aesthetic that derives from the bicultural space” (9), and claims an important role for theatre as a site for the negotiation of cultural differences. Greenwood highlights the need for work which “seeks, in a systematic way, to align what occurs in theatre with what takes place on the broader socio-political front” (63-64) and in some respects she begins to do this. More so than preceding works, the history aligns particular plays, theatre troupes and theatrical events with their socio-political contexts.

The most substantive part of Greenwood’s work are her interviews with five male theatre practitioners (four Māori and one Paakeha), who were selected for “their extended involvement

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14 Māori renaissance refers to a period (from the late 1960s to the early 1990s) of sustained social, political and cultural awareness of things Māori in New Zealand society. See Ranginui Walker, Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou: Struggle Without End (Auckland, New Zealand: Penguin Books, 1990) 209. Walker describes the “dynamic of the Māori cultural renaissance” as one where “a culture [. . .] is freed from alienation”.

15 Definitions of bicultural and Māori theatre and drama are provided further into Whakaaro.
in the bicultural interface of theatre" and because their experiences reflected "a range of generational perspectives [ . . ] and a range of activity in the field" (11-12). Greenwood gives very clear reasons for interviewing these men, but doesn't consider the representative issues such a gender dynamic may suggest or present.

Most of the monograph's focus is given to theatrical structures and processes (à la Christopher Balme), considerations of the blend of Maaori and Western principles and views in New Zealand theatre and the relationship between theatre and education. Greenwood admits that in much of what she calls bicultural theatre, Maaori "have taken the initiative in making meaning in the place where the two cultures overlap" (12). Such a phenomenon (if indicative of a trend) presents the possibility of a more secure and assured place for Maaori in theatre, to some extent (though not entirely) diminishing the claim for a bicultural label.

Transgressive Itineraries is rare among work which examines Maaori plays and playwrights because, unlike post-colonial critiques that precede it, studied attention is given to play texts with detailed close-readings "comparable to those required by a dramaturgical approach preceding production" (18). As I have already mentioned, close analyses of Maaori scripts are rare, so Maufort's decision to devote considerable space to the study of these plays asserts their importance as literature and credits the work of the dramatists separately from the production cast and crew. Of especial interest to me are examinations of plays by Hone Kouka – Mauri Tu (1991, published 1992), Nga Tangata Toa (1994, published 1994) and Waiora (1996, published 1997) – and Briar Grace-Smith – Ngaa Pou Waahine and Purapurawhetu. Maufort focuses on both playwrights' employment of magic-real elements and also notes their peculiar use of "extended poetic realism" (Transgressive Itineraries 22). His readings are sensitive to Maaori philosophical concepts and cognisant of local nuances.

However, such an intent focus on scripts is at the expense of any discussion of specific performances or productions. Maufort's readings do not include the inflections and impact of live production which, in the case of plays such as Waiora and Purapurawhetu (because of the ways in which waiata and other traditional forms are employed), reduces somewhat the scope of some of his interpretations. Moreover, Maufort refers only to published plays. This inevitably compromises the range of his study: in a theatrical infrastructure such as New Zealand's, a majority of plays that are produced are not published.

Like comparative analyses that have preceded his, Maufort also falls victim to the limits necessary when the work of three nations' dramatists is presented under one banner. While the differences
and similarities between the nations are taken into account, there is little space remaining for examination of the relationships between writers from the same nation. Nor does Maufort acknowledge the way gender dynamics may have affected the types of plays produced.

Finally, I consider Maufort’s labelling of native playwrights as “Europe’s Other(s)” (ibid 17) somewhat problematic. Most Maaori practitioners claim to be creating plays for their people, and since the early 1970s, they have discovered a voice less concerned with a position as ‘Other’s’ in relation to a European centre. Maufort’s claim that “the self in crisis and [...] lack of belonging are re-interpreted in post-colonial drama from the perspective of Europe’s Other(s)” (ibid) is Eurocentric in its disregard for Maaori self-determination and the assertion of an identity on their own terms.

**Research methodologies**

**Post-colonialism**

In a review of *Woman Far Walking*, Judith Dale examines the play’s relevance to Maaori/Paakehaa relations and the Treaty of Waitangi. Although she does not use the term post-colonial to describe it, most of her comments are geared towards a reading which posits Witi Ihimaera’s play as a post-colonial text, that is as a text that engages with, resists and dismantles the effects of colonialism on the expression of indigenous (Maaori) identity, practices and beliefs. She describes *Woman Far Walking’s* depiction of the historical relationship between Maaori and early European settlers and the “still-imponderable issues of treaty-making” (*Outstanding Aotearoa* 40). Also, she notes its foregrounding of “the European invasion of Aotearoa New Zealand and the consequent settlement of (what became) dominant Pakeha culture” (ibid), arguing that, in the play, “Pakeha culture is a guilty secret that has, in its perpetration, been borne until now as a burden or shame on the spirit and mana of Maaori.” (ibid). As well as identifying some of the post-colonial tropes in *Woman Far Walking*, Dale also analyses Ihimaera’s representation of the Treaty as a wahine. She queries his decision to “use [...] a female protagonist as the vehicle for colonial history,” noting that “there is something disturbing” in the fact that a Maaori woman – the victim of rape by Paakehaa – bears the guilt and shame of colonial history and of the loss of Maaori “spirit and mana” because she refuses to commit infanticide after being raped by colonial Paakehaa (ibid). Dale’s reading of the play’s post-colonial expressions and its implementation of gender analysis is a useful starting point for an account of my own methodology.

**Post-colonial feminisms**

With its focus on the possible effects of colonialism on expressions of contemporary indigenous identity, post-colonial literary criticism seems an obvious tool to employ in an examination of Maaori
women in Māori plays. Like Dale, Gilbert and Tompkins, Goldie, Maufot and other commentators have identified elements in Māori plays that are common to other contemporary post-colonial literatures produced by self-proclaimed/iconic post-colonial writers from a range of former colonies. As with the works of more well-known post-colonial writers, Māori plays address issues of land, the indigenous body, cultural and gender identity and history in relation to the ongoing effects of imperialism, and my analysis and discussion takes account of the way responses to colonialism, cross-cultural relationships (between Māori and Pākehā) and claims for self-determination have shaped (and continue to shape) expressions of contemporary Māori identity (especially waahine identity). However, I do not label or categorise plays as post-colonial; instead, I use elements of post-colonial theory as motivation for my textual analysis. Indeed, an area of specific focus in the readings emerges from the post-colonial impulse to recognise and value the different and diverse experiences and realities of post-colonial subjects. Put more plainly, the play readings examine moments when Māori playwrights show Māori women as they attempt to carve out their specific and different identities in post-colonial Aotearoa.

Since the mid 1980s, due largely to the instrumental work of feminists such as Chandra Mohanty, women's issues — particularly those relating to self-representation and the assumed universality of 'Third World' women's experiences — have been encompassed in post-colonialism's theoretical address. Mohanty developed her theory against "the lack of address to gender issues in mainstream post-colonial theory and also against the universalising tendencies of Western feminist thought" (Mills 98). Along with other post-colonial feminist thinkers such as Gayatri Spivak and Cheyla Sandoval, Mohanty calls for a "'worlding' of mainstream feminist theory" (ibid) to accentuate the differences in experiences between women of varying nationalities, cultures, races, classes and sexualities.

The play readings in this thesis take advantage of a particular 'worlding' of feminist theory: mana waahine Māori. Mana waahine Māori analyses address Māori women's national and cultural contexts in an attempt to more clearly identify the peculiar social, political and cultural forces operating on their representation/production. By referencing mana waahine practices and thought, I point to the particularity and diversity of Māori women's experiences, as distinct from the experiences of other female post-colonial subjects, and I question, in a similar vein to Mohanty, the "production of [. . .] women as a homogenous category" (ibid 106).

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16 Wole Soyinka, Derek Walcott, Albert Wendt and Salman Rushdie are identifiable as post-colonial writers.
**Mana waahine Māori**

Mana waahine is a broad term embracing "a wide range of women's activities and perspectives" (Smith, Getting Out 61). Mana waahine politics evolved out of the activities of the Māori Women's Welfare League, which was established in 1951. According to one of its former presidents, Dame Mira Szaszy, "The League established the 'mana' of [Māori] women on a national basis" (290), giving "Māori women decision-making powers on the issues which affected them very closely – as mothers, and their children and their homes" (ibid). The League raised awareness about Māori women's needs and specifically worked to gain recognition for "their inherent dignity, or mana tuku iho" (288). In the mid 1980s, as the Māori cultural cause for self-determination solidified its purpose and gained more recognition from the majority populace, waahine were freer to develop theories informed by their peculiar needs and experiences as Māori women.

According to Leonie Pihama, "mana waahine theoretical frameworks" are still emergent and "analysis continues to be grown and nurtured by Māori women" (*Thesis* 258). There is "ongoing discussion and searching being undertaken by many Māori women" who are attempting to identify the "essential elements of such a framework" (ibid). Expressions of mana waahine are profoundly affected by differences in tribal affiliation; adaptation or resistance to colonial control; one's level of traditional knowledge; social status and relationships with Māori men (within iwi and hapu/su-tribe). While these differences affect the way mana waahine is expressed, there are some common notions underlying it which impact on Māori theatrical expression.18

Firstly, mana waahine aims to make Māori women's contributions to Māori society more visible. Within mana waahine there is an urgent call for recognition of Māori women's voices and concerns. Pihama states simply that "There is a need for Māori women to speak to and for ourselves. To focus our work on engaging the issues that are important to us" (*Thesis* 38). The sentiment Pihama expresses derives from the politics of self-determination, but it is a self-determination which recognises the distinct experiences of Māori women. Kaa concurs with such an approach. To her, mana waahine means "everything" (Interview 18 June 2002). She asserts that it is elemental to a sense of Māori cultural identity and that it guides self-determination:

> You know how it is always the men who call out ‘Tihei Mauriora!’ on the marae? It actually means 'I have life.' I got up once and said it; to the combined gasps of everybody present:

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'Women don’t say that!’ But women have every right to say it, since it was a woman, Hine-ahu-one, who gave the first sneeze (McLeod Concussion 45).

Secondly, Maaori feminism considers the role and status of Maaori women in Maaori communities and wider society. Mana waahine engages with social and political structures, nationally and internationally, noting their impact on Maaori women. In certain cases, structures which undermine or oppress Maaori women are resisted and challenged. The expression of resistance, integral to tino rangatiratanga politics, is a common facet of mana waahine thought. Within mana waahine, according to feminist filmmaker Merata Mita, resistance may be exercised as “anti-colonialism” (Mita 37). Denying the validity of a ‘post’ colonial existence for Maaori, Mita demands, instead, alertness to the on-going, unequal power relationship between coloniser and colonised in Aotearoa and so advocates an ‘anti’ colonial approach to artistic and documentary representations of Maaori. Such an approach queries and challenges the dominant economic, cultural, political and social forces which continue to impinge on Maaori lives. For her, anti-colonial resistance militates against complacency and enables greater representational control of images for Maaori women.

Thirdly, mana waahine politics assert that Maaori identity is shaped by whaanau, hapuu and iwi and that these domains are not apolitical. Mana waahine thought demands that these social structures, especially the whaanau, are recognised as politically important sites because they have great influence on Maaori women’s experiences. Mana waahine thought has generated an ‘inward gaze’ in the themes of Maaori plays. Since the early 1990s attention to the impact of national politics on the social relations between Maaori and the Crown has been superseded by a focus on the internal and domestic politics operating in Maaori whaanau. Increasingly, Maaori women’s experiences are being used to illustrate the diverse nature and range of Maaori cultural identification. Maaori playwrights are still concerned with broad political action but they project Maaori self-determination by investigating individual experiences and whaanau relationships. The plays illustrate how resistance to, or challenging of the power structures internal to Maaori society, can contribute to anti-colonial resistance and struggle at national and global levels.

Fourthly, for many Maaori women, mana waahine is about waahine autonomy and women’s ability to make informed decisions in their own interests. According to Pihama, the articulation of women’s experience is crucial to their expression of active agency. Maaori women’s increased participation in their own dramatic representation is an important by-product of these larger trends to be more participatory in social, cultural and political realms. By becoming “active subjects who think, speak and create their own universe” (Savano 25) waahine are able to redress their invisibilisation and suppression by calling for a re-evaluation of their place and voice in society.
Pihama asserts that mana waahine is integral not only to women's expressions but also to men's. She argues that taane need to be cognisant of the racial, cultural and indigenous issues embedded in mana waahine thought because such understandings can benefit the whole of Maaori society:

[We cannot allow Maaori men to get off the hook. Challenging racist, sexist, homophobic, patriarchal, capitalist structures benefits all Maaori people not solely Maaori women. Maaori men have a role to play in these challenges (Thesis 253).

In Maaori theatre, taane playwrights have been enlivened by the representational possibilities mana waahine offers to the expression of Maaori cultural identity on stage. In particular, aspects of self-determination that are affixed to mana waahine thought have been represented in their plays.

In large part, waahine self-representation in art has been radically altered by the emergence of a modern conceptualisation of principles derived from mana waahine. Mana waahine has been a central influence in recent artistic representations of and by Maaori women leading to the recovery and recognition of Maaori women's stories. In the 1980s and early 1990s for example, mana waahine inspired a flourishing of biographies, autobiographies, novels and historical narratives by and about Maaori women. Texts such as *The Bone People, Wahine Toa, Haeata Herstory, Nga Morehu, Potiki* and *Mana wahine Maori*, influenced particularly by the literature of Black American feminists, inspired acknowledgment of the rich experiences and contributions of Aotearoa's indigenous female population.  

It was part of this blooming of waahine stories which introduced playwrights such as Owen, Brown and Potiki to wider influences. Maaori feminist thought is evident in some of their plays, which address and offer solutions for social inequalities experienced by Maaori women and also provide spaces for waahine to play out and resolve identity crises. Reading the plays with these mana waahine perspectives in mind reveals drama as a site in which assumptions about the uniformity of Maaori women's identity is being questioned and arguments about universal experiences are being tested.

With an awareness that there has been little extensive, substantive work produced on Maaori plays (and a greater amount of work on attempts to define and categorise them), I use aspects of post-colonialism, post-colonial feminism and mana waahine to conduct close-readings of individual plays, groups of plays by particular playwrights, and specific performances. I point out some of the plays' social, cultural and political details and how these influence representations of Maaori women. In

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19 See Jon Battista, "Nga Ahorangi: A Bibliography of Maori Women's Creative Writing," *Hecate* 23.1 and 23.2 (1997) for an extensive and comprehensive listing of waahine writing.
so doing, I aim to identify the richness and variability – the competing possibilities – for the representation of Māori women's lived experiences in Māori plays.

Interviews with directors, playwrights and actors provide first-hand, experiential evidence to supplement my play readings. In particular, these interviews provide rich contributions to the discussion of the emergence and development of Māori theatre and drama – their content and form – as well as acknowledging the range of Māori voices and interests involved in the representation of Māori women for the stage.

Definitions

Theatre and Drama

I have drawn on Kier Elam's definitions of theatre and drama:

'Theatre' is taken to refer [. . .] to the complex of phenomena associated with the performer-audience transaction: that is, with the production and communication of meaning in the performance itself and with the systems underlying it. By 'drama' on the other hand, is meant that mode of fiction designed for stage representation and constructed according to particular ('dramatic') conventions (2).

Most of my analyses of representations of waahine characters are based on drama written by Māori for the stage (or stage equivalents such as halls, marae, or other venues that may function as performance spaces). Some of these textual analyses are supplemented by interpretations and observations of play performances I have attended. These have been considered in relation to "the complex of phenomena" that contribute to New Zealand theatre – its practitioners, its training institutes, its performance venues, aspects of its funding and its audiences.

Māori theatre, Māori drama and bicultural theatre

Nobody really defines [bicultural theatre] clearly [. . .] we came to the conclusion from working together, put your skills into the basket, you know and that'll feed the theatre if you like (Amey, Interview 26 July 2002).

As Janinka Greenwood makes clear in her History of Bicultural Theatre, boundaries between the terms 'Māori theatre' and 'bicultural theatre' are under constant negotiation. A useful distinction between these terms resides with the relative level of Māori/Paakehaa participation. For the purposes of this thesis the term 'Māori drama' refers to plays that are written by dramatists who acknowledge a Māori whakapapa. 'Māori theatre' refers to the production of those plays by a group who uses theatrical processes that are substantially determined by the Māori involved. Crucial to any Paakehaa participation in a Māori theatre project therefore would be the
understanding that they relinquish power and control in order to assimilate with Maaori practices. As such, it would be feasible to refer to a project as ‘Maaori theatre’ even though Paakehaa participants were involved.

The term ‘bicultural theatre’ on the other hand refers to projects which include Maaori and Paakehaa participants operating within more conventional theatrical protocols. Both terms take into account the ‘skill sharing’ involved in New Zealand theatre projects. In some instances, what may be considered by some to be bicultural theatre, I will refer to as Maaori theatre because the processes used and the level of involvement of Maaori at each step of the production has been significant. Given the smallness of the New Zealand theatre industry and its relatively short history, the infrastructure is so interdependent that bicultural cross-overs within Aotearoa’s theatre scene are inevitable. Directorial, managerial, acting and technical expertise and skills are regularly shared.

For Maaori theatre practitioners more than their non-Maaori counterparts, the extent to which a play and its production becomes Maaori or bicultural, may depend on how intimately it engages issues of representation and how it handles the balance of Maaori as well as Paakehaa audiences. Often Maaori theatre practitioners face demands to represent Maaori accurately and sensitively – with a level of authenticity not expected of non-Maaori.

Set against other New Zealand plays, Maaori plays are distinguishable partly by recurring themes. Potiki has identified the following “themes or components” from “numerous Maaori plays from the 1970s through to the late 1990s”:

- a strong sense of association with the past and tuupuna; loss; longing for what has gone or been taken; land as central to identity; the search for identity or a changing or shifting sense of identity or self; the discovery of family secrets – especially in relation to whakapapa or breaches of tapu; the arrival of a stranger as a portent of future happenings or things hidden in the past; the fight to survive intact as whanau and as a culture; conflict with authority – often in the form of government or Paakehaa control; whanau or hapu/iwi rivalries; contested leadership; spiritual forces as omnipresent, influencing all times; the special position of whaangai; inclusion of cultural forms such as haka, karanga and wero; tangi; hope for the unity of whanau or individuals (Foreword 9).

Potiki’s list is not exhaustive or indicative of elements unique to Maaori theatre (some of the components are identifiable in non-Maaori plays too). Also, Maaori theatre and/or drama can exist without the appearance of any one of these tropes. However, the list is a useful descriptor, foregrounding the most common features apparent in a majority of Maaori plays.
Where are Aroha’s granddaughters?

Together, the chapters provide a description of the increased visibility of Aroha’s granddaughters on the New Zealand stage. As well, and more importantly, they lay a path which traces the development of dramatic representations that recognise Māori women’s multiple identities and experiences; expose the compound oppressions of race and gender stereotypes; and recuperate previously ignored or overlooked realities. The current prominence of waahine characters in Māori plays is connected to the increased involvement of Māori women practitioners (most predominantly, playwrights) in theatre praxis. The chapters chart the progress of waahine characters as they move from positions like those of their foremother, Aroha, to that of their younger kin, Te Atakura.

Chapter One, “A whakapapa of Māori theatre and drama”, provides a brief narrative history of the emergence of Māori plays and the theatre institutions that have produced them. Focus is given to the development of a particularly influential and significant theatre production company, Taki Rua. Simultaneously, the chapter assesses the place of Māori women in the development of Māori drama, and begins to reclaim the special gains waahine have made as playwrights and actors.

The next two chapters argue that peculiar aspects of the content and form of Māori theatre and drama – “Tino rangatiratanga” (Chapter Two) and “Marae theatre” (Chapter Three) – have complemented Māori women’s attempts to assert their identities through plays and performance. As modes of theatrical production, marae-concept theatre and Māori reference theatre in particular, have assisted dramatists, directors and actors with the creation of plays that are more reflective of the lived experiences of Māori women.

Chapter Four, “Kuia and Kootiro”, focuses on the representation of waahine characters in plays by Māori men, written and/or produced since 1980. It considers the significant effect Aroha and Queenie Mataira have had on the representations of Māori women in plays by Maranga Mai, Hone Tuwhare, John Broughton, Apirana Taylor, Hone Kouka and Witi Ihimaera. The latter part of the chapter explores the effect of mana waahine on taane playwriting. Male playwrights are becoming more aware of the dramatic potential that derives from women’s issues and concerns, and in the process, these playwrights are presenting waahine characters that begin to query and challenge the kuia and kootiro stereotypes. Chapter Five, “First Wave Waahine Playwrights”, examines the work of Renee, Rena Owen, Riwia Brown and Roma Potiki. It argues that these waahine represent Māori women’s lives more realistically by breaking down kuia and kootiro stereotypes and reflecting the diversity of experiences that contribute to Māori women’s identity.
Chapter Six examines the work of contemporary playwright Briar Grace-Smith. It studies the waahine roles in five of her plays, investigating in particular the way in which a concern for the expression of a bicultural identity, along with the inclusion of tino rangatiratanga and mana waahine principles, produces waahine characters that destabilize the kuia and kootiro stereotypes established in earlier plays by taane writers. Not only do Grace-Smith's constructions of Maori identity enable an increased focus on the realities faced by waahine; they also show Maori women as agents in their identity formation, expressing a range of experiences and perspectives.

A set of appendices provides lists of plays by Maori mentioned in this thesis. Appendix A provides the first (and sometimes second) production details for plays from 1980 to 2000, while Appendix B gives the first (and sometimes second) production details (where available) for plays cited in this thesis pre 1980. Appendix C is a selection of production details for plays not mentioned in the thesis but which may be of interest to the reader.

Since their grandmother's appearance on New Zealand's stage, Aroha's granddaughters have made formidable gains in their theatrical representation. Informed by mana waahine principles, Maori playwrights' dramaturgical representations of waahine emphasise Maori women's struggles, their resistance to oppressive and silencing societal forces and their endurance and power in modern Aotearoa society. Maori plays have muted Mrs Atkinson's patronizing call, "Where are our Maoris?", in favour of waahine agency and demands for recognition and acknowledgement: "Ignore us at your peril!" (Kaa, Interview 18 June 2002).

20 Maori opera, dance, children's plays and plays written and performed in te reo Maori are developing areas of Maori drama and theatrical craft which are excluded from this thesis. These all require careful, detailed study. My elementary level of reo Maori restricts any knowledgeable commentary on the content of reo Maori plays. A history of plays written in Maori, and research into the potential and actual benefits for audiences attending this drama would best be undertaken by a fluent Maori speaker who could also publish in reo Maori.
CHAPTER ONE

A WHAKAPAPA OF MAAORI THEATRE AND DRAMA

From positions as passive, exotic and decorative objects in late nineteenth-century theatre, and from the constraints of a monocultural ethos that pervaded New Zealand art and theatre initiatives from the early 1900s through to the 1960s, Maaori have become critical participants in theatrical creation and production. Through the bicultural mid 1970s and into the 1980s, a Maaori theatrical tradition steadily emerged with the 1990s culminating in a vital, influential and confident theatrical position for Maaori within the spectrum of New Zealand's theatre. Most notably, during the 1990s, waahine became active in the production, direction and creation of drama.

This chapter presents a brief whakapapa of the place of Maaori and especially Maaori women in theatre and drama. In particular, it is a history of their participation as playwrights, directors and actors. It provides a context for the play analyses which appear in later chapters. As the whakapapa unfurls, it becomes evident that, with the growing influence of Wellington-based theatre production company, Taki Rua Productions, Maaori and Maaori women are more prominent in theatre in Aotearoa, and simultaneously are more active in their own representation. While Taki Rua is not solely responsible for this increase of Maaori in theatre, it has facilitated the involvement of some of the last two decades' most important waahine writers, actors and directors.
Māori theatre and whakapapa

A Māori worldview foregrounds Māori frames of reference such as whakapapa/genealogy, and incorporates reo Māori/Māori language and tikanga/custom in its conceptualisation of social, cultural, political and economic phenomena. Tipene O'Regan says regarding Māori cultural identity:

I and my tribe are the present expression of our tuupuna [ancestors] and the source of our uri, our descendants. We are both past and future, as well as ourselves.

The whakapapa that ties me to my tuupuna is also the structure that orders my history and that of my people. It is the conduit that carries their spiritual force – their wairua – to me in the present and by which I pass it forward to future generations. It carries the ultimate expression of who I am (337-338).

According to O'Regan, synchronization between his tipuna/ancestors and his tinana/body, wairua/spirit and hinengaro/intellect contributes to a solid notion of Māori cultural identity and his relationship to other Māori, present and past.

O'Regan's description of the influential movements between ancestors and their descendants highlights the usefulness of a whakapapa frame for engaging with relationships between historical and contemporary Māori theatrical expressions. If theatrical tipuna help determine Māori theatre of the present and future, then a theatrical whakapapa helps to trace identificatory marks, traits or features of the craft. The relevance of a Māori theatrical whakapapa is recognised by wahine actor and director Nancy Brunning: "In Maori theatre, we always remember and acknowledge all the companies who came before us. [...]. They were the ones that paved the way, made it possible for us to get involved and to have theatre" (Interview with Legat 92).

The recitation of a Māori theatre whakapapa can link contemporary Māori theatrical practice with Māori theatrical ancestors and tipuna. Several extra-theatrical contexts and socio-historic events have contributed to increased Māori participation in New Zealand theatre and to the development of specifically Māori theatrical forms.

Tuku Iho: Passing Down

Crucial to the growth of Māori theatre and drama has been the constant, exemplary presence of Wellington-based theatre production company Taki Rua Productions, which has developed what is currently a dominant model for Māori theatrical practice. Since the mid 1990s, Taki Rua has been a pre-eminent producer of Māori theatre. Its emergence as the "epicentre of [the] Māori theatre
The theatrical whakapapa from which Taki Rua springs reveals much about the complex and often difficult periods indigenous theatre has had in maintaining a bridgehead within Aotearoa's theatrical context. A brief history of the production company's emergence uncovers, for instance, the complicated tensions between New Zealand theatre's bicultural expectations and Māori demands to represent Māori experience through drama. Furthermore, it reveals an ongoing tension (not unique to Māori theatre) between the social expectation that theatre will provide alternative, counter-cultural experiences and the reality that commercial or box-office success determines its survival (particularly in a theatrical environment where Government subsidies are thinly spread). In addition, the whakapapa also describes a theatre institution which, although initially privileging male participation, has more recently facilitated (and indeed sought) contributions from Māori women. The story of Taki Rua's development exposes a concurrent increase in wāhine roles. As wāhine practitioner Roma Potiki explains, there were no "roles for Māori women before Taki Rua, apart from the very odd thing" (Interview 7 Dec. 2002).

In many respects, Taki Rua has become synonymous with Māori theatre as a majority of Māori drama has its origins with the company. Because of this, Taki Rua carries immense responsibility for representing what is a vast, eclectic collection of Māori interests. Much of the drama produced by Taki Rua, for example, evidences a tight weave between Māori theatre and Māori society. Recent plays have made reference to Māori politicians and contemporary socio-political events such as New Zealand First's capture of the five Māori parliamentary seats, and the implementation of te reo Māori in schools.1 Others deal with more long-standing social concerns such as Treaty of

Waitangi debates and Māori/Pākehā relations.\(^2\) The cultural, political and social concerns of Māori society impinge heavily on Māori theatre and in turn Māori theatre assists with initiation of koorero/discussion about these aspects of Māori society.

Taki Rua Productions provides a contemporary example of the representational responsibilities laid upon Māori drama. Tanea Heke (former artistic director of Taki Rua) admits that

> Every time you step forward, it’s not just you or two people you work with or even the company, it’s every person who has walked into a theatre that has seen our productions, that has ever had a conversation with anyone who has worked for Taki Rua. When you step out, you represent alright (Interview with Fuemana Nov. 2002).

Making this representational responsibility even weightier is the tendency for audiences, critics and theatre commentators (often erroneously) to correlate all Māori theatre with Taki Rua Productions. Therefore, Taki Rua receives most of the praise (and blame) for any images of Māori on the stage. Consequently, it realises the necessity of acknowledging the influence of a theatrical whakapapa and its place within it. As part of a broader Māori theatre whakapapa Taki Rua plays and playwrights offer a range of expressions of Māori cultural identity. The Māori theatre whakapapa rectifies inaccurate and erroneous images of Māori and reinforces the powerful presence of the indigenous voice and indigenous practices within theatrical realms.

Taki Rua’s whakapapa is rooted in a mixture of Māori theatrical appearances. Since 1972, a line of Māori dramatists has become more evident as part of New Zealand’s theatrical history. Although taane were overrepresented in the initial emergence of Māori writing for the stage, by the late 1980s, waahine writers, facilitated by Māori theatre groups that formed and dispersed throughout the late 1970s and well into the mid 1990s, also inflected Taki Rua’s current success.

**Māori theatre, drama and institutional structures**

*The New Depot*

In 1982, New Zealand had seven professional theatres located in the larger cities. Among them, Downstage (est. 1964) and Circa (est. 1976) were in Wellington, Mercury (est. 1968) and Theatre Corporate (est. 1975) were in Auckland, and the Centrepoint Theatre (est. 1974) was located in Palmerston North. The South Island cities Christchurch and Dunedin were home to the Court (est. 1971) and the Fortune (est. 1973) respectively.\(^3\) In 1982, John Banas, artistic director of

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\(^2\) Signed at Waitangi, Northland, on 6 February, 1840, the Treaty of Waitangi has become a defining document for the relationship between Māori and the Crown in Aotearoa.

\(^3\) Since this time, Auckland’s Mercury has closed (1992) and in 1986 Theatre Corporate also collapsed. The Auckland Theatre Company, (initially a combination of personnel from Theatre Corporate and the Mercury) was established in 1992.
Downstage – the oldest of the theatres – initiated moves to form a collective to manage and administer Downstage's second, 100-seat venue – The New Depot Theatre in Courtenay Place. The New Depot Collective was officially formed in 1983.

Between 1983 and 1998 the collective was known by five different names, each new name emphasising the theatrical interests and foci of various committee members. In 1985 the Collective was renamed The Depot, and in 1991, with a major change in committee personnel and a renewed philosophical commitment to bicultural interests, it became known as Taki Rua-Depot Theatre. August 1993 saw a shortening of the name to Taki Rua Theatre and then 1997 ushered in the most significant change in structure and direction, Taki Rua Productions.

At the time of its establishment, the New Depot Collective's aims were broad and inclusive. Central to these was the provision of a professional theatre space for the support, development and production of indigenous, New Zealand drama. Members were volunteers, contributing to a collective decision-making process rather than carrying out the instructions of a sole artistic director. The collective insisted that high professional standards were maintained and that a variety of theatre co-operatives use the space to develop and produce their own work. Amateur groups that targeted specific communities, in particular women and Māori and Pacific Islands peoples, had the chance to flourish in this space.

In its first three years, the New Depot faced challenges that are endemic to New Zealand theatre, especially because it aimed to exist purely on the staging of new, untested New Zealand plays. Although its formation contributed to Wellington's status as the country's theatrical epicentre, the New Depot struggled to cope financially. Initially, New Zealand's primary arts' funder, the Queen Elizabeth II Arts' Council (QEII), did not provide any direct financial support. Instead, the new theatre was underwritten by Downstage, which retained the lease and topped up any shortfalls, but artistically the New Depot operated independently from it. Its venue was run-down and uncomfortable for audiences and practitioners. Moreover, the Collective struggled to maintain a consistent quality of theatrical output. The small budgets of participating theatre co-operatives imposed restrictions on their workshop processes, leading to productions of varying quality. In 1985 the Collective was forced to abandon its Courtenay Place premises for an auditorium in Alpha Street. This shift was accompanied by Downstage's announcement that it could no longer provide financial backup for the New Depot.

and now operates as a production company using Auckland's Maidment Theatre as its base. Wellington remains the hub of the country's theatrical activity, supporting four professional theatres (including Taki Rua Productions and BATS).
Despite the tentative position of the New Depot, its first two and a half years saw the production of 42 New Zealand play premieres. Among these were several productions mounted by Māori attracted by the new theatre’s inclusive kaupapa. A relationship between Colin McColl (a member of the original New Depot Collective and also artistic director of the Wellington Arts Centre) and Rangimoana Taylor, who was based at the Centre, prepared the ground for an escalation of Māori involvement with the New Depot. Te Ohu Whakaari, a Māori collective formed under Taylor’s guidance, used the venue to perform drama that shared Māori culture with its audiences, by injecting it with Māori experience and idiom.

In 1983, Te Ohu Whakaari presented at the New Depot Selwyn Muru’s *The Gospel According to Tane*. They demonstrated such a level of commitment and passion that it “made the production perhaps the most important event at the New Depot so far” (Tremewan, *New Zealand Times* 13 Oct. 1985). The same year, under Taylor’s management, Te Ohu Whakaari produced *Ngaa Paki o te Maui* and the following year, six performers (including a young Briar Grace-Smith) helped produce *Pacific Awake*. In the early 1980s through to the early 1990s, Te Ohu Whakaari mounted 20 shows, a majority of which opened at the Alpha Street venue with support from the Depot, Taki Rua-Depot and Taki Rua collectives respectively.

**The Depot**

In 1988 the New Depot Collective re-named their theatre The Depot and followed up on a controversial decision to open its programme to non-New Zealand drama. Despite its changed kaupapa for the inclusion of non-New Zealand work, The Depot produced the sort of plays that continued to be ignored by more mainstream companies, in particular work by women and Māori. Laurie Atkinson notes that in 1985 “female directors took charge of nearly all the productions at Circa and The Depot” and that women such as “Hera Cook, Anne Coombes, Tilly Lloyd and Amanda McArthur” were involved in set design (*Evening Post* 28 Dec. 1985). The theatre’s attention to such underrepresented groups was paralleled by Playmarket’s – New Zealand’s playwright’s agency and script advisory service. In 1982, over half (seven) of the 11 new scripts the agency submitted to

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5 Christopher Balm in “New Māori Theatre” and Hone Kouka and Patrick Evans in “A Chronology of the development of Māori drama” state that the October performance of *Ngaa Paki o te Maui* was Te Ohu Whakaari’s first. This contradicts the information provided in Tremewan’s review which suggests that a performance of *The Gospel According to Tane* took place in May of the same year.
6 In The New Depot’s programme listings, the play title is recorded as ‘Ngā Pake o te Māori.’ The cast list provides a single name, Rongopai Broughton.
7 According to Peter Calder, "Creative Polynesian Flame," *New Zealand Herald* 4 Nov. 1993: 4.1, these included school productions and contributions to compendium shows.
8 In 1988, The Depot was granted ‘client’ status by the QEII Arts’ Council. In this period, ‘client theatres’ were the major recipients of QEII funds.
Robert Leek for a mid 1980s review of indigenous drama were by women, and according to Leek, women were "central to the action and concern of [those] plays" (1).

Significantly, it was during this period of attention to plays by women and Maaori that Riwia Brown, playwright, actor, director and screenwriter, became the first wahine to have her work performed at The Depot. Brown was an early member of Te Ohu Whakaari so her initiation into theatre was built on the group's collective, whaanau-based production processes. Te Ohu Whakaari's close affiliation with The Depot meant that Brown benefited from the expertise of the Depot Co-op members, whom she credits with her development as a playwright.

Brown's first play Roimata attracted large and diverse audiences. In fact, the success of Te Ohu Whakaari's season of Brown's play and an earlier season of Rore Hapipih's Fragments of a Childhood (1988) prompted committee members to call for "larger submissions of Maaori and South Pacific scripts or concepts" because "Maaori theatre always attracts good houses at The Depot" (Depot Newsletter August/September, 1988).

Responding to the call for the submission of more Maaori scripts, Te Awa I Tahutí, the first play by actor Rena Owen, was also produced in 1988 at The Depot. (Owen had played Girlie in Te Ohu Whakaari's production of Roimata in the previous year, and later she performed in their productions of No Ordinary Sun (1990), Iwitaia (1991) and revived Girlie for Roimata's companion play, Te Hokina (1990)). Although Owen's relationships with The Depot Collective and Te Ohu Whakaari were productive, unlike Brown her first experiences in serious drama developed outside the Maaori theatre scene that was then gaining a foothold through The Depot. From 1984, Owen worked as a professional actor in Britain, where Te Awa I Tahutí was first produced in 1986 when Owen was part of a London-based company, Clean Break. Upon her return to Aotearoa, Owen joined the Maaori theatrical community based around The Depot. In 1991, her second play, Daddy's Girl, was produced at The Depot (with Riwia Brown as its director).

In 1991-1992 Owen played the central wahine character, Ruby, in He Ara Hou's national tour of Whatungarongaro (see further into chapter for information regarding this play). For Owen, the roles of Toni and Girlie, and particularly Ruby (all wahine living in isolated, spiritually-bereft urban

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9 Her brother Apirana Taylor (also a member of Te Ohu Whakaari) describes days and nights spent in the living rooms of other members' homes, devising and rehearsing plays. Apirana Taylor, personal interview 13 Mar. 2000.
10 Roimata was produced by Te Ohu Whakaari and directed by Jim Moriarty again in 1994, in a revised form which incorporated the play's sequel, Te Hokina. In 1996, Brown's Intrangi Bay was performed at Taki Rua.

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conditions with few cultural reference points or role models) became precursors to her most well-known and lauded role as Beth Heke in Lee Tamahori's landmark feature-film, *Once Were Warriors*.

Riwia Brown credits The Depot with fostering the development of Māori actors, writers and directors like herself and Owen, saying that The Depot brought short stories, poetry, new writing, plays, improvisations, traditional ways to a public form (Enoch 12). According to her, the Collective's open-door policy and its active encouragement of new writers and indigenous works contributed to the emergence of Māori drama.

**Taki Rua-Depot**

In 1991, the Depot Collective, maintaining the risk-taking manifesto on which it was built, introduced a quota system of 50 percent Māori and 50 percent Paakehaa works. This was a shift in focus to reflect their "commitment to the continued growth and development of Māori theatre" and to a spirit of partnership (Vague, Feb. 1991). The spirit of partnership was encapsulated too by a change of name to Taki Rua-Depot Theatre.

In the wake of the Collective's new bicultural commitment, Māori participation in the theatre increased. Māori committee members, practitioners and co-operatives such as He Ara Hou, (a more recently formed company from the Kapiti Coast under the joint guidance of Roma Potiki and John Anderson); Jim Moriarty with Te Rakau Hua O Te Wao Tapu; and Rangimoana Taylor, were beginning to help determine in a more fundamental way, the creative direction and organisational structure of the theatre. 12 Between 1991 and 1993, The Depot Collective launched fifteen productions which, varied in dramatic content and style, displayed the multifaceted social and cultural sources of Māori stories and storytelling. 13

During this time the plays included both co-operatively devised pieces and individually conceived scripts. In the decade between 1990 and 2000 waahine were more heavily involved than previously. As well as Brown and Owen, Renee and Briar Grace-Smith also made notable contributions. Reo Māori plays were written by waahine such as Hera Taute and Esther Tamehana. Moreover, using Taki Rua-Depot's productions as a channel, a critical dialogue around the function, form and direction of Māori theatre was emerging.

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12 Discussed further into the chapter.
13 Among these plays were *Whakatao* *Maori Tu* and *Daddy's Girl* in 1991 and *Hine* and *Five Angels* in 1993.
By late 1993, the philosophy of the theatre was encapsulated in the name Taki Rua, "a weaving pattern" meaning "to go in twos - signifying the bicultural aspect of the theatre" (Kouka, Introduction 17). In a visible demonstration of bicultural partnership, Hone Kouka and Colin McColl became joint programme managers/artistic directors. In a period which saw the strengthening importance and value of Maori cultural expression, the Kouka-McColl partnership was charged with revitalising Taki Rua and ensuring a viable future direction for the Collective.

Kouka and McColl were supported by the theatre's business manager, Tony Burns. One of the first decisions from the Board to the new management team was to create roles for an increasing number of newly trained Maori actors, most of whom were recent graduates of Toi Whakaari: The New Zealand Drama School, through continued development and production of new work by young Maori playwrights. As a result, the theatre established strong connections with corporate sponsors. Sponsorship was secured from one of New Zealand's largest accountancy firms, Coopers and Lybrand, for a newly formed acting ensemble named Te Roopu Whakaari which was intended to forge "a powerful whaanau based style of theatre" (Kiwi Hiwa Ra, Apr. 1994), a philosophy reiterated in Taki Rua Productions' current kaupapa. Practitioners such as Nancy Brunning, Erina Toi-Paku and Shimpal Lelisi, who with their acting, directing, writing and management skills would go on to enrich Maori and a blossoming Pacific Islands theatre field, were part of this small but important roopu/ensemble. It was through Te Roopu Whakaari's plays that Maori theatre began to carve paths away from its exclusively marginal or alternative position into the realms of mainstream New Zealand theatre. The most important of these plays were Nga Tangata Toa, He Repo Haka (produced by Te Roopu Whakaari in 1994) and more recently Purapurawhetu.

The newly formed Te Roopu Whakaari offered job security to writers such as Kouka and enabled him to solidify his place as one of New Zealand theatre's most exciting playwrights. It was also due to the promise of on-going work for new actors that Nancy Brunning was able to make a successful and well timed transition from television to live theatre. During their time in Te Roopu Whakaari, Kouka and Brunning developed a productive working partnership and each had a very important impact on Taki Rua's future.

Prior to his training at Toi Whakaari Kouka had participated in Fortune Theatre's youth classes and had studied English and Economics at the University of Otago (where, in his first year, he performed in a professional production of Joe Musaphia's 1985 play The New Zealander and, in his
graduation year (1988), directed the first production of John Broughton’s *Te Hara: The Sin*. During his matriculation, Kouka studied drama under the tutelage of Lisa Warrington, participating in productions at the University’s Allen Hall.

It is with the production of *Waiora* (with Brunning in the role of Rongomai) that Kouka’s playwriting skills were widely acknowledged by New Zealand’s theatre-goers. This play, commissioned by the International Festival of the Arts Committee in 1996, and later taken to Hawaii with the support of a Creative New Zealand grant, showed Kouka’s maturation as a playwright. In 1996, Kouka was awarded a Fellowship from the University of Canterbury.

Since graduating from Toi Whakaari Brunning has acted on stage and screen. Early in her career she became popularly known for her role as Nurse Jaki Manu in the long-running television series *Shortland Street*. With the instigation of Te Roopu Whakaari, not only did she become an integral member of Taki Rua-Depot and a keen advocate and supporter of indigenous theatre, she also became the face of Maaori plays and a signature representative for Taki Rua-Depot. Since the first production of *Nga Tangata Toa*, Brunning’s image has been used in publicity for Maaori plays. Posters advertising productions such as Grace-Smith’s *Papurawhetu* and *Haruru Mai*, have also capitalized on Brunning’s popularity. More importantly, however, Brunning’s performances in Brown’s, Kouka’s and Grace-Smith’s plays, including *Ngaa Waahine* (1992), *Hide ‘n Seek* in 1994, *Nga Tangata Toa, Waiora, Purapurawhetu* and *Haruru Mai* in 2001 in particular, have increased the profile of Maaori theatre. Moreover with the knowledge that actors of Brunning’s calibre were available to play roles, dramatists such as Kouka and Grace-Smith could be confident that a skilled, trained wahine actor could play what were becoming, according to Brunning, “quite complex characters, quite meaty [roles]” (Interview with Legat 93).

In 2002, Brunning helped to revise, and then directed, a new version of Kouka’s *Home Fires*. In this capacity she was building on the directing experiences she gained with Grace-Smith’s *Waitapu, Flat Out Brown* (1996) and *Ngaa Pou Waahine* and her revision and direction of the third production of Ihimaera’s *Woman Far Walking*. Her most recent work has been as Assistant Director in conjunction with Samoan director/actor Nathaniel Lees on Albert Wendt’s first play, *The Songmaker’s Chair* (2003) for the Auckland Theatre Company (ATC).

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15 There was also a sponsor in Hawaii (Ilio‘ulokalani Foundation).
16 In addition to playwriting, Kouka also writes short stories and novels. Currently producer of Maaori drama for Radio New Zealand, since 1992 he has written scripts for children’s television programmes and doco-dramas. *Ngaa Tahu: Signatures*, for example, was broadcast on television, Waitangi Day, 2000. It was written in conjunction with Andrew Bancroft.
Kouka’s and Brunnings’s entries into professional theatre were accompanied by emerging signs of a heightened critical response to Maori theatre. In 1992, academic and popular interest had escalated to such an extent that Taki Rua hosted a hui to “discuss whether Pakeha reviewers should review work by Maori practitioners” (Kouka, “Reviewing Maori Theatre” 2). By 1995, Kouka felt that Maori theatre had matured enough to confidently confront ill-informed criticism and demand a type of reviewer who would bring knowledge of taha Maori/the Maori side to play critique. Kouka’s observations, which advocated Maori criticism of Maori plays, reinforced the importance of reviews which came from purely Maori perspectives.

**Taki Rua Productions**

Early in 1998 a Taki Rua panui/newsletter announced not simply another name change, but a definitive structural and philosophical alteration for the theatre. Taki Rua officially became Taki Rua Productions Society Incorporated “to reflect [its] new status as producer but also to open up production avenues in fields other than theatre, such as radio or television” (He Panui Jan-May 1998). Its new status meant relinquishing the Alpha Street theatre in favour of an office building in Victoria Street.

This movement augured a shift in organisational and creative style too. Rather than opt for the cooperative structure on which it was originally based, Taki Rua Productions began to hire playwrights, directors, actors and technicians on a production-by-production basis. Since its new manifestation the company exists in a sparer form, comprising a management team made up of a combination of key roles such as programme manager/artistic director, business manager and publicists. Building on the intentions of the Taki Rua-Depot Theatre, Taki Rua Productions has a central kaupapa to “get theatre out to the people” (Amery 38). According to Kouka, operating as a production company allows “so much more freedom”, while also making theatre accessible to “so many more people without the work suffering” (ibid). For Taki Rua Productions, the shedding of the performance venue has meant that plays can be toured nationally for extended periods and developed with a larger audience in mind. In 1998, for example, one of the company’s Maori language plays, *Taku Waimarie*, toured for six months, playing to children and parents involved with kohanga reo and immersion schools throughout the North Island. In 1998/99, *Sons* (first produced in 1995) a play by New Zealand born-Samoan playwright, Victor Rodger, was taken to Auckland. Later, productions of *Purapurawhetu*, and *Woman Far Walking* toured the country too.

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17 Of particular interest is that since 1991 when The Depot assumed its hyphenated, bicultural structure, plays performed at Taki Rua, or more recently, produced by the company, are considered to be prototypical, or even benchmarks of Maori dramatic production.

18 Taki Rua publicity says the first year of the production company was 1997, however, 1998 was the first official notice.
Such tours would have been very difficult to balance if the company also had to manage a simultaneous production in its own theatre.

In 2001 Taki Rua toured plays internationally. Taki Rua’s productions of Grace-Smith’s Purapurawhetu went to Greece and Ihimaera’s Woman Far Walking was performed at the Commonwealth Games Arts Festival in the United Kingdom. Meanwhile, Antonio Te Maloha’s reo Maaori play, He Taniwha Tino Pai, toured the North Island, strengthening the thread of Maaori language plays established by the first New Zealand Post Season in 1995. In addition, Kouka ran writer’s workshops targeted at new Maaori dramatists.

Between 1998 and 2002, a Maaori woman, Tanea Heke (graduate of Toi Whakaari, actor and director) was the company’s joint-programme manager.19 According to Heke, the decision to become a production company was driven almost entirely by financial considerations: “closing the theatre [. . . ] got rid of all the debt and overdrafts, because there was no way our work actually made a profit back then. It would all go back into maintaining the theatre” (Interview with Fuemana Nov. 2002). So, while Taki Rua’s foundational kaupapa remained intact under Taki Rua Productions’ structure, some of the methods for achieving the kaupapa were modified. In 2002, Heke and other members of the Taki Rua Board assisted with the creation of a strategic plan for the company.20 For years Heke resisted the initiation of a “business-type plan,” but she reconciled herself to the idea as she watched the company’s “feel as you go process” restrict it to a goal that was “just a play or its commission” (ibid). The business plan provided a firm template for the development of new scripts, from first draft to first production; it also included future strategy and mission statements. The aim was to reduce the company’s dependence on key personnel and allow instead for stability of Taki Rua’s theatrical activity under any potential management changes. Heke is confident that the plan enabled more accurate investment in the creative side of the organisation. Her predictions for Taki Rua Productions’ future embrace a business ‘speak’ she eschewed earlier in the company’s development: in two years, Taki Rua will “consolidate its position in the domestic and international markets” while maintaining “controlled growth and expansion of artistic and training initiatives” (ibid), thereby embedding the production company more completely in a commercial model of theatrical production.

While Kouka and Heke are both very positive about the benefits of Taki Rua’s production company status, other practitioners bemoan this move, seeing it as the rejection of Maaori theatre’s home

19 Both Heke and fellow programme manager Brent Thawley, resigned from their positions in 2002. They were replaced by Amanda Hereaka.
20 Other members of the board included Mike Hollings, Robyn Bargh, Simon Garrett, Phil Grieve and Tony De Goldi.

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and the dispersal of the theatre-whaanau community that developed around it. In the eyes of some, the inclusive, leftist philosophy of the theatre's origins has been forsaken for a more professional, commercially-focused operation. Jim Moriarty, for instance, laments the loss of Maaori theatre's turangawaewae/standing place. He senses the dissipation of any oppositional energy that may have been sustained by operating in the theatrical fringes. In contrast to Kouka and Heke, Moriarty is "happy to remain part of the fringe forever," contending that "once you are accepted you become fat and complacent" (Calder, New Zealand Herald 4 Nov. 1993).

Although it is still an issue of some contention, Taki Rua's decision to become an independent production company has thus far ensured the continued generation of new Maaori plays. Plays that Taki Rua has helped produce have also been able to reach a broader audience. For example, in a first for Maaori theatre, Grace-Smith's play Haruru Mai, initially commissioned by the International Festival of the Arts Committee in 2000, was subsequently revised and produced under the auspices of the Auckland Theatre Company (ATC) in 2001. This shift from the fringe to the mainstream – Haruru Mai was included in ATC's 2001 programme (their 9th season) along with plays such as The Blue Room, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead, A Streetcar Named Desire and Secret Bridesmaid's Business – has seen another of Grace-Smith's plays performed in a larger professional theatre. In 2003 Grace-Smith's Potiki's Memory of Stone was commissioned and produced by Christchurch's Court Theatre. 21 A steady migration of Maaori theatre from its base in an alternative, fairly localized fringe to a broader based, popular centre will expose a larger number of people to Maaori theatre.

While Taki Rua's transformation from burgeoning theatre collective to independent production company exposes the infrastructural fragility endemic within professional New Zealand theatre circles, it also offers a fascinating insight into the development of indigenous theatre from dependence to sovereignty. 22 That same movement is paralleled in the national ethos and the growing regard for Maaori drama within the wider New Zealand theatre community.

Inevitably, Taki Rua Productions' success has been partially shaped by a combination of political and socio-cultural movements. Radical alterations to the outlook of the Maaori population in the late 1970s and early 1980s initiated moves for greater social equality and inspired growth in Maaori literary expression. Developments in dramatic expression filtered through too so that as The Depot was adopting a more bicultural outlook and recognising this in name and in its artistic

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21 Potiki's Memory of Stone was included in a season alongside plays such as Milo's Wake and The Sound of Music. The collaborative relationship between Grace-Smith and The Court is discussed in Whakamutunga.

22 The New Zealand professional theatre infrastructure is not comparable to European models where strong historical dramatic traditions have ensured the existence of a steady audience base as well as support of creative development.
programming, other theatres such as BATS (est. 1986) saw the potential of Maaori drama to create and encourage new audiences. Meanwhile, Toi Whakaari: The New Zealand Drama School which under the directorship of people such as Nola Miller, George Webby, Robin Payne and Sunny Amey had been offering courses to intending actors since the 1970s, implemented a "conscientious policy of admitting Maaori students." (Calder, New Zealand Herald 4 Nov. 1993). Notable Maaori graduates include Hone Kouka, Nancy Brunning, Cliff Curtis, Rachel House, Nicola Kawana, Jason Te Kare, Karl Kite Rangi and Minima McDowell.

For a majority of contemporary Maaori theatre practitioners, Taki Rua Productions (and its former manifestations) have been a springboard for creative development, acting, directing and management roles and the forging and sustenance of theatrical relationships through the establishment of a consistent theatre community base. Early sponsorship arrangements during the Taki Rua-Depot years allowed for the continued nourishment of previously inexperienced Maaori writers who as they developed their craft, created more roles for Maaori actors. Moreover, the production company continues to foster a growing public interest in Maaori theatre through maintenance of its existing Maaori audiences and latterly, creation of newer audiences with its extensive touring schedules and reo Maaori plays.

This broad range of subject matter and representational style and the spread in personal and group concerns have recently been framed as the "Five strands of Taki Rua." These include: Te Wai Hohonu, the mainbill productions; Te Reo Maaori Tour, an education sector taking drama to schools; Te Wai Paapaku, supporting emerging talent; Taki Rua Pacifica, developing plays with Pacific Islands’ foci; and Te Rangi Waimarie, international export of mainbill shows. Each strand has a target audience to meet the "spread of age ranges from under 25 to 50 plus [. . .] and the 70% Paakehaa and 30% [of audiences] who identify themselves as Maaori" (He Panui, Apr. 2003).

Clearly, the prominent position of Maaori drama within the Aotearoa theatre context and Maaori women’s place within that does not come without precedent. In fact, the origins and development of Maaori theatre and drama can be traced back over a century and as Hone Kouka says, "we should have some knowledge of what has come before, those who have pushed us along, those who have shown us the way" (Introduction 9).

_Early appearances_

Kapai the life we Maoris lead,
For its little we want and little we need,
A mat of flax and a skirt of reed
As we wore in days gone by...
Oh life is happy and free from care
For it's little we want, little we need,
Smoke and a feed of kai.
(Marama: The Mere and the Maori Maid qtd. in Harcourt 33)

Very rarely in the period between George Leitch's theatrical extravaganza *The Land of the Moa* (1895) and Bruce Mason's plays on Maori themes, *The Pohutukawa Tree* and *Awatea*, were theatrical performances written, directed, produced or acted by Maori. In fact, until the 1920s when Alan Mulgan wrote three one-act plays, which according to Howard McNaughton tentatively "gesture towards national identity" (*Oxford History* 282), New Zealand drama was virtually non-existent. Most productions performed in the country's theatres until that time were imported from Australia, Great Britain and the United States of America.

Between 1885 and the 1950s theatrical appearances of Maori most commonly occurred in the form of concert or kapa haka troupes or in the burlesque theatre popular among colonial audiences. Given this, Adrian Kiernander's description of characters in *The Land of the Moa* as sympathetic for the time deserves attention. The play depicts a commonplace scenario: a wily US Captain ensnares a Maori chief's daughter and is chased across the country by the chief's iwi and the British authorities. Kiernander praises Leitch's treatment of the Maori characters in his play, in particular his departure from common attitudes towards the place of women in colonial society. As well as the inclusion of Kura, a fierce, self-assured female heroine, the play also features an old Maori woman, Wangarita, who in the final scenes, disposes of the play's villain. However, in keeping with the prevalent attitudes of colonial superiority, the first production of the play saw the incorporation of a Maori haka party as "popular novelty" (Kiernander 40) while lead roles were acted by Paakehaa in 'brown face.'

In *A Dramatic Appearance* Peter Harcourt describes a performance of 'I've Lost My Heart In Maoriland,' a musical number included in the repertoire of a 1918 revue, *Buzz, Buzz*, performed at the Vaudeville Theatre in London. The original production contained English chorus girls dressed as Maori maids, singing before a backdrop of a "typical" New Zealand scene which was "improved" with touches of North American Indian totems, South Sea Island lagoons and the Englishman's vaguely romantic notions of all those far-flung colonial territories" (10).

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The post-war period saw several comic operas/musicals such as H S B Ribband’s *Marama: The Mere and the Maori Maid* and Paul Peritas’s 1925 *Hinemoe: The Leap Year Pantomime*, which contained particularly romantic depictions of Maaori/Paakehaa relations. Ribband parallels a make-believe Maaori myth with a contemporary colonial romance, while Peritas attempts to make comical comments on ancient Maaori aristocracy. The elements of burlesque, comic opera and caricature characteristic of theatrical representations of Maaori at the time serve to calcify Maaori in a historic and mystical wonderland.

In the 1920s, when around 90 percent of Maaori lived in rural areas (Walker 186), there was a belief that Maaori would achieve greater equality in relation to their Paakehaa counterparts. After the Great War, Maaori farmers received government assistance with land management and farm development. However, the ‘one people’ ideology beginning to take root only “functioned to hide the relationship of Pakeha dominance and Maori subjugation” (ibid). *Marama*, which was greeted favourably in Hawke’s Bay during its tour of the North and South Islands, demonstrated, in its romantic ending, the prevailing attitude that imperial authority was the ‘benevolent father’ in Maaori/Paakehaa relations. At the play’s conclusion, the Crown representative and patriarchal figure, the Governor-General, returns equilibrium to what was formerly social chaos.

In 1939, The Young Maaori Party was formed. This group of Maaori men led by Sir Apirana Ngata provided a quiet but forward-thinking, critical and educated counterpoint to the rhetoric of smooth race relations in 1930s and 1940s Aotearoa. Although Maaori were finding a more representative voice, it was still difficult to work against the belief in a culturally unified society. In the 1940s *Marama* was revived, reappearing at a time when New Zealand’s social equality and race relationships were being lauded as some of the best in the world. The attitudes expressed in the wake of the Great War persisted well beyond World War II. In 1956, the Minister of Maaori Affairs, E B Corbett, confidently expressed that:

> Maoris and Europeans today are a homogenous people united in the common purpose of individual welfare and national stability. This unity has its roots in the respect and admiration each has for the other; it is fostered by the friendships formed at school, at work and on the playing fields against a background of social and economic equality (Corbett 4).

Playing to largely Paakehaa audiences, Ribband’s and Peritas’s musical productions reinforced the popular images of young Maaori maidens and noble Maaori warriors. Clearly, the major division of

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24 According to Ranginui Walker, *Struggle Without End: Ka Whawhai Tanu Matou* (Auckland, New Zealand: Penguin Books, 1990) 196, the Young Maaori Party came out of a Young Maaori Conference held at the University of Auckland under the initiative of Apirana Ngata, Professor H. Belshaw and Dr I. Sutherland. Walker says “After surveying Maaori communities, Belshaw concluded that their problems were not easy to resolve because they were isolated from each other and from the main centres of European population”.

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Maaori and Paakeha populations between rural and urban areas and their resultant lack of significant contact, along with the mistaken understanding that social equality had been achieved, contributed to the inauthentic, burlesque representations of Maaori in these plays.

At the same time as *Marama* and *Hinemoa* were being performed, kapa haka troupes/concert-parties served as Aotearoa’s envoys, with specially composed and choreographed waiata poi/song performed with poi, ringaringa/action songs and haka/fierce rhythmical dance. As early as 1910, Maggie Papakura, a tourist guide based at Rotorua, led her kapa haka troupe, Tuuhourangi, to Australia. A proliferation of groups from different iwi toured nationally in the decades between 1920 and 1940. In 1920, the Hinemoa Entertainers, led by Georgina Rauoriwa Warbrick and Eileen Rangiriri Strew, based themselves in Rotorua. Te Pou o Mangatawhiri, led by Tainui rangatira Te Puea Herangi, toured extensively in the North Island and performed at the Auckland Town Hall in 1928, promoted alongside stars such as Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford. The Huia Maaori Entertainers were formed around 1930, and in 1939 Tuini Ngawai also created a kapa haka troupe in the East Coast.

Importantly, unlike the pantomimes and musicals of the same era, most kapa haka performances were initiated, performed and managed by Maaori (particularly Maaori women). Skilled singers, dancers, choreographers and composers were (and continue to be) appreciated by Maaori and non-Maaori audiences. Over the years, however, an association with New Zealand's tourist industry has detached the performances from their marae contexts. Furthermore, in its requirement that performers adhere to performance rules and strictures, kapa haka can be limiting as a form of theatrical expression, restricting alternative representations of Maaori cultural identity. This said, the development of contemporary Maaori drama is fed by weaving kapa haka elements into the dramaturgical fabric of Maaori plays. The complex and sustaining presence of kapa haka's contemporary performance (kapa haka festivals are a huge part of Maaori life) lies beyond the parameters of this thesis.

An important, but perhaps less well-known component of the Maaori theatre whakapapa were the annual performances put on by Maaori girls’ colleges and teachers’ colleges during the 1950s and 1960s. These performances were devised, rehearsed and presented "for whatever number of given performances" and then “forgotten” (Hapipi, Personal letter 15 July 2004). Significantly, these “full-scale performance[s] in the grandest tradition” drew on “some of the vast resources of ancient

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27 Recent developments in the Maaori kapa haka festivals have seen a widening of repertoire and practices.
Maori myths and legends” (Habib 43-4) and were “interspersed with action songs, haka, etc” (Hapipi, Personal letter 15 July 2004). Although the performances were specially produced and not repeated beyond their first season, their significance lay in their theatricalisation of Maori myth and tribal traditions. Maori involvement in these productions provided a bridge to further involvement in New Zealand theatre.

The Maori Theatre Trust: a grand concert party?

With the advent of the Maori Theatre Trust in 1966, Maori made even stronger attempts to expand the representation of indigenous culture through theatrical performances. The Trust was established by renowned opera singer Inia Te Wiata, following the success of the 1965 New Zealand Opera Company National tour of Porgy and Bess (with a combined cast of Black Americans and Maori). It was managed by Dick Johnstone who, in 1968, directed, in Wellington’s Town Hall, a Downstage production of Awatea. Seminal figures such as George Henare, Huia Maitai (nee Brown), Don Selwyn (later, manager of He Taonga films) and Josh Gardiner were founding members of the Trust and a young Apirana Taylor and Jim Moriarty were also participants.

There are conflicting views concerning the style of the Trust’s theatrical output. Rore Hapipi, who observed the Trust from a peripheral position as a close friend of Don Selwyn, understood that “the Trust was formed to perform ‘legitimate’ theatre […] after the British and European tradition” (Personal letter 29 May 2002). However, Brian Kirby reports that they “did concerts, not theatre” and that their repertoire consisted mainly of “bits from opera musical comedy” (Interview 17 June 2002). Meanwhile, Samson Samasoni says that the Trust’s primary aim was “the preservation of Maori music and culture” (15). Nevertheless, according to Don Selwyn, a central motivation for the establishment of the Maori Theatre Trust, was encouragement of Maori participation in theatre. He notes that when the Trust was established, Maori considered theatre to be an elitist practice with a paucity of enduring relationships:

Most theatrical bodies have had difficulty in getting Maoris to participate in plays […]. They have encouraged and wanted them to be involved but have found that unless there is some long-lasting personal contact and social unity, the Maoris have been pretty indifferent about participating […]. They considered theatre was an elitist section of the arts (Samasoni 15).

Hapipi makes a connection between the Trust’s lack of a central theatrical direction and its dissolution around the early 1970s:

Disappointingly […] after a time […] their activities moved away from the concept of locally produced plays in favour of the grander concept of a National Maori Theatre. And even more disappointing, they had evolved from performing legitimate theatre, into the form
of a Maori Concert Party. Albeit, a far more grandiose one than your normal Concert Party. And that their agenda now was to 'conquer the world!' This, before they had even 'conquered' their own country! (Personal letter 29 May 2002).

As Hapipi intimates, the dissolution of the Maaori Theatre Trust could be attributed in part to the tenor of their theatrical output. In addition to Awatea, their four-year production history included He Mana Toa (Professor James Ritchie and Douglas Lilburn (music)), The Golden Lover in 1967 (Douglas Stewart and Douglas Lilburn), and a performance of Green are the Islands at the Osaka World Expo in 1970. Most of these pieces were combined drama and musical items that did not always represent contexts relevant to Maori experience. Don Selwyn, for example, reportedly bemoans his part in the Trust's production of Stewart's Golden Lover, denouncing the play's "patronising colonialist representation of Maaori" (Kouka and McNaughton, Our Own Voice 109).

Although the Maaori Theatre Trust provided an entry into professional theatrical careers for several of its male players (Henare, Selwyn, Moriarty and Taylor in particular), it rarely displayed the full representational potential of indigenous theatre, favouring instead stereotyped, or at best, archetypal portrayals of Maaori individuals and society. Disappointingly because of artistic and financial problems the Trust only vaguely hinted at the beginnings of a culturally distinctive New Zealand theatre form.

Of all the Trust's productions, Awatea probably brought the group closest to realising (at least at the time) its goal of representing indigenous culture through Maaori theatre. Unlike the other more large-scale music and dance spectacles in its theatrical repertoire, Awatea was the Trust's first attempt at New Zealand drama that dealt with Maaori concerns in a serious way. Inia Te Wiata, who played Werihe Paku in the 1968 production, explains the reasons for accepting to appear in a play "written by a pakeha about the Maori":

such plays are a significant part of New Zealand culture. The old chants have been translated, the Maaori arts are familiar and our mythology is well-known, but Awatea has been written of Maori life as it is today; the author has lived among the Maaori people and has the ability to present their life and problems (qtd. in Harcourt 153).

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28 In Ta Matou Mangai (Wellington, New Zealand: Victoria University Press, 1999) 12, Kouka suggests that the Trust "shone brightly but perhaps became too successful too quickly, dissipating by the end of the decade".
29 He Mana Toa was part of the Unity Theatre's (Wellington) jubilee. Green Are the Islands was created to showcase the New Zealand nation. According to Peter Harcourt, A Dramatic Appearance: New Zealand Theatre 1920-1970 (New Zealand: Methuen, 1978) 145, the production included a cast of 270, among them were "Inia Te Wiata, Kiri Te Kanawa, Joe Musaphia, Oswald Cheesman, shearing expert Godfrey Bowen [. . .] the Maori Theatre Trust, the New Zealand Ballet and the National Band".
Bruce Mason

Bruce Mason’s ability and stature as a playwright and his pivotal and enduring involvement in New Zealand theatre meant that Maaori practitioners respected his skill and learned from his knowledge of the craft. Around 1953, prior to writing plays about Maaori, Mason had established himself as a playwright with Wellington-based collective, Unity Theatre. Unity established a formidable, progressive and intelligent base for New Zealand theatre with its offerings of a combination of serious international and indigenous political drama. The theatre’s central intent was to create and perform “plays which [were] real and sincere in their presentation of life” (McNaughton, Bruce Mason 5). Moreover, its co-operative approach to theatre, its commitment to drama as a tool for social good and its promotion (in particular Mason’s) of indigenous drama set benchmarks which were mimicked by later theatre collectives. There is no denying, for example, the echoes of some of Unity’s philosophies in Taki Rua’s kaupapa.

Mason’s contribution to the establishment and development of professional indigenous theatre in New Zealand is considerable. His membership of Unity was followed by a period as theatre critic for the Dominion Newspaper. His reviews were known for their thorough, informed insights into theatrical production overseas and in New Zealand. Around this time he became heavily involved with Downstage theatre and became editor and contributor to its magazine, Act. In the early 1960s after leaving the Dominion, Mason became editor of the Maaori magazine Te Ao Hou, during this time he was inspired to write more about Maaori.

As has been noted, The Pohutukawa Tree contained the first serious dramatic representations of Maaori.30 In fact, Mason’s plays on Maaori themes written between 1957 and 1968 made a significant contribution to the promotion and sustenance of indigenous New Zealand drama.31 Although written by a Paakehaha, the plays have particular resonance with indigenous playwrights because in them Mason begins to address the social effects of colonialism upon Maaori within a serious dramatic framework. The plays depict the complex relations of guilt, oppression, patronage, sincerity, concern and protection that are the consequences of colonialism. Sensitive drawn, these complexities give insight into the dynamics of Maaori/Paakehaha relations. Therefore, they lay firm foundations for subsequent playwrights — Maaori and non-Maaori — to explore Maaori experience for potential drama.

30 See John Thomson, New Zealand Drama 1930-1980: An Illustrated History (Auckland, New Zealand: Oxford University Press, 1984) 54-55. Thomson identifies four plays which dealt with racial issues and relationships around this period. Two were British Drama League Competition entries including a play written in 1934 involving stock characters and situations. Nyra Bentley’s Skin Deep written in 1964 was the other. The remaining two plays include Eric Bradwell’s 1933 Polynesian-based play The Man Called Jones and Allen Curnow’s 1949 play The Axe: a verse tragedy.
31 The Hand on the Rail was revised for the stage in 1974. Hongi was performed in 1968 as a radio play.
Mason's seminal influence is widely acknowledged. Theatre academic Howard McNaughton praises Mason's playwriting abilities and his contributions to the development of New Zealand's contemporary drama. Sebastian Black credits Mason for injecting New Zealand drama with new structural and stylistic possibilities, particularly through the thematic and dialogic experimentation allowed by his Māori plays:

Evoking the last remnants of the dying traditions of a noble race allowed him to infuse his plays with the theatricality of Māori ceremony and to elevate his prose far from 'the crude locks of Kiwi English' by tapping the verbal music of an oral tradition (Black 133).

Sunny Amey (theatre practitioner, former Artistic Director of Downstage) admits that Mason had "a huge influence" because he introduced Pākeha audiences to new cultural worlds (Interview 7 Dec. 2002). Grace-Smith is one of many practitioners who acknowledge the significance of Mason's plays on Māori themes:

Māori theatre is moving at a tremendous speed. As well as early Māori theatre practitioners, Bruce Mason was a catalyst for this. Here was someone who put a show on that had Māori people and Māori stories. When Māori saw that show they went, we can do that, we can tell our own stories. Here's a Pākeha guy writing about us. It gave us the attitude we needed to take Māori theatre into a theatre as such (Interview with Livesey 5).

Hapipi also speaks generously of Mason's contribution to Māori drama. However, along with Paki Cherrington (Interview 11 June 2002), he recognises that Māori contributions to directorial and design decisions for stage productions of *The Pohutukawa Tree, Awatea* and *The Hand on the Rail* were limited. Drawing on his peripheral involvement with the Trust's production of *Awatea* and on his later involvement with television, Hapipi observes the way he "saw the Pākeha telling the Māori how they should behave as Māori, during rehearsals. It rankled. It just didn't seem right. It wasn't on" (Personal letter 29 May 2002).

**From concert parties to politics**

Its final production staged in 1970, the Māori Theatre Trust duly disbanded in the early 1970s. A combination of factors contributed to its demise. According to Hapipi, the Trust overreached in its endeavour to become an emblematic national theatre company. There were also tensions over artistic control, and the representation of Māori in some of the Trust's productions fed frustrations among the cast which Pākeha directors and dramatists did not always appreciate or perceive. Jim Moriarty explains too that the demands made upon the Trust (especially upon the realisation of the quality of its performances) sometimes seemed at odds with the intention of its members:

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There was a bloody urgent call from the Government of the day to get some sort of positive image overseas. It wasn't enough for [the Trust] to be committed to theatre, the politicians of the day wanted them to demonstrate to the world that this is how Maori and Pakeha get on down here in Godzone (Samasoni 15).

Harry Dansey

In the heavy shadow of the Trust's collapse, Harry Dansey wrote *Te Raukura* which marks the beginning of a new period for Maori theatre. Like other Maori plays produced in the 1970s, it introduced a type of Maori theatrical expression not confined to concert-party style performances. *Te Raukura* was at the forefront of a new Maori theatrical whakapapa concerned with exploring social, cultural and political matters relating to Maori life in Aotearoa society. Several of the plays which followed Dansey's maintained as a central focus, the impact of colonialism upon Maori society and the types of oppression emerging from it. In addition, since *Te Raukura*, plays have confronted audiences with issues of Maori self-determinism/tino rangatiratanga. (Chapter Two explores tino rangatiratanga in more detail).

The first play by a Maori playwright to be published, *Te Raukura* canvassed a broad spectrum of Maori political concerns. Its first production (directed by Pakehaa John Thomson) shifted the Maori involved away from the decorative, nationalistic propaganda of the Trust, towards a more distinct form of Maori theatrical expression.

Ngaa Puna Waihanga

In 1973 there was also a significant development in Maori art and literature. Hone Tuwhare and Para Matchitt called a meeting of artists and writers to discuss issues in the arts, at Matchitt's marae at Te Kaha, on the East Coast of the North Island. Out of that meeting – attended by Selwyn Muru, Witi Ihimaera, Georgina Kirby and Bill Nepia among others – Ngaa Puna Waihanga/the Maori Writers and Artists Association was established. Among members who later became involved in the development of Maori theatre were Keri Kaa, Rore Hapipi, Don Selwyn, Paki Cherrington, Selwyn Muru and Apirana Taylor. According to Cherrington, Ngaa Puna Waihanga had a "seminal effect on arts in general [. . .] much new Maori work came out of the Artists and Writers, they were breaking new ground" (Interview 11 June 2002).33 Of especial note insofar as a theatre whakapapa is concerned, was Ngaa Puna Waihanga's production of *Te Waka Karaitiana* (1983) to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Bishopric in New Zealand. Hurriedly

33 Members of Ngaa Puna Waihanga encountered criticisms of their work. Maori elders challenged their disregard of tradition and their breaking of tuturu/true Maori form. The kind of contemporary art they were producing was attacked because the art practice was transgressing tapu.
composed and rehearsed, the play unfolded in a documentary format and was a query of the Anglican Mission’s activities in colonial New Zealand. Brian Kirby managed and directed the first production of this play, which was performed before the Archbishop of Canterbury on his visit to Turangawaewae in Ngaruawahia.

Another play, Hanga Hou, written by Don Selwyn and George Tait to send to the second South Pacific Festival in Papua New Guinea, used agit-prop techniques to represent Maaori issues. Performed by Te Whaanau Players, the play consisted of the first scene from Te Waka Karatiana followed by scenes that had been improvised by the cast in response to ideas arising from Te Waka.

Te-Ika-a-Maui Players
Dissatisfied with the lack of Maaori contribution to theatrical craft, Rore Hapipi established his own theatre troupe, Te-Ika-a-Maui Players, in 1975/6, to coincide with the writing of his play Death of the Land (1976/7). Death of the Land was a ‘break-away’ Maaori play, again, departing from the popular and familiar concert-party representation of Maaori culture and presenting material that challenged its audiences.

Te-Ika-a-Maui came together, dispersed and reformed depending upon availability of cast members and demands for performances. Despite its amateur, ad-hoc composition, the group established precedents which guided practitioners who followed. Their pioneering work in Maaori theatre included a whaanau approach to performance, a co-operative mode of operation, tours to varied and unusual venues, and a desire to educate and motivate politically their audiences. Brian Potiki, Selwyn Muru, Bruce Stewart, Rawiri Paratene and brothers Rangimoana and Apirana Taylor who all went on to write and/or direct plays, were participants in Te-Ika-a-Maui at various times. Jim Moriarty was also a major figure in the group. Moreover, Te-Ika-a-Maui Players launched the careers of notable waahine actors, directors, producers and writers: Katarina Mataira, Keri Kaa, Tungia Baker, Mere Boynton and Roma Potiki were all active members. Riwia Brown and her sister, Haina Taylor were also involved. (Chapter Two explores the pivotal role Hapipi’s troupe played in the development of a self-determined Maaori theatre).

Roma Potiki’s involvement with the group and her awareness of the capabilities of her Maaori colleagues informed her subsequent involvement with the “volatile, high energy” group, Maranga

34 Most discussions of the development of Maaori theatre refer to the influence of Hapipi’s play Death of the Land rather than the influence of Te-Ika-a-Maui Player’s production processes. While stylistic and thematic elements of Death of the Land warrant mention, including its use of a tipuna figure, Rongo, who oversees proceedings, the kaupapa and practices of the personnel within the group are just as important.
Mai (Samasoni 15). Their eponymous play reflects the experiences of groups like Ngaa Tama Toa and the Waitangi Action Coalition. (The political work of these groups is covered in more detail in Chapter Two).

Maranga Mai

Maranga Mai (1979/80) was among the first wave of plays to challenge a broad cross-section of New Zealanders with important Maaori political issues. The play’s partial revue style includes folk-protest songs alongside traditional waiata to punctuate and underscore re-enactments of confrontations between Maaori and the Crown. For Brian Potiki (original member of Maranga Mai, playwright, performer, poet, director) Maranga Mai was motivated by a belief “that non-Maaori should understand the history of broken contracts/promises, racism, ‘demonisation’ of the marginalised gang and street culture behind the activism” (Personal letter 4 May 2002). Maranga Mai focused on cultural resistance grounded in oppositional, alternative, sometimes anti-colonial dramaturgy and theatrical display. Maranga Mai’s origins lie in devised theatre and an inclusive approach to Maaori politics. The women involved in the traveling troupe, including Roma Potiki, Jackie Davidson, Huhana Oneroa and Liz Marsden, brought their own awareness of confrontation, pro-community alliances, health and employment matters to the play’s composition.

Since Maranga Mai disbanded in the early 1980s, Brian Potiki has toured the motu with his own politically and historically based plays, most recently, Hiroki’s Song (1990-1993) and A Mutiny Stripped (2003). He works within the alternative theatre stream in New Zealand and shares Moriarty’s belief that theatre at the fringe is where new theatrical developments and experimentation can occur.

Mervyn Thompson and Paul Maunder

During the 1980s, political themes – particularly Maaori attitudes towards land loss and cultural alienation – remained the focal point of Maaori theatre and drama. Notably, during this period, collaborative, group work continued in tandem with the emergence of a stronger line of individual Maaori playwrights. Bicultural projects such as Mervyn Thompson’s Songs to the Judges (1980, published 1983) and Paul Maunder’s Te Tutakitanga a Te Puna (1984) were also forged out of links between Maaori and Paakehaa theatre practitioners.

Thompson developed a theatrical form known as ‘song play’ to explore local political and social issues. Some of his plays focused on Maaori issues and functioned in much the same vein as Maranga Mai to encourage a redefinition of the histories and futures of New Zealand. Consequently, Thompson is widely credited for his influence upon an alternative theatre tradition
and for his contribution towards the development of a unique and independent indigenous theatrical voice.

Paul Maunder, operating mostly out of Wellington, had also been part of the burgeoning experimental New Zealand theatre scene in the early 1970s. After his theatre group Amamus disbanded, Maunder established Theatre of the Eighth Day, a collective which attempted to use theatre to explore New Zealand stories and themes through bicultural lenses. The plays *Te Tutakitanga a Te Puna* and *Hemi* (1983) were performed by Theatre of the Eighth Day's Maaori and Paakehaa members (eventually, Brian and Roma Potiki would be among them) at the New Depot Theatre.

**Hone Tuwhare**

Just prior to Thompson's and Maunder's bicultural theatrical explorations, Hone Tuwhare wrote his classic play *In the Wilderness Without a Hat* (1977). Although the play offers an overt theatrical expression of Maaori cultural identity it was not produced until eight years after it was written. Like Hapipi, Tuwhare sought to use drama as a vehicle for Maaori political expression. His play *In the Wilderness Without a Hat* was inspired by his involvement with the 1975 Land March and the pan-Maaori expression and deliberate assertion of Maaori identity that the Hikoi provoked. It includes a large cast of mostly Maaori characters and provides some rich, powerful roles for Maaori women. *In the Wilderness Without a Hat* is noteworthy primarily because it is set within the walls of a wharenui at a highly emotionally charged time in the major characters' lives: a recently deceased relative is interred on the marae. In a way that had not been attempted in previous Maaori plays, Tuwhare's play embodies the realities of Maaori marae life. Such insights into marae life were also dramatised by Hapipi in his television play *The Protestors* (1982) which was broadcast nationwide. As well as involving Don Selwyn and Jim Moriarty, the cast also included notable figures such as Joanna Paul, Billy T James, Merata Mita and Zac Wallace who went on to create, act in and produce Maaori television and film.

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36 Protestors marched from Te Hapua, Northland, to Wellington to express Maaori concern at the continued loss of Maaori land. The March "mobilised Maaori in ways unseen since the previous century". See Augie Flberas and Paul Spoonley, *Recalling Aotearoa* (Auckland, New Zealand: Oxford University Press, 1999) 44. Tuwhare says, "this march was without precedence, with people from as far south as Invercargill and Dunedin participating. It was, for the first time in our country's painful history, an honest and true demonstration by lowly and humble folk, Maaori and Pakenga, who together gave a more meaningful expression to the platitudine: 'We are one people'". See Hone Tuwhare, Author's Note, "In the Wilderness Without a Hat," *He Reo Hou: 5 Plays by Maaori playwrights*, ed. Simon Garrett (Wellington, New Zealand: Playmarket, 1991) 56.
Renée

In 1982, *Setting the Table*, a play by wahine playwright and novelist, Renée, was staged at the Mercury Theatre. At the vanguard of women's writing in New Zealand, Renée developed her craft in Auckland miles away from the influential Māori theatre scene in Wellington. Although a majority of her 15 plays are not "outwardly Māori" but rather "push to show the struggle and contribution women make to [...] politics and social order" (Kouka, *Introduction* 17-18), they have added significantly to the integration of waahine within New Zealand theatre.

In 1984, Renée joined Working Title Theatre, a group of professionals who helped co-operatives produce their own plays. The following year, she wrote *Groundwork*, her first play to deal with Māori identity issues. Key concerns of Renée's feminist plays such as domestic violence, sexuality, identity crisis, the impact of colonialism, oppressive social systems and the need to respect women are also addressed in several Māori plays.37 Characteristic of many theatre practitioners and writers of the time, Renée wrote her own plays and worked collaboratively. By continuing to write women-focused plays, Renée demonstrates that Māori women can make significant contributions to Māori theatre by writing about their own experiences.

**Breaking new ground**

*He Ara Hou*

In 1989, John Anderson and Roma Potiki, who had been involved in Te-Ika-a-Maui Players, Maranga Mai and Theatre of the Eighth Day, formed a small theatre collective in Paekakariki, He Ara Hou Māori Theatre Inc.. In 1990, *He Ara Hou* previewed *Whatungarongaro* at St Peter's Church Hall in Paekakariki and later performed it at Taki Rua and at various marae around the country. Potiki notes that the devising, workshop and rehearsal processes assisted with the exploration of "issues relevant to the community," and "[strengthened] the individuals and the group" (*He Wahine Kaimahi* 116). A 'come as you are' approach was used in creating *Whatungarongaro*, and total involvement was encouraged. Tamariki/children were often around during rehearsals and partners not directly involved with the play attended the live-in workshops.

*He Ara Hou* Māori Theatre Inc. melded kaupapa Māori philosophies such as whaanaungatanga/relationship, whakahokia/reciprocity and manaaki/hospitality with methods pioneered by Theatre of the Oppressed and Theatre of Liberation, producing a community-oriented theatre that benefited performers and audiences alike.38

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38 Theatre of Liberation works towards a spectator-less act where the "spectator becomes the protagonist in his own play". See Eugene Van Erven, "Theatre and Liberation: Political Theatre that Works (for a Change)," *Illusions* 3 (1986): 6-11.
From 1990 Maaori theatrical activity flourished, in large part because of the diverse range of community-based theatre groups and independent projects that had begun to appear throughout the country in the late 1980s. Selwyn Muru (a sculptor and painter) wrote plays in English and Maaori which were performed by Ngaa Puna Waihanga and Te Ohu Whakaari. Also in the early 1980s at Waiatarau, Freeman’s Bay, Don Selwyn and Brian Kirby ran Department of Labour training courses. These eventually led, in 1984 (through a series of Governmental commissions and recommendations), to the establishment of He Taonga I Tawhiti. In 1992 Selwyn’s and Kirby’s scheme became known as He Taonga Films. At Northland Youth Theatre, in the late 1980s, Arnold Wilson ran a series of arts, culture, drama and dance workshops under the title ‘Te Mauri Pakeaka,’ which encouraged a high level of Maaori participation. Wilson was assisted by Sunny Amey, Jan Bolwell, Don Selwyn and Stephen Bradshaw. An important piece of youth theatre, Driftwood (published 1985) introduced youth, a majority of whom were Maaori, to the educative and creative benefits of theatrical craft.39

The year New Zealand marked 150 years since the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi – 1990 – ushered in some significant Maaori theatrical events and developments. Treat It Right, a play about race relations in Aotearoa, directed by the joint team of waahine Ella Henry and Cathy Denford was performed at the Maidment Theatre in Auckland. That year also saw Te Koanga Spring Maaori Arts Festival in Auckland, including a production of Pei Te Hurinui Jones’s translation of The Merchant of Venice: Te Tangata Whairawa O Weneti, (directed by Selwyn, who later directed a film version which won the Hawaiian Film Festival top prize in 2002) and John Broughton’s Te Hokinga Mai, directed by Rangi Chadwick. Whakarite Theatre Company, which developed out of a Government access scheme, was formed in Christchurch. Members of the Company were concerned about the lack of roles available for Maaori and Pacific Islands actors and consequently much of their focus was on indigenous theatre. While not focused solely on Maaori theatre, Maaori director Christian Penny co-founded Theatre at Large in 1990 in Auckland, and later went on to direct Manawa Taua/Savage Hearts (1993) and Gold (1997) (among other plays) with the group.

Also in 1990, The Depot was transformed into a marae for the duration of the International Festival of the Arts. Te Rakau Hua O Wao Tapu (a combination of Taylor’s Te Ohu Whakaari and Hapipi’s Te-Ika-a-Maui Players) performed a large programme of plays by Maaori dramatists as well as

39 The networks and connections between education and Maaori performance art/theatre have been strong since the early 1970s, helping its expansion and growth.
These subsequent poetry readings over the four weeks of the Festival. Branching out from this experience, Moriarty subsequently toured other plays with his newly formed company, Te Rakau Hua O Te Wao Tapu. These plays, which Moriarty refers to as "flax-roots" drama (Glassey and Welham 61), carry specific social messages about "drug and alcohol abuse, violence and sex" (Kouka, Introduction 19).

By the time Whatungarongaro and Kouka's first play Mauri Tu were performed as a double-bill at The Depot in 1991, Maaori theatre and drama were being recognised by theatre critics and academics as innovative and potentially significant aspects of New Zealand's established theatre frameworks. Since 1991 Maaori theatrical activity has continued to spread, develop and diversify. In 1995 in the South Island, Kilimogo Theatre Company was established by Hilary Halba, Rangimoana Taylor, Cindy Diver and Awatea Edwin. Their aim to build a structure through which innovative bicultural and Maaori theatre of high quality could be presented in Te Wai Pounamu/the South Island culminated in a production of Hone Kouka's Nga Tangata Toa in 1997.

John Broughton and Moriarty also established a productive and enduring theatrical relationship (by 1995 the pair had worked together on 10 of Broughton's plays). Two factors contribute to the content and structure of Broughton's oeuvre. One is the influence of New Zealand playwright Roger Hall and the other is Broughton's academic background (he studied science and went on to become a dental practitioner). Of the approximately 11 plays he wrote between 1988 and 1995, Michael James Manaia (1989) and 1981 (1995) were two of his more serious dramatic pieces. Jim Moriarty worked closely with Broughton on both plays, performing the former (which was commissioned by Fortune Theatre) to high critical acclaim and directing the latter. Michael James Manaia examines the repercussions of the Vietnam War for a returning soldier, and 1981 depicts a whaanau involved in the turmoil surrounding the South African rugby team's tour of Aotearoa in 1981.

Maaori theatre now

From a context where Maaori theatrical activity and playwriting appeared sporadically and on the margins of the established theatre and drama scene, the expression of Maaori cultural and social experiences is increasingly being located in New Zealand's larger, regional theatres. Thirty-one of

40 These included Bruce Stewart's Broken Arse, a dance, Hei Wawata by Talao; He Oriori mo he Tamariki by Tina Cook and Whetu Fala; John Broughton's Nga Puke and Te Haro, Korero Mai Wahine ma (poems, prose etc by Maaori women writers); and a series of works read by Hone Tuwhare and Apirana Taylor.

41 In 1992 during the International Festival of the Arts, Broughton and Moriarty transformed the Lower Hutt Town Hall into a marae for their production of Broughton's play Marae. McNaughton reports that "Te Aestiwa people displayed their weaving, taaniko, and carving and welcomed both cast and audience on to the temporary Wahakhu Marae"; Howard McNaughton, "Drama," The Oxford History of New Zealand Literature, ed. Terry Sturm. 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) 381.

the 71 Maaori plays performed between 1992 and 2000 were produced by Taki Rua. Included among these productions are Grace-Smith’s Purapuruwhetuu and Witi Ihimaera’s Woman Far Walking. Theatres such as Fortune, Bats, Downstage and more recently, Court have staged productions of Maaori plays.

Since 1990, Maaori and Maaori women’s participation in theatrical activity has increased. One striking feature of recent Maaori theatre is the extent to which waahine actors have helped determine how waahine characters are presented in plays written or directed by taane and Paakehaa. Nancy Brunning, Rachel House and Rima Te Wiata are examples of waahine actors who enhance the roles they play by bringing relevant cultural (including gender) experience to their work with taane and Paakehaa playwrights and directors. Brunning’s close work with Kouka, and House’s and Te Wiata’s positions alongside Witi Ihimaera at “the heart of [Woman Far Walking’s] development” (Programme note 2002) show how waahine actors have added crucial complexity to the representation of Maaori women. Increased participation has contributed to an expansion of Maaori drama’s representational styles and modes and has spread to technical areas of theatre such as set and sound with the involvement of practitioners such as Dianne Prince, Warryn Maxwell and Himiona Grace. Maaori dramatists continue to write for theatre and, more frequently, for television, radio and film.

Among waahine writers, Renee, Brown, Owen, Potiki and Grace-Smith in particular have made important contributions to Maaori women’s self-determined representation. Fed by a line of mana waahine activists, theorists and creative artists, their work in turn feeds writers of the new millennium such as Rua MacCallum (whose new play Tatai premiered at The Globe in Dunedin in May 2003), Miriama McDowell who has produced a solo play – Ngaa Manu Koriko (2002) – and newer Maaori writers such as the participants and members of the Young and Hungry Seasons at BATS theatre. As well as waahine, taane playwrights such as Albert Belz and Mitch Tawhi Thomas (winner of the Bruce Mason Award for 2003) are also receiving critical attention. Furthermore, Taki Rua writing workshops are now assisting the production of new works by writers such as Whiti Hereaka and Kirk Torrance.

Added to the proliferation of Maaori dramatists is a steady growth in play publication. The founding of Huia Publishing in 1991, Playmarket’s commitment to the distribution and promotion of scripts and the willingness of well-established publishing houses such as Victoria University Press have meant that Maaori plays are being performed more often. Furthermore, Maaori plays are now

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appearing in curricula of high schools and tertiary institutions because they are recognised for their potential literary as well as performance qualities.

**Facing the past and entering the future**

The recitation of a Māori theatre and drama whakapapa is useful not only because it recognises the influence of theatrical tipuna on current theatrical activity, but also because implicit in the whakapapa’s recitation is an acknowledgement of the oral theatre and performance of marae kawa/protocol. Playwrights, directors and actors employ aspects of marae ritual and performance within their productions – at once paying homage to their ancestors – theatrical or otherwise – and transferring marae protocol to the new site of theatre. In its retracing of tribal histories, in its exhibition of political resistance, and in its retelling of personal stories, Māori theatre presents diverse ways of acknowledging its whakapapa.

Bicultural collaboration in Māori play production processes echoes some more recent social formations within New Zealand society. On the whole, society is placing greater emphasis on bicultural relationships and the importance of long-term Māori involvement and consultation in policy decision making. Government institutions especially are making attempts to understand Māori cultural practices. The thematic content and organisational process of Māori drama and theatre reflect these sociological shifts so that Māori theatre represents part of the whole that is Māori society. Moreover, because of this greater social engagement with Māori culture, the theatre is also speaking to and about non-Māori New Zealand society. For example, Moriarty sees theatre as

[...] a way to offer some perspectives, not just for Māori. We do live together in Aotearoa [...] There is unity in diversity and with the concept of diversity comes the right to be individual, and the fair access to the sharing of resources and to practice individuality or cultural separateness or resonance (*Otago Daily Times*, 9 May 1995).

The development of specifically Māori theatrical forms such as marae theatre and the integration of tikanga and reo Māori as well as extra-theatrical contexts such as the push for agency/self-determinism and the advent of Māori feminism have contributed to waahine’s involvement in theatre.

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44 Marae-theatre is discussed in Chapter Three.
CHAPTER TWO

MAAORI THEATRE, DRAMA
AND TINO RANGATIRATANGA

In *Woman Far Walking*, Tiriti O Waitangi Mahana – a 160-year-old kuia – reclaims a contemporary identity for all Maaori as she retells Aotearoa’s past from a Maaori perspective, interrogates its predominantly Paakehaa present and explores Maaori/Paakehaa relations. The play presents Tiriti O Waitangi Mahana (Tiri for short) as a female embodiment of New Zealand’s “founding document” (Barlow 134) – the Treaty of Waitangi. She is born on 6 February 1840, the same day as the Treaty is signed, and she re-enacts many of the Maaori struggles over those decades.

The Maaori and English versions of the Treaty of Waitangi contain the British Crown’s promise of protection and the Maaori desire to maintain sovereignty over their land and resources. Signifying the bringing together of two peoples, the Treaty of Waitangi is a document which to a large extent determines the way Maaori and non-Maaori New Zealanders relate and has become a crucial document in political conversations about race relations in Aotearoa.¹

¹ See Cieve Barlow, *Tikanga Whakaaro: Key concepts in Maaori Culture* (Auckland, New Zealand: Oxford University Press, 1991) 134 who says that “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".
According to Hone Kouka:

The Treaty of Waitangi has forced Maori and non-Maori to continually examine their relationship with each other. This treaty, and its misunderstanding in translation, continues to underline how different Maori thought is from non-Maori (Introduction 10).

It is not unusual to find Maori plays which either directly address or obliquely refer to the cultural politics stemming from the important social and political issues raised by the Tiriti O Waitangi.

In aligning the Treaty with a Maori woman, Woman Far Walking foregrounds the battles faced by Maori and also the particular roles played by Maori women in these battles. The play asserts Maori women's significant role in historical change and political effect. Tiri recasts the history of Aotearoa from a Maori woman's perspective, carefully yet forcefully dismantling colonial histories in favour of an oral narrative which highlights Maori views and actions in key historical events. In her role as woman warrior, Tiri is an instigator of social and political change and a filter for the nation's historical conflicts. Moreover, she is also a figure of tino rangatiratanga/Maori self-determination.

By inflecting theatrical processes and forms and dramatic content, tino rangatiratanga has become an element of Maori theatre and drama which assists Maori as they attempt to make their own statements and effectively express their cultural identity. The incorporation of tino rangatiratanga modes in theatre and drama recasts theatrical production processes and orients play content towards an investigation of the diverse range of Maori cultural perspectives and the plural expressions of Maori cultural identity. For Maori women, an important off-shoot of tino rangatiratanga has been the implementation of mana waahine thought in drama. Application of mana waahine's guiding principles has generated representations that are particularly alert to the variability in Maori women's experiences. Tino rangatiratanga and mana waahine contribute to the writing and production of Maori plays which make "their own statement" and have "their own identity to express and goodwill to share" (Selwyn 7).

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2 See Leonie Pihama, "Tihei Mauri Ora: Honouring Our Voices: Mana Waahine as a Kaupapa Maori Theoretical Framework," PhD Thesis, University of Auckland, 2001, 126. Pihama's definition of tino rangatiratanga as "the right to define and control what it means to be Maori in Aotearoa" guides my application of the concept in this thesis. (For me tino rangatiratanga is a term describing the Maori drive to control their own representations). However, it is crucial to acknowledge that the term has multiple meanings depending upon the contexts in which it is used. Not surprisingly (given the multifarious groups in Maori society) a common understanding of the concept is split along a variety of lines. For more detailed explanations of the term see Donna Awatere, Maori Sovereignty (Auckland, New Zealand: Broadsheet, 1984); Cleve Barlow, Tikanga Whakaaiao: Key Concepts in Maori Culture (Auckland, New Zealand: Oxford University Press, 1991); Hineani Melbourne, ed., Maori Sovereignty: The Maori Perspective (Auckland, New Zealand: Hodder Moa Beckett Publishers Ltd, 1995) and Augie Fleras and Paul Spoonley, Recalling Aotearoa: Indigenous Politics and Ethnic Relations in New Zealand (Auckland, New Zealand: Oxford University Press, 1999).

3 Simply defined as Maori women's feminism the concept mana waahine Maori is discussed in detail in the Whakaaro.
Maori politics and Maori theatre: The 1970s

The 1970s marks a very important period for Maori politics as well as for the development of Maori theatre. During this decade, Maori political consciousness increased as young, educated, mostly urban Maori recognised the discrepancies between their social and cultural needs and the Crown's weak attempts to address them. "Anti-system groups" (Awatere 27) like Ngaa Tama Toa, Te Matakite O Aotearoa, Te Kotahitanga and the Waitangi Action Coalition advocated Maori rights, presenting strong opposition to New Zealand society's generally apathetic acceptance of the status quo.

Maori grievances over land and language loss and experiences of racism, powerlessness and disintegration of community spawned the development of radical, counter-cultural protests. Issues that had been discussed at hui on marae paepae around New Zealand, and in the homes of Maori, migrated via such groups as Ngaa Tama Toa into the wider New Zealand community. Political demonstration was allied with Maori cultural expression as young Maori assumed a collective, audible and militant voice. Many of Ngaa Tama Toa's demonstrations centred on Waitangi Day celebrations, where protest theatre and Maori performance forms such as haka and waiata were employed to convey contempt for the Crown's neglect of Treaty promises. Although kaumatua/elders such as James Henare "growled" Ngaa Tama Toa members because they were "militant, against Maori sentiment, custom and tradition," Linda Tuhiai-Smith insists that Ngaa Tama Toa heightened "issues [...] taking them both into the Maori world and into the Paakehaa world" (Riding the Back 2002).

In the early and mid 1970s, among politically active Maori there was an atmosphere of frustration and anger and a growing consciousness of the need for action against injustice. In the cultural arena, protests and sit-ins were held to establish Maori language, Maori radio and Maori forms of education. Buoyed by this political and cultural awakening, and spurred on by concern over the diminishing of Maori rights and the loss of Maori land, a pan-Maori protest, initiated either by John Rangihau or Dame Whina Cooper (the oral histories are contradictory), became a dynamic performance of a united Maori culture. The 1975 Hikoi/Land March, a mass expression of Maori grievance over land alienation, radically redefined notions of Maori cultural identity, undercutting the prevalent myth about racial harmony in Aotearoa. In the wake of the Hikoi, Maori recognised themselves as a culturally distinct and powerful group, and in turn, demanded recognition from others as 'tangata whenua' or 'people of the land.' This demand for indigenous rights and status was a deliberate push for Maori to take control of Maori issues.

*International movements for indigenous and Black rights (particularly those in the United States of America, South Africa and Vietnam) also inspired Ngaa Tama Toa's protests.*
Māori women were deeply involved in the political battle for Māori autonomy. For example, Donna Awatere-Huata, Hilda Hilery, Ripeka Evans, Titewhai Harawira and Hana Te Hemara Jackson were active and vocal participants in groups such as Ngā Tama Toa, Waitangi Action Coalition and He Taua. Hana Te Hemara Jackson exemplified the pivotal role wahine assumed when, in 1971, as the New Zealand flag was being raised during the Waitangi Day commemorations, she broke through the police and navy blockade. She stood beneath the flag pole and called, 'Tihei Mauri Ora/’It is the breath of life’ in a gesture of defiance. From this moment, Jackson – a wahine – was singled out by the media and held up as a symbol of Ngā Tama Toa’s defiance and vociferousness. Jackson’s impulsive action had enormous presence and impact.\(^5\)

Māori men and women involved in artistic activities were inspired by this potent cultural politicism and revitalisation. In 1973, for instance, members of Ngā Puna Waihanga/the Māori Artists and Writers Association strengthened the Māori political voice in art and literature by producing work which challenged the conventions of traditional Māori art.\(^5\) That year saw the appearance of the first novel by a Māori writer: along with other works written during the "Māori cultural renaissance", Witi Ihimaera’s Tangi"[mobilized] emblematic figures for Māori identity as indigenous identity in New Zealand" (Allen Blood Narratives 151).

According to Hone Kouka, the turbulent political times of the 1970s “gave rise to Maori theatre as we know it” (Introduction 12), in particular, claims that the Treaty of Waitangi was a potent political document filtered through to drama – especially that written between 1972 and 1986.\(^7\) Two male playwrights – Harry Dansey and Rore Hapipi – were the first Māori to interweave theatrical expression and Māori political issues. Both men were concerned to make political statements through drama. They used plays to retell Māori histories, to express injustice and to examine Aotearoa’s race relations. Consequently, Māori theatre was allied with politics and plays became vehicles for overt political messages.

Harry Dansey’s Te Raukura set a precedent for a significant alliance between theatre and modern Māori political protest, claims for sovereignty and autonomy and recognition of a distinctive cultural identity. It did so by referencing one of the most tragic events in Māori history – the siege of Parihaka Pa.\(^8\) Focussing on the contrasting leadership styles and

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\(^5\) The intense and determined involvement of wahine in the push for Māori autonomy is evident in the subsequent development of mana wahine politics. This is explained in Whakaaro.

\(^6\) Witi Ihimaera, personal communication, 31 May 2004, noted that there were debates amongst members of Ngā Puna Waihanga regarding the place of politics in art and that “it took a while” before “the Artists and Writers decolonised themselves”.

\(^7\) In the mid 1980s and 1990s plays such as The Protestors, In the Wilderness Without a Hat, Get the Hell Home Boy (1982) and Treat It Right continued to address issues related to the Treaty such as cultural identity, integrity, respect and Māori/Paakehaa relations.

philosophies of Maaori prophets Te-Ua-Haumene and Te Whiti O Rongomai, the play traces a history of the Taranaki people's struggle for land, the right to determine cultural expression and often uneasy Maaori/Paakehaa relationships. Dansey's tentative introduction to the published edition of the play demonstrates sensitivity to the New Zealand public's initially wary reception of Maaori culture and language in literature and art. Although the setting is historical, the use of two present-day narrators makes clear the play's reference to the contemporary situation in Aotearoa: the intermingling of past and present gestures towards a Maaori worldview by underlining the influence of ancestors on modern manifestations of Maaori culture. In a convenient mimicry of life in art, Te Raukura's first production saw Syd Jackson – a founding member of Ngaa Tama Toa – play Tamatane the narrator whose role it was "to query, question, break if need be, build anew the world" (Act One, Scene 11).

Rore Hapipi was inspired to write Death of the Land after his involvement in the surge of political activism around the time of (and subsequent to) the 1975 Land March. The piece bluntly confronts the alienation of Maaori from their land and culture, the differing attitudes of Maaori towards their cultural heritage, and, perhaps most controversially, the imbalance of power and the social gaps between Maaori and Paakehaa.

**The emergence of tino rangatiratanga in Maaori theatre**

Since Dansey and Hapipi wrote their first plays, Maaori claims for wider social recognition and demands for self-representation have gradually been redefined under the larger theoretical umbrella of Maaori sovereignty or 'tino rangatiratanga'. The concept tino rangatiratanga is a contested term with an inherent vagueness and open-ended frames of reference. One meaning, is its reference to 'Maaori self-determinism' or, as Ella Henry puts it, the Maaori desire "to have freedom and flexibility to be who and what we are, with pride" (Melbourne 15). In some respects, Maaori theatre has become a testing ground for the range of possible ways tino rangatiratanga can be practised or realised. Maaori practitioners have used theatre as a space for enacting various forms and expressions of tino rangatiratanga politics.

For example, when he founded the Maaori travelling troupe Te-Ika-a-Maui Players, Hapipi initiated a shift in the way Maaori politics could be conceived in Maaori theatre. While their play Death of the Land was an attempt to raise political issues which paralleled the sorts of concerns in wider Maaori society, the establishment of the troupe marked a sharp and deliberate turn towards the realisation of Maaori self-determinism in theatrical production. Hapipi was adamant that Maaori should participate actively in every element of play production:

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9 In Harry Dansey, introduction, Te Raukura: The Feathers of the Albatross (Australia: Longman Paul, 1974) x-xi, Dansey says "Though it was tempting to leave whole sequences in Maori untranslated, this might have appeared pretentious and was resisted".
I resolved [ . . . ] the things I would avoid and rectify in any involvement I had in Maaori theatre. We, the Maaori, would be masters of our own destiny, for better or worse! We would write the plays. We would direct them. I might add that I'm referring to a time before Harry Dansey wrote his play, Te Raukura (Personal letter 29 May 2002).

For Te-Ika-a-Maui Players, Maaori self-determination in theatre was realisable not simply through a playwright’s reflections upon relevant Maaori issues, but also through Maaori participation in the direction and production of plays. Moreover, with Te-Ika-a-Maui Players, Hapipi was determined to show that increased Maaori participation could generate the skills, knowledge and talent necessary to produce “legitimate” theatre:

I don’t think I or others involved in the production of my plays in the 1970s and ’80s did anything different to what Pakeha theatre and television was doing, at the time. In so far as I and they followed the tradition of theatre that came out of Britain and Europe. What difference there was, was that, possibly, for the first time, [ . . . ] we’d formed a theatre company that took our destiny in our own hands. Where Maaori were in charge. At the helm, steering the waka. For better or worse [ . . . ] we were blazing a new trail. The Maaori performing theatre – telling our own stories – off our own bat. No assistance or patronizing from the Pakeha (Personal letter 29 May 2002).

Hapipi foresaw the possibility of a Maaori-led group developing a type of theatricality that stood in contrast to the offerings of “white theatre.” He understood that sustained Maaori involvement in theatre would eventuate in a distinct Maaori theatrical form:

[L.]et’s do it ourselves. Sure, we might make fools of ourselves for a while, but with this one difference [ . . . ] if we stuck to it we’d come through with something unique, which I think is impossible for white theatre to do here no matter how hard they try (Coke 61).

Te-Ika-a-Maui Players incorporated important Maaori political messages in their plays and at the same time developed the notion of Maaori self-determinism in theatrical craft. However, their major play – Death of the Land – did not quite attain the level of uniqueness Hapipi foresaw. Its reliance on the British and European models necessary to produce “legitimate” theatre (an aim of the theatre troupe) restricted any real experimentation with dramatic form, and the ad-hoc nature of the group could not satisfy the commitment required to maintain a truly Maaori-led theatre. Te-Ika-a-Maui’s greatest contribution to the realisation of tino rangatiratanga in Maaori theatre was its emphasis on Maaori participation in all areas of dramatic craft.

Drawing on the five years of Maaori political activity following the 1975 Land March, Maranga Mai exemplifies more overtly than Te Raukura or Death of the Land the use of Maaori drama as a political tool. The play includes issues relevant to tino rangatiratanga and highlights the potential of Maaori theatre as a vehicle for recognition of Maaori “worth” through “resistance and self-assertion” (Soyinka qtd. in Crow and Banfield 6).
Maranga Mai's members aimed to encourage Māori participation in political resistance. Towards that end, the play references Māori self-determination by re-enacting, from a Māori point of view, landmark moments in the Māori protest movement: the 1975 Hikoi, the Bastion Point occupation in 1977, the Raglan Golf Course protests in 1978, He Taua's challenge to the Engineering Haka party in 1980 and the subsequent fight for a Māori-led justice system. In production, Maranga Mai pared back the theatricality so that the use of props, sets and lighting were minimal. The cast set itself the deliberate project of producing theatre as an overt, confrontational political act. For members of the troupe, raw political content and direct, spare production values were necessary elements of a Māori-determined dramatic form.

Maranga Mai is also distinguished from its theatrical predecessors in its use of a wahine figure to canvas historical and contemporary tino rangatiratanga issues. It was the first in a long line of plays which recognised – more overtly than the Māori plays before it – Māori women's roles in the struggle for Māori self-determination. Brian Potiki emphasizes the important place women had in the group:

It was utterly, lovingly, feelingly democratic and consensus-led: more than this, our community at Mangataipa (near Mangamuka bridge), centred around Te Arohanui Marae, were still essentially matriarchal. Strong, deeply compassionate women provide the leadership there. The synergy in Maranga Mai was soft and nurturing qualities expressed by the men and women (Personal letter 14 July 2004).

Maranga Mai's conscious inclusion of mana waahine elements – particularly its emphasis on Māori women's leadership and rangatira status, and its consideration for the integral role waahine play in Māori communities and wider society – indicated the beginnings of what would become a significant and important mana waahine movement within Māori theatrical expression.

In Maranga Mai a kuia figure represents Māori struggle, resistance, optimism and mana. Appearing at strategic moments beginning with the play's opening, she is reminiscent of Papatuanuku, and signals “the awakening of a people, a nation, the land” (Kuia). Later she speaks on behalf of tiopuna reaffirming the challenge raised throughout the play: “I won't forget our struggles, I'll watch over them in death, ae, I'll never really be gone.” In Maranga Mai, the kuia is a lasting and eternal figure of Māori self-determination and mana waahine standing alongside rangatahi/youth to confront injustice.

Ana Meihana, a prominent member of the Waitangi Action Coalition, portrayed the play's kuia figure in later productions (Potiki, Personal letter 4 May 2002), while veteran activist, Titewhai Harawira, was among the cast when Maranga Mai was first performed for an audience of protestors gathered at Bastion Point. The direct connexion between political and theatrical
activism is illustrated by the personnel involved. Through Maranga Mai, the content of Māori theatre was more strongly affiliated with tino rangatiratanga issues.

When Te Ohu Whakaari/Contemporary Māori Performers Trust formed in the early 1980s, its members too were inspired to produce plays with Māori political content. Their work included issues such as access to Māori language, the return of Māori land, women's rights and police mistreatment of Māori. Te Ohu Whakaari toured their plays to marae, schools and community halls. Briar Grace-Smith, who was a member of the troupe for 18 months, recognised the way they educated Māori audiences about Māori issues:

Here was a group of young Māori, using theatre as a way to make change and tell our own stories our way [. . .]. Taking theatre out into the community meant many Māori would experience and be part of this [. . .] performance (Grace-Smith, Telling Our Stories 61).

Like Te-Ika-a-Maui, Te Ohu Whakaari was using theatre to deliver political messages to the Māori community. However, Apirana Taylor (an early member of the troupe) states that Te Ohu Whakaari also “worked for over 100 Māori theatre practitioners who were looking for a place to stage, develop and refine their art” (Author's note 206). Te Ohu Whakaari “took a lot of work by Māori writers” and “put it on stage” (ibid). Also in common with Te-Ika-a-Maui, was Te Ohu Whakaari’s intent to produce their own work by involving Māori in playwriting and production.

A plurality of meanings: Tino rangatiratanga in Māori theatre since 1980

Given the rhetoric surrounding Māori self-determinism in theatre in the early and mid 1980s, it is ironic that plays with Māori themes were often written, produced and/or directed by Paakehaa men. These plays focused on tino rangatiratanga issues such as land loss, cultural alienation and race relations. For example, prominent bicultural projects such as Mervyn Thompson’s Songs to the Judges and Paul Maunder’s Te Tutakitanga a Te Puna are theatrical revisions of major events from Aotearoa’s past. Both plays reconfigure the relationships between Māori and Paakehaa by placing more emphasis on Māori perspectives. They make deliberate departures from the “legitimate” theatrical forms that Hapipi and Te-Ika-a-Maui Players were keen to emulate, while also moving away from the didacticism of plays such as Maranga Mai. Their work favours alternative modes of dramatic representation, and demonstrates how politics can be innovatively woven into theatre.

Songs to the Judges includes Māori and Paakehaa characters imbued in perpetual Land Court trials. Land ownership, injustice, indigenous politics and corrupt legal proceedings are the core thematic concerns of the play. In Te Tutakitanga a Te Puna, Elizabeth, a young wahine, moves in and out of the past and present as she interacts with and comments on the actions of figures such as Hongi Hika and Thomas Kendall.
Thompson was a source of inspiration in moves for self-determinism in Māori theatre by showing how theatrical presentation could generate social power. His illustration of the different ways politics could be woven into theatre—and theatre’s capacity to become a tool for consciousness-raising—impacted upon the Māori plays which followed. Thompson’s main themes—social inequality and injustice, the plight of the working class and unemployed, breakdown of families, poverty and corruption—echoed the experiences of many Māori, giving his plays extra resonance for Māori audiences.10

As with Thompson, the intentions, processes and content of Paul Maunder’s bicultural work with his troupe Theatre of the Eighth Day resonate with Māori concerns. Several of his plays took place on marae because Maunder saw them as sites where crucial historical events had taken place. Maunder’s intention to locate political, historical and social inquiry within Māori theatrical contexts may have been marred, however, by reports that Māori participants “felt [. . .] plundered for content” because “the power basically stayed with the director and one or two of his friends” (Potiki, Interview with Balme 37).

Although Māori participants were asserting themselves by appearing on stage and telling stories which raised important political issues—particularly about colonial oppression and Paakehaa dominance of Māori—Paakehaa, not Māori, were in control of production processes. In the case of Theatre of the Eighth Day, this was particularly ironic because its processes limited the extent to which Māori were able to learn skills that could enable them to produce and direct their own plays.

Because of these bicultural projects, Māori practitioners became more aware of the need to address Māori participation in theatrical processes: they recognised the importance of tino rangatiratanga politics in process as well as content. Like Brian and Roma Potiki they became conscious of the various layerings or pluralities of self-determination that could operate in theatrical production. Moreover, control of all aspects of production and performance could generate a type of theatre that would be more relevant for its Māori participants and audiences. Several practitioners, but most consistently Rangimoana Taylor, were adamant that the political frame of Māori theatre should be widened to incorporate exclusively Māori casts and crews. Taylor had already begun to develop the theatrical skills of Māori with his group Te Ohu Whakaari, which in 1984 was aiming to operate independently of the Wellington Arts Centre where it originated.11 Others, were content to engage Paakehaa in Māori-oriented projects: Roma Potiki worked with Paakehaa John Anderson to produce Whatungarongaro,

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Since the early 1990s, Paakeha directors Colin McColl and Murray Lynch have often been employed in the production of Maaori plays. At Taki Rua, McColl directed Kouka's *Nga Tangata Toa*, Taylor's *Whaea Kairau* (1995) and Grace-Smith's *Haruru Mai*, while Lynch directed Brown's *Irirangi Bay* and Kouka's *Waiora*. Although their theatrical experiences are largely shaped by European conventions, when directing Maaori productions McColl and Lynch enter into a working relationship within a Maaori-determined framework. The directors participate in customary rituals such as karakia and blessings before rehearsals and performances, consult intensively with playwrights and collaborate with kaumataua. Kouka says "in relation to Colin and Murray, or the Pakeha directors, they have to buy into the ideal of the mode that they're going to work in" (*Our Own Voice* 112). He continues "[...] Colin McColl and Murray Lynch [...] had an acceptance of where they stood at the beginning of it, and what they had to gain, and also where we stood and what we had to gain as well. The partnership just seemed to work beautifully" (ibid 117).

McColl’s and Lynch’s involvement in projects with Maaori practitioners is a measure of the increased confidence and skills Maaori now bring to theatre. As well, it is an indication of an embracing of Maaori theatre by the general New Zealand theatre-going public. Theatres such as Auckland’s ATC and Christchurch’s Court and Dunedin’s Fortune, now seek out plays by Maaori to include in their programmes. Gradually, Maaori have moved from a position where they felt exploited and disempowered, to one where they determine the terms in which plays are constructed. In handing their productions over to directors like McColl and Lynch a prominent and confident position is staked out by Maaori practitioners. Moreover, it is possible that Maaori theatrical processes start to inflect non-Maaori ones, as McColl, Lynch and others transfer the skills and experience they have gained from their direction of Maaori plays into non-Maaori processes.

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12 Kaumataua are cultural guardians and consultants for Maaori plays. They perform a variety of functions dependent upon their skills and the needs of the cast and crew. Most ensure that Maaori protocol is followed during workshops and rehearsals and give advice about the play’s Maaori cultural aspects.

13 See Nicola Legat, interview with Nancy Brunning, "True Grit," *North and South* 163 (1999): 90-95. Brunning says of her work with Colin McColl “My view is that directors who direct anything that has Maaori content expect you to give 100 percent, so I expect the directors to give 100 percent, taking on board all of the concepts and not being afraid to ask when they don’t understand. Colin does that” (94).

14 As early as 1995, John Broughton was commissioned to write a play for Fortune Theatre (1982). In 2001, Briar Grace-Smith’s *Haruru Mai* was included in ATC’s programme and in 2003 Potiki’s *Memory of Stone* premiered at The Court.

15 Cathy Downes and Nathaniel Lees are other non-Maaori directors who more recently, have been involved with Maaori productions.
However, there is still debate among Maaori practitioners about the affect of these Maaori/Paakehaa projects. A primary concern is the extent to which involvement of Paakehaa directors and the appropriation of plays by mainstream production companies reduce Maaori control of Maaori representations. According to Rangimoana Taylor, for example, every time a non-Maaori directs a Maaori production, Maaori give away their power:

We’re putting in good Maaori writing and actors, but we’re giving the show away having a non-Maaori to direct a Maaori production, and we’re giving our power away by letting this happen (Capital Times 21 May 1996).

The considerable philosophical divergence between Taylor’s and Kouka’s positions derives from perceptions about the extent to which self-determination can (or should) be applied in Maaori theatre. The plurality of understandings about Maaori self-determinism in a theatrical context shows how various shades of self-determinism may be applied to theatrical processes (each shade producing different sets of outcomes and responses). The distance between Taylor’s and Kouka’s viewpoints also suggests that there are a range of possible ways Maaori cultural identity can be represented in theatre.

**He Ara Hou Maaori Theatre Inc.: Tino rangatiratanga in action**

Roma Potiki has been a key participant in dialogue concerning the application of tino rangatiratanga principles in the production of Maaori plays. One of her major contributions to Maaori theatre is the implementation of processes which reflect more closely than any preceding them, a theatrical politics rising out of tino rangatiratanga. In fact, Potiki argues that Maaori theatre can be an example of “tino rangatiratanga in action” (Potiki, Confirming Identity 153). She speaks of the creation of self-determined, Maaori models of theatre implying that these models will assist Maaori in political, cultural and artistic expression:

It is a visible claiming of the right to control and present our own material using self-determined processes which suit us and achieve our political, cultural, and artistic aims (ibid).

Potiki’s approach to theatrical production fosters greater participation by Maaori so that they are responsible for the creation, production and performance of their own material. For Potiki, a form of tino rangatiratanga is realisable through production processes which foster sensitive approaches to group work and enable participants to explore aspects of their communal and individual identities:

If you get people together and involve them in making drama, then you can begin to express the diverse natures of contemporary Maaori experience. For all things Maaori, our strength comes from being in a group (He Wahine Kaimahi 115).

Her particular application of production processes elicits greater depth in explorations and representations of Maaori identity and facilitates reinterpretations of the way tino rangatiratanga can be made manifest in Maaori theatre. According to Potiki, tino
rangatiratanga in theatre manifests when Māori are able to freely and openly express their diverse experiences.

A particularly formative set of experiences for Potiki's conceptualisation of tino rangatiratanga in theatre were the workshops she participated in alongside visiting Filipino representatives of PETA (the Philippines Education Theatre Association) and BUGKOS (the national alliance of Philippines cultural organisations). The Filipino envoys employed a "kind of educational process which makes everyone feel like they are teachers and learners at the same time" (Coke 61), a process that, according to Potiki, "was acceptable at the community level" (Interview 7 Dec. 2002). The PETA and BUGKOS representatives introduced Potiki to "Integrated Arts Workshops" – three-day workshops in which “participants gradually and collectively compose a dramatic story that relates their experiences” (Van Erven 8). Potiki then introduced these processes to the members of He Ara Hou. These processes tapped the personal and group experiences of members, helping them to explore relevant social, cultural and political issues.

Potiki describes the theatrical processes used by He Ara Hou as "an example of the form of Māori Theatre emerging in the 1990s" (Potiki, Confirming Identity 155). The implementation of inclusive, community-based theatrical development affected the lives of participants – waahine and taane alike – and made for a dramatic experience which was more reflective of the realities of He Ara Hou's audiences.

Whatungarongaro: a story of now about people like us is a dynamic example of what Potiki refers to as "tino rangatiratanga in action" (Confirming Identity 153), and an equally important example of how tino rangatiratanga processes produce a deepening of the representations of Māori lives. The play was devised upon the understanding that there was collective ownership of the performance text. Whaanauungatanga/relationship was fostered through the involvement of cast and crew's families in rehearsals and other activities. Māori rituals such as karakia were implemented during the play's creation. The characters' experiences in the play derived from the stories told by members of the group.

More than plays preceding it – which deal mostly with Māori nationalist issues and wide political concerns – Whatungarongaro develops smaller, domestic, whaanau-based stories. While domestic violence and alcohol abuse are not the larger issues to do with land rights and language that were addressed in earlier plays, they are reflections of the personal, more intimate concerns confronted by many Māori in their daily lives. He Ara Hou facilitated Māori

16 In its incorporation of Filipino models of theatrical creation and production, He Ara Hou was like other theatre troupes from New Zealand's experimental line, which gleaned theatre experience internationally. See Murray Edmond, "Old Comrades of the Future: A History of Experimental Theatre in New Zealand 1962-1982," PhD Thesis, University of Auckland, 1996, 85. Edmond explains that experimental groups such as Theatre Action worked under the influence of L'Ecole Jacques Lecoq; Living Theatre modelled their early work on R G Davis's San Francisco Mime Troupe and Amamus gained ideas from the Polish Theatre Laboratory and Jerzy Grotowski.
participation and, in turn, produced representations that maintained their political bite despite the specific, local and intimate subject matter.

One further outcome of the tino rangatiratanga processes established in Potiki’s work was closer scrutiny of women’s roles in groups. He Ara Hou members sought to recognise and rectify any power imbalances stemming from gender conflict. Potiki sought assurance from the group that they would respect female participants and foster an environment that was “very supportive of [...] women” (Potiki, Confirming Identity 159). Clearly, Potiki’s understanding of tino rangatiratanga in Māori theatre is underpinned by a feminist intent to value women’s contributions and enable them to become more active in their own representations.

With this philosophy, He Ara Hou aligned theatrical expressions of tino rangatiratanga with mana waahine and made a definitive alteration to Māori political expression in theatre. Their production processes generated a type of Māori drama more concerned with the politics of cultural identity. Rather than being viewed purely as a tool for political resistance and agitation, Māori theatre became a platform for the exploration of contemporary Māori experience and for the performance of a range of ways of identifying as Māori. In plays following Whatungarongaro, Māori playwrights chose to project Māori whaanau relationships and individual experiences.

Wahine Toa: A bicultural approach to tino rangatiratanga and mana waahine

Keri Kaa’s work with Sunny Amey and Jan Bolwell on the cross-cultural Wahine Toa, Taki Toru and Sing Whale! offered new possibilities for the production of a type of bicultural theatre that incorporated tino rangatiratanga and mana waahine. Throughout the production period for their dance-theatre, Kaa, Amey and Bolwell aimed to “model a partnership between Māori and Paakehaa” (Amey, Interview 7 Dec. 2002) that would shape an integrated, culturally-informed piece of theatre. The bicultural processes used by Kaa, Amey and Bolwell evolved from the shared aims, trust and respect that can develop out of long-term friendship. The creative relationship between the three influenced the contributions of the waahine performers involved in the production. Wahine Toa required actors and dancers to work in an atmosphere that encouraged experimentation with traditional performance forms. In this respect, Kaa was pivotal. Amey admits that much of the process relied on Kaa’s determination about how her “cultural base” could be “explored and changed” (Interview 7 Dec. 2002).

Wahine Toa is radical in its claim for an alternative status for the female figures of Māori mythology. Its retelling of Māori myth foregrounds waahine such as Hineahuone, Mahuika and Murirangawhenua, whose significance for life beyond the marae – their function as guides for behaviour – is emphasised. By invoking a line of waahine ancestresses, Wahine Toa brings
mana waahine to public attention and begins to redress the invisibilisation of Maaori women. Moreover, it asserts Maaori women's vocal and tangible importance within Maaori society.

During *Wahine Toa*'s creation, decisions were collective. Instead of getting "a Maaori person in" (ibid) to give last minute advice about the incorporation of cultural performance forms, customs or ritual, both Maaori and Paakehao experts were included at every stage. This is unlike Kaa's experience as a cultural advisor for other theatrical projects. She speaks disparagingly of directors who only consult her about taha Maaori elements a few days prior to the play's opening, undermining the importance of the cultural material and making her task incredibly difficult (Kaa, Interview 18 June 2002).

Contrastingly, Kaa had a guiding presence during devising and rehearsal stages of *Wahine Toa* and waahine performers felt more at liberty to express their opinions and reservations about the shape of various pieces because Kaa was involved. Through a bicultural approach which facilitated and integrated self-determined representation, the young women found that they were able to stake a claim over the material that was being produced. Bolwell explains:

> [W]e had a beautiful piece in *Wahine Toa* called Rimurimu which Keri sang, which was about the hair like the seaweed and we had all these women [who] had long hair and I choreographed this dance [. . .] which really focused on the hair and how the hair moved and they were on their knees and at one point I had them turning, and down on the floor, with their backsides facing the audience. And these young women who were traditional dancers came to me and they said, 'Jan, we feel deeply uncomfortable putting our bums out towards the audience.' Now I was into the mould of a contemporary dance piece and [. . .] I was thinking of it completely from shape and form, as I worked this dance. They were saying, [. . .] 'My god, she's got us baring our bums to the audience, exposing ourselves in this way and [. . .] insulting the audience.' [. . .] And I could feel their discomfort, you know, so I'd go up to Keri [. . .] and I'd say, 'I still don't feel that, what can I do that will make that acceptable?' So often with just a slight change in orientation, I could still work creatively and yet make it acceptable for those young people. So there was huge learning for me as well [. . .] to be able to be malleable and to make them feel secure so that we could in fact explore ideas and still not break a kawa that was very important to them. I think that's part of the bicultural process isn't it really? (Interview 7 Dec. 2002).

Kaa's flexibility, her willingness to manipulate material of sacred, spiritual and intellectual value to Maaori and her strength in fielding query and criticism, produced a cross-cultural exchange that empowered waahine participants to make decisions and suggestions during the creative stages of production. Kaa's assertive stance towards the work — sealed to Amey's and Bolwell's
determination to develop a truly bicultural creative process – facilitated the realisation of tino rangatiratanga and mana waahine within a Maaori/Paakehaa theatrical relationship.

**Individual playwrights’ inclusion of tino rangatiratanga and mana waahine**

In many plays, scrutiny of the differences in Maaori life experiences and their expression of self-determination have become increasingly centred on Maaori women characters. Intent on foregrounding Maaori women’s experience, several plays by waahine weave Maaori political issues such as the assertion of identity into careful investigations of the gender relationships internal to Maaori society.

Riwia Brown’s *Roimata* and *Nga Waahine* focus on waahine resilience in the face of male deceit, aggression and disinterest. In these plays, conflicts around sex, marriage and pregnancy are resolved because waahine characters are able to negotiate difficult social obstacles. The patriarchal structures governing whaanau life, violence, oppression and the resulting demands placed on waahine are explored in Rena Owen’s play *Daddy’s Girl* and Renee’s *Jeannie Once* (1990, published 1991) and *Te Pouaka Karaehe* (1992). Renee’s *Groundwork* and *Jeannie Once* also expose the double oppressions experienced by waahine who are victimised because of their race and their gender. Plays such as *Daddy’s Girl*, *Te Pouaka Karaehe*, and Grace-Smith’s *Ngaa Pou Waahine* examine the tensions between traditional and modern Maaori lives and troubled relationships between older and younger generations. They also gesture towards the damaging impact of Paakehaa social and political controls on the expression of waahine identity.17

As taane playwrights engage with mana waahine concerns, their representations of Maaori women gradually become more relevant to Maaori women audiences. More so than waahine playwrights, taane writers represent tino rangatiratanga and mana waahine in the form of political epics. The tino rangatiratanga issues which first appeared in *Death of the Land* and *Maranga Mai*, such as the push for land rights, the reclamation of reo Maaori and the redressing of the imbalance of power between Maaori and the Crown are returning to the stage. However, in more recent plays, these issues are frequently figured through Maaori women characters who participate in epic journeys or foundational moments in national history. In plays like *Woman Far Walking*, *Whaea Kairau* and *1981*, Maaori women are involved in decade-long wars and political confrontations and battles which at times assume monumental proportions.

Like *Maranga Mai*, *Woman Far Walking* brings tino rangatiratanga and mana waahine together whilst recovering Aotearoa’s history and giving it a Maaori point of view. In the play, Tiri Mahana demonstrates an absolute desire to assert her Maaori cultural identity. The play

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17 Detailed discussions of these plays and playwrights is carried out in Chapters Five and Six.
suggests, however, that Maaori identity has been circumscribed by interactions with Paakehaa and the necessity to struggle against them. Rather than providing a simple solution to questions about whether tino rangatiratanga and mana waahine can be realized, Tiri Mahana represents a problematisation of the issues. Through her, the play raises questions about the quality of the tino rangatiratanga being asserted and the difficult battles that must be won if self-determinism is to be realised in an expansive and full form. In other words, Ihimaera raises questions about the extent to which Maaori can actually realise their tino rangatiratanga when confronted by the invasiveness of Paakehaa political and social structures.

**Multiple expressions, multiple existences**

Maaori theatre realises a plurality of meanings and uses for tino rangatiratanga and mana waahine politics. Maaori practitioners use theatre as a testing ground for the possible manifestations a self-determined politics may take on, experimenting with different applications of tino rangatiratanga and mana waahine and in the process producing plays of increasing thematic variety, depth and breadth. Some plays project anti-colonialism through protest and see theatre as a vehicle for channelling anger. Others draw on shared expertise to articulate the contemporary position of Maaori or investigate universal themes in specifically Maaori contexts. Still others challenge stereotypical constructions of indigenous identity and resist dominant hierarchies.

According to Roma Potiki, tino rangatiratanga can also be observed in play production processes which generate Maaori participation in all aspects of playmaking. If Maaori are in control of their images, and are knowledgeable about the ways that stories can be constructed and told, this inflects the way plays represent Maaori lives. In other words, the more Maaori involved in the production processes of theatre, the wider the range of experiences that are brought to plays and subsequently injected into stories for the stage. One very notable effect of tino rangatiratanga practices in playmaking is an increase in plays about the assertion of Maaori identity and a concomitant increase in the number of characters who are agents in their own identity formation.

The development of a distinct political voice in Maaori theatre has been accompanied by the dramatisation of a range of Maaori women's stories. Since the late 1980s, the representation of waahine experiences on stage has been altering the political thematic of Maaori theatre. The impact of Maaori self-determination and mana waahine Maaori movements, has gradually contributed to a sustained recognition of the distinct, significant, political, social and cultural differences among Maaori and especially Maaori women.

Rather than using theatre to define Maaori cultural identity, Maaori dramatists exploit its representational force to query, challenge and oppose existing, and often ill-informed notions of
what it is to be Maaori. By drawing upon a combination of personal histories, hapu and iwi identifications and wider New Zealand social contexts, plays depict Aroha’s mokopuna making decisions about who they are and where they fit in. One obvious and promising consequence of such representations is the range of options for expression that are now becoming apparent through plays. In their alignments between Maaori theatrical processes, dramatic content and expressions of tino rangatiratanga and mana waahine, Maaori plays are more representative of a variety of “authentic cultural existence[s]” (Soyinka qtd. in Crow and Banfield 6) and are claiming a sense of authority for Maaori.

This said, because theatre is created through collaborative effort and because there is a relatively small pool of practitioners in Aotearoa, it is inevitable that Maaori and Paakehaa will often produce work together. These bicultural relationships present an inevitable challenge to both Maaori and non-Maaori theatre practitioners as they attempt to combine different cultural practices and ways of working.

Maaori theatre’s confident assertion of distinctive and varied Maaori political voices is matched by developments in dramaturgy. Since the late 1980s, a significant number of plays presented in established venues (such as The Depot, Downstage and more recently, Auckland’s Herald and Maidment theatres) contain a distinctive kind of thematic and style which draws on Maaori references and inflection as well as marae rituals and structures. Such practices contribute to the creation of a Maaori dramatic style which also influences the sorts of waahine roles and characters appearing in Maaori plays.
In Briar Grace-Smith's *Ngaa Pou Waahine*, Te Atakura (Kura) — the central wahine character — determines her whakapapa and asserts her waahine ancestry from within the historically and spiritually charged space of an ancestral wharenui/meeting house.\(^1\) In the 1997 touring production by Taki Rua, Sean Coyle's and Kate Peter's design accentuated the vital role of the wharenui as a physical representation of Kura’s ancestry.\(^2\) Selected elements of marae protocol and a few architectural structures common to wharenui were (re)presented in the theatre space. Four engraved poupou were arranged in a broad semi-circle across the stage; in wharenui, poupou function as texts, containing stories about gods or tribal ancestors.\(^3\) In the play, the references to an ancestral wharenui, combined with specially composed karakia/prayers, mihi/welcome, oohaki/dying pronouncements and waiata — oral performance forms of the marae — provide a Maaori base for Kura’s attempts to define her cultural identity. At the conclusion of the play, with the aid of the ancestral waahine guides represented in the poupou, Kura is able to give voice to her experience and identify her whakapapa.\(^4\)

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1. Wharenui represent the body of an important tribal ancestor and as such, are sacred to the iwi.
2. *Ngaa Pou Waahine* was first performed in 1995 at Taki Rua theatre.
3. Poupou are carved wooden posts which stand inside a wharenui, providing structural support. In their span from floor to ceiling, they are symbols of the bind between the cosmological, ancestral parents – Ranginui and Papatuanuku.
4. Most poupou represent male figures. Here, using waahine figures, Grace-Smith introduces the idea of claiming the inner space of the whare.
Although the wharenui and the inclusion of marae performance forms in *Ngaa Pou Waahine* are stylised representations of 'real' marae and wharenui, and therefore only references to them, they still have a powerful resonance for audiences. The (re)presentation of the marae and wharenui in Western theatre space keys the audience into the wider cultural politics associated with marae while creating the possibility for the marae and wharenui to be seen as spaces for theatrical performances. This chapter explains how marae-concepts came into Māori plays by looking in particular at the development of - what may be coined - marae-concept theatre: a Māori theatrical form which, in conventional theatre space, incorporates the protocols, customs and sometimes the physical architecture and spatial dimensions of the marae.\(^5\) Marae-concept theatre originates from and references Māori performance forms (those that often take place at hui) such as waiata, oratory, storytelling and physical display. These particular Māori adaptations to conventional theatre forms have been propitious for the representation of Māori on stage and have also facilitated the creation of Māori women characters, like Kura, who are more self-determined and self-expressive.

**Māori theatre and the marae**

Keri Kaa recognises that marae ritual, such as the poowhiri/welcome ritual, bears similarities to a theatrical performance. She posits the marae as the originary site of Māori theatre:

> If you grew up the way we grew up, the way many Māori in rural areas grew up, going to the marae at regular intervals and watching the preparations 'back-stage' for a welcome and watching what actually happens at a welcome with the host people getting all lined up and everyone to their allotted positions and then watching the arrival of an ope or visiting group, it was total theatre, it's just that the script is never prepared, it's unscripted but it is a total theatre, in many ways it's true theatre particularly in the unpredictability of the action, that's the best bit. I think that's what I've always enjoyed about the marae is the theatre, you see the protagonists, you see all the dead beats then you see some of the singers and performers who are a bit like a Greek chorus [. . .] (Kaa, Interview 18 June 2002).

Her explication of the poowhiri in Māori ceremonial gatherings reinforces other commentators' notions about the marae as a site for traditional performances. Hone Kouka, for example, states that "the marae is [. . .] theatrical in nature, consisting of the marae atea (the clear space in front of the marae where the orators speak) and the paepae (the area at the sides of the marae atea where visitors sit)" (*Development of Maori Drama* 155). Don Selwyn contends that the marae is "a natural organic living [. . .] amphitheatre" where "people sit down and

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\(^5\) I am using the term 'marae-concept' to refer to a theatrical activity that previously has been called 'marae-theatre' (See Christopher Balme, *Decolonizing the Stage: Theatrical Syncretism and Post-colonial Drama* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999) 2) and 'theatre-marae' (see Rangimoana Taylor in Debbie Gee, "Theatre-marae: Welcome Change," *On Film* 7:1 (1989): 44-46). Marae-concept theatre is intended to be a looser descriptor, allowing for the variety of ways marae elements are incorporated in conventional theatre spaces and practices. It also describes more accurately the fact that it is the "illusion of a marae" (Gee 44) that is erected in the theatre space rather than an unproblematic transference of marae into the theatre.
each of the speakers get up and do their performance and the argument and the debate” (Greenwood 17). In accordance with Kaa, Paki Cherrington insists that the “marae is where Maaori theatre comes from” and that poowhiri is "pure theatre” (Interview 11 June 2002).

The theatricality of the marae is also central to its place as a forum for Maaori cultural politics. Hauraki Greenland uses dramatic terminology when he describes the role of the marae as a site for political debate and koorero. He highlights an inevitable relationship between the expression of Maaori politics and the processes and protocol of the marae:

the mode and the circumstance of Maaori politics are, respectively, largely oral and frequently marae-situated [...] or referenced, with procedure being based on kawa [...] and local group consensual decision-making when in non-traditional settings. These constitutive elements define the grassroots of Maaori politics as drama (vide Goffman) in which participants weave a web of meanings established by tradition and legitimated by common consent. Accordingly, ascribed criteria such as whakapapa [...] age, gender, mana [...] and acquired criteria such as fluency in oratory, demeanour and status, are used by the actor and this combination is frequently decisive for the outcome (88).

For Kaa, Selwyn and other theatre practitioners, the origins of a traditional Maaori theatre lie in the marae and, because of this, are inextricably tied to elemental, physical and spiritual aspects of Maaori life. Interestingly, while describing the theatricality of Maaori ritual and marae structures, Kaa and Selwyn refer to Western theatrical conventions. By referring to the Greek and Roman heritage which underpins Western theatre in their explication of marae ritual, these practitioners proffer reasons for Maaori interest in conventional theatre. Both suggest that what are apparently primarily Western conventions are already inherent in the theatricality of traditional Maaori practices. It is this interrelationship that shapes the form of contemporary marae-concept theatre.

Like Kaa and Selwyn, Greenland notes the inherent theatricality of formal marae activity. For him, however, the theatre becomes an analogy for the way Maaori politics are enacted on marae. Maaori politics can be framed as drama because they are often incorporated in marae-based rituals – rituals that are inherently theatrical. The performance element of Maaori politics is also transferable to non-traditional settings: Greenland points out that procedures from the marae, such as kawa or consensual decision-making processes, are transportable and can be referenced out of their original marae-contexts. Clearly, then, the marae (and/or its constituent processes) is a potent site for the performance of Maaori cultural politics.

Considering that the marae is a site where Maaori politics are often enacted and discussed, marae-concept theatre creates a strong political base for plays. In theatre, the marae context is particularly pertinent for Maaori women. The sorts of politics in Maaori plays are often those
which relate to women's issues and cultural identity – issues which do not always receive as much attention as others in traditional marae contexts. As will be discussed later in this chapter, in marae-concept theatre waahine have been able to negotiate their tino rangatiritanga, assert their difference and represent themselves in a theatrical context which also has meaningful and relevant cultural resonance.⁶

A further function of some marae-concept theatre is its conscious addressing of the barrier between stage and audience, so that the two are joined by an inclusive address that gathers an audience into the onstage world. In the eyes of Maaori audiences this dilutes the theatre's reputation as an elitist, exclusive and alien place, because the practices, rules and behaviours which frame the drama become familiar and comfortable. Playwrights, directors and actors employ aspects of marae rituals such as poowhiri within their productions, paying homage to their ancestors, theatrical or otherwise. Western theatre-going conventions are supplemented by marae conventions, implementing an acculturation of the Western theatre space. Furthermore, for many Maaori there is a shared history of cultural development, growth and tribal specificity attached to marae, and performances which occur through marae-concept theatre are touched by this shared whakapapa, adding further resonances to the stories that unfold on stage.

By maintaining references to marae procedures and protocols, marae-concept theatre brings Maaori inflections into a non-marae setting. However, Rangimoana Taylor points out that this is only the "illusion of a marae" erected in the "theatre" (Gee 44) and not pure marae-theatre. According to Taylor, pure marae-theatre is marae-based and is a separate situation where the rules and regulations that apply to theatre cannot always be easily or directly transferred. Brian Potiki's experience of performing in a marae highlights the different dynamics at work in the marae venue:

In 1998 in Rotorua, I remember a threatening Maori male roaring at me to remove myself from a table I was sitting on – a work table I hasten to add, not one in the kitchen or wharekai – just as we were about to start, the table had been elevated so my character could be seen by all the audience. This was followed by a moment of cultural schizophrenia! [. . .] the man's Maori partner hissed scoldingly at him 'it's part of the play set' (Personal letter 4 May 2002).

As Potiki describes, there are demands and restrictions in marae-based settings which have the potential to impinge on theatrical performances. In marae-concept theatre, however, marae rules are not as strictly applied – because it is the illusion of a marae that is erected in the theatre. Rather than a wholesale transplantation of the marae into theatre space, marae-concept theatre involves a selection of marae elements.

⁶ Tino rangatiritanga is discussed fully in Chapter Two.
Marae-concept theatre can emphasise the marae as a setting for performance, but also the specialised processes and practices attached to marae. In plays such as *In the Wilderness Without a Hat*, *The Protestors* and *Te Hokinga Mai*, the marae provides a site for the action. However, with “the illusion of a marae concept” erected in the theatre, the marae and its associated rituals are used stylistically to reshape the circumstances and nature of the theatrical experience created for an audience. For example, Te Ohu Whakaari performed Rore Hapipī’s *Tupuna* (1987) using marae-concept theatre. The audience were seated on benches around the action, and preceding the play and the interval, the cast members performed hongi/sharing of breath and waiata. As opposed to theatre in a marae setting, therefore, marae-concept theatre brings together the agendas of theatrical practice and the cultural specificity of the marae. Importantly, groups and individual practitioners are freer to make decisions about which aspects of the marae they will keep intact in the transfer to theatre and which aspects they will manipulate to accommodate with Western theatrical convention.

This practice of ‘picking and choosing’ which elements of the marae’s customary practices will be applied to a theatrical setting is particularly important to Māori women’s appearances and performances in marae-concept theatre. It means that waahine need not be subject to some of the stricter gender roles which govern ritual enactments on marae. With few tribal exceptions, Māori women are not permitted to perform the whaikoorero/speeches of welcome that constitute the centrepiece of the poowhiri. Māori tikanga and kawa dictate that the public speaking arena of the marae paepae/sacred area in front of the meeting house is reserved for Māori men. From the paepae, male elders recite the whakapapa of the local iwi, recall tribal histories, explain the significance of proverbs, and declaim ancient chants. Thereby, those men “expert in the art of oratory” (Barlow 85) simultaneously reflect upon and construct their identities while delivering whaikoorero. On many marae in nineteenth century Aotearoa and still today, waahine were not “permitted to occupy a place on the paepae” because it was believed 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” (ibid). However, in marae-concept theatre, these gendered marae rituals and spaces can be reorganised and re-worked to facilitate (and in some cases, accentuate) Māori women’s expression.

Representations of Māori women are enhanced by approaches to marae-concept theatre which aim to achieve a sense of participation and ownership on behalf of all Māori. A key concomitant of Roma Potiki’s conceptualisation of marae-concept theatre is that Māori take the theatre over to make a statement about tangata whenua status. This ownership of space requires the physical transformation of the theatre and adjustments to conventional theatre protocols, so that spectators and performers are
following a traditional form which is like the form of going onto a marae. There would be audience outside at a certain time, there would be karanga, the audience would have a chance to respond to that karanga, and would be welcomed into the space and made to feel welcome; and in so doing reduce the sense of alienation for the Māori theatre-going public. And my understanding is that there would probably be karakia [prayer-chants] at some point in that process to bless the space. [. . .] So there would be an acknowledgement of the requirements to make a Māori audience feel comfortable. [. . .] So at the end they could talk and not just clap [. . .] sharing that particular protocol with a non-Māori audience, and with a Māori audience to make them feel at home and to reiterate that we are also part of the theatre, the theatre is no longer an alien space for us (Interview with Balme 39).

Clearly for Potiki, marae-concept theatre is more than simply a decorative refurbishment of the theatre space (to make it 'more Māori'). She claims the theatre space and its processes for Māori performers and audiences, using marae structures and protocols as an invitation to enter a new space and share the dialogue resulting from the acceptance of that invitation.

Marae-concept theatre can enhance audiences' understandings of marae life and taane and waahine roles within it, by generating a virtual marae experience. In Taylor's and Moriarty's production of *In the Wilderness Without a Hat* audiences were provided with such an experience. Mere Boynton's review describes the theatre's physical transformation into a marae:

the theatre had been transformed into a wharenui [. . .]. The audience were expected to conduct themselves as if they were in real marae surroundings, and that meant taking off their shoes and participating in a formal Māori welcome. The "theatre marae" setting worked well especially for Māori people in the audience, helping them to feel more comfortable and sure of themselves in what was usually a pakeha-dominated environment. It was instrumental in dispelling any apprehension the pakeha audience may have felt about marae and introducing them to the marae as a theatrical possibility (Boynton 8).

Boynton's perception that marae-concept theatre can be used as a tool for educating Pakehā audiences and familiarising them with marae protocols complements Roma Potiki's conceptualisation of marae-concept theatre. Boynton's conceptualisation describes a widening of the address of marae-concept theatre so that Pakehā are eased into the possibilities of a theatre based on Māori contexts and processes.

Furthermore, Taylor's and Moriarty's production of Tuwhare's play greatly expanded the level of contribution from Māori participants. It became a springboard for further experimentation with the marae-form inside the theatre context. Boynton comments that the
most interesting outcome was the increased Maaori participation. Maaori members of the audience practically took over all proceedings and insisted that whaikoorero [...] and waiata [...] be given at the end of the play (Boynton 8).

In this production and others like it, Maaori were boldly and directly claiming theatre as a vehicle for their cultural representation.

Taylor's and Moriarty's successful production culminated in The Depot Theatre's transformation into a marae for 1990's International Festival of the Arts. During this time a range of work by Maaori, including poetry and prose readings by waahine, was housed in the theatre. Audience members were required to participate in most aspects of marae tikanga and the theatre itself was home to Maaori art. The Depot theatre was transformed into a wharenui filled with drama, dance, music, poetry and so on, carvings and tukutuku.

All [illustrating] the position of Maaori in the contemporary society of Aotearoa. [...] Contemporary carvings, purpose carved as a gift from carvers of Aotearoa to the actors/dancers of Aotearoa, will stand proudly in place in the wharenui as an integral part of each performance (Moriarty, Stagestruck 1990).

At this point, Maaori culture was not merely on display in a theatrical setting, instead, the theatre became a 'living' marae where Maaori protocols were enacted. Audiences could witness two theatricalities – Maaori and European – co-existing.

**Maaori reference theatre**

Therefore, since the mid 1980s, marae-concept theatre has gradually been recognised as an influential and critical Maaori theatrical form. Due to the long-term commitment of Maaori practitioners in recent Maaori theatre, the inclusion of marae elements has become taken-for-granted. Overt marae-concept theatre is slowly being replaced by what can be more appropriately called Maaori reference theatre. Now that Maaori have established the theatre as another turangawaewae/standing place, writers and directors need only include a brief karanga/welcoming call, karakia or tauparapara/chant to act as a kind of short-hand invocation of the ceremonies and ritual inherent in the marae. Kouka explains how Maaori who have become accustomed to marae-concept theatre as a determinant of dramatic style, have made adjustments to the way marae protocols are followed in order to suit the needs of their productions:

There is a feeling [...] among many practitioners, that they have moved past the need to illustrate their culture and that for the audience the welcome is a given – therefore subtler ways are used. Mihimihi [greetings] are in the programme. Lighting is used to encompass all prior to play proper starting, thus bringing actor and audience together. Some groups get their actors to greet the audience as themselves and some have the welcome in the opening salvos of their performance; the play being the whaikorero,
perhaps completed with a waiata. By doing this modern theatre stays true to the protocols of old (Introduction 16-17).

The moment when practitioners "moved past the need to illustrate their culture" is a critical one in the emergence of a distinctive Maaori theatrical aesthetic. A confidence is signaled not only in the claiming of theatre space as an alternative turangawaewae for Maaori, but more obviously from Kouka's perspective, in the incorporation of subtle, less overt Maaori references in Maaori plays. The fact that audiences understand and accept that these subtle Maaori references have wider cultural resonance is confirmation that audiences are becoming more attuned to the use of Maaori cultural frameworks in theatre.

Potentially, however, the truncation and readjustment of marae concepts could mean that in the theatre the marae is rendered less traditional and conventional and therefore less functional. There is the risk that, in being released from its original purpose, it is partially denuded of its cultural relevance, making its utility artificial – too extrapolated from its traditional purpose – and the ritual enacted in its new site less potent.

Waahine and the potential of Maaori reference theatre

Notwithstanding the possibility that these representations of marae-associated rituals could dilute the power of marae traditions, for Maaori women the potential to stylise and abstract marae rituals, protocols and kawa, for theatrical and dramatic purposes, assists with articulation of experiences peculiar to them. Theatre lends a certain level of permissiveness to marae ritual and Maaori references which is particularly liberating for Maaori women, releasing them from the restrictions that could operate in traditional marae contexts. Because marae elements are open to new interpretations within the theatre space, the marae, as a site for waahine expression, becomes flexible enough to accommodate new roles for Maaori women. Thus, waahine are able to articulate important political, cultural and gender phenomenon in a contemporary, public context through the Maaori frame of the marae.

Rena Owen's use of Maaori reference in Te Awa I Tahuti illustrates the way transformation of marae practices into the theatre can assist waahine with self-determination and expression. Although the play is set thousands of miles away from any marae, in a London prison cell, and was produced prior to Taylor's, Moriarty's and Potiki's dialogue about marae-concept theatre, Owen had already spotted the potential for using Maaori performance forms in theatrical contexts. 7 While her play does not incorporate elements of marae architecture or marae processes such as poowhiri in its staging or storytelling format, its inclusion of poi, waiata and haka as ameliorative remedies for dealing with identity crises invoke marae concepts. Owen's

use of waiata, for example, gives the central character Toni's dialogue cultural resonance and also heightens the play's psychological subtext. Whenever Toni wishes to avoid conversing with her counsellor Mrs Bottomley, she uses song:

TONI. Family? [...] Well, I had a bald head when I was five. Dad shaved my hair off so I wouldn't catch head lice in the swimming baths.

Pause. TONI twirls her poi.

MRS BOTTOMLEY. Go on.

TONI suddenly twirls the poi in an orderly fashion and sings to its actions. At first quietly, she then releases the song into full action, ending on her knees.

TONI. Tutira mai nga iwi, aue
Tatou, tatou e
Tutira mai nga iwi, aue [...] (Scene 1 135-136).

Later, as trust develops in the relationship, Toni performs waiata to heal the rifts between Mrs Bottomley and herself. By the play's conclusion, waiata help Toni to heal, aiding her with self-expression and also providing positive reminders of home. When she recites Te Rauparaha's haka, Toni rises above her psychological problems and is re-energised for release; the waiata and haka sustain her by making a bridge that helps reconcile her divided sense of self.

_Te Awa I Tahuti_ is an example of a play that, although not based on marae-concept theatre, effectively and usefully abstracts elements from the marae to facilitate Māori women's self-expression. More recently, practitioners have reached a point where traditional Māori practices and rituals may be given modern re-interpretations or even subverted.

Roma Potiki's stylisation of marae ritual in _Whatungarongaro_, for instance, marked the evolution of something entirely new in Māori theatrical terms. The play's combination of abstracted and stylised marae rituals with the theatrical and dramatic aspects of "Brecht, broad comedy, dance and television" (Kouka, _Introduction_ 22) produced a new kind of theatre which I refer to as Māori reference theatre. Such theatre has been the catalyst for some innovative work by wāhine practitioners. _Whatungarongaro_ illustrated (for its mostly Māori audiences) the way Māori motifs, references and rituals could be meaningfully and usefully melded with conventional theatre devices to enhance the dramatic representation of Māori experience. Rather than completely adhering to marae protocol or producing strict reproductions of marae rituals, truncated versions of poowhiri and modernised haka and waiata became integral components of the play. For example, in a reinterpretation of the poowhiri, bird-like spirit characters Huia, Ruru and Tui perform a "whaikoorero of welcome to the audience" (Scene 1 33) which also includes cast members dancing like waves and then birds, within the stage space. Following this (in the place of a karanga), Ruby, the central wāhine character, "emerges from the audience, walks toward the stage and begins to recite the opening monologue" (ibid).
This poowhiri-dance sequence frames Ruby’s monologue and accentuates her feelings of isolation, spiritual emptiness and identity confusion. The manu/bird spirits that perform the poowhiri-dance provide a visual commentary on New Zealand’s indigenous history, its geographic and spiritual isolation and the interrelationship between the land, sea and Māori. Whatungarongaro drew on these Māori references to tell its story of disenfranchisement and a community’s decay. Describing his experience of watching the play, Kouka reinforces the potential distinctiveness of Māori reference theatre: “the play changed the way I looked at Māori theatre [. . .] it had everything [. . .]: dance, waiata, a staunch Māori story, the mixing of things Maori and Pakeha, a few props, and the rest left to the audience’s imagination” (Can Plays Help 32). Whatungarongaro became a model for further experimentation with marae concepts, Māori reference and European drama.

Wahine Toa extends the representational capacity of Māori reference theatre so that it functions to foreground waahine presence. An important part of the project was the transfer of marae performance elements as well as traditional Māori narratives “onto the stage in ‘the theatre’” (McLeod 44).8 In the opening sequence, karanga – the traditional welcoming call used during poowhiri and performed by an older female – was performed by a combination of old and young women as a farewell to “Hinetitama who, on discovering that her husband Tane is also her father, leaves the world of light to become Hinenui-te-po, goddess of the underworld” (Bolwell 22). In the narrative of the dance, the story of Murirangahwenua, an ancestress who sacrifices her jawbone at the demand of the demi-god Maui, is told as a “handing over of knowledge” which “helps build up a picture of land loss, of change, of pathos and of inspiration” (Rikihana-Hyland 45). Murirangawhenua’s story is contemporarised so that it resonates more clearly with a modern-day audience.

In Wahine Toa, the combination of dance, theatre and marae extends Māori women’s opportunities for self-expression. Through the medium of dance-theatre, directors Kaa, Amey and Bolwell effectively insist that not only are marae customs and protocols open for abstraction and stylisation, but that waiata, haka, physical gestures and traditional cosmological and historical narratives can be modernised to privilege alternative interpretations. Bolwell remembers Kaa’s boldness when it came to experimentation with traditional kapa haka forms: "Keri would constantly say [. . .] ‘we create our own kawa’, so she made room for people to explore and experiment in a way that she just wouldn’t in a traditional marae setting” (Interview 7 Dec. 2002).

8 In the introduction to the book which inspired the dance, Robin Kahukiwa states that waahine, “by their actions, hold the plot[s] together and provide the knowledge and aroha necessary to enable the heroes to perform their deeds and fulfil their tasks”. See Wahine Toa: Women of Māori Myth (Auckland, New Zealand: Collins, 1984) 10.
Other practitioners employ aspects of marae-concept theatre after the performance per se is finished. Often audiences will be invited to join the cast and crew for a cup of tea and koorero (sometimes this process is referred to as a poroporoaki/farewell). The poroporoaki provides a forum for audience members to discuss (and in some instances work through) their responses to the content of plays. Nancy Brunning has been a strong proponent of such post-performance encounters. She advocates an approach to theatrical experiences that reconsiders and revalues the spiritual and emotional engagement between audiences and actors as they perform on stage. She sees them as a chance for audiences to “korero about the characters” and to help “them get closure on some of the issues that come out for them” (Mato, Sunday News 19 July 1998).

During poroporoaki discussions, Brunning, out of role, has the opportunity to acknowledge the audience’s spiritual, physical and emotional investment in her performance and the chance to offer them her thoughts about her character. Brunning regards the poroporoaki ritual as a natural or expected progression for Maaori plays that deal with emotional and spiritual material. For her, the poroporoaki shows respect to the audience and enhances actors’ and audiences’ experiences.

Briar Grace-Smith's Waitapu and Purapurawhetu acknowledge marae-concept theatre in their references to the traditional Maaori arts of weaving and carving but, unlike Whatungarongaro and Wahine Toa, those plays do not rely as heavily on marae-based ritual to explore Maaori cultural identity. Both Waitapu and Purapurawhetu also illustrate the way Maaori references (other than solely marae-concepts) can be effectively employed to make comment on gender roles in Maaori society.

In her plays, Grace-Smith regards traditional art forms as inscriptions of identity. Carvings and weaving are scripted, inscribed versions of the oral histories, whakapapa and stories associated with Maaori life. In Purapurawhetu, for example, the lives of the Te Kupenga iwi are mirrored in the simultaneous creation of a tukutuku panel. The romance, tragedy, humour and redemption threaded tightly into the story of the tukutuku panel are embodied on stage so that the audience participates in the interpretation of this traditional art form. Stories, preserved in art forms such as the tukutuku panel, have the potential to create and sustain culture and cultural identity. Moreover, rather than being woven by a woman, the tukutuku panel in the play is woven by a young man. Grace-Smith subverts the usual gender roles so that as Tyler—a male—weaves, Kui—an elderly wahine—speaks. She reveals her secrets through oratory, and both male and female participate in a recuperation of traditional beliefs, roles, tikanga and practice while simultaneously repairing the damage done to the wharenui and to their iwi and
culture. Such storytelling motifs are often used by Grace-Smith as productive contexts for Maaori women's self-expression.⁹

Later plays such as *Nga Tangata Toa* show how the modification of European dramatic texts to incorporate Maaori reference can extend the possibilities of Maaori theatrical expression. Kouka’s play weaves marae rituals and references into a European story – Henrik Ibsen's *The Vikings at Hegeland.* As well as borrowing the basic structure of the original narrative of the source text and overlaying it with Maaori contexts, Kouka’s dramatic re-inventions incorporate Western dramatic forms and techniques. Like Ibsen, Kouka also includes dialogue which uses stylised idiom and mixes the colloquial with the poetic. Furthermore, *Nga Tangata Toa* reflects the epic themes of *The Vikings,* exposing similarities between the indigenous history of Maaori and Viking cultures. Comparable geographies, the valuing of warrior-like attitudes, the importance of whaanau bonds and the interaction between ancestral Gods and humans gives *Nga Tangata Toa* a resonance beyond its local East Coast setting.

A touring production of Kouka’s *Nga Tangata Toa* in 1995 included elements of the marae in its design. In the set, Dorita Hannah struck a balance between the Viking aspects of Ibsen’s text and the new Maaori setting. Wide wooden floorboards laid along a deep thrust stage (bordered on three sides by simple, straight backed forms for audience seating) gave the feeling of both a wharenui and a feasting hall. In addition, the thrust staging meant that the mihi at the play’s commencement, with audience members entering the acting area to the voices and waiata ringaringa/action songs of the cast, replicated the dynamics of the exchange between tangata whenua/home people and manuhiri/visitors on marae. This configuration reinforced the ceremonial aspects of Kouka’s script. Indicative of the growing confidence of Maaori writers who use marae-concepts and Maaori reference in their work, reviewers attribute Kouka’s plays with a "power" that stems from "its deployment of Maaori language and ritual" (untranslated reo Maaori appears throughout the play) and in Scenes Three and Nine, Wi, Te Riri and Rongomai use the taiaha, while other scenes include karanga, poowhiri and waiata tawhito/ancient songs.¹⁰

Jim Moriarty’s theatre company, Te Rakau Hua O Te Wao Tapu, offers an alternative strategy to Kouka’s. Rather than oblique references to, or stylized performance of marae rituals, Moriarty’s group retains more of the spatial, architectural and customary conventions of the traditional marae, basing much of its work on the earlier "philosophies and principles of theatre marae" (Glassey and Welham 57). For Moriarty, the inclusion of marae elements produces a theatre framed by the healing aspects inherent in Maaori whaanau values. Moreover, he believes that

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⁹ See for example, Kura in *Ngaa Pou Waahine* (also in the introduction to this chapter). See also Chapter Six for details of Grace-Smith’s explorations of wahine identity in plays.

the use of marae "skills and tools" has enabled him to bring "a sense of mana Maori, arikitanga and tino rangatiratanga" (ibid 60) to his work. By making only small adjustments to conventional protocol, Te Rakau Hua o Te Wao Tapu shows that when incorporated into a dramatic representation, Maaori rituals do not have to be overly stylized or abstracted to be effective.

Since 1990, Moriarty's understanding of marae-concept theatre has expanded. He continues to acknowledge that Maaori theatre is enhanced by conventional European and American theatricality and professional production standards, but he is more definitive about the ameliorative benefits that derive from marae-concept theatre, seeing it as a process that encourages people to share their hurt, and from their hurt to create an objectified theatrical narrative. Through the liberation of that hurt, you can see a performance that's about personal liberation (ibid 65).

In 1998 Moriarty incorporated and abstracted elements of marae poowhiri in Watea, a performance piece devised by Te Rakau and women inmates from Arohata Prison. Audiences were led by karanga into the acting area and made to stand in a circular space in the centre of a large studio. Here, the all-waahine cast surrounded the audience and proceeded with a challenging and confrontational haka. This inverted the usual spatial dynamic of conventional theatrical experience, so that the audience – usually the passive spectators – were the central focus of the performers’ gazes. The elements of pukana/grimace, ringaringa/hand actions and takahia/stamping feet used in conjunction with modern-dance moves, expressed both welcome and challenge. Because the poowhiri was performed in a less stylized, more traditional way, minimal alterations such as the encircling of the audience upon their arrival to the marae-referenced space, were accentuated and could not go unnoticed by the audience. By maintaining a closer connection to marae ritual, the poowhiri in Watea made an effective and powerful comment on the relationship between audience and performers specifically about the relationship between those who are marginalized from society (the inmates) and those whose inclusion in society is taken-for-granted. In keeping with poowhiri protocol, the performance was followed by a cup of tea and kai/food and then a poroporoaki where audience and waahine performers responded to the issues raised by the play. The retention of the poroporoaki reinforces Moriarty's contention that marae-concept theatre goes some way to healing both participants and observers.

Although marae-concept and Maaori reference theatre are realized in different forms in, for example, Hone Kouka's, Briar Grace-Smith's and Jim Moriarty's plays, these writers and other practitioners share a desire to increase Maaori participation in theatre and, simultaneously, a desire to represent Maaori experiences (men's and women's) from within Maaori cultural contexts.
Maaori theatre and te reo Maaori

Decisions about whether to use marae-concept theatre in the production of a Maaori play are accompanied by choices about which language to write in, te reo Maaori or English. In fact, Maaori dramatists are constantly challenged about the relative authenticity of pieces written in the coloniser’s tongue rather than in their native one. Ngugi wa Thiong’o points out that “the choice of a language already predetermines the answer to the most important question for producers of imaginative literature: For whom do I write? Who is my audience?” (Thiong’o qtd. in Crow and Banfield 8). Some practitioners, such as Kaa, argue that “what makes the thing [a play, a piece of theatre] distinctively Maaori is if it’s told in te reo, and the whole thing is told in te reo” (Interview 18 June 2002). Ihimaera sees a new form of theatre lying in Maaori chanting, poetry and waiata, the core oral components of Maaori language (Lecture 1 Aug. 2001). However, both Potiki and Kouka are adamant that English language theatre is definitely part of the Maaori theatre repertoire, stressing that the level of reo spoken among Maaori restricts the types of plays able to be performed and the audiences who would understand them. Kouka says, “if Maori theatre had to be in Maori we’d end up with only a handful of ‘legitimate’ plays. And what we call Maori theatre wouldn’t exist” (Can Plays Help 32). Potiki notes that Maaori language is of prime importance in a larger sense, admitting that there is no denying its representative power and the cultural richness it conveys. However, she opposes the idea that “Maoriness” is the “prerogative of only those versed in te reo Maori” (Confirming Identity 153). Kouka and Potiki argue that the English language is a crucial part of Maaori experience and identity.

The two poles of the reo argument, represented by Kaa at one extreme, and Kouka and Potiki at the other, may possibly be bridged by considering the interwoven relationship between language and theatre. Language, like the theatre it is part of, represents only part of the whole of Maaori culture. According to Kaa, plays presented entirely in te reo are vital for authentic representation; however, te reo cannot be isolated from other aspects which construct Maaori culture. Similarly, a Maaori play which is enacted almost entirely in English should not be precluded from the category ‘Maaori theatre’ because standard English is also ‘part of the whole’ that is Maaori society. Although his focus is on the written text rather than performance, Bill Ashcroft presents a useful summation of the argument, observing that the use of native language “in the written text is not the embodiment of the culture, but a part of the culture which stands for the total. In this sense it represents metonymically the vast world of difference which is the culture. But it is not itself that difference” (115).

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While most Māori plays written since 1980 are predominantly in the English language, dramatists are increasingly incorporating more Māori language in their texts. Whatungarongaro's combination of Māori and European elements includes a blend of reo Māori oral forms such as whaikoorero and the demotic language of the street. The play's accentuation of the differences between the figurative use of te reo Māori and colloquial English, is typical of many Māori plays. In the play, Huia, a bird-like ancestral spirit, uses poetic descriptions of times past which are set alongside Dean's flat, understated dialogue:

HUIA. Tena koutou nga taonga mokopuna o te hunga tangata! He aha o koutou kai?
What is your food? It glows like the sun, not the earth. I nga ra o mua whangai a Tane i ona mokopuna katoa [. . .]

DEAN. So it's story time is it, man? Story time eh, bird? Yeah, well I like your story but that was then an' this is now (Scene 3 41).

The purpose of this contrast is to foster a deeper appreciation of reo Māori among audiences. Plays such as Flat Out Brown, Waïora and Purapurawhetu, also highlight the eloquence and poetry of reo Māori. Just as importantly, however, by using both Māori and English side-by-side in the dialogue, these plays create a picture of Māori cultural identity that merges traditional Māori life and modern English language forms.

In Woman Far Walking, rather than simply juxtapose Māori and English languages, Ihimaera uses a form of English language that is embellished, poetic and deeply infused with Māori references. Ihimaera grafts Māori vocabulary, grammar, imagery and idiom onto English, effectively producing a heavily nuanced Māori-English form. This blended language use is evident when Tiriti O Waitangi Mahana introduces herself to the audience:

I am 160 years old. I was born on 6 February, 1840 [. . .] My whakapapa, my genealogy, takes me back to the people of Te Tai Rawhiti, the East Coast. I grew up at a time when the iwi Māori ruled the land. In those days before jet planes my ancestor, Paikea, came to these islands riding a majestic whale. The sky was a man and the earth was a woman – and I still greet them both –

Ihia te rangi! Ihia te mana!
Ko Ranginui kei runga,
ko Papatuanuku kei raro,
teenaa koorua, teenaa koorua, teena koorua (Prologue 9-10).

Several Māori playwrights produce this type of blended English in their plays. Māori characters often use Māori-English to convey the emotional and spiritual implications of their taha Māori without having to rely solely on Māori language. In a sense, playwrights' manipulation of the English language, by threading it through with reo and Māori performance forms, invokes the deep interconnections of reo Māori and tikanga Māori, suggesting that culture and language "cannot be separated from each other's influence and creation" (Pihama, Thesis 114).
**Waiaata and waahine**

More frequently, untranslated reo is appearing in plays in the form of dialogue, soliloquies, waiata, haka and tauparapara/chant. In many instances, reo is filtered through especially composed waiata, whose musical elements can convey meaning to a wider non-Maaori speaking audience. Waiaata in recent Maaori plays are used for a range of purposes, including lamenting, appeasing, protesting and confronting injustice. Through Maaori performance forms such as waiata and haka, te reo is "made accessible to the Standard English audience" (Ashcroft 100). Importantly, that audience is also introduced to the "multiple perceptions, systems of values, customs, experiences and attitudes of a culture in ways that are faithful to the original" (ibid). The continued use of Maaori performance forms in plays creates a stronger demand for non-speakers of Maaori to become more versed in te reo and also to become more attuned to a play's fluctuations in mood and tone.

In a majority of plays, waahine characters are the performers of waiata and consequently, are responsible for delivering a substantial amount of reo Maaori in these plays. In many instances, waiata are used to heighten dramatic tension. At these moments the wahine performer has the privilege of the audience's concentrated attention as she articulates and embodies the central issues of the drama. This predominance of waahine singers also means that waahine characters (more so than their male counterparts) have increased access to non-dialogic forms of self-expression.

This expressive empowerment can be seen in *Te Awa I Tahuti*, where a significant portion of the play's emotional impact stems from Owen's use of waiata and haka. In the play, waiata are used as intervals between the colloquial, demotic English language conversations between Toni and Mrs Bottomley. As Toni sings (and simultaneously discovers her voice in the world of the play), she is able to reflect upon her Maaori identity. Similarly, a wahine character crystallises the central issues of the drama in the closing scene of John Broughton's play about racial tension, political protest and whaanau conflict, 1981. The sole wahine character Faith, sings a waiata in te reo, lamenting her whaanau's breakdown and mourning for the victims of violent protest. In an echo of the resolution in Broughton's *Te Hara* – where Kuini sings to grieve the loss of traditional Maaori knowledge – Faith's lament closes the lid on the Pandora's box opened by the play. While her song acknowledges the intensity and complexity of the problems extant at the play's denouement, the waiata does not heal her whaanau's ills.

In *Woman Far Walking*, Tiri Mahana uses her Maaori-English language to captivate, deride, entertain and incite her audience. Several sections of untranslated haka and waiata add musical, lyrical and vocal substance to Tiri's spoken dialogue. Her waiata convey emotions not easily rendered through direct speech – for instance, the cyclical joy, pain and suffering tied to
birth and death. Tiri (accompanied by a conscience-figure, Tilly, who sometimes echoes the waiata in English versions) laments the death and loss of her children, celebrates her love for second husband Tainui by singing a bi-lingual version of ‘Oh Susannah’ and, through karakia, joins Te Kooti and others demanding freedom from bondage. When Tiri is very young, her mother teaches her the women’s haka ‘Ka Panapa’. Its refrain is repeated at key moments in the play. Jessica, one of Tiri’s young moko, gestures towards a continuing line of waahine warriors as she performs the haka at the end of the play. In Woman Far Walking, ‘Ka Panapa’ is used as a vocal emblem of women’s strength and stamina. Its performance for Maaori and non-Maaori audiences in the public space of the theatre enables a wahine character to make a powerful statement about mana waahine and women’s role in the preservation, maintenance and energising of Maaori culture.

In Waiora, Rongo, a young wahine is, like Tiri Mahana, a channel or conduit between a Maaori past and present. Like Tiri, a large proportion of Rongo’s fear and sadness is communicated through waiata and haka. In an early scene, Rongo sings a waiata in reo to her Nanny. Through her song she conveys her experience of cultural and spiritual loss upon her whaahine’s migration to a new home. Rongo associates their migration with a sort of starvation as she becomes hungry for words and ravenous for her own ‘Maaori’ way of existence. The waiata she sings to her Nanny shows how Rongo’s cultural identity, her life as a Maaori, is tied firmly to Maaori language and other Maaori forms of expression. Her song and her references to linguistic starvation exemplify the interconnectedness of language and the expression of cultural identity.

Rongo is yet another female character who is responsible for presenting the play’s central drama. Her centrality is obvious in the play’s climactic final scene which is expressed entirely in te reo Maaori, filtered through karanga, haka and waiata. As Rongo lies on the shore of Tangaroa, supposedly drowned, her father, Hone/John, begins a haka of self-hate, remonstrating with himself for uprooting his whaahau and depriving them of their cultural connections. Slowly, however, his haka turns into a struggle with the ancestors for Rongo’s return. Soon Hone/John’s whaahau join him and together, unified and spiritually and culturally reawakened, they battle for Rongo’s life. As the whaahau’s haka ends, “Rongo slowly stands and begins a short haka of her own. She has heard her family [. . . she] then begins to sing some of ‘Tawhiti’ [. . .]. Its beauty should pierce the air” (Act Two 109). Rongo’s performance of ‘Tawhiti’ adds an effective emotional force to the play’s end. Her expression in te reo draws the whaahau together and sews up the central message of the play about creation, origins and survival – about beginning again.

Te Awa I Tahuti, Woman Far Walking and Waiora demonstrate that “within Maaori thought te reo Maaori and tikanga Maaori are inseparable,” and that they are “reliant on each other for
their maintenance and survival” (Pihama, Thesis 24). Furthermore, in each of these plays, it is the bond between language and culture which enables the central waahine characters to articulate and enact their identities. More generally, these plays recognise that the inclusion of marae ritual, tikanga and reo are important for the effective dramatisation of Maaori lives. Whether Maaori playwrights make overt or subtle references to the marae and reo, adhering strictly to marae rituals or radically modifying them to suit the agendas of Western theatre convention, there is recognition that (in some form) the incorporation of tikanga and reo are vital to the representation of Maaori cultural identity.

**Transforming the theatre: creating an alternative turangawaewae**

A confidence and certainty among Maaori in theatre is signaled by the move from marae-concept theatre — the deliberate and determined inclusion of marae settings and rituals in theatre — to Maaori reference — the incorporation of more stylised, less didactic examples of Maaori customs and thought in the content and structure of plays. Contemporary plays now seamlessly integrate Maaori elements with Western theatre constructs. Through this, Maaori practitioners have been able to lay a firm claim to theatrical creation and production in the wider New Zealand theatre scene. Maaori have also produced a type of theatre that is more accessible to and more relevant for Maaori audiences. Moreover, when marae concepts, reo, and Maaori performance forms are blended with Western theatrical forms in plays, Maaori cultural identity is represented effectively and powerfully, as characters assume a greater sense of agency and claim power from a strong cultural base.

Appearances of marae-concept and Maaori reference theatre mark a growing confidence among Maaori theatre practitioners. Writers and directors are now exploiting the freedom and flexibility generated in the merging of “the aesthetic space of theatre with the cultural space of the marae” (Balme, *Decolonizing the Stage* 249) while still maintaining the intent of “the protocols of old” (Kouka, *Introduction* 17). The increasing fluidity spawned by this productive blending of Maaori and European theatricalities is crucial in giving voice to Maaori women who (at least in traditional marae-contexts) have not always been able to express their experiences fully or publicly. In marae-concept and Maaori reference theatre, however — where the marae is reconceptualised as a Maaori referential space and there is freer play with the otherwise rigid concepts usually pertaining to the marae — Maaori women can articulate, engage with and address issues of import to wider Maaori society.

Briar Grace-Smith’s *Ngaa Pou Waahine* encapsulates most effectively the expressive possibilities marae-concept and Maaori reference theatre present for Maaori women. The play is a fitting example of the effective merging of waahine identity politics, reo, oratorical performance forms, marae-concepts (most notably the architectural resonance of the wharenui) and Western dramatic form. As described above, Kura stands on stage and speaks from within the walls of a
wharenui (a structure which represents part of the whole of Maaori society). The stage becomes a place from which Kura can confidently observe, rehearse, orate and perform, while the culturally charged space of the wharenui becomes a source for her assemblage of dreams, oohaki, waiata, lullabies, memories, proverbs, whakatauki and mythologies in order that she can construct a better sense of who she is. At the play's conclusion, when Kura produces a representation of herself by using her own body to create a poupou (Scene 8.41), the fluid, transformative freedom offered by the Western theatre space merges with the comparatively stricter, more rigid traditions emblematised in the poupou. In her embodiment of this poupou, Kura simultaneously symbolises her contemporary identity and her traditional Maaori origins.

Marae-concept theatre and Maaori references (in conjunction with tino rangatiratanga and mana wahine politics) have facilitated considerable change in the way that Maaori women are represented in plays. More often, in contemporary Maaori plays, there is a preference for figuring wahine as representatives of Maaori experience and as active in the construction of Maaori cultural identity. The following chapter looks into New Zealand's theatrical past to explore in more detail the impact Aroha Mataira and her Paakehaa male creator have had on the prevalence of Maaori women characters in contemporary plays by taane writers.
CHAPTER FOUR

KUIA AND KOOTIRO

The first [Māori woman] I saw on stage was the woman in the Bruce Mason play *The Pohutukawa Tree* and I thought then that he'd picked up on the power and the force of the kuia in the kind of way that he presented the character [...] I remember being struck by this powerful woman on stage (Kaa, Interview June 18 2002).

Even though over forty years have passed since Bruce Mason created Aroha and Queenie Mataira – the central waahine characters in *The Pohutukawa Tree* – Aroha is still recognised as an iconic female figure in New Zealand drama. With *The Pohutukawa Tree*, Mason introduced Māori playwrights to the dramatic possibilities of the ‘Māori world’ – what he saw as its “intrinsic drama” and “eloquence” (Mason, Interview with Paske). However, this romanticised view of Māori life spawned a line of exaggerated, overly-romantic waahine characters that represent a limited version of Māori and waahine identity. Aspects of Mason’s figuration of Aroha and Queenie still linger in Māori playwrights’ work. In particular the practice of condensing and concentrating several tropes of taha Māori in waahine characters is a favoured strategy of taane playwrights. Like Aroha and Queenie Mataira, there are kuia and kootiro characters in contemporary Māori plays who bear the huge burden of representing the whole of Māori culture. Consequently, Aroha and Queenie have become problematic dramatic
prototypes or templates for more contemporary representations of Maaori women in Maaori plays.

Wahine figures from selected plays by taane (written between 1980 and 2000) are comparable to Aroha (the kuia) and Queenie (the kootiro). Of course, Aroha and Queenie are not the sole source for more recent depictions of Maaori women in plays by male playwrights. The previous two chapters provide an alternative reason for the foregrounding of wahine characters in Maaori plays. Therefore, in tracing lines of descent, the chapter also foregrounds examples of characters who are modifications or in some instances, complete reconfigurations of Mason's prototypes and points out where taane playwrights have extended the possibilities for the representation of Maaori women in plays.

The Pohutukawa Tree

_The Pohutukawa Tree_ tells the story of the Mataira whaanau: Aroha, a widowed mother, and her two children, Queenie and Johnnie, who live and work on the Atkinson's orchard. Aroha's struggles to raise her family so that they remain true to their heritage and also, and somewhat contradictorily, to Christian beliefs comprise the play's central thread. Complicating Aroha's journey is her whaanau's isolation from its iwi. The Matairas are the only members of the Tamatea tribe to remain on their ancestral land, most of which has been sold to the Atkinsons for their orchard; consequently, they are separated from their own people and surrounded instead by Paakehaa. Aroha's determined attempts to uphold her Maaori spirituality, while simultaneously adhering to the social morals and manners prescribed by a very puritanical Christianity, contribute to some difficult family dynamics. Unable to satisfy their mother's unrealistic standards, Queenie and Johnny rebel: Queenie becomes pregnant to a young Paakehaa, Roy McDowell, while Johnnie, in a confused and drunken state, sacks the local church. By the end of the play, Aroha is left without her children, preparing to pass into the afterlife.

Aroha Mataira: Kuia

Scholars and reviewers have commented on the importance of Aroha Mataira's representation. Howard McNaughton reports that, when Mason read the play at a Young Maaori Leaders Conference in 1960, his audience "regarded Aroha as wrong but authentic" (Bruce Mason 24-25): although they disagreed with her actions and could not relate to them, they found the character believable. Subsequently, she has been described as a "powerful" woman (Kaa, Interview 18 June 2002) with "authority" and a "natural integrity" (White 118). Actors and directors involved with productions of the play have recognised the depth of Mason's
characterisation of the role.\(^1\) Mason reports that to his knowledge "no Māori actress who played the part has felt that it was untrue to them or that it was wrong for a Pakeha to write it" (Interview with Paske).

Aroha has proved resonant with both Māori and Pakeha audiences and consequently, Mason’s famous kuia has become something of a dramatic archetype. The play offers her up as an ideal figure through which to represent Māori women and Māori society. Aroha’s connection to ancestral land, her chiefly descent, her kaitiaki status, her cultural knowledge and prowess in storytelling and singing are detectable in many waahine characters who follow in Māori drama, particularly those in plays written by taane.

Throughout *The Pohutukawa Tree*, Mason emphasises Aroha’s earthly connection to her papakainga, Te Parenga, and her iwi, Ngati-Raukura. The seasonal cycles of a large pohutukawa tree that hangs over the porch of her house represent Aroha’s physical and psychological states. Early in the play Mason aligns Aroha with this natural element, describing her as “stubborn and as tough as an old stump” (Act One, Scene 1 52). The association between women and nature, reinforced by Mason’s references to her mana whenua status, suggest a parallel between Aroha and Papatuanuku, the earth mother. Papatuanuku stands for nurturance, aroha, manaaki, maternal love and protection.

Aroha’s emblematic role is heightened by her chiefly qualities. She is the direct descendant of Whetumarama, former leader of the Ngati-Raukura, and, in line with her heritage, is the pataka/storehouse of knowledge for her iwi. Aroha displays her capabilities as a storyteller and kaitiaki/guardian of Te Parenga’s ancient history in the first Act:

> Look over there. What do you see? The oranges and lemons of the Atkinson orchard. See instead a great totara forest. And here, where my house stands. See the pekerangi where the warriors crouched, muskets set to fire. Down there on the beach, where those Pakeha children play, see the great ship Alcestis, white sails spreading, moving into Te Parenga Bay. Four hundred soldiers aboard her, red coats and crossed straps. And here, where this old pohutukawa stands, see the puuwhara of Whetumarama where he took his stand, like a star shining in glory, his taiaha raised to strike (Act One, Scene 1 53).

Her role as cultural storehouse is matched by her abilities as a consummate performer and vocal representative for her people. Aroha’s status and power in the community is clear when she sings a waiata on behalf of her people at the play’s climax.

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Aroha is an emblem for the precarious position of Māori in Aotearoa. On the one hand, the physicality of an aging, troubled Māori woman dealing with familial, cultural and social dilemmas embodies a Māori culture whose traditions Mason saw as “dying” and whose culture he regarded as “shattered” (Black 136). On the other, like the race from which she originates, Aroha is “noble-looking [. . .] with the features of an aristocratic strain, somewhat beaked and aquiline” (Act One, Scene 1 51). According to McNaughton, Mason saw in Māori elders the “cultural potential for symbolism, ritual, imagery and stylised speech patterns” (Bruce Mason 27), characteristics which enabled him as a Paakeha to honour a “noble race” (Black 133) and to dramatise them in a “world of power and symbol, almost of myth” (Pocock qtd. in McNaughton, Bruce Mason 23). It was firstly through Aroha, and then a series of kaumatua that Mason symbolised the capacity for “older Māori” to be “[repositories] of authority” (Ibid 27). As with Mason’s kaumatua characters, Aroha’s dialogue and manner capture the tragic majesty and power often associated with great loss. Some of her last lines encapsulate the emblematic role Mason assigns her: “I will go proud down to my death, for that is all I have left. I will not be humbled, I will die true to my past [. . .] I go to dark. To my only home” (Act Three 108).

Elderly characters so close to death can easily assume other-worldly, monumental qualities which make them the perfect focus for a play’s cathartic or tragic end. They boast a strange majesty and ethereality that lend plays an epic emotional power. In Aroha for example, Mason creates a character who is “too big” (Johnny, Act Two, Scene 2 79) – her old-fashioned manners, her extremely staunch spirituality and her enduring pride create what McNaughton has identified as a “colossal stature” (Bruce Mason 27).

Mason’s use of the kuia figure to highlight the dramatic elements he saw in Māori life is echoed in Māori literature written in English in which Māori elders have a vital function as emotional and spiritual reference points. As with Aroha, kuia or grannies have been used to represent the loss of traditional Māori customs, knowledge and practices. For example, the first collection of Māori writing in English, Contemporary Māori Writing, contains amongst its mixture of 27 short stories and poems, several pieces which refer to the passing away of traditional rural Māori life. Rora Paki’s ‘Ka Pu te Ruha, ka Hao te Rangatahi’ is dedicated to the old people of his pa, few of which “are left for us to look to. They have made way for the younger generation [. . .] Even those who remain have not the same influence as of old [. . .]” (9). Their slow, inevitable dwindling is matched in his reminiscences with images of perfection. He remembers his grannies as “industrious” and “constantly labouring” (11) toiling “at their self imposed task of tending the family garden” (9) while always seeming to know “just what was in [their moko’s] minds” (12). In the same collection, Witi Ihimaera’s ‘Tangi’ describes a kuia at a

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2 The kaumatua characters are Werihe Paki in Awatea, James Smithson in Swan Song and Hingawaru Karani in The Hand on the Rail.
tangi "slowly stepping from the darkness, her black gown threaded with green leaves, her hands outstretched [. . . ] telling of the grief which tears at her heart" (60). In these stories, Māori elders, kuia in particular, have come to embody the ideals associated with traditional Māori life and spirituality such as purity and nobility, nurturance and protection of the whaanau. Their magical kuia intuition and the comfort and sustenance they provide reproduce the tropes often associated with ideal Māori women. Like The Pohutukawa Tree, however, some of these stories honour the supremacy of the old people and their ways, while simultaneously suggesting that they are an endangered breed: modern ways and Paakeha culture are preventing them from holding firm to their customs and supporting their iwi in the traditional ways.

An aspect of Aroha's character that has received a significant degree of critical commentary is her harsh, unforgiving approach to motherhood which stems from a damaging puritanical form of Christianity and complete absorption of its ideals. In the play Aroha eventually casts aside both Johnny and Queenie, an action not generally associated with kuia. Some commentators have interpreted her rejection of her children as a problematic oversight on Mason's part. Paki Cherrington argues that the manner in which Aroha takes on Christianity is "screwed up", creating an unmotherliness that makes her "unconvincing" (Personal letter 25 April 2002), particularly because "no Māori mother would ever send her pregnant daughter away from home" (McNaughton, Bruce Mason 25). However, James Bertram observes that Aroha is part of "a very unusual Māori family, in a most unusual situation" (qtd. in McNaughton, Bruce Mason 24), therefore, her responses to her whaanau may be unusual too. Moreover, Helen White carefully sets aside preconceived ideas about women's obligations as mothers, interpreting Aroha's "hardness and narrowness" as a benefit. Recasting her rigid mothering as a sign of exceptional self-will, White delights in the rare expression of "authority and control" that Mason's kuia brings to the stage. Aroha's peculiar, unmotherly characterisation has been addressed and reworked in subsequent characterisations of kuia in plays by taane. In most cases taane writers maintain the dignity and authority incorporated in Mason's figuration of Aroha but add to it the motherly, nurturing behaviour they see as an innate part of the kuia role.

While for most Māori, elders, and kuia in particular, have always been key representatives of Māori custom and tradition, it was Mason's use of Aroha that first tapped the dramatic possibilities of this role. Subsequently, kuia have repeatedly appeared as central characters. Aroha is an excellent template for the use of a kuia character as the focus of a play's central drama. The tragic poetry encapsulated in her aging and her will to die; the tension in her character between the incompatible worlds of Māori spirituality and Christianity; the tension also between traditional and modern outlooks as well as her emblematic function as a
representative of Maaori culture, offer a near perfect example of the way kuia can economically yet effectively encapsulate some of the core dramatic elements and conflicts in te ao Maaori.

Unlike the elders in Mason’s plays, who are generally reaching the end of their lives, most kaumaatua and kuia in recent plays are not close to death and, instead, speak for whaanau and communities that are either thriving or at least regaining a sense of cultural significance. A vital difference between the representation of characters like Aroha and those in later plays by Maaori playwrights is the non-fatalistic, more optimistic portrayal of the latter characters. While waahine characters in contemporary drama, like their dramatic antecedents, are still struggling with social, political and gender related issues, they are no longer depicted as members of an endangered species. Rather than going “proud to their deaths”, as Aroha does in Mason’s play, kuia such as Nan in Apirana Taylor’s Kohanga, and Tiriti O Waitangi Mahana in Ihimaera’s Woman Far Walking, are portrayed as the progenitors and conduits for the renewal and rejuvenation of indigenous expression.

The shift towards a more nuanced, less archetypal representation of kuia characters is also observable in the contemporary representations of young Maaori women or kootiro characters. Nevertheless, Mason’s stereotyped depiction of Aroha’s young daughter, Queenie Mataira, also has a legacy which to some extent determines the representation of kootiro in contemporary Maaori plays.

Queenie Mataira: Kootiro

From the first scene of The Pohutukawa Tree until the last, Mason foregrounds the contrast between Aroha as kuia and her daughter Queenie as kootiro/girl. Midway through the play Aroha casts their differences in stark relief:

    What am I to her? What have I ever been? A mother who loves her? No. A gaoler.
    Well, she got out of gaol late at night. Look what happened. All right: let her try freedom. See if she does any better with that (Act Two, Scene 1 66).

While sexuality is stripped from older waahine characters, it is often associated with younger Maaori women. Mason raises the issue of the continuity of Maaori tradition, the confused state of identity which results from association with two culturally diverse worlds, and the sense of identity achieved through returning home. These issues recur in more recent Maaori plays by Maaori men and are often explored through kootiro characters.

In the first scene of The Pohutukawa Tree, Queenie – described as a “comely looking girl of seventeen” (Act One, Scene 1 43) – encounters Roy McDowell, a new arrival to Te Parenga. The scene is played out like a childhood game of ‘catch and kiss’. The exchange establishes much about Queenie’s relationship with Aroha and about her desire to be free from motherly discipline. While simultaneously positioning her as a sexual temptation for Roy, Mason
establishes Queenie as over-protected, sexually innocent and socially naïve. Queenie’s volatility, vehement pride and curious playfulness make up a string of characteristics commonly attributed to young wahine maidens by colonial artists and writers. Leonard Bell, for example, describes European representations of young “dark-eyed, fair skinned and exceedingly comely” Māori maidens (142). He says that since the late eighteenth century they have “stood as a metonym for the South Seas Paradise ‘tout court’” (146). He also says that “Within this scheme [...] the Māori female, could represent the land, in effect ‘inviting’ the European viewer to take possession” (ibid).

An inquisitive young woman, Queenie is easily flattered by Roy’s shallow compliments and is vulnerable to his attempts to engage her in physical contact. Sexual tension develops between the two when Roy plays a gramophone record and they dance. Mason describes their separate transformations as they move to the music: Roy becomes “lithe and sinewy” and Queenie, after an initial stiff awkwardness, feels “the rhythm of the music [...] go right through her” (Act One, Scene 1 14-15). Roy takes Queenie’s willingness to be more expert and relaxed in her dancing as a sign of her sexual availability. Eventually they become sexually involved and, six months later, Queenie becomes pregnant.

Queenie’s relationship with Roy can be interpreted as a comment on the cultural corruption of younger generations of Māori. Unlike Aroha, who stands resolute in the face of Paakehāa temptations and allures, Queenie represents Māori culture’s identity crisis. Through Queenie, Māori are posited as confused innocents who are highly susceptible to and corruptible by Paakehāa desire, greed and in some instances, ignorance. Instead of ‘standing in’ for a pure idea of traditional Māori culture, Queenie represents a culture in turmoil, easily corrupted by the modern values and temptations of Paakehāa life. Mason places Queenie in a difficult, transitory space so that she has to cope with her mother’s strict Victorian and Christian morals, an alienated sense of her Māori heritage and the lures of Roy McDowell, who represents escape from a restrictive family life. Although Aroha won’t let her daughter visit the whānau at Tamatea, Queenie is vehemently proud that she descends from a line of Ngati-Raukura chiefs. (Her sense of self-importance, pride and a vague romanticism indexed to the British Royal family are registered by her assumption of the name ‘Queenie’ instead of her given name, Isobel). However, her love of pop culture and her penchant for showing off, in conjunction with her adoration of the materiality of Paakehāa life, challenge the traditional Māori boundaries and values that she has been taught.

It is not by chance that Mason has used a female body to display what he saw as the vulnerability of Māori culture: Queenie’s accidental pregnancy genders Mason’s depiction of the power divide between Māori and Paakehāa. Through Queenie, Māori are aligned with the stereotypically feminine traits of innocence, naivety, passivity and victimhood, while Paakehāa,
through Roy, are cast as opportunistic and callous. Queenie’s poorly timed pregnancy, Roy’s rejection of her and the child, despite their chiefly lineage and his claim that Aotearoa is “a white man’s country now” (Act Two, Scene 1 64), re-enact a larger social and cultural clash between Maori and Paakehaa along clear gender lines. Kootiro are often ejected from such relationships, becoming the victims of what is interpreted mostly by the Paakehaa partner, as cultural incompatibility. Issues of unwanted pregnancy, vulnerability to the sexual desires of Paakehaa men and the subsequent social problems this presents to Maori continue to be explored through kootiro characters.3

Roy McDowell’s refusal to marry Queenie because she is Maori leads to her expulsion from Aroha’s home and Aroha’s denial of motherly protection. Initially, Queenie is hurt by her mother’s rejection, but, because she knows she has disappointed Aroha, Queenie sees her subsequent banishment as inevitable. Although in some sense Mason punishes Queenie for her wayward behaviour, by depriving her of her mother’s attention and care, the negative aspects of her teenage experience are smoothed out with signs for a brighter, more solid future. Upon discovery of Queenie’s pregnancy, Aroha sends her daughter back to Tamatea on the East Coast. She is assured that the Ngati-Raukura will “have her, ask no questions, look after the child” (Act Two, Scene 1 85). In a flourish that is not in keeping with the tragic mode of the play, Queenie exits with a shout of “Hooray!” to the world, as it were,” as she “trudges off, indomitable” (Act Two, Scene 2 91). The next time Queenie is mentioned she has married, become the mother of five adopted children plus her own and, with “the tribe at her feet” (Act Three 85), has assumed the crown and attention she always craved.

After succumbing to the promises of “dressing up and pretty things” embodied in Roy McDowell, and after enduring her outright rejection from his socially constricted Paakehaa world, Queenie rises up, even stronger than she was before. In the course of the play, Queenie becomes a capable mother, an adored wahine leader and, most importantly in the case of her identity, entirely at ease with her whaanau, the Ngati-Raukura. Despite her complicated youth, Queenie has settled into Tamatea and into a role befitting a queen, the role her mother would have been offered had she decided to return to her people. The traits Queenie exhibits at the play’s close are those typically expected of a tuturu wahine.

In plotting out Queenie’s journey this way, Mason suggests that confused rangatahi can best achieve a clear sense of identity by returning to the rural and almost entirely socially isolated papakainga. Tamatea functions as a tidy dramatic solution for the problematic issues surrounding Maori culture that are raised through Queenie’s character. Once back in Tamatea, Queenie settles in with the iwi that, contrary to Aroha’s claims (in Act One, Scene 1)

3 See in particular the discussion of John Broughton’s 1981 further into the chapter.
about beer-swilling and depravity, is full of life and “such joy in simple things, so much music and laughter, such a fine distaste for those nagging things that make us so miserable: time, security, money” (Sedgwick, Act Three 87). As an attempt at resolving Queenie’s ‘unhealthy’ attraction to Paakehaa temptations, Mason produces a romantic image of a marginalized but socially enriched Maori society that welcomes strays with warm, open arms. More than this, however, he sites the continuance of the Maori culture in a closed-circuit environment. The only possible solution for Queenie and her brother Johnny (who represent the future of the Maori culture) is to thrive within a world untarnished by Paakehaa influence. They can fortify their awareness of community and their identity only by dwelling in Tamatea. If they venture beyond its safe enclosure, in Mason’s conceptualisation of the world, they will be lost.

A further consequence of Mason’s representation of te ao Maori in plays like *The Pohutukawa Tree* is a narrowing of identificatory possibilities for its waahine characters. In his attempts to preserve what he saw as a “dispossessed” yet “wonderfully cheerful” race (Sedgwick, Act Three 87) Mason depends upon Maori society’s return to tradition and spiritual and material simplicity. Moreover, his dramaturgical solution for the dispossessed kootiro requires her to function within conventional gender roles. She must be an honourable wife, mother and caregiver for her people.

In creating Tamatea, Mason introduces a literary convention to which Maori dramatists from the early 1980s through to the 1990s have often returned. In *The Pohutukawa Tree* and other dramas, the uukaipo/motherland commonly provides solace and renewed cultural understanding for troubled and confused kootiro characters. For example, *Roimata, Whatungarongaro, Jeannie Once* and *Waiora* maintain this idea of the unchanging, protective tribal homeland. In fact, many plays that draw on this motif are written by women who have complicated the formerly convenient use of the uukaipo. In their plays, the return to the ukaipo is not as easy nor as triumphant as Queenie’s. However, Mason’s solution for Maori dispossession and identificatory confusion in a return to traditional cultural practices and consequently, traditional gender roles, still resonates (although less overtly) in more recent Maori plays – particularly those by Maori men.

**Lines of descent: traces of kuia and kootiro in plays by taane**

*Maranga Mai*, *In the Wilderness Without a Hat*, *Kohanga* and *1981* are examples of plays which include kuia and kootiro. While waahine in these plays retain some features of Aroha and Queenie, they also offer reconsiderations and revisions of these kuia and kootiro types.

**Maranga Mai**

Like Mason’s Aroha Mataira, and like the kuia in much Maori literature of the 1960s and 1970s, the wahine figure in *Maranga Mai* emblematises Maori culture, particularly Maori links to land...
and traditional customs. As with representations of kuia that precede her, she is also endowed with the otherworldly, 'perfect' qualities of Papatuanuku. In a similar way to the Maaori mother of creation, this kuia is a nurturer, offering aroha and manaaki to her children while bearing the continual blows of a less than understanding imperial patriarch. In the 1980 video production of Maranga Mai she appears in funereal garb, wearing a long black dress and a black shawl (reminiscent of the kui in Ihimaera's 'Tangi'), but this kuia does not represent a culture that is dying and going "to dark. To [her] only home" (Aroha, The Pohutukawa Tree, Act Three 108). Instead, Maranga Mai's kuia is a filter for Maaori rebirth through anti-colonial struggle. She represents a culture that is in desperate need of renewal – of 'waking up' – after centuries of oppression. Her resilience and unrelenting struggle against political oppression – an embodiment of Maaori's enduring cultural presence and history of resistance – is a counter to ongoing injustices, broken promises and bad relations. By overseeing all the protest action in the play, she reinforces the "nurturing, grounded leadership of Maaori women" (Brian Potiki, Personal letter 4 May 2002), paying homage to such figures as Whina Cooper, Eva Rickard and Katerina Mataira, who worked for such causes as Maaori women's welfare, the re-appropriation of Maaori land and the rejuvenation of Maaori language and culture.

In the 1980 video production, the kuia is played by a young, obviously healthy, rangatahi, Ana Meihana, who assumes the buckled frame and slowed speech patterns of an elderly woman. As Meihana shifts in and out of the kuia role, she reinforces the play's message about awakening and becoming alert – physically and psychologically – to Maaori causes. This emphasises the contemporary power of the kuia figure for young and old audiences as well as suggesting that Maaori youth need to sustain and rejuvenate Maaori culture. In other words, Meihana's portrayal of the archetypal kuia underscores the need for rangatahi to take up the mantle of their elders.

The Pohutukawa Tree and Maranga Mai both feature archetypal kuia as representatives of Maaori culture. But changing attitudes towards Maaori identity beyond the theatre have meant that the culture these two kuia represent is significantly different. In Maranga Mai, the kuia suggests that Maaori cultural awakening and revival is a definite possibility. While her metaphorical purpose is similar to Aroha's in that she is also a vehicle for mourning over the loss of customs and beliefs, a significant difference lies in the kuia's plea for Maaori to continue to struggle for their rights. In this she marks a broader shift in Maaori conceptualisations of their own culture and highlights the philosophical distance between Mason's figuring of a spiritual, determined, yet ultimately doomed Maaori culture, and a rejuvenated, re-awakened one.
In the Wilderness Without a Hat

Hone Tuwhare's *In the Wilderness Without a Hat*, another play which bears witness to the pan-Maori awakening from a political and cultural slumber, also features waahine as representatives for Maori culture. Importantly, however, Tuwhare's representations of Maori women indicate the beginnings of a more complex and considered approach to the construction of Maori women characters within Maori drama.

Tuwhare's portrayal of waahine characters was greatly inspired by the kuia Whina Cooper, the icon of Maori leadership during the 1975 Hikoi. Rather than attempting to encapsulate all the kuia qualities inherent in Whina Cooper in one character, Tuwhare distributes the traits among three waahine; Rongo-Mai-Titaha, Waimiria and Mere, who represent (respectively) past, present and future expressions of Maori cultural identity. This allocation of representative roles across three characters removes some of the restrictive emblematic load often concentrated in individual characters (à la Aroha and Queenie) and allows Tuwhare to illustrate more detailed and intimate aspects of waahine lives.

The play's action unfolds within the walls of a wharenui which represents the body of Nga Puhi Kahao-rau's ancestral waahine, Waimiria. The 'female' body of the wharenui is being restored and, as work is carried out on interior carvings, the whole iwi begins to restore its sense of cultural identity. While maintaining the desired associations between women and Maori cultural leadership, the use of the wharenui as a dramatic motif and symbol of a fading culture removes some of the representational weight often applied to Maori women characters.

Waimiria

Waimiria, the central female character and namesake of the wahine ancestress embodied in the wharenui, is representative of contemporary Maori culture. In the play, she fulfils the functions normally reserved for a kuia figure. Although not elderly, she is protective, hardworking, prophetic, spiritual and loving. Tuwhare valorises her actions and attitudes above all other characters. She is a solid and steady presence throughout the play. Waimiria is no less at the heart of the iwi, than the wharenui. As ahi kaa/the one with occupation rights, Waimiria is expected to maintain the iwi's kainga and marae, provide for all members of the hapuu and impart ancestral narratives and histories. She is also expected to be a good, caring mother and a hard working member of the tribe. To this end, she nourishes her people physically and psychologically, acting as a mother figure for all. Like Aroha Mataira in *The Pohutukawa Tree* and the kuia in *Maranga Mai*, she is protective of the Maori cultural past and present, she is the kaiwhakahaere/organiser, she speaks te reo fluently and she is the pataka for the whaanau's stories. On the eve of her sister Miriama's tangi, Waimiria sets tasks for her

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1 Tuwhare also wrote a poem entitled 'Rain-maker's Song for Whina' praising Cooper's actions.
sons, Paul and Tom, and daughter, Mere, ensuring that everything is in order. When major conflict occurs during the debate over Miriama’s body, Waimiria vouches for the speaking rights of her lover/partner Mathew, jeopardising her position as a respected widow and leader in the whaanau.

Tuwhare’s representation of Waimiria is unlike previous representations of waahine in that he normalizes her actions. Whereas Mason depicts Aroha Mataira as an exceptional kuia, and Maranga Mai accentuated the political power and stamina of its kuia figure, Tuwhare refuses to isolate or elevate Waimiria from the daily routines of marae life. While he includes respectful, quiet, praise of Waimiria’s leadership, there is also a matter-of-factness about her enactment of leadership roles and her nurturing and hard working attitudes.

Tuwhare’s characterization of Waimiria has a three-fold effect. It produces a more integrated and relevant representation of waahine. Like women in the audience, Waimiria lives a fairly unexceptional day-to-day life, working industriously in support of her whaanau but often unnoticed by them. Consequently, very few demands are placed on her symbolic representation. Whereas Aroha – the only Maaori in a Paakehaa environment – is forced into a dramatic position where she becomes a ‘specimen’ of her culture, ‘performing’ her ‘Maaoriness’ for the concerned and curious eyes of Paakehaa on-lookers, Waimiria is depicted as a participant in a living culture, not as a ‘display-item’ loosely taped to the culture.

However, another effect of Tuwhare’s normalization of Waimiria’s behaviour is that it leaves little room for waahine who deviate from whaanau and iwi expectations. The deliberately understated integration of Waimiria into the everyday goings-on of the marae allows for a subtler acknowledgement of the important place of waahine in Maaori society, but, it is also a restrictive figuration because the quiet idealisation of Waimiria places boundaries around the types of behaviour expected of Maaori women.

In some respects Tuwhare counterbalances Waimiria’s idealisation with her recently deceased sister Miriama. Unlike Waimiria, Miriama is not a conventional mother-figure, and is not closely associated with her whaanau and iwi. Members of the iwi report that she “hardly ever comes back” to her home and that, when she does, she is “always with a different man” (Act One, Scene 1 72). Although she is tangata whenua of Nga Puhi Kahao-rau, Miriama has left her people and moved to the South Island, refusing to conform to the religious teachings and values expounded by her Northland elders. In the play, Miriama does not receive the respect afforded her sister. However, her death and the return of her tupapaku/corpse to her Northland home do spark discussion among other characters about their own lives and their respective expressions of ‘Maaori-ness’. In particular, Miriama’s refusal to satisfy the expectations of her iwi offers an alternative point of identification for waahine audience
There are some echoes between Topless, who regarded by members. While her situation is feminine power: feminine knit Miriama serves to understand her wayward decisions. Tuwhare's careful and constructive representation of Miriama serves to question the heavy burden of expectation laid upon Maaori women in close-knit whaanau communities.

Rongo-Mai-Titaha

There are some echoes between Miriama and the carved ancestress figure Rongo-Mai-Titaha, who comes to life in Act One, Scene Two of the play. Like Miriama, Rongo-Mai-Titaha is infamous for her relationships with a number of different men. Tuwhare emphasises her feminine (and sexual) allure: "unmistakably a woman with a moko on her chin (where else?). Topless, and wearing only an enigmatic smile, she holds a small flax-kit with karaka berries" (Set notes 57). When Paul, Waimiria's adopted son, describes Rongo-Mai-Titaha he idolises her feminine power: "[...]. best player and bloody hardcase in the whole of Bay of Islands - outlived, outfought and outfucked three out of four husbands [...]." (Act One, Scene 1 61). Her ability to outlast three husbands earns her a legendary status in the whaanau's whakapapa. In fact, her carved image is cause for comment by several men. Paul sees her physical representation as the object of some silly puns: "Disgraceful! Cover yourself up woman. Hopefully we'll see less of this - this blatant, disgusting display of udders - [...]. To corrupt udders of us who are trying mightily to see the light" (Act One, Scene 2 81). In contrast, Herepete, the kaumaatua, is embarrassed by Rongo-Mai-Titaha's image. For him, she evokes times past, when Maaori were unchristian, perhaps savage. He thinks she should lose her place on the whare walls. Tom, Waimiria's son, who has brought his Paakeha in-laws to the marae, buries Rongo-Mai-Titaha and her male tipuna companions, in an ancient, barbaric past. He says "ancestor worship leaves me rather at a loss, you know?" and relegates Rongo-Mai-Titaha and the others to the "neolithic age" (Act One, Scene 2 86-87). Even Hopu and Wero, Rongo-Mai-Titaha's ancestral companions make light of the way men in particular choose to frame and objectify her. Her male sidekicks shush her when she objects to the way Paul talks about her life. Hopu and Wero react as if she is merely seeking attention.

Rongo-Mai-Titaha's female image is a focal point for characters' mixed responses to Maaori self-representation. In a similar way to the debate over Miriama's tupapaku, responses to Rongo-Mai-Titaha encapsulate the central theme of the play: What is a Maaori? What constitutes Maaori identity? When does one wear one's Maaori hat, when does one wear another? Importantly also, rather than representing the past as buried and forgotten, Tuwhare's portrayal of Rongo-Mai-Titaha as a fertile, active and energised whaine ancestor, enlivens representations of the Maaori past. When she breaks free of her sculptural form and enters the action of the play, interacting with the tangata whenua, she is an embodiment of the way the Maaori past influences and shapes the Maaori present. At the play's climax, Tuwhare
strengthens the connections between Maaori past and present by involving the young wahine Mere very closely with Rongo-Mai-Titaha and the other ancestral figures so that the teenager becomes a conduit between Maaori culture’s past and future.

Mere

Mere is symbolically and developmentally a huge distance away from the prototypical kootiro, Queenie Mataira. Although she has the same youthful curiosity and energy as Queenie, Mere is less naïve and also less vulnerable to Paakehaa influences. She is intended to represent the positivity and resurgence of Maaori voice, politics and recognition which Tuwhare attributes, in part, to the renaissance following the Land March. At fourteen years old, she is on the cusp of adulthood and the play records her rite of passage. Mere’s presence on the marae is aligned also with the maintenance of tribal, marae-based life.

In Act One, Scene One, Mere indirectly addresses the audience through the unseen wall of the wharenui, calling for action and implicating them in the future survival of Maaori culture:

[. . .] if we don’t breathe some life, pump some new blood into those people [the ancestors] – this house, you know? [. . .] It [sic] we don’t do that soon, then a great army of – of wetas and huhu bugs will come down – get into the woodwork, and then one fine sunny day [gestures towards audience] all these fine woods will collapse into tiny heaps of – of – chewed up sawdust on the ground (Act One, Scene 1 69).

As Mere recites what she has learned about her tribal history, as she urges Paul to return to the marae for good and as she helps Waimiria with daily marae activities, Mere provides a channel of information to the audience. She learns about her culture as the audience learns. A particularly important lesson that Mere learns is about the sexual division of labour on the marae: she is told that she shouldn’t enter the whare while the men are working on the carvings and that she should be in the wharekai helping to prepare their lunch. Later, when Paul discovers that Miriama is his birth mother, Mere witnesses the women of the tribe embrace and comfort him through song. Waimiria’s and Mere’s close relationship implies that Mere will be her mother’s successor – Waimiria is a model for many of the typically female behaviours which Mere will fulfill when she matures.

Despite the focus on wahine as invigorating leaders and healers in In the Wilderness Without a Hat, women remain tied to the expected gender roles in place on the marae. When the time for major debate and koorero arrives, it is Cappie, Karepo and Mathew who discuss cultural identifications and possibilities for expressions of Maaori life. Conversely, when Paul requires comfort upon the discovery of his parentage, it is the whaea/middle-aged women who provide it. Thus, the reconstruction and rejuvenation of Nga Puhí Kahao-Rau hinted at in the final scene, rests upon the playing out of conventional gender roles. Although Tuwhare extends the representation of Maaori women beyond the kuia and kootiro archetypes by presenting them
pragmatically and less emblematically, there is an extent to which – almost inevitably – the play preserves expected gender behaviour. The play does not present an outright challenge to these types because, ultimately, it suggests that conformity to gender roles guarantees harmony for troubled communities. After all, everything seems to function far more smoothly with Waimiria's motherly-guidance and Rongo-Mai-Titaha's and Mere's peacekeeping.

**Te Hara and Te Hokinga Mai**

Whereas Maranga Mai and Hone Tuwhare offer representations of Maaori women which make significant adjustments to Mason's **kua** and kootiro prototypes, John Broughton's early plays *Te Hara* and *Te Hokinga Mai* preserve both these waahine types. In the fable-like *Te Hara* and the later *Te Hokinga Mai* Broughton relies on the idealistic figuration of the **kua** and kootiro. While in both plays Broughton positions waahine as integral to a continuing sense of Maaori community, his tendency to explain Maaori concepts and world views for a non-Maaori audience affects the figuration of his waahine characters. There is a notable difference, for example, between characters like Waimiria from *In the Wilderness Without a Hat* – who is integrated into her dramatic world, actively participating in it – and waahine characters such as Kuini Mathews, Dolly Maaka and Marama Kingi from *Te Hara*, who are merely dramatic devices, used to explain or example points or to educate the audience about elements of Maaori culture.

*Te Hara* opens with two women, one an Aroha Mataira-like **kua** – Kuini Mathews – and the other in her 20s – Dolly Maaka – in the kitchen baking bread and peeling potatoes. Kuini – a transliteration of the name Queenie which is used to signal the **kua**'s matriarchal status in the Mathew's household – is described by Broughton as "a storehouse of knowledge for her iwi [. . .] aged about 60 who has brought up a family of five children" (*He Reo Hou* 223). Like Aroha Mataira in Te Parenga, Kuini has "lived all her life" at her pa Kohuwai, "where she was brought up by her old people [. . .] she is the largest land owner for a square mile about Kohuwai" (ibid).

Although *Te Hokinga Mai*’s central female figure is also named Kuini Mathews, she is not the same Kuini Mathews who appears in the earlier *Te Hara*. However, in many respects, this character is a replica of the **kua** who first appears in *Te Hara*. Broughton’s descriptions of the two different Kuini are almost identical:

- The wife and mother [. . .] aged in her 50s. She is very well versed in the arts and crafts of her Kahangungu people. She was brought up by her old people and is now regarded as the storehouse of knowledge for her iwi (11).

Broughton’s preference for archetypal waahine figures is clear in this ‘easy’ transfer of the Kuini character from one play to the other. In *Te Hara* and *Te Hokinga Mai*, Kuini is a model of conventional waahine behaviour. She is kaitiaki of Maaori land, she holds firmly to her ancestral ties, and she upholds Maaori moral codes and values. It is clear that Broughton
exploits the kuia’s resonance as a conduit for messages which relate directly to Maaori spirituality and cultural well-being. In both plays, Kuini represents the fully domesticated mother figure. Not only is she particularly expert in the kitchen, but she has a faithful devotion to her whaanau and iwi. (Notably, however, Kuini’s mother-role has very little influence beyond the kitchen doorway). In *Te Hokinga Mai* in particular, the kuia channels the traumatic emotions of war and is seen as almost solely responsible for the maintenance of whaanau bonds and the manaaki and tautoko/support of the Maaori community.

In both *Te Hara* and *Te Hokinga Mai*, Broughton contrasts Kuini with kootiro figures. In *Te Hara*, Kuini’s perfect mothering qualities are set up in opposition to Marama Kingi’s ill-disciplined and self-centred mothering. Like kuia, the characterizations of kootiro are limited by Broughton’s determination to use drama to educate audiences about aspects of Maaori culture and to “promulgate and reinforce positive health messages” (O’Dea 46).

Like Queenie, Marama is precariously balanced between Kuini’s traditional strictures and the more permissive, modern world beyond Kohuwai. She is a young, erratic mother who lets her “kids run loose” (Scene 1 226), expects others to discipline them and, furthermore, is too easily dominated by an arrogant husband. Dolly and Kuini criticize Marama, implying that she should be at home caring for her children and disciplining them. Broughton’s motivation to educate Maaori about the ill-effects of careless parenting and bad habits such as smoking (“You want to see what Marama smokes, up to three packets a day” (ibid)) produces a two-dimensional character who merely distills the play’s messages about cultural respect, whaanau cohesion, health and welfare.

In *Te Hokinga Mai*, Huia Mathews – a fourth year medical student who is assigned a pivotal role in protecting her whaanau’s health and welfare – contrasts with Kuini because of her youth and education. Despite her exuberance, Huia is considerably less rebellious and decidedly more respectful of Kuini than Marama, even more so than Queenie Mataira is of Aroha. Huia’s obedience and thoughtfulness set her up as a rangatahi role model.

As with most of Broughton’s wahine figures, this kootiro character is also confined to the kitchen. When Huia says she’ll “pop down to the beach to see how Wiremu and the boys [are] getting on with the paua and crayfish” (15) and Kuini asks that she “give [her] a hand in the kitchen” and “ice the carrot cakes” instead (ibid), Huia complies. This maintenance of conventional gender behaviour is also observable in Huia’s drive to promote Maaori health issues. For example, she reminds her father about the benefits of a good diet, by trying to convince him that “carrot cake, raw vegetables, coleslaw, wholemeal bread [...]” (16) provide much needed roughage. Broughton’s representations of kootiro characters limit the play’s potential for exploration of women’s roles on the marae or the intricacies of mother-daughter
relationships. Waahine characters in *Te Hokinga Mai* reinforce rather than challenge the status quo.

Both *Te Hara* and *Te Hokinga Mai* opt for safefigurations of waahine. Despite their depiction of waahine as leaders and nurturers of Maaori communities, and despite emerging out of a society increasingly focused on women's concerns, the plays provide only a narrow range of identificatory possibilities for audiences because of their archetypal representations of Maaori women. However, in 1981 – a play which explores a whaanau's experiences during the South African rugby team's tour of Aotearoa in 1981 – Broughton alters his earlier dramatic structures and modes and in the process produces a considered, more nuanced portrayal of a kootiro figure.

1981

Faith Matthews – "aged in her 20s, a fourth year Law student at Otago University" (Character notes 2) – is the sole female in 1981. Like Huia from *Te Hokinga Mai*, Faith's outlook is shaped by a blend of Maaori practices and beliefs and the 'concept-altering' experiences of a Paakehaa education. Faith's university education is not merely a convenient excuse for introducing issues about Maaori health and welfare. Instead, Faith's university education helps her to articulate ideas about her position as a Maaori woman in Aotearoa and to formulate notions about the status of indigenous peoples within a more global perspective. In many of her increasingly heated discussions with her brothers, she advocates indigenous rights and makes informed statements about New Zealand's troubled race relations history. Armed with this knowledge, Faith has a mature outlook and consequently carries more credibility and dramatic weight than kootiro characters in Broughton's earlier plays. As Faith's character is developed, the audience encounters a wahine who is determined, self-willed, educated and biculturally articulate.

The 1980s urban setting is a further factor that frees up Broughton's representation of this kootiro figure and strengthens Faith's characterisation. In urban Auckland, Faith's behaviour is not as strictly determined by the rules and practices governing marae life. Neither is her behaviour conditioned – as Huia's and Reihana's are – by a relationship to a kuia role model. Instead, Faith stands alone as a semi-independent wahine, 'watched over' by her brothers Rusty and Ben. Assisted by the looser social rules of an urban setting, Faith sheds some of the archetypal mothering traits Broughton tends to attach to female characters. When she is with her brothers, however, Faith automatically assumes traditional female roles. She frequently prepares the kai for the whaanau and plays up to her brothers' jokes about her need for their physical protection. Faith is often the first to vie for peace when an argument erupts, and – like Kuini Mathews in *Te Hara* – she sings a mournful lament in the final scene. At the play's conclusion Faith becomes a channel for all the characters' hurts. She absorbs the pains of the
weary protestors and, more importantly, of her whaanau. More sharply, she channels the hurt produced by the conflict between Maaori and Paakehaa during this period.

However, Faith's assumption of these traditional waahine roles compounds her representation as an icon of Maaori women's roles in the anti-apartheid, anti-racist protests of 1981. While informed mostly by clear political thought, Faith's commitment to the anti-tour protests are ultimately determined by her need to "get out of Dunedin" (Act Two 80) because she has broken up with her boyfriend. Dennis refuses to commit to Faith despite her announcement that she is pregnant with his child. The playwright hinges Faith's final motivation for participating in the protests to problems that as early as The Pohutukawa Tree have plagued kootiro characters: vulnerability to uncaring men, sexual desire and unwanted pregnancy. This element of Faith's story weakens what is initially developed as staunch political resolve. Moreover, her resolve is made even more questionable when — upon the discovery that her brother Rusty was molested and raped by their Uncle Tip and that Ben thoughtlessly planted marijuana on the tribal urupaa/gravesite — she declares that she wishes she'd "never come to Auckland [... ] got involved in this protest stuff" (Act Two 136). These aspects of Faith's character mark a retreat to kootiro-type. Moreover, they undermine the political power and confidence that Faith displays early in the play.

Although Faith represents a determined shift away from Mason's prototypes by introducing a more intense political dialogue to the kootiro character and a wider range of possible modes of identification for young waahine, the options open to Faith at play's end remain somewhat limited. Broughton's treatment of her character (Faith's pregnancy, her failed university course, the psychological and physical trauma erupting from the protests) point at a bleak future which is governed by fate rather than by her own agency.

Reconfigurations of kuia and kootiro

Taane dramatists are adapting and in some instances, completely reconfiguring Bruce Mason's prototypes — Aroha and Queenie Mataira. For instance, some Maaori writers refuse to depict elders in a 'Mason-esque' way — as a kuia "dressed in black" (Grace-Smith qtd. in Huria, Maa te Reehia 3) associated with death and loss — claiming that they are now loaded and restrictive stereotypes. In effect, waahine characters are being reconfigured in response to the limitations presented by Mason's prototypes. Taane writers such as Apirana Taylor and Hone Kouka steer away from reproducing waahine types because they recognize the way such characters limit identificatory possibilities, and thereby present an entirely unrealistic site of identification. For instance, in their plays, kuia and kootiro are less iconic and more human, containing the sorts of desires, dreams and problems commonly associated with a younger generation. In other cases, Kouka and Taylor prefer to assign the roles and functions typically associated with kuia to their younger or middle-aged Maaori women characters.
More often, waahine figures in Maaori plays contribute to drama that realises alternative realities and identities for the many Maaori women in contemporary Aotearoa society. In their acknowledgment of the possibilities for multiple expressions of identity, contemporary representations provide a more accurate reflection of the realities of Maaori women’s existence. Waahine characters are able to express the complicated experiences of their private lives and their wider social relationships. Also, plays are framed inside mana waahine perspectives, encouraging inquiry into the expectations brought to bear upon women by their male counterparts and Maaori social structures.

Kohanga

Written two years prior to Te Hara, Aprana Taylor’s first play Kohanga is in several respects more radical in its characterization of women. Kohanga devotes substantial space to women’s concerns, siting the movement for and eventual establishment of kohanga reo/Maaori language nests (and consequently the preservation of Maaori culture) in the arms of Maaori women both young and old. Rather than presenting “political stick figures”, it produces characters that, according to Taylor, are “human” (Capital Times, date unknown, cited in Taylor, Kohanga and Whaea Kairau 191). Towards this end, the play is the site of a significant transformation in the presentation of archetypal waahine characters. However, while Kohanga begins by presenting a kuia who is critical and antagonistic towards the part expected of her in the struggle for cultural rejuvenation, by the end, she is reinstated in the role of an ideal kuia.

In Kohanga, Taylor disrupts the imaging of older Maaori women as repositories and purveyors of cultural knowledge. The play opens with Nan/Materoa, and her daughter, Nell. Nan’s first utterances deny the audience any sense of comfortable association between the archetypal kuia figure and the preservation of Maaori culture:

NAN. Kohanga
NELL. Yeah. Kohanga
NAN. What for? And what do you mean, Kohanga. What is a Kohanga?
NELL. It’s a nest [...] To learn Maori.
NAN. Ha! Maaori. Learn Maaori. Why?
(Act One, Scene 1 8)

From the outset, Nan/Materoa is presented not as a thoughtful, spiritually generous or loving kuia but as a ‘brown skinned Pakeha’. She tells her husband Umu, “the sooner Maaori people become Pakeha, the better” (Act One, Scene 1 10) and praises Paakehaa lifestyles: “I worked hard at being Pakeha [...] now I think I’ve become Pakeha which is what I want. We’ve got

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5 See also “Troupe brings struggle to Depot Stage,” The Wellington Evening Post 12 Nov. 1986, where the director of the first production, Rangimoana Taylor, cites the avoidance of stereotyped characters as an important drawcard for attendance at the play.
nice carpet on the floor and pictures on the wall” (Act One, Scene 3 31-32). She believes that she would be more healthy and less arthritic if “the Pakeha would get their bulldozers and cut the [local] mountain up. Cart the whole thing away and dump it in the sea” (Act One, Scene 1 13). Later, in a way reminiscent of Aroha Mataira, Nan admits that she kept Nell and her other children away from her tribe (Te Hapu Mau Roa) because of its “filth, sickness, drunkeness [and] incest” (Act One, Scene 3 32). Nan’s mantra about the death of Maaori society and the promise of Paakehaa society and her almost sacrilegious dismissal of her maungatipuna/ancestral mountain undercut tropes commonly associated with elderly waahine figures such as the metaphorical connection between kuia and Papatuanuku.

Taylor’s modification of the kuia character creates opportunities for the introduction of new angles on the thoroughly explored dramatic themes of Maaori cultural rejuvenation, the strangulating effects of Crown policy on Maaori and the internal rifts that can develop within whaanau. For example, a simple reversal of the kuia/kootiro dynamic, whereby the junior in the pairing is forced to convince the senior of the value and benefits of cultural preservation, allows Taylor to display the overwhelming impact of assimilationist policies on Maaori cultural expression.

It is crucial to note, however, that Taylor’s attempts to query the kuia archetype are limited. By the end of the play, Nan becomes an anti-assimilationist, a spokesperson for Maaori culture and is fast approaching the status of an ideal kuia. For much of the play, in relation to her whaanau, her cultural lineage and her kuia status, Materoa has been ‘lost’. Her journey is one of self-discovery towards an inevitable destination – her role as a nurturing, powerful kuia. Despite her early refusal to participate in the struggle for cultural rejuvenation, the play’s final presentation of Nan is as a culturally aware matriarch.

Nan’s about-turn at play’s end is not surprising. Interspersed with her constant insistence that her culture is not worth preserving because it is in decline are whakatauki/proverbs, spiritual dreams and memories of formative moments in her life. These phenomena are heavily inflected with Maaori reference. When Materoa tells her whaanau about these dreams, they recognize what she fails to see: the innate presence of taha Maaori in her life. With her whaanau’s prompting, the sudden death of local elder Hemi Jenkins, and the insistent lobbying of her daughter, Nan realizes the shallowness of her praise of Paakehaa ways and that: “It is wrong to take a people and tell them everything about them is wrong and of no point or value. For people then think of themselves as valueless and when they are thought of like this we have a social tragedy” (Act Two, Scene 5 80).

Nan’s self-discovery and re-education return the responsibility of cultural rejuvenation and survival to the hands (in this case, “bosom”) of the kuia figure. Through the course of the play
Materoa accepts the role that she has refused to acknowledge let alone value. In *Kohanga*, Taylor disrupts audience expectation and then slowly satisfies it by returning the elderly Maaori woman to a position of leadership, protectionship and authority. Although the play ultimately rests on an archetypal portrayal of the kuia figure, the representation is more meaningful because the audience has been privy to the character's coming to terms with that status.

In other plays by taane playwrights, kuia are role models for kootiro figures. However, the mother-daughter (kuia/kootiro) relationship Taylor establishes between Materoa and Nell is not like the role-model relationship shared by Waimiria and Mere in *In the Wilderness Without a Hat* or Kuini and Huia in *Te Hokinga Mai*. In *Kohanga*, the kuia – the possessor of cultural wisdom – refuses to hand down her legacy. Nell, unlike Nan, knows very little about her Maaori cultural origins. She has to beg Materoa before she will relinquish any information. Nell has to attend reo Maaori classes and clearly struggles, internally and externally, to cultivate a Maaori cultural understanding. Her experience mimics those of Maaori who, brought up in urban Aotearoa, are alienated or detached from their culture. Her negative experience is compounded because her mother refuses to participate in the cultural education of her or her grandchild, Hurae. Nan's refusal to be a conduit “between the grandchild and his or her tribal tipuna” *(Allen, Blood Narrative* 132) denies Nell and Hurae their "rightful place in Maori society" *(ibid)*. However, Nell is headstrong and, despite the obstacles presented by her mother, continues to struggle, exhibiting a determination and grit synonymous with early proponents of the kohanga movement.

Idealistic, energetic and self-determined, Nell presents an important shift in the portrayal of young waahine characters. Unlike those before her who tend to be dominated by the dictates of their elders or who suffer from the thoughtlessness of Paakehaa men, Nell epitomizes a new breed of waahine. She resists the pressures of modern society to restrict her expression, and she struggles for the right to develop her own voice. The play refuses an immediate, easy elision between Maaori culture and older Maaori women, and, in the push for Maaori cultural rejuvenation, hands a great deal of responsibility to younger waahine such as Nell. In the process, *Kohanga* becomes a celebration of kootiro energy.

*Hide 'n Seek and Waiora*

The kootiro figures Kataraina and Jill from *Hide 'n Seek* and Rongo and Amiria from *Waiora*, mark a definitive shift in taane playwrights' representations of younger Maaori women. *Hide 'n Seek* and *Waiora*, even more assuredly than *Kohanga*, create alternative figurations of young waahine whose outlooks yield a variation of perspectives on Maaori community and society.
Gone from these kootiro figures are any traces of the “simple, naïve puppy-fat” (Mason, qtd. in Dowling 73) of Queenie Mataira or Mere’s wide-eyed positivism and cultural pride.6

In *Hide ‘n Seek*, for example, writers Hori Ahipene and Hone Kouka present Kataraina and Jill as young self-aware waahine who carefully negotiate their relationships with other whaanau members and, most importantly, who operate beyond the type of insularity depicted in the Maaori worlds of earlier plays. Two factors are particularly notable in Ahipene’s and Kouka’s alteration of the kootiro character. One is Kataraina’s influence over the play’s narrative and the other is her positioning in the bosom of a whaanau that has no kuia figure.

Kouka and Ahipene present the central wahine character Kataraina as clever, inquiring and sometimes cynical. They position her within the tight embrace of a small rural community where “everyone’s related to everyone” and “everyone knows everyone” (Scene 1), but also in a wider context where American media personalities like Oprah Winfrey, Tom Cruise and Madonna provide role models. Whereas Queenie eventually blossoms in the arms of her iwi, Kouka and Ahipene refuse to represent the tight-knit community as an insulated sanctuary where Kataraina can flourish. Instead, Kataraina is critical of the stifling impact of rural Maaori life. She hatches escape plans: “I reckon the only way to get away from [the community] is, if you’re real crafty or real clever or both” (ibid) and sees opportunities for herself that lie beyond the “one horse town” (ibid) that is Whaanaupiripiri.7

Prior to *Hide ‘n Seek*, no plays by taane depended upon a kootiro to speak from an authoritative position about other characters or events. In *Hide ‘n Seek* Kataraina delivers two monologues which frame the action and to a great extent determine the audience’s perspectives of Whaanaupiripiri and its inhabitants. Through Kataraina, Ahipene and Kouka are able to present a youthful, less nostalgic and romantic view of rural Maaori life. Moreover, the conversational and familiar tone of the monologues allows the audience to establish an affinity with Kataraina, encouraging them to see her version of events.

In a revival of the play in 1994, Nancy Brunning played Kataraina and became an “on-stage delegate” (States 172) for the audience. She established a rapport with audiences which encouraged them to see events from her ‘kootiro perspective’ and, she was given the license to connect with the audience in a way other actors were not. In performance, Kataraina’s monologues provided Brunning with a chance to exhibit both Kataraina’s thoughts and her own regard for the audiences’ responses, enabling Brunning to create a sense of collusion between her acting self, the kootiro character and the audience.

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7 The town’s name refers to the clinginess of the whaanau.
Hide 'n Seek does not reproduce the types of kuia/kootiro relationships common to plays before it. Instead, it compares the experiences between Kataraina and another kootiro character, Jill (Kataraina's brother's girlfriend). Kataraina and the city-based, career-oriented, self-assured Jill represent the diverse experiences of waahine. At 30, Jill is older than the "tough" Kataraina. Originally from Te Muka, Jill now lives in Wellington, has a career as a journalist, owns an apartment and has travelled widely. The restrictive and demanding life experiences which have kept Kataraina in Whaanaupiripiri, watching TV, and "stuck in [the] house 24 hours a day", (Scene 12) are completely alien to Jill. Jill's financial and social independence bring a sense of freedom that Kataraina will never be able to experience, but Jill's independence comes at a price. Her life is bereft of any whaanau or support networks. Her career and her relationship with Tiaki take up most of her time. Although Kataraina is often resentful of the demands her whaanau make, she is also grateful for the protection and aroha it provides. The play's depiction of the respective lives of Kataraina and Jill demonstrates the different ways waahine identity is shaped. The play dismantles previous constructions of kootiro as either vulnerable, naïve and corruptible or as exaggerated, overwhelmingly optimistic emblems of a rejuvenated Māori culture and offers, in place of the kootiro stereotype, examples of young waahine actively and meaningfully participating in diverse social and cultural contexts.

While in Hide 'n Seek, Ahipene and Kouka introduce alternative figurations of kootiro characters, in Waiaora, Rongo and Amiria – the play's kootiro characters – are comparable with Mason's Aroha and Queenie Mataira respectively. Although only 18-years-old, Rongo becomes the play's surrogate kuia figure. Like Aroha Mataira, she is self-possessed and strong-willed. She is closely aligned with the Māori spirit world. For most of the play, Rongo is the only character who can see and hear the whaanau's tiipuna. She also has a deep relationship with her recently deceased Nan, the unseen kuia figure who represents the past and the home the whaanau has forsaken. More than any of the other waahine in the play, Rongo is associated with the land, Papatuanuku. She is also the self-designated pataka for her whaanau: "Kel te mahara ahau, ki ngaa pao, ngaa waiata, ngaa haka araa te katoa" (Act One 30). Although she is not elderly or close to death, and therefore does not manifest the same ethereality as Aroha, Rongo's quiet observation of her whaanau and her grappling with spiritual and cultural matters suggests a mana usually reserved for kuia. Even Amiria, Rongo's older sister, sees Rongo in this way, telling her Dad not to ask Rongo for her opinion on pop music because "she thinks she's a kuia" (Act One 18). Like Aroha Mataira, Rongo's representational burden is heavy. However, rather than representing an already battered and broken culture, Rongo is an example of a Māori culture in the process of transition, a culture that, when not enlivened and rejuvenated, could be diluted by Paakehaa forms of expression and existence.
Amiria has similar ideas and experiences to Queenie Mataira. Both characters are eager to have more interaction with the Paakehaa world, particularly because of the consumerist promise it holds. Like Queenie, Amiria is fond of dressing up. She would “love to have enough money to buy dress after dress, like that, dress after dress” (Act One 26) and she sees Louise Stones’ lifestyle as the living out of a dream. Also, like Queenie, Amiria clashes with her mother whom Amiria sees as an impediment to her developing adult-expression. In Act One of the play, when Sue/Wai (Amiria’s mother) and Amiria argue about Nick, Amiria’s Paakehaa boyfriend, and about Amiria’s increasing “bad manners” (39), Sue is cast as a mother-gaoler (like Aroha in The Pohutukawa Tree). Amiria’s infatuation with Nick who gives her the feeling that she is “light, floating” (Act Two 94) is similar to Queenie’s fascination with Roy McDowell.

While Rongo and Amiria represent the changing nature of Maaori cultural life in 1960s Aotearoa, Kouka manages to dilute the heavy concentration of cultural symbolism often borne by waahine characters. Unlike Aroha and Queenie, Rongo and Amiria are not merely dramatic devices for representing Maaori culture. They are able to comment on the way they are perceived by others. For example, helping her mother prepare the hangi for Rongo’s birthday, Amiria is conscious of outsiders’ opinions of her whaanau and wider Maaori society. Amiria jokes about the way Maaori are perceived by non-Maaori: “We don’t talk, we work” (Act One 21) and she chastises Maaori in a tongue-in-cheek manner for their backwardness: “[...] why dig a hole in the ground and put a fire on top when you can use an oven? Bloody Maaoris – when will we ever learn?” (Act One 37). Later, in a drunken state, Amiria parodies the popular image of Maaori kapa haka entertainers: she exclaims to Louise Stones,

[...] us Maaoris put on this show for you pakeha fullas all the time [laughing] I’m sure you would have seen it before. Let me do a bit of a dance for ya. (She dances a satirical haka pokes out her tongue) (Act One 52).

Rongo, too, is aware of the way Maaori are viewed by outsiders. When Louise refers to the whaanau as “you people” (Act One 37), Rongo is quick to question Louise’s blanket categorisation and stereotyping of Maaori. Moreover, Rongo’s reluctance to play out the roles Paakehaa expect of Maaori is in part an attempt to deny Paakehaa a claim to Maaori identity. At various points in the play Louise, Steve Campbell, Hone and Sue ask Rongo to sing. Rongo cannot. Her “heaven sent” (Act One 60) voice that “makes the birds blush” (Act One 40) is reserved for the private moments when Rongo is alone, communicating with her Nan. While her silence is analogous with the potential silencing of voice and language upon Maaori transition into Paakehaa dominated spheres, it can also be interpreted as a deliberate refusal to conform to Paakehaa expectations of Maaori behaviour.
In *Waipora*, Kouka modifies the typical roles laid upon kootiro characters. As well as being representatives for a culture in transition, they also become markers of the culture's emerging self-consciousness and of its ability to control the way it is perceived.

**Woman Far Walking**

Kouka and Ahipene's expansions of the representational possibilities of the kootiro figure are matched by Witi Ihimaera's kuia figure in *Woman Far Walking*, Tiriti O Waitangi Mahana. In some respects, the symbolic pairing of Tiri and the Treaty of Waitangi lends the kuia figure a similar representative function to the kuia portrayed in *Maranga Mai* (more than 20 years before). However, Tiri's physical representation and the critical consciousness applied to her iconic status intensify and complicate the presentation of this kuia character.

Tiri's exaggerated, supernatural age marks a considerable departure from kuia in preceding texts. In fact, Tiri's "extreme old age" (Act One, Scene 1.9) creates a type of ethereality and 'larger-than-life-ness' that even Aroha Mataira does not achieve when she wills herself to death. Although tempered by a naturalistic representation (in the opening scenes Tiri is "[. . .]") in a wheelchair [. . .] dressed in a white nightdress. Her hair is white, waist length [. . .] swept from the back of her neck [. . .]. She has [. . .] walking sticks in both hands [. . .] wrinkles [. . .]." (Ibid), there is a definite sense that Tiri operates on spiritual planes as well as earthly ones. She assumes a god-like status because she is a great warrior, is able to commune with Death and has a superb memory.

Rather than being an emblem of the passing of customary ways and the death of the majestic and proud Maaori race, Tiri becomes the embodiment of the 160 years of Maaori resistance, struggle and warring that has sprung up around the Treaty. Her longevity emphasises the important historical and contemporary role of the Treaty, while her disabled, contorted 160-year-old body suggests at best, a battered, worn-down relationship between Maaori and the Crown. At worst, Tiri, because of the battering she has received, represents Maaori fragility and susceptibility to repeated neglect of Treaty promises. However, rather than present a kuia who simply endures the epic proportions of 160 years of war and protest and the threat of the eternal presence of conflict, Tiri is a wahine warrior who defies complete archetypal identification by pushing for war rather than peace.

Tiri's emblematic role is undercut in other ways too. Unlike kuia characters before her, Tiri converses directly with the audience, in a similar manner to Kataraina in *Hide 'n Seek*, and thereby conveys her anxiety about her iconic role. Tiri is self-conscious, ambivalent and reluctant about her representation as a symbol for Maaori cultural history:

Just because I've lived longer than anyone does that make me a freak? A sideshow exhibit? Left high and dry like a waka in a museum where there are no seas? Or stuffed
and put into a glass case like a huia with glass eyes and plastic bones wired together? Is this all I am to anyone? (Prologue, Scene 1 7).

This uneasy adjustment to the historic emblem role is aggravated by Tiri’s split personality. In the play, a younger version of herself, a kootiro conscience-figure, Tilly, intermittently interrupts Tiri’s koorero. The relationship between older and younger selves embodied in Tiri and Tilly is alternately antagonistic and amicable, challenging and comforting. In fact, Tilly’s presence goes some way to explaining Tiri’s psychological torment and her ambivalence towards the iconic role she is automatically assigned. When Tiri berates Tilly and tells her to “go away” and “leave [her] alone” because she’s always coming “uninvited” (Act One, Scene 1 13), she is actually berating herself.

Also complicating the depiction of this kuia is the physical representation of the division between body and spirit, embodied in the tension between Tilly’s youth and Tiri’s age. Tilly’s youthful vigour, her fluidity of movement and the capacity to re-enact personalities from Tiri’s early life contrast markedly with Tiri’s debilitating, motionless age. Tilly becomes a physical embodiment of the psychological energy stored in Tiri’s steadily crumbling flesh and bones. If they are read as emblems, therefore, the two figures are embodiments of a Maaori culture that is at once worn-down and energised.

In order to edit Tiri’s interpretation of events, Tilly assumes various guises as figures from Tiri’s past. Tilly’s persistent questions and promptings form a meta-commentary on the authenticity of Tiri’s narrative and more broadly on the erasures and elaborations that inevitably occur in the retelling of history. Through these two figures, the past challenges and confronts the present, undercutting the cultural self-assuredness often represented through kuia. Tilly enacts the workings of Tiri’s memory-filled mind: whole sentences, phrases and quotes move from the mouth of one figure to another, thus readjusting earlier representations of the kuia as a knowledgeable mentor and the kootiro as a student or learner.

Tilly “has a congruence with Tiri but often exhibits a critical role which sees both characters argue and pull against each other” (Character list 3). Rima Te Wiata, who played Tilly in the first production of Woman Far Walking, encapsulates the way Tiri and Tilly relate:

I have no feelings toward Tilly, all my feelings are towards Tiri. Tilly is the part of you that argues and motivates you. She is the part of you that reminds you of events in your life and cruelly comments on your behaviour. She is your mind, and in the end, she is your spirit. She changes from mind to spirit, gashing your senses in a bat of an eyelid. Forgiving you one minute and provoking you the next. So who are you? Well, you are Tiri. You are the guilt of the Treaty’s demise and all its battles to stay alive. You are the lifegiver. You are Maaori. You are a woman (Te Wiata, Personal letter 18 Nov. 2000).
Te Wiata’s explanation of the relationships between past and present, the exchanges between youth and age and the differences between body and spirit highlights the elements that make Tiri Mahana such a complex kuia.

Ihimaera injects the kuia figure with renewed dramatic potential and so questions the ease with which figures such as the kuia come to be accepted as icons of history and nationhood. The play introduces mana waahine concerns by critiquing stereotypes and, in particular, the burden this lays upon women in Māori society. Tiri’s reluctant, ambiguous acceptance of the iconic kuia role, her skills as a warrior and the split identification between herself and Tilly encourage the formulation of questions about the effectiveness and relevance of using waahine as symbols of national and cultural identity. However, as is the case with so many waahine figures in plays by taane, Tiri’s alternative, disruptive representation is curbed by a final reversion to archetype.

As with dramatic representations such as Aroha Mataira and the kuia in Maranga Mai, Tiri, despite her protestations, remains a core representative figure of Māori society. Pairing the Treaty of Waitangi with Tiri’s life accentuates the kuia’s symbolic function. Moreover, Ihimaera expands on the established tropes of women as earth mothers and peacemakers by feminising the Treaty. He makes associations between Tiri, the land and the Treaty’s potential to bind Māori and Paakeha in a harmonious relationship. The heavy symbolism in Tiri’s pairing with the Treaty overshadows her own personal history because her narrative of struggle is the same historical narrative as the New Zealand nation.

An archetypal element to Tiri’s representation is also observable in alignments between Tiri and the matriarchal Papatuanuku. Tiri often makes comments which glorify motherhood. In Tiri’s eyes, mothering signifies womanhood and identity. She associates history with her role as mother:

But for a woman, history is intimate. It has to do with the birth of children, grandchildren, great grandchildren [. . .]. It has to do with whooping cough, the first steps a child takes, the triumphs and failures of their lives. It has to do with supporting them, holding them when they are dying (Act Four, Scene 2 86-87).

Tiri becomes a supreme model of motherhood, bearing many children and being a grandmother and great grandmother to many more. In the play, all women are given the responsibility for ensuring cultural survival:

[. . .] where there is one there is a thousand. Where there are nine, there can be ninety or nine hundred or nine thousand. All of you have the blood of your whānau in your veins. You start making babies, you hear me! (Act Three, Scene 3 73-74).

In a brief moment of vulnerability, Tiri admits that it was her love of motherhood and her boundless capacity for aroha that produced the greatest mistake of her life. Instead of killing her son Pirimia (the progeny of Tiri’s rape by four Paakeha soldiers), “the smell of a newborn
child [..] the feel of one's own flesh against [her] skin” (Act Four, Scene 4 96) weakened her resolve. By sparing the child, she sets herself up for years of guilt and torment.

Although two possible solutions for Tiri's suffering are offered at the play's conclusion, both tend to reinforce the archetypal and stereotypical portrayal of waahine. One is the handing down of Tiri's legacy to her great-great-great-great-grandchild, Jessica. The second is Tiri's retreat from the stage with her mother who, throughout the play, has kept close company with the figure of Death. These resolutions demand the reproduction of archetypes and simultaneously reduce the potential for alternative representations of Maaori women.

Jessica and Tiri replicate the generational relationship identified by Chadwick Allen - a "grandparent-grandchild bond" which figures prominently in the stories gathered in Witi Ihimaera's first collection Pounamu, Pounamu (Blood Narratives 133). Tiri passes her knowledge of the past and Maaori cultural tradition to Jessica whose task it is to continue the cultural struggle. The solution works tidily with the play's plot and also works at an emblematic level - sealing the past, present and future of Maaori culture to the grandparent-grandchild coupling. While it is clear that the grandparent-grandchild bond is a hopeful and enduring symbol of on-going Maaori resistance, its repeated use creates a cliché out of the bond and reduces its dramatic potential.

This grandparent-grandchild union also creates an oversimplification of waahine roles. While Ihimaera has achieved a level of complexity in the formerly stereotyped appearance of the kuia, the younger Jessica is merely a simple plot device for the play's resolution. When Tiri assigns Jessica the role as leader, she hands her a mighty historical weight that is compounded by a legacy of self-doubt and self-deprecation. Tiri's refusal to kill her white-skinned, blue-eyed child Pirimia, and her subsequent disappointment about her inaction, is left unresolved and Jessica inherits a problematic burden. During the course of the play, Jessica does not acknowledge or address this aspect of Tiri's history. While Ihimaera's construction of Tiri involves the interweaving of the complex representational layers of self, community and national understandings, his conceptualization of the younger Jessica is simplistic.

Tiri's departure from the stage echoes Aroha Mataira's morbid end at the close of Mason's play. Like Aroha, Tiri (effectively) decides that it is time for her to pass away. She retreats to be with her mother. However, in contrast with The Pohutukawa Tree, which figures the slow but inevitable decline of Maaori culture, this particular ending, while maintaining the association between kuia and the passing/fading of an era of Maaori cultural practice and tradition, is hopeful. Even upon her departure from the land of the living, it is expected that Tiri will continue to support her moko and the younger generations.
Through Tiri, Ihimaera offers a refiguring of the kuia archetype. A subversion of audience expectation and the inclusion of mana waahine frameworks encourage a reassessment of the taken-for-granted characteristics and expectations laid upon the literary figuration of kuia. However, underlying these somewhat radical departures are fundamental tropes that preserve conventional ideas about the kuia as a perfect pinnacle of Māori womanhood. In the approximately twenty years between *Maranga Mai* and *Woman Far Walking* the kuia is still dramaturgically sealed to roles of mother, caregiver, leader and pataka.

**Shifting identities**

According to Roma Potiki, it is “not surprising that kuia appear on stage all the time” (Interview 7 Dec. 2002). She says that they are “iconic figures” and “some of the key drivers in Māori society” (ibid). However, it is the aspects of Mason’s figuration of Aroha and Queenie Mataira that still linger in Māori playwrights’ creation of kuia and kootiro characters that limit the representation of Māori women. In characters that are tightly bound to type, there is very little room for the portrayal of waahine agency or the demonstration of difference in waahine experience. Kuia and kootiro figures in some Māori plays cannot function as relevant representatives for, or reflections of, the daily lives of waahine audience members because they maintain too many of the archetypal or stereotypical tropes associated with waahine.

In particular, the figuring of the land as a woman, and the contingent relationship this sets up between waahine characters and Papatuanuku, fixes female identity tightly to women’s roles as mothers, wives, daughters and sisters within whaanau structures. While this can be interpreted as empowering, because women in these roles will often be depicted as assertive, loving and capable, it is also restrictive. Most women in plays by Māori men do not experience any life beyond these whaanau roles. Even when leeway outside of these roles is allowed, it is quickly retracted by a return to the norm before the final curtain falls. A kind of tension is at work in contemporary representations of waahine in taane plays because on one hand, taane playwrights are working towards representations of waahine characters which divert from expectation and defy archetypal status, while, on the other, there is an underlying desire to see women performing their familial duties and functions within whaanau settings.

However, there is an important distinction to be made between the representational purpose of the kuia and kootiro characters in plays such as Mason’s and later plays by taane playwrights. None of the Māori plays discussed in this chapter uses elderly waahine to represent Māori as an isolated, romantic, poetic, almost majestic culture. Nor do they suggest that younger Māori women symbolise a vulnerable culture in need of protection from one or other Paakehā threat. For the most part, taane playwrights have problematised and queried the roles assigned waahine.
However, within contemporary representations of waahine, space remains for the establishment of new dialogues and frameworks along with new dramatic styles and forms. The potential exists for further analysis and examination of archetypal waahine figures and motifs and for the modification or reconstitution of archetypes and stereotypes.

Waahine playwrights Renee, Rena Owen, Riwia Brown and Roma Potiki use theatre and drama to query the boundaries around cultural identity and people's preconceived notions of Maaori. At the same time as taane have been presenting stereotypes, these women have used plays to make the point that shared gender and culture do not necessarily have to frame similarities in social and cultural outlook.
CHAPTER FIVE

FIRST WAVE WAAHINE PLAYWRIGHTS

In John Broughton’s 1989 play *Michael James Manaia* a 30-something, Vietnam veteran – Michael Manaia – recounts part of his life history. He is haunted by the untimely and unnecessary death of his younger brother, experiences of psychological and physical abuse at the hands of a violent father and his witnessing of horror and bloodshed during the Vietnam War. Between reminiscences of high school shenanigans, booze-ups and parental rows, Manaia relates loving memories of his Nanny. In remembering her, he returns to the myths of Maaori origins and in particular to the story of the creation of the first woman, Hineahuone:

Ko wai tera? Who is that?
Ko Tane Mahuta.
'Tis Tane Mahuta, God of the Forests.
Titiro! Titiro!

Kei te aha a Tane?
What is Tane doing?
Titiro. Look!
Look now at Tane!
Tane Mahuta.
He gathers the earth together.
He makes something.
He moulds something.
Carefully.
Carefully now, out of the earth.

He aha? What is it?
He wahine tena!
He wahine?
Ae! A woman!

Tihei Mauri Ora!

Ha! 'Tis the breath of life.
Tane has breathed the breath of life.
See, she wakens, she lives.

Ko wai te wahine nei?
Who is this woman?

Ko Hine Ahu One ia.
It is Hine Ahu One.
The Earth Formed Maid (36).

Like Tane Mahuta in Manaia's retelling of the fashioning of the first Maaori woman, taane playwrights were initially responsible for the creation and representation of waahine characters in Maaori plays. While taane writers contributed to the increased presence of Maaori women on the New Zealand stage, the possibilities for waahine characters were not developed very far beyond the kuia and kootiro types first embodied by Aroha and Queenie Mataira in The Pohutukawa Tree. Indeed, stereotyped waahine figures such as these tended to mask the alternative experiences and various realities of Maaori women's lives.

In their representation of waahine characters, a 'first wave' of waahine playwrights - Renee, Rena Owen, Riwia Brown and Roma Potiki - accentuated the complexity of Maaori women's lives. Plays by these writers display a conscious rejection of male imaging of Maaori women in favour of work that places prominence on Maaori women's varied life experiences. While representations of kuia and kootiro still appear, those archetypes are reconfigured in order to query the idealistic figuration in plays by taane playwrights. In plays by this first wave of writers, waahine characters are self-aware, self-critical and self-determined, frequently
expressing opinions that are strident, questioning and subversive. In their bid to "put women on stage" (Renee, Interview with McCurdy 66) and to reclaim culture and re-establish cultural identity (Potiki, Introduction 10), these waahine writers redefined the dramatic terrain of Maaori theatre. Plays such as Renee's Groundwork, Jeannie Once and Te Pouaka Kaehe, Owen's Te Awa I Tahuti and Daddy's Girl; Brown's Roimata and Potiki's Whatungarongaro offered alternative Maaori social contexts to highlight the differences in Maaori women's experiences.

Renee, Owen, Brown and Potiki altered the Maaori dramatic landscape in four main ways. The first of these was to introduce a sharper focus on the experiences of waahine characters. Their plays emphasized the distinct experiences of Maaori women in relation to Maaori society, and in so doing, brought mana waahine concerns to the fore. They provided a greater sense of waahine's roles in whaanau and hapuu producing increased awareness of the complex and peculiar social forces shaping waahine, young and old.

These waahine writers also influenced the corpus of Maaori plays by establishing a critical distance between Maaori characters and the conventional dramatic determinants of Maaori cultural identity – the marae, relationships with elders and rural settings. Instead of perpetuating these conventions, Renee, Owen, Brown and Potiki examined the drama that lay in characters' separation from and subsequent return to their marae. In their plays waahine characters are in ambivalent relationships with the marae because while it may represent cultural affirmation and centrality, and may also be a source of tino rangatiratanga, simultaneously it can be an emblem of a changing or fading sense of self. Much of the drama is created as the characters – located in new, often urban environments – negotiate relationships with their tribal homes.

Simultaneous with the shift away from the marae was a shift towards urban and suburban locations as plays by these waahine writers began to explore the experiences of Maaori living in urban contexts. Roimata and Whatungarongaro in particular examine the effects of rural-urban migration and the feelings of cultural dislocation and alienation that can result. What is more, they investigate the way new and difficult social situations presented by urban life impact on male/female relationships.

A further adaptation to the dramatic terrain was initiated by Renee, whose plays often include scenes that present characters participating in some kind of dramatic performance. By role-playing, several of Renee's waahine characters demonstrate that they are capable of using performance to construct and control their identities. As well as drawing attention to the relationship between performance and identity (encouraging audiences to ask whether cultural and gender identity are innate or acquired) Groundwork, Jeannie Once and Te Pouaka Kaehe illuminate the influential and invasive effect stereotyping and social expectation can have on the
way women perceive themselves and are perceived by others. Furthermore, Renee’s use of metatheatrical elements offers an alternative to the straight, dramatic realism often employed in Māori theatre and lays the foundations for experimentation with ways of representing Māori lives in drama.¹

Consonant with mana waahine thought, which requires that taane as well as waahine pay heed to and support waahine causes, waahine playwrights have carved a path that taane such as Apirana Taylor and Hone Kouka (in particular) have followed. Consequently, waahine writers have inflected the work of taane writers by extending dramatic realism as a mode of theatrical presentation.

**Beyond the marae**

In plays by Renee, Owen, Brown and Potiki much of the dramatic action occurs away from the marae and/or the rural papakainga. Alternative, mostly urban or suburban settings are favoured as waahine playwrights move beyond the small-town and marae common to plays by taane (such as *Kohanga* and *In the Wilderness Without a Hat*). The first wave of waahine playwrights explores the issues arising out of geographical and psychological distance from the often isolated, rural marae. Renee suggests that drama can lie beyond the marae, either on its outskirts or in urban contexts where characters can negotiate their relationship with it. Insisting that it is not the “only valid experience to be written about” she sees “a whole world of Māori experience that is not necessarily connected to the marae.” For Renee, more intense drama lies in stories about exploring why Māori are “less connected [. . .] to the marae” (Renee, Interview with Warrington 77).

As early as 1985, in *Groundwork*, Renee placed waahine characters in situations removed from the marae.² Two holding cells in the Auckland Police Station are the setting for the action which takes place against a background of protest over the 1981 Springbok Rugby tour of New Zealand. Five women are detained to ‘cool-off’ during the final day of the anti-tour marches. Confined within the cells, the women speak about their reasons for getting involved in the protests, ultimately realizing the diverse causes which separate them. From the cells, Emma (Māori) and Ellen (part-Māori) re-enact memories of their friendship and argue about their political and cultural allegiances.

Signifying confinement and control, the holding-cell is an effective backdrop for the playing out of Ellen’s concerns about identity. The cell is also a visual metaphor for Ellen’s initially staid and

¹ As mentioned in Chapter One, Renee is a key figure in New Zealand theatre. In particular, she is well-known for feminist plays which deal with socialist politics and working-class, sometimes lesbian, female characters. Three of her plays – *Groundwork*, Jeannie Once and *Te Pouaka Kaehe* – address issues of Māori identity (the first two of these deal less centrally with race issues).

² *Groundwork* was first produced at Theatre Corporate by Working Title in 1985.
repressed attitude towards her Maaori heritage. More importantly, locked up at the station, Ellen has space to contemplate her childhood, her relationship with Emma, and her present situation. The setting – a space beyond conventional society – provides Ellen with the opportunity to think more critically about herself, about her relationship with her Maaori mother and their small-town community.

Rena Owen uses the division between rural marae and urban spaces to depict her urban characters’ ambiguous and often tense relationships with marae-based communities. Her first play, *Te Awa I Tahuti*, questions the conventional association of the marae with nourishment and nurture. It demonstrates that connection with the marae is not always easy and that constriction, disrespect and rejection can sometimes be connected with a rural marae upbringing.

Like *Groundwork*, *Te Awa I Tahuti* features a Maaori woman in a cell. In this instance, Toni, a recovering drug-addict and near-suicidal kootiro, is fifteen months away from being released from a prison in London, far from her papakainga. As part of her rehabilitation, Toni receives counselling from an older British therapist, Mrs Bottomley, to whom Toni describes a childhood dominated by a violent and oppressive father and the suicide of a younger brother. The counselling helps Toni find the strength for her return to the outside and gradually, she reclaims her Maaori cultural heritage and accepts the trauma her father produced in her life.

In *Te Awa I Tahuti*, Toni’s enforced solitude in the prison-cell creates a space for reflection. Ironically, this prison space liberates Toni to reveal a conflict with her rural home. In this enclosed, marginalised space, Toni has the ‘floor’ and is able to articulate the problems associated with her marae-based past. Early in the play, she describes her childhood and her rural home romantically, recollecting beach picnics, hangi and guitar-playing in the “winterless North” (Scene 1 138). However, as Mrs Bottomley counsels Toni, the latter admits that the rural papakainga is not always the loving, whaanau base it is often believed to be. For example, Toni’s idyllic recollections of home are overshadowed by memories of her brother Frankie’s beatings at the hands of their father: “He’d been my father’s punchbag all his life. Deaf in one ear, thanks to a beating. Not fucken good enough. Put him in a mental hospital [. . .] Shot himself with a double-barrel shotgun” (Scene 1 140-141). Her own relationship with her father was dominated by fear and this has created a deep uncertainty about the rural home with which he is aligned.

Since turning 18 Toni has stayed away from her father’s influence and her rural home, choosing to live in Auckland and then even further away in London. Disconnecting herself even more

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3 *Te Awa I Tahuti* was written and produced for the first time in 1987 when Owen was part of a London-based company – Clean Break.
definitely from her birthplace, she has changed her name from Te Arohanui (much love) to the shorter, androgynous, Toni. Clearly, time away and distance from home have brought new perspectives and Toni’s relationship to the marae has become ambivalent as she observes it more critically.

Like Toni, Rose and Rachel, young sisters in Owen’s second play – *Daddy’s Girl* – are situated at a considerable geographic remove from the marae. Both girls have grown up in an Auckland suburb without any connection to or knowledge of their rural home. Trapped in the whaanau home, 26-year-old ex-nurse Rose cares for her ailing father, Joe Paraone, a 60-year-old stroke victim. She endures his tantrums and is worn down by his demands, sacrificing any sense of self-fulfilment for her father’s welfare. Rachel, the elder of the two, lives and works in the city. She has a tepid relationship with her father and so has stayed away from home. Joe’s mother, a ghost-figure – Ngaro Paraone – berates Joe for his abandonment of the marae and his iwi. Unseen by all characters except Joe, Ngaro focuses her energies on trying to convince her son to return with his daughters to their papakainga. Both Rose and Rachel experience some psychological fall-out from their father’s decisions to withdraw from his Maaori whaanau, deny his cultural heritage and live life beyond the marae.

*Daddy’s Girl* emphasises the limiting effects environment and one’s knowledge of the past – in this case, lack of knowledge – can have on self-expression. Rose’s self-understanding is reduced because she is ignorant of her cultural heritage and marae connections. Much of the drama stems from Rose’s gradual realisation of her Maaori heritage, her shedding of an identity shaped by a life beyond the marae and the construction of a new identity shaped in relation to it. When the sisters duly discover their Maaori ancestry and visit their father’s hapuu at his tangi, they make the decision to strengthen their connections with the rural home. Rose considers that she may eventually move there, “go back for more” (62), because she felt “really at home” (63), whereas Rachel suggests that she’ll “stick to visiting once a month” (ibid). In the powerful final scene, the sisters decide to redecorate their father’s living room, marking their place in the city while simultaneously recognising that they have a new, alternative rural home.

Written two years prior to *Daddy’s Girl*, Riwia Brown’s *Roimata* dramatises the terrain between the rural home, the often restrictive psychological boundaries home erects, and the difficult, alienating effects of city life. While nurturing, protecting and nourishing, the rural home in *Roimata* is also a place of oppressive order and discipline where Nan barks grumpily at Roimata:

NAN. Roimata!

ROIMATA. What’s wrong?
NAN. What are you doing with your boots on? Want to dirty your nice clean floor? Take those off, I want to talk to you.

[...]

NAN. [... ] You’ve made the bread?
ROIMATA. Ae.
NAN. Chopped the wood?
ROIMATA. Ae. (Scene 165)

Brown presents a tension between this traditional rural existence, where hierarchical familial relationships are entrenched and values solid, and a difficult, often alienating, amoral, urban existence. Early in Roimata, Brown cleverly shifts the audiences' attention and expectations away from the conventional representation of Maaori on the rural marae, to a focus on Maaori lives in the city of Wellington. Roimata’s Nan’s death enables Roimata to bid a temporary farewell to her papakainga and marae.4

In Wellington Roimata is initially confused and unanchored. However, in moving away from the marae, she manages to gain understanding about herself, her sister and her father. In the city, Roimata carries the marae with her. Her pride in her cultural inheritance enhances her relationships with potential partners, Eddy and Kevin. These relationships give her a greater sense of the diversity of Maaori identity and her social experiences in Wellington make her more certain about her subsequent return to the marae.

Urban landscapes

Roimata extends the canvas of urban life depicted in Maaori plays by presenting a range of urban experiences. Scenes of reckless social behaviour in the predominantly male domains of the pub and gang headquarters are contrasted with quiet, contemplative scenes in spaces like Girli’s city flat. As Roimata interacts in these different urban spaces, she gains an appreciation of the variation extant in Maaori lives beyond the marae.

Roimata features individuals who represent a large, diverse grouping of urban Maaori distanced and alienated from the papakainga: gang member Eddy, Christianised Kevin, financially-independent, street-wise Girli, and the oppressed and degraded Paakehaa woman Mouse. This urban milieu is mapped along gender lines: Maaori males are repressed or violent, drug-abusing, alcohol-swilling and anti-social and women such as Mouse, Roimata and Girli are potential victims of male disrespect and violence.

Like Roimata, which investigates the connection between urban existence, cultural alienation, loss of heritage and negative social relationships, Whatungarongaro looks critically at urban

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4 Te Hokina, the sequel to Roimata, shifts the dramatic action back to the marae. City inhabitants Eddy, Blue Boy and Mouse visit Roimata and Girli in their new rural home.
ways of life. More strikingly than its predecessors, Potiki's play creates a portrait of devastated Maori lives. Set in a harsh urban environment, Whatungarongaro focuses on Ruby – an unemployed, alcoholic, solo mother – and her two children, Wiki and Dean. Ruby's experiences in Whatungarongaro reflect a grim reality similar to the one described by Ngahuia Te Awekotuku:

Maori women 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 whaanau (46).

In some respects, however, Ruby's position is economically and socially worse than Te Awekotuku's scenario suggests. In the play's critique of contemporary, urban society, Ruby represents the problematic disintegration of Maori self-respect. She is positioned as the crucial link in a chain of abuse and neglect. Her fragile psyche is exposed in several scenes. In Scene Two for example, the effects of alcoholism are explored in "Poem for Ruby":

In the morning, [...] my whole body's cold
And my face is hurting
And everytime I go to stand I feel sick
And every breath is a gasp
And every sweat-filled minute I wish I was dead (38).

The play also presents Maori youth such as Wiki and Dean as out of place in their urban environments. Their urban surroundings cannot provide solutions for the trauma, neglect and confusion they suffer. The siblings witness family models where the relationships between men and women are unbalanced. Throughout, the play addresses the problem of Maori males physically abusing their female partners. Whatungarongaro illustrates more harshly than Te Awa I Tahuti or Roimata the negative impact taane feelings of worthlessness can have on Maori women and children. In a flashback in Scene Three, Dean remembers his mother being raped by "some uncle" of his (42). The rape is depicted on stage:

Eddy has his hand on Ruby's throat. She is choking. Dean has woken and jumped out of the bed, unsure what to do. Eddy is on top of Ruby. They struggle. Ruby has been raped. Finally she manages to push him off her (44).

Dean's witnessing of this attack on his mother ruins any hopes of his forming a nourishing and supportive whaanau. Dean lacks male role models; rather than allow himself to be co-opted into a role like Eddy's, Dean splits the whaanau in order to protect it. He opts out entirely, preferring a "life on the street" where "choices are few" and "nobody cares" (Scene 3 40-41).

1 While TV dramas such as Hapipis The Protestors and stage plays such as Tuwhare's In the Wilderness Without a Hat prophetically signalled the ever-widening distance between rural and urban Maori lives, their settings remained within or near rural marae or papakainga. Admittedly, in the case of both these plays, the stronghold of the marae is in some way threatened by urban change.
Unlike Ruby and Dean, Wiki manages to maintain some hope for her future by acknowledging the possibility of an alternative way of life. For Wiki, rest, safety and aroha lie in a return to old times. Her dream-like, utopian vision of Dean’s resting place (in Scene 12) — a place “somewhere peaceful and happy” where “people love you and [. . . ] are always showing their aroha to you” — is located “somewhere old” (68), removed entirely from the dangerous, undesirable and unwelcoming urban domestic lives they currently inhabit. She is ready to learn from the slow-paced, old-eyed view of her ancestors. At the end of the play, Wiki is the only character who has awoken to Huia’s call: “The times have changed, I come with the strength of my tupuuna, for you to see with old eyes, to awaken from this dream. Maranga Mai! Maranga Mai! Hui! Hui! Hui! Hui! Huia!” (Scene 3 41). *Whatungarongaro* does not project a bleak outlook for Wiki. Instead, refracted through Wiki’s decision to return to the papakainga, a strong sense of Maaori spirituality, acceptance and tolerance are offered as solutions for contemporary social problems faced by Maaori.

**Crumbling whaanau structures**

*Whatungarongaro* presents a family destroyed by the financial and social demands of urban life. Importantly, *Te Awa I Tahuti, Daddy’s Girl* and *Roimata* were also groundbreaking in their observations of the vulnerability of traditional whaanau structures especially as Maaori became more alienated from their cultural roots. In Owen’s, Brown’s and Potiki’s plays a great deal of the pain stems from Maaori men’s inadequate, neglectful and sometimes violent approaches to fatherhood. In *Te Awa I Tahuti*, for example, Toni escapes her father’s aggression and abandons her family as it collapses in upon itself. The social situation in *Daddy’s Girl* is not much better. Joe feels inadequate because he fails to gain acceptance from Paakehaa society; as a consequence, the whaanau splits.

*Te Awa I Tahuti* suggests that firm whaanau ties come undone because of male violence and aggression. Such problems also make it difficult for waahine to maintain and negotiate positive connections to the rural home. Owen addresses the web of problems experienced by wives, mothers and children who live with husbands and fathers who are consumed by a sense of helplessness and hopelessness. J.T., the unpredictable, often violent father in *Te Awa I Tahuti*, is a negative presence in Toni’s childhood memories. In her counselling sessions with Mrs Bottomley, Toni speaks of a man whose full-time job at the freezing works, a school life where he was punished for being Maaori and a life of expectations never satisfied, turned a “wonderful daddy” and “proud warrior” into a “hori” reduced to working in the “freezing works” (Scene 3 159). Following in his footsteps and thereby forming a degenerative, negative male

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6 Until Michael James Manaia, few plays investigated the psychology of the violent or traumatised Maaori male. Owen’s and Brown’s plays were among the first to refer to such characters.
whakapapa, are Māori men such as Toni’s brothers who have, according to her, got “Gangs. Prisons. Yop schemes to look forward to” (ibid).7

Joe Paraone’s fluctuating passive-aggressive behaviour in Daddy’s Girl is partly a product of his rejection from Paakehaa society and his guilt over the neglect of his mother’s hapu. He snaps orders at his daughters, and restricts Rose’s life by demanding that she see to his physical needs. Joe, christened Hohepa, wants to deny his whakapapa and iwi links, believing that separation from his rural home will ensure success in the Paakehaa world. However, Joe’s whaanau pays a severe price for his attempts to disguise his Māori heritage. Joe loses his wife, is estranged from his mother and then haunted by her upon her death. He clings dependently to his daughters, damaging any chances of their developing independent and rewarding adult relationships.

Whatungarongaro examines whaanau breakdown and shifting attitudes towards the rural papakainga by foregrounding the urban experiences of Māori. In the urban environment Ruby has turned to alcohol as an escape from her loneliness and from the difficulties of raising alone, Wiki and Dean. Willie, Ruby’s ex-husband, has a new girlfriend and divides his time between work and the pub. Ruby’s and Willie’s daughter, Wiki, who is in a relationship with a Paakehaa boy, Stevie, has to deal with her mother’s increasing apathy towards her and her brother, as well as her unplanned pregnancy. Dean is abusing solvents and rarely stays at home, preferring the streets and his friends’ company to his mother’s and sister’s. Hula and Huna and a flock of manu-spirits accompany Dean, who, overwhelmed by the trauma of his mother’s rape, dies, when he follows a taniwha into a near-by creek after overdosing on solvents. His death at the play’s conclusion forces Wiki to reconsider her future, while, for Ruby, the future seems even more bleak. However, against this horrific picture of urban life, Whatungarongaro does not posit the marae or rural life as a trouble-free solution or alternative.

Like Te Awa I Tahuti, Whatungarongaro raises questions about the stability of whaanau structures and the nurturing, comforting values of the marae and papakainga. Images of the rural marae are tainted by the hint of male violence. The drunken booze-talk of Willie and his mates transforms the marae from the conventional romantic ideal into a space for drunk cousins and hidden stashes of whisky:

WILLIE. [. . .] The thing I like best is going up home for a few days. Head up the marae and get away from all this. Just get up country an forget town for a while.

[. . .]

7 Youth Opportunities Programmes (YOP schemes) emerged in Great Britain in 1977 to provide work experience for 16-18 year olds who had been unemployed for a minimum of six weeks.
GARY. Yeah. Yeah, when I get to the marae, first chance I get, I head straight for the wharekai, one o’ the boys usually got a bottle of whiskey stashed somewhere. (Scene 6 57).

**Relationships with men**

In plays by the first wave of waahine writers, waahine’s confused and ambivalent attitudes towards the rural home are often exacerbated by selfish and/or aggressive male figures who dominate the waahine’s perceptions about their relationship with home. Importantly however, the plays also show that the same taane characters have a capacity for tenderness and aroha which complicates even further the relationships waahine have with their male counterparts. In some plays, waahine playwrights provide insights into the dynamics of romantic relationships between taane and waahine, presenting the relationships in a much more complex manner than earlier simplistic representations such as the one shared by Queenie Mataira and Roy McDowell in *The Pohtukawa Tree*. In particular, *Roimata, Whatungarongaro* and *Te Pouaka Kāraehe* scrutinize the personal, intimate elements of male/female relations, giving them more prominence in the play’s plots.

*Roimata* contrasts a range of male/female pairings to highlight the different power dynamics in male/female relationships. Although she is an object of contestation between Eddy and Kevin – a gang member and a Salvation Army cadet respectively – Roimata holds the most power in these taane/waahine relationships. Both men try to dominate her: Eddy claims that Roimata is his woman (Scene 10) and Kevin assumes that she will have his children (Scene 17). However, Roimata has a self-assurance and determination which both of the men lack (making her all the more desirable to them). Eddy admits that the days he spent with Roimata at Girlie’s “were the best” (Scene 16 210) and Kevin tells Roimata that he has “always loved [her]” (Scene 17 215) and that he wants to marry her. While there is an element of melodrama to Roimata’s relationships with these men – she falls pregnant and is not certain who the father is – the scenes she shares with each of them reveal something of the confusing awkwardness and sincerity associated with new relationships.⁸

In the play, the impending birth of Roimata’s child creates room for the expression of an alternative form of female independence and self-determination. Roimata rejects the potential trappings of marriage and the expectation that she will be part of a nuclear whaanau. She and her half-sister Girlie decide to raise the child together, free from dependency on men. Furthermore, although single, Girlie is financially independent and capable of asserting herself

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⁸ See Trish Dunleavy, “New Zealand Television Drama: The First Thirty Years 1960-1990,” vol. 2, PhD Thesis, University of Auckland, New Zealand, 1999, 395. *Roimata* was one of five Maori dramas made for television in 1989 as part of the series *E Tipu, E Rea* /Grow Up Tender, Young Shoot. Five 30-minute TV plays which “reflected the concerns of [the] Maori Broadcasting lobby group, Te Mana Aute” were broadcast in a late-night slot on TV One in November.
in a range of urban domains. She is assertive and uninhibited in relationships with men. Although at times Roimata considers Girlie’s multiple, short-term relationships with men as empty and futile, she also realises that Girlie is in control of and confident about the decisions she makes.

Conversely, Blue Boy’s mistreatment of Girlie’s Paakehaa friend, Mouse, illuminates the power imbalances that can be detrimental to male/female relationships. Blue Boy controls and manipulates the submissive Mouse, making sexual threats by telling her he’ll “put a bit of Maori” in her and will rape her (Scene 4 179) if she doesn’t comply with his demands. Mouse, an occupant of the gang headquarters, is ordered around by its male members. They make her “clean the shithouse” (Scene 6 186) and shout down her queries and protestations. Mouse’s destructive relations with Blue Boy contrast starkly with the romantic liaisons shared by Roimata and Eddy and Roimata and Kevin. Nevertheless, all the male/female pairings in Roimata challenge the myths of romantic, unproblematic love. Brown uses these relationships to hint at larger social issues such as cultural alienation (Eddy and Roimata), stifling religiosity (Kevin and Roimata) and uneasy Maaori and Paakehaa relations (Blue Boy and Mouse). While short stories such as Witi Ihimaera’s Big Brother, Little Sister (1972) and novels like Keri Hulme’s The Bone People (1986) had looked critically and thoughtfully at taane and waahine relationships, in the late 1980s, Brown’s depiction of such relationships was relatively new to Maaori theatre. Although potentially contentious, her raw, uncensored portrayal of urban Maaori lives and her depiction of waahine as objects of male disrespect and abuse, brought previously shrouded issues to light.

Like Roimata, Whatungarongaro challenges the notion of blissful, uncomplicated romantic love. Willie and Ruby are divorced, and many tensions still exist in their broken relationship. In a flashback in Scene Six, Ruby and Willie have a fist fight while at a party. Ruby is jealous of Willie’s new girlfriend, Marion, and expresses her hurt by angrily spilling a drink on Marion. Willie defends Marion by pushing Ruby. A fight ensues: Willie and Ruby “really let fly” (53) as their friends look on. The fight reveals the level of passion Willie and Ruby still have for each other, but, more than this, it accentuates the problems with a social environment that sees couples express their regrets, jealousies and disappointments through violence. The way Willie’s and Ruby’s friends talk about the fight creates a picture of a society whose members have become accustomed to such behaviour:

GARY. Well that sure was a bash, mate.
TOM. I’ll say.
MARG. Never mind, Willie, it happens to the best of us.
TINA, looking at Gary. Yep, sure does (57).
However, in *Whatungarongaro* the more positive effects of taane/waahine relationships are also recognised. For instance, Ruby has a moment of self-realisation when she reminisces about the beginnings of her relationship with Willie. Their first sexual encounter contains aspects of the elemental love shared by the mythological parents of humankind, Tane and Hineahuone. Willie, like Tane, is described with a powerful gentleness and Ruby associates the moment with clay, aligning herself with Hineahuone:

> It was a magical place for us both. The clay was such a deep colour.  
> It stayed on my feet for days. He was so beautiful then and I was too. He moved over me like a cloud (Scene 9 66).

Here, Ruby is in an unusually peaceful, contemplative mood. Ruby's dream is an example of the aroha that exists beyond the claustrophobic demands of modern life. While providing a counterpoint to their earlier violence and aggression, it also helps to explain Ruby's sadness at Willie's departure. The two perform a "dance of lovers, strong, sensuous and centred" (ibid), indicative of a balanced, reciprocal, loving relationship. The memory implies that, for at least one moment in their lives, Willie and Ruby had the potential to be warm lovers.

Ruby’s dream is a rare moment of serenity and tenderness in the play. Unlike earlier scenes, where waahine have been sexually objectified through male banter, here Ruby manages to assert and control her own sexual desires which are just as powerful as Willie’s. Significantly, Potiki was adamant that in production the rendering of this sexual encounter would not overly sexualise or degrade Māori women. Instead, she wanted to "achieve a sense of sexuality – that sexual feelings are both powerful and positive – and to show that women and men both had something equally erotic and strong to offer" (*Confirming Identity* 160).

Renee’s *Te Pouaka Karaehe* portrays taane and waahine relationships from a women's perspective. It tells the story of sisters Irihapeti and Wikitoria Harmer, their mother Sarah Dacre, and their half-sister Sophie Marsh. Iri, Wiki and Sophie are returning to Porohiwi, a small East Coast town, for the unveiling of Marama Porohiwi’s (also known as Guide Marama) gravestone. Marama is the play’s kuia, mother to Sarah and – it is later revealed – step-grandmother to Sophie. All her life, Sophie has lived with her birth mother Hetta, who, when Sophie was a teenager, was kicked out of town by an angry Marama, ostensibly for failure to pay rent. However, there is the suggestion that Marama held a grudge against Hetta because Sonny (Marama’s only son) fell in love with her in his youth.

One strand of the play focuses on an ‘on-again off-again’ relationship between Irihapeti (Iri) and Tama, a radio talk-back host. As with *Roimata* and *Whatungarongaro*, the male/female relationship becomes a filter for wider social commentary, in this case on the increased range of

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9 *Te Pouaka Karaehe* was first performed at Taki Rua Theatre.
life choices available to waahine. Iri and Tama's relationship is a casual, open one, which is set up, in part, to contrast with Hetta's clandestine and Sarah's convenient relationships of a generation before. In contrast to Hetta, who mistakenly fell pregnant to Sonny, Iri is freer to engage in sexual liaisons without fear of unwanted pregnancy. Unlike Sarah, who maintained an unhappy relationship with her cheating husband out of duty and a desire to please her mother, Iri can be more assertive about the partner she chooses. Unencumbered by social taboos about women's expression of sexuality, Iri assumes the role of aggressor in her relationship with Tama, telling him that sex is not tantamount to love:

IRI. Tama, just because I enjoyed fucking you doesn't mean we take up where we left off
[...]
TAMA. What does it bloody mean then.
IRI. I don't have to answer you.
TAMA. You love me I know you do.
IRI. Are you saying you've never slept with anyone unless you were serious about them? I was tired and lonely.
TAMA. So it was revenge.
IRI. Whatever it was I'll do it again any time you like (Scene 25 51).

Iri's take on her relationship with Tama - her refusal to marry, her liberated attitude towards sex and her selfishness - is illustrative of the play's wider concern to show waahine as active, determined and unencumbered by social expectations.

**Performative possibilities**

Common to Renee's plays *Groundwork, Jeannie Once* and *Te Pouaka Karaehe* is the proposition that gender and cultural identity are not innate but rather are acquired or learnt. In each of these plays, waahine characters refuse to conform to society's fixed ideas about how they should behave. Identities are not regarded as fixed and immutable but instead, as flexible, adaptable and available for interrogation. Metatheatrical devices draw attention to the elements of performance threaded through the characters' everyday lives. In plays with overtly feminist interests - particularly plays that demand recognition of the artificiality of gender such as Caryl Churchill's *Cloud Nine* (1979) or Timberlake Wertenbaker's *The Love of the Nightingale* (1988) - such metatheatrical or self-reflexive modes are common. However, few plays by Maaori that were written in the same period use such approaches to interrogate racial or cultural identity. For several years, Renee was alone among Maaori playwrights in using self-reflexion as a platform for commenting on the construction of Maaori cultural identity.\(^{10}\)

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\(^{10}\) *Whatungarongaro* was one of the other Maaori plays to use self-reflexive elements such as song, direct address to audience and role-switching.
In *Groundwork*, action switches between present-day scenes and Ellen's memories. In the present, Ellen (a "dark" woman), detained in holding cells, is prompted by a fellow cellmate to recall and re-enact her childhood friendship with Emma (a "Maaori"). Ellen remembers a time when she and Emma were involved in a school play. In the school play, Ellen played a "poor orphan who has been stolen away by gypsies" but who, after throwing off her "raggy cape" (8), is discovered to be a "beautiful princess" (46). Emma on the other hand, played a "dirty old tinker, the dark one, the evil one" (ibid). The school play was formative for both Ellen and Emma. Ellen liked the school play because it had elements of fantasy – rags to riches stories and the heaping of good fortune on the unfortunate – whereas Emma interpreted the play as indicative of the stereotyping of Maaori in New Zealand society. Later in their lives she reveals that the play taught her and other kids that it was not "good to be black" (ibid). Ellen's and Emma's different interpretations of the play prophesy a steadily deepening rift that matures in their adult lives. The women recognise that, although they are similar in many ways – they share a Maaori heritage, grew up in the same area, are passionate about women's causes and the struggle for human rights – they hold very different ideas about how these experiences will shape their lives.

The women's responses to the school play also highlight their divergent attitudes towards "the system" (45). Just as she is blind to the overt racism in the school play, Ellen is also blind to the state of race relations in 1980s Aotearoa. Emma, on the other hand, is fully aware of the way "[her] people," as part of a "colonised race," have had to "fight back" to stop the land from being taken and te reo from being suppressed (ibid). Their responses to the school play ultimately exemplify their contrasting attitudes towards cultural identification.

Throughout her life, Emma has seen other Maaori marked as failures, "the accused, or the target" (57). She sees society making unrealistic, unjust demands on them. She approached her stereotyped, racist role begrudgingly in the school play, while in her adult life, she adamantly refuses to assume the role "the system" (45) has forced upon her. At the end of the play, Emma exults in her self-determined debunking of cultural stereotypes. She proclaims her ability to re-define the "standard expressions" with which Maaori have been labelled: "look at me – tihoe Mauriora! – [. . .] I'm Muriwai! [. . .] I'm Muriwai! Emma Broughton and every time you get rid of me there'll be another like me, everywhere you look" (57). In contrast, just as she did in the school play, Ellen, as an adult, unquestioningly portrays the part asked of her, slipping easily into a role which helps her perpetuate an unjust system. Instead of learning more about her Maaori heritage (something her mother kept secret throughout Ellen's childhood) and embracing the contradictions and conflicts this may incur, Ellen conforms to society's dictates; rather than working against the system, she validates it.
In a flashback scene near the end of the play, Emma demands that Ellen learn more about her Maaori heritage because she believes that if Ellen recognises her own Maaori background, she too will see the corruption and oppression in the system. However, Ellen tells Emma that she 
"can't make [her] feel something [she] doesn't" and that she can't "pretend and [. . .] undo the way she was brought up" (46). By the end of the play, however, Ellen comes to the realisation that she can to some extent "undo" her mother's work. She decides to go "up north" and look up "a few names from [her] Mum's birth certificate" (54). At this point, Renee reintroduces the school play motif to highlight the performance aspect of Emma's and Ellen's lives. Emma refers to Ellen's role in the school play and reminds her that her decision to go up north could change her life irrevocably: "Be careful – when you lift the raggy cape you don't always find a king's daughter underneath [. . .] things have always been there but they're not hidden anymore" (ibid).

As with other of Renee's plays, Jeannie Once foregrounds the lives of women and historicizes the action, setting up a relationship in which the play, although set in the past, makes pertinent comments on the position of women in contemporary society. In its examination of the social demands placed on women, Jeannie Once sews the world of make-believe or play-making to the real world. Metatheatrical elements focus attention on social control and expectation, and on the way identity is constructed (particularly for women). Music-hall performances complement, reinforce and comment on the central action. For example, as the wahine servant Martha attempts to escape from the domineering Reverend Wishart and assembled constabulary, the music-hall star George Lamont sings "The Gendarmes Song", making musical comment on Martha's flight. By involving the audience in songs and "locating [a] pianist as an 'entertainment' during the interval," the music-hall sections extend the play's realist elements and "question the boundaries" of play and performance (Tompkins 245). In several scenes the play also invites audiences to pay attention to a dress-maker's dummy located in Jeannie's workroom. The dummy is used to highlight "the ways in which most of [the play's] women [. . .] are constructed" (247). As different characters interact with the dummy, they adopt alternative personae, using the dummy's unprotesting presence as an audience for their imaginings and as an escape from the harsh demands of "the too-difficult external world" (245).

Of particular note in Jeannie Once is Renee's handling of Maaori identity issues through the wahine character Martha. Although Martha is not a central character in Jeannie Once, her presence in the play is noteworthy because Renee's treatment of the character presents alternative possibilities for the representation of wahine characters. Until Martha in Jeannie Once, the experiences of Maaori women in early colonial New Zealand had received scant attention in plays. Moreover, the identity predicament faced by Martha – the difficulty of balancing Paakehaa ideals and beliefs with Maaori ones, and the difficulty of determining an
identity in the face of oppressive social demands – had not been addressed using metatheatrical devices. Jeannie Once offered a stylistic alternative to the straight realism often employed for the representation of Māori women characters.

In Act Two, Scene Six, Martha takes cover in a seashore cave as she hides from her cruel and puritanical master, Reverend Charles. While there, she attempts to reconcile the divergent geographies that map her compound identity:

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 (Act Two, Scene 652-53).

The cave’s transitional location, on the sea’s edge, away from the city, provides a safe space for Martha to articulate her thoughts. Along with Martha are two Paakeha companions, Jeannie Brannigan and Alec McPherson, who have become willing accomplices in Martha’s escape from her guardian. Jeannie and Alec become an audience for Martha’s koorero about her identity: through their presence Martha’s erstwhile private, internal contemplation, transforms into an outward performance. Although only briefly, Martha takes centre-stage for a small audience of two, and reveals her awareness of her composite identity. Martha recognises that in large part she can determine her own identity and that her Māoriness cannot be erased or modified according to Reverend Charles’s demands. In the quiet, contemplative space of the cave, Martha is given the opportunity to inform Jeannie and Alec (and the theatre audience) about her experiences of hybridity, alienation and dislocation as she reconsiders her place in society.

As with Groundwork, characters in Te Pouaka Karaehe refer to acting, drama and theatre. In the play, Sophie is rehearsing for the role of Nora in a university production of Ibsen’s A Doll’s House. Widely recognised as an important dramatic work, A Doll’s House clearly signifies Renee’s efforts to highlight feminist causes by “[putting] women on stage” (Renee, Interview with McCurdy 66). In addition, one of Ibsen’s central concerns in his play was to convey the idea that “the prime duty of anyone was to find out who he or she really was and to become that person” (Meyer 17). With its emphasis on the conflict between community expectation, duty and the articulation of self, Te Pouaka Karaehe also carries this idea as one of its themes. As the conflicts in Te Pouaka Karaehe intensify, as more is revealed about the characters and as parallels between Nora and various of the waahine characters arise, notions of identity formation, waahine oppression and social expectation are interrogated.

Sophie has recently discovered a passion for acting. As she studies for her role she endeavours to find some part of herself that can identify with Nora’s psychological state. However, because Nora has conformed to Torvald’s dictates for years (and in Sophie’s eyes has behaved “like a child”, a “complete idiot” (Scene 26 52)), Sophie struggles to understand the role. Like Emma in Groundwork, Sophie seeks to determine her own path and she dedicates a lot of her life to
rebelling against the role society deems appropriate for her. Sophie thinks Ibsen’s heroine takes too long to recognise “that a marriage was not sacrosanct” and “that a man’s authority in his home should not go unchallenged” (Meyer 17). Sophie declares that she’s got to “find something in her” (Scene 26 52) so that she can play the role, but expresses her frustration at playing Nora because, according to her, Nora is “making a perfect ass” of herself (ibid).

However, Sophie’s ‘insights’ regarding Nora prove ironic. As she prepares for the role, Sophie observes her own behaviour and begins to perceive her own life as a performance, one where she feels “sort of removed” from her emotions, “as though it’s a play where I’m watching myself watching other people” (Scene 19 41). She collects a catalogue of others’ emotions in order to impersonate them: “I see me filing things away, an expression, a frown, a way of talking” (ibid). Although Sophie can discern her own engagements and interactions with others (while she can see her own life as a performance), she does not seem to register that Nora too, up until her quiet rebellion, has also been performing the role of “Torvald’s little chipmunk” (Scene 26 52). Indeed, while Sophie copes with the layers of pretence, performance and reality in the construction of her own identity, she is not overly sympathetic towards the role-playing of others.

Sophie accuses her arch rival Iri of being pretentious because she seems to assume and discard identities in much the same way as a disguise. Despite Sophie thinking that it is acceptable for her to use “someone else’s words” (Scene 12 29) in order to cajole, attract or upset an audience, she resents the same in Iri. Sophie finds it difficult to associate with Iri because, like Nora, Iri has given in and conformed to the expectations of her Nanny (the figure of absolute authority in Iri’s life). Iri’s anxiety about fulfilling the expectations of others means that, when Sophie “tried to talk to Iri”, it was as though they were “speaking different languages” (Scene 19 41). The conflict between Sophie and Iri lies in a contrast of ideas about the purpose of performance.

Unlike Sophie, Iri’s performances are overly determined by others’ expectations, particularly those of her stubborn, proud Nanny Marama. Iri dreams that she is a show-piece in a museum, trapped inside a glass box from which there is no escape:

Last night I dreamed about te pouaka karaehe. I’m in this glass box and I can’t get out. [. . .] Nanny looks in, says come on, you can do better than that [. . .] Wiki and Ra push through the crowd. ‘You have to sign,’ she says and tries to push a paper through the glass. [. . .] I stand very still. Waiting (Scene 5 8).

Iri’s performances are driven by a desire to impress others and prove that she can become what they expect. When preparing for a job interview, Iri debates about her ‘costume’. Her final decision about what to wear is based on her belief about others’ perceptions: “Wonder what to wear. Navy blue suit, very professional? Or go for style and to hell with it. No, better
stick with the navy blue. Style is not something the minister worries about too much” (Scene 7 17). As she rehearses for the job interview, she reveals an intricate understanding of the various ways she could be read: as an overly-ambitious career woman, as a Maaori radical, as a spokesperson for all of Maaoridom, and as an unmarried woman lacking in maternal instincts (Scene 9 19-21).

A metatheatrical moment early in the play draws attention to the layers of disguise in Iri’s character and also to the self-consciousness with which she approaches her roles. After Scene Two, in which Iri appears as a young girl, the actor playing Iri is required to change her costume in front of the audience. She removes the clothes she wore as the ‘child’ Iri and puts on the costume she will wear as an adult.

As the play progresses, however, Iri cannot convincingly perform all her roles and she loses sight of her sense of self. In the final scene, Iri realises that she’s “spent most of [her] life doing what someone else wanted” (70) and that one of the ways to counter the oppression and compromise inculcated by such a life is to focus on who she is and who she wants to become. Through its metatheatrical references, Te Pouaka Karaehi is, like Groundwork, questioning notions of pre-ordained or inherited identity. It also casts a critical eye on a society that assumes individuals will play particular roles merely because of their gender or ethnicity.

The extent of metatheatricality in Renee’s plays is seldom reached in those by other Maaori playwrights. While several New Zealand plays such as Carolyn Burns’s Objection Overruled (1982, published 1984), Stephanie Johnson’s Accidental Phantasies (1980) and Lorae Parry’s Eugenia (1996, published 1996) address the performative aspects of gender identity, few address the possibilities of viewing cultural identity as a performance.¹¹ Judith Dale notes that the question of whether one acquires or is ‘born’ with a racial identity “is not a discussion that many [. . .] Maaori may be willing to engage in, but if such an interrogation can take place anywhere it will be [. . .] within the consciously performative conditions of theatre” (Performing Identity 40). Renee tackles these issues quite openly and inventively in Groundwork, Jeannie Once and Te Pouaka Karaehi. She recognises that Maaori identity, not unlike gender and sexual identity, is not static or certain and uses metatheatricality to highlight the construction of cultural identity.

Adventurous explorations: waahine themes in plays by taane

Howard McNaughton infers that Renee’s “Maaori reading of Ibsen” in Te Pouaka Karaehi was significant in marking a point where the “input of women playwrights at Taki Rua” inspired other Maaori writers to experiment with dramatic content and form (Oxford History (Rev.) 387).

In particular, metatheatrical explorations of the performance and construction of identity in *Groundwork*, *Te Pouaka Karaehe* and *Whatungarongaro* have indicated new dramatic possibilities for representing Māori situations and characters. *Te Pouaka Karaehe’s* references to Henrik Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House* and *Whatungarongaro’s* combination of traditional Māori ritual with techniques from Theatre of Liberation have broadened other Māori playwrights’ ideas about the types of dramatic writing and production that can be used to represent Māori life. For instance, after attending a production of *Whatungarongaro* in 1990, Hone Kouka was inspired to admit that its inclusion of “dance, waiata, a staunch Māori story, the mix of things Māori and Pakeha” changed the way he looked at Māori theatre (*Can Plays Help* 32).

The emergence of two plays – *Nga Tangata Toa* (Hone Kouka) and *Whaea Kairau* (Apirana Taylor) – owe something to the dramatic innovation of plays like *Te Pouaka Karaehe* and *Whatungarongaro*. Like *Te Pouaka Karaehe, Nga Tangata Toa* presents a reconsideration of an Ibsen play – *The Vikings at Hegeland*. However, rather than incorporating reference to Ibsen’s work within his own (like Renee in *Te Pouaka Karaehe*), Kouka takes Ibsen’s extant work and reconfigures its Viking characters and Nordic settings as Māori warriors in a post-World War I New Zealand context. Similarly, in 1995, Apirana Taylor’s *Whaea Kairau* presented a reworking of *Mother Courage and her Children*, relocating Bertolt Brecht’s story during the New Zealand Land Wars, a period of intense conflict between Māori and Pakehaa (post the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi). As well as retaining *Mother Courage’s* commentary regarding war, *Whaea Kairau* also touches on the increasingly confused nature of colonisation. Both Kouka’s and Taylor’s plays provide an escape from what David Carnegie has labelled the “mundane naturalism and fragmented televisual dramaturgy common among new playwrights” (*Nga Tangata Toa: The Warrior People* 24). Moreover, Kouka’s and Taylor’s experimentations with dramatic form have affected the representation of waahine characters by creating new waahine types for the stage.

*Nga Tangata Toa* for example, sets up a reflexive relationship between the female character Hiordis in Ibsen’s original, and Rongomai, its central waahine figure. Like Hiordis, Rongomai is extremely strong, vindictive and violent. Rongomai also lives by a Māori warrior code that is infused with spirituality and ancestral knowledge. Taking his cue from Ibsen’s larger-than-life characterisation of Hiordis, Kouka was able to create a new type of kootiro figure for the stage – the waahine warrior. Rongomai’s stubborn warrior attitude and (akin with Hiordis) her insatiable desire for utu set her apart from earlier representations of waahine. In contrast to kootiro figures in previous plays, Rongomai is an androgynous figure, capable of demonstrating

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12 *Whaea Kairau* was initially commissioned by Colin McCall on behalf of Taki Rua Theatre. Taylor notes that “Although reviewers and critics were sure that it [Whaea Kairau] is partly inspired by the German novelist Hans Jacob Grimmelshausen [1684 *Courage the Adventuress*] who has also inspired Brecht’s play *Mother Courage*, I had read neither, and I still have not”. See Apirana Taylor, *Kohanga and Whaea Kairau: Mother Hundred Eater* (Auckland, New Zealand: The Pohutukawa Press, 1999) 207.
an "heroic masculinity" (Templeton 58). In the days before her marriage to Wi, she stayed up and drank with the men, and was also chosen as manu ngangahu (warrior leader). She boasts that in battle she is "as fierce as any tane" (Scene 9 36).

Rongomai asserts her own form of mana waahine by insisting that the 'natural order' be overturned and the strict and limiting boundaries around gender roles be renegotiated. Throughout the play she displays an acute awareness of the restrictions placed upon women, seizing many opportunities to deride oppressive and constricting gender divisions. In Scene Eight, vying for a taste of action beyond the narrow world offered Maaori women of the time, Rongomai asks about Te Wai's relationship with Taneatua, as she and Te Wai peel potatoes in the kitchen:

Will this always be women's work?
TE WAI. Who else would do it?
RONGOMAI. The men, and then we fight the wars. Haven't you ever wanted to go into battle? Fierce. Oh I can outhunt any man.
TE WAI. But could you kill someone?
RONGOMAI. Yes...And I'd fight our war, not the Pakeha's. You must get some feeling from Taneatua of the warrior inside. What does he tell you? (Scene 8 29).

Rongomai exposes her attraction to battle and murder, and also reveals her contempt for what she perceives as women's lowly place in the social structure. She berates the fact that her femaleness prevents her from active participation in heroic, warrior-like acts even though she has physical ability equal to (or greater than) Wi's and Taneatua's. Frustratingly for Rongomai, the achievements and deeds of men such as her father, husband and their male compatriots are valued above hers. Her stories of adventure are disregarded, and consequently she is forced to endure (and even participate in) the many retellings of the exploits of Taneatua and Wi.

To compensate for the assumed powerlessness of her gender in matters of war and physical aggression, Rongomai exploits others' expectations of waahine behaviour. In order to gain control of and manipulate situations in her favour, Rongomai knowingly presents and disguises aspects of her identity. She manages to change before her audiences' eyes, while also "maintaining a sense of self at all times" (States 142). Being fully aware of how she is received by her audience, Rongomai appreciates and recognises her ability to perform so that she can get what she wants.

For example, in Scene Nine, as retribution for the murder of her father, she orchestrates Te Riri's downfall by exploiting others' expectations. Firstly, in her usual challenging manner, she provokes Te Riri into a playful taiaha fight and then, as it takes a more serious turn, agitates him so much that he begins to suffer an asthma attack. Eventually Rongomai slows the fight
and convinces the others that she will tend to Te Riri's ailment by playing the womanly role of caring nurse. Rongomai is able to convince the others that she would willingly and ably perform such a feminine role because she is aware of their expectations of her. However, once her whaanaunga have left the whare, Rongomai stands aside and watches Te Riri die. Because Taneatua's, Wi's and Te Wai's ideas of gender behaviour are so entrenched, they cannot detect Rongomai's pretence. Rongomai exploits their social understandings and, in murdering Te Riri, produces a flawless yet shocking performance that allows her to manipulate events for her own ends.

As with Nga Tangata Toa, Taylor's reworking of Mother Courage facilitated experimentation with the way Maaori, but especially Maaori women, could be represented. In particular, the play's refiguring of Brecht's female characters—Courage, Yvette Pottier and Katrin—"extended [Taylor's] boundaries" (Taylor, Interview 13 March 2000) so that he created waahine who perform roles as a callous, calculating mother, a wise whore and a mute virgin. While common to European drama since the 18th century, female types such as the whore and the speechless heroine had never been so deliberately or boldly evoked through the figures of Maaori women.13

The play's wartime context gave Taylor the scope to experiment with his waahine characters. No longer confined to the domestic spaces which dominate plays such as Daddy's Girl and earlier plays by taane such as Te Hara and Kohanga, waahine in Whaea Kairau are represented in a field of dramatic action which is not conventionally associated with women. As a result, women are depicted disrupting and disturbing expected modes of 'feminine' (and waahine) behaviour, testing the boundaries which usually circumscribe their actions and responses. Taylor's departure from expected representations of Maaori women characters was highlighted in McColl's 1995 production which was set in a "mad carnival atmosphere" (Stuchbury, The Dominion, 9 June 1995) that evoked the Victorian fairground. Whaea and her three children were first seen looking "like a group of tatty traveling players, with Puawai and her two brothers dressed as clowns" (Atkinson, qtd. in Taylor Kohanga and Whaea Kairau 199). This carnivalesque atmosphere produced an expectation that "anything goes and could conceivably happen" (Kershaw 222). Simultaneously, deliberate double-casting focused on the characters' functions as role-players and performers.

Like Rongomai in Nga Tangata Toa and Renee's waahine characters Emma, Martha and Sophie, Amiria a "young Maaori forced into prostitution to survive" (Cooke, Sunday Star-Times, 16 June 1995) is determined to challenge and alter the role society has deemed 'fit' for her. Based on

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the figure of Yvette Pottier in *Mother Courage*, Amiria is a whore who demonstrates a capacity for great passion and love: "My heart is somewhere else [. . .] Back up North with the man I truly love" (Scene 4 144).

Caught in the chaos of the New Zealand Land Wars, Amiria realizes that she can survive by using her body as a means of commercial exchange. However, unlike her older counterpart, Whaea Kairau (Courage), Amiria exercises a critical self-awareness and is also fully aware of the way the larger wartime context is determining her (and others') behaviours: "Unlike you Whaea Kairau, mother whore, I hate what I am" (Scene 3 135). Amiria comments openly on her dislike for a society which has forced her into such actions and therefore refuses to berate herself for being a prostitute, choosing instead to criticize the society that put her where she is. Amiria's acute self-consciousness means that she can prostitute herself with the knowledge that she is only assuming a temporary identity, which can be discarded once the war is over.

Amiria explains that she was raped by a mission priest who said she "needed to behave like the Virgin Mary" yet "couldn't rip her dress off fast enough" (Scene 6 156), and ever since she has been reliving this abhorrent sexual act with other desperate men. In a dream-waiata sequence in Scene Eight, after her murder by a jealous Despard, Amiria returns as a ghost-figure. Dressed as the Virgin Mary, she is given space to show the complicated experiences which have contributed to her current position and the role she is forced to perform:

*We see Amiria dressed as the virgin Mary. She sings a song and bares her breast.*

Purer than pure
as a child
taught
of
the virgin mary

taught of the virgin child
hell
the priest
had me
in anger and hate
broken in war
I traded purity
for a pretty dress
the price
eternal death (Scene 8 166-167)

With Brecht's representation of Yvette Pottier as a template, Taylor uses Amiria - a Maaori woman - to address issues about patriarchal power, the hypocrisy of Christianity and the demands both patriarchy and Christianity make on female sexuality. Displaced, disenfranchised
and deprived of her own sense of identity, Amiria clearly is a victim of the imperialistic processes of colonization, and she is quite aware of patriarchy's ludicrous and illogical demand that she enact the contradictory roles of virgin and whore. It seems that she is able to survive for so long in such hostile circumstances because of her ability to understand and subsequently manipulate men's perceptions of her.

Like Kattrin in Mother Courage, Puawai (translated as blossom) is an innocent virginal girl corrupted by the violence and vagaries of war. After witnessing her whaanau being attacked by raiders and seeing her "beloved grandfather" being "beaten to death [...] his head cut off and stuck on a pole" Puawai "hasn't talked" (Scene 2 109). Also like Kattrin, Whaea Kairau's speechless heroine contrasts starkly with the woman at the centre of the play: the talkative, mercenary and amoral mother figure.

In keeping with the Brecht, Whaea Kairau shows that in a context where innocents are abused and exploited and where conventional social roles are disregarded or deliberately overturned, romantic and simplistic ideals like those held by Puawai are not only out of place, but also impossible to realise. If she wants to survive in the chaotic world of war, Puawai cannot enact the role she feels drawn to - a role as a loving, nurturing female. Instead, Puawai's circumstances demand that she follow her mother into the bargaining game (a role she is incapable of performing because of an overwhelming urge to love).

Importantly, Taylor's reworkings of Brecht's whore and virgin characters for a Maaori context introduced alternatives for the oft-represented kuia and kootiro types. Furthermore, Taylor's reconceptualisation of Brecht's female character types and their effective incorporation into local, Aotearoa history showed that Maaori women's experience could easily be used as a filter for the sorts of universal issues relevant to women in a broad, international context.

Te huarahi o ngaa waahine: the women's pathway

Plays by the first wave of waahine playwrights offered new ways for representing Maaori identity in theatre. Owen's and Brown's early plays were notable primarily for identifying alternatives to the marae and rurally-based settings that had come to dominate previous Maaori plays. Renee and Potiki inflected the mostly realistic dramatic style of Maaori theatre by interweaving metatheatrical elements into plays' plots and by accentuating the mythical and ritualistic elements overarching urban Maaori life. Common to all their plays was the inclination to question the existing approaches to Maaori dramatic writing.

Waahine playwrights' construction of waahine characters, their magnification of waahine lives and the exploration of new thematic content and social contexts produced a dramatic representation of Maaori society considerably different from that presented in earlier plays.
Importantly, the concern of these waahine playwrights was to recognise the variety of ways in which Māori theatre could function as a site of cultural query. Their drama began to address more overtly and more creatively the increased incidence of confusion over Māori cultural belonging, taane/waahine relationship problems and waahine self-determinism. This first wave of waahine playwrights redefined the Māori dramatic terrain by influencing playwrights who followed. Led by this first wave of waahine playwrights, for example, plays by taane (particularly in the decade since Kouka wrote *Nga Tangata Toa*) have also begun to focus more intently on waahine experience. In fact, as well as casting waahine in central roles, they are also exploring the performative possibilities available to Māori women. A further offshoot of this concentration on waahine identity has been increased experimentation with Māori theatre as a site for the negotiation and playing out of a range of ways of identifying as Māori.

Building on the foundations laid by the first wave of waahine writers, contemporary waahine playwrights such as Briar Grace-Smith use Māori theatre as a site for revising stereotypes. In *Ngaa Pou Waahine, Flat Out Brown, Waitapu, Purapawhetu* and *Haruru Mai*, Grace-Smith presents waahine characters of various ages, beliefs and levels of connection to traditional society, constructing different notions of what it can mean to be Māori. Often, her plays redefine commonly held perceptions of Māori cultural identity by altering, re-examining and reconfiguring kūia and kootiro types so that they reflect more closely the lives of waahine audience members.
CHAPTER SIX
WAHAHINE CHARACTERS IN PLAYS
BY BRIAR GRACE SMITH

Sometimes you haven’t had the opportunity to learn about the history of your people, and it’s easy to buy into what you’ve heard, read or watched about your culture. Writing is a way of just putting those things out there, but without being preachy. Just, here it is, but I’m not telling you this is wrong, but placing characters, and putting them in certain roles that go against the grain of what we’ve been lead, or we have believed (Grace-Smith, Interview with Livesey 4).

Briar Grace-Smith is a dramatist, actor, short story writer, poet, and screenwriter. Since the mid 1990s her plays have created alternative images of Maori for the stage. In five of her plays – Ngaa Pou Waahine, Flat Out Brown, Waitapu, Purapurawhetuu and Haruru Mai – waahine are centre-stage. Set in both rural and urban locations, in the marae and beyond it, the first four plays examine modern-day constructions of community and individual identity whilst the fifth has a recent historical setting (1960s Aotearoa). All five plays show waahine in powerful, active positions, determining their own identities, voicing their concerns and asserting their belonging. These identities are not straightforward, but instead, are multiple, shifting and

1 Whereas British feminist writers such as Caryl Churchill and Timberlake Wertenbaker chose to historicize contemporary feminist issues in their early work before proceeding to the more sensitive, difficult task of reflecting contemporary society on stage, Grace-Smith takes a more direct route, experimenting in her first few plays with the representation of contemporary lives before historicising them in Haruru Mai.
sometimes self-contradictory. In Ngaa Pou Waahine and Flat Out Brown especially, young waahine characters seek out alternative subject-positions as they determine their own belonging to Maaori communities and New Zealand society. Haruru Mai comments on the slowly developing cultural rifts between Maaori and Paakehaa in 1960s Aotearoa. Maaori and Paakehaa affinities and dissonances also feature in her other plays and are examined in the tension between rural and urban/traditional and modern lives. In Ngaa Pou Waahine, Purapurawhetu and Haruru Mai, explorations of family origins and genealogy are important to waahine characters' journeys of self-discovery. Jointly, the plays examine contemporary constructions of waahine identity, in the process demonstrating the way Maaori drama is increasingly becoming a fertile place for Maaori women's self-expression and for the representation of a wide-range of waahine lives.

**Living life in the cultural interstice**

Grace-Smith's life in the cultural interstice has shaped the conceptualisation of Maaori cultural identity in her plays. Like several waahine characters in her plays, Grace-Smith has a blended cultural heritage and her formative years present a constant negotiation between demands of both Maaori and Paakehaa frameworks. Unlike some of her contemporaries, when asked to cite her tribal affiliations, Grace-Smith will sometimes cite her European genealogy along with her Maaori one. Miriam Rehutai Hoskins – her mother – was Maaori, of Nga Puhi and Ngati Wai descent, and, her father – Alan Smith, was a Paakehaa of Scottish ancestry. It is possible that these bicultural family contexts contribute to the balancing and blending of Maaori and Paakehaa social, cultural, spiritual and intellectual constructs in Grace-Smith's work. Miriam Smith (nee Hoskins) wrote children's fiction and in 1990 won (posthumously) the Aim Picture Book of the Year award, while Alan Smith was the Government's Director of Maaori and Pacific Island Education. Grace-Smith's parents' literary backgrounds and their deep involvement with children's education meant that from an early age, Grace-Smith was exposed to literature and theatre.

Notably, Grace-Smith's plays include motifs similar to those that appear in her mother's children's stories which are published in English and Maaori (a publishing practice which acknowledges Aotearoa's dual language heritage). Often in these stories, characters interact in an environment shaped by the competing interests of traditional and contemporary life. In Roimata and the Forest of Tane for example, Roimata, who has recently moved from the city to live with her ancient kula, is educated by her and told stories about her own cultural heritage.

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3 See Miriam Smith, "Roimata and the Forest of Tane," Te A0 Marama IV: Contemporary Maaori Writing for Children, ed. Witi Ihimaera (Auckland, New Zealand: Reed Books, 1994) 43.
Roimata learns about rejuvenation and resilience in the face of the relentless collision of Maaori and Paakehaa cultures.

The elements of death, loss, and acceptance, which are so pronounced in *Waitapu* and *Purapurawhetu*, appear equally dominant in Miriam’s story *Te Taitama: The Boy from the Sea*. In this magic-realist fable, a prematurely aborted fetus is lovingly cast out to sea by a mourning mother, where it is nurtured and nourished by a taniwha and eventually grows into a young, vivacious boy – Te Taitama. As Te Taitama grows, his earthly mother and underwater, god-like father attempt to negotiate an amicable relationship. The boy learns how to mediate between their contrasting lives. Like Te Taitama, Grace-Smith has been influenced by both her parents. She says that it was her father “who really pushed [her] to pursue [her] Maaori side” (Welch 37). She also says he was a source for *Ngaa Pou Waahine*: “I often incorporate mythology into my work and *Ngaa Pou Waahine* was prompted by a story from Dad while we were fishing out in Whangaruru Harbour” (*Telling Our Stories* 62). The mixed influence of formal educational backgrounds and Maaori cultural teachings is a foreshadowing of the blended Maaori and European narrative elements in Grace-Smith’s plays.

Three professional experiences have also influenced Grace-Smith’s representations of Maaori cultural identity: her involvement with the Maaori theatre companies Te Ohu Whakaari and He Ara Hou; the script development work she carried out in conjunction with Playmarket during the late 90s and her on-going association with Taki Rua Productions.

Originally developed as a Government employment scheme in Wellington by Rangimoana Taylor, Te Ohu Whaakari encouraged theatrical development inside a Maaori kaupapa. The tenets of Te Ohu Whakaari’s kaupapa were whaanau-based support systems, sharing of meals during workshop, rehearsal and performances, and crucially, nourishment of the three major facets of Maaori existence, tinana, wairua and hinengaro. From her involvement with Te Ohu Whakaari, Grace-Smith gained an appreciation of the capacity theatre had to enhance and develop Maaori existence. According to Grace-Smith, attention to the tinana, wairua and hinengaro ensures that Maaori stories and Maaori theatre can flourish (Interview Dec. 7 1998).

The strongly bicultural themes in Grace-Smith’s work were also influenced by her membership of He Ara Hou in 1989. Headed by the Maaori/Paakehaa partnership of Roma Potiki and John Anderson, He Ara Hou had a kaupapa which paralleled and extended the community based elements of Te Ohu Whakaari. Its impact can be easily identified in Grace-Smith’s theatrical style. In a similar vein to He Ara Hou’s *Whatungarongaro* (which Grace-Smith helped to write),

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5 See Chapter One for descriptions of some of Te Ohu Whakaari’s activities.
6 See Chapters One, Two and Five for some thorough discussion of He Ara Hou and *Whatungarongaro*.

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her plays *Ngaa Pou Waahine*, *Flat Out Brown* and *Haruru Mai* tend not to focus on the assignment of blame for the problematic social conditions they depict and do not make demands for retribution. Instead, solutions to contemporary social problems faced by Maaori are identified in characters’ adaptation of Maaori spirituality, tikanga and belonging to suit their modern lives and identities.

Grace-Smith’s mastery of playwriting may in part be traced to her connection with Playmarket where her dramatic craft was honed. Grace-Smith was trained and subsequently employed by Playmarket as a script advisor – a role which required her to provide detailed comments on new play scripts and to give advice to dramatists about things such as preparing a play for workshop. The job exposed Grace-Smith to a diverse range of scripts and writing styles. In her own words, it “demystified the process of writing” (*Telling Our Stories* 61) and inspired her to blend Maaori motifs with more conventional dramatic forms.

Commenting on her theatrical practice Grace-Smith describes a community of Maaori and non-Maaori writers learning and borrowing from each other in a process of dramatic inheritance:

I find [. . .] that with all theatre, especially Maaori, we feed off each other’s work quite a lot [. . .] we’ll go to a play and go ‘I liked that, I wouldn’t mind taking that further’, or ‘no, I didn’t like that I want to show another side of that issue’ (Interview with Livesey 5).

The tuku iho process Grace-Smith describes has been especially relevant to her relationship with Taki Rua Productions with whom she has maintained strong associations since writing her first play *Ngaa Pou Waahine*. Taki Rua’s bicultural philosophy is particularly evident in the production history and dramatic content of some of her plays: *The Sojourns of Boy* was co-written with Jo Randerson and produced by Taki Rua and Bats; *Purapurawhetu* and *Haruru Mai* were produced in conjunction with the New Zealand International Festival of the Arts, and in the case of *Purapurawhetu*, a later relationship was developed with Downstage. In 2001, *Haruru Mai*, was revised and produced by the Auckland Theatre Company.

Grace-Smith’s playwriting has been nourished and developed through channels that have facilitated and supported her innovative (and challenging) representations of Maaori and Paakehaa cultural and gender identity. Notable among the new approaches Grace-Smith has brought to Maaori theatre is her push to “show another side” of cultural and gender stereotypes.

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7 For details on the founding of Taki Rua and its subsequent development see Chapter One.
Stereotypes and the other side

Grace-Smith says the "thing with characters" is to "break stereotypes so [Māori] can't be put into boxes" and to show instead the "broad face of who [Māori] are" (Interview with Livesey 4). Her plays illustrate the way "Māori writers have pulled the romantic gauze from around figures such as the revered kaumatua and the humble kuia and are breaking down these images" (Grace-Smith Interview 7 Dec. 1998). In her destabilisation of waahine stereotypes and her construction of new waahine figures, Grace-Smith offers a range of characters that associate with Māori culture in different ways. Rather than being subject to the limiting categories which derive from characters like Aroha and Queenie Mataira, Grace-Smith’s figurations of waahine cover a far broader and more complex range of identifications. Those waahine characters can be placed along a ‘whakapapa continuum’ according to the ways they recognise and express their Māori cultural heritage. Through these different representations the plays provide a critical examination of cultural and gender identity constructs.

The notion of a ‘whakapapa continuum’ draws on Leonie Pihama’s theory of the connection between Māori cultural identity and whakapapa. Pihama argues that, although ‘Māori’ is a contested term with a multitude of possible readings, an essential component is the acknowledgement of a whakapapa. According to Pihama, connections with tiipuna, whether known or not, are the ultimate indicators of Māori cultural identity.8

In Ngā Pou Waahine – a solo-piece for a wahine actor – 18-year-old Te Atakura (Kura for short) is left to piece her identity together after the death of her mother, Miro. Adopted at a young age by her preoccupied Aunt Lizzie, Kura longs to recapture the feelings of maternal love and care she experienced as a child. Throughout the play, Kura’s memories of her mother impinge on her life and when she focuses on her memories, she realises that she must become more active in her search for self-knowledge and in her attempt to learn about her whakapapa. In her dreams, Kura is also visited by her ancestress, Waiora, and recognises the powerful waahine ancestral line from which she is descended.

Mana waahine, especially the power of a female ancestral line, facilitates Te Aniwaniwa’s (Niwa for short) self-expression in Grace-Smith’s second play, Flat Out Brown. This play focuses centrally on the lives of brother and sister, Tawhiri and Niwa, who have only recently decided to live together after years spent apart because of their parents’ separation. In the first scene, 16-year-old Niwa befriends Culture, a runaway, who is possessed by the spirit of his ancestor, Te Hauraki. Meanwhile, Tawhiri meets Sharlene, a music producer who (somewhat forcefully) advises him on his career and on his problematic relationship with Niwa. Culture tells Niwa the story of an ancient romance between Te Hauraki and a wahine ancestor, Puna. Niwa finds

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many affinities with Puna and, as the play progresses, becomes more and more obsessed with Puna’s plight (Puna is trapped in a rock by Tuake because he does not want her to leave him for Te Hauraki). Niwa also feels trapped, and in the final scene finds self-knowledge and a sense of release when she travels from Wellington to Omanu Bay where she frees Puna from the rock.

Written while Grace-Smith was part of He Ara Hou, Waitapu is a stronger example of the intermingling of Māori mythology, the ancestral realm and contemporary gender and cultural identity than Flat Out Brown. A newly married couple, Jaki (who is pregnant) and Matiu, return to Matiu’s papakainga following the death of his koro, Pita. Jaki and Matiu remain in Waitapu while Matiu carves a poupou for the newly renovated wharenui. Jaki has already suffered three miscarriages and her current pregnancy is also a difficult one. This exacerbates an already growing rift between Jaki and Matiu’s aunty, Wai, who does not consider Jaki a fit wife for her nephew. Jaki learns from Matiu’s cousin, Tiki, that the source of her childbearing problems is tied up with one of Waitapu’s ancestresses – Hine Te Awhiowhio – who was poorly treated by Aunty Wai’s whaanau. Tiki reveals that Hine Te Awhiowhio’s son was murdered. He goes on to tell Jaki that his own birth mother was sent away from the village by his adoptive mother – the controlling and interfering Aunty Wai. With the support of koro’s ghost and Tiki, Jaki manages to expose the true history of Waitapu and to assert her place as part of the Waitapu whaanau.

Like the village of Waitapu, Te Kupenga, the coastal setting for Purapurawhetuū – Grace-Smith’s most widely-known play – is a sad, infertile place, haunted by the death of a young boy. Two young Māori, Ramari (aged 18) and Tyler (aged 20) learn about whakapapa and family relationships as they work on a tukutuku panel/woven flax panel to be erected in the village’s renovated wharenui. As they weave, Ramari and Tyler are visited by Aggie Rose/Kui (aged 60), who through the telling on an oohaki/dying story, reveals the secret surrounding the sadness in Te Kupenga. Aggie Rose/Kui explains why Koro Hohepa searches endlessly for paua at the sea’s edge, and why Matawera, his demanding and disrespectful son, has returned after years away. During the play, Ramari finds the threads which tie her to Te Kupenga and Aggie Rose/Kui avenges the murder of her son. In so doing, Kui returns much needed life to Te Kupenga and its inhabitants.

Hidden stories and secrets are also woven into the narrative of Haruru Mai. Although written three years after Purapurawhetuū, and set around 30 years before it, the play investigates similar issues – loss of cultural identity, the search for familial origins, the damage that can be caused by guilty secrets and the sorrow of war. For the two waahine in the play – Pearl and Paloma (Mars) – World War II has meant great loss. Pearl and Mars have both lost Moana – a man who was central to their lives. For Pearl, losing Moana meant losing the boy she idolised as a teenager, and for Mars it meant losing her father and, along with him, a true sense of self.
and belonging. The central focus of the play is the romance that develops between the older Silas (a Māori Battalion veteran) and the much, much younger Mars, who sees in Silas the possibility to reconnect with her dead father. Silas knows that Mars is Moana’s daughter. Silas also knows that during a battle, he shot Moana, fatally wounding him. Silas’s romance with Mars is driven by his need to atone for the shooting; however, he cannot bring himself to tell Mars about the circumstances of her father’s death. Mars and Taku (a lad in his 20s who Silas rescued from the gutter outside the local pub) compete for Silas’s attention and, together with Pearl (Silas’s cousin), are the victims of Silas’s guilty secret – his failure to admit what he has done, and ultimately, who he is.

The whakapapa continuum

Exemplifying Grace-Smith’s project to re-construct and debunk waahine stereotypes, a selection of waahine characters from her plays can be placed at four points along the whakapapa continuum: ngaa tiipuna, ngaa whaea, ngaa ngaro and ngaa tikangarua.

Closely associated with the Māori cosmological realm and steeped in whakapapa, tikanga and Māori cultural knowledge, ngaa tiipuna speak and act with assurance regarding their Māori cultural identity. Often, they are figured as spirits or ghostly-memories and as cultural repositories, bearing many of the iwi’s burdens. Ngaa tiipuna are active agents in Grace-Smith’s plays, cast as rangatira, warriors and kaitiaki. They include Waiora, the mythological rangatira of the Moa people in Ngaa Pou Waahine; Puna, Niwa’s ancestor in Flat Out Brown; and Hine Te Awhiowhio, kaitiaki/guardian of the whirlpools in Waitapu.

Ngaa whaea include Miro and Lizzie, mother and aunty to Kura in Ngaa Pou Waahine; Jaki’s interfering aunty, Wai, in Waitapu; weaver of stories, Aggie Rose/Kui in Purapurawhetu; and the opinionated waahine, Karamea and Pearl, from Haruru Mai. Ngaa whaea are older women who have been brought up in rural Māori communities. Although they are all presented as mother-like figures, none of them exhibits conventional mothering traits. These waahine complicate earlier portrayals of waahine characters such as Kuini Mathews in Te Hokinga Mai and Waimiria in In the Wilderness Without a Hat, who are almost glorified by their male authors as selfless, whaanau-focused mothers. In fact, a majority of Grace-Smith’s whaea characters are focal figures for a critique of the myth of the cohesive, wholesome and loving whaanau unit.

At the other end of the continuum are ngaa ngaro/the lost ones. These waahine have restricted access to their whakapapa and, consequently, lack knowledge about custom and tradition. Mostly in their early 20s, these characters come from urban environments. More obviously than tiipuna and whaea, they must face the contradictory demands laid down by a modern Paakehāa society and an out-of-reach Māori one. In contrast to ngaa tiipuna, they suffer from identity crises. Kura from Ngaa Pou Waahine and Niwa from Flat Out Brown
illuminate the difficulties of determining a place within Maori whaanau and community. Kura's and Niwa's whangai status makes their whaanau experiences uneasy and they find it difficult to gain cultural knowledge. Ramari from Purapurawhetu also experiences the challenges of establishing an identity for herself. She is allocated a 'born-again Maori' role through which her belonging and understanding are tested.

Ngaa tikangarua/bicultural figures are more aware of their whakapapa than ngaro figures. Ngaa tikangarua are confident enough to recuperate the Maori traditions passed down by ngaa tipuna and adapt them to their modern lifestyles. Sharlene in Flat Out Brown and Tia – Kura's newfound friend in Ngaa Pou Waahine – live in urban, Paakehaa-dominated environments, but, because they internalise their taha Maori, they can confidently assert their indigeneity. Jaki in Waitapu is aware of her Maori heritage and through Matiu's love realises its healing properties. She is conscious of the limits and boundaries erected around cultural knowledge and acceptance. Ngaa tikangarua's relationships with Paakehaa are balanced; they can meet them on their own terms; and, unlike Queenie or her mother Aroha, they are not victims of a Paakehaa cultural legacy. They realise the value of their cultural identity and are able to communicate effectively within the social demands of an increasingly bicultural Aotearoa.

Ngaa Tipuna

A majority of Grace-Smith's plays contain ancestral figures that represent the Maori cosmological realm. They are spirits or deities like tipuna figures in plays that came before, such as Rongo in Death of the Land, or Huia and Huna in Whatungarongaro. Some are antecedents of on stage characters like Rongo-mai-ti-taha In the Wilderness Without a Hat or the ancestral figures in Waiora. However, unlike ancestral spirit figures in those earlier plays, who are all-knowing, all-seeing and untouchable, Grace-Smith's tipuna characters have human-like foibles and desires. Rather than being represented as iconic and idealised, in Grace-Smith's plays, they become complex and vulnerable characters. More importantly, rather than represent a male-dominated ancestral realm, Grace-Smith's early plays recover a pantheon of female spirit and tipuna figures. Ngaa Pou Waahine and Flat Out Brown show that contemporary Maaori society is under the influence of both male and female ancestors and that waahine characters are influenced just as much by the matriarchal line as they are by the patriarchal one. Waiora is the tipuna figure in Ngaa Pou Waahine, and Puna in Flat Out Brown. In Waitapu, goddess of the whirlpools, Hine Te Awhiowhio, is a vengeful tipuna figure. Thoroughly knowledgeable of Maaori tikanga and kawa, Waiora, Puna and Hine Te Awhiowhio

9 See Rore Hapipi, "Death of the Land," He Reo Hou: 5 plays by Maori playwrights, ed. Simon Garrett (Wellington, New Zealand: Playmarket, 1991) 19. In Death of the Land, present-day characters are berated by their male ancestor Rongo, a conscience figure and overseer of events. Accompanied by "strobic or coloured lighting and an eerie noise" when he appears on stage, Rongo displays supernatural powers. The three ancestral figures of Nga Puhi Kahao-rau, two males and a bare-chested wahine, Rongo-mai-ti-taha, intercede in a potentially violent debate in In the Wilderness Without a Hat.
communicate using whaata, karanga and karakia. Their supernatural strength and profound cultural knowledge not only restate a definite place for waahine in the mythological realm but also project a waahine self-determination borne out of traditional Maaori knowledge, customs and practices. Ngaa tipuna represent Maaori women's centrality in the creation and maintenance of Maaori culture, indicating the psychological, spiritual and physical depths of mana waahine. Puna and Hine Te Awhiowhio demonstrate the way women's individual pain and suffering impacts on the balance among hapuu and iwi. Waahine and Puna also highlight the cyclical nature of women's experiences. Their pains and their strengths are passed down to their younger counterparts – Kura and Niwa.

While each tipuna represents the mythological past, these supernatural waahine are not as idealised as the kula figures in The Pohutukawa Tree, Maranga Mai or Woman Far Walking. Grace-Smith develops these ancestral figures so that they can expose their deep emotional complexities and hurts. Ngaa Pou Waahine, Flat Out Brown and Waitapu all begin with scenes that depict tipuna in moments of vulnerability. In Ngaa Pou Waahine

Waahine stands in front of the audience. She wears a korowai and has her red hair in a topknot, bound with a heru (comb). [. . .] we are given a glimpse of the old story in which Waahine, Kura's tipuna is captured. Takimoana has taken Waahine away from her people [. . .]. [. . .] she becomes physically weaker and by the finish she is in a kneeling position (Scene 1 13).

In Flat Out Brown, "Te Hauraki performs an incantation to the winds to help him free his lover, Puna, who has been encased in a rock by Tuake, her husband" (Scene 1 1), and in Waitapu, Hinewai witnesses the murder of her son, Rongopai, and "comes forward and weeps over her son's body" (Scene 1 1).

Unlike ancestral figures in taane plays, Grace-Smith's tipuna have an 'earthly' matter to contend with: all suffer from the wrath of jealous, power-hungry taane. They overcome the domineering presence of males by subverting patriarchal power. There are several waahine ancestral figures that take on male roles as rangatira, warriors and kaitiaki. In Ngaa Pou Waahine for example, Waahine is described as strong, self-determined and most importantly, as the life-force sustaining her iwi:

By the time she was a young woman, boy, did she have things under control [. . .] Waahine. Ko wai ia? Te wahine e kawe ana te mana o teenei iwi. I te mate ia, kaahore he iwi (Scene 5 32).

"When their enemies would attack, Waahine kept the Moa People safe" (Scene 3 26). But when she faces Takimoana, "for the first time in her life she [feels] afraid" (Scene 7 38). As soon as Waahine faces her nemesis, she sacrifices her mana and gives it to her iwi, the Moa people, so that they can thrive. Although encased in a rock at Omanu Bay, in Flat Out Brown, Puna still manages to share her manaaki and aroha with her people. As kaitiaki, she ensures that
"there's always plenty of kai moana" (Act Two, Scene 1 39) and like a true guardian, she empathises with her iwi and acts as a channel for their pain.

In the five plays, tipuna become conduits for self-determination and mana waahine. But living descendents can only receive these ancestral gifts and become healthy and productive when they recognise and ease the secret anguish and repressed pains of nga tipuna. For example, in Flat Out Brown, in Act One, Scene Two, Niwa is 'possessed' by Puna who, confined by her husband's jealousy calls through Niwa to her lover Te Hauraki: "I can hear my name" (4). Subsequently, Niwa is "entranced" by Puna's spirit and "dances a dance that parallels her own feelings of anger and entrapment with Puna's" (40). In Act Three, Scene Two, Niwa is driven by Puna's spirit to damage her brother's flat. On the walls she sprays the words "Free Puna in the Rock" (78). In the final scene, Act Three, Scene Four, Niwa sets Puna free. Puna releases "the glow of [a] rainbow" (83) as she reaches "for the stars" (84). Ngaa Pou Waahine, begins with Walora's oohaki. Miro tells Walora's story piece by piece until, as Miro gets weaker, it reaches its climax. At play's close, Kura stands so that "behind her, the poupou representing her tipuna, Walora, is in light", while "the others are in darkness" (Scene 8 41). Walora's presence is reinstated as Kura recites the play's closing lines.

Grace-Smith's plays often begin at a point where tipuna's stories are in need of recovery because they have either been lost or forgotten. Hine Te Awhiowhio exemplifies the way tipuna characters require recognition and remembrance. In her time, Hine Te Awhiowhio – known then as Hinewai – was regarded as a "ware [...] not good enough" for her lover Titoki (Scene 10 31). In fact, after being driven out of Waitapu and witnessing Rongopai's murder (the son she bore to Titoki), Hinewai and Rongopai are deliberately erased from the tribe's collective memory: "soon they all forget about Rongo and Hine" (Scene 10 32).

Initially, Hine Te Awhiowhio is only a pervasive and influential presence in the mind of Tiki, Aunty Wai's whangai. He mentions her in at least three scenes and speaks directly to her in Scenes Four and Ten. Unlike Tiki, Matiu and Jaki do not remember Hine Te Awhiowhio's story and until it is remembered, and Hine's mourning over her son's murder is recognised, Hine will take people from the iwi: "She takes them to hurt the people, make them cry. She'll just keep taking and taking off them 'cos they hurt her. They forgot her son. [...] they don't remember" (Scene 12 41). The spirit figure Koro reminds audiences that "secrets [...] eat away at you until there's nothing left" (Scene 11 36). It is not until Hine Te Awhiowhio's secret anguish is restored to the iwi's collective memory that the iwi's own healing and rejuvenation is assured. At the conclusion of Waitapu, it is Jaki who reminds everyone of Hine Te Awhiowhio's place in Waitapu's whakapapa:

And there's two carvings now. One is of Te Mana Kaha, he stands outside the Meeting House, in the domain of Our War God, Tu Matauenga. And the other is of your son.
Rongopai. He stands inside the place of peace. [. . .] And on the night when they were unveiled all of us were up real late listening to the old people [. . .] They told us what they knew about you. So it won't be lost, it'll never be lost. And I'll never forget. 'Cos I've seen you. I've seen you and I remember you (Scene 18 55).

Although initially suppressed or erased, by the end of most of Grace-Smith's plays, tiipuna are reanimated and recognised by their descendents. Once this happens, tiipuna characters are able to inflect the present in a positive way as they become active participants in contemporary society, assisting their descendents with their search for cultural and gender identity. When represented in this way, ngaa tiipuna provide a richer theatricalisation of Māori perspectives of the interaction between past and present. While the past is vulnerable to erasure, it remains a vital, alive and sometimes, unforgiving force in the present.

Ngaa Whaea

Unlike Puna, Waiora and Hine Te Awhiowhio, the matriarch of Haruru Mai, Silas's mother Rangimarie Terewai Lovey Jones-Hikorere Karamea, is not a supernatural figure. She represents a second grouping of waahine in Grace-Smith's plays - whaea. Miro and Lizzie from Ngaa Pou Waahine, Auntly Wai from Waitapu, Kui/Aggie Rose from Purapurawhetu and Rangimarie Karamea and Pearl from Haruru Mai are whaea figures, appearing between the tiipuna figures and ngaa ngaro on the whakapapa continuum. These characters are knowledgeable about their whakapapa ties and express their connections to Māori culture in differing ways. Aside from Pearl, each of these waahine is a mother.10

Mother figures in plays such as In the Wilderness Without a Hat, Te Hara, Te Hokinga Mai and Woman Far Walking are represented as mostly middle-aged or slightly older waahine who are devoted, uncomplaining and exceptional performers of their familial roles. Tuwhare’s, Broughton’s and Ihimaera’s plays in particular glorify motherhood by presenting waahine characters as strong and self-sacrificing. However, as discussed in Chapter Four, such representations of waahine can limit the exploration of other modes of waahine expression. By proposing that mothers are at the crux of whaanau survival, these representations create a sense that from generation to generation waahine should enact the gender expectations specified by traditional Māori society.

In contrast to her taane counterparts, Grace-Smith critiques the notion that mothers are always willing and capable participants in whaanau life. Rather than present them in conventional, archetypal ways, the plays deliberately demystify the idealisation of mother characters. Grace-Smith addresses - often with intricate detail - the difficulties of motherhood and the trauma and pain associated with childbirth. And, through ngaa whaea characters, she exposes the

10 Pearl's position as a whaea figure is explained further into this section.
negative consequences of strict and rigid expectations on mothers. As well as denying the archetypal simplicity of mother characters, Grace-Smith’s plays offer whaea characters alternative imaginary realms for the expression of their mana waahine.

_The childless mother_

In many respects, Pearl from *Haruru Mai* is a whaea figure that goes “against what other people may think Maaori women are like” (Grace-Smith, Interview with Livesey 4). She is a single, independent, mid 40s wahine who has no children of her own, and furthermore, she uses the language and gestures commonly associated with men: Grace-Smith presents her as “a farmer” who “dresses like a man” (Character list i). This gender switching makes Pearl less easy to identify as either an archetypal kula or an ideal whaea figure and amongst the whaea figures makes Pearl the most interesting because she embodies a complex tension. On the one hand, she subverts conventional gender codes complicating typical representations of middle-aged wahine. However, on the other, of all Grace-Smith’s waahine characters, she approximates most closely the enduring and nurturing power associated with the mother of Maaori creation, Papatuanuku. Pearl’s characterisation highlights the difficulty of “showing another side” of a character or an issue (Grace-Smith, Interview with Livesey 5).

Pearl is cultural kaitiaki and gatekeeper. Acceptance or rejection within the Pukerata community lies firmly in Pearl’s hands. She reminds her cousin Silas that she has “got big strings, big thick ropes of muka which bind [her] to this land, that mountain, that river and that sea” (Act Three, Scene 9 81). So, for her, existence is based around her place in Pukerata. The recitation of her whakapapa functions as a steadily beating heart, energising her attachment to the land and the community. When, in the play’s final scene, Silas lies half drunk, spiritually beaten and empty, Pearl encourages him to revive himself by chanting their whakapapa: “Ko te Piki ki te Rangi te maunga, Ko Walariki te awa, ko Pukerata te marae, Ko Uamairangi te tangata” (Act Three, Scene 9 81). In addition to this, Pearl’s keenness for gardening, growth and preparing food also accentuate nurturing and nourishing qualities, connecting her quite firmly to an archetypal earth-mother role.

Pearl’s close psychological connection with the land is reflected in her physical surroundings. Silas’s house is located where Pearl’s “whenua was taken [. . . ] Stored in the hollow of a [nearby] Tanekaha tree” (Act Three, Scene 6 64). With the solidity of its ever-present maunga, the ancient memory of its ancestral burial caves and the foreboding macrocapa trees, Pukerata

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11 Within two years (2000 and 2001) two contrasting versions of *Haruru Mai* were produced. The first version was commissioned by the organisers of the 2000 New Zealand International Festival of the Arts and produced in conjunction with Taki Rua Productions. Following this, Simon Prast, Auckland Theatre Company’s Artistic Director, arranged for the play to appear in its 2001 programme. An agreement was made between Grace-Smith and Prast that the script would undergo extensive rewriting before its ATC production. Thus the 2001 version of *Haruru Mai* appeared at the Maidment Theatre in February of that year — courtesy of Playmarket. Quotes that appear in this chapter are from the 2000 version of the play.
reflects various aspects of Pearl's personality and thus exploits the already strong associations between women, the land and Papatuanuku. Prominent in the design for the first production of *Haruru Mai* was a large rock – situated just stage left of the main acting area – and one or two coloured threads extending across the seating in the auditorium. Designers Diane Prince and Mark McEntyre explain how the rock and threads were aligned with Pearl's cultural solidity, her nurturing qualities and her role as kaitiaki. The threads in particular reiterate Pearl's rootedness in the whenua and also her connection to the people of Pukerata:

The kohatu (rock) – is Pearl's mauri, her ahi kaa, floated in muka, an ancient memory of ownership, hovering delicately balanced between Silas' past and his present – the physical and spiritual worlds [.. .] Pearl's muka is her authority, interlocking and reconnecting the strands of her hapu together (Programme note 6).

It is not difficult to see therefore why the whole community perceives Pearl as a mother figure. At 40-something, Pearl is abundantly maternal. She is compelled to extend her aroha and guidance throughout the community, particularly towards her cousin Silas and her whaanaunga, Taku. Like an archetypal mother, she feels so strongly for her 'children' that their ills become hers: Taku's arrival in Pukerata gives her a "rash on [her] shoulder" (Act Two, Scene 1 23) and she provides a remedy for Silas's poisoned life after his break-up with Paloma.

Also, more obvious in Pearl's characterisation than in any of Grace-Smith's other whaea figures, is an emblematic or representative role, in some ways akin to the political spokesperson function performed by waahine characters like the kuia from *Maranga Mai*, Nell from *Kohanga* and Faith in *1981*. Grace-Smith makes it difficult not to interpret Pearl as a representative of Māori culture because she associates her with the land and with cultural surety and knowledge. For example, Pearl's lamentation that during the war "thousands of our beautiful young men" were "Used! Put up front to cop the frigging lot!" (Act Two, Scene 1 25) represents the attitudes of many Māori years after the war's conclusion. Her concerns about the imbalance of power evident after the Māori Battalion's return from the War and her observation that the growing interdependence between Māori and Paakehā is accompanied by the marginalisation of Māori ways, speaks for a Māori culture that in the 1960s was still feeling the after effects of the loss of "sons, fathers, lovers [.. .] future leaders" (Act Two, Scene 1 26). Rather than praise World War II for its perceived outcomes of social equality between Māori and Paakehā, Pearl condemns it for its divisiveness.

To the extent that her main concern is to strengthen the position of her iwi as they enter the 1970s, Pearl is a younger contemporary of 'real life' kuia such as Whina Cooper and Eva Rickard who led early Māori protest movements and sowed the seeds for claims of tino rangatiratanga

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12 *Haruru Mai* was first performed at the 2000 International Festival of the Arts at the Soundings Theatre in Te Papa Tongawera, Wellington.
and mana waahine. Issues which Pearl raises forthrightly throughout the play – her disapproval of the decision to send Maori troops to war, her right to speak out against an elder and her claim to ownership over Silas's land – resonate beyond the 1960s context in which they are explored.

The difficulty presented by Grace-Smith's representation of Pearl is that, set against these pervasive tropes of ideal motherhood, the effect of gender switching is weakened. For example, Rena Owen's performance in the first production highlighted Pearl's androgeny and contributed to an effective subversion of the usual middle-aged waahine figure. Appearing variously in tailored, pinstriped suits or cow-cocky trousers and wide-collared linen shirts, Pearl had a gruff, masculine exterior which set her apart from other women on stage (and from waahine in other plays). However, because the gender switching only applied to Pearl's attire and body language and less so to her psycho-social experiences of the world (these remained mostly female and maternal) any deeper kind of gender subversion went unrealised. Importantly though, the simple changes introduce and alert audiences to their own expectations of waahine characters – especially whaea figures. If part of Grace-Smith's project is to "break stereotypes" (Grace-Smith, Interview with Livesey 4), then Pearl's assumption of masculine behaviour and dress goes some way towards achieving that goal.

*The kuia in black*

Grace-Smith's representation of Pearl retains the tropes normally associated with mother figures and also alters them to prevent easy assimilation of the mother-type into a reading of the play. A similar approach is used in Grace-Smith's figuration of Aggie Rose/Kui in *Purapurawhetu*. As Aggie Rose/Kui's double-name suggests, Grace-Smith presents two sides to this whaea character – a younger and older version of the self: "Aggie Rose and Kui are the same person and are played by the same actor. [...] Aggie Rose is the 'memory' of Kui as she was in her youth, tough and vivacious" (Character list 22). Kui is "in her sixties [...] her] eyesight is bad and she is arthritic. She uses a stick to help her walk, a veil covers her face" (ibid). In production, representations of Aggie Rose/Kui play with the semiotic coding commonly associated with aging kuia or whaea. For example, in the 1998 touring production of *Purapurawhetu*, Aggie Rose/Kui (played by Nancy Brunning) was clad in a long black dress and wore a dark veil of gauze over her face. She appeared on stage from behind silver cloud-like screens suspended from the flies as if she was materialising from the sky. Carrying a tokotoko/cane, Brunning played Aggie Rose/Kui with an arthritic hunch. Brunning's costume, deportment and her emergence from the misty sky, lent the character an ethereal, almost magic, majesty. Several of the semiotic codes associated with nurturing, all-loving and respected kuia were employed in her representation.
However, the play undercuts such stereotypical representation by including moments when Kui “removes her dark headscarf” (Act One, Scene 3 50), trails it behind her and transforms into the young, sexy and vivacious Aggie Rose. From an elderly, arthritic wahine who “can’t even peel a damn apple” and can only “sit and wait” (Act One, Scene 2 41), Kui becomes a tango-dancing, cigarette-smoking *femme fatale*. The destabilisation of stereotypical imagery provides a productive play on images of “women in black at a tangi” that are so common in early Maaori literature in English.13

The doubling of Aggie Rose/Kui subverts stereotypical figuration and offers alternatives to images of self-sacrificing, nurturing mother figures. In comparison to earlier representations of whaea such as Waimiria (*In the Wilderness Without a Hat*) and Kuini Mathews (*Te Hara*), Aggie Rose is an unconventional mother. She is suspicious and critical of her step-son, Matawera, even though her husband Hohepa tells her that she is “his mother now. He needs you” (Act Three, Scene 2 97). Instead of mourning the death of her son Bubba along with the iwi of Te Kupenga, Aggie flees the village, after razing their wharenui because “the love and trust [she] let grow in Purapurawhetuu is gone [. . . ] used up” (Act Three, Scene 2 99). In contrast to Hohepa, who mourns in a passive, pathetic (what Tyler calls “porangi” (Act One, Scene 2 45)) way, Aggie Rose/Kui expresses her grief through acts of violence because she is angered at her son’s death.

However, as with her portrayal of Pearl, Grace-Smith’s characterisation of Aggie Rose/Kui does not produce a radical alteration of the mother-type. Instead, Grace-Smith treads tentatively: she prevents her characters from conforming to expected modes of behaviour but deviates only enough to slightly extend conventional gender boundaries. For example, as well as her dark, cold and aggressive side, Aggie Rose has a warmer side which moves her closer to a more typical representation of the mother figure. The play suggests that, beneath her vengeful exterior, lies a deep and boundless sense of aroha and forgiveness. At the end of the play, Aggie Rose forgives Matawera’s murder of Awatea and forgives Hohepa for his earlier refusal to listen to her concerns. Moreover, through her ownership of land at Te Kupenga, Aggie Rose has mana whenua status. She is aware that this binds her to Papatuanuku, to the land, ensuring that she fulfil an earth-mother role in the healing and preservation of Te Kupenga.

Although the final image of Aggie Rose/Kui is romantic and idealised, there are deeper dimensions to the whaea figure. Grace-Smith uses her to address the “desexing” of kula characters in plays by Maaori men (Grace-Smith, Interview 7 Dec. 1998). She expresses concern at the number of Maaori men who refuse to believe that their kula and other older Maaori women maintain sexual feelings. She insists that “Maaori women are more in touch

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13 See John Huria, “Maa te reehia e kawee,” *Playmarket News* 16 (1998): 3. Grace-Smith says, “We’re not seeing women in black at a tangi. We don’t see stereotyped characters. It’s a sign of validity”.
with older Māori women” and that they are “more able to give kuia extra dimensions and sexual responses which Māori male writers and non-Māori writers may not want to or be prepared to acknowledge” (ibid). Purapurawhetu’s Aggie Rose — and by association, Kui — resex both the kuia role and the mother role. Aggie Rose is sexually alluring. Aware of her physical attractiveness and sexual power, she actively seeks a romantic liaison with Hohepa: 

[... ] one knee up against a wall. She slowly pulls a cigarette from her cleavage and attaches a filter to it. She takes a long drag and shoots out the smoke in a hard circular stream. All the while her gaze is fixed on Hohepa. She tosses her head back and laughs (Act One, Scene 3 50).

Aggie’s penchant for 1950s American popular culture, cowboy Westerns and the tango lends a sexual vigour and vitality to her portrayal. Because the character often switches between younger and older versions of herself, the sassy elements in the younger portrayal also transfer to the kuia. Constantly swigging from a hip flask of gin, Kui is cheeky and provocative. She speaks the language of a more youthful self and brings some of Aggie Rose into her older body:

Let me tell you about this Aggie Rose. She didn’t get close to nobody. The tighter Hohepa held on to her the emptier he felt and the more he wanted. Like a bottle of good gin, it can make you cry but you still gotta finish the bugger off. (She takes a long swig from the flask) (Act Two, Scene 2 67-68).

In this way, Aggie Rose/Kui encourages a reconsideration of extant ideas about older Māori women and mothers.

The split evident in Aggie Rose/Kui has textual precursors in the representations of Miro and Waiora in Ngaa Pou Waahine. Aspects of Miro are detectable in Aggie’s youthful, exuberant behaviour and in her predilection for pop music, while Kui’s delivery of an oohaki and her storytelling are reminiscent of the tipuna figure, Waiora.

Ailing mothers

Miro in Ngaa Pou Waahine was the first mother figure Grace-Smith created for the stage. Unlike Aggie Rose/Kui, Miro displays traits more commonly associated with traditional conceptions of mother figures. She is outwardly maternal — nurturing Kura physically and psychologically — and is a kindly, fun-loving mother who is intensely interested in reminding Kura of her mana waahine lineage. As with kuia and whaea figures in taane plays, Miro is romanticised and sentimentalised. Her isolated, 1970s rural life is represented nostalgically:

Whakarongo ki teeraa, Te Atakura. Sounds like Number 7’s bell, ringing its way home. (she moves to the window and looks out) Aae. Kua tae mai ia. The crafty old thing, and look! You wouldn’t bloody believe it! Her tits are empty! Hell! She should be bursting.

That bloody Kepa! I bet he’s having fresh cream on his porridge right now (Scene 3 26).

Although Miro conforms to stereotypical ideas of rural Māori life and female nurturing, she is also an important antecedent for the more complex whaea figures who appear in Grace-Smith’s
later plays. Like Aggie Rose/Kui, Miro’s oratory drives the central narrative. As she recalls Walora’s exploits, she recuperates a matriarchal ancestral line for Kura. Appearing as an embodiment of Kura’s memory, Miro shows how stories and people from the past can exert considerable influence on others’ contemporary lives.

As in Haruru Mai and Purapunwhetuu, design in the 1997 production of Ngaa Pou Waahine encouraged an association between Miro and the feminine, mothering powers of Papatuanuku. For example, in the production, Miro told stories while attending to Kura who was wrapped in blankets in a woven flax cradle near her side. Miro was lit by a warm, earthy glow and spoke in nostalgic, comforting tones of her love for her child and her matriarchal heritage. Stories about listening to the “rich as steam pudding and cream” crooning of Howard Morrison (Scene 2 19) just before Kura’s birth also lend Miro an endearing, comical side.

Miro’s humour is counterbalanced by an underlying sadness. During the play, the audience learns that not only is Miro bringing Kura up alone but that she is suffering from cancer. Miro is a solo-mother by choice rather than circumstance. She ensures that Kepa – the father of her child – is kept at arm’s length and hurls abuse at him, proclaiming that he is “not bad for a roll in the hay, engari he tiane, he paapaa? Kaahore! He koretake rawe koe” (Scene 3 26). Disregarding traditional Maaori ideals about family, she makes a firm decision to live an independent, self-sufficient life. Kepa becomes unnecessary in Miro’s alternative family scheme. She warns Kura, “if that bastard ever tries to tell you that he’s your old man, smack him one in the face” (Scene 7 37). By making the decision to keep her baby from becoming “part of [Kepa] and [his] koretake ways. [. . .] parties and beer and [a] long drop with two seats” (Scene 3 26) Miro asserts her mana waahine. She resists dominant ideas about whaanau and creates a life which still incorporates the extended whaanau but also meets her own needs as a solo-mother. By highlighting the strong bonds that can grow between a mother and daughter, the play models an alternative and successful reformulation of familial relationships.

As well as raising the possibility for alternative whaanau configurations, Ngaa Pou Waahine suggests that new whaanau structures may require difficult sacrifices and compromises. Although she is suffering from cancer, Miro is optimistic about raising Kura single-handedly, however, she is mindful that because of her cancer she is “not long for this world” (Scene 7 36). While Miro says “Bally Hoo” to the doctor’s diagnosis (Scene 3 26) she knows that she will have to go through the painful process of arranging for her daughter’s care. Even worse than this, Miro is concerned that if upon her death Kura is not brought up within the arms of a caring whaanau, Kura’s sense of waahine identity will be threatened.
Grace-Smith sets Miro’s attempts to arrange care for Kura within a story of betrayal and disloyalty. Miro procures a promise from her cousin Lizzie that she will pass Kura to her Aunty Ivy (Miro’s sister) once Miro dies. However, Lizzie, hypocritically disapproving of Miro’s solo-motherhood and seeking a remedy for a traumatic stillbirth, dishonours Miro’s wishes of passing her daughter to her “sister Ivy, up in Kawakawa” with “three other kids and a big house and a husband that works hard and thinks with his head” (Scene 7 36). Instead, Lizzie keeps Kura herself, introducing the child into an emotionally cold, culturally sterile environment, denying Kura the chance to grow up learning about her wahine ancestry.

Although in Ngaa Pou Waahine Miro and Lizzie are whaanau, their attitudes towards ancestry, mothering and whaanauangatanga are starkly opposed. No matter how hard she tries, Lizzie “feels nothing” (Scene 2 21) for Kura, her adopted daughter. Unlike Miro, Lizzie has an ambivalent attitude towards her cultural origins, and an intense hatred of her original home and her rural environment: “Never again. Plucking pheasants. Never again. Bends. These bends and twists and holes. Wetas. Gone soon” (Scene 8 39).

Unlike Pearl, Aggie Rose/Kui and Miro, Lizzie is attracted to a Paakehaa values, norms and beliefs. She is dissatisfied and mistakenly believes that marrying a Paakehaa will “give her the fine life” (Scene 3 26) and, in her hopeless clinging to the young Paakehaa schoolteacher, George Chambers, she demonstrates a selfishness that is rare among kuia and whaea figures in plays by taane. According to Lizzie, Paakehaa are “soft like rose petals” and “so, so sensitive” (Scene 4 29) and she admires George Chambers because he is “so clean and well dressed [. . .]. So smooth” (Scene 4 29). These glorified ideas blind Lizzie to the richness of her own cultural heritage – a richness of which Pearl, Aggie Rose/Kui and Miro are entirely aware. In common with Aroha Mataira, Lizzie has an extremely punishing commitment to Christianity: “Be merciful to me, God. Wash away my sins because of your great mercy. I have sinned against you, and done what you consider evil, so you are right in judging me” (Scene 6 35). Lizzie’s concept of the Church and God contribute considerably to her already disturbed psychological state. The only fond memories she manages to retain (memories of her romance with “Georgie”) are tainted by the demands of the Church. Lizzie’s desires to be with a Paakehaa, combined with a guilt-driven Christian devotion, contribute to her cultural confusion and an unattractive hypocrisy which make Lizzie a dislikeable whaea figure.

Unlike Aggie Rose/Kui, whose unmotherly behaviour is explained and valorised by the end of Purapurawhetu, Lizzie’s unmotherly responses to Kura are framed negatively. Lizzie’s painful, traumatic miscarriage goes some way to explaining her difficult relationship with Kura and her inability to perform the mother role, but the obsessive pride and selfishness she shows during her failed childbirth reduce audience empathy:
Stabbing, pulling. Stabbing, pulling. Stabbing, pulling, leaving *(she screams out)*

What's wrong? Oh God, what's happening? *(she speaks very clinically)*. There was blood and I had to lie across the back seat. All the time I was praying that no one would see me or recognise the car. When I saw it, it didn’t look like a baby. They didn’t look like real hands or feet and it wasn’t moving. So I threw it out the window and left it there on the side of the road (Scene 8.39).

While audiences are encouraged to identify with the non-conformist behaviour of whaea characters like Aggie Rose/Kui and Miro, there is very little in Lizzie’s behaviour or attitude that endears her to the audience. Her attraction to Paakeha culture and her domineering presence in Kura’s life produce a whaea figure who is culturally confused, religiously strict and, therefore, dislikeable and hard.

*Over-protective mothers*

Like Lizzie, the whaea figures from *Haruru Mai* and *Waitapu* – Karamea and Aunty Wai – expose the damaging impact of rigid approaches to motherhood. These kuia are exaggerations of mother figures, exerting so much motherly discipline that they have the potential to destroy their children’s notions of self-identity. Although she does not appear on stage, Silas’s mother – Rangimarie Terewai Lovey Jones-Hikorere Karamea – is a pervasive presence in *Haruru Mai* as weighty a presence as the lengthy genealogical thread sewn into her name. Karamea’s dominance was emphasised in the Auckland Theatre Company’s (ATC) production of *Haruru Mai* by a larger-than-life oil portrait which hung from ceiling to floor. As well as suggesting her status in Pukerata, the sheer size of the portrait, *(suggestive of her controlling observance of Silas)* became a concrete sign of the limiting and oppressive influence a mother figure *(in the form of the past)* held over Silas.

Karamea is unusual among whaea figures because she does not want her son to embrace his Maaori ancestry. Although she was “taught everything about [the] place” *(Act Three, Scene 6 66)*, she passed very little on to Silas. When he was younger he wasn’t “allowed to say Kia ora to any of the kids round the Pa, [his] own cousins weren’t good enough” *(ibid)* and he was taught very little about the qualities of whanaungatanga and community. While, according to Silas, Karamea “only wanted the best” for him *(ibid)*, Pearl reminds Silas that Karamea “stole” from Pearl’s family and that she “stripped” the mana “right off of” her parents’ backs *(ibid 67)*. Karamea’s dealings with Pearl’s whaanau exhibit a greed and selfishness uncharacteristic of kuia within Maaori society. Pearl makes it clear that, as Karamea aged, she became less and less respectful of her whaanau and iwi:

Her whaanau were always a lot wealthier than the rest of us. Owned the timber mills. She was bought *(sic)* up as royalty you know […]. Some time back her father gave mine money. He...he was in trouble. Now I...I know your Grandfather wasn’t expecting
the loan back [BEAT] But Karamea was. She needed some collateral to set up her business in Auckland. Demanded it back, this was years later Silas (ibid 66).

Karamea’s selfish and private ways were passed on to Silas. Rather than educating him about his place in Pukerata and teaching him about the contribution he could make to the community, Karamea handed Silas a licence to avoid the past. Karamea seals away her knowledge of the whaanau’s misdeeds and this becomes a model for Silas’s behaviour. Because of Karamea’s controlling maternal eye, Silas suffers.

Like Karamea, Aunty Wai from *Waitapu* is an example of a whaea figure who has the potential to impact negatively on her ‘children’s’ lives because of a heavy-handed application of motherly discipline. Although the rigid and strict Aunty Wai does not demand the suppression of Maaori cultural identity (as Karamea does) she instead insists that her whaanau adhere to traditional kawa.

In *Waitapu*, Aunty Wai’s interactions with her new daughter-in-law, reveal a conservative, tradition-bound outlook which challenges Jaki’s looser regard for traditional cultural practices. For example, Aunty Wai upholds “arranged unions” saying “sometimes [they] make the best marriages” (Scene 7 25). In the honour of tradition, she also forces her young nephew Matiu to maintain old-fashioned beliefs, even if it keeps him from seeing Jaki (his wife): “Total abstinence is what I’m talking about my dear [. . . ] in every sense of the word” (Scene 6 16). Furthermore, she insists that Matiu and Jaki not follow their own alternative kawa. As the self-designated spokesperson and moral judge for the iwi of Waitapu, Aunty Wai sees fit to prescribe others’ identities:

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WAI. Points finger. He ware koe.
KORO. That’s not true Jaki. Remember the story.
JAKI. I know what you’re saying and it’s...
WAI. It should have been Ripeka he was happy with her.
JAKI. You..you don’t know about us..
WAI. Merely an infatuation that’s turned into pity, [. . . ] Matiu can see that now. [. . . ]
He’s having doubts about you Jaki. You’re not of the right breeding (Scene 14 48).
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Through her accusations that Jaki is “ware” (ibid) Aunty Wai gains a reputation as “interfering” (Scene 11 35), “stupid” and finally, “bloody cruel” (ibid 49). Her cruelty extends to her adopted son, Tiki, who she batters with criticisms saying: “He’s a simple boy” (Scene 3 5), “He can’t look after himself” (ibid 6). She tells Jaki that he’s “a man on the outside, but inside? He has the mind of a young boy” (ibid 7), and that “the company of young women, makes him go stupid” (Scene 7 23).

Aunty Wai’s cruel and conniving ways become an obstacle to the passing on of Waitapu history and traditional knowledge. Aunty Wai is so preoccupied with preserving the status of her
ancestors that she stubbornly refuses to remember the tragic, shameful episodes attached to her hapuu’s history. When she tells Jaki the history of Waitapu, she only recalls the story of her revered tipuna, Te Mana Kaha. Very deliberately, she erases any recollection of Te Mana Kaha's relationship with Tiki’s ancestress, Hine Te Awhiowhio or Rongopai, the child they bore.

Aunty Wai does not admit that there are alternative, less glowing stories of her hapuu’s history. Tiki is left to tell Jaki (in a tentative, surreptitious manner) his own story about the tipuna of Waitapu. However, Aunty Wai interferes with Tiki’s storytelling too. Using her position as Waitapu’s whaea, she lays down the whakapapa law, skewing Tiki’s stories and undermining his competence as a storyteller. In Scene Seven, Aunty Wai tells Jaki not to take Tiki’s stories seriously and shortly afterwards undercuts Tiki’s attempts to communicate with Jaki by saying sarcastically, “Stories. I’ve heard so much about these stories. What can they be about dear?” (Scene 14 46).

Aunty Wai’s unrealistic demands on Jaki (symptomatic of her rigid ideas about cultural identity) coupled with her refusal to listen to new stories about her past, limits her capacity to contribute to a refashioning of Waitapu’s future. By the final scene, Aunty Wai is only minimally involved in whaanau events and left out of whaanau activities she exerts far less control over others' relationships. Aunty Wai provides an examination of the potentially negative impact of rigid responses to cultural change and fluidity: the refusal to adapt and reconfigure cultural practices means she is marginalised by the younger generation whereas, an openness to the possibility of cultural change could help with the maintenance and rejuvenation of Maaori culture. The play suggests that rather than resist these changes, whaea figures could spearhead them, and in so doing, support the younger generations as they realise new ways of identifying as Maaori.

Grace-Smith’s whaea figures offer more detailed, intimate and personal characterisations of waahine as mothers. Whaea are far less iconic than the middle-aged women and kuia characters in taane plays. Grace-Smith exposes the complex realities and emotions which impact on the lives of Maaori mothers. In doing so, she increases the possibilities for audience identification while also illustrating the potential for moving beyond idealised images of Maaori mothers.

Ngaa Ngaro
Just as some of the physical and spiritual characteristics of Grace-Smith’s tipuna are reminiscent of kuia such as Aroha Mataira, Kuini Mathews and Materoa, ngaa ngaro – the younger waahine depicted in Grace-Smith’s plays – have experiences in common with kootiro figures from taane plays. Like Queenie Mataira (The Pohutukawa Tree), Hula Mathews (Te Hokinga Mahi), Faith Matthews (1981) and Amiria (Waiora), Grace-Smith’s ngaro figures – Kura, Te Aniwaniwa and Ramari – are younger, ranging in age from 16 to around 20 years old. All
three ngaro are grappling with the balance between the traditional, custom-based lives of their ancestors and contemporary social-cultural contexts.

Another broad commonality ngaa ngaro – the lost ones – have with kootiro figures are problems of “exile, dispossession, homelessness, and ill-defined identity” (Maufort, *Aboriginal Realism* 14). However, a primary and important difference lies in the way audiences see Kura, Te Aniwaniwa and Ramari articulating their existential confusions and even more crucially, acting to understand and alleviate them. Grace-Smith presents young women as figures that are much more powerful and complex than their kootiro counterparts.

In contrast to some of their kootiro antecedents who are assured of access to their Maaori culture and history, because of their proximity to whaanau, hapuu and iwi, Kura, Niwa and Ramari find that their access to information about their cultural heritage is obstructed. Even Mars (*Haruru Mai*), who has a keener sense of her cultural identity (after being brought up by her mother and Uncle Mack in small town Pukerata), finds it difficult to learn anything about her father’s influence on her life. In this way, ngaa ngaro figures have much in common with characters such as Rose and Rachel from *Daddy’s Girl* or Girlie from *Roimata*. Much of the intensity in these characters’ psychological journeys and the deeper investigation into the confusions about belonging can be seen as deliberate developments of themes and situations initially depicted in work by Renee, Rena Owen, Riwi Brown and Roma Potiki.

In *Ngaa Pou Waahine* and *Flat Out Brown*, for example, Kura and Niwa (respectively) must recuperate their Maaori pasts from within Paakehaa urban environs. *Ngaa Pou Waahine*’s suburbia is sterile and interferes with Kura’s capacity to fantasise, dream and remember the past. During the course of the play she realises that she “can’t stay [at home] anymore” because her “dreaming has become real” and she needs “to find out where [she’s] meant to be” (Scene 4 34). However, her constractive suburban life and her lack of connections with an iwi, conspire to make her return to her mother’s Northland home all the more difficult. In *Flat Out Brown*, Niwa’s urban environment is populated by people who “don’t see [her]” and make her feel like she doesn’t “fit in” (Act Two, Scene 1 34). Her early life with an alcoholic father and experiences of living in Wellington streets convince her that she will be out of place anywhere. When her friend Culture asks her back to his papakainga in Omanu Bay she immediately finds reasons why it would not work, saying that it’s his papakainga, not hers, that Culture’s people would “probably speak Maori [to her] all the time” and that she would be shamed because she could not respond (Act Two Scene 1 34).

In contrast to Queenie Mataira, it is clear that Kura and Niwa will not be exiting the stage with a shout of “Hooray” as they trudge off with determination towards their open-armed whaanau in the nurturing, isolated rural papakainga. Instead, ngaa ngaro have a relationship with Maaori
culture that is a lot like Wiki’s in *Whatungarongaro*. Like Wiki, Kura’s and Niwa’s understanding of their cultural roots and belonging are barely developed and they are distanced and alienated from the idea of a cultural home. Grace-Smith has embodied these issues of belonging in Ramari from *Purapurawhetu*. Ramari is a character that has an “insider-outside relationship with Māori identity” (Grace-Smith, Interview 7 Dec. 1998). Such characters strive to identify with their Māori heritage without ever being able to shed their Paakehaa socialisation. As a result, insider-outsider characters like Ramari have rare perspectives of Māori and Paakehaa worlds but never feel completely at ease in either.

Until her visit to Te Kupenga, Ramari has spent most of her life in urban Christchurch. Although she has an abstract understanding that she is Māori, it is clear that she has had a monocultural upbringing because she has very little knowledge about Māori culture. Her insider-outsider status in Te Kupenga (her mother’s papakainga) is evident in the tangata whenua’s response to her. Tyler, Kui and Matawera have their own rules and demands concerning cultural belonging and greet Ramari with a mixture of warmth, suspicion and disdain. Ramari admits that in Te Kupenga “everybody treats [her] like a bad joke” (Act Two, Scene 1 61), and that “it seems Te Kupenga doesn’t like [her]” (ibid). Her attempts to be involved more fully in Te Kupenga’s community are awkward and strained. When she offers to assist Tyler with the tukutuku panel, Tyler rejects her: “I don’t want any company, okay?” (Act One, Scene 1 27), and when Ramari is introduced to Kui, she meets a silence and coldness which leaves her “feeling stupid” (Act One, Scene 2 42).

Matawera welcomes Ramari in a patronizing way because he wants to satisfy his need for control and power. While alone on the water’s edge contemplating her insider-outsider status in Te Kupenga, Ramari is surprised by Matawera who, ever-watchful, responds to her question about whether there is a “place for me anywhere?” by patting his heart and saying, “There’s a place for you right here. [ . . . ] If I could [. . . ] I’d steal the tiara from [. . . ] Princess Anne, and declare you the Queen of Te Kupenga” (Act Two, Scene 1 57). These experiences, coupled with Ramari’s excessive doubt about whether or not she fits in, highlight the predicament of the insider-outsider character. Because her inclusion in Te Kupenga is not easily assured, she experiences a distancing from the culture of which she expects to be a part. Even though near the end of the play Tyler admits that Ramari is a “typical kick-ass Te Kupenga wāhine” (Act Two, Scene 3 79), there is a sense that Ramari’s insider-outsider experiences will continue to impinge on her attempts to be fully subsumed into Te Kupenga life.

Ramari’s experiences in Te Kupenga are not uncommon to other ngaro characters. Kura, Niwa and Mars are also uncertain about their cultural and/or familial roots. Like young wāhine in plays by the first wave of wāhine writers, these ngaro characters locate some of the answers to their feelings of homelessness and dispossession in the recuperation of their Māori culture.
However, *Whatungarongaro* and *Daddy's Girl* end at the moment where characters decide to recover their Māori side, whereas Grace-Smith's plays depict ngaro characters such as Ramari negotiating their return to their iwi and wrestling with their acquisition of new knowledge. In other words, while plays such as *Whatungarongaro* and *Daddy's Girl* showed young waahine who were determined to incorporate taha Māori in their lives, they did not show in great detail the outcomes of these decisions for the women involved. In *Ngaa Pou Waahine, Flat Out Brown, Purapurawhetu* and *Haruru Mai*, much energy and dramatic momentum comes as ngaa ngaro steer themselves through the difficult psychological and physical journeys that will help them form their new cultural identities and move them towards a fuller realisation of their selfhood.

Grace-Smith's representation of ngaa ngaro spotlights her dramatic project to help Māori "learn who [they] are" and "what [they've] been through" by drawing on the past (Interview with Livesey 4). She sees the depiction of characters' active engagements with the past as productive: "If you look at your past you know your whakapapa and where you’ve come from, and all of those things, all of us, we feel a lot stronger in who we are, you don’t feel as lost" (ibid). Kura, Niwa, Ramari and Mars all learn about themselves as they engage with, remember and – in the case of Niwa and Kura – relive, the past. All ngaro realise that their uncertainty about identity can be reduced through the recuperation of a whakapapa.

In *Ngaa Pou Waahine*, Kura has several questions about her existence: "I have so many questions. But how long do I have to wait for the answers? I need to know about my mother, I need to know about my home. I need to know" (Scene 2 20). The play suggests that if she can learn something of her mother and her whakapapa Kura will begin to resolve and affirm a stronger sense of self: "[...] something has changed. [...] I heard the words. I saw the memory. [...] Telling me of my past, my future. [...] I can’t stay here anymore. I need to find out where I’m meant to be" (Scene 4 34). While not entirely ignorant of her whakapapa, Kura was adopted out to an Aunty: a "rigid' and "tight-lipped old bag" (Scene 2 20) who told Kura nothing about her past. As she struggles to remember and interpret her mother's stories, Kura suffers a complex identity crisis which she slowly alleviates as the play progresses.

One way Kura tries to recuperate her whakapapa and establish a firmer sense of self is through the enactment of dreams, imaginings and sub-conscious memories. Kura's Aunt Lizzie complains that Kura will "trap [her] with some strange piece of conversation" and that she is "always dreaming when there's work to be done" (Scene 2 14). Kura's friend Tia, in refreshing contrast to Lizzie, indulges Kura in her dreams, interpreting them more favourably as "out-of-it fantasies" (Scene 2 18). Usually, Kura's dreams are present-day ones, related to her boyfriend JT and her mindless job in a local canning factory, but in private moments she shares waking dreams of the past, her mother and her mythological ancestress, Waiora. When she recalls
memories of her mother she returns to her childhood and sees “big huge legs [...] that belong to someone giant and beautiful”. In the dream an “arm reaches down and pulls [her] up”, Kura is cradled by her mother where she feels “all safe” (Scene 2 20). Through her dreams Kura learns she is a descendent of a wahine of the Tangata Turehu (fairy people) with the gift of foresight and the power to keep her people safe – and realises that her contemporary experiences are similar to those of her ancestress. Like Waiora, Kura feels a “great pain inside” (Scene 3 26) because of her dislocation from her true home and, also like Waiora, Kura contains a special mana inside. Kura’s dream life functions as a crucial factor in her development of selfhood. Her dreams bring her closer to her past and her female ancestry and stimulate her awareness of Maaori spirituality.

At the conclusion of the play, Kura admits that something inside her has been awakened:

Inside me is this spring
Its bubbles surge and pop
against the inside of my skin
Through my hair the kookoowal sparkles.
It sparkles with life and with mana.
Hoomai te waiora (Scene 8 41).

Her final actions in the play are to do “one very strong action with puukana, making her own poupou” (ibid). With this, she embodies a much stronger sense of selfhood than she has at the beginning of the play. The audience is left with the picture of a ngaro figure who has made significant progress in determining her cultural identity. By closing the play with an image that is firmly rooted in traditional Maaori culture, it is clear that any identity Kura decides to shape will rest on the bedrock of her Maaori past.

Like Kura, Flat Out Brown’s Niwa struggles to find ways to express herself. She is lost. Others see that something is missing in her (Act One, Scene 4) and she too senses that there is something beyond her life in Wellington, but her circumstances deprive her of a chance to explore this more thoroughly. For Niwa, identity and self-expression come from freedom – from not having to “cook or clean or wipe up anybody’s vomit” (Act Two, Scene 3 61) and from not being pressured to fulfil the desires of others.14 Although Niwa’s brother Tawhiri loves and supports his sister, he also restricts her self-expression by avoiding “heart to hearts” and insisting that she follow his dictates for her future (Act One, Scene 4 22). Tawhiri’s overprotective behaviour curtails Niwa’s chances to “determine [her] own destiny” (Act Two, Scene 3 51). According to Niwa’s friend Culture, “colours” are “trapped inside” her and they will only be revealed if Niwa is at liberty to express herself (ibid). Niwa’s form of “creative

14 The split family (in particular the mother having to choose between children) is a repeated motif in several Maaori plays. In 2001 it was used as the central conflict in Albert Belz’s Te Maunga.
expression using art” (Act Two, Scene 1 50) – tagging – is a sign of a frustration and anger borne of uncertainty about her belonging and identity.

Like Kura, Niwa finds a solution for her self-expressive dilemma by recuperating an ancestral, mythical past. Throughout the play, Niwa is aligned with an ancestress figure named Puna. Niwa is attuned to Puna’s call: “I can hear my name. Puna calls to me” (Act One, Scene 1 4), and is “the only one” (Act Three, Scene 2 75) who can free Puna’s spirit (which like Niwa’s, is confined, frozen and impatient for release). In the final scene, Niwa takes it upon herself to free her ancestress from the cliff face in which she is encased. By freeing Puna, Niwa achieves a sense of freedom for herself and – in an echo of Kura’s existential awakening – is able to “search inside [her] heart” and see “[her] colours” (Act Three, Scene 4 83).

In Flat Out Brown Grace-Smith highlights, more vividly than in Ngaa Pou Waahine, the difficult terrain that must be navigated by ngaro figures as they attempt to learn more about their cultural identities. Niwa has a greater sense of self-determination than Kura. Niwa’s journey to the rural papakainga, her discovery of her own “colours” and her recuperation of a mythical past demonstrate her agency in the realisation of an identity. However, Niwa doesn’t only draw on taha Maaori as a source for her cultural identifications. Like Kataraina in Kouka’s and Ahipene’s Hide ’n Seek, Niwa takes a composite approach to cultural belonging. Her cultural identifications are spread wide; she reads the novel White Swans and revels in the energy and fun she finds in popular music and dance. While taane plays such as 1981, Hide ’n Seek and Waiora gesture toward the blending of Maaori and non-Maaori elements in the lives of their kootiro characters, Flat Out Brown shows how multiple cultural influences can be embraced and incorporated into an identity that is not rigidly Maaori or Paakehaa but instead, flexible and adaptable.

Not unlike Niwa, Kura and Ramari project a contemporary reality for many young waahine: the necessity of active involvement in the journey toward understanding of Maaori cultural identity. However, unlike Kura, Niwa and Ramari, Mars in Haruru Mai does not negotiate or recuperate a ‘lost’ past by returning to the papakainga. Mars is already incumbent in the papakainga, but perceives it as constricting. Although at home physically, Mars is not at home spiritually and is envious of those who are. Rather than remain within the boundaries of her hometown, Mars wants to embrace what others in the village – particularly Pearl – perceive as the ‘outside world’. As with Kataraina from Kouka and Ahipene’s Hide ’n Seek, Mars experiences the restrictions of belonging to a tight-knit community. The narrowness of the rural hometown limits her dreams of independence and fame and crushes any attempts to forge an identity separate from other Pukerata waahine. Mars wants to embrace new cultural experiences but, since the age of 13, has been living with her mother and an ‘Uncle’. She has been looking after “Mum and Mack […] his drinking problem” and their “five kids” (Act One, Scene 3 20). She is
clearly not at home in Pukerata, a town that she thinks is "small-minded" and "not worth worrying about" (Act Three, Scene 8 70). She fantasises about becoming "the first Maori ever to get out of Pukerata since World War two [sic]" (Act Two, Scene 3 34). She perceives herself as "special" and "different" and these self-perceptions stop her from participating in activities at the local marae. Whereas other ngaro figures are initially ignorant of their cultural roots and susceptible to others' notions of inclusion and exclusion, Mars is cast as a "witch" (Act Two, Scene 2 30) who knows exactly how to manipulate and control those around her. Mars says of herself, "If you slit me open you'd find scars an inch [sic] and a heart with a hide like a wild pig" (Act One, Scene Three 19). Silas says that she "speaks directly as a child" while at the same time she is "slipping a dull-edged knife beneath [his] ribs" (Act Two, Scene 2 30). Taku – grandson of a deceased Pukerata local – calls Mars "the bitch" (Act Three, Scene 5 62).

While other ngaro figures such as Kura and Ramari are conscious of their identity confusion and open and willing to explore and alleviate it, Mars is destructively unaware of the way her lack of knowledge about her father has impacted on her life. Throughout the play, Mars is obsessed with retrieving knowledge about her father, Moana, who died fighting during World War II, and this determines her thoughts and actions. For example, once she discovers that Silas fought alongside her father during the campaign at Pascuccio Spear, she makes more demands upon Silas's time. Their relationship intensifies and, in her desperate attempts to glean from Silas what her father said about her: "[. . .] what about me then? I want to know what he said about me" (Act Three, Scene 8 74), Mars begins to hurt those around her. Mars sees Taku as a rival for Silas's affections and after she deliberately runs him out of Silas's home, Taku commits suicide. Mars' false accusations of Taku show the degree to which she is willing to manipulate situations so that she can learn something of her father's life.

Mars often converses with her father's spirit and every night keeps "one window open for him [. . .] in case [. . .] he comes home" (Act Two, Scene 3 40) and she admits that "for so long" she has "been trying to imagine what happened" to him so that she will "know his death wasn't a waste" (Act Three, Scene 8 75). To a certain degree, Mars is aware that Moana's absence has become an obsession for her, confessing that it is unusual "missing what you never had" (Act Two, Scene 3 40). However, she is not aware of the extent of her obsession. Mars does not realise that her obsession with her father's absence has contributed to her listlessness, discontent and the formation of damaging relationships. She cannot see, for example, that much of her attachment to Silas and her horrific treatment of Taku derives from her frustrated attempts to know herself through her father. Nor does she realise how she can draw on sources other than her absent father as buttresses for her identity. For instance, she chooses not to regard Pearl as a person who has insight about her father, even though Pearl grew up with him. Mars also plans to escape from Pukerata despite the fact that this is the town where her family is based and where her father's spirit roams.
Alone among the ngaro figures, Mars is less knowingly confused about her identity and, consequently, cannot take action to alleviate her sense of displacement and ill-fit. Mars is appointed most of the blame for Taku’s suicide, and the Pukerata community, with Pearl at its head, alienates Mars. In the final scene, however, there is a sense of redemption and future hope for Mars when she appears with her new son at Moana’s graveside in Pascuccio Spear. Mars sings a waiata of healing to her father and simultaneously gains a sense of healing for herself.

Viewed in tandem with their tiipuna and whaea counterparts, ngaa ngaro are representative of a shift in the socio-political perceptions and realisations of Maaori cultural identity, particularly as this identity relates to Maaori women. Ngaa ngaro’s existential inquiries into origins, genealogy, cultural practice and belonging offer new dramatic explorations of the ways Maaori culture can be constructed. Even more than this, by presenting characters who unlike some of their dramatic ‘foremothers’ have been exposed to cultural norms, expectations and social structures that are non-Maaori, the possibilities for what can be incorporated as part of waahine identity are extended. In short, ngaa ngaro’s existential entanglements compellingly illustrate a continued concern to investigate the composition of Maaori culture, its relationship to Paakehaha society and to Aotearoa more generally. Kura’s, Niwa’s, Ramari’s and Mars’s varied identities and their interactions within Maaori and Paakehaha society provide signs of the dynamism and constantly changing nature of contemporary Maaori culture.

Through their psychological and physical journeys towards recuperation of lost pasts, Kura, Niwa and especially Ramari at the conclusion of Ngaa Pou Waahine, Flat Out Brown and Purapurawhetu, come closer to realising a fuller sense of who they are as Maaori. While a majority of the ngaro figures become more certain of their cultural identities, none of the plays suggests that the journey is over: notions of Maaori identity in contemporary New Zealand society are different, changing and always incomplete.

Ngaa Tikangarua
The final grouping of characters – ngaa tikangarua/bicultural waahine (between ngaa tiipuna and ngaa ngaro on the whakapapa continuum) – to a great extent represent the positive aspects of a blended identity, appearing as emblems of a modern Maaori condition. In Tia from Ngaa Pou Waahine, Sharlene from Flat Out Brown and Jaki from Waitapu, Grace-Smith goes some way to creating new waahine archetypes. These characters are modern, urban waahine who present a deliberate contrast to the naïve, romanticised and sexually objectified representations of kootiro such as Queenie Mataira in The Pohutukawa Tree. Differently from ngaro characters, ngaa tikangarua do not experience feelings of cultural displacement and inadequacy. Unlike Ramari and Kura, ngaa tikangarua are knowledgeable about their
whakapapa. Also, in contrast to kootiro and ngaro who are tentative about cultural expression, ngaa tikanga are instinctually call on the strength of their ancestral line, as well as traditional customs and beliefs, to inflect their mostly non-traditional, urban lives. In many ways, tikangarua are similar to ngaa tiipuna characters. Like ngaa tiipuna (who perform kaitiaki and protector roles in relation to their young ngaro descendents), Tia and Sharlene from Ngaa Pou Waahine and Flat Out Brown, respectively, are posited as guardians and mentors for their ngaro counterparts.

Like ngaro figures, Tia, Sharlene and Jaki have each been brought up away from the rural papakainga: Tia and Sharlene live respectively in suburban and inner city Wellington, while in Waitapu, Jaki, an Auckland from Mt Eden, shifts to her husband’s papakainga ‘down the line’. Despite the distance from their original homes, tikangarua exhibit a more sure sense of self than Kura, Niwa or Ramari. Tia and Sharlene are capable of integrating smoothly and confidently in Maaori and Paakehaa cultural contexts and Jaki, although grappling with the difficult dynamics of rural, whaanau life in Waitapu, is able to assert herself in unfamiliar surroundings. Tikangarua achieve a secure sense of identity through “acknowledgement of genealogy [. . .] whaanau (family) participation, access to cultural knowledge, some facility in the Maaori language and access to mainstream society” (Jahnke 19).15 In their everyday lives, tikangarua exhibit a greater acceptance of and balance between Maaori and Paakehaa influences than any of Grace-Smith’s other waahine characters.

In some respects, like kuia and whaea characters that are given weighty representative roles in taane plays, these waahine are the most emblematic in Grace-Smith’s plays (more so than ngaro or whaea characters). They are not existentially confused like their ngaro counterparts, nor are they deeply engaged in a search for or journey towards their personal, cultural histories. Instead, like ngaa tiipuna,Sharlene and Tia are confident of their Maaori cultural identities. Furthermore, Sharlene, Tia and Jaki can, without hesitation, draw on traditional oral forms to express themselves. For example, near the end of Flat Out Brown, after Niwa has trashed her brother’s flat and run away to Omanu Bay, Sharlene sings “Arohaina Mai”, a waiata that expresses her grief and aroha for Tawhiri and her empathy with Niwa’s bid for freedom. In Ngaa Pou Waahine, Tia instinctively recalls her father’s words to Kura, reciting them in reo: “E kii ana te korero, e kore te maunga e haere ki te tangata, me haere te tangata ki te maunga, or something like that [. . .]” (Scene 8 40). While Jaki does not express herself using te reo Maaori, she has the final lines in Waitapu. In an extended koorero she speaks directly to Hine Te Awhiowhio: “Hine. Your pain was part of me for so long. There was a time not long ago when it got so bad I walked into your river. I couldn’t find anything to hang onto but you”

15 Jahnke footnotes a research project on Maaori identity carried out by Te Hoe Nukuroa Research Unit at Massey University. See Robert Jahnke, “Voices Beyond the Pae,” He Pukenga Koorero 2.1 Kooanga/Spring (1996): 12-19.
(Scene 18 55). In these three plays, contemporary waahine characters find expression in traditional oral forms. Tia, Sharlene and Jaki are adept at modifying waiata, whakatauki and poetic oral storytelling to suit their situations, demonstrating a comfortableness and assured reliance on Maaori expressive forms that is not apparent in their ngaro counterparts.

Tia and Sharlene also assume mentor or protector roles. They both advise younger ngaro characters about how to negotiate cultural relationships. For example, in her short but inspirational discussions with Niwa, Sharlene encourages Niwa to recognise her inner “talent” (Act Two, Scene 3 50), helping her realise that she can find her own form of creative expression. Sharlene also becomes a spokeswoman on behalf of younger waahine, alerting Tawhiri to the pressures faced by girls such as Niwa. In Act Three, Scene Three she reminds Tawhiri that “there are so many things pulling at young woman [sic] today. It can be so hard staying focused” (81). In Ngaa Pou Waahine, Tia encourages Kura’s “out-of-it fantasies” (Scene 2 18) and watches over her. She inspires Kura to look beyond the city and her current situation for answers to her identity questions: “I took Te Atakura home for a kai tonight. I thought it might do her some good to meet the old man [. . .]. Anyway, I reckon that girl already knows where the answer lies. Just helps to be told” (Scene 8 40). Through tikangarua, Grace-Smith provides young waahine with waahine role-models who are not aging kula or revered ancestors. The mother-daughter or kula-kootiro relationships which dominate plays such as Te Hara, Te Hokinga Mai, Kohanga and Woman Far Walking are replaced by a waahine-waahine partnership.

Ngaa tikangarua also bring mana waahine and tino rangatiratanga elements to Grace-Smith’s plays. Sharlene, Tia and Jaki demonstrate waahine agency with their assertive, self-determined approaches to identity construction. Sharlene in particular seeks alternatives to the familial, gender roles of wife and mother by countering feminine stereotypes. She does not have the loving, nurturing and supportive gentleness often associated with Maaori women. A hard-nosed, money-driven talent scout, she assumes traits commonly associated with ruthless, driven businessmen. This affects her relationship with the male, ‘kaupapa’ musician, Tawhiri. Sharlene is so domineering, she convinces Tahwiri that he could make things “much, much better” for himself (Act Two, Scene 2 44) if he would “make some changes to [his] music” and “use some session musicians” as back up (ibid 46). In the relationship she tries to take control and leaves Tawhiri floundering over ethical and moral concerns about his music.

While content to build relationships with others, Sharlene is also self-sufficient and independent. She approaches life in a ‘do-it-yourself’ manner, asserting her waahine agency by maintaining control of her own destiny. Sharlene’s taha Maaori is clothed with an assertive, ‘hard-edgedness’ often associated with Paakehaa worlds: “just because I’m successful I shouldn’t be
made to feel I have to quote my tribe” (Act Two, Scene 3 50). Her Maaoriness is incidental to her career and relationships – she knows her whakapapa: “[...] my Grandfather [...] was a Sergeant with the Maori Battalion” (Act Two, Scene 3 49) – but as an only child has spent her life “all over [...] in New Zealand, Australia and [...] in London” (ibid). She believes that she doesn’t have to “wear [her] Maaoriness like a suit of armour” (ibid). While admitting that she draws on her grandfather’s strength, she is persistent in her claims that her own hard work helped her achieve her current status: “Only you decide your destiny. Not anyone else” (Act Two, Scene 3 50). Her desire to maintain independence and an identity inclusive of, but not dominated by her ethnicity is clear.

Although at play’s end she tells Tawhiri, “I’ll be back” (Act Three, Scene 3 82), Sharlene’s career takes precedence over his need for support. Moreover, she leaves the stage with the only Paakehaa character, Flash, who has just – albeit unintentionally – driven Niwa out of Tawhiri’s flat. Flash and Sharlene are aligned at this point – both are well-meaning but their own concerns take preference above those of their friends. In part, Grace-Smith uses Sharlene’s situation to raise a question about balancing individual needs and community needs. While Sharlene’s sense of wahine agency is accentuated in the play, the extent to which she lets it take precedence over manaaki, support and aroha for the community is criticised.

Tia, in Ngaa Pou Waahine, is a more positive and energetic character than Sharlene. Moving “to a funky reggae beat” (Te Whaanaunui 11), she manifests a solid sense of self. She tells Kura that she is the “flavour of the month” and enlivens Kura’s dull life: “Snap, snap chick, we’re talking action” (Scene 2 18). Encouraged by her father (who speaks Maaori and supports Tia’s quest for cultural knowledge), Tia seeks ‘Maaoriness’ in others. In her first encounter with Kura she says, “There goes MWA [...] Maaori with Attitude. [...] ‘Kia ora babe,’ I said. ‘I’m Tia, ko wai to ingoa?’ ‘Aye?’ she answered. ‘It’s cool, babe, I just asked you what your name was’” (ibid). Unlike ngaa ngaro, Tia has managed to locate a comfortable identificatory position which does not exclude the influences of her urban environment but rather includes and adjusts them to form an alternative, Maaori/Paakehaa expression. Tia’s hip-hop attitude, comic koorero and her university education feed her positive outlook and unique presence in the play. Tia excels at storytelling and uses a clever blend of colloquial English and Maaori which mirrors the energised cultural mix that makes up her character:

Yeah, those bus trips were tuumeke. I’d be left with my head spinning all the way to Varsity. Yep. She’s well and truly stuck between poo and rangi that dawn child.

Poorangi as (ibid).

Tia’s confidence and surety as she assists Kura in finding her own heritage make Tia the most idealised of the tikangarua characters.
In *Waitapu*, Jaki’s experiences are particularly illustrative of the social pressures faced by Maaori women. In contrast to Sharlene, who deliberately eschews whaanau roles, Jaki feels compelled to meet the expectations of a dutiful, faithful and obedient wife and a good, thoughtful mother. After her recent marriage, and her return to Waitapu with her husband Matiu, Jaki is met with unexpected demands. Matiu’s Aunty Wai forbids her from seeing Matiu while he carves a sacred pou for the iwi’s whare. Matiu tries to warn his Aunty that Jaki “is from the city” and that “stuff like that doesn’t happen there” (Scene 6 18), but Aunty Wai insists that Matiu sacrifice Jaki’s needs for the needs of his people.

Like Ramari, Jaki is cast as an insider-outsider figure: she is urbanised, Paakehaa-ified and anxious about her new home in Waitapu. However, in contrast to Ramari, Jaki is not unsure about her expression of Maaori identity. Although she does not possess the cultural knowledge of Matiu or her new whaanaunga, Tiki, Jaki nevertheless identifies as Maaori. Grace-Smith reinforces this identification by creating a bond between Jaki, Koro Pita’s spirit and the memory of Hine Te Awhiowhio. Ironically, the main threat to Jaki’s mana waahine comes in the form of another waahine – Aunty Wai.

Aunty Wai constantly judges Jaki according to her own standards of a good wife and mother: “What is your family name dear? [...] *Laughs*. Jones. Very Maori. Very Maori indeed” (Scene 3 8). She tells Jaki “You must [...] learn to let go of your vices [...] for the sake of the baby” (Scene 7 24) and that “smoking really does contradict everything we are doing with the Rongoa” (Scene 7 24). Jaki has had several miscarriages, which discredit her in Aunty Wai’s eyes:

WAI. If you are losing your babies dear girl, it is because either you can’t carry full-term..

JAKI. There’s nothing wrong with me. The doctor said there is no reason..

WAI. Or simply that you and Matiu aren’t compatible... (Scene 12 40).

Jaki herself experiences so much doubt about her relationship with Matiu’s whaanau that she attempts suicide: “Jesus..I’ve had it..you want me to go..well I’m going [...] I’ll make sure none of you’ll find me” (Scene 14 48).

Jaki’s unfortunate position as insider-outsider is intensified because she cannot manage to carry out her expected reproductive function. Aunty Wai interprets Jaki’s physical problems as a deeper, spiritual phenomenon: “there’s still this..thing this evil that she’s brought into the house. It’s stayed with us. I can feel it” (Scene 14 49). Grace-Smith entwines Jaki’s biological and spiritual plight with a deeper supernatural claim for utu/balance. The solution to Jaki’s recurrent miscarriages is beyond her direct control, but, as she listens to and learns from Tiki’s stories and as she deepens her respect for te iwi and te wahi that is Waitapu, Jaki is healed. There is a meaningful shift in Jaki’s attitude towards Waitapu and accompanying this, a reconsideration of the dominant place Paakehaa culture has heretofore held in her life. She
realises "life here [in Waitapu] is alright" (Scene 17 55), revealing an increasing level of understanding about the history of her new home and her role in retaining and sharing that knowledge:

[... ] all of us were up real late listening to the old people. Even Aunty Wai turned up for about ten minutes. They all told us what they knew [...]. So it won't be lost, it'll never be lost. And I'll never forget (Scene 17 56).

Despite Aunty Wai's attempts to undermine Jaki's identity, Jaki finds a place for herself and shows a determination to achieve balance between her individual values and those of the Waitapu iwi. Jaki is portrayed in a more positive light than Aunty Wai: the Waitapu community values Jaki's open, flexible attitude to their traditions above Aunty Wai's rigid conventions and jealous protection of knowledge. Overall, Jaki's story emphasises the need for cultural flexibility and sharing of cultural knowledge and power. The play implies that severe rigidity and inflexibility can produce a stagnated community. In the final scene Jaki's joy at her successful pregnancy is a powerful statement about the role of the tikangarua figure in facilitating the growth and renewal of te iwi Maaori.

Tikangarua characters such as Tia, Sharlene and Jaki raise the following issues: should Maaori identity be about articulating indigeneity and the active expression of ethnic group belonging? Should one's indigeneity be a brand or suit of armour, reinforcing and protecting self-hood? Or is it best kept in balance with a larger mix of identifications such as class, gender and career which can also shape self-hood?

In one sense, ngaa tikangarua offer a balanced resolution for the cultural tensions presented through waahine characters in plays by taane. While kula and kootiro in taane plays highlight the cultural difference and distance between Maaori and Paakehaa, and the tension and conflict of Maaori and Paakehaa values, ngaa tikangarua embody something new. In Grace-Smith's plays, they depict the meeting of Maaori and Paakehaa worlds not as a tragic, calamitous clash, nor as a romantic and easy fusion of divergent values. Rather, ngaa tikangarua expose the difficult, yet ultimately enriching transfusion and intermingling of cultural influences.

**MWA: Maaori with Attitude**

Of the thirty characters who appear in the five plays analysed above, only fourteen are Maaori women, yet a majority of these play central roles in the negotiation of cultural, gender and familial identification. In Ngaa Pou Waahine, Flat Out Brown, Waitapu, Purapurawhetu and Haruru Mai, Maaori women's concerns about identity and gender relationships are carefully explored so that the breadth and diversity of women's experience exposed in the texts forces a destabilisation of formerly acceptable signifying codes for Maaori women.
Through subtle changes to existing stereotypes Maaori women characters in Grace-Smith's plays are more reflective of waahine concerns and lives. Grace-Smith presents a range of characters which increase the chances for audience identification. Furthermore, her representations of Maaori women enhance the self-determining aspects of characters and encourage individuals' active participation in their own identity formation. As Grace-Smith overturns stereotypes, she queries commonly held and deep-set perceptions of Maaori cultural identity. Rather than represent Maaori society as unitary and homogenous, she exposes the diverse range of experiences Maaori women can bring to the expression of their culture, and in doing so facilitates a larger theatrical inquiry into the nature of Maaori identity.

However, issues still remain. After speaking with audiences of her early plays, Grace-Smith noticed the influence popular constructions and representations of Maaori women can have in determining audience perceptions of characters. Ironically, as appearances of waahine on stage became more varied, intimate and less stereotyped, some audience members started to question the authenticity of the characters. Grace-Smith says that they “refused to believe in” her characters, claiming that “Maaori women aren’t like that” (Grace-Smith, Interview 7 Dec. 1998). The power of well-established stereotypes is enduring. Although Grace-Smith's characters have often been created from first hand experience or at least, have been created on the premise that “Maaori women are more in touch with [. . .] Maaori women” (ibid) they are still greeted with scepticism because they do not fulfil expectations. The range of individuals such representations must embrace is diverse, broad, shifting in voice, and differing in the demands made upon Aotearoa society.

The thesis conclusion suggests that Maaori theatre in the years 1980 to 2000 has become a site where waahine have been successful in creating, exploring and experimenting with their representations. However, it queries the extent of this success and makes some predictions about the future for Maaori women in New Zealand theatre.
WHAKAMUTUNGA:
THE MANY FACES OF AROHA’S GRANDDAUGHTERS

Moving from the arms of the whaanau

Due in part to their diverse and innovative representations of Maaori life, Grace-Smith’s plays are making a very definite mark within New Zealand theatre. While at least half her plays have been produced with the support of Taki Rua Productions, other of her plays are being produced outside the theatre whaanau which supported her early work. These involvements with larger, often predominantly Paakehaa theatre organisations (in Grace-Smith’s case, the Auckland Theatre Company and Court Theatre) are introducing new audiences to Maaori theatrical expression and experience. However, these new relationships have also tested the function of Maaori drama as a site for querying, challenging and modifying the tropes and codes which, since the early 1900s in New Zealand drama and theatre, have been associated with representations of Maaori. As their plays make the inevitable migration from the theatrical margins to larger theatres, an imminent challenge for playwrights such as Grace-Smith will be the maintenance of a critical, expansive, self-determined approach to representation.

For example, in 2001, Simon Prast, then artistic director of Auckland Theatre Company (ATC), chose Grace-Smith’s play Haruru Mai to open that year’s ATC season “Playing with Fire”. This was to be the first staging of a Maaori play by the company and was also Prast’s “first ‘go’ at a local
work” (Programme note 16). Originally commissioned by the International Festival of the Arts 2000 and with some production assistance from Taki Rua, the play had been performed at the 2000 Festival with Colin McColl as its director. Prast, who had read a first draft of Haruru Mai in 1999 (and possibly seen a performance at the International Festival), but who had never before worked closely with any playwrights, was nevertheless confident enough to insist on several revisions before the play's performance by ATC. Together, he and Grace-Smith re-wrote the play.

In brief, the play, which is set in 1960s Aotearoa, occurs at a time when Maori and Paakehaa are experiencing social and political interaction. As part of a relatively isolated social and cultural group, Pearl, Paloma (Mars) and other Pukerata locals are obliged to adapt to the slow transition into a Paakehaa-dominated society. Attached to these pressures are laments for the loss of national innocence and a growing awareness of the vulnerability of Maori identity. These conditions form the backdrop of a story about the troubling relationship between Silas, a World War II Maori Battalion veteran, and Mars, a significantly younger Pukerata wahine. By gaining Silas’s affections, Mars is trying to retain connections with her father who died during the War. Three other characters, Moana (a ghostly figuration of Paloma’s father), Taku and Pearl, add to the play’s sensitive examination of Maori whakapapa and identity.

Elements of the Prast/Grace-Smith version of Haruru Mai and ATC’s 2001 production typify the sorts of issues to be confronted by Maori playwrights and practitioners, as large, regional theatre companies collaborate with Maori artists and/or groups to produce plays. For the Maori involved, an overarching concern in the next few years will be one of engaging with the values and mechanisms of these mainstream theatre institutions and their mostly non-Maori audiences, while simultaneously “[asserting] a trajectory and provenance of cultural, political and aesthetic” theatricalism that continues to contest inaccurate representations of Maori (Uno 5).

Some of the principal revisions made to the original version of Haruru Mai highlight a problematic divergence between Maori and mainstream practitioners’ understandings about the possibilities for representing Maori on stage. Most notable among the changes was a problematic shift away from the original’s subtle integration of Maori cultural, spiritual and performance aspects, towards an intentional accentuation and ‘marking’ of the piece as distinctively, and as a by-product, stereotypically, Maori. Prast’s and Grace-Smith’s changes to the original script indicate that, in order to rewrite and then direct this Maori play, Prast saw fit to set the characters and contexts within cultural frames with which he was familiar.

1 See ATC play programme for details of the 2001 production of Haruru Mai.
When Prast read Grace-Smith’s first draft of Haruru Mai he said he was “struck by a resemblance, in form and content, between Briar’s new work” and two “classics of modern theatre” – Arthur Miller’s All My Sons and Death of a Salesman (Programme note 16). Prast concluded that “Briar had written a great tragedy”, a tale about “a secret of war wreaking havoc in peace” (ibid). Prast’s perception of the play as an Arthur Miller-esque drama created an interesting tension: although his commissioning of the play for production by ATC showed his “increased awareness of Indigenous artists’ work”, (Casey, Creating Frames 213) and helped to draw more attention to Maaori theatre, Prast chose to filter the play through a conventional, ‘recognisable’ Western dramatic frame. While the original version incorporates the expression of Maaori’s “own explicit sub-culture” and their own “history, fiction, music [and] cultural commentary” (Sinfield 82), the new version’s focus on ‘tried and true’, Miller-esque frames undercuts the expressions of Maaori identity which are a powerful feature of the original script. Prast’s reformulation of Haruru Mai as a “modern tragedy” (Programme note 16), his push to recreate the work so that it spoke to the mostly non-Maaori ATC audiences, led to a ‘hijacking’ of the play.

For example, an aspect that was crucial to the representation of Maaori in the original version of Haruru Mai was the depiction of the interaction between ancestors and their living descendants. The original makes clear and important allusions to the Maaori view that ancestors’ spirits dwell with the living. In the opening scene, father and daughter, Mars and Moana, sing Haaruru Ana Mai, a “waiata pertaining to the Battalion”, and are joined by “a drunk Silas” (Act One, Scene 1 1). McColl’s staging of this scene – based on the original script – made no distinction between the living characters and the dead. Moana (Karlros Drinkwater), long passed away, stood and sang with Mars (Katie Wolfe), on the edges of Silas’s verandah. The two were joined by Silas (George Henare), who wove the waiata into his own drunken warbling. Apart from Moana’s World War II garb and Mars’s and Silas’s more contemporary dress, no aspects of staging were used to indicate that Moana was in fact a spirit or ghostly figure.

Later, lurking just beyond Silas’s verandah, Moana engages in conversation with Silas. Stage directions simply specify “the sound of a stick or rifle being dragged through gravel [. . .] and the crunch of footsteps [. . .]. Moana stops some distance from Silas” (ibid 3). At the close of the conversation between the two men, Moana’s presence as a ghost becomes clear:

MOANA. Let me come in. (BEAT) I won’t stay long.

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1. The reference to “hijacked” here refers to the way work by Indigenous theatre artists can be appropriated by “non-Indigenous decision-makers”.

2. All My Sons was produced by the ATC in 1997 and Death of a Salesman in 2000 (directed by Prast).

SILAS. (Upset) You...you don't belong here my friend. I want you to go.

MOANA. He aha?

SILAS. (Firmly) Haere atu e hoa. Haere atu.

(Moana slowly heads into the trees, Silas grabs his flagon and exits).

In this version, boundaries between the living and the dead, dream and reality, are almost indistinguishable, reflecting the tangible interconnection between Maaori ancestors and their descendants. However, in the second version, these spiritual resonances are considerably diluted because they are not presented as conversations between the living and the dead, but rather, as a series of flashbacks from Silas's perspective. Although the dramatic convention of the flashback is an effective and familiar way to depict characters' past experiences and present preoccupations, its use in the second version disregards the Maaori worldview that tipuna intermingle with the living. Moreover, the flashbacks erase the first version's strong sense that Silas cannot escape his whakapapa. Ultimately, this modification depletes the original's subtle and evocative referencing of te ao Maaori.

In the ATC production, the reliance on flashbacks meant that the initial scene between Silas and Moana was played out on a part of the stage separate from Silas's homestead and was accompanied by lighting and music changes suggestive of a shift to the battlefield at Pascuccio Spear, undermining the idea that Silas was a man literally haunted by the ghost of Moana. While Prast's use of recognizable dramatic conventions such as the flashback may have assisted a predominantly non-Maaori audience to more easily understand the content of the play, it also denied the role the work could play in the Maaori community, thus reducing the potential for other possible responses (Casey, Creating Frames 213).

A further distinguishing element of the original version was its almost seamless integration of Maaori performance forms and ritual, so that in aspects of the action, waiata become as common as dialogue. Waiata are sung as characters remember past events (Act One, Scene 1), tell stories (Act Three, Scene 3) or farewell loved ones (Act Three, Scene 9), and in Act Three, Scene Eight as Moana is killed, a "haka can be heard" (78). Moana's and Pearl's repeated enunciation of their whakapapa is a particularly significant motif in the third Act of the original version. In Act Three, Scene Two, Moana mentions his ancestral links as he carves an olive branch in the trenches, and in the play's closing scene, Pearl recites her whakapapa over and over in the hope that she can help Silas to heal.

Although the second version attempts to immerse its characters in the "ancient mythology of Maoridom" (Prast, Programme note 16), waiata and haka are not interwoven with the action. The
Prast/Grace-Smith variation uses waiata only as emotive interludes between scenes. The detached nature of the waiata was accentuated by the ATC production. At the opening of the play, Silas (Henare) and Moana (Antonio Te Maioha) sang “Hariuru Mai Ana”. Te Maioha stood upstage, close to the back wall on an elevated platform which seemed to represent the afterworld, and Henare knelt downstage, close to the audience, with a look of fear and pain on his face. Both actors were lit so that dark reds and shadows covered their bodies. The song was performed separately from the action which followed, and consequently, rather than being an example of the very real presence of Māori performance forms in everyday life, became a conspicuous appendage to the on stage action. Waiata were performed in a similar way throughout the production: one by one, different characters would join Moana in a duet, which did little to further the play’s action or assist with character development.

In the final scene, in a similar, mechanical vein, Silas’s and Moana’s deaths are accompanied by a haka that is poignantly placed but quite detached from the play’s action. At the end of the ATC production, the haka which marks Moana’s and Silas’s ascent to the afterworld seemed gratuitous. Grafted on to the end of the play, the haka was performed by a large group of young men who had no connection to any of the previous action. Although skillfully and forcefully performed, the haka became a signature showpiece, or concert-party item. With very little relevance to the action that preceded it, aspects such as the haka undercut the first version’s much tighter intermeshing of Māori references.

An important and innovative aspect of Grace-Smith’s original version is its exploration and experimentation with ideas about cultural belonging and gender identity. During the play, Silas initially struggles with, and then reclaims, the strength of his Pukerata ties. Discovered only at the conclusion of the play, Silas’s respect for and acceptance of his Māori origins are especially potent because earlier he says he “[feels] like a stranger” (Act One, Scene 2 11) and he is berated by Pearl who has to remind him that he’s “tangata whenua here” (ibid). The first version’s redemptive ending reinforces notions of Māori cultural resilience and belonging. When he is at his lowest point, lying drunk and lonely in his collapsing homestead, Silas is cast “a few rescue lines” by Pearl (Act Three, Scene 9 81) who encourages him to recite his whakapapa. Silas tentatively articulates his whakapapa and, as he speaks the names of his ancestors, he regains strength and recuperates cultural pride. In the International Festival production, Henare and Rena Owen stood downstage. Owen’s arm was wrapped firmly around Henare’s shoulders and both stared out across the audience as they recited the whakapapa together and the lights dimmed. This final image of Pearl embracing Silas in a gesture of forgiveness evoked a sense of the restorative energy and strength locatable in a return to Māori culture.
However, to reinforce Prast's idea that *Haruru Mai* is a tale about “war wreaking havoc in peace” (Programme note 16), the second version replaces the redemptive ending of the first with a horrific vignette of murder, suicide and bloodshed. In its drive for tragedy, it presents a bleak outlook for its Maaori characters, who turn upon each other at the end of the play. Unlike the first version which ends with a split scene of “Paloma in Italy at the soldier’s graveyard and Silas and Pearl inside the house in Pukerata” (Act Three, Scene Nine 80), the second version ends with three characters dead and one mourning their loss. Near the end of this version, Taku commits suicide after learning that Fern (his lover) has given up on him. And, upon discovering that Silas shot and killed her father during a skirmish, Mars shoots Silas dead and then uses the same gun to kill herself. Pearl witnesses, and is then left to deal with the awful aftermath, of Silas’s wartime secret. The tragic, operatic ending of the second version creates an extremely bleak outlook for Maaori in the rapidly changing society of the late 1960s. Like the Mataira whaanau in *The Pohutukawa Tree*, the iwi of Pukerata are doomed. However, instead of representing the gradual decline of a race under the dominance of Paakehaa society, the iwi in *Haruru Mai* violently and determinedly exterminate themselves.

Furthermore, the problematisation and refashioning of waahine identity, which is a very definite proposition in the first version, is considerably reduced in the second. The first version offers an alternative to the stereotyped waahine characters who sometimes feature in plays, using Pearl’s masculine attire and outspokenness to present a different image of “what other people may think Maaori women are like” (Grace-Smith, Interview with Livesey 4). While Pearl retains the strength, knowledge and aroha of some of the earlier figurations of waahine characters, her presentation as a “farmer” who “dresses like a man” (Character list i) complicates her otherwise stereotypical traits.

Although, in the second version’s opening scenes, Pearl is still presented as an androgynous farmer figure who maintains robust whakapapa ties, the Prast/Grace-Smith version also includes an additional scene at the beginning of the second Act which undermines this depiction of Pearl. In this Act, Pearl first appears wearing a wedding gown she never got to use in her youth (she was betrothed to Moana, but he rejected her in favour of his true love, Missy). Pearl wears the dress because there is to be a party a Silas’s homestead and she is required to dress formally for it. However, the story she subsequently tells of her abandonment at the altar, and her deep and lasting sorrow – although slightly humorous – weakens the original version’s depiction of a resilient, staunch, yet unconventional figure. Moreover, this alteration suggests that Pearl has a latent desire to enact the conventional role of wife, and that her male attire and behaviour are merely a rejection of the femininity that went unrecognised by her potential husband. At moments,
therefore, Pearl verges on the tragi-comic, her role as jilted, mourning bride, transforms her into a melodramatic stereotype. At the end of the play, the audience only sees a failed wife and mother (she cannot even help Silas recuperate his lost identity). They do not see the "thick ropes of muka" that tie Pearl to the land and that give her the strength to forgive Silas. In the ATC production, the audience was left with the image of Pearl (Tanea Heke), wearing the blood-soaked wedding dress that was meant for her marriage to Moana, clutching Taku's (Taika Cohen) limp corpse, weeping inconsolably over his body, as the corpses of Mars and Silas lay silently behind her.

**Ka whakatautikatia: Striking a Balance**

The disparities between the first and second versions of *Haruru Mai* pinpoint two matters which will become increasingly important as Māori dramatists and practitioners and their mainstream counterparts undertake collaborative projects. One is the need for companies to procure knowledge of the breadth and depth of the Māori theatre whakapapa and to develop an understanding of the strategies and trends that shape the forms and themes of contemporary Māori plays. By learning about the whakapapa, directors of larger, institutional companies would ideally recognize that Māori have already created effective strategies for representing Māori experience on stage, that their plays have attracted broad and varied audiences and that, rather than simply relying on Western dramatic modes, they have been able to communicate Māori experience to those audiences by using Māori language, ritual and performance forms. It could be argued that, to a great extent, Māori have achieved tino rangatiratanga in theatre and that practitioners' awareness of this fact would contribute to productions of Māori work which can avoid appropriative or assimilatory practices. In the case of the 2001 version of *Haruru Mai*, for instance, it is reasonable to assume that, had Prast been more attuned to the use of Māori narratives and art forms in Grace-Smith's earlier plays and/or in those of other Māori writers, he may have been less inclined to re-write drastically *Haruru Mai* within a Western dramatic frame that ultimately diluted the play's Māori cultural specificity. Moreover, armed with knowledge about Māori theatre whakapapa, Prast may have been informed enough to weave Māori performance forms such as waiata and haka into the narrative fabric of the play.

A second issue concerns the degree to which Māori writers and practitioners assert their tino rangatiratanga within these collaborative relationships. If these writers and practitioners can use drama to transmit messages that are specifically relevant to Māori, whilst striking a balance with the demands, expectations and requirements that come with the use of institutional theatre resources and the skills of its personnel, they will be able to produce culturally distinctive work "that is neither determined by the dominant nor miraculously immune to it" (Sinfield 68). In other words, Māori plays produced by mainstream companies will function most powerfully and
effectively when the Māori involved can exercise, articulate, transmit and "insist on [their] own explicit subculture" (ibid 82) while simultaneously meeting the requirements of their majority non-Māori audiences. Although this balance was sought in the Prast/Grace-Smith collaboration on Haruru Mai, it appears that Grace-Smith's artistic intentions were compromised. For example, Grace-Smith's experimentations with representations by showing "sides of people that you wouldn't usually see" (McWilliams, Programme note 8) and creating characters that have a "dark side" but also some "good in them" (ibid) were circumscribed by the perceived need to cater to the lack of Māori cultural experience of the largely non-Māori ATC audience. In order to comply with, or satisfy, the tastes and expectations of such theatre audiences, the levels of diversity, innovation and self-determination in the representations in the second version are reduced. Moreover, Prast's admission that the first version of Haruru Mai was "rendered in a voice unique to this country" (Programme note 16), then his subsequent imposition of the components of "the modern tragedy" upon the play's second version, placed limits on Grace-Smith's tino rangatiratanga. Rather than retaining the first version's implicit assumption that audiences would be attuned to the aspects of taha Māori included in the play, the second version's reliance on 'tried and true', or archetypal understandings of Māori culture and possibilities for its representation on the stage saw the play undergo a reacculturation. Consequently, Grace-Smith's ability to challenge, experiment with, or offer alternatives to cultural tropes were reduced, along with her ability to exercise tino rangatiratanga. The Haruru Mai experience is indicative of a problem which over the next few years will require close attention: achieving the very difficult balance between the multiple demands of Māori writers and mainstream companies.

Two years after Haruru Mai was produced by ATC, Grace-Smith worked with Canterbury's professional theatre company, The Court, on Potiki's Memory of Stone. The play traces the experiences of Tui, Potiki, Manaaki, Tam and Connie as they study, deal in and trade pounamu/greenstone. Similarly to other of Grace-Smith's plays, secrets from the past impinge on the characters' present. As the play unfolds, each character's different relationship to, and interpretations of, various stones, are revealed. All five characters discover that their present-day existences have been largely determined by their past connections to one particularly special piece of greenstone.

With their collaboration on Potiki's Memory of Stone, Grace-Smith and The Court personnel managed a more effective balance between mainstream and Māori cultural demands than the Grace-Smith/ATC collaboration two years earlier. There are several important reasons for this, the most crucial of which centre on the theatre's artistic director – Cathy Downes' – acknowledgement and understanding of the Māori theatre whakapapa. In working with Downes, Grace-Smith was
collaborating with a director who has a vast range of experience in and knowledge of New Zealand and Maaori theatre. As well as writing plays, Downes has also acted in and directed New Zealand and Maaori plays. In 1997, she directed *Purapuruwhetuu* for Taki Rua at Downstage Theatre and, in 2000, the International Festival production of *Woman Far Walking*. Equipped with an intimate knowledge of Maaori theatre whakapapa, Downes has an understanding of the skills and knowledge Maaori writers and practitioners can bring to the project, and she had developed already a close working relationship with Grace-Smith. Furthermore, she is able to trust Grace-Smith's ability as a playwright and therefore is comfortable with letting Grace-Smith develop her work independently. In 2001, two years before *Potiki's Memory of Stone* was actually staged at The Court, Downes had "approached [Grace-Smith] with an invitation to commission her to write a play" (Downes Programme note). Rather than taking an extant work and altering it to suit the audience at The Court, Grace-Smith was able to take the time to write a play in a way she saw fit for herself, the cast and the audience. Downes did not limit the possibilities for experimentation with representations of Maaori by imposing artificial or contrived structures upon the script, but rather, along with playwright Stuart Hoar, was dramaturg for the various drafts that were produced. Moreover, Downes' experience as a director on other Maaori-led productions gave her an awareness of and readiness to incorporate processes largely dictated by the Maaori in the group.

One of the most notable outcomes of the balance in this relationship was The Court production's seamless integration of Maaori performance forms and mythological elements. Various notions of tapu and noa surrounding the carving, shaping and cutting of pounamu/greenstone, the ancient knowledge passed down about the different legends associated with the stone and the songs, rituals and chants relating to their spirituality, were depicted as part and parcel of the characters' everyday lives, rather than being grafted on as interludes between scenes. Moreover, Grace-Smith was able to expand upon her earlier experimentation with waahine figures. In *Potiki's Memory of Stone*, Grace-Smith returns to the exploration of the relationship between waahine tipuna and ngaro figures that she began in *Ngaa Pou Waahine* and *Waitapu*. As well as embodying the ties between past and present, the split between Tui (the ngaro) and Naonao (the tipuna) allows for a more effective theatricalisation of Grace-Smith's intent to show both the "dark" and "good" sides of characters. The resulting production was evidence that it is possible for mainstream companies and Maaori playwrights to produce an outcome that allows the playwright (and cast) to maintain artistic and cultural specificity and integrity while also meeting the demands of a wider audience.

It is vital that along with Grace-Smith, Maaori playwrights continue to experiment with and reconfigure Maaori images and experiences in their drama because, as Grace-Smith's work has shown, new, innovative and diverse representations of Maaori can lead to reconsiderations of
Maaori culture and Maaori cultural practices. As Maaori drama’s presence is felt in New Zealand theatre, it is particularly important that this experimentation and innovation is applied to representations of Maaori women. Alterations to kuia and kootiro stereotypes will help to extend the “range of meaning systems which inform and constitute [Maaori] realities/identities” (Hoskins 98), possibly leading to new interpretations and perceptions of Maaori culture and Maaori cultural belonging in people’s lives beyond the theatre.

The Maaori theatre whakapapa and Taki Rua

If part of the aim of greater Maaori involvement in Maaori theatre and drama is to produce a wider range of Maaori experiences and perspectives and a variety of ways of communicating them theatrically, then the fact that Taki Rua has almost monopolized the theatrical representation of Maaori could create an interesting dilemma for their future representation. Most important are the potential restrictions imposed on Taki Rua by their “desire to reach as wide an audience as possible” (Boynton, qtd. in Huria, Maa te Reehia 6) through performances in venues largely operated and frequented by non-Maaori – such as Circa, Downstage and the Maidment – and an equally important responsibility to satisfy specific Maaori cultural demands for accurate, imaginative, non-stereotyped and oppositional theatrical representation. Such tensions will inevitably constrain the future development of plays and, consequently, will impact on the Company’s capacity to represent Maaori women in innovative, imaginative and diverse ways. While Taki Rua’s current structure (“The Five Strands”) aims to incorporate a fairly broad range of subject matter, representational style and individual and group concerns, it relies almost solely on individual writers and scripts as sources of dramatic diversity and experimentation. The Company seems to steer away from the production or support of collectively created, experimental work and turn more towards script-based models that are more suited to Taki Rua’s ever-broadening mainstream audience. With such systems in place, possibilities for expanding and diversifying the representations of waahine through the employment of theatrical modes which rely less on scripts produced by individual playwrights and more on group-devised or experimental work, seem limited.

Moreover, the Company’s drive to try to “attract sponsorship” by presenting a “marketable face” means that Taki Rua is compelled to “ensure that production standards are such that they give sponsors kudos” (ibid). In addition, Taki Rua’s artistic directors are wary that sponsors are sometimes “frightened of the work [...] seeing it as confrontational, controversial and divisive” (ibid 5). Taki Rua’s attempts to balance these tensions and secure sponsorship may inadvertently create exclusionary practices. For example, smaller groups such as Te Rakau Hua o te Wao Tapu, whose “brand of theatre is issue-centred” (Huria 6) and is often performed without the paraphernalia of theatre lights and sound, may not meet the rising production levels expected of
work that is to receive large sponsorships. Moreover, sponsors may interpret the work as too
dialectical or political, thereby choosing not to fund such productions and effectively reducing the
range of theatrical approaches present in Taki Rua's repertoire. Furthermore, as audiences for Taki
Rua's plays become more international (through Te Rangi Waimarie/export of mainbill shows),
representations in the plays need to accommodate for an audience demographic that is less
knowledgeable about the intricacies of Maaori culture. Attempts by some playwrights to query,
experiment with, or reflect upon, Maaori cultural identity (an approach favoured by waahine
playwrights in particular) will only develop gradually, after audiences gain an understanding of taha
Maaori and Maaori experience.

**New Movements**

A brief review of Taki Rua's activities over the last few years gives some indication of how the
Company is confronting these multiple challenges. Since the early 1990s, productions such as *Te
Pouaka Karaehe*, *Purapurawhetu* and *Woman Far Walking* have been successful for Taki Rua in
translating and preserving Maaori cultural values and perceptions while simultaneously addressing
concerns or interests that lie beyond what are usually considered to be specifically Maaori issues.
Moreover, Taki Rua's historical and enduring support of waahine writers such as Riwia Brown,
Renee and, more recently, Briar Grace-Smith, has also facilitated the creation of waahine characters
in particular, who represent a growing range of Maaori interests and concerns and who interact in
numerous and varied settings and cultural contexts.

Since 2000, Taki Rua Productions has been producing plays which are increasingly bold in their
offerings of new interpretations of Maaori culture and belonging. A recent and dominant trend to
emerge in newer plays such as *The Sojourns of Boy, Awhi Tapu, Have Car Will Travel* and *The
Untold Tales of Maui* is the use of theatre (in a similar vein to Grace-Smith) as a vehicle for
commentary on stereotyped perceptions and assumptions audiences have about Maaori cultural
identity. However, like Renee's *Te Pouaka Karaehe* (and other of her plays) these new works
explore and exploit the understanding that identity is a self-determined construction or
performance. In respect of this understanding of Maaori cultural identity, new Maaori playwrights
make use of an eclectic range of cultural references and sources, theatrical and film tools, and
Maaori performance forms. Practitioners are much more confident and deliberate, and far less
anxious, about blending forms in this way. These plays are beginning to engage with theatrical
techniques that draw attention to the constructed nature of theatrical representation. A self-
referentiality (Maaori making comment upon their identification as Maaori and upon their culture
and its beliefs, codes and values), and a slowly developing willingness to depart from the dramatic
realism which has dominated Maaori theatrical representation, bring to the stage new ways of
constituting Māori reality and therefore may provide insights into audiences’ own existential queries.

For instance, Albert Belz’s *Awhi Tapu* includes characters who engage in role-playing, and in so doing, comment on their capacity, and the capacity of the community, to alter, shape and reconstruct identity. All the action takes place in the central North Island forest region of the Urewera, where the characters are also coming to terms with the whakapapa and history of the place. The four main characters – Girl Girl, Sonny, Wendy and Casper – imagine themselves as gangsters in a mobster-style film, and take control of the direction of the action. They also assume and modify various roles from *The Wizard of Oz* – Lion (Cowardly Kuri), Tinman (Mechanoman), Strawman (Hempman) and Dorothy (Girl Girl).

*The Untold Tales of Maui* (2003) written and performed by the Humourbeasts (Jemaine Clement and Taika Cohen) and produced by Taki Rua, is a powerful example of a new direction for Māori theatre. The play includes parodies of figures from Māori mythology such as Maui-tikitiki-a-Taranga, the goddesses with whom Maui comes into contact, and his five brothers (in the 2003 production at the Silo Theatre in Auckland they were represented by a puppet that resembled a massive, conjoined set of quintuplets). A kuia figure is the play’s grandmother-storyteller. In the 2003 production at the Silo she appeared as a stunted, grotesque, hag-like figure, standing only three feet high, on a rock, centre-stage. She provided a direct comment on and subversion of the iconic kuia used in many literary and filmic representations of Māori culture. Her narrative included a comical mixture of 1980s Kiwi-slang, Māori transliterations of Anglo-terms (for example, “witi reparti”) and Māori dialogue simultaneously (and unnecessarily) translated into English (for example, “Kia ora koe/informal greeting to one person”). The concept of the respectful, skilled and disciplined male Māori warrior was replayed through the lens of Hong Kong Kung Fu film pastiche and the sacred, spiritual significance Māori attach to the natural world – in particular to its birdlife – was modified and reconceptualised by the representation of a dopey kererū/wood pigeon as a tiny puppet with a human head. In short, the play takes some of the more familiar tropes and figures of Māori culture and through quirky theatrical representation ‘comments’ on them.

*Kei hea ngaa waahine?*

A notable issue (which requires much deeper consideration than I can provide here) is an observable shift towards a predominance of taane writers in the years since 2000. Writers such as Renee, Riwia Brown and Briar Grace-Smith have shifted their foci from stage drama towards novels,

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4 The title given to the play for its early 2003 productions was *The Lost Legends of Maui*.
television and film where they are producing representations of Maaori for much larger and more diverse audiences. As this ‘migration’ evolves, an important consideration becomes: Where are our Maaori women now? Without the obvious and influential presence of waahine writers in theatre, will taanne writers retain the aspects of mana waahine that have been a definitive feature of Maaori playwrights of the last decade? Will a new wave of waahine writers emerge to continue the innovative approaches to representation instigated by the first wave of waahine playwrights?

However, between 1980 and 2000, as Maaori women have become more active in the Maaori theatre whakapapa, participating not only as writers, directors and actors but also as commentators, observers and critics of drama, and as they begin to determine issues that are important to them, contemporary representations of Maaori women in plays have become less reliant on the kuia and kootiro stereotypes which dominated early plays (and, in fact, other literary representations of waahine) and more reflective of a variety of Maaori and waahine experiences. Maaori women’s playwriting has created images of Maaori women that resemble more closely the complexity and diversity of waahine lives, looking “below the veneer of everyday life” to the “emotions and feelings” that “control [. . .] lives” (Potiki, Confirming Identity 160).

Moreover, waahine characters are more often used to interrogate Maaori cultural identity. At their most vital and critical, waahine characters have become sites for the exploration and/or construction of cultural and gender identity and for investigations of the way “colonial relations of power [and . . .] Western modes of living” (Hoskins 22) have shaped contemporary Maaori identities. More recently in plays, waahine characters have the agency to speak, act and problematize the terms of their own representation. One very important feature of this increased focus on Maaori women’s lives has been the recognition that cultural identity is one identity among a number of various identities that contribute to self-expression. These various experiences and representations produce waahine characters that break from the dominance of Mason’s figurations in The Pohutukawa Tree. They are part of a new generation that claims a different line of descent from that originating from the flawed ‘grandmotherly’ figure, Aroha Mataira.

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5 Renee no longer writes for the stage. Riwia Brown has been a member of the New Zealand Film Commission and in 2003 she adapted the screenplay of Once Were Warriors for its presentation as a musical. Briar Grace-Smith is still writing for the stage but she also writes TV dramas – for example, Fishskin Suit and Being Eve – and is currently working on a screenplay.
I. Published plays


---. *Secrets and Setting the Table.* Wellington, New Zealand: Playmarket, 1984.


**II. Unpublished plays**


---. "Electra: Thoughts During the Tour." Devised theatre, 1982.


III. Interviews and Letters

---. Interview with author. 26 July 2002.


Cherrington, Paki. Interview with author. 11 June 2002.


---. Interview with author. 27 July 2002.
---. Letter to author. 29 May 2002.


Ihimaera, Witi. Personal communication with author. 31 May 2004.

Kaa, Keri. Interview with author. 18 June 2002.

Kirby, Brian. Interview with author. 17 June 2002.

---. Letter to author. 4 May 2002.


IV. General references


---. "Downstage Colonising Maori." 21 May 1996.


*He Panui: Taki Rua Newsletter.* April 2003.


O'Dea, Patrick. "Where were you in '81?" *Listener* 6 May 1995: 46.


---. "It is Political if it can be passed on: Roma Potiki interviewed by Christopher Balme." Interview with Christopher Balme. *CRNLE-Journals-Reviews 1* (1993): 35-40.


APPENDIX A
PLAY PRODUCTIONS
## APPENDIX A:
### PRODUCTIONS OF PLAYS CITED IN THESIS

#### 1980

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maranga Mai</th>
<th>Maranga Mai</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| First production | Maranga Mai  
|               | Bastion Point  
|               | Auckland, 1979 |
| Cast (variable) | Huhana Oneroa  
|               | Cyril Chapman  
|               | Henare Chapman  
|               | Hori Chapman  
|               | Titewhai Harawira  
|               | Brian Potiki  
|               | Liz Piripi |
| Video production | Maranga Mai  
|               | Video Production  
|               | University of Auckland  
|               | Auckland, 1980 |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hanga Hou</th>
<th>Te Whaanau Players</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| First production | North Island Marae Tour  
|               | Waiatarau, Freeman’s Bay,  
|               | Maungarei, Mt Wellington,  
|               | Rotorua, Hamilton,  
|               | Waahi Bay, Huntly 1980 |
| and |  
| Character/cast (variable) | RANGI  
|                   | PAPA  
|                   | TANE MAHUTA  
|                   | RUAUMOKO  
|                   | REHUA  
|                   | TUMATAUENGA  
|                   | TAWHIRIMATEA  
|                   | KAIWAIATA  
| Production | DIRECTOR  
|           | KAUMAATUA/WRITER  
|           | TECHNICAL DIRECTOR |

- Ana Meihana  
- Nopera Pikara  
- Buffy Pihema  
- Hemi Rudolph  
- Roma Potiki  
- Jackie Davidson  
- Faenza Reuben  
- Merata Mita/Piki Uenuku  
- Paki Cherrington  
- Robert Pouwhare/Peter Rowell  
- Hone Edwards/Herbert Wharerau  
- Gary Taylor  
- Peter Rowell/James Cherrington  
- Tomo Nahi  
- Don Selwyn  
- George Tait  
- Dawn Underwood
### Songs to the Judges

**First production**
Maidment Theatre  
Auckland, 13 February 1980

**Characters/cast**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Cast</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JUDGE</td>
<td>Mervyn Thompson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTOR A</td>
<td>Hemi Rapata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTOR B</td>
<td>Arthur Ranford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTRESS C</td>
<td>Margaret Blay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTRESS D</td>
<td>Maggie Maxwell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIANIST</td>
<td>William Dart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTOR E</td>
<td>Richard Eriwata</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Production**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Cast</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DIRECTOR</td>
<td>Mervyn Thompson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSICAL DIR./COMPOSER</td>
<td>William Dart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DESIGNER</td>
<td>Priscilla Pitts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSISTANT DIRECTOR</td>
<td>Richard Howard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**New Zealand Tour 1981**

In Association with New Zealand Students Arts Council  
Auckland: Little Maidment Theatre, 28-29 March  
Hamilton: Waikato Art Museum, 2-3 April  
Palmerston North: Manawatu Art Gallery, 4-5 April  
Wellington: City Art Gallery, 7-11 April  
Christchurch: Southern Ballet Theatre, 18-19 April  
Dunedin: Allen Hall and Fortune Theatre, 14-16 April

**Cast**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actor</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Margaret Blay</td>
<td>Mervyn Thompson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharon da Silva</td>
<td>Hemi Rapata</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arthur Ranford</td>
<td>Mervyn Thompson</td>
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**Production**
<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>DESIGN</td>
<td>Priscilla Pitts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSICAL DIRECTOR</td>
<td>William Dart</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Electra Thoughts During the Tour 1982

**Production**
Outdoor bush-clearing 1982
Get the Hell Home Boy

Selwyn Muru

First production

Maaori Writers and Artists Association
New Independent Theatre
Auckland, 1982

Character/cast

TUPU TAMARANGI
BENJI
KORO
TUA
STING
COURT CLERK
PRISON OFFICER
TOBRUK
DOLLY
BISTRO

Production

DIRECTOR
DIRECTOR'S ASSISTANT
LIGHTING
GRAPHICS
SET

Robin Kora
James Cherrington
Paki Cherrington
Kuresa Faleseuga
Roger Fowler
David Mead
Ian Melville
Vince Tierney
Dawn Underwood
Albert Whittaker

The Protestors

Rore Hapipi

Production

Television Broadcast
TVNZ Loose Enz Series
TV 1, May 1982

Characters/cast

PAT
MAUREEN
HARRY
MAGGIE
TOKI
ANGIE
MANNY
BOBBY
RU
GANG LEADER
BILL
DONNY
AUNTY WAI
PETER
SARAH
STRANGER
REV MAKA
GANG

Production

DIRECTOR
PRODUCER

Jim Moriarty
Joanna Paul
Reg Ruka
Therese Ireland
Don Selwyn
Aroha Harris
Zac Wallace
Billy T James
Merata Mita
Hemi Rapata
Robin Ruakare
Whare Kerr
Meri Mareh
John Givins
Nikki Farrell
Gary Taylor
Hone Kaa
Black Power

Peter Muxlow
Tony Issac
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Secrets</strong></th>
<th><strong>Renee</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| First production | Feminist Arts Festival  
Mercury Theatre  
Auckland, 19 June 1982 |
| Character/cast | WOMAN AND EMMA  
Elizabeth McRae |
| Production | DIRECTOR  
DESIGN  
LIGHTING  
Renee  
Renee and Bernadette Doolan  
Priscilla Pitts |
| also | Mercury Theatre  
Auckland, 9 July 1982 |
| Character/cast | WOMAN AND EMMA  
Elizabeth McRae |
| Production | DIRECTOR  
DESIGN  
Aileen O’Sullivan  
Elizabeth Mitchell |
| Second production | Fortune Theatre,  
Dunedin, 6-23 September 1989 |
| Characters/cast | Lousie Petherbridge  
Bernadette Doolan |
| Production | DIRECTOR  
STAGE MANAGER  
Renee  
Mary Macrae |

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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Setting the Table</strong></th>
<th><strong>Renee</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| First production | Mercury Theatre  
Auckland, 27 September 1982 |
| Characters/cast | ROSIE MURPHY  
SHEILA JEWELL  
CON BEATH  
ASSY CARLSON  
LIZ KEENAN  
DETECTIVE INS. MAXWELL  
CONSTABLE ROBERTS  
FIRST MAN  
SECOND MAN  
Annie Whittle  
Frances Edmond  
Elizabeth McRae  
Kate Hood  
Heather Bolton  
George Henare  
David Chilvers  
Roy Billing  
Nat Lees |
| Production | DIRECTOR  
DESIGNER  
Aileen O’Sullivan  
Amanda Lane |
**Te Waka Karaitiana**

**Brian Kirby and Te Whaanau Players**

First production: Māori Writers and Artists Association
Turangawaewae Marae
Ngaruawahia, 1983

*Possibly one performance prior to this at*

St Faiths Church, Rotorua

**Character/Cast**

- MAAORI NARRATOR: Robin Kora
- PAAKEHAA NARRATOR: Roger Fowler
- KAUMATUA: Pura Panapa
- PAAKEHAA BISHOP: Rev. Bob Scott
- MAAORI MINISTER: Paki Cherrington
- REV. PANAPA: Rameka Cope
- PAAKEHAA PRIEST: Richard Howard
- YOUNG MAAORI: Wiki Oman
- HONE HEKE: Whatanui Skipworth
- KENDALL: Don Kjestrup
- TE KORE KARANGA: Georgina Kirby
- GOVERNOR: Sean Duffy
- MAAORI MESSENGER: Graham Smith

**Production**

- DIRECTOR: Brian Kirby

---

**Asking For It**

**Renee**

First production: National Touring Revue
Kaikōhe, Auckland,
Invercargill
West Coast, Coromandel
70 performances, 1983

**Cast**

- Angela Boyes-Barnes
- Judy Wishart
- Renee

- Margaret Blay
- Jess Hawk
- Bernadette Doolan

---

**No Ordinary Sun**

**Hone Tuwhare**

Production: Brian Potiki et al
North Island Tour
Te Araroa to Hamilton
1983
Cast
Jill Walker
Huhana Oneroa
Corrine Berry (d. 1987)
Steven Key
Hemi Rudolph
Noperi Pikari
Hori Chapman

The Gospel According to Tane

First production
Te Ohu Whakaari
New Depot Theatre
Wellington, 6 May 1983

Production
DIRECTOR
Rangimoana Taylor

Second production
Māori Writers and Artists Association
Mercury Theatre
Auckland, 1984

Character/Cast
REV. HIKI
SERA
HEMI/ARCHDEACON
PUMI
TU
STAN/BISHOP BEATSON
SONNY
HINE
TAANE
Robin Kora
Huihana Rewa
Paki Cherrington
Pete Smith
Kerry O'Reilly
Mitchum Tata
Poina Te Hiko
Chico Morehu

Production
DIRECTOR
Don Selwyn
DESIGN CO-ORD.
Dorita Hannah
LIGHTING DESIGN
Tim Dowson
CHOREOGRAPHY
Val Irwin
STAGE MANAGER
Mark Harlen
KAUMAATUA
Colin Welsh
PROPS
Titi Withera
WARDROBE
Robert Sinclair
Elizabeth Whiting

Hemi: The Life and Times of a Great Poet

Theatre of the Eighth Day

First production
Theatre of the Eighth Day
New Depot Theatre
Wellington,
15 September-1 October
1983

Cast
John Anderson
Falani Aukuso
John Mete-Kingi
Kevin O'Grady
Ngaa Paki o te Maui

First production
Te Ohu Whakaari
New Depot Theatre
Wellington, October 1983
Cast (?)
Rongopai Broughton
Production
DIRECTOR
Rangimoana Taylor

1984

Pacific Awake!

First production
Te Ohu Whakaari
Te Ohu Whakaari
Tapu te Ranga Marae,
14-17 June 1984
Cast
Donna McCloud
Himiona Grace
Michael Grace
Briar Smith
Maringikura Saltzam
Apirana Taylor

Te Ohu Whakaari
Tour

New Depot, Wellington
Maaori Court Otago
Museum, Dunedin.
Free Theatre,
Christchurch.
Fairfield, Nelson.
Teacher's College,
Palmerston North.
Left Bank, Hamilton.
Little Maidment,
Auckland.
11-14 July 1984

Te Tutakitanga a Te Puna (Encounter at Te Puna)

Theatre of the
Eighth Day

209
First production: Theatre of the Eighth Day, New Depot Theatre, Wellington, 23 August-1 September 1984

Characters/cast (variable):

- HONGI HIKA: Brian Potiki
- THOMAS KENDELL: John Anderson
- KUJA: Karlite Rangihau
- YOUNG POLYNESIAN SERVANT/CONVICT: Stephanie Turner
- WHALING CAPTAIN: Michael Grace
- ELIZABETH: Tony Burton
- ROMA POTIKI: Roma Potiki

Ngati Pakeha: He Kooreroo Whakapapa

Production: Theatre of the Eighth Day
New Depot Theatre, Wellington, 1985

Cast (variable):

- Malcom Yockney: Eddie Campbell
- Jim Moriarty: Tony Burton
- Peter Kaa: Stephen Dyver
- Lani Tupu: Bruce Stewart
- Sharon Namana: Wiremu Kingi
- Geraldine Martel: Leitu Porter Samuel
- Lee Brandt: Gavin Mitchell
- Verena Watson: Werner Nagel
- John Anderson

Production:
- DIRECTOR: Paul Maunder
- DIRECTOR'S ASSISTANTS
- LIGHTING: Paul McGuinness

Groundwork

Renee

First production: Working Title Theatre, New Independent, Auckland, 1985
Characters/cast

Driftwood

First production

Northland Youth Theatre
Whangarei, 22 January 1985

Characters/cast

Driftwood

Rachel McAlpine

First production

Northland Youth Theatre
Whangarei, 22 January 1985

Characters/cast

Production

Rachel McAlpine

First production

Northland Youth Theatre
Whangarei, 22 January 1985

Characters/cast

Production

Kohanga

First production

Te Ohu Whakaari Depot Theatre Wellington, 13 November 1985

Characters/cast

Production

Kohanga

Apirana Taylor

First production

Te Ohu Whakaari Depot Theatre Wellington, 13 November 1985

Characters/cast

Production
In The Wilderness
Without a Hat
(On Ilkia Moor
B'aht'at)

Hone Tuwhare

First production
Waiaatarau
Freeman’s Bay
Community Centre
Auckland, 1985

Characters
MATHEW
PAUL (PAORA)
KAREPO
HEREPETE
WAIMIRIA
MERE
TOM
CLARICE
MOANA
MRS COLBY
MR COLBY
KURA AND MARTHA
BERTIE

TUI/GRACE
SONIA/MERE
HEMI/LLOYD
BOB/DAVID
LANCE/TONY/PIRIPI
CAPPIE
SUSAN
JOE
DAINTY
SAM
HOPU, RONGO-MAI-TITIHA, WERO
UNAMED MAORI WARRIOR
MIRIAMA/RAWIRI

Production
DIRECTOR
Don Selwyn

Second production
Te Ohu Whakaari and
Te-Ika-a-Maui Players
Depot Theatre
Wellington,
August 1989

Characters/cast
MATHEW
PAUL
MERE
HEREPETE
WAIMIRIA
MOANA
CLARICE
TOM
MR COLBY
BERTIE
KAREPO
KAREPO’S MEN
CAPPIE TITSON
HOPU
WERO
RONGO-MAI TITIHA

Apirana Taylor
Eteuati Ete
Haina (Taylor) Stewart
Jim Moriarty
Nicola Kawana
Chelsea and Amanda Snees/Rogerson
Harriet Crampton
Henry Vaeoso
John McDavitt
Dion Paul
Haami Piripi
David and Dean Moriarty, Dion Paul
John McDavitt
Norman Apirana
George Manukau
Rowena Hawea

Production
DIRECTOR
PRODUCER
DESIGN
LIGHTING
Rangimoana Taylor
Jim Moriarty
Eruera Te-Whiti Nia
Gerard Taylor
1987

**Te Awa I Tahuti**

Rena Owen

First production

Clean Break
Albany Empire
London,
17 February 1987

Characters/cast

TONI
MRS BOTTOMLEY

Production

DIRECTOR

Ann Mitchell

Second production

Bats Theatre
Wellington,
September 1995

Characters/cast

TONI
MRS BOTTOMLEY

Production

DIRECTOR

Trudy Steadman

**Tupuna and Ngaa Morehu**

Rore Hapipi and Jim Moriarty

First production

Te Ohu Whakaari and Te-Ika-a-Maui Players
Depot Theatre
Wellington, 1987

Cast

Turei Reedy
Riwa Brown
Jim Moriarty
Peter Kaa

Production

DIRECTORS

Christina Asher
Esther (Whetu) Fala
Neil Gudsell
Angela Heffernan

1988

**Fragments of a Childhood**

Rore Hapipi

First production

Depot Theatre
Wellington,
17 March-3 April 1988

Cast

Riwa Brown
Cara Lavers
Peter Kaa

Mere Boynton
Neil Gudsell
Turei Reedy
Te Hara (The Sin)

John Broughton

First production
University of Otago, Lunchtime Series
Allen Hall Theatre
Dunedin,
16-17 June 1988

Characters/cast
KUINI MATTHEWS
DOLLY MAAKA
MARAMA KINGI

Production
DIRECTORS
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
STAGE MANAGER
LIGHTING
SOUND

DIRECTOR
COLLABORATORS
Jim Moriarty
Rangimoana Taylor
Bill Kircher
Robyn Paul
Judith Holloway
Alistair Andrews

Roimata

Riwia Brown

First production
Te Ohu Whakaari
Depot Theatre
Wellington,
27 July 1988

Characters/cast
ROIMATA
NAN/GIRLIE
MOUSE
EDDY
KEVIN
MAJOR

Production
DIRECTOR

Rangimoana Taylor

Te Hokinga Mai

John Broughton

First production
Otago Museum
Dunedin,
16 October 1988
Characters/cast

**Hiroki’s Song**

JOHN TE RANGIMARIE MATTHEWS
KUINI MATTHEWS
HUIA MATTHEWS
REIHANA MATTHEWS
JOHN-JUNIOR MATTHEWS
MARTIN BALFOUR-DAVIES
RNZAMC MEDICS

Pere Komene
Maera Hua
Wendi Samuels
Leigh Keefe
Warren Alcock
Martin Phelan
Greg Livingston
Dave Armstrong

**Ngaa Puke**

**Production**
Touring production
1990-1993

**First production**
Taki Rua-Depot Theatre
Wellington, March 1990

**Characters/cast**
WARU
ANGIE

Tobias Mills
Maggie Harper

**Production**
DIRECTOR
Lisa Warrington

**No Ordinary Sun**

Hone Tuwhare and Te Ohu Whakaari

**First production**
Taki Rua-Depot Theatre
Wellington, 1990

**Cast**
Rena Owen
Jim Moriarty
Tungia Baker
John Mesarov

**Production**
DIRECTOR
Jim Moriarty

**Broken Arse**

Bruce Stewart

**First production**
Taki Rua-Depot
Wellington, 3-31 March 1990

**Characters**
TAMA
HENRY
TU

WHIMPLE
PIGGYSCREW
WEAZEL
**Cast**

Rees Fox
Michael Galvin
Peter Carr
Darren Young
Apirana Taylor

**Production**

DIRECTOR

Rangimoana Taylor

**Treat It Right**

**Collaborative**

**First production**
Maidment Theatre
Auckland, 19 April-15 May 1990

**Characters/cast**

KAUMAATUA
JESTER
JESTER
LOUISE
CHORUS LEADER
TV REPORTER
LOUISE'S BOSS
MERE
KENNY
MR EARL

**Production**

DEVISORS

CATHURAL CONSULTANTS

DIRECTOR

**Jeannie Once**

**Renee**

**First production**
Fortune Theatre
Dunedin, 15 June-8 July 1990

**Characters/cast**

JEANNIE BRANNIGAN
MARGARET MAY O'CONNOR
HONORIA WISHART
MARSHA LEWIS
MARY O'MALLEY
BARNEY O'MALLEY
ALEC MCPHERSON
GEORGE LAMONT
BEHIESE MARCHMONT

**NURSE**

Peter Dennett
Colin Kitchenman
Johnathan Hendry
Maggie Harper

Te Paki Cherrington
Fiona Edgar
Richard Haeata
Sarah Smuts-Kennedy
Sam Scott
Briar Smith
Peter Smith
John Watson

Cathy Denford
Ella Henry
Don Selwyn
Paraire Huata
Ngapo Wehi and Whaanau
Irirangi Tiakura
Wiremu Te Aho
Cathy Denford

Julie Edwards
Billie Atkinson
Hilary Norris
Sima Urale
Bernadette Doolan
Sean Allan
Martin Inwood-Phelan
Barry Dorking
Molly Anderson
Production

PRODUCTION MANAGER
Jon Waite

LIGHTING DESIGN
Richard Finn

COSTUME DESIGN
Jain Kewene

STAGE MANAGER
Billie Atkinson

DIRECTOR
Lisa Warrington

DESIGN
Campbell Thomas

Te Hokina

Riowia Brown

First production
Taki Rua-Depot Theatre
Wellington, August 1990

Characters/cast
GIRLIE
Rena Owen

ROIMATA
Lani Gifford

MOUSE
Carol Smith

EDDIE
Darren Young

BLUE BOY
Hori Ahipene

DOLLY
Madeline McNamara

Production
DIRECTOR
Apirana Taylor

Te Tangata

Pei Te Hurinui Jones

Whai-rawa O Weneti
Merchant of Venice (in Maori)

First production
Festival Centre
Holy Sepulchre Church
Auckland, 17-19 September 1990

Characters/cast
TIUKA O WENETI
Te Rangi Matanuku Kaa

PIRINHI O MORAKA
Morehu McDonald

ANATONIO
Ngamaru Raerino

PATANIO
Tukuroirangi Morgan

HARARINO
Joe Naden

HARANIO
Hone Heke

KARATIANO
Hemana Waaka

RORENETO
Rangikawhiua Chadwick

HAIROKA
Waihoroi Shortland

TUPARA
Ral Makihia

RANAHAROTO KOPA
Hori Sterling

POHIA
Maryann Mangu

NERITA
Pahi Rangiaho

TIEHIKA
Molly Greenwood

PONONGA
Pakira Heke

Production
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER
Selwyn Muru

PRODUCER
Brian Kirby
Second production

Feature Film
New Zealand Film Commission
2002

Cast (incomplete)

Waihoroi Shortland
Ngarimu Daniels
Scott Morrison
Te Rangihau Gilbert

Production

DIRECTOR
Don Selwyn
PRODUCER
Ruth Kapua
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER
Puhi Rangiaho
ASSOCIATE PRODUCER
Bill Killen
COMPOSERS
Mark Teirney
EDITOR

Davorin Fahu

Whatungarongaro

Roma Potiki and He Ara Hou

First production

He Ara Hou Maori Theatre Inc.
Taki Rua-Depot Theatre
Wellington,
24 October 1990

Characters/cast

RURU
ROSE
RA

WIKI
HINEAHUONE
WAVE/BIRD

HUNA
TANE
TUI
GLEN
EDDIE
GARY

MATA
TINA
Josie
MONOLOGUES

Lizzie Pengelly
Briar Smith
Hemi Rurawhe
Makarita Matapelu
HUJA          WILLIE        Wiremu Grace
LUCY          MARG          Perry Piercy
MARION        MONOLOGUE
RUBY          Roma Potiki
JOJO          TOM           Ngarupiki Reid
WAVE/BIRD     STEVIE PIWAIWAKA
              DEAN WAVE/BIRD
              Production DIRECTOR
              PRODUCTION MANAGER
              LIGHTING DESIGNER

Touring production
He Ara Hou Māori Theatre Inc
Taki Rua-Depot Theatre
Wellington,
18-28 September 1990
Rena Owen takes the role of Ruby

1991

Daddy’s Girl  Rena Owen
First production  Te Ohu Whakaari
                 Depot Theatre
                 Wellington,
                 31 January 1991
Characters/cast
NGARO PARAONE
HÖHEPA PARAONE
CATHLEEN BROWN
RACHEL BROWN
ROSE BROWN
Whetu Fala
Wi Kuki Kaa
Katherine McRae
Tina Cook
Rena Owen

Production
DIRECTOR  Riwia Brown

Michael James Manaia
John Broughton
First production  Downstage Theatre
Wellington,
15 February 1991

**Characters/cast**

- MICHAEL MANAIA

**Production**

- DIRECTOR
- MUSIC
- DESIGN
- TECHNICIAN
- COSTUMES
- SET CONSTRUCTION
- PROPS

**Touring production 1991**

- Te Rakau Hua O Te Wao
- Tapu
- Dunedin, Edinburgh, Auckland, Wellington 1991

**Mauri Tu**

**Hone Kouka**

First production

- University of Otago, Lunchtime Series
- Allen Hall Theatre
- Dunedin, April 1991

**Cast**

- Hone Kouka

**Production**

- DIRECTOR
- PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
- LIGHTING DESIGN
- LIGHTING OPERATOR
- STAGE MANAGER
- KAIKARANGA

**Second production**

- Te Ohu Whakaari
- Taki Rua-Depot
- Wellington, September 1991

**Cast**

- Hone Kouka

**Production**

- DIRECTORS
- LIGHTING
- LIGHTING OPERATOR
- STAGE MANAGER
- FRONT OF HOUSE
- PUBLICITY

**Also**

- Colin McColl
- Cherie O'Shea
- Jerry Banse
- Tony Rabbit
- Eleanor Aitken
- Anne de Geur
- John Batty
- Matthew Mellor
- Matthew Mellor
- Cherie Ingle
- Hone Kouka
- Lisa Warrington
- Graeme Thompson
- Cindy Diver
- Nigel Waters
- Jan Logie
- Gervais Laird
- Wendi Samuels
- Apirana Taylor
- Riwia Brown
- Norm Apirana
- Patrick Utuiera
- Stuart Turner
- Hori Ahipene
- Bridget Brady

220
Taku Mangai

Wiremu Davis

First production
Barn Theatre
Northland Polytechnic
Whangarei, November 1991

Cast
Wiremu Davis

Production
KAUMAATUA
KUIA
DIRECTOR
DESIGNER
LIGHTING
KAIKARANGA

Hamiora Te Waru Rewiri
Geneva May Davis
Stuart Devenie
Wiremu Davis
Aaron Davis
Doreen Smith
Kura McNeil
Sarah Piripi-Howell

Second production
Watershed Theatre
Auckland, 1996

Cast
Wiremu Davis

Production
DIRECTOR
Don Selwyn

Iwitaia

Haina Stewart and Te Ohu Whakaari

First production
Te Ohu Whakaari
Taki Rua-Depot Theatre
Wellington,
11-21 December 1991

Characters/cast
MARIE
JAKE
PENE
HUIA
OLD MAN
IWITAIA
MATT
RIPEKA

Haina Stewart
Hori Ahipene
Rena Owen
Mere Boynton
Apirana Taylor
Hone Kouka
Turei Reedy
Roimata Baker

Production
DIRECTOR
PRODUCER
PRODUCTION MANAGER
LIGHTING DESIGN
LIGHTING OPERATOR
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Rangimoana Taylor
Anne Keating
Bridget Brady
Norman Apirana
Pat Utuiera
Makareta Matapelu

1992
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<th><strong>Ngaa Waahine</strong></th>
<th><strong>Riwia Brown</strong></th>
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<td><strong>First production</strong></td>
<td>Taki Rua-Depot Theatre</td>
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<td>Wellington, 19 February-14 March 1992</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Characters</strong></td>
<td><strong>Production</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>DAINA</td>
<td>DIRECTOR</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOANA</td>
<td>PRODUCER</td>
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<tr>
<td>KAREN</td>
<td>CO-ORDINATOR</td>
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<tr>
<td>AUDREY</td>
<td>SET DESIGN</td>
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<tr>
<td>MATHEW</td>
<td>LIGHTING AND DESIGN</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nancy Brunning</td>
<td>Riwia Brown</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donna Muir</td>
<td>Helen Morris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carol Smith</td>
<td>Bridget Brady</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingrid Prossor</td>
<td>Andrew Thomas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eteuati Ete</td>
<td>Norm Apirana</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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| **Te Pouaka** |
| **Karaehe (The Glass Box)** |

| **First production** | Taki Rua-Depot |
| | Wellington, 18 March-11 April 1992 |
| **Characters/cast** | **Production** |
| SARAH Dacre | DIRECTOR |
| IRI HARMER | PRODUCER |
| WIKI HARMER | MARKETING |
| SOPHIE | GRAPHICS |
| TAMA | Renee |
| Oriana Walker | Renee |
| Mairanga White | Bridget Brady |
| Toni Gordon | Helen Morris |
| Frances Kewene | Andrew Thomas |
| Shane Rangi | |

| **Wahine Toa** | **Keri Kaa, Sunny Amey and Jan Bolwell** |

| **First production** | Taki Rua-Depot Theatre |
| | Wellington, 2-19 September 1992 |
| **Cast** | **Production** |
| Ngahuia (Christina) Asher | CHOREOGRAPHY |
| Tungia Baker | LIGHTING DESIGN |
| Sarah Franks | ORIGINAL MUSIC |
| Stephanie Pohe | Jan Bolwell |
| Moi-Maree Thompson | George Schneider |
| Erina Toi-Paku | Helen Fisher |
| Grace Turu | |
| Mairanga White | |
**Hide 'n Seek**

Hone Kouka and Hori Ahipene

First production
Te Ohu Whakaari
Taki-Rua Depot Theatre
Wellington, October 1992

Characters/cast
- TIAKI
- ERU
- KATARAINA
- JILL
- TREV

Production
DIRECTOR
- Hone Kouka

Second production
Te Ohu Whakaari
International Festival of the Arts
Wellington, 15-19 March 1994

Characters/cast
- TIAKI
- ERU
- KATARAINA
- JILL
- TREV

Production
DIRECTOR
- Hone Kouka

**Hine**

He Ara Hou Maaori Theatre Inc.

First production
He Ara Hou Maaori Theatre Inc.
Taki Rua-Depot Theatre
Wellington, 9-20 March 1993

Cast
- Briar Grace-Smith
- Hemi Rurawhe
- Wiremu Grace
- Kohai Grace

Production
DIRECTOR
- John Anderson
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
- Roma Potiki
LIGHTING
- Grant Lees
LIGHTING OPERATOR
- Pat Utulera
He Repo Haka

Jeff Addison

First production
Centrepoint Theatre
Palmerston North,
26 June 1993

Characters/cast
WEKA/TIGERTOOTH
CHLOE/GINA STEVENSON
HARRY STEVENSON/
SERGEANT SEALES
ANGELA BICKERS
LUKE
MUM
TESS
NEWSREADER

Production
DIRECTOR
Peter Kaa
Amanda Rees
Matthew Chamberlain

Second production
Te Roopu Whakaari
Taki Rua Theatre
Wellington,
29 June-23 July 1994

Characters/cast
WEKA/TIGERTOOTH
CHLOE/GINA
HARRY/SERGEANT SALES
MIKIAMA AWATERE

Production
DIRECTOR
Willie Davis
Hera Dunleavy
Matthew Chamberlain
Erina Toi-Paku

DESIGNER
Dorita Hannah
Helen Todd
Te Whanau o Addison
Tony Burns
Sarah Hunter
Kate Peters
Geina Torcano
Briar Grace-Smith
Sharon Matthews
Jane Woodhall
Eleanor Aitken
Andrew Misser

LIGHTING DESIGN
MUSIC
PRODUCTION
PUBLICIST
STAGE MANAGER
ASS. STAGE MANAGER
DRAMATURGY ASS.
COSTUMES

PRODUCTION MANAGER
PROPS

MUSIC
Himiona Grace
Johnathan Crayford

Manawa Tawa
(Savage)

Collaborative
**Hearts**

First production  Theatre at Large
Watershed Theatre
Auckland, July 1993

Characters/cast  TUPOU
TAHUTU
ROY FOLLY
LOTTIE FOLLY
ACTOR

Production  DIRECTORS
WRITING ASSISTANTS
KAUMAATUA

Cliff Curtis
Rachel House
Carl Bland
Alison Bruce
Damon Andrews

Christian Penny
Anna Marbrook
David Geary
Wiremu Davis
Ngamaru Raerino

**Five Angels**

Hone Kouka

First production  Te Ohu Whakaari
Taki Rua Theatre
Wellington, 21 October 1993

Characters/cast  GEORGE/RANGI
APERIRA/CAROL
HANA
TAXI
BOSSI
HENRY

Production  DIRECTOR
SET DESIGN
LIGHTING
LIGHTING OPERATOR
COSTUME
CHOREOGRAPHY
MUSICIANS

Hemi Rurawhe
Erina Toi-Paku
Donna Muir
Peter Daube
Lucy Schmidt
Bradley Carroll

Stephen Bain
Angela Sullivan
Sue Dunlop
Sharon Matthews
Leanne Plunkett
Pita Te Tau
Aaron Jonkers
Katarina Governor

Second production  Centrepoint Theatre
Palmerston North, September 1995

Characters/cast  APERIRA/CAROL
BOSSI
HENRY
TAXI
GEORGE/RANGI
HANA

Production  DIRECTOR

Rachel House
Waimih Hotere
Bradley Carroll
Mitch Thomas
Antonio Te Maioha
Nicola Kawana
### 1994

**Ngā Tangata Toa**

**Hone Kouka**

First production  
Te Roopu Whakaari  
Taki Rua Theatre  
Wellington, 25 May 1994

<table>
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<td>PAIKEA</td>
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<td>Shimpal Lelisi</td>
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<td>TE WAI</td>
<td>Erina Toi-Paku</td>
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<td>TANEATUA WI</td>
<td>Jim Moriarty</td>
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<td>RONGOMAI ROSE</td>
<td>Matthew Chamberlain</td>
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<td>HOUHOU</td>
<td>Nancy Brunning</td>
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<td>Hera Dunleavy</td>
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<td>Samuel Toia/Tyson Day</td>
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Production  
DIRECTOR  
DRAMATURG  
DESIGNER  
MUSIC  
LIGHTING  
Colin McColl  
Haldis Hoaas  
Dorita Hannah  
Gareth Farr  
Helen Todd

### 1981

**John Broughton**

First production  
Fortune Theatre  
Dunedin,  
12 May-10 June 1995

<table>
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<td>FAITH</td>
<td>Julie Edwards</td>
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<td>RUSTY</td>
<td>Peter Kaa</td>
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<tr>
<td>BEN</td>
<td>Calvin Tuteao</td>
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Production  
DIRECTOR  
DESIGNER  
MUSICIANS  
Jim Moriarty  
Jon Waite  
Sharon Smith  
Conrad Phillips

STAGE MANAGER  
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR  
Martin Phelan

WARDROBE  
LIGHTING AND SOUND  
SET CONSTRUCTION  
Jain Kewene  
David Gill  
Ian Macleod  
Bruce Smith

Second production  
Centrepoint Theatre  
Palmerston North,  
October 1997

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<td>BENNY</td>
<td>Jason Te Kare</td>
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<tr>
<td>RUSTY</td>
<td>Mariao Te Huranga Hohaia</td>
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</table>
Production DIRECTOR

Toni Waho

**Ngaa Pou Waahine**

Briar Grace-Smith

First production: Ngaa Kete Waahine e Toru
Taki Rua Theatre
Wellington, May 1995

Characters/cast: TE ATAKURA
TIA
LIZZIE
WALTER
MIRO

Production DIRECTOR
MUSICIAN
SET AND LIGHTING TECHNICIAN
KAUMAATUA
PHOTOGRAPHS AND PUBLICITY

Nancy Brunning
Himiona Grace
Kate Peters and Sean Coyle
Erolia Ifopo
Bob Wiki
Sarah Hunter

**Taki Toru**

Keri Kaa, Sunny Amey and Jan Bolwell

First production: Lower Hutt Little Theatre
Wellington, 24-31 May 1995

also

Downstage Theatre
Wellington, 8-17 June 1995

Cast: Hinemoana Awatere
Mere Boynton
Terri Ripeka Crawford
Whetu Fala
Felicity Molloy

Production ARTISTIC DIRECTORS

Keri Kaa
Sunny Amey
Jan Bolwell
Mark Simpson
Adrian Kearns
Jane Winnie
Sue Dunlop
Andrew Downes
Janet Roddick
**Whaea Kairau:** Apirana Taylor

**Mother Hundred Eater**

First production: Taki Rua Theatre, Wellington, June 1995

Characters/cast:

- WHAEA
- PUAWAI
- AMIRIA
- MOKAI
- CAPTAIN DESPARD
- BLACK JACK
- WARE
- MAJOR TAMAHOU
- CONSTABLE CHEESEMAN
- SERGEANT-AT-ARMS
- REVEREND WALMSELY
- GOVERNOR
- LONG BILLY
- RONGO
- SETTLER JACK WINFIELD
- KORO
- HEMI
- ROSE GREEN
- JOHN

Production: DIRECTOR

1996

**Waitapu** Briar Grace-Smith

First production: He Ara Hou Maaori Theatre, Canada, March 1996

Characters:

- RONGOPAI
- TE MANA KAHU
- HINE TE AWHIOWHIO
- MATIU
- KORO (GHOST) PITA
- JAKI
- AUNTY WAI
- TIKI
- HINEWAI
- KOTARE

Production: DIRECTOR

Tina Cook

**Waiora Te** Hone Kouka

228
### Ukaipoo: (The Homeland)

**First production**
New Zealand International Festival of the Arts
Downstage Theatre
Wellington, 15 March 1996

**Characters/cast**
- HONE (JOHN)
- WAI TE ATATU (SUE)
- AMIRIA
- RONGO
- BOYBOY
- STEVE CAMPBELL
- LOUISE STONES
- THE TIIPUNA

**Production**
- KAUMAATUA
- DIRECTOR
- SCRIPT
- HAKA AND WAIATA
- SCRIPT ADVISOR
- MUSICAL DIRECTOR
- SET DESIGN AND COSTUME
- LIGHTING DESIGN
- STAGE MANAGEMENT
- PRODUCER

### Flat Out Brown

**First production**
Taki Rua Theatre
Wellington, June 1996

**Characters/cast**
- NIWA
- TAWHIRI
- FLASH
- CULTURE
- SHARLENE

**Production**
- KAUMAATUA
- DIRECTOR
- MUSICIAN
- STAGE MANAGER
- LIGHTING DESIGN
- LIGHTING ASSISTANCE
- LIGHTING OPERATOR
- COMPOSER
- PRODUCTION MANAGER

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<td>Tina Cook</td>
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<td>Rachel House</td>
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<td>Mick Rose</td>
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<td>Grace Hoet</td>
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<td>Hone Hurihanganui</td>
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<td>Bob Wiki</td>
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<td>Pita Mahaki</td>
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<td>Ta'i Paitai</td>
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</table>
**Irirangi Bay**  
**Riwia Brown**

First production  
Te Roopu Whakaari  
Taki Rua Theatre  
Wellington, June 1996

**Characters/cast**

GEORGE  
MARY  
IRIRANGI

Karl Kite Rangi  
Hera Dunlevy  
Grace Hoet

**Production**

KAUMAATUA  
DIRECTOR  
DESIGN  
LIGHTING  
STAGE MANAGER

Bob Wiki  
Murray Lynch  
Andrew Thomas  
Lisa Maule  
Grace Hoet

**Don't Call Me Bro**  
**Briar Grace-Smith**

First production  
Young and Hungry  
Bats Theatre  
Wellington, 18 July-3 August 1996

**Characters/cast**

DAWNIE  
POWHIRI  
CRUISE  
DAPHNIE  
STEVIE RAY  
JANE

Amelia Taumoeppeau  
Marisa Pene  
Andrew Chambers  
Crystal Moananui  
Brian Hotter  
Natalia Barrett

**Production**

DIRECTOR  
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR  
LIGHTING/SOUND

Mariao Te Huranga-Hohaia  
Miranda Luxford  
Eileen Watson/Maiangi Waitai

**1997**

**Purapurawhetu**  
**Briar Grace-Smith**

First production  
Te Ohu Whakaari, Taki Rua Theatre  
Downstage Theatre  
Wellington, May 1997

**Characters/cast**

KUI/AGGIE ROSE  
HOHEPA  
MATAWERA  
TYLER  
RAMARI  
VOICE OF AWATEA/BUBBA

Vanessa Rare  
Hemi Rurawhe  
Jim Moriarty  
Bradley Carroll  
Kirsty Hamilton  
Himiona Grace (jnr)

**Production**

DIRECTOR

Cathy Downes
Touring production  
Taki Rua Theatre  
Auckland, Gisborne, Whakatane,  
1999  
and  
Christchurch, Dunedin  
Hamilton, Auckland  
July-August 2000

Characters/cast  
KUI/AGGIE ROSE  
HOHEPA  
MATAWERA  
TYLER  
RAMARI  
VOICE OF AWATEA/BUBBA

Production  
DIRECTOR  
DESIGNERS

Himiona Grace
Diane Prince
Mark McEntyre
Helen Todd
Deborah Ruffell
Kohai Grace
Alair Smith

Himiona Grace (Jnr)
**Production**

**DIRECTORS**

Christian Penny
Anna Marbrook
Heather Lee

**PRODUCER**

1998

---

**Home Fires**

**Hone Kouka**

First production
New Zealand International Festival of the Arts
Downstage Theatre
Wellington, 27 February 1998

Characters/cast
EMARE
Vicky Haughton
TIA
Nicola Kawana

Production
KAUMAATUA
Bob Wiki
DIRECTOR
Nat Lees
DESIGNER
Mark McEntyre
LIGHTING DESIGN
Lisa Maule
MUSIC/SOUND DESIGN
Nigel Scott
MUSIC
Hone Hurihanganui
CHOREOGRAPHY
Teokotai Pa’itai

Second production
Taki Rua Productions
Herald Theatre
Auckland,
19 October-9 November 2002

Characters/cast
JACOB
Rangimoana Taylor
RANGI
Rawiri Paratene

Production
DIRECTOR
Nancy Brunning
CHOREOGRAPHER
Teokotai Pa’itai
WAIATA
Hone Hurihanganui
SET DESIGN
Ross Gibbs
COSTUME DESIGN
Colin McLean
SOUND DESIGN
Warren Maxwell
LIGHTING DESIGN
Vera Thomas
SCRIPT ADVISOR
Catherine Fitzgerald
MUSIC
Eric Nagan
SOUND DESIGN
John Hodgkins
SCRIPT ADVISOR
Iain Cooper
CHOREOGRAPHY
Karin Melchior

---

**Sing Whale! (He Apakura Tohora)**

**Keri Kaa, Sunny Amey and Jan Bolwell**

First production
New Zealand International Festival of the Arts
Te Papa
Wellington, March 1998
Cast
Nicole Bishop
Justine Hohaia
Charles Korenoho
Warwick Long
Hemi Rurawhe

Sass Mahuika
Malcolm Murray
Trucy Reire
Janet Roddick

Production
CHOREOGRAPHER
ARTISTIC DIRECTORS
Jan Bolwell
Keri Kaa
Sunny Amey
Jan Bolwell
Janet Roddick
Clea Matthews
Keith Walker
Helen Todd
Tolis Papazoglou
Keri Kaa
Debz Ruffells

Te Rakau Hua O Te Wao
Tapu

Watea (A devised theatre piece)

First production
Te Rakau Hua O Te Wao
Tapu
Te Whaea, National Dance and Drama Centre
Wellington, 2 December 1998

Cast
Berta Harrison
Ngahuia Tawhai
Shirley Hunt
Te Wairemana Campbell
Lana Borlase
Nelly Sione

Olivia Papuni
Meg Williams
Jana Travers
Oriana Walker
Lynda Chanwai-Earle
Henri Kinghazel

Production
DIRECTOR
LIGHTING
Jim Moriarty
Keith Waaka

1999

The Sojourns of Boy
Jo Randerson and Briar Grace-Smith

First production
Taki Rua Productions
Bats Theatre
Wellington, 1999

Characters/cast
AUNTY
UNCLE
LC
RAMONA
RUNTY
HACKER

Anne Budd
Rawiri Paratene
Peter Daube
Bronwyn Bradley
Greg Matetaka
Karl Drinkwater

Production
DIRECTOR
David O’Donnell
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<th><strong>Haruru Mai</strong></th>
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| First production | New Zealand International Festival of the Arts  
Soundings Theatre, Te Papa  
Wellington, 3-11 March 2000 |
| Characters/cast | SILAS  
PEARL  
PALOMA  
TAKU  
MOANA |
| Production | DIRECTOR | George Henare  
DESIGNERS | Colin McColl  
LIGHTING | Diane Prince  
MUSIC AND SOUND | Mark McEntyre  
SOUNDINGS | Lisa Maule  
THEATRE | Himiona Grace |
| Second production | Auckland Theatre Company  
Maidment Theatre  
Auckland,  
16 February-11 March 2001 |
| Characters/cast | SILAS | George Henare  
PEARL | Tanea Heke  
PALOMA | Nancy Brunning  
TAKU | Taika Cohen  
MOANA | Antonio Te Maioha |
| Production | DIRECTOR | Simon Prast  
DESIGN | John Verryt  
COMPOSER | Gareth Farr  
LIGHTING | Vera Thomas  
STAGE MANAGER | Frith Walker  
ASS. STAGE MANAGER | TJ Haunui  
WARDROBE | Elizabeth Whiting  
TECHNICAL MANAGER | To Robertson |

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| First Production | New Zealand International Festival of the Arts  
Soundings Theatre, Te Papa  
Wellington, March 2000 |
Characters/cast

TILLY
TIRI

Production

DIRECTOR
COMPOSER
DESIGN
LIGHTING
SOUND

also

Touring production

Taki Rua Productions
Whangarei, Auckland,
Gisborne, Hastings,
Whakatane, Hamilton,
2000

Second production

Taki Rua Productions
Taranaki, Wellington,
Auckland, 2001

Characters/cast

TILLY
TIRI

Production

DIRECTOR
PRODUCERS
SET AND COSTUME
LIGHTING DESIGN
COMPOSER
PRODUCTION MANAGER
STAGE MANAGER
TECHNICAL OPERATOR
PUBLICITY AND MARKETING

Third production

National Tour
Christchurch, Dunedin
Hamilton, Palmerston North
and Manchester (UK), 2002

Characters/cast

TILLY
TIRI

DIRECTOR
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
COMPOSER
SET DESIGN
COSTUME DESIGN
LIGHTING DESIGN
PROD. MANAGER
REHEARSAL STAGE MANAGER

Rima Te Wiata
Rachel House

Cathy Downes
Gareth Farr
Diane Prince
Mark McEntyre
Jo Kilgour
Matt D’Herville

Nicola Kawana
Rachel House

Christian Penny
Tanea Heke
Brent Thawley
Diane Prince
Mark McEntyre
Jo Kilgour
Gareth Farr
Cathy Knowsley
Jennifer Lal
Juliette Howard
Rachel Lorimer

Riria Hotere
Kahu Koroeke Hotere

Nancy Brunning
Christian Penny
Gareth Farr
Ross Gibbs
Nic Smillie
Vera Thomas
Cathy Knowsley
Marlena Campbell
APPENDIX B
KEY PRODUCTIONS
APPENDIX B:
KEY PRODUCTIONS OF PLAYS
CITED IN THESIS
PRE-1980

The Pohutukawa Tree
Bruce Mason

First production
New Zealand Players
Theatre Workshop
Wellington, 1957

Characters/cast
QUEENIE MATAIRA
ROY MCDOWELL
REV. ATHOL SEDGWICK
AROHA MATAIRA
JOHNNY MATAIRA
MRS ATKINSON
MR ATKINSON
SYLVIA ATKINSON
GEORGE RAWLINGS
DR LOMAS
CLAUDE JOHNSON
MRS JOHNSON
SERGEANT ROBINSON

Design
Mary Nimmo
Paul Skinner
Ronald Lynn
Hira Tawhahare
Maia Sullivan
Helen Brew
Frank Gawn
Marie Collett
William Campion
Bruce Mason
L. Assheton Harbord
Mollie Marriott
Roger Tristram

Production
Mary Nimmo
Paul Skinner
Ronald Lynn
Hira Tawhahare
Maia Sullivan
Helen Brew
Frank Gawn
Marie Collett
William Campion
Bruce Mason
L. Assheton Harbord
Mollie Marriott
Roger Tristram

Producers
Mary Nimmo
Paul Skinner
Ronald Lynn
Hira Tawhahare
Maia Sullivan
Helen Brew
Frank Gawn
Marie Collett
William Campion
Bruce Mason
L. Assheton Harbord
Mollie Marriott
Roger Tristram

Te Raukura: The Feathers of the Albatross
Harry Dansey

First production
St Mary's Cathedral
Auckland, 1972

also
Mercury Theatre
Auckland, 1972

Characters/cast
KOROHEKE
TAMATANE
TE UA HAUMENE
THE ANGEL GABRIEL
HEPANAIA KAPEWHITI
TAHUTAKI
WI TATARA RAUKATAURI
TE WHITI-O-RONGOMAI
TOHU
CAPTAIN LLOYD

John Tamahori
Syd Jackson
George Henare
Phillip Munro
Fred Ellis
Sonny Waru
Toby Curtis
Joshua Gardiner
Whatanui Skipworth
Bruce Griffiths
Or

Production

**Death of the Land**

**Rore Hapipi**

First production

Te-Ika-a-Maui Players
Newtown Community Centre
Wellington, 1976

Or

Te-Ika-a-Maui Players
Unity Theatre
Wellington, 1977

Cast (variable)

Don Selwyn
Tungia Baker
Riwia Brown
Roma Potiki

Production

DIRECTOR

John Thomson

Further production

Rotorua Festival of the Arts
Te Aro Nui a Rua Meeting House
Rotorua, 1984

Characters/cast

A SERGEANT
SIR GEORGE GREY
SIR WILLIAM MARTIN
SERGEANT O'ROURKE
CAPTAIN CHAMBERS
PREMIER FOX
JOHN BRYCE
WILLIAM PARRIS
A CONSTABULARY OFFICER
COLONEL MESSENGER
LEADER OF THE WOMEN
UIMANO
KAWAU

Geoffry Snell
Paul Minifie
Keith Beaumont-Smith
John Bailey
Gregory Moss
Bruce Griffiths
John Geddes
Gerard Bonk
Timothy Mowbray
Geoffrey Snell
Anne Tia
Sonny Waru
Rangi Dansey

Rongo
TUTA TANGITU
ROSIE PORTER
MIHIATA MOERANGI
WEHI
WIREMU KINGI
MICHAEL ATKINSON
MAUD ATKINSON
JOHN WILSON
JUDGE

Tainui Stephens
Pura Panapa
Arapera Blank
Dawn Underwood
Te Paki Cherrington
Jim Shepherd
Alan Blackburn
Poto Stephens
John McKee
John McKee
APPENDIX C
SELECT LIST OF PRODUCTIONS
APPENDIX C:
SELECT LIST OF OTHER PLAY PRODUCTIONS

1980

The Meeting House
(Musical Play)

Rex McGregor

Characters

PETE NEWTON
HEMI
GEORGE
GRANNY NEWTON
GLENDA ELMSLY
POP
MOANA
MR TAINUI
MRS ELMSLY
LEO

1981

Directions

Rawiri Paratene

First production
Trinity Fortune Theatre
Dunedin, 3-12 September
1981

Characters/cast

DAVID
WALLY
ROBERT
JIMMY
DIANNE
KATE
LINDA
JANINE
MS DIXON
JULIE
EMMA
CHRISTENE
MARY

Stephen Smith
Rick Hanna
Andrew Wooding/Peter Greenall
Matthew Claver
Monique Lammers
Phillipa Gibson
Natalie Scouler/Fiona McAlevey
Bridget Telfer/Kari Morseth
Louise Green
Gina Burton
Lynne Cardy/Jenne Birkin
Margi Melson/Phillipa Jamieson
Anne Chronican

Production

CO PRODUCERS
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
TECHNICAL ADVISORS
STAGE MANAGERS
PRODUCTION SECRETARY

Lisa Warrington/Rawiri Paratene
Alistair Robertson
Anne Coombes, Tony Rabbit
Susan Wiltshire/Bruce Smith
Signy Henderson

DESIGN
Debbie Brown
1982

**Outside In**

Hilary Beaton

First production
Theatre Corporate
Auckland, 25 November 1982

Characters/cast
MA
LOU
SANDY
KATE
GINNY
DI (BOSS)
HELEN

Lee Grant
Maya Dalziel
Hester Joyce
Norelle Scott
Donogh Rees
Sarah Peirse
Teresa Woodham

Production
DIRECTOR
LENN
STAGE MANAGER

Judith Gibson
John Verryt/Sabrina Achilles
Brendan Shadbolt

1983

**Saturday Night Sunday Morning**

Rawiri Paratene

First production
Depot Theatre
Wellington, 1983

1984

**Wednesday to Come**

Renee

First production
Downstage Theatre
Wellington, 17 August 1984.

Characters/cast
GRANNA
MARY
IRIS
CLIFF
JEANNE
TED
MOLLY
DOT

Davina Whitehouse
Kate Harcourt
Jane Waddell
Tim Homewood
Lucy Sheehan
Cliff Wood
Michelle Leuthart
Ruth Dudding

Production
DIRECTOR
DESIGN

George Webby
Janet Williamson
LIGHTING
Stephen Blackburn

Second production
Fortune Theatre
Dunedin, 7 June 1985

Characters/cast
GRANNA
Pamela Pow
MARY
Shirley Kelly
IRIS
Miranda Harcourt
JEANNIE
Hilary Halba
CLIFF
James Maclaurin
TED
Nic Farra
MOLLY
Anne Marie Speed
DOT
Beverly Reid

Production
DIRECTOR
Lisa Warrington
SET DESIGN
Alistair Stewart
LIGHTING DESIGN
Tracey Clement

PRODUCTION
John Reid
Alistair Broughton
Tim Rowberry
Gordon Jopson
Ian Taylor
Andrew Cotton

1986

Kia pai tatou
Patricia Grace, Apirana
ki a Tatou
Taylor and Te Ohu
(Caring for
Whakaari
Ourselves)

First production
Te Ohu Whakaari
National Tour
1986

Cast
Esther Fala
Neil Gudsell
Tina Cook
Paora Maxwell

Production
DIRECTOR
Rangimoana Taylor

Pass It On
Renee

First production
Theatre Corporate,
Auckland, 1 March 1986.

Characters/cast
NELL
Jennifer Ward-Lealand
JEANNIE
CLIFF
GUS

Production
DIRECTOR
DESIGN
LIGHTING

Judith Gibson
John Watson
Michael Hurst

Roger McGill
Donald Grant Sutherland
Andrew Mayo

1987

Born To Clean

Renee

First production
Working Title Theatre
Auckland, 1987

Second production
Depot Theatre, Wellington

Cast
Clare Bear
Bernadette Doolan
Andrea Kelland
Hillary King

Production
MUSIC AND SONGS
Jess Hawk Dakenstar
Hillary King

1989

The Waitara Purchase

Brian Hannam

Second production
The Whakarite Theatre Company
Depot Theatre
Wellington, 1989

Characters/cast
NARRATOR
SETTLER
QUEEN VICTORIA
SAMUEL MARSDEN
BISHOP SELWYN
EDWARD WAKEFIELD
ROBERT FITZROY
ROBERT PARIS
EW STAFFORD
SETTLER
MAORI
Linley Bullen
Chris Clarkson
Erolia Ifopo
THOMAS GORE BROWN
SETTLER
MAORI
MCLEAN
SPAIN
EDITOR

MAORI
TUHAWAIKI
KINGI

ABEL TASMAN
GEORGE GREY
SETTLER
HOBSON
TEIRA
CW RICHMOND
FRENCHMAN
SURVEYOR

Production
LIGHTING DESIGN

1990

Te Whaanau a Tuanui Jones
Apirana Taylor

First production
Depot Theatre
Wellington, 23 May 1990

Characters/cast
TUANUI JONES
KOKA JONES
TERE JONES
SALLY BROCK/JONES
KAPA JONES
POU JONES
ANAHERA JONES
SAM BROOK
SGT MORAN
POLICEMEN

Rongo Tupatea Kahu
Tina Cook
Peter Sears
Carol Smith
Pita Te Tau
Eteuati Ete
Rowena Hawea Harvey
Marton Csokas
Zvonimir Mesarov
Kingi Morgan
George Manukau

Production
DIRECTOR
PRODUCER
LIGHTING
DESIGN

Apirana Taylor
Jim Moriarty
Norman Apirana
Ngapine Dinnan

Second
September 1990
Production

Characters/cast
TUANUI JONES
KOKA JONES
TERE JONES
SALLY BROCK/JONES
KAPA JONES
POU JONES
ANAHERA JONES
SAM BROOK
SGT MORAN
POLICEMAN

Rongo Tupatea Kahu
Macgregor Cameron
Turei Reedy
Carol Smith
Hori Ahipene
George Manukau
Larnie Gifford
Colin Kitchingman
Sima Urale
Kingi Morgan

Production
DIRECTOR
Rena Owen

1991

Caramel Cream
Stephen Sinclair

First production
Taki Rua-Depot Theatre
Wellington 1 May-1 June 1991

Characters/cast
MITCH
CLAIRE
PETER

Turei Reedy
Joanne Simpson
Jed Brophy

Production
DIRECTOR
SET DESIGNER
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
LIGHTING DESIGNER
STAGE MANAGER

Duncan Smith
Duncan Smith
Jacquie Nismith
Angela Sullivan
Alistair Edwards
Cendywn Roberts

1992

The Marae
John Broughton

First production
International Festival of the Arts
Waiwhetu Marae, Lower Hutt
Town Hall Wellington, 1992
Remembrance of Things to Come

First production: Taki-Rua Depot Theatre, Wellington, June 1992

Cast: Hone Kouka, Sue Morrison

Production: Tommy Honey

King Hits

First production: Te Roopu Whakaari, Taki Rua Theatre, Wellington, 15 July-12 August 1995

Cast: Shimpal Lelesi, Mario Gaoa, Anne Budd, Matthew Chamberlain

Production: Tony Burns, Amanda Yates, Helen Todd, Jennifer Lal, DJ Ma, George Nepia for Pasifika Noise, Sean Coyle, Kate Peters, Christiaan Ercolano

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**Mana is my Name**

**John Broughton**

First production: Te Rakau Hua O Te Wao Tapu
Taki Rua Theatre
Wellington, September 1995

Characters/cast:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Director</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PAORA</td>
<td>Tamati Rice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KATE</td>
<td>Tanya Phillips</td>
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<tr>
<td>JOHN</td>
<td>Zvon Mesarov</td>
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<tr>
<td>KUNI</td>
<td>Oriana Walker</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATANUI</td>
<td>Toni Huata</td>
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<td>MARY</td>
<td>Bronwyn Hayward</td>
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Production:

<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DIRECTOR</td>
<td>Jim Moriarty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIGHTING</td>
<td>Helen Todd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSICAL DIRECTOR</td>
<td>Jerry Banse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIGHTING OPERATOR</td>
<td>Adrian Wagner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1997

**Taiki E**

**John Vakidis and Hone Kouka**

First production: Te Rakau Hua O Te Wao Tapu
1997

Cast:

- Adrian Wagner
- Toni Huata
- Te Arepa Kahi
- Jerry Banse
- Meg Williams
- Te Wairemana Campbell
- Khelah Love

Production:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Jim Moriarty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1998

**The Powder Room**

**Glenda Tuiana**

First production: Bats Theatre
Wellington, March 1998
Cast
Julia Dean
Megan Peinell
Evelyn Ashton
Celeste Bell

Production
PRODUCER
Greg Wikstrom