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Towards Theories of Māori Feminisms

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He tau pai te tau
He tau ora te tau
He tau ngehe te tau
He tau no te wahine
Rapua he purapura e tupu ai te tangata

The year is good
The year is peaceful
The year is full of promise
It is the year of women (a time for peace and growth)
Seek, therefore, the seed from which will come the greatest growth for all people[1]

We need to actively honour, to celebrate the contributions, and affirm the mana of Māori women: those tīpuna wāhine who have gone before us; those wāhine toa who give strength to our culture and people today; and those kōtiro and mokopuna who are being born now, and who will be born in the future, to fulfil our dreams. These words restate a basic tenet of feminist theory: that as women we have a right to our herstories. Throughout our story as a people, Māori women have been successful innovators and leaders. Our work and deeds have had a significant impact on Māori culture and society, breaking new ground, often in radical ways. And yet, our women, and their stories, have been buried deeper and deeper in the annals of time by the processes of oppression that seek to render us invisible and keep us out of the records.

In order to make sense of the reality of Māori women's lives, our herstories must be told; they must be considered alongside the stories of our iwi, our peoples; and of Aotearoa, our land. The history of Aotearoa since contact with Pākehā adds another dimension to our stories, as does an analysis of our international connections beyond our immediate waters.

Having approached a study of our stories in such a way, we may be able to reflect honestly on the reality of Māori women's lives; the connections we have with our past, our contemporary situation, and the dreams we have for tomorrow.

The need to write Māori women back into the records, to make ourselves visible — all of which may seem to some feminists to be stating the obvious — is a necessary part of introducing a paper which aims to work towards Māori feminist theories. Such is the state of the struggle to validate and affirm Māori women's studies in some quarters.[2] There it is still considered unnecessary to focus on Māori women and girls in their own right. It is argued that because Māori culture and society is holistic in nature, any study of them can only be carried out in a context in which the holism of both remains intact through every phase of the study, in order for it to be authentic and authoritative to Māori.

The essence of this position is central to this paper. I hope to show that in order to understand the needs of Māori women and girls it is essential to develop Māori feminist theories in which Māori society and culture are central. This, however, does not preclude the necessity for specific analysis of the needs of women and girls in their own right. Aspects of our culture are continually being considered in their own right: weavers, musicians, writers, sports people, political parties, iwi, all meet regularly to work together. Such clearly focused work is also necessary if we are to realistically provide for the needs of Māori women and girls.

To argue that this work is unnecessary is also to imply that the life experiences of Māori women and men are the same, hence there is no need for Māori women's studies. This is not so. The life experiences of Māori women and men are not the same. Māori women's health, education, family structure and support, employment and unemployment statistics are significantly different from Māori men. Our women earn less, are left alone to raise children, take subjects at school which prepare them for the lowest paid, least secure sectors of the labour market, and have health problems which lead the world in negative indices in some areas such as smoking and related health problems.[3] The issue of life styles and opportunities for Māori women and girls is a serious one and demands our specific concern. People should not feel the need to discuss the plight of Māori always in general terms, without highlighting the specific needs and concerns of our women and girls.

In our work with Māori women we need to recognize that they, like any other community of women, are not a homogeneous group. A number of factors influence Māori women's development: tribal affiliation, social class, sexual preference, knowledge of traditional Māori tikanga, knowledge

of the Māori language, rural or urban location, identification on the political spectrum from radical to traditional, place in the family, the level of formal schooling and educational attainments to name but a few.

These factors must be taken into account when our women's stories are being researched, and they must be accepted without judgement. There is still destructive debate taking place in some quarters over who are 'real' and, heaven forbid, 'acceptable' Māori women. The discussions that go on about who is not a real Māori, or not Māori enough, or only a weekend Māori, best serve the interests of those who wish to see us kept off the record and out of control. Precious time is wasted debating *amongst ourselves*, who is and who isn't an 'acceptable' Māori. Trying to identify the 'ideologically correct, real Māori women' has already proven futile. The decade of the 1980s will be remembered for many things, some of them lessons learnt from mistakes made. We have been through times when families, relationships, and people's sanity were destroyed at the hands of activists, working to attain goals very similar to the current kawenata of Māori development, who tried to change those identified as not coming up to predetermined 'acceptable standards'.[4]

The identification of Māori is an issue over which whānau, hapū, and iwi have cultural control. This control is exercised through tikanga Māori, including whakapapa. Self-appointed Māori who question the identity of other Māori, at an individual level, *according to their own agenda*, are meddling in the affairs of whānau, hapū, and or iwi which are not their prerogative. As Māori we have challenged tauiwi for the right to our mana. Some self appointed activists have now taken over the task of attacking the mana of our people at an individual level, where tauiwi left off. Ironically, they claim to be doing this in the name of Māori causes! If Maoridom really is at crisis point, then surely it stands to reason that our meagre resources, both human and material, will be best served by clearly identifying the goals of Māori development, as the Hui Taumata did, and then committing our limited resources to attaining those goals as quickly as possible. The current in-fighting and debate over the least important questions only postpones the day when Māori attain the goals of Māori development, and when Māori women, as a part of this movement, are whole and strong once more.

The word 'reality' will be used regularly throughout this paper. We need to celebrate our visions and to share our perspectives for these are precious taonga that we possess. Dreams and visions are energizing and exciting. As Rangimarie Rose Pere has so eloquently reminded us 'to us, the dreamers are important' (Cox 1987). They enable us to enter a world beyond the constraints of that which our bodies inhabit, opening up the

challenges of new possibilities. Our work must also reflect the reality of Māori women's lives.[5] The real experiences of Māori women and girls, retold and recorded by us, provide a crucial base from which to develop strategies of change for Māori women. A balance must be reached between the world which minds, hearts, and souls can visit and that in which our bodies must dwell.

Puhi wāhine e pao i runga i tō kuru pounamu
Arā ki te horo ahau
Ko au tonu te mekameka ka noho i runga i ngā take o ngā puhi maunga puha i te kōrero
Ko au tonu te uha o tōku mana
Ko au tonu

Noble women, chant upon your greenstone rock
That if I am to be shattered
I am to be the greenstone necklaces that will sit upon the base of every female mountain that activates the words:
I am the source of my own power
I am

(Black 1983)

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The development of theories of Māori feminisms is an urgent task facing both the women's and Māori movements if the life chances and life styles of Māori women are to be improved. This assertion is likely to be denied by some traditionalists, to be debated but not seen as a priority by some activists, to be laughed at by some chauvinists and patriarchs, to be taken up by increasing numbers of Māori feminists. However it is received, it will remain permanently on the agenda of both movements.

Theory is not an academic luxury, it is a necessary part of our revolutionary equipment. It can be a tool for empowerment and liberation. As Sue Middleton has shown in her seminal papers 'Towards a sociology of women's education in Aotearoa',[6] and her contribution to this volume, the development of indigenous theory in Aotearoa makes an invaluable contribution to our work because it is pivotal in completing our understanding of ourselves and the connections we have with the world around us. Without it we come to understand ourselves only as others see us. The development of theories of Māori feminisms is not an ostrich approach to Māori development, where Māori feminists have their heads buried in the sand, not aware of or interested in the world around them,

concentrating only on the role or status of Māori women, in isolation from the world they live in. This kind of posture is self-defeating if development is the aim. It is especially so because you can't even see who is kicking you in the bum, let alone catch them at it! A more appropriate analogy is perhaps that of a bird flying high in the sky, with full view of the horizons around it, moving in directions and at a speed that it can control. This is the power offered by Māori feminisms.

For our day-to-day needs we have a range of tools available from which to fashion a meaningful existence. Some are to be found at the level of real, physical objects which we use every day: toothbrush, knife, hose. They are important and useful specialist tools. They are tools which our bodies use every day of our lives. If we pick the wrong tool for the job, the outcome is a disaster. Try ironing with a spade, digging up a field with a toothbrush, drying washing in a microwave. They know which tools we need for the jobs that we do every day of our lives. When we lack a tool necessary for our survival, we make a new one.

Other tools are not of this kind. They are intangible, tools which we cannot see, grasp with our hands, or employ the power of our physical strength to use. They are equally as valuable in our lives. These are tools of the heart, mind and soul: te ngākau, te hinengaro, te wairua. They know how to use them, why we need them, and what their powers are. They are the sources from which these tools are born. Theory is a tool of this kind: a powerful intangible tool which harnesses the powers of the mind, heart, and soul. It has the power to make sense of a mass of ideas, observations, facts, hunches, experiences. With the right theory as a tool we can take the right to our tino rangatiratanga, our sovereignty as Māori women,[7] to be in control of making sense of our world and our future, ourselves. We can and must design new tools — Māori feminist theories, to ensure that we have control over making sense of our world and our future. This is a feminist position in which the artificial creation, inflation, and maintenance of male power over women is unacceptable.

We don't need anyone else developing the tools which will help us to come to terms with who we are. We can and will do this work. Real power lies with those who design the tools — it always has. This power is ours. Through the process of developing such theories we will contribute to our empowerment as Māori women, moving forward in our struggles for our people, our lands, our world, ourselves.

Data bases for theories of Māori feminisms

There are at least four central Māori sources of data from which to develop theories of Māori feminisms. These Māori sources are primary sources

in this work. Māori society, both te ao hou and te ao tawhito (the present and past); te reo Māori, the Māori language; Māori women's herstories, the stories of the lives of our women; and ngā tikanga Māori, Māori customary practices. As Rangimarie Rose Pere's seminal work *Te Wheke*[8] has shown educationalists, analyses of Māori society must be grounded in te ao Māori, the Māori world. Ngahuia Te Awekotuku's analysis of her time as an activist in the sixties also argues this (Te Awekotuku 1989). Recalling days when the politics of student activists drew heavily from the political analyses of the United States, imported into Aotearoa, she identifies the need for the development of indigenous models to inform our visions and practices.

Depending on the nature of the study, the data base generated from Māori sources can be augmented by other significant sources. Feminist theory and herstories from other women of Aotearoa, particularly our Pākehā sisters; from other coloured women around the world; from indigenous women, whose people have been colonized; in fact from other women wherever they are, all provide an international perspective. Beyond these sources of feminist knowledge are the other vast data bases which document everything else ever written (although usually excluding women).

Māori society: te ao tawhito, te ao hou

An historical analysis is fundamental to an understanding of our society. Critical analysis of the development of our society must include everything that has had an impact on Aotearoa, from the time of creation to contemporary times, and should take into account plans for the future. The tribal basis of Māori society cannot be overlooked in any study of Maoridom. Iwi Māori have suffered different fates at the hands of the colonizers. This iwi focus is particularly relevant in studies of Māori women, as this area is one in which tribal kawa and tikanga differ markedly. Without iwi-based analysis, people may assume that the tikanga which apply to women and women's knowledge are pan-tribal in their origins and impact. They are not. The role of Ngāti Porou women in Ngāti Porou society, as detailed in Apirana Mahuika's MA thesis, for example, provides a fascinating historical analysis which helps to explain why Ngāti Porou women are so strong, to this day! (Mahuika 1973)

There is no one theory of Māori feminism; there will be many.

Te reo Māori: the Māori language

Both oral and written sources in Māori as well as English should be consulted in this work, as much of the history of Maoridom remains in the oral archives of the various tribes. Within Māori oral traditions, there

exists a range of rich primary sources of data; 'haka, waiata, tauparapara, karanga, poroporoaki, paki waitara, whakapapa, whakatauki, and pepeha' (Karetu 1975). From these sources an authentic and authoritative Māori data base can be generated from which to study the role and status of Māori women and Māori feminisms.

Māori women's herstories

Work for Māori women must be promoted and undertaken by Māori women. People have spoken on our behalf for long enough. In the pursuit of equity, participation is central to empowerment. As the women of the Te Kōhanga Reo movement are finding out through their experiences, there is no substitute for taking personal responsibility for learning — it is crucial for the empowerment of Māori women. Sue Middleton's research, which incorporates women's oral histories, provides an excellent example of how women's herstories 'describe and relate the personal experiences of individuals to structural and historical phenomena' (Middleton 1990). Māori women must be provided with the time, space, and resources necessary to develop the skills to undertake this work, starting with the exploration, reclamation and celebration of our herstories, our stories as Māori women. The recently published annotated bibliography of work written by or about Māori women, contains over seven hundred references, many of which are biographical or autobiographical (Erai, Fuli, Irwin, and Wilcox 1991).

Tikanga Māori: Māori cultural practices

Since Māori and Pākehā have come into contact, traditional Māori cultural values and practices have been under attack. Some have been buried by colonization, others have survived through adaptation. The reclaiming of traditional cultural practices and the deconstruction of those which have changed since the arrival of the Pākehā are important sources of learning. The role and status of women is one of the major areas in which this work is necessary, and it needs to be undertaken from a Māori feminist perspective. Māori women's analyses of the role and status of Māori women in pre-European Māori society,[9] differ markedly from those undertaken by Pākehā male anthropologists[10] and the Pākehā women whose reconstructionist work is based on theirs.[11]

Traditional Values and Contemporary Practices: Women and Speaking Rights on the Marae

I would like to make the case for the development of theories of Māori feminisms by exploring a thorny contemporary issue: the issue of speaking rights on the marae. What I hope this analysis will show, is that in order

to understand the debate surrounding the issue, some understanding of Māori language, customs, and cultural practices, and an anti-racist, Aotearoa-feminist perspective are prerequisites. The people able to speak from such a knowledge base are few and far between. And so the misunderstanding continues.

The speaking rights of women on the marae is one of the most misunderstood and abused contemporary issues of our culture and time. Many of those engaged in the debate, and identified as 'on the Pākehā side', have been accused of trying to analyse Māori culture in Pākehā terms, in order to give the colonization of our culture and people a twentieth century face, in the name of feminism and equality of rights. Those 'on the Māori side' claim that Pākehā ideas have been used to make observations and judgements about the Māori world with little or no attempt to reconcile the different epistemological bases of the two cultures. Those 'on the Māori side' are also accused of using the misunderstanding which surrounds this issue to protect colonized views about the role and status of women and that it is evidence of sexism and Māori male hegemony in the Māori community. Some Pākehā use this 'evidence' of blatant sexism to justify both their ignorance about the Māori language and culture and their refusal to become informed. As you can imagine, this does not go down well in Māori circles! It places Māori women who may wish to talk about this important issue with their whānau, hapū, and iwi, in a very difficult position.

One major concern is the fact that very few people really debate the issue in full. It represents one of the classic examples of cross-cultural misunderstanding, of people 'talking past each other'.[12] People wanting to learn more about this area have been attacked for asking questions about the tikanga and protocol which pertain to the matter of women speaking on the marae. A very defensive mentality has grown around the subject and made it virtually untouchable in many quarters. For women, this practice of being attacked, bullied and ostracized for seeking knowledge is not new. Once it is recognized in these terms, women can learn to develop coping strategies for both the attacks and attackers. For Māori women, this is much more difficult, because there are so few 'Māori, woman-friendly' sources of knowledge about speaking rights on the marae, which are authentic and authoritative to Māori.

Critical features of the debate are:

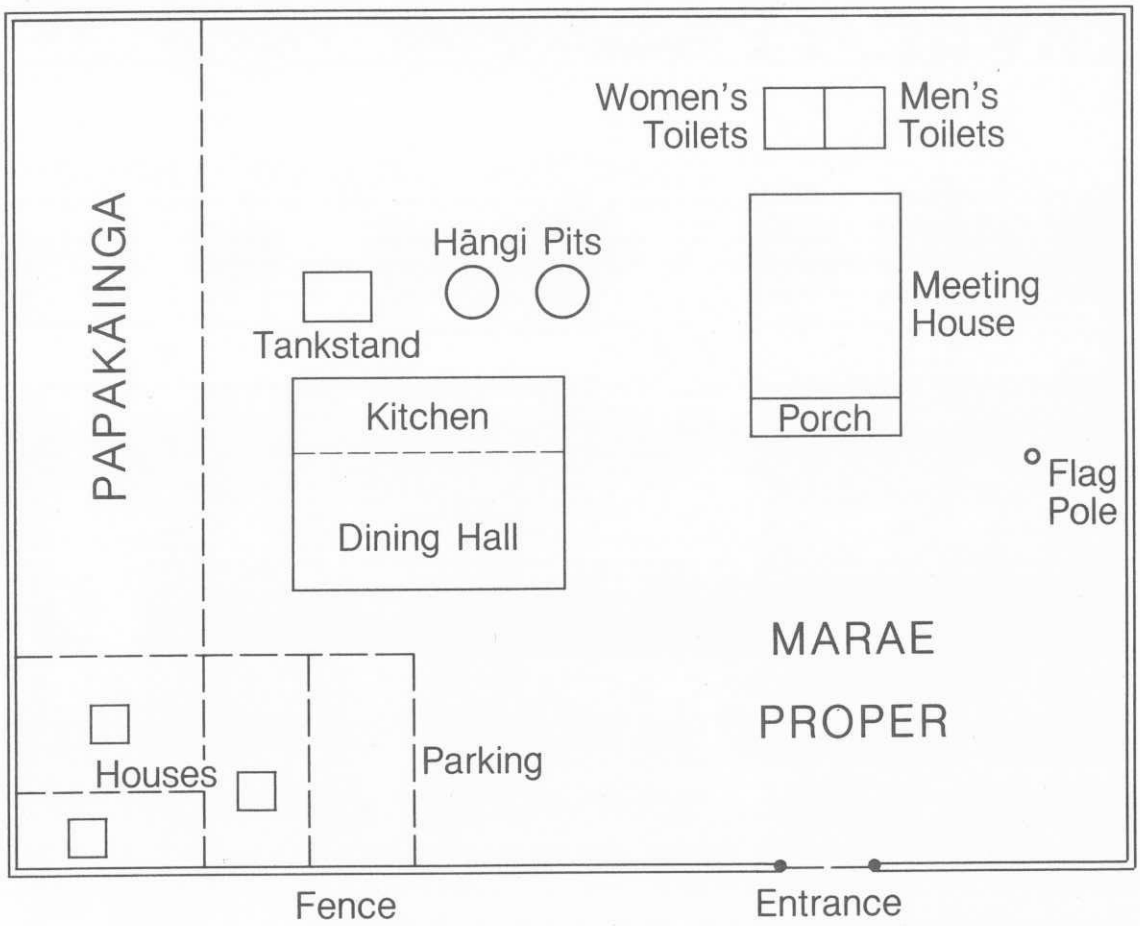
its location on the marae ātea, the central courtyard of the marae complex, directly in front of the wharenui;

the roles men and women play in the rituals invoked during ceremonial procedures used to welcome people onto the marae;

the fact that in most tribal groups men whaikōrero outside on the marae ātea, women do not;
because men do whaikōrero and women do not in most areas, this is identified as an example of sexism, of the denial of women's rights;
from this example, Māori culture and society, by association, are also identified as sexist;
the misunderstanding surrounding this issue is used by public servants to stop Māori women being appointed to a range of positions throughout the public service, a clear instance of 'talking past each other'.

For those totally unfamiliar with the physical layout of a marae, the following is enclosed to provide a spatial organizer for the description and analysis that is to follow.

Sketch plan of a typical marae



Source: Joan Metge (1976: 228) *Rautahi: The Maoris of New Zealand*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

At issue in the debate are at least the following:
what counts as 'speaking' and who has the power to legitimate 'what counts as speaking'?
what 'rights' are we referring to?

what is the location, the marae or marae ātea, and in what contexts is the issue being discussed?
what are the 'rituals of encounter' practised on the marae ātea and what is the role of women during these rituals?
what tribal differences occur in the rituals of encounter practised on the marae ātea and what explanation accounts for these differences?
in what circumstances and for whom has this become an issue?
what are the implications of this analysis for contemporary New Zealand society?

This issue has challenged the marae, a central institution in Māori life and culture, and ideas about the role and status of women.[13] Targeting the marae as it has, this controversy has hit at the very heart of Maoridom and caused great pain. As a result, over the years the subject has become virtually untouchable. It is not debated openly, in an informative way — a hallmark of Māori oral tradition. The debate that does occur is usually carried out under very stressful conditions, and is a minefield of unstated and unexplored assumptions about what is happening, how actions are to be interpreted, and the relative importance of the various actors involved. It is into such a minefield that this writer tiptoes, if it is possible to tiptoe through a minefield as explosive as this one is!

Under what circumstances and for whom is this an issue?
The issue of women's speaking rights on the marae ātea has become increasingly prominent during the last twenty years. As the second wave of feminism made its impact on this country in the early seventies, the role and status of women in all sectors of our society was opened to public scrutiny and criticism (O'Neil 1990). In the process, the anger and frustrations of the feminist movement were visited upon individuals and institutions alike. The marae, the central most important institution in Maoridom, became a target for the visitation of some of this feeling.

Ironically, on at least two levels the debate engages in double standards which are seldom acknowledged. At the heart of the matter is the assertion that men whaikōrero, that women don't, and that this is an example of sexism, of the denial of women's rights. Here, the principle of equal rights is being argued in the context where male behaviour is used as the norm against which female behaviour is judged. Women weren't doing exactly what the men did, therefore what they were doing *didn't count, in its own right*. These feminists are proposing that Māori society and culture should adopt the very use of male behaviour which they would not accept for themselves, as a norm for judging female behaviour.

The second level at which a double standard exists concerns the power wielded by the two camps in the debate: the protagonists, with Pākehā society backing them up, used Pākehā power, amassed over the years through colonization and racism, so that they defined what counted as 'speaking'. The Māori community was relatively powerless in its bid to have its own definition of speaking rights validated. This at a time when there was international protest action for the rights of indigenous people to be upheld, and the racism which denied those rights to be exposed!

Another concern has been the development of a *range* of analytic strategies which work effectively with a *range* of different groups. Failure in this regard has led to some disastrous results. What works with a group of Pākehā feminists, women only, all subscribing to a similar notion of what feminism is, will not necessarily work with a Māori group consisting of a variety of ages and tribal affiliations — men and women, with differing views about the role and status of women! The point may seem trite in the 1990s, but it is still an important one. Many feminists, and I count myself here, have attempted to work through this question with a range of groups using the same methods.

The search for knowledge in such contexts becomes very problematic, at times openly dangerous to one's physical, cultural, and spiritual health. I will never forget the moment when, at a Māori women's hui, organized as part of the 1982 Women's Studies Association Conference and held on a marae in Palmerston North, a young Māori woman stood and asked the Māori males present (who included one of the most revered male kaumātua in the district at the time) to leave.[14] Her position was based on the notion that women should meet in women's only groups, and that men, if present, should know to leave, and be asked to do so if they don't know. The reply given included the statement that the men would not leave, and that she had no right to ask them to do so. We were told in no uncertain terms that we were on their marae,that they were the tangata whenua, guardians of the mauri of the wharenui, and that most of the women at the hui were manuhiri. Kawa pertaining to the roles of tangata whenua and manuhiri at hui on marae was briefly outlined. A short while later, we were informed that the kaumātua had another meeting to attend and that the men had to leave. The role of caring for the house, initially carried out by a male kaumātua, was then handed to a young local woman.

From this incident valuable knowledge was shared by all, and significant learning opportunities created. For a moment, it seemed that perhaps the venue chosen was the wrong one for the hui. In fact, the venue chosen was the correct one, and this incident, though incredibly painful at the time, was proof that Māori feminism is grounded in both Māori culture

and the women's movement. Further, that under the kaupapa of whānau development, Māori feminists work with all Māori people, including men, a principle which stands Māori feminism apart from some other expressions of feminism.

Implicit in feminist challenges on this matter are ideas that Māori culture and society are not just patriarchal, but misogynous. Both assertions must be subject to the same kind of thorough research and analysis that is undertaken in any other area of feminist scholarship before conclusions can be reached. For years, conclusions and pronouncements about our culture and society have preceded research and analysis.

For many Māori, having the right to speak on the marae is not an issue, and never has been. It is viewed as a Pākehā women's preoccupation, which is irrelevant for Māori. For a growing number, however,it is becoming a matter of importance, and needs to be carefully worked through.

What counts as 'speaking', and who decides what counts as speaking?
This question is pivotal to the whole debate. Māori culture is by tradition an oral culture, with an oral literature. I leave the definition of what counts as Māori literature to an expert:

> Maori literature may be classified tentatively as prose and poetry, though in Maori there is a fluidity between the two. These may be oral (unwritten) and written literature, and there are distinctive regional and descent group variations. Maori prose is of three kinds: traditional oral texts, modern oral compositions and modern written prose. (Dewes 1975)

In this context the following all count as 'speaking', in the category 'traditional oral text': karanga, waiata, tangi, whaikōrero. Protagonists in this debate have recognized only whaikōrero as 'speaking'. The other forms of oral arts, some in which women only speak, have not perhaps been regarded as *real* speech making, but when women waiata, karanga and tangi, our culture says that we are speaking through legitimate, and highly valued Māori oral arts. Others have denied this, claiming instead that it is only whaikōrero which counts as speaking. For Māori, the oral arts cover a wide variety of forms of speaking.

To what 'rights' are we referring?
Formal Māori marae procedures are not governed by the principles of democracy which form the basis of the dominant political system in Aotearoa: individuals do not automatically have the *right* to speak during the formal welcoming procedures on a marae, just as they do not have the automatic right to speak at formal welcoming procedures in Pākehā

culture. When visiting dignitaries are welcomed by a city, for example, Joe and Jill Bloggs don't have the right to jump up out of the crowd and take over proceedings, offering their own personal welcomes, just because we live in a democratic society. The speakers for the occasion will be carefully chosen to represent groups involved in the occasion. This point is crucial: when we talk about the welcoming procedure on the marae ātea, we are not considering a routine part of our culture. It is one of the most highly ritualized events, and as such involves only a small group of people, just as in Pākehā culture, where small groups of people are chosen by the people, to represent them.

However, Pākehā culture tends not to have formal rituals of encounter, invoked for all, regardless of status, which parallel the rituals of encounter witnessed on the marae. Certainly, in Pākehā culture, when important dignitaries or royalty visit, we see all sorts of pomp and ceremony. But, when run-of-the-mill Pākehā meet each other, the rituals of encounter are nowhere near as complex as is the case in Māori culture. Observers of marae protocol, witnessing the regularity with which the rituals are invoked, may have mistakenly assumed that their prestige is somehow diminished. This is not the case. Though marae welcomes may occur every day, they remain highly ceremonial occasions in our culture which should be compared with similar kinds of experiences in Pākehā culture. In neither culture do the principles of democracy apply to participation at such times.

What location is being referred to — the marae or marae ātea — and in what contexts is the issue being discussed?

The following unfortunate[15] comment was taken from a copy of 'He Panui', the Ministry of Women's Affairs newsletter (1988): '. . . generally speaking, women do not speak on the marae . . .'. This introduces an element of ambiguity with regards the meaning of 'marae', a concept which is central to the whole argument. Marae can be used with at least two distinct meanings; firstly as *a whole living complex* (Walker 1975:21); *the traditional meeting place of the Māori people* (Tauroa H. and P. 1989); or secondly, as marae proper, *an open space of ground in front of an ancestral meeting house* (Walker 1975); or marae ātea *the area between the hosts and the guests during a welcome* (Tauroa H. and P. 1989).

To say that women do not speak on the marae, using marae in its first context, is obviously ridiculous. It does not explain why women arrive home after hui on marae with no voices; how jokes, yarns, and other networking rely on hui for their effectiveness; nor does it explain the noise heard on most marae, which is often created by the women! In the above quotation, the marae proper or marae ātea, has become abbreviated to marae, with serious consequences.

Kawa governing behaviour on the marae ātea during formal, ceremonial occasions is usually relaxed after these are complete. For example, during a pōwhiri 'all should refrain from walking about in the immediate area of the marae-atea during the mihi. One must never walk in front of a speaker. If children are present, they too must be restrained from walking across the marae-atea at this time' (Tauroa H. and P. 1989). When formalities are over, this area is utilized in more flexible ways, though not recklessly so. People can and do walk across the marae ātea after the formal ritual is complete, but this area is never a free-for-all playground. It always remains a place for dignified contact and conduct. This point is important and will be returned to later.

Kawa governing protocol during formal welcoming procedures does not apply to patterns of interaction in informal situations, only formal ones.

What are the 'rituals of encounter' practised on the marae ātea and what is the role of women during these rituals?

Focusing our attention then on the marae ātea, and not the whole complex known as the marae, let us consider what actually happens there during the formal marae procedure of welcome. The whole process can include up to eight distinct types of ceremony: waerea, wero/taki, karanga, poroporoaki, pōwhiri, tangi, whaikōrero, and hongi (Salmond, 1975). Each of these features is regulated by its own kawa, and in many tribes, though not all, they are gender related. These are karanga (usually women), wero (usually men) and whaikōrero (usually men). The rest are practised by men and women. The kawa that governs behaviour on the marae is a complex set of ideas which is based in Māoritanga. In order to be able to understand te kawa o te marae and to discuss its meaning and relevance, one must become a student of tikanga Māori and te reo Māori.

Women usually begin pōwhiri with karanga. A woman from the tangata whenua side begins with an opening karanga, call of welcome. 'The karanga constitutes the first words spoken between tangata whenua and manuhiri. It is the first expression of welcome.' (Tauroa H. and P. 1989) The kaupapa of the karanga is crucial to the occasion. Women offer the first call of welcome to all who have gathered, the living and the dead; they make reference to the people gathered and their interconnectedness by acknowledging all the different groups that have come together; they also address the purpose of the gathering, openly referring to the reason that has brought everyone together on this occasion. The karanga from the tangata whenua is replied to from the manuhiri, the visiting side. Following the interchange kaikaranga from the tangata whenua and manuhiri, the pōwhiri moves into its next phase.

In te kawa o te marae, the central focus is not on individual rights or needs; rather, on whānau, hapū, and/or iwi rights and needs, which are of central importance. Individuals speak on behalf of whānau, hapū, iwi and other groups. Their speaking rights are conferred on them by the groups they represent.

What tribal differences are there in the rituals of encounter practised on the marae and what accounts for these differences?

As with other elements of protocol, the kawa that relates to women during pōwhiri on the marae ātea varies between tribes. In most tribes women do not whaikōrero on the marae ātea. But, this is not the case for all tribes. Ngāti Porou and Ngāti Kahungunu are two tribal areas in which some women can and do whaikōrero. The explanation for the differing tikanga pertaining to whaikōrero and the role of women lies deep in the history of each tribe. Research into tribal differences in kawa is necessary if we are to make an educated analysis of this issue.

For example, consider Muriwai and the 'kawa wahine' that has developed as a result of her deeds. Muriwai was a sister of Toroa, Puhimoanaariki and Taneatua, of the Matatua canoe. At Whakatane they sighted a beautiful mountain and a harbour with a good landing place. They decided that they should inspect this beautiful place. Muriwai and some of the people were left aboard the canoe. The rising sea and currents carried it close to the rocks. Powerless to act, and recognizing the imminent crisis, Muriwai stood in the canoe, chanted a special karakia, then called out 'ē — ī! Tēnā, kia whakatāne ake au i ahau! — Now I shall make myself a man!' She ordered the crew to paddle away to safety, saving it from sure destruction. Eruera Kawhia Whakatane Stirling was named Whakatane in memory of his ancestress Muriwai. From her deeds is derived the '"kawa wahine", a women's etiquette amongst the tribes descended from Muriwai . . . high-born women in the direct line from Muriwai have held the right to speak on the marae'.[16] Eruera Stirling's mother, Mihi Kotukutuku, was one of those women. In the book *Eruera: the Teachings of a Maori Elder*, he retells the story of Muriwai's deeds. This deed, he relates, is often incorrectly attributed to Wairaka, the daughter of Toroa.

What is the significance of this in contemporary New Zealand society?

During the contemporary Māori renaissance there is a great deal of energy being generated by people seeking to learn about the traditional ways of ngā tīpuna Māori, analysing the impact of colonization on our tikanga and reconstructing, where appropriate, traditional cultural ways. In this

search for knowledge from the traditional Māori world, there is a danger that what we are able to retrieve will be grasped uncritically and accepted as tūturu Māori wherever it is identified as such! New Māori tikanga are emerging everywhere and being incorrectly labelled as 'traditional Māori culture'. At one level there is no problem with this. All cultures are dynamic and continually changing. However, it is clear that many of the 'newly traditional' Māori cultural practices that are emerging serve the interests of Pākehā men whilst disempowering Māori women, in the name of 'Māori cultural practices'.

Unfortunately, when cultural practices are identified as traditional, many Māori people feel unable to view them critically, because they come from a world which we are trying to reconstruct. It is a strange culture that legitimizes the rights of male outsiders over and above the rights of its own women. These new 'tikanga' seem to many Māori women to be new practices of male bonding, not Māori culture, and they should be recognized as such.

The marae is identified as the central domain of Māori life, and, as such, it is an important location in which to consider the patriarchal bias of some of these new, 'traditional' Māori cultural practices.

When we contemplate the development of marae in recent years, it is possible to identify specific examples of change necessary to accommodate the needs of a dynamic culture. We now have tribal marae built outside traditional tribal boundaries, intertribal marae, and multicultural marae (Metge 1976), all adaptations to traditional cultural concepts around which marae were established. Wharenui utilize the latest technology to ensure greatest comfort and design appeal, incorporating the latest technology such as central heating. Some are carved by tauiwi. Styles, subject matter, and building materials depict the changing times. Some wharenui contain taonga from Pākehā culture which promote biculturalism by providing links to Pākehā culture in the wharenui. A beautiful example of this is a stained glass window depicting the arrival of the Pākehā in the wharenui at Parewahawaha, Bulls. When we put koha down these days it is more often than not money. Rarely is it augmented by delicacies which the manuhiri are renowned for, such as sea food.

Some commentators believe that the pace of change is such that the kawa of the marae has reached crisis point (Karetu 1978). Young men are speaking out of turn, before their elder brothers and whilst their fathers are still alive (Rangihau 1975). Indeed, in some well known families, the father and any number of the sons can be heard speaking in their district at the same time! Ironically, some of these very people are also employed to teach others about our culture. Furthermore, they are doing so by

requiring that their students adhere to strict traditional tikanga, which they themselves are not practising! Some men are speaking who are not fluent speakers of Māori, they sometimes break into English when their Māori runs out or is insufficient. Pākehā men speak on the marae ātea, some fluent in Māori, some in Māori and English, some in English only, some using speech notes. What feminists might call the bonds of patriarchy are giving tauiwi men participatory rights in our culture over Māori women, simply because of their maleness.

What this 'crisis in kawa' and the changes continuously being made to marae show Māori women, is that our culture can and is being changed daily, and that many of these changes accommodate the needs of men and the links that they have with each other, across cultural boundaries. The role and status of women remains petrified, like a slab of rock, unchanging, immobile, inflexible, whilst everything around us in our culture is rapidly changing. In such a context, where it is accepted that Māori culture is being transformed to accommodate the needs of a vital, changing culture, legitimate questions can be raised about why it is that the rights and roles of Māori women remain unchanged? When a Pākehā man, who is tauiwi, not a speaker of the language, or tangata whenua in a Māori sense of this word, is allowed to stand and whaikōrero on the marae ātea simply because he is a man, then Māori women surely have cause for concern.

This paper has sought to show that we speak, through various forms of oral arts, according to our traditional ways on marae, and that to state the opposite position is incorrect. But, if the kawa of these tikanga is to change to fit a contemporary context, is there not a logic to the position that the changes should include Māori women before Pākehā men if they are to be accepted as cultural changes and not patriarchal bonding?

In recent times it has become common for Pākehā men to be given participatory rights to everything about our culture from the protocol governing behaviour on the marae ātea to the political power to speak on our behalf.

Another important feature when considering 'location', is that tikanga which are supposed to pertain to the marae ātea *only* are being applied to situations off the marae ātea over which they cannot exercise the same cultural power. In Māori culture the marae ātea is considered to be the domain of Tumatauenga, the god of war. In areas where women do not traditionally whaikōrero, the gender division of cultural practices is related to the power of Tumatauenga over this site and the need to protect Māori women, and the generations they carry, from the potential danger of forays onto it. However, inside the wharenui the power of Rongo, the god of

peace, prevails. Here, in theory, all are safe to speak in any form. So, the argument used to determine male and female speaking rights outside, on the marae ātea does not hold *inside*, according to Māori culture.

Some blatant examples of people taking a tikanga which relates to the marae atea, and transferring its cultural power to another location in which it has no meaning, are those in which Māori women have been denied jobs at all levels of the public service because 'they can't speak on marae'. Māori women have been denied jobs from school teaching to university professorial positions because of this. In the most ludicrous example that I know of, a Māori woman, employed as a temporary itinerant teacher of Māori, was not permanently appointed to the job when it was advertised because she could not 'speak on the marae'. The job required that the person be a fluent speaker of Māori, which she was . . . A man with a well known Māori family name was appointed to this job. He could not speak Māori, but he had the qualifications of the right gender and whakapapa!

Cases like this show that not only do men extend participatory rights in our culture to other men before Māori women, but they abuse cultural power off the marae, where it has no control, in order to disempower Māori women. In such cases Māori communities have been used to legitimate a practice which enables Pākehā to discriminate against Māori women, in the name of our culture.

Conclusion

It is incorrect to argue that according to traditional tikanga Māori, Māori women do not 'speak' on the marae ātea. Māori women speak on the marae ātea through various forms of our oral arts, including whaikōrero in some areas, during the formal procedures governing, for example, ceremonies of welcome onto the marae.

We are currently watching the evolution of strange new cultural practices in which men are bonding to each other, through patriarchy, to give each other participatory rights across Māori and Pākehā culture, in ways which exclude Māori women. As a result of the dynamic processes of change to which our culture is subject, we could be seeing men karanga, women whaikōrero, both Māori women and women moving through our culture, completely interchangeably. This is not happening. The changes being made to our culture are freeing up the role and status of all men, Māori and Pākehā, whilst petrifying, meaning *ceasing to change or develop*, the role and status of Māori women. It is also having the effect of petrifying, using the other meaning of the word, *frightening*, Māori women about their culture.

In their search for the aroha that we are told is a central poutokomanawa of our culture, many Māori women find instead ostracism, rigid role definitions and expectations, and derision. Contemporary expressions of our culture offer little to some Māori women but the shackles of oppression from which others have already freed themselves.

As I hope to have shown through this analysis, a Māori feminist theoretical analysis helps us to see what is really happening to our culture, and challenges us to participate in cultural change in ways which are based in kaupapa Māori. It will be the development of Māori feminist theories, in which the artificial inflation of mana tāne is problematic, which will keep our culture honest to itself and to our people. The development of Māori feminist theories, in which mana tāne and mana wahine are equally powerful, is crucial if our culture is to retain its mana as Māori culture, and not a hybrid version of international patriarchy. The development of Māori feminist theories will challenge us as a people to reconstruct mana tāne and mana wahine in a contemporary context.

When our changing cultural practices focus on the recreation of this partnership, fundamental to whānau development, then the first partnership lost when the Treaty of Waitangi was signed — the partnership between Māori men and women — will be better placed to empower all of Maoridom.

Notes

1. Report of the Royal Commission on Social Policy (1988: 155) *Volume II: Future Directions*.
2. In the paper 'Challenges, To Maori Feminists', *Broadsheet* 182, October 1990, I have identified and discussed a number of the major issues that I think face Māori feminists and Māori Women's Studies today.
3. See for example Department of Statistics/Ministry of Women's Affairs (1990).
4. At the Hui Taumata, Maori Economic Summit (1984) the Māori people assembled wrote a kawenata (covenant) of Māori development, a blueprint for Maoridom to work from as it moved forward into the twenty-first century. It stated that the objectives of Māori development were: 1) to strive to achieve parity between the Māori and Pākehā people of New Zealand in the areas of housing, education, land development, employment, business, health; 2) to strengthen Maoridom's development of identity through Māori language and the heritage of the ancestors, the marae, the Māori spiritual pathway and Māori mind, and tribal identity; and 3) to achieve these objectives within the development decade declared by Maoridom at the Hui Taumata. This kawenata was published in Annex D, Board of Maori Affairs Report, 1986.
5. I wish to pay tribute to the influence of Irihapeti Ramsden on my thinking about the need to highlight the reality of Māori women's lives. Since the latter part of 1988 I have had various opportunities to listen to Irihapeti speak, and to discuss ideas with her.

6. See Middleton, Sue 'Towards A Sociology of Women's Education in Aotearoa', in Middleton, Sue (ed.) (1988).
7. See Awatere, Donna (1984) for a full analysis of Māori Sovereignty.
8. Pere, Rangimarie Rose (1991). This work is also published as a paper in Middleton, Sue (ed.) (1988).
9. See for example Papakura, Makareta (1986) and Pere, Rose (1983).
10. See for example Best, Elsdon (1924).
11. See for example Heuer, Berys (1972).
12. This phrase is the title of a seminal work, *Talking Past Each Other*, Dr Joan Metge and Dr Patricia Kinloch, Wellington: Victoria University Press, published in 1978, and regularly reprinted ever since, which discusses the findings of their research into how people from different cultures communicate.
13. See Salmond, Anne (1975) and Tauroa, Pat and Hiwi (1989) for detailed discussions of the significance of the marae and the tikanga pertaining to it in Māori society and culture.
14. For a general report of this hui see Cameron, Kathie 'Maori Women's Hui', in Women's Studies Association (1983).
15. In my opinion it was most unfortunate that the newsletter did not contain a detailed statement about this issue. It chose instead to focus on a complex issue simply, adding to the confusion and misunderstanding surrounding the matter, rather than enabling people to become informed about it.
16. This section is drawn heavily from Stirling, Eruera (1980: 84) and Anne Salmond (1975). Those wishing to read about this famous woman should refer to the original text for a fuller discussion of her deeds.

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