CHAPTER NINE

DEVELOPMENTS TOWARDS MANA WAHINE THEORY

Just by being Maori and a woman, who thinks about her life, and her people - one is on the cutting edge. That is where Maori women live - on the cutting edge.¹

Introduction

This thesis is a theoretical discussion. Chapters Four and Five focused on Kaupapa Māori theory, highlighting both context and elements that are a part of how Kaupapa Māori theory is currently articulated. This chapter continues a discussion of issues related to theory and in particular the positioning of Māori women in theoretical developments. It is argued the following chapters, that Mana Wahine theory is a theoretical framework that provides for a Kaupapa Māori analysis that focuses on issues that directly impact on Māori women. In saying that it is also my contention that any theory that engages racism, sexism, capitalist exploitation, and homophobia, as it is argued drives Mana Wahine theory, will be ultimately be beneficial for all Māori not just Māori women. It is noted that this thesis does not intend to provide a definitive framework, rather it continues the process referred to by Kathie Irwin as moving ‘towards’ Maori women’s theories.² The intention is therefore to indicate that Mana Wahine theory can provide a Kaupapa Māori theoretical framework that engages issues from Māori women’s viewpoints and in doing so engage issues as they impact specifically on Māori girls and women. As such, this chapter continues the process of openings that has been the focus of this thesis. This chapter contributes to the openings for Mana Wahine theory by looking at the relationship of theory to Māori women and addressing some of the historical underpinnings of the development of Mana Wahine theory. In doing so it highlights that Mana Wahine theory has a genealogical pathway that has laid for us examples of resistance and cultural expressions by Māori women that in turn influence our present day articulation of Mana Wahine theory.

The previous three chapters have given some examination of the notions of race, gender and class emphasising that these ideologies intersect in ways that seek to oppress and marginalise Māori women. In providing an overview of historical constructions I have engaged a range of sources as an indication that beliefs regarding Māori women are constructed from both primary and secondary

source material. Including secondary sources highlights the assumption of truth of the primary material in the reproduction by other authors. It is my contention that given the current context of colonisation within which we find ourselves, theories are needed that are able to engage the complexities of Māori women’s experience and the discourse that have been presented. To date there has limited discussion in regard to how those theories may be developed. Much of what has been advanced has come directly from Māori women. It is my view that this is not only appropriate but is essential to the articulation of Māori women’s analyses. I do not argue for a singular theory. I do not argue that Western theories are totally irrelevant to Māori women’s analysis. Nor do I seek to impose a framework on all Māori women. What I am doing is bringing together a range of ways in which Māori women talk about theory in an attempt to identify some elements that may be clearly articulated as Māori women’s theories or Mana Wahine theories. This in essence is what this entire thesis is about. Having outlined some discussion regarding myself and the academy, Kaupapa Māori theory, colonial impositions of race, gender, class and examples of the intersection of these ideologies and colonisation, I am now where I really want to be, talking Māori women’s theory.

This chapter, lays the idea that theory is important for Māori women, however it is emphasised that theory must be developed from our own place. As such this chapter begins the conversation towards the assertion in the final chapter that Mana Wahine is both a valid and essential development in Kaupapa Māori theory. It is important that in looking at Mana Wahine to context those developments within the wider political and cultural contexts of Māori people generally. Why, because the experiences of Māori women are influenced in extreme ways by our experiences of the oppression and suppression of te reo Māori me ōna tikanga. These cannot be separated from our experiences as Māori women but are interwoven and interact in complex ways within our daily experiences.

For Kathie Irwin the experiences of Māori women and the theorising of those experiences need to be undertaken with both a focus on being female and being Māori and that those can be analysed through Māori frameworks that incorporate at the centre of analysis Māori concepts of the world. In promoting these ideas Kathie identifies that there is a need for Māori women to struggle against any those beliefs that attempt to deny Māori women access to the necessary knowledge and tools that will enable us to take control of our own definitions and knowledge bases. In her article ‘Towards Theories of Māori Feminisms’ she argues that the tools of analysis need to be developed by Māori women

\[\text{2 Irwin, K. 1992 (b) op.cit.}\]
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. The 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.\(^3\)

The message is clear, it is for Māori women to determine our own theories. However, that is not in isolation but within the context of what it means to struggle against patriarchal institutions and also against colonial oppression, they are inseparable. The struggles for our people, our lands, our worlds, ourselves are struggles that are a part of our daily lives as Māori women, they are never about just being Māori or just being women but are about a combination of what those things mean. What this then opens is an idea that race, gender and class are interacting in complex ways and that any form of analysis needs to incorporate these considerations.

**Theory as a tool for Māori women**

Theory is identified as a tool that Māori women can use actively to explain and debate in and with the world. In my view it is crucial that Māori women define and control theory, whilst simultaneously providing critique of those non-Māori theorists that have defined theory within which we are supposed to ‘fit’. We need to control our own theories of the world and construct theories that embrace the experiences and realities of all Māori women and not just a selected few. Mana Wahine is identified as a framework through which we can develop theories that will support the projects of Māori women.\(^4\) Kathie Irwin argues strongly for the development of Māori women’s theories. She asserts a need to take from Western feminism what may be useful for Māori women, whilst simultaneously framing Māori women’s theories within Māori epistemologies, te reo me ōna tikanga. She argues the need to develop theoretical frameworks which allow for Māori women to position themselves within Te Ao Māori whilst providing for critical analysis and much needed research into what is happening for Māori women now and what Māori women themselves determine to be important aspects of Māori feminist theories.\(^5\)

This is a view that has been expressed by many Māori women. It is a call to recognise and acknowledge that Indigenous Peoples have been debating issues of oppression for many generations and therefore we

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\(^3\) Irwin, K., 1992 (b) 'Towards Theories of Māori Feminism' in Du Plessis, R. (ed.) with Bunkle, P., Irwin, K., Laurie, A., Middleton, S., 1992 Feminist Voices: Women’s Studies Texts for Aotearoa/New Zealand, Oxford University Press.


\(^5\) Irwin, K. 1992 (a) op.cit.
as Māori women have a history of analysis that can be drawn upon in terms of understanding, analysing and explaining our position and context. This is expressed powerfully by Kathie Irwin, who notes theory is

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, 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.

As I have argued in the Kaupapa Māori theory chapter there is a wariness of theory that exists for Māori people. This wariness, and at times distain, is well deserved. However, as Kathie so clearly states, if we are able to define, develop and control our own theoretical base as Māori women then theory is a tool that we can use for our own interests. For the interests of Māori women to be catered for in theoretical discourse we need to ensure that our theoretical developments take a wide view of what is happening for Māori women. That then requires a framework that is able to place te reo Māori me ōna tikanga at the centre alongside issues of gender, class, race and sexuality. This necessity has been argued in terms of Kaupapa Māori theory, where Graham Hingangaroa Smith has maintained that Kaupapa Māori theory must be expansive and able to critically examine the wide range of situations encountered by Māori. This must also be the case for Mana Wahine theory. There needs to be an ability to engage the wider contextual issues for Māori whilst also ensuring that there is a strong analysis of the specific ways in which Māori women are positioned in the world. This is crucial as we are located within a societal context where Māori women often bear the brunt of government policies and who I would argue are holding up Māori society.

Ngahuia Te Awekotuku states that Māori women are making ‘fresh inroads’ in a range of areas. In the tertiary sector new developments are occurring as Māori women develop and teach courses specific to Māori womens knowledges, tikanga and issues. This is happening in two languages, te reo Māori and

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6 Smith, L.T. 1992 (b) op.cit.
7 Irwin, K. 1992(b):5
8 Smith, G.H. 1997 op.cit.
9 Some Māori men will find such a statement demeaning of their status, however we merely need to look at who is providing for Māori children and whanau to know that it is Māori women who are primarily those providing the nurturing, the food, the education, the stability for Māori whanau. That is a present day reality that we are located within. It is also a direct result of the colonial undermining for whanau structures which historically ensured that all in the whanau were cared for. What we have now is a dominance of a nuclear model, that outcome of which has meant the protection and care mechanisms that are a part of the extended family have been undermined. For further discussion of these issues refer to Cram, F. & Pitama, S., 1998 op.cit.; Pihama, L. 1998 op.cit.; Durie, M., 2000 op.cit.
English, and in terms of practice, research, theoretical developments and presentations. As such Ngahuia has argued that Māori women are reaching a critical milestone in our own political growth, with the writing and discussion of our own theory and analysis.  

I agree with Ngahuia’s sentiments and argue further that the development and articulation of Māori women’s theories is essential to the ongoing struggle for not only Māori women but for the well-being of Māori more generally. This assertion is made in light of the developments of Mana Wahine that assert the need for analyses that are able to engage the multiple realities of our lives and therefore move beyond simplistic definitions or analysis. A key role for Mana Wahine theory is to undertake the challenge referred to by Ani Mikaere as making sense of the contradictions that face Māori women daily. Ani has laid significant groundwork in her writing, drawing on a specifically Māori women’s analysis to identify key problematic in the ways in which Māori women are represented. 

The assertion of Māori women's theories is not new. Just as Kaupapa Māori has its origins in ancient knowledge so to does Mana Wahine. What we as Māori women are having to do in our present context is reassert our positions and status within our own communities as well as wider society. The status of Māori women has been seriously misrepresented. Mana Wahine as a theoretical framework asserts that Māori women must be recognised in the many roles that are ours, and that includes our leadership, rangatira positions. Mana Wahine is an assertion of our intrinsic mana as descendants of our tūpuna, as holders and maintainers of whakapapa. An underlying tenet of Mana Wahine is that our tūpuna wāhine have always had critical roles in Māori society. With this as a fundamental understanding we can then undertake a process of examining how and why such an understanding is not presented in day to day, common-sense discourse about Māori women, and most importantly whose interests are served in the denial of such an understanding.

It is important that Māori women take control of spaces where our stories can be told. This includes theoretical space. Our voices have been silenced for too long. The silencing of Māori women’s voices has meant the silencing of our theories, worldviews. It has meant that Māori women’s stories are able to then be defined as 'myths', and therefore some figment of the cultural imagination. The marginalisation of Mana Wahine has meant that Māori women are constantly having to try and 'find' themselves within the texts of the dominant group. We are forever trying to see ourselves in the images created by the colonisers. It is also necessary in the process to look to the work that our tūpuna wāhine have already

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10 Te Awekotuku, N 1991 op.cit.:12
11 Mikaere, A., 1995 op.cit.
undertaken in laying a foundation for ensuring Māori women are active in all areas that pertain to our wellbeing.

**Māori Women’s Movements**

Western feminisms have been presented as the dominant form of analysis in regard to issues of gender relations in this county. These analyses have centred upon a notion that gender issues are the primary focus. In doing so the white women's movement has, on the whole, failed to cater for the analyses advanced by Māori women. Over the past twenty years Māori women have actively critiqued Western feminism and challenged whether Pākehā women will ever align themselves with Māori women. Issues of Māori sovereignty and tino rangatiratanga were marginalised as the overwhelming dominance of radical feminism defined the parameters of the feminist movement in the country. The struggle for Māori women to have their voices heard in the feminist arena was such that many removed themselves and established Māori women’s groups.

Such developments are not unknown to Māori women. In reflecting on the involvement of Māori women in land movements and in the Suffrage movement period and see that there have always been Māori women challenging the fundamentals of colonial patriarchal organisation. Tania Rei explores Māori women’s involvement in gaining voice in Te Kotahitanga and also alongside Pakeha women in the franchise struggle. Tania writes that from the inception of Te Kotahitanga Māori women were actively involved. Photographs of Te Kotahitanga hui from the Alexander Turnbull Library show that Māori women’s participation was high, in fact Tania Rei states that reports of the hui identify that equal numbers of women and men were in attendance. Although Māori women attended Te Kotahitanga in equal numbers to Māori men they were initially unable to vote or stand as members. Just under a year after the official opening of Te Kotahitanga Meri Mangakahia put a motion that Māori women be given the right to vote and to stand as member of Te Kotahitanga. After the initial motion was abandoned, the right for Māori women vote and stand for Te Kotahitanga was not given until 1897.

In 1893 Nga Komiti Wahine were formed as a means by which Māori women could deal with issues confronting Māori women at the time. As with their more recent equal, The Māori Women’s

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12 Rei, Tania 1993 Māori Women and The Vote, Huia Publishers, Wellington
13 Te Kotahitanga was a gathering of Māori leaders, both female and male, formed to unite Māori to present grievances to the Crown. Tania Rei notes that it was modeled on the existing colonial settler parliament and electoral districts were defined by tribal boundaries. This was by no means a small gathering, by 1893 21,900 women and men were a part of Te Kotahitanga and by 1895 there were 35,000.
14 ibid.:16
Welfare League, Ngā Kōmiti Wāhine dealt with key issues related to the well-being of Māori women and whānau including; alcohol, smoking, domestic violence, promiscuity, retention of Māori women’s knowledge etc. Tania Rei notes that Māori women spoke freely about these issues whenever possible. In the publication ‘Te Puni Wāhine’ a copy of the rules of the Tāmairangi Women’s Committee, the Wairarapa branch of Ngā Kōmiti Wāhine, has been reprinted from the Māori newspaper ‘Te Puke Ki Hikurangi’. The rules included notions such believing in God; not working on Sundays; not taking alcohol onto marae, except for medicinal purposes, or into other peoples houses; women caring for children and husbands; observing teachings of elders; showing respect for each other; caring for pregnant women and the sick; not being promiscuous; not smoking in meetings; not holding grudges; attending Sunday meetings but not monopolising them; maintaining skills in weaving and cooking; and sharing work. Fines were imposed on those that transgressed the rules.

There are a number of observations that can be made in relation to the rules outlined by the Tāmairangi committee in regard to positioning of how they viewed their roles and obligations both to themselves and in the wider Māori community. A missionary influence is clearly indicated in the idea that work should take place only on the six days and that the seventh day is a day of rest. The influence of christianity in defining gender roles is explored in chapter six, however it is worth noting that Māori women’s organisations were developing rules that aligned with christian ideologies, an indication of the impact of such ideological assertions within Māori communities. There is also clear indication of tikanga Māori within the rules, those being related to notions of manaakitanga: caring and providing for each other, whanaungatanga: relationships, hauora: health and wellbeing, mahi tahi: working collectively and collaboratively, mana tangata: fundamental respect for the mana of all people, whare tangata: women as the givers of life and the home of future generations, mātauranga Māori: Māori knowledge, taonga tuku iho: those treasured things tangible and intangible handed to us from our ancestors. Most evident are the strong statements regarding an expected respect for each other, the need to care and provide for each other and an assertion for the wellbeing of Māori. The consistent references to the use of alcohol can be viewed in the context of increasing alcohol use in Māori communities, one of the many tools of colonisation. Therefore, it is not surprising that Māori women involved themselves in the

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15 ibid.:19
16 It is noted in Te Puni Wāhine He Komiti Wāhine tēnei nō Pāpāwai, marae o Wairarapa. I tapā hei whakamaumahara ki a Tāmairangi, wahine rongonui o ō rētū takihī. This is the Women’s Committee from Papawae a marae in the Wairarapa. The name was given in memory of Tāmairangi a renowned woman of that area. Te Puni Wāhine,1994 ‘Te Puke Ki Wairarapa’ 26 Aperira 1898 Wharangi 5, Huia Publishers, Wellington:13
17 ibid:13
Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) movement. Tania Rei identifies the objectives of the WCTU as follows;

This organisation wanted to control the use of alcohol which it believed was the cause of many social and economic problems for women and children. Branches of WCTU were set up from 1884, and from 1886 the organisation lobbied for the parliamentary franchise. By 1890 many members of the WCTU had widened their goals and saw the vote as an issue of justice, an ordinary right that women were entitled to as citizens of the state, as well as a means of achieving far reaching social reforms including equal opportunities in employment and education.\(^\text{18}\)

Tania writes that whilst the exact time of Māori women’s involvement in the WCTU is unknown there were Māori women who had concerns about alcohol abuse joining in the 1870s. The WCTU were successful in gaining women the vote for the colonial parliament in 1893.\(^\text{19}\) Māori men were also involved in this process, both for and against women’s suffrage. The debates surrounding suffrage highlight the key ideologies of the time in regard to the position of women in the colonial settler society. They also give us some insights into the ways in which Māori men had also internalised colonial gender ideologies.\(^\text{20}\) In 1892 when women’s franchise was before the house as newspaper reported that Eparaima Te Mutu Kapa would fully support the measure and that he believed that it was an injustice to deny women the vote. Hoani Taipua stated that he would not support the move as he did not believe Māori women were sufficiently qualified to exercise the vote.\(^\text{21}\) Tania Rei notes that Rāpata Wahawaha spoke in 1893 on the franchise issue.

In his opinion Māori women were nurturers, wavers and cultivators and they had always been excluded from sacred ceremonial duties. He claimed christian doctrine supported his view, women did not preach or take part in the political assemblies of Europeans. ‘It is only in the last few years that the voices of fanatical women have been heard in the streets of Wellington and Gisborne and other places. This has considerably puzzled us. We do not know whether the old rule was the correct one or whether this is the right thing’. He believed that most laws had a ‘sting’ and the vote might bring unforeseen burdens for Māori women. The measure should be delayed until they had been consulted.\(^\text{22}\)

Again the influence of missionaries is evident, as is the intention to locate the argument within tikanga Māori. What is clear from the large numbers of Māori women who in fact did vote in 1893 was that Māori women did not view the vote as a right only for Māori men, this too is indicated in the assertion of Māori women to vote and stand in the Kotahitanga movement. Where gaining the vote was for those Māori women involved a victory the involvement of Māori women in the WCTU was not completely beneficial. In Nga Komiti Wāhine, Māori women were seeking to retain Māori women’s

\(^\text{18}\) ibid.:25
\(^\text{19}\) for indepth discussion of the involvement of Māori women in the WCTU and suffrage refer to Rei, Tania, ibid. where Tania takes us through the ways in which Māori women were involved, key Māori women who were active in the movement, Māori women’s interests in the elections and the responses to suffrage.
\(^\text{20}\) These issues are discussed in some depth in Chapter six.
\(^\text{21}\) Rei, Tania 1993 op.cit.:30-31
\(^\text{22}\) ibid:32
traditional skills, however, the WCTU expected Māori women to give up certain traditional practices. The Temperance Pledge to be taken by Māori women was worded as follows:

He whakaae tēnei nāku kia kaua ahau e kai tūpeka, e inu rānei i tētahi mea e haurangi aī te tangata, kia kaua hoki ahau e whakaae ki te tā moko. Mā te Atua ahau e āwhina.
I agree by this pledge, not to smoke tobacco, not to drink any beverages that are intoxicating, and also not to take the tā moko. May God help me.

The Temperance movement maintained that Māori women should not take moko kaauae, which in terms of wider dominant discourses was considered a barbaric act. Tania writes that one reason for Māori women agreeing to such a pledge could have been due to the increased infections that were experienced from the movement from bone to metal implements in the practice of tā moko. It is also documented that moko was often viewed by Pākehā as 'ugly' and a 'savage' custom. The reclamation of tā moko and in particular moko kaauae for Māori women in a growing element in the revitalisation of mātauranga Māori.

Māori women’s involvement in National organisations grew, as did Māori women’s movement into the political arena. In 1935 Rehutai Maihi stood as candidate for Northern Māori. In 1949 Iriaka Ratana became the first Māori woman in parliament, she held the seat for twenty years. The Māori Women’s Welfare League was established in 1951. The organisation is another example of a Māori women’s collective movement that was formed to deal directly with issues pertaining to Māori. In the publication ‘Te Timatanga – Tātau Tātau: Early Stories from Founding Members of the Māori Women’s Welfare League’, Anna Rogers and Miria Simpson state that by the end of the first conference in September 1951 the League officially began with a focus on;

The promotion of all activities that would improve the position of Māori, particularly women and children, in the fields of health, education and welfare.

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23 Tā Moko refers to the process of Māori tattooing. It is noted however that the English term ‘tattoo’ is in fact inadequate in defining the process of tā moko in that there are cultural practices that accompany the process of moko.

24 Rei, Tania 1993 op.cit.:40

25 The moko kaauae is the moko worn by Māori women on the chin area and is a key symbol for Māori women. Moko was however considered a dying practice, as is noted in two letters from George Grey and John Lubbock in the introduction to H.G. Robley’s publication “Moko: The Art and History of Māori Tattooing”. Grey wrote that the illustrations gathered by Robley were valuable documentation of an art that was “rapidly passing away and will soon be forgotten”, Lubbock noted also that it was an important process of preserving “all evidence of a life which is rapidly disappearing”. Such statements are indicative of the view regarding aspects of Māori life that were being violently removed from Māori people through impositions of colonial superiority. Robley, H.G. 1896 Moko: The Art and History of Māori Tattooing, Chapman and Hall, London Reprinted 1998 by Senate, Tiger Books International, UK

26 ibid.

27 Coney, Sandra 1993 Standing in the Sunshine, Penguin Books (NZ) Ltd., Auckland
Furthermore, they comment that the League development grew from the work of Māori women welfare officers, positions that had been instigated through the Māori Social and Economic Advancement Act 1945, and also from the need to have Māori women’s voices heard in order for them to have influence on issues directly related to them. Something that was difficult in the context of male-dominated tribal committees.\(^{29}\)

More recent expressions of Māori women’s movements can be seen in the developments during the 1970s and 1980s. Throughout the late 1970s and 1980s Māori women were actively involved in Māori Sovereignty, anti-apartheid and Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific movements and were writing prolifically for magazines such as Broadsheet. Articles by Māori women contributed significantly to the opening of active debate in the women’s movement.\(^{30}\) Ngahuia notes that at the 1977 Young Māori Leaders conference Māori women held their own session to discuss issues for Māori women and that same year the first Huihuina Wāhine Māori Anake, in 'post-Pākehā herstory' was held in Freemans Bay Auckland.\(^{31}\) She describes the hui in some depth, making the closing statement that what was successful about the hui was the fact that it happened. The first Black Women’s Hui, held at Waiheke in 1980, created a space for Māori and Pacific Islands women to share and talk about a range of issues which were otherwise marginalised, by western feminist frameworks. The Black Women’s movement soon developed into separate Māori and Pacific women’s groups where emphasis on basing ones analysis in cultural defined ways took some precedence. This was both an exciting and a difficult time for Māori women. The entrenchment of particular political ideologies saw direct challenges made to personal relationships between Māori and non-Māori, numerous Māori women have commented on the destructive nature of such hard-line politics. The complexities of Māori women’s experiences also saw a diverse range of forums being organised to look at specific issues which were of interest or relevance to groups of Māori women. Various iwi women hold hui, formally and informally, to look specifically at the types of issues that are raised within their area. Where this discussion regarding Māori women’s movements is brief, what is important is the idea that Māori women’s theories have not developed out of a vacuum but are a part of wider social, cultural and historical developments.

The assertion by Māori women that we need to create space for our voices is not a new one, it echoes the assertions made by our tūpuna wāhine who sought space within the structures of Te


\(^{29}\) ibid.


\(^{31}\) Te AwekoTuku, N., 1991 op.cit.:54
Kōtahitanga and the WCTU, and who were a part of the development of the Māori Women's Welfare League, of those women who through the 1970s and 1980s were a part of the Black women's movements and the Māori women's movement and those in the 1990s who sought support for Māori Lesbians by holding Hui Takatāpui. Thus, assertions of Mana Wahine are not new, but follow in the footsteps of many Māori women and articulates from their kōrero and actions a way of viewing theory that has Māori women at the centre of analysis. These movements of Māori women are a crucial part of the ways in which Māori women are working to develop our own theories. Māori women have instigated these forums and movements to provide a place on the map where our voices are heard and where our positions are validated. That includes the necessity for us to acknowledge the diversity of Māori women's experiences. A part of that acknowledgement was the instigation of the first National Māori Lesbians Hui (Hui Takatāpui) Orakei in 1990 which for some years became an annual event. As a part of the development of Māori women's groups came powerful critique of how the white women's movement and Western feminisms served the interests of Māori women.

**Debate over usefulness of Western 'feminisms'**

The label Māori Feminism is problematic for many Māori women. This problematic is located within an analysis that identifies a fundamental contradiction in the use of the label in relations to Māori women's analyses and theories of the world. Much of the criticism is based in an idea that the terms Māori and Feminism do not sit comfortably together, and that for some Māori women their experiences of Feminism and/or what is often termed the 'Womens Movement' has not been a healthy one but has been mirrored their experiences of wider Pākehā society, where Māori ideas and concepts have been marginalised and denied and Māori women's voices been silenced.

I’ve been involved in civil rights issues, socialism and feminism. Being a black woman requires you to have a split personality. The Women’s Liberation Movement is racist, the anti-racist movement is sexist and the socialist movement is both racist and sexist. This leaves black women out on a limb.\(^{32}\)

The question of ‘what is feminism?’ took up a great deal of discussion. Feminism to me is a many splendoured thing. Its analysis covers all forms of oppression, not just sexism but racism and capitalism. It’s not reformist like the Women’s Liberation movement of the 60’s and 70’s, which sought equality and the ‘laundry list’ through the system. Being ‘given’ your freedom is hardly freedom; the power to give is also the power to take away. Feminism is a revolutionary concept that seeks to destroy that power, that questions the foundations that cause oppression - not ask for handouts! ‘Feminism’ in the white woman’s movement touches only on sexism. Racism and capitalism aren’t seen as relevant issues.\(^{33}\)

\(^{32}\) Jan, 1980 Broadsheet November, Broadsheet Collective, Auckland.

\(^{33}\) Mona cited in ibid
We are in fundamental tension with the project of white women. Where western feminism may have provided some useful analyses of patriarchy there continues the imposition of white matriarchy.³⁴

Māori women, like indigenous women, black women and women of colour world-wide, have consistently voiced outrage at being constantly located as ‘Other’ within dominant discourses, raising issues of difference and marginalisation. As discussed in chapter seven, representation and definitions of Māori women have been, in many instances, historically constituted through the voices of the coloniser. We have been defined, painted, filmed, researched, imaged within dominant Pākehā frameworks and assumptions. The voices of Māori women have been marginalised or made invisible within the power relations that exist in our colonial experience. It is understandable then that feminism as a concept is viewed as problematic, particularly for Māori women who have historically been on the margins of what has been seen as a predominantly white women’s movement. This does not mean that all Māori women have thrown out the term feminism. Just as I have engaged the term ‘theory’ in this thesis, so too do Māori women engage the term feminism.

Ngahuia Te Awekotuku notes that Māori women’s work preceded feminism as Māori women. As is shown in the discussion of Māori women’s movements our tūpuna wāhine have consistently worked to shift the effects of colonisation. For many this meant that their work was focused in the Māori community and therefore few joined the feminist movement. She raises the point that some Māori women find the term feminist a contradiction and view feminism as an imported idea that is Pākehā and therefore has no relevance to Māori. Feminism some argue imposes a foreign way of seeing, and of being.³⁵ The strength of the anti-feminist position for some Māori is noted in a prevailing belief that Māori women’s involvement in feminism is ‘un-Māori’.³⁶ Ngahuia disagrees with such a position arguing instead that the term feminism can be defined by Māori women to be what Māori women want it to be, that our definitions are related to our own experiences and definitions of how we describe and analyse our oppression as Indigeneous women in the world. Māori women have been oppressed, denied of economic, political, social power and a feminist analysis can be used to view and explain what has happened. Like the need to redefine the term theory is it therefore necessary to redefine the concept of feminism, drawing from the potential that exists within the term. In Ngahuia’s terms feminism constitutes

Woman initiated political action - at its ripest and most elemental.³⁷

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³⁴ Smith, L.T. 1992(a) op.cit.
³⁵ ibid:10
³⁶ ibid:11
³⁷ ibid.
Similarly Kathie argues that there is no one single theory of feminism but that there are many.\textsuperscript{38} She maintains that in order to understand more fully the positioning and needs of Māori girls and women it is essential to develop Māori feminist theories even when groups of Māori do not perceive this as necessary.

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\textsuperscript{39}

Ripeka Evans also argues the effectiveness of Māori feminism in making change for Māori women. Again, as with Kathie and Ngahia, she states that there are real differences between Māori feminism and Pākehā feminism. Māori feminism, she argues, is distinctive in that it is founded in Māori philosophies and values and because the outcomes for Māori women are not solely located in gender but lie in much wider political change.\textsuperscript{40} However, Linda Tuhiwai Smith and Donna Awatere are more cautious in regard to feminism. White feminisms, Linda notes, whilst useful at one level can perpetuate 'otherness' at another. Linda argues that existing feminist analyses fail to recognise the cultural and historical realities of Māori women.\textsuperscript{41} She asserts that race and class may mean that Māori women's alliances with Pākehā women may at best be tenuous, reminding us that cultural institutions are sites of struggle and therefore it is not surprising that some Māori women view Pākehā feminism with suspicion. She notes that in the building of a wharehui in a mainstream Pākehā girls school,

issues of race and class differences tended to struggle against any potentially common interests of gender.\textsuperscript{42}

A similar theme was outlined in Donna Awatere's book 'Māori Sovereignty' where she explored the possible alliances available to Māori in the struggle for sovereignty. She writes;

The first loyalty of white women is always to the White Culture and the White Way. This is true as much for those who define themselves as feminists as for any other white woman.\textsuperscript{43}

Further to which, Donna Awatere raises a number of other criticisms of the ways in which Pākehā women position themselves as the voice for all women. Firstly, she argues white feminists assume a position of defining feminism for all women, whilst denying the struggles of Māori women. The

\textsuperscript{38} Irwin, K. 1992(b) op.cit
\textsuperscript{39} Irwin, K. 1992(a) op.cit: 4
\textsuperscript{40} Evans, R. 1993 op.cit.
\textsuperscript{41} Smith, L.T. 1992(a) op.cit: 34
\textsuperscript{43} Awatere, D., 1984 op.cit:42
ability to control definitions is, she argues, as a consequence of white power and privilege.\footnote{44} Secondly, in assuming a right to speak for all, individual Pākehā women are able to then view themselves as ‘spearheading’ a challenge to patriarchy that all will benefit from. The flaw in such an assumption is the underestimation of the strength of patriarchal institutions and the liberal belief that individual success necessarily means real change for all.\footnote{44} Statements such as this are not limited to Māori women. Indigenous women, Black women, women of colour have raised major concerns about the inability of white women to engage through feminism with the multiple experiences of women who are not white, heterosexual or middle class.

Lee Maracle, a member of the Stó:lō Nation, challenges the inadequacy of white women’s theories to engage the issues for Native women.\footnote{45} She reminds us that the idea that white women are racist should not be a surprise, nor is the idea that white people create definitions that serve their own interests. The white women’s movement is no different in this regard in that it is created and defined in ways that serve the interests of dominant group women. However, like Ngahuia, she argues that Indigenous women are a part of the struggle for emancipation of women and that we must define that movement on our own terms. It is a movement that is about the liberation of all from domination and therefore must be a struggle against all forms of oppression.\footnote{47} This is also indicated by Devon A. Mihesuah who argues that the focus of white women on gender oppression and their overlooking of racial and cultural considerations is often alienating of Indian women.\footnote{48} What is also crucial for Indigenous women is that locating of gender issues clearly within the gambit of wider social, cultural and political issues. Winona Stevenson of the Cree nation notes

I believe that while feminists and Indigenous women have a lot in common, they are in separate movements. Feminism defines sexual oppression as the Big Ugly. The Indigenous Women’s movement sees colonization and racial oppression as the Big Uglies. Issues of sexual oppression are seldom articulated separately because they are part of the Bigger Uglies. Sexual oppression was, and is, one part of the colonization of Indigenous Peoples.\footnote{49}

Hawaiian academic and activist, Haunani Kay Trask has been a consistent voice in the Indigenous women’s networks bringing forward challenge to the limitations of Western feminisms and the need for

\footnotesize{\begin{flushright}
44 Awatere, D., 1984 op.cit.:42
45 Awatere, D. 1984 op.cit:42
46 Maracle, Lee 1996 I am Woman: A native Perspective on Sociology and Feminism, Press Gang Publishers, Vancouver
47 ibid.
48 Mihesuah, Devon A. 1998 ‘Commonality of Difference: American Indian Women and History’ in Natives and Academics: Researching and Writing about American Indians, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln
\end{flushright}
Indigenous women to articulate our own theories and practices. A key to the relationship of Indigenous women to feminism is the need to recognise that Indigenous women seeking to achieve self-determination or sovereignty work towards this goal as a people. For Haunani this means that Haole women need to position themselves alongside Hawaiian people in the struggle to overthrow an oppressive regime, this however it is pointed out is a rare and difficult alliance. The centrality of gender in white feminism and limited definition of what constitutes struggle for women means that few Haole women are active in alliance with Hawaiian women in the wider struggles of self-determination. Haunani argues that in Hawaii Haole feminists have refused to support sovereignty movements and have defined feminism in their own interests. Interests which fail to include the positioning of Indigenous women.

In Hawaii, they see the oppression of women but they refuse to see the oppression of Hawaiian women as a product of colonialism. To grasp the nature of our oppression requires an understanding that haole – feminist, marxist etc – are part of the colonial forces.

As with Māori women’s critique of Western feminism, Haunani argues that the universalising of feminist issues as being the same for all women does not serve the interests of Indigenous women where issues of race and culture are critical. She argues that the exploitation of Indigenous women is by both white men and white women and that exploitation by our colonisers cannot be separated from sexual oppression. Haunani emphasises that the universalising tendencies of Western feminism have reduced oppression for all women to a common denominator of gender, when this is not the reality of many Indigenous women. Nor is it the reality for many Black women and Women of Colour. The publications ‘This Bridge Called My Back’ and ‘Making Face, Making Soul: Haciendo Caras’ provide article after article of analysis and critique by Women of Colour, Indigenous women and Black women. In her preface to ‘This Bridge Called My Back’, Cherrie Moraga discusses the analogy of ‘the bridge’ for women of colour. A bridge, is walked over, and walked upon, as are the backs of Black/Indigenous women and Women of Colour. The symbolism of such an analysis is not lost on Māori women. We too know the state of being walked upon, of being walked over, of being trampled upon. Since the theft and desecration of Papatūānuku by the colonial invaders of this land Māori women have experienced ‘this bridge called my back’.

51 Haole refers to the white American colonisers of Hawaiian lands.
52 Trask, Haunani Kay 1993 From A Native Daughter: Colonialism & Sovereignty In Hawaii, Common Courage Press, Monroe, Maine, p 266
53 Trask, Haunani Kay 1986 op.cit. p177
In an open letter, to white feminist writer Mary Daly, Audre Lorde highlights the invisibility of Black women in white women’s writings and calls in to question processes of selective marginalisation of Black women, by white feminist authors. In a challenging statement she questions Daly’s use of Black women’s writings:

So the question arises in my mind, Mary, do you ever really read the work of black women? Did you ever read my words, or did you merely finger through them for quotations which you thought might valuably support and already-conceived idea concerning some old and distorted connection between us? This is not a rhetorical question. To me this feels like another instance of the knowledge, crone-logy and work of women of colour being ghettoized by a white woman dealing only out of a patriarchal western-european frame of reference.\(^6\)

What is most evident in the anthology ‘This Bridge Called My Back’ is the fundamental agreement that Women of Colour must of necessity engage the complex inter-relationship of race, gender, class and heterosexism in their analysis. This means that there is a clear place for feminist analyses that incorporate the intersections of all forms of oppressions, and therefore all forms of struggles. For many of the writers there is a need to develop alliances with those groups that are able to engage those oppressive structures. The Combahee River Collective’s ‘A Black Feminist Statement outlines clearly a desire for analysis that is complex and which actively engages all forms of oppression. In providing background to the formation of the Collective it is noted that this group of Black women were drawn together by analysis that was anti-racist and anti-sexist and grew to include analysis of heterosexism and economic oppression.\(^7\) A key concern is also that of the need to actively address the racism of the white women’s movement. This is a common theme through the writings of many Black women, Indigenous women and Women of Colour. Such challenges to racism in the white women’s movement are heard internationally, just as is the call for Black women, Indigenous women and Women of Colour to focus upon our analysis from our own cultural, social and political identities.

As the Combahee River Collective asserts it is for Black women to realise the liberation of Black women. This must also be said for Māori women. An area of particular interest for Māori is that of tino rangatiratanga and sovereignty, therefore an analysis of the relationship of feminism to sovereignty movements is a critical one. It is also one that is fraught with complexities in regard to the positioning of gender, race and Indigenous rights. This is highlighted by Devon A. Mihasuah:

Indian women who participated in the takeover at Wounded Knee in 1973 washed clothes, prepared food, and stayed in the background while the flamboyant males spoke to the media. Deb Lamb’s research on the takeover reveals that some Indian women could not have cared less about the opinion white feminists held about what appeared to be their subservient roles. Many Indian

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women concede that male American Indian Movement leaders were and are sexist, having learned misogynist ways of thinking from white society. Nevertheless, the women agree that combating racism against their tribes is more important than personal gain.\textsuperscript{58}

Here Devon asserts the need for Indian women to define themselves in their own terms. That is a necessary need for Indigenous women if we are to represent ourselves from a position of our own context. However, in articulating the need to focus energies solely on racism maintains an assumption that racism and sexism can exist separate from each other. For Māori women this is not an assumption that can be made and to do so is to repeat the mistakes that we so fervently critique in regard to white feminism, that is the non-recognition of the intersection of oppressive ideologies and practices. What this means is that many Māori women whilst rejecting the singular focus on gender of Pākehā feminism, do attempt to engage the wider issues for Māori within a framework that is inclusive of race, gender and class.

Māori women's involvement in the so-called 'second-wave' of feminism through the seventies corresponded with Māori women's activism in Māori sovereignty movements. Māori women's groups were clearly a feature of Māori nationalist movements through the 1970s and 1980s.\textsuperscript{59} Powerful statements were made by Māori women in the movement and these appeared in feminist magazines such as Broadsheet. It may be stated however that Māori women's involvement in both past and present expressions for tino rangatiratanga have often been overlooked by the mainstream media and in fact Māori women's leadership in Māori communities more generally has often been denied. These issues are engaged by Geraldine Heng\textsuperscript{60} in relation to Third-World struggles, where Third-World feminisms are described as having had a tenuous and often contradictory relationship with nationalism. She notes that Third-World feminism rose in tandem with Third-World nationalist movements, and that female emancipation is a "powerful political symbol".\textsuperscript{61} In this discussion Third-World feminism has aligned with nationalism and expresses a feminism that is directly relevant to its own context. Nationalist movements can, however, be equally antifeminist and feminism can be presented by antifeminist nationalism as being:

of foreign origin, and influence, and therefore implicitly or explicitly antinational.\textsuperscript{62}

\textsuperscript{58} ibid.:41
\textsuperscript{59} Recently at a dinner held by one of the few remaining Māori women's groups from that time, Amorangi, it was noted that at least 10 Māori women's groups were formed through this time period.
\textsuperscript{60} Heng Geraldine 1997 'A Great Way to Fly': Nationalism, the State, and the Varieties of Third-World Feminism' in Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures, Alexander, M. Jacqui and Mohanty, Chandra Talpade (eds) Routledge, New York
\textsuperscript{61} ibid:31
\textsuperscript{62} ibid.:34
The analysis from Geraldine Heng raises the contradictory nature that feminism may be constructed as within nationalist movements. Similar discussion is given by bell hooks\textsuperscript{63}, Cheryl Clarke\textsuperscript{64} and the Combahee River Collective.\textsuperscript{64} These issues remind us of the necessary complexities of Indigenous women’s analyses, in that we are seeking to provide forms of analysis that are able to express issues of sovereignty, race, class and gender in ways that recognise the interconnection.

bell hooks, a prolific Black women writer in this area, challenges Western feminism to be more expansive in analysis. She asserts that feminist analysis must be open to the wider possibilities that are a part of engaging gender alongside analyses of race, culture, class and sexuality. In a ground breaking analysis of feminism, Feminist Theory: from margin to center\textsuperscript{65}, bell hooks reminds us that feminism in America did not emerge from those who are most victimized and that feminist writers themselves wrote as if those women did not exist. The invisibilisation of black women, women of colour, Indigenous women existed both through sexist oppression and through the development of white feminism that centred on the ‘plight’ of the white middle class woman. As such feminism in America was constructed within what bell hooks refers to as a “one-dimensional perspective on women’s reality”.\textsuperscript{66} Racism is inherent in such a positioning and the failure to recognise that leads to the refusal to recognise and acknowledge the experiences of Indigenous women, Black women and Women of Colour. As bell hooks so powerfully writes;

The idea of “common oppression” was a false and corrupt platform disguising and mystifying the true nature of women’s varied and complex social reality. Women are divided by sexist attitudes, racism, class privilege, and a host of other prejudices. Sustained woman bonding can occur only when these divisions are confronted and the necessary steps are taken to eliminate them. Divisions will not be eliminated by wishful thinking or romantic reverie about common oppression despite the value of highlighting experiences all women share.\textsuperscript{68}

Angela Davis provides cutting edge analysis in her writings related to gender, race and class.\textsuperscript{69} Her writing is strongly influenced by involvement in radical Black movements and therefore is theorised from a location where race, class and gender are viewed in their interrelationship to each other. Angela Davis notes that from as early as 1895 Black women were organising after having been ‘shunned’ by a “racially homogenous women’s rights movement”.\textsuperscript{70} The contemporary women’s movement continues

\textsuperscript{63} hooks, b., 1990 Yearning: race, gender and cultural politics, South End Press: Boston 
\textsuperscript{65} Combahee River Collective, 1983 op.cit.
\textsuperscript{66} hooks, bell 1984 Feminist Theory: from margin to center South End Press, Boston 
\textsuperscript{67} ibid.:2 
\textsuperscript{68} ibid.:44
\textsuperscript{69} Davis, Angela Y. 1984. Women, Culture and Politics. The Womens Press, New York
\textsuperscript{70} Māori women also sought involvement in women’s movements in Aotearoa through the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century and this is discussed in more depth in Chapter Ten.
its racially homogenous character through the ongoing assumption that Black women's experiences are marginal to a gender-centric analysis. As Angela Davis states:

They have falsely presumed that women's issues can be articulated in isolation from issues associated with the Black movement and the labor movement. Their theories and practice have frequently implied that the purest and most direct challenge to sexism is one exorcised of elements related to racial and economic oppression — as if there were such a phenomenon as abstract womanhood abstractly suffering sexism and fighting back in an abstract historical context.71

For feminism to be useful for those women who have been rendered invisible there must be a serious commitment to the inclusion of wider issues that impact on Black women, Indigenous women and Women of Color. Trinh T. Minh-ha72 provides a discussion about the ways in which selected Women of Colour become constructed in the position of ‘specialness’. In such a position a white First-World women audience expects Women of Colour to express their differences. Specialness and difference is in affirmed only if one is able to paint themselves as authentic, as defined by white First-World women.73

The notion of specialness as the chosen ‘Other’ is one that is not uncommon to Māori women, particularly in regard to the white women’s movement. Māori women continue to be published as ‘special editions’ and to appear on the fringe of women’s conferences. Only select Māori women are viewed as acceptable speakers and others, even when deemed appropriate speakers by Māori women, are often rejected by Pākehā women academics. Few Māori women have published books either as sole author or as editors. Most literature published in Aotearoa regarding Māori women, and likewise women of the Pacific more widely, is edited by Pākehā women. As Linda Tuhiiwai Smith has noted Māori women have tended to be anthologised by others.74

The women referred to in this discussion have been instrumental in my own thinking about how Māori women engage feminism. They have each provided analysis of not only the ways in which Western feminisms have rendered non-white women invisible, but have done so in a context of recognising the need for analysis that is incorporative of gender in ways that are connected to wider social, economic, political and cultural realities. None of these women dismiss the need for focus on women’s experiences, rather they promote analyses that position gender as interrelated to issues of colonisation, capitalism, heterosexism, classism and racism. For Māori women such an analysis is absolutely

71 ibid.:18
72 Trinh T. Minh-ha 1989 Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality And Feminism. Indiana University Press, Bloomington. The attempts by Minh-ha to have Woman/Native/Other is perhaps an example of who defines what is ‘appropriate’ writing in terms of feminist publications. Minh-ha attempted 33 times to have her book published before being successful (personal communication).
73 ibid
essential as we live within a context of colonialism that has been both driven and justified by acts of racism and capitalist exploitation.

Where it is important, as Ngahuia Te Awekotuku, Kathie Irwin and Linda Tuhiwai Smith have reminded us, to utilise what is useful within Western feminism it is also important to know more intimately the aspects of Western feminism and its development that have not been so good for us as Māori women. The critique of western feminism is not solely located in notions of who controls the definition but also in engaging some fundamental tenets of the various forms of Western feminisms that exist from liberal to poststructural. In order to do that, however, it is important to outline the theoretical analysis that will provide the foundation from which the critique emerges. Lee Maracle, on the relationship of Western feminism to Indigenous women's developments affirms the desire of Māori women to voice our own theories. She writes,

The women of the world are re-writing history with their bodies. White women of CanAmerica are a footnote to it all. I am not in the habit of concerning myself with footnotes. I am concerned about us, though. White women figure too largely in our minds. Let us stop chasing them and challenging their humanity at every turn. Let us begin by talking to each other about ourselves. Let us cleanse the dirty shack that racism left us. Let us deal with our men-folk and the refuse of patriarchy they borrowed from white men.  

Taking this lead it is important to provide some analysis of the relationship of Mana Wahine to Māori men, as within the wider picture of engaging and resisting colonisation it is Māori women and Māori men who are more likely to be working alongside each other.

**Mana Wahine and Māori Men**

The stated need for Indigenous women to work alongside Indigeneous men is a key element that sets our theorising apart from some other expressions of feminism, particularly white feminism. Kathie Irwin notes that the movement for change Māori feminists work with all Māori people, including men. The earlier movements which our women participated in has shown that Māori women have consistently worked alongside Māori men in order to bring about change. However, the impact of colonisation has without doubt changed the ways in which Māori women and Māori men relate. In order to work against the patriarchal structures of Western capitalism and colonial imperialism it is necessary to have a critical understanding of the impact of those structures upon our relationships with whānau, hapū and iwi. As Lee Maracle has powerfully stated Indigenous women need to "deal with our men-folk", and I would add too that Māori men who have an analysis of the complexities of colonial oppression also need to deal with other Māori men.

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75 Maracle, Lee 1996 op.cit.:139
There is a dire need for Māori men to more actively and publicly critique the sexist nature of the structures that govern many Māori developments. What is most obvious is that where there is recognition of the role of Māori women in the development and operations of Te Kōhanga Reo, Kura Kaupapa Māori and Whare Kura there are few Māori women represented in other key positions. This came was very explicit for me during a recent Māori Development conference where after a paper given by the Minister of Treaty Settlements, Margaret Wilson, the chair of the panel received questions from six Māori men before moving to close the session. Although prevented from doing so by Māori women, this is not uncommon a situation for Māori women to find ourselves in. We need to ask ourselves why in such contexts there continues to be an assumed right for Māori men to speak, whilst Māori women often have to struggle to gain space. The internalisation of dominant patriarchal hegemony is such that often Māori men do not even see that is the case, and then many feel offended when it is brought to their attention. The insidious nature of colonial patriarchal discourse is such that some Māori male academics perpetuate representations of Māori women as the ‘inferior other’ in their writings. Māori men must reflect on their historical and contemporary compliance with white patriarchy. Linda Tuhiwai Smith highlights the historical cooption of Māori men by early Pākehā male missionaries and colonial administrators. The imposition of white patriarchy was to be maintained through not only the domestication of Māori women and men into dualistic gendered roles but through an undermining of the fundamental structures of Māori society and the denial of Māori women access to key roles that were in fact theirs. This has been highlighted in chapter eight.

The process of the signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi provides us with examples of the attempt by missionaries to deny the rangatira status of Māori women. Claudia Orange describes the ways in which missionaries approached Māori men to sign Te Tiriti o Waitangi. This was in line with their own ideas and beliefs about the position of women. This is not a difficult point to prove, we just need to look at the struggle that women have in the churches today to see that the oppression of women continues within those institutions. We could also expect that such oppression historically was many times what we see now. Claudia Orange details the issues surrounding the signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi by Māori women and the disturbances that arose with those missionaries who had limited knowledge of the role and status of Māori women.

An instance of this was the signing by Māori women. A precedent was established at Waitangi when Ana Hamu, the widow of Te Koki, original patron of the Parihia mission, had been allowed [sic] to sign. Henry Williams, knowing that women of high rank in Māori society should be given fitting acknowledgement, acted accordingly elsewhere. At Port Nicholson, the accession of

76 Irwin, K. 1992(a) op.cit.:5
77 Refer Chapter seven.
78 Smith, L.T. 1992(a) op.cit.
Te Rau o Te Rangi (Kahe) was allowed; at Kapiti the chieftainess Rangi Topeora signed. Williams also drew Hobson's attention to a situation at Kapiti where the 'ladies have expressed some disappoiprtion in not having a more prominent part in the Treaty with her Majesty' in as much as the agreement was with a woman. Subsequently, Williams appears to have allowed a Wanganui woman of rank, Rere o Makī, to sign. And in the north, at Kaitaia, the missionaries Taylor and Puckey had allowed the signing of Ereonoara, high-born wife of Nopera, chief of Te Rarawa. Bunbury, however, refused to allow the signing of the daughter of Te Pehi, the celebrated Ngati Toa chief, who had been of paramount importance in Cloudy Bay and further south before his death some years earlier. Her husband, one of Nohorua's three nephews and possibly inferior to her in rank, would not sign, probably as a consequence.79

This quote highlights not only the role of missionaries in defining status of Māori women in decision making and leadership through their own cultural definitions, but it also gives hope in that it indicates that there have been Māori men who are not willing to buy into the male-centred privileges of white patriarchy. Those Māori men appear now to be few in numbers, and therefore there is a direct challenge to Māori men to reflect on the colonial ideologies that seek to define how they are expected to be. Māori women have taken a lead in challenging the racial gendered constructions that colonialism bases its expectations upon. Ngahuia Te Awepotuku asserts that Māori male leadership falls well short of providing an analysis of the 'flax roots' issues, which she identifies as the imposed patriarchy, racism, sexism, and classism. She writes,

Because Māori society has been hierarchical and stratified, and because the Māori male maintains the visible leadership, what seems to be happening, in the most simplistic terms, is this. The white moderates are demanding that the ruling patriarchy, i.e. white New Zealand, accommodates and understands the indigenous patriarchy, while the radicals are working to undermine, and ideally overthrow the white system, and establish their own cock-oriented male alternative - instead of Pakeha male power, Māori male power. But still, male power.80

There is a direct challenge to Māori men to assess their cooption by and collaboration with white male regimes of oppression. Māori women who lay such challenges often then have to take abusive responses. Māori women who seek to provide solid critique of such positioning are often considered to be undermining the struggle or is un-Māori. I find such attacks on out-spoken Māori women disturbing. In an article titled 'The Intellectual Rangatahi: A Privilege or a Sell-Out', Kura Taumaunu highlighted the forms of abuse received for speaking out.81 Kura highlights the dilemma's of being an 'intellectual rangatahi' noting that young Māori men at university are often branded 'radicals' whose knowledge is 'book learnt' and therefore of lesser value. This raises issues in regard to what constitutes appropriate forms of coming to Māori knowledge. As I noted in chapters three

79 Orange, Claudia 1987 The Treaty of Waitangi, Allen and Unwin Port Nicholson Press, Wellington:90 A note needs to be made in regard to Claudia Orange's use of the term 'allowed' throughout this quotation, which itself maintains a notion of the white male missionaries have the right to determine who was or was not 'allowed' to sign.
80 Te Awekotuku, N., 1991 op.cit:62
and four there are valid reasons for Māori people to be wary of institutional learning and knowledge, that should not however be at the detriment of defining who is or is not a 'real' Māori. Continuing in her discussion Kura then identifies processes by which young Māori women are demeaned, she writes;

When a wahine stands up on the same issues, the oppression is more apparent. Allegations of 'radicalism', 'sexual frustration', and 'lesbianism' are fired. If a 'radically', 'sexually frustrated' 'lesbian' can korero Māori she is considered arrogant, a misfit in a society of intellectual Māoris.⁸²

Such attacks as described by Kura are not isolated incidents. These responses are both misogynist and homophobic. I have seen many such attacks on articulate, political, committed Māori women. It is almost a taken-for-granted experience for many Māori women who choose to not be silenced or denied space to speak. The frustration becomes even more intense when such processes of denial are couched in cultural frameworks. Moana Sinclair writes of a similar experience after positing views regarding the western influence in the construction of speaking rights. Moana notes that a Māori male student preceded to patronisingly 'correct' her and highlights the demeaning responses she endured;

Various happenings of this kind took place, the snide remarks about my being 'not a real Māori woman' (whatever a 'real woman' is) 'a Māori with feminist leanings', 'a Māori with Pakeha concepts'.⁸³

Ngahuia Te Awekotuku views such constructions as a part of wider oppressive relations that privilege Māori male and Pākehā definitions of what constitutes being Māori. She argues that being dismissed as being 'Pākehā' is an ultimate insult for Māori women and that Māori women can not afford to accept male-directed definitions of who we are or how we are expected to act.⁸⁴ Linda Tuhiwai Smith also provides specific discussion of the role of Māori men alongside Māori women. Linda clearly outlines that colonisation recreated internal structures of hierarchical relations between Māori women and Māori men. Māori men, she notes, were coopted by white men in the colonising process, it was Māori men who were sought by white men to trade and treaty with.⁸⁵ The dismissal of Māori women's roles meant that white men sought council with Māori men, this has had implications in the gendered nature of how Māori society currently operates.

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⁸² ibid:21
⁸⁴ Te Awekotuku, N., 1991 op.cit
⁸⁵ Smith, L.T. 1992(a) op.cit.
In light of these issues it is my view that we cannot allow Māori men to get off the hook. Challenging racist, sexist, homophobic, patriarchal, capitalist structures benefits all Māori people not solely Māori women. Māori men have a role to play in those challenges. Those Māori men that chose to address issues of colonisation and racism whilst being sexist, homophobic and abusive in their relations with Māori women should not be considered 'leaders' and definitely have no right to the label 'radical'. It needs to be asked, where are the Māori men now who are willing to take on the struggle against patriarchy and all that it stands for? There are few Māori men that are willing to do that, to take on fully the ideologies of patriarchy and to refuse to be a part of the ongoing oppression of Māori women. This requires Māori men to reflect critically not only on the colonial impositions but equally on what is being constructed as tikanga Māori. This is not to say that such Māori men do not exist, but that we rarely hear Māori men voicing in public fora the need for reflection and transformation. What tends to happen is that Māori men leave the gender issues for Māori women to deal with. That in turn denies that Māori men have a role to play in the transformation of gender inequalities and to lay challenges to other Māori men in terms of behaviour, attitudes and practices. This is an issue that Audre Lorde has raised in relation to Black men. Audre consistently argued that Black men must take responsibility for challenging all forms of oppression and that attacking Black feminists is not a useful approach. In responded to an attack on Black feminist writers by a Black male scholar, she writes:

The lack of reasonable and articulate Black male viewpoint on these questions is not the responsibility of Black women. We have too often been expected to be all things to all people and speak everyone else's position but our very own. Black men are not so passive that they must have Black women speak for them. Even my fourteen-year-old son knows that. Black men themselves must examine and articulate their own desires and positions and stand by the conclusions thereof. No point is served by a Black male professional who merely whines at the absences of his own viewpoint in Black women's work. Oppressors always expect the oppressed to extend to them the understanding so lacking in themselves.86

Through colonialism there have been many distortions of gender roles. The construction of ideas of masculinity for Māori men is one such distortion. Many of our people have internalised unproblematically the notion that we were/are a warrior race and that the term warrior is synonymous with male. This is a distortion that has had incredibly detrimental implications for Māori. Anthropologists and ethnographers have revelled in their descriptions of inter-iwi or inter-hapū warfare. Stories of bloody thirsty natives, ‘massacres’, ‘cannibalism’ dominate discussions of warfare. Much of what is described occurred post-arrival of our colonisers, particularly in a time

where muskets had been well distributed through certain iwi, for which we can give thanks to many of the 'god-loving' missionaries.87

The impact of musket wars was phenomenal,88 as prior to their introduction warfare was fundamentally hand to hand and therefore fatalities were contained. The maintenance of the belief that all Māori men are warriors and therefore inherently violent has been boasted most effectively by author Alan Duff. Duffs argument is fundamentally a deficit one, that is based on the notion that Māori are a ‘warrior race’ and therein lies a cultural predisposition for violence.89 This belief then provides the basis for his books, and the subsequent films, ‘Once Were Warriors’ and ‘What Becomes of the Broken Hearted’. Both films present us with the dysfunctional Māori male who is driven by violence with limit hope for any redemption. In the context of colonial representations this is a dangerous form of representation.

As I have noted in an analysis of ‘Once Were Warriors’ the film is located within a context of ongoing mis-representation of the history of this land.90 We have yet to see Māori views and representations of colonisation, rather we have been surrounded by Pākehā representations which deny colonisation. Films such as ‘The Piano’ position Māori as the colourful native other, who provides a native backdrop for the colonial survivors and Māori men as the negotiators and collaborators with Pākehā men.91 More recent films such as ‘Jubilee’ present the model of the ‘useless’ Māori male, who is incompetent in all things including the organisation of the jubilee, when ironically organising such large gatherings is in actuality a strength in Māori communities.92 The point is that representation of Māori men in film is more often than not constructed through Pākehā eyes and those constructions tend to reproduce gender relations that are detrimental for Māori women.

The significance of this is that in terms of providing critique of such constructions of Māori men, it is Māori women who are taking the lead. There is still little public analysis from Māori men in regard

87 Jenkins, K., 2000 op.cit.
88 Belich, J. 1986 The New Zealand wars and the Victorian interpretation of racial conflict Auckland University Press, Auckland
92 ibid.
to these issues. In a critique of the warrior image as perpetuated by the Jake Heke character of 'Once Were Warriors', Andrew Erueua Vercoe has begun to write to the presentation of Māori men as inherently deficient, challenging the colonial origins of current gender beliefs, he writes,

Māori men need to be taught what it means to be in a relationship, which presupposes learning to relinquish some of their ego-driven needs. I'm talking about sharing - the type of sharing where both individuals benefit from the relationship. Sometimes learning about a relationship requires outside help, and this means that men, as I have said, have to learn how to ask for it. We've had this misguided male macho psyche plaguing us ever since Victorian codes of conduct were introduced to Aotearoa. The role of women, in a Māori sense was replaced with the authoritative notion that the man ruled the roost. There is a difference between presiding in humility and ruling with an iron fist.\(^93\)

Although there is some slippage in the final sentence of this statement which infers that Māori men are the leaders, they just need to be more humble in their leadership, this is a beginning. There is a dire need for Māori men to engage a critique that is expansive and therefore inclusive of an gender analysis that questions those beliefs that serve to elevate their interests over and above those of Māori women. However, we can't afford to wait for the bulk of Māori men to commit to this, in the meantime Māori women will continue to construct our own approaches, analyses, theories and actions.

**Summary**

This chapter has provided a discussion of Mana Wahine theory in relation to wider philosophical issues. Mana Wahine theory is a particular form of Kaupapa Māori theory that validates the mana of Māori women therefore an understanding of the term Mana Wahine is critical. The term Mana Wahine theory serves as an overarching term for a range of Māori women's theoretical approaches, each of which have the fundamental belief that to engage issues from a Māori women's viewpoint is both valid and necessary. Drawing on the notion Mana Wahine as a means of naming Māori women's theories makes explicit the approach and intent. It affirms that Māori women have mana, a belief that early writers have undermined in the insidious ways in which they have describe our tūpuna wāhine. It affirms also a movement of uplifting the position of Māori women in a context where our roles and status have been systematically diminished.

The development of Mana Wahine theory as is currently being articulated is founded upon a range of historical movements which Māori women actively participated in. The historical developments of Te Kotahitanga highlighted that Māori women considered themselves to have a key role in the decision-making processes for their people. Therefore subsequent involvement in the Temperance and Suffrage movements does not come as a surprise. The significance of this is that it indicates

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clearly that Māori women's participation in later movements and organisations is based on solid historical involvement, therefore the forming of organisations such as the Māori Women's Welfare League and the emergence of Māori women's hui and interest groups did not occur in a vacuum. Māori women it seems have always been mobilising against oppressive acts. Mana Wahine theory then has a incredibly strong foundation that reaches from mana wāhine as expressed within whakapapa through to the development of Māori women's movements as a means of engaging issues.

The movements towards Māori women's theories are an extension of what our tūpuna wāhine have laid down for us. It is from this understanding that the relationship to Western feminism is engaged. It is not necessary to totally dismiss Western feminism. The concepts underpinning feminism do not belong solely to white women. Indigenous women, black women and women have colour have all voiced some degree of distrust in white women's movements. The distrust has often been in regard to the inability of white women to see and engage the racism within their own movements. There has also been strong critique of how white women, feminist or not, are benefited by acts of colonisation and therefore are resistant to the need for an examination of colonialism and racism. There are Māori women who see the term Māori feminism and recognise that the underpinning notions of affirming women's worldviews and struggling against impose oppression are not owned by Pākehā women. Māori feminism names a form of feminist approach that affirms Māori women naming our own realities and solutions.

The critique of Western feminists tendency to universalise all women's experiences within their own framework is one that is voiced by a range of Māori and Indigenous women. Women's experiences are socially, culturally and politically bound and must be engaged in that way. The notion of gender oppression as culturally bound raises issues in regard to the role of Māori men in challenging white patriarchal and internalised sexism. It is argued that Māori men have a role in challenging all forms of colonial oppression including those forms that may serve the interests of Māori men. There are few Māori men that actively analyse the gendered nature of colonisation however it is argued that challenge to colonial patriarchal benefits not only Māori women but all Māori people in that it is a challenge to an unjust social form that has been imported to Aotearoa and therefore has no place here. Māori men must be called into account in regard to challenging not only racism, classism and colonisation, but also sexism. The challenge is clear, however those Māori women can't wait for Māori men to catch up, we need to continue on with the struggle and the affirmation of Mana Wahine as theory is one part of that movement.