

Chapter One: The Narrative Archive

*Me aro koe ki te ha o Hine-ahu-one¹
Pay heed to the dignity of women*

The position of Maori women today, like those derived from any body of knowledge, emanates from a long recorded tradition recorded that resides in a multitude of forms². This genre is cloaked in metaphor, innuendo, subtlety and jargon that elucidates what is valued to those schooled and initiated into its cultural milieu (Marsden, 1992). A cursory reading and retelling of such narratives may leave an impression that males are the central characters. Yet a closer inspection reveals that females also play key roles; often they are custodians of knowledge who, amongst other things, advise, direct and protect males (Jenkins, 1988; Smith, 1992; Metge, 1995). Who Maori women are resides in whakapapa which provides a framework that recognises individual uniqueness within the group (Pere, 1988). Notions of partnership, complementarity and interdependence are delineated and reiterated in narratives of the cosmogony, lore and tribal histories.

It is argued that cosmological narratives locate the female principle and women in complementary and interdependent roles alongside the male principle and men (Szasz, 1987; Walker, 1990; Smith, L., 1990; Smith, C., 1994; Tomlins-Jahnke, 1996). Narratives of lore expound female characters who are strong, knowledge bearers and ultimately capable of changing the course of humanity (Jenkins, ^{1992?} ~~1988~~; Pere, 1988; Te Awekotuku, 1991). Tribal narratives reiterate the diverse roles and functions of women in customary

¹ Originally used as the title for the Maori Women's Welfare League National Conference (1984 cited in, Report of the Royal Commission on Social Policy, 1988, Vol II; p. 158).

² The style and form of traditional accounts transcends the parameters of oral histories most often cited in anthropological writings. They are equally encased within a variety of figurative art forms such as: carvings, moko, tukutuku, kowhaiwhai, waiata and place names. These are a few of the many taonga tuku iho (treasures passed down from ancestors) that are often ignored dimensions limiting the number of locations and type of history recorded in Western accounts.

Maori societies (Mahuika, 1975; Kupenga et. al. 1988; Jenkins, 1988). However prior to advancing notions of female roles within customary Maori societies, the degree of variance across tribal groups must first be recognised to dispel any perception of Maori as a homogeneous group in either customary or contemporary contexts.

As argued by King (1983), there appears to have been enough commonality between tribes from the Aupouri in the north to the Ngati Mamoe in the south for early writers to falsely claim that similarities pervaded all facets of Maori existence. King noted basic language, spiritual concepts, competitiveness, conventions of warfare and ways of giving and receiving hospitality as the basis for this premise (ibid: 43). However, as argued by Tomlins-Jahnke (1996), the composition and rich variation of internal functioning within iwi and hapu seemed to have been narrowly perceived by pakeha writers such as Best (1924) and Firth (1963).

Nevertheless, in spite of recognised diversity, what has drawn Maori women together, in more recent times, is the homogenising effects of colonisation; this has adhered an opaque veneer to the window through which Maori women are viewed by the world³. Through this veneer have emerged discourse mutations that have powerfully normalised the abnormal, dramatised the mundane and turned halves into whole. It is a discourse that sees male as owner and provider, casts female authority as secondary and insignificant, and simultaneously fractionates genderised roles customarily based on complementarity and collective good. The ideological dichotomisation of male and female, hierarchical division within society based on ethnicity, and individualism has meant that Maori women have been (re)defined,

³ See for example The Royal Commission on Social Policy (1988, Vol. II; pp. 51-79) that provides a synopsis of mana wahine drawn from submissions to the commission, Waitangi Tribunal claims and submissions made to Women's Affairs advocating the establishment of Te Ohu Whakatipu.

(re)fashioned, (re)named and (re)organised⁴ into a colonial social order that atrophies who and what Maori women represent. The result is that at times Maori women must (re)mind Maori men, as much as non-Maori men and women, about who they are and from whom they descend. Many Maori women - writers, film makers, academics and artists - are located within the position of 'talking back', 'filming back', 'writing back' and 'painting back'⁵ (Irwin, 1992; Te Awekotuku, 1991; Jenkins, 1992; Pihama, 1996; Mita, 1993; Mead, 1996), in order to (re)assert their authority through (re)uniting the status of Maori women as complementary and equal to that of Maori men. This becomes particularly important when non-Maori have vested in themselves the power to (re)define the position and function of Maori women in both Pakeha and Maori contexts⁶, and when many Maori men accept such (re)interpretations uncritically. This is particularly evident when, some Maori women,

... have also been led to believe that this *loss of dignity* and the right to be involved with decision making stems from Maori tradition (Pere, 1982, p.95) [My emphasis].

Hegemonic discourse that envelops and then subverts the customary positions of Maori women is a tool of colonisation that has simultaneously subjugated women while trivialising its own catalytic subordinating role. This is achieved in part by relocating such subversion within reinterpreted Maori cultural precepts. A measure of hegemonic power is the extent to which European renditions of who we are, are accepted uncritically. The combination of scientific discovery of indigenous groups and further ideological impositions attached to industrialisation and the rise of capitalism (Fanon, 1961; Churchill,

⁴ According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary the prefix 're' is used in the sense of 'altering the previous state'. Equally it can be used to 'return to previous state after lapse or cessation or occurrence of opposite state'. The latter is the position of (re)location advanced.

⁵ See Robin Kahukiwa's series of paintings entitled "White out".

⁶ See for example Heuer, 1972; Klein, 1981; Fry, 1985 and Carson, 1991. What becomes most problematic in such accounts is the perpetuation of Eurocentric views of genderised roles within traditional Maori society continue to be accepted based on academic acumen while those advancing positions within the cultural milieu that forms the focus of debate are reminded that we "(these women) are very much twentieth-century New Zealanders, but perhaps it is the closest we can come to the pre-European years." (Openshaw, Lee and Lee, 1993; p. 27).

1992) provides a mindset in which Maori women become the recyclable waste products of a colonial process. This process has more often than not seen those being colonised as either expendable commodities or raw material privy to the deft hand of the colonial manufacturer. Who Maori women are and how they see themselves are rarely given expression in such schema.

What follows is not an attempt to undermine the male characters in these narratives; rather it attempts to provide an analysis in which women are (re)located in positions equal and complimentary to their male counterparts. In each of the narratives explored, women actively engage in the creation, evolution and maintenance of Te Ao Maori in partnership with their male associates. Genderised characteristics prescribed by Maori custom differ markedly to those advanced by colonialism. Evidence of this is derived from the principles, attributes and processes that underpin three forms of narratives: cosmological narratives, narratives of lore and tribal history narratives. In these are the following **principles**.

- Continuous creation, in which the universe is portrayed as dynamic encompassing physical and intellectual growth and progress in which male and female elements are interlocated.
- Interactive participation where physical, spiritual and elemental phenomena are seen as active participants in a dynamic creative process based on interdependency and complementarity in partnerships that involve male and female elements.

Women display within these narratives the following **attributes**:

- they are power(ful) in their own right and provide channels through which economic, political and social status is distributed
- women characters often enable those associated with them with knowledge, technology and wise counsel while further exhibiting characteristics of -
- courage and self determination.

Appropriate **processes** are also reinforced that suggest

- hui as a forum for considered debate, negotiation, and for conciliation when positions are divided.

The reiteration of these principles, attributes and processes across Maori narratives provide, as argued by Tickner, "the mode by which culture is expressed. Many see folklore as, in effect, archaeology of the mind" (1992, p. 1).

Cosmological narratives⁷.

Maori cosmogony or the phenomenological world was separated into three states of existence, "Te Kore (the void), Te Po (the dark), and Te Ao Marama (the world of light)" (Walker, 1990; p. 11). First was Te Kore; the void of time, space and light in which resided the potential (Simmons, 1985). From this aeonic time frame emerged the potential for life, for becoming, for being, all things. The notions of potentiality and interactive participation opposed to the dichotomised positions of active and passive are integral components of this period. Marsden (1992) in reflecting on these three states quotes Ngapuhi wananga,

Te korekore i takea mai, ki te po te kitea, te po tangotango, Po whawha, Po namunamu ki te wheiao, ki Te Ao Marama.

From the realm of Te Korekore the root cause, through the night of unseeing, the night of hesitant exploration, night of bold groping,

⁷ The use of the word narrative is a conscious attempt to divorce the content of the following sections, particularly cosmological narratives and narratives of lore, from relegation to myths and legends, when such discourse relegates said histories into the realm of imagination and 'sets of ideas that form part of the beliefs of a group but is not founded on fact' (The Oxford Dictionary 1994, New Edition). When biblical references are prefixed with the word myth I would see the use of terms 'myth and legend' less problematically. The conceptual leaps of faith required within many biblical stories remain scientifically unsubstantiated yet are elevated above the scientific evidence of the crucial interdependence of sky, earth and elemental forces for all living things embodied within Maori cosmology. The differential treatment of one from the other is problematic when credence is attributed to one while the other is trivialised.

night inclined towards the day and emergence into the broad light of day (p. 135).

Many writers engage in interpretation of this first phenomenological phase; Te Kore. Once again Marsden maintains it is

the realm between non-being and being ... the realm of primal, elemental energy or latent being. It is here that the seed-stuff of the universe and all created things gestate. It is the womb from which all things proceed. (1992, p. 135)

Within the first two periods, two main allegorical figures arise across the majority of writers: one of plant growth, the seed representing the male element and gestation providing the female balance (Simmons, 1985; Best, 1923; Buck, 1949; Salmond, 1985). Taylor (1855 citing Te Kohuora) and Andersen (1907 citing Tama-Kere) add a third dimension, 'the epoch of thought':

From the germ of life sprang thought, and God's [Io] own medium came; then bud and bloom; and life in space produced the worlds of night (p. 127).

Two things are indicated in these dissertations, first that the potential for conceptual, abstract thought was highly valued. Secondly, there is no indication that such a virtue resided solely or primarily with either the male or female principle. What is evident is the existence of male and female elements interlocating consciousness (Taylor, 1855; p. 14) with abstract thought and intellectual capacity in the evolving cosmogony. Sproul (1979) maintains that a participative, internally active view of change is evident, where creation is revealed

... in abstract physical stages, evolving through the three periods of thought, night and finally light. It is dramatic and moving because its point of view is internal and participatory, not objective and reportorial. There is no one deity, no fixing of a sacred process into one persona; nature itself is only a dependent part of the whole. Being itself evolves from the conception through thought, spirit and matter to the greater climax, the blaze of day from the sky (p. 338).

These participative processes are not seen to act in exclusionary ways, where any one is independent of the others. The principle of interdependence is further reiterated in the creation of humankind, contrary to the typicality of Heuer's (1972) eurocentric claim that,

Culturally the role of women was made clear in the account of their creation. The first woman was formed out of a mound of earth and impregnated by her male creator with a life spirit. From this woman was regarded as being a passive receptacle for the dominant male spirit. Later mythology developed also an emphasis upon women as non-sacred and destructive, and many of women's activities, both prescribed and proscribed, emerged from this belief (p. 55).

The pacification and supplication of women is incongruous with the principles of interdependence and complementarity. Tane was one participant in a collaborative process (Tomlins-Jahnke, 1996) who participated in the creation not of the first woman but of the first human. Heuer's possible paralleling of this narrative to the Judaeo-Christian parable of Adam and Eve implies Tane like Adam is human, that Hine-ahu-one is the first reference to woman in the cosmogony and that her creation is the culmination of individual, male activity. Taking each assumption in turn, Tane is not mortal, he and his siblings are derived from Ranginui-e-tu-iho-nei (sky father) and Papa-tua-nuku (earth mother).

Hine ahu one, as pre existing, pre formed but hidden/hiding from Tane.

This primeval pair are the culmination of the potential advanced in Te Kore, which marks the transition from the first state Te Kore to the second Te Po. The intensity of this shared embrace precludes light, leaving their off-spring to reside in perpetual darkness. The progeny⁸ of this union while personified in the male form (Walker, 1990; Marsden, 1992) were attributed the full range of personality traits that within Western theorising are dichotomised into male and female characteristics. In the search for light and space it is Tane, the first born, who although is credited with separating Ranginui and Papa neither

⁸ The number of progeny varies across writers, seven are most commonly cited. Others such as Andersen (1907, p. 146) and Best (1924, p. 75) note 70.

conceives nor accomplishes the task alone. Separation is the culmination of hui (deliberations) between siblings. This is not to imply, however, that consensus was achieved on the course of action taken. To the contrary, it is the lack of consensus that in part locates the siblings in their respective realms and subjects some to the wrath of others. Each sibling further provides the distinct branches of whakapapa⁹, the basis on which the physical and elemental worlds are ordered (Marsden, 1992).

After the separation of Rangi and Papa, Tane sustains ahi ka (residence) with his mother, establishing her as a source through which economic, social and political status is distributed. Heuer's analysis commencing in the third state of existence ignores the presence of female elements prior to and during the search for the ira tangata (the human principle). Tane is an active agent in a process that involves hui (collaborative deliberation) and the ultimate need to acquire the counsel of Papa-tua-nuku in order to locate the uha (female principle) in order to create human life. Papa-tua-nuku provides Tane with knowledge regarding where to look, and parting with her own physical substance resulting in successful accomplishment of the task (Metge, 1995; p. 95), the creation of Hine ahu one, the first human being. Furthermore, Papa-tua-nuku displays attributes of wisdom, tolerance and forbearance in her willingness to protect, nurture and sustain many of her offspring in spite of the disservice done to her and Rangi in their separation. Heuer's use of an individualising framework as the basis for analysis privileges the role of the individual to the detriment of other key participants even in group contexts¹⁰.

⁹ Whakapapa or notions of tuakana/teina also effect this ordering, for example, unborn Ruaimoko, god of volcanoes and earthquakes, remains within the body of Papa. Even though unborn he continues to be seen as active and displays his own mana and the potential to effect change.

¹⁰ Triandis (1995, p. 2) provides a preliminary definition of collectivism as 'a social pattern consisting of closely linked individuals who see themselves as part of one or more collectives; are primarily motivated by the norms of, and duties imposed by, those collectives, are willing to give priority to the goals of these collectives over their own personal goals and emphasise their connectedness to members of these collectives'. He goes on to define individualism as a social pattern that 'consists of loosely linked individuals who view themselves as independent of collectives; are primarily motivated by their own preferences, needs, rights and the contracts they have established with others; give priority to their personal goals over the goals of others; and emphasise rational analyses of the advantages and disadvantages to associating with others.'

Further Eurocentric references to later narratives that emphasize the non-sacred and destructive nature of women is equally unfounded. From the union of Tane and Hine-ahu-one, Hinetitama, Muri-ranga-whenua and Mahuika are born¹¹ (Sproul, 1979; Tanenuiarangi, 1988). The contribution of these four women continue to reinforce the critical role of women in the development of culture as established by Papa-tua-nuku. Tane takes Hinetitama (his daughter) as his wife. Upon discovering the incestuous relationship she has unwittingly entered into, Hinetitama displays both the power and the self determination not only to leave the relationship but also to transform the course of humankind. From a prior state of immortality, Hinetitama, later known as Hine-nui-te-po, instigates mortality as a costly reminder of her violation by Tane (Jenkins, 1992). The initial desecration of personhood is of Tane's making, the power and recognised authority to remove and transform oneself rather than remaining a victim is Hinetitama's contribution.

The further contributions of Hinetitama's sisters, Muri-ranga-whenua and Mahuika are given expression in narratives of lore and the critical roles they play in the exploits of Maui.

Narratives of lore

Perhaps the most widely known and most often cited character from which lore is drawn is that of Maui-tikitiki-a-Taranga (Andersen, 1907; Walker, 1975, 1990, Schwimmer, 1966). Many customary practices are blueprinted in such narratives and the significance of women made transparent through the reiteration of principles, attributes and processes. Maui narratives provide the primary focus in this section as an analysis of the 'oppression we are meeting

¹¹ Muri-ranga-whenua and Mahuika are signalled here to form a whakapapa link that is important for understanding Maui's connections arising in the narratives of lore and the theoretical chapter.

dressed up mistakenly in the cloaks of our own culture' (Irwin, 1993; p. 303). The oppression is particularly borne by Maori women, as typically, the reinterpretation of customary narratives are reformatted into European patriarchal precepts. The pivotal role of women ignored in Colonial myths of Maori narratives enjoy wide exposure. They are consumed by Maori and Non-Maori children alike in schools, gifted to overseas visitors as tokens of indigenous fare, and used against Maori women in later analyses by current writers as a means of justifying the contemporary secondary status of Maori women. Female characters in these reinterpretations are often reduced to old crones or conversely to sex nymphs, setting the scene for virile dominant male characters who romp through paradise. Women are thus (re)imaged in a web of attraction and repulsion, derived from the sexual musings of cultural interlopers (Young, 1995). The portrayal of women as expendable not only diminishes the status of women but equally limits their counterparts, Maori men, to 'once were warrior' caricatures. Fanon (1965) shows that when colonials made history, the men and women objectified in such chronicles are condemned to immobility and silence. Churchill (1992) goes beyond Fanon's position, he argues, that 'objects of study' experience literature as a weapon of genocide. Literature in this sense becomes a textual strategy used to atrophy indigenous groups through fictional, non-fictional and cinematic representation.

Maori men and women writers, (Mahuika, 1975; Walker, 1990; Marsden, 1991; Jenkins, 1988; Smith, L., 1992; Tomlins-Jahnke, 1996) provide contrary analyses to eurocentric accounts, focusing instead on the contribution of both genders and rarely attributing significant events to individuals. In these analyses writers recognise female characters as displaying a diverse number of skills and fulfilling a variety of roles across a number of domains. In a like

manner, Maui narratives are contingent upon his connection to women through whakapapa and their enabling attributes.

Maui narratives note that his life commences as an aborted foetus. He is cast^{ed} into the ocean by his mother in the top-knot of her hair, which is ^{of other interpretations} commemorated in his name, Maui-tikitiki-a-Taranga (Walker, 1992; p. 172). He ^{humble as form of mana?} is the child of a woman in control of her own destiny, a trait Maui himself is later to emulate. Having survived his humble beginnings Maui achieves his birthright through the initial acceptance of him, by whanau and hapu, based on the acknowledgment of him by Taranga. By the simple act of acknowledgment, Taranga provides the channel through which Maui is accepted and becomes a part of a whakapapa matrix. In addition to locating Maui within a social group, the further connection to land provides political, economic and spiritual attachments. In short, Taranga enables Maui access to all the rights and obligations afforded whanau and hapu members.

Furthermore the foundation of many of the feats attributed to Maui are based on the knowledge and technology acquired from his kuia. It is Muri-ranga-whenua that supplies him with her enchanted jawbone and knowledge of its potential use¹². Mahuika, another of his kuia, supplies him with the source of fire, the discovery of which is revered within many cultures. It is the forbearance and tolerance of these kuia toward their mokopuna, in spite of their power to dismiss him, that enables Maui to accomplish many of the feats for which he is renowned (Kupenga, V., Rata, R., Nepe, T., 1988, p. 31; Jenkins 1992). Walker (1992, p. 174) cites these narratives, based on the actions of these women, as the origin of elders in general being the repositories of wisdom, knowledge and tribal lore.

¹² It is with this technology and knowledge, that Maui is able to beat the sun into submission. It is later fashioned into a fish hook and used to catch Te Ika A Maui (North Island). Subsequently bone was to be valued as a source from which a variety of prized implements were fashioned and used by both men and women (Walker 1992).

The narratives of Tawhaki, are equally dependant on the diverse roles and skills of the women with whom he is associated. His mother provides him with strategic knowledge enabling him to avenge the death of his father. His wife recovers and revives him after internment in a shallow grave, created by his brother in-laws. His grandmother informs him of correct route and the appropriate procedures to follow when pursuing his wife within a celestial realm. It is Tangotango, a celestial maiden, who initiates the nightly visitations to his bed. She, like Hine-nui-te-po takes her leave after being personally insulted, returning to the celestial realm from whence she came. Tangotango's home in the celestial relm proves to be a place where pursuit by Tawhaki is impossible, (without the knowledge of his kuia Whaitiri). She possesses the required knowledge of both the path that should be followed, and the cautionary advice necessary to complete the arduous journey.

Thus women traverse both the upper and lower realms of Maori cosmogony. Women possessed knowledge and skills important for the livelihood and development of Maori culture. They are most frequently portrayed as characters who, through their tolerance and forbearance, enabled others while maintaining their own self determination. These principles and attributes are reiterated in the telling of tribal histories.

Narratives of tribal histories

Within the narratives of tribal histories, women's contribution to Maori societies are multifaceted in that they fulfil integral roles in the social, economic, political and spiritual development and perpetuation of communal life. Pakeha feminist critique has narrowly focused on the contribution of Maori women during initial engagement with manuhiri, as a means of arguing that the same patriarchal

precepts exist within Maori culture as they do in European contexts (Te Awekotuku; 1991). Mana wahine critique of Western feminisms (Awatere, 1984; Te Awekotuku, 1991; Irwin, 1992; Tuhiwai-Smith, 1992; Evans, 1993; Pihama and Mara, 1994; Mead, A., 1994) argue that there are fundamental differences in the ideological assumptions underpinning Western theoretical positions that are in conflict with Mana Wahine theory derived from the diametrically opposed positions of individualism and collectivism (see footnote 11).

Contrary to Western analyses Kahu Stirling¹³(1997) of Te Whanau a Apanui and Ngati Porou, and Peti Nohotima (1997)¹⁴ of Tuhoe, speak about the place of women on the Marae atea. They maintain that because of the high regard for women as store houses of knowledge and as the *whare tangata* (the house of humanity), they did not often speak in this forum. While noting that it is the women's voice that is heard first, in the form of *karanga*, and last in *waiata*, the *whaikorero* was a forum in which challenge and blood shed could occur. This position is reflected within the *Whakatauki*,

Whakaakotia te tane kotahi tonu
Whakaakotia he wahine he mano he mano he mano.

One man (falls) and it remains one man
A woman falls and the potential of hundreds are lost.
(Maori Proverb)

Women were recognised and valued as the first teachers; they were prolific composers of various forms of *waiata*¹⁵ which incorporate elements of tribal history, people and protocol (Stirling, 1997; Nohotima, 1997). The point being made here is that Maori women played a significant role within Maori society. They were not insignificant in creating, shaping, developing and sustaining

¹³ HOD Maori Studies at Palmerston North College Of Education in personal communication.

¹⁴ Head of Kura Kaupapa Programme at Palmerston North College Of Education in personal communication.

¹⁵ The value of *waiata* as a means for recording historical incidents, making political statements and teaching purposes was widely used and applied to off spring very early through the use of *oriori*; a form of chant primarily directed toward the young.

Maori culture. Maori women's role models encompassed the range of human potential which has been historically 'written out' of literary accounts and anthropological studies. Nohotima (1997 citing her mother), referring to Best's writing on Tuhoe, suggests that his androcentric view of their tribe can be attributed to two things. Firstly, the use of only men as his informants, and secondly, his audience. Best's credentialling agents lay in his 'homeland' England; thus he was perhaps more concerned with meeting external parameters of validity than with those that would have been acceptable within the tribe that provided the focus of study¹⁶.

and written out as 'writings' - composing

Seeing Maori women as a repressed group is incompatible with the level to which Maori women are integrated into tribal histories that incorporate women fulfilling diverse roles and displaying a variety of often ignored attributes.

Some of these attributes include:

Bravery

- Wairaka whose descendants in the Ngati Awa, Tuhoe and Whakatohea tribes, celebrate her bravery and strength in saving the waka Mataatua.

Compassion

- Ngatoroirangi, of Tuwharetoa when claiming the land in the Taupo district from the lofty heights of Ngauruhoe beseeches his sisters, Kuiwai and Haungaroa to use their powers to save him from the harsh elements (Grace, 1959; p. 63).

Intellect

- Rongomaiwahine known for her beauty, her status of birth and her quick intellect, was seen by Kahungunu as a desirable partner. Her own personal mana is evident with two previous marriages. She was considered highly desirable for a myriad of reasons. Both she and

¹⁶

Biggs (1960) raises further shortcomings in the works of Best for further consideration.

Kahungunu¹⁷ are immortalised in meeting houses throughout the area¹⁸.

Self-determination

- Te Awekotuku (1991) gives an account of Hinemoa, an ancestor of Te Arawa. The first version¹⁹ is developed and perpetuated for the tourist trade encompasses notions of love and succumbing to desire. She also speaks of a second version, although possibly less palatable to an external audience, incorporating attributes of tenacity, strength, courage, and determination.

Leadership

- Within Ngati Porou, Apirana Mahuika (1975) cites many instances in which the position of women is paramount. There are those remembered for their leadership; holding the rank of ariki (temporal head of the tribe) status (Hine-Matiaro) and the status of chiefs (Hinerupe and Hinetapora). The latter, in spite of having an older brother, is cited as being the most important leader of her time. Neither of these women were tuakana (of the senior line) yet both rose (like Maui) to the position of leadership based on recognised ability.

Receptacles of knowledge

- Mahuika also indicates women also became the receptacles of knowledge, bestowed with the role of keeping oral histories and genealogies (Ngaropi Rangi). Still others were regarded as tohunga (the religious head of the tribe) whose main responsibility was to mediate between iwi and God (Rangihurihuia).

Status of birth

- There were those remembered for their status of birth; Matamua (first born status, if born first). The matamua is regarded symbolically as descending from the gods, and therefore with the birthright mantle resting on her, she had the mana to perform the special duties (eg.

¹⁷ Women had the ability to name their world. In debating the worth of the union between Kahungunu, and Rongomaiwahine, Rongomaiwahine likened the virtues of Kahungunu to the stars in the heavens. Consequently he is often figuratively represented with nga whetu at his side.

¹⁸ Personal conversation with Mana Cracknell of Rongomaiwahine. Kahungunu is remembered for the traits recognised and defined by Rongomaiwahine. Beside carved representations of Kahungunu often reside tukutuku panels of nga puraurawhetu which signify Rongomaiwahine's characterisation of Kahungunu, situating her as the namer of names while representations of Rongomaiwahine carry no such qualifiers.

¹⁹ Te Awekotuku suggests that there was no one story that it varied according to the audience being addressed but incorporated similar elements 'Unrequited passion ... the romantic melody of his flute across the water... . (1991, p. 19)

sacred rituals and removal of tapu) adhering to the role of first born (Tamatea Upoko, Hineauta, Uepohatu).

Providing historical reference points

- Other points of note cited by Mahuika displaying the status of Ngati Porou women include the number of Meeting houses bearing female ancestral names (Kapohanga, Hinetapora, Materoa); and the number of chief hapu named after women, (Te Whanau a Hine-rupe, Te Whanau o Tapuhi, Te Aitanga-a-Mate).

Avenues through which social, economic and political connection is claimed

- the rights of Mana Whenua - rights to land inherited through the women (Iritekura - Waipiro block); and the privilege of children being known through their mother (Nga kuri paka a Uetuhiao - the renowned warrior sons of Uetuhiao).

The examples cited do not constitute a definitive list but provide examples of the diverse contribution made by Maori women to their respective societies. It provides a counter view to the freeze frame approaches taken by those external to the cultural milieu who claim Maori women and public leadership roles are incompatible with Maori cultural precepts. It equally highlights that Maori men customarily recognised, embraced and actively sought the counsel of women, not because they were considered secondary and insignificant but because they too were active participants in the creating and shaping a culture based on complementarity and interdependence.

Metge (1995, p. 92) notes the variation of female and male roles across iwi, "some iwi insisting they are different but equal", other iwi according men a dominant position, particularly with regard to access to public leadership. Salmond (1991 cited in Metge, 1995) suggests that the discourse on male dominance emerged out of 'competitive striving in war' as a possible rationale for the separation of status between men and women yet the women cited above rose to prominent positions within such times. A clearer disjunctive is

attributable to colonisation with the assignment of women into the domestic domain and exclusion from political decision making and property holdings. In contrast however, Mita (1983 cited in Paraha, 1992) maintains in her whanau there is 'a history of women who didn't stay at home. They took their places by the men and were shot at and shot back' (p. 112).

A eurocentric and androcentric propensity to categorise and commodify those colonised has resulted in the privileging of selected facets of cultural practice that endorsed existing Western codes. Anthropological orthodoxy regarding contradiction appeared to vacillate between relegating many of the dynamic facets of observed cultures to obscurity, or casting behaviour contrary to their own, as pathological. This is contrary to the diversity evident in Maori narratives of cosmology, lore and tribal histories that locate women complementarily with their male counterparts. The women immortalised in cosmological, tribal and narratives of lore fulfil critical roles in the growth and development of a dynamic culture.

The metaphoric use of male and female physiology and intellectual capacity, engaged in participative interaction, formulate the transition from Te Kore to Te Po, culminating in the primeval pair Rangi and Papa. In Te Po the proliferation of off-spring displayed the range of human characteristics currently dichotomised into male and female. Papa-tua-nuku is positioned as nurturer, provider, protector and Advisor. Te Ao Marama positions women as active agents with the power to change destiny. It is a power that the infamous Maui is unable to circumvent. Attempting to (re)enact the original violation of Hine-nui-te-po in order to regain immortality, costs him his life. However prior to Maui's death, he engages in many acts from which lore is narrated and the diverse positioning of women is made evident. Equally tribal narratives

provide diverse representations of women where contribution to society across private and public domains is normalised.

This chapter centralises the diversity of roles played by Maori women in customary Maori societies. In effect it normalises their contribution across social, political and economic domains. The next chapter shifts the focus onto the ways in which leadership has been conceptualised in the literate archive.