Religion, Gender and Rank in Maori Society
A Study of Ritual and Social Practice
in Eighteenth and Nineteenth-Century Documentary Sources.

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Abstract

The main goal of this work is to understand the role that tapu (the sacred) had in ordering Maori gender relations, and set this role into a wider social context, through an investigation of early documentary sources. Particular attention is given to the distinctions Maori made between rangatira (chiefly persons), tutua (the low-born) and taurekareka (slaves).

Early nineteenth-century descriptions of funerary rites and rites of welcome are analysed to shed light on Maori constructions of gender and their relation to religion, rank and ritual. Maori ideas about sexual reproduction, abortions and the menses are also investigated. A selection of sources describing the tapu prohibitions and ceremonial surrounding childbirth and children are also discussed. Various religious roles in Maori society are surveyed, giving particular attention to women’s religious and ritual activities, and their interpretation. Western representations of Maori slaves and women in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are also investigated.
Chapter One.
Introduction.

The aim of this study is to explore the connections between aspects of Maori religion, ritual and Maori gender relations before the effects of Christianity and westernization substantially altered Maori life-ways and religion. I do this through an investigation of aspects of Maori religion and social life in early documented sources.

My main goal is to understand the role that tapu (the sacred) had in ordering Maori gender relations, and set this role into a wider social context. I give particular attention to the distinctions Maori made between rangatira (chiefly persons), tutua (the low-born) and taurekareka (slaves). Obviously women were to be found in all three social categories, and tapu took a central role in marking the prestige of rangatira. A study of gender that did not examine these three categories would be meaningless.

I. The Sources Drawn on in this Study.

Recent writing on Maori culture often emphasizes the importance of regional and tribal difference while earlier works do not give regional variation the same degree of emphasis, or even ignore it entirely. Early to mid-nineteenth-century sources do not lend themselves well to a regionally specific analysis on gender and tapu so I have not attempted it. A good deal of the earliest nineteenth-century material centres on the north of the North Island but as we approach the middle of the century, the geographical spread of the sources moves southward. The sources show that there was regional variation in the details of ritual, religion and mythology but also indicate that there were typically Maori patterns of ritual, religion and social organisation that were common throughout the
country. This dissertation is primarily concerned with these general patterns. I have, however, taken care to indicate where possible the region or tribe from which a given piece of evidence came.

I have drawn on a wide range of sources which includes the journals and narratives and studies of Maori culture produced by western observers: explorers, travellers, traders, government officials, missionaries and settlers. I also endeavour to draw on Maori language sources wherever possible, these include published collections of myths, songs and karakia (incantations) and also some manuscript material. The majority of sources on which I draw were written in the early to mid-nineteenth century, or by people who had lived in New Zealand during this period. I also make use of some eighteenth-century observers, particularly with regard to their descriptions of the division of labour in chapter six. In chapter seven, I also examine a selection of eighteenth-century sources and compare their depictions of gender and rank with those of the early nineteenth century.

Writers on Maori culture often select 1840 as the point after which significant cultural change had occurred. Of course this date merely constitutes an extremely broad rule of thumb. In practice, everyone relies on sources of from a much wider period, most notably the ethnographic writings of late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, especially Elsdon Best's extensive corpus. One of the goals of this study is to give a greater emphasis to early sources than has typically been the case, and to move away from what seemed to be an undue reliance on the turn of the century ethnologists.

Where my sources failed me, I do however make some judicious use of Best's early work among aged Tuhoe which he began in 1895. I do not rely on his later material where one is likely to encounter problems. In Best's later writing, he was increasingly influenced by some Ngati Kahungunu sources which scholars agree is relatively late material, and in some instances of questionable

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1 Biggs 1960: 3; Heuer 1960: 8. See also Wright 1967 cf. Hanson and Hanson 1982: 5.
authenticity. Generally speaking, Best’s later general works on the Maori are a poor substitute for his earliest writing based on careful and extensive fieldwork among aged Tuhoe. In chapter five, I present a case study which highlights the consequences of relying too heavily on Best’s *The Maori* and Tregear’s *The Maori Race*. This case study illustrates the superiority of Best’s early work on the Tuhoe and indicates that his research at that time produced material that was in close continuity with Maori culture as it was earlier in the century.

II. A Review of the Secondary Literature.

There are five studies which examine a selection of early documented sources on women’s roles in Maori society. Two monographs: Berys Heuer’s *Maori Women* and Bruce Biggs’ *Maori Marriage* and two articles: Margaret Orbell’s “The Traditional Maori Family” and Caroline Ralston’s “Maori Women and the Politics of Tradition”. In these studies religion is dealt with briefly and expeditiously as part of the background which shaped Maori social life.

Two other studies of the roles of women in Maori society and religion, I have excluded from my study because they fall outside of my period of interest. These studies are based on oral research rather than early documented sources: Judith Binney’s general historical comment on “the role and status of Māori women” focuses on the life-histories of women who came of age in the early twentieth century in the Urewera region and were connected with the Ringatu religion, a movement heavily influenced by Christianity. There is also Apirana Mahuika’s comment on female leadership and tapu in Ngati Porou which derives largely

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1 Best’s key informant in his later work was H.J. Te Whatahoro. For a discussion of Best’s work with Te Whatahoro, see Craig (1964: 146-57). For a detailed analysis of Te Whatahoro’s manuscripts, see Simmons (1994). See Orbell (1995: 72-3) for a general comment on the historicity of Te Whatahoro’s manuscripts and related sources. See also Biggs (1960: 41, 66-7, 69, 72) for a critical evaluation of Te Whatahoro’s material relating to birth and marriage.

2 Heuer 1972; Biggs 1960; Orbell 1978; Ralston 1993.

from his study of the opinions of four influential senior men in the 1960s and 70s.  

Those studies that draw on early documented sources to address issues relevant to women and gender difference in Maori religion include J. Prytz Johansen’s *The Maori and his Religion*, Jean Smith’s *Tapu Removal in Maori Religion*, F.Allan and Louise Hanson’s *Counterpoint in Maori Culture* and Margaret Orbell’s article “Māori Mythology”. The Hansons also incorporated the same ideas that they present in *Counterpoint in Maori Culture* in a survey of related ideas in Polynesia: “Female Pollution in Polynesia”. These studies focus very strongly on myth and ritual and as a consequence their discussion of Maori social life is relatively confined. 

Two other short studies of a selection of early documented sources have appeared the prime focus of which is not to analyse Maori society of the period but to examine the ways in which western representations of Maori women have been shaped by western agendas and ideologies. Kathryn Rountree analyses the depictions of Maori women in the journals from Cook’s three voyages. She describes them as the product of a “European male gaze” which found Maori women unappealing compared to other Polynesian women. Rountree also looks to the decline of the enlightenment ideal of the noble savage and the paradigm for enlightenment science, where the scientific subject is male and the object scientific investigation is female, to explain depictions of women. Patricia Grimshaw and Helen Morton survey a selection of nineteenth century western sources and emphasise the ways in which they are the products of “the colonial male gaze” and shaped by the various agendas and biases of colonial men. 

There are two key issues in the secondary literature which I try to address in

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6 Johansen 1954; Smith 1974; Hanson and Hanson 1982; Orbell 1992.

7 Hanson 1983.

8 Rountree 1998.

this study. Firstly, the role that Maori religion had in shaping gender relations. Secondly, methods for reading and evaluating sources.

There are two opposing views on the relationship between Maori social life and religion in the literature. Orbell asserts that the distinction between tapu and noa reflected and shaped a gender hierarchy; in general men were considered sacred, while women were believed to be noa. This distinction was evident in both the division of labour in everyday life and women’s ritual roles. This same picture of the connection between Maori religion and gender difference is evident in Heuer’s and Johansen’s works. Biggs also states that women’s sexual organs and the menses were thought to destroy tapu. These assertions are also in continuity with material that can be found in Elsdon Best’s work, although in Best’s case it is not integrated into anything approaching a sustained analysis on the position of women.

Subsequently F. Allan and Louise Hanson have argued that Maori women’s roles in certain rituals and Maori ideas about sexual reproduction show the interpretation that women were noa and men were tapu to be in error. Allan Hanson also asserts it is logically incoherent to say, as Best does, that women were generally noa and that high ranking women were also tapu. The Hansons’ work as a whole generally presents Maori gender constructions as complementary and egalitarian, and their analysis of women’s relationship to tapu takes place in this

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10 Orbell 1995: 186-88 cf. Orbell 1992: 288-9. For a rather hostile response to Orbell’s assertions see Te Maire Tau (1996) who criticises Orbell’s lack of regional focus and failure to consult with contemporary experts on tribal tradition. He also complains that the assertion that women were noa and men were tapu is “an insult to Maori women”. See also Charles Royal (1996) for another critical response. Royal considers Orbell’s conclusions to be in error and the consequence of an undue reliance on documented sources when the truth of the matter is to be found in oral tradition as passed down to Royal by his elders. We encounter in these comments the complex and contested role that gender and history takes for some exponents of contemporary tradition. For a general discussion of some of the issues involved in twentieth century tradition and its relation to documented historical evidence in the Pacific see Keesing (1989).


13 Hanson and Hanson 1983: 87-9.

14 Hanson 1982: 348.
Although the Hansons’ interpretation was presented as a new challenge to old ideas, they were not the first to assert that the distinction between tapu and noa did not relate to gender difference in Maori culture. This assertion had already been made by Mahuika, who held that “tapu was held equally by men and women in Ngati Porou”, alongside a generally egalitarian view of Ngati Porou constructions of gender and tribal leadership. Mahuika’s conclusion, however, was not based on early documented sources but was largely the product of his discussions with four informants, influential senior men of his tribe. The Hansons make no reference to Mahuika’s work but Mahuika’s views were published in the influential anthology on Maori culture and politics Te Ao Hurihuri in the year before the Hansons came to New Zealand to conduct their library research. I think it likely that Mahuika is an unacknowledged influence on the Hansons’ interpretation of documented sources.

The Hansons’ work Counterpoint in Maori Culture was subject to some criticism with regard to their treatment of historical change and evaluation of sources. And one authority on Hawaiian religion expressed bewilderment as to how they could have arrived at such an interpretation. Nonetheless their treatment of tapu and gender was generally well received. Most notably Nicholas Thomas went on to use the information in Counterpoint in Maori

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15 For a comment on this feature of the Hansons’ work, see Valeri 1985.
16 Mahuika 1973:75.
17 For a criticism of Mahuika’s very positive assessment of twentieth century Ngati Porou gender relations see Arapera Blank’s discussion of family life in Ngati Porou (Blank 1980: 35-8). One of Mahuika’s key informants was Eruera Stirling and he can be found expressing contrary views on female leaders and orators to the ones he contributed to Mahuika’s study, see Stirling and Salmond (1980: 76, 233). Another of Mahuika’s four key informants disagreed with Mahuika’s conclusion that female leadership was normative in Ngati Porou during the course of his research (Mahuika 1973:205).
18 Mahuika 1975. The Hansons spent a year in New Zealand 1976-7 (Hanson and Hanson 1983: xi).
*Culture* in his study of Marquesan gender relations, because of the paucity of comparable Marquesan sources.\(^2\) It does seem, however, that missionaries and other western observers made statements that ran somewhat contrary to the Hansons’ assertions for Thomas devotes a chapter to “disentangling tapu” from the errors of missionaries and other observers in the Marquesas.\(^3\) Thomas argues that western writers had through unfamiliarity oversimplified indigenous gender relations and tapu, and the relationship between them.

A feminist anthropologist, Caroline Ralston, who has written written quite widely on women in Polynesia takes up these themes also.\(^4\) She affiliates the interpretations produced by the Hansons’ and Thomas and presents a programme for the interpretation of Polynesian sources. Her comments indicated that it was necessary to embark on a radical rereading of historical sources. According to her, “indigenous concepts of male and female” have been misinterpreted by both contemporaneous western observers and subsequent writers. These same writers had also ignored or minimized the power and influence of chiefly and non-chiefly women.\(^5\) Further she asserted that later specialists had exacerbated earlier errors because they were blind to historical change. Not only has the historical record been distorted by western gender ideologies, but also Polynesian ideologies and practices have actually changed as a result of western colonization.\(^6\) The end result was, she claimed, that those producing western representations have had a strong tendency to reproduce images of their own patriarchal culture instead.

\(^2\) See Thomas (1990: 68-73, 207 n.22) for an indication of his dependence on the Hansons’ work on tapu. For an indication of his approach to early documented sources on the subject of tapu see ibid., 190-1. For a comment on the paucity of Marquesan language sources see ibid., 186.

\(^3\) Ibid., 68-73.


\(^5\) Ralston 1987: 115. For a comparable statement on the erasure of powerful women by patriarchal writers and the negative effects of colonialism on Maori gender relations see Te Awekotuku’s views in Te Awekotuku and Waring (1984: 480-1). Te Awekotuku differs from Ralston in that she holds that the distinction between tapu and noa did shape Maori gender relations in most tribes (Ibid.).

\(^6\) Ralston 1987: 118, 121.
Ralston gives no indication of her theoretical antecedents, but the approach she outlines is exactly that to be found in Mona Etienne and Eleanor Leacock's influential works. Etienne and Leacock's anthology *Women and Colonization* is perhaps the most influential statement that female subordination among indigenous peoples was the result of colonialism, westernization and in particular capitalism.\(^{27}\) Leacock has also asserted that male dominance is a myth promulgated by western writers and not a feature of indigenous societies.\(^{28}\)

Subsequent writers have, however, demonstrated that a paradigm where indigenous stateless societies are taken to be gender egalitarian and female subordination is taken to be the result of capitalist penetration does not adequately describe the multiple effects of colonialism and the diverse historical periods, cultures and societies involved.\(^{29}\) We can be sure then that a generalized paradigm with regard to indigenous cultures and the impact of western colonialism is inadequate and most writers on the subject would eschew such an approach.

In Polynesia, Jocelyn Linnekin's book challenged Leacock's mode of interpretation. Although Linnekin criticises studies of Hawaiian religion for overemphasizing gender inequality, she agrees with Valeri that Hawaiian concepts and practices relating to kapu (a cognate of tapu) devalued women.\(^{30}\) She also provided an example of colonialism enhancing the status of certain women, arguing that Hawaiian women of rank rose to greater prominence in colonial Hawaii, because they became leaders of greater stability than men of comparable rank, whose power was undermined by their association with the war ethic.

Ralston, having read Linnekin's book on Hawaiian women, changed her

\(^{27}\) Etienne and Leacock 1980.

\(^{28}\) Leacock 1981.

\(^{29}\) For critical comment on Leacock's approach to the effects of colonialism and western contact on indigenous gender relations see Ortner (1996: 142-3) and Lamphere (1987: 23-5).

\(^{30}\) Linnekin 1990.
approach to the interpretation of historical sources.\textsuperscript{31} She produced a survey of early nineteenth-century sources on the New Zealand Maori which she claimed showed clearly and directly that Maori gender relations were egalitarian without the need for the kind of interpretation she had formerly proposed.\textsuperscript{32} She also claimed that "in New Zealand no comment was made about prohibitions or restraints on Maori women, nor reference to belief of their profane and polluting nature in sources prior to 1850".\textsuperscript{33} Ralston has rather sweepingly rejected anything written on the New Zealand Maori between 1850 and 1950; the detrimental effects of colonialism render them, she thinks, next to worthless.\textsuperscript{34} Her evaluation here is still consistent with the rather simplistic view of the effects of colonialism on indigenous gender relations that she expressed in her earlier comments, and which she claimed to have abandoned. This sort of evaluation is one that could only be made by a scholar unfamiliar with Maori language sources, which date from about 1850.\textsuperscript{35} These contain a great deal of material that has little or no connection with the effects of westernization or colonialism, and can only be understood in relation to a Maori social and religious world that was neither westernized nor colonized.

Grimshaw and Morton show that even those early English language sources on which Ralston relied present a far more ambiguous picture than she admits. They note, quite rightly, that Ralston’s interpretation is shaped by her desire to show that gender inequality and prohibitions on female orators in twentieth century tradition do not have their historical roots in the early nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{36} Indeed, as half of Ralston’s article was taken up with a discussion of contemporary tradition, her examination of early nineteenth century sources was perforce sketchy.

\textsuperscript{33} Ralston 1993: 32.
\textsuperscript{34} Ralston 1992b: 175, 181.
\textsuperscript{35} Grimshaw and Morton 1995: 149.
Grimshaw and Morton, in their examination of a selection nineteenth century English sources, found that there was a wide variety of statements made about Maori women. Some write that Maori women were horribly oppressed, others write about their remarkably elevated social position.\textsuperscript{37} One writer, Joel Polack, a British trader who wrote four volumes on the Maori, manages to make both types of statement.\textsuperscript{38}

Grimshaw and Morton make much of this and eschew evaluating "ethnohistorical" debates in favour of an analysis that shows these contradictory assessments by western observers to be a consequence of the tension between their "fundamental convictions about appropriate femininity" and Maori social life.\textsuperscript{39} To some extent, Grimshaw's and Morton's point is well taken. Summary evaluations of "the position" of women are worthless, if one wishes to understand the society that is being described.\textsuperscript{40} It is very likely that they will reflect certain ideological or rhetorical agendas. For a start, it would be a rare society indeed that had one social location for all women. In Maori society there were substantial differences between enslaved captives and the head wife of a chief, for example.

Rather than summary evaluations, an investigation into particular aspects of the culture and social structure is needed. Certainly, I have found in my study that if one puts the summary evaluations of female status to one side and instead collates as many sources as one can find on particular aspects of Maori culture, a compelling and relatively consistent picture emerges. A project of this kind is a good deal more difficult than relating a selection of early western sources to western prejudices and ideologies that have already been thoroughly documented and analyzed in numerous published studies of western constructions of race, class and gender.

\textsuperscript{37} Grimshaw and Morton 1995: 144-5.

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., citing Polack 1838: I, 363 and Polack 1840: II, 94.

\textsuperscript{39} Grimshaw and Morton 1995: 146, 148.

\textsuperscript{40} Rosaldo 1980: 396-7 (n.10), 401.
Merely locating sources and estimating whether one has found a representative sample is in itself a difficult matter and one that Ralston clearly glosses over in her survey. Even recent editions of published writing from English and French writers are seldom indexed in any helpful way on matters relating to gender, rank and religion. Indeed, women were seldom a particular focus of these writers, so one must comb through a vast quantity of material to find the scattered references and begin to collate them and relate and compare them to what is said about men. Published collections of Maori language material are equally difficult and the problems escalate when one turns to manuscript sources. In all, it was an immensely time consuming process merely to collect and collate relevant sources on gender, rank and religion. This is a field where much work remains to be done.

III. Chapter Outline.

The shape of this work has been largely determined by what I could find in the sources. In chapter two I consider Maori beliefs about the gods (atua) and the dead, tapu (the sacred), early nineteenth-century descriptions of funerary rites and the gatherings that took place at these times. I consider what these sources suggest about Maori constructions of gender and their relation to religion and ritual. I also examine early descriptions of the rites of welcome performed at other gatherings.

Maori beliefs about women’s sexual functions have often been thought to contribute to the cultural background that made women’s connection with tapu problematic. In chapter three I examine some sources on Maori ideas about sexual reproduction, abortions and the menses. Abortions formed a lesser class of atua that were thought to be especially destructive. The menses too seem to have had a destructive role and women made special mention of them in songs where they

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41 Ralson 1993.
cursed their enemies.

In chapter four I examine a selection of sources on the tapu of childbirth and the rituals performed over newborn children, and the ways in which the ceremonial surrounding childbirth and children marked the prestige of chiefly children and in particular chiefly boys. I then give some consideration to early nineteenth-century comment on female infanticide.

In chapter five I examine the various religious roles in Maori society, giving particular attention to women’s roles. I conclude this chapter with a re-examination of some rituals which have been used in the Hansons’ influential reinterpretation of tapu and its relationship to gender, and in so doing present a case study that illustrates the shortcomings of turn of the century ethnographies.

In chapter six, I begin with a discussion of early sources on rangatira, tutua and taurekareka. The distinctions between rangatira and lowly persons was built on the distinction between tapu and noa, and this is evident in the division of labour, spatial separation and separate dining. I then discuss an early Maori source that states that men were tapu and women were noa, and which connects this distinction with the division of labour. I then compare various early descriptions of the division of labour and also consider whether women and men ate together.

In chapter seven, I examine the wider context which must have reflected Maori ideas and practices relating to tapu and gender and rank. I do this through an analysis of western depictions of slaves and women in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and consider what these suggest about Maori social life during this time. In this chapter we will also encounter some of the more egregious effects of western prejudices about racial difference and women, and I also make some comment on these.

Chapter eight comprises a short summary of my findings and a consideration of why my conclusions differ so markedly from those drawn by the Hansons’ and Ralston.
IV. A Note on the Orthographic Conventions in this Work.

It has become common practice to indicate long vowels in Maori words. The Maori Language Commission currently recommends the use of macrons but some writers also simply use double vowels. Long vowels are seldom indicated in nineteenth-century sources and because they are the primary focus of my study, in sympathy with them, I have not used macrons or doubled vowels. When I quote twentieth century writers and translators, I of course preserve whichever orthographic convention they have used.
Chapter Two
Gender, Religion and Ritual at Maori Gatherings Described in Early Sources.

In this chapter I discuss a number of early sources which show that dead chiefs formed part of the tribal pantheon. Early descriptions of funerary customs confirm the connection between the dead and the gods and also show something of the social context in which the dead took on this significance. The funerary rites for chiefs and their near kin were occasions for Maori communities who normally lived independently of each other to gather and affirm their alliances and kinship bonds. This was tremendously important in a society where the war ethic governed relationships between those who were neither allies nor kin. I also consider the extent to which the female dead and ancestors of the tribe took their place among the gods.

I then examine the roles that women took in funerary rites as mourners and handlers of the dead. Maori not only mourned and lamented at funerals, they also did this in their rituals of welcome. In the rites of welcome, women are again prominent as mourners. I compare and contrast some of the distinctive features of the rituals of welcome and mourning, and consider what this suggests about Maori gender relations. The roles that men and women took were often quite distinct but also overlapped to a certain extent. In general, it seems that women took a complementary role which softened the bellicosity of men’s warlike behaviour. On the other hand, some women, especially those closely related to the chief, also engaged in warlike performances. This reflects the high value the Maori placed on war, vengeance, and warlike prowess and display.
I. Atua: The Gods and Dead Chiefs.

Anyone acquainted with the secondary literature on Maori religion will be familiar with the first ancestors of the Maori such as Ranginui, Papatuanuku, Tumatauenga, Tanemahuta and Hinenuitepo.\(^1\) Analyses of these widely known ancestral figures, however, do not complete the picture of early nineteenth-century religion. Early sources show that dead chiefs became gods.

Edward Shortland writes that while Maori mythology referred to supernatural beings called atua who existed in the distant past, it was the spirits of the more recently dead who were expected to take a direct interest in family and tribal affairs.\(^2\) Thus "every tribe and every family" had "its own proper Atua."\(^3\) These atua had a number of functions. They were, for example, thought to watch for any neglect or violation of tapu prohibitions. Shortland singled out the spirits of "warriors and other great men" as being particularly concerned with the fortunes of the tribe.\(^4\) Missionary Richard Taylor's comment that Maori gods "were no more than deceased chiefs" also suggests that those who were of political significance to the tribe during their lives continued to be significant after death as atua.\(^5\) Polack similarly remarks that dead chiefs were "regarded as gods by their

\(^1\) See e.g., Hanson and Hanson 1983: 41.

\(^2\) Shortland 1856: 81. Shortland was a government official who resided in New Zealand 1841-6. His main residence was at Maketu but he travelled widely in the North and South Islands. Two of his published works on the Maori derive from this period (Shortland 1851, 1856). He returned to New Zealand periodically: 1862-5, 1869-73, 1880-89. A later publication (Shortland 1882) comprises translations of Maori manuscripts in his possession, which he had collected "many years ago" (Shortland 1882: vii). For a fuller discussion of his life and work see Anderson (1992).

\(^3\) Ibid.

\(^4\) Ibid., 82.

\(^5\) Taylor 1855: 64. Taylor arrived in the Bay of Islands in 1839 as a missionary. From 1840 he was stationed at Putiki Wharanui, near Wanganui. He travelled widely and often through a large portion of the west of the North Island, from Taupo to Wanganui and along the coast.
Both Polack and Shortland particularly remark on the role dead chiefs had in battle. Polack writes that before battle "they are appealed to ... being supposed to have the same affection for their tribe as when on earth." Shortland comments:

In war these spirits are supposed to attend the army, and direct its movements while on its march, by communicating advice or warning through some one or other of their nearest living kinsmen. In actual conflict, they hover over their combatants, and inspire courage into the hearts of their own tribe.

Shortland's comment that these atua tended to accompany one of their nearest living kinsmen, suggests one of the religious bases for the power of chiefs, they were usually one of the nearest living descendants of not only previous chiefs but also the tribal gods. War, of course, does not exhaust the areas of social life in which atua were involved. Cultivating the kumara, the building of a chief's house, the cutting and dressing of the hair of chiefly persons and childbirth are just four notable examples.

From Shortland and Polack we have a rather androcentric account of the familial atua of chiefs. We will be in a position to evaluate the extent to which the Maori pantheon was male-dominated after examining some salient features of the social context in which the idea that dead chiefs were gods was meaningful.

II. Early Descriptions of Funerary Rites.

In early sources the Maori word for god, "atua", is frequently applied to the dead, especially the chiefly dead. Missionary Thomas Kendall wrote in 1815 that the Bay of Islands chief Ruatara had died. As soon as Ruatara was dead:

the natives called his corpse atua as they do all other dead people.

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7 Ibid.

8 Shortland 1856: 82.
Whenever we came near a piece of tabooed ground and ask the reason why it is tabooed, if a person has been buried in it we always receive for an answer “atua lies there.”

The connection between atua and the dead of the tribe is particularly noticeable in the expression settler Frederick Maning uses for a person who prepared the corpse for the funerary rites: “kai tango atua” (one who handles atua). Maning characterizes the “tapu tango atua” (the tapu from handling atua) as one of the more severe forms of tapu. Missionary William Yate also records that the “strictest of their tapus are ... connected with their dead.” Kendall writes that “the veneration of the New Zealanders for the dead is extraordinary.” A Maori who could speak English explained to Kendall how important the funerary rites were to Maori religion, he said it was like the missionaries going to church.

The ongoing importance of chiefs to their tribe is reflected in the way that the recently dead members of the chief’s family might be kept a good deal nearer to the village than appears to have been the norm for other members of the tribe. Samuel Marsden, for example, was very much struck by how near a chief was keeping his father’s body to the village:

The natives do not like to visit the places of their departed friends, and generally have some frightful image erected near the spot to terrify all who approach ... I was therefore much surprised that Weerea [Whiria] had his father so near him and in the centre of the village.

Whiria’s father had been slain in battle and his body, well wrapped with knees drawn up to the chin, had been placed on a stage which had been built upon a small hut. Whiria informed Marsden that he would remain there “until his

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9 Elder 1934: 78. Kendall was stationed at Rangihoua 1814-22 (Lineham 1992: 203).

10 Maning 1863: 126. Maning arrived in New Zealand in 1835. He lived at Hokianga and Kohukohu in close contact with his Maori neighbours in the 1830s and 40s. Much of the material in his book Old New Zealand (Maning 1863) derives from this period (Colquhon 1992).

11 Ibid. 122, 134.

12 Yate 1835: 85. Yate was stationed at Waimate, Kerikeri and finally Puriri during the period 1828-34 (Lineham 1992: 212).

13 Elder 1934: 78.

14 Elder 1932: 117. This observation was made in 1814 at Waikare, Whiria’s village on the bank’s of the Waikare river. Whiria later became Pomare II ard a principal Nga Puhi chief.
bones moulder away."\textsuperscript{15}

G.S. Cooper’s description of the layout of a Taupo pa, Pukawa, in 1850 indicates a similar practice.\textsuperscript{16} The remains of the former chief Mananui Te Heuheu Tukino II and his favourite wife Nohopapa who had both been killed in a mud slide four years earlier were kept at a fenced wahi tapu (sacred place), next to the dwellings of Iwikau Te Heuheu Tukino III and his near relatives. In this case they were subsequently moved to a more final resting place.

Marsden has left us with another account that shows the close connection between dead chiefs and atua, and which gives us some indication of the wider social context in which dead chiefs took on this significance. In 1820 when Marsden and his party were travelling to Waimate he met with a number of Maori travellers who asked where Marsden and his companions were going:

When we told them they immediately informed us that there was an atua at Wyemattee [Waimate]. I could not comprehend what they meant, as they all seemed much interested about the atua; I thought some chief was either dead or near death, as they told us that there were a great number of persons at Wyemattee.\textsuperscript{17}

At Waimate itself, Marsden stopped at “a farm” (by which he probably means a village), belonging to a chief closely connected with Hongi Hika named Taraia. He saw there the largest gathering of Maori he had ever witnessed: “There were some of the heads of tribes with their fighting men from Shokee Hangha [Hokianga] on the west side of New Zealand to Bream Head on the east.”\textsuperscript{18} Other observers estimated that there were nearly 3000 people present.\textsuperscript{19} Various leaders connected with Hongi Hika had called this meeting to arrange a war expedition against the people of Kaipara. Marsden thought the occasion resembled “more a

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{16} Cooper 1851: 274-77. Cooper travelled through the central North Island with a party of government officials in 1850.

\textsuperscript{17} Elder 1932: 242.

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{19} Cruise 1957: 95.
country fair than anything else I can compare it to.”

Amid the general bustle a circle of chiefs sat in a circle “in deep consultation”. A large feast, comprising “some hundreds of baskets” of kumara and introduced potatoes with fish, was eaten. Despite the liveliness of the scene loud lamentations could be heard continuously, coming from “a distant farm ... near a mile off”:

when we inquired the cause the natives told us the atua was there, and that was all we could learn. These lamentations continued without interruption, and we determined to visit the atua next morning in order to know what it was that interested almost everyone we spoke to.21

The next day Marsden and his friends visited the atua:

we found a dead chief seated in great state. His hair was dressed according to their custom and ornamented with feathers and a garland of green leaves. His countenance was bright and clear, having been recently anointed with oil, and retained its natural colour. Whether there was a body or not we could not tell, as the mats covered the whole up to the chin; he had the appearance of a man sitting upright in his chair. I had seen one some time before whose head was dressed in a similar way, and the body had been dried and preserved as well as the head. This chief had been a young man when he died, apparently about thirty years old. His mother, wife and children were seated before him, and the skulls and other human bones belonging to his family and ancestors were placed in a row on his left hand. I inquired when he died, and was told he was killed in battle beyond the river Thames some months ago. This chief was called the atua, of whom we had heard so much the preceding day.22

Marsden’s account shows a war council coinciding with funerary rites for a dead chief. Funerary rites for a principal chief would, of course, be an ideal occasion for a council of war, given that it was a time when neighbouring chiefs who usually acted independently of each other might meet together. The death of an important person would also be a time when questions concerning the pursuit of vengeance would be of pressing importance. The coincidence of a council of war with the funerary rites for a chief also coincides suggestively with Shortland’s

20 Elder 1932: 243.
21 Ibid.
22 Elder 1932: 244
and Polack’s assertions that dead chiefs as atua were particularly important in ensuring success in warfare. The funeral that Marsden describes, however, shows that Polack’s claim that chiefs killed in war could not become gods is probably wrong. It seems much more likely that a chief who was consumed by the enemy, rather than merely killed, might be prevented from becoming a tribal atua. The consumption of an enemy seems to have been the ultimate conquest.

Polack writing of his travels in the north of the North Island, 1831-37, gives a general description of the display of a chief’s body which resembles Marsden’s account. Polack notes that the body of a “principal chief” would be displayed with the bones and skulls of the chief’s ancestors nearby. An engraving produced from a drawing by de Sainson who visited New Zealand in 1827 shows a similar scene: a dead man is seated with his knees drawn up, propped up against a post at the top of which is carved a head with a protruding tongue. He is shrouded in a cloak up to his chin and his head is ornamented with a number of large feathers. To his left, in this case, are four piles of bones each with a skull on top. The engraving also shows the mourners. Two women are seated in front of the dead man and they are shown cutting themselves about the arms and breasts. Further away a larger gathering of mourners are depicted, some weeping, some waving their arms, others appear to be sitting in conversation. Two men are shown firing muskets.

Polack adds some other details of interest that can be compared with Marsden’s account. He notes that everything in the vicinity of the dead chief was strictly tapu. However, unlike Marsden’s account the chiefs that Polack describes had not been preserved. Marsden’s uncertainty concerning the presence of a complete body suggests that he had usually only encountered preserved heads which had on at least one occasion impressed him with their fresh looking and attractive

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23 Polack 1838, II:71.

24 For more detail on this subject see my discussion of insults and cursing songs in chapter three.


26 Dumont d’Urville 1834-5: Plate LI.
appearance. 27 Although rarer than preserved heads, preserved bodies appear in other early nineteenth-century sources.28

Polack also remarks that the enemies' bones would be placed at the dead chief's feet. This suggests that funerary rites were not only directed toward commemorating the tribal dead but also matters relating to vengeance. As already noted, the funerary rites Marsden describes coincides with a council of war. He also mentions that the handsome cloaks worn by the dead chief were given by neighbouring relations. This indicates that the funerary rites of chiefs were part of traditional exchange relations and thus political occasions and an occasion for neighbouring communities to affirm their connections.

The political importance of funerary rites is also suggested by Augustus Earle's account of a visit to Kororareka by the wounded and dying Hongi Hika and a dozen of his men .29 Although not literally an account of a funerary rite, it was universally recognized at this point that Hongi was close to death, and the events described are sufficiently close to a funerary rite to shed some light on these matters. Hongi's visit was an occasion of feasting and dancing. Hongi was tapu as a consequence of his decline and sat a little distance from the gathering.

Before the festivities began, Tururo, the mother of Te Uruti, the chief of Kororareka

approached Hongi with the greatest respect and caution, and seated herself some paces from his feet. She then began with a most melancholy cadence (her eyes streaming with tears and fixed upon the ground), the song of welcome ... This woeful song lasted half an hour, and all the assembly were soon in tears; and though at first I was inclined to turn it into ridicule, I was soon in the same state myself ...30

Someone translated the general sense of Tururo's song for Earle. It was clearly a song which paid homage to Hongi. His decline was mourned, his various

27 See e.g., Elder 1932: 154.

28 See e.g., Cruise 1824: 46, 134; Polack 1838: I, 375-6.

29 Earle 1909: 62-3. Earle was a professional artist who spent nine months in Hokianga and the Bay of Islands in 1827-28.

30 Ibid.
conquests recounted, his dead friends lamented; the continuing survival of some of his enemies was also remarked upon and regretted. I note here that Earle calls this lament for Hongi a song of welcome. Early to mid-nineteenth-century sources generally show considerable overlap between rituals of welcome and rituals of mourning (this point will be developed in more detail below).

When Hongi and his men finally left in their “large and richly ornamented canoes,” the people of Kororareka gathered on the shore, weeping and lacerating themselves. Earle remarks, however, that soon after Hongi’s departure he found that Te Uruti and his people were glad to see them leave: “It was more dread of Hongi’s power, than love for him, that induced them to treat him with such respect and homage.” Thus their performance was a political necessity at a time when Hongi and his near allies were extremely powerful.

Earle was also present at Kororareka when Te Uruti himself died. This is another occasion which shows the political importance of the funerary ceremonies for chiefs. Three days after Te Uruti’s death more than twenty war canoes filled with armed warriors arrived in the bay claiming that this was a “condolence visit.” Te Uruti’s daughter told Earle:

that amongst the chiefs who landed ... were several of the most inveterate foes of her father, and that they were only restrained from committing the most dreadful outrages, and carrying off all her relatives as slaves, by witnessing the many friends of George [i.e., Te Uruti] by whom they were surrounded.

Thus it seems a chief’s funeral was a good time for allies and enemies to display their relative strength and numbers, and, on this occasion at least, maintain the status quo without the necessity for war.

The Ceremonial Display of Bones.

In Northland it was usual for the bones to be disinterred one or more times and

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31 Ibid., 63.

32 Earle 1909:177.
displayed at ceremonial gatherings called hahunga. Earle describes the mourning ceremonies performed over the bones of "the great chief A-rowa" who had died four months ago. His bones lay on display under a rough shelter, the skull ornamented with feathers. Various communities had travelled to the occasion. Like the engraving taken from de Sainson's picture of a chief's funeral, Earle's description indicates that women were especially prominent as mourners:

The women here invariably perform the parts of chief mourners; a group of them with the widow of the deceased at their head, kept up a most mournful cadence, and at every pause in their dismal song slashed their ... faces, necks and arms ...  

I return to the prominence of female mourners which is not unique to funerary rites below. Let us return to descriptions of the display of bones.

Kendall gives some information on hahunga for those who were not chiefs. After attending a hahunga gathering in 1815 he made some notes on the subject. Kendall makes no mention of any names, he calls the dead simply "five natives" and the mourners simply "their relatives." This suggests that the people involved were not chiefs and did not belong to chiefs' families. He notes that it was general custom for people to display their dead friends' bones, but he also notes a difference in the treatment of the bones of ordinary people and the bones of chiefs. A "common person's bones" were cleaned only once, while a chief's bones would be taken up four or five times, "polished and brightened with oil and put into a basket" and "preserved as sacred relics". Again he uses the term atua, this time to apply to the skull.  

Another early remark that applies the term "atua" to the bones is made by the missionary Francis Hall who wrote that muskets were fired when the bones of

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33 For a wider ranging discussion of the variation in Maori burial customs see Oppenheim 1973.

34 Murray-Oliver (1968:106) says that the chief's real name was probably Te Atiu and he was the father of Moetara, a chiefly man who appears in sources from this period.


36 Elder 1934: 81.
Hongi Hika's son-in-law were exhumed "to drive away the Attua [atua]." Some light can be shed on Hall's statement that the muskets drove away the atua by comparing it to the description of a funeral ceremony given by one of Shortland's informants. This source describes another method for sending the dead person's spirit on its way. After the corpse was buried, the tohunga (priest) would take a stalk called a tiri from certain types of plant (toetoe or rarauhe) and place it near the grave pointing in the direction of Hawaiki as a pathway for the spirit. A tiri could also be placed near where the person had died so that the spirit could return as an atua and thus appear to an intermediary through whom it could communicate to its living relations. The person who functioned as a intermediary was called a "kaupapa" or "waka-atua." A comment from James Stack's memoir of life on the East Cape in the 1840s suggests why people were concerned to send the atua on its way. According to Stack, it was believed that "all disembodied spirits, when first released from the body, were envious of the living, and ready to injure them when they got the chance."

The realm of the dead is sometimes said to be Hawaiki, the paradisiacal homeland of Maori religion, and it is also sometimes said to be the underworld. Although there were rituals to send atua away from the realm of the living, the application of the term atua to corpses and bones generally suggests that they were also thought to stay close to the person's earthly remains. Taylor's comments on the rituals performed on the death of the chief's child in Taranaki indicate that a diversity of ideas were drawn upon. He notes that the karakia (incantations) performed seemed to be directed toward sending the child's spirit to the highest heavens and the abode of the gods, yet the child was also buried with taro to take to the underworld. Despite the presence of rituals to send the dead off to another realm, he also notes that many believed that the spirits of the

37 Wright 1959: 142.
38 Shortland 1882: 44.
39 Reed 1935: 181.
40 Taylor 1872: 220.
dead lingered by their remains and inhabited the sacred burial grounds.\textsuperscript{41}

Gatherings where people mourned over the bones of chiefs seem to have served the same purposes as when people gathered to mourn over chiefly corpses. The journals of the missionary Henry Williams indicate that they occurred rather frequently in the 1820s and 30s, around the time of the kumara harvest, to the point that Williams was rather bored by them and even neglects to mention who the rites were actually held for, despite some instances clearly being important occasions.\textsuperscript{42} One hahunga gathering at Waimate was clearly a large one of some political import: chiefs from Hokianga had travelled to the occasion and the chiefs present discussed the recent death of Te Whareumu, a notable chief connected with the people at Waimate.\textsuperscript{43} Te Whareumu had been killed in Hokianga and the occasion appears to have been an opportunity to affirm that peace had been established.

War and peace were not the only matters to be discussed at hahunga. Polack indicates that other matters that required collective planning were discussed, for instance major fishing expeditions and the siting of new cultivations.\textsuperscript{44} Hahunga like other funerary rites were also part of Maori exchange relations and an occasion for people to host an impressive feast. As we have seen, Williams notes that they were timed to coincide with the kumara harvest. On one occasion he notes that his party was presented with thirty baskets of kumara "which is always expected to be carried away."\textsuperscript{45}

In conclusion then, the larger gatherings and grander funerary rites that centred on the bodies and bones of chiefs and the instances where their remains were kept far closer to the village than was the norm for other members of the tribe seem to reflect not only the political importance of chiefs in life but also their

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 220-1.

\textsuperscript{42} Rogers 1961: 132, 180, 244-5, 370.

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid, 132.

\textsuperscript{44} Polack 1840: I, 104.

\textsuperscript{45} Rogers 1961: 244-5.
continuing importance after death as atua. Funerary rites for chiefs were themselves political occasions where communities affirmed their alliances and kinship connections, exchanged gifts and made plans for battle and other collective activities.

III. Atua and Gender.

At this point it is worth considering the ways in which the make-up of the Maori pantheon of atua may have reflected human gender relations. If, as Polack and Shortland indicate, it was principal warriors and chiefs who went on to become atua then this suggests that female atua may have been less common. Warfare was an area of life in which men predominated and documented instances of female chiefs are rare. None of the early nineteenth-century travellers record meeting a female chief.\textsuperscript{46} The nearest mention comes from Nicholas when he writes that he thought the Bay of Islands chief, Ruatara, and his successor (also male) had taken up a position that in fact belonged to Te Pahi’s daughter who was too young to take up the position on her father’s death.\textsuperscript{47}

Missionaries do a little better, Marsden notes meeting one female chief in person.\textsuperscript{48} He had also been told by Maori, and also by Kendall, about Hinematiioro who possessed “a large territory and numerous subjects” on the east coast of the

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\textsuperscript{46} Elder 1932: 175. I base this generalisation on the following published narratives by vistors to New Zealand in the early nineteenth century: Nicholas (1817,II) ; Earle (1909) - first published 1827; Polack (1838); Cruise (1824). I also surveyed the published journals from Duperrey’s visit in 1824 (Sharp 1971) and Dumont d’Urville’s visits in 1826-27 (Wright 1950) and 1840 (Wright 1955). In eighteenth-century sources chiefs are male also. In chapter seven of this work, I comment on some of the images of chiefs in the eighteenth century in more detail. My conclusions on the rarity of female chiefs may be compared to the number of female tribal leaders in The People of Many Peaks: The Maori Biographies from the Dictionary of New Zealnd Biography 1769-1869. I have not relied on this work because it does not always do justice to early documentary sources. It may however serve as a rough guide to the relative numbers of female chiefs: of the 124 people listed as “tribal leaders” in this work only six are women.

\textsuperscript{47} Nicholas 1817: II, 193.

\textsuperscript{48} Elder 1932: 195.
North Island. A survey of published early nineteenth-century missionary journals does not show up any further examples. In the Maori language newspaper Ko Te Karere (1842-60), one female chief is mentioned in 1852: Taurua Te Tawaroa Te Makuini, the chief of Te Patukirikiri at Waiau (Coromandel). If tribal atua tended to be former chiefs, then the rarity of documented instances of female chiefs suggest that the tribal atua were predominantly male. Checking this assertion is no easy matter; for sources on early to mid-nineteenth-century Maori religion do not give specific information on tribal and familial gods of this kind. If the localized tribal and familial atua followed the pattern apparent in stories about the primal ancestors, then male atua would have predominated. As an example, in a mid-nineteenth-century creation story the more widely known personifications - the sky, wind, the sea and fish, the forest and the life within it and human fertility - are all male, while female figures are associated with the earth and death. In particular, Tane, (literally husband, man, lover) who represents the forest, the life within it and human fertility is the main creator figure in Maori religion and mythology. There are a number of female figures who personify various natural phenomena such as sandstone and the mist, but these seem to have been relatively minor figures. One outstanding counter-example to this generalization is Whaitiri - particularly as she was known on the West Coast of the North Island. There she was credited with the separation of the earth and the sky, a feat more usually performed by Tane. In one source she is

49 Ibid., 175.
50 The missionary records surveyed are: John Butler's letters and journals 1819-24 (Barton 1927); Henry Williams' journals 1826-40 (Rogers 1961); Samuel Marsden's letters and journals 1814-37 (Elder 1932); the letters and journals of Thomas Kendall, William Hall and John King which together span the period 1815-33 (Elder 1934).
51 Ko Te Karere Maori/Maori Messenger 1852, Dec 2; Her obituary is recorded in January 1857.
52 For a mid-nineteenth-century account of some of these personified forces, see Grey (1928: 1-5); see also Johansen 1954: 218-9. Orbell (1995: 181) indicates that the first generation of descendants of Rangi and Papa are usually male.
54 See Orbell (1992: 300-302) for a survey of some of these lesser figures in Maori mythology.
described as “te atua kuia tuatahi o nga po” or “the first old goddess of the ages of darkness”\textsuperscript{55}. In Maori mythology, Whaitiri is, however, a notable exception rather than the norm.

Karakia generally invoke the names of gods and ancestors, so a survey of these should indicate the relative importance of various ancestral figures. A survey of names in forty-six mid-nineteenth-century karakia is suggestive.\textsuperscript{56} Eight karakia mention no names at all but the majority do.\textsuperscript{57} A good number of Maori names are not gender specific and at least nineteen of the karakia contain names that are not readily identifiable through other sources, a finding that is not surprising given the localized nature of some ancestral gods. Of the names that are identifiable, the Sky and the Earth, who are also the primal parents, are mentioned reasonably often. Rangi is mentioned in eleven karakia, Papa is mentioned in eight.\textsuperscript{58} Over all, among the names that are identifiable, male names predominate.\textsuperscript{59} Tu who is the first warrior and human being is particularly noticeable, appearing in eleven of the karakia.\textsuperscript{60}

Although male figures predominate among the identifiable names, female ancestors are prominent in karakia which apply specifically to women or girls. In a karakia performed when a woman had her chin and lips tattooed, some names of some well known male ancestors and gods are called upon: Rangi, Ruatapu,

\textsuperscript{55} Orbell 1995: 42; White 1887: 44. A detailed analysis of Whaitiri’s roles is given by Johansen 1958: 99-104. There is some question concerning the historicity of White’s source here which might be resolved through further research into his manuscripts.


\textsuperscript{57} Ibid. The karakia which mention no names are to be found on pp. 98, 114, 187, 257, 258, 311, 372, 388. Another karakia on p. 139 has “the hand of Fate”. Fate here is a broad figure of speech not an actual god or ancestor.

\textsuperscript{58} For Rangi see Grey 1853: 58, 262, 296, 342, 356-7, 373, 377, 378, 379, 148, 427. For Papa or Nuku see Ibid., 262, 274, 296, 304, 305-7, 377, 380, 409, 418.

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., 226 for the great chief Tawhaki and his father Hema; Maru a god generally associated with war appears on pp .262, 314; Rehua on p.277; Maui on pp.280, 380; Whiro a figure associated with evil pp. 287, 367; Tane pp. 296, 361, 373, 377; Tiki p. 304; Tutangatakinu p. 311; Uenuku p. 314; Tangaroa p. 318, 326-7, 381, 418; Rongo pp. 378, 379, 380; Rongomai, pp. 58-60, 148. Itupawa p. 226.

\textsuperscript{60} Grey 1853: 75-6, 78, 305-7, 342, 356-7, 358-9, 367, 373, 377, 378, 397.
Rongomai, Kahukura.61 But also mentioned is Hineteiwaiwa a widely known female figure who appears in a number of traditions and represents many of the roles accorded to women in Maori society.62 Two other female ancestors are mentioned in the same karakia: Hinerauwharangi and Rukutia.63 Hinerauwharangi (Hine of widespread leaves) is a female fertility figure associated with the growth of plants.64 Little is known about her compared to the wealth of material concerning Tane. Rukutia is a female ancestor who originated weaving.

Both Hineteiwaiwa and Hinerauwharangi also appear in a karakia called a tuapana. This karakia was recited during a ritual to remove tapu from a girl child. Two other similarly constructed female names appear in this karakia: Hineangiangi and Hinekorikori.65 By contrast, the tuapana for a boy names various male ancestors including Tu (the first warrior) and Tane. It cannot always have been the case, however, that female ancestors were called on in rituals for women and girls, for another karakia called a tua, where a girl is dedicated to her future role, makes no mention of female ancestors; like the tua for a boy, Tu is the ancestor called upon.66 These tua and tuapana are discussed in greater detail in chapter four of this work.

Female ancestors are also mentioned in contexts that are not specific to women. For instance, in a karakia to ward off a magical attack and deal death to the enemy responsible for it, references are made not only to Tane and Tu but also Papatuanuku, the earth mother.67 Papatuanuku is mentioned because of her connection with the underworld which lies underneath or within her. Another

61 Grey 1853:58-60.
63 Orbell 1995:162.
64 Ibid., 60.
66 Grey 1853:75-78.
67 Grey 1853: 305-7. My statement concerning the purpose of the karakia is based on internal evidence.
female name Hineruakimate is also mentioned. This name could be translated as Woman-vomits-death, and suggests a figure similar to Hinenuitepo, the ancestor who guards the underworld. A karakia performed at the completion of the construction of a very tapu house, invokes some well known male ancestors - Tane, Tu and Rangi - as well as a number of names about which little is known but near the end of the karakia are two obviously female names, Hinemanini and Hinemanana.

Female ancestors must have been similarly present among the familial and tribal atua but tracing their presence is difficult. Two sources are to be found on this matter. Missionary Thomas Buddle is one writer who makes reference to female atua in the context of ritual cures for illness. He writes that "Fern root was cooked and presented to their deified friends, male and female." The offering of food to female atua is also described in a narrative given by one of Shortland's informants probably from Maketu, where Shortland spent a good deal of his time in the early 1840s. This narrative describes the rituals performed after the death of a legendary chief. An Arawa chief called Ihenga is led by the spirit of his dead father, Tuhor, to Tuhor's brother, Kahu, so that Ihenga may be freed of the tapu that is the consequence of his father's death. During the rituals, ceremonial food was offered, the text tells us, "to the stone images, and was divided for Houmaitahiti, Ngatoroirangi, for Tamatekapua, and for Tuhor, and was pressed into their mouths.

It appears that the important Arawa ancestors named here are represented by stone images. Certainly Tuhor is only present in spirit having died before this

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68 Grey 1853: 305
69 Grey 1853: 373-5
70 Buddle 1851: 23.
71 Shortland 1882: 61-4. My reason for suggesting that this narrative comes from one of Shortland's informants at Maketu is that this is where much of the narrative is set
72 Shortland 1882. In Arawa traditions Houmaitawhiti also appears as a very important chief (Orbell 1995:140). Ngatoroirangi figures as a legendary tohunga with magical powers of awesome proportion (Ibid., 126-7).
event takes place in the narrative. Similarly Tamatekapua, Tuholo’s father, cannot be there in person as he also died earlier in the narrative. Both Tama-tekapua and Tuholo, then, are clearly dead and their remains have already been disposed of. Ngatoroirangi’s death is also mentioned at the start of the narrative. So this must be an offering to the dead, or the ancestral atua, and the names given are the ancestors that the stones are supposed to represent. The text then goes on to say that the “female Atua were fed as in the former case”. The names mentioned in this connection are Kearoa and Whakaotirangi, whom Shortland explains were “sacred female ancestors” and the wives of Ngatoroirangi and Tamatekapua. If this legend concerning the rituals performed by Arawa ancestors for their dead reflects what early nineteenth-century chiefs in actuality did for their dead, it may be that dead chiefs as atua were accompanied by their senior wives. It is worth noting here that the suicide of senior widows was customary in early nineteenth-century Northland. This practice would make it rather likely that the chief’s atua was accompanied by his senior wife’s atua.

IV. Gender and Funerary Rites.

In ascertaining the gender balance of familial and tribal atua, descriptions of funerary rites may also be important. On this count, it is striking how rare accounts of funerary rites for women are in early sources. Polack’s general comments on funerary rites centre on men (see above). He also comments on a hahunga gathering for some dead warriors. He records one funeral for a chiefly woman in his travel narrative. In this case, he recounts a visit to a village where

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23 Shortland 1882: 51.
24 Ibid., 61.
25 Ibid.
26 Heuer (1972: 41) lists some sources on this; see also Wright (1967: 168, n.6). Missionary Henry Williams remarks on the decline of the practice in 1833 (Rogers 1961: 291).
27 Polack 1838: I, 225.
the young widow of a chief had committed suicide by refusing food after her
husband’s death. Her relatives were wracked with grief and Polack description of
how her body was displayed is illustrated with a small engraving. It was a scene
modified somewhat by Western custom; rather than being posed in a seated
position she lay with her head on a European pillow. At her head was a post in
the shape of a carved human figure, in this case painted red and reminiscent of
the post against which a seated dead chief leans in de Sainson’s picture (described
above). Her hair was dressed with gannet feathers and she wore a fine cloak. She
does not seem to have been the focus for a gathering of mourners beyond her
own village.

As I have already noted, the suicide of senior widows was customary in
Northland. Although missionary John King states that men also killed
themselves on the death of their wives, no one seems to have documented an
actual instance of it. We have, however, some anecdotal evidence from Tuai
(brother to the chief, Korokoro) who told d’Urville of “several chiefs who had
killed themselves in despair at the death of a dearly loved wife” but Tuai also
said that it was more often done by wives. The predominance of widow suicide
must surely reflect the greater importance of chiefly men. Other people, however,
might suicide or at least be seen attempting it in grief for a relative. Hongi Hika,
for example, was reputed to have attempted suicide twice on the death of an older
brother in 1815 but was “providentially prevented”, as Kendall puts it. In
Hongi’s case, it is a little hard to believe that he intended his attempts to be
successful, they were perhaps a conventional expression of grief for a more senior
member of his family. The burden of mourning for their relatives fell more
heavily on women in other ways which are more widely documented and I
discuss these further below.

78 Polack 1838: I, 239-40.
79 Biggs 1960: 76.
80 Sharp 1971: 34.
81 Elder 1934: 86
One account that stands out as a detailed description of a large gathering for the funeral of an important woman is given by John Rutherford who describes the funerary rites for the mother of the chief at a village where he resided temporarily in the north of the North Island.\textsuperscript{82} The display of the corpse in this account resembles quite closely various accounts concerning funerals for chiefs. The old lady was seated on a cloak, leaning up against a post in the centre of the village and shrouded in another cloak up to her chin.

The head and face were anointed with shark oil, and a piece of green flax was also tied round the head, in which were stuck several white feathers, - the sort which are here preferred to any other. They then constructed around the corpse, an enclosure of twigs, something like a bird’s cage, for the purpose of keeping the dogs, pigs and children from it; and these operations over, muskets continued to be occasionally fired during the remainder of the day to the memory of the old woman.\textsuperscript{83}

While the occasion recounted by Rutherford does not seem to have been as large as the one Marsden saw, it was reasonably large, attended by “some hundreds”. Chiefs and their families came “from miles around ... bringing with them their slaves loaded with provisions.”\textsuperscript{84} In contrast to Polack’s and Marsden’s accounts, Rutherford makes no mention of any ancestral bones on display. The occasion seems typical for chiefs and their families in this period. Everyone wept and lacerated themselves before the corpse. This was followed by a large feast. This particular funeral was not an occasion for a council of war, but it was an occasion for the men to deliberate on the cause of the old lady’s death, and the “following morning, the men alone formed a circle round the dead body, armed with spears, muskets tomahawks and merys.”\textsuperscript{85} After some discussion, a captive was blamed for her death and killed.

\textsuperscript{82} Craik 1830: 192-4. John Rutherford’s account has been described as “at least partially fraudulent” (Wright 1967:212). A good deal of Rutherford’s material compares well with details given by other writers. His depictions of his own importance in the tribe with which he lived, however, do seem overly grandiose.

\textsuperscript{83} Craik 1830:192

\textsuperscript{84} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{85} Ibid., 193.
and the priest to a secret burial spot. After three months had passed, her bones were cleaned and placed in a special box on top of a post at the same place where the corpse had been displayed. A fence was erected around it and “a wooden image was erected, to signify the ground was tabooed, or sacred, and as a warning that no one should enter the enclosure.” Rutherford thought that this was “the regular manner of interment ... for anyone belonging to a chief’s family.”

It was also usual for one or more slaves to be killed on the death of a chiefly person. In Rutherford’s account, the captive who was killed was a Pakeha who, in his ignorance, had used his knife to cut thatch for a house and then lent the knife to another slave to prepare the old lady’s food. This seems to be a tapu violation, the construction of houses was associated with a tapu. Deaths and illnesses were often thought to be the results of a tapu violation whether accidental or caused by witchcraft (makutu) and it does not seem unreasonable to suppose that it might have been common for a slave or captive to take the blame. However, the killing of a slave or captive for the deaths of chiefly persons was not necessarily connected with the idea that the slave was to blame. When the chief’s brother at Rangihoua died in 1819, his death was attributed to witchcraft but there is no evidence to suggest the slaves killed were held to be at fault. Two female slaves were killed by the dead man’s relatives and another relative wished to kill yet another young woman “as a satisfaction on his part, that the spirit of the departed chief might not injure him.” So it seems that slaves were killed to appease the atua. Yate’s comment that slaves were killed as a “satisfaction to the manes of the dead” suggests this also. This suggests the dangers attendant on a chiefly person’s relatives if they did not kill a slave and illustrates the power a chiefly person might be thought to have after death.

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86 Craik 1830: 194.

87 For a further discussion of Maori beliefs about illness see chapter three of this work. See also my discussion of makutu in chapter five.

88 Elder 1932: 156.

89 Yate 1835: 243. Manes is a Latin term for the spirits of the dead.
Other comments suggest that the slaves were intended as attendants. Henry Williams remarks that when a three year old girl belonging to a chiefly family died, an old woman was killed "as a companion" for her.\textsuperscript{99} Polack writes of a funeral for a "principal warrior" and chief, that his wife who had hanged herself lay near her husband, and some slaves, male and female, had been killed as attendants for them.\textsuperscript{91}

In general, one slave at least was likely to die on the death of any member of a chief's family but the death of the chief himself probably required a greater tribute. To the instances surveyed above we can add two more. Missionary John Butler records an instance when not only did the chief's head wife kill herself but two other wives were killed.\textsuperscript{92} These may have been slave wives.\textsuperscript{93} A slave was killed when Bay of Islands chief Tuhi became ill, and more were expected to die on his death.\textsuperscript{94}

Ernest Dieffenbach makes reference to some grand and lengthy funerary rites held for a woman: the funerary rites held for Waitohi, an elder sister of Ngati Toa chief Te Rauparaha and mother of Te Rangihaeata. He describes Waitohi as "a very old woman, who had enjoyed great renown as a prophetess amongst the different tribes."\textsuperscript{95} The "funeral festivities" lasted several weeks and during them Te Rauparaha held some councils of war which culminated in a battle between Ngati Raukawa and Atiawa.\textsuperscript{96} Thus Waitohi's funerary rites must have involved a political gathering of the kind we have observed in connection with the funerals of male chiefs. George French Angas later drew her exquisitely ornamented sepulchre which he saw near Te Rangihaeata's carved house. The

\textsuperscript{99} Rogers 1961: 103.
\textsuperscript{91} Polack 1838: IL 73.
\textsuperscript{92} Barton 1927: 248. Butler was stationed in the Bay of Islands 1819-23.
\textsuperscript{93} Biggs 1960: 76.
\textsuperscript{94} Elder 1934: 258.
\textsuperscript{95} Dieffenbach 1843: I, 104. Dieffenbach travelled in New Zealand 1839-41.
\textsuperscript{96} Ibid.
proximity of her remains to Te Rangihaeata's house suggests her ongoing significance after death and may be compared to other instances where chiefs keep their predecessor or other near relative near them after death. Another instance of a large funeral rite for a woman appears in Stack's memoir where he recalls the funerary rites for the favourite daughter of East Cape chief Wahanui in the 1840s. His comments indicate that it was a large event with people travelling some distance to join in the mourning.

The above instances show that female kin of the chief received some of the tributes accorded chiefly men (such as the sacrifice of a slave) and the death of a woman could occasion a large funerary gathering comparable to that documented for male chiefs. Early sources describing funerary rites, however, more usually describe the funerary rites of men. Earle, for example, gives two accounts of funerary rites and the large gatherings they entailed, both for male chiefs. One concerns the death of the chief of Kororareka, the other is an account of a hahunga held for a male chief. Richard Cruise, who spent ten months in the north in 1821, records only one funeral; he examined the preserved body of a male chief lying in state, attended by two old women. He does, however, mention that the upper body and head of a woman in a similar state of preservation had been observed at Hokianga but makes no comment as to the circumstances in which this was seen.

Henry Williams in his journals 1826-40 makes no mention of funerary rites for important women. Seven occasions where he mentions attending funerary rites involve the remains of male chiefs. He did, however, attend four hahunga gatherings where he does not identify the bones in any way.

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97 See Angas (1847a: I, 264-5) for a written description of Waitohi's sepulchre. For Angas's painting of the sepulchre and accompanying commentary see Reed (1979a: 44-5). Angas travelled through the North Island in 1844.

98 Reed 1935: 179-80.

99 Cruise 1824: 134. Cruise was an officer on the British naval ship The Dromedary.


101 Ibid., 131-2, 180-1, 244-5, 322.
missionary journals show up nothing further. All the chiefly funerary rites that Kendall mentions are for men.\textsuperscript{102} I have already noted, however, that he does refer to a hahunga ceremony which does not seem to have been a chiefly one and he does not specify whose bones were displayed.\textsuperscript{103} King mentions one funeral only, again for a male chief.\textsuperscript{104} Neither do Marsden’s letters and journals contain references to a funerary gathering for chiefly women. The closest instance Marsden gives is a hahunga held by Hongi Hika. This occasion attracted a large gathering and was attended by a number of chiefs. Four sets of bones were on display, the bones of three chiefly men, one of whom was a son-in-law of Hongi’s, and one woman: Hongi’s mother.\textsuperscript{105} This enumeration of the bones on display seems to reflect the predominance of chiefly men in accounts of funerary rites. It also indicates the importance of a chief’s senior female kin, as do Dieffenbach’s comments concerning Waitohi’s funeral and Rutherford’s description of a funeral for the mother of his chief. Overall, however, the preponderance of references to the funerary rites of chiefly men in the sources must reflect their political importance in life and probably their on-going importance in death as atua. The low numbers of sources describing funerary rites for women is all the more striking when one considers that mortality rates for women were considerably higher than for men.\textsuperscript{106}

The starkest contrast in early sources, however, is not between the funerary rites for women and for men but between the funerary rites for rangatira and the lack of them for enslaved captives or kuki. Richard Cruise gives us an example where not even the tapu associated with death applied to a slave child or “kuki” in Northland in 1820. Cruise and his companions found the right arm, head and a portion of the torso of a child lying close to the pathway within the village

\footnote{102} Elder 1934: 64, 76-8, 86, 87.

\footnote{103} Ibid., 81-2.

\footnote{104} Ibid., 1934: 254-5.

\footnote{105} Elder 1932: 399.

\footnote{106} For a discussion of sources on this matter see chapter four of this work.
precincts. They asked the chief, Kiwikiwi, about the body:

[He] ... said it was the child of a cookee [slave], that had died of disease a few days before, and that the remnant we now saw was that which the dogs had not as yet devoured. We endeavoured to point out to him the propriety of burying this disgusting object, but he seemed quite offended at the proposition, saying, "that if it were the child of a rungateeda [rangatira] or gentleman, it should be laid in tabboed ground, and every funeral rite paid to it; but that a cookee could not be allowed even the decency of burial, and that he should disgrace his rank, if he were in this instance to deviate from the customs of his country."\(^{107}\)

Other early comments also show that the bodies of slaves were disposed of with little ceremony and that there was little or no tapu associated with their remains. Slaves who were killed by their masters were sometimes eaten;\(^{108}\) the bodies of slaves who had died of disease were not eaten but not subject to any of the prohibitions and avoidance that one usually sees with respect to the dead in early sources. Earle says that if a slave died of natural causes the body was dragged to the outside of the village, "made sport of by the children" and eaten by the dogs.\(^{109}\) He saw the body of a slave-wife, killed by her husband for adultery, treated similarly.\(^{110}\) Polack says that slaves who died by disease were "seldom devoured, but hastily flung into the sea or a hole, where the dogs often feed on the remains."\(^{111}\)

This lack of tapu and ceremony must be connected with the idea that they did not continue after death as atua. This observation is supported by Cruise's remark that in contrast to the chiefs, "the cookee [slave] has no further existence beyond this world."\(^{112}\)

\(^{107}\) Cruise 1824: 109.

\(^{108}\) E.g., Cruise 1957: 77-8; Earle 1909: 17, 96-7.

\(^{109}\) Earle 1909: 104.

\(^{110}\) Ibid., 73

\(^{111}\) Polack 1838: II, 110.

\(^{112}\) Cruise 1824: 268.
V. Female Undertakers and Mourners.

The preceding material on atua and funerary rites shows the importance of the dead in Maori religion and also the importance of funerary rites to Maori politics. On these occasions Maori communities affirmed alliances, held councils of war and organized other collective activities. While early descriptions of the grander funerary rites centre on male chiefs, it is clear that women predominate as mourners and undertakers.\textsuperscript{113}

Undertakers.

Maning states that a person of little concern to a village could be assigned the role of undertaker permanently and thus their state of tapu was also permanent.\textsuperscript{114} These undertakers, according to Maning, lived a lonely life on the outskirts of the village, cut off from contact with the rest of the community; he described them as “Old, withered, haggard, clothed in the most miserable rags, and daubed all over from head to foot with red paint ... keeping always at a distance, silent and solitary.”\textsuperscript{115} Unable to eat with their hands, they ate what was thrown to them. Maning remarked “I have often thought, in observing one of these miserable objects, that his or hers, was the very lowest ebb to which a human being’s prospects could be brought by adverse fate.”\textsuperscript{116} Maning’s inclusion of the feminine pronoun suggests that it was not unusual for this role to be conferred upon a woman.

William Brown also remarks on the handling of a corpse:

a person, by merely touching it, becomes for a time strictly tapued and ... is prohibited the use of his own hands. He is fed by others, or eats food out of a basket placed before him without touching it with his hands. When the sacred period has elapsed [...] the person who takes off the

\textsuperscript{113} Heuer 1972: 41
\textsuperscript{114} Maning 1863: 123
\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., 124
\textsuperscript{116} Ibid.
tapu must take all the duties, or rather encumbrances of it upon himself. This is generally done by an old woman, who is constantly sacred or tapued, and such are generally chosen to handle dead bodies, so that as few persons as possible may be put in this helpless condition.\textsuperscript{117}

It is interesting that Brown here makes a connection between the role of aged women in handling the dead and their role in rituals to remove tapu. Women’s roles in the ritual removal of tapu warrant a separate discussion and analysis, and I take up these issues in chapters four and five. In this chapter, I will consider only women’s roles in tending the dead.

Cooper provides us with a specific instance of a woman charged with tending the dead. He describes the role that the sister of Taupo chiefs Te Heuheu II and III played in the funerary rites for Te Heuheu II and his favourite wife, Nohopapa. As I have already remarked, Mananui Te Heuheu II and Nohopapa died in a mud slide in 1846, and his brother, Iwikau, succeeded as Te Heuheu III. By 1850, the bodies of Te Heuheu II and Nohopapa had yet to be consigned to a final resting place. The sister of Te Heuheu II and III was charged with the care of the corpses:

On entering the pa we found all the chiefs and principal men seated on the ground (which had been previously covered with fresh cut fern for the purpose) in front of Te Heu Heu’s house, and beside it, quite apart from any one else, sat an old woman of about fifty, a sister of Te Heu Heu, who was under a strict tapu, being the only person permitted to touch the bodies of the dead chief and his wife; this poor old creature was obliged to keep quite apart from all her species, not being allowed to touch any article of food, even to feed herself, that office being performed by a slave who put the food into her mouth, and when she was thirsty poured the water from a calabash down her throat, her lips not being permitted to touch the vessel. She is a fine tall woman, rather thin and with grizzly hair, but was bedaubed all over at the time we saw her with a disgusting paint of red ochre and shark oil.\textsuperscript{118}

The sister of Te Heuheu I and Te Heuheu III seems to be in a better position than those undertakers that Maning described because she had a slave to feed her.

\textsuperscript{117} Brown 1851:11. See also Cruise (1824: 46-7) where two old women attend the preserved corpse of a chiefly man.

\textsuperscript{118} Cooper 1851: 278.
We can put some of Cooper’s negative characterization of this woman’s situation down to certain western prejudices; like Maning, he did not much like shark oil and red ochre. But it is unreasonable to dismiss this negative characterization entirely, particularly when he notes her social isolation. It seems reasonable to suppose that Cooper and Maning were able to recognize a difficult situation when they saw one.

The tapu prohibitions on the dead and those who tended them may be compared to the tapu associated with the sick and those who tended them. Sickness was generally thought to be caused by an attacking atua, so the tapu prohibitions as with the dead are a consequence of the presence of an atua. The resemblance between the tapu prohibitions on the ill and the dead probably also reflects the close connection between mortality and illness in the nineteenth century. Taylor describes the situation:

Sickness also made the person tapu; all diseases were supposed to be occasioned by atua ... entering into the body of the afflicted; these, therefore rendered the body of the person sacred. The sick were removed from their own houses, and had sheds built for them in the bush, at a considerable distance from the pa, where they lived apart; if any remained in their houses and died there, they became tapu, were painted over with red ochre, and could not again be used, which often put a tribe to great inconvenience, as some houses were the common abode, of perhaps thirty or forty different people.

Taylor’s comment on the cause of illnesses is supported by other sources. Cruise who visited New Zealand in 1820 wrote that one of the men from his ship found a lizard and being interested to find the Maori name for it showed it to a woman:

She shrunk from him in a state of terror that exceeded description, and conjured him not to approach her, as it was in the shape of the animal he held in his hand that the Atua was wont to take possession of the dying, and to devour their bowels.

Kendall also writes in 1815 of a man, who he thought “in a deep decline” and also suffering from a “violent cold”, that the sick man said “atua was within

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119 See e.g., Taylor 1855: 61; Thomson 1855: 529; Grey 1853: lxvii.
120 Taylor 1855: 61.
121 Cruise 1824: 318.
him eating his vitalis." Kendall also makes a general comment, "They ascribe everything to atua that gives them pain." 122

On the occasion of the chief Ruatara's illness, Kendall notes that it was believed that an atua had entered into him. He also notes that it was not liked for people to die in the village and was told that if this happened the atua would be angry and dire consequences would follow.123 Thus the ailing chief Ruatara was taken to a spot well away from the village where he lay in the open air inside a fenced enclosure.124 He was tapu and could only be approached by the tohunga and members of his family.125 Marsden was able, with some difficulty, to gain entry to the enclosure and found that Ruatara was attended by "two of his wives, his father-in-law, the priest, and several attendants".126 Earle who visited Hongi Hika while he was dying and consequently in a state of tapu noted that only a wife and daughter were allowed near him.127

Just as there is some comment to indicate that it was typically women who tended the dead Yate comments that it was old women who usually tended the sick:

An old woman is generally appointed to feed and otherwise attend upon the sick man, that the length of time, under which the nurse is obliged to remain in a state of consecration, may not interfere with any work wherein the men may be engaged, whether it be a work of profit or pleasure.128

It seems that men might avoid some of the more burdensome tapu prohibitions associated with the sick and the dead.

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122 Elder 1934: 86.
122 Elder 1934: 75.
124 Elder 1932: 120.
125 Elder 1934: 77.
124 Elder 1932: 120-1.
127 Earle 1909: 59.
128 Yate 1835: 86
Female Mourners.

King and Kendall both comment on the extended period of mourning for widows who were prohibited from remarriage during this time. Kendall writes that if a man were to cohabit with a widow during this period "the whole of the people around him, especially if the woman’s husband was a chief, will rise on behalf of the departed atua and inflict punishment". King writes, "Twelve months or more should pass over, or a time sufficient to decay the flesh, before the widow accepts of another husband. If not they are in danger of being beat and plundered, which is often the case." Marsden too records the prohibition on remarriage for the widow of Tara, the chief of Kororareka. He describes her as "polluted", a remark that indicates that she was in a state of tapu. Yet Marsden also remarks that Tara’s widow "was compelled to live and eat with the common people which suggests a lack of tapu and a loss of status during her period of mourning. These two contradictory impressions of the widow’s status are difficult to resolve. However, she and Tara’s successor Te Uruti had agreed to marry but could not do so until her period of mourning was over. She told Marsden that both she and Te Uru-ti had been plundered of all their possessions as a consequence of their deciding to marry. Angas too observed the widow of the late chief during a year of mourning at a ruined pa near the Mokau river on the west of the North Island:

The widow was a middle-aged woman, dreadfully disfigured by the cuts and gashes she inflicts upon herself with a pepi-shell [pipi] whenever she cries; and she wore a ... garland of large green leaves upon her head as an emblem of mourning. Since the death of her husband which took place eight months since, she has been tapu, and not allowed to feed herself or to change her garments; which are all in rags. She is either fed out of the hands of another native or she eats ... by putting her mouth to the ground. The period of her mourning and the force of the tapu are to continue for four months longer.

119 Elder 1934: 140.
120 Elder 1934: 254.
131 Elder 1932: 158.
132 Angas 1847a: II, 90.
In the early nineteenth century, wives and near female relatives of the chief are also to be found in a state of tapu while the chief is absent. Cruise met Hongi Hika's mother in 1821:

we met Hongi's mother on a lonely part of the beach; she was very old, and her hair was perfectly white. In consequence of the departure of her son she was tabooed; ... a woman sat beside her with a basket of potatoes, and put them into her mouth as she required them.\textsuperscript{133}

Polack at Maungakahia valley in the early 1830s met with the senior wife of an important chief in the region and found her "tapued, on account of the absence of her liege lord".\textsuperscript{134} Yate, on visiting a large village near Kerikeri, seems to have observed a similar situation:

the chief, Wata, had gone from home, leaving his wife, who was under a strict tapu. All the food of which she partook was placed at her feet; when putting her hands behind her, she leaned forward and took up as much as as she required with her mouth.\textsuperscript{135}

Over all, these instances attest to the ceremonial importance of male chiefs. Dieffenbach is the only writer to state that widowers underwent a comparable period of tapu for their wives.\textsuperscript{136} No one, however, seems to have recorded an actual instance of a chiefly man enduring a period of mourning comparable to the above descriptions of mourning widows. It seems fair to conclude that chiefly widowers did not usually undergo a period of mourning comparable to that expected of widows. A prohibition on marriage in any case would have made little sense because male chiefs practiced polygyny. Nor are there any instances of a chiefly man in a state of tapu because his wife was absent.

We have already seen Earle's remark that women invariably took the role of principal mourners. His water colour of the hahunga ceremony for the chief "A-rowa" shows a group which seems to be predominantly female gathered in a

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\textsuperscript{132} Cruise 1824: 43.

\textsuperscript{134} Polack 1838: I, 165-6.

\textsuperscript{135} Yate 1835: 244.

\textsuperscript{136} Dieffenbach 1834: II, 40.
semi-circle around the bones of the chief. All appear to be weeping, some are lacerating themselves. On the periphery of the group are four men. Three have full facial moko and one does not. Two are onlookers, one appears preoccupied with his musket and another reclines in relaxed fashion, apparently in conversation with him. It is an image which coincides with Campbell’s assertion that men did not put the same energy into mourning.\textsuperscript{137} Cooper’s description of the public lamentations that took place at Pukawa before Te Heuheu II and his wife were consigned to their final resting place suggests this also. The sister of Te Heuheu II sat alone within the enclosure where the bodies lay. She wept and lacerated herself with a piece of obsidian. Her performance may be contrasted with the situation of her brother, Te Heuheu II’s successor, who Cooper notes was absent during these proceedings. Three rows of mourners stood outside the enclosure facing the weeping and bleeding sister. The front row comprised women only while the back rows included male relatives and neighbouring chiefs.\textsuperscript{138} The performance given by the front row of women appears to have been the more energetic. They waved their arms and some bent over almost double.

Maning gives a description of a crowd mourning over the severed head of a man who had been killed in battle. In the middle of the crowd were his mother and female cousins in a row before the head, “screaming, wailing and quivering their hands about in a most extraordinary manner, and cutting themselves dreadfully with sharp flints and shells.”\textsuperscript{139} Dieffenbach describes a particularly heart-rending scene at an Atiawa pa (Waikanae) after a battle with Ngati Raukawa where sixteen Atiawa men had been killed:

\begin{quote}
At our arrival on the beach we were welcomed with a salute of musketry which continued until we entered the fencing of the pa.
All the people of the village were assembled; and though grief was expressed in every face, they received us with the greatest kindness and
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{137} Campbell 1973: 109.

\textsuperscript{138} One of Shortland’s informants also says that when people gather to mourn over a body, the women were in the front with the men behind them (Shortland 1882:43).

\textsuperscript{139} Maning 1863: 56.
attention. They regarded us as friends and allies as we had brought with us from Te-awa-iti some of their relations; and when they saw the medical men of our party giving assistance to the wounded, their confidence and gratitude were unbounded. Some of the women gave themselves up to violent expressions of grief, cutting their faces, arms, and legs, with broken muscle-shells, and inflicting deep gashes, from which blood flowed profusely. We had brought with us E Patu [Patu], the son of a chief in East Bay, whose uncle had been killed in the battle. We found the widow standing on the roof of a hut, deploring in a low strain the loss of her husband. When E Patu approached she threw herself upon the ground, and lying at his feet, related to him, in a funeral song, how great had been their happiness, how flourishing were were their plantations, until the Nga-te-raukawa [Ngati Raukawa] had destroyed their peace, and bereft her of a husband. During this time E Patu stood before her, convulsively throwing his arms backwards and forwards joining in her lamentations.

An old woman, bent down under the burden of many years, had her arms and face frightfully cut; she was painted with red kokowai, with a wreath of leaves round her head, and gesticulated and sang in a similar manner.  

The prominence of female mourners in this description must of course be in part the consequence of warfare being a predominantly male realm and in this case all the dead seem to have been male. Nonetheless close male kin must have been present and do not come to Dieffenbach’s attention in the same way. The funerary rites for Te Heuheu II (above) where death was not a consequence of war conforms to the same pattern. Kendall’s description of the principal mourners for Bay of Islands chief Ruatara, who died of illness in 1815, also conforms to this pattern:

After the funeral ceremony was over, the two surviving wives of Duaterra [Ruatara], his sister, mother-in-law, and uncle were conducted to a hill opposite the door of my dwelling. They are to bewail the loss of Duaterra for some time to come. No person is to touch the two wives and sister - atua would be angry.

Here an uncle is at least included in the principal mourners, but the rest are female kin. It is also notable that Kendall singles out the wives and sister as being

140 Angas painted a male mourner who appears to be making these same arm movements (Reed 1979a: 77).  
141 Dieffenbach 1843: I, 102-3  
142 Elder 1934: 78.
subject to the tapu prohibitions associated with mourning.

Sources describing the practice of self-laceration often highlight female mourners. It was not an exclusively female activity. Yate, for instance, describes a chiefly man mourning over his dead son who had died just two hours before Yate came to see them. The boy was dressed “with feathers and other finery”. The father was prostrate at his child’s feet,

weeping bitterly, and bleeding in many places from self-inflicted wounds. Next to him sat the mother singing a mournful lamentation over the dead body of her son, and accompanying every stanza with a deep gash across her neck and arms, with a piece of glass. Around, were three friends and relatives, falling in with the chorus, and wounding themselves ... \(^{143}\)

Men afflicted with personal grief obviously lacerated themselves. But here we can see that the ceremonial performance is led by a woman. Yate also remarked that in general women “cut themselves more extensively and deeper than the men.”\(^{144}\) People sometimes rubbed dye into these self-inflicted cuts which left fine blue lines that did not have the carved texture of moko. These lines were more usual in women, something which confirms that it was a practice particularly associated with women.\(^{145}\)

Over all, mourning and funerary rites as they appear in early nineteenth-century to mid-nineteenth-century sources indicate that mourning and lamentation were a significant part of Maori culture in which both men and women participated. It does seem, however, that the heartfelt grief that female relatives such as wives or sisters can feel had been elevated into a ceremonial requirement for women whereas it was less of a requirement for men, although men certainly did on occasion weep and lacerate themselves. The prominence of women rather than men in paying homage to the dead in this way in early

\(^{143}\)Yate 1835: 243.

\(^{144}\) Ibid., 137.

\(^{145}\) See e.g., Angas (1847a: I, 315) for a comment on the presence of dyed lacerations on women; and Angas (1847b: Plate XX) for a portrait of a woman with these on her face. Shortland (1851: 18) in his discussion of moko remarks that women often had “fine blue lines, or scratches which are often to be seen on their cheeks, arms, and breasts.” Bidwell in 1839 also makes some vivid remarks on this (Robley 1998:43).
sources, put alongside the fact that the funerary rites for chiefly men tended to attract greater ceremony and larger gatherings; indicates that chiefly men generally enjoyed greater prestige and political influence than other members of their society.

VI. The Rituals of Mourning and Welcome Compared.

Shortland’s description of a hahunga ceremony at Maketu pa in the 1840s is especially interesting; for he not only shows female mourners but gives a more detailed description of the events than many other commentators. Shortland describes a hahunga ceremony at Maketu pa where the skulls of “three celebrated chiefs” were displayed\textsuperscript{146} The occasion included a great feast at some point. The courtyard within the pa was thronged with spectators, whose faces were painted with “black, white or red colours” and who had feathers in their hair.

“At one extremity of it was a sort of stage, on which were three figures in a sitting posture”, they were shrouded in cloaks of traditional manufacture “of the handsomest description”:

Where there heads should have been, however, there were to be seen only the fleshless skulls, their eye sockets stuffed with red cloth for eyes, and feathers of the *hui a* and *kotuka* [kotuku] in place of hair. In front of the platform, and at a short distance from it, stood three elderly women. Their bared arms and breasts bore the marks of recent wounds, inflicted with shells or sharp stones, in honour of the dead, to whom they were then addressing praises in the form of a wailing extemporary recitative, each actor using such words as she felt most appropriate, but preserving the same melancholy strain.

This extemporary performance, called *tangi* ... is used on all occasions of meeting after an absence. In measure and tone it resembles the chanting of our cathedral service, and the accompanying action and gestures of the performers produce altogether one of the most moving scenes available.

The *tangi*, however, did not last long. In the rear of the three ladies were seated in rows, eight or ten in a row, and five or six ranks deep, the best born young belles of the town; and when the old ladies and the audience were tired of *tangi*, the scene changed, and the young ladies, still remaining seated on the ground, struck up a more lively strain,

\textsuperscript{146} Shortland 1856: 148-9.
called haka. The haka is not a modest exhibition, but the reverse ...\textsuperscript{147}

One old woman continued with her song of lament but the other two who stood in front accompanied the young women’s song with postures and gestures that were often sexually suggestive, or as Shortland put it “disgustingly lascivious”. The audience appear to appreciate these poses and gestures greatly and responded “with the applause they desired.”\textsuperscript{148} Shortland found the sudden transition from mourning to sexually suggestive entertainment especially jolting. He was usually a sympathetic writer on Maori culture and religion but falters here. It was, he wrote, the most “ungodly” scene imaginable; the skulls were “hideous” and the people seemed “a savage crowd of demons”\textsuperscript{149}. We have seen in the writing of other observers, however, that hahunga and other funerary rites were great social occasions where people came together and did a good deal more than mourn. Hahunga in particular took place some time after the death of the person and the person had already been thoroughly and extensively mourned at the funerary rites that took place after the death. It is also possible that the three dead chiefs themselves in Shortland’s account were present not only to be mourned over but also entertained.

\textit{Lamentations Performed in Welcome.}

Shortland’s above account also draws attention to another very interesting feature of Maori rituals of mourning; these were not only performed as part of funerary rites. He notes of the old women’s performance of the mourning song, and the gestures accompanying it, that it was “used on all occasions of meeting after an absence”. We have already seen that Earle described a song of mourning for the dying Hongi Hika as a “song of welcome”. Early nineteenth-century sources show a marked overlap between the rituals of mourning and the rituals of welcome.

\textsuperscript{147} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{148} Ibid., 149.

\textsuperscript{149} Ibid.
Angas’s description of his welcome at a Taupo settlement in 1844 shows women lamenting and weeping and bending almost double:

from eighty to one hundred natives met us, and conducted us to the chief’s house, a sort of square; here we sat down in silence and the women burst forth into a loud tangi: many stood wringing their hands and bending their bodies to the ground in the Eastern style, whilst from all around tears flowed profusely ...\footnote{Angas 1847a: II, 109.}

The women’s performance bears a close resemblance to Cooper’s description of female mourners at a Taupo funerary rite which we have already noted (p. 41). Cooper’s description of the front row of female mourners shows them lamenting and bending almost double. Angas also describes the welcome for on the return of Kiwi, an important chief at Ahuahu, “The women stood upon the hill, and loud and long was their tangi to welcome his approach”.\footnote{Angas 1847a: II, 73.} At Queen Charlotte’s Sound too, when a group of chiefs visited from the North Island, Angas notes that it was the women who performed the tangi.\footnote{Ibid., I, 237. See also ibid., II, 107-8 for another example where women predominate.}

The above sources show that the some of the rituals of mourning were performed as part of a welcome and indicate that women took as prominent a role in these performances as they did in funerary rites. One explanation for this is that mourning and shared grief were powerful symbols of community and kinship in Maori society. We have seen that funerary rites were occasions where communities who usually did not live together gathered and affirmed alliances and organized themselves collectively. Thus lamentations in ceremonies to welcome visiting chiefs and communities may appear because it helped to cement those relationships which were developed in part through joint participation in funerary rites. Shared grief may have been a valuable counterweight to the war ethic which tended to govern relationships between
Maori communities, even closely related ones. The fragility of peaceful relationships between related communities is well illustrated by an incident recorded by Dumont d’Urville. The leaders of one community requested that he shoot the leaders of another closely related but more powerful community. D’Urville’s comment on the matter seems reasonable: “Among these tribes, as indeed is the case everywhere else, an over-powerful ally is often more to be feared than an enemy who can be fought on equal terms.” Remarks made to Earle by members of the community at Korarareka (led by Te Uruti) concerning their fear of Hongi Hika and his men, although they were, in theory, allies suggest a similar situation.

The prominence of women as mourners in the case of funerary rites was, I have argued, a consequence of the greater ceremonial significance accorded to male chiefs. This same prominence is apparent in the rituals of welcome performed by Maori communities in the early to mid-nineteenth century. As we have seen in the case of funerary rites, men personally affected by grief, would lacerate and weep in much the same way as women did. The sources show, however, that mourning was a heavier ceremonial requirement for women. On the departure of the dying Hongi Hika and his leading men from Kororareka, however, Earle’s description of the weeping and self-laceration performed by the people of Kororareka seems to be gender-neutral. This may be a consequence of the power of Hongi Hika and his people at the time: probably no one at Kororareka could afford not to be seen to grieve for him.

Polack too remarks of various gatherings that he had observed that no distinction with regard to class or sex could be made with regard to the custom of weeping and self-laceration:

I have often been in assemblies comprising many hundreds of all classes, and I doubt if a single person of either sex or age, could be found,

See e.g., Johansen (1954: 61–83) on the importance of retribution and revenge for both the individual and the community. See also Biggs (1960: 47) for some general remarks on inter-tribal and intra-tribal warfare and Vayda (1960) for a detailed study of Maori warfare.

Wright 1950: 119-120.
whose face and body was not excoriated with scars inflicted voluntarily, on the occasion of the meeting, as testimonies of their indelible love and friendship ... ¹⁵⁵

The majority of sources, however, show that the requirements of mourning both in welcomes and at funerary rites generally fell more heavily on women.

**Warlike Displays Performed as Part of a Welcome.**

Another notable feature of rituals of welcome in the north in the early nineteenth century are the warlike displays: war dances and ritual battles and contests. These warlike performances also illuminate some interesting aspects of Maori social life and gender difference. I begin with an account by Polack which contains some of the typical features of a peaceable encounter between communities in the north of the North Island in the early nineteenth century.¹⁵⁶ His description gives an illustrative sequence of the events that might occur and thus a general context in which to set the lamentations and warlike displays that took place.

Before announcing their presence, the Maori party accompanying Polack put on their best clothes, dressed their hair and the men painted themselves with the red kokowai mixed with shark oil. Then,

the gentlemen discharged their guns, that were no sooner heard in the Pá, which was situated on an elevated plain within a trifling distance, than a large shout issued from the place. Everybody appeared in confusion; women, with children in their arms, running about wringing their hands, and making hideous outcries. We were joined by one of the inhabitants, quite naked, but armed to the teeth, with his loaded musket, which he was ready to discharge; his cartridge box filled, appended to his belt, in which was placed a bayonet and a tomahawk.¹⁵⁷

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¹⁵⁵ Polack 1838: II, 57.

¹⁵⁶ Polack 1838: I, 112-120. He identifies this pa as being some distance up the Kaihu river which runs into the Kawhia harbour.

¹⁵⁷ Polack, 1838, I:113-4.
On seeing Polack, the man shouted "A Pakeha! A Pakeha!" The news was echoed throughout the pa. In this instance Polack represented a novel feature of the social landscape; these people had heard a good deal about Pakeha but had either seldom or never seen one before. They were also very interested in trading and Pakeha who might settle near them represented a reliable source of trade. Polack, on his part, was hoping that they would loan him canoes to travel down the neighbouring river to the Kawhia harbour so that he could estimate its worth as a trading route.

Shouts of "Haere mai!" (welcome) followed, "accompanied by the waving of garments and boughs of trees, and by discharges of ammunition, which were returned by my party." On arriving at the village, nearly the entire community came forward to meet him, "except the old chief and some of his ancient nobles, who were debarred from following the stream, by etiquette."

As a peculiar looking person in strange garments and with foreign habits Polack was, in this instance, subject to considerable investigation.

These people flocked about me, some feeling my garments, others lifting up my trousers to examine my boots and determine their length. My jacket, waistcoat, hat underwent the minutest regard [...]

With difficulty, I broke from the circle, and made up to the old chief, who sat accompanied by his ancient warriors, fidgetting with anxious impatience for my introduction. I saluted the old gentleman, who pressed noses with me, expressive of affection and regard.

Meanwhile a warlike "dance of welcome" was performed by the hosts and then the visitors. The hosts and visitors then engaged in a "sham fight":

The discharge of artillery still continued; the din and bustle was now augmented by the háká, or dance of welcome, accompanied with yells of about two hundred stout and agile performers. The convulsive distortion of countenance and furious gesticulations were given with the usual éclat, and returned by my people. A sham fight was then commenced between both parties, in which muskets, and bayonets fixed

158 "E’pāhehā! E’pāhehā!" in Polack's rendition of it (Ibid., 114).
159 Ibid., 112, 119, 120-1.
160 Ibid., 116
161 Ibid.
on small poles, spears and paddles came in active collision.\textsuperscript{162}

Then those who recognized a person in the other party to whom they were related in some way embraced and wept over each other:

One of the females who had accompanied us met with her father, whom she no sooner beheld, not having expected to see him in this village, than she fell upon his neck, and embraced him [...] The parent, who was quite grey and bowed down with old age, applied his nose to hers, large tears rolling down in quick succession down his aged face, which the duteous daughter wiped away with her mat, that was soon saturated with their united tears.\textsuperscript{163}

Others sat in small groups and wept, and some lacerated themselves: “The mussel-shell, as usual, was made use of by the different groups, and their blood flowed copiously.” An old lady, after weeping and embracing with her nephew “remained some time after the others had finished, excoriating herself with such cruelty, that I was astonished at the blood she had lost.” Everyone then sat in a circle with the chief, Kaka, and some of his wives sitting at the head. This was followed by a ritual performance by a woman who Polack calls a wahine tohunga or female priest. This description is unique in early nineteenth-century sources and a very interesting one.

An elderly priestess then rose up, and commenced a chant commemorative of the circumstances of the visit; imploring the Taniwao [Taniwha?], or divinity of the deep to stay his anger [...] also to certain departed spirits which she named, bowing her head and raising her arms as she pronounced the names of each, and supplicated them not to wreak their wrath on us as we passed the sacred shores where their ossified remains lie buried.

The ancient crone then invoked the manes of the illustrious dead who, in this existence, had been enemies to the Hokianga tribes, with whom my companions and I now dwelt, to spare us, who had not joined in the enormities committed by those people. The wahine tohunga commenced her cantatory prayers with a subdued cadence scarcely distinguishable; but, as she entered more fully on the subject, she became animated with fury. Her grey locks streamed in the wind; her eyes sparkled with peculiar brightness; her countenance appeared to dilate; and, from a quiet old lady as I first supposed her to be, she stood now confessed, like the Pythoness of yore, dealing forth to the assembled multitude her oracular inspirations, the truth of which none

\textsuperscript{162} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{163} Ibid., 117.
of her audience doubted (save myself).
All listened with profound attention ... After this oration, she sat
down exhausted, and both parties seemed on the most friendly terms;
Kākā promising me, as early as I pleased on the morrow, three of his
best canoes.\footnote{Ibid., 118-9.}

As was usual for any social event of the time, the occasion was completed with
a feast. Polack's Maori companions, though related to the people they were
visiting, had been living with their enemies in Hokianga. This seems to have
been a source of some awkwardness which was smoothed over by the above
performance by the aged woman. I will discuss this performance in more detail
later. A few days later, however, Polack's endeavour was again put in doubt
because of a threat of attack from neighbouring enemies.

With the exception of the ritual performed by the aged woman at the
conclusion of the above excerpt, every element of Polack's account compares well
with other early nineteenth-century descriptions. The appeal to the gods made by
the woman and oracular pronouncements, appear to have been directed toward
smoothing over the possibility of hostility between hosts and visitors. It is an
incident that both suggests the fragility of peaceful relationships between kin
whose relations were not cemented by living together and shows that Maori
could through ritual resolve these matters.\footnote{See also Johansen (1954: 11) on the importance of living together to cement the bonds of peace
and kinship.}

The shouting of welcome and waving of cloaks occurs in other descriptions of
welcome by Polack.\footnote{Polack 1838: 176; Ibid., II, 119.} Cruise gives an account of a welcome where he specifically
remarks that it was the women who waved cloaks and shouted welcome.\footnote{Cf. Cruise 1921: 115.} This
can be compared with Nicholas's narrative where it is women who call "Haere
mai" (welcome) to visitors.\footnote{Nicholas 1817: I, 269, 279, 331.} Nicholas also describes an instance where one old
woman waved a red cloak in welcome and called "Haere mai," when he and two
chiefs (Te Uruti and Te Puhi) went to visit Ruatara and Hongi Hika, who had set up camp near Kororareka with their people:

During the whole ceremony of our introduction, the old woman never ceased waving the red mat [cloak] and repeating a number of words, which according to Duaterra [Ruatara], were prayers designed exclusively for the occasion, and suggested the first moment she beheld us.\(^{169}\)

This performance by an aged woman can be compared to Polack’s “wahine tohunga” described above, particularly given that Ruatara called the woman’s recitation “prayers.” After her recitation, the chiefs fired their muskets and pistols, then some of the other warriors did the same, and this was followed a ritual battle and a war dance.\(^{170}\)

Description of relatives embracing and weeping together are found in other sources. The aged woman who remained weeping and lacerating herself long after the others had finished coincides with other descriptions of aged women and their prominence as mourners.\(^{171}\)

The other feature evident in the occasion described by Polack (above) is the warlike context in which these welcomes occurred, the visitors, though related had been living with a people who had been at war with the hosts. A few days later there was another threat of war with a neighbouring tribe.\(^{172}\) In this context, it is not surprising that the rituals of welcome included some warlike display such as a ritual battle and a war dance both of which appear in Nicholas’s and Polack’s descriptions above.

References to ritual battles or “sham fights” on such occasions are reasonably common in early sources.\(^{173}\) These warlike elements, however, do not always appear. Polack’s account can be contrasted with an instance recorded by Marsden

\(^{169}\) Nicholas 1817: I, 128.

\(^{170}\) Ibid.

\(^{171}\) See e.g., Dieffenbach (1843: II, 103) and Shortland (1856: 148-9) - already cited above, pp.47,49. See also Angas (1847a: II, 30, 32-3, 47).

\(^{172}\) Polack 1838: I, 128-9

\(^{173}\) Nicholas 1817: I, 128; Elder 1932: 186.
and Nicholas when they arrived unannounced with two chiefs, Korokoro and his brother Tuhi at a village on the Cavalli Islands. Everyone simply ran and hid with the exception of one old man who was lame, until they ascertained that the visitors were not a threat. In common with so many other accounts of the period, relatives embrace and weep together and the mourning of the women is particularly striking. Korokoro’s aunt approached with an infant on her back and accompanied by some other women and children.

She had a green bough twisted round her head, and another in her hand ... When she came within a hundred yards she began to make a very mournful lamentation, and hung down her head as if oppressed with the heaviest grief.\textsuperscript{174}

In Nicholas’s account of the same incident, he says:

the group consisted of three young women and some children, headed by an old woman who appeared bent down to the ground with age and infirmity. They approached in slow and regular procession one after the other, with their faces inclined towards the ground, and each with an air of melancholy sadness. As they ascended the hill, and when they had nearly gained its summit, the old woman began repeating in a low and plaintive voice a number of words, which Tui informed us were prayers or invocations to a certain deity.\textsuperscript{175}

Thus in the above excerpt we have a third example of an aged women performing a karakia as part of a welcome in the early nineteenth century.

Returning to Marsden’s account:

Korokoro appeared much agitated and stood in deep silence leaning on his musket. As his aunt advanced she wept aloud and prayed exceedingly ... Korokoro remained motionless till his aunt came up to him when they laid their heads together, the woman leaning upon a staff, Korokoro upon his gun, and in this situation they wept aloud for a long time and repeated short sentences alternately, which we understood were prayers, and continued weeping. ... At this time also the daughter of Korokoro’s aunt sat at her mother’s feet weeping, and all the women joined in their lamentations. ... Many of these poor women cut themselves in the faces, arms, and breasts ... till the blood ran down in streams.\textsuperscript{176}

\textsuperscript{174} Elder 1932: 186.

\textsuperscript{175} Nicholas 1817: I, 115.

\textsuperscript{176} Elder 1932: 84.
The absence of any warlike display in the above encounter seems to be a consequence of the unexpected nature of the visit and perhaps the small numbers and thus military weakness of these people. They were clearly in a state of trepidation before they recognized Korokoro. This is another incident that reflects the warlike nature of early nineteenth-century Maori society. Another contrast between this account and Polack's is that the visiting Pakeha were not the centre of attention. Nicholas remarks that when Marsden saw Korokoro's aunt approaching, he "immediately went to her, and taking her by the hand, was anxious to inspire her with confidence by this mark of friendship" but she took no notice of him and walked on by, only Korokoro had her attention.\textsuperscript{177}

Let us examine some other accounts of the warlike displays of the kind that appear in Polack; displays seem to have been reasonably common. Maning observed that warriors engaged in the same warlike displays and dances before they went to war and when "strangers of importance" visited. According to him, until the speeches were made "declaratory of war, or welcome, as the case may be" there was little difference.\textsuperscript{178}

Generally in a meeting between equals, some kind of warlike display was as essential to a welcome as it was before war, often in the form of a ritual battle or sham fight and a warlike dance.\textsuperscript{179} These displays were predominantly a masculine endeavour but not exclusively so.

\textit{Warlike Dances.}

Cruise describes the war dances performed in 1821 when a chief named Poro and 350-400 of his people travelled down from the North Cape to Te Whareumu's pa, south of the Whangaroa harbour.\textsuperscript{180} Poro intended to assert his

\textsuperscript{177} Nicholas 1817: I, 114-17.

\textsuperscript{178} Maning 1863: 216.

\textsuperscript{179} See e.g., Earle (1909: 62-3, 129); Cruise (1824: 185-6). These and other examples are cited below.

\textsuperscript{180} Te Whareumu, the chief near Whangaroa, like Te Uruti, the chief of Kororareka, was also known as "King George".
right to visit the region and trade with the Pakeha shipping as Te Whareumu’s people were doing. Some distance from the Whangaroa pa, Poro’s men

left their women, children, cookees [slaves], baggage and clothes, and advanced to the top of the eminence in three divisions, with great rapidity, and carrying merely their arms. Their bodies were perfectly naked, and painted red; their hair tied up and oiled, and their faces smeared with a kind of blue paint, not uncommon in some parts of New Zealand. On arriving at the top of the hill, they performed the war dance, and shouted defiance; after which the baggage was moved up, and the encampment formed.\(^{181}\)

This then was a male-only war dance, although many women had travelled with these men to this occasion.\(^{182}\) On the other hand when Te Whareumu’s people reciprocated both men and women performed: “the men were painted red and armed, and many of the women appeared in a similar costume, to make as much show as possible.”\(^{183}\) Cruise presents a plausible explanation for this difference. Poro had brought with him two hundred warriors, twice the number of fighting men that Te Whareumu had in his village.\(^{184}\) So we can see that gender arrangements did not always determine the role that women took in rituals of welcome, of more pressing relevance in this case seems to have been the desire to equal the visitors’ display of numbers in the war dance.

A survey of depictions of Maori dances from the early nineteenth century suggests that it was not unusual for men to perform warlike dances with a small number of women in their midst. Earle writes of the warlike dances performed by the people of Kororareka when Hongi Hika came to visit: “I was astonished to find their women mixed in the dance indiscriminately with the men, and went through all those horrid gestures with seemingly as much pleasure as the

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\(^{181}\) Cruise 1824: 185-6.

\(^{182}\) Cruise (1824:198) later visited their encampment and estimated that Poro’s people numbered about 350-400 in total, and remarks that many of them were women.

\(^{183}\) Ibid., 186.

\(^{184}\) Ibid., 188.
An engraving taken from Earle’s depiction of the occasion suggests that it did not take very many women for Earle to conclude the sexes were mixed indiscriminately, for there are eight or more male figures visible and only two women. The dancers are not performing with weapons, the two women are young and appear to be wearing head-dresses of leaves. Another picture of a dance on board the *Astrolabe* in 1827 shows a small number of women performing also: two women, nine men and one boy. Once again the dancers are not performing with weapons.

Nicholas also describes a small number of women performing with the men. In this case the dance was not performed as part of a welcome but after an impromptu race between two canoes. There were three women in the race, they had babies with them and placed them in the bottom of the canoe while they competed. At the conclusion of the race, all performed a warlike dance:

> The women were no less violent in all their attitudes and movements than the men; they raved and roared with equal fury, and the distinction of sex appearing no longer visible, was completely lost in their convulsive excesses.

**Ritual Battles.**

The presence of a small number of women in warlike dances can be compared to their presence in the ritual battles described in early nineteenth-century sources. One of the most noticeable features of the rituals of welcome in Northland was the “sham fight” performed by warriors, where the hosts and visitors fought each other. Maning’s description of a “sham fight” stops short of actual combat but three young warriors from the host’s side threw darts full into the faces of the visitors, who were then chased until one of the pursuers had

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186 Murray-Oliver 1968: 111.

187 Wright 1950: 92.

188 Nicholas 1817: I, 362-4.
touched the shoulder of the fleeing host, the opposing columns charged each other and impressive war dances were performed by each side.\(^{189}\) His description suggests a nicely balanced display of power and controlled aggression by both visitors and hosts, which was probably the general aim of warlike dances and ritual battles in most circumstances. These displays also show that warlike prowess was highly valued in Maori society.

In other cases (such as the one described by Polack above), the “sham fight” actually involved hand-to-hand combat but stopped short of serious injury. In a less formalized encounter, the visiting party might just be pelted with sticks and stones.\(^{190}\) Early accounts of ritual battles in the north of the North Island, include a small number of women actively engaged in the combat, who also wield weapons.

Nicholas described certain of the local women engaging in a ritual battle and war dance when a group of visitors arrived at Rangihoua. He said that his inquiries on this matter led him to believe that it was not a general practice but confined to certain “ladies of more intrepid character than the rest”.\(^{191}\) The wife of the leading chief, Ruatara, was particularly noticeable:

> Among those who distinguished themselves by peculiar intrepidity, and were foremost in every attack, I was a good deal surprised to see the Queen of Tipoonah [Te Puna], Duatera’s lady, whose courage, on this day, was eminently conspicuous. This sturdy Amazon, dressed out in the red gown and petticoat she received from Mr. Marsden, and holding a large horse-pistol in her hand, appeared upon all occasions anxious to signalize herself; and superior to the timidity of her sex, displayed in conflict the most undaunted spirit, rivalling the boldest man in deeds of heroism, and selecting for her antagonist the most formidable she could find. ... Besides this dauntless Penthesilia, I observed likewise some other female warriors, who joined in the combat with much resolution, and following the example of their queen, exposed themselves in the thickest of the fight, to mimic dangers.\(^{192}\)

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\(^{189}\) Maning 1863: 40-9. Maning lists this incident as a “sham fight” in his table of contents (Ibid.,v)

\(^{190}\) Polack 1838: I, 161.

\(^{191}\) Nicholas 1817: I, 200.

\(^{192}\) Ibid., 199-200
Women are absent from his description of the visitors, on this occasion headed by a chief named Korokoro. In both Nicholas’s account and Cruise’s account of the war dance at Whangaroa, it is women who are on their home territory who participate in the warlike display. It must have been a general pattern for Rahu, Ruatara’s wife, to engage in men’s activities on these occasions, for Nicholas writes of another occasion when some visitors arrived at Rangihoua:

When the canoes got close enough to the shore for the people in them to land, Duaterra and all his warriors starting up with horrid yells from the place where they were sitting, ran along the shore, making furious gesticulations; and presenting their spears and muskets at the approaching party, as if to intimidate them from landing. In the midst of this tumultuous assemblage I observed the queen, who raved about with as much violent uproar as the wildest of them; carrying in her hand the large horse pistol that she had in the sham fight, and having her husband’s sword-belt slung over her shoulders. They next danced to the war song, and then sat ... down opposite to the canoes ... regarding their seeming opponents with fixed attention: while these were now resting on their paddles, and both parties continued looking at each other, without speaking a word, for at least quarter of an hour. At length an old chief in one of the canoes was the first to break silence, and rising up with an air of consequential gravity, entered into conversation with some of his people; he then addressed himself to Duatarra, and they talked together for some time, while all the others listened with respectful attention. 190

That Rahu wielded a horse pistol in these displays, suggests that in the trade for western weaponry, firearms did not go exclusively to men, they might also go to an important women. Given that the battle involved hand to hand combat, she was probably using it like a club. The horse pistol also stands out as rather unusual, perhaps the only mention of one in early sources. That Rahu was wearing her husband’s sword belt, suggests that her husband had an interest in her presenting a warlike appearance.

Women do not only appear with introduced weaponry, Marsden writes of what may be the same occasion, that Ruatara’s wife wielded a whalebone club, which he estimated to be about seven feet long. It may be that Marsden has confused Rahu with someone else in this case, or that one or other of them has in their

190 Ibid., II, 20-2.
description mingled a description of more than one occasion, given that these ritual battles were fairly common. Marsden notes that “a number” of women were in the fray and particularly comments on an especially aged chiefly woman, Te Pahi’s wife in the midst of the fight. On another occasion Marsden describes a ritual battle fought when a group of armed men came to visit Hongi Hika’s people. On this occasion Hongi’s daughters fired muskets charged only with powder while the men fought hand to hand with clubs and spears.

It seems fair to surmise from the above accounts that the numbers of women who participated in these warlike displays were usually few and usually from important families. The inclusion of a small number of chiefly women in some descriptions of these activities suggests the high value placed on these warlike activities and shows that chiefly women could be included in predominantly masculine performances. We have also seen an instance where gender and rank were not the only consideration (see above p.60), the desire to produce an equivalent display of numbers in war dances could result in a relatively large number of women being included.

Warlike Men and Peaceful Women.

Nicholas describes a male-only war dance that suggests a complementary relationship in which men appear warlike and women appear as peacemakers. The occasion was the consequence of one chief sleeping with the wife of another. Both chiefs and their people met together, warlike displays were performed, followed by a good deal of oratory, and the adulterer presented the injured chief with some baskets of potatoes. The injured chief’s side performed some combat manoeuvres and charged at the other chief’s people twice. They then performed a war dance but

the raging vengeance of the scene was softened by three females, who joining the dance amidst the plaudits of the assemblage, soon chased

194 Elder 1932: 92.

away the horrid discord, and held all the warriors in mute attention to
their graceful movements. When these females had concluded their
performance, the entire party seated themselves down in the midst of
the enclosure... 196

This performance in dance can be compared to instances where women break
up fights between men. Wilson describes a ritual battle between the men of
Ngati Maru and Ngati Tumutumu in Tauranga that was performed to resolve a
conflict between two communities.197 The conflict originated in an incident where
the missionaries and Te Matapihi, a leader of Ngati Tumutumu, had fallen foul
of each other. Ngati Maru and Ngati Tumutumu engaged in a battle rather like
the ones already discussed. Wilson remarks that the performance was “the
greatest compliment they could have paid us. It was intended as a mark of
distinction and honour; also as a satisfaction for the outrage of the previous day.”

Ngati Maru on their arrival charged at Ngati Tumutumu, firing at them, but
hitting no one. Ngati Tumutumu crouched unmoved. Then they leapt up and
came forward to meet them with their weapons. “At this instant the women and
even the big children of both tribes rushed in ... seizing their arms, dragged them
forcibly away, the men gradually letting them go. A fierce unarmed conflict
ensued.” Wilson notes that both rangatira (chiefly) and ware (low-born) men
were mingled indiscriminately in the fray. So in this case women and children
took a role in ensuring that a ritual combat was an unarmed one. After the battle
the men formed up into one solid body and performed a war dance and events
closed with a series of speeches.198

These two instances of women intervening in fights and war dances indicate
that Maori could make use of a complementary gender relationship to reduce the
consequences of the high value that was generally placed on warfare. This is
something that is also suggested by women’s prominent role in public

demonstrations of grief which seem to have been central to the affirmation of

196 Nicholas 1817: II, 107-108

197 Wilson 1889: 15-17.

198 Ibid., 17.
alliances and kinship relations.

Shortland remarks that:

The friendly interference of a stranger in their quarrels is never taken amiss by the New Zealanders, and I have often known it to prove serviceable by enabling the weaker party to yield with safety to their honour, on the plea that so doing was owing to such interference.199

This comment points to a difficulty in resolving conflict in a society where the war ethic and honour are intimately related. Backing down is likely to be seen as an admission of weakness. Perhaps women could intervene in conflicts between men because they were excluded to some extent from this ethic they could save men the embarrassment of admitting weakness. Tuta Nihoniho who fought in the wars of the 1860s makes a remark that may reflect the extent to which women were believed to act independently of the war ethic:

if peace is concluded in time of war by men, it will not be a firm or lasting one. It is termed a male peace, and stands for treachery, deceit, trouble. But if women assume the function of making peace, that is known as a female peace, and it will be a firm, durable one.200

Traditionally inter-marriage was one of the means of making peace but other methods were used.201 Henry Williams observed a group of women who came to negotiate with the enemy.202 In S. Percy Smith’s collection of traditions concerning warfare on the west coast of the North Island, there is a reference to women of high rank acting as “go-betweens” for two tribes who were formerly at war.203

At a large meeting held at Whanganui where representatives of a number of tribes met to discuss their political relationships and plans for the future in 1872 at the close of the land wars, the orators make reference to a traditional practice

199 Shortland 1856:238.
200 Nihoniho 1913: 51 (English), 23 (Maori ).
201 For some comment on the role of political marriages in peace-making see Biggs (1960: 25) and Johansen (1954: 21).
202 Rogers 1961: 426. In this case the women’s efforts at diplomacy were not successful and Williams remarks a little unfairly “Women make but bad politicians”
203 Smith 1910: 458.
whereby a child from one community was given to another as a method of making peace. The child was probably intended to marry into the community he or she had been given to. They elaborate on this practice as an image of peace and war.204 A girl is used as an image of peace and cultivation, while a boy with a moko is used as an image of discord and war. The imagery does not stop there, the girl’s virginity is used as an image of a new peaceful start, and the bastard “poriro” is used as an image of treachery and backsliding into warfare. This discussion took place in a context that differs from the early nineteenth century. It took place among a people who no longer valued the war ethic, and who considered many traditional practices backward. In the early nineteenth century, the war ethic was the unquestioned basis for a good deal of Maori social life.

Nonetheless, these images that associate men with war and women with peace must have a history that goes back to the early nineteenth century and even earlier - and those instances in the early nineteenth century where women intervene in fights and displays of masculine aggression certainly suggest this. The connection between masculinity and warfare is very obvious in some of the language too. This is particularly evident in some of the vocabulary for war, the expression “toa” for a warrior also means male.206 Tore and torna can both describe the erection of penis and readiness for battle.207 A Ngati Toa war song also makes this connection in the lines “When will your penis rise, when will it be ready to fight?”.207

On the other hand, the presence of a small number of important women in ritual battles and war dances shows that gender relations were not entirely complementary on this matter, important women could be incorporated into

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204 Te Waka Maori o Nui Tiren. 8(9): 65-7, (Wed. May 8 1872).


206 Ibid., 437. The sexual and agressive definitions of “tora” and “tore”are absent from early dictionaries but the missionaries must have been aware of them. Williams (ibid., appendix) notes that they followed the Tahitian missionaries in using “ture” as a transliteration of Torah “to avoid unpleasant suggestions”.

men's warlike performances. The presence of a small number of important women in men's warlike activities suggests that those activities were accorded a higher value than those activities with which women were generally associated. This involvement of women in warfare and warlike activities was not simply a case of acting like men, there were also specific roles for high ranking women in this connection - that included them but gave them a gendered role. Tuta Nihoniho provides a good example of this, the call to battle could be given by a woman. He begins his discussion with a proverb that suggests a complementary relationship between men and women. He comments that "man will eat his food of blood on the battlefield. This is the reason for the proverb which says "Battle for men, childbirth for women." So men spill blood on the battlefield and women do it in childbirth. Yet Nihoniho continues with the special connection that women have with spilling blood and connects it with both battle and death:

Bear in mind, kahawai are the fish with much blood, like woman, and she has a powerful voice, a voice which commands much sympathy for calling in the battle. For if a woman gives the command to attack, the enemy will not be able to return the attack; because the attack was commanded by a woman and women are a cliff where men leap off into the night."

Nihoniho is also notable for using the term "toa" for notable women who accompanied men into battle and gave the battle cry. Nihoniho's comment that women are a cliff where men leap into the night is evocative of the leaping place to the underworld and Hinenuitepo, who according to one of Shortland's informants, still lies on the path to the underworld her thighs open and her labia gaping. There was generally a strong connection between women and death in Maori mythology and ritual.

In the early nineteenth century, the acts of vengeance performed by chiefly

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208 Nihoniho 1913: 22 (my translation).
209 Ibid., 23 (my translation).
210 Ibid., 13.
211 Shortland 1882: 23.
widows after battle show another gendered warlike role accorded to important women. This is well illustrated by an at incident at Rotorua in 1836, where the women seem to have collectively negotiated with the men for a female captive so that a chiefly widow could kill her. Another very striking example of female participation in acts of vengeance after the battle is to be found in Francis Hall’s description of a male only warparty’s home-coming at Waimate. The men returned in victory with a number of captives and severed heads, but also with the corpses of two of their own chiefs.

A small canoe, with the dead bodies [Tete and his brother, according to Kemp], first approached the shore: the war canoe and those taken in fight, about 40 in all, lay at short distance. Shortly after, a party of Young Men landed, to perform the war-dance and song usual on their return from fighting: they yelled, and jumped, and brandished their weapons, and threw up human heads in the air....

An awful pause and silence ensued. At length the canoes moved slowly, and came in contact with the shore; when the widow of Tette [Tete] and other women rushed down upon the beach in a frenzy of rage, and beat in pieces the carved work at the head of the canoes with a pole: they then got into a canoe, and pulled out several prisoners-of-war into the water and beat them to death: except one boy, who swam away and got into another canoe. The frantic widow then proceeded to another canoe, and dragged out a woman-prisoner into the water and beat out her brains with a club with which they pound fern root.

It is noticeable that the women seem to be taking not only vengeance against the enemy captives but also against their own men because they appear to have smashed the carved prows of their own canoes, prows which their men would have gone to some effort to carve.

In conclusion then, though early sources indicate that women could take a peaceful role in rituals of welcome, they were also included on a number of occasions in war dances and ritual battles in which men generally predominated. Numbers were usually small and these women appear to have been rangatira women. There is one occasion where the hosts incorporated a relatively large

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213 White 1887-90: V, 236-7. This account comes from Samuel Knight who was a catechist at Rotorua 1835-7.

214 Vayda1960: 105.
number of women in their war dance, while the visitors’ war dance did not include women. The large number of women in the war dance performed by the hosts seems to be a consequence of their fighting men being considerably outnumbered by the visitors. This incident shows that an equivalent display of numbers in the war dance was of overriding importance. The male-only war dance performed by their visitors may have been an expression of power. It is also possible that hosts, rather than visitors, may have been more inclined to include some of their chiefly women in their warlike displays.

VII. Oratory.

Having considered the rituals of mourning and war dances performed at Maori gatherings, it is worth considering the speech-making which often took place on such occasions. In twentieth-century writing on the matter it is said that speech-making in the public courtyard (marae) was done by men only; with the exception that certain high ranking women on the East Coast sometimes did so, although most usually this was done on their home marae.\textsuperscript{215} In the twentieth century this general prohibition on women is definitely connected with ideas about tapu.\textsuperscript{216}

As others have commented, early sources show that female oratory was not confined to the East Coast.\textsuperscript{217} But though early sources contain instances of female orators, they are nonetheless a good deal rarer than male orators. The sources give no clear indication of whether this relative absence was connected with ideas about women and men and their relationship to tapu. It is, however, worth examining the sources more closely for what they suggest about Maori gender relations.


\textsuperscript{216}Salmond (1979: 149) says that in regions where women are forbidden to orate “it is, said that \textit{whai\text{"{o}rero} is tapu}, and not fitting for women.”

The dominant image of the orator in early sources is male and chiefly - and we should examine some accounts that show what appears to have been the norm for speech-making so that we have a context in which to situate instances of female orators. Earle, for instance, describes a visit by canoe from some Nga Puhi warriors led by a man named Tareha to Te Uruti’s people at Kororareka one morning in 1827.\textsuperscript{218} The occasion began with war dances performed by naked warriors with oiled and beautifully dressed hair, topknotted with feathers.\textsuperscript{219} Then a ritual battle took place, which Earle describes as “a pell-mell sort of encounter, in which numerous hard blows were given and received; then all the party fired their pieces in the air”.\textsuperscript{220} Then the two groups approached each other and began to hongi (press noses) “and those who were particular friends cried and lamented over each other.”\textsuperscript{221}

The slaves then set about preparing the fires for the morning meal,

while the chiefs, squatting down, formed a ring, or, rather, an oblong circle on the ground; then one at a time rose up and made long speeches which they did in a manner peculiar to themselves. The speaker during his harangue, keeps running backwards and forwards within the oblong space, using the most violent but appropriate gesticulation ...The orator is never interrupted in his speech; but when he finishes and sits down, another immediately rises up and takes his place, so that all who choose have an opportunity of delivering their sentiments, after which the assembly breaks up.\textsuperscript{222}

Elsewhere Earle remarks on the long talks by “elder chiefs” which were usual for such occasions.\textsuperscript{223} His written descriptions may be compared to two of his paintings which both show male orators. One chiefly male orator stands in a canoe on the occasion of a war expedition, and Earle comments that on this

\textsuperscript{218} Earle 1909: 78-81.
\textsuperscript{219} Ibid., 78-9.
\textsuperscript{220} Ibid., 80.
\textsuperscript{221} Ibid., 80.
\textsuperscript{222} Earle 1909:80. See also p. 131 for another description of chiefly orators.
\textsuperscript{223} Earle 1909: 130.
occasion the speech-making by various chiefs went on for several days.\textsuperscript{224} An engraving from Earle shows a chiefly man orating amid a crowd of warriors.\textsuperscript{225}

Marsden describes a few of the occasions where he observed speech making, and the orators seem always to have been male chiefs. He records three occasions where chiefs met to resolve or discuss a conflict. At Coromandel, Marsden records an instance where a minor chief was accused of stealing a cloak from the principal chief’s son. The men belonging to either side engaged in warlike displays including dances and "military evolutions". The leading men on both sides made speeches, at the end of which it was agreed that the minor chief would compensate the principal chief with a canoe and a slave.\textsuperscript{226} Another occasion that Marsden documents was a discussion of the possibility of war as a consequence of a conflict between two neighbouring chiefs.\textsuperscript{227} He also records is a large inter-tribal gathering at Kororareka where peace was made.\textsuperscript{228} On another occasion when Marsden was staying five miles from the Kaipara river, he writes that, although he was anxious to start early so as to reach the river in good time, "as several chiefs were present and wished to say something on the occasion of my visit it was two hours before their different speeches were ended."\textsuperscript{229} This suggests that chiefs probably liked to make speeches as part of the proceedings whenever they had important visitors.

By contrast early recorded instances of female orators are rare. Polack is one writer who remarks that women also engaged in oratorical displays; he also says that they were "consulted alike in public and domestic affairs ... and even join the war council, which they at periods aid by their deliberations".\textsuperscript{230}

\textsuperscript{224} Murray-Oliver 1968: 128-9

\textsuperscript{225} Murray-Oliver 1968: 110-111.

\textsuperscript{226} Elder 1932: 276.

\textsuperscript{227} Elder 1932:185.

\textsuperscript{228} Elder 1932:467.

\textsuperscript{229} Elder 1932: 292.

\textsuperscript{230} Polack 1840: I, 95; Ibid., II, 117.
If we look to specific instances of such women that Polack encountered in his travels rather than his generalisations on the matter, he provides us with just two actual examples. There seems to be a certain amount of Polack's own personality written into his synopses of these speeches but given he is one of the few writers to give any attention to female orators, they are worth recounting. The synopses at least give some indication of the type of performances that might have been seen in the early nineteenth-century in Northland. He describes the deliberations that occurred near the close of a hahunga. The future activities of the tribe were discussed with a good deal of passionate oratory. The possibility of war was debated, a large fishing party planned. Then an aged woman stood up and requested information from the Seignory as to the location of the farms ... to be cultivated, which she apprehended as being eligible she sat down, on which a young lad arose and dissented from the lady ... 

The essence of the young man's argument is the sort of hot-headed statement we might expect from a young man: that the sites selected by the lady were a weak choice, they should be bold enough to plant their cultivations in the sight of their enemies. An argument that Polack says the youth repeated several times in his speech. Polack then devotes nearly two pages to every oratorical flourish in a speech given by an old man. Polack's account of the speech reads like a very dynamic performance typical of chiefly men of the time. He was, however, arguing for the same position as the old lady - the new cultivations should be planted in a reasonably secure position - and it seems that he carried the point.

The old lady's speech looks to have been relatively succinct and seems to be in the nature of a request to the senior men, which is presumably what Polack means by "the Seignory". It was followed by an ill-considered and critical response by a young man, and was supported by a lengthy speech by a more sensible old man, which seems to have gone a long way toward settling the case. The other female orator that Polack describes is a widow contributing to a discussion that had turned to the subject of war; this speech also took place at the

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231 Polack 1840: I, 104.
232 Ibid., 104-6.
close of a hahunga:

an old Sybil arose, declaring that all her children had been devoured by the enemy; and if she was not avenged by the audience before her death, in after life she would haunt them and their children, until their hearts should melt away for fear, and so fall easily into the power of their most rancorous enemy. "I am fit for nothing now," she cried ringing her aged hands in hopeless despair, "but to dig the ground, and plant food for the enemy. Had Te Rorahà lived, (her husband who had been a chief of consequence), it would have been avenged long ere this."231

Nicholas records a very interesting example of women orating at a large gathering. The occasion was a gathering to resolve a dispute between two chiefs, "Wiveeah" (Whiwhia) and "Henou"(?), over adultery: Whiwhia had slept with Henou’s wife. The respective parties of the two chief’s positioned themselves on either side of a river. An interchange of speeches between the two sides took place. All the speeches were by men. At the conclusion of the speeches a feast was held, each party on its own side of the river. The adulterer, Whiwhia, gave Henou potatoes for his feast. It also looks as though a karakia was recited over the food before it was distributed:

a party of cooks prepared themselves for dressing the baskets of potatoes that were sent over by Wiveeah. These being first brought into the middle of the field, under the direction of a chief belonging to Wiveeah, were all placed there together; and certain ceremonies being gone through, which consisted partly in the repetition of some words which I could not comprehend, and in the interchange of various movements among the assemblage, they were regularly distributed through the different tribes.234

Maori were generally rather cautious about eating with strangers, bewitching food was one of the things that enemies were thought to do to each other, so the karakia performed may have had something to do with this.235 Henou and his men then performed two mock charges at the opposing party followed by a fierce war dance until it was interrupted by three women who transformed the performance into something rather less warlike (I have already discussed this

231 Polack 1838: I, 231.

234 Nicholas 1817: II, 103.

incident, see above p. 64). Whiwhia's party then performed more or less identical battle manoeuvres. The speeches which were made by men were concluded on this occasion with statements by Whiwhia's three wives:

his three wives now deemed it expedient to interpose their oratory, as confirming mediators between the parties, though there was no longer any enmity existing on either side. They spoke with great animation, and the warriors listened to their separate speeches in attentive silence; they assumed, I thought, a very determined tone, employing a great deal of impressive action, and looking towards the opposite chief with an aspereity of countenance, not warranted by the mild forbearance of his deportment. The expostulating harangues (as I should suppose they were) of these sturdy ladies completed the ceremonials of this singular conference ... 236

Nicholas' description of the women's oratory suggests that they performed in the same dynamic style that was typical of male chiefs. It also seems that Whiwhia's wives had some stern things to say to the cuckolded husband. This may relate to an interesting feature of Maori ideas about retribution and adultery. We can see here that the adulterous man gave the wronged husband a good quantity of potatoes; later in the century paying compensation to the wronged husband became one of the standard ways for resolving such disputes. Two early sources, however, remarks on the practice of plundering the cuckolded husband. 237 Polack, too, notes that victims of misfortune were often plundered by friends and relatives. 238 Presumably underlying this was a view that accidents did not simply happen to people, they were at fault themselves in some way. This may explain why Henou received a dressing down from Whiwhia's wives; they may have held Henou partly responsible for the affair.

In each of these examples where women are shown orating, we can see that women who have a specific interest in the matters being discussed do speak out. When it comes to deciding the situation of cultivations, given that women

236 Nicholas 1817: II, 111.

237 Perry 1852: 9-10; Brown 1845: 24, 35.

worked on them and that the head wives of chiefs supervised these activities, it is unremarkable that such women who oversaw these activities would have something to say about it and that sensible men would listen to what they said.

In the case of the wives of the adulterer, it is obvious that they might feel the need to seek redress for their situation. In the case of the Polack’s widow speaking in favour of war and vengeance, we have seen that chiefly widows had recognised rights when it came to the pursuit of vengeance.

One other relatively early and striking instance of a female orator appears in a newspaper in November of 1852, when the Governor and his officials met with the Te Patukiri people in the Coromandel. The goal of the meeting was to set up an agreement whereby mining licenses could be sold. Taurua Te Tawaroa Makuini is an early documented example of a woman of rank who possessed land and was involved in its disposal, although in this case she was only leasing mining rights not selling the land itself. She is described in the Maori text as “te wahine rangatira o te Patukirikiri”, the female chief of Te Patukiri and she is called a “chieftainess” in the English text. She died in 1856, and her obituary which appeared in the Maori Messenger describes her as the chief of Te Patukirikiri. The obituary remarks that she was “highly venerated by the tribes of the Thames; and indeed her name was respectfully mentioned by remote tribes in various parts of the country.” She was known to Pakeha in the area as the “Old Witch” because of her adherence to traditional religion, and her participation in “public discussions” is also remarked upon in her obituary.

Let us examine the report of the occasion in 1852 when Te Tawaroa orated. The speeches began with the Governor's address. Wiremu Hopihana Te Karore made a formal statement of the boundaries of the land involved, concluding: “This

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239 See e.g., Elder 1932: 113, 209.

240 Maori Messenger 1852, December 2.


242 Ibid., 8.

243 Ibid., 7.
consenting is made in the presence of the Governor, of the Bishop, of the Chief
Justice, of all the Europeans, of the chiefs of Ngatipaoa, and before Te Horeta who
sits here."

Te Horeta interjected, "Before yourself! What have I to do with your matters?"

Te Karore continued with a statement to the effect that the rights and
obligations of the miners and the Te Patukirikiri people should be made clear so
that there could be no problems in the future.

Hanauara Te Otatu interrupted:

Long speeches or short speeches, what then, will the quantity of gold be
increased? Talk of the land being worked: talk about your own little
piece of land so that the fat may be quickly eaten and the bones left ...
Speak for yourself and say how much you want; you must adjust these
things. It is you who have to reap the harvest.\textsuperscript{244}

He then addressed Te Tawaroa, "Make haste and reveal your thoughts lest you
die."

Te Tawaroa’s son Pita then rose and spoke and solicited a collective response
from the Te Patukirikiri people:

O Governor, listen. We consent to the gold of the land being given up;
but the land itself is to be retained by us. The gold alone is to be given
up to the Governor. Is it not so? Are you willing to give up the gold to
the Governor?

Everyone replied "Yes". He then asked, "Shall we keep the land for our
children?"\textsuperscript{245}

Everyone assented again. The possibility of the establishment of a township for
the Pakeha miners was then discussed by various orators.

Then Te Tawaroa gave the final statement on the matter:

All I am agreeable to is, that the gold should be worked. The land will
not be given up to you. The gold only will be given up. You have
already heard that you are to have the gold; but the land is for myself.
Listen; one month, - one hundred pounds for mine only; for my claim
only. One month, one hundred pounds for mine only.

\textbf{Te Otatu called out,} "Tena e Kui, tena, be strong, you have two hundred

\textsuperscript{244} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{245} Ibid.
pounds, you will get three hundred and four hundred presently. Your demands have been agreed to, e kui, the Pakeha are laughing."

And indeed the Pakeha were so overcome with laughter at the "gestures of this little woman" according to the report, that proceedings had to be halted until they recovered themselves. She waited for them to finish and then reiterated her point, "O Governor! One month, one hundred pounds. For mine only. This will be my call forever and ever, amen and ever after."

The proceedings concluded with a few more speeches and then everyone signed an agreement. Now we can see that one of the men present, Te Otatu, was not especially polite or deferential to Te Tawaroa but neither was he to Te Karore who gave the opening speech for Te Patukirikiri. Te Otatu seems generally inclined to demand that people state their wishes plainly and not go on for too long. We can see that he expected that Te Tawaroa would stand at some point and give a statement of her position on the matter. She seems only to have made the one speech and her son seems to do a good deal of the talking. Te Tawaroa's speech, however, seems to have been the final statement of substance from Te Patukirikiri.

A puzzling feature of the account is why the Pakeha found Te Tawaroa's speech so hilarious, for they must have very often seen and heard chiefs loudly demanding that their wishes be acknowledged. Let us consider how she would have looked to Pakeha observers and what this may tell us about the occasion. When important speakers orated, it was often, as we have seen, a very physical dynamic performance. Mary Martin gives a good description of a "powerful speaker", "a man of some standing" whom she saw open a debate at Waimate in 1844:

He began by trotting slowly up and down a given space, always beginning and ending each sentence with his run to and fro. After a while he got warmed up and excited, and then he rushed backwards and forwards, he leaped up off the ground, he slapped his thigh, shouted, waved his spear. Anyone who had not understood the language, would have thought he was breathing out death and destruction, instead of
urging the Bishop to stay among his people.²⁴⁶

The missionaries Henry and William Williams had adopted the Maori style of whaikorero although they had toned it down to a less athletic performance. When Martin observed this she found it funny:

It was very amusing to see the two brothers Williams stand up to answer him. They had lived so long in the land that they used Maori action, though they did not leap or rush about. Archdeacon Henry Williams, a stout, old-fashioned-looking clergyman, with broad-brimmed hat and spectacles marched up and down with a spear in his hand, and elicited shouts of applause.²⁴⁷

The sight, then, of a very English-looking missionary pacing backwards and forwards, gesturing in a Maori style with a spear in his hand must have struck Pakeha who were not used to it as incongruous and thus amusing. It is probable that the hilarity among the Governor and his officials resulted from their feeling that a woman performing in this fashion was similarly incongruous, it is thus probable that it was not a sight with which they were familiar. This indicates that by 1844 officials dealing with Maori on a regular basis had not often seen women performing oratory in the style that was common among important men, certainly not often enough for them to find it commonplace.

As I have noted, although it appears to have been rare, there is no reference to an absolute prohibition on women speaking at large public occasions in early published sources. The nearest we get to this is in a statement by Wiremu Nera Te Awaiaataia, who attended a large King Movement meeting in 1859. He was opposed to the King Movement, and there was some tension surrounding his presence at the meeting:

Brother ... I did not come to be mocked; I am here by your invitation; I came because I was sent for; and now I am told that if I speak to the Runanga a woman will reply to me; what is my fault that I am to be insulted? I do not intend to allow myself to be thus treated; I therefore resolved on returning home this morning, but Thompson [i.e., Wiremu Tamihana] has been to detain me; at his request I have consented to

²⁴⁶ Martin 1884: 37.
²⁴⁷ Ibid.
remain; but I do not intend to be put to shame.\textsuperscript{248}

So we know that in the Waikato region in 1859, it was considered insulting for a man to be replied to by a woman at a large inter-tribal assembly or council. It is probable that such ideas were much older and would in part account for the relative rarity of female orators in the early nineteenth century. The other obvious reason for the rarity of female orators is that oratory was the preserve of chiefs, who were usually male.

While mention of female orators at large gatherings are rare in the early nineteenth century, it is worth noting that the majority of songs in Ngata and Te Hurinui’s comprehensive collection are composed by women.\textsuperscript{249} Maori songs on the whole are not generalised expressions of sentiment, they are usually specific responses to a particular set of circumstances; names, places and specific events are often mentioned in the songs. We have seen a very good example of the political nature of such songs a lament composed and performed by Tururo the mother of the chief at Kororareka for Hongi Hīka. We have also seen that this song represented a powerful piece of political diplomacy at a time when no one could afford to offend Hongi and his men. One of the reasons why women are so prominent as composers of songs may be that it was their major form of public expression on matters which concerned themselves and their peoples.

\textsuperscript{248} Budde 1859: 44.

\textsuperscript{249} Ngata and Te Hurinui 1961: xi.
Chapter Three.
Conception, Abortions and the Menses.

Childbirth and the menses had a tapu connected with them. Abortions and probably also the menses could in certain circumstances become atua. Yet Biggs, Best, Johansen, Smith and Heuer indicate that there is something about Maori views of women’s reproductive and sexual functions that forms part of the cultural background that made women’s connection with tapu problematic.¹ The menses and postpartum effluvia, for example, are also said to be destructive of tapu; Best and Smith both give expression to this apparently contradictory relationship by using terms such as “unclean”, “polluted” and “impure”.² More recently this interpretation, especially the notion that there was something polluting about women, has been rejected by the Hansons. Instead, they argued that the processes of menstruation and childbirth gave women an especially close connection with tapu and the gods.³ They also noted that Smith’s and Best’s interpretations divided tapu into two categories for which there was no linguistic evidence.⁴

In this chapter I examine a range of sources concerning conception, the menses and abortions. In the subsequent chapter I will discuss material relating to childbirth and children. Early sources give limited information so I examine Best’s early work on the Tuhoe and their ideas concerning conception, the menses and abortions and compare this with the early material that we have. I will examine this material with a view not only to producing a closer and more nuanced view of women’s relationship to tapu but also to take a wider view of

³ Hanson and Hanson 1982: 87-94; Hanson 1983: 347, 357, 375.
⁴ Hanson and Hanson 1982: 93.
the role these ideas and practices had for Maori conceptions of gender.

I. The Conception of a Child.

Jean Smith connects the association between men and tapu and the gods with sexual reproduction. She cites Best in this instance:

The seed of life is with Taane and with man, with woman is the receptacle that nourishes it. The seed of the spiritual god is with the male for he is a descendant of gods. Woman emanates from Papa the Earth.  

In another of Best's later works, *Maori Religion and Mythology*, similar material is presented in an appendix in Maori: the man provides the seed, while the woman, like the earth nurtures it. It is said that men provide the seed because they are descendants of the atua or gods, while women are said to descend from Papa-tuanuku.  

As I have stated in chapter one, in later works by Best the risk increases that he is presenting relatively late Ngati Kahungunu material received from Te Whatahoro and about which questions concerning historicity and reliability have been raised. The idea, however, that men provide the seed for offspring, while women like the soil simply nurture it, seems a likely one for a people familiar with horticulture to arrive at; and it is certainly found elsewhere in the world. Let us consider what there is to be found in earlier material, beginning with Best's research on the Tuhoe at the turn of the nineteenth century.

Best found that men were thought to plant the wairua (soul or spirit) of the child in the womb:

The wairua (spirit) of a child is, according to several of my authorities, implanted by the male parent during coition. "I think," said a worthy old friend of mine, "that the wairua is implanted during sexual connection. We do not know where this spirit comes from, but I think that the spirit (wairua) of an ancestor may thus be implanted in a child,

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6 Best 1924a: 403.

7 See chapter one, p.4.
because see how often a child resembles a grandparent or ancestor."  

This account differs from Best's later material with which I began this section, in that it is not given the same theological slant as his later material. Both his earlier and later sources do, however, share a similar idea concerning the male contribution to conception. Best's Tuhoe informants call the man's contribution the wairua rather than the "seed of the atua", but the boundary between atua and wairua is rather a thin one in early sources at least. The wairua is used of the non-corporeal portion of the person that can travel when the person is alive but asleep, and it is the portion of the person that can become an atua in death. The term "atua" seems often to refer to embodied forms of the dead. It was as we have seen frequently used of corpses and bones in the early nineteenth century, it is also used of the ancestral dead after they have entered the bodies of living persons and creatures, and stone images.  

Best also gives a karakia that a Tuhoe tohunga might recite to make a woman conceive, and it suggests a similar idea, the conception is connected with the appearance of a wairua and the one of the lines states "I implant you like Papatuanuku". The verb translated as implant here is "whakato" which can mean both to plant and to cause to conceive. So it seems that if the father did not plant the wairua by physical means, the tohunga might be expected to do it ritually. We also get the sense that Best's Tuhoe informants understood human reproduction in the same light as horticulture: the woman is the earth and the man plants the seed in her. He found that his informants generally thought the female role in

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8 Best 1906a: 3.

9 The subtlety of the distinction between atua and wairua is in evidence in two early nineteenth-century works. Dieffenbach (1843: II, 16) describes both the wairua and the atua as spirits of the dead and struggles to delineate the two. Polack (1838) also has trouble.

10 See Orbell (1995: 31-2, 240) for a recent analysis of wairua and atua. I have cited an instance where that ancestral atua inhabit stone images in chapter two, p.31.

11 Best 1906a:62. The phrase as it appears in the karakia is "Ka whakato au i a koe ki a Papatuanuku." Biggs 1960:62 gives a full translation of this karakia.
sexual reproduction a rather "passive" or "receptive" one. In Best's later book-length work on the Tuhoe we find the idea that before birth a person existed in Hawaiki. Best remarks that he had often heard the expression "I was at Hawaiki at that time" which meant that the speaker had not yet been born.

Earlier sources on creation mythology certainly suggest a view of sexual reproduction that put the stronger emphasis on male fertility and procreative power. The creator of the first human being seems always to be male. Tane (literally male, husband or lover) who is associated with the fertility and life of the forest, is often the creator of the first human being but sometimes Tu the warrior does it. Another figure that can take this role is Tiki, a figure closely associated with male sexuality, and sometimes even said to be Tane's penis. An excerpt from a Ngati Porou tradition written in 1871 illustrates this emphasis on male fertility rather well. After Tane shapes the first woman out of the soil:

Tâne tried out this thing that he had shaped. He thrust his penis against the top of the head, and that’s why there is sweat. He thrust it against the eyeballs, and that’s how she acquired pupils in her eyes. He thrust it against the nose, and that’s why there’s mucus. And against the mouth - saliva comes from that. All these things are from Tâne’s penis.

A similar performance by Tane is to be found in a collection of South Island traditions written around 1850. In the figure of Tane there is a very strong emphasis on the male as procreator.

A connection between horticulture and reproduction is evident in the language as we have it in Williams. We have already seen the expression “whakato” that appears in the Tuhoe karakia means both to plant and to cause to conceive. As is well known whenua, one of the words for the afterbirth, also means land or

12 Best 1906a:4.

13 Hanson and Hanson 1983:88 citing Best 1925: I, 673.


16 Reedy 1993: 118.

ground. Ewe, a word that can mean afterbirth, mother, and among the Tuhoe meant womb, also means land. Tinaku is another word that has meanings relating to both human reproduction and cultivation, it can refer to seed tubers, cultivated ground, and as a verb it means both to germinate and to conceive. This same overlap between expressions for sexual reproduction and cultivating is evident in nineteenth-century writing.

A man from Uawa, for instance, wrote to the newspaper Te Waka Maori o Ahuriri about the excess female mortality that had affected his community in 1874: thirteen marriageable young women had died but only three young men. He complained that his community thus had “no ground remaining for planting crops of men to occupy the land”. Land as a compensatory gift to a bride’s family is mentioned in Wiremu Maihi Te Rangikaheke’s Moe Wahine text, written about 1850, a member of the bride’s family asks for a piece of land, “One quarrel, one piece of land, so that you may copulate with a human being and I may copulate with the land”. A King movement law code written in 1860 also uses “cultivation” as an expression for sexual reproduction.

Oriori (Songs Composed for Children): An Early Source on Sexual Reproduction.

Songs are one, perhaps the only, reasonably early source on Maori ideas concerning the conception of a child. For the purposes of this discussion I will focus on songs that appear in Grey’s collection, published in 1853 and McGregor’s first volume of songs which was collected from Waikato prisoners of war in 1864. Ngata and Te Hurinui’s volumes contain more of these songs, of course, but

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19 Williams 1971: 419.
20 Te Waka Maori o Ahuriri 12 (3): 1 (Feb. 8, 1876).
22 Head 1983: 184-5.
many were first recorded in the early twentieth century and the aim here is to compare Best’s material from the turn of the nineteenth century with the earliest sources we can find.

Most of the references to the conception of a child occur in oriori. Oriori are songs composed for children of chiefly families by their parents or grandparents, and have been described as “typically complex with many references to myth and tradition and to the child’s kinship connections.” They are thought to have been a means of educating the child in traditional matters. They are also likely to have been a statement to the surrounding community concerning the child’s importance and the parent’s expectations concerning the child. This is certainly suggested by the explanation that accompanies one such song that begins rather like a lament but the content of which seems typical of an oriori. It was composed, it is said, by a man after his grandchild had been insulted when visiting another village by people inquiring within his hearing as to his identity and parentage.

These songs could be composed for girls - Grey’s collection contains one sung by the Taupo chief, Te Heuheu, for his daughter - but the majority seem to have been composed for boys: eight of the ten oriori in Grey’s collection are for boys. McGregor’s 1864 collection contains three oriori for boys, two of which are variant versions of the same song, and one oriori for a girl. Ngata and Te Hurinui’s collection which includes songs from later sources follows the same pattern, the

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24 Ibid., p. 19.

25 McGregor (1893: 17-18) gives a version of the song recorded in 1863-4 where this explanation is given. Grey (1853: 231) records another version of the song. Ngata and Te Hurinui (1961: 266-7) record a later version; they classify the song as an oriori (Ibid., xiii).

26 The oriori for boys in Grey’s (1853) collection are to be found on pp. 46, 47, 231, 186, 115, 218, 351, 205. See ibid., p. 212 for the song composed by Te Heuheu for his daughter, and ibid., p. 89 for the other oriori for a girl.

27 See McGregor 1898: 8-13, 18 for the oriori composed for boys. The oriori on p. 18 is the same as one of Grey’s (cf. Grey 1853: 231). See McGregor 1898: 53-4 for the oriori for a girl.
majority are still for boys.  

The fact that the majority of oriori address boys must have some connection with the preference for sons commented on in early sources. In many cases little or nothing about the composer is known, but it seems that they were composed by both men and women. It is possible that they were more usually composed by men given that early sources show rangatira men were the primary care-givers for their infants, particularly their sons. I will consider the status of girls as compared to boys in more detail after a discussion of child birth rituals, after which we will have a wider range of evidence to draw on.

An investigation into oriori suggests more about the origins of the child. The following oriori was composed by a chiefly man for his son and was first written down in 1863-4 probably by a Waikato prisoner of war. It contains an account of the boy’s ancestry in which both the sky father Rangi and Tane are specifically mentioned:

You are from above, you are from the lineage of Ranginui,  
Who stands here,  
You are descended from Rangitū and Rangiroa,  
You are descended from Tane himself.

But later in the song it is said that the boy is under threat from practitioners of makutu. To avert the danger, perhaps, he is told that he should emphasise the lowly aspect of his origins when speaking to these men:

The medium is at the shrine  
and bewitching you.  
Say to him, “Oh Sir,  
I am from the lowliest infancy,  
From the non-existence,  
That is the unfastened nothingness,

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29 Parts I-III of Ngata and Te Hurinui’s collection contain in total twenty-five oriori. Twenty of them clearly address a boy (See song nos. 30, 75, 81, 101, 121, 145, 158, 185, 186, 190, 201, 269, 219, 215, 231, 234, 272, 209, 234, 209, 270). Songs nos.s 1, 162, 261, 282 address girls. The gender of the child is in doubt for song no. 273.

29 For further discussion of the preference for male children, see chapter four.

31 See chapter four.

That is the unbound nothingness,
Bundled up and suspended on the strand, e,
Of the furrowed gourd.\textsuperscript{33}

We have in the above song two images concerning the child’s origins combined. Firstly the child has his origin in the nothingness that is sometimes said to precede creation in Maori mythology.\textsuperscript{34} Secondly he grows like a cultivated plant, the gourd. These images are found in another oriori as well, although it adds a third reference to a pregnancy which occurred at Hawaiki, the paradisiacal homeland which is the origin of life and fertility:

Oh son who was searched for,
Oh son who was sought,
We two were searched for
Inside the unfastened nothingness,
Inside the unbound nothingness,
Bent up, suspended from the shoot of the gourd, na, i.
It was Kurawaka indeed, Kurawaka who was heaped up,
It was indeed Tohi-nuku, and Tohi-rangi,
Which swelled in pregnancy at Hawaiki, e.\textsuperscript{35}

Kurawaka is sometimes identified as the pubic mound of Papa-tuanuku (the earth) where the first woman was made by Tane, this event is also often said to have taken place in Hawaiki.\textsuperscript{36} The image of the child growing like a gourd at the end of a vine, is suggestive of the umbilical cord, which connects to the afterbirth the names for which also mean land (ewe and whenua).

The notion that the conception of the child is a reenactment of the first pregnancy of Maori creation mythology is confirmed by a comparison with the language of a Ngati Porou genealogy. The following genealogy was written for Colonel Porter and gives an account of his wife, Here Waka’s lineage. The first four names are some primal ancestors:

\begin{center}
    Ko Tāne-nui-a-Rangi
    Ko Tīki
\end{center}

\textsuperscript{33} McGregor 1864:10.

\textsuperscript{34} See e.g., Taylor 1855: 14.


\textsuperscript{36} Orbell 1995: 54.
Ko Oho
Ko Hine-titama$^{37}$

Tane and Tiki are the well known figures associated with fertility and sexuality, Hinetitama is in many stories, a wife of Tane’s. The next names in the genealogy are readily translatable and clearly refer to a sequence of events that appears in the oriori that we have discussed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ko Te Kitea</th>
<th>The Found</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ko Te W[h]airo</td>
<td>The Dimly Seen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ko Te Kune-iti</td>
<td>The Little Swelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ko Te Kune-rahi</td>
<td>The Large Swelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ko Te Kimihanga</td>
<td>The Seeking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ko Te Rapanga</td>
<td>The Searching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ko Te Hahautanga</td>
<td>The Questing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(I hahaua ki hea?)</td>
<td>[It] was sought from where?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ko Te Iti</td>
<td>The Smallness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ko Te Kore</td>
<td>The Nothingness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ko Te Kore-te-whiwhia</td>
<td>The Unfastened Nothingness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ko Te Kore-te-raweа</td>
<td>Bundled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ko Pupu</td>
<td>Suspended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ko Mauake</td>
<td>The Strand of the female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ko Te Kanoī-o-te-uhā$^{38}$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The language of both the genealogy and the oriori are strikingly similar. This can be shown by putting a portion of the genealogy and an oriori side by side.

Excerpt from the above genealogy written in 1875.$^{39}$

| Ko Te Iti          | No te iti-itinga nei hoki au, |
|--------------------| No te kore-korenga, |
| Ko Te Kore         | Koia te kore te whiwhia, |
| Ko Te Kore-te-whiwhia | Koia te kore te raweа, |
| Ko Te Kore-te-raweа | Pupu mau ake ki te kanoī, e, |
| Ko Pupu            | O te hue rai, e. |
| Ko Mauake          |                  |
| Ko Te Kanoī-o-te-uhā |                |

The resemblance in the language is striking. We have then in Ruatapu’s

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$^{37}$ Reedy 1993: 192.

$^{38}$ Ibid. As is conventional for genealogies Reedy does not give a translation.

$^{39}$ Reedy 1993: 192.

$^{40}$ McGregor 1864: 10.
sequence of names a standard sequence of ideas, that seem to refer to the first conception and pregnancy in the history of the world. This indicates that all conceptions and pregnancies reenact the first⁴¹ - something that suggests that the emphasis on male fertility and sexuality that one finds in Maori creation mythology did indeed apply to Maori ideas about human reproduction. The theme of seeking and searching that appears also in the oriori already quoted and also in the above genealogy, indicates that fathers through conception seek something out that already existed.

We have seen that one of the oriori makes mention of a primal pregnancy that takes place in Hawaiki. In an oriori for a daughter composed by her father, it is said that she was formed at a distant land ("i tawiti"):

Oh my daughter,
When you swelled forth at a distant land.
And your hands and legs were formed,
And your face was formed,
You floated, oh daughter,
In Ruatea's canoe, Kurahaupo.⁴²

The distant land where the girl was formed must be Hawaiki because Kurahaupo is a canoe known in many regions as one that travelled from Hawaiki to Aotearoa.⁴³ As with one of the oriori already discussed, this oriori suggests that the creation of the child reenacts the creation of the first human being who was formed in Hawaiki by Tiki or Tane.⁴⁴

Another reference to the child's origins in Hawaiki is found in a lament composed by a man for his children: "Oh it was I who went to fetch you / From Hawaiki, so that your grew/So that you became men!"⁴⁵ In another another oriori

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⁴¹ Cf. Orbell (1991:13)


⁴³ Orbell 1995:94.


⁴⁵ Orbell 1991:14 gives this translation of the lines as they are given in Maori by Ngata and Te Hurinui (1961: 250-1). The lines as given in Maori by Ngata and Te Hurinui are the same as those given by Grey (1853: 9).
the father says he sought for his son “beneath Papa” where the boy was “beginning to grow in the cave of the sun”, which suggests his father found him in the underworld or Te Po.⁴⁶ Both the underworld and Hawaiki are places where the ancestral dead are said to go thus both these two oriori indicate that the child was brought forth from the realm of the ancestors.⁴⁷

So far we have an indication that the opinion of Tuhoe man at the turn of the nineteenth century who thought that the wairua of a child might come from an ancestor must be an older one of wider provenance. Both the idea that it is the father who provides the wairua and that it comes from an ancestor appears in an oriori that was composed by a woman who had given birth to an illegitimate child (poriro). In this song the woman tells her child, “You were not conceived by your father / You were made a bastard by me.” ⁴⁸ The song concludes: “Turn your ear to the sky / To bravely hear your ancestor [say] / “Oh son lacking a wairua from me.”⁴⁹ This song also suggests something of the basis for the stigma that attached to illegitimate children for whom Maori had an extensive and disparaging vocabulary.⁵⁰ The word which I have translated as “conceived” is “ahua” which is the passive of the verb listed as ahu in Williams which he translates as “tend, foster, fashion”; it is also a word connected with cultivating, ahu-whenua means to cultivate the soil, ahuahu can mean to unearth crops.⁵¹ So we have here a word that like whakato has some connection with horticulture as well as sexual reproduction.

Overall these songs do suggest the same ideas that Best found among the Tuhoe, that sexual reproduction was understood in the light of horticulture or

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⁴⁶ Grey 1853: 46.
⁴⁸ Grey 1853: 115. The relevant lines are “Kihai koe i ahu e to matua / I mahia porirotia e au”.
⁴⁹ Ibid. The relevant lines are “E huri to taringa ki te rangi / Ki te rongo toa i to tipuna / “E tama wairua kore naku,” e.”
⁵⁰ See the entry for “bastard” in Biggs (1985: 13).
⁵¹ Williams 1971: 3 - 4. I note that the meanings he gives for “Ahu” (i, ii) and “Āhua” seem to be very closely connected.
cultivation; and thus the contribution of men to conceiving a child was overestimated. The conception of the child also seems to be a reenactment of a primal conception. This confirms that the emphasis on male fertility that appears in Maori creation mythology applied also to ordinary human pregnancies. It appears that the father in conceiving a child sought out something that already existed in Hawaiki or the underworld – which in itself suggests that the idea that one of Best’s Tuhoe informants had, that the wairua of the child came from the ancestors, probably also reflects earlier ideas. In early sources we certainly do not get the neat theological exposition that appears in Best’s later material, but overall the depictions of conception confirm that male fertility and procreative power received the greater emphasis in Maori ideas about sexual reproduction, they also indicate that it is men who access the realm of the ancestors where the child originates.

II. Still-births and Abortions: A Source of Atua.

In a short essay titled “Ko Nga Atua Maori” (The Maori Gods) written in 1849, Wiremu Maihi Te Rangikaheke, a prolific mid-nineteenth-century writer who worked closely with George Grey, describes the origin of atua that cause illness.\(^{52}\)

The things which become gods are women’s pregnancies which die while still inside, and their children are caused to abort, they are cast into the water and eaten by those fish, they remain as gods which attack men, women and children.

Other pregnancies when they die while still inside and are aborted, they are cast upon the land and eaten by the creatures of the land and by the birds of the sky; they remains as gods which attack men, women, children, anyone at all.

According to Te Rangikaheke, these atua which result from abortions are not the great atua, they are a class of lesser atua.\(^{53}\) The above passage probably does

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\(^{52}\) Grey 1853:lxvii. The original ms is to be found in GNZ MMSS 81. For a detailed discussion of Te Rangikaheke’s life and work see Curnow 1985. His tribe was Ngati Rangiwhewahi of Te Arawa.

\(^{53}\) Grey 1853:lxvii. The original ms is to be found in GNZ MMSS 81.
not describe the usual means for disposing of miscarriages and stillbirths, it
describes what would happen if people were careless. Grey writes that a “a child
born before its time” was “carefully buried with peculiar incantations and
ceremonies” to prevent it from returning as a “malicious being or spirit”.
According to Grey, all the malevolent gods of the Maori had this origin.
Shortland also remarks that the spirits of “dead infants” were thought to avenge
all infringements of tapu whether deliberate or accidental by causing an illness.
They were thought to do this by feeding on some part of the invalid’s body
“more or less vital, according to the magnitude of the crime.”

Te Rangikaheke also describes a method for curing the diseases produced by the
atua that arose from abortions:

The pathways for the atua are flax from where women put on their
aprons, it remains as a conducting path for the atua. When someone is
sick, the path is placed above his head then the tohunga recites a
karakia, when the attacking atua obeys, if the karakia is done exactly
right, it will be seen by the seers. If the karakia is not done exactly right,
the atua will not obey and the sick person will not survive.
The other plants which can be pathways because they are used by
women for their aprons are: raupo, toetoe, kutakuta, raurakau; all sorts
of plants are pathways of the atua.

This cure for illness can be compared to Shortland’s material on the subject. He
had been trained as a medic and served in this capacity while he was in New
Zealand. When visiting the sick, he had frequently seen a blade of flax suspended
from the roof of the hut directly above the head of the invalid. He found that
the blade of flax was part of a ritual cure which was effected by a matakite (seer)

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54 Grey 1906: 12.
55 Ibid.
56 Shortland 1856: 114-5.
57 Grey 1853: lxxvii.
58 Presumably they would see the atua leaving the sick person via the pathway left for it.
59 Shortland 1856: 128.
and a tohunga belonging to the sick persons hapu: "every hapu having at least one matakite and several tohunga." The seer was consulted to determine the tapu violation that the sufferer had committed and the identity of the avenging atua. The tohunga would then identify the pathway through which the atua had arrived. He comments that it was a general belief that the preferred paths for these atua were the inner shoots of a flax plant and the toetoe. The tohunga could identify the correct stalk by a "peculiar sound or cry issuing from it on being pulled up." Then the tohunga would hang the stalk of flax or toetoe above the sick man's head and recite a karakia. The atua was then supposed to depart through the stalk which was a pathway to the underworld.

The use of certain kinds of stalk (toetoe again or rarauhe) as a pathway for an atua appears elsewhere in Shortland's material, in relation to sending the spirit of a dead man on its way to Hawaiki and bringing it back again as an atua. Another mid-nineteenth-century medic, Arthur Thomson, describes a ritual performed with a stalk in order to predict the fate of the sick person. He says that the priest would often pull up a piece of fern, if the root came up "clean and free of earth" then the sick person was expected to get well.

Neither Shortland nor Thomson make any connection between these stalks and women's aprons but given that illnesses were often thought to originate with the menses and abortions, it is possible that the connection was there but they were not aware of it. On the other hand, these plants may have been thought to be paths to the underworld independently of any connection to women's aprons.

Best in his research among Tuhoe at the turn of the nineteenth century found evidence of comparable ideas and practices relating to abortions. When a miscarriage occurred the foetus would be buried but if an animal dug it up and

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60 Ibid., 127.

61 Ibid.

62 Shortland 1882:44.

63 Thomson 1855: 529.
ate it, it was believed that the spirit would thus enter the animal and become an "atau ngau tangata" or "man afflicting demon". Similar consequences were expected if a woman threw one into a stream. The spirits of stillbirths were also thought to emanate upwards from where they were buried, for Best recounts a Tuhoe tradition where a foetus had been buried under the perch of a tame kaka with the consequence that the spirit entered the bird and several people were seriously afflicted with eye disease and other ailments.\textsuperscript{64}

According to Best, a sick person on visiting a priest or seer, might be diagnosed as having been afflicted by one of these creatures. The priest would ascertain which woman he thought was responsible, "and, on his asking her, she will admit it, and say that she buried it at a certain place, or buried it in a stream."\textsuperscript{65} Ideas like these are not unique to Maori society, and can be compared, for example, with Inuit belief that a miscarriage improperly disposed might lead to misfortune.\textsuperscript{66}

Best describes these atua which he calls kahu as "always evil". He did, however, find that a famous war god of the Tuhoe was reputed to be a still-birth which a priest had conciliated. This comment on the disposition and character of dead still-births can be compared to Shortland’s account concerning the atua which originated from "dead infants". Grey, we have seen calls them "malicious". Shortland does not call them evil as such but describes them as agents of vengeance for the greater atua of the family or tribe who had been angered by a tapu violation. These dead infants generally took this role "on account of their love of mischief, and because, not having lived long enough on earth to acquire attachments to their living relatives, they are more likely to attack them without mercy."\textsuperscript{67} Grey gives another explanation for their antipathy toward human beings, they were motivated by resentment because they had not had a chance to

\textsuperscript{64} Best 1906a:15.

\textsuperscript{65} Best 1906a:13.

\textsuperscript{66} Rasmussen 1979 [1929]:310-311.

\textsuperscript{67} Shortland 1856: 115.
enjoy life. 44

It seems that infants and miscarriages solved a problem in Maori religion. The gods were kin and were supposed to continue their attachment to their families and tribes in death. Yet tapu violations were thought to incur the wrath of the gods, and required that the gods sometimes violate those kinship bonds that made them so important to their tribes and families in the first place.

III. The Menses.

A Comment on the Sources.

Shortland remarked that the menses and related customs were a subject "on which a New Zealander would not be likely to volunteer any information, and on which no one, perhaps, but a medical man would have made enquiry". 45 It was, he thought, a matter was "not calculated to interest the general reader" and so put his information in an appendix, in Latin. A search of Shortland's manuscripts did not turn up any further information. An examination of writing by other early to mid-nineteenth-century medics indicates that it was not a subject that drew their attention. 46 Their interest in disease and childbirth seems to have led them quite naturally to a certain amount of ethnographic inquiry. Thomson, however, is the only medic to discuss menstruation and he discusses only physiological matters such as the age of menarche and menstrual dysfunction. 47 Missionaries were often amateur medics but even a missionary with ethnographic interests like Taylor says nothing. In his dictionary, in the sections

44 Grey 1906: 12.

45 Shortland 1856:115.

46 Shortland 1856:292.

47 Bennet 1831; Thomson 1854a, 1854b, 1855; Hooker 1869.

48 Thomson 1855:524.
headed "Native Pharmacopeia" and "Native Diseases" he gives vocabulary relating to sexual health, pregnancy and abortion, noting for example, an expression for "the quickening of the child", an abortifacient made from the kareao root, terms for venereal disease and a poultice to cure it. He gives no vocabulary for the menses. Other early dictionaries are also silent on the matter. William Colenso's dictionary in 1898 is the first to include vocabulary on the topic, giving "angiangi" as a white lichen used to soak up the menses.

After Shortland no more is written on the topic until Goldie's treatise "Maori Medical Lore" appeared in the Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute in 1904. Goldie, however, should not be treated as an authority; his work is a synthesis of material collected by others. Goldie's treatise is built in large part upon information given to him by Best and which Best later published separately as a series of articles under the title "The Lore of the Whare-Kohanga" and a two part article titled "Maori Medical Lore". The information in these articles derives primarily from the Tuhoe at the turn of the century. On the subject of the menses some of the other material presented by Goldie and not indicated by quotation marks or any reference to the original source is actually from Shortland, more or less verbatim. Besides Shortland, the other key source

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73 Taylor 1870:109-117.
74 Colenso 1898:110.
75 Goldie 1998 [1904].
76 Ill health prevented Goldie from completing it.
77 Best 1905a, 1906a, 1906b, 1906c, 1907.
78 Best 1904,1905b.
79 "The Lore of the Whare Kohanga" (Best 1905a, 1906a, 1906b, 1906c, 1907) which is largely based on Best's fieldwork among the Tuhoe should not be confused with Best's later works on the same subject, with similar titles but which draw on rather late Ngati Kahungunu sources. These later works are "Maori Customs Pertaining to Birth and Baptism" appeared in the same journal in 1929 (JPS 38,4: 241-70) and which presents material written for him by a Ngati Kahungunu man, probably Te Whatahoro. In the same year Best published a longer work The Whare Kohanga (Nest House) and its Lore which is known to come from Te Whatahoro. Biggs (1960:66-7) on the basis of a comparison with other sources judges this work unreliable. For wider discussion concerning the historicity of Te Whatahoro's material and related sources see Simmons (1994) and Orbell (1995:10).
on which I draw are songs composed by women, most of which were first written down around the middle of the nineteenth century.

*The Menses: Another Source of Atua.*

While Best uses the term "kahu" and "atua kahu" to refer to abortions in the "Lore of the Whare-Kohanga", Shortland uses a related word to apply to the menses: "kahukahu".80 The menses, according to Shortland, were known as kahukahu and were the most virulent form of this lesser class of atua which were believed responsible for causing illnesses.81 In a Latin appendix he explains that, according to his information, the pieces of cloth used by menstruating women were also called kahukahu. The menses, he says were believed to contain "the seeds" of a human being, thus "a piece of cloth stained with menstrual blood is considered sacred (tapu), just as if it had taken human form."82 This suggests that the menses could be thought of as something like a stillbirth or miscarriage and also goes some way toward explaining why Williams gives "menses" as one of the meanings of atua.83

Best records two Tuhoë statements concerning the menses which concur Shortland’s view that the menses contained the germ of a human being:

"E ahua tangata ana te paheke o te wahine. He whakatipu tangata taua mea." (The paheke of a woman is a sort of human being, it is a person in embryo.) Another aged authority states: "The menses is a kind of human being, because ...when the paheke ceases to come away, then it assumes human form and grows into a man."84

One of Best’s informants whom he calls his "chief authority" disagreed on this


81 Shortland 1856:292.

82 Ibid., 115.

83 Williams 1971: 20 cf. Williams (1917: 24 ) which is the first time atua is given the definition “menses” in any of the dictionaries. In Williams's 1871 edition, however, atua appears as an expression for the the moon at fifteen days (Williams 1871: 11). There may be some connection between these two meanings which relate to the lunar cycle.

84 Best 1905a: 211-212.
point. He held that only stillbirths could become atua, because men through the act of coition implanted the wairua, the spiritual component of the person that would go onto become an atua. Best as a consequence of this divergent opinion seems to have been in two minds on the matter. In his series of articles, "The Lore of the Whare-Kohanga", he gives an account of atua kahu which centres on the improper disposal of abortions (discussed above). But in a series of articles titled "Maori Medical Lore" Best tells us that it was believed that a menstrual clot thrown into the water could go on to become an "atua kahu" which caused illness. Best describes the cure effected by a "priest" or "priestly seer": having ascertained that a woman was at fault and elicited a confession from her, the priest looked for a water weed which was placed on the sick person and a karakia recited to send the atua on its way. The water weed, in this case, was a pathway for the atua to leave the invalid.

The idea that the menses were sometimes, perhaps generally, thought of as a type of abortion finds some support in the language. I have already noted that Williams lists "menses" as one of the meanings of the word atua. Williams also lists "tahe" as meaning both "menses" and "abortion". The word tahe seems to have more general meanings relating to a liquid flow, it can refer to the sap of a tree, and as a verb can mean "exude, drop, flow". Tahe is, for example, applied to the flow of blood from a wound in a mid-nineteenth-century song. Tahe can be compared to paheke, another word which is applied to the menses. Paheke is a general term relating to a liquid flow and can be used of "any running discharge".

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85 Ibid., 212.
86 Best 1905b: 232-3.
87 Ibid.
89 Williams 1971: 358.
tears for example. 91

Some stories concerning two notable figures in Maori mythology, Whakatau
and Maui, give suggestively vague accounts of their origins. In Grey’s collection
of Maori mythology Maui tells his mother when she fails to recognize her son, “I
was a thing wrapped by you inside your girdle”. 92 Of Whakatau’s origins we are
told that he wasn’t born as a man but was a “maro” i.e., apron. 93 We get the sense
here that Maori may have feared that women could could be carelessly discarding
something more than blood when they threw away soiled aprons and girdles.
This suspicion is enhanced by stories which describe Whakatau as being smaller
than a fingernail. 94 Mohi Ruatapu’s stories about Maui written in the 1870s
suggest the same sort of ambiguity concerning Maui’s origins. In his 1871 account
he describes Maui as “blood which died inside and came out”. 95 When Maui
returns to his mother who insists that she only has four sons and no fifth he tells
her, “As for me, I am your blood.” 96 In Ruatapu’s 1876 rendition of the story we
are told that Maui was a “tahe”, a word which can mean both menses and
abortion and that he was “blood from his mother’s girdle - a child that died
within.” 97

It may be that we are encountering here the idea that menstrual clots were an
early abortion, this idea is certainly found elsewhere in the world, among the
Inuit for example. 98 Given that Maori songs indicate that the menses were
thought to be destructive in themselves, it is worth considering the possibility

91 Williams 1971: 247. For an example where paheke is applied to the flow of tears see Grey
(1853: 62).


95 Reedy 1993: 18 (Maori), 119 (English).

96 Reedy 1993: 19 (Maori), 119 (English).

97 Reedy 1993: 79 (Maori), 183 (English). Reedy translates “tahe” as “abortion”.

98 E.g., Rasmussen 1979 [1929]: 310-311.
that Maori did not make a sharp distinction between the menses and abortions. A sharp distinction between the two phenomena makes relatively good sense in society where the menses are generally cyclic and regular and where the menarche is taken to be a mark of a girl’s sexual maturity and is an event which precedes sexual activity. Neither prehistoric nor early to mid-nineteenth-century Maori fit this description at all well. Firstly it is probable that amenorrhea was reasonably common and that the menarche was relatively late. Secondly there is no evidence that the menarche was marked ritually in any way nor that it was taken as a mark of a girl’s sexual maturity.

Estimates of prehistoric Maori fertility suggest that it was about as low as that typical of hunter-gatherer societies. This suggests that menarche would typically have been late and amenorrhea was probably relatively common.\(^9\) The earliest age of menarche is thought to have been about 14 years, somewhere around 17 years may, however, have been more typical.\(^10\)

While the menarche was probably relatively late, early nineteenth-century sources indicate that it was not unusual for girls to be sexually active at about 10-12 years.\(^11\) Although it is probable that fertility increased, and the age of menarche probably decreased during the early to mid-nineteenth century as a consequence of the introduction of hardier crops with higher yields, a pattern of sexual activity before the menarche seems to have continued.\(^12\) Mid-nineteenth-century medic Arthur Thomson estimates that the age of menarche ranged from 13-16 and notes

\(^9\) Pool 1991: 42.


\(^11\) See Garrett (1991:76) for missionary Maunsell’s 1838 estimate that girls were typically sexually active from the age of 12. Polack (1838:I, 380; II, 175) suggests 10 or 11; Lesson in 1824 estimated that some of the girls brought out to La Coquille for prostitution were 9 or 10 years old (Sharp 1971:55). Henry Williams writes in 1827 that he was much disappointed when he lost four “very little girls whom we had considered safe, for some years” from his mission to prostitution (Rogers 1961: 42). A King Movement law code specifically prohibits men from marrying having sexual relationships with very young girls (Head 1983: 153, 184-5).

\(^12\) Sutton (1986) discusses the likelihood that prehistoric Maori food supplies were marginal and argues that fertility and the birthrate must have increased in the early nineteenth century, perhaps as early as 1830.
that girls were often sexually active before the age of menarche.\textsuperscript{103}

Given that Maori ideas about the menses developed in a context where skipped periods were probably common, and where girls were typically sexually active before their first period, it is not surprising that documented sources suggest that the menses may have been thought of in the same light as an abortion. It is possible that menstrual clots, in particular, were believed to be abortions.

Shortland, Best and Te Rangikaheke all give very negative accounts of the activities of atua that arose from abortions and the menses, so it is intriguing that two culture heroes, Maui and Whakatau, have these origins. They do, however, seem to conform to the characterization given of this type of atua in certain respects. Whakatau is particularly associated with vengeance which makes his role comparable to that accorded kahukahu. Stories told about Maui show him to be a trickster who violates many of the norms for human behaviour, including those relating to kinship. A very striking instance of the way in which Maui violates social norms is a story where he turns his brother-in-law into a dog, makes him eat excrement (Maui's own) and causes his sister's suicide.\textsuperscript{104} These are features which are suggestive of his origins as an abortion, which are generally connected with mischievous and malevolent activities. Maui differs however because he is also a creator.

\textit{The Disposal of the Menses.}

Shortland also says that women would hide their cloths in the rushes that made up the walls of the house and "for this reason the wall of the house is so sacred that no one dares to sit down leaning back on it." He also remarks that like many Pakeha accustomed to chairs, he had often leaned his back against the wall inside Maori whare, which was a "breach of etiquette" as a consequence he was

\textsuperscript{103} Thomson 1855:524.

\textsuperscript{104} Reedy 1993:124-5. See also Shortland (1856:63-4) for a story where Maui tricks his older brother and thus kills him.
the subject of "sly jokes and various remarks, which to a New Zealander would be highly offensive." 105

This is interesting because a man's back, particularly an important man, has a tapu to it. 106 Yet bringing his back into contact with the menses, is thought to be degrading in some way. We can compare this to the notion that having an atua in the form of a lizard land on one's back is not good for one's life or health. 107

The notion that the menses contained a destructive atua is supported by an excerpt from a song which Shortland quotes:

It is the kahukahu clinging to the wall of the house.
I am making my blood run down,
[Instead of] water to smear the brows of the priests
The kahukahu will gnaw spitefully, it will be certain death. 108

Shortland gives no further information about this song, nor is there any further information to be found in his manuscripts. But is is clear that the menses appear in this context as something that can kill by being brought into contact with the heads of priests. The head and hair, like the back, is a part of the body where the tapu of an important person was especially concentrated, and thus important persons could not carry food on their backs. 109 This excerpt as we have it also suggests that putting a kahukahu in the wall of the house where the priests might sit or sleep is not something women would ordinarily do unless they harboured ill intentions toward them. Thus Shortland was perhaps mistaken when he supposed that this was the usual method of disposing of the menses. He may be recounting information concerning what men feared women might sometimes do, rather than what they generally did. Shortland did, however, stick to his account in a later publication, adding only the information

105 Shortland 1856: 113.
106 Ibid., 107. I discuss a number of sources on this in chapter six.
107 Ibid., 93.
108 Shortland 1851:295. I have preferred my own translation.
109 See e.g., Taylor 1855: 24, Dieffenbach 1843: II, 104.
that the kahukahu were also known as atua-noho-whare, house-dwelling atua.\textsuperscript{110}

The only other source we have on the disposal of the menses is from Best. Best found that the Tuhoe used a "light coloured, fine, very soft moss, found growing on logs in the forest" called kohukohu or angiangi.\textsuperscript{111} In any case, Best tells us that women used the moss internally and when used for this purpose it was called a kope. Insofar as the disposal of the menses goes Best's information differs from Shortland. He says that women buried their kope in the forest, each woman had her own "secret place" for this. If the kope was seen by others they "would probably make a great joke of it" and the woman would be humiliated.\textsuperscript{112}

The notion that the violation of certain prohibitions or proprieties relating to the menses might be a subject of humour appears also in Shortland's material, we have seen that he found himself subject to "sly jokes" on the matter. If Best's information that the menses should be disposed of discreetly reflects older notions, this may be an explanation for why Shortland came across the notion that kahukahu might be found in the thatched walls of the house. It may have been part of an effort on the part of women to dispose of their menstrual cloths or sponges discreetly, perhaps not an especially easy matter in a crowded communal sleeping space.

\textbf{The Destructive Effects of the Menses.}

While the excerpt from a song given by Shortland may not tell us what women normally did with their menses, it does indicate that bringing the menses into contact with the head of a priest was expected to kill him. This reference can be compared to other songs composed by women. In the light of what we have seen so far, it will come as no surprise that references to the menses are made in cursing songs. A song first recorded in 1853 and attributed to Topeora, a niece of

\textsuperscript{110} Shortland 1882: 107-8.

\textsuperscript{111} Best 1905a: 213.

\textsuperscript{112} Ibid.
Te Rauparaha’s, contains references to the desecration of the heads of notable members of the enemy tribe by consuming them and using them as vessels for food as the following excerpt shows. The song concludes with the statement that she will let her menses fall on the head of one of her enemies:

...  
My throat is tickling eagerly  
For the hidden brains of Pou-tū-teka  
I shall greedily swallow raw  
The stinking brains of Tara-tikitiki  
To fill me up inside  
...

I’d enjoy eating Kūkū, and Ngahu,  
The ancestor from whom arose  
Your persistent urge for war  
Though tapu is the head of Te Rua-keri-pō  
Why not give it as a vessel for mussel juice  
At Te Kawau  
And then be set afloat in the current  
At Tara-hanga  
For the feast of heads of Ngāti Pou  
And there my menses shall spurt forth  
On the old man’s head  
Of Te Rangi-moe-waka, the war-monger.¹¹³

Now the words that Te Hurinui and Ngata have translated above as “my menses” are simply “taku toto” which is literally “my blood”, a vaguer expression. The conclusion that she refers to her menses is eminently reasonable because women’s blood generally was not considered to be destructive. As we have seen in chapter two of this work, early nineteenth-century women bled copiously when they lacerated themselves for the dead and they did this to honour and mourn the dead not to insult them. There can be no doubt that Topeora intended to insult not honour Te Rangimoewaka. There is probably a nice irony in the vagueness of Topeora’s statement which draws on the contrast between what a woman would do to honour the dead and what she would do to insult them. This reference to the menses then compares well with the excerpt

from the song that Shortland quotes (cited above). Both indicate that bringing the menses into contact with the head of an important person is destructive.

Other songs use terms more specific than the broad expression “my blood” but are less specific about what was actually to be done with the menses. Another cursing song attributed to Hinewhe who like Topeora was a chiefly woman connected with Te Rauparaha, also makes a passing reference to her menses. It is clear that they are expected to have an ill effect “You will not rejoice/[at] my menses at Horokiri” but the song gives no further information. 114 The rest of the song is difficult to translate but as with the cursing song by Topeora there are clear references to the consumption of the enemy and the desecration of a head for instance in the lines “And you will come here / As food for the throat” And “I will up-end my wooden bowl over the crown of Tako’s head / There is your food, Putaitua / The silvery head of Ngata.”115 The word I have translated here as “wooden bowl” is “kumete”. Best uses this word for a wooden trough used by Tuhoe women to boil tawa berries so that they will be soft enough to eat, by dropping a hot stone into them.116

Another cursing song, first collected by Samuel Locke, probably between 1868 and 1883, also combines a reference to the menses and the consumption of enemy brains: “The blood flows freely from the folded apron beneath/Eat, oh girl, the moist brains of Te Kauru ...”117 But here the menses are just referred to in passing with no reference as to what is to be done with them.

Reference to the destructive power of the menses also appear in two laments. In one lament: “Here are the menses, the flow from below/To drive away the

114 Grey 1853: 282.
115 Ibid.
116 Best 1924b: 430.
117 Ngata and Te Hurinui 1990: 242-3, I have used Ngata and Te Hurinui’s translation as a guide but modified it slightly so that it sounds a little less Victorian.
practitioner of makutu." Makutu is the art of magically harming or killing people. Presumably the menses had the same bad effect on practitioners of makutu as they have on tohunga in Shortland's song.

In another lament, a passing reference is made to a moss used to soak up the menses. This menstrual sponge is used to bewitch a weapon, (a hoeroa) "A menstrual sponge / Shall be returned / As weapon bewitching fluid for Rautao."

In this case it is worth considering here how one would otherwise go about ritually damaging a weapon so that it would prove ineffective. The only source I have been able to locate on this matter is Best in his field notes on Tuhoe war customs. He notes that a weapon could be rendered ineffective by touching it with cooked food or passing cooked food over it. Both are acts generally associated with the ritual removal of tapu.

In the other three songs I have discussed, references to the menses appear alongside references to eating heads and brains. Such references are usual for Maori curses. Shortland notes that any statement which suggested the cooking or eating of a person or part of a person was a curse, and that it was particularly awful to mention damaging the head or back. Two expressions, "kai angaanga" and "kai upoko" which mean "curse" combine kai the word for food or eat, with

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119 For further discussion of makutu see chapter five.

120 Grey 1853:185. The relevant lines in this song is "He kore waiwhero/ Kia utuhia/ Hei wai kana hoeroa ma Rautao." See the entry for "kore" in Williams (1971:140 cf. Williams 1917: 164)) and also "waiwhero"(Williams 1971: 478 ) for which he gives "Something used in occult rites" and "Menstruation". Cf. Williams (1871: 561) where only the former definition appears. Rautao is a name that appears in Tuhoe genealogies but the sources listed by Fletcher (1982 [1918]) give no further information.

121 Best 1902e: 243.

122 For some examples of these types of ritual see chapter four.

123 Shortland 1851: 27.
a word for the head.\textsuperscript{124} "Pokokohua", an expression which means "boiled head" is described by Williams as an "epithet which is considered the greatest possible insult."\textsuperscript{125} This was not merely a verbal insult but was a practice actually perpetrated on enemy heads. Wilson examined the remnants of a battle in Tauranga in the 1830s. Partly consumed human remains lay around but he also noticed a human head on a post. The head had been boiled and stripped of its skin and hair and there was a raw kumara stuck in its mouth.\textsuperscript{126} The addition of a raw kumara makes an obvious and insulting reversal of the usual order of things.

It is striking then, that Topeora included letting her menses into contact with a man's head as an insult on a par with references to cooking and eating heads. This can be compared to the notion that bringing the menses into contact with the head is an degrading act comparable to cooking or eating the head. Food was generally inimical to tapu, so the references to the transformation of the head into food through cooking and/or eating are not only obviously aggressive remarks they are a desecration of the part of the person that was held to be most tapu. While there is little explicit information on the effects of the menses on the head, there is good deal of information in early sources concerning the significance of heads, especially chiefs' heads and concern about their relationship to food that warrants further investigation.

\textit{Food and the Desecration of Heads.}

Savage who visited the north of the North Island in 1804 wrote of the aversion Maori had for food touching their heads and also being beneath food:

The head seems to be generally considered an improper part to be touched by any kind of food, nor do they ever like articles of that description to be over their heads, though at some distance.

\textit{Between the beams of the ship were nettings filled with potatoes,}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{124} Williams 1971: 10 cf. Grey 1853: 348.
\textsuperscript{125} Williams 1971: 290 cf. Williams 1871: 119.
\textsuperscript{126} Wilson 1889: 51.
\end{flushleft}
under which the natives had a very great aversion from sitting. My reason for believing that this aversion was connected with their religion was, that they always expressed their disgust in the strongest manner, and that nothing but force could induce them to remain in that situation. They would enter no further into an explanation of their feelings than matta matta very bad.  

The word that Savage renders "matta matta" was probably "mate" or "matemate" both of which refer to defeat, death and illness. Cruise also noticed this aversion to passing beneath food. He had found that "fatal consequences" were thought to await anyone who entered a house "where any article of dead animal food is suspended over their head."

A dead pigeon, or a piece of pork hung from the roof, was a better protection from molestation than a sentinel; and latterly, this practice has been followed by our people, who lived on shore, with great success, whenever they wished to be free from the intrusion of the natives.

This aversion to finding oneself underneath food was quite long lived for Best encountered it at the turn of the century. The fear of being beneath food was long-lived and regionally widely distributed, for Best comments on it in his recollections of his early years as an ethnologist among the Tuhoe:

I well remember an incident that occurred in one of my bush camps long years ago. A travelling native friend arrived thereat one evening, and stated his intention of staying the night...

Happening to look up, however, he spied a bag of flour and a side of bacon suspended from the ridgepole above him. This truly alarming sight was too much for my guest; he gathered up his belongings and stalked into my tent, where he passed the night, first glancing at the ridgepole in order to ascertain if it contained any soul destroying food product.

On another occasion when Best hung his saddlebags from the ridgepole of his host's tent, Best was asked "with some anxiety, if they contained any food."

While the documented instances of people fearing to be beneath food suggest

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127 Savage 1807: 23.
128 Cruise 1824: 180.
129 Best 1924b: I, 260.
130 Ibid., 261.
that it was a prohibition that applied to the general population, the heads of
chiefs were subject to the most concern. Marsden remarks, for instance,

    The New Zealanders appear to entertain the notion that the deity
resides in the head of a chief, as they always pay the most sacred
veneration to the head. If they worship any idol, it is the head of their
chiefs, as far as I am able to form an opinion of their worship.\textsuperscript{131}

Marsden, here, is referring to the veneration paid to the preserved heads of
dead chiefs. As with funerary rites, although people generally notice the rites
performed for chiefs and warriors a good deal more than anyone else’s, people
also did this out of personal attachment for near relatives. Marsden for instance
notes that he saw a woman’s head sitting on a painted and carved box outside a
chief’s house at Rangihoua, the head belonged to the chief’s wife’s sister. He had
acquired both women as prisoners of war:

    One of them he took for his wife and the other for his servant. ... At the
time of her death his wife requested to have her sister’s head preserved,
in order that she might relieve her mind by weeping over it, and it was
kept for that purpose.\textsuperscript{132}

Enslaved captives typically occupied the lowest position in Maori society so we
probably have here evidence of the social mobility that some captive women
might achieve through marriage to their captors. Taylor remarks also that he had
observed several instances where the head of a “beloved wife or child” was
preserved.\textsuperscript{133} Otherwise comments on the preservation of heads relate to warriors
and chiefs. With the exception of the woman described above the other heads
that Marsden observed were male and chiefly.\textsuperscript{134} Enemy heads were preserved by
triumphant warriors so that they could display the heads of “the distinguished
chiefs they had killed,” according to Taylor.\textsuperscript{135} Yate notes that if nothing else could

\textsuperscript{131} Elder 1932: 244.

\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., 178.

\textsuperscript{133} Taylor 1855: 154.

\textsuperscript{134} See Elder 1932: 151, 154, 172, 177, 377.

\textsuperscript{135} Taylor 1855:154.
be rescued, a slain warrior’s head would be brought home by his friends.\textsuperscript{136} Heads could also be later returned as a peacemaking gesture.\textsuperscript{137} So heads then, particularly the heads of male chiefs and warriors, were a focus for mourning, vengeance and peace-making.

Yate remarks that “the head of a chief is always most sacred”.\textsuperscript{138} Yate particularly notes in this context the aversion to placing food over the chief’s head, such an act would be “taken as a curse, and as a threat that he shall be eaten as a relish for the food, be it kumera, corn, or potatoes, that may have been put in this position.”\textsuperscript{139} It was not only food that was a problem for a chief, other lesser persons were not supposed to pass over their heads either. Polack comments that the chief’s head “at certain times is accounted so sacred, that he is often unable to walk below in a ship’s cabin, fearful of a less sanctified soul walking over this deified part.”\textsuperscript{140} Brown also writes that:

It is contrary to the mysteries of tapu to touch anything that has been over the head of a chief, that portion of his body being deemed sacred. For this reason, no slave would venture on the roof of a house to repair it, and the chief should be compelled to perform the operation himself. I witnessed a practical illustration of this among the tribe with whom I resided. The chief having much against his inclination, refrained, for upwards of three weeks, from entering the house, as the roof was not finished; as he knew that if he at once entered it, the workmen would not afterwards complete the job; when he or another chief of equal rank, would have to perform the work.\textsuperscript{141}

It was, of course, a difficult matter to maintain these concerns about tapu on board western ships and Cruise remarks in 1821 that Maori were commonly

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{136} Yate 1835:93,133.\\
\textsuperscript{137} See McNab 1908:695 and Elder 1932:167 for comments on this practice. For specific instances of this see Elder 1934: 135-6 where the heads of chiefly men were exchanged. Dumont d'Urville met a chief who was travelling with a head, again chiefly and male, that he intended to return to its people of origin as a peace-making gesture (Sharp 1971:48-9). See also Cruise 1957: 135-6 for another instance.\\
\textsuperscript{138} Ibid., 87.\\
\textsuperscript{139} Ibid.\\
\textsuperscript{140} Polack 1838: II, 69.\\
\textsuperscript{141} Brown 1845:14.\
\end{flushright}
abandoning their concern for tapu while on board.\textsuperscript{142}

So we can see then that cooking or eating the head is the worst thing that one could do to the enemy. The idea that the head should not be brought into contact with food, and that food should especially not be passed over a chief’s head seems to be connected with this. And just as food should not go over the chief’s head, neither should an inferior person.

The cooking and consumption of food frequently appears in rituals to remove tapu. Cooked food was brought into contact with the tapu person, or more often the tapu person’s hands, and then consumed, or tapu food might be waved over the tapu object or person, the prohibitions on the chief’s head in relation to food must relate to these ideas.\textsuperscript{143} So it is particularly striking that the menses coming into contact with the head appears in cursing songs. The menses themselves are tapu, they appear to be associated with a certain type of atua, yet like food, consumption and cooking, they are destructive to the most tapu portion of the body.

In conclusion there seem to be a number of ways to desecrate the head:

- an inferior person passing over the head
- food passing over the head
- bringing food into contact with the head
- using the head as a vessel for food
- cooking and/or eating the head or brains
- bringing the menses into contact with the head

We can see, then, why a notion that the tapu of the menses is polluting appears in Best’s and Smith’s works, for example.\textsuperscript{144} The menses have a tapu, yet they can desecrate the tapu of a head, as can an inferior person, contact with food, or cooking or eating the head. It seems that there is something a little odd about the

\textsuperscript{142} Cruise 1824: 180.

\textsuperscript{143} Some examples of these rituals are discussed in chapters four and five.

\textsuperscript{144} E.g., Best 1905a: 212-3; Smith 1974: 40-1.
tapu of the menses. This can be explained by the association between the menses and certain malevolent lesser atua. If, for example, the head of the chief or priest is the most tapu and is a site where the important familial and tribal gods are manifest then bringing the chiefly head in contact with the menses, puts him and his god beneath an inferior and destructive god. Or given that these malevolent atua are said to gnaw on their victims, it is perhaps an act that turns the head into food in the worst possible way.

_Prohibitions on Menstruating Women._

Best found that menstruating women were not prohibited from cooking and asserts that the concern about tapu or “uncleanness” centred on the menses rather than the menstruating woman herself. He did, however, note a number of prohibitions on women, in one case where they were thought to have a bad effect on food preparation: if a menstruating woman attempted to boil the kernels of tawa berries, it was thought that they would remain hard and never cook. And he also notes a number of instances where menstruating women were thought to be destructive to food sources. He says also that in the past women had generally been prohibited from cultivating the hue (gourd) because the presence of a menstruating woman was thought to kill them. It was also thought that the presence of a menstruating woman would drive titi (mutton birds) away from the fires that were lit by fowlers to lure them; and if a menstruating woman visited a beach with pipi beds, the pipi would migrate elsewhere. 145

Similar ideas seems to have been found throughout New Zealand in the early twentieth century and proved very long-lived. Biggs writes in 1960:

To this day the failure of crops, or the lack of success of fishing parties, will be ascribed to the presence of a menstruating woman. Similarly, in some districts, a woman is not expected to ride the best horses, for fear that their well-being will be affected. 146

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145 Best 1905a: 215.

146 Biggs 1960: 20.
Biggs has suggested that sexual intercourse was probably prohibited during the menstrual period, although he could find no direct evidence on the matter. Best, however, found no evidence of a customary prohibition, finding instead that it was a matter of individual preference. He also found that it was only the first day of the period that was thought of as the paheke, the word his informants generally used of the menses. Paheke is a word that has more general meanings relating to a liquid flow or slipperiness. The second and third days of the period called the “koero” a word that has a more general application relating to dying or wasting away. The koero was held to be the time that a woman was most likely to conceive. This idea may be a rather old one of wider regional application; settler Thomas Perry lived for a while near a Maori community at Otaki remarks that women were thought most likely to conceive “at a certain period” which must be a euphemism for the menstrual period:

the New Zealanders allege that a woman under certain circumstances, at a certain period, will certainly conceive. An inquiry not fitting to be prosecuted by a believer in the true God; but it is mentioned here, because it suggested to the writer an application as to the tree of life, which yielded its fruit every month.  

The remark is made at the beginning of what might fairly be described as a catalogue of complaint concerning Maori custom but Perry was married to a Maori woman so he was reasonably well-placed to know. The above comment also gives an indication of the kind of attitudes that precluded early documentation on this subject. The idea that the menstrual period is a time at which a woman is most likely to conceive is found elsewhere in Polynesia, the Rapans for instance. The little evidence there is suggests that at most only the first day of the period was a matter for concern.

Best also notes that a man should not use a woman’s garment as a pillow, an observation that can be compared to the songs we have surveyed which show that the menses should not be brought into contact with the head. On the other

147 Perry 1852: 6.
148 Hanson 1983: 359.
hand the information Best got from an aged Ngati Awa tohunga suggests a wider prohibition on contact with women:

"Son! Never recline on the resting places of woman, such places are unclean. The blood (i.e., paheke) of woman is there. They are the undoing of man. But should you happen to do so, then be sure that you conciliate your ancestors, that they may restore your sight, and continue to guard and preserve you against evil."^{149}

In this context, Best is referring to a loss of supernatural vision which he calls kahupo, hinapo, and matapo. The term hinapo appears also in Best's list of expressions for a warrior who has lost his courage as a consequence of a tapu violation.^{150} Best, presumably on the basis of this material, claims that all important men had to avoid the places where women slept. This must be an over-generalization for his remarks suggest that important men do not sleep with women when in fact they did. One of the most common words for marriage and a sexual relationship is "moe" the same word for sleep. The Maori language seems to be rather like English in this respect, to sleep with someone implies a sexual relationship, although unlike English usage the same word could mean marriage. Given that Best's informant on this matter was an aged Ngati Awa tohunga, it is possible that his remarks may reflect the extra care that an aging religious specialist might take.^{151}

Men were probably required to avoid sexual contact with women while engaged in special activities. Both Maning and Taylor, for example, indicate that warriors under a war tapu could be prohibited from sexual intercourse. It is possible that underlying this prohibition is a concern about the menses. It is also possible that the general exclusion of women from certain tapu activities such as building houses or instruction in traditional lore is at least in part a consequence

^{149} Best 1905a: 213.

^{150} Best 1924: II, 227-8. See also chapter five where I discuss the rituals to cure a warrior of these conditions.

^{151} Best 1905a: 213.
of Maori beliefs about the menses.152

The Silence of Early Sources: A Further Comment.

Although a silence on matters relating to the menses in nineteenth-century sources is not unexpected given the attitudes of the time, writers on the topic did have a discourse through which they could have made the subject of prohibitions on menstruating women respectable, if they had observed them. Nineteenth-century writers often saw a parallel between Maori tapu prohibitions and the uncleanness of Old Testament Law. This observation went beyond merely suggesting a parallel, some thought the Maori had actual historical connections with the peoples of the Old Testament. Thomas Buddle, for example, wrote of Polynesians generally that “the existence of many Jewish customs” suggested that “either they are descendants of Abraham, or of some race that dwelt contiguous with the Hebrews”. He saw Maori customs relating to betrothal and the custom of a brother marrying his deceased brother’s widow in this light, and also customs relating to tapu.

As among the Hebrews the mother was tapu for a season after childbirth, so it is among the New Zealanders. She was not allowed to feed herself or engage in any kind of work. Some sacred person was engaged to attend her; and that person had to be fed by another; his hands were not permitted to touch and kind of food; and no common person was allowed to approach.153

The other custom Buddle compares to notions of uncleanness is the handling of the dead:

Among the Hebrews - he who came nigh a corpse was considered unclean, and had certain ablutions to perform before he had come into

152 Best (1924: 255) describes house building and canoe carving as a tapu, male only activity. Both these activities are mentioned in a dedicatory rite for a boy recorded in the mid-nineteenth century, a similar dedicatory rite for a girl gives a comprehensive list of her labours and does not include these activities (Grey 1853: 352-4, 361-3.) Williams wrote that women were prohibited from entering a large house under construction in a Maori village he visited in November 1833, “We endeavoured to assemble the people in a large new house which was not quite finished, but this was objected to, as it was tapu’d yet, and the women must not enter; the men might do so. This was sufficient for us to wave [sic] the question” (Rogers 1961: 348). Earle observed in 1827 that only men of rank were permitted to carve a war canoe (Firth 1929: 204, n.1 citing Earle 1832: 110.)

153 Buddle 1851: 11-12.
the congregation; so among the New Zealanders. He who touches a
corpse is tapu; - cannot feed himself, nor do any kind of common work
till the tapu is removed.\footnote{154}

This tendency was not unique to missionaries, Maning also remarks that the
tapu of the dead was "simply the uncleanness of Jewish law". Richard Taylor
again is perhaps instructive here, in an appendix to *Te Ika a Maui* he lists thirty-
six customs that he thought resembled "those alluded to in Scripture as being
common in Israel, or to the heathen around them" along with the relevant Bible
passages.\footnote{155} The tapu prohibitions relating to women after childbirth, and those
who had handled a corpse are listed as:

\begin{itemize}
\item XXVI. *Women unclean after childbirth.* - Lev. xii. 2,5; Luke ii. 22
\item XXVII. *All unclean who have touched a corpse.* - Haggai ii. 13.\footnote{156}
\end{itemize}

The tendency of nineteenth-century writers to see in certain tapu prohibitions
parallels with biblical references to uncleanness suggests, that if Taylor and his
contemporaries had heard of any tapu prohibitions relating to menstruating
women, they had a discourse through which they could make such delicate
matters respectable, and could have made passing references to Leviticus 15:19 or
Leviticus 15:25, for example. Taylor makes no mention of menstruation in his list
of Maori customs resembling those found in the Bible.

The general silence on the menses suggests, then, not only the effects of
nineteenth-century British prudery but also that they were not marked ritually or
socially in any way that would have drawn indigenous custom and belief to their
attention. Thus Best's observation that menstruating women generally went
about their usual daily activities is probably in continuity with earlier practices. It
also suggests that any concerns about the menses may have been expressed
through general prohibitions that kept women away from men's activities rather
than prohibitions which applied specifically to menstruating women. The

\footnote{154}{Ibid., 12.}
\footnote{155}{Taylor 1855: 465-6.}
\footnote{156}{Ibid., 466.}
instances that Best lists as occasions when menstruating women were thought to jeopardize the outcome: mutton birding, shellfish gathering, cultivating the gourd, boiling tawa berries. All seem to be activities accompanied by a greater element of uncertainty than most daily activities associated with food preparation. The movements of mutton birds and shellfish beds, for example, fall outside of human control. Despite people's best efforts, the crops they depend on sometimes fail. The preparation of tawa berries, an important component in the diet in hill country where relatively little cultivated food was grown, was a lengthy one and doubtless one that sometimes also failed. To be rendered edible, the kernel was first removed from the pulp, then they were cooked in an earth oven, and then air dried for storage. They then had to be softened by boiling and pounded before they could be eaten. That they sometimes failed to soften again after the drying process is not surprising and their failure to soften would represent a considerable loss of woman-hours.

Tapu is typically associated with prohibitions on the handling and preparation of food. If we are correct that women generally went on cooking and preparing food while menstruating, then the effects of any tapu associated with the menses were rather limited, and it was not sufficient to prevent women from cooking and preparing food.

157 Best 1924: 432.
Chapter Four.
Childbirth and Children.

In this chapter I examine a variety of sources on childbirth and children. I have several aims here. One is to provide a closer and more nuanced view of the tapu that pertained to childbirth, and to build on what I found in my examination of abortions and the menses. I also analyse this material in terms of what it suggests about gender and rank in Maori society. Unlike the menses childbirth captured the ethnographic interests of early writers so in this chapter it will be possible to abandon Best and rely solely on earlier sources.

The exact details of the duration of the tapu prohibitions and the rituals performed to remove it vary from source to source, so I shall give an overview of the variety of rituals presented in various sources. I will then discuss what these sources have in common and what their various details suggest about the wider social context in which gender difference and tapu were significant.

I. A Survey of Early Sources on Childbirth.

I begin by presenting in translation accounts taken from two mid-nineteenth-century Maori manuscripts; these have not been published in translation before so I present them at the beginning of my discussion so that they can be referred to with relative ease.

A Description of Childbirth Rituals Taken from GNZ MMSS 31.

This manuscript is in George Grey's handwriting and was written before 1854. It also has some annotation and translations by Grey. The material relating to childbirth is contained in the first 5 pages (numbered 5-9). This excerpt begins with a discussion on tapu as it related to the birth of a child:
At the beginning of the tapu, this thing, the tapu is a great thing indeed. Tapu is the thing that makes the child important. However, if the man and woman are not yet married, there won’t be any tapu at all.

So when their [i.e., the married couple’s] boy or girl is conceived and the child is about to be born, the mother is given old and ragged garments. At daybreak after two or three nights, those first garments, of the beginning, are cast off and when the child’s umbilical cord falls off the tohunga [priest] performs a karakia [incantation] called a tua. The child is laid flat on the father’s lap and the tohunga performs the tua, the karakia. If it is a boy it will be this karakia:

You will be determined to fight
Tangaengae.

The karakia for a girl is this:

You will provide food
Tangaengae
You will weave cloaks
Tangaengae

Fern root is eaten by the father, that is the horonga [i.e., tapu removal] for the child, the mother continues to be tapu. If the woman is not of greater rank than the husband, the parents of the husband eat the boy’s or girl’s fern root.

The garments in which the mother gave birth are left behind along with her bed where she gave birth. She is given better garments than she had before, then the father can come near her and sleep with the woman and the servant who attended the birth. As for that servant’s fire, no person will eat from it hence the proverb, “A mother’s fire is a foul fire, a tapu fire.” And so people will have nothing to do with that foul fire, that is their reason.

So then the husband and wife can be together but no one else will go near until the child can roll about and crawl. Then people can eat even while touching the child but the mother is still fed [by another]. The mother weaves a garment while she cannot eat with her hands. Something will be cooked as a horohoronga [tapu removal] for her hands, then the mother can eat with her hands. As for the garment woven while she cannot eat with her hands, no one can eat while in contact with it, but her own close and distant relatives, they may approach it; [they] will not forget that it is a tapu garment.

The custom is just like that when the head is combed ...

The text then discusses the tapu of hair combing and cutting and the consequent prohibition on eating with the hands and a translation is presented in

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1 The Maori word translated as servant here is “pononga”.

2 The Maori word translated as foul here is “kerakera”, the same word that appears in GNZ MMSS 28.
translation in chapter six of this work.

A Description of Childbirth Rituals Taken from GNZ MMSS 28: 126-131.

This excerpt comes from a Maori manuscript book also in Grey’s handwriting dated 1857. As with GNZ MMSS 31 parts are annotated by Grey. The excerpt is taken from a section titled “Na Nga Kaumatua Enei Korero” (These Stories Were Told by the Elders). “Na Nga Kaumatua Enei Korero” begins with some traditional history concerning the Hauraki region and Ngati Paoa, and is followed by genealogical material concerning the descendants of Paoa.

The material on childbirth rituals in this manuscript is as follows:

Just as the child is about to be born, the mana begins from here, however, it comes from the past, from the ancestors. When the child is about to be born, they leave the village for a place some distance away. If the labour lasts all day, a crime has been committed against the ariki, against the thatch of their houses, or their garments. Then the tohunga [priest] is fetched to perform a karakia [incantations]. The tohunga arrives and removes the crimes, that is to say the crimes which were disclosed and which obstructed the birth. When all the crimes are disclosed, then the child is born. A servant is selected for the mother from among the rangatira [chiefly persons], not from strangers but from her own relatives.

The mother has another servant, there is a servant for the mother’s servant. The servant’s hands are hands held behind the back because she feeds the mother, the mother does not handle her food. Another servant may hold her hands behind her back for the mother’s servant, then there will be three servants. The servants will not go near the

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3 GNZ MMSS 28.
5 Ibid., 140-149.
6 Ibid., 126-131.
7 Williams (1971:15) gives the following definition for “ariki”: “First-born male or female in a family of note”. The term here then probably refers to the senior members of the chiefly families in the community. See my discussion of other definitions in chapter five.
8 This is a reference to tapu violations.
9 This explanation for difficulties in childbirth is comparable to Maori notions that tapu violations caused illnesses. For an example where adultery was thought to obstruct the birth, a confession from the woman and an incantation might be required, see Grey (1928: 107-8).
10 The word translated as servant here is “ora”.
village on account of the importance of the tapu.

After a week, when the child’s umbilical cord comes off, the tohunga is fetched. He arrives and sleeps [the night]. In the morning the tohunga gets up to perform the karakia, he has a koromiko branch in his hand. That koromiko branch is used to call to the ariki [pl.], the atua [pl.], the mountains, to his own mountains.

The purpose of that koromiko is as a mauri [protective ritual] for the child. When the summoning is finished, the koromiko branch is placed on the child’s head, then the tohunga calls to the great trees of the mountains, to the famous trees of those mountains. That day is tapu because the mana is made to descend. Then the top of the koromiko branch is broken, it is a corpse for the child.\textsuperscript{11} When that is finished, the tangaengae [a dedicatory ritual] is done so you [i.e., the child when it grows up] will provide food.

When the tangaengae is finished, the child is eaten-all-over\textsuperscript{12} by the ariki, after that the father of the child does it, then it is finished, the child is noa.

That encampment is left behind, the child’s nest house will fall down, it is a tapu house. The people will not eat from the fire where water is boiled for the mother, it is a fire of foul water, a tapu fire. The reason no one will eat from it is in case the child might die or will not be strong to go to war, or will not be brave within.

Something like this is done for the rangatira [chiefly persons] of this land. The tutua [low-born] only get a tua and do not get a mauri. It is from this that the rangatira get their mana, the mana of the Maori person who has the iriiiri ritual, on this occasion the name was given to the child.

It can be seen that the excerpt from GNZ MMSS 28 focuses very strongly on mana, while the excerpt from GNZ MMSS 31 focuses on tapu. The excerpt’s focus on mana is in continuity with the preceding pages of the manuscript. The manuscript begins with a discussion of the source of Ngati Paoa’s mana which came not from the eponymous ancestor but from an ancestor named Te Pukeko, who gave his daughter in marriage to Ngati Paoa. Prior to this, Ngati Paoa were, according to this narrative, a people without mana but Te Pukeko’s daughter gave birth to three children all male, and from this circumstance Ngati Paoa’s mana became very great and they were henceforth a bold people.\textsuperscript{13} The text also

\textsuperscript{11} In the manuscript Grey gives the explanation that the broken branch represents the child’s first victim as a warrior. If this is the case, then this part of the ritual might be done only for a boy. On the other hand the language of the Maori text, that the branch was “a corpse for the child”, suggests that the broken branch represents a human sacrifice.

\textsuperscript{12} The Maori word here is “kaingakatoatia”.

\textsuperscript{13} GNZ MMSS 81: 110-1.
explains the difference between the marriages of rangatira women and tutua. Rangatira women with mana ("nga wahine rangatira whaimana") have a ceremonial feast on the occasion of their marriage while tutua do not.\(^{14}\) This text’s focus on mana is unusual for an early source on tradition. While power, authority, and prestige are clearly themes in a good deal of traditional material, this is not usually worked up into an exposition on mana in this fashion. The term is in fact rather rare in early sources, with the exception of karakia (incantations).\(^{15}\) It is possible that this text was written as a response to an inquiry into mana as a concept while GNZ MMSS 31 was a response to an inquiry into tapu. There is, however, no information on the exact circumstances in which the texts were produced, the queries that stimulated their focus and so forth.

\section*{A Survey of the Methods to Remove the Tapu of Childbirth.}

Most accounts say that women during childbirth and for a certain period afterward might be segregated from the rest of the village and that new mothers and newborn babies were thought to be tapu.\(^{16}\) Both GNZ MMSS 28 and 31 indicate the mother was unable to eat with her hands for a period after the birth, a prohibition that appears in a number of other circumstances, for example in handling the dead and mourning, hair cutting and house-building. I have already noted that there seems to have been considerable variety in the exact detail of what was done in the rituals performed after childbirth. The methods used to remove the tapu in each case are not unique to childbirth and appear in other

\(^{14}\) Ibid., 113-4.

\(^{15}\) For two karakia where "mana" appears see Grey (1928: 75, 76), more instances can be found in Grey 1853. Mana generally has meanings relating to power, authority, prestige and efficacy. Williams (1971: 172) cites a good selection of mid-nineteenth-century sources for these meanings. Mana also seems to have been virtually synonymous with vengeance (see e.g., Grey 1928: 174). The term appears to have been a more pragmatic one than general studies of Polynesian religion might suggest (see e.g., Eliade and Couliano 1991: 202-3). Mana also changed in its usage in the mid-to late nineteenth century, some of these issues are touched on by Johansen (1954: 272-6) but warrant a separate study that is beyond the scope of this work. For a general critique of the scholarly tendency to over-systematize and theologize mana as a concept in Oceania, see Keesing (1984).

\(^{16}\) See e.g., Biggs 1960: 95-6; Hooker 1869: 72; Colenso 1858: 17.
Marsden gives the kind of information that we find in other sources, the baby and mother are tapu, there is a ceremonial feast and a ritual where the child is sprinkled with water.\textsuperscript{18} Te Rangi\-ikaheke describes the first pregnancy of a well-born woman. She is tapu and prohibited from the handling of food for a short period when the pregnancy first becomes public knowledge.\textsuperscript{19} She is released from the tapu after a ritual involving water called a “waituhi” and also a grand ceremonial feast after which she could return to preparing and carrying food with the low-born people. This is rather striking because preparing and carrying food was generally a mark of low status and Te Rangi\-ikaheke’s narrative otherwise suggests that he describes the rituals for a rather advantaged young woman. Food preparation and its relationship to rank and gender is discussed in detail in chapter six. In Te Rangi\-ikaheke’s narrative the young woman becomes tapu again when she gives birth. She is, as in other sources, segregated for a period and a sequence of rituals and another grand ceremonial feast precede her return to the community. Both the ceremonial consumption of food and the ritual use of water appear in many sources.\textsuperscript{20}

Nicholas says that Ruatara, a Bay of Islands chief, told him that:

The New Zealanders make it an invariable practice, when a child is born ... to take it to the Tohunga, or priest, who sprinkles it on the face with water, from a certain leaf which he holds for that purpose; ... they believe that this ceremony is not only beneficial to the child but the neglect of it would be attended by the most baleful consequences.\textsuperscript{21}

The ceremony may not necessarily have been performed by a tohunga. Dumont d’Urville’s Bay of Islands acquaintance, Tuai, told him of a similar ceremony but

\textsuperscript{17} See chapter five of this work

\textsuperscript{18} Biggs 1960:70 citing Elder 1932: 477-8.

\textsuperscript{19} Biggs 1960: 89-90. The original manuscript is to be found in GNZ MMSS 81 and was written by Ta Rangi\-ikaheke around 1850.

\textsuperscript{20} See e.g., Smith 1974 for a survey of tapu removal rituals.

\textsuperscript{21} Nicholas 1817: I, 61.
said that it was performed by the child’s mother. In *Voyage Pittoresque* de Sainson depicts a group of women performing this ceremony for a child. Dieffenbach heard two different accounts of the ritual, according to one it was done by women, according to another it was performed by a priest. If, as Nicholas says, it was thought dangerous not to perform a ceremony of this kind, it may be that where a priest was not available, or where a woman’s family did not arrange for a priest to officiate, women would do it for themselves. Another possibility is that women generally performed some ceremonies of their own, as well as those performed by a priest. One of Hookers informants, for example, remarks in passing on karakia recited by women on the birth of the child. It is also possible that there was some regional variation in exactly who did what.

The use of water appears again in two karakia for children that appear in Grey’s called “tua pana” (tua-pana), one for a girl and one for a boy. White presents translations of these karakia as part of his discussion of Maori birth rites. Internal evidence clearly shows that they are rituals where water is used to remove a tapu and the expression waituihi appears in both of them. The tua-pana for a girl concludes, “The tapu of Hine is removed / The tapu of Ruanuku / Is carried to the water and pushed down”. The boy’s tua-pana has a similar verse in the middle: “The tapu of Ruanuku is removed / A tapu which is carried to the

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23 Dumont d’Urville 1834-5: Plate XLVIII.

24 Dieffenbach 1843: II, 29. Dieffenbach’s rather fanciful approach to resolving these two accounts was to suggest that it was done in a dialogue between the priest and a group of young women.


26 Grey 1853: 353-4, 361-3. Williams (1971:444) defines “tua-pana” as “a spell to facilitate child birth” citing these karakia as examples. White (1885: 20-1) interprets them as tapu removal rites or “baptisms” for children. Internal evidence indicates that White is correct on this point. For an example of a karakia to ease childbirth see Grey (1928: 107-8). Williams (1844: 149) gives “tua” as “Native baptism” and synonym of tohi and iriiri.

27 White 1885: 119-21, 123-4.

water / And a waituhi ritual performed." The tua-pana for a boy also concludes with some repetitive statements concerning submersion.

The use of water was not unique to childbirth and it is found in other rituals. Yate for instance remarks that people who had tended a corpse would plunge themselves into a stream before they could rejoin ordinary society. 

Taylor also notes that warriors before going to battle for the first time would immerse themselves in water and have water sprinkled over their heads by the priest. 

The ceremonial consumption of food is also a common theme in a number of accounts concerning tapu removal after childbirth. Both GNZ MMSS 28 and 31 make reference to the ceremonial consumption of food. In GNZ MMSS 28, it is said that the child is eaten-all-over (kaingakatoatia) by the ariki and then the father. GNZ MMSS 31 uses the term horonga for the food that is ceremonially consumed by the father and the child’s highest ranking grandparents and for the food that is used to remove the tapu from the mother’s hands. Shortland also gives a description of rituals of this kind which were performed before the child could be handled freely by its relatives:

A small sacred fire being kindled by itself, the father takes some fern-root and roasts it thereon. ... after touching the head, back, and different parts of its body with the horohoronga, he eats it. This act is termed kai-katoa i te tamaiti, eating the child all over, and is the conclusion of the ceremony performed by the father.

According to Shortland the tapu was not considered completely removed until the child’s eldest female relative performed the same ceremony the next day; Shortland calls this ritual the “ruahine”, an expression that is sometimes applied to women who perform these rituals. The ruahine is discussed in more detail in chapter six. Thus Shortland provides a description of a kaikatoa rite which is also referred to in GNZ MMSS 28. Grey also gives a karakia for a kaikatoa ritual.

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30 Yate 1835: 137.
31 Taylor 1855: 76-7.
32 Shortland 1856: 145.
33 Grey 1853: 379.
The karakia indicates that the intention of the ritual is to make the child’s mauri (life force) flourish and to feed Rongo and some other unnamed gods and thus propitiate them.

The expression “kai-katoa” used by Shortland, and “kaingakatoatia” seem to be unique to rituals for new born children, but the basic method is the same as that used for removing the tapu from the hands in other contexts. GNZ MMSS 31, even compares the removal of the tapu from the hands of a new mother to the method used after hair combing: “The custom is just like that when the head is combed”. Shortland too uses the same word horohoronga for the food consumed to remove a tapu after hair cutting:

The ceremony in this case, was simply to rub the hands over with a potato or fernroot, which had been cooked over a sacred fire. This food, called horohoronga, was then carried to the head of the family in the female line, who having eat it, the hands became noa immediately.34

Jean Smith remarks that “cooking and eating and fighting and killing provided almost interchangeable idioms” in the Maori language.35 Horo is one of those interesting polysemic words that illustrates her point; it has meanings that relate both to warfare and to eating, as well as tapu removal. Horo can mean “free from obstructions” and it is possibly in relation to this meaning that it can have meanings relating to speed and making an escape. It also has meanings relating to defeat and destruction, it is used to describe the conquest or fall of a pa.36 Horo can also mean to crumble down, or to be caused to crumble down. Horo can also mean to swallow, and given that horohoronga is a term given to food consumed in tapu removal rituals, this meaning must also be salient.37

One of Shortland’s informants gives another account of the rituals performed after the birth of a chiefly boy.38 This account is far more detailed than the one

34 Shortland 1856: 110.
35 Smith 1974: 36.
36 See eg, Grey (1928: 57, 78).
37 Williams 1971: 60-1.
38 See Shortland 1882: 40-3 for the English translation. Two copies of the Maori manuscript are to be found in Shortland’s papers MS2b: 48-50, and MS150: 61-3.
first published by Shortland. It also appears to have been far more elaborate, possibly because it is an account specifically concerning a chief’s son, while other accounts seem to be more general in character. In this case the ritual was done when the infant was “about a month and strives with its hands to reach its mother’s breast.” The classic tapu prohibition on handling food may be a salient feature here.

The first phase of the ritual is done by a tohunga, who held the child, reciting a karakia while he placed the boy on the ground and a female ariki (senior female relative) stepped over him and picked him up, at which point the karakia recited by the tohunga states “The boy infant is free from tapu / He runs freely where food is cooked.”

The tohunga then carried out a ritual called “poipoi” (waving) where he waved “the fernroot cooked for the Atua” over the child, and then commanded the atua to eat it, the food then being deposited at a wahi tapu (where no one else would touch it). Let us turn to the next part of the ritual. Exactly as in Shortland’s 1856 account the ritual is called “kai-katoa” and the “female ariki” (senior female relative) touches the various parts of the child’s body with the fernroot cooked on her separate fire but in this case she does not actually eat it:

> The Ariki is said then to eat this fern-root, but does not do so in fact. She only spits on it, and throws it on the sacred place. If there are several female Ariki of the same family of whom one is absent, a figure is made of weeds to represent her. Then part of the fernroot is offered to her the figure and is stuck in it.

Both pieces of fernroot in these rituals had been cooked on separate fires kindled specifically for the purpose: “one fire for the Ariki, one for the Atua.” The act whereby a senior or high ranking woman steps over a tapu object or person, is found in other rituals: in a ritual to cure frightened warriors, and in the removal of tapu from houses, where a woman may step over the threshold

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39 Shortland 1882: 41.
41 See chapter five of this work.
or sit or stand on the roof of a house. Likewise "poipoi", the act of waving food over a tapu object, and the offering of some portion to the atua appears in a mid-nineteenth-century story which recounts the removal of a war tapu. In this story two dogs are killed, one is chopped up raw and presented to the atua to eat at the shrine, the other is cooked and then we are told "ka poipoia, ka mama tama i te riri": it was waved to remove the war tapu from the men.

In GNZ MMSS 28 it is intriguing that the ritual with the koromiko branch, a ritual that presumably has a protective function for the child, involves a rather aggressive act: the branch is brought into contact with the child's head, where we might expect the tapu to concentrate and then the top is broken. Grey gives the explanation that this act represents the boy's first victim as a warrior. As a comparison, however, Yate remarks on a ceremony where tapu is removed from people by using a stick which is passed over the shoulders and between the legs and then broken and burned, buried or thrown into the sea. It is possible that the ritual with the koromiko branch is another tapu removal ritual.

Taken together, all the information on rituals to remove the tapu of childbirth reflect the range of rituals used by Maori to remove tapu in other contexts: the use of water, being stepped over by a senior female relative, the consumption of food. In each case a comparable ritual can be found in another context. The rituals performed to remove the tapu surveyed here do not suggest that there is anything exceptional or unusually horrible about the tapu associated with childbirth. There are, however, a number of other features in early descriptions of childbirth that warrant further investigation. These include the comments that there is something foul about the mother's cooking fire that appear in GNMMSS 28 and 31 and also the connection between lengthy tapu prohibitions and elaborate ceremony and the status of chiefly boys and girls.

43 Grey 1928: 94.
44 Yate 1835: 86.
II. The Tapu of Childbirth and the Language of Dirt.

In both GNZ MMSS 28 and 31 it is said that the mother’s cooking fire is something to be avoided, and the tapu associated with it is connected with foulness. The Maori word used in both cases is kerakera. This language suggests that the connection that various Pakeha writers have made between the tapu of child birth and “uncleanness” may not merely be the consequence of a tendency to interpret Maori custom in terms of biblical categories, it may reflect something they found in the Maori language. 45

GNZ MMSS 31 gives little in the way of explanation concerning the foulness of the mother’s fire, except to say that is why no one will eat from it. GNZ MMSS 28, however, says that the “reason no one will eat from it is in case the child might die, or will not be strong to go to war, or will not be brave within”. Thus the fire is a horrible thing to eat from, because to do so will damage the child. This may be compared to the desire to protect the child from malign influences that is evident in George Bennett’s comments on the disposal of the afterbirth in 1830:

The placenta is named Fenua [whenua], which word signifies land; it is applied by the natives to the placenta, from their supposing it the residence of the child. At New Zealand, on it being discharged it is immediately buried with great care, as they have the superstitious idea that the priests, if offended, would procure it, and by praying over it, might occasion the death of both mother and child, by “praying them to death”, to use their own expression. 46

Attacks by witchcraft (makutu) appear to have been one of the main explanations for sickness and death among Maori throughout New Zealand during the nineteenth century. The afterbirth must have been thought a particularly accessible avenue for such attacks.

45 Nineteenth-century translations of Leviticus use “poke”(dirt) and constructions based on it to convey the expression “unclean”, not kerakera. Leviticus 12: 2 which refers to the uncleanness of women who have given birth was not translated until 1848 in Ko Te Tahi Wahi o Te Kavenata Tawhito (Telford 1848). The language of Leviticus may subsequently have made its way into Maori usage. One of Best’s Maori correspondents in a letter dated 1916 uses the expression “taapoke” to describe the defiling effects of female blood on cultivations (Orbell 1970: 45). “Taapoke” is simply poke with a causative prefix (see the entry for “tā” in Williams 1971).

46 Bennett 1831: 437. Bennett mentions in particular his stay near the Thames river (Bennett 1831: 435). He must also have travelled elsewhere but he does not give any specific information on this.
Our sources, however, indicate that the tapu and ritual surrounding the new mother was not solely connected with a desire to protect the child. One source indicates that the rest of the community needed to be protected from the new mother’s postpartum discharge. Shortland’s informant explains that the reason a new mother was separated from her village, was because people feared the rehuwhaereere, the discharge from the mother after giving birth. If the men who cultivated the kumara went near her, the kumara might be adversely affected.\(^3\)

This indicates that the effluvia from a new mother was thought to have a destructive effect on a highly valued crop. So we are seeing a concern about female effluvia that is comparable to the concerns about the menses that Best found among the Tuhoe at the turn of the century.

Some light can perhaps be shed on this precaution perhaps by considering how far the practices relating to childbirth have their parallels in the treatment of the sick. Just as seriously ill people did not remain in their houses but were moved some distance away so were women in labour. One observer in 1840, encountered a group of Ngati Haua where a young woman who had given birth to a son just a few hours before lay nearby. The new mother was lying under a rough canopy of branches while “immediately opposite lay a poor old woman, dying from a mortal disease, it was life and death strongly contrasted.”\(^4\) The other contrast was that the new mother and baby were attended to, but the dying woman was “scarcely noticed”. This suggests that sick people and new mothers might occupy the same space away from the village.

Another parallel between child birth and illness can be found in the practices of women to rid themselves of any blood after the birth. Early nineteenth-century medic George Bennett describes this:

\(^3\) Shortland (MS2b:48) says “Ka whanau te wahine, ka wehea te kaigna [sic] ki tahaki: ko te take, kei tata ki nga tangata mahi kumara, kei hoki te mate ko nga kumara; koia i wehea ai-he rehu wairere.” See also Shortland MS15o: 62 for another rendition of this account, here he writes “rehu whaere”. He defines this term as “discharge from mother after birth of child”(MS15o:63). In Shortland’s published translation he changes “rehu wairere” to rehu-wahine, which he leaves untranslated (Shortland 1882: 40). Williams (1971) gives “rehuwhaereere” as “afterbirth” (wheereereere = mother or wife).

\(^4\) Taylor 1959: 144.
After the child is born they wash themselves in the water, and afterwards use a vapour bath, which is made by heating stones, which is made by heating stones and throwing water, and three kinds of shrubs in a green state upon them (which are called ... tarataramoa ... mangel ... and kotukutuku ...) from these a steam arises, over which they sit; this is done to promote the lochial discharge, or, to use their own expression, "to make the blood come from them". 

Colenso also remarks that women were quite concerned to rid themselves of any blood after the birth, which confirms that it was perceived as a problem. Bennett also notes that women also used steam to cure themselves of sexually transmitted diseases so the above practice was not confined to childbirth but was also used in relation to disease. Further evidence that this was not a practice confined to child bearing comes from Cook in the late eighteenth century in the Marlborough Sounds. He saw a young woman prepare what he initially thought was an oven, but she put some specially selected green plants over the stones and then an old woman squatted over it. That an old woman used it, indicates that it was not always used in relation to child birth and Cook remarks that she looked "poorly". Although these very early sources suggest that the use of these oven-like arrangements was something particularly associated with women, Taylor later describes the use of oven like arrangements in which invalids were placed as a general cure for illnesses.

There are two points we should consider here. Firstly, the explanation for illness that Maori generally held, that illness was caused by an atua which was attacking the sick person. Secondly the resemblance between the arrangement used for steam baths to an oven. Cooking sheds and ovens are places that tapu persons and atua avoid because it is destructive of them, and in one nineteenth-century myth cooking steam appears as something destructive in its effects.

Therefore, I suggest that this steam bath is a practice that involves more than

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48 Bennett 1831:437.
49 Ibid., 438.
50 Beaglehole 1961: 579.
51 Taylor 1870: 111.
therapeutic vapours, an atua is being driven off.

It is probable that childbirth was a situation which was not understood solely as a positive thing where the production of a chiefly child was involved but also had something in common with Maori ideas about illness. Childbirth, after all, had the potential to become an occasion of illness and death for either mother or child. And we have seen evidence that it was believed that abortions, stillbirths and menstrual blood were thought to become particularly destructive atua. It seems possible that the postpartum discharges were subject to related concerns. Also, given childbirth was one of those times when mother and child were at risk of disease and death and given that atua were generally thought the cause of illness and death, it may be that childbirth was a process that was thought to attract certain malevolent gods that the rest of the community might do well to avoid.

III. The Tapu of Childbirth and the Status of the Child.

It is clear that the tapu of childbirth was closely connected with the social position of the child. Two sources indicate that the first pregnancy and birth of a woman of high rank or a woman who was married to a man of high rank could be subject to an especially lengthy separation and elaborate ceremony. According to GNZ MMSS 31 (above) it is the tapu of the birth that makes the child important. In GNZ MMSS 28 (above) the writer connects the separation of the woman and the child from the village with the mana of the child. GNZ MMSS 28 also says that tutua children did not get as much ritual, only rangatirā got the ritual called the mauri (where the stick is broken) or the iriiri, or naming ritual. The notion that tutua get some kind of ritual albeit a lesser one appears in one of Shortland's sources also. We are told that the child of a rangatirā and a tutua get

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54 See e.g., Hooker (1869: 71); and Te Rangīkahaheke's account of the first pregnancy and birth of a young woman from an important family in Biggs (1960: 89-90).
different rituals; nor would the tutua attend the ritual for a rangatira child.\textsuperscript{56} According to Shortland’s source the child’s first haircut was subject to special ceremony, and it is said here too that the rangatira and tutua have different karakia (incantations).\textsuperscript{56} Shortland’s source describes only the ceremony performed for a rangatira (chiefly) child, and on the occasion the entire community is under a tapu and prohibited from eating. The text leaves it unsaid but obviously the first hair cutting of a tutua would not merit a tapu prohibition that applied to the entire community. The unspoken social category in these sources is taurekareka or slaves, that they are not mentioned suggests that such prohibitions scarcely applied to them if at all.

The tapu of a chiefly birth also involved the exclusion of low status persons. GNZ MMSS 28 specifies that the woman’s attendant (ora) must be a rangatira and a relative of the woman. Wiremu Tamihana of Ngati Haua also wrote that “the whare kohanga (birth house) was extremely tapu and no taurekareka could approach it, nor could tutua”.\textsuperscript{57} Thus we have a source that specifically mentions taurekareka as a category or person to be excluded just like tutua.

Dieffenbach who travelled in New Zealand between 1839-41 indicates that lower status women may have been relatively unaffected by the tapu of childbirth for he comments that generally “only the wives of chiefs are subject to this rigorous custom.”\textsuperscript{58} A Maori man, after telling Nicholas the happy news that missionary Mrs King had given birth to a boy, parodied Mrs King’s labour rather mercilessly. This man went on to say that New Zealand women gave birth in a far more stoic fashion:

in the open air, surrounded by a concourse of both sexes, ... without uttering a single groan, while the spectators, who stood carefully watching the process, shouted out tarnee! tarnee! (an infant, an infant.)


\textsuperscript{57}Shortland MS2b: 50.

\textsuperscript{58}Ibid., 86.

\textsuperscript{59}Dieffenbach 1843: II, 24.
as soon as nature had executed her office; ... [then] rose up as if no such occurrence had taken place, and resumed her ordinary occupations.\textsuperscript{59}

Nicholas's informant was obviously describing the birth of a boy, for the word Nicholas has rendered "taree" must have been "tane"(man or male). This suggests that the birth of a boy was a matter for particular excitement. This account probably also comes from a man of relatively low status for Nicholas makes no mention of his name, and he generally takes care to note the names of chiefly men; moreover, up to about 1830 Maori living at missions tended to be redeemed slaves.\textsuperscript{60} That the birth took place in the open air indicates that there was some concern about tapu, and Nicholas notes that women gave birth away from the houses a point which can be compared to the practice of keeping the seriously ill away from dwellings.\textsuperscript{61}

One of the contributors to Hooker's collection published in 1869 notes that he observed a woman "who, being taken in labour while at work in a field, retired to a short distance alone, gave birth to the child, and in two hours afterwards was again at work."\textsuperscript{62} Given the lateness of the material, we might suspect that this is an image of a tradition in decline but we also find the same image in earlier sources (Nicholas), and in Dieffenbach's comment that the tapu of childbirth generally only applied to chiefs' wives.

GNZ MMSS 28, 31 and Shortland's informant all credit tutua (the low-born) with a certain amount of tapu and ritual, but a lesser version. Taurekareka or slaves receive no mention except that we are told that like tutua they may not approach the chiefly woman and her child while they are tapu. When we put this information alongside the connection between the tapu of childbirth and the importance of a chiefly child that appears in the sources so far discussed, it seems fair to suggest that childbirth among the slaves, like their deaths, may have been

\textsuperscript{59} Nicholas 1817: II, 171-2.

\textsuperscript{60} Wright 1967: 155-6.

\textsuperscript{61} See chapter two.

\textsuperscript{62} Hooker 1869: 70.
unmarked by ritual or tapu.

In GNZ MMSS 31 there is also the interesting remark that “if the man and woman are not yet married, there won’t be any tapu at all”. The Maori word used for married here is of English derivation “marenhatia”. It is possible that this remark reflects a Christian sensibility but there is no other evidence of this in the account. Before Maori acquired the word marena, they seem to have used the same vocabulary for sexual relationships generally as well as marriage. The verb moe “sleep” is used both of sexual relationships and marriage, and the terms tane and wahine are used both of lovers and spouses. This fluidity in the language reflects the absence of marriage ceremonies, except in the case of political marriages, and also a tendency to consider a relationship established when it was publicly acknowledged that a couple was sleeping together. 63

On the other hand there is a reasonably extensive and disparaging vocabulary for illegitimate children. The remark about there being no tapu pertaining to the birth of a child whose parents were not married may reflect the complexities of a social context where people cared a good deal about inheritance and lineage but where young women enjoyed considerable sexual freedom. Taylor, for instance, remarks that women of rank were often permitted to live with a slave for a while “without her being considered as belonging to him longer than she might feel disposed to remain, or until her friends might dispose of her to one of suitable rank.”64 He remarks, however, that if a young woman pursued a relationship of this kind in the face of her father’s disapproval, he might kill the child.65 Taylor characterised this type of violent response by an irritated grandfather as “frequent”.66 How frequent it actually was in these circumstances was we do not have the information to judge. There is, however, a good deal of general comment on the prevalence of infanticide, particularly female infanticide in early

64 Taylor 1855: 59.
65 Ibid.
66 Ibid.
nineteenth-century sources and I discuss these in more detail below. What GNZ MMSS 31 suggests, however, is that parents and families who did not want to recognize a chiefly young woman’s relationship and subsequent offspring could take the relatively benign route of refusing the child any ritual recognition.

GNZ MMSS 31 also shows another way in which the rituals surrounding child birth could help to fix the social position of the child in the remark “If the woman is not of greater rank than the husband, the parents of the husband eat the boy’s or girl’s fern root.” This comment on the relative rank of the parents probably reflects a social context where the family could choose to emphasise the mother’s or father’s lineage depending on what appeared to be most advantageous. Polack comments that the status of a child born to a chief by a slave-woman could be predominantly determined by the father’s rank.67 On the other hand Polack also remarks on a “minor chief” in the Bay of Islands who “married a woman much his superior in rank, as his own mother had been a slave.”68 The importance of the chief was advanced accordingly by the connection. The children “often twitted their father in my presence, on his being the son of a slave; reminding the old man to mark their difference in rank, as their parents were chiefs, and not slaves like his mother.”69 Thus a man could advance his own situation and the status of his children even more so by marrying up.70 One early nineteenth-century observer comments that “the higher the rank of the mother, the more illustrious is the child, because it is from her that he derives his title to nobility”.71 This comment indicates that there could be a marked difference in status between the offspring of the senior wife of a chief who was often a woman of rank in her own right, and the offspring of a slave wife.

Thus rituals of tapu removal for children probably had a good deal to do with

67 Polack 1838: I, 374.
68 Ibid., 375.
69 Ibid.
70 See also Orbell 1978: 107-8.
marking the social position of a child in a society where the factors determining it could be rather complex. Descent could be traced matrilineally as well as patrilineally, and chiefs practised polygyny and had wives which would ideally include a senior wife from an important family, to whom the chief’s heir would be born. But a chief would also have junior and slave wives who might have the good luck to be more fertile than the senior wife and produce a son for the chief. To further complicate matters, although people seem to have taken lineages and the arrangement of marriages quite seriously, young women also enjoyed a good deal of sexual freedom which could result in offspring that her family might not wish to recognize.

IV. The Preference for Boys.

There is evidence in the sources to indicate that there was a preference for male children. Nicholas in his recollection of what was probably a kuki’s birth remarks that the spectators “who stood carefully watching the process, shouted out *tanne! tanee!*” Nicholas translates this as “an infant, an infant” but the word in this case was probably “tane” i.e., “A boy! A boy!”72 One of Shortland’s Maori informants also says that if the chief’s child was a boy the hapū would rejoice and his description of the rituals are those performed for a chiefly boy.73 I have also mentioned that the Ngati Paoa history presents the birth of sons in a political marriage as a sign that the tribe’s mana had been restored. This information coincides with Earle’s comment in 1827 that the “strength and pride of a chief ... consisted of the number of his sons” and Cruise’s observation in 1821 that “as the males form the strength and consequence of the tribe, the birth of a boy is hailed with pride and delight by the community.”74

Grey records the proverbial phrase -“A woman who hears the rituals

74 Earle 1909: 185; Cruise 1824: 275.
performed over the slain"- for which he gives the explanation that it was of little use to have a daughter for she might one day raise heirs for the enemy. 75 These comments reflect a general preference not an absolute rule for Colenso writes that "Sometimes the birth of a daughter was preferred to that of a son for political reasons." 76 The arrangement of marriages appears to have been quite important to tribal politics and it was one of the recognized means of making peace with enemies. 77 I have also found two examples where brothers withheld their consent to their sister's marriage because the groom did not offer a female relative or sister in return. 78 This suggests that a man without a sister might have trouble finding a wife thus providing thoughtful parents with a very good reason to want a daughter. The desire for a daughter is also reflected in a ritual given in a mid-nineteenth-century Maori manuscript which describes a ritual to produce a daughter to be performed by a man who was grieved because his wife had not provided him with one. 79

I have shown that the tapu and ceremony surrounding the birth of a child related to the child's rank. The births of first-born children in important families were subject to greater ceremony and lengthier separations from the community. There is also evidence to suggest that the birth of a boy was subject to greater ceremony than girls. One of Hooker's sources asserts that the birth of a boy was

75 Grey 1857: 30.

76 Colenso 1868: 17.

77 Biggs 1960: 25, 37.

78 Rogers 1961: 150;
Kendall (1820:102-3) presents the following dialogue:

Where is your older brother?
At Whangaroa.
What is he doing there?
He is seeking a wife.
Who is the woman?
Such and such, Teku.
Is the parent agreeable?
He is agreeable, the brother is angry.
Will the brother not consent?
He will not.
What is he angry about?
There is no person in exchange: the husband has no sister.

79 GNZ MMSS 81: 14.
subject to greater ceremony. 80 Another of his sources remarks that some of the birth rituals for the boy were repeated at puberty, but this was not done for a girl. 81 According to Taylor this second performance of dedicatory rituals took place before the boy’s first battle. 82

The assertion that the birth of boys might be subject to greater ceremony than girls of comparable rank is supported by four karakia presented by Grey. Two are called tua, one for a boy and one for a girl. 83 The other two are labelled “tua pana” (tua-pana), again there is one for a girl and one for a boy. 84

The tua given in Grey’s collection dedicate the boy or girl to their future roles, they appear to be full versions of the type of karakia referred to in passing in the excerpts from GNZ MMSS 28 and 31 presented at the beginning of this chapter. Certainly the word “tangaengae” used in both manuscripts forms a refrain in the karakia given by Grey. Williams notes that “tangaengae” can mean refer to an “incantation to confer vigour” and is the meaning of the word in the tua given by Grey. 85 The content of these karakia suggests that they are intended to ensure the child’s success in his or her future role. The other two karakia labelled “tua pana” seem designed to remove the tapu resulting from the birth. In the case of both the tua and the tua-pana given by Grey, the karakia for the boy is significantly longer than that for a girl. In the case of the tua, the one for a girl is less than a third of the length of the one for a boy. In the case of the tua-pana the one for a girl is half the length of the one for a boy.

Biggs has translated and transcribed all but the last verse of the tua for the boy. 86 The last verse is rather obscure and the girl’s tua also concludes with it. 87 The

80 Hooker 1869: 71.
81 Ibid., 73.
82 Taylor 1855: 77.
83 Grey 1853: 75-7, 78.
84 Ibid., 352-4, 361-3.
85 Williams 1971: 378.
86 Biggs 1960: 71. Biggs gives no indication that he has left off the last verse.
87 For an attempt to translate this last verse see White (1885: 125).
content of the karakia, with the exception of the last verse, is in summary thus: the boy is dedicated with the water of Tu to grow up big and strong, and his future role is outlined, he will grow up to climb mountains, to be a great warrior, to produce food, to build great houses and war canoes, to summon the people to make nets and go fishing. The tua for the girl is considerably shorter, it opens with the same lines as the tua for a boy:

Dedicated with the water of Tu,
You will grow up
Tangaengae

The girl’s tua also ends with the same verse as the boy’s. The girl’s karakia is a good deal shorter and comprises of a rather bald summary of her future labours:

Dedicated with the water of Tu
You will grow - tangaengae.
To provide food - tangaengae
To weave coarse cloaks - tangaengae
To weave fine cloaks - tangaengae
To summon the multitude - tangaengae
To carry firewood - tangaengae
To dig shellfish - tangaengae
May granted - tangaengae
Be the growth - tangaengae
For this tapairu.

Williams (1971) gives tapairu as “First-born female in a family of rank, who was invested with a special tapu” but does not apply this meaning to tapairu as it appears in this tua, for he cites the above lines as exemplifying another usage “Sometimes applied to other female infants.” This may be because he thought the karakia did not seem elaborate enough for a girl of high rank and makes reference to so many labours. Given that the sources we have surveyed always give the rituals performed by rangatira, and do not go beyond mentioning that something else or less is done for tutua, it is reasonable to conclude that this karakia was intended for relatively privileged girls. Tapairu, here, is presumably

88 Grey 1853: 78.
89 Ibid.
90 Williams 1971: 382. Williams (1871: 152) defines tapairu as simply, “first-born female in a family” or “nephew or niece”.
a respectful term with which to refer to a girl.

The reason for the extra length of the boy’s rite is not because the boy’s contribution to productive labour is less but because the boy’s tua dwells on warlike triumphs and great strength. These same themes appear in a karakia for a chiefly boy given by one of Shortland’s informants; we cannot compare what might have been done for a girl in this case because the writer only gives an account for what is done for a chiefly boy.91

We are seeing here evidence that suggests greater prestige was conferred on boys of good birth compared to girls, despite the substantial contribution that women made through their labours.92 This must be a consequence of the high value placed on warriors and warfare. Indeed both the karakia for the boy and girl call on Tu, who of Rangi and Papa’s offspring is sometimes said to be the human being, and is sometimes credited with the creation of the first human being, so he is an obvious ancestor to call upon in birth rites.93 On the other hand, Tu is also the first warrior so it seems a logical that rituals which call on the first warrior to dedicate children to their future role would be more elaborate for male children who were expected to follow in his footsteps.

The two karakia called tua-pana given by Grey, one for a boy and one for a girl, are clearly rituals where water is used to remove a tapu. The tua-pana for a girl concludes: “The tapu of Hine is removed / The tapu of Ruanuku / Is carried to the water and pushed down”.94 The boy’s tua-pana has a similar verse in the middle: “The tapu of Ruanuku is removed / A tapu which is carried to the water / and a waituhi ritual performed”. Specifically female ancestors are called on for the girl: Hineangangi, Hinekorikori, Hinerauwharangi, Hineteiwaiwa:

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91 Shortland MS2b 48-50 cf Shortland 1882: 40-3.

92 For an evaluation of the extent of Maori women’s labours as compared to men see Orbell 1978: 112.

93 For an early story where Tu is the descendant of Rangi and Papa who personifies what it is to be human see Grey 1928: 5-6. For a comment on Tu’s role as the creator of the first human being see Orbell 1995: 222.

I stand at this dawn,
...
At the dawn of this waituhi
...
At the dawn, the dawn of Hineangangi
At the dawn of Hinekorikori
At the dawn of woman,
...
There is the post which stands
It is the post of Hine
Of Hinerauwharangi
Of Hineteiwaiwa

Hineteiwaiwa is an ancestor who is associated with many of women’s roles in Maori traditions, including childbirth. Hinerauwharangi, “woman of widespread leaves” is a female fertility figure associated with the growth of plants and women’s roles generally. Like Hineteiwaiwa, she also appears in an incantation performed when a girl was tattooed.95

The tua-pana for a boy similarly mentions dawn and some male ancestors, for example, “At the dawn of Tu / At the dawn of Tama / At the dawn of Tawake”. And elsewhere in the karakia “It is Tane who stands at the dawn of Tu”. The same themes and images appear in both the karakia for a boy and the karakia for a girl and they have the some purpose, the removal of a tapu through the use of water. The difference lies in the ancestors called upon. The ancestors called on for the girl are predominantly female and fewer in number. In the boy’s case, the ancestors called upon are male, including Tu and Tane, two key figures in Maori creation mythology. The boy’s karakia is also more repetitive than the one for a girl and it is done with more rhetorical flourish.

Thus documented instances of karakia for boys and girls of comparable rank indicate show that the same procedures and ideas were drawn on in these rituals. The relative brevity of the karakia for girls, however, lends support to those sources which indicate that the birth of a girl generally attracted less ceremony and enthusiasm.

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95 Orbell 1995: 60. See Grey (1853: 57-60) for a karakia performed when a girl is tattooed.
The Care of Children.

General descriptions of Maori children in the early nineteenth century are biased in two directions, toward the children of chiefs and toward boys. Girl children in general remain rather shadowy figures in the historical record, particularly when we pause for a moment and consider how often remarks about "the children" in fact refer to boys. Consider, for example, Marsden's comments:

The chiefs are in general very sensible men and wish for information on all subjects. They are accustomed to public discussions from their infancy. The chiefs take the children from the mother's breast, where they hear all that is said upon politics, religion, war, etc., by the oldest men. Children will frequently ask questions in public conversation and are answered by the chiefs. I have often been surprised to see the sons of chiefs at the age of four or five years sitting among the chiefs and paying close attention to what was said. The children never appear under any embarrassment when they address a stranger whom they never saw. In every village the children, as soon as they learned any of our names came up to us and spake to us with the greatest familiarity. 96

Marsden's comments obviously take rangatira children as a special focus and he makes particular mention of chief's sons. Polack is another writer who comments on children that he saw in various villages:

The child of either sex, at an early age, are able to run about long before those belonging to European parents can stand alone. They are early initiated by their parents into all the games, dances and practices of their fathers. The children of a chief are regarded by the tribe with peculiar delight ... The New Zealand father is devotedly fond of his children, they are his pride, his boast, and peculiar delight; he generally bears the burden of carrying them continually within his mat ...

The children are seldom or never punished; which consequently, causes them to commit so many annoying tricks, that continually renders them deserving of a sound wholesome castigation.

The father performs the duty of a nurse; and any foul action the embryo warrior may be guilty of, causes a smile rather than a tear from the devoted parent. 97

It sounds as though Polack may have found himself the butt of a some childish practical jokes during his stay in Maori villages. His remarks about children almost certainly refer primarily to boys, given his later remarks:

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96 Elder 1932: 193.
97 Polack 1838: I, 374.
The boys are brought up entirely by the men; and it is not uncommon to see young children of tender years, sitting next to their parents in the war councils, apparently listening with the greatest attention to the war of words uttered by chiefs.

One garment, or mat, serves for both father and son; and the precocity of the children may be seen in young urchins, who have scarcely the power to walk, steering large canoes without aid.

... a little native boy is half a man when a European child is first placed at school. They talk of, and with, strangers, without any feeling of awkwardness and bashfulness. 98

A number of other sources also show men to be the primary care-givers for their sons.99 Marsden’s comments placed alongside Polack’s suggest that the father’s role in caring for infants was part of a pattern of incorporating children into a gendered division of labour very early. René Lesson, of the French ship La Coquille, also gives an account of a boys’s education and early involvement in the discussions of older men, especially the sons of chiefs.100 He also notes that, “We were very often astonished to see young boys come on board and run all over the ship among the seamen without appearing to be timid or surprised; their bearing was always assured.”101

Early nineteenth-century sources do not give any comparable general descriptions of girls, or of groups of girls. Polack in his narrative of his travels gives a description of his experience at a village situated north of the Kaipara harbour . He recalled that while the “children, with accustomed curiosity, followed me, feeling my legs and pockets at every turn”, his comments on the “young females” differs considerably:

The females exhibited the usual mixture of bashfulness and curiosity of the dear sex, screening their faces with extended hands, and peering between their fingers. The modesty and reserve of the young females of the country, in parts uncontaminated by obscene Europeans, induce them to retire from the stranger. It was so in this instance; but curiosity

98 Ibid., 378.
100 Sharp 1971:99.
101 Ibid.
soon made them return.\textsuperscript{102}

This caution or modesty does not appear to have been confined to the young, nor was it only a response to a strange-looking foreigner, for Polack remarks elsewhere upon "the bashfulness and timidity which the New Zealand women feel on the appearance of a stranger, foreigner or native".\textsuperscript{103} Nicholas also remarks on the "retiring timidity" of women in the presence of strangers away from the centres of European contact and the prostitution that was prevalent there.\textsuperscript{104} Dumont d'Urville too wrote of the cautious behaviour of women compared to the boldness of the men when he first arrived in Tasman Bay in 1826.\textsuperscript{105} If girls, like women, generally adopted this retiring behaviour, this would help to account for the lack of comment on girls.

Dumont d'Urville provides one very striking instance where one or two little girls came to his attention at Uawa, a place where western contact and prostitution seems to have been well established. When Haki, a chief attempted to board the ship, and d'Urville attempted to prohibit him from doing so, Haki flew into a "tearing rage" while a girl accompanying him conveyed his message:

a girl in his canoe who spoke a mixture of bad English and Zealand, repeated incessantly and with extraordinary volubility that Shaki, her master, was a great chief, a friend of the English, and that I was doing wrong not to receive him.\textsuperscript{106}

Haki came on board with a number of young women, who proceeded to engage in prostitution and pilfer whatever they could lay their hands on, the best of their acquisitions going to Haki and the chiefly portion of the community back on shore. A girl (of twelve or thirteen years by d'Urville's estimate) named Rautangi, perhaps the girl who introduced Haki so volubly, had attached herself to

\textsuperscript{102}Polack 1838: I, 164.

\textsuperscript{103}Ibid., 214.

\textsuperscript{104}Nicholas 1817: I, 187-8.

\textsuperscript{105}Wright 1950: 77.

\textsuperscript{106}Wright 1950: 117.
d'Urville:

This little girl was extraordinarily lively; her body was never still and her imagination was just as active, for she might be seen laughing, then very soon afterwards crying, and often doing both almost at the same moment.  

D'Urville could not ascertain her relationship to Haki remarking that she "seemed to have a close tie" to him "but it was impossible for me to tell whether she was only his slave or whether she was his sister. Their answers to my questions, varying from moment to moment, first in one sense and then in the other, left me constantly in doubt on the subject."  

D'Urville's description of her suggests she was possibly a spoiled favourite, excitable, impetuous and voluble. But given that she appears along with a group of prostitutes who were under the control of the chief, her status is in doubt, particularly as d'Urville's estimate of her age makes her, for the time, easily old enough to be sexually active. Whatever her status, she stands out as one girl who made her presence felt and who might display something of what we might perhaps expect of a chief's favourite. On the other hand, her prominence and forward behaviour takes place in a context where western trade and prostitution were established and Nicholas and Polack both comment on the change in female behaviour in this context.

Female Infanticide.

Probably the earliest comment on infanticide comes from Kendall in September 1815. He includes infanticide in a list of observations to report to the Church Missionary Society which include such diverse subjects as suicide, burial customs, demography and climate.  

This comment concerning the presence of infanticide can be set against the famine and consequent high mortality that

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107 Ibid., 121.
108 Ibid.
109 Elder 1934: 90.
Kendall’s Maori neighbours had endured that winter. Infanticide in this case may have been a response to conditions where an infant’s chances for survival were poor. In 1820 three men of the naval ship the Dromedary all remark on the presence of female infanticide. Skinner remarks that it seemed “a common practice”. McCrae simply writes that he had “heard of one or two instances of mothers putting their children to death who were females, because they could not go to war.” Cruise perhaps refers to the same instances when he said that in families “where the number of females has far exceeded that of the males, the disappointed mother has been known to sacrifice the former.” Like McCrae, he connects this with a preference for warriors who formed “the strength and consequence of the tribe”.

Subsequently, in 1829, Yate argued that female infanticide was a good deal more common than anyone had yet realized. Polack, who travelled reasonably widely in the north of the North Island in the early 1830s, estimated that about one in four women with whom he was acquainted and who had given birth to several children had practised infanticide. Polack also gives an account of his conversation with a group of women. He appears to be the only early nineteenth-century writer who endeavoured to discuss the matter with Maori women:

On taxing some females with having committed infanticide, they laughed heartily at the serious manner in which I put the question. They told me the poor infants did not know or care much about it. One young woman, who had recently destroyed a female infant, said that she wished her mother had done the same to her, when she was young;

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110 Elder 1934: 106.
111 McNab 1908: 496
112 Ibid., 539.
113 Cruise 1824: 275-6.
114 Ibid.
116 Polack 1838: I, 381.
"For why should my infant live?" she added; "to dig the ground! to be a slave to the wives of her husband! to be beaten by them and trodden under foot! No! can a woman here protect herself, as among the white people; and should I not have trouble enough to bring up girls, when they can only cry and make a noise?"¹¹⁷

Polack does not give much detail of the speech that he gave on the matter which provoked this response. It was probably rather self-righteous and based on an idealised account of the position of women in his own society; as Shortland noted, western commentators had a tendency to forget the women of the lower classes of their own society when drawing a contrast between Maori gender relations and their own.¹¹⁸

Certainly it seems that the women with whom Polack discussed the matter became irritated with him, for they suggested that his mother should have done the same to him.¹¹⁹ The occasion ended with Polack informing one woman, who had argued with him especially forcefully, that she was a fool, and stalking away in a sulk. The young woman’s speech (above) indicates the kind of pressures that could bear upon a junior wife in a polygynous household. Her comment that she had enough to do without raising a girl would not apply to a boy, because early sources show that fathers were the primary care-givers for male infants and boys.¹²⁰

Polack later wrote that he thought infanticide was the consequence of pressures on mothers of a “humble station” in life.¹²¹ Thus he thought infanticide was more usually practised by junior wives and slaves. Maunsell who arrived in New Zealand in 1835, wrote at the end of 1838, “The accounts of ... infanticide are as harrowing as they are undoubted” and says that it was done by women who felt that they had too many children, particularly if the child was a female.¹²²

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 382.
¹¹⁸ Shortland 1851: 60.
¹¹⁹ Polack 1838: I, 382.
¹²⁰ Orbell 1978: 114, 117 n.31.
¹²¹ Polack 1840: II,93-4.
¹²² Garrett 1991: 76.
Around the middle of the century accounts of infanticide disappear.\textsuperscript{123} Taylor in 1855 described infanticide as a former custom.\textsuperscript{124} In 1857-8, Fenton indicated that the general opinion of observers was that the practice of infanticide had generally disappeared. He wrote that though he had himself “met with instances of women who have destroyed four, six and even seven children, offspring of themselves, and mostly females ... the universal testimony of those best qualified to judge” was conclusive that the practice had been nearly extinct for many years. Fenton gives the earliest date for the cessation of the practice, suggesting that it had probably declined as early as 1835.\textsuperscript{125} Medic Arthur Thomson, however, wrote in 1854 that female infanticide was “prevalent”. By contrast in 1859 he wrote that “children are seldom destroyed directly” but also states that girls died as a consequence of neglect.\textsuperscript{126} It is probable that infanticide would co-exist with indirect practices such as neglect; infanticide would represent the extreme and hence perhaps the most commonly reported edge of a range of practices. Thomson’s shift in his explanation for the causes of mortality in female children suggests that while infanticide disappeared it took longer for related indirect practices to disappear. The spread of dates suggested for the decline or disappearance of infanticide may be a consequence of the practice declining earlier in some regions and later in others.

It is difficult to estimate exactly how prevalent female infanticide and the consequences of a related neglect of female children were, for while the sources indicate that males out-numbered females in the early nineteenth century, no one took the trouble to estimate the relative numbers of male and female children.\textsuperscript{127}

From 1857 onwards, however, statistics were kept on the sex ratios for both


\textsuperscript{124} Taylor 1855: 165.

\textsuperscript{125} Fenton 1850: 36.

\textsuperscript{126} Thomson 1854b: 356; Thomson 1859: II, 287. See also Orbell 1978: 117, n.29.

\textsuperscript{127} Orbell 1978: 113; Pool 1977: 78. For some early figures showing that males outnumbered females see Taylor (1855: 256) and Shortland (1851: 53-4).
those under the age of fifteen and those fifteen years and over. I present a chart of these figures expressed as a ratio of males per one hundred females calculated from census figures (Fig. 1.).

![Fig. 1. Maori sex ratios 1857-1896](image)

The figures show that the sex ratio for those under 15 was significantly higher than the birth-rate of 105 males per 100 females which is believed to be universal for all human populations. Overall, the disparity in both the junior and senior age ranges decreased in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The disparity is greater for adults which suggests that the physiological burden of child bearing was responsible for some of the disparity in the adult population. In 1886, the first time data was gathered for the 0-5 year age group the masculinity ratio was only 109:100, not too far off the birth rate, and in 1901 the ratio for the 0-14 year age group was also 109:100.

It is fair to conclude from the above figures that female welfare improved in the latter half of the nineteenth century. It does not seem unreasonable to suggest

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138 The figures in this chart were calculated from the New Zealand censuses. In some years the age-specific data was incomplete for some regions. I therefore only calculated the sex-ratios from figures given for regions where the data was complete.
that the mid-century sources that say infanticide was now a thing of the past marked the beginning of this improvement. This suggestion finds support in Divale and Harris's study of the junior age (0-14 years) sex-ratios of 160 traditional societies where warfare was practised.\textsuperscript{129} It was usual for these societies to have a junior age sex ratio that was skewed markedly in favour of males.\textsuperscript{130} Divale and Harris's figures also showed a strong correlation between the cessation of warfare and sex ratios that were closer to the birth rate.\textsuperscript{131} They conclude that traditional warfare results in a preference for males and warriors that takes a toll on female welfare through practices such as infanticide and/or a tendency to confer less care on female infants and children.\textsuperscript{132} In the case of the early nineteenth-century Maori, the sources that I have surveyed show a preference for boys that is connected with a preference for warriors, and which coincides with Divale and Harris's findings. The New Zealand sources that remark on the cessation of infanticide from 1835 at the earliest and sometime in the 1850s at the latest, broadly coincide with the decline of traditional warfare from the 1830s onwards.\textsuperscript{133} This then would also coincide with the general pattern that Divale and Harris found. It also coincides with the disappearance of slavery before 1850.\textsuperscript{134} Given that slaves were captive enemies the decline of traditional warfare and the disappearance of slavery are certainly connected. The disappearance of slavery would remove one group of disadvantaged women whose offspring may have been the most likely to suffer the effects of neglect and infanticide.

\textsuperscript{129} Divale and Harris 1976.

\textsuperscript{130} Ibid., 527-531.

\textsuperscript{131} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., 525-6.

\textsuperscript{133} Owens 1992: 46 estimates that “the worst of the fighting” ceased in the north in the 1830s. The central and southern regions, despite the occasional conflict, were also generally co-existing peacefully by this time.

\textsuperscript{134} Buddle 1851: 46. See also chapter seven of this work for further discussion on slavery and its disappearance.
The Secondary Literature on Female Infanticide in New Zealand: a Comment.

There is some disagreement in the secondary literature on how to interpret early nineteenth-century sources on the subject of infanticide. Heuer, Gluckman and Orbell conclude from early nineteenenth-century comment that female infanticide must have been reasonably common.\textsuperscript{135} Biggs asserts that tribal genealogies show that female infanticide was not practised.\textsuperscript{136} Demographer Ian Pool echoes Biggs on this point.\textsuperscript{137} Neither Biggs nor Pool actually present an analysis of any genealogical sources to support their assertion and I am not sure that tribal genealogies would provide the historical records needed to disprove the presence of female infanticide. I note that Polack's record of a statement by a woman on the subject (see above), indicates that the practice may have been particularly associated with low status women and their children. It is especially doubtful that tribal genealogies could provide good information on the offspring of lowborn and slave women in the early nineteenth century.

Pool also concludes that early nineteenth-century sources are the product of unwarranted generalisations built from a small number of extreme incidents. The error, according to him, was compounded by the failure of observers to recognize the naturally low birth rate of a society whose fertility levels approximated those hunter-gatherer societies.\textsuperscript{138} Pool notes that a Maori man called "Nayti" (Neti ?) questioned on the subject by the House of Lords in 1837-8 indicated that he thought infanticide was very rare: "Some women do it. Not many. They like nine or ten; they do not like any more".\textsuperscript{139}

\textsuperscript{135} Gluckman 1976: 187-8; Orbell 1978: 113-4, 117 n. 26; Heuer 1972: 28. I note that Pool (1991: 47-8) misrepresents Heuer when he says that she concludes that female infanticide was not a general custom. He has perhaps confused her views with those of Biggs (1960: 75).

\textsuperscript{134} Biggs 1960: 75.

\textsuperscript{137} Pool 1991: 47.

\textsuperscript{138} Ibid., 47-8. Pool's discussion of historical sources is cursory in his later work, for more detail see Pool 1977:137-9.

\textsuperscript{139} Pool 1977: 138.
practised infanticide after nine or ten children then it must have been rare indeed for families of this size were unusual.\textsuperscript{140} On the other hand, if, as Fenton indicates, the date at which infanticide disappeared was as early as 1835 in some regions, Neti's comment may reflect a changed attitude toward family size and infanticide. While early to mid-nineteenth-century observers agree that large numbers of children in a family were rare, there is some question as to whether this was a consequence of a naturally low birth rate. Colenso remarks that "very many women have each borne more than 10, or even 12, children, though they seldom reared them all."\textsuperscript{141}

Overall, on the basis of a more extensive analysis examination of early sources including Maori birth rituals, the late nineteenth-century census figures and Divale and Harris's statistical analysis of comparable societies, I come to a different conclusion from Pool's. On balance, the evidence suggests that there was a pattern of preferring boys to girls, and that this was connected with traditional warfare and a preference for warriors. This social context took a toll on the welfare and life-span of female children, and it would have taken the heaviest toll on the female offspring of low status women such as tutua (the low-born) and taurekareka (slaves). I conclude that the repeated mention of female infanticide in early nineteenth century sources reflects this social context.

\textsuperscript{140} See eg. Dieffenbach (1843: II, 33). He says that there were rarely more than two or three children per family. Brown (1845: 40) also says that "large families were never seen".

\textsuperscript{141} Colenso 1868: 6. Colenso's arrived in New Zealand in 1835, so his comments will presumably reflect his experiences in the early to mid-nineteenth century.
Chapter Five.
Religious Roles in Maori Society.

I. Tohunga, Priests and Priestesses.

In chapter two, we have seen that Polack used the term "wahine tohunga" to refer to a woman that he observed performing an incantation and giving oracular pronouncements as part of a welcome to visitors. Polack is the one commentator that I have found in the early to mid-nineteenth century who applies the term "tohunga", to a woman. I have noted, however, that there are two other early sources that show an aged woman performing incantations as part of a welcome. This seems to have been part of the hospitable and peaceful role that women often took in rituals of welcome. Although we do find some references to "priestesses," the majority of "priests" or "tohunga" mentioned in the sources are men.

Kendall provides the earliest definition of the term "tohunga": "priest", "mechanic", "skilful man," and as a verb, "understanding and conceiving". There is in these definitions a clear emphasis on knowledge and skill. Two sources show the transmission of knowledge from father to son or another younger male relative. Dieffenbach writes:

The knowledge of the priests is handed down from father to son; and the youths undergo a regular course of instruction. I was present at one of these lessons: an old priest was sitting under a tree, and at his feet was a boy, his relation, who listened attentively to the repetition of certain words ... At the old tohunga's side was part of a man's skull filled with water; into this from time to time he dipped a green branch which he

1 See chapter two of this work.

2 McNab 1914: 549; Cruise 1824: 269; Elder 1934: 258.

3 See e.g., Earle 1909: 156; Cruise 1957:74; Elder 1934: 86-7, 106; Elder 1932: 286-7, 472; Dieffenbach 1843: II, 119; Angas 1847a: I, 262, II, 73; Buddle 1851: 22.

4 Kendall 1820: 215.
moved over the boy's head.\(^5\)

I have already discussed some instances of the use of water in ritual: to remove the tapu of childbirth, in rituals before young warriors go to battle and to remove the tapu from handling the dead. I will return to the use of water by this tohunga when I discuss the rituals performed during a course of instruction for rangatira boys in the South Island (see below).

Buddle, like Dieffenbach, describes the role of the tohunga as one that was generally inherited, passing from father to son,

the father taking pains to instruct the son in all the mysteries of the order ... I have heard old Tawaki, a great priest of the Ngatimaniapoto tribes teaching his son, when all were retired and they were alone.\(^6\)

One explanation for why tohunga were usually men is found in two mid-nineteenth-century Maori sources. Te Rangikaheke writes that men's education in traditional lore was more extensive than women's.\(^7\) A South Island man who described a school of learning for rangatira children said that only boys were permitted to attend, and only one woman was permitted in the house where the sacred lore was taught and she was there to perform a protective ritual for the participants.\(^8\) The South Island source both suggests a general exclusion of women and also suggests that one woman at least was in a position to know as much as many men.

According to Buddle a community might contain a number of tohunga, one of which would wield the greatest influence. "In many instances, the principal chief was the high priest as well, uniting in his own person the rank of Ariki, or lord, and chief priest."\(^9\) Probably the most influential tohunga came from the chief's

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5 Dieffenbach 1843: II, 119.
6 Buddle 1851: 22.
7 Grey 1853: lxxviii.
8 White 1887-90: I, 4-15 (Maori text); White 1887-90: I, 8-16, (English text). White's original source is a manuscript to be found in the Polynesian Society Manuscripts, 1187, folder 201. I discuss this source in more detail below.
9 Buddle 1851: 22.
family, if he was not the chief himself. Te Rauparaha’s older brother, for example, was a famous tohunga of considerable influence. Yate, on the other hand, remarks that it was often the younger brother of a family who took the role. The connection between belonging to an important family and becoming an important tohunga is evident in Yate’s remark that the power and authority of a priest derived from “his chieftainship.” Yate also gives some indication of the tohunga’s political importance: “they send for these conjurors from other tribes to answer some political purpose, or that they may make the individual a handsome present for his services, and through him be considered to make a present to the tribe, or family to which he belongs.” It is likely that he describes here the role taken by a priest from an important family.

Buddle notes that a community might have more than one tohunga. It is possible that the reason men predominate in the sources as priests and tohunga is that the sources are oriented toward the chief priest in a community. The chief priest, like the chief, may more usually have been male. While Earle records an instance where a famous male tohunga came to visit, he also remarks on the presence of “cunning” men and women in Maori society, who were thought to be able to foretell the future and communicate with the atua.

A number of things that tohunga were known to do were not exclusive to men. There are references to women of rank having some skill in prophecy. Earle, for instance, wrote of Tururo, the mother of the chief at Kororareka, that she was regarded as a sibyl by her tribe; Dieffenbach described Waitohi, an elder sister of Te Rauparaha’s and mother of Te Rangihaeata as “the great prophetess”. We have also seen that Polack’s female tohunga made “oracular pronouncements”. Other instances include a mention of a female healer, female

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10 Reed 1979: 32.
11 Yate 1835: 147
12 Ibid.
13 Ibid.
practitioners of makutu (witchcraft) and women communicating with the gods. I survey some of these instances below.

Healing.

Maori healers sometimes appeared to remove foreign objects from people's bodies, an activity for which shamanistic healers in other parts of the world are known. Brown remarks that many priests were expert in this sleight of hand, removing for instance pieces of wood from the ailing part of the person's body. In 1824 John King visited a woman called Tu who was very ill. The cause of her illness was believed to be a tapu violation she committed while visiting away from home, in the North Cape. It was thought that she had eaten from a hangi (oven) where a near relative had been baked: "The priestess had taken a stone, a piece of glass bottle, and a bone out of her side, and tells her she will not live long." The objects that the priestess produced were said to be from that same oven. Gudgeon records that a famous Ngati Maniapoto woman had divined that an illness had been caused by witchcraft and conjured up the bleeding heart of the perpetrator." This story suggests a similar skill in sleight of hand to that of the priestess that King records.

Angas met a party of Maori travelling inland from Maungataritari "They told us that a woman, a relation of the chief Ngawaka, had been shot by another chief for bewitching his son; who was sick and who died after she attempted to cure him by her magic art." Thus the unfortunate woman rather than effecting a cure had been accused of makutu (witchcraft). It was thought likely that Ngawaka would gather a large taura (war party or plundering party) to seek retribution for this act because she was a near relation of his. If a reasonably well connected woman could come to an end like this, the risks must have been even higher for

15 Brown 1845: 80-1.
16 Elder 1934: 258.
17 Gudgeon 1907: 87.
18 Angas 1847a: II, 139.
a person without these advantages. This may explain why chiefly men tend to be
the most prominent and numerous priests in the sources, it was probably a
definite advantage to be well placed in the hierarchy of the chief’s family before
one began a priestly career.

*Makutu: Magical Attacks on Enemies.*

Taylor wrote that the “power of bewitching was not confined to the priests, but
was supposed to be possessed by every one, a simple wish often being sufficient.”
Angas recounts the stories circulating about a Waikato woman in 1844:

> Eko [Ko], the celebrated witch of Waikato, is the wife of a chief not far
> from Mokau: she performed some actions which were considered by the
> natives to attest to her power of witchcraft, and ever since she exercises
> by her arts of sorcery, unbounded sway over the minds of the
> superstitious inhabitants: to such an extent is her power exerted, that
> many natives die under the influence of fear. Not long since, she had
told one of her victims that she had taken out his heart; and he actually
died, out of a belief that his heart was gone.

Angas painted the portrait of another woman, Pori, famous for her skill in
witchcraft and the wife of one of Te Rangihaeta’s warriors. Angas wrote that she
was “regarded as a priestess by the surrounding people”.

Shortland writes of an old lady of Ngati Whatua who had claims to some
portions of land which had been sold to the government under the authority of a
chief who did not pass any of the payment onto her:

> she, to show her displeasure, gave it out that she would *makutu* both
> him and the Governor.
> Strange enough, not long after, the chief fell sick and died; and in a
> few months more, the Governor also died; which coincidence tended to
> very much confirm belief in the report that generally prevailed among
> the members of that and neighbouring tribes ... that the cause of death
> in both cases was the old lady’s *makutu.*

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19 Taylor 1855: 90.
20 Angas 1847a: II, 83.
21 Angas 1847b: Plate XX.
22 Shortland 1856: 119.
Presumably any other chief in the neighbourhood, as a consequence, would treat her with greater consideration. Shortland remarks that those who used makutu were “generally persons who have suffered wrongs” but who were “too weak to hope to obtain redress by more open means”. 23 One of his informants evidently thought there was something not quite manly and rather risky about it. This informant remarked that “the man who uses makutu is not a thoroughly brave man, he is a brave liable to fall.”24

The belief in makutu must have had a certain regulatory force because it was a recognized course of action for various complaints: if a counter-gift or payment was not given or a promised gift sent to someone else, if a man was envious of another’s fame, disputes over land, jealousy among rival wives, stinginess, insults and curses. 25 Makutu was, however, a two-edged sword. It could advance a person’s situation, or at least give them some sense of consolation. On the other hand it could render a person more vulnerable because makutu itself invited retribution.

There is a circularity to all of this, disadvantaged persons might develop a reputation for makutu with a view to improving their situation, yet an otherwise vulnerable person with a reputation for makutu seems like an outstanding candidate for blame in these circumstances. And disadvantaged persons hitherto without any reputation for makutu might be suspected of it, if other people in their community thought for a moment about the wrongs such people had suffered and the sorts of grudges that might result. If a sick person failed to recall a tapu violation that might have caused his or her illness, makutu was the next most likely explanation. Shortland thought that often “an innocent person has been sacrificed to the rage of the relatives of a sick man, under the belief that he had caused the disease by such unlawful means”.26 Buddle’s comments indicate

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24 Shortland Papers MS 14n.
26 Shortland 1856: 116.
that it was the less advantaged members of society who were likely to suffer most if they were thought guilty of makutu. If the person was not important, they were likely to be killed, while the usual response to chiefs thought guilty of makutu was counter-magic. 27

Buddle noted two instances of retribution for makutu that he had observed near his Waiapa mission station. He thought these instances the “most revolting” ones he knew of. The most likely reason for his revulsion is that they occurred within the family. In both cases the victim was a woman. On one occasion, after two or three children had died in a family, the “men gifted with second sight” told the bereaved father that it was the result of makutu perpetrated by his mother-in-law and so he killed her. In another case, one of the bereaved father’s wives was supposed guilty and killed. It is not possible to estimate how usual it was for such instances to occur within the family. Doubtless Maori families, like families in all societies, were sometimes the site for the kind conflict and tension that could lead to accusations of makutu. Given that ill-feeling between rival wives was a recognized cause for makutu, and that makutu was the recognized recourse of the disadvantaged, junior or slave wives might have seemed especially likely suspects in cases of family illness and child mortality.

Matakite.

Another religious role that is referred to reasonably often in early sources is matakite. It is a term which refers to a seer or visionary. It can also be used as a verb relating to the practice of divination. One instance of a ritual involving both a tohunga and an unspecified number of matakite appears in a manuscript by Te Rangikāheke.28 The tohunga sets about curing a sick person who was believed to be ill as the consequence of an attack by an atua. The tohunga with the aid of a

27 Buddle 1851: 29.
28 Grey 1853: lxvii see also chapter three of this work.
stalk from certain kinds of plant believed to be pathways for atua recites a karakia to eradicate the atua from the sick person. The performance is watched by some matakite who will observe the atua leaving if the ritual is successful.

Shortland gives another version of the rituals to cure the sick which was effected by a matakite (seer) and a tohunga belonging to the sick person’s hapu: “every hapu having at least one matakite and several tohunga.” 39 The seer was consulted to determine the tapu violation that the sufferer had committed and the identity of the avenging atua. The tohunga would set about identifying the pathway through which the atua had arrived and perform the ritual cure. Buddle comments that matakite were consulted in cases of illness caused by witchcraft and would identify the witch. 30 This may not have been a role that was exclusive to men but there is little specific information about them. Buddle, however, in one case specifically refers to the “men with second sight” who were consulted to identify the witch (see above).

Matakite is also a term that relates to prophecy and divination. There are also songs included in Grey’s collection which are labelled matakite, and so are presumably prophetic songs. 31 Some rituals to divine the future were male-only affairs. Williams and Polack on separate occasions observed a ritual to divine the future using sticks which involved chiefly men and a male priest only. 32

Divining the future obviously was not exclusively a male occupation given Dieffenbach’s description of Waitohi as a prophetess and Earle’s comment regarding Tururo. People presumably got their knowledge of the future from communicating with the gods and there are quite a number of instances of women communicating with the gods or having the gods speak through them and I discuss these below.

39 Shortland 1856: 127.
30 Buddle 1851: 23.
31 Grey 1853.
32 Rogers 1961: 228-9; Polack 1838: I, 130-1; cf. Taylor’s discussion of rituals of this type (Taylor 1855: 91-3).
Communicating with the Gods.

Early nineteenth-century Maori clearly set great store on direct communications from atua, that is to say, the dead. Maning records several instances of male priests or tohunga acting as mediums for consultations with ancestral spirits. These communications were, however, not exclusive to priests or chiefs. McCrae, for instance, comments that Maori frequently told him that they could hear “the ghosts of their friends.” This remark almost certainly refers to atua, who were the dead members of the family and tribe. Taylor wrote that Maori atua:

manifest themselves to their descendants or priests, under the form of lizards, spiders, moths, whirlwinds, flashes of lightning &c; ... they often enter the body of individuals and surprise them, using their voice to utter their will.

Serving as a medium for an atua was clearly not the exclusive prerogative of priests, the wider community was also involved. Shortland had often heard that atua visited their living relatives and on several occasions he had risen in the morning to be told that the atua had the night before “taken part in the state councils of the tribe”. Although he always asked if he could attend the next occasion when the atua were expected and never received a direct refusal, he was never invited. He thought this was because Maori had developed an aversion to permitting a Pakeha unbeliever to observe and disparage traditional religion.

Shortland’s exclusion from such performances contrasts with the experiences of missionaries. Taylor, for example, seems rather familiar with the phenomenon (see above). The 1830s journals of Henry Williams, who might be described as an unbeliever par excellence, contain three instances where atua communicated through people and in each case the medium for these communications was a woman. In 1832 there was considerable alarm at Otuiho

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33 Maning 1863: 136- 150.
34 McNab 1908: 549.
35 Taylor 1855: 186.
36 Shortland 1856: 85-6.
because a chief named Ururoa and his war party were thought to be advancing:

An old woman much in the character of witches of former days, had a great deal of news to impart. She appeared their oracle, and had revealed by her dreams the desires of Ururoa, who lives at Wangaroa. Poor wretch, she set at naught all I had to say, and amused herself and others occasionally by a pukana, one of their hideous stares, accompanied with a Satanic grin and twirl of the tongue. She spoke of the excellency of the Reinga [i.e., the realm of the dead] as having conversed with many from thence.\(^{37}\)

In this case the woman communicated with the dead through dreams. Yate also remarks that the dreams of old men and women and the interpretations they gave of them could be quite influential.\(^{38}\) He writes that villages were occasionally "thrown into a state of consternation by the midnight cry of a few old women, who declare that, in their sleep, they have seen the spirit of the chief dancing before them, or his head placed on a pole." Such dreams signified death or danger for the chief, and the rest of his people might as a consequence set out to fetch him. Yate’s explanation is that the women had consulted together on the subject and aimed to hasten their men’s return home.\(^{39}\) Williams noted another occasion when he spent the night in a communal sleeping house at a Waikato pa during hostilities between the Nga Puhi and Waikato peoples:

Awoke in the night by hearing a woman making a great squeaking noise, profound silence all around. This is none other than the Atua now talking, commanding the people to be strong to acquit themselves like men, for there would certainly be a battle and victory would be theirs.\(^{40}\)

Williams also records a woman’s resistance to his preaching on the coast of Lake Taupo in 1839:

Towards sunset assembled all for evening prayers and addressed them. While I was speaking upon the necessity of laying aside their lieing [sic] vanities a woman (she may be said to be under the influence of an evil spirit) came forth with the utmost fury and declared that if these things were spoken against she would go and cast herself into one

\(^{37}\) Rogers 1961: 268.

\(^{38}\) Yate 1835: 89-90.

\(^{39}\) Ibid.

\(^{40}\) Rogers 1961: 425-6.
of the boiling springs and instantly ran off professedly for that purpose. Several followed to secure her while others replied coolly [sic] that she had better do so. I continued without further interruption noticing to them the enmity of Satan against their even hearing of the one true and only God and Jesus Christ...\(^{41}\)

Williams's remark that the woman "may be said to be under the influence of an evil spirit" indicates that she was a medium. And certainly her response to his preaching shows that she perceived that missionary religion did not bode well for her. Clearly, as Williams's above comments show, missionary Christianity put such women outside the bounds of legitimacy and made them satanic envoys. John Hobbs is another missionary who makes particular mention of female mediums. He found it encouraging in 1826 when young female converts at his mission were able to laugh at an old woman who was inspired by an atua.\(^{42}\) He also met with a woman in the Kawhia region who predicted the results of a coming war through the inspiration of her gods. \(^{43}\)

That Shortland had a good deal of difficulty in gaining an opportunity in observing instances like this, suggests that perhaps by the 1840s, as Christianity was spreading, traditional practices of this nature had become less public and less of an everyday event. Shortland was probably also hampered by the common Pakeha reluctance to sleep in Maori communal sleeping houses where visitations by atua could happen spontaneously. It is noticeable that two of Williams's three experiences took place in a communal sleeping house. Maning also shows two instances taking place late at night in a communal sleeping house. \(^{44}\)

Shortland did eventually observe a medium in action, after receiving some help from a rather unlikely quarter. The young Christian chief Wiremu Tamihana Tarapipipi Te Waharoa invited Shortland to see an old Ngati Haua

\(^{41}\) Rogers 1961: 470.

\(^{42}\) Williment 1985: 60.

\(^{43}\) Ibid., 141.

\(^{44}\) Maning 1863: 140, 143-4.
woman who was well known for her ability to make tribal atua appear.\textsuperscript{46} Shortland’s description of the seance performed by this woman suggests an impressive and astute performance by a female medium. Shortland gives no clear indication of the lady’s name or kinship connections. He does, however, say that she had two female slaves, which suggests a degree of importance.\textsuperscript{46} That the medium was a woman, fits with what seems to be a pattern of female involvement in direct communications with atua. That she was aged also fits with the general significance that senior women of rank had in Maori religion.

Shortland was accompanied in his visit to this lady not only by Tamihana but also a cousin of Tamihana’s, Tuakaraina, who adhered to traditional religion. Although Tuakaraina was initially very helpful to Tamihana and Shortland and helped to arrange the visit, it turned out that his great hope was that the atua would take vengeance on Shortland for being an unbeliever.

They found the old lady residing at a temporary shelter near a potato plantation at harvest time:

Apparently our approach had not been noticed, for we found the old woman wrapt in her blanket, seated compostedly by a blazing fire, while two female slaves were busily employed talking and weaving potato baskets. As soon as … we were discovered, the mistress bid us enter, and motioning her two slaves to move further off, gave up to us her own place, which was spread with a neat mat of plaited flax, and took theirs.\textsuperscript{47}

The lady was given some tobacco and after recounting interesting news from the village Tuakaraina broached the real cause of their visit. The lady refused because she had become a Christian and expressed concern that Tarapipipi would be angry. At that point Tamihana came up and sat just outside the door telling the woman,

“There is no wrong, mother, in what the stranger wishes. Do not fear on my account.”

\textsuperscript{46} Shortland is obviously “the gentleman” who told Taylor about a seance that he attended (Taylor 1855: 43-4). Taylor’s version of the incident varies in some of the details as we would expect of a second-hand account.

\textsuperscript{47} Shortland 1856: 90.

\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., 88.
"Very well," replied the old lady; "we shall see what will happen."
And without saying more, she left off smoking, removed all the
blazing sticks from the fire. 48

Shortland does not tell us why Tamihana remained outside. That he did so
could suggest two things: either he still adhered to certain notions of chiefly tapu
and thus could not enter the old lady's house which had a large number of
potatoes stored inside; or he was preserving his position as a Christian leader by
maintaining his distance from traditional practices.

For a while nothing happened and Tuakaraina became impatient, he insisted
that everyone put out their pipes, he then stretched himself face down, full
length on the ground and implored the atua to appear. Eventually something
heavy landed with a thump on the roof, and something that sounded rather like
a rat rustled its way across the thatching until it was above their heads. Indeed,
marauding rodents must have been reasonably common near plantations at
harvest time and human settlements generally, especially after the arrival of the
rats and mice that came with the Pakeha shipping. However, both Shortland and
Tamihana were extremely impressed and unable to give a rational account for it.

The old woman covered her head and face with a blanket, bending over until
her head nearly rested on her knees, "immediately from the spot where the
rustling noise had ceased issued sounds imitative of a voice, but whistled instead
of being articulated in ordinary tones." Everyone (except Shortland) instantly
recognized it as Te Waharoa, Tamihana's father. 49

The atua began a conversation with his son on some private family matters
but Tamihana interrupted him, "Don't speak on that subject, father; but turn to
welcome our Pakeha." The atua then welcomed Shortland. Tamihana, although
outside the door, was still sitting quite close to Shortland and whispered to him,
"Put your hand over the woman's mouth quickly." As soon as Shortland did this,

48 Ibid., 90.
49 Ibid., 92.
the atua demanded "Who has put his hand to touch me?"  

Shortland noticed that whenever the whistling voice could be heard, he could not hear the old lady’s breathing, and when the voice stopped she would breathe rather fast, as though she had just exerted herself. Thus we can conclude, as did Taylor of such performances, that she was a ventriloquist.

Shortland asked that the atua to show himself but he said that he was a lizard and would not come nearer to Shortland for fear of killing him. Lizards, as manifestations of atua, were very generally objects of fear in New Zealand, and were thought to cause illness. At this point Tuakaraina whose dislike of Shortland seems to have been growing by the minute asked Te Waharoa to land on Shortland’s back and thus kill him. Te Waharoa refused to co-operate saying he would not hurt his son’s friend.

Before Te Waharoa left, he asked for a present “a cask of tobacco, or perhaps a coat,” it seems reasonable to suppose that the present was not strictly speaking for Te Waharoa but the human medium who helped him to appear. Tamihana was not inclined to take the request seriously and laughingly asked the atua “How will you be able to put it on?” Te Waharoa then took his leave and promised to send Whitiki, another atua who was reputed to be of Nga Puhi extraction but dwelled with the atua of Ngati Haua. After a few moments silent waiting, something again fell with a bump on the roof and rustled its way across the roof, this time going down and along the thatched walls of the house and then back to the roof, above the old lady. A whistling voice was heard again, this time in Nga Puhi dialect.

Whitiki said he had taken the form of a spider but like the lizard refused to show himself to Shortland. Shortland then subjected Whitiki to some questions that he thought might trip him up; Whitiki dealt with them very astutely but

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50 Ibid., 92.
51 Taylor 1855: 45.
52 Shortland 1856: 93.
Shortland noted an error of fact on one point. The final atua to appear was the spirit of a dead baby which spoke in a small squeaking voice rather like an infant. The first thing it did was make a joke, which Shortland did not understand but made Tamihana "laugh heartily."\footnote{Ibid., 95.}

Tuakaraina, still hoping that something awful would befall Shortland, spoke to it, "Child, do be angry with the foreigner, - he has stolen my comb and left it in a cook house." The infant did not take Tuakaraina's accusation seriously and responded with a scatological insult, "To u rokeroke" which Shortland thought "not sufficiently delicate for translation."\footnote{Ibid., 96.}

Then, after laughing heartily at his vile joke, in the same squeaking tones, it also departed, laughing as it went; for we heard the voice gradually dying away till lost, as it were, in the distance.

After that we heard no more Atua; and the old woman removing her blanket from her face, and raising her head, as though just awaked from a trance, inquired if I was satisfied.\footnote{Shortland (1856: 96) renders it "You be ..." . Rokeroke must be a word for excrement, see the entry for "roke" in Williams (1971).}

Shortland's experience did not take place in the usual circumstances. Such an event would not normally have taken place in a house where food was stored. Subsequently the house and everything in it was tapu, and the old lady lost all the baskets of potatoes that were stored in the house because of the visitation by the atua. A more usual setting must have been the communal sleeping house where food was prohibited. Because the lady was a Christian convert, albeit a recent one, it is difficult to be certain if she would ordinarily have shared a house with her potatoes at harvest time. If she did, that would place her in agreement with other sources that put women, even important women one step closer to the handling and preparation of food than men. I discuss the association women had with preparing and handling food in detail in chapter six.

Shortland's account also indicates that Best was less than fair in his summary of\footnote{Shortland 1856: 96.}
female roles. He stated that women never acted as tohunga "of the higher ranks" but occasionally might be the medium for "fourth-class" atua such as a "cacodemons" (evil spirits). Shortland gives no information concerning the woman's standing in relation to her people. Indeed he does not call her a tohunga or even a "priestess" but she acts as a medium for a conversation between the former chief, Te Waharoa, and his living heir, Wiremu Tamihana. This must have been a rather powerful role and before the spread of Christianity a woman with the talent for such performances must have stood rather a good chance of influencing chiefly opinion. The sources we have surveyed suggest that women may have acted as mediums reasonably often. One reason for this may be that it gave them an opportunity to wield a degree of influence over tribal and chiefly opinion that was not available to them through more direct methods.

Shortland's account has a good deal in common with Maning's accounts of similar occasions, with the exception that Maning's mediums were men. In one case that Maning records, the medium was a man known for his expertise who had travelled from another village at the request of the friends and relatives of a popular young chief who had recently died. The skill in ventriloquism that the man had was similar to the Ngati Haua woman in Shortlands account. As in Shortland's account the atua did not come until the fire had died down and it dealt with an inquiry very astutely. The question of presents or payment also came up and was discussed briefly; the dead man specifically requested that his tame pig and gun should go to the priest. Just as Tamihana made light of Te Waharoa's request for gifts, the dead man's brother did not feel bound to follow this request to the letter and insisted that he should retain his brother's gun.

57 Best 1924a: I, 271.
59 Ibid., 143-8.
60 Ibid., 148.
61 Ibid., 147-8.
does seem likely, however, that mediums of renown may have been able to make a satisfactory living from their activities.

Because direct communication with atua was not limited by gender or rank, it may be that this method offered persons access to a degree of influence and authority that they could not have had otherwise. This may be the reason that women seem to be especially prominent in the records as mediums for atua.

II. Ariki and Tapu Removal.

We have seen Buddle remark that the chief tohunga of a tribe might also be the principal chief "uniting in his own person the rank of Ariki, or lord, and chief priest." Williams in his definitions of ariki, gives priority to the meaning "first-born", male or female, of an important family. As a consequence it can also mean chief or priest. Colenso presents the term as one that relates to lineage and the leadership of the tribe. The ariki, according to him, is "the head of the tribe, being the first-born (male or female) by the eldest branch; the lineal heir or heiress." 63

Earlier definitions of ariki indicate it was a term that may have been applied to a role that was primarily religious in character rather than a term that applied to the chief. Kendall gives the following meanings for ariki: a "representative of God", a "priest". 44 D’Urville formed the impression that it might apply to a chief whose region of influence was unusually wide but thought the significance of ariki was "more religious than political." 65

Shortland gives an explanation which fits well with Kendall’s definition of ariki:

The heads of families ... in both the female and male line, are regarded

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62 Williams 1971: cf. Williams 1844: 6 where the definition given is simply "A chief; a priest."
63 Colenso 1868: 21.
44 Kendall 1820: 136.
45 Dumont d’Urville 1834-5: 51.
by their family with a veneration almost akin to that of their Atua. They form, as it were, the links of connection between the living and the spirits of the dead; and the ceremony releasing any thing from the restriction of tapu cannot be perfected without their intervention.  

Shortland’s description of an ariki thus centres very clearly on a ritual role. His accounts of various rituals indicate that these persons were often called upon to consume tapu food in rituals to remove tapu; and it was often a woman who took this role. The term “wahine ariki” was used by some of Shortland’s Maori sources to refer to a senior female relative who performed rituals to remove tapu, and we have already encountered some examples of this usage applied to women in the preceding chapter, in rituals to remove the tapu of childbirth, and the tapu from the hands after hair cutting. “Wahine ariki” is not the only expression used, one of Shortland’s manuscripts which describes the kaikataoa rite performed over a newborn child calls the woman who performs the rite the “tupuna wahine”, a senior female relative.  

We have seen that some of the definitions of ariki suggest a chiefly priest. This may explain why Buddle’s description of one of the tohunga’s roles, for example, bears a very close resemblance to Shortland’s account of the ritual roles of ariki: “They are in fact representatives of the gods, and receive all the offerings which are to propitiate their deities, part of which is consumed by themselves”. This overlap may in part be explained by the fact that the chief tohunga, if not the chief himself, was often well placed in the family hierarchy of the chief.  

Yate and Polack both also make references to the ritual consumption of food by chiefly men. Yate writes:

> After the completion of some special work, I have known the “poapoa,” or sacred food, to be carried on a spear upwards of sixty miles, in order that it may be eaten by some great man, and that he may become tapued, as an honour to himself and to the circumstances out of which it arose.  

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66 Shortland 1856: 103-4.  
67 Shortland MS3c: 12.  
68 Buddle 1851: 22.  
69 Yate 1835: 88.
Polack gives a similar account of a man he encountered in the early 1830s:

On the road we met with a man who was carrying some poapoa, or sacred food, consisting of some tápued pigeons, which were intended to be eaten by a chief near Kaihu. The bearer being tápued was not allowed to break his fast until he had delivered the provision, of which it is accounted an honour to partake, being reserved for the principal chiefs of the country. I offered the man food, but it was refused with horror; for the fellow was assured the Atua would devour him if he broke his fast before he delivered his errand.⁷⁹

It seems then that there were two roles that could overlap. Firstly, there were tohunga, the men who had been taught specialized religious knowledge by their fathers who might also be a senior member of the chief’s family. Secondly, principal chiefs and persons of the most senior lineage in a family or tribe, independent of whether they were the priest, were required to consume tapu food in tapu removal rituals. It is in this role that senior women very often appear in the sources.

We have seen in the preceding chapter that one of Shortland’s accounts of the rituals performed over a chiefly child, shows a tohunga performing a karakia which dedicates the child to his or her future role. But the rituals to remove the tapu are done by the child’s father and the child’s eldest female relative. The father cooks some fern root on a small sacred fire and then touches the child’s head, back and various other parts of the body with the fern root and then eats it. The next morning the same act is done by the female relative. Shortland calls a ritual act performed by the senior woman “ruahine” and says it means “old woman”.⁷¹ As a term used in ritual, it appears to be more or less synonymous with tapu removal rituals performed by women.⁷² It is also applied to a woman who performed these rituals.

The ritual removal of tapu by a senior woman appears again in a description of


⁷¹ Shortland 1856: 145 cf. Williams (1844: 121) - the definition of “ruwahine” is “old woman”. In Williams (1871) the definitions given are “old woman” and “woman under the restriction of ‘tapu’.”

⁷² See eg, Grey 1928:16, 60.
the removal of tapu from warriors who had returned from a war party given by Wiremu Tamihana. The ceremony to make the war party noa was not complete until the highest ranking woman of the tribe ("te wahine te tino ariki") ate the left ear of the war party’s first victim.\textsuperscript{73} In the case of Ngati Haua and some other tribes, human flesh was a tapu food and, except for this woman, only men were permitted to consume it. The ritual suggests how important the ruahine could be, she does what other women may not. This feature also appears in a mid-nineteenth-century account of a South Island whare kura, where one woman attends an exclusively male occasion in a ritual capacity. I discuss this in detail below.

Yate’s comment indicates that the consumption of food in tapu removal appears was an honour that reflects a person’s rank and enhances a personal tapu. Shortland’s general account of ariki suggests this too, as does the Ngati Haua rite that calls on the most senior woman to be the only woman to consume a portion of a slain enemy. Yet some of the sources on aged women in related roles are not overwhelmingly positive. Brown connects the role that aged women took in removing the tapu with their role in tending the dead, and clearly saw it as a burden rather than an honour:

... the person who takes off the tapu must take all the duties, or rather encumbrances of it upon himself. This is generally done by an old woman, who is constantly sacred or tapued, and such are generally chosen to handle dead bodies, so that as few persons as possible may be put in this helpless condition.\textsuperscript{74}

Yate’s remark also suggests a certain ambivalence in the tapu prohibitions that tended to fall on old women and their exclusion from other types of tapu:

Old women are generally the persons who suffer most, or, rather who are most frequently honoured with the tapu, and with all the works connected with it; though there are some with which they never have anything to do.\textsuperscript{75}

\textsuperscript{73} Shortland MS3c: 12 cf. Shortland 1856: 248.

\textsuperscript{74} Brown 1851:11.

\textsuperscript{75} Yate 1835: 86-7.
Taylor also gives a variant of the term ruahine, "ruawahine" and defines it "priestess of the third rank" which contrasts with his definition of "ariki" whom he calls a priest of "the first rank", and tohunga whom he calls priests of "the second rank." These ambivalent remarks about the women who removed tapu suggest that their role was perhaps not usually accompanied by the political power that accompanied male chiefs who could also participate in rituals to remove tapu.

III. Women and Tapu Removal: Twentieth Century Interpretation.

The role of the ruahine or high ranking or senior woman in removing tapu by consuming food or stepping over the tapu object or person has been discussed in detail by Johansen. He concludes from the evidence gleaned from a combination of nineteenth-century sources and Best's twentieth-century works that women were thought to be especially powerful agents of tapu removal because they are noa and have a strong association with everyday life.\footnote{Taylor 1870: 57, 63, 65.}

The idea that women are especially prominent in rituals to remove tapu because women were thought to be noa while men were thought to be tapu can be traced back to Best's early work on Tuhoe birth customs, where he remarks, that while the first born children - male and female - of the chief were tapu, and thus excluded from various lowly labours such as preparing food, "in a general sense a male is tapu and a female is noa, or common, i.e., void of tapu. Hence women are employed to take the tapu off, or make common, any tapu person or object."\footnote{Johansen 1954: 214-29.} This same interpretation reappears in Best's later work, "Women render all things noa or void of tapu, for they are as a rule, viewed as the very antithesis\footnote{Best 1906a: 26.}
of tapu. At the same time some high-class women were tapu." 79

Most recently F. Allan Hanson has rejected this interpretation on the basis that Best has contradicted himself for it is precisely those tapu women that Best describes as participating in rituals to remove tapu.80 We have already seen in mid-nineteenth-century sources that the woman who takes this role is a senior relative or high ranking woman. In one of Shortland’s accounts, for example, the ritual to remove the tapu from a chiefly boy is completed by a senior female relative of the child who steps over him. In Wiremu Tamihana’s description of the removal of a war tapu, the highest ranking woman available consumes the ear of the slain enemy.

Johansen’s explanation for the appearance of high-ranking women in this role is that such women represent women’s noa nature, but they are, through the tapu associated with rank, the most elevated example of this noa female nature.81 Thus such a woman does not entirely destroy the tapu that would still cling to the chief’s first-born, or to warriors; she simply reduces the tapu to a point where they can safely participate in the ordinary life of the community. This interpretation would suggest that in ritual Maori exploited the apparent contradiction that rank confers a person with tapu, yet women were thought to be noa. In Hanson’s interpretation, however, this is a logical contradiction that must be resolved. He strengthens his case by citing three sources that showed women performing the same ritual acts that had generally been thought typical of tapu removal rituals in rituals where the participants were made tapu rather than released from it.

My aim in the following analysis is to show the problems that can arise from an undue reliance on early twentieth-century general works on the New Zealand Maori; and also to demonstrate the merits of seeking out the earliest possible sources on a given subject, even if, in some instances we can only go back as far as

79 Best 1924b: 407.
80 Hanson 1982: 348.
Best's research among the turn of the century Tuhoe.

*A Female Role in Maori Ritual: a Re-examination of the Evidence.*

F. Allan and Louise Hanson, as part of their argument that tapu and noa had no connection to gender difference, produced a striking reinterpretation of a female role in a ritual described in three sources. They believed that these sources demonstrated that a woman stepping over a person or object could sometimes make that person or object tapu. The Hansons also noted that they could not discern any particular feature or "marker" which distinguished those rituals where a woman removed tapu from those rituals where a woman made a person or thing tapu. If women were generally excluded from rituals because of their unstable relationship to tapu, and if they were generally able to make things either tapu or noa, it does seem odd that the rituals to produce or remove tapu were not distinguished in any clear way. The Hansons suggested that this was a matter for further research. I agree and will begin my study of female roles in ritual with the three sources that they selected.

*An Investigation into a Female Role in Rituals to Restore Courage.*

One of the rituals on which the Hansons drew was a cure for a warrior suffering from weakness and fear before battle. The Hansons cite two sources for this: Elsdon Best's *The Maori* (1924) and Edward Tregear's *The Maori Race* (1904). According to the Hansons these sources show that a ruahine would step over the reclining warrior thus curing him and also making him tapu.

These sources are obviously rather late for a study of early nineteenth-century religion and for that reason alone deserve a closer inspection than they have hitherto received. In the first place, I will examine Best's material as he presents it

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81 Hanson 1982: 349; Hanson and Hanson 1983:88-9
82 Best 1924: II, 228.
83 Tregear 1904: 336.
in The Maori and compare it with the same material as it appears in an early publication of his field notes on the Tuhoe in the 1890s, "Notes on the Art of War" (1902-1903). This early material of Best's is also certainly the original source for Tregear's statements on the subject. My comparison will provide a useful case study for demonstrating the caution that must be employed when using early twentieth-century ethnographies.

In The Maori Best describes the situation of a warrior who had lost his nerve. The warrior could be "afflicted" by a number of "conditions" which Best lists as "hauhauaitu, pahunu, hinapo, tumatarehurehu, etc." 85 These conditions, were Best says,

the result of some transgression of the laws of tapu, that is to say of offences against the gods... A person so affected loses his nerve... the gods are not with him; their sustaining, vivifying power has been withdrawn. He has become pahunu [anxious], he is assailed by tumatarehurehu, he is afflicted by hinapo [dimness of sight], and can no longer see the warning signs of the gods. The writer is inclined to think that Tu-mata-rehurehu (dim-eyed Tu) and Tu-mata-pongia (sightless Tu) are personified forms of this condition of hinapo. 86

Best connects a loss of nerve with the idea that there has been a loss of communion with the gods, he can no longer see their "warning signs". This is a plausible connection; it is evident in early sources that Maori set great store on the predictive power of dreams, omens and other communications from the gods. It seems reasonable to suppose that war would be one of those contexts where the participants were at considerable risk and were even more concerned with portents than usual. They would want to be assured that the atua were readily available to communicate with them when necessary.

Although Best, in the passage quoted above, initially describes tumatarehurehu as one of a range of conditions where a warrior loses his courage, he then goes on to use the word as a proper name: "The writer is inclined to think that Tu-mata-

86 Ibid.
rehurehu (dim-eyed Tu) and Tu-mata-pongia (sightless Tu) are personified forms of this condition of hinapo.\textsuperscript{87}

The question of quite what Best meant by “personified forms” is one to which I will return. At this point, I note that Tu-mata-rehurehu (dim-eyed Tu) and Tu-mata-pongia (sightless Tu) are strikingly obvious inversions of the name sometimes given to the first warrior of Maori mythology: Tu-mata-uenga, Tu of the flashing eyes.\textsuperscript{88} Williams provides us with three more similarly constructed words whose definitions relate to some state of apprehension or loss of courage: tumatakuru, tumatatenga, tumatawhaiti.\textsuperscript{89} All could be broken up into names the same way that Best did for Tu-mata-pongia and Tu-mata-rehurehu, to give: Tu-mata-kuru (Tu with weary eyes), Tu-mata-tenga (Tu with extinguished eyes), Tu-mata-whaiti (Tu with narrow eyes).\textsuperscript{90} For tumatakuru, Williams gives us an exemplary phrase: “When one shivers, the edges of the eyes redden and the shoulders shake; that is the tumatakuru.”\textsuperscript{91} Thus we have here a description of symptoms rather like an illness. Best supplied a good deal of the material that appears in Williams and it is probable that we have here some of Best’s “etc.” that he left out in the above account.

Best in The Maori also describes some ritual cures for these conditions:

Should men of the fighting force be afflicted by these evils it becomes necessary to remove them ... the afflicted person passes between the legs of the priest of the party, or those of a chief. If a woman is available, the sufferer will lie down and get her to step over him, or, as the Maori phrases it, he passes below her thighs... In some cases the afflicted man just inserted his head between the limbs of a woman. We are also told that the apron or kilt of an influential woman was carried by an armed force in some cases, and a man afflicted by hauhauaitu would wrap it

\textsuperscript{87} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{88} See e.g., Grey 1928: 1-5.

\textsuperscript{89} Williams 1971: 453.

\textsuperscript{90} Tumatawhaiti is said to be one of Tumatauenga’s names, acquired after he defeated his brothers (Grey 1928: 4).

\textsuperscript{91} Williams (1971: 453) gives the phrase in Maori only “Ka wiri, ka whero te taha o nga whatu, ka ruru nga pakahiwi; koia te tumatakuru.” Cf. Williams (1844: 151) “Tumatatenga”: “To be afraid”.

around his head, and let it remain there a few minutes.\textsuperscript{92}

It is clear enough in Best's account that a frightened warrior's courage could be restored by various rituals which seem to share the similar notion that the genitals of certain persons have a curative effect: being stepped over by a woman, placing his head inside an influential woman's apron, passing between the legs of the male chief or priest accompanying the war party. But we do not get any intimation that the man has been made tapu by the act. Edward Tregear, on the other hand, does say that the woman stepping over the warrior made him tapu:

a priestess (\textit{tapairu}, in this case called \textit{ruahine}) of high rank would step over any person so afflicted. The priest had by incantations to cleanse this man, as he would be tapu on account of a woman having stepped over him.\textsuperscript{93}

The Hansons have presumably relied on Edward Tregear's comment in \textit{The Maori Race} for their interpretation, and read Best's account in \textit{The Maori} in this light. Before going any further, it is worth evaluating these two sources. Tregear's \textit{The Maori Race} is the first published attempt to produce a general work on the Maori. It is also a textual synthesis, produced from the material available in the journals of the time, most notably the \textit{Journals of the Polynesian Society} and \textit{The Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute}. \textit{The Maori Race} might also be fairly described as a popularizing work, intended for a wide readership. The book is, as Tregear himself wrote, "a fairly efficient attempt to cover an immense ground within the space of a single book one can hold without difficulty."\textsuperscript{94} Tregear also indicated that the "mass of material" available to him made the task a hard one.

Best's work, \textit{The Maori}, is the second published attempt at a general work with much the same aims. Best contrasts with Tregear on one point because Tregear's study was solely a textual synthesis, while Best's work draws on his ethnographic fieldwork. In Best's work, however, we have a synthesis of information gleaned

\textsuperscript{92} Best 1924b: II: 227-8.

\textsuperscript{93} Tregear 1904: 336.

\textsuperscript{94} Howe 1991: 153.
from a wide variety of sources, including historical records, research among aged Tuhoe at the turn of the century, and relatively late Ngati Kahungunu material. In any case, as Best himself remarked in the preface to *The Maori*, “it was necessary to omit a great deal of detail matter”.

Both *The Maori* and *The Maori Race* suffer from certain limitations as popularizing, generalised accounts. It will always be worth checking earlier publications where we can view the material in its original published context, as yet unshaped by the pressures of producing a synthesis of a diverse range of material for a general audience. In this case, Best’s series of articles “Notes on the Art of War”, which appeared in the *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 1902-1903, give a good deal more detail on the subject than can be found in Tregear’s and Best’s general works. These articles contain Best’s earliest published descriptions of rituals to cure a warrior of a loss of courage. Best also states in his introduction to “Notes on the Art of War” that his primary concern was to publish the material he had collected in his field notes while he was living among the Tuhoe in the late 1890s. The articles certainly appear to be a relatively unprocessed collection of material. Thus we are probably as close as we can get to viewing Best’s research in its original context without archival research.

The mass of relatively unprocessed detail that Best presents in these articles, and others like them in the *Journal of the Polynesian Society* and the *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute* is the great merit of his work; it is also unfortunately the reason those later general works like *The Maori Race* and *The Maori* are so appealing, even to scholars in the field. These general works give relative order to a chaotic collection of material but is a great pity that they were published without references to the sources on which they drew.

In “Notes on the Art of War” Best gives an account of a ritual performed by a

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93 Best 1924: I, xi.

94 Best 1902a: 11.
high ranking woman called a tapairu to restore courage to a warrior or to prevent him from losing it:

[The ritual] ... was sometimes performed by a tapairu ..., both as a cure and as a prevention. While engaged in such tasks a woman is known as a ruahine. As a rule the person lies down and the woman steps over him, the priest reciting the invocation to loosen the grip of Tu-mata-rehurehu, and restore the man who from the sacredotal point of view is unclean.97

Best explains his use of the word "unclean" in a footnote, "i.e., unclean, if he has infringed a law of tapu." A comparison of Best's description of the ritual with Tregear's account in The Maori Race is illuminating. Tregear's account is neater and more succinct but bears a close resemblance to Best's. It would be remarkable if Tregear in his chapter on "War, War Omens and Murder" had not drawn on Best's extensive "Notes on the Art of War", whether in published or manuscript form. Not only would they have been an obvious resource for any scholar but Tregear's friendship with Best and his work for the Polynesian Society, as editor of the journal until 1901 and then as president until 1903, make it all the more likely.

Tregear's rendition of the ritual is almost certainly a neat summary of Best's account in "Notes on the Art of War." There are, however, two points where Tregear's summary is at variance with Best. Firstly, Best does not say the man is tapu because the woman has stepped over him, he uses the word "unclean". Best uses the term "unclean" for tapu in certain circumstances, including childbirth and the tapu of the menses. Tregear's use of the word tapu here is warranted and a better choice than "unclean". The second point where Tregear differs from Best, Tregear has clearly misread him. Best does not state, as Tregear does, that this tapu (or uncleanness as Best translates it) is the consequence of the woman having stepped over the warrior. Two pages earlier Best makes it reasonably clear that frightened warrior was already tapu, that was the nature of his condition as a

97 Best 1902a: 51.
man afflicted by hinapo and pahunu. 

Best, for example, describes potential causes of hinapo (dimness of sight) and pahunu (anxiety). These include the eating of tapu food such as the meal of the eldest daughter or son in a chiefly family, or the eating of food that had been left for an atua. These are definitely "transgressions of the law of tapu". Shortland is one early writer attempts an explanation for why eating a tapu person's food was such an awful thing to do. According to Shortland, tapu restrictions were transmitted by physical contact whereby some part of the tapu person's or the atua's presence was transmitted. This explained why chiefs, and certain members of their families were subject to a range of prohibitions relating to contact with food and its preparation.

[T]he portion of the spiritual essence of an Atua, or of a sacred person, was communicated directly to objects which they touched, and also that the spiritual essence so communicated to any object was afterwards more or less retransmitted to any thing else brought into contact with it. ... the act of eating food which had touched anything tapu involved the necessity of eating the sacred essence of the Atua, from whom it derived its sacredness. If to eat an enemy was the greatest insult to be offered to him, how horrible to eat anything containing a particle of the divine essence.

This also explains why one would not eat the leftover food of the chief's heirs for example, it had been in contact with the tapu person and thus had something of the tapu person within it. And the breaking of a tapu prohibition itself made a person tapu. Maning, for example, describes the state of tapu that left him shunned by his Maori friends and neighbours after he, against their advice, ate with his hands after handling an ancestral skull. No one would have anything to do with him until he had undergone a period of isolation and the priest had performed a rite to remove the tapu. Because he had used his kitchen while in this state of tapu, the priest smashed all his cooking vessels and no one ever

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98 Best 1902a: 49.
99 Ibid.
100 Shortland 1856: 102.
entered his kitchen again and he had to build a new one.\textsuperscript{101}

Best’s most illuminating comment on the consequences of the tapu violations that could destroy a warrior’s courage is: “The special atua which presides over and is the cause of such afflictions is known as Tu-mata-rehurehu.”\textsuperscript{102} By contrast, his statement two decades later in \textit{The Maori} is a good deal less clear: “The writer is inclined to think that Tu-mata-rehurehu (dim-eyed Tu) and Tu-mata-pongia (sightless Tu) are personified forms of this condition of \textit{hinapo}.”\textsuperscript{103} Best in his later interpretation has left out an important piece of information that he gives in his earlier notes: Tumatarehurehu was an atua.

The notion that fear was caused by an atua is also found in earlier documented material. Shortland notes that if a young or inexperienced warrior was stricken with fear before or during a battle it was believed to be the result of “the baneful influence” of a hostile atua.\textsuperscript{104} Best’s Tuhoe ritual reflects a similar world view. The cure was for the “family tohunga or priest” to repeat a karakia which would invoke the aid of the tohunga’s atua, which would, if successful, expel the hostile atua. It is possible that the actions of the “priestess” remarked on by Cruise in 1820 may refer to a similar kind of ritual:

An elderly female, or kind of priestess, of the tribe of any warrior who is going to fight, abstains from food for two days, and on the third, when purified and influenced by the Atua, after various ceremonies, pronounces him an incantation for the success and safety of him she is about to send into battle.\textsuperscript{105}

\textbf{Tu-mata-rehurehu was an Atua: Further Comment.}

An analysis of both the language of Best’s Tuhoe informants and a comparison with earlier Maori language sources confirms Best’s statement that Tu-mata-rehurehu was an atua, and also suggests that the ritual cures for a warrior who

\textsuperscript{101} Maning 1863: 126-7.

\textsuperscript{102} Best 1902a: 48.

\textsuperscript{103} Best 1924: II, 227-8.

\textsuperscript{104} Shortland 1856: 81-2.

\textsuperscript{105} Cruise 1824: 269.
had lost his courage were to rid him of this atua and its accompanying tapu.

In “Notes on the Art of War,” Best records the Tuhoe proverb, “Kaua e aroaro-rua, kei ngaua koe e Tu-mata-rehurehu.”106 “Do not vacillate, lest you be attacked by Tumatarehurehu” (my translation). The verb “ngau” which can mean “to attack” has the more literal meaning “to bite”. It is a verb applied to the activities of atua in mid-nineteenth-century Maori language sources. Ngau appears, for instance, as the verb for an attack by an atua.107 Ngau is also used as a verb to refer to the atua’s consumption of a food offering.108 We have seen in chapter three (p.92-3) that atua were believed to cause illness and death and did so by feeding on their human victims.

Best, oddly enough, translates aroaro-rua (which I have translated as vacillate) as a verb meaning to violate a tapu. This may have been perhaps a specifically Tuhoe usage but I have followed the definition given by Williams.109 Aro and aroaro mean either “to face” or “to consider” and rua is, of course, “two”. The term suggests indecisiveness, being in two minds on an issue, or dithering, rather than a tapu violation. Tapu violations were generally an explanation for a variety of misfortunes, and seem to have been thought of as the major cause of a loss of courage. Best’s translation reflects this general context but I suggest that this proverb reflects a psychological observation rather than one relating to a violation of tapu. Warfare is very likely a time for decisive action, not undue reflection which would very likely lead to an attack of the jitters.

Whakahorohoro: The Goal of the Tuhoe Ritual.

Another statement given by Best’s Tuhoe informants refers to an attack by Tumatarehurehu and the ritual cure performed by the ruahine:

106 Best 1902a: 50.
108 Grey 1928: 94.
109 Williams 1971: 16.
Mehemea ka haere koe ki te riri, ka parangia e Tu-mata-rehurehu, ka puta koe i raro i nga kuwha o te ruahine, hai whakahorohoro tena i nga hauhauaitu, i nga hinapo.\textsuperscript{110}

Best’s translation runs:

If you go into battle and you are overcome by Tu-mata-rehurehu, pass under the thighs of the ruahine, that is to abolish the hauhauaitu and the hinapo.\textsuperscript{111}

The word that Best translates as “abolish” is “whakahorohoro”. Whakahoro, Williams tells us means “make free from tapu,” this verb is used, for example, in a mid-nineteenth-century Maori text, to refer to the removal of a tapu from a waka.\textsuperscript{112} Williams also defines “horohoro” as “remove ceremonial restrictions” which amounts to the same thing; the causitive prefix “whaka” seems to make little or no difference here. We have seen in the preceding chapter that constructions based on horo also appear in other contexts, for example, rituals to remove the tapu from childbirth and to remove the tapu from the hands after hair cutting. Comparable language and ideas can be found, therefore in tapu removal rituals where food is ceremonially consumed and in those where a woman steps over a warrior.

Thus there can be no doubt that whakahorohoro in the Tuhoe statement quoted above is a verb that refers to the removal of a tapu. The ruahine’s act of stepping over the warrior is a type of tapu removal, in this case she is ridding the warrior of an unwanted atua. Her act here can be compared to the material on illness discussed in chapter three where the general explanation for an illness was that it was the consequence of an attack by a malign and vengeful atua. We have seen that certain types of plant might be used as a pathway to send the atua on its way, and that Te Rangikaheke specifies that these plants are used by women when they put on their aprons.

\textsuperscript{110} Best 1902a: 51.

\textsuperscript{111} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{112} Williams 1971: 61; Grey 1928: 94.
In Best’s Tuhoe material, a woman by stepping over a frightened warrior will send the atua causing the fear away. In The Maori, Best says that the frightened warrior might even put his head in a high ranking woman’s apron. I have not been able to trace this to any earlier statement of Best’s but it can be compared to Best’s statements in the Lore of the Whare Kohanga where he says that men should not use a woman’s garment for a pillow, lest it damage their tapu (see chapter three, p. 115). If a high ranking woman’s apron was used to cure a frightened warrior, then it appears to be a ritual that accords with Johansen’s thesis reasonably well, that high ranking women still have women’s tapu destroying qualities but it is elevated by their rank and they remove only what needs to be removed leaving a man’s personal tapu intact.

Conclusions on the Ritual Cure for a Frightened Warrior.

In Best’s earlier material on the cure for a warrior who has lost his supernatural vision and his courage it is clear that an atua is being removed and sent on its way. Both Shortland’s and Te Rangikaheke’s material on illnesses and ritual cures show a similar situation, illness is caused by aggressive atua who must then be removed.

Both a loss of courage and an illness involve a tapu. One possible explanation for both conditions was that the victim had violated a tapu. Tapu violations generally make the violator tapu. Best’s comment that the nervous warrior was “unclean” as a result of infringing a law of tapu indicates this. Another possible cause was a magical attack by an enemy (makutu), this sometimes leads us back to a tapu violation, one of the methods by which makutu was believed to be effected was by tricking the victim into violating a tapu.133 The Tuhoe proverb, discussed above, suggests a psychological cause for a warriors loss of courage, an indecisive warrior might be vulnerable to an attack by Tu-mata-rehurehu. Whatever the ultimate cause, the most immediate cause of these conditions is the unwanted

133 Shortland 1856: 116-8.
presence of an atua and an atua is a tapu being.

Thus these rituals do not have as their aim the restoration of a tapu, as has been claimed, but to rid the sufferer of an unwanted atua. The information that we have shows that rituals performed over sick people to cure them were rituals to remove a god. The general thrust of such rituals was probably much the same as the ritual performed over a convalescent. The aim is to restore the victim to a state where the victim is no longer tapu, in the sense that the unwanted godly presence has been removed. The same was also true of rituals to restore courage, an unwanted god was exorcised and an unwanted tapu removed.

The Development of Twentieth Century Interpretation.

We have in the above material traced a sequence in the development of recent interpretation, noting how some crucial pieces of information were lost and distorted in Tregear’s and Best’s general interpretation. Tregear misinterpreted Best’s explanation of a ritual where a woman steps over a warrior. By the time Best wrote The Maori, Tumatarehurehu who is very clearly an atua in his earlier work has become something far more nebulous: “The writer is inclined to think that Tu-mata-rehurehu (dim-eyed Tu) and Tu-mata-pongia (sightless Tu) are personified forms of this condition of hinapo.” Best describes the warrior’s condition solely in terms of an absence of the gods, not an unwanted presence: “A person so afflicted loses his nerve... the gods are not with him; their sustaining, vivifying power has been withdrawn.”

Best’s depiction of the nervous warrior’s condition as a withdrawal by the gods can be compared with Shortland’s description of a sick man’s condition. Shortland too suggests a certain loss of tapu and a withdrawal of the gods: “the sacred state of the sick man has been damaged, and the spirits of his departed ancestors displeased.” If we stopped there, we might be led to conclude that a ritual cure would be directed toward restoring the man’s tapu. “But,” continues Shortland, “the active cause being some infant sprite, who commissioned as
avenger, has entered into him, and is feeding on his vitals; the cure can only be affected by driving out this spirit."\(^{114}\)

Bearing in mind that the "infant sprite" as Shortland calls it is an atua, that is to say a god, the condition is not so much a withdrawal of the gods but a disruption in the relationship. The gods are angry and seek vengeance, and the sick man has not as a consequence become a godless, tapu-less or noa person but one who actually has a god inside him; a lesser and vengeful one that is eating him up, but nonetheless a god. We might also note that a sick person is suffering one of the worst fates in Maori society, the invalid is being eaten. In the human world, someone who is safely consumed by another is defeated and a person who has been eaten has had their personal tapu desecrated. Food for the gods, is, however, generally tapu.

We have seen then that the Hansons' interpretation of the ritual where a woman restores a man's courage as simply a restoration of the gods and a tapu is misled. Part of this misinterpretation is the result of relying unduly on early twentieth century general ethnographies. The Hansons have been led astray by Best's vagueness and omission in The Maori and Tregear's misunderstanding of the information that Best gives in his earlier and more detailed work on Tuhoe war customs. There is a certain irony in this, given Allan Hanson's later work on the role of writers like Best and Tregear in "inventing" Maori tradition.\(^{115}\)

A second factor the Hansons' misinterpretation is, I suspect, an overly dualistic notion of tapu and noa. War parties, on especially dangerous expeditions were tapu, sometimes extremely tapu, and at this time were supposed to be in close communion with their gods.\(^{116}\) They were separated from ordinary village life and required a tapu removal ceremony before they could return to it.\(^{117}\)

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\(^{114}\) Shortland 1856: 126.

\(^{115}\) Hanson 1989.

\(^{116}\) See e.g. Maning (1863: 111-2) for the tapu of war parties. See e.g., Shortland (1856: 82) on the presence of the gods during war (see also chapter two of this work).

\(^{117}\) See e.g., the Ngati Haua ritual described by Wiremu Tamihana, cited above (p. 174).
If a warrior loses this communion with the gods, one could easily leap to the conclusion that he is no longer tapu and that any ritual cure must be to restore his tapu. Tapu, however, seems generally to have been a mark of separation from the collective. So a frightened warrior might be tapu in the sense that he has the wrong god with him and is no longer part of the courageous collective that makes up a war party that is to say, warriors and their war god(s).

In the light of the ritual cures for illness and loss of courage that we have discussed, it is worth commenting on a comparable Marquesan ritual where a woman’s genitals were used to cure an illness. Thomas has used the Hansons’ interpretation of Maori ritual to shed light upon this ritual because there are so few Marquesan sources on these matters. Thomas concludes that the ritual was one to restore a tapu and the presence of those atua (the Marquesan word is etua) which sustain health and life. An explanation drawing on extant Maori sources, however, would make the ritual one which removes an atua.

In the above material I have traced the development of a twentieth-century interpretation that begins with an error of Tregear’s in The Maori Race and is compounded by Best’s vagueness and omissions in his general work The Maori. Best’s material as he presented it in “Notes on the Art of War” gives the most detail, and shows that when the ruahine steps over a warrior who has lost his nerve she is not introducing a tapu, she is taking part in a kind of exorcism. She is helping to get rid of an atua and the state of tapu associated with it.

The Hansons claimed that these rituals showed that women could make men tapu by performing the same ritual acts generally associated with tapu removal. They used this evidence to support their argument that Best’s assertion that women were noa and men were tapu was mistaken. In showing the Hansons’ and Tregear’s interpretations to be incorrect, I have eliminated a piece of evidence used to support the assertion that tapu had nothing to do with gender.

Furthermore, the above material provides a case study which suggests how we...
should approach the material to be found in early twentieth-century 
ethnographies: attention should be given to the works’ purposes and sources. 
General works like The Maori and the Maori Race should not be used as 
authorities in themselves, they are best used as a guide to further research in 
earlier publications where more detailed accounts are presented and where the 
author is under less pressure to produce something for a very general audience. 
In the above case study, we may not only be seeing the effects of the pressures that 
the task of writing a general work can bring to bear on an ethnographer but also 
the effects of the passage of time. I think it likely that in later life Best was losing 
touch with his earlier work.

Best’s later works in general, even those which focus on a particular topic such 
as Maori Religion and Mythology, warrant the same caution. These works are a 
synthesis that reflects not only his research among the Tuhoe, but also his general 
reading in earlier historical sources, his acquaintance with the work of his 
contemporaries and his later enthusiasm for some relatively late Ngāti 
Kahungunu material. Every effort should be made to trace the material to be 
found in Best’s later works back to earlier sources, so that the evidence can be 
evaluated in its original context.

There is a limit to the conclusions that can be drawn from one case study, but 
this study does indicate that Best’s research among aged Tuhoe in the 1890s 
reflects a similar world view to that found in earlier sources. It is also possible 
that this resemblance does not derive solely from Tuhoe memories but also Best’s 
reading in historical sources which he used to frame his inquiry and to “fill in the 
gaps”. If one wishes to examine Maori culture as it was up to about the mid-
nineteenth century, there can be no substitute for a close examination of sources 
that date from the period in question.
A Ritual Performed by a Woman in a South Island Whare Kura

(House of Learning).

Having concluded that extant evidence does not show a ruahine making a warrior tapu by stepping over him, I have disposed of two of the Hansons' three sources. The remaining source would then, if it showed a woman making the participants tapu, seem to be an anomaly.

In The Ancient History of the Maori, John White gives an account of some Ngai Tahu rituals that were performed before chiefly boys were instructed in genealogies and karakia. The Ancient History of the Maori is bilingual, so there is both a Maori account of the ritual and an English one.119 The Hansons interpret one of the rituals described in the text in this way: "the students were made tapu by a procedure which included their eating a bit of fernroot which had been passed under the thigh of a woman".120

On first reading it seems that the English text is a rather loose translation of the Maori text but neither one gives any indication that the woman's ritual performance made the students tapu. In order to support this contention the obvious response was to subject the Maori text to a close reading. Although a close reading of this text indicates that it does not contain anything to support the Hansons' interpretation, an examination of the original manuscript shows that such a reading would serve no wider purpose. The worth of a close reading would largely depends on an analysis of the language as used by a Maori informant. About half of the original manuscript is in English, as noted down by a Pakeha researcher. Thus half of White's Maori text has a relatively distant relationship to the original statements in Maori.

119 White 1887-90, I:4-15 (Maori text); White 1887-90, I:8-16, (English text).
120 Hanson and Hanson 1983: 88-9; Hanson 1982: 349.
The Source for White’s Material on a Ngai Tahu Whare Kura.

White’s material on the Ngai Tahu whare kura derives from a manuscript written by a Wesleyan missionary, Charles Creed, who was based at Waikouaiti but travelled widely in the southern half of the South Island from 1844 to 1852. In a letter dated 1880 Creed’s son says that his father collected his information over thirty years before from the oldest priests and chiefs he met.

Creed’s manuscript on the whare kura is in the form of rough notes in a mixture of Maori and English. It reads as though Creed was taking notes from an informant who spoke in Maori but when Creed could not keep up his note-taking, he lapsed into English to record the gist of what was said.

For the most part White’s treatment of Creed’s text on the whare kura rituals is fair, although the order has been changed in places and occasionally statements not in the original document have been inserted. Nonetheless an interpretation based on a close reading of White’s Maori text would still be misguided. Parts of the original manuscript are in English, White’s Maori text in these portions is the language of a Pakeha translator not a Maori informant. White has also changed the order of some of the information and inserted a few statements that are not in the original. I shall therefore use the Creed manuscript.

Summary of the Information Contained in the Manuscript.

The text falls into three parts. The first part describes the rituals and tapu surrounding the construction of a tapu house where rangatira boys were instructed in certain karakia and traditions. Only rangatira boys and their fathers attended. Some of the rituals surrounding this course of instruction are described, including the one involving the woman under whose thighs the kumara is

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121 This manuscript can be found in the Polynesian Society Manuscripts 1187, folders 201-2. The contents of these folders are so disorganized that it is not possible to give page references in the following discussion.

122 See Tremewan (1992: 31-2) for some general comments on White’s work as an editor of Maori manuscripts.
passed, a ritual which is done at the beginning of the course of instruction. This is the ritual that the Hansons thought made the boys tapu.

In the second part of the text a large assembly house (whare whakarunanga nui) is discussed which, like the house of learning, is said to be tapu. Men and women who were excluded from the whare kura for chiefly boys could gather in this house at night in the winter and ask the tohunga certain things. The text describes a tapu removal ceremony performed after these sessions so that the common people may return to their daily work. The rest of the time the same house was used for sleeping in and to house visitors.

The final section of the text describes a whare tatai which stood outside of the pa where men discussed certain omens relating to the stars and made plans relating to getting food and the seasons. The text also describes certain rituals associated with the proceedings. Like the whare kura for rangatira boys it is described as a predominantly male affair. A tapu woman brought food into the house and one to three tapu women might remain in the house during the proceedings. This document thus conforms to what seems to have been a general pattern: a tapu woman might participate in what was otherwise a masculine preserve. We have seen another example of this in the Ngati Haua rite to remove the tapu from warriors: the most senior woman eats the flesh of an enemy, something that is prohibited to other women.

Peculiarities of the Text.

Best remarked in his short monograph on Maori schools of learning that the information in this text (as presented by White) should be “viewed with caution”.\textsuperscript{124} Unfortunately, he was not in the best of positions to judge. His key source whose authority he asserts repeatedly in his monograph is Te Matorohanga whose teachings he only gained access to through Te Whatahoro.

\textsuperscript{124} Best 1986: 10.
These sources have already been subject to historical criticism.\textsuperscript{125}

Best notes, in particular, two points which seemed odd to him. Firstly the text has children instructed in sacred lore, secondly the text has people eating inside tapu houses. On the first point, the instruction of children does not seem especially surprising and seems likely to be in continuity with life as it was in earlier times. Early nineteenth-century observers remark on the precocity of Maori children and the early age at which male children accompanied their fathers, and that chiefs’ sons spoke up in men’s discussions.\textsuperscript{126} Creed’s manuscript depicts a comparable situation, each boy is accompanied by his father in the school. Nor is the instruction of children by tohunga unique to Creed’s manuscript, one of Beattie’s South Island informants was first instructed by tohunga in 1858 when he was eight years old, and it was expected that they would continue to instruct him until he was about 16.\textsuperscript{127}

Creed’s manuscript also has people eating inside tapu houses. Food is eaten in both the whare tatai and the whare kura. Most early information from the North Island shows that Maori did not eat in their houses. Either southern practices differed or the text shows a later development, such as seems also to have occurred in the North Island.\textsuperscript{128}

Overall, however, the document must count as early, around 1850, and it is a document that - though in the form of rough notes, from the memory of an aged man - must count as relatively direct when compared to the process of writing and rewriting, and elaboration that Best’s information from Te Whatahoro

\textsuperscript{125} For a general discussion of the historicity of Te Whatahoro’s material see Simmons 1994 and also Orbell 1995: Biggs 1960: 41, 66-7, 69, 72 discusses Te Whatahoro’s shortcomings on material relating to birth and marriage.

\textsuperscript{126} See chapter four.

\textsuperscript{127} Beattie 1994: 370-1. The man never completed his course of instruction because both his instructors died and there was no one with the knowledge to replace them. For some comments on a whare kura in Otakau 1879-82, perhaps the last to be held for sons of chiefs in the South Island see Beattie 1994: 205.

\textsuperscript{128} See e.g., Cruise (1824: 179) and Nicholas (1817: L176) on the prohibition on eating inside houses. Missionary journals in the late 1820s remark on the decline of this prohibition in the 1820s (Wright 1967: 142).
underwent. In the following I will examine closely the ceremonies involved in
the whare kura as they are presented in Creed’s manuscript.

The text begins with a description of the ritual and tapu restrictions
surrounding the construction of a house in which chiefly boys are instructed. The
tohunga performs a karakia for one of the posts which supports the roof. The
men who build the house are tapu and they are only permitted to eat in the
evening. When the house is completed, a person or a dog is sacrificed. A sacred
oven burns inside the house at the time of the sacrifice. An unspecified number
of tohunga officiate and they along with the tapu builders eat of some kumara or
eel which is cooked on the fire. This seems to be a tapu removal ritual which
bears a resemblance to other accounts of tapu removal rituals, food is cooked on a
tapu fire or oven and is consumed.

The text then describes the ceremonies performed for chiefly boys who are to be
instructed by an unspecified number of tohunga. The text explicitly states in
Maori that the students are males only (“he tane anake”). Thus the document
presents evidence from another region that supports Te Rangihaeke’s statement
that men received a more extensive education than women.129 The boys are taken
to a body of water where the tohunga put a rush or piece of grass into the water
and then into the boys’ left ears, and a karakia was performed. This was done that
their ears might be opened to instruction and they would receive it “immaculate”
(this part is in English). A ritual is performed with fresh or green moss or
seaweed, then they go to the shrine where there is a representation or “idol” of a
god named Kahakura. There they perform a ritual using dry seaweed or moss -
perhaps it is an offering to the god. A karakia is performed again, then the text
says “ka urutia te mana o te tapu. Ka waiho te tapu ki mua ka mutu ka haere ki
taua ware - katoa nga tamariki me te tohunga.” The phrase “ka urutia te mana o
te tapu” is odd - it might translate as “the power of the tapu is entered”. “Te
mana o te tapu” is an unusual expression for a nineteenth-century text, and I

129 Grey 1853: lxxviii.
have found no comparable phrase in other sources to aid me in the translation. White's text indicates that he thought this expression signified that all the subsequent proceedings were tapu.\textsuperscript{130}

Next a tapu fire is lit, and some fern root is cooked and passed under the thighs of a woman, and the children each eat a bit of the fern root. This is done the text explains in Maori “to fix them on the work.” When they have finished eating the fern root, they sit down. There is only one woman in the house of learning, she is a tapu woman, she is there as a “pa Maori” [a Maori fortification]." While the Creed manuscript has “hei pa Maori” (to be a Maori pa), White has “hei pa mo te mauri” (to be a pa for the life force).\textsuperscript{131} It is possible that White's expansion may be correct. It does seem a little odd for a Maori informant to call the woman a Maori pa. In any case, it seems that this is a metaphorical use of the term “pa” which signifies that the tapu woman has a protective function.

The children's fathers accompany them in the whare kura and watch over them while they are instructed from sunset to midnight for four or five months beginning in February. Their fathers' presence must have been essential, for if a child fell asleep this was an omen that he was to die, and he would no longer be permitted to attend the school.

During the day the students are prohibited from playing with the other children and they do not go near the cooking houses. If one of the tapu boys comes into contact with a noa child, that child is taken to the whare kura to be a water carrier. The women bring the food to a place some distance from the whare kura and then the tapu boys take it into the house.

Three or four priests perform various karakia to ensure the success of the proceedings, for example: a karakia to open students' ears and a karakia to make the children's souls desire to work and yearn for the stories they will be told. The boys are then taught various skills: for instance how to kill people by giving

\textsuperscript{130} White 1887-90: I, 9-10 (English text).

\textsuperscript{131} Ibid., 6 (Maori text).
them food or tobacco (makutu), karakia for unifying a war party, and how to restore health to the sick.

The text describes the ceremony which closes the proceedings, the participants go to the shrine and perform a ritual with some bracken or grass, which is put in or over a fire. Then the tapu is removed. The language here is clear - “ka whakahoroa te tapu”, the tapu is removed.

_The Ritual Performed by the Tapu Woman in the Whare Kura._

I will now analyse the ritual performed by the tapu woman after the visit to shrine and before the boys’ instruction begins. The term “pa” suggests that her presence has a protective function. When she passes the fern root under her legs and feeds the boys, the text says this is done “to fix them on the work.” Although the Hansons concluded that her act makes the boys tapu there is nothing in the manuscript to suggest this. The same is true of White’s rendition of the manuscript, he takes the ritual at the shrine as the point at which the proceedings have become tapu. While there is no language to indicate a tapu removal, the ritual has some of the typical components of a tapu removal, albeit combined in an unusual way: an object passes beneath a woman, food is cooked on a tapu fire and consumed. The best that can be done here is to cast about for some comparable material.

There is no other source that has a ritual where food is passed under the thighs of a tapu woman and consumed by students on their entry to a house of learning. Tapu removal rituals performed in other contexts may perhaps shed some light on the matter. Sometimes tapu removal rituals were performed to fix an achievement and protect people performing important activities. A tapu removal ritual performed by Tuhoe after a large tree was felled, for instance, was credited with warding off “evil influences and sickness from the workers,” stopping them from becoming overly tired and making them “intelligent and

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clear minded at their work". The goals of such tapu removal rituals parallel those credited to the ritual role of the tapu woman in the above text - she is credited with fixing the students on the work - and the tohunga also perform karakia and ritual with this general goal in mind, that is, opening their ears, making them eager to learn.

One example of a broadly comparable ritual where food is consumed after a woman has stood over it appears in a legend in Nga Mahi a Nga Tupuna. A young woman, the daughter of a tohunga, places her foot on some tapu food and eats some of it while certain karakia are recited. This was done because an enemy, while pretending to be a good host, had given the tohunga bewitched food which, had he consumed it, would have killed him. In this case the woman is ritually removing a malignant presence in the food, and making it safe to eat.

What possibly led the Hansons to claim that the consumption of the fern root made the students tapu is that this is a ritual which takes place at the beginning of instruction, not at the end, where a tapu removal ritual very clearly does take place, enabling the boys to return to ordinary life in the village. The Hansons view the ritual as comparable to the immersion in water which also occurs at the beginning of the instruction. They consider that immersion in water both removes tapu and makes people tapu. In particular, they claim that the use of water as part of the rites to dedicate children makes them tapu. In chapter four, I have discussed the language of two karakia for children in Grey’s collection which internal evidence shows were recited at rituals involving immersion in water. The language clearly indicates that these were tapu removal rituals. Two other karakia that dedicate the child to his or her future duties simply contain the phrase “dedicated with the water of Tu,” but do not make any mention of tapu at

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133 Ibid., 41; Best 1907 247-8.


133 Hanson and Hanson 1983: 76.

134 Grey 1853: 353-4, 361-3. See also chapter four, p. 125 of this work.
all. In Creed’s manuscript all that is said about the water in which the students are immersed is that it will open their ears to the instruction they will receive.

The Hansons have a stronger case when they refer to Taylor’s account of the immersion that warriors underwent before going into battle. After the warriors have immersed themselves over their heads, and the priest has sprinkled them with water, the priest recites a karakia which dedicates them to war and makes them tapu. We have also seen that Dieffenbach describes a priest engaged in instruction sprinkling his student’s head with water (p. 155).

Water perhaps had a cleansing function and rid the participants of unwanted atua and their influences before a person entered on or participated in tapu activities. I have already analyzed an example where the removal of a tapu and an atua is performed at the beginning of a tapu enterprise, this is done for a warrior who has lost his courage. Some atua are destructive and vengeful and the successful completion of a tapu enterprise might require the removal of these atua. The reception of sacred knowledge may be one of those dangerous occasions, like war, where the participants are supposed to be especially tapu and by the same token especially liable to suffer the consequences of tapu violations.

Creed’s document is an extremely difficult one to interpret, but there is no evidence that the woman was, by the act of passing the fern root under her thighs and feeding it to the boys, making them tapu. She may have been making the food safe for them to eat during a tapu enterprise and may be compared to the daughter of the tohunga who makes bewitched food safe to eat by standing over it.

It also seems that levels or degrees of tapu were manipulated in certain rituals. Indeed the tapu removal rituals associated with tree-felling did not put an end to the tapu associated with the proceedings, for the felling of such large trees were for the purpose of constructing prestigious canoes or houses, which were also

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137 Grey 1853: 75-7, 78. See also chapter four, p. 140-1 of this work.

tapu proceedings. Likewise, after the construction of prestigious houses tapu removal rituals could be conducted, not to remove the tapu of the house entirely but to diminish it so that people could safely use the house, although they would not eat in it.139

Thus it is possible that the students of the whare kura are fed with fern root to level off the tapu which can reach dangerous and counter-productive levels.140 Thinking of tapu in terms of levels of tapu which may either diminish or increase rather than in terms of outright removal or introduction in ritual situations seems a more productive way of looking at the situation. For instance, the ritual removal of tapu from the hands of a chief after hair cutting did not otherwise affect his personal tapu as a chief. Warriors under a tapu of war were not lacking in a personal tapu to begin with, as Maning explains it. When on a very dangerous war expedition, led by “a chief of very high rank, standing and mana” their “personal tapu was increased twofold” and “over and above the ordinary personal tapu, made sacred in the highest degree, the leading chief being the most tapu of all”.141

That there were rituals where levels of tapu were manipulated in some way makes sense in the context of the whare kura if the function of these rituals and the concept of tapu was connected to the prestige of the learning. The idea that a tapu situation or activity is dangerous and must be carefully controlled fits well with this; the notion that a powerful and productive situation is one step away from a counter-productive and potentially fatal one is one that is common in religious ideas, power often comes with danger.

Summary.

I have examined the rituals cited by the Hansons to support the notion that


women sometimes made people or things tapu by performing the same ritual acts that in other circumstances removed tapu. Neither the ritual where a woman steps over a warrior to restore his courage nor the ritual where fern root is passed under a woman's thighs before being consumed by the students of the whare kura appear to make the participants tapu. This removes one support for the Hansons' claim that the assertion that men were tapu and women were noa was an error of Best's. In order to explore this subject further, however, we will need to examine some earlier sources and going beyond the examination of sources on ritual, examine the division of labour and rank, both of which have implications for a person's relationship to tapu.
Chapter Six.
Gender, Rank and Tapu.

We have seen in the preceding chapters that both the rituals of death and birth reflect aspects of Maori gender relations. A number of sources indicate that the birth of chiefly boys attracted more ceremony and celebration than the birth of a girl. We have also seen that in early sources describing funerary rites, the funerals of male chiefs predominate, while women are especially prominent as their mourners.

The sources collated in the preceding chapters also show very clearly that gender was not the only factor that shaped Maori social organisation and ideas about tapu, rank was also significant. In chapter two we saw that while the deaths of members of the chief's family involved a good deal of ceremony and their bodily remains were subject to a number of tapu prohibitions, this was not so for slaves. One early nineteenth-century source even remarks that slaves, unlike the rest of the population, were thought to have no further existence after death. In chapter four, we have also seen in the rituals to remove the tapu of childbirth, it is chiefly women and children who have the more elaborate rituals to remove the tapu and dedicate the child to his or her future role. We have seen that the tapu of the birth of a rangatira child requires that lesser persons such as tutua (the low-born) and taurekareka (slaves) must stay away. We also find reference in the sources on childbirth to a class of person called tutua who are described as having similar though lesser rituals for removing the tapu from children. Clearly gender is not the only aspect of Maori social relations that shapes one's relation to tapu and ritual.

In this chapter we will examine the stratification of Maori society according to rank more closely. This will obviously contribute to a better understanding of Maori gender relations because women were rangatira, tutua and taurekareka.

1 See chapter two, pp. 39-40 of this work.
The relationship between gender and rank is also worth exploring, for social categories of this kind are likely to be related in various ways, as Anne McClintock remarks “no social category exists in privileged isolation; each comes into being in relation to other social categories”.

I. Maori Social Stratification: the Secondary Literature and Early Sources.

Lian gives the most recent account of Maori social stratification:

*Rangatira* (highborn) refers to those who can trace their descent through senior lines. Chiefs are usually, though not invariably, recruited from this stratum. *Tuutuuaa* (low-born) are those whose genealogical connections with the founding ancestor are remote. The third stratum is constituted by *taurekareka* (slaves), who are mostly captives from war and disregarded within Maori society by virtue of the fact that they have no kinship claims over their captors.

This three tiered structure is to be found in two classic twentieth century works, Sahlins' *Social Stratification in Polynesia* and Firth’s *Primitive Economics of the New Zealand Maori*. The earliest authority on which they draw is Best’s discussion of Maori social hierarchy *The Maori*. Best’s fieldwork on this was conducted over half a century after Maori had ceased to practice slavery and it seems that he could not find any tutua either. Our understanding of distinctions between rangatira, tutua and taurekareka will be enhanced by an investigation into earlier sources.

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3 Lian 1992: 393.
5 Best 1924b: i, 345-9.
Mid-Nineteenth-Century Sources Showing a Three-Tiered Society.

Two writers provide an image of a three-tiered society: Colenso and Cooper. Colenso arrived in New Zealand as a missionary in 1835, and his comments probably derive from his experiences of Ngati Kahungunu in Hawkes Bay where he spent most of his time. He describes the structure of a “sub-tribe” and although he does not give a Maori word for this, he is probably referring to a hapu. The key distinction he makes is between “the bond” and “the free”. Of the free, at the top of his list is the “tino tangata”, the principal man or chief, and his near relatives: “his brothers and sisters, and half brothers and half-sisters by other mothers ... his uncles and aunts, cousins, etc.” 6 This sounds like the stratum that others have labelled rangatira.

Among the free Colenso includes an especially lowly category: “Poor men and low plebeians, though free, were children of remote lateral descendants of a tribe, especially if their fathers or mothers had been slaves.” This corresponds reasonably well to later descriptions of tutua. Colenso, however, gives us no Maori word for this.

Cooper’s description of the layout of Pukawa pa at Taupo in 1850 is another source that indicates a three-tiered structure but not necessarily one that shows tutua as a distinct group. 7 Cooper’s description gives a good indication of how distinctions of rank might be worked out under an especially powerful dynasty of chiefs. The pa had a large central courtyard. Iwikau Te Heuheu Tukino III and his nearest relatives lived on one side of the courtyard, next to the wahi tapu - where the remains of Mananui Te Heuheu Tukino II and his favourite wife, Nohopapa, awaited their final resting place. 8 The “inferior people” lived on the other side of the courtyard. The “inferior people”, however, were probably not tutua because

7 Cooper 1851: 274-77.

8 Mananui and Nohopapa were killed in a mud slide in 1846 (Hura 1991: 168). Cooper observed during his visit in 1850 some of the mourning ceremonies preceding their final disposal - see my discussion in chapter two.
the Maori translation of this text simply says "te nui o te iwi", the majority of the people. Each household belonging to Te Heuheu’s nearest relatives had its own fenced enclosure, with a cooking shed at the opposite end to the dwelling. The slaves of these households lived in "small wretched huts" adjoining the cooking shed. I have not found any other similarly clear depictions of the layout of a village or a pa. But we have already seen in chapter two that Marsden, further north, met a chief who was keeping the body of his father near him in the centre of the village, in contrast to the distance people generally kept between themselves and the remains of their dead. Rutherford also writes that the remains of mother of the chief was kept at the centre of the village where he stayed; Angas also writes that the wooden structure in which Te Rangihanaeta’s mother’s remains were kept was near Te Rangihaeata’s carved house. We see in this something of the basis for the personal tapu of chiefs, their close and positive connection with their dead kin and predecessors.

The other element in Cooper’s description that is to be found in earlier sources is the depiction of the role of slaves who are shown in early sources doing the cooking while their masters did not, and sleeping in the cooking house if not in the open air. In the following section, I shall discuss a range of nineteenth-century sources on taurekareka.

Slaves.

There is no doubt slaves, or taurekareka, occupied the lowest position possible in Maori society up until 1850, by which time slavery had disappeared.10 Cruise heard the term taurekareka applied to a captive and Maori had expressed their ideas about captives reasonably clearly to him. While in New Zealand waters, Cruise’s ship, the Dromedary, captured an American ship, the General Gates:

Among the gentlemen taken out of the General Gates, there was one who lived on terms of intimacy and familiarity with the officers of the

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9 See chapter two, pp. 18-9, 34-6.

10Buddle 1851: 46. See also my discussion in chapter seven.
Dromedary; but this was an error in our conduct which no explanation could excuse: without the slightest reserve they expressed their astonishment that we could so far forget ourselves as to sit down and eat with a towra caracca [taurekareka], or prisoner of war; and this degrading appellation was universally applied to the American gentleman as long as he remained with us.11

McCrae who was on the same ship also said that slaves did not eat with their masters and said that slaves did the cooking.12 The custom of slaves eating separately from their masters could be observed as late as 1844. Angas observed the evening meal of a group of Maori with whom he was travelling in the Waikato region, “the slave girl ate alone after the others had finished”13

Earle is another who shows slaves doing the cooking, in a picture titled “Slaves Preparing Food”. This picture shows four male slaves at Kororareka roasting and beating fern root in 1827. Earle provides the following commentary:

The four slaves will be readily distinguished by their occupation and inferior appearance. Nothing can be more miserable than the life of a slave in New Zealand; but prisoners of war are the only persons in a state of slavery. They are always employed to cook, and are now generally termed “Cookies,” a name given to them by the chiefs, on account of the resemblance of their principal occupation to that of cooks on board ship.14

René Lesson adds that male and female slaves did not sleep with the rest of the community but slept in the open, or sometimes sheltered next to the ovens.15

Taurekareka also appear in Grey’s collection of Maori mythology.16 A certain amount of caution is necessary here because mythology cannot be read as a direct charter for social life as it was lived. These are often tales of the exceptional and the miraculous, not everyday life. Maori legends are also much more concerned

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12 McNab 1908: 543.
13 Angas 1847: II, 158.
14 Earle 1838: plate no.3
16 Grey 1928.
with the qualities of those who are truly chiefly in character than the social situation of lesser persons.

Nonetheless, aspects of daily life do sometimes appear as a backdrop to the story and lesser persons such as taurekareka and tutua are mentioned although not in such a way as to give a clear picture of the three strata. Let us examine the instances where taurekareka are mentioned.

In some legends chiefly characters who go on a journey may be accompanied by an attendant who is sometimes referred to as a taurekareka. In one such story Tawhaki, a great chief, and his brother set out on a magical journey to the sky in search of Tawhaki’s wife who has run away with his daughter. They take two taurekareka with them. One of their taurekareka perishes because he disobeys Tawhaki’s order that he not look at Tongomeha’s pa which they pass on their way. 17 While the Maori text gives no explanation of this incident, Grey’s translation gives the explanation that because they were “unclean or unconsecrated persons” they could not safely look at such an “enchanted” place. 18 In other words, the myth depicts a tapu prohibition, a rather extreme one as we might expect in a tale concerning a supernatural journey, where such distinctions are probably writ a good deal larger than they were in real life. According to White Tongomeha was an atua associated with the eyes, and this would explain the prohibition on lowly persons looking at the habitation of this particular god. 19

The remaining taurekareka does the cooking for the chief and is later given away in return for a host’s generous hospitality. 20 When Tawhaki finds his wife’s people he disguises himself as a taurekareka. 21 This is a theme to be found in other stories, sometimes a chief may disguise himself as a lesser person when he

17 Grey 1928: 40.
18 Grey 1906: 49.
19 Orbell 1995: 221.
20 Grey 1928: 41.
21 Ibid., 42.
is among strangers. These stories must have gained their interest in the tension between the disguise and the chiefs innately superior qualities. There is also a certain amount of comedy to be found in duping the strangers. These stories give some indication of the differences between chiefs and lowly persons, although we have to bear in mind that the chief is probably signalling in various ways that he is really an important person.

In the story, the men all make Tawhaki carry their adzes that they had been using to chip out a canoe and two women make him carry their firewood. The carving of a canoe was a tapu activity, and adzes were a valuable possession, so a burden where the adzes and firewood are placed on the back of the slave seems odd. But the point of this episode is presumably not to show an ordinary event in the life of a slave but to demonstrate Tawhaki's superior strength. If he were really an old slave, we would presumably expect him to crumple under the burden of both axes and firewood. Also his in-laws live in the sky, so their lifeways may differ from those on earth.

In the same story everyone is very surprised when the "old slave" goes and sits by Tangotango's fire. Tangotango is a chiefly woman and it is made clear in the story that the act should make him tapu, and is an act that a slave would ordinarily avoid. In fact, Tangotango is Tawhaki's wife and when the people finally realize that he is the great Tawhaki, the tapu prohibitions are reversed, it is not the "old slave" but they, who flee the courtyard which by Tawhaki's presence has become tapu to everyone.

The story suggests that there are places where a slave should not go, for example, a slave should not sit by a chiefly woman's fire. This may be compared to the material on childbirth rituals which we have encountered in chapter four: the tapu of childbirth means that the taurekareka and the tutua must stay away.

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22 Ibid., 42-3.

23 Earlier in the story, Tawhaki's wife, Tangotango, reverses the usual social order by suggesting that Tawhaki should care for their child if female, and that she should care for it if it is male (Grey 1928: 40; Orbell 1995: 194).
The story also suggests that women might relieve themselves of the burden of carrying firewood by using a male slave and he does the cooking for the chief. In another story the chief’s daughter travels with a female taurekareka who carries the food on her back.  

24 This shows another reason for the chiefly person to travel with a slave - the slave not only does the cooking but also carries the provisions.

Tutua.

We have seen in chapter four that mid-nineteenth-century documents on childbirth rituals show tutua to be a category of person that also practise these rituals, but in a different and lesser form. One of these documents also describes the effects that rank had on the tapu that was a consequence of hair cutting:

Cutting hair had a great tapu, for an ordinary man it was two weeks before he could eat with his hands, an important man’s tapu lasted for eight weeks before [his hands] became noa, for more important rangatira it took 16 weeks to ebb away. For a tutua it would not take three days for it to ebb away, because the tapu of the tutua is not equal to the tapu of a rangatira. When a rangatira combs his hair, he will not eat with others he would eat from some food heaped on the ground, or else gathered into the hands if there are two [i.e., if there is a person available to feed him, and bear the tapu restrictions attendant on the person handing him the food], then the tapu is taken off, and [the hands] become noa.  

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Thus this text and the texts on childbirth rituals show that tutua have some claim to tapu, albeit a lesser one than the rangatira portion of the community. Tutua also appear in Grey’s collection of Maori mythology along with “ware” a term synonymous with tutua.  

26 We have seen that the great chief Tawhaki dupes his in-laws into thinking he is a taurekareka. A similar motif appears in a story about Paoa, a chief who pretends to be a tutua in the presence of his hosts who turn out to be his future in-laws. Paoa has left his two wives and former people forever because his senior wife publicly humiliated him by refusing to provide

24 Grey 1928: 123.
26 E.g., Grey 1928: 157.
food for his guests.\textsuperscript{27} The reason for his wife’s anger was that he had been spending all his time with his other wife who is beautiful but a tutua.\textsuperscript{28} Thus Paoa’s pretence that he is a tutua among strangers may have some connection to these preceding events, he has been humiliated as a consequence of associating too closely with a tutua.

Paoa’s impersonation of a tutua gives some indication of how a tutua might behave. He conveys the impression that he is a tutua by what he eats and the manner in which he eats it. His hosts give him the kahawai to eat but he passes it to his companions and eats instead from the baskets of fermented shellfish; he eats hungrily and in large handfuls.\textsuperscript{29} Thus this story suggests that a tutua does not eat the really good food, does not eat with refined manners, and is perhaps much hungrier than a rangatira.

As in the story about Tawhaki, the chief’s pretence to be a lowly person is a device to put his obviously chiefly qualities into sharp relief. While many of the host people remark when they observe him dining that he must be a tutua, the elders know he is really a rangatira trying to make himself look bad.\textsuperscript{30}

In another instance where a visiting chief, Matatini, disguises himself, he eats with the tutua who eat separately from the rangatira.\textsuperscript{31} A young rangatira woman famous for her beauty and rank, however, recognizes Matatini’s desirable qualities, so she takes her stone and sits in front of him and beats fern root for him. Thus the story indicates that a chiefly woman would not prepare a genuine tutua’s food.\textsuperscript{32} When the visitors go to sleep, the rangatira sleep inside one of their hosts’ houses and the tutua sleep outside, and the disguised chief with

\footnotesize
\begin{enumerate}
\item Grey 1928: 158.
\item Ibid., 157.
\item Grey 1928: 161.
\item Ibid.
\item Ibid., 195; see also Orbell 1992: 165 for a recent translation.
\item Grey 1928: 195.
\end{enumerate}
them. In another story the rangatira and wāke sleep in the house but in different places.

In another story, the flexibility and grace of the chiefly heroine’s (Te Kahureremoa’s) hands when she dances are admired and we are told that the rangatira have one way of dancing while wāke have another because the hands of the wāke are clumsy. A connection between grace and nobility is certainly not unique to Māori society and it can also be compared to Paoa’s lack of finesse in his dining manners (above).

Another chiefly man Tutanekai is derided by his brothers who call him a tutua and a poriro (bastard). The term tutua in this story is an insult and not a good description of his social position. With the exception of coming from the wrong patrilineage, as a consequence of his mother’s adultery, he is in every other sense chiefly. He might be the product of his mother’s adultery but her liaison at least was with a famous neighbouring chief, Tuwharetoa. Tutanekai is adopted and loved by his mother’s husband who is the chief and Tutanekai even has his own taurekareka.

There are a number of Māori traditions where younger and illegitimate sons prove themselves superior to the legitimate and/or older brothers. It is questionable how far such tales tell us about the life of those who were unquestionably of low status, it seems more likely that these stories have some connection with the jockeying for position that occurred in rangatira families. Colenso’s remarks, for example, show that asserting one’s position and rights was particularly important and that this accounted for the “constant exertion and struggle” and the “daily jostle of New Zealand life”.

33 Ibid.
34 Grey 1928: 122.
35 Ibid., 110.
37 Colenso 1868: 21.
There is an aspect to Tutanekai, however, that gives the epithet tutua a little more weight than a mere insult. Coming from the wrong patrilineage seems to have resulted in a lack of care for the rituals which involved the chief and his sons.38 Other sources show that tutua are excluded from the rituals of rangatira and practise their own lesser forms of rituals, so this lack of concern for the rituals of his father and brothers may show his lowly aspect.39 We have seen in a song that a poriro would not get a wairua from his father’s ancestors, thus it is likely that a poriro would be excluded from the connection that chiefs had with their ancestral gods.40

Grey’s collection also contains rather a sad tale about a female tutua, Te Aohuruwhuru. An old man takes her from her husband as a servant or slave (pononga) to weave his clothes and prepare his food.41 This story suggests that the line between a tutua and an enslaved captive might be a rather fine one. Te Aohuruwhuru is ultimately an ambiguous figure, a little like the chiefs who only pretend to be tutua, and demonstrate their superior qualities. After her captor humiliates her, when she prepares for her suicide, she decks herself out in the very fine garments and ornaments that only a chiefly woman could have possessed: kaitaka cloaks and plumes of huia, white heron and albatross.42 Thus she dies in a way that suggests she was someone significantly more important than a tutua.

Overall, tutua or ware appear in Grey’s collection of mythology as a group of people who do not generally mingle with the rangatira, although tutua women may be taken as inferior or slave wives by rangatira men. Tutua eat and sleep separately from the rangatira and they may also eat food of lower quality. They were a group that was perceived to be lacking in refinement. They contrast with

38 Grey 1928: 113.
39 See chapter four.
40 Ibid.
42 Grey 1928: 198.
taurekareka in that tutua and ware is used as a general collective term to describe a group of people who are not rangatira. Taurekareka only appear in Grey’s stories one or two at a time, and appear to be a chiefly person’s possession, although the story of Te Aohuruhuru suggests that there must have been some overlap between tutua and enslaved captives, a tutua might be taken captive as a wife, for example.

To expand our picture of what is said about tutua in myth and ritual it would of obviously be a great help if we could turn to observations of these people in everyday social life. For the most part, our western sources completely fail us. Early nineteenth-century western sources describe a social world comprising only of rangatira and slaves.

Marsden notes, “From what I could learn there appears to be no middle class of people in New Zealand, but that they are all either chiefs or, in a certain degree, slaves.” This tendency toward a two-tiered society is also suggested by Nicholas’s narrative. Nicholas travelled with Marsden and never uses the word slave in his narrative of his travels. He particularly noticed the distinction between “rangatira and cookees”, remarking, “All the males belonging to the family of the chief are styled rungateedas [rangatira]” and distinguished them from “the common people”. He uses the term “cookee” for any man of low status that he met with and translates it as “common man”. An examination of Earle’s, Cruise’s and Polack’s works gives no reference to tutua or ware, although the position of cookees or slaves is certainly remarked upon. This trend continues into the 1840s. The social world that Angas describes in 1844 comprises only chiefly persons and slaves. Dieffenbach also defines rangatira as the ‘freemen of a tribe’, although he was obviously aware that there were inferior persons who were not slaves, for he observed on some occasions that the “[i]inferior persons and slaves” could be

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43 Elder 1932: 118.
44 Nicholas 1817: I, 292.
45 Dieffenbach 1843: II, 115.
found sleeping next to the fire in the cooking house."

We have seen in chapter four that some of Shortland’s Maori sources on ritual contrast rangatira with tutua, but Shortland in his published work only ever discusses the social situation of slaves. It is also noticeable that in his published translation of a Maori document on birth rituals he omits the remarks made about tutua. We also find George Grey, a competent mid-nineteenth-century translator, translating both “ware” and “tutua” as “slave.” “Tutua” does not appear in the early dictionaries but ware does appear as a term distinct from slavery. Kendall defines a “wāri” (i.e., ware) as “A servant, a poor man”, and “tāo reka reka” (taurekareka) as “Slave.” Williams (1844) defines “ware” as “A man of mean birth.” D’Urville, who made a close study of Kendall’s dictionary, makes a note of the distinction between taurekareka and “wari”. On his second visit to New Zealand, he translates the expression “tangata wari” (tangata ware) as “slave”.

It seems that the distinction between a low-born person and a slave was a relatively subtle one that outsiders to Maori society generally did not feel the need to grapple with. The only clear description of tutua I have been able to locate comes from Maning. Maning in Old New Zealand mentions slaves but does not give a Maori expression for it. He does, however, give a definition of a tutua, “a nobody, who had no tapu or mana about him”, and he contrasts this with rangatira, “A chief, a gentleman, a warrior”. Maning’s definition of a tutua as someone who had no tapu or mana differs little from the situation of a slave and is in continuity with the lack of interest in the distinction between tutua and taurekareka in other Pakeha sources. In 1890, however, he gives a more detailed description of tutua:

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46 Ibid., 70.

47 Shortland 1882: 40-2. See also chapter four of this work.


49 Kendall 1820: 207, 226.
A certain tribe had been utterly conquered and exterminated with the exception of some twenty or thirty persons, who ... the conquerors allowed to live, and to whom they allotted a small piece of land which had formerly been their own as a mahinga or place to cultivate for their subsistence. They were not reduced to the condition of menial servants or slaves of the lowest class, but to that of tutua, or persons who might be knocked about ad libitum, and all sorts of odd services required of them as occasion arose.  

From Maning’s description it seems that tutua might be described as a subject people. Like slaves they were defeated enemies but unlike slaves they were left to live as a relatively autonomous community, albeit one where the members might still be at the beck and call of their conquerors from time to time. If tutua were a group of conquered people who were left with enough resources to maintain a collective identity as a separate community, this would explain why tutua are mentioned in mid-nineteenth-century texts as having a certain amount of tapu and some different or lesser kind of rituals than rangatira. They would have been able to perform rituals together and observe certain tapu prohibitions amongst themselves.

**Tapu and the Distinction between Rangatira Men and Slaves.**

Because of the limitations in our early sources regarding tutua, I shall for the most part only discuss the broad distinction between rangatira and slaves that early nineteenth-century writers used and explore the relationship between this distinction and gender difference.

We have already seen reference to slaves carrying food, cooking and sleeping in cooking sheds. This contrasts with rangatira men who did not carry food, did not do the cooking, and did not enter the cooking house. The reason for this was

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51 Mackay 1890: 19.

52 See e.g., Earle (1909: 156) for a comment that shows that male rangatira did not usually cook, and the one instance where he saw chiefly men cooking was for a ceremonial feast for themselves and a visiting priest. Maning (1863: 128) remarks that cooking “is the very last thing a rangatira can turn his hand to.” Shortland says that rangatira men did not enter the cooking-house (e.g., Shortland 1851: 30). Sources also that show rangatira men did not carry food on their backs, see Shortland (1851: 30, 59) and Maning (1863: 117-8) and Yate (1835: 87).
that they were tapu and under the special care of the gods. Yate, for instance, remarks that it was the “sacred character” of a chief that prohibited him from carrying food.\textsuperscript{53} Maning also says that a “man of any standing” could not carry food on his back because it would make the food tapu and only he would be able to eat it.\textsuperscript{54} Shortland says the same thing and explains that “every New Zealand gentleman, in former times was more or less sacred, and his head and back-bone especially”.\textsuperscript{55} According to Maning, entering a cooking shed would have similar consequences; after a chiefly man had entered, neither the food nor the vessels could subsequently be used by the “cooks or inferior people”.\textsuperscript{56}

Slaves were expected to die as a consequence of eating food that had been touched by a tapu personage, and also if they ate from their cooking fire.\textsuperscript{57} Brown says that slaves who erred in this way were expected to be attacked by an atua.\textsuperscript{58}

Shortland is the only early writer who endeavours to explain why a tapu person had to avoid the preparation of food and carrying of food on their backs. His explanation seems plausible:

The ancient religion of the New Zealander taught him that any thing, if placed in contact with a sacred object, acquired the sacred nature of that object; and that it was his first duty to guard whatever had been thus rendered sacred by contact from being eaten, or used for the purposes of cooking or eating.

The greatest injury one man could inflict on another being to eat him, it was a natural idea that to eat anything which had become sacred by contact would be offensive to the person whose sacredness it had acquired; ...\textsuperscript{59}

Shortland deduced one “pervading principle” which he thought could explain a number of social habits that were otherwise incomprehensible to non-Maori:

\textsuperscript{53} Yate 1835: 87.

\textsuperscript{54} Maning 1863: 113-4.

\textsuperscript{55} Shortland 1851: 292 cf. Maning 1863: 113-4. Maning adds that rangatira boys were less circumscribed in their activities than men.

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., 114.

\textsuperscript{57} Brown 1845: 13; Maning 1863: 112.

\textsuperscript{58} Brown 1845: 13.

“food which has once touched a sacred object becomes itself sacred, and therefore must not be eaten except by the sacred object.” A transgression of these tapu prohibitions were thought to anger a rangatira’s ancestral gods who would attack him and cause him to sicken or die.

Slaves on the other hand, according to Shortland, need not worry themselves about violating their personal tapu; conquest and captivity had cost them all their connections with their ancestral gods and consequently their personal tapu. This is certainly also suggested not only by the division of labour, but as we have seen in chapter two, the lack of regard for the corpses of slaves, little in the way of tapu prohibitions seem to have applied to them and also Cruise’s remark that slaves were thought to have no existence after death. Overall, it is clear that rangatira men were sacred and slaves by contrast were not. The distinction between rangatira men and slaves is not, however, the only factor in determining the division of labour, for Shortland tells us that the male slave’s lack of tapu made it possible for him to assist women in their labours. Charles Darwin who visited New Zealand earlier in the century also noted that males slaves did the cooking which Maori thought was the lowest of women’s work. The next step in my analysis is to consider the relationship between gender and tapu.

II. Gender and Tapu.

The distinction between the tapu of rangatira men and common nature of slaves is not the only distinction to appear in early sources. In 1849, Te Rangikaihaheke, an Arawa man, wrote an essay titled “The Basis of the Male Tapu”

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62 Shortland 1851: 296.
63 Shortland 1856: 83.
where he contrasts the tapu of men with the noa nature of women.  

The men were tapu, the women were regarded as those who were noa, to carry the food, to do all the things behind, namely preparing food. There was one tohi ritual for men, another for women; one education for the man, another for the woman, one kind of purenga ritual for men, another for women. Therefore the tapu of men was greater than that of women; that of the men had to do with the things of the sky, with the thousands above, the myriad above, Tawhiri-matae, the thousands below, the myriad below, the thousands at Hawaiki, the myriad at Hawaiki. This was the reason for the tapu of men.

As for the tapu of women, a portion of the things of the sky concern women, a portion of the things below concern women, a portion of the things of Hawaiki concern women, the things concerning Hine-teiwaiwa. This was the reason why women were tapu, and why that of women was smaller.

The ancestors in the sky were not all included in the education for women, nor were the things of the land all included in the things concerning women, nor were the things of Hawaiki all included for the education of women, that concerned the men, all the little things, and the big things were included for the education of men. However, the men were not told of absolutely all the tapu customs and noa customs, some things were withheld by the Maori tohunga.

This text presents a number of points of interest. Firstly, it shows that the assertion that women were noa and men were tapu did not originate with Best. In fact Te Rangikaiheke’s statement predates Best’s earliest comment on the matter by some fifty years. This suggests that Hanson’s erasure of Best’s apparent logical error has been a little premature.

The treatment of this text by those who were aware of it is interesting. Johansen presents the first two paragraphs as evidence that women were noa and men were tapu. Michael Shirres cites the original manuscript (which does not deviate from the published version) as evidence that women were tapu. In fact Te Rangikaiheke says two things; firstly that men are tapu and women are noa, secondly that women are less tapu than men. That Te Rangikaiheke had no

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66 Grey 1853: lxvii cf. CNZ MMSS 81. The first two paragraphs of this text have already been translated by Johansen (1954: 217) I have aimed for a more literal translation.

67 Hanson 1982: 348.


69 Shirres 1982: 45.
problem making the two assertions, one after the other in the same short essay, invites us to consider how these two ideas could co-exist in the mind of one man. It may be that the two statements are synonymous. It is possible that Te Rangikaheke's view of tapu and noa with regard to women is a little like Maning's treatment of tutua. As we have seen Maning in one context calls a tutua a "nobody" and someone with "no tapu or mana about him", making him sound exactly like a slave, and yet in another makes it clear that tutua is better off than a slave (see above). It is possible that Maning's comments do not merely represent a Pakeha carelessness with regard to some of the subtler distinctions of Maori society, it may be that Maori did generally call tutua, "tangata noa", common people, an expression for those without a chiefly tapu. As we have seen above and in chapter four, mid-nineteenth-century texts on childbirth rituals and hair cutting shows that the tutua do have a small amount of tapu, albeit a smaller one than rangatira. But it may be that for the most part, this small claim to tapu was thought little of. Certainly Grey's collection of traditions shows them subject to the same rules of avoidance as slaves: they eat separately and sleep separately from rangatira. Moreover, Tamihana remarks that both the tutua and the taurekareka must stay away from the rangatira mother and her newborn child while they are tapu (see previous chapter).

That Te Rangikaheke saw no contradiction in saying that women are both noa and less tapu than men, can also be compared to Valeri's finding with the Hawaiian cognates kapu and noa:

*Kapu* and *noa* are purely relative notions. They are therefore not substances or states but marks between relations between substances and states. A being cannot be absolutely *kapu* or absolutely *noa*, but is *kapu* relative to certain beings and *noa* relative to others.\(^7\)

It may be that Te Rangikaheke shares with the Hawaiians the notion that distinctions between the sacred and ordinary express relations, not absolute

\(^7\) See, e.g., Taylor (1855: 63-4) who says that the chief without his tapu would merely be "he tangata noa."

\(^7\) Valeri 1985: 90.
essences. This assertion can be compared with Creed’s manuscript on the South Island whare kura which tells us that the tapu students of the whare kura must stay away from the noa children.\textsuperscript{72} If a tapu student comes into contact with one of the noa children, that child becomes tapu and must join the boys at the whare kura. The child does not join as a student of the whare kura, but as their water carrier. Thus he or she becomes a servant for the sacred students and the child has only become sacred in the sense that he or she is excluded from the village.\textsuperscript{73}

Let us discuss the main points of Te Rangikaheke’s essay in detail. We can see that Te Rangikaheke viewed carrying food and preparing it as women’s work. Women, he says, “do all the things behind”, a phrase which refers to activities that did not take place in the tapu precincts of the village. “Muri”, (behind) appears to have been used of the common or noa places of the village, in contrast to “mua”(front) which is the term used for tapu places.\textsuperscript{74}

The notion that preparing and carrying food is the task of women also appears in Te Rangikaheke’s Moe Wahine narrative, where he describes the first pregnancy of a chiefly young woman. In this text he says that when her first pregnancy becomes public knowledge she becomes tapu for a period, and may no longer prepare food, until the tapu is ritually removed by a priest.\textsuperscript{75} After the tapu is removed, she could carry food and prepare it with “\textit{nga ora o muri}”,\textsuperscript{76} that is to say, the servants or slaves who labour in the common parts of the village.\textsuperscript{77}

\textsuperscript{72} Polynesian Society Manuscripts, 1187, folders 201-2 ; White 1886-90: 5-6 (Maori text)
\textsuperscript{73} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{74} Williams 1971: 213, 214.
\textsuperscript{75} Biggs 1960: 89.
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., 97.
\textsuperscript{77} Williams (1971) gives both servant and slave as meanings of “\textit{ora}”. Williams 1844: 83 gives only “\textit{slave}” as a meaning. In the childbirth rituals described in GNZ MMSS 28, however, the mother’s attendant is called an “\textit{ora}” and it is specified that the ora must be a chiefly relative (see chapter four). Two other words in the 1844 edition are defined as both slave and servant, e.g., pononga and tumau (Williams 1844: 103, 151). The meaning of tumau varied regionally, meaning servant in the Waikato and slave in East Coast (Ibid., 151).
Te Rangikaheke says that women are less tapu than men, on account of their different rituals; men and women have different tohi and purenga rituals. Tohi are the rituals performed over newborn children and over young warriors to make them successful in battle. It is not surprising that we find Te Rangikaheke making some connection between the rites performed over children and the lesser tapu for women. We have seen in chapter four that girls tended to get less ritual than boys.

Te Rangikaheke also tells us that men and women have different purenga rituals. There is not a great deal of information available on pure or purenga rites, it seems that they were often tapu removal rituals.71 In Te Rangikaheke’s Moe Wahine text, reference is made to a pure ritual as part of the process to remove the tapu from the pregnant young woman. This is a clear instance where the tapu of a rangatira woman seems to be less than a rangatira man, for as we have seen, the removal of this tapu permits her return to carrying and preparing food. Pregnancy and childbirth are processes that involve tapu and tapu removals at certain points. These are obvious examples where women, especially rangatira women are tapu. And this must be why Te Rangikaheke says both that women are noa and less tapu than men.

The assertion that men have a greater tapu than women is in Te Rangikaheke’s view connected to a notion that the sphere of women is less extensive than men’s: only a portion of the things of the sky, the things below (perhaps the underworld or else simply the earth) and only a portion of the things of Hawaiki concern women. Both the sky and Hawaiki, the paradisial homeland, are important sources of life and fertility in Maori religion. The things which concern men in Te Rangikaheke’s mind, however, border on the infinite, “the thousands, the myriad”, and include above and below, the sky, Hawaiki and also Tawhirimatea, the wind. Not surprisingly, he also asserts that men’s education is

71 See Williams 1971. Williams (1844: 110) gives the earliest definitions of “pure” that I have found: “A sacred service over the dead”, and “Sacred food”, both of which suggest tapu removal. Williams 1871: 126 also gives “a ceremony for removing the ‘tapu’ from houses, canoes, persons &c.”
more exhaustive and particularly notes that women do not know quite so much about the ancestors in the sky.

The things that concern women that make them tapu, Te Rangikaheke relates to Hineteiwaia, a widely known female figure who appears in a number of traditions and represents many of the roles accorded to women in Maori society. She is, for example, sometimes said to be the first ruahine, and sometimes she is credited with the origin of weaving. 79 Hineteiwaia also has some association with childbirth. 80 Hineteiwaia represents some important roles for women, and some of these roles have a tapu pertaining to them. The ruahine is a tapu woman, childbirth has a tapu associated with it, and so too does the weaving of ornamental cloaks. Nonetheless, Te Rangikaheke sees the activities connected with Hineteiwaia as less tapu than men's activities.

**Gender and the Division of Labour.**

We have seen that the distinction between rangatira men and slaves is apparent in the division of labour, male slaves cook and carry food while rangatira do not. We have also seen that Te Rangikaheke singles out the division of labour as something that makes women noa and men tapu: women do the common work, they carry and prepare food.

Shortland gives the most sympathetic early discussion on the division of labour. His discussion is shaped by a desire to counter certain Pakeha misapprehensions. Firstly, he notes that western writers who professed themselves horrified by the heavy loads that Maori women carried were employing a simplistic contrast with the lighter labours of their own more privileged classes of women. Thus they tended to ignore the heavy labours done by working class women in British society:

> we should not forget that a great deal of labour, equally unbecoming the sex, is performed by women even in our own country. Witness the


80 Ibid.
heavy loads constantly carried to Covent Garden on the heads of Welch women. Witness also the condition of the female apprentice very generally in our farm houses.\textsuperscript{81}

Secondly, Shortland noted that the explanation why women could be seen with the slaves carrying heavy loads for their men lay in Maori religion. He argued that the tapu of rangatira men provided “powerful motives which forbid a New Zealand gentleman to allow a basket of food to come in contact with his back”. He commented that travellers “judging only from what they see”, failed to understand why women carried heavy loads of food and erroneously blamed “the laziness and inhumanity” of native men.\textsuperscript{82}

I note that Shortland’s account does not lend itself very well to the Thomas’s assertion that western statements connecting tapu with gender relations are an over-simplification caused by their lack of familiarity with the culture and the tendency to give an exaggerated depiction of female subordination among indigenous peoples.\textsuperscript{83} Rather in Shortland’s view it is ignorance of the culture and a failure to understand the role of Maori religion in shaping the gendered division of labour that produces an unduly negative depiction of Maori gender relations.

Shortland also avoids oversimplifying the gendered division of labour by drawing attention to the difference between the “privileged class” of Maori women and slaves of both sexes:

It is the duty of the female to prepare baskets for the crop, and when packed, to assist in carrying it home; but this work is chiefly performed by slaves of both sexes; for New Zealand has its privileged class of females, who are principally occupied in weaving mats, in domestic cares, and other employments more suited to their sex.\textsuperscript{84}

He also noted that a writer who described Maori women as “beasts of burden”

\textsuperscript{81} Shortland 1851: 60.
\textsuperscript{82} Shortland 1856: 105.
\textsuperscript{83} Thomas 1990: 61-2, 190-1.
\textsuperscript{84} Shortland 1851: 59.
did not place the work of Maori women into context with the heavy work done exclusively by men, "dragging their large canoes from the woods from where they were built, a distance of many miles, to the nearest river ... felling and burning timber, in order to prepare grounds for cultivation".  

Shortland thought that the labours done by a "privileged class of females" were comparable to those of the privileged classes of women in his own society. Shortland also indicates that the ariki, that is to say, "the heads of families ... in both the male and female line" and the "heir male or heir female of a family" were excluded from certain labours. The ariki performed the tapu removal rituals because of their close connection to the family gods. Like chiefs, they could not do certain kinds of work which had to be done "by slaves, and such females as are exempt the laws of tapu." However, when it comes to cooking, a task that Earle, for example, shows male slaves doing, Shortland lumps the slaves and women together, noting that the "cook-house" was "a place to be entered by none but slaves and women."

We can see that Shortland never entirely detaches his discussion of tapu from a discussion of the gendered division of labour, even though he is inclined to give the effects of rank on women's roles in this case rather more attention than other writers. Shortland clearly saw a distinction between the labours done by a privileged group of rangatira women and those done by other women. His comments also indicate that a number of women who are not slaves share in their labours, while men who are not slaves do not involve themselves in these labours. It is also clear that men who were not slaves did not enter the cooking house. His comments on ariki, their role in tapu removal, and their exclusion from ordinary labours, also indicate that a senior woman who was responsible

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85 Ibid., 58-9 cf. Anon 1850.
86 Shortland 1856: 103.
87 Ibid., 104.
88 Ibid., 105.
89 Ibid., 97.
for the tapu removal rites probably would not enter the cooking house and
probably had to avoid the handling and preparation of food.

Shortland describes a privileged class of women who can avoid the heavier
labours associated with slaves, and excludes women who perform the tapu
removal rituals from the labours generally associated with slaves. The contrast
he draws between the “New Zealand gentleman” and the slave is one that applies
rather widely not just to a small privileged group of men, for in another
explanation he draws this contrast between a “free” man and a male slave. As
already noted in the preceding section, according to Shortland, a person taken
captive as a slave by another tribe was no longer “under the care of any Atua”.
Slaves were, as a consequence, “independent of any law of tapu, as far as they
were individually concerned.” The belief that the male slave had no personal
tapu meant that he could help women “in a variety of menial offices connected
with carrying and cooking food” which while free he could not do “without
incurring the anger of his Atua, and its consequence - sickness and perhaps
death.” Thus in Shortland’s account here the distinguishing mark of a male
slave is that he assists women in their labours.

Shortland’s remarks on the division of labour confirm Te Rangikāheke’s
assertion that women were noa and were associated with carrying and preparing
food, he adds further detail, showing that some women were more privileged
than others in this respect but it does seem that women had this general
association. Rather than rest with their generalisations, however, we will
examine some eye-witness accounts which flesh this out the division of labour.

Carrying Burdens.

One area where we can sometimes trace a distinction between women of
differing rank is in some scattered descriptions of instances when Maori were

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90 Ibid., 83.
91 Ibid.
seen carrying burdens upon their backs. There is a good amount of evidence that, as Shortland commented, that some women did not carry burdens of provisions on their backs.

Gillfillan who lived mainly in the Wanganui area between 1841 and 1847 drew a “settler bartering tobacco for potatoes and pumpkins”. This drawing shows both Maori men and women carrying or unloading burdens from their backs. The Maori man negotiating the sale however does not seem to have carried anything. Those who have been carrying burdens have naked torsos while he wears a cape draped over one arm and shoulder in such a way that would seem to be incompatible with bearing a burden on his back.

Roux’s description in 1772 of a party of Maori he met with gives some indication of the way that rank and gender could be reflected in who carried the burdens. He describes a visit to his encampment by a chief and his “very numerous retinue” including his wife, who was painted in red ochre and whose head was ornamented with feathers the same as her husbands ... several young girls, who appeared to belong to his followers, accompanied them. There were also other women who carried the provisions. The men alone carried arms.90

In this case, men bear the arms and adult women, with the exception of the chief’s wife, bear the burdens. We might note that in a society where the war ethic tended to govern relationships between communities, there is a practical aspect to a division of labour that excludes the bearers of arms from carrying burdens on their backs. A warrior with a heavy burden on his back would not have the appearance of being ready to fight at short notice - in a society where warlike display seems to have been just as important as actual violence, this must have been important. Absent in this account is any mention of male slaves. Mention of male slaves are rare in eighteenth-century sources, a point to which I shall return in the subsequent chapter.

92 Bell 1980: 38.
93 McNab 1914: 389.
Eighty-six years later, in a King movement procession in 1858, a similar gendered division of labour to that observed by Roux was present. The King movement was Christian and nationalist in orientation and their public rituals were shaped by their appreciation of British military pageantry. Despite these changes, this westernized procession resembles Roux’s account of a group of visiting Maori. Women, though not all of the women, bear the burdens, while the men bear arms:

Potatau [the king] accompanied by his son in front, preceded by his flag, the device of which is a cross and three stars, with the name of the country “Nui Tireni” (New Zealand) in the centre. Immediately following were the Chiefs and most respectably dressed Natives who had accompanied him. Then came the men of note, and lastly, the women the majority of whom were bearing burdens, though a considerable number of them, in consequence of high birth, were exempt from this degradation.*

Men, of course, are the ones that bear arms as in Roux’s description. The nineteenth-century British excluded women from military display far more rigidly than Maori did in the early nineteenth century, as the various descriptions of war dances and ritual battles that I have discussed in chapter two indicate. Any westernization on this point could only serve to exclude women more rigidly than before. Slavery had disappeared by about 1850, so sources after this date do not describe male slaves who might have blurred the gendered nature of load bearing. In 1844, Angas describes a chief’s daughter in accompanied by a party of women that he took to be slaves:

At the summit of a steep hill we met a party of slave girls, travelling

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*S Southern Cross, 9 July 1858. Wiremu Tamihana also wrote an eye-witness account of this procession. He does not give any detail on who was carrying the burdens, probably because it was such an ordinary feature of Maori life, it would not occur to him to describe it. His account confirms, however, that the men led the procession:

the people walked backward and fired a salute, even three volleys, and the sound thereof was as the roar of thunder. After this they did obeisance, and arranged themselves in procession. First came the people resident in that locality, bearing aloft the flag of New Zealand; then followed the king with his own people; then followed the other tribes; and lastly the women (Sinclair 1959: 269).
towards Whakatumutumu, heavily laden with baskets containing cakes of stinking [i.e., fermented] maize; they were accompanied by a pretty-looking young woman, the daughter of one of the chiefs at Pari-pari, gaily attired in a string-mat, with a bunch of myrtle leaves in her ear. The grace and gentle bashfulness of this rangatira damsel were in strong contrast with the coarse and rude appearance of the half-clad slaves who were her fellow travellers. 

We have in the above accounts some illustrative examples of Shortland's statement that there was a privileged class of women who were exempt the labours conferred on other free women and slaves. In this regard it is worth noting the tattooing that sometimes appears on the shoulders of rangatira women. Quoy in the 1820s remarks on it as a general feature of chiefly women. Dumont d'Urville in the 1820s saw a "slave woman" carving a moko onto the back and shoulders of the wife of a chief in the 1820s in the Bay of Islands: 

the chief Tuao [Tuai] showed me his wife while she was in the act of receiving the completion of her moko on her shoulders. Half her back was already incised with deeply cut designs, similar to those which adorned the faces of Corocoro's [Korokoro's] relatives, and a female slave was engaged in decorating the other side of the back with designs of like taste ... Tuao himself seemed to glory in the new honour his wife was receiving by these decorations.

This is a practice that is certainly incompatible with carrying loads for the duration of the healing process at least. It is not unreasonable to suggest that moko on the back and shoulders is connected with the exclusion of important women from carrying loads. D'Urville's remark that he thought the designs similar to those he had seen on faces, is suggestive, given that tapu is said to have concentrated itself in the head and the back. Moko, however, were designed in sympathy with the shape of the body part that it adorned. The resemblance

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95 Angas 1847a: II, 85.
96 Wright 1950: 222.
between the moko on faces and backs may simply be because the two planes of the face and the two planes of the upper back and shoulders lent themselves well to a similarly symmetrical design. Unfortunately, while the historical record has left us with a good number of depictions of moko on the face, thighs, buttocks, and on the arms, we are not similarly served with those done on the shoulders and upper back. Let us return to the division of labour.

Mary Martin describes the division of labour as she found it near Auckland in the early 1840s:

All our firewood was brought by canoes and stacked on the beach by the men. But there was still a long distance to be traversed up a steep hill to bring it to our door, and the women were expected by their husbands to undertake the carrying up of the whole load, some ten or fifteen tons. The Judge insisted that no woman should do this, whereas both men and women resented this infringement on the liberty of the subject. The latter looked on the job as a part of their perquisites. Poor creatures, their backs were bowed early enough by hard field labour.98

The Martins successfully imposed their own version of a gendered division of labour in this case. As a consequence they were for a time out of favour among the relatives of those men who carried the firewood.99 In this case Mary Martin makes no reference to distinctions in rank. Distinctions of rank, did come to her attention when the missionaries started a boarding school in the Waikato. The school acquired five girls from Waiheke in 1848:

But after a while the mothers came up and found their girls doing some little bits of house-work, and went back in a high dudgeon saying that they were being made slaves of, and must return. So the fathers came up by canoe the next morning... We used every argument in vain, and at last I cried out in despair, “Why do you men listen to your wives in this way?” One of them, with a droll sheepish look, caught up a bit of wood, and whittling it to a sharp point, which he prodded against his hand, said, “Mother, your words are just; but you see, though women’s words are not powerful, they are very sharp, and they go on-on-on.” So we lost our scholars.100

98 Martin 1884: 12.
99 Ibid.
100 Ibid., 67.
Martin intended this vignette to be amusing, its humour derives from the recognition of familiar beliefs within an unfamiliar context. The notion that masculine authority is not always a match for nagging women would certainly have been a familiar one to Mary Martin and her readers.

We have seen then that Martin gives us two references to the division of labour, one where questions of rank did not come to her attention and one where they did. Nicholas observed a gendered division of labour when the people of Paro, a village about 15 miles from Rangihoua, prepared fish to trade with their Pakeha visitors:

The women and the girls were employed in opening them and taking out the entrails, while the men occasionally assisted in these operations; or going in their canoes, supplied the industry of the others by bringing in plenty of bream and snappers, which they caught with the hook and line.101

Marsden and Nicholas helped with gutting and salting the fish and Nicholas writes that they were ridiculed by an old chief, named Pene, for it. The chief "exclaimed, contemptuously, "Mr. Marsden and Mr. Nicholas cookie cookee," and with a smile of self-importance cried out, "Mr. Bennee, nuee nuee rungateeda."102 Thus Pene thought that Marsden and Nicholas were acting like slaves in contrast to his own activities which were those of an important rangatira. This seems to have been an occasion when all the village was working for the sake of trade and Nicholas makes no mention of any women avoiding these labours as Pene did. This incident confirms Shortland's statements that male slaves engaged in women's work.

Lesson, by contrast, in 1824 in the Bay of Islands, thought that it was the "young slave-girls" who gutted the fish.103 Lesson's journal and the others of La Coquille indicate that they were in contact with a people who had a large supply of slaves,
so this may account for the difference. We can probably conclude with some safety that women who had slaves at their disposal would avoid such work. Other factors may have counted such as the urgency of the work.

When early writers describe who does the cooking, they sometimes show the women doing it and sometimes the slaves. As we have seen, one of Earle's pictures, shows male slaves beating and cooking fernroot. Yet in another picture, he shows two young women roasting a fish over the fire, while a man in a striped cloak sits some distance away. Earle makes no indication either in his description of the occasion or the commentary accompanying the picture on the rank of the women. The women are young and attractive as many of Earle's female subjects were.

In Angas's artwork we find one depiction of a rather unusual cooking house which once served Te Heuheu Mananui's father. It was an unusually ornate and solid structure for a cookhouse with circular apertures in the walls, which Angas says the slaves climbed through. Angas also shows another cooking shed, of a more usual construction, where he says the women did the cooking for those who were working the cultivations. The two women that can be seen sitting inside the shed are cloaked, and one woman's cloak looks rather a fine one, white with red spots. So her dress suggests that she does not come from the lowest stratum of Maori society, yet she is sitting inside a cooking shed, something that other sources tell us rangatira men would not do.

Let us examine a depiction of the division of labour as Dubouzet found it in Otago. He describes the domestic scene near a group of houses where the chief lived:

I found about a dozen Zealanders of both sexes gathered there: they were said to be slaves. The women were busy preparing the potatoes, fish and shellfish for a meal; others were making a few cloaks and baskets with native flax. They all took orders from the chief's wife who

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104 Earle 1838: plate no.3.


106 Reed 1979a: 52-3.
sat outside and directed the work with the harshness of a true matron. She was dressed in a grubby print dressing-gown and also wore a beautiful cloak. The only thing that distinguished her from the other women was that her face was tattooed all over. This sign of rank gave a very pronounced dignity to her face. When he presented me to her, her son was lavish in the deference that he showed to her. The men prowled about the hut and spent their lives in a state of absolute idleness, a great contrast to the heavy work which fell to the women. 107

There are number of points of interest in this account: the position of a chief's wife in relation to food preparation, the depiction of female industry and male leisure, and the presence of a full facial moko on a woman.

In the first place, it is rather unlikely that women would weave cloaks in the midst of food preparation so Dubouzet is probably mistaken here. It is more likely that the weavers were making the serving baskets which were generally woven for each meal and then disposed of.

A striking feature of Dubouzet's account (above) is his inclination to play down the features that distinguished the chief's wife from the other women and his lack of success in doing so. The full facial moko, the comment on the beautiful cloak, the deference paid to her by her son, and the obedience she commands from other women all undercut his point. That the woman was also wearing a dirty dressing gown tells us little, for many Maori acquired western clothing without any knowledge of how to maintain them through laundering and mending. Western garments were often also worn in a quite different manner and contexts than those dictated by the culture from which they originated. Although full facial moko were exclusively a male adornment in the North Island, this was not so in the South Island. 108 It is possible that we are seeing here the use of a masculine ornament to mark prestige in women. Information on this matter is too sketchy to come to any absolute conclusion.

We can also see that this lady is not participating directly in the activities rather

107 Wright 1955: 23.
108 Shortland 1851: 16; Colenso 1868: 18.
she directs them. This coincides with early nineteenth-century comment that the wives of chiefs were “overseers”. It also coincides with Cruise’s remark that the head wife of a chief had something like a supply of domestic servants in the junior wives and captive women. Lesson noted too that the wife of a chief of his acquaintance whom he thought was of high rank and came from a “distinguished family” came into the marriage with “three family slaves.” This suggests that there were certain labours that she was not expected to do. It is clear that there was a hierarchical order to women’s work with cooking being an example of the lowest of women’s work and carrying loads on one’s back is another clear example. Involvement in food preparation, cooking and the carrying of food was a mark of low prestige and a sign that one’s claims to a personal tapu were limited.

It is clear that head wives of polygynous chiefs who were in command of junior and slave wives, and women of rank whose family provided them with slaves or servants had the means to avoid cooking and carrying food. It would be surprising, given Maori notions about food preparation and personal tapu, if they did not take the opportunity to distance themselves from it. Certainly Polack indicates this, remarking that the “employments of the New Zealand females are equally performed by the superior chief and her slaves; with the exception of cooking, cutting firewood, and fetching water.”

A privileged minority of women, who commanded slaves, servants, or junior wives had the resources to avoid certain labours that were generally associated with women and generally avoided by men (with the exception of slaves). But these same women were very likely to be involved in the directing of these

110 Cruise 1921: 155.
113 Polack 1840: I, 163-4.
operations, while men were not. We can see in Dubouzet's description that the wife of the chief is still directing these operations while the men have nothing to do with it. This does seem to put even important women one step closer to the preparation and handling of food than the generality of men.

Marsden indicates the kind of role that the head wife of a chief might take in the offering of hospitality to guests. One evening during his journey to Tauranga he met a chief and his wife from a pa named Te Puriri, whom he and his party sheltered with. On rising, Marsden noticed that the chief's wife and her servant had disappeared.

I missed the chief's wife of Tipporari (Te Puriri) and her servant woman. On inquiring where they were, I was informed that they had gone away very early in order to prepare dinner for us at the hippah, where the chief invited us to dine with him as we passed. We reached the hippah about two o'clock, and found the lady had got a plentiful supply of provisions for us and all her slaves ready to attend us. 114

Marsden's description suggests why food preparation was regarded both as women's work and the work of slaves in early to mid-nineteenth-century sources. Even important women were involved, they may have avoided getting food on their hands directly and to this extent they may have preserved a personal tapu. However, these women were still, albeit as overseers, more closely connected than the majority of men to a labour that was not prestigious and incompatible with a personal tapu. This then would account for why Te Rangikaheke saw men as tapu and women as noa, and/or less tapu, and why Shortland never entirely detaches questions of tapu from gender.

As a footnote to this discussion I note that there is a very interesting depiction of cooking in a mid-nineteenth-century story in Grey's collection. In this story, the hosts cook fern root for the guests, and we are told that the men beat the fern root while the women turned it. This instance certainly involves men more closely in food preparation than most early nineteenth-century evidence

114 Elder 1932: 268.
suggests.\textsuperscript{115} It may be indicative of the lengths that hosts might go to in order to provide their guests with food, it may reflect a regional variation in custom, or it may be that the story is not one that describes an ordinary event and the event is intended to show that the people described are a little peculiar. Nonetheless it does place the women in more direct contact with the food than the men.

In the same narrative a chiefly young woman singles out the hero of the story among the visitors as the man she wants for a husband. She signals her interest by sitting by him and cooking and beating his fern root for him.\textsuperscript{116} So cooking in this case appears as something a woman does for a husband or lover.

\textit{The Image of Masculine Leisure and Female Industry.}

We have seen that Shortland challenged the notion that had been expressed by other contemporary writers that Māori women were “beasts of burden” while Māori men were idle. He does this in part by remarking on the very heavy labours done by men. There is a feature to the division of labour, however, that Shortland does not address. Women’s labours may not have been the heaviest that were required in Māori society but they may have worked longer hours than men. Let us consider some of our historical sources which present an image of masculine leisure and female industry.

We have already seen one such image in the account given by Doubouzet (see above). We should note that this account appears in a context where the author is attempting to show evidence of moral and social decay among the people of Otago as a consequence of European contact. Both Doubouzet and d’Urville’s descriptions indicate that this was a community living near a European settlement, suffering from the effects of the introduction of alcohol and where prostitution seemed to be a major source of income.\textsuperscript{117} So their comments on idle men and overworked women take place in this context. But the suggestion that

\textsuperscript{115} Grey 1928: 194-6.

\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., 195.

\textsuperscript{117} Wright 1955: 22-3.
men may have had more leisure time than women, finds support in earlier sources.

Roux’s description of scenes he observed in the eighteenth century suggest that women did tend to work longer hours while men spent time in warlike practice:

The women have to do all the work, the men only occupying themselves in warlike preparations and exercises. They are continually engaged in these exercises, throwing darts and spears at each other. The women are always busy, either in making cloth, or cultivating the soil, or preparing food. Sometimes they even go fishing with very large nets, but, as a rule, the men do this work.\(^{118}\)

We know from Shortland that the Roux’s assertion that the women “do all the work” is an overstatement. Cook, for example, noted that men did the especially heavy work, including building houses and canoes.\(^{119}\) The comment, however, that men spent a good deal of time practising at fighting and related pursuits coincides with comments from two early nineteenth-century observers who also remark on wrestling matches and so forth, that young men especially engaged in.\(^{120}\)

Another observer who travelled with Cook, Parkinson, viewed the gendered division of labour at Uawa somewhat negatively remarking that women wove the fine cloaks, carryed burdens and did the “drudgery”, while men did the carving.\(^{121}\) The observation that women worked more than men continues into the nineteenth century. Cruise also remarks that he thought the women laboured more than the men.\(^{122}\)

Ironically, those domestic labours that European observers thought more suited to women may have been largely responsible for women working longer

\(^{118}\) McNab 1914: 401-2.

\(^{119}\) Beaglehole 1955: 280.

\(^{120}\) E.g., Earle 1909: 132; Polack 1838: I, 131,233.

\(^{121}\) Parkinson 1784: 98.

\(^{122}\) Cruise 1824: 105.
hours. The domestic duties which resemble those that western observers might have found suitably feminine: food gathering and preparation, and weaving were part of an ever-repeating daily cycle of domestic labour. Many of the labours associated with men are defined projects, there is a limit to how many waka are needed, and how many houses are to be built, the clearing of cultivations too, would be done seasonally.

The weaving of garments, an activity which must have met with European approval, was done without a loom and was also a time consuming process. Sculpting pounamu weapons is a labour that men did that was a comparably slow process, but in this case we are talking about heirlooms that probably lasted a good deal longer than clothes do.123 Yate estimated that a fine kaitaka cloak took three to four months “close sitting” to weave; and in this estimate Yate makes no reference to the time taken to prepare the fibre.124

Women also worked on cultivations, and an engraving after de Sainson, provides another image of masculine leisure and female industry, eleven women are shown, dressed in short skirts with their hair loose, digging a plantation while in the background two top-knotted and cloaked men converse with European visitors.125 Other top-knotted cloaked figures are suggested in the background near the dwellings.

Angas who travelled widely in the North Island in 1844 remarks on the extensive labours of women and most interestingly conjoins it with a positive comment on their political influence, writing that though women possessed “a remarkable influence over the men, which extends to their councils and debates” but were also “the doers of all drudgery, and have to work in the potato grounds, cook, carry wood and water, and bear heavy burdens when travelling.”126

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124 Yate 1835: 157.

125 Dumont d'Urville 1834-5: Plate X.

126 Angas 1847b: Introduction (n.p.).
Combined in this statement are obviously remarks about high-ranking women and those other free women whose labours overlapped significantly with the labours of slaves. Angas's conjunction of these two aspects of Maori social life, however, may be informative; perhaps there was a connection between these two aspects of Maori social life. Although the extensive range of labours which free women performed were often of lower status than those associated exclusively with free men, this work was nonetheless essential to Maori society, and particularly essential to chiefly men who wished to preserve their high status. Marsden, for instance, notes that some chiefly men explained to him that without a number of wives and their labours either as fieldworkers or overseers they would not be able to maintain their cultivations.127 Thus women's labours were crucial and men knew they were dependent on them. We have also seen that Marsden's journals show that chiefly hosts liked to offer food to their guests and were dependent on the labours of their wives and slaves to do this (see above). The story about the chief, Paoa, in Grey's collection of mythology, discussed previously, also reflects this context. Paoa as a consequence of spending too much time with his second wife, a tutua, angers his senior wife. In retaliation she refuses to supply him with provisions to feed his guests. The humiliated chief then leaves his tribe. 128

In chapter two, we have also seen one of the rare records showing a female orator in the early nineteenth century, shows a senior woman offering advice at a hahunga gathering on where to situate the cultivations next season, which also suggests a connection between women's labours and their influence over tribal opinion.

Even so, ideas about personal tapu, the way that tapu transmitted through contact, and an aversion to eating anything that had been in contact with the tapu

127 Elder 1932: 209.

128 Grey 1928: 157-159. This is not of course an unambiguous tale about female power. Paoa goes on to find himself another high-ranking wife.
person, was closely related to the division of labour in Maori society. The evidence surveyed indicates that the distinction between tapu and noa related both to gender and rank so that there was a significant overlap in the labours of slaves and free women, although a small number of privileged women did not participate in the heaviest of women's labours.

*Did Women and Men Eat Apart?*

Ralston, alongside her conclusion that tapu did not connect to gender difference, also concludes that men and women did not eat separately. By contrast, Johansen comes to the conclusion that, "Men and women must have eaten apart in most places." In both cases their discussion of sources on this matter are rather cursory, I will explore here a greater variety of sources in more detail and discuss its relation to tapu.

Instances of people dining separately sometimes related to a temporary state of tapu. These states were connected with life-cycle events such as mourning, childbirth or hair cutting. The affected person had to eat apart from the rest of the community and was unable to eat with his or her hands. Separate dining also appears to have been one marker of social hierarchy in Maori communities. We have seen that rangatira did not eat with enslaved captives or tutua.

A permanent prohibition on men eating with women would give further support that the distinction between tapu and noa was applied to gender difference. There was, however, another situation where people did not eat together: hosts although obligated to provide food for their visitors did not necessarily eat with them and visitors took their leftovers away with them when they left. Shortland indicates that it was the consequence of the localised nature of tribal and familial atua, which meant that each community was under the care

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129 Ralston 1993: 32.

130 Johansen 1954: 213.

131 See e.g., Shortland 1856:117; Elder 1932:95; Maning 1863: 50-2.
and protection of its own set of atua.\textsuperscript{132} We should also perhaps consider the potential for relations of hostility between communities who did not consider themselves closely related and who did not usually live in proximity. People who could kill by makutu were reputed to be able to achieve it through rituals performed over the spittle or leftover food of the enemy.\textsuperscript{133}

Given that persons of differing rank ate separately, and the competitive rivalry that may often have existed between communities, it would be a difficult process to determine who should eat with whom when a sense of hierarchical order had not been established through day to day interactions. It would be rather easy for friction to develop.

What follows is a detailed discussion of the historical evidence used by Ralston and Johansen concerning the issue of whether men and women ate apart supplemented by my own findings. Ralston says of the evidence deriving from early contact between western observers and the Maori that:

One observer, Crozet, in the Bay of Islands area very briefly in the 1770s, said that women did not eat with men, but many other accounts specifically mentioned that men and women ate together. Perhaps Crozet witnessed a temporary prohibition due to a particular circumstance or misunderstood information given to him.\textsuperscript{134}

Crozet was not the only man on board the \textit{Mascarin} to conclude that men and women ate separately, Roux comments of women in the Bay of Islands June 1772:

I have never seen them eating with the men; on the contrary, they wait upon them whilst the latter are eating. Indeed I have even seen them push their servility to such a point as to actually place the food in their husbands' mouths. This custom of the women waiting on the men must be a rule among these people, for the men remain seated and chat away with their fellows, without paying any attention to the women who wait upon them. This almost made me think the women were regarded as slaves. I have been able to get no definite information on this point.\textsuperscript{135}

\textsuperscript{132} Shortland 1856: 117.
\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., 116-7.
\textsuperscript{134} Ralston 1993: 32.
\textsuperscript{135} McNab 1908: 401.
The comment that he sometimes saw women place food in their husbands' mouths may relate to a temporary prohibition, for those were often marked by an inability to eat with the hands. Otherwise Roux's observations indicate that it was a general custom that he never saw violated in the four months that the Mascarin was in New Zealand waters. Roux's comments appear to be based on his own observations and not on misunderstood second-hand information.

Ralston tells us that "many other accounts" give specific mention of Maori men and women eating together in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. She neglects, however, to give us any citations for them. This is an unfortunate omission because good, clear descriptions that show men either eating with women or eating apart from them are rather rare. Nicholas for example describes Maori eating in "several detached groups" but says nothing more.\footnote{Nicholas 1817, II: 105.} There is a good reason for this rarity, so many of our descriptions come from people who were after all visitors to the Maori communities that they observed, and hosts did not always eat with their visitors. Another reason for them not to comment on women eating apart from men is that it may have been a practice that seemed a logical extension of the division of labour, where women were involved with food preparation. It would be a very convenient and logical practice for women to leave their meal until after the men had finished. When we consider the extra work that feeding guests would involve, it is possible that observers did not did not think it worth commenting that women were too busy being good hosts to sit down and eat until later.

Johansen does a little better than Ralston by mentioning two sources that show women and men eating together as a counterpoint to his sources which say that women ate apart: Dumont d'Urville and James Cook.\footnote{Johansen 1954: 213.} Unfortunately, he gives us no actual citation for Cook and the reason for this may be that it is not actually there, for a thorough perusal of Cook's New Zealand journals failed to reveal any
such comment. However, one of Cook’s men (Monkhouse) gives description of a meal and food preparation at Anaura which indicates both that chiefs ate apart from everyone else and that women and men ate separately.\textsuperscript{138}

Angas provides another instance of separate dining, of Te Heuheu Mananui’s eight wives, only his favourite one was “permitted to eat with him, and then out of separate vessels.”\textsuperscript{139} Instances of women eating separately are also recorded by visitors who were hosted by Pakeha men and their Maori wives. In these instances, because hosts and guests are eating together, the absence of the wife at the dinner table is particularly noted. James West Stack in his recollections of his childhood in early nineteenth-century New Zealand recalled this practice at a whaling station in Poverty Bay in the 1840s. The Pakeha whaling captain’s Maori wife “waited upon” Stack and his companions “after the fashion of her countrywomen” while they dined.\textsuperscript{140} Stack thus indicates that he thought this was a general custom and it is likely had sufficient subsequent experience throughout New Zealand as an adult to evaluate the accuracy of this comment in hindsight when he wrote his recollections around 1916. Another example of the separate of dining in a mixed marriage is described by a dergyman who visited the Gundry family in Onehunga, in 1855:

It seemed very queer to know that the tall Maori woman who was standing near, replenishing my cup of coffee, handing me the salt, butter &c., was really Mrs Gundry. I have never seen her sit down at the same table with her husband: he and I sat together and she acted as our waitress. It must be an uncomfortable life, but every man to his taste.\textsuperscript{141}

Johansen’s key sources supporting the notion that women and men ate separately are Colenso and Taylor.\textsuperscript{142} Taylor holds the same position in both


\textsuperscript{139}Angas 1847a: II, 110.

\textsuperscript{140}Reed 1935: 195. Stack wrote the recollections in 1916.

\textsuperscript{141}Drummond 1971: 164.

\textsuperscript{142}Colenso 1868: 8; Taylor 1872: 187.
editions of his work and says that the "males could not eat with their wives, nor their wives with their male children, lest their tapu or sanctity should kill them." Colenso also comments on this practise as a general one, "They had two principal meals a day, at morning and evening, cooked and eaten hot, and always in the open air, the men apart from the women." Both Taylor and Colenso had substantial experience in early to mid-nineteenth-century New Zealand. Taylor arrived in New Zealand in 1839 and travelled widely within New Zealand, as well as living as a missionary in the Taranaki region. Colenso arrived in New Zealand in the Bay of Islands in 1835, and spent considerable time in the Hawkes Bay region from 1844. Johansen gives considerable weight to their findings and it does seem unlikely that they could have been misled about such an everyday event.

Let us now consider the statements of those writers who say that men and women ate together. Polack is one writer who clearly states that women eat with the men but he simply mentions it in passing. As already noted, Johansen refers to Dumont d'Urville as a source who says women and men do eat together. Dumont d'Urville's comments are, however, a little more complicated than that and particularly interesting because they represent the view of a man who had by then visited New Zealand twice in the 1820s. He remarks that, except when specific prohibitions were in place, women could eat with the men. By specific prohibitions ("tabous particulieres") he probably means temporary states of tapu that relate to particular activities and life-cycle rituals. Given that certain labours

143 Taylor 1855: 59.
144 Colenso1868: 8.
145 Owens 1990.
147 Johansen 1954: 213.
148 Polack 1840: I, 94-5.
149 Dumont d'Urville 1834-5: 402.
and life-cycle rites were exclusive to each gender, then this would definitely result in separate dining for the sexes. We might suspect that men’s involvement with warfare, carving canoes and building houses, all of which seem to have been attended by tapu prohibitions, must have contributed to a good deal of separate dining. For women, childbirth and the weaving of ornamental cloaks were associated with certain tapu prohibitions which could also contribute to separate dining.

An engraving taken from a work by de Sainson shows a very interesting case of what must have been a temporary prohibition. A man and a woman are shown sitting in the porch of a house, each is being fed by a different servant from separate baskets.\textsuperscript{190} This is interesting because they appear to be husband and wife and perhaps sharing in the same prohibition, yet they are not eating from the same basket. This suggests that some hierarchical ordering to the tapu is involved. Another possible explanation is that perhaps, that they are under the care of different atua.

Dumont d’Urville, despite his statement that women could eat with men, says that they did not ordinarily do so for the sake of convenience.\textsuperscript{191} He gives no further information but it can be interpreted in the light of the suggestion that I have made, the custom of separate dining for men and women has some connection with women’s involvement in food preparation and certain practical considerations connected with this. At bottom, we can ultimately trace women’s involvement in food preparation to a notion that women are noa or less tapu than men. But we have some evidence that it was not universally connected with an absolute prohibition on women and men eating together, even if they did generally eat apart.

As a footnote to this, I add two later references to separate dining. One later example that probably has some connection to earlier practices occurs in an

\textsuperscript{190} Ibid., Plate XLVII.

\textsuperscript{191} Dumont d’Urville 1834-5: 402.
interracial context occurred in Waitotara in 1874. It is another example where
guests eat with their hosts. The Maori community at Waitotara hosted a large
Christmas feast to which Maori “from Oeo to Wanganui” were invited along
with Pakeha from the “Waitotara township and neighbourhood”. Between four
and five hundred Maori attended and about 30 Pakeha.

At one o’clock precisely, the signal being given, the chiefs of the
different settlements and the white people marched in procession to the
banquet, headed by Pehimana, the principal chief of Waitotara, who
presided.152

The chiefs dined with the Pakeha men and women, only one Maori woman sat
at this table, she is described by the reporter as a “coloured lady of rank”. Thus the
“high table” included only one woman. This instance suggests that the majority
of chiefly women were busy organising the meal, a feature that is in continuity
with the earlier observations that I have surveyed. It also perhaps suggests why
there is some variety in the historical records. The comments on women and
men eating together may reflect observations relating to certain high ranking
women in some regions.

Best also provides us with an instance where men and women were required to
dine separately. Among the Tuhoe at the turn of the century it was said that the
plumes of the kotuku (white heron) were tapu and a woman could not eat with a
man while he was wearing them. It was believed that her hair would fall out if
she did. Kotuku feathers were probably never easy to come by and were probably
only ever worn by important men, not men in general. So it would seem that we
have here a late statement where concerns about rank and gender, tapu and
eating apart are intermingled. We may be seeing here a regional or historical
variation on the custom or both.153

152 Te Waka Maori 1874.

Chapter Seven.
Images of Inequality 1769-1845: Western Representations of Rank, Gender and Physical Appearance.

In the preceding chapter I have shown that the distinction between tapu and noa shaped and reflected the division of labour, and I have noted that there was an overlap in the labours of slaves and the labours of free women. In this chapter I will focus on western sources and examine the images of women and slaves that they contain. This examination provides an opportunity to foreground some of the peculiar biases of western sources in this period. Given the great emphasis in the secondary literature on the biased nature of western sources, it is as well to address this in an area where these biases were especially obvious: depictions of physical appearance.¹ Judgments relating to ugliness and beauty will very obviously have a good deal to do with the culture of the observer. A close examination of these images, however, shows that an explanation that relies solely on analyses of western culture is inadequate. For example, some depictions of physical appearance often shade into descriptions of dress and ornament. In other cases, comments concerning poor or good looks and physique may be connected with the health and welfare of the persons described. So I will also discuss the ways in which some of these depictions reflect Maori social life of the time. Thus they may expand our picture of the society in which Maori ideas and practices relating to tapu, noa, gender and rank took shape.

Vayda has suggested that male slaves at least became more common in the early nineteenth century, perhaps as a consequence of the need to accumulate a larger labour force to supply the trade with western shipping.² If this were true, it

¹ Those writers that emphasise the ways in which western sources are shaped or biased by western preconceptions are Ralston (1987), Rountree (1998), Grimshaw and Morton (1995) and Thomas (1990:61-2). See also my discussion of their views in chapter one of this work.

would suggest a significant change in the structure of Maori society, a change that might have consequences for the relationship between rank and gender. In this chapter, I will trace the development of western images of female and male slaves in western sources and consider whether they confirm Vayda’s suggestion.

In the late eighteenth century, western writers often drew a very sharp contrast between the physical appearances of Maori women and men: they admire the men and disparage the women. This contrast, while it does not entirely disappear in the early nineteenth century, is eclipsed by a sharp contrast between the physical appearance of chiefly persons and the lower stratum of Maori society.

Generalizations about the poor appearance of slaves do not appear in eighteenth-century sources.

Part one of this discussion focuses on western depictions of rank and appearance. In this section I trace the development of western depictions of slaves from the eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century. In this section I will, of course, examine depictions of low status women. This will give a useful background for part two, which focuses on general remarks made about female appearance which are common in the eighteenth century but are far less prominent in the early nineteenth century.

I. Contrasting Images: Rangatira and Slaves.

Many early nineteenth-century sources describe the poor appearance and physique of low status persons and contrast this with the appearance and physique of high status persons. Some of these sources give a reasonably plausible depiction of the effects Maori social hierarchy might have on the welfare of low status persons. Others, however, make fanciful appeals to racial difference to explain the distinction between rangatira and slaves. These comments are shaped by the belief that human races could be ranked hierarchically and/or a propensity to view Maori slaves in the same light as enslaved Africans.

In the following I will take a dual approach to my sources. I will examine the
ways that they are shaped by certain western ideas or prejudices about social hierarchy and race. I will also explore the ways in which they reflect Maori society of the time.

I will begin by examining a selection of eighteenth-century sources. While early nineteenth-century sources give a strong impression of a society divided into two strata, rangatira and slaves, eighteenth-century sources do not. Nonetheless some of the same elements that appear in early nineteenth-century sources also appear in the eighteenth century and provide a useful background for understanding early nineteenth-century depictions of slaves.

**The Image of the Slave: Eighteenth-Century Antecedents.**

There are two notable instances in the journals from Cook’s voyages that are suggestive of the social stratification to be found in early nineteenth-century sources. In Hawke’s Bay, Monkhouse provides a similar image to that found in the early nineteenth-century descriptions of slaves. One of the canoes he saw contained, “a miserable looking, half starved crew - their hair uncomb’d, ungreased, unornamented - their few mats [i.e., cloaks] old and dirty - their boat old, and without ornament and weapon.”

Despite their “half starved” and impoverished appearance, these men had a good supply of fish on board and traded for it. As they were leaving another fleet of canoes approached. The leading canoe of the second fleet first spoke to the men who had traded the fish and then approached the ship. As the canoe approached the ship, an old man stood with a staff in his hand and appears to have recited a karakia. The men in this canoe did not trade fish, although a club of some kind was handed over. This encounter seems to have been more ceremonial in character than the meeting with the men who traded the fish. Three of the men on board were dressed and ornamented in the way that we would expect of chiefs:

Two men had their hair neatly clubbed upon the top of the head in two parts and ornamented with three feathers and much daubed with

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3 Beaglehole 1955: 579.
grease. An old man who sat in the Stern had a Skin of an Animal of a brown Colour bordered with white.  

The contrast between the two groups of men, described above, suggests that a degree of social stratification was present. Monkhouse also saw at Poverty Bay, a young man beating and cooking fern root. As we have seen in chapter six, nineteenth-century sources indicate that free men did not do the cooking. Parkinson and Roux, however, simply comment on the extent of women’s labours without mention of male servants or assistants.  

Another instance of a very negative depiction of a group of people, one which is suggestive of the descriptions of the appearance of slaves in the early nineteenth century, occurs in the Bay of Plenty. Parkinson writes of some plain-looking canoes, without ornament or carving, which contained “people, who were naked, excepting one or two, were of a very dark complexion, and made a mean appearance.” This is an early remark conjoining lowly appearance with dark skin. The next day Parkinson saw several more plain looking canoes and writes “the people in them cut a defpicable figure.” Later, some came on board the Endeavour and gave some explanation of their situation:  

Some people, it feemed, came to them now-and-then from the north, plundered them of every thing they could find, and carried their wives and children away captives ... being subject to the ravages of those ruffians, they are much dispirited, and that may be the principal caufe of their poverty and wretchedness.  

It is reasonable to suppose that the poverty of a people subject to repeated plundering from their neighbours would show up in a lack of garments and ornaments and the absence of carved canoes. It is also reasonable to suppose that the strain of a difficult existence would show up in their general physical

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4 Beaglehole 1955: 580.

5 Parkinson 1784: 98; McNab 1914: 401-2. See also chapter six.

6 Parkinson 1784: 102.

7 Ibid., 102-3.

8 Ibid., 103.
appearance just as it would in their lack of property. In contrast to early
nineteenth-century sources (see below), Parkinson’s observation concerning dark
skin colour seems more accidental than a key element in his description of an
inferior appearance.

A careful reading of an incident that occurred during Cook’s third and briefest
visit to New Zealand gives another instance of a degree of social stratification that
is comparable to that found in early nineteenth-century sources. This visit in
1777 comprised only of a two week visit to Queen Charlotte Sound. At Ship’s
Cove, Samwell wrote that there were “many Girls on board but all of them very
ordinary.” His description of these young women is by no means flattering. Like
“other Courtezans”, he thought they were

so lavish of red paint in daubing their faces & so fragrant of noisome
smells that they did not meet with many admirers even among the
Ship’s Company, who upon these occasions are never known to be
peculiarly nice in the Choice of their Paramours.9

At first glance it reads much like some of the typically negative depictions of
Maori women in eighteenth-century sources which I will discuss separately. The
red paint probably comprised of shark oil and red ochre; it was considered by
Maori of the period to be an embellishment. It was probably a form of
ornamentation more usually practised by those who did not have moko.
Certainly Parkinson on Cook’s first voyage notes in Uawa that men with moko
did not use red ochre. That he thought it a “nafty cuftom” confined to “women
and servants” (see below), an observation that is in itself suggestive of the
overlap between distinctions of gender and rank in the early nineteenth century.
The appearance and smell of kokowai obviously did not appeal to a European
aesthetic but despite Samwell’s focus on the ochre and oil, he is commenting on
something a little more substantive than a lack of appreciation for Maori forms of
ornamentation. The red ochre and oil was not unusual and does not seem to
have been sufficiently off-putting in other cases. Yet on this occasion, according to

9 Beaglehole 1967: 995.
Samwell, Cook’s men showed an unusual degree of restraint. Cook’s journal confirms this: he notes in his journal with some relief that for once none of his men were absent from their posts without leave.¹⁰

A little further on in Samwell’s journal, he gives more information. On shore he says, “we saw a few who were cleanly & handsome.”¹¹ Later Te Weherua, the son of a local chief, who travelled with Samwell to Tahiti explained, “that none of the fine Girls were suffered to come near us but were kept with great Care at their Habitations & that those girls who came on board the Ships were the mere refuse and outcasts among them.”¹²

These women must surely have been tutua or taurekareka. A comparison with Cook’s comments on his first two visits to Queen Charlotte Sound are illuminating. During his second visit, he notes that men were bringing “wives and daughters” to the ships for the purpose of trade but this differed from the pattern of sexual behaviour he had encountered a few years earlier in the same place.¹³ Sexual relations then had appeared to be a private matter between some of the young women and the visiting Europeans, apparently conducted without any reference to the chiefs or anyone else except the two people concerned. Thus there seems to have been an evolution in Queen Charlotte Sound toward a sex-trade, which culminates in an effort on the part of rangatira to exploit female slaves. Samwell’s description can also be compared to Lesson’s comments on the contrast between the appearance of rangatira women and the young slave women brought on board La Coquille in 1824 (see below).

With the exception of the above two instances any recognition of social hierarchy in eighteenth-century sources is confined to identifying between one and three persons in any given group who seemed to be better dressed and wielding a certain amount of authority. These persons were generally men. Cook,

¹⁰ Beaglehole 1967: 61
¹¹ Ibid., 996.
¹² Ibid.
¹³ Beaglehole 1961: 175.
for instance, noticed in particular that there would be between one and three older men in a canoe who were distinguished by their finer dress and authority over the others:

When ever we were Viseted [sic.] by any number of them that had never seen or heard anything of us before they generaly [sic.] came off in the largest canoes they had, some of which will carry 60, 80 or 100 people ... In each canoe were generaly an Old man, in some two or three, these use'd always to dire[c]t the others, were better Clothed and generaly carried a halbard or battle ax in their hands or some such like thing which distinguished them from the others.14

Monkhouse gives us a similar picture on shore at Anaura. He found about sixty people “sitting very orderly and peaceably” near the crew who had been sent to get water, there were two “Old Men who appeared as chiefs” and whose cloaks differed from everyone elses’ and “seemed to have an eye over the Conduct of the rest”.15

While the figures of authority that emerge in these encounters are usually men, there are contexts where this is not so. Banks’s account of the method for negotiating sexual access to a young woman on shore, depicts these negotiations as being conducted through an older woman which he calls “the mistress of the family.”16 During Cook’s first visit encounters of this kind took place in a context of ceremonial exchange and the offering of hospitality.17 We are probably seeing here evidence that the duties related to offering hospitality to guests were performed by women under the authority of the head wife of the chief, often a woman of rank in her own right.

A family group at Anaura gives an impression of the distinctions drawn between women, Monkhouse described a husband, wife, two sons, and two other

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14 Beaglehole 1955: 281.
15 Ibid., 584.
17 See Biggs (1960: 15-16) and Heuer (1972: 23) for an indication of the ceremonial quality to sexual relationships between female hosts and male visitors and for an indication of the way this changed in the context of the trade with western shipping.
women, one old and one young "who acted as servants." This coincides with early nineteenth-century descriptions of the families of polygynous chiefs discussed in chapter six, where the senior wife wielded authority over the junior wives and/or slaves.

The above two examples where women emerge as figures of authority occur in encounters with families rather than in larger collectives. In Roux’s journal, one description of a woman really stands out for the time. He met a travelling party with a man and woman at the head of it, whom he thought were husband and wife. Roux’s description of the woman’s ornamentation, particularly the large white feathers in her hair, exactly like the man’s, are unusual for the time. Large white feathers in the hair in both the eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century appear usually on the heads of male chiefs.

Monkhouse describes the distribution of his gifts ("beads &c") at Poverty Bay, he offered them to "two old Men, who appeared as chiefs ... One of the chiefs distributed my presents to two women probably his wife and daughter - other Women sat by them but did not seem to expect a participation in these favours."

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18 Beaglehole 1955: 584.

19 McNab 1914: 389. See also chapter six, p.227.

20 Cook indicates in his journal that large white feathers were a masculine ornament (Beaglehole 1955: 280).

In the early nineteenth century Earle’s art works also suggest that large white feathers were generally the prerogative of male chiefs. In Earle’s painting of his meeting with Hongi Hika and other members of his tribe, Hongi has several large white feathers in his hair, one other man has three, no one else wears them (Murray-Oliver 1968: 82-3). A water colour of Te Uruti and three of his men shows Te Uruti (the chief of Kororareka) shows only Te Uruti wearing four large white feathers (Ibid., 95). Earle also shows the skull of a dead chief wearing a similar arrangement to that of Hongi and Te Uruti (Ibid., 103) He shows another ceremonial occasion at Kororareka where warriors presented severed heads to Te Uruti’s mother, Turero (Ibid., 99). One man is wearing three good-sized white feathers, another wears two smaller looking ones. Turero wears what may be a cluster of smaller white feathers. In chapter six, p. 246, we have seen that Best’s Tuhoe informants also thought the feathers of the white heron were a masculine ornament. This must, however, have been a general pattern, not an absolute rule. As noted in chapter two, John Rutherford describes the corpse of the mother of a chief wearing "several white feathers, - the sort which are here preferred to any other" (Craik 1830: 192-4). And as noted in chapter six, a legend shows a woman preparing to commit suicide wearing white heron feathers (Grey 1928: 197).

21 Beaglehole 1955: 585.
So distinctions of rank do appear in these accounts but they do not extend to a
generalized depiction of an upper stratum of rangatira as it appears in the early
nineteenth century. While early nineteenth-century observers give a strong
impression of a society divided into two strata, slaves and rangatira, eighteenth-
century sources do not.

Both Cook and Roux were told by Maori that captives were not kept prisoner
but killed.\textsuperscript{12} If this impression was correct, this would go some way toward
explaining why eighteenth-century sources give such scanty evidence of the two
strata that are so apparent in the early nineteenth-century. Vayda, on the basis of
Cook's and Roux's statements, suggests that male slaves at least may have been
rarer in the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{13}

Anderson's remarks in 1777, however, indicate that women were kept. When
captives were numerous, he wrote, "they destroy their prisoners one after the
other and never spare any, even murdering the women whom they cohabit with
untill their fate is determin'd."\textsuperscript{14} Despite his statement that none were spared, his
remark that captive women were cohabited with indicates that they were kept for
a while at least. And his statement that they even killed those women accords
with nineteenth-century observations that slave's right to life could be tenuous
(see below). We have also seen that there were women at Queen Charlotte
Sound that a chiefly man described as "refuse" and "outcasts." Moreover, some
impoverished people in the Bay of Plenty also complained that they were
repeatedly plundered of women and children by their neighbours (see above).
The mention of children indicates that male slaves as well as women must have
been present in some places at least.

In 1793, Philip King gives what seems to be the first depiction of the stratified
society that is commonplace in early nineteenth-century sources. His information

\textsuperscript{12} Vayda 1960: 107.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{14} Beaglehole 1967: II, 814.
derives from conversations with Tuki, a chiefly young man from Doubtless Bay, who had been kidnapped from New Zealand and subsequently resided with King at Norfolk Island for six months. King writes that “the inferior classes are perfectly subordinate to the superior classes.” He also gives the term “Ta Ane Emoki” and defines it as a “labouring man.”25 The Maori phrase here is very likely “tane mokai” or enslaved man. “Tane” is a term that can only apply to men, so this must be an early reference to the presence of enslaved men.

The theme of racial difference that becomes prominent in early nineteenth-century sources is not a feature of eighteenth-century sources where social stratification is mentioned. I have noted, however, one passing reference to skin colour in the description of an impoverished group of people. There are, however, some peculiar remarks on racial difference to be found in Crozet’s journal. Although not connected to any comment on slavery Crozet’s comments may very well have set the tone for subsequent descriptions of slaves. An edition of Crozet’s papers was first published in 1793 and extracts of Crozet’s observations in the north of the North Island appear in various places subsequently:26

I remarked with great astonishment that amongst the savages who boarded the vessels in the early days there were three kinds of man, of which those who appeared to be the true aborigines were yellowish white and the biggest of them all, their mean height five foot nine to ten inches, and their hair black, glossy and straight; others were more swarthy and not quite so tall, their hair slightly frizzled [? curled]; finally there were the true negroes with woolly heads, not so tall as the others but generally broader in the chest. The former have very little beard and the negroes have very much.27

Crozet’s comments are a rather fanciful elaboration of some minor physical variations in the Maori population. Some of it may also represent an exaggerated impression of differences in grooming that may relate to rank. The oiled and top knotted hair of important persons might contrast with the relatively unkempt

25 McNab 1914: 543.
26 Roth 1891: vii-viii.
27 Ibid., 28.
hair of slaves. Men with facial moko in the early nineteenth century were known
to pluck out their beards.28

Later in his journal Crozet restates his ideas about racial difference and
proposes an explanation for the racial variety that he believed he saw “three
varieties of man: whites, blacks and yellows. It is most certain that the whites are
the aborigines”.29 He proposed that the indigenous people of New Holland
(Australia) must have arrived subsequently - and by intermarrying produced the
“yellow people.”30 Oddly enough, if we were to fuse King’s remarks on social
stratification with Crozet’s remarks on an apparent racial difference among
Maori, we would have something that bears a strong resemblance to early
nineteenth-century descriptions of slaves and rangatira.

Contrasting Images of Rangatira and Slaves: 1815 -27.

Nicholas, who visited the north of the North Island 1814-15, gives what may be
the most plausible account of the differing appearances of rangatira and slaves in
the early nineteenth century:

The chiefs are much superior to the lower orders in the comeliness of
their persons; but this may be accounted for by their exemption from
labour and their easy state of independence, in which neither the mind
nor body undergoes any fatigue. All the males belonging to the family
of the chief … have generally servants of their own to wait upon them.31

Nicholas’s remarks concerning the exemption of chiefs from labour is
overstated, while there were certain labours that chiefs did not participate in, they
still seemed to have worked reasonably hard. It would be hard to account for the
wealth of admiring comments concerning the athletic muscularity of men in
general in the late eighteenth century and rangatira men in particular in the

29 Roth 1891:66.
30 Ibid.,67.
31 Nicholas 1817: I, 292.
nineteenth century, if they were leading lives of absolute leisure. I discuss some of these images further below. Nevertheless, Nicholas's comments on the difference in appearance he noticed between rangatira and less advantaged persons are plausible. Equally plausible is the explanation that this was the result of rangatira living easier lives, if not the absolute leisure that he suggests.

Cruise, who visited New Zealand in 1821, also comments on the differing appearance of slaves and rangatira:

There is a striking difference between the rungateddas [rangatira], that is, the chiefs and better class of people, in stature and cast, and those who are by birth cookees, or slaves. Many of the latter are almost black and below the middle size.

A lack of height suggests that low status children did not always get enough to eat. Cruise, however, said that slaves, although they did not dine with their masters got enough to eat. McCrae, who travelled on the same ship indicates that life for slaves was certainly harsher. He thought that slaves were "very badly clothed" and appeared to be in a "wretched condition." Cruise's comment on skin colour, however, suggests that he thought that he might be observing a racial difference. This suggestion becomes even stronger in the comments of subsequent observers. Atkins in 1829 echoes Cruise but specifically suggests a racial difference:

They are divided into two classes, viz., ranghateeros (or chiefs) and their relations of different consanguinity, and cookees (slaves), who are nearly black, and much shorter, and appear a different race of people.

The theme of skin colour crops up elsewhere in the same period. Earle remarked that it was easy to distinguish the slaves from the "free Zealander"

32 See also Earle's paintings of various men in 1827 (Murray-Oliver 1968: 43, 107, 110-111).
33 Cruise 1824: 263.
34 McNab 1908: 543.
35 Ibid., 696.
though both their complexions and garments were identical. This remark that suggests that he was inclined to look to dress and skin colour in his first assessment of who was important but had not found it absolutely reliable. He thought that slaves generally had "a squalid, dejected look" and appeared "literally half starved." Skin colour, however, clearly marks the difference between masters and slaves in a hand coloured lithograph taken from one of Earle's depictions. The slaves are scantily clad and very dark indeed while their masters are rather pale and well cloaked. The difference in skin colour, however, may have been added by the colourist. The original work does not appear in any of the published catalogues and collections of Earle's art.

The descriptions of the skin colour of low status Maori by western observers may reflect their propensity to see racial difference as a cause of, or explanation for, slavery. The western trade in African slaves certainly springs to mind in this regard. These statements may also be influenced by Crozet. It is also a distinct possibility that the comments on skin colour reflect the more weathered appearance of slaves. In the early nineteenth century, slaves were seen sleeping in the open, or sometimes under the rather minimal shelters that housed the ovens. They also tended to be more scantily clad than their masters.

Cook's observations in eighteenth-century Tahiti suggest a comparable instance where an observer perceived a difference in complexion that related to rank:

those of the inferior sort who are obliged to be much exposed to the sun and air are of a very dark brown, the Superiors again who spend much of their time in thier [sic] houses or under shelter are not browner than people who are born or reside long in the West Indias nay some of the

34 Earle 1909: 103.
35 Ibid., 103-4.
36 Murray-Oliver 1968: 117.
women are almost as fair as Europeans. 40

Not every observer in New Zealand who perceived a racial difference in the appearances of low and high status persons wrote about skin colour. Three men on the *Astrolabe* (Dumont d’Urville, de Sainson and Quoy), wrote of the difference in the appearance of the men they saw in 1827. They do not mention colour but do mention the possibility of racial difference.

Dumont d’Urville’s comments on the men in two canoes that visited the *Astrolabe* in Tasman Bay, come close to giving the impression that it was merely certain prejudices concerning “common unimpressive” facial characteristics and racial difference that produced his description of men he met with in Tasman Bay:

One of the canoes carried ten natives, the other nine; half of these people seemed to be of high rank, judging by their tattooing, their fine figures, and the distinguished appearances of their faces; the others, without any tattooing, and with common unimpressive features, slaves, no doubt, or belonging to the lower classes, might easily be taken for men of another race, so different did they appear at first sight from the chiefs.41

With the exception of his comment on tattooing, Dumont d’Urville’s description appears to reflect his own class and racial prejudices rather more than it reflects Maori life in Tasman Bay. A comparison with Quoy’s and de Sainson’s remarks, however, suggest that Dumont d’Urville’s description is a response to distinctions present in Maori society of the time. Quoy’s general comments on Maori social stratification are straightforward and resemble the remarks we have already seen from other observers, “People of the lower orders are shorter and not quite so good looking; few of them are tattooed.”42 De Sainson gives a more detailed description of the differences he saw between men in the north of the

40Beaglehole 1955: 123.

41Wright 1950: 75.

42Ibid., 222.
South Island:

As a rule the New Zealanders are tall and well built; without being at all stout, their firm well developed muscles show that they cultivate strength as well as agility. They hold their heads high and their shoulders well back ...

Among the men we had on board, three or four seemed to belong to a different race. Thin, of poor physique and dirty, they were not tattooed; their features were of the lowest type, their hair matted together; and a few scraps of roughly plaited flax formed their only covering. 43

Some of de Sainson’s description obviously suggest the effects of a social hierarchy, for it seems to reflect a lack of grooming and ornament in some of the men, their hair was not dressed, they did not have moko, their clothing was rough and minimal. The comments that these men were “thin” and had “poor physique” suggest that these men were somewhat undernourished but someone disposed to perceive racially based hierarchies might see this as evidence of racial difference and look for physical differences in this light, notably, “features of the lowest type.” De Sainson’s comments, though they lean toward a racial explanation, give sufficient detail to indicate that his remarks reflect the effects of Maori social stratification not just the effects of western race and class prejudices.

A Depiction of Female Slaves in 1824.

The comments on the appearance of low status persons that I have surveyed above are either general or comments that centre on men; and it is sometimes is hard to tell the difference because androcentrism is a feature of the writing of the period. Nonetheless one observer specifically remarks on a lack of height in low status women. René Lesson contrasts the “slave-girls” with the “married women” who were brought on board La Coquille for the purposes of prostitution in the Bay of Islands in 1824:

All the married women who came on board [...] had much more fully developed figures than the slave-girls who lived on the ship [...] These women were robust and strongly built, rarely less than five feet two or three inches tall. The slaves, however, on an average, were four feet

43Wright 1950: 206.
three to four feet six ..."44

The "married women" seem to have been wives of chiefly men so this comment probably reflects a difference that is a consequence of rank and privilege not merely marital status. Some of these slight and short young women also appeared to be rather young, and this would certainly explain their small size, "some" appeared about nine or ten years old; but he indicates that the majority looked to be 15-20 years old.45 Therefore sufficient of them were old enough for this generalization concerning their lack of height to have some weight. It is also in keeping with the comment of others on a general lack of height among kuki or slaves. Other comments from men on board La Coquille show that this observation took place in a context where rangatira men and women were prostituting low status women and girls for their own profit. This incident can be compared with the attempt to exploit low status women at Ship's Cove described by Samwell in 1777 (see above).

As with the observation that skin colour had some relation to rank, the observation that there was a difference in female physique has its parallel in a comment made by Cook in eighteenth-century Tahiti. In 1769 he wrote, "The superior women are in every respect as large as Europeans but the inferior sort are in general small." 46

In Lesson's case, in the Bay of Islands in 1824, the explanation that these young slave women had not been getting enough to eat is supported by their behaviour while on the ship. Lesson wrote,

our seamen regaled these antipodean beauties from their own platters, but my stomach still turns over when I remember the greed with which they scooped up the bits of food which overflowed on to the deck, licking them up and fighting for them with the pigs we had on board. Once a bowl of rice was spilt on the deck, and seven or eight girls

44Sharp 1971: 86.
45Ibid., 55.
threw themselves down flat on their stomachs and left not a grain on the planks.  

Thus the women acted in a way that suggests that, to them, food was a scarce resource. A history of hunger rather than "greed" is a better explanation for the way that they acted.

*Images of Slaves in the 1830s and 40s.*

The perception that Maori society was divided into two strata with distinct appearances continues in writing in the 1830s and 40s. William Brown lived in the north of the North Island from 1839 wrote:

- The slaves have a very different appearance. They seem formed of far inferior materials; the very texture of their skin is coarser. Neither are they so tall or well proportioned, though they are more muscular. 

This observation is in continuity with earlier comments and suggestive of a more weathered appearance, and harder work. Comments about low status women in particular also appear. Angas seems to connect height with rank saying that, "some of the chiefs are above the average height of Europeans, and a few (though instances are not of frequent occurrence) incline to obesity." By contrast, he makes some very unflattering remarks concerning the appearance of low status women, "The slave-women ... are as coarse and unprepossessing as the daughters of the Rangitiras [sic], or chiefs are pleasing and comely." It is a striking feature of Angas's narrative that he makes frequent mention of female slaves but never describes and seldom mentions male slaves. He mentions

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47 Sharp 1971: 56.
48 Brown 1845: 29.
49 Angas 1847a: I, 311.
50 Ibid.
51 Angas (1847a) makes frequent mention of female slaves in *Savage Life and Scenes*. In vol. 1 see pp. 237, 242. In vol. 2. see pp. 33, 64, 75, 85, 95, 101, 157.
painting the portrait of one slave at Paripari who was probably male, given that Angas does not specify that the slave’s gender. This image is not to be found in any of Angas’s published collections on New Zealand.

Although Angas indicates that there were occasions when he painted slaves, his published collections are relentlessly picturesque and his portraits are no exception. His portraits are a collection of notable men, women and children of Maori society in the early 1840s, often exquisitely dressed and ornamented. There are, however, two slaves in his collection The New Zealanders Illustrated and both are women. One is shown in a plate depicting women’s activities titled “Domestic Economy: Women Making Mats &c,” she is scraping potatoes draped in a rough cloak of traditional manufacture and a white skirt or dress underneath, probably of western manufacture. The plainness of her garments, hair and general lack of ornament suggest her low status but she does not look as bad as Angas’s description in Savage Life and Scenes (see above). The same is not true of the other female slave who appears in the centre of a page of artefacts titled “ Implements and Domestic Economy.” A mid-nineteenth-century gentleman not overly given to sympathy for those less fortunate than himself might call her “coarse and unprepossessing.” She was apparently an “aged slave woman, at Pouketouto, in the interior, beyond Mokau” She is thin, scantily clad and without ornament. She is also crouched rather awkwardly with her shoulder at a peculiar angle as though there might be some injury affecting her back or shoulders. An injury of this kind would not be surprising in someone who had spent a good part of her life carrying heavy burdens of provisions on her back.

52 Angas 1847, II: 89.

53 See Angas 1847: I, 238; II, 89 for comments that indicate that he occasionally sketched slaves.

54 Angas 1847b: Plate LIX.

55 Ibid., Plate LV.

56 “Implements and Domestic Economy,” Plate LV of Angas’s The New Zealanders Illustrated appears in Reed’s edition but the explanatory note for the slave has been omitted (Reed 1979a: 48-9)
The picture suggests that the years took a heavy toll on slave women.

Polack in the 1830s claimed that low status women differed "but little from the males in outward appearance." By contrast, he describes high status women in terms that suggest that in his eyes they conformed to European standards of femininity and beauty. It seems reasonable to suppose that women from the upper stratum might be judged more favorably in relation to British and European notions of femininity of the time. The feminine ideal of those who wrote about New Zealand almost certainly had a class bias built into it as well as a general cultural and racial bias. That is to say the women they thought beautiful in their own society were likely to have led relatively leisured lives and were well dressed. A more leisured life-style and finer dress and ornament for women of rank in Maori society would help to account for their statements. This difference is particularly apparent in Angas' description of the decorative attire of a chief's daughter and the "coarse and rude appearance" of the scantily clad slave women who accompanied her (see chapter six).

Prior to 1830 the idea of racial difference is often drawn on to explain differences that were better explained by the effects of a social hierarchy that came under the observation of writers who were inclined to see social hierarchies in racial terms. Angas and Polack supply evidence that the idea of racial difference was beginning to take on a life of its own, independent of any probable social realities. Polack appears to be the first who really elaborates on what has been called the "two race theory." He uses the terms "class" and "race" interchangeably. According to him, the "higher classes" of Maori society a separate race, they not only had a better physique but also "features approaching to the European." He describes the "inferior classes" not only as "short in stature" but in terms that suggest an obviously racist stereotype: "hair lank, or frizzly; complexion brown, approaching to black, and the expression of the

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57 Polack 1838: I, 361.
58 Ibid., 361-2.
features often insidious."\(^{59}\) In his 1840 work, he calls the higher race "Malay" and the inferior one "Papuan".

While I have suggested that Crozet may have influenced other writers there is no doubt in Polack's case, for Polack makes specific mention of Crozet's ideas. Polack's division of the Maori into two races derives not solely from Crozet but also from another eighteenth-century author, Johann Forster.\(^{60}\) Forster divided the Pacific into two races and thought that those peoples who inhabited Polynesia and New Zealand were "more fair, well-limbed, athletic, of a fine size, and a kind benevolent temper."\(^{61}\) The other Pacific peoples were "blacker, the hair just beginning to become woolly and crisp, the body more slender and low, and their temper, if possible more brisk, though somewhat mistrustful."\(^{62}\) He also thought both races contained within their populations "varieties, which form the gradations toward the other race".\(^{63}\) In Crozet and Forster, then, are the roots of Polack's apparently idiosyncratic discussion of Maori distinctions of rank.\(^{64}\)

Polack differs from earlier nineteenth-century writers in New Zealand. Earlier writers generally use the idea of racial difference to convey their impressions of the differing appearances of low and high status persons. Polack's discussion takes on more of Crozet's and Forster's interest in racial types. In Polack's discussion the idea that the Maori comprises two distinct races is the premise for his discussion of Maori social hierarchies. He also uses it to explain the defeats that people in the East Cape suffered at the hands of their neighbours. The East Cape

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\(^{59}\) Ibid.

\(^{60}\) Sorrenson 1977: 457.


\(^{62}\) Ibid.

\(^{63}\) Forster 1996: 153.

\(^{64}\) The development of the "two race theory" in nineteenth-century writing on the Maori has been discussed by Sorrenson (1977: 457) although he does not give much attention to its connection with the depiction of slaves, except to observe that this connection probably reflects their "unkempt" appearance.
people, according to him, belonged to the inferior race. The idea that the Maori comprised two races “Papuan and Malay” lived on after Polack. Roth, in his 1891 translation of Crozet, adds an approving footnote to Crozet’s discussion of racial difference among the Maori, “These observations are very correct. There are two distinct races among the Maories, the black or Papuan, and the yellow or Malayo-Polynesian.”

In the 1840s the notion that the Maori comprised two races was apparently quite common. According to Angas,

It has frequently been stated (though perhaps without good grounds for conjecture) that the present inhabitants of New Zealand have sprung from two distinct races: the one a darker and inferior variety, who were the former inhabitants of the country; and a later race superior in intelligence and physical character, who, amalgamated with the aborigines.

This account reverses the order of arrival that Crozet proposed, in Crozet’s version the lighter people were the aboriginals. The version Angas records also sounds more like a founding myth for British colonialism in New Zealand than an explanation for Maori social hierarchies. It is certainly suggestive of some of the ideas concerning racial amalgamation that appear after 1840.

Depictions of Racial Difference and the Maori Slave: Conclusions.

The notion that the Maori population was made up of different races goes back to the eighteenth century, with Crozet proposing three races to account for the variation in skin colour that he observed. Crozet, however, does not connect skin colour with either rank or conquest. Early nineteenth-century sources show that a racial difference was suggested in the context of describing the differing appearance of high status and low status persons. These differences in appearance

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66 Roth 1891: 28, n.1.

67 Angas 1847: I, 305.

68 See e.g., Anon 1850.
could equally well be explained by the effects that social hierarchies can have on a person's welfare, the work that one does, one's access to resources such as food clothing and shelter. One early nineteenth-century observer, Nicholas, actually does connect the difference in appearance to the effects of a social hierarchy, without bringing up the question of racial difference. Others too, while commenting on an apparent racial difference, give sufficient detail in their descriptions to show that they were observing the effects of a social hierarchy as well as recording some of the peculiar racial theories of the day.

Polack, who lived in New Zealand in the early 1830s, stands out as a writer who drew explicitly on eighteenth-century ideas about racial difference in the Pacific. For Polack the theory that Maori comprised different races is a premise for his discussion of Maori social stratification and even regional variation. His writing perhaps marks the beginning of a trend on which Angas remarks in the 1840s. The notion of race had taken on a life of its own apart from attempts to describe or explain Maori social hierarchies.

The Image of the Slave: Some Material Causes in Maori Society.

I have suggested that with the exception of the occasional eighteenth-century racial theory, until Polack's fanciful theories, the depictions of slaves have some plausible elements to them. I suggest that the negative depiction of slaves reflects an unequal distribution of resources such as food and shelter, and a generally harder life. The repeated remarks about a lack of height suggest that captive children may have been particularly affected.

Early nineteenth-century descriptions of enslaved captives indicate that women and children were taken captive, while adult men were more usually killed. Cruise, on one occasion, notes that the prisoners he saw "were generally women and children". McCrae who travelled on the same ship as Cruise

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Cruise: 1824: 118
indicates that he thought this was a general pattern. Earle emphasised that "Children are greatly prized ... they remain slaves for life" and said that women "if beautiful" were taken as wives. On one occasion where he records his observations of a war party returning to Kororareka, only women and children were brought back as captives, all the men had been killed. Rewa, a Bay of Islands chief, on the eve of battle in 1821 told Butler which of the enemy was likely to be left alive:

He said there would be very few saved, if any, and they would be women and boys.
He said a warrior would save a woman for a wife, but that every woman that was saved must be of particular beauty. Little boys would in some measure be spared, as they could bring them up as slaves, and as they grew they would have neither knowledge of their father or mother, or any enmity against them.

The presence of children in descriptions of captives goes some way toward accounting for the very negative descriptions of the stature of slaves in general. Butler's rendition of Rewa's comments on the matter is the only account where I have seen where boys mentioned are specifically as a preferred category of captive, it may be that captive children were predominantly male, early nineteenth-century censuses certainly show a high masculinity ratio in the population, and late nineteenth-century censuses show that this was the case among in the 0-14 age group as well as the adult population.

The explanation I propose for the negative images of low status persons in the early nineteenth-century society, particularly their lack of height, conflicts with the depiction of Maori food resources and the life of slaves in Firth's classic and influential work on the economics of the New Zealand Maori and I discuss this further below.

70 McNab 1908: 538.
71 Earle 1909: 103.
72 Ibid., 158-9.
73 Barton 1927: 173.
74 See chapter four.
Two Images of Food Resources in Maori Society before 1830.

The secondary literature provides two images of food resources in Maori society. In Firth's classic and influential work on Maori economics the dominant image is a society of plenty.75 Firth's depiction can, however, be countered by Sutton's argument that late prehistoric food supplies in New Zealand were marginal until the introduction of western crops and livestock.76 Sutton's argument hinges on the quality and quantity of food sources in relation to the effort required to prepare them, and the seasonality of cultivated crops in regions where cultivation was possible. He suggests that introduced foods may have had a significant impact in some regions before 1830. It is possible that the ethnographic record on which Firth drew was one that reflected a new affluence thanks to introduced food sources.

Kendall comments in 1819 that "More than ten times the quantity of land is now in cultivation than we observed when we first landed on the island."77 He connects this with the introduction of new tools but the new crops must also have had some effect. Certainly, it is noticeable how speedily the introduced potato and maize had become central features of the diet. Polack describes a meal served when he was a guest at a northern pa in the 1830s: the feast comprised of two large pigs, potatoes, maize, kumara, taro and turnips.78 Introduced foods made a substantial contribution to the spread. Potatoes and maize are clearly the staple diet in Angas's account of his journey into the central North Island in 1844, although kumara were still a highly prized food in areas where it was possible to grow it.

Taylor writes in 1855 that the potato "is far more universally cultivated than

75 Firth 1928.
77 McNab 1908: 443.
78 Polack 1838: I, 81.
the *kumara.* 79 The reasons he gave were that the potato required less labour, and yielded "a more certain and larger return." Introduced crops like the potato and maize also flourished in the central North Island and the south of the South Island where it was either impossible or extremely difficult to cultivate traditional crops. It seems reasonable to suppose that Maori would not have adopted the new crops so speedily and generally unless these crops offered distinct advantages over their former means of subsistence.

Houghton's assessment of prehistoric Maori skeletons lends support to Sutton's assessment of food supplies. Houghton found that the bone structure of prehistoric New Zealanders was "a little deficient" and this was probably a consequence of nutritional problems. 80 This deficiency in bone structure was particularly apparent in females. Houghton also found that the skeletal record indicates an unusual degree of sexual dimorphism in New Zealand, men were 9.1% taller than women, while a more usual figure would fall within the range of 6-8%. The lack of height and bone thickness in women suggest that "women were less well nourished than men." 81 Thus it seems that scarcity may have affected women more than men.

**Scarcity in Early to Mid-Nineteenth-Century Sources.**

There is some comment in historical sources that lends support the notion that Maori food supplies were marginal. Many observers admired the height and athletic musculature of the men but the dominant image is one of a lean people. Cruise illustrates this well:

> When the men use violent exercise, they strip themselves naked, retaining only the belt with which they gird their waists very tight. Fulness [sic.] in this part of the body is unknown among them, and when seen in Europeans excites much ridicule. 82

79 Taylor 1855: 378.

80 Houghton 1996: 199, 201, 204.

81 Ibid., 199.

82 Cruise 1824: 266.
In 1844, by which time, introduced food stuffs would very likely have had their effect, Angas comments that he observed instances of obesity among chiefs but thought such instances rare (see above). His art work too suggests a generally slim people.

Maning observed that in his experience, that Maori communities, “were never far removed from the necessity or scarcity of food.” Taylor likewise remarks in his discussion of traditional food sources that Maori had been “very much pinched for food.” His discussion of Maori seasons suggests that seasonal scarcity occurred in the height of summer and the middle of winter. It is not only Pakeha sources that comment on food scarcity, Maori songs do as well. Ten songs in Grey’s collection mention a lack of food. Six of these songs about a lack of food are short verses called tau. This suggests that short verses complaining about a lack of food were an established genre.

The notion that it may not have been unusual for Maori communities to suffer periods of scarcity finds some support in the journals of two early missionaries, Thomas Kendall and John Butler. In the winter of 1815, there appears to have been a famine in the Bay of Islands. Kendall wrote in August of that year,

> We have witnessed a melancholy scene - so many deaths ... Many young people, healthy and strong a few months ago when the kummeras (kumaras) and potatoes were in season, would not thank us for a meal; we see them now with their bones sticking out craving our potato peelings.

In September of the same year Kendall made a note to himself to write to the Church Missionary Society regarding the “distressed condition of the natives in

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83 Maning 1863: 190.
84 Taylor 1855:391.
85 Taylor 1872: 32-3.
86 Grey 1853: 64, 102, 140-2, 150, 199, 230.
87 Elder 1934: 106.
the winter and the great mortality."\textsuperscript{88} In the winter of 1820, Butler mentions several slaves dying of starvation.\textsuperscript{89} Some of these problems must have extended beyond winter, for in March of 1822, he examined the body of a slave who had been shot by her master for stealing his food, and remarks that she "appeared to be almost starved to death."\textsuperscript{90} Instances of kuki stealing food and the subsequent acts of retribution for it appear elsewhere in the records of the 1820s.\textsuperscript{91}

While Houghton's analysis of prehistoric skeletons indicates that a marginal diet took a heavier toll on women in the late prehistoric period, in the early nineteenth century, it looks as though the burden of scarcity fell most heavily on slaves. By contrast, however, Henry William's journals 1826-40 from Paihia contain no mention of famine or instances of starving slaves. We have seen, however, that Earle describes the general appearance of slaves in 1827 as "literally half starved."\textsuperscript{92} In general, there is, I think, sufficient evidence of food scarcity and its effect on slaves to support the notion that the negative image of slaves had an empirical basis despite the erroneous racial theories that accompanied this image.

\textit{Slaves after 1830.}

Slaves were still noticeable in the early 1840s, Angas who travelled through relatively isolated regions of the central North Island in 1844, mentions slaves, reasonably frequently, and they were usually female (see above). Buddle in 1851, however, writes, "Slaves generally have been liberated and returned to their homes."\textsuperscript{93}

\textsuperscript{88} Elder 1934: 106.

\textsuperscript{89} Barton 1927: 84.

\textsuperscript{90} Ibid., 222.

\textsuperscript{91} See e.g., Barton 1927: 52, 53; Williment 1985: 37.

\textsuperscript{92} Earle 1909: 103-4.

\textsuperscript{93} Buddle 1851: 46.
The disappearance of slavery must also reflect the decline in traditional warfare and religion which together provided much of the context in which Maori ideas about captivity and slaves made sense. As I have shown in chapter six, distinctions between tapu and noa were quite significant in marking the difference between slaves and rangatira.

Presumably a practice like slavery does not disappear overnight. The disappearance of the practice must have been preceded by a period of decline, and possibly an easing of circumstances for taurekareka and tutua. Polack indicates that this may have been evident in the 1830s saying that the situation of a taurekareka had become "less burthensome to the northward than it was within a very few years back." 94

**The Image of Slaves or Kuki in Sources 1815-1827 Versus the Secondary Literature.**

Firth and Vayda both note that a slaves right to life tended to be precarious but take care to emphasise that Maori slavery was not the systematic form of exploitation that it was in the western world. Vayda follows Firth in giving a relatively benign description of Maori slavery, "As a general rule, they ate well, were forthright in their speech, were kindly treated, and not expected to overwork themselves." 95 In essence Firth and Vayda are repeating remarks made around the middle of the century. Buddle, for instance, writes of slaves that, they were expected to work and supply the wants of their masters. Their condition, however, bore no resemblance to the slavery of what are called civilised nations. It was not reduced to system. No grinding labour was exacted. They were not treated with cruelty. But any misdemeanour, any insult offered to a slave by his chief, would be visited with instant death; and the death of a slave would not be considered worth anybody's notice. 96

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94 Polack 1838: II, 105

95 Vayda 1960: 106.

96 Buddle 1851: 46.
Shortland gives a comparable picture:

The captive was ... in some respects more free than his master: he entered into conversation with him fearlessly, he fed well, was not expected to overwork himself, and seldom cared to return to his own tribe - which circumstance is a satisfactory proof of his being generally well treated: and if eventually he obtained a wife from ... his adopted tribe, his children inherited their mother's position, and became the objects of care of the spirits of her ancestors. Any one, therefore, would be led into error, were he to form an idea of the condition of this class of persons from a knowledge of what slavery generally has been or is now, in other countries.\footnote{Shortland 1851: 296-7.}

The commentary of thoughtful mid-nineteenth-century writers is often invaluable but here I think they have their limitations. Buddle and Shortland’s periods of observation are relatively late for a custom that had disappeared by 1851. Slavery must have been in a decline before this date and Shortland arrived in 1840, Buddle arrived in 1835. As I have noted above, Polack indicates that as early as the 1830s, in the north at least, the life of a slave was getting easier. Comments on slaves and kuki in the 1820s indicate that mid-nineteenth-century depiction of slavery is overly benign, particularly with regard to statements that would suggest that low status persons generally ate well. The observation that low status persons got enough to eat is made by one early observer, Cruise in 1820, but then he also observes that many of the kuki or slaves were “below the middle size” (see above). Nor is he the only one to comment on this lack of size, as we have seen, similar observations appear in the writing of five other early nineteenth-century observers with a geographical spread from the north of the South Island to the north of the North Island.

I have presented a variety of sources in the previous chapter that show that people of differing rank ate apart. I have also presented evidence from Barton that suggests that slaves might starve first when food was short but there is not much in the way of direct evidence that a low status persons generally had a different or lesser diet. I have noted, however, in the previous chapter that a mid-
nineteenth-century legend shows a chief giving the impression that he is a tutua by passing the best food (kahawai) to his companions. Maning makes the remark that the food set aside for an important chief under a war tapu would, as a matter of course, be sufficient for two or three men. Moreover, no one was permitted to eat his leftovers. This I think invites the contemplation of what might occur at the other end of the social scale. If important persons get more than they needed, perhaps lowly persons sometimes got less than they needed. Consider also Taylor’s comment that,

a large person was thought to be of the highest importance; to acquire this extra size, the child of a chief was generally provided with many nurses, each contributing to his support by robbing their own offspring of their natural sustenance; thus, while they were half-starved, miserable-looking little creatures, the chief’s child was the contrary, and early became remarkable by its good appearance.

Taylor is the only source I have seen to remark on the difference in the nursing of a chief’s children as compared to lower status children. It is a piece of information, however, that goes some way toward explaining the differences in height and appearance remarked upon by early nineteenth-century observers. Where mid-nineteenth-century portrayals of slavery seem to be more accurate, is in the individual variation that was possible. In a stateless society it “was not reduced to system”, as Buddle remarked. There was more flexibility than the systematic exploitation that appeared in “what are called civilised nations.”

Yate is one early nineteenth century observer who gives an impression of the variety that was possible:

liable, at any moment, to be killed as a payment for the death of any person of consequence, or for the slightest breach of the law, though that law be broken by another; obliged to bear with the caprice of all above himself in rank and fortune; slavery in New Zealand is no light yoke. Yet I have known some slaves of a bold and daring spirit, who

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98 Maning 1863: 112.

99 Taylor 1872: 352.

100 Buddle 1851: 46.
have thrown off the yoke, and assumed an authority which their possessors dare not to repel. Some masters are peculiarly kind to their captives, and allow them, in almost every thing [sic], to have their own way ... \(^{101}\)

Thus although slavery was a serious disadvantage in Maori society there was some variety in the situation of slaves and presumably low status persons generally. In the right circumstances and with the right personal qualities a slave might do very well. Masters did not inevitably exploit slaves to the extent that was permissible in their society. While Earle said that, in general, slaves looked “half-starved” (see above), he also painted a plump, healthy young slave girl whom he thought well cared for by her mistress.\(^{102}\) He also met with an enslaved but talented moko artist who, despite his captivity, enjoyed a relatively privileged position.\(^{103}\) Dumont d’Urville wrote of a slave he met in the Bay of Islands, who before his captivity was a rangatira, that he had eventually been set free and given a wife, and was his master’s “agent in all bargains to be made with Europeans”.\(^{104}\)

The forthright manners of low status persons is also confirmed by earlier observers. Nicholas also comments on the lack of reserve in the speech and behaviour of “the common people” in the presence of their chiefs and took this to be convincing evidence that they were not harshly treated.\(^{105}\) Yate also noted the forthright manners of slaves:

> in no instance have I known a case where a slave has been afraid freely to enter into conversation with a chief, or to treat him with the utmost freedom and unconcern; even when that chief has been his master, and has born the character of a fiery and cruel man.\(^{106}\)

His concluding comment suggests that Nicholas’s interpretation that these easy

\(^{101}\) Yate 1835: 120.

\(^{102}\) Murray-Oliver 1968: 130-1.

\(^{103}\) Earle 1909: 114.

\(^{104}\) Sharp 1971: 39.

\(^{105}\) Nicholas 1817: I, 292.

\(^{106}\) Yate 1835: 120.
manners reflected good treatment might be a little too optimistic. The general observation that Maori slavery was not as onerous as it was, for example, in America probably reflects the fact that slavery in a stateless society is not the systematic form of exploitation that appears when slavery has the force of the state, a capitalist economy and notions of racial difference behind it. In New Zealand, there was more room for variation in the lives of individual slaves and more potential for social advancement.

II. Contrasting Images:

*Western Depictions of Maori Women and Men.*

I have already dealt with some aspects of the depiction of women in the preceding discussion of depictions of slaves. I have shown that the sharp contrast between the appearances of rangatira and slaves is a feature of early nineteenth-century comment while it does not appear in eighteenth-century sources, although there is some evidence that taurekareka and tutua were present. King’s comments in 1793 convey a clear image of the stratified society that others describe in the early nineteenth century.

No one who has read eighteenth-century sources can fail to be struck by the contrast between the descriptions of men and women. Eighteenth-century observers consistently admired the tall fine looking Maori men that they saw, yet they found the women unusually short and frequently judged their appearance unattractive. Judgments of beauty will, of course, reflect culturally determined ideals. Thus explaining them in terms of a western history of ideas is an obvious avenue for historical research.

Others have discussed the negative depiction of female appearance in western sources. Grimshaw and Morton discuss the negative comment made by British travellers in the nineteenth century and they incorporate this material into an interpretation which presents these representations as the product of a “colonial
male gaze. Rountree has analyzed the descriptions of female appearance in journals from Cook’s three voyages to New Zealand from a similar perspective. She explains these negative depictions in terms of a combination a “European mind-set” and a “male gaze”. She also draws on a feminist analysis of enlightenment science which argues that the scientific observer was archetypally male while the object of scientific investigation was female. Rountree detects an increasingly negative depiction of women in the journals from the later voyages and argues that the negative depiction of women results from a general pattern of viewing Maori custom and the New Zealand environment less favorably than elsewhere in the Pacific. She also suggests that these negative depictions are shaped by the decline of the enlightenment ideal of the noble savage.

A close reading that takes both rank and gender into account suggests another explanation for the very negative depiction of women on Cook’s third voyage. Cook’s third voyage as I have noted was merely a two week visit to Queen Charlotte Sound. I have discussed Samwell’s and Te Wcherua’s comments on the women who came on board at Ship’s Cove (see above). It is reasonably clear in this instance, that the only women the men of the ship were permitted to approach were low status women, probably tutua or taurekareka, given that a chiefly young man called them “refuse and outcasts” (see above). The brevity of this visit meant that these were the only women to come under close observation. Thus the very negative depiction of the Maori women on board had a good deal to do with Maori social structures, and also the development of a sex trade where rangatira tried to exploit female tutua and/or taurekareka. This instance illustrates the limitations of an interpretation which leans too heavily on gender to the exclusion of other factors such as rank. It also shows that the

109 Ibid., 43-4.
110 Ibid., 45.
111 Ibid., 43-4.
extensive general literature available on western gender ideologies and their influence on the representations of indigenous women are not always sufficient to account for western representations of Maori women.

The incident at Ship's Cove suggests that it took very few visits from western ships for a form of prostitution to develop that made a group of exploited women in Maori society especially conspicuous. It is possible that some of the very negative depictions of Maori women made by eighteenth-century observers who were relative late-comers to the scene are shaped by this changing context. Although the exploitation of slave women through prostitution continues in the early nineteenth century, the female population who visited the ships seems generally to have included women from both strata of Maori society.\textsuperscript{112}

\textit{The Stature and Physique of Women and Men.}

While nineteenth-century sources contrast the physical appearance of rangatira and slaves, eighteenth-century sources contrast the appearance of women and men. Savage's account of New Zealand in 1805 stands out as the turning point perhaps, he makes no negative comments about slave or kuki as all observers after him do, nor does he denigrate the appearance of women, as the majority of eighteenth-century observers do.\textsuperscript{113} I have already noted, however, that King's conversations with Tuki in 1793 produced an account of Maori social stratification that resembles early nineteenth-century comment.

James Cook wrote of his first voyage to New Zealand, "The Natives of this Country are a strong raw boned well made Active people rather above the common size especialy [sic] the men." Joseph Banks on the same voyage was more specific:

\begin{quote}
The men are the size of the larger Europ[ea]ns, Stout Clean Limn'd and active, fleshy but not fat ... The women without being at all delicate in
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[112] Biggs 1960: 15-16.
\item[113] Savage 1807.
\end{footnotes}
their outward appearance are rather smaller than Europ[ea]n women.\textsuperscript{114}

Banks also tells us what he thought of their looks "The women are plain." Monkhouse wrote of the men at Poverty Bay that the people seemed to be generally rather short, but specifically singled out the women as "universally of low stature and very plain."\textsuperscript{115}

The references to both a lack of height in the women and their poor looks continue in the writing of subsequent eighteenth-century visitors. Du Clesmeur in 1772 wrote "The New Zealanders are tall and well made ... The women are small and ill made."\textsuperscript{116} Roux, in the same year, also admired the Maori men he saw. His description of the men he saw near Cape Brett is particularly detailed:

These islanders are generally of tall stature, well proportioned, of a very agreeable figure, with regular features, and seem very agile. They are of a very vigorous appearance. Some, who appeared to be the tallest among them, and whom we measured, were all over 6ft. in height ... The ordinary height of these natives, so far as I can judge, is from 5ft.5 to 5ft. 6in. They are all well built, and have fine eyes and aquiline noses. Their mouths are large, with fine teeth; the chin is well made; in a word, they are fine men.\textsuperscript{117}

Roux devotes comparatively little attention to the women, "In the chief's handsome canoe there were four young women, by no means pretty, and rather badly built." At the Bay of Islands, he says "In these canoes there was a great number of women; almost all very ugly, short and badly built."\textsuperscript{118}

Comment on a general lack of height continues in the early nineteenth century. I have already presented Quoy's observations in the north of the South Island concerning the "people of the lower orders" who he thought "shorter and not quite so good looking; few of them are tattooed." But he also says that, "The

\textsuperscript{114}Beaglehole 1962: II, 11-12.

\textsuperscript{115}Beaglehole 1955: 585-6

\textsuperscript{116}McNab 1914: II, 471.

\textsuperscript{117}Ibid., 371.

\textsuperscript{118}Ibid., 375.
women are nothing like so good looking as the men. They are nearly all quite short ... Only the wives of chiefs are tattooed; they have a special design on the lips and shoulders.”  

This indicates that Quoy, like most early nineteenth observers, was alert to distinctions of rank. It is intriguing, however, that his general description of women bears a strong resemblance to his statement about “the lower orders.” According to him both women and the lower orders are shorter, not so good looking, and have less tattoo than chiefly men.

The comment on height seems to have been a relatively long-lived one, unlike the judgments concerning female attractiveness, for Angus comments on it in 1844. Angus is a more typical early nineteenth-century writer than Quoy confining the worst of his negative remarks to slave women. Angas’s comments may be compared to Dieffenbach’s for there is a substantial overlap in their content. It is possible that Angas’s comments are informed by a reading of Dieffenbach. Dieffenbach writes, that the women were “not in general so handsome as the men” echoing the eighteenth-century writers on this matter. He remarks on premature aging and also he thought women were not reaching their full height. To explain this, he looks to social causes, mentioning the heavy work that many women did and also some of the physiological burdens associated with an early age of sexual activity that he thought aged them prematurely:

they have to cultivate the fields, to carry from their distant plantations wood and provisions, and to bear heavy loads during their travelling excursions. Early intercourse with the other sex ... frequent abortions, and the long nursing of the children, often for three years, contribute to the early decay of their youth and beauty, and are prejudicial to the full development of their frame.

While judgments concerning beauty and ugliness are highly subjective and

119 Wright 1950: 222.
118 Angas 1847a: I, 308
111 Ibid., 311 cf. Dieffenbach 1843: 2, 12.
122 Dieffenbach 1843: II, 11-12.
very likely determined by cultural ideals, observations regarding height seem relatively neutral. Houghton's analysis of prehistoric skeletons indicates that early observers were correct, there was an unusual degree of sexual dimorphism in New Zealand. And the skeletal evidence is suggestive of a different or poorer diet for women. As Houghton remarks, there is no ethnographic evidence of a different diet for women. The extent of food taboos in the early nineteenth century seems to have been fairly limited. They varied regionally and only applied only to human flesh and/or dog meat.\footnote{Johansen 1954: 224.} The only other evidence we have that may possibly suggest a difference in the quality of food that women received is the pattern of eating separately and probably after the men (see chapter 6).

The comment on early aging in women may suggest something about female welfare. Dieffenbach mentions here the early age at which girls were sexually active, eleven or twelve by most estimates. Child marriage may have taken its toll on girls. In the case of political marriages, boys were also sometimes married young but generally speaking an early age of sexual activity and marriage seems to have been more usual for girls. This was probably the consequence of the high masculinity ratio of Maori society, there were more men than women; and to add to the problem, chiefs practised polygyny. William Williams remarks, for example, that "many a poor man" went without a wife.\footnote{Williams 1867: 156.} A King movement law code provides a Maori comment on these issues. The code explicitly prohibits men having sexual relationships with "very little girls" and also prohibits child marriage for girls. The remarks accompanying this law suggest that child marriage took a particularly hard toll on girls, "there are many who are abused by child marriage" and "they are born, they die and that seed is lost."\footnote{Head 1983: 183-5.}

On the matter of heavy labour and "mode of living," referred to by Dieffenbach,
some of this comment no doubt stems from drawing a contrast not merely with western women, but those belonging to the middle and upper classes. Western observers who complain that New Zealand women were "badly built" may also reflect the difference between the physiques of privileged women in western societies and those of women in a society that did not maintain a leisured class of women to the same extent. Some of the disparaging remarks on female bodies in New Zealand are probably also the consequence of unappreciated racial difference.

The comments on early aging in women, however, suggest a social context and physical environment that took a harder toll on female bodies than male ones. This is suggested too by the difference in mortality rates for women and men. Early nineteenth-century comment on the low numbers of women compared to the men suggest a higher mortality in the female population. Censuses that were taken from the mid-nineteenth century onwards also show a higher mortality rate in the female population (see chapter four). The physiological burden of childbearing is certainly one factor here but Houghton's analysis of the height and bone density of late prehistoric women suggests that other factors may have been at work.

Western Judgments of Attractiveness.

I have already noted that Banks, who visited New Zealand on the Endeavour called the women in New Zealand "plain." Roux and du Clesmeur made even blunter comments. Statements concerning lack of height and lack of attractiveness are often conjoined but not always. Some of the comment centres on women's faces. Bayly is one 1772 observer who makes no comment on height but says "Their Whinies (or women) are not regular featured in general as the men, tho' some of them were jolly fine girls."¹²⁶ Monkhouse comments of the people at Poverty Bay, "The men seem in general better featured than the Women

¹²⁶ McNab 1914: 204.
few of them have thick or broad noses”.

In this comment, we have a depiction of women combined with what seems to be an exaggerated perception of racial difference. Johann Forster who travelled on the Resolution uses gender instead of race to convey his distaste, calling the facial features of women in the north of New Zealand “masculine and indelicate.”

Lesson stands out as an early nineteenth-century writer who combines in his comments about a perceived masculinity and an exaggerated sense of racial difference in women. I have noted above that Lesson, who visited the Bay of Islands in 1824 commented on a marked difference in the physique of enslaved young women who were much shorter and slighter than other women on board La Coquille, this makes him fairly typical of nineteenth-century observers. He has a keen eye for distinctions of rank when it comes to describing physical appearance. Yet he also continues the eighteenth-century tendency of generally viewing the men more favorably than the women. I will consider his comment closely because he gives some detail and illustrates some of the notions that probably shaped western descriptions in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

As is usual for early observers, Lesson’s description of “the New Zealanders” is of the men, a description specifically of the women is given afterward. He admired in both sexes their dark eyes and white teeth. On the other hand he found Maori facial features, hair and dyed lips irreconcilable with European notions of femininity:

The women of most races are distinguished by their delicacy, but in New Zealand their general appearance is diametrically opposed to our ideas of beauty. The girls in their first bloom, are characterised by broad faces, masculine features, thick lips often black with tattooing, wide mouths, flat noses, badly arranged untidy hair ...

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127 Beaglehole 1955: 585.


In his description of the men, “an oval face, a narrow forehead ... nose sometimes aquiline but more often flattened”, European features begin to emerge, while his comments on young women are of unqualified (and unappreciated) difference: “broad faces” and “flat noses.” Lesson’s description of the women suggests that he perceives them in a light that makes them appear more racially different than the men. Ornament is probably significant here too. The tattooing on Maori women’s lips appears to have reinforced Lesson’s impression of racially different facial features. Ornament, however, is insufficient to account for it, given Lesson’s comments about noses and face shape.

I suspect that the answer to why men’s faces are judged more favorably than women’s lies in the overly determined nature of European and British ideals of female beauty. The ideals for feminine attractiveness were probably more rigidly determined than that for men and in the process has more of a racial bias built into them.

Lesson’s depiction of aged persons also differs from women and men. He says of the “older natives” (i.e., men) that “many wear their beards long ... and recall the heads of antiquity portrayed by the brush of some of the great painters.”

Thus in this description of older men, he connects their appearance with idealised depictions of the patriarchs of western history. Old women he merely calls “flabby” and “repulsive.” While Lesson could be an incisive observer this was obviously not one of his better moments, instead they are the thoughtless remarks of a young man who was unused to the sight of an aged woman’s body, coming as he did from a society where women were covered from bosom to ankle. These remarks must also be shaped by a rather ordinary patriarchal propensity to view older men as distinguished persons and to judge older women no longer sexually attractive. While these comments undoubtedly reflect the patriarchal power relations in Lesson’s own society, where the status of

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130 Sharp 1971: 86.

131 Ibid.
women was closely linked to their sexual attractiveness to men, prejudice and observation may very well be reinforcing each other here. Older men appear as key figures of authority in early descriptions of encounters with Maori society and there is little reason to doubt western observers on this point. Thus Lesson’s image of aging patriarchs probably also reflects a feature of Maori social organisation.

**Ornament and Dress.**

Lesson’s comments on hair style continue in the same vein as the remarks discussed above but are of course more interesting because ornament can tell us more about Maori society. For men, Lesson differentiated the hairstyle of chiefs and others “The New Zealanders wear their hair long, falling over the face in straggling locks, and only the chiefs take the trouble to dress it in a single tuft.” Women’s hair on the other hand he simply describes as “badly arranged” and “untidy.” This seems simply biased toward the negative when he comments on women, the difference between “untidy” and “badly arranged” hair and “straggling locks” sounds minimal. But it also suggests that he was particularly struck by the way that male chiefs groomed their hair, and an absence of elaborate coiffure in women. This is something that echoes the eighteenth-century comment on the dress and ornament of men compared to women. Banks, for instance, commented that “the women affected ornament rather less than the men.”

Another difference between the appearances of women and men was apparent in the textiles they wore. Cook remarked that he “hardly ever saw a woman weare [sic] a peice [sic] of the fine cloth”. The artist Sydney Parkinson also commented on this:

Their cloth is white, and as glossy as silk, worked by hands, and

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133 Beaglehole 1955: 280.
wrought as even as it had been done in a loom, and is chiefly worn by the men, though it is made by the women, who also carry burdens and do all the drudgery.\textsuperscript{134}

These references probably refer to the very fine kaitaka cloaks. The favourable comments on male appearance in contrast to female appearance may in part be a response to a society where where finery and ornament were a masculine prerogative. Parkinson’s comments on the cloth, who was wearing it and who made it, also lead back to an image of female industry that appears both in eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century works. I have already discussed discussed this in some detail in chapter six.

Parkinson’s comments on general appearance and ornament are also worth examining. Parkinson is an unusual eighteenth-century observer in that he does not draw the sharp distinction between the appearance of men and women that others do. He wrote flatteringly of the men and also reasonably so of the women at Uawa. The negative judgments that he makes have far more to do with ornament. He describes the men as compatible with European norms:

in general, lean and tall, yet well shaped; have faces like Europeans; and, in general, the aquiline nose, with dark coloured eyes, black hair which is tied up on the crown of the head, and beards of a middling length. As to their tataowing, it is done very curiously in spiral and other figures ... This tataowing is peculiar to the principal men among them...

Parkinson’s above description of the men shades into a description particularly of “the principal men” and their moko. He contrasts this to the face painting that others did. Here, as we have already seen, it is notable that he lumps “servants and women” together: “servants and women content themselves with besmearing their faces with red paint or ochre; and were it not for this nafty custom, would make no despicable appearance.”\textsuperscript{135}

Parkinson, like many western observers, was not a fan of oil and red ochre.

\textsuperscript{134} Parkinson 1784: 96.

\textsuperscript{135} Ibid., 97.
While Europeans could admire moko, they did not like face and body paint. Its oily appearance seems to have lacked appeal and often shark oil seems to have been used with the ochre, the smell of which also did not appeal to those who were not used to it. But Parkinson's negative impression of the practice seems also to stem from the perception that it is connected with status. Obviously men with moko would not be much interested in obscuring them with red ochre; and moko does seem to have a general connection with high status. Parkinson, however, distinguished between the effects of ornament and the faces that lay beneath and stands out as one observer who does not exaggerate the racial difference of women, although it seems that he initially expected the women to have a "savage countenance."

Many of the women, that we saw, had very good features, and not the savage countenance one might expect; their lips were, in general, stained of a blue colour, and several of them were scratched all over their faces as if it had been done with needles or pins. This, with a number of scars which we saw on the bodies of the men, was done on the decease of their relations.136

In this description there is evidence that another practice may have shaped the comments of other observers who do not give this kind of detail. In both the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century self-laceration was predominantly a female practice, although men certainly did it on some occasions. It was more generally done by women and was more likely to appear on women's faces (see chapter two).

While there is some clear comment on men's dress and ornament in contrast to the women's in the eighteenth century, the evidence is less clear in the early nineteenth century. There are no direct statements on the matter. Nor do Earle's or Angas's artworks give any clear indication. In Angas's case, in 1844, there is also the distinct possibility that patterns of dress had changed as western textiles and garments became more readily available.

However, Polack's narrative of his travels in the north of the North Island in

136 Parkinson 1784: 98.
the early 1830s is suggestive. When he visited relatively isolated villages in the south of the Bay of Islands - both his Maori travelling companions and his hosts dressed in their best clothes. He admires the fine cloaks, bird skin ear ornaments and the flowers in the hair of chiefly young women on two occasions.\textsuperscript{137} But on three other occasions the bulk of his comment centres on the dress and ornament of men, while his comment on the dress of women is rather cursory.\textsuperscript{138} On the Kaihu river he met with two large waka which were travelling with various grave goods to a hahunga ceremony for a chief:

in one of them sat a venerable decrepit old chief full dressed, and decorated in the native fashion; his hair was tied up in a bunch behind and ornamented with ... feathers. The tattooing on his face was scarce discernible from the quantity of kokowai with which he was bedaubed; it had also been made use of to sprinkle his garments ... \textsuperscript{139}

The chief also wore a jade hei tiki around his neck and a bird skin ear ornament. This description of a chief contrasts with eighteenth-century comment that men with moko did not wear face paint, and my suggestion that the practice would not be compatible with showing one’s moko to good effect. In this case the entire travelling party wore kokowai and oil, they were also all tapu and were transporting grave goods to a hahunga ceremony. This must be an instance of a mourning custom. While Polack describes the dress and ornament of the aged chief in considerable detail, he says little of the dress of chief’s five wives except they were covered from head to toe in “kokowai and shark’s oil”, the smell of which he found hard to bear.

Polack then goes on to describe in considerable detail the occupants of the second waka which contained only men, he remarks that “by the particular attention paid to their dress, I was convinced they were all chiefs.” He mentions topknots, silky flax cloaks, dog skin cloaks, bird skin and sharks tooth ear

\textsuperscript{137} Polack 1838: I, 113,124)

\textsuperscript{138} Ibid., 228, 157-8, 158-9.

\textsuperscript{139} Ibid., 157-8.
ornaments, and their weapons.\textsuperscript{140} Polack's focus on the dress and ornament of important men occurs again in his narrative when he comments on the dress of his male hosts. After the men performed a war-like dance as part of the welcome to their guests, their wives brought out the men's best cloaks (dog skin for some, fine flax in white or black for others) and feathers. The women "arranged the outward appearance of their husbands with seeming pride and pleasure."\textsuperscript{141} Polack does not describe the women's dress on this occasion. So in Polack's narrative, at least, there is some suggestion that chiefly men outshone women in dress and ornament on certain occasions.

III. Contrasting Images: Rangatira and Slaves, Men and Women Reconsidered.

Of the early nineteenth-century sources I have surveyed above Nicholas, Cruise, Earle, Atkins, Polack and Angas all make general comments on a difference in physique and appearance as it related to rank. De Sainson, Quoy and d'Urville comment specifically on this difference as they found it among men. Lesson and Angas both specifically remark on the differences between women of different ranks. Quoy and Dieffenbach both contrast the appearance and stature of the women with that of the men, as eighteenth-century writers do, and also remark upon the differences between chiefly women and others. In general, nineteenth-century observers depict rangatira women in relatively positive terms, they save their vitriol for slave women. As I have remarked, it seems reasonable to suppose that the dress, ornament and labours of rangatira women probably translated reasonably well into the class-based notions of femininity that western observers possessed.

It is intriguing that the contrasting depictions of rangatira and slaves in early

\textsuperscript{140} Ibid., 158-9.
\textsuperscript{141} Polack 1838: II, 162-3.
nineteenth-century sources and the contrasts drawn between women and men in the eighteenth century resemble each other to some degree. Eighteenth-century western observers show a tendency to emphasise or even exaggerate racial difference when they describe Maori women. This is particularly striking in the comments about facial features. It seems that when they look at men they see something of themselves reflected back at them. This theme also appears in early nineteenth-century depictions of rangatira and slaves, the rangatira are perceived as resembling Europeans while the slaves are perceived as racially different. The theme of racial difference is obviously developed more fully in relation to slaves but elements of it are nonetheless there in the depictions of women.

I have suggested that the very negative depiction of women in the eighteenth century is partly explicable in terms of a western ideology, in particular, an overly determined ideal for feminine appearance, one that as a consequence has a good deal more racial and cultural bias written into it than the ideal for masculine appearance. This bias, although it does not entirely disappear in the early nineteenth century, is replaced by similar tendencies in the depiction of slaves. The exaggerated depiction of racial difference among slaves, however, has a history of its own, it reflects both peculiar racial theories and the harder lives of slaves both male and female. It also probably reflects the class biases of the gentlemen who wrote about them and who came from a stratified society themselves. It is unsurprising that they would view rangatira as more like themselves than slaves.

The negative depiction of slaves in early nineteenth-century sources is not solely explicable in terms of western bias, it also reflects the effects of inequality in Maori society. It is worth considering how far the negative depiction of women is related to gender inequality, given that a greater degree of ornament and finer garments are associated with men and male chiefs in the eighteenth century; and given that some writers combine their harsh descriptions with a comment on women’s labours. I have shown in the previous chapter that there was a
substantial overlap in the labours of free women and slaves.

Given that negative depictions of slaves in the early nineteenth century eclipse the negative generalisations about female appearance in the eighteenth century, it is possible that this change reflects a change in the structure of the Maori communities. It may be that slaves were more common in the early nineteenth century than the late eighteenth century. A close reading of a selection of eighteenth-century sources, however, shows some evidence of tutua or taurekareka and there is there is some reference to taking women and children captive. Thus I think it more likely that the reason that sharp contrasts between women and men predominate in eighteenth-century writing is because sexual difference was an obvious starting point for newly arrived foreign observers. The short visits of eighteenth-century observers to a small number of communities also did not give them the broader view of Maori society that was more readily available to early nineteenth-century observers.

The fact that Philip King writing of the information gleaned from his conversations with a chiefly man over a period of six months notes the presence of "inferior classes" and "superior classes" and gives an expression for a male slave shows that it may have taken a more in depth inquiry than was possible for eighteenth-century visitors to understand this aspect of Maori society. The comment that the unfortunate young women at Ship's Cove in 1777 were "refuse" and "outcasts" derives also from a conversation with a chiefly man.

In the nineteenth century, the earliest clear depictions of a society divided into two broad strata result from relatively long stays in New Zealand. Marsden's and Nicholas's comments take place during a stay of three months in the north of the North Island 1814-15. McCrae and Cruise's comments are the product of a ten month stay in 1820-21. Once these views made their way into the published record - Nicholas's narrative was published in 1817 and Cruise's in 1824 - subsequent observers even on brief visits would thereafter be on the lookout for distinctions of rank.
The depiction of slaves and women may also resemble each other on certain points because of a demographic overlap, both eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century sources show that women and children were more likely to be taken captive than adult men. This suggests that the majority of captives and slaves were female. The negative image of women that predominates in the late eighteenth century and lingers in the remarks of some observers in the early nineteenth century may reflect this feature of Maori society.
Chapter Eight

Conclusions.

The Re-evaluation of Early Documentary Sources.

One of the goals of this work has been to show the value of early documentary sources and to show that the careful collation and comparison of these sources yields a compelling picture of Maori communities as they were in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In this I am endeavouring to counter trends and methods evident in recent writing on the topic which I have surveyed in chapter one. Most especially I wish to counter those historians and anthropologists who, particularly when confronted with difficult or alien material, consider their primary analytical task to be the deconstruction of western ideologies and prejudices. This comment of course only applies to western writing. In the case of early Maori writing (dating from around 1850), where it is considered at all by scholars employing this mode of interpretation, this approach becomes even more dismissive - early Maori writing is seen as colonized or erroneous.¹

While it is always necessary to keep in mind the likely context and possible agendas which shaped the production of these early texts - both western and Maori writing also contain a great deal of information that only contemporaneous observers and participants can provide. I have endeavoured to show that we are a long way from having the last word on early documentary sources in terms of what they can tell us about Maori society in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Through careful comparison and evaluation early sources still have a valuable contribution to make, especially when Maori language sources are incorporated into the study.

¹ I am referring here particularly to Ralston's assertion that ethnographic sources including material written by Maori 1850-1950 are too colonized to be useful. See also Thomas's (1990) remark on evaluating early indigenous writing. His treatment of western sources have already been discussed in the introduction.
I also wish to draw attention to the richness and variety in early documentary sources for which late nineteenth and early twentieth-century ethnographies (such as Best's and Tregear's) are a poor substitute. In my opinion subsequent scholars have been hamstrung in their inquiries by relying too heavily on research built on fieldwork that was largely an inquiry into the memories of aged Maori in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Much of the dynamism and variety that we would expect of any human society disappears in these ethnographies. Instead we are left with a rather flat and overly generalized, rule-based account of Maori society as it might have been in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

As a consequence the bulk of this project has been taken up with locating, collating and presenting the descriptive material that is lacking in the available secondary literature. It was also necessary to broaden the focus of the project beyond female roles and participation in Maori society in order to give a more holistic description in which to contextualize depictions of women in this period.

*Theorizing on* Tapu, Rank and Gender.

One of the great challenges in the field is the collation of sufficient sources to produce a fair account and one that is not the product of a highly selective reading. Because of the effort needed merely to develop a reasonably nuanced image of the social context of the period, it has not been possible to develop an over-arching theory of tapu, gender and rank to replace older theories and generalizations. I have, however, criticized existing work on a number of points and can on the basis of my research at this point propose a way forward.

Firstly we have enough information to conclude that Ralston's and the Hanson's depictions of Maori gender-relations as egalitarian is incorrect. Instead the early sources indicate a society that was hierarchically organized by both gender and rank. This gave rise to a complexity and variety that can provide a rich field for historians and anthropologists interested in developing new
theories of gender-relations that take other forms of social hierarchy into account. I have also found that early sources indicate that the distinction between tapu and noa was reflected in Maori gender-relations. We have seen that the assertion that women were noa and men were tapu did not originate with Elsdon Best as the Hansons claimed. Te Rangikaheke makes the same statement in 1849, he also asserts that women have a tapu, albeit a lesser one than men.

This apparent contradiction can be resolved through Valeri's insight into the Hawaiian cognates kapu and noa, that they are not absolute essences but expressive of relations.\(^2\) Thus a person could be tapu in relation to one social category but noa in a relation to another. This is, I think, well-illustrated by early sources on the division of labour. These show that the majority of women and slaves (both male and female) cooked and carried firewood and provisions. These activities were thought incompatible with the personal tapu of a prestigious and important person. High-ranking women, however, had the means to avoid these labours in attendants, junior wives, and slaves, although they must often still have been the overseers and this one step closer to those activities than a free man would have been. Likewise chiefly women's lives generally involved more ceremony and lengthier tapu restrictions than tutua women, while slaves' lives seem to have had little or no ceremonial significance. On the other hand we have seen in our surveys of both birth rites and funerary rites that the births and deaths of chiefly men were generally marked by more ceremony than chiefly women.

The contrast between the ceremonial significance of chiefly men and chiefly women, however, pales in significance when compared to the lack of ritual and tapu pertaining to slaves. The lack of tapu pertaining to the corpses of slaves can be put alongside comments that slaves unlike free people had no existence after death; and that slaves, by virtue of their captivity, had lost all connection with their ancestral gods.

\(^2\) Valeri 1985: 90.
At this point I conclude that the tapu associated with free men was built on gender difference as well as rank. By contrast the tapu associated with women was built on the elevation of rank which enabled them in some instances to participate in men's activities, either on much the same terms as men (e.g., in ritual battles and chiefly oratory), or in a specific gendered role accorded to women of high rank, (e.g., protective and tapu removal rites). Other instances of temporary tapu applying to chiefly women such as mourning widows and sisters and the wives and mothers of chiefly men, suggest that chiefly men generally enjoyed greater ceremonial significance than women. Some female roles involving tapu, such as undertakers and women who removed tapu, were viewed by contemporaneous observers as more burdensome than prestigious. These statements may reflect a context where these ritual roles were shaped by the political dominance of chiefly men.

The tapu associated with the menses and postpartum effluvia seem a special case. The menses or perhaps menstrual clots were an early miscarriage and thus contained within them dangerous atua of the kind thought to result from miscarriages. These atua were thought to cause disease. Thus women's association with tapu was given in this context a negative association. In particular it is striking that women's cursing songs indicate that the menses, though apparently tapu, could destroy the tapu of a high ranking man's head.

Women also seem to have been very concerned to rid themselves of postpartum effluvia and one early source explains that this effluvia was feared and thought to damage the kumara crop. The kumara crop itself was of considerable ceremonial significance and subject to periodic tapu prohibitions. As with the menses and chiefly heads it seems we have an example of a substance that though thought to be tapu is destructive of a tapu thing.

Another explanation given for the tapu of postpartum effluvia and the placenta is that they were so closely connected with the tapu chiefly infant that to come into contact with them was to damage the infant. This combination of
negative and positive aspects in the tapu prohibitions related to childbirth can be compared to the tapu associated with illness and is probably connected with it. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries childbirth and miscarriages must in reality have had a strong connection with sickness and death. The illnesses and declines of chiefly persons was accompanied by a greatly magnified concern for tapu - this concern reflects their ceremonial importance as chiefly persons, but also must reflect a fear of the atua that was attacking them and could no doubt attack others if appropriate precautions were not taken. Thus the menses and childbirth though tapu have a negative aspect associated with them and a connection with that class of lesser and vengeful gods who caused illness. This gives the special connection that the menses and childbirth had with the gods a negatively charged aspect that probably affected women’s ritual status more generally and contributed to the view that the tapu associated with women was less than that associated with men.

With regard to power-relations, tapu obviously had a close connection to power or mana but should not be assumed to be identical with the power or mana of the tapu person. The connections between tapu and mana and power-relations need to be explored further. One of the problems here is that mention of mana in early sources is rare in contrast with the term’s prominence in later sources and scholarly analyses. This difference between earlier and later sources in itself warrants further investigation.\(^3\) Obviously an adequate theory of tapu and gender must be developed in conjunction with a study the of distinctions between rangatira, tutua and taurekareka as they related to men and women. We may be better to rephrase our questions of Maori society and ask not, “Who was tapu and who was noa”, but rather, “Who was tapu and who was noa in relation to whom and in what context?”

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\(^3\) Cf. Keesing 1984 who argues that mana in Oceania has been elevated into a theological concept by scholars. He excludes Eastern Polynesian cultures from this general argument. It seems possible that studies of Maori religion have been affected by this theologizing trend in scholarly analyses. See also Johansen’s (1954: 272-6) comments on mana as it appears in later sources.
So far in the works of Jean Smith, the Hansons and Johansen, the analysis of tapu has been conducted primarily through an inquiry into Maori concepts. The shape that the Smith’s and the Hansons work on tapu has been in large part dictated by an old debate in religious studies, viz., whether or not primitive notions of the sacred distinguish between purity and pollution. The approach to all three toward female roles in ritual has been oriented toward understanding the symbolism of the female body and reproductive functions in myth and ritual. As a consequence analyses of ritual and religion which elucidate tapu and noa, and female and male as ideas have been generated without sufficient attention to social practice.

It seems to me that the way forward is to consider the connections between Maori religion and ritual as they related to social relationships and social structure. We also need to return to early sources, especially Maori texts on ritual, and collate and compare the information found there. I think it likely that investigations in the field have been over-determined by a western discourse on comparative religion and this problem has been compounded by an excessive reliance on Best’s works. Further investigation into Maori language sources will yield a more compelling picture of Maori religion and ritual.

I have assembled an array of material that sheds light on Maori gender relations and the ways in which these were shaped and reflected by Maori religion and ritual. My focus has differed from other works using sources from a similar period, in that I have endeavoured to integrate a study of Maori social life with a study of religion and ritual. In doing so I have moved away from the highly conceptual or theological analyses that seem typical of studies of Maori religion and ritual. I have not attempted to excavate an underlying structure or logic to Maori culture and thought on tapu and ritual.

Feminist discussions on the complex and indeed sometimes contradictory relationships between gender and other hierarchical social categories such as

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4 See e.g., Douglas 1966 for a survey of this debate and a further contribution to it. Smith (1972) is a criticism of Douglas’s conclusions, and Hanson 1982 is a criticism of Smith and Best.
slavery and class suggest, to me at least, that the efforts to make tapu as it related
to rank and gender conform to a logician's requirements may be misdirected. On
the other hand, it may be that more work of the kind I have outlined above is
needed before a coherent underlying logic can be proposed with any certainty.

I have not in this work constructed a new over-arching theory or argument
concerning the nature of distinctions between tapu and noa and their connection
with gender and rank because to do so at this stage would be premature.
However, I have amassed a range of material that can be used to further a project
of this kind.

\footnote{See e.g., McClintock (1995: 5, 9) for a recent concise statement. Spelman 1988 gives a detailed
discussion of the complexity of the relationships between gender and other social categories in a
variety of cultural contexts.}
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Abbreviations.

JPS  Journal of the Polynesian Society.
TPNZI  Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute.
NZJH  New Zealand Journal of History.

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