

RECALLING TŪRANGAWAEWAE

Pōwhiri in New Zealand feature film

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Abstract

Like a number of fundamental Māori rituals and practices, pōwhiri have appeared in New Zealand fiction feature film since its beginnings in the silent era. Pōwhiri are multisensory, kinaesthetic experiences that, for most Māori, recall one's tūrangawaewae—where he or she stands and belongs—because, in general, the predominant experience of pōwhiri is at home, amongst one's own community. This article critically analyses pōwhiri as it has been constructed in New Zealand feature film history. It first presents an historical overview of pōwhiri and then focuses on Tearepa Kahi's *Mt. Zion* (Hita, Milligan & Kahi, 2013). The analysis considers commonly portrayed elements of pōwhiri, and how the “real” influences the “reel”, and perhaps vice versa. How might the ways pōwhiri have been imagined and presented in feature film be seen to reflect, and perhaps even shift, change or challenge ideas about what it means to belong as Māori to Aotearoa now, in the 21st century?

Keywords

pōwhiri, ritual, film, fiction, performance, wero

Introduction

Pōwhiri, together with a range of fundamental Māori rituals and practices, have appeared

in New Zealand fiction feature film since its beginnings in the silent era. Pōwhiri are multisensory, kinaesthetic experiences that, for most Māori, recall one's tūrangawaewae—where one

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stands and belongs—because, in general, the predominant experience of pōwhiri is at home, amongst one’s own community. I am utilising “recall” here in three ways: to reflect karanga, the beckoning call on behalf of the haukāinga, and the call of reply by the manuhiri; the performance of live pōwhiri and the re-construction of pōwhiri on film, and the problem of representation of sacred rituals; and lastly, the memory of past pōwhiri, where the body haptically remembers pōwhiri, retracing one’s loss, trauma and melancholy.

Pōwhiri, as a tapu cultural ritual, consists of a number of elements unpacked by scholars over the past 40 years in particular (Barlow, 1991; H. Mead, 2003, 2016; Metge, 2010; Rewi, 2013; Salmond, 1975; Smith, 1976). They have underlined the range of elements and structures in the ritual process between the wero, pōwhiri proper (including karanga and haka pōwhiri), whaikōrero, harirū and tiaki/manaaki tāngata o te hapū—all of which keep those involved in the pōwhiri safe from makutu, which can, and has been known to, transpire should the specific kawa not be adhered to. For instance, although Graham Smith’s (1976) study focused primarily on the integral use of greenery in pōwhiri rituals, he detailed the strictures of the ritual and how to keep it as tapu as possible. The use of rau and headdresses, according to Smith, are fundamental to pōwhiri, and he proffered both a kind of “rating system” and a diagrammatic chart to exemplify where and when in the process tapu is at its weakest and strongest. Greenery, again according to Smith, is symbolic of the proximity of life and death, the removal of tapu, to convey the differentiation between manuhiri and tangata whenua, and as a signifier of peace and welcome (pp. 41–42). Here, I use Smith’s study to frame the importance of tapu to pōwhiri.

While tapu is the pre-eminent value in the ritual, the quality of the performance itself also matters. Hirini Mead (2003, 2016) described pōwhiri as tapu welcoming ceremonies, and explained the key purposes, principles and

contexts of pōwhiri. He delved into the details of 20 identifiable/general movements within the ritual, much as the other scholars cited above did. However, Mead went further to discuss the necessary preparation and rehearsal to generate the best pōwhiri performance. This is significant because Mead explicitly supported the idea that a rōpū conducting a pōwhiri would put the most capable people—skilled performers—forward as representatives of the hapū to challenge and receive manuhiri. For example, at our Ngāti Awa ahurei held every two years (Ngāti Awa Te Toki), the wero is a competition item, and it is clear from the performance that each hapū puts forward the best kaiwero to represent them and their distinct style. Learning the wero and necessary mau raukau techniques is therefore another taonga passed from generation to generation, and is thus a precious performance gift. If the Māori ritual of encounter puts performance values in the service of maintaining tapu when it is performed for “real”, then what happens when it is converted into acts to be portrayed and performed in New Zealand fiction feature film, or the “reel”?

This article critically analyses pōwhiri as it has been constructed in New Zealand fiction feature film history. It begins with a historical overview of pōwhiri in New Zealand film and then focuses on Tearepa Kahi’s recent feature *Mt. Zion* (Hita, Milligan & Kahi, 2013). My analysis considers elements of pōwhiri that are commonly portrayed, and how the real pōwhiri influences the reel, and perhaps vice versa. How might the way that pōwhiri has been imagined and re-presented throughout New Zealand film history be seen to reflect, and perhaps even shift, change or challenge ideas about what it means to belong as Māori to Aotearoa now in the 21st century? How, in particular, might the performance of the pōwhiri in *Mt. Zion* be seen to convey belonging?

Historical overview

Hei Tiki (1935)

Produced and directed by the Hungarian-American film-maker Alexander Markey, *Hei Tiki* is a New Zealand silent feature film. Set in “Māoriland”, it portrays an extremely controversial “pōwhiri-of-sorts”. In his previous New Zealand outing as the original director of *Under the Southern Cross* (Collins & Markey, 1929), Markey had insulted the manaakitanga of the exponentially supportive Te Arawa people by demanding counter-tikanga acts from cast members, despite warnings and instructions as to how to deal with Māori people. He also stole precious cultural taonga (Babington, 2007; Blythe, 1994; Limbrick, 2010; Martin & Edwards, 1997; Mita, 1996; J. K. T. Wilson, 2013, 2016, 2017). One particular act Markey insisted on was for some male cast members to wear flour in their hair, which breaches the important tapu/noa dichotomy. In the most basic of terms, any food is considered noa, and the head, which contains all knowledge and memory, is considered extremely tapu. As a result of his offences, coupled with an inability to submit his footage to the producers, Markey was expelled from that production. Mysteriously, he then received funding from the New Zealand government for his dream project, *Hei Tiki*, and given the highest mark of respect (Limbrick, 2010; J. K. T. Wilson, 2013). Markey was furnished with a special pass by the government that had only ever been given to their distinguished guests, symbolic of their mark of approval. He was assigned an assistant, Puataata Grace from the Ngāti Tūwharetoa Trust Board, who was urged by the government to serve Markey as their honoured guest (Limbrick, 2010).

Te Arawa refused to support his return to Rotorua for the production of *Hei Tiki*. As an iwi, Te Arawa all but disappeared from film production following *Under the Southern Cross*. Some Te Arawa actors stayed involved in

film production as individuals, but not the collective. After an absence of almost four decades, Te Arawa returned to support their local singing sensation Howard Morrison, when he was cast in John O’Shea’s musical comedy *Don’t Let It Get You* (1966) as the featured entertainer. The time stretching from immediately before the departure of Te Arawa from film production to their return could be an interesting period to explore for a Te Arawa historian/researcher, as they would have access to the exceptional tribal kōrero it would require. Te Arawa’s refusal forced Markey to relocate the production to Taupō, albeit under the watchful eye of Māori member of Parliament Apirana Ngata. The production commenced, and Markey reverted back to directing Māori cast members to perform extremely counter-tikanga acts, including the pōwhiri scene mentioned earlier.

I deliberately refer to the scene in *Hei Tiki* as a pōwhiri-of-sorts because it is the precursor to an unorthodox ritual: the debut of Mara (Ngawara Kereti), the village puhi who has come of age. The pōwhiri-of-sorts commences with members of the hapū readying the marae and preparing the hākari to celebrate Mara becoming a woman. Soon after, there is a sequence that shows the village pakeke at the front of the marae wearing performance attire, piupiu and pari, whilst singing, dancing and frolicking, and waving large tree fronds as though performing a haka pōwhiri. This scene is followed by a wider shot of the adoring group who receive Mara into the fold. She enters from frame-left, arms outstretched and supported by a person-in-waiting on either side. The action builds to a kind of “reveal scene”, similar to what occurs in make-over reality TV shows when, for example, the featured person is shown to their family for the first time after undergoing a range of procedures. *The Swan* (Atkins, 2004), for instance, featured conventionally “plain” women who went through plastic and dental surgery, strict exercise/dietary regimes, and a hair, make-up and wardrobe overhaul. The reveal scene occurs at the end where they

appear for the first time to an awaiting, adoring audience of family/friends who eagerly anticipate the “new” woman. Similarly, in *Hei Tiki* Mara walks over a “mat” consisting of young village boys lying face down to the ground until she reaches the centre of the frame, before the camera closes in to reveal her beauty to adoring viewers for the first time, a cinematic convention utilising what is known as the “Lillian Gish lens” (Affron, 2002; Cohen, 2001). The Lillian Gish lens was designed by photographer Henrik Sartov to heighten an actor’s facial features. Lillian Gish was a darling of the US silent film era. Directors would plant the seeds prior to her character’s arrival on screen and then highlight her entrance by softening her facial curves and allowing everything else in the shot to go out of focus. The convention was used here to connect Mara with the starlets of international production companies, and to appeal to their audiences.

The Māori cast members, costuming, greenery, the setting, and the reception of an honoured guest all imply pōwhiri, regardless of the plethora of problems in this pōwhiri-of-sorts sequence, particularly the idea that Māori women are permitted to step over men. The extrapolation of distinctive pōwhiri features—the performance attire, the movements, singing, and swinging of greenery—plays to the ideas circulating in anthropological and art historical depictions at the time: that Māori belief systems were based on the rag-tag and bobtail exotic philosophies that international audiences were so interested in witnessing (M. Mead, 1928, 1934). If the performance of pōwhiri is, at its heart, a way of inviting belonging by and from participants, then Markey’s manufactured tapu ritual certainly falls short. *Hei Tiki* exemplifies a period in New Zealand film history when directors and producers were not only lacking caution towards culture, but were inclined to produce cinematic adaptations of tikanga and pōwhiri in order to titillate audiences, by playing back to them their preconceived ideas about the mysterious people of the South Pacific.

What transcends the sacrilegious nature of this scene in *Hei Tiki* are individual ritual elements: the marae itself, the greenery and piupiu. Although pōwhiri is essentially breached in this film, there’s also something precious in it: the people of the past are preserved in performance, despite the integrity of the ritual being diminished by the lens of the foreign film-maker to suit the eyes of the faraway audience. What else was left of their belonging to their whenua, to their hapū and iwi, of their tūrangawaewae in this filmed performance? The question is remarkably complex.

Cinema transitioned to sound soon after *Hei Tiki*. At that time, there were no Māori writers, producers or directors, and Māori characterisations for the most part appeared only in glimpses. Importantly, a good proportion of films over this time were produced for an overseas audience and included such films as *Rewi’s Last Stand* (Hayward, 1940), *Green Dolphin Street* (C. Wilson, Raphaelson & Saville, 1947), *Broken Barrier* (Mirams & O’Shea, 1952), *The Seekers* (Brown, Fairchild, Guthrie & Annakin, 1954), *Runaway* (O’Shea & Graham, 1964) and *In Search of the Castaways* (Attwooll, Hawley & Stevenson, 1962). Although some are set on the marae, and show acts of receiving people onto the pā, none of these films featured pōwhiri.

***Mauri* (1988)**

Fast forward to the 1980s. Although Merata Mita directed a number of documentary films, particularly during the 1980s, *Mauri* was her only feature, and it presents two pōwhiri. Set in coastal/rural 1950s New Zealand, *Mauri* is significant because it represented an important turn for Māori in New Zealand film, particularly as Mita was the first Māori woman to direct a feature film. Notably, in the early 1980s Mita hosted the first Television New Zealand (TVNZ) Māori affairs programme *Koha* (Waru, Leonard, McDonald & Toogood, 1980–1989), an experience she described as “bitter and demoralising” (Mita, 1996, p. 42).

Whilst at TVNZ, she witnessed the mechanics of an outfit which demanded that *Koha* present interesting cultural tidbits about Māori culture for the majority predominantly Pākehā viewing audience to appreciate and understand, with no more than two per cent reo Māori (p. 42). It became a mission of all those who worked on *Koha* alongside Mita to invert production tools and the industry to empower and train Māori to produce their own screen material. *Mauri* is one outcome of this mission, and the dawn of Whakaata Māori is another. *Mauri* is also significant because Mita was insistent on portraying a slice of Māori life in a way that inverted the “boom-boom-boom” of guns and car crashes that were elemental in the intensely popular white male action hero-centred Hollywood blockbuster films of the 1980s. Emanating from the kaupapa of producing film for, in and by Māori, *Mauri* is dotted with a range of distinctive cultural rituals: from the severing of an umbilical cord with a shell, which was practised for millennia, to the burial of a baby’s whenua and pōwhiri.

The first pōwhiri scene in *Mauri* is midway through the narrative, when the jilted Ramari (Susan Paul) marries Steve (James Heyward), the Pākehā neighbour. The wedding service takes place at the small Te Mata church. As the couple are showered with confetti and applause, they happily pose for photos beneath the steeple. The scene switches from the well-wishes of whānau and friends to a young manukura tane calling “Aha toia mai”, the opening words to the well-known haka pōwhiri “Toia Mai”. A kapa of tamariki reply “Te waka!” The haka pōwhiri here stands in for the other critical elements of pōwhiri—wero and karanga, and whaikōrero. Similarly, in the second pōwhiri, Mita uses different elements—karanga and whaikōrero—as metonyms for the ritual as a whole. The strongest markers of pōwhiri throughout are the performance costumes of the kapa (tasselled dresses/kilts and tipari), and the marae space where the pōwhiri performances, for the most part, take place.

Looking more closely at the second pōwhiri scene in *Mauri*, we see the hapū welcome an ope onto the marae to discuss important developments in the Te Mata community. Unlike the first pōwhiri scene, the second pōwhiri begins with a kaikaranga beckoning the manuhiri onto the ātea. As is customary, we see the women present themselves in the front of the rōpū during their approach. However, the men, including the district mayor and two of his male councillors—who are Pākehā or perhaps “white Māori”—violate this important stage of the pōwhiri by barging through the women, clearly in a hurry to take their seats at the front. Koro Hēmi (Sonny Waru) commences the whaikōrero, and acknowledges the council for coming to consult with them. Meanwhile, the council representatives appear tetchy and impatient, willing Koro Hēmi to conclude his address as quickly as possible. The Mayor, in turn, rises and begins his speech with a greeting in poorly pronounced te reo—“Tin-a kutu, tin-a-kutu, tin-a-kutu car-towah”—sending fits of giggling through the hapū. At the conclusion, Koro Hēmi announces a cup of tea, which completes the tapu part of the ritual. However, the council does not approach the tangata whenua to harirū; rather, the Mayor approaches Koro Hēmi to inform him that the council do not have time for a cup of tea and must get back to the office, essentially disabling the hapū from extending their manaakitanga to their important manuhiri and thus leaving the pōwhiri ritual in a state of suspension.

In the second pōwhiri scene we see karanga, whaikōrero, an invitation to engage in tiaki/manaaki tangata and harirū, and a fleeting but interrupted moment when the ope acknowledge the hunga mate. There are no wero and only parts of the pōwhiri proper, but it is still recognisably pōwhiri because of the key elements selected, and the way they are portrayed. The counter-tikanga performances of the few Pākehā characters, as directed by Mita, serve to heighten our critical reception of the lack of sensitivity towards, and understanding of,

te ao Māori. We see the Pākehā characters as outsiders to the Māori world, in violation of the ritual, and the respect that is customary for those who would belong. In Mita's film, the breach of protocol has the potential to provoke recognition in the audience, and perhaps even resolution to do better. In pointing to what is wrong with this picture, in other words, the film might encourage the audience to think more positively towards what is right.

Mauri emerged in the period immediately following the "Māori renaissance". In 1984 the Te Māori exhibition had put Māori culture on the international map, complete with the spectacle of a pōwhiri that began on the steps of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Following the response to Te Māori, and with the much stronger integration of Māori stories into the second rewrite of the New Zealand Film Commission (NZFC) Act 1978, the NZFC recognised that films featuring Māori were a sure way to generate interest in New Zealand. Pōwhiri became an integral part of New Zealand films again, and soon began to be written into tangi scenes in films such as *Once Were Warriors* (Scholes, Brown & Tamahori, 1994), *Crooked Earth* (Scholes, McGee & Pillsbury, 2001), and a particularly moving tangi scene in the more recent *The Strength of Water* (Copeland, Grace-Smith & Ballantyne, 2009). I have only discussed a few cinematic pōwhiri thus far because scholarly analysis of the pōwhiri components in film is limited. However, I am looking forward to expanding my investigation on the cinematic reconstruction of tapu rituals further in the future.

How do film-makers come to select certain ritual components and not others? And to what effect? In *Hei Tiki*, for instance, there are very few elements extrapolated from pōwhiri, yet the use of greenery, the marae space in which it is performed, the movements (albeit questionable), the way the performers are dressed in piupiu and pari, and the celebratory gestures with which Mara was received, are all

recognisably borrowed from pōwhiri—even as the film produces a perception of Māori philosophies as exotic, mystical and strange. As such, while failing to reflect the integrity of Māori cultural and ritual practices, *Hei Tiki* does an excellent job in retrospect of showing us the deficits in cross-cultural relations—both on screen and off—at that time. This makes the film valuable and worthy of further analysis.

In contrast, 50 years later the two pōwhiri in *Mauri* can be seen to be imbued with ritual understandings and commitment, depicting a haka pōwhiri by local tamariki wearing traditional performance clothing, the receiving of the wedding party onto the marae, and an informal harirū in the first pōwhiri scene where friends and whānau have come to kiss the bride and take photos in front of the whare. In the second scene, a karanga, a (interrupted) moment remembering the hunga mate, a whaikōrero in tau utuutu format and a declined invitation of the locals' manaakitanga are portrayed. A plethora of elements in *Mauri*'s two pōwhiri indicate a heightened awareness of, and attention to, pōwhiri details to exemplify the intense tapu of the ritual. This close comparison of *Hei Tiki* and *Mauri* leads to what should be by now an obvious observation: when controlled by Māori in films such as *Mauri*, the camera frames the content differently; it "provide[s] a different context and serve[s] a different philosophy" (Milligan, 2015, p. 349). That is, in film as in life, when Māori control the performance of culture and ritual, Māori identity is affirmed, and belonging to tūrangawaewae is confirmed. However, it cannot be ignored that the limitations of the cinematic medium, particularly in terms of time constraints, means that Indigenous film-makers too are forced to make decisions about what aspects of the ritual they should whiri in to the narrative, and what to leave out. Thus, despite the film-maker's best intentions to entice audiences to know about the rituals, the two-hour-or-so time restriction of a general cinematic attraction means they are disempowered from conveying more than

a very few aspects. This is important to keep in mind as we move forward into a discussion of *Mt. Zion*. Both Mita and Kahi are directors who have aimed to maintain tikanga Māori but who have been compelled to remove features to comply with the strictures of a time-dependent medium.

***Mt. Zion* (2013)**

Mt. Zion centres on the hard-working Pukekohe community of potato workers in the late 1970s. Doomed to follow in the footsteps of his strict, stressed-out father, Turei (Stan Walker)—a talented singer and dreamer—decides to attempt an escape from the banalities of potato farming by bringing their band, Small Axe, out of the garage and into the local pub. Their performance excites bar manager/publicist Layla (Miriam Smith), who challenges Small Axe to enter a nationwide competition to be the support band for Bob Marley and the Wailers on their New Zealand tour. Turei's brother leaves the band, and in a bid to secure the best possible guitarist, Turei recruits Booker T (Kevin Kaukau), a well-known lead guitarist who agrees to play for a fee that Turei cannot afford. Nevertheless, he agrees to pay it. Turei chooses to dishonour himself and his whānau by stealing a koha gifted by the community to help his pā (Temuera Morrison) recover from an injury. Turei's theft is then shockingly exposed to all on live television. He loses his mana and, seemingly, the musical opportunity of his life. Small Axe challenges him to work and sing in their community for free until his debt is paid and his honour is restored.

There are two pōwhiri scenes in *Mt. Zion*. In the first, after years of trying, Turei's mā (Ngawai Herewini) has finally managed to organise the (Pākehā) Mayor to come and discuss an important issue affecting the marae and the surrounding community. The hui is scheduled the same day as Small Axe's audition for the Bob Marley competition. Although Turei is Pā's first choice to deliver the wero, brother

Hone (Troy Kingi) is forced to step out from the performance group in his place, because Turei stays in the whareiti for too long. The wero ensues with Hone as the lead kaiwero, and he is soon flanked by Turei and Reggie (David Wikaira-Paul). Knowing the Mayor does not understand te reo, Hone issues a number of challenges as he waits at the waharoa. The Mayor and staff enter the marae without comprehending he has been beckoned to pay a fee to come onto the ātea as a joke. However, Mā's long-standing ambition to have an audience with the council is finally realised, which takes place off screen and away from the narrative. During the last ten minutes of the film, Turei steps out of the group to perform the wero, to welcome an ope. Unbeknownst to him, it is Bob Marley and the Wailers who have been invited to Ngā Hau e Wha Marae to experience a traditional welcome. He focuses, hesitates, turns back to the kapa to check the reality that his musical idol stands facing him from the waharoa. He refocuses and continues his solo wero. Soon, he reaches to the belt of his piupiu to retrieve his rau to present as a taki, and realises he left it on the sink in the bathroom. Little Toko (Te Rangi Kahi) advances from the kapa to deliver Turei a rau out of his kilt, and in doing so the tamaiti restores the tapu. Once the rau is laid down, Marley steps forward to claim it; he relishes the moment, replying to Turei with a playful snarl. Once Marley has collected the rau in peace under the watchful eye of the kaiwero, Turei pivots, slaps his upper thigh and returns to the hapū, who commence the karanga and haka pōwhiri, and Marley and the entourage become part of the spectacle.

As I have tried to capture above, *Mt. Zion's* two pōwhiri scenes include some key aspects of the ritual, in particular the wero and pōwhiri proper (which includes karanga, haka pōwhiri, whaikōrero, harirū and manaakitanga). However, neither pōwhiri fully incorporates greenery, which we only see as a rau laid down in front of the Mayor and Bob Marley during the wero. There were no whaikōrero, with the

exception of a short whakawhiti kōrero in the whare when the hapū addresses Turei's misdemeanour which takes place *prior* to Marley's pōwhiri. Both *Mt. Zion's* pōwhiri sequences include wero, yet only one has three kaiwero in the way that, according to Smith (1976), belongs to pōwhiri proper. In the first pōwhiri scene, the wero ends before the karanga and haka pōwhiri commence, focusing our attention on the dynamic between Hone and his entitled teina, Turei. Further, although Marley has a significantly higher profile than the Mayor of the Franklin District, his wero is performed by a solo kaiwero, while the Mayor has three. This is an interesting development, both cinematically and in terms of pōwhiri itself. It could be that the second pōwhiri scene has been staged to show Turei having the opportunity to perform, instead of showing us how honour is conveyed to Marley through a proper wero. That is, the film keeps our attention again on the individual, psychological thread rather than on the collective ritual performance.

If we follow Metge's (2010) reminder that, in the most practical sense, pōwhiri serve as introductions to much bigger kaupapa, then the reduction of the pōwhiri from a collective ritual to a personal one also diminishes our view of the business at hand, including the negotiation of relations between Māori and Pākehā at Mā's hui. In *Mt. Zion* both the ritual and the social are overshadowed because of the central protagonist's narrative arc.

Herein lies the responsibility of Māori screenwriters and directors in negotiating the needs of the narrative versus accuracy in conveying tapu rituals. Do they write to drive the narrative forward or to display an authentic performance and appease knowing participants in the audience? How do they negotiate the balance of authenticity in a film's diegesis that is fiction? Indeed, this is the challenge to Māori screenwriters and directors and those who teach writers/directors of the future.

It is clear from this brief discussion about *Mt. Zion* that further discussion and examination of

ways to improve and/or enhance the depiction of pōwhiri in New Zealand film could be useful in building capacity to include more rituals such as pōwhiri on screen. It may be that consultation with hapū and iwi could be useful to facilitate authentic approaches to cinematic depictions of pōwhiri. I conducted a hapū-based audience study about Māori-centred films in my doctoral research (J. K. T. Wilson, 2013) and responses to the rituals performed in the film selection were distinctively hapū perceptions. The hapū responded according to the kawa of their own marae rather than the messages intended by the producers of the films. During my doctoral research my Ngāi Taiwhakāea whānau viewed the short film *Kerosene Creek* (Fitzgerald & Bennett, 2004), which is predominantly set on an unnamed marae and in which the hapū conduct a tangi. The screening generated hapū-specific questions in terms of the constructed kawa on the film and our kawa. These questions included: Would Ngāi Taiwhakāea lower the flag to give a sense of realism to a film? Would Ngāi Taiwhakāea allow the pouhaki to be part of the fiction? Would Ngāi Taiwhakāea permit filming inside our wharetīpuna and of precious whakaahua to contribute to the diegesis? Would Ngāi Taiwhakāea draw a line between constructed kawa and kawa tūturu?

These questions about a film produced in another rohe generated a very important discussion that was hapū-specific. The questions were brought to the fore by elements on the screen that did not reflect the audience's own kawa, and therefore did not sit right with them. Thus, consultation with a hapū or iwi may also complicate matters, as each have their own approaches to pōwhiri and other rituals that may not align with others'. Furthermore, a good proportion of Māori feature films are not written to connect to a specific hapū or iwi, and consulting on hapū and iwi specificities in rituals can be problematic. Diversity within rituals amongst different hapū and iwi influences the ways that tūrangawae is conveyed and understood amongst the audience. It is clear

that there is much room for research on this topic in the future.

Conclusion

Even the preliminary analysis presented in this article shows us how problematic it can be to construct and present the performance of pōwhiri on film. In each example, we see how the imperatives that govern the selection of elements and how they are focused upon almost inevitably diminish the integrity of the ritual while throwing up (often unintended) ideas about Māori culture in the cross-cultural, not-quite-postcolonial context. It is easy to criticise these films for the ways they repackage pōwhiri as an exotic attraction (*Hei Tiki*) or take our eyes away from the communality of the ritual to fulfil a Western narrative of individual progress (*Mt. Zion*), or even just the elision of small but important parts of the ritual to smooth the action and keep things moving forward efficiently (*Mauri*). It is not just that the screen has a limited capacity to translate the multivalent, full sensory experience of pōwhiri into two dimensions; rather, that film cannot stop for an hour or so to observe or inform the audience about the finer details, to wait the two or six waiātā and waiata kinaki out, or take time for an extra waiata. Cinema and its audiences are not expected to have the patience to sit through it all. But it is also a consequence of the medium's limitations. The film-maker must contend and negotiate through a series of complex questions with themselves about what content should stay in the film and what should be edited out in order to comply with cinematic norms, as well as negotiate the representation of kawa and tikanga in an acceptable way. Perhaps this means that cinema itself is identified with the dominant Pākehā culture and gaze more so than Māori film-makers and audiences want to recognise. These films give us a small taste of belonging to the Māori world, preserve some key aspects of its values and knowledges,

past and present, within the fragments of ritual we see performed, and perhaps, at their best, inculcate a desire in us for a more fully embodied experience of tūrangawaewae.

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Glossary

ahurei	festival
Aotearoa	original Māori name for New Zealand
ātea	sacred space
haka	dance, performance
haka pōwhiri	welcome haka
hākari	feast or scrumptious meal
hapū	subtribe, to be pregnant
harirū	exchanging of kisses or hongis
haukāinga	home people
hongis	exchange of breath, by pressing noses
hui	meeting
hunga mate	the dead
iwi	tribe
kaikaranga	caller
kaiwero	man who performs the formal challenge in a pōwhiri
kapa	team

karanga	calls	puhi	virgin girl or special
kaupapa	rationale, issue, theme, purpose	rau	woman of rank frond, plume or spray of
kawa	iwi-specific protocols of the marae	rōpū	leaves group
koha	gift	taiaha	long-handled wooden weapon
kōreo	speak, talk, discuss; discussion	taki	challenge or entice
koro	term of address for an elderly man, grandfather	tamaiti	child
mā	mother, mum	tamariki	children
makutu	curse, supernatural magic or spell	tāngata	people
mana	prestige, authority	tangata whenua	people of the land, hosts
manaaki	to show care or hospitality to others	tangi	keening, weeping, crying, funeral procession
manaakitanga	to be hospitable beyond one's feelings towards the guests	taonga	prized or precious possession
manuhiri	guests	tapu	sacred
manukura tane	young male leaderMāori Indigenous person of Aotearoa	tau utuutu	an order of formal speech-making during whaikōrero where speeches alternate between the home speakers and the guests
marae	meeting place	te ao Māori	the Māori world
mau rakau	the bearing of traditional Māori weaponry	Te Arawa	the Indigenous people of the Rotorua region who connect to Tama- te-kapua, chief of the Arawa waka
mauri	life force	te reo	the language, the voice
Ngāti Awa	an iwi based on the coast of the Eastern Bay of Plenty	teina	younger sibling of the same gender
Ngāti Tūwharetoa	an iwi based in the central plateau of the North Island	tiaki	guardian, carer
noa	free from restrictions	tikanga	cultural values, ways of operating
ope	entourage	tipari	finger-woven headbands
pā	fortified village, father, dad	tūrangawaewae	homeland, sense of identity
Pākehā	New Zealander of European descent	tūturu	real, true, authentic, original
pakeke	adults	waharoa	entrance, opening, gate
pari	bodice, bra	waiata	song, chanted poetry
piupiu	skirt made from flax worn specifically for haka and known for its swishing sound	waiata kinaki	song of support
pouhaki	flagpole	waka	canoes
pōwhiri	ritual of encounter	wero	traditional challenge
		whaikōrero	oratory

whakaahua	portrait, illustration, picture, image photograph
Whakaata Māori	Māori Television
whakapapa	genealogy, connections
whakawhiti	exchange or crossing
kōrero	over of talk, discussion, consultation
whānau	to be born, family
whare	house, building
whareiti	small house known as the toilet
wharetīpuna	ancestral meeting house
whenua	land, placenta
whiri	plait, integrate, tie-in

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