

**Performing Arts Festivals, Festivalization and Global Public Sphere: Locating
DNT Performances of India and the Māori Performances of Aotearoa/New
Zealand in Post-colonial Asia-Pacific**

by

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ABSTRACT

The project aims at theorising the idea of ‘festivalization’ of the local and global public sphere generated by performing arts festivals. The thesis challenges the concept of ‘festival’ in its popular framework of a celebratory event that is well-planned, culture specific and entertaining. I provide three different study models to accommodate my theoretical conceptualization and discuss the theory in detail in context of selected case studies.

The research also seeks to investigate the politics around (re)presentation of indigeneity through the medium of theatre within various socio-political contexts through case studies from several Indigenous theatre groups located in Oceania and beyond. The project offers detailed discussion of the first two theoretical models developed by me in context of case studies from India and Aotearoa/New Zealand followed by an exploration of the artistic festivals and their implications within and beyond Oceania in context of my third and final study model.

The theoretical models study theatre performances in the contexts of their representation, reception and efficacy within the festival generated space as well as the initiatives of Indigenous communities across the globe to create artistic festivals to celebrate their Indigeneity and authority over Indigenous arts. These two focuses together will locate the reception, representation and (re)production of Indigeneity through the medium of theatre within the festivalized space locally and globally. The third study model finally locates the festival itself within both local and global space to explore its political implications within the socio-political context.

I also aim to investigate the politics behind provisions of ‘space’ and ‘funds’ for the international display of indigeneity through international performing arts festivals; and juxtapose the tourist centred performing arts festival against the festival created by the Indigenous communities through funding generated through ‘donations’ made by local communities. The discussions on this segment is focused on the politics of (mis)presentation of indigeneity through hybrid performances alongside exotic traditional indigenous performances on international stages.

As an Indian citizen, crossing multiple boundaries between the so-called third world, indigenous world and metropolitan culture, I am aware about, respect and acknowledge the Indigenous intellectual and cultural property rights. Being a non-Indigenous researcher working with Indigenous communities, I followed the principles of ‘decolonising methodologies’ (Smith, 1999). I am aware and adhered to the

matters including self-determination, cultural aspiration, socio-economic mediation, culturally preferred pedagogy, collective philosophy, extended family structures, respect to Treaty of Waitangi and growing respectful relationships as essential aspects of conducting this research. I have applied collectively chosen pedagogy and philosophy when I conducted the interviews within Indigenous communities and when wrote about them in my thesis.

Indigenous theatre within the context of performing arts festival is a rarely explored area of post-colonial studies which makes the present project significant in itself. The project will document original ideas directly from indigenous theatre practitioners and their experiences of participation in international performing arts festivals. And finally, I believe this study could contribute to a better understanding of the politics of international performing arts festivals in (re) producing indigeneity, distinct from their conventional reception as an exotic 'other' culture.

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USE OF LANGUAGES AND GLOSSARY OF MĀORI TERMS

I have used three different languages including English while researching. I mainly used Hindi as a medium of communication with Budhan Theatre members and have translated the interviews into English myself. Moreover, Budhan's plays are all originally written in Hindi, which I have translated into English for this project. Translation is a complex task and I would like to be clear that, while I tried my best to translate accurately, I am not an expert translator. I have focused on capturing the meaning of the original source rather than literally translating them. Indigenous and foreign words are only translated at their first occurrence in the thesis with their meaning in square brackets and not italicized thereafter as academic convention. Below is a glossary of common Māori words that I use throughout the thesis. The glossary is based on the understanding I acquired from the Māori Dictionary online (Moorfield)

haka = traditional Māori action dance

hapū = subtribe

harakeke = flax

hikoi = march

Hineahuone = woman of Earth, mother to humanity

Hinenuitepō = guardian of the afterlife

Hinetitama = first human form, often perceived as daughter archetype

hui = meeting/conference

ihi = energy

iwi = tribe

kaitiaki = guardian

kaitiaki = keeper/guard

Kaitiakitanga = Guardianship and conservation

karakia = prayer

karanga = the call or chant of welcome

kaupapa = principles or policy/strategy

kawa = protocols

kawanatanga = governorship

kōrero = discussions

kuia = grandmother archetype

mana = power, authority, prestige

mana wāhine = power of Māori women/discourse relating to Māori women

mana wāhine o Aotearoa = Māori woman of New Zealand

mana whenua = local Indigenous people/authority

Marae = official Māori meeting house

Marama = light

noho marae = staying at the traditional Māori meeting house

Pākeha = New Zealander of European descent

Papa = is Papatūānuku's abbreviated name which means foundation or flat surface

papakāinga = communal land

Papatūānuku = earth mother

pito = umbilical cord

pōwhiri = the traditional welcome ceremony

rangatira = leaders/esteemed or chiefly people

rangatiratanga = autonomy

Ranginui = sky father, Rangi for short

rohe = region, generally delineated by geographical features such as mountains, rivers, valleys or forests

Te Ao Māori = Māori worldview

te whare tangata = house of humanity/womb

tikanga = rules/customs

tino rangatiratanga = self-determination or sovereignty

tohunga = experts

tūrangawaewae = a place to stand

tutua = commoners

tīpuna = ancestors

urupa = burial site

utu = often translated as 'revenge' but also including concepts of 'reciprocity' or 'balanced exchange'

wāhine toa = powerful women

waiata = traditional Māori songs

waka = canoe

wero = challenge

whakama = humiliation

whakapapa = genealogy

whānau = family

whānaungatanga = kinship or a sense of family connection

Whare Kariori = a performance staged in succession of communities by travelling troupes

Whare Mātoro = entertainment performances specifically designed by and for young people

Whare tapere = a site of performance or entertainment

Whenua = land

whenua ki te whenua = reflects the Māori philosophical view that the placenta, like the land, provides physical, emotional, spiritual and intellectual nourishment and provides for all the needs of humanity

एकं सद्विप्रा बहुधा वदन्ति

"Ekam Sat, Viprah Bahudha Vadanti"

(There is only one truth, we – humans understand/describe it from different perspectives)

(Reference: Rig Veda, Book 1, Hymns 144-146)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

As the Sanskrit hymn *एकं सद्विप्रा बहुधा वदन्ति* conveys, this project is an attempt from a point of view of a non-Indigenous researcher from a ‘third-world’ country to understand the politics around the (re)presentation of indigeneity through the medium of theatre within the distinct socio-political contexts of local and global spaces. The research project explores Indigenous theatre performances within spaces provided by performing arts festivals in different socio-political contexts. The project focuses on Indigenous theatre performances from the post-colonial commonwealth nations of Aotearoa/New Zealand and India, as well as on the performances created through trans-Indigenous¹ artistic collaborations within Oceania² and the world.

New Zealand is a settler-invader colony of the former British Empire, India on the other hand is an occupied colony of the former British Empire and has different political, historical and cultural characteristics. The contemporary society of New Zealand is increasingly multicultural, with globalized economies and ongoing struggles and negotiation between Māori and non-Māori communities; whereas Indian society in itself is multi-traditional (based on region, religion and caste) and multi-cultural. India has experienced continuous struggles on the basis of religion, caste and class. However, despite several differences among the socio-political and historical characteristics between the countries, both share a similar post-colonial predicament between 'self' and 'other', and in some contexts, doubly 'othered'. This doubly othered experience occurs in the context of India, where the De-notified and Nomadic Tribes - DNTs³ are further oppressed and marginalized by mainstream Indian society. It also occurs in

the context of settler-invader country like New Zealand when Indigenous peoples are portrayed as 'criminals' or 'troublemakers' by migrant communities as well as by members of elite /bourgeois section of Indigenous population of the country.

I have been connected to Budhan Theatre⁴ for the last eight years as an artist and academic researcher and I have focused my artistic interest on the reception of indigeneity through the medium of theatre. Budhan Theatre (Ahmedabad, India) is a non-profit theatre group formed in 1998 by Prof. Ganesh Devy, Baroda based well-known literary critic, linguist and tribal activist. It is run by Daxin Bajrange Chhara, Roxy Gagdekar Chhara, Aatish Indrekar Chhara and Kalpana Chhara - members of the Chhara community, one of the DNTs. They are an Indigenous community fighting for their socio-political acceptance as a community of artists and actors rather than their popular labelling as 'criminals'.

My decision to study the politics of performing arts festivals was prompted during a discussion with Dakxin Bajrange Chhara about Budhan as a theatre group of DNT communities being alienated from mainstream Indian Theatre. In an effort to redress this alienation, Budhan decided to organize their own performing arts festival in 2011-12. The project was further inspired by productions by Māori theatre companies Taki Rua and Tawata productions, as well as the Pūtahi festival - an annual Indigenous performing arts festival organised by Māori theatre practitioners in Wellington, Aotearoa/New Zealand. I have gradually developed my project studying this issue in the context of different Indigenous communities and theatre groups. As an Indian national, raised and educated in a diverse socio-cultural post-colonial culture, I offer a unique perspective on the contemporary representation and reception of Indigenous theatre performed by DNT communities in India, and by Māori theatre artists of Aotearoa/New Zealand. The chapter four of this thesis will also explore trans-Indigenous artistic collaborations within and beyond Oceania. New Zealand is also a significant site globally; due to its distinct post-colonial socio-political setup resulting from the Treaty of Waitangi, signed between the Māori community and the British Crown in 1840, which has significant repercussions on intercultural relationships in the country which are distinct from other post-colonial societies. Also, as a developed country within a developing commonwealth region; and as a first world economy in a third world region, the New Zealand entertainment market contributes significantly as a testing/experimental market for business development projects that are furthered if successful to the first world region. The above-mentioned conditions make Aotearoa/New Zealand an economically, socially and politically appealing and important space

for the present study. I came across the street theatre created and performed by the Denotified and Nomadic Tribes of India (the DNTs) as part of my masters' research project (S. Bhatt) which inspired me to further my investigations in the context of the festival organization and its socio-political significance for the DNT theatre movement.

My personal interest and experience play an obvious role in terms of the selection of India as geographical location for one of my case studies. There are also significant reasons behind the selection of case studies in Aotearoa/New Zealand and leading the discussion towards the significance of trans-Indigenous collaborations within and beyond Oceania. Both countries share colonial histories and are part of the broader Asia-Pacific region. While Aotearoa/New Zealand has a history of active Indigenous struggle, the situation in India is quite in contrast as the culture and arts by DNTs are completely ignored and undervalued by the society and the state. I focus on the performances and activities of Budhan Theatre for my case studies from India due to it being the only theatre group of DNT arts in India and the world; and I drive my Aotearoa/New Zealand based case studies from several Māori theatre groups of Aotearoa/New Zealand with similar philosophies and practices.

The word Indigenous is used in this thesis to describe the native inhabitants of the settler-invader colonies of the former British Empire although it is a term that is rarely used in the Indian cultural context. However, the project specifically focuses on the theatre of the Denotified and Nomadic Tribes of India who were the native inhabitants of Indian lands. Their land was taken away by the British government in colonial India and this continued after independence through the actions of the government of present-day India, thus the DNTs have continued to be homeless and landless within their own society. During colonial rule, the British labelled the DNTs of India as 'criminal tribes'. The government of independent India continued these stereotypes, calling them 'habitual offenders', and continuing to socially exclude these communities on the basis of erroneous assumptions about their inherent and invariable criminality for more than a century now. The DNT face complex and intersecting issues including homelessness; loss of culture and languages, and higher prison population ratio, and the other problems are similar to the Indigenous communities across the world. However, the DNTs of India are still officially known as "de-notified" and with no acknowledgement of their diverse linguistic and tribal heritage. Most DNT communities are excluded from India's social welfare system, education and employment reservations. I would therefore refer to the DNTs as Indigenous and I argue that it is relevant to use the term Indigenous for describing these Indian communities.

A significant shift in the objective of tourism and festival celebrations from negotiating and communicating identities and culture towards highly commercialised 'cultural consumption' is an outcome found in contemporary cosmopolitan societies across the world. The impacts of colonialism not only affected identities, cultures and languages of Indigenous communities, but also stimulated the desire to experience or consume the 'other' culture within the elite class or dominant communities. The idea that individuals can be immersed in other cultures, virtually or through travel, is an important site of investigation in the area of tourism sociology (Sassatelli 23).

1.1. Performing Arts Festivals, Indigeneity and Post-colonial Theatre Studies

Many social scientists and culturologists including Karabaev (2000), Bakhtin (1984), and Genkin (1975 as qtd in Karabaev 2000) believed that festivals are "the first form of human culture" and "are sources of spirituality and religious beliefs" (Karabaev 56). It can be said that the social function of festivals is closely related to traditional and historical continuity, spiritual beliefs and community (identity) survival. As Arcodia and Robb assert, "a festival revolves around the marking of special occasions and the celebration of significant events" (156). Related issues are raised in characterizing festivals in the context of tourist promotion. According to the South Australian Tourism Commission:

Festivals are celebrations of something the local community wishes to share, and which involves the public as participants in the experience. Festivals must have as a prime objective a maximum amount of people participation, which must be an experience that is different from or broader than day to day living. (as qtd in Arcodia and Whitford 3).

The concept of a festival as sharing the values of local groups with a public which may or may not be local hints towards one of the characteristics of it being community participation. Such events involve a diversity of performances and ritualistic celebrations by a group with shared or collective beliefs or experiences. Historically, festivals celebrated special occasions through arts, rituals and festivity. Most cultures celebrated social or religious occasions and had carnivalesque events such as festivals, market fairs and harvest celebrations (Arcodia and Whitford 3-4). In the Middle Ages, "carnivals were the occasion of mass celebrations during which the normal course of social life was turned upside down as participants in carnival would engage in the mockery of public officialdom" (Arcodia and Whitford 4). Bakhtin argues that, "[i]n the framework of class and feudal political structure this specific character could be

realized without distortion only in the carnival and in similar marketplace festivals" (Bakhtin 9).

Festivals are often marked as promoters of arts and culture within a specific socio-political space. Along with performances and arts, festivals help to make the venues in which they are held popular, and thus helping market them to the tourism industry. Venues are a significant part of understanding the contexts of contemporary festivals. Most festivals are organized within urbanized venues, unlike traditional ritualistic festivals that are organised within traditional /culturally significant spaces, which may or may not be urban. The sensory experience of attending a performing arts festival is unique as it connects to "the authenticity of the one-off experience of 'being there' " to an individual (Sassatelli 18). As Waterman (quoted in Sassatelli 18) says, "successful festivals create a powerful but curious sense of place which is local, as the festival takes place in a locality or region, but which often makes an appeal to a global culture in order to attract both participants and audiences". Leila Jancovich of the Arts Council England, Yorkshire, describes the main characteristics of festivals, seen from the angle of an arts funding agency. As quoted in D'Art report for IFACCA Jancovich argues that:

The festival sector is large and varied incorporating amongst others, community events, (which may or may not involve artistic input); art form specific festivals (whose audiences may be local, regional, national or international); umbrella branding of existing activities as a promotional tool. Festivals may work with the existing arts infrastructure, or they may take place in locations with little or no arts infrastructure. . .Other partners including regional development agencies and local authorities use festival activity to develop community initiatives or use the festival model as a means of umbrella branding existing community activity...The main drivers for festival activity can most easily be defined as: a) Art form development, b) Community/audience development, c) Tourism, and d) Economic regeneration. (18).

A number of scholars have been working on measuring the impact of festivals upon host communities, including Arcodia and Whitford (2006), Anderson and Solberg (1999), and Yardley, MacDonald & Clarke (1990). Also, there are several models developed by different scholars to examine the economic impacts of festivals and to determine the degree to which festival attendance facilitates the development of social capital (Arcodia and Whitford 2).

Festivals have potential to enhance the local economy of a particular region as they provide opportunities for the local community to grow their tourism and hospitality sectors (Arcodia and Whitford 11). According to Robinson:

[A]rts festivals in New Zealand and Australia have become multimillion-dollar business with Festivals such as The Adelaide Festivals and The Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras that generates around 4.13 million and 4.27 million respectively (68-70).

So, it could be assumed that festivals have the potential to generate positive economic impacts to varying degrees including; enhanced revenues and employment for local trades, cafés, tourist outlets and museums (Arcodia and Whitford 11). Festivals can also affect the economy negatively through the presence of inflated prices, residents' evacuations, and the interruption of normal business (Dwyer, Mellor, Mistilis and Mules 191-204). However, the success of festivals should not be measured solely on the basis of their economic impacts.

Festivals also effect the socio-cultural life of the local communities in the host region. Collective participation and longing for community are two major ways that festivals affect a community on a socio-political level (Soutar and McLeod 571-582). Some of the negative impacts of festivals include disruption of resident lifestyle, vandalism, over-crowding and crime (Arcodia and Whitford 13-4). For instance, numerous social issues have been brought to notice by the Sydney Mardi Gras, including violent attacks on the police in 2010 (Bevege and Jones) and physical assaults by the police on participants in 2013 ("Green Left Weekly"). Noticeably, the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras provoked legislative reform for acts including the Public Assemblies Act and the 1982 NSW Anti-Discrimination Act (Arcodia and Whitford 14).

Festivals are considered opportunities or platforms for industry and economic development by local governments and thus are encouraged (Arcodia and Whitford 14). The political impacts of festivals can be positive in terms of the enhancement of tourism through events such as the 2000 Olympic Games or the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras (14). The opening ceremony of the Sydney Olympic Games in 2000 was seen as highly inclusive of multi-cultural nationalist identity of Australian society. However, at the same time, it is a significant example of how the performance of indigeneity can (re)produce the marginality or othering of Indigenous peoples due to its presentation. In the opening ceremony a young white girl was shown leading the Indigenous performers towards the awakening/new beginning; this indirectly portrayed

Indigenous Australian communities as primitive and being awakened and led by a young girl from a so called 'civilized culture'. The global focus on the country through the lens of the Olympic Games festival revealed the constant discrimination against Aboriginal peoples in Australia (Arcodia and Whitford 13-4).

Festivals can also have negative effects on the local environment. Recently, the proposed use of Eden park in Auckland for night cricket matches and a fundraising concert venue was opposed by residents of the neighbourhood. The former Prime Minister Helen Clark is one of the residents of the neighbourhood opined that the stadium is a traditional sports venue and allowing it to become an entertainment hub is not viable considering the location of it in a residential area ("Helen Clark"). The future of the stadium is on hold due to the residential opposition as well as lack of funding for re-development. Another significant example of this is the conversion of Melbourne's Albert Park to host the Australian Grand Prix⁵ which involved substantial construction and redevelopment (Niall). In 1876, Albert Park in Melbourne was permanently reserved as a public park. Despite this, on 17th December 1993 the government announced the park as venue for the Australian Grand Prix beginning in 1996 (Niall). The park is still being used for the race despite protests carried out by the citizens of the region. A group of residents are still protesting after 22 years of the festival being held on the park. Protestors have communicated with the government directly offering possible alternative spaces for the race, but they have had no success (Florance). There were about 200 households who were protesting the use of the public park and the destruction done to the park roads and greens as a result of the race (Florance). According to Laing and Frost (261), the focus of the festival or mega event organizers has been on "how green strategies and the promise of environmental renewal are crucial for the competitive bidding for mega events, especially world sporting championships". Laing and Frost further discuss the recent trend in festival organization focusing on the environment:

Interest in such strategies has been fuelled by widespread negative publicity relating to air pollution at the 1998 Kuala Lumpur Commonwealth Games and the 2008 Beijing Olympics. A further recent development has been in strategic collaborations between high-polluting and green events, such as the one developed between the 2009 Formula 1 Grand Prix and Earth Hour [...]. Apart from the 'greening' of these mega sporting events, the effect of climate change and other green issues on events has attracted little attention at present (261).

The issue of environmental sustainability is one of the primary challenges facing the contemporary world. To protect and share environmental resources globally, effective communications across various cultural boundaries are important (Dawes and Maufort 11). There are festivals being held that specifically focus on environmental and sustainability issues. One of the longest running sustainability festivals is known as the Green Festival, and it is organised across a variety of different cities in the USA⁶. The Burning Man⁷ is another example of a festival that promotes sustainable, carbon-free existence in human society. Other examples of green festivals include the Fuji Rocks Festival⁸ (Japan), the Green Man Festival⁹ (UK), and the We Love Green Festival¹⁰ (France). The "Green Olympics" was one of the themes of the 2008 Olympic Games in China¹¹ the Olympics aimed to campaign about the need for worldwide environmental protection; which positively impacted the ecological issues of the host society. China achieved the goal of developing Beijing as green and environment friendly city to host Olympics 2008 by reducing the number of cars on roads by alternate odd-even driving policy which basically means the cars with licence plates with odd numbers at the end can be driven one day and with even numbers the following day; and by developing more eco-friendly public transportation based on electric and solar energy; as well as by controlling the industrial coal furnaces and building works (Roger; Layton).

Environmental issues and the destruction of natural resources have been at the centre of Indigenous protests around the world as the land and natural resources have significant cultural and traditional values for Indigenous communities. Examples of such movements include, the Aboriginal Australian communities protesting against Fracking for Shale gas in Southwestern regions of Australia fearing the contamination of local water resources ("Aboriginal Groups"); Indigenous communities of Philippines fighting to save the land from gold-mining (Zacarias and Jimenez); Indigenous resistance against the US oil-corporations in South America (Vidal); Standing Rocks movement against building oil-pipelines on Indian reserves in Dakota, USA (Hersher) and many more. Indigenous communities are often at the forefront of the activism for the preservation of nature and its resources due to their cultural connectedness with nature. For instance, this connectedness in Māori is called *Kaitiakitanga* [Guardianship and conservation] which is an acceptance of deep kinship between the humans and natural world and thus the nature is to be protected. Like most Indigenous communities of the world, for tribal communities of India, nature is the provider and most of the tribal communities including the DNTs perform rituals showing gratitude towards the provisions and ecology. The issue of environmental sustainability is one of the issues expressed by Indigenous artists across the

world through the medium of their arts which will be discussed in detail in chapter four. To return the focus on performing arts and theatre, the following paragraphs will discuss Indigenous performing arts festivals in detail.

1.1.1. Indigenous Performing Arts Festivals

Festival organization in contemporary times involves a list of official formalities, governmental policies and countless institutional interventions. The policies of governments and institutions work together as agencies that control artistic expressions in the contemporary world. There is an inherent paradox in the current structures and systems, on one hand artistic expression is controlled by the agencies as discussed above and on the other hand, each agency has a role in terms of promoting creative endeavours. This often-ambivalent relationship with power structures often leads non-dominant sections of society towards anxiety and dissatisfaction, which further induces them to represent themselves locally as well as internationally. Contemporary Indigenous performing arts festivals provide significant socio-political spaces in which Indigenous peoples can (re)present themselves to mainstream society. I call these spaces as festival-generated spaces which refers to the space(s) made available by local/national or international theatre/arts festival(s).

Interestingly, the socio-political spaces provided by Indigenous festivals also connects to the building of a public sphere for Indigenous peoples and epistemologies within the respective geographical locations. This idea of a public sphere could be interpreted in terms of Partha Chaterjee's concept of non-dominant sections of society creating a "political society" (Chaterjee 114-128). However, the concept of "Counterpublics", introduced by Warner (56) is also important to understand the idea more specifically. Warner explains the dividing lines between communities within the public sphere as Public and Counterpublics. Counterpublics broadly means a section or group of people with an alternative or rival public culture. As Warner explains:

Counterpublics are defined by their tension with a larger public. Their participants are marked off from persons or citizens in general. Discussion within such a public is understood to contravene the rules obtaining in the world at large, being structured by alternative dispositions or protocols... A counterpublic against the background of the public sphere, enables a horizon of opinion and exchange; its exchanges remain distinct from authority and can have a critical relation to power; its extent is in principle

indefinite, because it is not based on a precise demography but mediated by print, theatre, diffuse networks of talk, commerce and the like (56-7).

According to Warner, theatre is a vehicle for the expression of Counterpublic ideas. Warner discusses the making of a "poetic" (57) world which is contributed to by theatre makers and other artists, and which eventually generates public discourse. According to Warner, poetic public discourses are always disorganized (Warner 82). Nancy Fraser argues that when public discourse is understood only as a single, comprehensive, overarching narrative, members of subordinated groups have no arenas for deliberation among themselves about their needs, objectives, and strategies (Fraser 34). Fraser advocates about the need to constitute alternative publics for the members of subordinated social groups—including women; workers, people of colour, and the LGBT communities (34). She calls discourses emerging from these marginalised communities "Subaltern Counterpublics" describing them as; "parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter-discourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs" (35). This suggests the creation of multiple ideational and epistemological worlds or spheres within a broader dominant socio-economic and political public sphere.

The public sphere is "both hegemonic and liberatory at the same time; it appears to be in league with the state and with global capital, on the one hand and on the other seems truly a space of democratic practice or even resistance" (Reneilt 20). The post-colonial discourse of identity politics and or the politics of survival (in the context of DNTs in India) resulted out of a divide between 'elite/mass' or high/subaltern' cultures (Chatterjee 132-8). This has a further layer to it: the intellectual divide between the non- Indigenous and Indigenous scholars which creates 'the public' and 'Counterpublic' (Warner 56-7) within a specific space.

According to one of the reports presented at the annual Western Australia Indigenous Tourism Operators Conference in Perth in 2011, Indigenous performing arts festivals provide an opportunity for non-Indigenous people to understand, experience and explore the Indigenous cultures of Australia. The report found that "Indigenous festivals provide an opportunity to remove the gaps between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous sections of society that developed due to discriminative, racist and suppressive attitudes by dominant sections of the society" (Bronitsky 2). The report also discusses the impacts of Indigenous performing arts festivals, concluding that these festivals lessen the social and cultural isolation of Indigenous communities. It is interesting to point here that the abovementioned impact is observed mostly

in context of the Indigenous festivals organized by the Indigenous people themselves without any political or commercial interference. I discuss this in detail in context of my case studies in later chapters.

While Indigenous festivals contribute greatly towards bridging the gaps between non-Indigenous and Indigenous communities, it is unfortunate that the typical capitalist perspective provided by the tourism industry doesn't necessarily provide a platform for articulation of authentic Indigenous voices. Many Indigenous performing arts festivals are funded by governmental or capitalist agencies and funding streams require the demonstration of arts and performances that follow their strategic and or political philosophies; this may limit the freedom of expression from the Indigenous artists and or participants. This strengthens the need for Indigenous communities' initiatives for organising festivals themselves, which is one of the key issues being focussed on in this project.

1.1.2. Performing Arts Festivals, the State and Capitalist Agencies

Governmental agencies and funding bodies serve as a major gateway to presenting a festival, including Indigenous performing arts festivals. The grant processes and selection criteria vary from country to country and region to region. Though the socio-political issues from an Indigenous perspective within New Zealand have huge similarities with other settler-invader countries like Australia and Canada, the financial and political provision from the government towards Indigenous artists varies. An overview of the funding policies of New Zealand and India in following paragraphs provides an essential background to discuss the issue in the specific context of the selected case studies from the two countries.

According to the International Federation of Arts Councils and Cultural Agencies (IFACCA¹²) report, Canada is the only country among the ten countries surveyed where the ministry/government provides funding and space specifically for festivals (Inkei 5). In Aotearoa/New Zealand it is acknowledged that all sorts of events may be referred to as festivals, however, from a cultural policy point of view the only events that may be classified as a festival are those that “have their primary focus on the development, presentation and/or participation in the arts; have a programme conceived, produced, curated, marketed and presented as an integrated package; and which occur within a defined area/region and within a defined period of time” (Creative New Zealand). For funding and other supports, Creative New Zealand pays special attention to the peculiar nature of festivals. Diversity of content, scope and outreach are emphasised among the eligibility criteria. Festival funding is considered under

'Project Funding' that receives approximately 31 percent of Creative New Zealand's overall funding budget (Inkei 7). A condition of funding is that organizers need to provide a written report at the end of the festival with details of the accounts and outcomes of the project.

According to the Ministry of Culture, India website, applications for organising festivals from non-profit organizations is considered under the 'Cultural Function Grant Scheme'. To be eligible for this grant, an organization must have been functioning for at least the past three years and must have been registered under the Societies Registration Act. The project or festival must reflect one or more aspects of Indian Culture. According to the information provided on the website, grants are provided for all types of interactive forums (including festivals) on any subject important to the preservation or promotion of cultural heritage, arts and creative endeavours (Ministry of Culture, India). Funded projects are required to publish a detailed report on outcomes at the end.

Like the Australian government, The Ministry of Culture, India considers applications keeping in mind applicants past experience of organising events and success ratio. The Ministry provides 75% of the total expense of the event and a maximum of INR 5,00,000 per project. The organizers need to provide a written report to the Ministry after the event. The scheme does not support individual applications/proposals or college/university festivals (Ministry of Culture, India).

According to the IFACCA survey report, most of the issues related to the provision of support to arts and culture festivals, as highlighted by the officials (from different countries) include shortage of venues, equipment, administrative support, liability insurance premiums, lower government priority, growing number of applications, quality control and budget control etc. (Inkei 11). However, these issues are combined with socio-political issues specific to Indigenous artists when explored in the context of the Indigenous artistic festivals. The issues are studied broadly in the context of global Indigenous performing arts festivals in chapter four; and discussed more closely in the contexts of Aotearoa/New Zealand and India in chapters five and six.

1.1.3. Festivals and Performance Studies

Studying rituals and cultural celebration emerged as a major area of concern in the field of Performance Studies in the 1950s. Victor Turner and Richard Schechner were two important anthropologists to study 'performance' in a social context. Turner developed the concept of

‘social drama’ in his study *Schism and Continuity* in the late 1950s. Turner also adapted Genep’s (1960) concepts of “preliminal, liminal and post-liminal” and translated it as, “separation, transition and incorporation” in which he discusses the ‘in-betweenness’ of the performance as compared to everyday life (Schechner 15-16). Schechner further developed the relationship between ‘social drama’ and ‘aesthetic drama’ and gave his diagram of the flows between the two in his essay “Selective Inattentions” (15-16). Significantly, Schechner entered into a series of collaborations with Turner, collaborations that can be read in Turner’s *From Ritual to Theatre* (1982), Schechner’s *Between Theatre and Anthropology* (1985) and *Performance Theory* (1988).

The new field of Performance Studies, apart from focusing on studying ‘theatre’ in social, linguistic and anthropological contexts, also emerged as an alternative field of research. As mentioned by Jon McKenzie:

[T]he new field of performance studies not only focused on marginalized objects of study but also saw itself as an alternative to conventional fields of research: it was liminal or in-between. Suspicious of established disciplines—and of the Establishment—performance scholars came to see their place as necessarily between conventional fields of study. Indeed, even after the first official performance studies programs had been established in the 1980s at New York University and Northwestern University, Dwight Conquergood would stress the liminality of performance studies, while Joseph Roach contended that it constituted not a discipline but rather an "inter-discipline" or a "post-discipline" (McKenzie).

In the 1980s and 90s, Turner and Schechner sought to conceptualize the function of theatre on a continuum from entertainment to efficacy; Turner focused on the transformative potential of cultural performances whereas Schechner formulated the famous concept of ‘ritualization’ of drama in his book *Performance Theory* (Schechner 1-25). Drawing on Turner’s theories of social drama and liminality Schechner views performance as "twice-behaved behaviors" defining performance as stretching from arts to ritual to entertainment to politics and economics (Schechner 66-70).

According to Turner, liminal social conditions encourage *communitas* through which participants are brought closer to the existential and primordial via the medium of rituals; and distanced from the cognitive and normative social order (127): "The unused evolutionary potential of mankind which has not yet externalized is released and ritual participants are made

free to enter into such vital relations with other man in fact or imagination" (Turner 127-8). In other words, *communitas* is an ideal state of shared experience where personal and social differences are set aside, and everyone experiences the same sense of being uplifted at the same time and within the same space. However, Turner claims to have observed that *communitas* is not limited to these traditional ritual contexts, but is achieved at contemporary carnivals and seasonal festivals like the Borderfest Festival (Texas, USA), The Rio Carnival (Brazil), Kadayawan Festival (Philippines), Bunksai Festival (Japan) etc.

Turner later modified his idea arguing that "the liminal-like moments and communitas-like sentiments that post-industrial actors experience in ritual-like social dramas in more individualized ways, and enter into more freely, as 'more a matter of choice, not obligation'" (55). Following this modification Turner saw the possibility for ritual to be creative, to make new situations, identities and social realities through such liminal-like and communitas-like moments (Schechner 66). For Schechner, liminality is the base for Performance Studies - "persons are stripped of their former identities and positions in the social world; they enter a time-place where they are not-this-not-that, neither here nor there, in the midst of journey from one social self to another" (67). Within the space marked by international festivals, the liminality of participants links with one another and may lead the transformation through cultural or ritual encounter. I have witnessed such transformation of people's mindset through cultural encounter in the context of Budhan Theatre's performances. It would be right to say here, that within a post-colonial globalising space, festivals can provide a liminal stage for participants who then may experience a journey from one social self to a hybrid/global social self. This will be discussed further in context of my case studies in later chapters.

The discussion above hints at the significance of looking at any social action, celebration or ritual or provocation as symbolic action and understanding that symbolic action as performance. Keeping in mind this idea, festivals and cultural celebrations can be understood as performances within a liminal trans-cultural community space. However, there are twists of this theory that impact the understanding of any community action as simple, straight forward performance. Conquergood calls this a praxis-oriented approach. According to this approach, performances of resistance and subversion are understood to flourish in the repertoire of performance practices of the marginalized, the enslaved and the subaltern, which becomes a backbone of the counterculture it creates (Conquergood 150). In simple terminology, this approach focuses on how the hegemonic codes develop within non-dominant communities as resistance against discrimination and or oppression.

However, this repertoire remains 'unrecognizable' to the members of the dominant culture and thus they remain "limited to representing strategies that reclaim, short-circuit and resignify the hegemonic code's signed imperatives" (Conquergood 151). As the members of hegemonic cultures are incapable of understanding these performances, the marginalized or subaltern performances include aspects of hegemonic cultures in their performance and subvert them. The idea of subverting the traditional/normative and or some aspect of hegemonic culture aligns with Foucault's approach¹³ towards subjugated knowledge and Butler's idea of performativity¹⁴ and the subversion of the normative.

The very idea of either assimilating elements of hegemonic culture or subverting them completely provides agency to the non-dominant or marginalised. According to the above discussion, an Indigenous community's initiative to organize Indigenous performing arts festivals for that community is an example of the creation of this kind of agency. I discuss these concepts further in Chapter 3 alongside my theoretical conceptualization for this project.

The above sections have provided an overview of the available academic discourse in the area of this research. They provide the backdrop against which I discuss my own contribution to the area of the performances studied through this research. I will discuss my role and identity as a researcher in the following paragraphs and locate myself politically before moving on to further discussion.

1.2. Research Background and the Researcher

I come from a Gujarati 'Brahmin' family residing in a small town named Godhra, located in Gujarat region of India. I learned Gujarati as my first language and Sanskrit as the language of prayers and religious activities. Hindi was my second language being the most used language of India, and English being the fourth language as well as learning basic Te Reo Māori here in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

I participated and performed in several *Shery Nataks* [Street Theatre] between the ages of 10 and 12 for a Hindu religious group called *Swadhyay Pariwar* who promoted the values of 'Hindu' Indian culture. I basically connected to this group to be able to participate in cultural activities with my childhood friend. As I grew up, I was stopped from participating in any performing arts events by my father who is not only a dominant patriarch but also a disciple of rigid caste-based and pro-Hindu social structures in India. I couldn't dare to express my wish to build my career in performing arts and felt I had to choose a bachelor's degree in English

Literature after my schooling. I started performing theatre at my college events. However, to hide my participation from my father, I had to make sure that the performance space was inside the college buildings and not in an auditorium in the town. After completing my bachelor's education, I moved to Vidhyanagar - a different city, away from my family to pursue my master's degree in English Language Teaching. To be honest, I chose the subject that was not offered at the local college to be able to move away from my hometown to achieve my dream of becoming a performer. I had all the freedom to explore excellent opportunities of acting on stage and on screen while I was at Vidhyanagar. My constant academic achievements and acknowledgement from my college transformed the views of my father to some extent and he started accepting my interest in theatrical activities. I performed as a lead actress in several full-length and one-act plays and acted as second-lead actress in a TV series called *Jindagi Ek Safar* [translates as *Life is a Journey*] between the years 2008 and 2010. However, I still couldn't dare to express my desire in front of my father out of fear and cultural conditioning. I had to achieve higher scores in exams and keep proving myself as a clever student to be able to stay away from my hometown and practice theatre.

After achieving my Master of Arts with first rank and gold medal, I started a research-based masters' degree with Comparative Literature and Translation Studies as major subjects; and kept performing and producing theatre plays. Just after I began my masters' studies at Central University of Gujarat, I came to know about Budhan Theatre and its works in the year 2010 when Roxy Gagdekar Chhara (one of Budhan theatre founding members) came to the Central University of Gujarat and talked about Budhan's work. I was stunned to know about the work done by the members of Budhan and was shocked to learn my ignorance about the existence of DNTs and their struggles in India. I was keen to find out more. I contacted Roxy and Budhan Theatre who warmly welcomed me and made me feel part of their theatre group. I was inspired to develop a research study with the theatre group and focused on studying the street theatre form in India which gradually became my dissertation for the degree of Master of Philosophy. I have been in contact with the theatre group ever since.

I moved to the United Kingdom to join my husband and lived there for about 10 months before I shifted to New Zealand for my PhD study. While I was there, I read a newspaper article on Waitangi Day celebrations and haka by UK based New Zealanders at the Westminster Abbey in London's CBD in February 2013. The article inspired me to learn more about the Māori community and culture in New Zealand. Before this, I knew very little about any Indigenous community or culture of Aotearoa/New Zealand. I started reading about the history and culture

of the Māori community and other Indigenous communities of the world. I was fascinated to learn that there are a number of similarities between the tribal cultures of India and the Indigenous cultures in the world. Initially, I had this naive idea of developing a research study with a comparative framework to study the theatre of resistance by the DNTs and the Māori community in New Zealand. However, after I arrived in New Zealand, I had an opportunity to learn and understand the culture, theatre and socio-political status of Māori community in more depth. After watching the Pūtahi Festival in 2014 in Wellington, the memories of the Ahmedabad Theatre Festivals and my conversations with Dakxin Bajrange Chhara (one of Budhan theatre founding members) about the politics of the theatre festivals flashed in my mind and the current project is an outcome of that instant and spontaneous thought.

I believe that there are significant implications of Indigenous performing arts festivals in the context of reinstating Indigenous identity, articulating the self-determination and preserving arts, cultures and languages. Moreover, studying Indigenous theatre and non-traditional festivals from the point of view of tourism sociology, cultural cosmopolitanism and performance studies will contribute a fresh perspective and understanding into post-colonial theatre studies. The theorization of the concept of ‘festivalized space’ and the ‘festivalization’ of Indigenous artistic expressions contributes towards the developing discourses in Festival Studies. I propose three study models to study the Indigenous performances within and outside the frames of festivals which is a fresh contribution to the area of Performance Studies.

It is important here to also mention my position as a researcher. Being from a third world country, I am an Indian citizen from upper caste and middle-class family. Am I from a dominant group of society? - Not economically, but from a privileged group in context of the infamous Indian caste-system. I am an “outsider” for the DNTs of India and similarly, an “outsider” for Māori in Aotearoa/New Zealand. However, it is a problematic position in today’s multi-cultural and globalized socio-political realm where boundaries are so blurry. I provide a fresh point of view, coming from a non-Western background. Though it was different, I had a colonial past and hence my readings and discussions of Indigenous arts and culture are non-hegemonic and different. They are rather inclusive and provide a unique perspective of reading Indigenous arts and culture in globalizing world. Therefore, my position as a researcher of this project is that of providing additional perspective rather simply an “outsider” perspective.

1.3. Methodology

The methodology used for the current research is a combination of different approaches including community based participatory action research (Getty), Insurgent research methodology (Gaudry) and a combination of semi-structured interviews, performance observation, observation of reception, archival study as well as drawing on my own experience of working with Budhan Theatre in India. The study traces the reception of specific productions by the same theatre groups in various spaces; within and outside the frames of festival as well as locates the process of festivalization and festival efficacy. This project thus aims to study theatre performances that have been performed in a variety of festival and non-festival contexts, and theatre festivals in context of the selected Indigenous theatre groups and analyse them in light of three different study models that I have developed: Performance as Dialogue Model, Performance Efficacy Model and finally, the Festival Efficacy Model.

Data Collection

I used ethnographic methods for the data collection. I contacted members of the theatre groups through emails and received welcoming responses from most of them. The initial data was collected through email conversation followed by face to face interviews and discussions with the participants. A selection of previous archived performances as well as my own experience of watching the performances of the selected case studies in several different contexts within festival space are also studied as part of this project.

Conceptual Framework

In its first act, the thesis provides an overview of the structure and function of Indigenous theatre in four different socio-political spaces. The subtle interplay of performances and counter-performances between Indigenous communities and cultural and political power structures within socio-political spaces will be studied through the Performance as Dialogue Model.

Secondly, the same theatre performances are studied against the background of their performances in international performing arts festivals in global space and analysed within the context of the Performance Efficacy Model. The policies of government funding and selection criteria for participation in the festival are studied. The discussions in this section focuses on the politics of the (mis)presentation of indigeneity through hybrid performances alongside 'exotic' traditional Indigenous performances on international stages.

And finally, the festivals organised by the theatre groups, including Indigenous artist's collaborations, will be investigated in context of the Festival Efficacy Model. The discussions around this concept are focused on the factors impacting the reception of the festival locally and globally, as well as on trans-Indigenous networking and increased recognition of the Indigenous artistic performances globally. The later part of the thesis includes discussions about trans-Indigenous collaborations within and beyond the geographic landscape of Oceania to explore the significance of festivalization and the festivalized space.

Acknowledgement of Indigenous Ways of Knowing

As an Indian citizen, crossing multiple boundaries between the so-called third world, Indigenous world and metropolitan culture, I am aware about and respect Indigenous intellectual and cultural property rights. Being a non-Indigenous researcher working with Indigenous communities, I have worked to follow the principles of 'decolonising methodologies' (Smith). I am aware of issues including self-determination, cultural aspiration, socio-economic mediation, culturally preferred pedagogy, collective philosophy, extended family structures, respect for the Treaty of Waitangi, and growing respectful relationships as required abilities for conducting this research. I have sought appropriate guidance in adapting my methodology to the different cultural contexts of my case studies. I have applied collectively chosen pedagogy and philosophy whenever conducting interviews within Indigenous communities or writing about them in my thesis. By collectively chosen pedagogy and philosophy, I mean, I have sincerely made an effort to understand the *kawa* [protocols] and *tikanga* [rules/customs] of *Te Ao Māori* [Māori worldview] by consulting my supervisor, Nicola Hyland who is Māori as well as by doing *noho marae* [staying at the traditional Māori meeting house] which added extensively to my understanding of the culture. I have attempted to read the history of New Zealand extensively and I have also sought out any possible alternative stories of the past. I have always been open to cultural and socio-political differences and worldviews expressed in productions being studied and by my interviewees. Moreover, I have discussed and received approval for my methodology of research and interview framework from the Human Ethics Committee of the Victoria University of Wellington.

Interview Process – Methodological Explanation

I have been fortunate to connect with some of the interviewees on several occasions over a period of last five years and interact with them casually on different aspects related to the Indigenous arts and festivals. However, I formally interviewed them all only once for the

specific purpose of this research. Therefore, the excerpts that I have used in the thesis are from the interviews agreed and consented by the interviewees. I received approval from Victoria University of Wellington's Human Ethics Committee for conducting the interviews for the purpose of this research on the 19th May 2015 through to the 31st December 2017. The Ethics approval number is # 21781. I have attached the copies of information sheet as well as consent form that I used for the interview process as appendix A. I have attached a full list of Interviewees on appendix B, although I have formally acknowledged them all under "Acknowledgements" on page 4 of this thesis.

I have received formal consent from the interviewees to use the knowledge I acquire from the interviews for the purpose of documenting this research. It was also agreed between me and the interviewees that any excerpt from my interviews can only be used in the finalized version of my thesis once it is approved by the interviewee. Some of the interviewees approved for me to use the data from the interviews in my thesis at the time of the interview and others accepted to receive the quotations that I am using from my interviews along with the context emailed to them for their confirmation.

Aims and Journey of this Research

Being a non-indigenous third world citizen, the journey of this research has had its challenges as well as opportunities. As I discussed earlier in this chapter, I had a comparative framework of research that I visualized to use in order to study DNT and Māori theatre prior to my arrival in Aoteroa/New Zealand. This soon changed as I started understanding the differences. While Aotearoa/New Zealand has a history of active Indigenous struggle, the situation in India is quite different as the culture and arts by DNTs are being actively suppressed by the state and are undervalued by the society. This project was conceived after I understood the Māori culture, arts and theatre performances better and then I witnessed the initiation of Pūtahi festival in 2014.

It is important to mention here that I consciously tried not to compare the theatrical expressions of the case studies but to appreciate the differences. It was fascinating to learn how these artists from two separate geo-political space decolonize themselves and how their ways of practicing arts and decolonizing techniques can complement each other. I also avoided reading/reproducing the historical accounts written from hegemonic / western perspectives and focused more on the resources available from sources that are direct and non-hegemonic/non-

Western, especially understanding the history of Māori arts as well as history of Aotearoa/New Zealand.

There were many challenges that I faced when I started. Being an “outsider” for the community of Māori artists. I couldn’t connect with them easily. The process of connecting locally with Māori artists took about a year and half. But, once I was connected, I received a warm welcome. I have had opportunities to talk to the Māori artists about Budhan Theatre and the DNTs. And likewise, I had opportunities to talk to Budhan Theatre members about Māori and other Indigenous arts and theatre when I visited them back home. Both Māori artists and the DNT artists showed interest in connecting with each other if the opportunity arises.

It is important to add that my main audience for this research is my DNT friends at Budhan Theatre whom I want to familiarise with how Indigenous communities across the world have been trying to decolonize. At the same time, I intend to familiarize my audience from Indigenous communities across the world about the work of Budhan Theatre and the struggles of the DNTs in India.

1.4. Chapter Outline

The thesis is divided into six chapters, the first three chapters provide cultural, historical and research background to the study. Chapters Four, Five and Six provide detailed analysis of the case studies in light of the study models and theoretical framework presented. The project is summarised and reflected on in the conclusion following Chapter Six.

This chapter provides an introduction to the research question and offers contextual backdrop to the study. The chapter also presents information regarding the background of the researcher and her language, voice and positionality. The chapter includes a brief account of methodology and framework used for the study.

Chapter Two presents an historical overview of the DNT theatre of India and Māori theatre practices in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The chapter explores the development of the contemporary form of Indigenous theatre in each geographical location and provides an account of the decolonising process performed and enacted through theatre in the contexts of both ethnic groups. The chapter also outlines the selected case studies for the project and provides performance and production details for each of the case studies.

Chapter Three provides detailed information about the theoretical framework used for the study. I discuss how the conceptual framework of the study is developed based on the academic

repertoire in the areas of post-colonial studies, performance studies, tourism and social sciences, political sciences, festival studies and Indigenous studies. In addition, it explains the theoretical models I designed for the study in this chapter. The chapter also explores the Indigenous contexts of the dramaturgical aspects of the DNT theatre and Māori theatre.

Chapter Four locates trans-Indigenous artistic collaborations and the process of festivalization of cultures within Oceania and beyond. The chapter discusses the global public sphere and the significance of the process of festivalization in different contexts including the artistic festivals as well as the performance of the protest and virtual acts of solidarity expressed through social media. The chapter uncovers the idea of spontaneous transformation of the 'local' space into the festivalized space as a protest or act of resistance unfolds.

Chapter five discusses case studies from Budhan Theatre. The chapter is an attempt to locate the theatre performances of Budhan Theatre and the socio-political struggles of DNTs of India. The chapter discusses the theatre performances and festivals organised by Budhan Theatre in context of the study models discussed in Chapter Three. The chapter explores the issues of police atrocities, right wing Hindu political agendas of the ruling political party of India and performances of protest by Budhan Theatre as cycles of performance and counter performance. The chapter explores DNT issues and expressions of activism through theatre performances by the theatre group in context of selected case studies and festivals.

Chapter six discusses the issues surrounding the Treaty of Waitangi, Indigenous identity/subjectivity and the representation of *mana wahine* [Māori woman] in Māori theatrical performances. The chapter discusses Indigenous performances in the context of race, gender and cosmological significance. The selected Māori theatre case studies from Aotearoa/New Zealand are explored in the context of the study models discussed in Chapter Three. The discussion focuses on locating the case studies within and outside the frames of the festivals, as well as the festivals organised by the Māori artists including trans-Indigenous collaborations within and outside Aotearoa/New Zealand. The chapter highlights the articulation of resistance by Māori artists and specifically the role of *wāhine Māori* [Māori women] as understood through the Indigenous Feminist discourse of *Mana Wāhine* in the specific contexts of the case studies and festivals.

This thesis is an attempt to understand the processes of festivalization and the implications of these processes when used by Indigenous communities across the world, with specific examples from DNT theatre of India and Māori theatre of Aotearoa/New Zealand. The thesis

contributes an innovative theoretical conceptualization of the festival space. It analyses numerous productions that have received little previous critical attention through newly developed study models as well as contributing to the areas of Indigenous studies, post-colonial studies and festival studies by offering a unique perspective of the researcher.

1.5. Key Concepts

I would like to clearly define several key terms that I use throughout the thesis to avoid misinterpretations and confusion around them. Following are the key terms that I use frequently throughout this document:

Hybridity

Hybridity is unavoidable post-colonial reality which can be looked at as an empowering tool against hegemonic socio-political and artistic practices. According to Bhabha, Hybridity:

displays the necessary deformation and displacement of all sites of discrimination and domination. It unsettles the mimetic or narcissistic demands of colonial power, but reimplicates its identifications in strategies of subversion that turn the gaze of the discriminated back upon the eye of power (34).

Hybridity, in this thesis is looked at as a way of decolonizing as it subverts the hegemonic structures of colonial/neo-colonial power. As Gilbert and Tompkins discuss the concept of Hybridity:

The syncretic combination of indigenous and colonial forms in the post-colonial world also contributes to the decentring of the European 'norm'. Hybrid theatrical forms recognise that colonialism can never be erased entirely to restore a pre-contact 'purity'; rather, hybridity reinforces the fact that hegemonic processes require continual deconstruction (294).

Indigenous performing arts in today's time are hybrid by default due to the past of colonial suppression as well as ongoing discrimination based on race. However, use of the hybrid forms of expressions and subverting them to represent the indigeneity by Indigenous artists can be looked at the strategic move towards deconstructing the hegemony and decolonizing.

Authenticity

The concept of Authenticity is very much related to the practice of creating the counter - discourse to resist colonial and canonical representation of race and culture by the imperial

writers and historians as discussed in Gilbert and Tompkins (16). Helen Tiffin terms this as “canonical counter discourse” (1987a, 22 as qtd. in Gilbert and Tompkins, 16). In context of Indigenous arts, cultures and histories, the question of authenticity is crucial to understand the non-imperial perspective on the areas. For instance, in context of Aotearoa/New Zealand, the authenticity of Te Tiriti O Waitangi / The Treaty of Waitangi has always been challenged due to the suppressive actions of the colonization.

On one hand, the concept of authenticity becomes problematic for students like me when available resources of Indigenous theatrical pieces and/or plays are in English which problematizes and linguistically limits the accessibility of resources available in languages other than English and my native language (s). On the other hand, use of Indigenous phrases, songs or speeches purposefully within English theatre performances provide an authentic touch to the performance and the indigeneity. For instance, in Aotearoa/New Zealand, most Māori theatre performances include use of Te Reo Māori which can be perceived as an act of decolonizing along with preserving and nurturing Te Reo Māori,

I have consciously attempted to focus on reading/ re-righting the Indigenous perspectives on arts and histories consciously in context of the Indigenous communities I have discussed in this thesis and hence relying on canonical Western writings of Indigenous arts, histories and cultures.

Global Citizenship

Global citizenship is being aware about and connected to the people and environments across the globe and learning how they contribute towards the creation of global society. It simply means to be connected consciously to the people, their lifestyles and environment across the globe. As Morais and Ogden defines it clearly:

[G]lobal citizenship is understood as a multidimensional construct that hinges on the interrelated dimensions of social responsibility, global competence, and global civic engagement [...]. It is the presence of each of these dimensions that leads to global citizenship. For example, one can have a sense of social responsibility and the global competence needed to effectively engage the world but does little beyond merely discussing issues. This person, akin to a coffee shop intellectual, does not engage in or take purposeful actions that advance global citizenship. Similarly, one can have a sense of social responsibility and be fully engaged in local and global issues, yet lack the

competencies needed to engage effectively in the world. A naïve idealist, this person may not recognize his or her own knowledge limitations or have the intercultural communication skills needed to engage successfully in intercultural encounters. Finally, one may have the competence to effectively engage in the world and be actively doing so but may lack a sense of social responsibility or genuine concern for others. This person may be guided more by global economic forces and the market economy than any real commitment to an equitable civil society. Thus, all three dimensions are critical to global citizenship, and according to Noddings (2005), Westheimer and Kahne (2004), and Andrzejewski and Alessio (1999), all should be incorporated into curricula, clearly identified in standards, and assessed in meaningful ways (5-6).

In other words, unlike its usual association with legal sanctions or sovereignty, the term Global Citizenship is about connectedness to the people, work, cultures and environments across the globe. I use the term on several occasions throughout this thesis to indicate the strong connections between artists, cultures and economies across the globe.

Glocal

According to the Oxford English Dictionary online, the glocal is defined as, “Reflecting or characterized by both local and global considerations”. Theoretically, the term Glocal was conceived to define the connectedness of the local to the global and vis-à-vis within the globalized world today. As Roudometof discusses:

Glocality is defined as experiencing the global locally or through local lenses (which can include local power relations, geopolitical and geographical factors, cultural distinctiveness, and so on). In this regard, most global events have a highly relevant glocal dimension: Witness, for example, the contrasting reactions by different publics when the news of 9/11 circulated around the globe. Glocality is a source of problems when constructing narratives intended for global consumption: In 2004, NBC was threatened with a lawsuit because of its coverage of the opening ceremony of the Athens Olympics. [...] ‘the evolutions of communication and travel have placed an interconnected global matrix over local experience’, and, as a result, ‘we now live in “glocalities”’. [...] The more exposed one is to how others experience the same events, the more aware one becomes of glocality (11).

I use the term glocal in the thesis to explain how globally renowned performing art shows can be accessed locally through the medium of international festival(s); and similarly, how local arts can travel and become available globally through the medium of festival(s). And, the audience is offered the ability to access the glocal space and the performances through the medium of performing arts festival(s).

Festival

Unlike its popular understanding of the term which defines festival as a well-planned event celebrating religious, cultural and/or artistic significance of the local and/or global communities; I propose, a festival is an event that is co-experienced or has co-existed moments of celebrations or solidarity by its participants within physical or virtual space. Festivals can be well planned in advance or created spontaneously by its participants who experience that energy/momentum together. Detailed discussion on this can be read in Chapter Three, p. 95.

Festivalization

It is a process – a process of transforming any physical/virtual space into a festivalized space. The process is carried out by the performers and spectators / audience that share the space and experience its energy / momentum at that time – it is a process in which performers and spectators converts the physical OR virtual space into a festivalized space using the rhetorical public sphere created within the specific socio-political and geographical space of the festival. Detailed discussion on this can be read in Chapter Three, pp. 92-95.

Festivalizing

It is an action – or a conscious effort by the organizers of the festivals to make the space available to the spectators – community – public – it is basically organizing the space ready for the festival to happen. Festivalizing creates an opportunity for the artists / activists to express their political response through arts/ exhibition or direct activism.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL BACKDROP OF THE COMMUNITIES, CULTURES AND THE CASE STUDIES

This chapter outlines the historical background of the Denotified and Nomadic Tribes of India (DNTs) and the Māori and Pasifika communities¹⁵ of Aotearoa/New Zealand. It will discuss trans-tribal¹⁶ exchange and inter-community exchange in the context of India, and trans-Indigenous exchange within Oceania in both pre and post-colonial periods. The chapter also discusses the development of Indigenous theatre, the significance of theatre groups, and their theatrical performances within local and broader festival generated spaces. Finally, the chapter gives an overview of major plays including the selected case studies discussed in later chapters.

2.1. The Denotified and Nomadic Tribes of India (DNTs)¹⁷

The land was ours

Even the rivers were ours

Our elders wandered the jungles and the plains

When we were hungry, we would beg

If we couldn't beg we would steal

The British came

They made laws

They made us “born criminals”

The British came and oppressed us
They beat us till our skin was flayed
The British left and the police came
Freed from the camps we were put in jails
The jungle disappeared
The land disappeared
The rivers disappeared
The rivers disappeared
The rivers disappeared

[Source: *Chhara Children's Song* qtd. in Schwarz ix]

As a consequence of a loss of land, language, and a nomadic way of living, the DNTs are highly marginalized communities. The displacement of the community and incorrect and stigmatizing labelling by British colonial powers has impacted the lives, identity and basic rights of street artists and nomads from the DNTs. The children's song above not only describes the injustices inflicted by colonizers but also highlights the subsequent atrocities and oppressions enacted by the Indian political system and society after independence.

To provide a comprehensive understanding about tribal communities and the DNTs of India, the first part of this chapter outlines the history of these tribes (DNTs), also known as *vimukta jati*²⁸. The second part discusses the emergence and development of Budhan Theatre (Budhan hereafter) as an agency seeking to support social change for the DNT communities. The discussion focuses on the significance of Budhan's theatre within the socio-political backdrop of India, and the theatre group's initiative of organising theatre festivals as mechanisms for supporting dialogue which can help to enact social change. The discussion will not only emphasise the reception of Budhan within the mainstream artistic world of India but will also investigate the politics of funding. The third section discusses the selected case studies of the project. The discussion in this chapter is based on my participation, observation and interviews with Budhan and Chharanagar¹⁹ residents.

2.1.1. Who are the Tribal communities of India and the DNTs?

It is almost impossible to describe the tribal communities and the Denotified and Nomadic Tribes of India in a single ethnographic framework. Devy argues that it would be inaccurate to refer to them as 'Indigenous' people of India: "The tribals (of India) are not necessarily racially distinct, nor are they all necessarily the original inhabitants of the areas they inhabit...communities have migrated, been forcefully displaced and rehabilitated themselves" (Devy ix). The DNTs of today's India were once diverse communities of street artists, orators and writers at Kings' palaces, skilled traders, cattle-herders, craftsman and sometimes skilled thieves in pre-colonial India²⁰ who were notified as "Criminal Tribes" in colonial India. There has been significant exchange between the tribal communities and the non-tribals since ancient times. The "exchanges between the two communities have been of profound significance in areas such as medicine, folklore, narratives technique, religious abstraction, music, dance, theatre and even agricultural technology" (Devy ix).

In pre-colonial India, most tribal communities used to travel from time to time, carrying their belongings on the back of their ponies as they mapped a number of journeys from remote jungles. It is said that these communities established links with farmers, shop keepers and other grazing communities. One well-known, well-researched and geographically wide-spread tribal communities of India are the *Gujjars*. The earliest historic reference to the *Gujjar* community (one of the nomadic communities in pre-colonial India and one of the Tribal communities in post-colonial India) is found in the *Harsa Charits* written by a Sanskrit poet Bana Bhatt in the seventh century (Ahmed 51). Bhatt writes about the *Gujjars* as "huns" [possibly a branch of Hephthalites] (Ahmed 51). There are several theories around the origins of the *Gujjar* community. According to one theory, it is believed that the *Gujjars* migrated from Georgia (a place situated between the Black Sea and Caspian Sea) via Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan to the Indian subcontinent and known as the "juzr" or "khazar" in the Arab histories (Khatana 64) and "gheysheer" of the Jewish writers (Khatana 64). According to another theory, the *Gujjars* are the descendants of Kusham and Yachi tribes of the Eastern Tartars of Russia (Tufail 30). The nomadic tribes called *Gujjars* of Jammu and Kashmir migrated from Gujarat and *Gujjaranwala* regions located in present day Pakistan. *Gujjar* communities are also located in the states of Rajasthan and Gujarat (where Budhan Theatre operates), and they are mostly known for rearing cattle (Tufail 30).

Dr. G. N. Devy, a former professor of English at Maharaja Sayajirao University, a cultural activist as well as the founder of Budhan Theatre, oversimplifies the cultural aspects of the Indigenous communities of the world. Although he argues that he would not call the DNTs of India as Indigenous as the term tribal is “too layered to be a synonym of Indigenous” (ix), he attempts to compare the tribal of India with the tribal communities of the world. He problematizes the issue of (re)presentation of indigeneity when he describes the similarities between the tribal communities of India and the tribal communities of the world:

Most tribal communities in India are culturally similar to tribal communities elsewhere in the world. They live in groups that are cohesive and organically unified. They show very little interest in accumulating wealth or in using labour as a device to gather interest and capital. They accept a worldview in which nature, man and God are intimately linked, and believe in the human ability to spell and interpret truth. They live more by intuition than by reason, they consider the space around them more sacred than secular, and their sense of time is personal rather than objective. The world of the tribal imagination, therefore, is substantially different from that of the non-tribal Indian society (Devy x).

However, such a generalized statement not only undervalues the conscious activism of the Indigenous communities across the world but also problematizes the issue of the representation of Indigeneity. These views from Devy conflict with Budhan Theatre’s effort of consciously articulating and representing the DNT identity within post-colonial Indian society.

The tribal communities of pre-colonial India were gradually converted by the gaze of a racist colonial administration into two main categories, either the ‘aboriginal or hill tribes’ or the “Criminal Tribes” of India. Due to the complexity of defining the Indigenous communities of India, it is important to explain the three major official descriptions of peoples within the Indian legal system, as descriptions of other communities including non-tribal and upper caste communities can help to understand how the DNTs of India were categorized.

According to the constitution of India, the tribals and lower caste/‘dalit’ (‘untouchables’) communities of India fall within the following three categories; i) Scheduled Tribes (ST - 8.63% of total Indian population as per the 2011 census) ii) Scheduled Caste (SC – 16.6% of total Indian population as per the 2011 census) OR iii) Other Backward Classes (OBC - 40.94% of total Indian population as per the 2011 census) based on their geographical locations Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India.

Scheduled Tribes (ST) includes tribal people of India who are also known as *Adivasis* meaning the aboriginals or original inhabitants. ST are not a homogenous group, this category encompasses over 200 tribes who speak more than 100 languages and who vary greatly in ethnicity, culture and language. There are some broad similarities in terms of their way of life and they are generally perceived as occupying an 'inferior' position within Indian society ("Article 342" 211).

Scheduled Castes is the constitutional name collectively given to the groups which have traditionally occupied the lowest status in Indian society and the Hindu religion which provides the religious and ideological basis for an "untouchable" group, which was inferior to all other castes²¹. Today, untouchability is outlawed, and these groups are recognized by the Indian Constitution to be especially disadvantaged because of their history of inferior treatment and are therefore entitled to certain rights and preferential treatment ("Article 341" 210-211).

The category Other Backward Classes includes economically backward classes in India and again this category includes communities across religions (The Constitution of India; World Dictionary of Minorities). The inclusion/exclusion of communities within the abovementioned categories depends on the density/growth and acknowledgement of the communities by the respective state governments of India. Usually these communities receive preferential treatments for education and employment at state agencies ("Article 340" 210).

Despite the presence of these categories, most of the DNTs are still largely unacknowledged and or forgotten in national statistics/data (Kasturi). Today, it is believed that the DNTs constitute a population of 60 million people, 5% of the present-day Indian population (Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India), however, there has been no official census carried out by the Indian government for these tribes yet (Kasturi). There are 313 Nomadic Tribes and 198 Denotified Tribes in present day India (Chhak 1).

2.1.2. The "Criminal Tribes" Act 1871

The nomadic communities living in forest areas during the colonial period were detached from the forest, land and natural resources by the way of the Indian Forest Act, which was implemented in 1865 by the British (Thayyil 270). The Criminal Tribes Act (CTA hereafter) was implemented in 1871 and aimed to confine the nomadic tribes within specific settlement areas to control 'criminal' activities (Rao 6). The CTA was designed by a British official named

Fitz James Stephen. The following quote describes racist colonial attitudes towards people from tribal communities and the assumptions made by the colonial powers that these communities were inherently criminal:

The meaning of professional criminal is clear, it means a tribe whose ancestors were criminal from times immemorial, who are themselves destined by the usages of caste to commit crime and whose descendants will be offenders against the law, reform is impossible, for it is his trade, his caste, I may also say his religion to commit crime (Bajrange "Birth 1871").

In accordance with the rules of the CTA, nomadic communities were confined in different settlements across India and the members' presence was regulated through regular roll calls. The Act was amended in 1879 to include the provision that "government could take the custody of all children of the age 4 and keep them in government schools, away from the pollutant atmosphere of the tribes, up to the age of 18" (Rao 6). The CTA was amended again in 1911 with a clear intention of tightening recording systems to identify members of the "Criminal Tribes" (Rao 7). In 1917, Sir Henry Sharp, the Educational Commissioner of the government of colonial India prepared a list of 'depressed classes' which included; 1) aboriginal or hill tribes, 2) depressed classes and 3) "Criminal Tribes" (Rao 8). The CTA was amended once again in 1924 to include the additional aim of correcting, reforming and rehabilitating the "Criminal Tribes" in India. The amount of punishment and the duration of imprisonment were now different for a person belonging to 'criminal tribe'. Section 23 of the 1924 CTA declared that if a person belonging to the criminal tribe was convicted of an offence, they would receive a punishment of 7 to 10 years imprisonment, whereas any other Indian not belonging to the "Criminal Tribes" would receive 3-6 months imprisonment for the same conviction (Rao 6).

Arguably, the most significant part of the 1924 Act was the provision related to the reform and rehabilitation of members of the "Criminal Tribes" (Rao 7). The missionary institutions, mainly the Salvation Army, had significant roles to play in the reform and rehabilitation efforts carried out under the CTA in India. General William Booth, the head of the Salvation Army, proposed the contribution of the Salvation Army in rehabilitation and reformation of the "Criminal Tribes" of India:

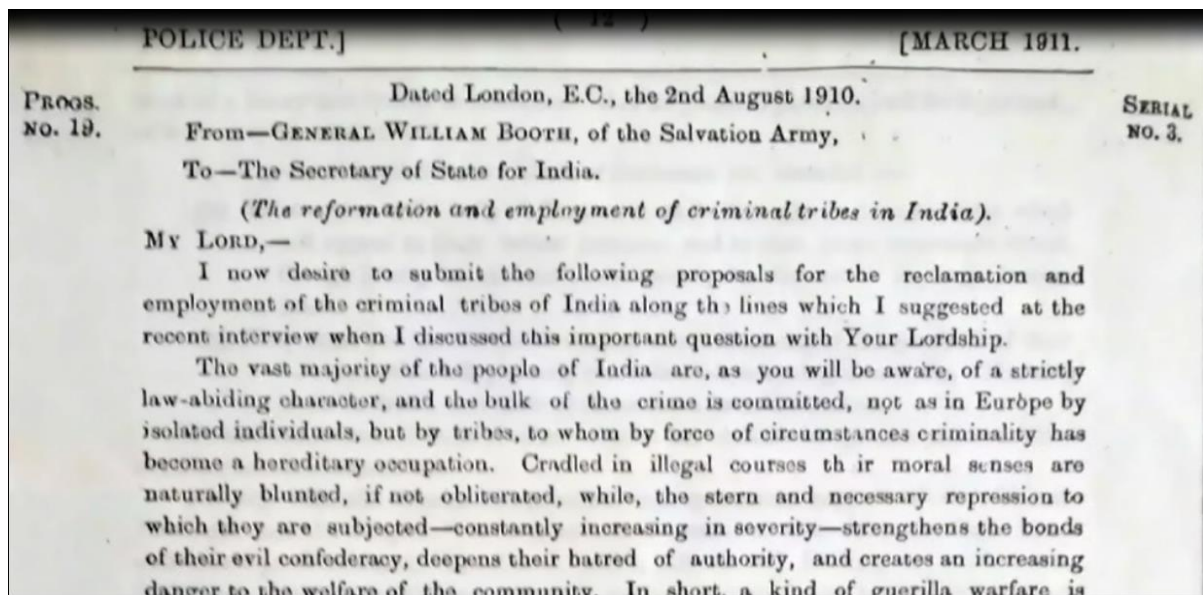


Figure 1: A letter from William Booth to the state of (British) India. Source: *Birth 1871: History, The State and The Arts of Denotified Tribes of India*. Copyright@ Dakxin Kumar Bajrange, Nomad movies, 2015

The nomadic communities of colonial India received brutal treatment from the colonizers and were labelled, stigmatized and stereotyped in such a way that has still not been erased a century and half later. After the 1924 CTA was implemented, the first reformation settlement was established in North India, in present day Uttar Pradesh (U.P.) followed by the establishment of Chharanagar settlement seven years later. The settlements were run by a few Salvation Army officers. The settlement had schools for children and work for members of the community. The Salvation Army reformation activities were accompanied by the industrial reform activities which led the members of the "Criminal Tribes" to secure employment within several areas which benefitted the colonial powers including; road/railway building, tunnel digging and mining projects of the British government in India. All the employees from the "Criminal Tribes" were given wages, food and living space on work sites. However, the oral traditions, languages and the cultures were suppressed greatly by the Salvation Army in the name of the reform. The songs of these communities that carried significant oral histories were replaced by the English songs taught to them by the Salvation Army. As Radhakrishna explains:

They were separated from children...A totally new oral tradition was forced upon them and the Salvation Army version of their songs try to prove that they knew they were 'crims' [criminals] and now they were wage earners which was better (xiv).

Another reformation settlement colony was established in 1931 in the Ahmedabad region, located at present day Chharanagar where the Budhan Theatre operates today. Some tribes were relocated to the Ahmedabad settlement and started working at textile mills and at several infrastructure development projects within the region. Chhara was one of the "Criminal Tribes" settled at Ahmedabad colony. It is important to mention the reporting done by the administrators of British India after their century of governance in India. W. W. Hunter, a senior civil servant whom the British government asked to do a "great stock-taking after a century of British Rule in India" wrote about a country that was "more secure, [a] more prosperous India where roads, railways, bridges, canals, schools and hospitals had been built; famines tackled; *thugi* [thieves], *dakaiti* [criminals] and predatory castes suppressed; trade developed..." (Radhakrishna 01). As more British population arrived in India, these Indigenous tribes of India received attention in documentation of the experiences of these new visitors. The DNT of India were communities that were highly romanticised for their dark attractive clothes, jewellery, their independent spirit and healthy outdoor lives (Radhakrishna 11), however, at the same time they were not so welcomed within the dominant society until reform had been achieved (Radhakrishna 11). Radhakrishna further notes that a number of English ladies described the romanticised version of the *Banjara*²², one of the nomadic tribes of India while their "law-making menfolk made the *Banjara* men out to be ferocious criminals" (Radhakrishna 11).

The political leaders and freedom fighters of India generally avoided the issue of "Criminal Tribes" during colonial rule. The nomadic communities of colonial India were not considered equal among other minority and or depressed/oppressed communities of India and therefore they were not the subject of any political activism. The stigma surrounding these communities was so profoundly internalized and widespread that even social activists in India who played their role as agents of change advocating on the issue of caste-ism within Hindu society preferred not to speak out for the rights of the "Criminal Tribes". For example, Dr. Ambedkar, a *Dalit* activist who later became the law minister in independent India, accepted the fact that the "Criminal Tribes" are oppressed and marginalised communities in Indian society, but clearly mentioned that he thought they did not need any representation, unlike the 'untouchables'. However, later in 1936 in *Annihilation of the Caste* Dr Ambedkar went on to write; "Thirteen million people living in the midst of civilization are still in savage state and are leading the life of hereditary criminals!! But the Hindus have never felt ashamed of it" (Ambedkar 24) thus demonstrating his increasing recognition of this issue. Political leaders like K. M. Munshi (a well-known academic and writer of Gujarati literature), Gopalkrishna

Gokhle (a political leader/freedom fighter and social reformer in British India) and Lokmanya Tilak (Indian nationalist and independence activist in British India) all opposed the inclusion of the "Criminal Tribes" in the wider society. Tilak went a step further and opposed the inclusion of the members of these communities into the Indian Army. He said "[t]hieving is their occupation. To receive beating is their occupation. They will not stand the discipline of the Army" (Bajrange, Gandee and Gould 15). Although members of the "Criminal Tribes" campaigned to participate in the armed forces and to represent themselves, very few national leaders took any interest in supporting these communities during the colonial period ("Birth 1871"). Even after independence, nationalist leaders of India demonstrated how thoroughly they had internalised a colonial mindset by not only opposing the inclusion of the "Criminal Tribes" in wider society, but also recommending the continuation of the CTA.

Interestingly, the Salvation Army significantly influenced legislations and law enforcement in most colonies under British colonial rule. As Radhakrishna points out that:

[The Salvation Army] played significant role in shaping not just criminal legislation, but also public perceptions of criminality of the groups with whom it worked. What constituted 'crime' and 'immorality' for them was the inverse of what Victorian (and sometimes Brahminical) values conceded. In fact, they were able, over a period of time, and with some authority to define the administrations all over the world what constituted criminality, and in different social contexts, even pointed out who these criminals were – paupers in England, tribals or nomads in India, aborigines of Australia or New Zealand, native Americans in North America and so on (16-17).

This quote highlights the historically significant role played by the Salvation Army in reinforcing legislation that reinforced political injustices and the socio-cultural discrimination suffered by the DNTs of India and Indigenous peoples across the world.

I acknowledge that there may be disagreements of appropriation, acceptability and correctness when I use the term Indigenous to describe the tribal communities of India. However, I believe my use of the term is appropriate looking at the convention number 169 of the International Labour Organisation from 1986 – accepted by the United Nations generally assembly 2007, on Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, "whose ancestors have lived in the area before the settlement or the formation of the modern state borders" (Cobo 39). The appropriation of the term Indigenous for the DNTs of India is thus justifiable on basis of their ancestral belonging before their forceful removal and formation of state borders. I use the terms

Indigenous, tribal and native interchangeably throughout my thesis based on the context to understand the wider depiction of de-colonizing actions and global reception of these ethnic groups. Therefore, I use comparative structure to establish the similarity in cultural aspects, artistic expressions and political activism between these communities to discuss the point further in the next section.

2.1.3. The Tribals and DNTs of Post-colonial India

The Criminal Tribes Act Inquiry Committee was set up to investigate the possible resolution of the notification of the tribes as criminals by the British. It was conducted between 1949 and 1950, two years after Indian independence. The Committee repealed the CTA on 6th March 1952 describing these communities as "De-notified" and labelled them as Denotified and Nomadic Tribes of India. The government repealed the CTA without providing any provisions for the DNTs in terms of employment. As soon as the Act was repealed, the members of these "Criminal Tribes" settlements who were working as labourers in mills lost their jobs. According to the new law, the DNTs were free and thus the government wanted them to go anywhere else but the settlement lands, so that lands could be repurposed for governmental use. The Kaka Kalelkar Commission was established in 1953 with the aim of investigating the possibilities of including "backward class" communities of India in a reserved category in order to provide welfare benefit to them (Barge 18). The commission proposed the idea of including several communities who were educationally and socially 'backward' within the OBC category to provide them with constitutional equality and reservation benefits enabling them to continue living on reservation lands.

In 1959, the government of India implemented the Habitual Offenders Act (HOA) for the DNTs who continued to be constructed as born criminals and/or habitual offenders, and as a threat to society. The HOA was not much different from the 1781 CTA in terms of how it was used by the authorities to marginalise and oppress DNT communities (Barge 18). Police forces around the country used these laws to hound the DNTs, who became subjects of regular humiliation, beatings and other atrocities enacted by the police (D'souza 82). The United Nations asked the Indian government to repeal the HOA in 2007 on the basis of how the Act was being used to justify these state infringements of the community's human rights²³. The National Human Rights Commission of India has carried forward the challenge to the HOA, however the Indian government has not yet repealed the HOA (D'Souza 82).

In 2006 the government of India established the Renke Commission to make recommendations for the needs of the Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes and provisions in terms of basic rights to land, housing and education (Renke). The commission submitted its report in 2008 with several recommendations including; implementing welfare schemes, allocating equal reservation criterion as the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes within the constitution of India, housing, residential schools, employment through handicrafts and traditional DNTs arts, financial inclusion, and decreasing police and social atrocities (Renke 106-131).

Unfortunately, the recommendations of the Kaka Kalelkar Commission and the Renke Commission have not been implemented in any widespread or coherent way. Instead the Indian government established yet another commission named the National Commission for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (NCDNT) in March 2015, with the aim of providing another report and recommendations within three years²⁴. This new commission was asked to report on similar issues to those addressed by the Renke Commission. The commission asked the DNTs of India, through newspaper appeals and other media, to report to the regional committee office for identification and recording of community members.

Dakxin Bajrange Chhara, one of the members of the Chhara community (one of the DNTs) and a leader of Budhan Theatre, went to report his community with several members from other DNTs residing within the Gujarat region. He went along with other members to support them, knowing that some of them were completely unaware of the atmosphere of the state offices and were hesitant to present themselves. Dakxin not only received a harsh response but also was denied further communication by the Regional Commissioner²⁵ who said, "I will not talk to the advocates, I will talk straight to the people...we can only provide some milk and grocery to you all, do not dream of getting any more support from us" (from my communications with Dakxin, translated from Hindi to English). There are several others among the DNTs who experienced a similarly rude and aggressive response (Bajrange "Personal Interview").

2.2. The Chharas and Budhan Theatre

The Chharas are originally from the Punjab region of India and lived nomadic lives during pre-colonial times along with communities such as the Sansis or Kanjars (Bajrange, Gandee and Gould 23). It is believed that they trace their ancestry from both Kanjar and Bhat communities (Bajrange, Gandee and Gould 23). According to the *Popular Account of Thugs and Dacoits*²⁶, the Kunjurs/Kanjars are originally from the bhats (bards) community, who were mainly singers

and dancers from the Jat tribes in pre-colonial times and who resided in the regions of Punjab and Rajasthan. "Bhats were good orators and thus had state support of the Kings" ("Birth 1871"). Kanjars, Chharas and Sansi communities also trace their ancestry from the soldiers of Maharana Pratap who fought for freedom against British rule (Bajrange, Gandee and Gould 23).

The Chharas are settled on the northern outskirts of the megacity Ahmadabad in Gujarat (a state located on the West coast of India) and they speak the Bhamta language; they count the Sansi and Bajania tribes as their linguistic cousins. There is a very strong prejudice against the Chharas in surrounding areas, such that when any casual visitors speak or want to visit the Chharanagar, they are advised not to go inside by the transport providers and autorikshaw/ taxi drivers who advise that nobody except for the social workers, students or activists would visit Chharanagar. Due to their history of nomadism and forced settlement, and dislocation-relocation, social stigmas have developed about the Chharas that place them at a considerable disadvantage in terms of competing for jobs and education. They have become scapegoats for the police, who manipulate the Chharas for illegal purposes, such as brewing country liquor under threat of police brutality (Bajrange "Birth 1871"). While the youth in Chharanagar find it very difficult to acquire and retain employment, the Chharas are highly motivated to excel at education.²⁷ On 31 August 1998, Budhan Theatre was founded by Dr. G. N. Devy, a literary critic, linguist and tribal activist based in Baroda (a city of Gujarat, India). The theatre collective was run by Chharanagar community members Dakxin Bajrange Chhara and Roxy Gagdekar Chhara. The name 'Budhan' was chosen in honour of the work done by the writer-activist Mahashweta Devi who fought for justice for Budhan Sabar who belonged to one of the DNTs in Bengal. Budhan Sabar was a tribal member of Kheira Sabar community and was brutally murdered under police custody. The theatre group also runs a small library to support Chhara children with their studies. The founders of Chharanagar Library were Smt. Mahashweta Devi and Dr. G. N. Devy. The theatre group fights for social justice and acceptance on behalf of Denotified and Nomadic Tribes all over India. Dakxin explains that:

The establishment of the library and theatre were the early steps for our resistance and development. We are struggling hard to remove that stigma from the community through the medium of theatre. I know, it's not easy; it will take many years to be totally accepted by mainstream society, but I am confident and hopeful about our efforts (Bajrange "Personal Interview").

Since 1998, Budhan has performed street plays to raise awareness about the conditions facing these tribes. Their goal is to use performance to publicly demonstrate, through their skills as actors and through the stories that they depict, that Chharas (and other DNTs) are not “born criminals” rather they are humans with real emotions, capacities, and aspirations. Budhan Theatre aims to counter the dehumanizing and stigmatizing history surrounding the DNTs that continues to have significant impacts upon them in contemporary India.

2.2.1. Increasing Awareness of Injustice and Atrocity through the Medium of Theatre

Budhan’s strategy is to use storytelling and performance to express social injustice and police atrocity through each of its plays. The ideology and design behind the performances is to make the audience (mostly higher caste/higher class and non-DNT members of society) more aware of the presented injustice and issues through demonstrating the victimhood and the persecution of individuals belonging to the DNTs. The theatre group performs its plays throughout India and also supports and fights for other Denotified and Nomadic Tribes that are facing similar problems. They also produce stage performances such as *An Accidental Death of an Anarchist* by Dario Fo, *Balcony* by Jean Genet, *Bhoma* by Badal Sirkar and *Charandas Chor* by Habib Tanwir; adapting these plays and making them suitable to represent their own experiences.

Budhan’s theatre is creative, experiential and an inherent art - they refer to themselves as born actors - which they use to resist injustice. As Dakxin says:

I am not a theoretician, my theatre is experiential, but the theatre not only gave us a changed identity, it also provided dignity. Even other artists from Gujarat have started looking up to us as one of them. In fact, our children couldn’t get into college for higher education earlier but today they do because they are considered good actors! (Bajrange “Small Efforts Matter” 31).

Budhan’s plays also increase awareness about other social issues like female infanticide, corruption, communal extremism and an ineffective education system. However, their major task is to resist the injustices enacted against them and to encourage socio-political acceptance. They fight for communities which are not given any power except the right to vote, which is a minor concession in today’s corrupt structure. Even after 68 years of independence, the majority of DNTs do not have a ration card,²⁸ they are not included in the electoral and BPL

list²⁹ (Barge 11). Budhan's approach is a "rights-based approach" which means, theoretically, that the act of participation in theatrical performance can be empowering (Sen 33).

Budhan slips into the stereotypical narrative when trying to explain itself as a group of born actors as in using the idea of being born with something inherent and stable. And therefore, creating the counter statement in response to the wrong label of "born criminals". Although, they began articulating this idea very playfully and ironically and mainly aimed at shifting the communal gaze towards the DNTs of India, they have developed into an activist group advocating for the tribal and DNT rights in India.

2.2.2. Theatre for Community Development

Budhan Theatre group focuses on four major activities: resistance through theatre, community sensitization, the development of a library, and community theatre training. The Chhara community are socially, politically and economically discriminated against by the larger society and face challenges such as; illiteracy (though not in very high number), challenges to community hygiene due to poor infrastructure and poverty, unemployment, gender inequality, illegal brewing of liquor as a consequence of unemployment and lack of resources, and stealing or criminal activity (although this is present to a lesser extent than prior to the establishment of Budhan Library) (Johntston & Bajrange 17).

Budhan Theatre sponsors scholarships for the education of young girls; it also runs an informal community school with support from the Denotified Rights Action Group³⁰ (DNT-RAG) and receives support from Bhasha Research³¹ for research and publication on issues related to the DNTs of India. Budhan also occasionally performs plays with a focus on broader community development issues within Chharanagar. The group has campaigned against female infanticide, child marriage, liquor addiction, and women's oppression through theatre. Their efforts at community development have been recorded in *Please Don't Beat me Sir!* (Friedmen and Talukar), a documentary by P. Kerim Friedmen and Sashwati Talukdar. This documentary is proof of Budhan's rigorous efforts towards community development. Ankur, one of Budhan's members talked about the changes in community practices over time and claims that the community theatre programs by Budhan have contributed hugely to bringing about change:

[S]ome years ago, in our community, it was a custom that the most beautiful girl marries the best thief of the community. Those who weren't robbers had to wait a long time to

get a girl, but now, it has changed. Today, the best girl marries the most educated bachelor of the community (Garange).

However, some families in the community are still rigid regarding issues such as the education of young girls, child marriage and women's liberation. But there are others who have fought against rigidity and criticism from the community to educate their children towards a brighter future.

The Chharanagar Library holds hundreds of books on radical literature, art, history, and language that have been donated by various individuals and institutions. The daily Gujarati newspaper and computers are also available to library users. School and college students and children from the Chharanagar community get together at the library on a daily basis for study and theatre training. They teach and learn from each other and decide on their roles for sensitization projects within the community³². As they say, 'Chharas are not born criminals, they are born performers'.

I visited the group and the library for six months on a weekly basis during the year 2011 and I observed and witnessed Budhan members engaging in peer education processes. I then visited the Budhan Theatre frequently until September 2012 and was in contact with the group via emails and social media while I was outside India. I visited the theatre group again in the years 2013, 2015 and 2018 along with my constant connection to the group via social media.



Figure 2: A photograph at Budhan Theatre library - children getting trained for theatre making. Source and photo courtesy: Budhan Theatre Library

Budhan Theatre's members include students and children. Budhan also welcomes those who are not studying, and older group members who have their own means of earning, either in the form of a job or through self-employment. Budhan offered two professional certificated courses on Mass Communication and Performance Studies, which are affiliated with the Indira Gandhi Open University during the years 2011-12 with funding from Bhasha Research. However, the courses are no longer offered due to lack of funding; I discuss the funding issue in more detail in chapter five. The library is a significant socio-cultural space where the children of the community learn to raise their voice through the medium of the performing arts.

2.2.3. Democratic Creative Processes and Major Performances by Budhan Theatre

The process of creating a play within Budhan Theatre is democratic. Members come together and decide what issues should be highlighted, often after conducting community surveys within the Chhara and other DNT or marginalized communities. After deciding on a theme and issues to be highlighted, members prepare a plot and decide roles. Then, the play goes to the floor. Actors create dialogues according to their roles and then develop the play into a script scene by scene. This then undergoes a series of revisions and editing before the final script is prepared. Actors often improvise during the performances, changing the dialogue to make them more effective depending on the context and audiences in attendance. Budhan's performance and its effect changes according to the space and setting. Context matters and impacts interpretation and meaning. For instance, a play depicting intense police atrocities becomes more tragic and poignant when it is performed in front of a police station with the explicit intention of making the police and public more aware of their prejudice and discrimination towards DNTs, and invoking feelings of guilt and/or shame amongst police officers and officials. These performances have such an impact that they are often interrupted by those in power, and Budhan Theatre members are either forced to leave or are banned from the space.

In another context and geographical location, the same play can be adapted to emphasize the innocence (as non-criminal) of the victimized members of the DNT community when it is performed to a 'mainstream' audience comprised of people who are socially, politically and economically more privileged than the DNTs of India. Mainstream Indian society is regularly involved in discrimination against the DNTs, often looking at them through colonial lenses that portray them as communities of 'criminals' (Bajrange "Small Efforts Matter" 6)

Budhan presents each performance innovatively. Using limited props, they perform short plays on street corners in freely accessible community spaces. However, actors also perform these street plays on stage as requested. “In each play we try to express a social problem and highlight our situation”, says Bajrange (Personal Interview”).



Figure 3: Street performance of *Budhan Bolta Hai*. Source and photo courtesy: Budhan Theatre Library

Major performances by Budhan Theatre in regards to articulation of resistance against the police brutalities and state negligence towards the DNTs include but are not limited to, *Budhan Bolta Hai* (1998) [“Budhan Speaks/Budhan”³³], *Pinya Hari Kale ki Maut* (1999) [“Pinya Hari Kale’s Death”³⁴], *Encounter* (2001), *Mazhab Nahin Sikhata Aapas Mein Bair Rakhna* (2002) [The Religion fuels vengeance amongst each other], *Ulgulan* (2006), *British Come Back to India* (2007). *Pinya Hari Kale Ki Maut* was performed at numerous instances to promote the rights of the DNTs and was also performed in front of the Chief Justice of Maharashtra High Court in 2000 in support of the Pinya Hari Kale murder case.

Encounter (2001) is a performance devised by Budhan Theatre members that depicts police atrocities. It tells the story of Deepak Pawar, a victimized community member from one of the DNTs located in the Solapur district of the Maharashtra region. The performance highlights a murder carried out by the Maharashtra police that was later transformed through being labelled

as an 'encounter' (in the police records) and which was never fully investigated. Deepak Pawar was forcibly taken from his home without any arrest warrant and killed by the police in a random and extreme act of unprovoked violence. In the official record, Deepak is charged with a weapon trafficking crime, when in reality his 'misdeed' was declining to pay a bribe to the police officer (Bajrange "Budhan Bolta Hai" 141). The play points towards the tendency of police to label any DNT person as criminal, which is then used as an excuse for the use of violent and sometimes lethal force.

Another important play performed by Budhan's Theatre is *Bhoma* (2004) by Badal Sircar³⁵. Sircar's original script contrasted urban and rural life in India and focused on the urban middle class. The protagonist, a poor villager, symbolized struggling and oppressed people. Budhan modified the script to include the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation bulldozing a DNT settlement, resulting in the death of two children (Bajrange "Budhan Bolta Hai" 195). Using a common chorus - *Bulldozer bhai* [brother] *bulldozer, corporation bulldozer* "Bulldozer brother, bulldozer, Corporation bulldozer" - the play speaks to the common fears of the community and to their insecurity of land tenure. In one of the scenes, a woman from the *Kabutara* community feels unable to claim her husband's dead body and perform the last rites, fearing that her family would be linked to the incident and that innocent family members would be arrested and beaten.

Ulgulan (2006) is a play that represents the problems of the Adivasi community (one of the DNTs in India) and their fight against the occupation of forest land by the government of India. These communities have been inhabitants of the forest for generations, having no other place to stay and to survive. The forests were a vital source of livelihood which has been taken away by the Forestry Department; the play presents the people's revolution against these government acts. *Ulgulan* also gives an overview of how the community fought against the British for access to the land during the colonial period. It intends to inspire communities to resist socio-political injustices in India today (Bajrange "Budhan Bolta Hai" 231-248).

Mujhe Mat Maro Saab (2008) [Don't Beat Me Sir!] is a combination of three real incidents of police atrocity that happened at three different times and across three different states of India. The play was performed a total of 70 times and was commissioned by Action Aid³⁶ to help mobilise the DNTs to fight for their housing rights. *Bhrastachar Ke Rang* (2004) [the colours

of corruption] and *British, Come Back to India* (2007) are performances by Budhan highlighting the corrupt governmental structure of contemporary India.

Budhan Theatre has also advocated for the basic needs of food, clothing and housing for poor populations of India. The group performed the play *Bhukh* [Hunger] in 2007 to articulate the hunger and poverty of working class and poor people. The play develops against a backdrop of the West Bengal famine during 1956 which was compounded by the closure of textile mills in Ahmedabad city that left numerous people unemployed (Roy Chowdhury 9). *Taras Lagi Chhe Taras* [I am thirsty!] (2008) is a play about the commercialization of the Kankaria Lake in Ahmedabad city. The performance was aimed at agitating against the Ahmedabad municipal commission's development of the lake front into a commercialised resort. Budhan Theatre performed the play 30 times as part of their weeklong resistance, at every street corner along a route from Gujarat College until they reached their destination at Kankaria Lake. Budhan received support from other local theatre practitioners and from the people of Ahmedabad for this particular series of street performances (Indrekar-Chhara).

Budhan's performances draw a clear picture of how the group has reacted against state perceptions of the 'marginal,' creating a unique narrative about marginalization. The performances can be depicted as theatrical statements layering four major socio-political factors: critique of the state, the police atrocities on the DNTs of India, the socio-political marginalization of the DNTs and the stunned non-marginalized audiences.

2.2.4. DNT Case Studies from Budhan Theatre

The selection criterion for these case studies include the cycles of performance and counter performance (discussed in detail in chapter 3) as well as the performances within the festivalized or festival generated space (discussed in detail in chapter 3).

Budhan performs with a clear intention of telling their stories using their language. At the same time, due to their use of less familiar stories, the novelty of artistic forms employed, and because of their Indigenous creativity, Budhan has also received attention from global cultural consumers. Budhan and its activities have become an attraction for research projects and studies which enables the non-DNT or non-Indian nationals to gain knowledge about these highly isolated and subaltern communities in Indian society (Friedman and Talukar 2011; Rivers, 2014 and many more). Locating Budhan's work within both local and international

spaces provides an important insight into the significant differences in reception of the arts and culture within different viewing communities.

The following paragraphs provide a brief overview of the case studies of Budhan to familiarise the reader with the DNT's theatre before commencing the discussion on the significance of Budhan's work within local and global artistic and political spaces in chapter five. The following paragraphs of this section will explore the selected performances of Budhan that I will discuss in detail in my project. The performances are selected based on their inclusion within festival generated spaces to analyse shifts in intention and reception as the works travel between the spaces within and outside the frames of festival.

Choli ke Pichne Kya Hai [What's behind the Blouse] (*Choli* hereafter) (2007) presents the problem of female oppression under class, caste and gender hierarchies. The play is about the commodification³⁷ of the female body within oppressive socio-economic power structures and caste hierarchies. It is an adaptation of Mahashweta Devi's short story "Breast Giver."³⁸ Through storytelling, Budhan's performance of *Choli* articulates gender, class, and caste as a triad formulating women's oppression. The performance uses female impersonators which is unusual/rare in contemporary Indian theatre where celebratory performances of the female body and gender are quite common. The carnivalesque street performance, *Choli* combines both; the traditional theatre's impersonator and a celebratory performance of female gender.

Mazhab Hamein Sikhata Aapas Mein Bair Rakhna [The Religion fuels vengeance amongst each other] (*Mazhab* hereafter) (2002) is another example of significant street theatre performance by Budhan. When communal riots rocked Ahmedabad in 2002, the group produced *Mazhab* in order to emphasize values of tolerance and respect (Bajrange "Budhan Bolta Hai" 165- 94). The play opens with the actors trying to rehearse a patriotic poem, *mazhab nahin sikhata aapas mein bair rakhna* –which translates as religion does not teach us to seek vengeance against one another. The opening scene suggests a play within the play, and the characters debate with each other to bring out the truth onstage. Tushar, one of the characters, suggests a change to the poem's words, revealing the truth as it is and convinces all by saying that theatre is the medium of art which should be used to state reality with courage. Tushar parodies the poem and presents it differently, with satire. The entire group of characters then recites the parodied poem as *Mazhab Hamein Sikhata Aapas Mein Bair Rakhna* translated as the religion that foments vengeance amongst each other. This mode of debate between the actors sets the background of the play whose purpose is "to bring enlightenment" to its

audiences (167-68). The focus of the incidents in *Mazahab* is on the lower classes and marginalized peoples who have minimal rights and minimal political awareness. They are shown becoming victims of the communal riots and suffering economically, emotionally and physically. The performance clearly shows the politics of “the vicious elite” of the majority and the dominant sections of society (Jha 47).

While the abovementioned plays represented the problems of DNTs, *Kahani Meri Tumhari* [Story of Mine and Yours] (2012) presents the stories of struggle specific to the members of Chhara community against social injustices and police atrocities. The play shows the actual sufferings and victimization of the community in a manner that brings tears in the eyes of spectators³⁹. The play presents several true incidents that happened to the fathers and forefathers of the Chhara members of Budhan. As Kalpana, one of Budhan’s members, says, "This is our story and it makes us cry in real every time we perform. Some of them are the real experiences expressed by the elders of the community and some of them were experienced by me" (Gagdekar, K.). Indeed, *Kahani Meri Tumhari* is an archive of the history of stigma, discrimination and injustices done to the Chhara community.

Budhan’s theatre appears to incorporate lots of the qualities found in Indigenous theatre across the world in the context of articulating the colonial past (for instance in plays like of *Ulgutan* and *British Come Back to India* as discussed above), raising their voices against the socio-political injustice as well as sharing the unacknowledged real-life stories of their struggle, and connecting and standing in solidarity with other victimized/ minority/ Indigenous communities. In terms of the artistic articulations of the protest, Budhan’s theatre is relatable and significant when compared to the Māori theatre of Aotearoa/New Zealand. Though the performances share differences in terms of the theatrical forms, access to funding opportunities as well as socio-political contexts, they share commonality in manifestation of a political protest within or outside of a festival generated space. Though the DNTs of India and Māori and Pasifika communities of Aotearoa/New Zealand and the Pacific Islands are far away geographically from each other, there are things that connect them. For instance, geographically they are connected through the Pacific Ocean. Historically they share a history of colonial rule as well as a common struggle to make their voices heard within their different socio-political structures. Historical accounts describe early cultural exchanges between the Māori community of Aotearoa/New Zealand and Indian communities who visited New Zealand as crew on British ships (Bandyopadhyay and Buckingham 6-7). And, while these accounts do

not specifically explore the exchange between the Māori community and the DNTs of India, I believe these connections and similarities provide a solid foundation for productive discussion in this thesis. The next section explores the historical backdrop of Māori culture and arts followed by a detailed overview of the selected case studies from Aotearoa/ New Zealand.

2.3. Māori in Aotearoa/New Zealand

we never knew
about Parihaka
it was never
taught anywhere
except maybe
around the fires
of Parihaka
itself at night
when stories
are told
of the soldiers
who came
with guns
to haul us up
by the roots
like trees
from our land
though the prophets
called peace peace
it was never
taught at school
it was all hushed up
how we listened
to the prophets
Tohu, Te Whiti
who called peace' Rire rire
Paimarire'

but the only
peace the soldiers
knew
spoke through
the barrels
of their guns
threatening
our women children
it was never
taught or spoken
how we
were shackled
led away to the caves
and imprisoned
for ploughing our land

(*Parihaka* a poem by Apirana Taylor, published on World Poetry Movement (WPM) website).

The above poem refers to the series of incidents that occurred at Parihaka village on the west coast of New Zealand's North Island's Taranaki district. Parihaka is an establishment created by the Māori prophets Te Whiti and Tohu to reclaim the ownership of the land through peaceful resistance by ploughing it. Historical account says that the village was attacked by 1600 British troops in 1881 in order to take over the land who not only destroyed the village but raped and assaulted Māori women and children. The crown apologised in 2017 for the invasion and the series of horrific actions of the British troops and administration that occurred in 1881 (Shaskey; Binney). I discuss this in detail later in this chapter.

Māori, the Indigenous people of Aotearoa/New Zealand, have been continuously asserting their politico-cultural identity and *tino rangatiratanga* [self-determination or sovereignty] over the land through different mediums including political protests, and through writing and the performing arts. There have been significant shifts in the socio-political status of Māori as a consequence of colonial rule in Aotearoa. Māori people have continuously worked on preserving their land, culture and language. The first part of this section will provide an

overview of historical Māori protest movements and discuss the socio-politico-cultural background of Aotearoa/New Zealand to provide context for understanding the activism presented through contemporary Māori theatre. The later parts of the section will focus on the development of contemporary Māori theatre and the case studies.

2.3.1. Pre-colonial Encounters

According to *Te Ara – The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*, Māori came to New Zealand in approximately the 13th century AD and adapted as *whānau* [family] to the new environments, established new societies, locating resources, hunting, planting and harvesting (Wilson). They had nomadic lifestyles and the era of initial 100 or 150 years of settlement has been named as the Māori tribal era (King 71). In the 14th and 15th centuries, Māori were required to adjust their lives in order to survive, which led them to live less nomadic lives with more defined territories (King 71).

There were social differentiations as well as inter - tribal engagements during this time. Individuals from outside could marry into a tribe and become part of the network of kinship privileges and obligations. However, the society was not classless; there was a division of peoples into *rangatira* [aristocrats] and *tutua* [commoners]. Rangatira had more *mana* [power, authority, prestige] and authority than the *tutua* (Royal). All of the *tutua* had some connection to the *rangatira* and *mana* within their ancestry which could be activated through an outstanding achievement in arts of war or peace or by becoming *tohunga* [experts] in activities of physical, artistic or spiritual nature (King 79-80). The whole country was divided into a national network of *rohe* [generally delineated by geographical features such as mountains, rivers, valleys or forests] over which *iwi* [tribe] or *hapū* [subtribe] had *mana whenua* [authority] over the land and resources (King 80). Intertribal relations were based on the concept of *utu* [often translated as 'revenge' but also including concepts of 'reciprocity' or 'balanced exchange']. According to Te Ahukuramu Charles Royal, Māori people lived in small tribal groups with a rich culture of spoken stories (Royal). The tribal lifestyle of Māori tribes in pre-colonial Aotearoa/New Zealand with rich culture of spoken stories come parallel with that of oral traditions and tribal life styles of the DNT communities of the pre-colonial India.

2.3.2. The Arrival of the Colonizers

Apart from these inter-tribal wars, the life of Māori people until 18th century was pleasant and culturally rich (King 92). With their first encounters with Europeans, Māori culture was

introduced to cultures of the world outside of Aotearoa/New Zealand. Western European nations in the late 17th and 18th centuries were focusing on the expansion of their geographical boundaries and colonization began. However, colonizers came to New Zealand in small groups and gradually, unlike patterns of colonialism in the Americas, Australia and the rest of the Asia Pacific (King 92-3). As Michael King notes, the Māori were not colonised in a single swell due to the relative geographical isolation of New Zealand (King 93).

European, mainly British sailors continued their contact with Māori tribes from 1769 onwards and started trading firearms and metal for timber, flax, sea-mammal oil and fur (Wilson). A number of other European sailors contacted and received help from Māori people in sealing and whaling during first two decades of 19th century. The timber industry began to grow in New Zealand in the 1820s. Christian missionaries arrived during the initial years of 19th Century and began spreading Christian spiritual ideas, along with teaching Māori to read and how to trade. Many Māori became Christians following the arrival of the missionaries in New Zealand (Wilson; Royal).

2.3.3. The Treaty of Waitangi

The Treaty of Waitangi was signed as a partnership agreement between Māori and the British Crown with an aim of unity on 6th of February in 1840 at Bay of Islands in the far north of the North Island of New Zealand (Orange). The Treaty is significant in marking the problematic relationship between the Māori community and the Crown due to the differences in understandings of it. There are two versions of the Treaty of Waitangi: the English version and the Māori language version. There is no equivalent word for ‘governorship’ in Te Reo Māori and so, the Māori had a different perception when ‘governorship’ was translated as ‘kawanatanga’ (Orange). The issue has been widely debated for the past several decades by a number of scholars (see Ross 129-157; Orange; Bell 43; Calman 8-17 and so on), in the context of Article One and Two of the Treaty of Waitangi. Māori questioned the promised *rangatiratanga* [autonomy] and the *kawanatanga* [governorship] which were implied in English version of the Treaty and interpreted by the Crown as Māori relinquishing “absolutely and without reservation all the rights and powers of sovereignty” unlike the Māori version of the Treaty (Orange).

2.3.4. Māori Prophetic Movements

The very early articulation of resistance against colonization through the Māori prophetic movements has been documented by Binney. This resistance was peaceful and non-violent, and the group of the prophets was known as Ngā Poropiiti. The early prophets dreamt of getting the Pākehā⁴⁰ out of Aotearoa/New Zealand and back into the sea from where they arrived. They were the very early versions of the Māori resistance against the deceitful act by the colonisers in taking over autonomy and governorship (Binney). The first prophetic movement was by Papahurihia in Northland before the Treaty was signed, but the prophet Papahurihia then joined the Anglican missionaries in 1833 (Binney). In 1864, another peaceful movement was led by Te Ua Haumene who established a new faith called Pai Marire (Binney). He was followed by Te Kooti and by Te Whiti and Tohu in 1866. It is important to note here that all of the prophets were arrested by the British government and then released or pardoned by the government after a few years. The contribution of Te Whiti and Tohu in Māori resistance is tremendous but remained unacknowledged due to the political suppression of it (Binney).

Te Whiti-o-Rongomai and Tohu Kakahi established a community at Parihaka village in the Taranaki district in 1866. The aim of this establishment was to reclaim the confiscated land by ploughing it. As the British government imprisoned the followers of Te Whiti and Tohu, more people joined in this non-violent resistance (Binney). This movement is similar to the non-violent civil disobedience movements carried by the Gandhi, Patel and other freedom fighters in India in the early 20th century. To my amusement, there is an evidence of Gandhi learning about the Parihaka movement just before he initiated the civil disobedience movement in colonial India:

...his [Te Whiti's] efforts in leading the peaceful resistance did not go unnoticed. It is rumoured that two Irishmen who had visited Aotearoa eventually ended up in India, talking to none other than Mahatma Gandhi about what Te Whiti had done on that fateful day. Today, Te Whiti's actions are likened to those of Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela (Ratana).

The potential and power that such a non-violent movement is tremendous which is why the British suppressed them. The Parihaka village was destroyed by the British soldiers and the women were raped by the British troops after Te Whiti, Tohu and other male protesters were imprisoned (Shaskey). However, the protest had its impact politically in decolonizing process in India far away from Aotearoa/New Zealand.

The first half of the 20th Century saw several significant incidents including the influenza epidemic in 1918 and participation of Māori soldiers in two World Wars that decreased the Māori population (Rice). The Māori struggle for land rights continued without significant challenge or threat to the Crown until the mid-20th Century. Māori struggle became prominent between the 1940s and 1960s when the government of New Zealand started implementing assimilation policies (Orange). Aimed at assimilating Māori into more Western ways of living by implementing a number of legal acts including the Māori Social and Economic Advancement Act (MSEA) was set up after World War Two, which enabled the government to relocate Māori populations to urban areas (Keane 4). Initially this was due to the labour requirement during World War Two, later it was for assimilation purposes (Keane 4). However, these policies ignited disappointment and frustration within Māori communities as rural social structures were weakened by the population decline. These challenges led them towards strengthening their socio-economic and political leadership (Orange).

2.3.5. The Māori Renaissance

The need for the Māori community to have a separate national identity was reflected in a Māori council newspaper in 1968 as documented by Richard Hill in his book, *Māori and the State: Crown-Māori Relations in New Zealand/ Aotearoa, 1950- 2000* (149). The decade of the 1970s has also come to be known as the decade of Māori Renaissance, which revived the consciousness of being Māori in New Zealand (Taonui 3). A major exhibition of Māori arts and culture titled *Te Māori* toured internationally to the museums including some museums of the United States in 1984 and received significant international attention to the Māori of Aotearoa/New Zealand (Tapsell 3). Many Pākehā and non-Māori people of Aotearoa/New Zealand learnt about Te Ao Māori and the Māori perspective through literary works of Māori writers like Witi Ihimaera and Patricia Grace. The early short stories of these writers were published in 1970s in *Te Ao Hou* [translated as the New World], a magazine published by the department of Māori Affairs in Aotearoa/New Zealand (Derby 5).

The campaigns for Māori rights and land rights began and developed into active Indigenous protests aiming to preserve Māori arts, language, culture and land (Rice). A number of anti-racist and Indigenous support organisations developed in New Zealand during the 1970s and 1980s. Māori protest groups began joining the struggles which resonated with them and engaging more broadly with other progressive politico-economic frameworks (Consedine, 2018). Soon, Māori protest groups started working with Pākehā-dominated organisations

including CARE (1964) the Citizens Association for Racial Equality; ACORD (1973) the Auckland Committee on Racism and Discrimination, and HART (1969) Halt All Racist Tours (Keane 3).

The Treaty of Waitangi became a strong point of focus for Māori protest during the 1970s, with an emphasis on regaining the tino rangatiratanga it promised (Consedine 4). In 1971, Nga Tamatoa, a Māori activist group that operated throughout the 1970s to promote Māori rights and racial discrimination in Aotearoa/New Zealand, declared Waitangi Day, February 6th, as a day of mourning in order to protest against and to draw attention to Māori land loss. Since then, Waitangi Day protests have become a symbolic reminder of Māori land loss and the event has been used to lobby the government to recognise and rectify the loss. Protestors frequently use methods borrowed from other socialist/liberation movements (such as Marxist liberation movements or Democratic revolutionary movement or Independence movements) including a confrontational approach which has sometimes led to tense encounters with traditional, more conservative Māori leaders and people (Hill 154). With an advancement of intense Māori protest, new political, cultural and social demands were raised. The awareness among Māori youth regarding the ongoing protest and activism lead to legislation formulating significant changes. With the slogan, “Time for a Change”, a third labour government changed a number of socio-cultural policies that raised Pākehā awareness about Māori culture, history and customs (Aimer 3). This political phase under the leadership of the third Labour government who held power between 1972 and 1975 was marked with change in a number of policies regarding Māori land issues and by the abandonment of some social and cultural assimilation policies (Aimer 6). However, the Labour government continued to face many challenges from Māori activists and communities due to the high expectations of Māoridom (Hill 154-5).

In early 1975, the idea of a *Hikoi* or ‘Māori land march’ was discussed by the Māori Women’s Welfare League (MWWL) led by President and National Party stalwart Whina Cooper (Keane 3). The focus of the march was “one of the most iconic elements of Māori losses and hopes: the land” (Hill 167-8). The Land March began in the far North, proceeding from Te Hapua to the national parliament in Wellington. The March began on September 14 of 1975 with only a few participants. With its key slogan, “not one more acre of Māori land” the number of people involved in the protest increased as the march progressed (Keane 3). The protestors who numbered around 5,000 by the end of the march reached parliament on 13th October 1975 and received tremendous media attention and community support. Whina Cooper presented a petition signed by 60,000 people demanding the statutes that alienate the land to be repealed

and the remaining of the tribal land to be returned to the Māori, to the Prime Minister Bill Rowling. According to Māori scholar Mason Durie, the march demonstrated “the extent of Māori dissatisfaction” (in Keane 3). According to Hill, the march symbolically reclaimed the tino rangatiratanga promised by the Treaty of Waitangi and “represented Māori at an auspicious moment” (Hill 169). Along with Māori activists, many liberal Pākehā also protested for Māori rights complementing and supporting Māori action and protest. With the changed National government in 1975, the focus of protests grew stronger on race-relations and many other issues including land rights (Hill 170).

Along with Pākehā social activists Māori activists occupied Bastian Point on 5th January 1977 to oppose the unjust land takeover of Ngāti Whatua mainland by the government in order to subdivide it and develop private housing. Protestors occupied the space for 506 days non-violently (Keane 3). The protesters rejected the crown's offer of a compromise to accept a part of the land if the iwi paid \$200,000 in February 1978 and continued the protest. The protesters faced a police and military operation that was 600 people strong. Authorities demolished the camp and arrested 222 protesters on 25th May 1978 (Hill 172). The protesters were shocked at the government's action; the government however, offered a part of the land to the trust which was accepted by the respective tribe whom it belonged to. However, counter performances challenging this compromise were seen on Waitangi Day protests and various other protests and occupations over the following years (Hill 172).

In the early 1980s the Waitangi Action Committee (formed in 1979) who headed the Waitangi Day protests at the time called for boycott of official celebrations of the national day and some of the protesters were arrested for rioting at Waitangi (Taonui 4). Following these protests, the Māori-Pākehā relationship became increasingly problematic as Pākehā in general were looked upon as oppressors (Hill 176). Māori activists rebelled against Pākehā institutions and socio-political domination. One of the Māori activist groups stated; “Contemporary Māori Activism is a product of generations of Māori struggle, fuelled by the continued injustice against Māori people and sustained by the Wairua of our Tipuna [spirits/souls of our ancestors]” (Hill 177-8). Richard Hill also notes that like Māori activism, Indigenous people across the world started reasserting their rights by the 1980s (178). This political activism has significantly inspired and impacted upon the creation of performing arts in Aotearoa/New Zealand. To understand the contemporary Māori performing arts, especially theatrical performances, the abovementioned historical context is very significant due to the nature of the performances. It is important to mention here that the origin of Māori theatre is in *whare tapere* [a site of performance or

entertainment] long before the British colonization of the country (Calman 4). Post-colonial Māori performing arts have always had an element of protest and an articulation of mana as I discuss in the following section.

2.4. The Development of Contemporary Māori Theatre

The primary focus of this section is looking at the combination of traditional knowledge, contemporary expressions and socio-political resistance expressed through Māori theatre in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Theatre in its conventional form is quite a new form of artistic expression within Māori culture; however, performance is not a foreign idea at all (Kouka 239). A famous *whakatauki* [saying] “Kia kawea Tātou e te rēhia” [Let us be taken by the spirit of joy, of entertainment] indicates the significance of arts and performances within the traditional Māori culture (Derby and Grace-Smith 2) and heritage. The *whare tapere* is the Māori concept for the practice of, and the space used, for entertainment delivered in the forms of dance, music, games or storytelling (Derby and Grace-Smith 2). There are versions of *whare tapere* like *Whare Mātoro* [entertainment performances specifically designed by and for young people] and *Whare Kariori* [a performance staged in succession of communities by travelling troupes]. *Whare tapere* is known to be the space charged with the energy of the performance which could be any designated physical space from an elevated stage to space underneath a tree (Derby and Grace-Smith 2). The traditions and customs of *whare tapere* were lost in the 19th century with the British touring companies but have been recently revitalised by Māori scholar and musician Charles Royal.

Theatre performances like *The Land of Moa* (1895) and *Tapu* (1903) have reportedly exploited the traditional Māori art forms including haka (Derby and Grace-Smith 1). These performances included minor roles by the Māori performers, but they were excluded from the process of the making and presentation of it. Māori performers performed in film *Hinemoa* (1914) but were excluded from the decision making or consultation over the content (Derby and Grace-Smith 1). Rudal Hyward’s films like *Rewi’s Last Stand* (1940) was the first to incorporate Māori perspectives by consulting them (Derby and Grace-Smith 2).

Like most Indigenous arts, the contemporary Māori arts were highly influenced by European art forms and formal arts education/training from a European cultural context. While British touring theatre troupes arrived in Aotearoa in 1840, conventional local theatre in New Zealand began in the 1920s and these Pākehā theatre makers looked back to England and started producing Western style theatre performances. McNaughton describes how theatre in New

Zealand began by adopting a Western style and moved towards incorporating Polynesian, European and Asian styles with over time and alongside increases in immigration (in Sturm pp. 321-93).

The involvement of Māori performers on stage in Māori and Shakespearean roles dates back to the 1920's and 1930's. However, these opportunities were very small scale, amateur and regionally located during this period (Metge 284). During the 1940s and 1950s, when the Māori people started migrating to urban areas, Pākehā theatre makers began to articulate cross-cultural interactions and to reflect on themes of Māori loss through theatre performances. Bill Tawhai was the first Māori actor to open the doors for Māori performers on stage as part of professional theatre performances in late fifties (Davis 12). In 1957, Pākehā playwright Bruce Mason wrote *The Pohutukawa Tree* and cast Hira Tauwhare (Talfrey) and Mary Nimmo in lead roles ("Success of Māori artists" 58-59). Hira Tauwhare could be seen as one of the pioneer Maori actresses to perform on stage as part of professional theatre performances ("Success of Māori Artists" 58-59).

The founding of the Māori Theatre Trust in 1966 "can be seen as the first attempt to establish Māori theatre totally dedicated to presenting and performing Māori subject matter and culture on stage" (Balme 150). The New Zealand Drama School was established by the Queen Elizabeth II Council, and Rawiri Paratene was the first Māori graduate from the school in 1972, followed by Rangimoana Taylor in 1975 (Derby and Grace-Smith 2). Te Ohu Whakaari was a theatre group formed by Rangimoana Taylor with Apirana Taylor, Riwia Brown and Briar Grace Smith. The group performed Māori theatre in schools and at maraes (Derby and Grace-Smith 2).

The first play written by a Māori playwright was *Te Raukura: The Feathers of Albatross* (1972) by journalist Harry Dansey, which was produced at the Auckland Festival with a cast⁴¹ of fifty Māori performers (Metge 285). This extremely political play articulates the Māori perception of the historical events of Te Poropiti movement. The play not only present the untold history of the non-violent protest of Parihaka, it presents it with traditional Māori artistic expressions of haka, waiata and poi. The action of writing the play itself can be seen as a political expression resisting the assimilative and dominating arts industry of the time.

Another theatre company, Te Ika a Maui Players was founded by Jim Moriarty in 1976 and their first performance of Rowley Habib's (Rore Hapipi's) play *The Death of the Land* articulated the land rights conflicts and protests against land courts processes (Derby and

Grace-Smith 02). In 1977, Hone Tuwhare, renowned Aotearoa/New Zealand poet, wrote *In the Wilderness without the Hat* which focused on internal clashes and socio-cultural issues within Māori community, articulating the differences and diversity of opinions and standpoints within the Māori community and challenging ideas of homogeneity. A number of Māori co-operative theatre groups formed in the 1980s including; *Maranga Mai* (1980) led by Roma and Brian Potiki⁴² (1983), *He Ara Hou* (1990) led by Roma Potiki and others, and *Te Rakau Hua O Te Wao Tapu* (1990) led by Jim Moriarty.

Māori theatre practitioners achieved excellence at creating theatrical performances in the decade during 1990s through collaboration and interpretation and adaptation of well-known Western plays. These works toured around the country and travelled overseas which can be marked as huge success in recognition of the contemporary Māori arts and theatre. Te Ika a Maui collaborated with Te Ohu Whakaari in 1990 and produced Bruce Stewart's *Broken Arse* (1990) and John Broughton's *Nga Puke* (1990). John Broughton wrote several remarkable plays including *Te Hokinga Mai*, *Michael James Manaia* (also performed at the Edinburgh Festival 1991) and *Marae* (commissioned for the Festival of Arts 1992). Roma Potiki's collaborative production *Whatungarongaro* (1991), travelled to Adelaide Festival in Australia in 1992 after travelling throughout Aotearoa. Rena Owen's play *Te Awa i Tahuti* was produced in London in 1987 and was reviewed by *The Times*. Her other plays including *Daddy's Girl* (1991) and *Waitangi* (1986) were produced by The Depot Theatre and the 1986 International Festival of Arts respectively (Derby and Grace-Smith).

Taki Rua focused and continued encouraging Māori theatre as well as bi-cultural theatre. The theatre group began celebrating two annual seasons: The Te Roopu and the Te Reo Māori seasons. Both the seasons included plays that were fully or largely produced in Te Reo Māori (Derby and Grace-Smith 02). Te Roopu produced significant interpretations and adaptations of the famous Western works such as Ibsen's *The Vikings of Helgeland* (as Kouka's *Nga Tangata Toa* 1994) and Brecht's *Mother Courage* (as Taylor's *Whaea Kairau* 1995). Te Roopu encouraged new writers like Briar Grace Smith who won the Peter Harcourt Memorial Award for a short play entitled *Nga Pou Wahine* (1995) and the Bruce Mason's Playwright's Award for the same play. The first Te Reo Māori season was produced in 1995 and four short plays including Hinemoana Baker's *Maua Taua* (1995), Esther Tamehana's *Korowai* (1995), Karlite Rangihau's *Taku Rakau E* (1995) and Godfrey and Toroa Pohatu's *Kapa Haka Blues* (1995) toured the country (Kouka and McNaughton 123). Briar Grace Smith's play *Waitapu* toured to Canada in 1996 with theatre group He Ara Hou. She produced two more plays titled *Flat Out*

Brown and Don't Call Me Bro in 1996, which were featured as part of the Te Roopu Whakkari season and Young and Hungry festival Season respectively (Derby and Grace-Smith).

Māori theatre became more radical and presented political and agit-prop aspects through Marae Theatre, initiated by Jim Moriarty and Rangimoana Taylor (Derby and Grace-Smith 1). Roma Potiki says Māori theatre can be seen “as tino rangatiranga in action” (“A Māori Point of View” 57). Durie (46) suggests that self-determination is an appropriate term when defining and understanding the term “tinorangatiranga” because it captures, “the essence of Māori ownership and active control”. Renée, John Broughton, Riwia Brown, Briar Grace Smith, Hone Kouka and Apirana Taylor were major Māori playwrights during the 1980s and 1990s who articulated Māori voices through their performances (Kouka “Recolonising the Natives” 239). Māori theatre contributes to a sense of self-determination of Māori people because they have control over the writing and performance of their own stories. Leading Māori theatre maker Hone Kouka argues that theatre practice gives performers the task of taking responsibility for what is shown and said on stage (Kouka “Recolonising the Natives” 239). Kouka discusses the hybrid nature of Māori theatre due to its non-traditional form:

I understood that Māori theatre can only be hybrid, as in traditional Māori society, the concept of a "theatre" was foreign. I also realised that, because our theatre had to be hybrid, I should understand and hold firm to my traditions and Māori point of view. Otherwise the theatre I created would become purely generic (“Recolonising the Natives” 241).

The status and function of Māori theatre is not clearly defined. Māori performances in the late 1990s, including Marae theatre, incorporated traditional Māori elements such as *pōwhiri* [the traditional welcome ceremony] and *karanga* [the call or chant of welcome]; the performances followed Māori *kaupapa* [principles or policy] throughout (Kouka “Ta Matou Mangai” 17). Apart from its structure and form, Māori theatre privileges a Māori point of view, and thus Kouka argues that any theatre that articulates Māori voices from a Māori point of view can be considered to be a Māori theatre piece (Kouka “Ta Matou Mangai” 17). Apart from the more political issues such as loss of land, language and culture as themes in Māori theatre; the element of memory and the exploration of synergies and differences between past and present realities is one of the distinct features of Māori performances (Kouka “Ta Matou Mangai” 17). With a noticeable blend of traditional and contemporary elements, contemporary Māori theatre has become a medium of raising Māori voices both within and outside of Aotearoa/New

Zealand. Kouka notes that Māori writing has started to be accepted into the mainstream: "The acceptance has pulled our work, as Jim Moriarty describes it, 'away from [being] ghettoised'; the mainstream at last is beginning to wake up" (Kouka "Ta Matou Mangai" 20). However, he also notes that Taki Rua Theatre gave up its Wellington venue and became Taki Rua Productions in 1997. Without a place to produce theatre, this demoted the Māori theatre group from having equal value and status to mainstream theatre (Kouka "Re-colonizing the Natives" 245). The status of contemporary Māori theatre in Aotearoa/New Zealand is thus problematic, while it is recognized as a participant in mainstream New Zealand theatre, key elements of infrastructure and status—such as a dedicated performance venue—have not yet proved sustainable.

Māori theatre practitioners have to face being relegated to a secondary space where they are advised to be "more creative" and to avoid "tired" expressions of the loss of land, culture and language (Kouka "Recolonising the Natives" 238). Kouka has also asserted that Māori theatre aims at articulating what they think and feel and would not compromise their freedom of expression and choices. He says, "we're not performing for fame or name, we are satisfied with what we have, but, we won't make any changes in the performance to be part of any festival or organised event" (Kouka "Playmarket"). The clear statement around not compromising the arts and expression of Māori politics through performances highlights the resistance against assimilative strategies in arts industry. Kouka points towards the need for clear articulation of Māori voices through theatre in Aotearoa/New Zealand. His statement also presents his determination of gradually decolonizing the artistic industry of Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Many Māori plays use Te Reo Māori words and phrases to articulate their power and specificity. Most of the plays use frequent code-switching that will resonate with bilingual speakers anywhere in the world (Peterson 19). The plays of Kouka, Briar Grace Smith and Witi Ihimaera present good examples of the use of Te Reo in Māori plays. Some of these plays include extensive use of Te Reo or several long dialogues in Te Reo which doesn't seem problematic for New Zealand audiences but does limit possibilities for gaining commercial promotion internationally (Peterson 19). Witi Ihimaera discusses this point about the intended audiences for Māori plays, he argues that "[i]nternational recognition is not so important. What's important is to tell your own story with as much truth and honesty as you can and if you can have people outside...your community who can appreciate your works, then that is a bonus" (in Peterson 20).

The use of Māori traditional performing arts forms like *haka* [traditional Māori dance theatre] and *waiata* [traditional Māori songs] in contemporary Māori theatre functions as cultural specificity like the use of Te Reo (Smith 1). The traditional performing arts like haka and waiata have whakapapa which originates from a metaphysical source, for example, haka originated from the metaphysical realm. Tamanui Te Ra, the *kaitiaki* [guardian] of the Sun lay with his wife Hineraumati and they had a son named Tanerore who performed haka for the first time for his mother which appears as the shimmering haze after Summer rain. The performances of traditional arts serve as mediums for maintaining connection with the cultural, emotional and spiritual grounds of the Māori community within Aotearoa/New Zealand (Mikaere 128). Haka is more than just a ‘war dance’ as widely translated in English, according to Hyland:

haka is not only dance – a concept defined by the word kanikani – but is intrinsically bound in the interweaving of verbal and psychic languages embedded in the dramaturgy... Haka’s functions are diverse: to honour a worthy figure or community, to woo, to demonstrate resilience, and most importantly, to declare tino rangatiratanga, or indigenous self-determination. (Hyland 3)

As discussed above, haka is a concept and an articulation of self-determination and thus political in nature. The performing arts form can be looked at as the performance of protest or resistance against imperial power structures. Scholars such as Hyland suggest that the haka has been acknowledged for its power of political articulation. The missionaries had tried to replace forms such as the haka with English hymns since their arrival in the 19th Century because they saw haka as conflicting with their Christian beliefs (Smith 2). They encouraged the use of English hymns and tunes. The devaluation of traditional performing arts and re-projection of it in convenient colonial form of entertainment speaks for itself about the impact of the settler communities on Māori arts.⁴³ Like other Indigenous artistic forms, haka has been undervalued due to the desire of global audiences to watch the ‘exotic’ Indigenous bodies at work as discussed by Hyland (3). Māori artists like Kereama Te Ua and Tapeta Wehi have been working towards the sincere presentation of kapa haka to decolonize such ongoing objectification of the Māori art form as tourist attraction. Therefore, haka can be aptly called a political performance and an integral part of the contemporary Māori theatre when used following the correct kaupapa and not just for representing the work as Indigenous or “more Māori” in nature (Hyland 3).

Potiki argues that traditional Maori art forms and symbols must be carefully used with “political self-awareness” and with the “deepest emotions” (“Confirming Identity”157). However, Indigenous traditional art forms and symbols are often seen as desirable for consumption by the tourists and dominant sections of society; and thus, they are very vulnerable to the misinterpretation or misuse. For instance, on a number of occasions, traditional haka or a *ta moko* (tattoo) has been used as part of advertising campaigns for products including energy drinks (Rereatea) and German cars (Rereatea). One recent example is the use of the haka by the Korean music K- pop group NCT 127 (Awarau) who launched their new music video containing performances of haka without consulting the respective iwi. Karlite Rangihau, a Māori academic wrote to the management of the group who later apologised for using the art form without consultation (Awarau)⁴⁴.

The articulations of grievances over the Treaty, land issues and cultural assimilation presented through Māori theatre have been one of the key points on the socio-political agenda of the Māori playwrights; however, this doesn’t mean that Māori theatre is declamatory/rhetorical theatre with this only agenda. As Potiki explains;

Objectivity will join subjectivity in Māori theatre so that we can work towards consistency in theatre approach and methodology and nurture our ability for self-examination within the socio-economic and cultural framework of our lives. And in this I accept that the cultural context is also a political one, however uneasy (“A Māori Point of View” 63).

However, socio-political struggle has always been part of the painful history of Aotearoa/New Zealand and is often articulated in Māori theatre. The articulation of Treaty issues, the 1975 Land March, socially assimilative policies of various governments and the articulation of the racist and stereotypical portrayal of Māori subjects within the works of non-Māori writers have been important socio-political issues that are highlighted in contemporary Māori theatre. The articulation of these issues from the past has been criticised by Pākehā theatre makers as “tired expressions” (Matata-Sipu) however they continue to be culturally significant for Māori playwrights. The use of past to locate the future is central to the Māori worldview (Potiki “A Māori Point of View” 63). According to the cultural value system within Māori communities, *whakapapa* [genealogy] is central and so is the presence of the dead in any kind of performances; be it a ritual on a Marae or a performance on stage (Potiki “Introduction” 9). Roma Potiki comments on this important cultural aspect in context of Māori theatre:

Māori theatre is a theatre that constantly remembers the past. I cannot recall having seen a play by a Māori writer that did not make some reference to tīpuna [ancestors]. The emanations/spirits of the dead most certainly rattle our bones. It is our ancestors who remind us of who we are, where we belong, and why we have been given the gift of life (“Introduction” 9).

The idea of portraying or mirroring the present through presenting the past has been quite common among the Māori playwrights. Plays like *Nga Pou Wahine* (Briar Grace-Smith 1995), *Waiora* (Kouka, 1996), *Woman Far Walking* (Ihimaera, 2000), *Hikoi* (Bunning, 2014), and *All Our Sons* (Ihimaera, 2015) are some examples of this practice. The beautiful blend of traditional values and socio-political concerns makes Māori theatre a unique form of storytelling. As Potiki remarks:

Māori playwrights decide on the story they want to tell, work on the content, and then share it with Māori and others. In doing so they contribute towards the reclamation of the distant and recent past by telling us what we remember. Sometimes they propose a future. They do this in a very contemporary and sophisticated sense, through a sophisticated medium called ‘a script’ (“Introduction” 11).

Māori theatre performances within and outside the frames of festival(s) highlight varied perspectives from audiences, theatre reviewers and the community. Moreover, this thesis argues that through locating political protests as an ‘action’ and reflecting on theatrical performances as a form of ‘response’ or ‘counter-performance’ leads us to consider the broad socio-political implications of these performances within the socio-political as well as the festival structure within the geographical landscape in which they are performed.

2.5 Case Studies from Aotearoa/New Zealand

Due to the lack of representation of the DNTs of India in creative or theatrical forms the case studies from India in this thesis feature performances created by just one theatre group. In contrast, the Māori case studies drawn from several different Māori theatre groups based in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The selected performance texts for inclusion in this thesis are *Woman Far Walking* (Ihimaera, 2000), *Te Karakia* (Belz, 2008), *Hikoi* (Bunning, 2014), and *Not in Our Neighbourhood* (McCaskill, 2015). The reasons behind the selection of these performances as case studies is their commonality in terms of the projection of socio/political protest through the medium of theatre, or the re-enactment of political protests in the form of a

theatre performance. The following paragraphs briefly describe the performance texts of the selected plays to set up a background for detailed discussion in the Chapter Six.

Woman Far Walking (2000) by Witi Ihimaera is a [re]presentation of Māori culture and history through the eyes of a 160-year-old woman whose name is Te Tiriti O Waitangi Mahana or 'Tiri'. The name comes from the Treaty of Waitangi as the woman was born on the day the Treaty was signed. The play was first directed by Cathy Downes in 2000, by Christian Penny in 2001, and by Nancy Brunning in 2002 ("Playmarket"). The play was commissioned by the New Zealand Festival and premiered in the New Zealand International Festival of the Arts organised in Wellington the same year. The play presents an allegorical account of the legacy of the Treaty of Waitangi and highlights 160 years of Māori suffering from violence, disease, war, and government policies. The play revolves around present day socio-cultural issues of Aotearoa/New Zealand from the point of view of the oldest woman in the world. It not only presents strong statements against social and racial domination, it also presents the significant relationship between Māori women and tino rangatiratanga Māori women were at the forefront of the political activism and articulating the tino rangatiranga through the medium of arts and literature as discussed previously.

Te Karakia is written by Albert Belz and was first performed as a workshop production named "Sleeping Dog" at Toi Whakaari: New Zealand Drama School in 2007. The production was directed by David O'Donnell and received dramaturgical shape from Hone Kouka. The play then travelled through some final revisions and premiered in 2008 with the name *Te Karakia* at the New Zealand Arts Festival, Wellington. The performance also toured to Hamilton and went to the Bay of Islands Festival in 2008. In 2009 it was performed at the Auckland Arts Festival. Between 5th and 8th June 2009, the play went to The Dreaming, Australia's International Indigenous Festival. *Te Karakia* is received as a love story set in New Zealand's bicultural society with a backdrop of the 1981 protests of South Africa's Springbok rugby team tour of New Zealand.

Hikoi (Brunning, 2014) is another example of a Māori play achieving a dramaturgically successful blend of traditional Māori beliefs and contemporary social structure. *Hikoi* is the story of a family living in small town called Te Moananui and it is set in the time period of 1970s up to the mid-1980s. The play presents the story of a woman, Nellie Miller, who leaves her husband and five children in order to participate in the famous *hikoi* (land march) of 1975 led by Whina Cooper to oppose the alienation (sale) of Māori land⁴⁵. The consequences of

Nellie's decision to join the land march were disturbing for her family. Charlie Miller - Nellie's husband (a Māori man but brought up in Pākehā family) doesn't support her decision of joining the *hikoi* which results in their separation. Nellie ultimately decides to return to her birth family, leaving their five children; Janey (JG), May, Pearl, Joseph (Joe) and Gracie (Bubba) with her husband. The play depicts the domesticity of a Māori family in the 1980s, and the quest of children for their mother who left them for the cause of the wider community. *Hikoi* was first picked up at the Matariki Development Festival in 2013 and a later version was given a staged reading at the Pūtahi Festival in 2014, then performed at the Matariki Development Festival in 2014. It premiered at the Auckland Arts Festival in 2015.

Not in Our Neighbourhood (McCaskill, 2015) is based on interviews and stories of women living at Hauraki Women's Refuge. The play provides a glimpse into the world of domestic violence within New Zealand society but also has an ability to relate to the global socio-political and cultural space. The women at Hauraki Women's Refuge belong to varied communities and classes. There are five female characters and one male character in the play. All the female characters are played by Kali Kopae, they are performed with a distinct voice and physicality for each character. The play was first performed at Pūtahi Festival in 2014 and then it was part of Kia Mau Festival in 2015. The play was well-received for its careful and respectful articulation of true stories. and was included in the New Zealand Festival of Arts 2016, as well as the Auckland Arts Festival in 2016. The play travelled to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in Scotland in 2018.

The plays featured as case studies here will be discussed in context of the theoretical models that I employ in the thesis in Chapter Three. The case studies will be contextualised within their local socio-political space, with and outside the frames of festivals. They will also be explored in context of the global spaces generated by international arts festivals.

This chapter has explored the history surrounding the DNT communities of India and the Māori community in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The chapter attempted to display the commonalities in terms of their colonial past and the differences of the cultural practices by locating the traditional and contemporary artistic expressions. The aim of the discussing these different cultural and ethnographic contexts and forms of cultural expression together was to offer a fresh bridge of connection between two Indigenous communities in the post-colonial world. The chapter has provided the necessary historical background for the discussion of the

theoretical conceptualization and the case studies which will follow in later chapters of the thesis.

In this chapter, I have argued that the artistic expressions of resistance against the dominating and assimilative practices of the hegemonic groups in India and Aotearoa/New Zealand align with similar decolonizing processes. And, the differences shared by the DNTs of India and the Māori of Aotearoa/New Zealand provide solid foundation to explore the proposed theoretical study models in two different contexts. The following chapter focuses on the theoretical aspects of this research.

CHAPTER 3

A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR MAPPING PERFORMANCE EFFICACY AND THE PROCESS OF “FESTIVALIZATION”⁴⁶

This chapter builds a theoretical basis to study various festivals and analyse the process of “Festivalizing” (Hauptfleisch, et al. 2007) or festivalization. Festivalization or festivalized space are concepts I derived from the term “Festivalizing”. I use the word festivalization to describe the process of transformation of normal space into a festival generated space. In this chapter, I explore the origin and development of the conceptualization of the nature and function of contemporary festivals in the post-colonial socio-political realm for understanding the process of festivalization of the space and culture(s). I attempt to broaden the boundaries of contemporary festivals and locate the process of festivalization in several different contexts. The chapter discusses the creation of festival space, the cultural politics of festival organization, and festival participation through various theoretical frameworks. Finally, I review the research models discussed by other researchers within the area of the study, before explaining the theoretical models that I have developed for this study.

3.1. What is Festival?

Festival is a complex space which cannot be described with one definition due to its nature that changes with different contexts. However, I have experienced and observed that the common aspect about festivals in several different contexts is its function of providing an empowering experience to its participants. I argue that the festival transforms the space where it takes place into a festivalized or festival generated space full of festival energy and momentum. This energy and momentum have always been part of festival ever since it originated. I discuss the origin and development of the festival in four parallel contexts in this section. I argue that the conceptualization of festival and communal celebrations was present since ancient times in most communities of the world and as the festivals developed towards its contemporary form, the function and nature of them transformed too.

उत्सव – pronounced as *utsava* is a Sanskrit word for festival. *Ut* meaning ‘removal’ and *sava* meaning ‘sorrows’ or ‘grief’, and so when these words are combined, they mean the ‘removal of sorrow’ in the Sanskrit language and tradition (“online Sanskrit dictionary”). The scriptures of India mention of celebrating the *utsavas* or festivals as early as approximately the Fifth Century BC (Varadpande 24). The first recorded festival of arts was organised in honour of *Indra* – the Rain God as per *Natyashashtra* (Barata-muni, trans. Ghosh 52-53). It is recorded by Varadpande that there are several references to performing arts festivals organised for the God Indra and his son Jayanta by creative writers like Silappadikaram who mentions the festivals full of singing dancing and music (25).

The tradition of celebrating a festival of Greek drama in honour of Dionysus in ancient Greece is widely known, and these festivals also commenced around the fifth century BC (Varadpande 25). These two ancient practices could be seen as the birth of theatre festivals in the world, the development of which took thousands of years. Festivals evolved as celebrations or expressions of religious values and developed into a means of expressing civic governance purposes in 336 BC, when Alexander the Great came to power and extended the reign of Greece into present day India and Egypt (Seffrin 312). At the same time in India, there are mentions of literary festivals by Sanskrit scholars (Varadpande 34) as well as victory festivals held in honour of the king during the Maurya Empire in the Third and Fourth Century B.C. (Mookerji 62).

Apart from the Sanskrit classical festival concepts, the tribal communities of India had their own conceptualization of festivals they celebrated the harvest as well as the traditional Indian festivals like Diwali and Holi. Often the Sanskrit literary works like Ramayana and Mahabharata are transformed into oral performances by the tribal communities when they perform those oral narratives (Devy xiii). Like most Indigenous communities of the world, the tribal arts have their origin in oral epics. The tribal arts and performances of India are closely connected with rituals and hence can be understood as creating a festivalized space wherein the energy of the performance (ritual) and festival is felt by everyone. In the words of Victor Turner, the creation of *communitas* or a spontaneous connection occurs between the participants and hence the space transforms into communal rites and celebration (Turner 127-128).

Māori communities in Aotearoa/New Zealand have celebrated harvest festivals as well as Māori New Year (known as the Matariki festival) since pre-colonial times (Derby and Grace-Smith 1). The Māori community also celebrated during the 10th month of the Māori calendar

known as “Ngahuru” which was celebrated after harvesting kumara (sweet potato), usually in the month of March (Calman). Māori theatre performances originated from the conceptualization of Te Whare Tapere (sites for entertainments) within which the performances of *haka* [dance], music and storytelling occurred (Royal). The significance of Te Whare Tapere as a source of community-building was marked and often the sites for performances were outdoors. These outdoor sites provided a space to the performers and a vibrant experience to its spectators. It is recorded by Derby and Grace Smith that a missionary, Thomas Grace watched the speech by Māori man in a village by Whakatane. He writes in his diary how extremely impressed he was with the performance (177-178 qtd. in Derby and Grace-Smith 1). The Whare Tapere can be understood as transformative space creating festival energy among the participants. Performances of the whare tapere were akin to sporting competitions, held within and between tribes, with the goal of exceptional performances and shared *ihi* [energy]. The energy transformed the normal performance space into the festival-like space. At the same time, there are evidenced of touring artists who are known as Whare Karioi who often used the space and performed there which clearly relates to the concept of festivalization of the space due to the obvious exchange between the touring troupe and the host community as well as usual celebration of communal rites /customs (Derby and Grace-Smith 1).

During the Middle Ages, a revolutionary festival form was developed in Europe which used masks to blur the distinction between performers and spectators and to celebrate the grotesque (Bakhtin 9). This developing carnival culture was completely in contrast with the tone of festivals that had previously been held in ecclesiastical and feudal cultures in the Middle Ages (Bakhtin 5). Despite their variety in terms of arts and the presentation of folk cultures, the carnivals during the Middle Ages that Bakhtin describes had a predominant theme linking them together, folk carnival humour.

This highlights the empowering nature of the festivalized space as well as the celebration of grotesque performance (non-ideal or unexpected within the frame of ‘normal’). However, Terry Eagleton (148) argues that the function of carnival was only to rupture the hegemonic structure and that it was ineffective politically as a revolutionary work of art. According to Bristol (Seffrin 325) carnivals functioned as “happy pills” for those living in poverty which were provided by those in power to give some temporary relief and to help to maintain the status quo (Seffrin 325). However, these arguments perhaps over-simplify the agency of the people involved in festivals. For example, for the people of the West Indies, carnival was the

only time when slaves and people living at the margins were allowed to celebrate and to express themselves. The carnival was a tool to access freedom of expression using masks to protect the identity of the people participating (Cowley 21-25). Or for the people of Trinidad and Tobago Islands, who started the carnival as manifestation of cultural politics and an expression of slave identity against the colonial suppression (Green and Scher 2). The carnival was a medium of resistance against the slavery, colonisation and dis-location of Indigenous, African and Indian populations from their homeland to the Island for labour and slavery (Green and Scher 3-5). But, the usual structure of festival is highly commercialized today and doesn't serve the same political resistance. This decline in the use of festival as a tool for political activism/resistance is discussed by Green and Scher in the context of the carnival of Trinidad and Tobago, "mourning about the loss of cultural politics of the carnival is into the narrative of the people of Trinidad and Tobago" (Green and Scher 10). However, through the narrative and rhetoric within the space, the carnival can still be looked at as an empowering experience for both the tourists and the host communities despite having lost its political significance.

The festivals during the 15th and 16th century were associated with and influenced greatly by the religious value systems within early cultures (Cross and Jolliffe 16). The power of the church was weakened when Elizabeth I came to rule England in 1558 as she banned religious plays (Seffrin 331). The 18th Century marked the rise of community theatre in the West, and the distinction between high and popular culture as represented in theatre began to emerge (Seffrin 322). The community theatre form in the West during the 18th century was in the forms of circus, street performances and in other popular theatre forms (Saffrin 327). The festival regained its function within the socio-political spectrum of being a civic gathering and to glorify the people rather than the kingdoms. The propagandist potential of festivals across Europe cannot be overstated during 19th Century and early 20th Century (Seffrin 339). In India during the colonial period, festivals like *Ganesh Utsava* were used as propaganda against colonial rule, bringing communities together to resist colonization (S. Bhatt 12).

The Twentieth Century marked the development of contemporary forms of arts festivals, spectacles and fringe or community arts festivals. Some of the significant arts festivals of the contemporary world include the Edinburgh Festival (Scotland), The Art Basel (Switzerland), Galway International Arts Festival (various locations), Sibfest (Romania), Adelaide Festival (Australia), Ibero-America Theatre Festival (Columbia) and WOMAD -World of Music, Arts

and dance (various locations), Trinidad and Tobago carnival, Mardi Gras (New Orleans), and the Rio De Janeiro carnival (Brazil).

Concerns around nurturing identity and creating theatre which reflected local value systems could be seen the reasons behind the development of contemporary festival forms (Cross and Jolliffe 21). This period of creative development is when events moved “from being place based and of primarily local significance to having a global reach” and therefore theatre also evolved to reflect these changes (Cross and Jolliffe 21). Contemporary festivals in the West can be understood primarily as a re-assertion of dominant cultural value systems held by the majority of the population within communities for instance, Cannes Film Festival. However, I argue, festivals can also be perceived as a medium to assert identity and increase self-determination among minority groups in the population or within migrant societies.

Arts festivals like Ahmedabad Theatre Festival or Pūtahi Festival, when produced by the community, carry a sense of that community and of the local place. Festivals are known for addressing issues of self-determination, belonging, identity and cultural politics, as well as concerns like unemployment, injustice, and unfair government policies. As Derret (32-33) argues, “[f]estivals and events provide authenticity and uniqueness, especially with events based on inherent Indigenous values; convenient hospitality and affordability; theming and symbols for participants and spectators”. However, when these festivals are encountered by visitors or tourists, the identity and value system of the locals shared with the spectators might or might not be received as they were intended. For instance, the Canadian government banned the celebration of Potlatch, an Indigenous festival mainly for the purpose of assimilation and failed to recognize the communal value of it. However, the native Canadian artists and performers are still invited to perform the songs and dances from the Potlatch to tourist as “living exhibits” (Zaiontz 17).

3.2. Spectatorship, the Tourism Industry and the Creation of Social Capital

In the present day many bourgeois societies across the world have a strong desire to consume global cultures and in doing so they are projecting their global citizenship (Yeoman 257). Amongst this overarching climate of consumerism, festivals are easily available consumable goods (Yeoman 257). The growth of social capital⁴⁷ is significant through the entire process of travelling to the festival, being part of it and experiencing the festival, the consumption of which can easily be shared on social media. For these reasons, I believe that festivals can be an

effective tool for projecting the politics of identity, visibility and self-determination of any community or group of communities. The festival goer can become the transformer of the politics projected through the festival/event and transforms their experience into different forms of expressions which obviously are politicised once again. Yeoman explains the function of festival for the acquisition of knowledge:

Festival and event goers have the means for endless choice and creative disorder allowing them to express thoughts, writings and ideas in consumer-generated arenas. The driving forces that are creating the opportunity for fluid identity and creative consumption are rising affluence and improved access to creative activities and tools. These allow for a strong degree of individual expression, determining where and how festival (experiences) are edited, adapted and enhanced (Yeoman 257).

Festivals like Burning Man (USA), La Tomatina (Spain), Snowbombing (Australia), and Mardi Gras (USA) have become part of the 'wishlist' for many tourists and festival goers across geographical borders due to their huge spectatorship and carnivalized nature. These festival spaces provide a shared experience of togetherness for participants who are exposed to the same activity and space at the same time. It has become very common to share leisure activities or festive experiences as accomplishments on social media. This personal experience becomes a possession to someone, which in turn can be looked at as a component of their accumulated 'social capital', as well as a source of cultural capital for an individual or a community. As Yeoman writes:

[f]estival and event goers now have the capacity to broadcast attendance and tell the world where they are and what they are doing, thus expanding their social connections and cultural capital. All of these lead to a different form of knowledge acquisition and gathering the festival experience, which also allows "consumers to share and co-create experiences, [and consequentially] a movement toward a more fluid identity emerges (Yeoman 257).

From the point of view of the tourism industry, the market value of festivals is obvious. As Fjell (131) writes "both festivals and tourism cooperate in a joint effort towards the same objective – the objective being a local/regional/national urge to utilize the events and create attractiveness of "the otherness"". Notions of authenticity and accessing authentic cultural experiences are another factor that attracts the tourism market towards the consumption of the

cultures from a host country. Fjell argues that in fact “authenticity is confused with the exoticization of place and event, in which, both place and event may simply be constructed elements of economic strategy” (132). The “locals” and local cultures are reduced and presented as an exotic singular culture which becomes an object of consumption for tourists within the process of festivalizing.

As Yeoman (249) discusses, festivals or spectacles have different life spans, and many festivals are at a mature stage while others still at an embryonic stage. The increase in the popularity and consumption of the festivals and spectacles is due to the growth of commercialised events and a widespread desire for cultural consumption. As Yeoman states;

Tourists are travelling more frequently to corners of the earth previously rarely visited. They are becoming more sophisticated and, concomitantly, more interested in different cultures. Furthermore, local people want to celebrate their particular form of culture, tradition, difference or, perhaps, eccentricity [...] Worldwide, consumers are spending more of their disposable income on travel and culture; and it is proposed here that [it is] the living or the creative cultural sector rather than the museum and heritage sector that is benefitting (Yeoman 249-250).

These participatory performances are limited in time and space and thus direct the spectator/participant/tourist to understand it as a special kind of experience of the 'other' culture. As Balme (8) discusses, "the representational practices [for tourism purposes] become themselves producers of phenomenon known as colonial mimesis [imitation or copy of colonial politics]". In such cases, the festival becomes delimited for the community participation and empowerment and only able to provide tourist centred 'exotic' experience to quench the thrust of cultural consumption of the global population.

Participants in High Culture festivals such as the Cannes Film Festival (France), Verona Festival (Venice Biennale) and the Edinburgh Festival (Scotland) are limited due to the exclusive nature of their participants (who are often well-funded and established) within the specific area of the arts (Zaiontz 77-78). The participants (both, artists and audiences) in these festivals include the international media making festivals very important events for the spectators who participate in part in order “to see and to be seen” (Picard and Robinson 278), and to confirm their status in the eyes of their co-elite members. This not only creates an entire

community of elites that approve and affirm each-others status through mutual recognition but also highlights the difference between the types of spectatorship.

There is a sub-category of elite spectators called ‘omnivores.’⁴⁸ ‘Omnivores’ or “taste makers” are “surrogate consumers” whose institutional position confers social legitimacy upon them as influential elite critics (Cheyne and Binder 337). Omnivores seem to dominate globalized hybrid society in the contemporary era. This section of society tends to consume global culture, desiring in this process a re-affirmation of the “Omnivore’s status as global citizens” (Kinnunen and Haahti 42). Omnivores setting up innovative stylistic trends can inspire local artists and artists from Indigenous communities. Because their art and cultural knowledge is not widely known it is ‘new’ to these “taste makers” who highlight these artists and cultural forms, allowing local and Indigenous artists to express their art and to build recognition and identity among the contemporary artistic world within a global marketplace (Kinnunen and Haahti 42). I argue Indigenous performance artists within and outside the frames of performing arts festivals thus have an opportunity to strategically (re)present their arts and culture through festivals and the gaze of omnivores which participate in them, and this can strengthen their agency. This is not to say that Indigenous artists always find inspiration from festival omnivores or seek separate venues for their theatrical articulations. The representation of indigeneity through the space provided by performing arts festivals points indirectly towards the power relations of representation. Indigenous performances can be (re)presented within the space created by performing arts festivals in such a way that re-asserts the identity and culture of the community. At the same time, identities and cultures can also be easily mis-represented, or presented as singularities, reducing the diversity and complexity of peoples and cultural forms. Festivals may have an essentializing function as they promote specific themes, artistic forms or particular time frames/historical contexts, hence, the festival generated space is highly affected by politics and power relations which effect the communities and cultures it (re)presents.

3.2.1. Types, structures and functions of contemporary Festivals

Below is a list of some of the popular contemporary festivals of the world along with their structures and functions:

| Name | Location | Type | Structure | Function |
|-----------------------|---|--------------------------|---|--|
| Snow and Ice Festival | Harbin, China | Seasonal display of arts | A month- long display of carvings on huge blocks Ice | Tourism, artistic exposure |
| Holi | Celebrated around the world by the Hindus | Religious | One day celebration with colours and water | Community connection/fun activity |
| Cascamorras | Baza, Spain | Historical | One day celebration in memory of famous historical incident of the stealing of the statue Virgen de la Piedad | Community connection/fun activity |
| Carnevale | Venice, Italy | carnival | Three weeks long celebration of traditional carnival | Fun, celebration |
| Tomorrowland | Boom, Belgium | Dance and Music | Three days long world's largest electronic Dance Music festival | Tourism, artistic exposure |
| Mardi Gras | New Orleans | Carnival | One day carnival | Fun, celebration, artistic exposure, tourism |
| Oktoberfest | Munich, Germany | Food/drink | First Weekend of October celebrated | Fun, community connections, tourism |

| | | | | |
|---|----------------------------|---------------------------------|--|--|
| | | | drinking beer, world's biggest beer festival | |
| Albuquerque International Balloon Festival | Albuquerque, New Mexico | Hot Balloon festival | One day festival – world's biggest hot balloon festival | Fun, community connections |
| Cooper Hill's Cheese Rolling Festival | Gloucester, England | Food with fun | One day festival of chasing the cheese rolls down the hill | Fun, community connections |
| Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival | Indio, California | Music arts festival | Three -ay festival held in middle of the desert – well known music festival | Artistic exposure, fun and camping adventure for participants, tourism |
| Running of the Bulls | Pamplona, Spain | Traditional Spanish festival | Week-long festival celebrating tradition of running the bulls | Fun, community connections |
| Burning Man | Black Rock city, Nevada | Unconventional, radical | Almost a week- long celebration of freedom and living unconventionally in middle of the desert | Fun, community connections, tourism, ecology, radical self-expression, arts |

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|--------------------------------|--|---|
| Wanderlust Yoga Festival | Oahu, Hawaii | Healthy lifestyle promotion | A week-long celebration of practicing yoga in relaxed space | Health, community connections |
| Gay Pride Rio and Parade | San Francisco | LGBTQ community | Two-day long celebration of LGBTQ community | LGBTQ pride, community connections, social acceptance, tourism |
| Lantern Festival | Celebrated widely by Chinese people as mark of Chinese New Year | Traditional | Celebration of new year | Fun, community connections |
| White Nights Festival | St. Petersburg, Russia | International arts festival | Famous annual international arts festival during the season of midnight sun in Russia – includes opera, ballet, music and theatre performances of local as well as international artists | Artistic exposure, community connections, tourism |
| Art Basel | Switzerland | Fine Arts | Display of local and international fine arts, lectures | Artistic exposure, tourism |

| | | | | |
|--|---------------------|----------------------------|---|--|
| | | | and panel discussions | |
| The Venice Biennale | Venice, Italy | Performing arts and cinema | Modern arts festival covers, architecture, dance, music, cinema and theatre – also provides access to buying and selling artistic works | Artistic exposure, tourism, access to merchandizing the artistic works |
| Hong Kong International Art Fair | Hong Kong, China | Modern arts | Display of international modern arts | Artistic exposure, tourism |
| Cannes Film Festival | Paris, France | Private film festival | Most prestigious and oldest film festival | Artistic exposure |
| Edinburgh International festival and Edinburgh Fringe festival | Edinburgh, Scotland | Arts festival | Exposure to creative art works | Artistic exposure, tourism |
| Sundance Film Festival | Utah, USA | Film festival | Famous American film festival that show new works by American and international film makers | Artistic exposure |
| Bonnaroo | Tennessee, USA | Music and Arts festival | Annual international | Artistic exposure |

| | | | | |
|--|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| | | | festival of music and arts | |
| Gilroy Garlic Festival | California, USA | Food festival | Annual food festival held in last weekend of July | Community connections, fun |
| London Film festival | London, UK | Film festival | Features, documentaries and short films from across the world is included in this festival held by British Film Institute in later half of October | Artistic exposure, tourism |
| Budapest Spring festival | Hungary | Dance, drama, music and arts festival | Exhibition of local and international arts | Artistic exposure |
| World of Wearable Arts Show | Wellington, New Zealand | Arts and fashion | Unique festival of wearable arts and fascination fashion | Artistic exposure, community connections |
| Young and Hungry Fetsival of New Theatre | Wellington, New Zealand | Theatre | Theatre performed and designed by young artists between the ages of 15-25 year old | Artistic exposure, community connections |

3.3. Indigenous Arts Festivals and Sustainability

The listed festivals in the above table visibly have different orientations and functions as ‘public art’ forms. Cros and Jolliffe (45) provide theoretical explanation of the four different orientations within festivals; Commercial, Industry, Artists and Public. For instance, The London Film Festival can be defined as oriented towards commercial and industry as well as artistic and, on the other hand, the World of Wearable Arts Show can be defined as oriented towards artists, industry and public. The following table explains these categories in detail:

| <i>Commercial</i> | | <i>Industry</i> |
|---|--|--|
| Investment, promotion, sponsorship, tourism opportunities, merchandising | International art fairs, award ceremonies | Networking, benchmarking/criticism, promotion, branding |
| Community arts events, international travelling exhibitions, many city arts festivals, gallery hops, affordable arts fairs, pop-ups, charity events | Events with broad appeal that successfully balance all four focuses | Some international film festivals, biennales, graduating exhibitions/performances for contemporary and heritage arts |
| Appreciation, awareness, cultural exchange, education, cultural identity, community affirmation | Most fringe festivals, arts seminars/conferences, studio openings, PechaKucha evenings | Knowledge transfer, acknowledgement, networking, inspiration, artistic affirmation |
| <i>Public/tourists</i> | | <i>Artist</i> |

Figure 4: Orientation Table. Reproduced from (Cros and Jolliffe 47)

The orientations explained above can be significant for understanding any event, including festivals. Understanding the orientation(s) of the arts event, is one way of categorising the politics or performance of the arts event within the socio-political sphere. For instance, those festivals or arts events that are aimed primarily at providing exposure for new/emerging artists as an inspiration to the public are events which primarily seek to build creative capital within a society (Cros and Jolliffe 47). Some of such festivals from the above list (p.94) include Edinburgh Fringe Festival, Art Basel, Young and Hungry Festival of New Theatre and so on. Festivals that focus on celebrating and reaffirming community identity and cultural politics are creating the affirmed political visibility, and so on. The budget or funding is a practical aspect of organising a festival. A well-known festival can easily receive funding due to its ability to gain a wide spectatorship, but the less famous festivals find it more difficult to get funding from commercial or governmental agencies; and some make a conscious decision not to receive money from commercial or governmental agencies due to political and/or ideological differences.

According to Cremona (7) “the size of the budget” and “the fact of accepting or refusing state aid” are important elements of the process of festivalizing. However, for the spectators or participants, the experience of going to the festival is always unique and has an impact. Even a low budget community festival that runs on donations from participants has its socio-political impact on participants, as the festival by default provides them with a range of artistic possibilities. As Cremona (10) discusses “[a]ttending a particular festival is in itself a meaningful act, even though the persons who make this choice are not necessarily aware of all or any of its political and social implications”. I claim that being part of the festival either as a presenter or a spectator is thus a privilege, because participation within the festivalized space automatically makes the participant a part of the performance of politics; and at the same time, they also experience or witness the politics of the performance.

Accepting funding from commercial or governmental agencies would impact the cultural politics employed by festivals through restraining the organizers in relation to terms and conditions. The capitalist values of owning the rights by investing money is a well-structured framework, within both commercial and governmental funding agencies everywhere, and this often leaves festival organizers with two stark choices: 1) accept the funds and sustain, or 2) reject the funds to follow their political convictions and suffer financial disadvantage. As Hauptfleisch argues;

There are formidable constraints on the organizers of any festival, directly linked to the cultural politics and cultural economics of the festival. And naturally this may have a most decisive impact on the ability of the organisers (or anyone else) to use the festival in any concerted and coherent fashion to shape artistic and cultural identity (44).

However, from the point of Indigenous artist(s) who accept funding for sustainability reasons, they can still control their political expression using social media or news media even if the politics of a particular festival would otherwise limit them. And, for those artists who do not accept the funding due to political differences, it becomes increasingly tough to survive but not impossible. Indigenous artists who have issues with politics of funding agencies often go to the community and appeal for donations or adopt a form of expression that doesn't need much resources, for example, Budhan Theatre and its street theatre which doesn't require any resources except for the brain, body and voice of the performers.

This predicament is always present when Indigenous artists organize festivals. In my own research, I can attest to the two major reasons behind why Indigenous artists/producers face it

more often than any other producers: 1) the re-assertion of identity and visibility among the artistic world is very important to be considered mainstream as these are important factors which lead to inclusion in festival spaces, and 2) using a festival as political forum to assert Indigenous rights and to resist against injustice can become impossible due to the ‘terms and conditions’ associated with accepting funding from hegemonic power structures, i.e. commercial or governmental agencies. Often the above-mentioned issue is more applicable for Indigenous artists due to their socio-political invisibility and assimilative attitudes of hegemonic power structures of the state and society.

I discuss several conventional forms of festivals including some Indigenous festivals organized by Indigenous artists throughout this thesis in relation to case studies of theatre productions staged in these festivals. I discuss Edinburgh International Fringe festival (Scotland, United Kingdom), FESTPAC (various locations), Bharat Rang Mahotsava (Delhi, India), New Zealand International Arts Festival (Wellington, New Zealand), Auckland Arts Festival (Auckland, New Zealand), Kia Mau Festival (Wellington, New Zealand), Ahmedabad Theatre Festival (Ahmedabad, India), Pūtahi Festival (Wellington, New Zealand), Black Comedy Theatre Festival (Ahmedabad, India), Breaking Ground Festival (Wellington, New Zealand). I discuss the efficacy of these festivals as well as the efficacy of theatrical performances within and outside frames of those festivals. I also discuss the process of festivalization of the space throughout my thesis and will conceptualize the idea in following paragraphs.

3.4. Contemporary Festivals and “Festivalization”

Funding organisations develop different definitions of performance and festivals that are specific to their own goals and cultural contexts. In this chapter I will introduce the term ‘festival’ more generally because this thesis explores work from across cultural contexts which therefore has multiple contextual connotations. From its traditional or ritualistic contexts to its contemporary context as highly commercial events aimed at bourgeois audiences, festival can be interpreted differently in different contexts. A definition of the term ‘festival’ according to the Oxford English Dictionary online database is “a series of performances of music, plays, films/movies, etc., usually organized in the same place once a year; a series of public events connected with a particular activity or idea”. Simply put, a festival is a physical or virtual space that offers a wide range of artistic or aesthetic expressions within a specific time frame.

It is very common to come across tag lines in publicity materials such as, “recently returned from the world premiere at Edinburgh festival” or “hit show of Bharat Rang Manch” or “a sell-out at the 2015 Ahi Kaa Festival” etc. when shows are touring or remounted. These tag lines not only contribute towards the marketing of the shows or festival, but also create a sense of celebration or being in the presence of a ‘happening’ around an event, and these factors eventify the space. Festivals therefore become a “means of retaining the event in the cultural memory of the particular society” (Hauptfleisch 39).

Festivals also confer power upon their organisers, who not only choose the theme or genre of the festival, but also develop those ideas into experiences that can become part of the cultural memory of a society. Along with the power, comes the responsibility of an organiser or an artistic director to showcase performances that will attract spectators. For these commercial reasons there are some festivals that would only invite well-proven or successful shows to participate; which in turn means that established popularity and prior success become qualifying measures for an artists’ inclusion. However, there are many festivals that provide opportunities to young or emerging artists locally as well as internationally; most obviously Fringe festivals held across the world, as well as local incentives such as the annual Young and Hungry Festival based in Wellington. The Young and Hungry Festival started with the aim of providing professional experience to emerging and young artists, the festival is known nationally for the integrated mentorship and direction it provides to new theatre makers and young artists (“Young and Hungry”). Another festival which provides a nurturing platform for emerging Māori and Pasifika talent is the annual Pūtahi Festival organised in Wellington, New Zealand, and the Short and Sweet Festivals which began in Sydney, Australia aiming to showcase new talent, and are now held in countries across the world (“Short and Sweet”).

In addition to selecting the theme and performances of the festival, artistic directors also have a responsibility to communicate the ‘politics of the event’ to audiences, thus introducing and making visible the politics of festivalizing to those people attending the event (Cremona 7). For instance, the identity of the artistic director or the intentions behind the selection of a particular theme or type of performances; refusing state aid or even highlighting a lack of state aid are all frames which communicate the politics behind the festivalizing. The process of festivalizing can also lead to the recognition, confrontation and strengthening of particular communities. For instance, the Adelaide Festival held in 2002 demonstrated a formal recognition of Aboriginal communities at a global level, and it is also often discussed as an

event which openly demonstrated a deeper communal acceptance of Aboriginal Australians at both local and national levels (Bramwell, 2002). Similarly, the Ahmedabad Theatre Festival held in 2012 in Ahmedabad city of India remarkably impacted on changing the identity of Budhan Theatre and in a way that of DNTs and demonstrated significant level of acceptance from the society and mainstream artists of India. A similar example from New Zealand can be the inclusion of the traditional waka voyaging performance into the New Zealand International Arts festival showcase the political message of the festival body becoming more inclusive of Indigenous arts as compared to the prior festivals (see Chapter Five).

Cremona (5-13) discusses three key factors in the process of the eventification of festivals or “festivalizing”; these are power, people and community. Cremona argues that festivals play a dominant role within the theatre culture of Western societies (6) which can be read within diverse post-colonial social, political and cultural contexts, such as theatre performance by Indigenous artists. When the festivals operate within the same socio-political and economical space, with an Indigenous rhetorical structure the festival space transforms into highly politicised space of articulating Indigenous politics. To put it simply, within its conventional conceptualization of festival, space is flexible and changes as the politics of the performance is delivered and momentum is felt by the festival participants including the Indigenous performers. For instance, *Hikoi* (2014), a Māori theatre performance, was first performed at Circa Theatre as part of Matariki Development Festival 2014. And then it was world premiered at the Auckland Arts festival 2015 – a festival that is organised by socio-politically and culturally hegemonic groups of Aotearoa/New Zealand society. Though the festival space is powered by the hegemonic politics of the festival, the space decolonizes as the performance is enacted and the energy/politics of the performance incorporates the rhetoric created through the performance; and hence in a way decolonizes the space.

Zaiontz describes festivals as “performances that have historically been the stage for sacred rites and rituals, civic celebrations and state spectacle, heritage displays and tourist encounters, and contemporary arts and performance” (13). The festival has such a broad possibility and hence cannot be defined through one single definition. The above definition highlights the idea of community togetherness for same purpose. I therefore claim that festivals can also be understood as groups of people who gather at the same place, either physically or virtually, to explore the same idea or for the same cause.

Despite its broad conceptuality, most festivals actually operate on a simple conventional basis of a sender – receiver model; however, these roles are flexible and interchangeable. Therefore, organisers and spectators cannot be ascribed a singular or fixed identity in the space but should both be seen as ‘participants’ (Sauter 2004, Arcodia and Whitford 2006, Schoemakers 2007). A polysystem is a word originally coined by Even-Zohar (1-2) to refer to a mix of interlinked but distinctive systems. Hauptfleisch extends the idea of a polysystem to describe the complexity and fluidity of cultural events (42) such as festivals. According to Hauptfleisch (42) a festival, due to its “polysystemic” nature (having many systems of rules), eventifies itself as a cultural event. The term eventify denotes the process of transforming normal space into polysystemic space, wherein the space is energised with the theme and politics of the event and transforms itself into a festivalized space.

I argue that the festival can be a well-planned or commercially organized event for the entertainment of the people, or it can be spontaneously carried out by group of people as a form of protest. In either case, the geographical space or virtual space becomes significant and it transforms from an everyday space into a festivalized or festival generated space. This transformation is possible because of the spontaneous *communitas* created by the energy or momentum of the performances (Turner 127-128). The significance of the space can be understood by focusing on the outcomes or efficacy of the festival, which is often captured either via personal experience, observation or via (social) media publications.

I claim that this process of festivalization encourages the broader politics of the performance by creating a rhetoric within the space. Due to the nature of any and every festival being ‘public’ (Zaiontz 15), the normal space hence converts itself into a festivalized rhetorical public sphere and encourages the cycle of performances and counter performances within the specific socio-political structure, physically or virtually.

3.5. Festivals and the Rhetorical Public Sphere

Arts festivals, being ‘public’ by nature, create a rhetoric of their ‘happening’ within a specific geographical/local space through media releases, advertisements and other publicity mediums. Festivals, as discussed above, eventify the space creating “a sort of meta-performance” (Cremona 9) by providing participants with an opportunity to watch several performances on similar themes within the same space. This in turn creates a rhetoric within that space – the

rhetoric of participant experience – and that is delivered through the performances/festival. The rhetoric created within the festival space is part of the broader rhetorical public sphere manifested by the festival within the local space. The rhetorical public sphere is an important aspect to study the efficacy of the performance(s) as well as the festival(s).

According to Nancy Fraser (122), when public discourse is understood only as being singular, comprehensive, and overarching; members of subordinated groups have no arenas for deliberation among themselves about their needs, objectives, and strategies. Fraser advocates the need for constituting alternative publics for the members of subordinated social groups—including women, workers, people of colour, and the LGBTIQ community (122). Fraser explains that these subaltern counterpublics create "parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter-discourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs" (123). This suggests the creation of multiple imaginary worlds or spheres within a broader public sphere.

The public sphere today is “both hegemonic and liberatory at the same time; it appears to be in league with the state and with global capital, on the one hand and on the other seems truly a space of democratic practice or even resistance” (Reinelt 20). The post-colonial discourse of identity politics and or the politics of survival resulted out of divide between 'elite/mass' and 'high/subaltern' cultures (Chatterjee 132-8). This has a further layer to it: the intellectual divide between Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars which creates ‘the public’ and the ‘counterpublics’ (Warner 56-7) within a specific space. Warner explains the dividing lines between the communities within the public sphere as ‘public’ and ‘counterpublics’. Counterpublics broadly refers to a section or group of people with an alternative or rival public culture. As Warner explains:

Counterpublics are defined by their tension with a larger public. Their participants are marked off from persons or citizens in general. Discussion within such a public is understood to contravene the rules obtaining in the world at large, being structured by alternative dispositions or protocols...A counterpublic against the background of the public sphere, enables a horizon of opinion and exchange; its exchanges remain distinct from authority and can have a critical relation to power; its extent is in principle indefinite, because it is not based on a precise demography but mediated by print, theatre, diffuse networks of talk, commerce and the like (Warner 56-7).

According to Warner, theatre is one of the key vehicles for the expression of counterpublics (82). Warner discusses theatre makers and other artists as contributing to the creation of a "poetic" world, which eventually generates public discourse (Warner 82). According to him, this poetic public discourse or rhetorical public sphere plays a significant role in employing the politics of the performances within and outside the frames of performing arts festivals (82).

The following paragraphs explore two different theoretical models for examining the processes involved in the creation of a rhetorical public sphere as well as to locate the efficacy of the performances. My discussion also considers the processes involved in the reception of the festivals by spectators and the wider public, as well as the inclusion of specific performances within festivals. The Performance as Dialogue Model (see figure 5 on p. 102) locates performance as a part of a circular process which leads to the creation of a rhetorical public sphere which initiates community dialogue and can lead to social change. The Performance Efficacy Model (see figure 6 on p. 103) locates the reception of performances within the rhetorical public sphere resulting from the performance within the festivals or post-festival space. Both models are influenced by the Schechnerian theory of Performance Studies which sees performance as a phenomenon that develops from everyday life (Schechner 28-51). The performances are re-generated, transmitted, transformed and received every day and are inter-cultural, inter-generic and inter-disciplinary (30). The models explored in this chapter locate theatre performances within and outside festival generated spaces to explore the rhetorical public sphere that they create, which leads to the evaluation of their efficacy within a specific socio-political setup. Understanding these two models is important before moving on to discuss the final model used for the study because, the final model, the Festival Efficacy Model locates the festival at the centre and explores the implications of using festivals as a space or a tool when used by the artistic communities.

3.5.1. Performance as Dialogue Model:

The Performance as Dialogue Model analyses performance as part of a process of dialogue or communication between two different institutions. In the context of Indigenous theatre performances, this model looks at performance as dialogue between the Indigenous community and the culturally and politically dominant forces within which that community functions. According to this model, Indigenous performances and the performances by the dominant group in a society are inter-dependent. When one action is defined as performance, the other will be counter-performance⁴⁹ and vice-versa. This dialogue encourages the creation of a

rhetorical public space. Using this theoretical framework as a tool for understanding the impacts of performance this thesis explores the cyclic process of making a performance; the intended meaning of the performance, the actual performance, aftermath and counter-performance. The cycle of performance and counter-performance create a rhetorical public sphere that not only defines the efficacy of the performance but also re-generates counter-performance as a result of its politics.

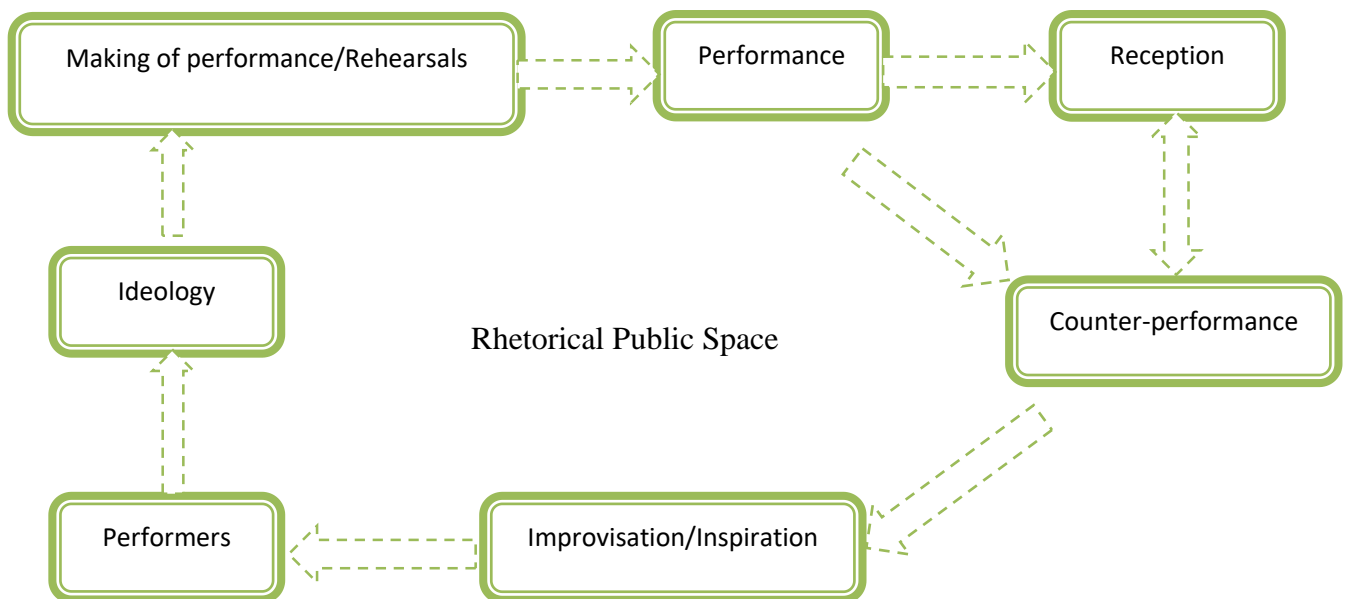


Figure 5: Performance as Dialogue Model

3.5.2. Performance Efficacy Model:

The Performance Efficacy Model focusses on analysing the reception of Indigenous arts/theatre within different socio-political spaces. This model focusses on analysing how the change of space (from everyday space to a festival space) effects the reception of Indigenous theatre within and outside the frames of festival. The efficacy of festivals is analysed based on measuring audience expectations and considering the politics of (mis)presentation of Indigeneity. This model also focusses on the reception of local issues, histories and their relevance to the global audience, turning the performances into a new counter-spectator/counter-culture⁵⁰.

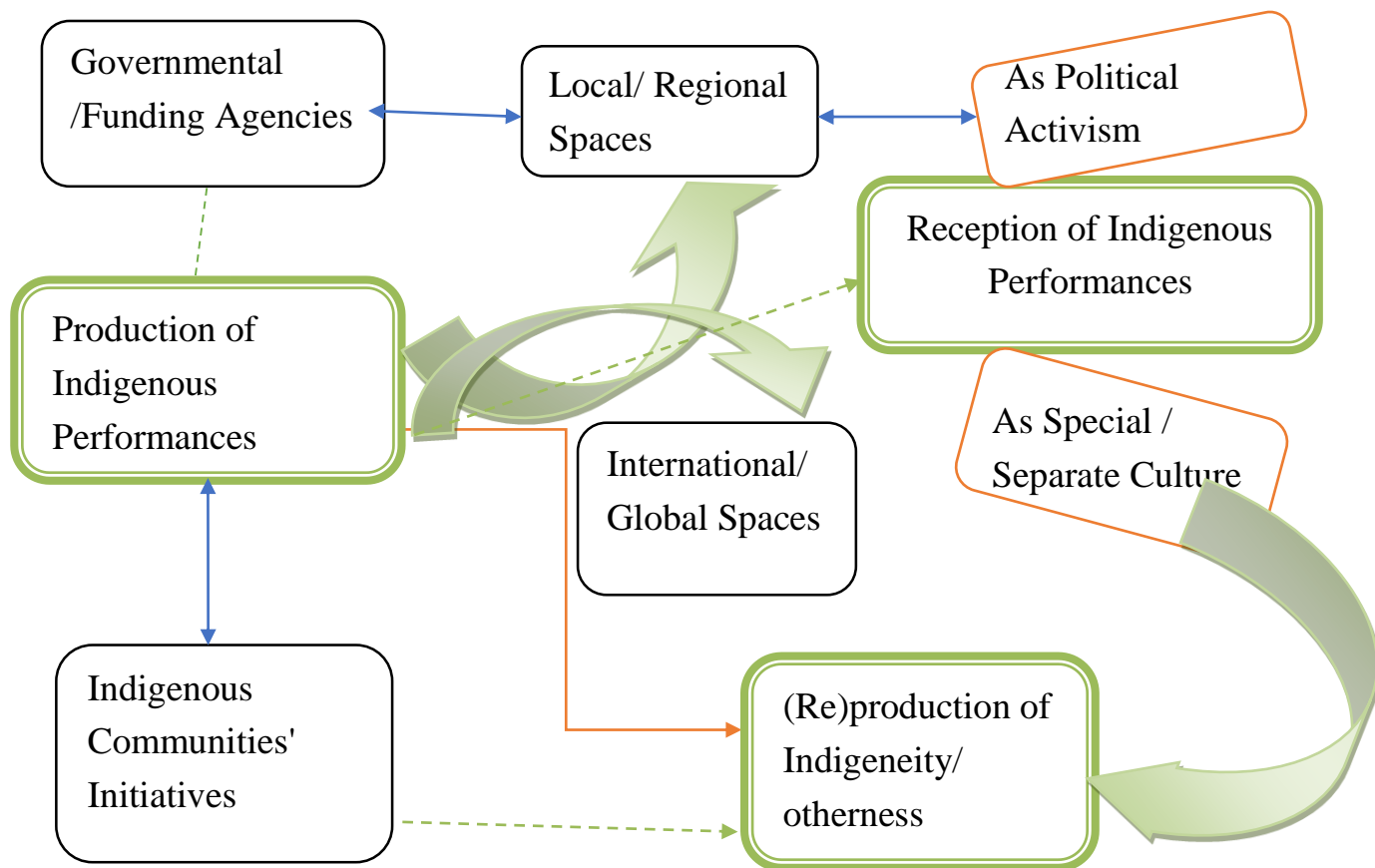


Figure 6: Performance Efficacy Model

Unlike Performance as Dialogue Model, Performance Efficacy Model is complicated due to the complexity of mapping the efficacy of the performance. This model displays the process of creating a performance and its reception in different socio-political spaces within which the rhetoric is created. The Performance as Dialogue Model focuses on how the rhetorical space is created through the cyclical process of performance and counter-performances; and the Performance Efficacy Model focuses more on analysing how the reception of the performance changes when they move from one space from another or from single performance to a meta-event – as part of a festival. The loop created by the interaction of the local and global spaces indicate the festival generated space which is transformed into glocal space; for instance, when an international festival is organized locally or when a local performance transforms into being global within international festival space. These models are significant to understanding this thesis because they provide the base for the actual research model that was created later in this research project.

3.5.3. Festival Efficacy Model

The third model which I have designed for use in this thesis research not only includes aspects of the Performance as Dialogue Model and Performance Efficacy Model, but also looks at the

performance and festival space in a broader sense. The model focusses on the process of creation and argues that the reception of performances and festivals and the process of creating festivals are fundamentally inter-dependent. There can be variances in terms of available aspects that contributes towards transforming the space into the festivalized space and hence those aspects can be omitted. All the three models need to be considered together for studying the efficacy of the festival which includes the rhetorical public sphere, performance reception and the creation of spontaneous communitas (Turner 127-28). For instance, the performance efficacy measured through its reviews determine its inclusion within the high-culture festival of arts and at the same time, inclusion of a performance within the well -known festival determine the quality and acceptance of the performance. Similarly, when an Indigenous political event leaves its implications within the space, the space transforms into the festivalized space representing the Indigeneity. I argue in either situation listed above, the politics of the performance within festival generated space creates the rhetoric which implicates the efficacy of that performance and or the festival.

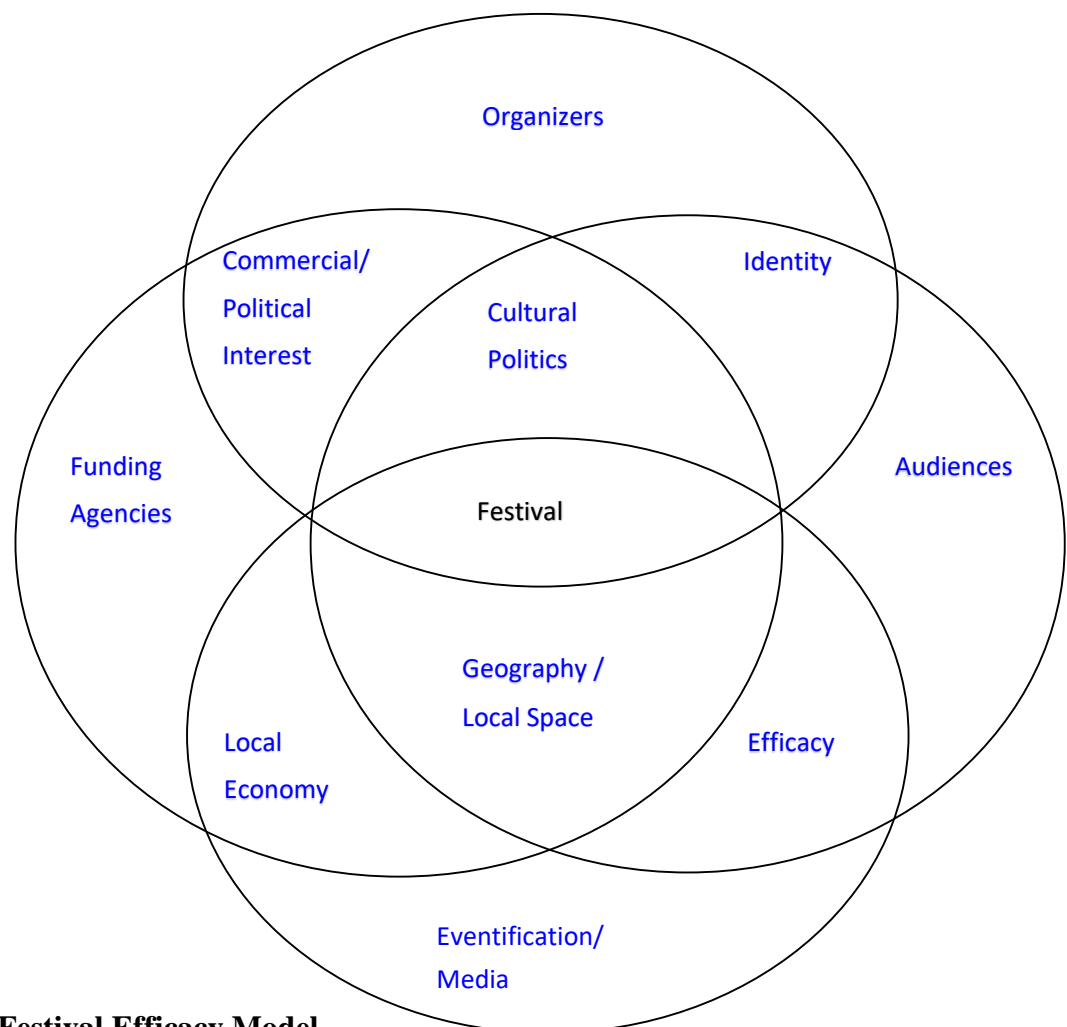


Figure 7: Festival Efficacy Model

The model displays a combination of four major areas/circles that help create a festival space and the rhetorical public sphere that resulted from the festival. The model focuses on how each of the aspects is inter-dependent and the entire process happens together to form the festival space and the rhetoric. I will discuss each of the circles in detail in the following paragraphs.

3.6. Indigenous Identity and Festivals

Audiences generally try and relate to what they watch and experience as part of the performance or festival, and the relationship they are able to establish to the ideas presented is of course influenced by their socio-cultural background, prior experiences and perspectives. This thesis argues that festivals create spaces for identity reconciliation and/or affiliation for Indigenous artists which is far more likely to happen if festivals are not tied to large scale commercial or political interests. At the same time, the type of festival and its geographical space determines what types of audiences might attend. Well known and high budget festivals invest significant amounts of money in marketing and in turn receive large audiences, whereas festivals organised by community theatre groups or festivals with low budgets have comparatively tiny sums to invest in marketing, and as a result receive selective and small audiences. Commercialised festivals receive different types of audiences including; non-theatre goers, tourists, omnivores and popular/non-popular artists. Local communities however can hardly afford the prices of such events. Smaller low budget festivals organised by community theatre groups tend to attract audiences from local communities and artists.

The media not only provides critiques of artistic events, but it also plays an important role in helping them to secure funding by positioning them as accepted arts events, thus conferring status and recognition upon them. This not only creates a possibility for the employment of cultural politics through the medium of arts, but also provides artists with an opportunity to produce their piece of art within the festival space. Moreover, (social) media also provide a platform to bring the communities together for the same cause and allows the festivalized energy to be shared among the participants virtually. For instance, events like the Standing Rock protest carried out by the Indigenous community in North Dakota created weeks long protest movement via social media (Facebook). The social media platform facilitated the creation of virtual rhetorical public sphere and the virtual space was converted into festivalized space. The efficacy of the artistic work or the festival is measured through its reception, which is mainly available through published reviews and shared experiences on social media. Some of the media tools such as online or on the spot surveys also provide details about how the

festival/artistic production is received. Published information in the media significantly impacts possible funding and participatory opportunities for artists and festival organisers.

While it is argued that the abovementioned conceptualization of the efficacy of the festivals can be true in most contexts, there is a possibility that festivals or performances cannot achieve the desired efficacy due to theatre or performing arts being unfamiliar or utilizing unrecognized mediums of expression which fail to engage local people. In such cases, rather than using the same model, conceptualizing the familiar and more acceptable medium of expression/performance can be useful so that the politics of festivals can be easily depicted and carried out by the participants.

The Festival Efficacy Model depicts the functions and efficacy of the festival. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the spontaneous festival can be simply explained as the eventification of the space by the participants for a certain cause. The characteristics of a festivalized or eventified space include the shared experiences of the energy and momentum of the performance as well as the spontaneous *communitas* is created within the space. For instance, when a group of people rallies or blocks a public space to resist the increase in fuel prices or a government's decision to sign a trade agreement with a multinational company, the space of the event is charged with festivalized energy and converts into a festivalized space or festival generated space. I argue through this thesis that there are four pillars involved in the establishment of a festivalized space; 1) well-rehearsed/spontaneous performance, 2) state/funding agencies, 3) participants/spectators and 4) (social) media. Although the spontaneous festival develops itself without the leadership or direction, it deploys the politics of the performances and liberates its participants with the accomplishment of having performed.

The articulation of socio-political issues and expression of resistance through counter-performance highlights the de-colonizing process carried out using artistic performances by the Indigenous peoples of the world. I use the term collectively to project the similarities in post-colonial marginalization and in responses to the issues by Indigenous artistic communities globally. Organising arts festivals and trans-Indigenous networking are part of this de-colonizing strategy, wherein the power is acquired by expressing solidarity and achieving the goal by expressing the resistance. I discuss these concepts in more detail and in context of the case studies in Chapters Four, Five and Six.

Based on the theoretical models discussed in this chapter, I propose a conceptual framework to understand the festivalizing process and the creation of festival cultures which regards festivals as tools of empowerment. I propose three different study models to understand and analyse the performances within festival generated spaces and to understand the process of festivalization. I argue that it is possible to evaluate the efficacy of performances using the rhetoric it creates in the forms of audience feedback, reviews and/or spontaneous actions carried out within the space during or immediately after the performance. However, the process of evaluating efficacy itself is complex and problematizes the study models if the performative expression is unfamiliar or it fails to engage local people. For instance, most Māori audience members for the Māori theatrical performances and festivals belong to the urban strata of the community and hence the accessibility of Māori arts and festivals locally within Aotearoa/New Zealand is limited within the wider Māori community.

I also argue that having ownership and authority over the process of festival organisation can empower Indigenous communities through giving them the ability to represent themselves and thus not risking the mis-presentation of their arts and culture. In the contemporary artistic world, festivals are used as tools of empowerment by Indigenous communities across geographical borders (for example, Māori artists of Aotearoa/ New Zealand, DNT artists of India, Native Canadian artists and so on) and hence the theoretical explanations of festivalization and performance efficacy in several different socio-political and geographical contexts provide fresh, unique and timely conceptualization in the area of study.

I contextualize the selected case studies of particular festivals in Chapters Four, Five and Six. The discussion of the theatrical performances as well as festivals is developed on the basis of evaluating the politics rendered by them, and their efficacy within the festivalized or festival generated space. My argument weaves through three major ideas throughout the thesis which are: 1) Politics – includes the ideas of protest as well as resistance, 2) Performance – inclusive of both, well-rehearsed and spontaneous performances, and 3) Festivalized space – which includes the generation and implications of a rhetorical public sphere.

CHAPTER 4

GLOBAL THE LOCAL AND LOCAL THE GLOBAL: INDIGENOUS COLLABORATIONS, ECOLOGIES OF PROTEST AND FESTIVALIZATION OF CULTURES WITHIN OCEANIA⁵¹ AND BEYOND

4.1. Introduction

This chapter locates trans-Indigenous artistic collaborations and the process of festivalization of cultures within Oceania and beyond. It also explores the areas of ecological activism through Indigenous theatre and the creation of virtual rhetoric of activism through social media. This chapter is divided into four parts. Firstly, it explores the historical and cultural aspects of Pacific migration to Aotearoa/New Zealand. Secondly, it provides a brief overview of trans-Indigenous collaborations across Oceania and beyond. Thirdly, it locates the ecologies of protest and festivalization of Indigenous cultures across and beyond Oceania. And finally, it depicts the use of social media in Indigenous activism and creation of virtual rhetorical public sphere.

Festivalization of culture has been defined by Négrier as “the process by which cultural activity, previously presented in a regular, on-going pattern or season, is reconfigured to form a ‘new’ event” (18). In the context of this chapter, I use the term for indicating the festivalization of culture that has travelled from its original geo-socio-political space to a different geo-socio-political space. For instance – the celebration of Pacific Island arts and cultures in Aotearoa/New Zealand by the Pacific diaspora and other New Zealanders. These celebrations within the new geo-political festivalized space are drawn from and refer to traditional forms of expression but are also “always symptomatic of the current social moment in which they take place” (Zaiontz 12). These multiplicities of meaning mean that the festival

space develops artistic and cultural forms in a unique space in which participants can experience the momentum of the festivalization process.

The contexts, functions and politics of performances change from the way they are received outside of the festival space, due to the lack of that momentum or “spontaneous communitas” (Turner, 127-28) that results from the energy of the festivalized space. I argue, this progression provides an inclusive “Glocal⁵²” space to participants who experience/consume the performance within a festivalized space. Arts festivals arguably provide a kind of “utopian space” to participants, enabling them to be a part of globalized world society where all cultures and identities are inclusive and equally valued (Maclaran and Brown 311). However, at the same time, the festival spaces in which major global festivals like the Cannes Film Festival (France) or the Edinburgh Festival (Scotland, United Kingdom) take place are politically hegemonic due to be the spaces in which the idea of imperial expansion or colonization emerged. So, the festivals provide an imaginary world (Maclaran and Brown 321) where global cultures from invaded regions get consumed within the geographical space from where colonial invasions originated. Liminal spaces where such decolonizing processes are carried out in solidarity by Indigenous or non-Indigenous populations can have problematic trajectories such as consumerism of Indigenous arts and culture and tourist centred presentations despite the well-established imperial politics of the space.

Zaiontz discusses this complexity in the context of the Arctic Games (established in 1970, and drawing together the northern first nations and Inuit from Canada, Indigenous athletes from Alaska, Greenland, Norway and Russia), “Unlike the viciously racist Anthropology Days, the Arctic and other contemporary Games are not proxies for the empirical display of savagery, but complex sites of solidarity, and modernity, by and for indigenous people” (70). There is another aspect to the debate, the presentation of Indigenous culture through the performing arts; which is sometimes located as an 'exotic' and attractive aspect of cultural consumption for tourism industry (Cassel and Maureira 1-2). When such ‘exotic’ performances are part of commercialized international festivals orientated towards tourism, they create social capital⁵³. The highly commercialized festivals that attract huge numbers of tourists⁵⁴ like the Edinburgh Fringe, Carnival of Rio de Janeiro and Mardi Gras in New Orleans have become hybrid and cosmopolitan festivalized spaces. I think the ever-increasing hunger for the consumption of different cultures of the world, and therefore maintaining the status quo of being global citizens, highlights the hybrid as well as the cosmopolitan nature of these cultural spaces. Within post-

colonial cultural discourse, hybridity is seen as one of the critical forces that undermines or subverts socio-political power structures and agencies. As Ien Ang explains, hybridity:

destabilises established cultural power relations between white and black, coloniser and colonised, centre and periphery, the “West” and the “rest”, not through a mere inversion of these hierarchical dualisms, but by throwing into question these very binaries through a process of boundary-blurring transculturation” (Ang 150).

The idea of co-existing together despite differences within a post-colonial globalized world is conceptualised by Jacqueline Lo as “Happy Hybridity” (153). However, this universalisation of difference as something to be consumed problematizes the idea of ethnic identity. Looking at it from the lens of cosmopolitanism, the shared morality of the one single universalized community equally problematizes the politics of Indigenous identity and thus projects the complexity of the festivalized space within the globalized world of today. And that is why when Indigenous arts and culture is presented through the festivalized space, Indigenous identity is even more politicised.

Hybridity is a concept that problematize boundaries, but it does not erase those boundaries and thus, presentations of indigeneity serve as political action within specific spaces. The ethnic Indigenous identity has often been mobilized to operate as a political force in campaigning for and securing citizenship rights and state resources in the post-colonial world (Mamdani 4). For example, the Indigenous rights of Māori communities across Aotearoa/New Zealand are protected by Te Tiriti O Waitangi/Treaty of Waitangi which enables them to legally claim their entitlements of land/location or anything else if they are breached by the Crown⁵⁵. These rights are not available to any other citizen of New Zealand. This project investigates the reception of indigeneity within the complex festival space, where marginality tends to be either erased through shared solidarity as discussed above or reproduced through the ‘exotic’ and essentializing exhibition of Indigenous arts and culture.



Figure 8: A picture of unknown Indigenous woman. Source: Facebook: “Indigenous Environmental Network” Accessed on 22 December 2018.

The chapter locates the trans-Indigenous collaborations within Oceania and beyond and hence it is important to understand the history of Pacific migration to New Zealand. Before I discuss the impacts of a globalized world and its relationship with Indigenous artistic collaborations, it

is apt to mention here that inter-cultural collaborations between Indigenous communities within Oceania is not a new phenomenon; they have always been there (Hau'ofa 148-61). While I discuss these collaborations in detail in following sections, I would like to mention here that Oceanic histories of voyaging, trade, cultural marriage and exchange date back to years before colonial powers entered Oceania's 'sea of Islands' (Hau'ofa 148).

This chapter situates Aotearoa/New Zealand as the Pacific nation with the largest and most diverse Pacific diaspora in Oceania. Aotearoa/New Zealand celebrates diverse Pacific cultures within the 'local' space through recognizing the socio-cultural connections and commonalities between different Pasifika communities, and through the arts cultural connections to individual cultures and homelands are also maintained. There are two major spatial trajectories that my arguments travel through; 1) the festivalization of Pacific cultures within Aotearoa/New Zealand by the Pacific diaspora and 2) trans-Indigenous festivalization within Oceania and the world.

4.2. Pacific Migration to Aotearoa/ New Zealand and Post-colonial Struggles

Dialogues and collaborations between Indigenous communities across the islands of Oceania are not new. According to Hau'ofa, evidence of economic and cultural collaborations are easily found in the oral traditions of Indigenous communities, and within blood ties across Oceania:

The highest chiefs of Fiji, Samoa and Tonga, for example, still maintain kin connections that were forged centuries before Europeans entered the Pacific, to the days when boundaries were not imaginary lines in the ocean, but rather points of entry that were constantly negotiated and even contested. The sea was open to anyone who could navigate a way through (154-5).

Colonial encounters led to the demarcation of fixed geographical boundaries between the Oceanic islands and to the formation of nation states however, cultural encounters with the colonisers also encouraged expanded migration across Oceania. Intra-cultural friction during the European settlements of nations across Oceania and the infamous 'local' genocides within colonized lands fuelled migration from Oceania (Davidson 5). The historical documentation of Pacific people migrating to New Zealand before and during World War II has been widely documented by scholars. ⁵⁶I will therefore be brief in discussing the history here.

Earlier waves of Pacific migration to Aotearoa/New Zealand started in the early 19th Century and were coupled with New Zealand's growing desire to expand as a political power within

Oceania. This movement started as early as 1840 when Prime Minister Richard Seddon toured Tonga, Niue, Fiji and the Cook Islands with the intention of lobbying local leaders to agree to the annexation of Pacific Island nations to New Zealand (Fairbairn-Dunlop 22). New Zealand already had a close relationship with other British colonies such as Samoa and Fiji (Fairbairn-Dunlop 23). New Zealand supported the British empire to uphold colonial rule in Fiji, and used human resources from Rarotonga, Niue and Kiribati for establishing armed forces in World War One (Fairbairn-Dunlop 26). According to Walrond, by 1916, eighteen Melanesians, forty-nine Fijians, and one hundred and fifty-one 'other' Polynesians had settled in New Zealand (Walrond). These groups represent some of the very first Pacific Island migrants to Aotearoa/New Zealand, numbering only 988 in 1935, but a census carried out ten years later showed that these numbers had increased to more than 2000; and by 1971 almost 2% of the population of New Zealand (around 50,000 in number) was of Pacific Islander descent (Macpherson 99).

The citizens of former and current New Zealand territories were encouraged to migrate to New Zealand after the Second World War to meet the post-war labour shortage. A significant number of migrants came from Samoa and Tonga, and a proportionally larger number came from Tokelau, a smaller nation which was suffering the effects of overpopulation. These communities were strategically settled by the New Zealand government, mainly in South Auckland, Otara, and in the Wellington cities of Porirua, Lower Hutt and throughout the Central North Island's forestry belt (Stevenson & Stevenson 57). Statistical sources cite the migration patterns and methods through which Pacific people settled in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The most common method of migration was chain migration (Macpherson 2006). According to the Macmillan dictionary online, chain migration can be defined as the migration of people/families from one specific place/town to another destination/country and they continue to bring people from their home country to this new place⁵⁷.

By the 1970s, New Zealand was known as the 'Britain of the South' (Skilling 57; Smith 25). It was depicted to migrants as a 'land of opportunity' and a land of 'milk and honey', but migrants also arrived to face a completely foreign cultural context (Mackley-Crump 73). Early settlers lived vulnerable and marginalised socio-economic lives and were often victims of significant hostility and racism (Mackley-Crump 73). In the later part of the 1970s, New Zealand's economy suffered significant deterioration which resulted in the unemployment of a number of Pacific migrants, and government policies which supported a "crackdown on migration" which was partly implemented by 'Dawn Raids', where the homes of people who

were suspected to be over-stayers or illegally staying in New Zealand were raided in the middle of the night. A number of Pacific migrants (some of whom were legally staying in Aotearoa/New Zealand) were deported (Mackley-Crump 75-76). As the economy of New Zealand was still stagnant in the 1980s, the migration ratio continued to be limited (Mackley-Crump 75-76). With the change in government in 1984, and the implementation of neo-liberal economic reforms branded as “Rogernomics⁵⁸”, the labour government dramatically impacted the New Zealand market and economy (Mackley-Crump 76). This in turn led to further reforms in immigration policy and emphasised labour market demands and the need for skilled migration. Between 1991 and 1994 greater numbers of Pacific people left Aotearoa/New Zealand than migrated to the country due to changes in immigration policy (Mackley-Crump 77). Despite these changes, people from Pacific nations continued to come to New Zealand albeit in smaller numbers. Many of these migrants were young, and they married and give birth to the next generation of Kiwi Pacific Islanders in Aotearoa/New Zealand. By 2001, the New Zealand population had grown by 10% and the Pacific population had increased by 40% (Johnston et al. 109).

With significant numbers of people moving from the Pacific nations to Aotearoa/New Zealand, the ratio of inter-marriage between people of different Pacific ethnicities, as well as with people from the Māori and Pākeha communities increased, and this has shaped contemporary society in Aotearoa/New Zealand (Mackley-Crump 77). The relationships between Pacific peoples and the tāngata whenua of Aotearoa/New Zealand is quite interesting. As Richard Hill (294) notes, the increased migration of Pacific peoples to Aotearoa/New Zealand coincided with renewed assertions of indigeneity within Māoridom. Additionally, the shared experiences of living / working space, urban drift and marginalization resulted in strong bonds between the communities. As Mackley-Crump (2012) discusses:

...Pacific migrants became the Pacific diaspora, Māori were also becoming diasporic, in being displaced from rural homelands and drawn into urban centres. Together Māori and Pacific migrants shared the socio-economic constraints, as ‘racialised sojourners’...(78).

This pattern of collaboration between minority communities and of identifying commonalities is recognisable in countries across the world (Mackley-Crump 79; Turino 104). Anne-Marie Tupuola (93) found that Pacific youth considered ‘ethnic labels’ as a useful way of connecting with other ‘minority’ groups in the world and/or of maintaining status quo with their peers

(Mackley-Crump 79). This pattern of collaborations among the Pacific diaspora and Māori community of Aotearoa/New Zealand has led to the development of strong cultural bonds, as exemplified by performances in the inaugural Polynesian Festival of 1976 (Mackley-Crump 79).

4.3. Festivalization of Pacific Cultures in Aotearoa/New Zealand

Dis-location and re-location, integration and adaptation of the 'new local' culture became a common part of the lives of people from Oceania and the world due to increasingly high levels of migration. These increased migration levels have also led to the growth of cultural festivals, such as diaspora specific events or multicultural celebrations (Mackley-Crump 3). The migrants took their culture and value systems with them and developed cultural connections with the local cultures of their 'new land' (Hau'ofa 155). The re-location of Pacific communities across Oceania has given birth to the diaspora of Pacific peoples who collaborated locally with Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups of artists to produce Pacific arts.

Early development of Pacific festivals in New Zealand began with the organisation of the Polynesian Festival (also known as 'Polyfest') of 1976 which included crafts, food stalls and music performances. This half-day festival was organised by a culturally diverse secondary school in Auckland (Mackley-Crump 80-81). The appeal of organising such festivals as a way of including and celebrating Pacific cultures in Aotearoa/New Zealand spread very quickly and fuelled the development of the Pacific Festival. Such small-scale celebrations nurtured the idea of the bigger and more unified festival. The first Pacific Festival was organised in 1993 in Auckland at Western Springs Park. As Mackley-Crump mentions, the Pasifika Festival was designed to be a multisensory community celebration and promoted the consumption of Pacific cultures through food, arts and crafts, and performances:

Forty years after the first Polynesian festival, the Pasifika Festival celebrated its twentieth anniversary in 2012 as the biggest Pacific festival in the world, with ten villages, twelve stages, and upward of 350 stalls attracting estimated annual crowds of between one and two hundred thousand people (4).

The success of the Pasifika Festival influenced the commencement and development of other festivals within New Zealand. However, the Pasifika Festival remains the major event in terms of the Pacific festival spaces within Oceania (Mackley-Crump 4). A number of other festivals celebrating Pacific cultures in Aotearoa/New Zealand have emerged including

primary/secondary school focused Pasifika festivals in different cities. Polyfest in Auckland (funded by ASB bank) is one of the largest festivals of Pacific arts in New Zealand. Pasifika Living Arts Festival (West Auckland) facilitates the development of performing arts from Pacific cultured in Aotearoa/New Zealand and features school performance groups alongside traditional food, arts and crafts stalls. Positively Pasifika (Wellington), is funded by Wellington city council and the Pacific Advisory Group and displays arts, music and food from seven Islands in the Pacific region. The Measina Festival (Wellington) is a Pacific arts festival organised during Samoan language week⁵⁹ that showcases contemporary Pasifika dance and theatre.

As discussed above, there has always been a connection between Māori and Pacific communities in Aotearoa/New Zealand based on historical, cultural, socio-economic and political similarities. These connections, which are also known as “axis of equivalence” (Hill 273-326) can easily be seen in Pacific festivals. Early Pasifika Festival coordinator Nancy Sandhoy states:

It was the closest culture you could align with, so there was a unity with Māori and Pacific... You become so New Zealand-ised, so Kiwi-ised, so you may have lost part of the Pacific, but you understand the Māori issues, so there was a greater alignment with those cultures. And we have the same sense of humour, and same type of music... you had the same things happened in the 70s, etc. (Mackley-Crump 231).

It is almost impossible to find a Pacific festival in Aotearoa/New Zealand without the involvement of the Māori community and artists. Similarly, Māori festivals of arts are inclusive of Pacific artists and arts. For instance, Te Matatini initially began as regional kapa haka competition for Māori performers and later became inclusive of Pacific participants. Whether it is Measina festival or Matariki festivals across New Zealand, Māori and Pasifika artists regularly get together in celebrating their cultures and art.

Diverse Oceanic communities and cultures have been woven together in celebrating their commonalities, and Turino (104) argues this is due to “strategic essentialism”. Strategic essentialism is defined by Spivak as “a strategic use of positivist essentialism in a scrupulously visible political interest” (Spivak 214). Strategic essentialism has its benefits and pitfalls when it is used as a political practice. The positive outcome of strategic essentialism could be that the members of groups, though having differences internally, may engage in essentializing and or standardising their public image using their group identity (Eide 76). However, there is a

risk of being dominated within the group by someone whose essentialism is more powerful than other members. On the other hand, public awareness about the risk can maximise the positive outcome with minimum risk (Eide 76).

Getting together to work towards decolonising cultures, languages and identities, as well as to fight against similar socio-political issues impacting Indigenous and diasporic communities inspires these diverse communities to stand together. Artistic festivals provide the perfect platform for the public and performative articulation of this strategic togetherness. The loss of languages, cultures and customs, and the need to decolonize are central themes in theatre practices across Oceania. As Looser (8), Balme (176), and Fortin (138) discuss, theatre as a literary genre – or Western notions of theatre as dramatic text - is an historically foreign concept within Pacific Island communities; and the adaptation of Western theatrical techniques into Indigenous artistic performances has been followed by the artistic communities of Oceania (see Balme's definition of syncretic Theatre⁶⁰). This adaptation of Western theatrical techniques into Indigenous expressions portrays the lives of people on these islands as intimately influenced by colonization (Looser 9). The collaboration between different Indigenous groups, or the transcendence beyond 'Indigenous' identities and geo-political issues marks the common practice of Oceanic theatre.

The advancement of philosophies like the "Pacific Way"⁶¹ which assumed that there were common values and practices across Oceania (Lawson 297-314) began bringing Pacific Island communities together, both within their own local communities and regionally. The "ideological brotherhood" or to be precise the idea of "pan-pacific person" or "the person of multiple worlds" was central to artistic and other collaborations (Looser 5; Va'ai 33; DeLoughrey 129). Such pan-pacific collaborations have been evident in Aotearoa/New Zealand due to the significant Pacific diaspora of the country.

4.4. Pacific Festival of Arts and Artistic Networking within Oceania

Festivals and artistic collaborations have played a significant role in disseminating cultural forms, practices, expressions and politics within Oceania. As discussed by Stevenson, "If one were to look for an underlying structure that could unify Pacific cultures the festival would suffice" (29). The South Pacific Commission (SPC) decided to use a festival as a tool to unite Indigenous communities in Oceania; organising the South Pacific Festival of Arts hosted by Fiji in 1972; followed by the second and third festivals hosted by New Zealand in 1976 and Papua New Guinea in 1980 (Stevenson 10-15). The festival was re-named the Pacific Festival

of Arts after the third festival marked significant participation from the Northern Pacific Islands, Hawai'i and Guam⁶². In the 3rd South Pacific Festival of Arts hosted in Papua New Guinea in 1980, for the first time that 1600 participants from 22 Pacific Islands participated. The Pacific Festival of Arts has not only gained importance within the region but has also become a tourist attraction (Stevenson 30). The festival is inclusive of both traditional as well as contemporary forms of arts such as clay artistry, visual arts, traditional music and dance, sculpturing, poetry, theatre and so on.

The most recent festival was hosted in Guam in 2016 and a delegation of about 100 Māori and Aotearoa/New Zealand based Pasifika communities participated. A Māori performance directed by Erina Daniels entitled *Party with the Aunties*⁶³ (2011) was selected as part of the festival alongside the significant inter-disciplinary visual art showcased by Māori woman Lisa Reihana who combined the history with technology and presented *In Pursuit of Venus[Infected]* (2016) -moving images representing the arrival of Cook at New Zealand and Australian shores from a Māori perspective. The work then travelled to the Venice Biennale the following year in 2017. A well-known Samoan actor, writer and director Maiava Nathaniel Lees presented *Fale Sā* [the Sacred House] as part of the New Zealand performances at the festival. Creative New Zealand spent \$65,000 towards the travel, per diems and accommodation of the New Zealand delegation who travelled to the Pacific Festival of Arts in 2016 ("Creative NZ"). The current government and or corporate agencies in the region are surprisingly the main sources of financial aid for the festival reviewing the sponsors advertisement on the festival hosted in Guam in 2016 ("Visit Guam"). Retail industries, banks, international shipping services and airline companies⁶⁴ are amongst the funding agencies for the festival. This also highlights how conflicting agencies ((neo)colonial as well as the Indigenous artistic groups) work together in creating a festival which is profitable for all agencies. Stevenson provides an example worth mentioning here:

[T]he giving of cultural aid by France prolongs Tahitian dependency, tourism to Tahiti is profitable for multinational corporations, and despite these demonstrations of domination it creates a cultural identity with which the Tahitian people can stand in contradistinction to colonial powers (Stevenson 30).

The gradual development of artists, arts and cultural politics have marked the contemporary versions of the Pacific Festival of Arts. However, the significance of the past and those artists who sowed the seeds of the festival cannot be underestimated. The idea of uniting within the same spaces and working collaboratively towards goals of decolonisation and self-determination, and of the removal the tourist gaze has become part of the cultural politics delivered by Oceanic artists through their arts. The initial purpose of this united move was to preserve and re-establish the 'traditional' art forms of Indigenous communities across Oceania. The brochure from the first Festival of Pacific Arts describes the intentions and ideas underpinning the festival (qtd. in Stevenson, 1999):

The culture of the South Pacific is a living culture...But even in the Pacific, change is inevitable, and positive efforts are needed to prevent the age-old arts from succumbing to the pervading sense of sameness that exists in much of our society, or being swamped by commercialism, or cheapened to provide facile entertainment for tourists. We hope that this festival will not only encourage the preservation of the best in Pacific Island culture, but that it will also serve to re-establish much that is in danger of being lost. In particular, we hope that it will re-emphasize the need for the retention of the classical art forms, for the best taste, for the highest ideals and dignity (31).

The Pacific Festival of Arts is a highly popular global festival, while the festival attracts huge interest from tourists, it is equally popular among academics, anthropologists, and the Indigenous artists and communities. However, it does not seem to be always accessible for everyone. According to the report published on *Stuff news* (Fagan), the flight costs for a return ticket to Guam is roughly around \$3000 per person and thus the government used Royal New Zealand Airforce for Māori and Pasifika artists who travelled and returned by the army jet planes (Fagan).

The presence of traditional dances and *waka* [canoe] is part of the The Pacific Festival of Arts; and interestingly the biggest artistic festival of Aotearoa/New Zealand entitled The New Zealand Festival of Arts has also adapted this traditional artistic expression as part of the 2018 festival opening ceremony⁶⁵. The *Waka Odyssey* was a historically unprecedented event, and an unforgettable opening of the New Zealand Festival 2018. Approximately 20,000 people gathered to witness the fleet of *waka* arriving at the Wellington waterfront, representing the

history of the Pacific explorer Kupe and his wife Kuramarotini⁶⁶. The waka travelled via Samoa and other Pacific Islands and across Aotearoa/New Zealand as part of the event, and the journey celebrated voyaging histories and stories (“NZ Festival”). The ocean was transformed into a huge stage within a vibrant festival-generated space with extremely thrilled crowd eager to watch this unique show. This inclusion is significant and has marked the success for Indigenous artists who have been struggling to make their presence noticed and to create their own artistic space within highly commercialised and Pākehā dominated artistic spaces like the New Zealand Festival of Arts space. This significant inclusion of the event highlights the unique place of New Zealand within Oceania representing a collective Pacific identity rather than just Māori. According to McLean, “It's an ancient custom the traditional canoe welcome in the Pacific Arts Festival, it symbolises the oneness of the people, islands and the canoes” (McLean). As O’Donnell writes about the show in his review published on *The Theatre Times*:

[*Waka Odyssey*] was arguably one of the most spectacular pieces of theatre ever performed in Aotearoa, turning the entire harbor and city into a stage, evoking the mythic past as well as the bustling activity of a twenty-first-century city which is a hub for migration, business and the centre of government. In a series of stunning tableaux, Marbrook, Barclay-Kerr, and Pol brought past, present, and future together in a celebration of voyaging and of Aotearoa’s legacy as a migrant nation” (O’Donnell “Celebrating Oceanic”).

The performance received a huge reception and thousands of people gathered at the harbour it seemed like a customary execution of the ‘inclusive’ philosophy of the festival. This significant inclusion also suggests the efficacy and reception of Pūtahi festival in three years after it started in the year 2014 as a response to the absence of Māori arts of the New Zealand Festival of Arts as discussed in previous chapter. Moreover, the spectacle defines globalized multi-cultural society of Aotearoa/New Zealand as O’Donnell sums up saying:

As Aotearoa welcomes new waves of migrants and refugees from around the globe, *Waka Odyssey* is a timely and optimistic recognition of the intercultural diversity of a South Pacific country with a dynamic history of migration and voyaging looking to the future (O’Donnell “Celebrating Oceanic”).

Artistic collaborations and cultural exchange between the Indigenous communities of New Zealand, Australia, Cook Island, Tonga, Fiji, the Solomon Islands, Samoa, Rapanui and Canada have been documented by several scholars including Stevensen (1999), Looser (2014) and Fortin (2016). As Fortin discusses, collaborations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, as well as between two Indigenous communities provide an opportunity to the artists to produce significant visual art and performance (186-190). According to the above scholars, there has been a significant exchange of artistic skills and co-production within Oceania in recent times. Some examples of this include; collaborations between Māori and Samoan, Cook Island, Native Canadian, Southeast Asian and Rapanui artists. Tawata is an important theatre group that has become home of these collaborations and the remarkable festival space it provides alongside Te Hau Tūtū trust through Breaking Ground and other efforts discussed in Chapter Six.

This drive to be more visible is a necessity within a globalised world for Indigenous artists who struggle to survive as fulltime artists. Uniting could be the best solution to this problem. There have been different kinds of collaborations among the artists from different artistic areas. “Oceania: Imagining the Pacific” is one of the major examples of how artists from Māori, Pacific and Pālagi [New Zealander of European descent] background collaborated in designing the arts gallery exhibition at Te Papa museum as well as at the City Gallery in Wellington in 2011, which was part of the Real New Zealand Festival 2011⁶⁷. As an example, beyond Oceania, the Oceania Exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts in London was held between September 29th to December 10th, 2018. The exhibition includes 200 pieces celebrating the arts and cultures of Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia. The exhibition presents an excellent collaboration of work between the Indigenous artists of the nations of Oceania and is first such exhibition so far that has been curated and brought to London by Indigenous people, rather than being stolen by the colonizer and placed in a museum context without the agency of the artists. The Indigenous rituals included in the opening ceremony of the exhibition included a haka performance, traditional Indigenous songs and blessings bestowed by the cultural representatives of the individual cultures to bless the treasures that journeyed to London from respected cultures. The exhibition is perceived as “a symbolic voyage of people from all nations represented in the exhibition” (Miller).

Another significant institution supporting collaborations between Indigenous artists within Oceania is the Oceania Centre for Arts, Culture and Pacific Studies (OCACPS) which is located at the University of the South Pacific in Suva, Fiji. One recent collaboration between Fijian and Australian artists was the printmaking workshop and exhibition entitled “Cli-mat: Weaving Climate Awareness through Art” in May 2012. The description on the OCACPS website describes the centre as aiming to, “create inspiring, innovative, and inter-disciplinary world class productions informed by Oceanian art forms and traditions but open to global influences”. The Pacific Sisters is another Indigenous group of artists from Māori and Pasifika communities including Rosana Raymond, Lisa Reihana and Ani O’Neil that works in collaboration and aims at presenting positive stories and identity of the Indigenous women using performing arts and fashion as their mediums. The Pacific Sisters are a collective of artists, performers, fashion designers, dancers and singers who collaborate with Indigenous communities across the Oceania to produce Indigenous artistic works. One of the artists of the collective shares “Our work is a reflection of the ‘spark’ we have had as Pacific Sisters – finding our connections to our Pacific stories, peoples, lands, each other,” Ani O’Neill (“Pacific Sisters”).

The description above self-defines the inevitable influence of a globalized world on Indigenous arts, and the commitment of Indigenous artists and arts educators to produce world class performances, as well as to be visible and recognised in terms of the global arts market. The Oceania Digital Library is another important collaborative project. It was initiated by The University of Hawai’i Library, the University of Auckland Library, and the University of California San Diego Library and the project began in late 2007. The goal of the digital library is to create digitalised data of Indigenous arts and cultures in Oceania, to actively seek funding to develop the collections and resources for the library, and to collaborate in preserving and growing Indigenous artistic collections⁶⁸.

4.5. Trans-Indigenous Collaborations and the Creation of Festival Space

Miria George discusses how artistic communities in Oceania have initiated festivals without accepting aid from government in order to increase visibility, agency and power from within (George “Personal Interview”). Festivals have proven to be vital events to showcase the presence and political viewpoints of Indigenous communities. It can be argued that festivals don’t just empower communities to be able to present an alternative point of view, but also provide Indigenous communities with opportunities to network with other Indigenous artists

and to begin collaborations with them. Shared histories of migration alongside shared diasporic (global) as well as local experiences of marginalisation highlight how this trans-Indigenous worldviews and identities can be mobilised as part of a strong Indigenous movement towards de-colonisation.

The trans-tribal collaborations and political activism done by the Denotified and Nomadic Tribes of India⁶⁹ can be looked at through the same lens. The mobilised identity of DNTs developed as part of strong political movements against social marginalization, negligence from the government and police atrocities and injustices that had been happening to the DNTs for decades in India. Budhan Theatre's⁷⁰ movement through street theatre and festival organization, without accepting funds from the government which might have impacted the forms that their theatre activism was able to take, highlights the similar approach taken by the Indigenous artists across the world (for example by Tawata in New Zealand or by Native Arts in Canada). This is effectively supported by the solidarity expressed through social media.

There have been an emerging number of cultural and artistic collaborations⁷¹ between Indigenous communities across and beyond Oceania, some examples include collaborations between the Māori-Cook Island theatre group Tawata (based in Wellington, NZ) with the Native Canadian group, Native Earth Performing Arts (Based in Toronto) and Debajehmujig (based in Indian Reserve on Manitoulin Island, Northern Ontario) or with the aboriginal Australian theatre groups Yirra Yaakin (based in Perth, Western Australia) and Moogahlin (based in New South Wales, Australia).

New Zealand based, Atamira Dance Company⁷² has been involved in significant cultural exchange and collaborative artistic works across the globe since the year 2000. Atamira, unlike the Māori theatre companies received generous funds as they mention on their website and can be seen in Creative New Zealand funding reports (2010, 2011, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018). Perhaps, this is because of the preference towards an art form. It is well established that the music and dance are the performing arts that are more in demand and more consumed within tourism sector or conventional international festival sectors as compared to theatre (Grant; Grant and Wallace; Wainwright). Atamira has a history of eighteen years of collaborations with artists from Indigenous and non-Indigenous ethnic backgrounds and to achieve global future through inter-cultural exchange, inter-disciplinary collaborations and

artistic development. I call such collaborations a step towards unified global Indigenous movement.

The sea is life for the people of Oceania (Munro at el. 114). Oceanic communities share the ocean geographically and the idea of sharing life and its values is common across the Indigenous communities of Oceania (Munro at el. 114). The Breaking Ground festival has served as a catalyst to inspire Indigenous artists to connect to each other consciously and to feel more supported globally. As Baker shares:

This festival [Breaking Ground 2017] has been an amazing opportunity to show work, to collaborate, to create networks. The experiences we have in the collaborations that have taken place have opened things up for me to feel lifted, to feel inspired, to feel that there is a support in a larger and global community of indigenous people and that to me is one of the largest take away experience from this festival. Hone (Kouka) shared this the other day, and I am only paraphrasing it, “The sea is between the island and not as wide, and we are closer together, it’s bringing our lands together” (Baker).

Te Haukāinga - a shared space of Taki Rua, Tawata and The Conch can be looked at as significant example of collaborations between the Māori and Pasifika artists. The Conch has extended relationships with the artists on the islands and their work *Marama* (2016) is an evidence of it. Creative New Zealand has committed itself towards a new strategic plan for Pasifika artists working in New Zealand which encourages the global reach of Pasifika arts and collaborations between Aotearoa/New Zealand based Pasifika artists and artists from the Pacific Islands (Grant). O’Donnell remarks on new strategic planning of Creative NZ,

The CNZ *Pacific Arts Strategy* stresses the strategic value of Pacific artists as Indigenous peoples identifying with the whole region of Oceania, as a bridge between New Zealand and the rest of the world (O’Donnell “Finding a Sense” 15).

The efficacy of the Māori performative resistance through theatre and festival organization is exceptional. It brought changes within the operational and policy /strategy matters at Creative New Zealand. Creative New Zealand annual report 2018 is an evident of this change when the government sponsored funding agency expresses,

Since November 2017, Creative New Zealand staff have spoken widely with the [Māori arts] sector and collated data and research from internal and external sources. As a part of this consultation, the Ngā Toi Māori roadshow helped develop Creative New Zealand's understanding of how the regional landscape for Māori arts and culture affects social, cultural, economic, and environmental wellbeing (Grant).

CNZ also began two international arts exchange programs with Banff centre for Arts and Creativity (located in Alberta, Canada) since the year 2014. CNZ provides funding for the tuition, accommodation and travel costs to be at the Banff centre to work alongside other Indigenous artists from across the world ("Banf Centre"). The works and initiatives of Māori artists inspire Indigenous artists to start similar collaboration and or festival organization as discussed by Rachel Maza:

It's similar to the festival we had in Melbourne, Yirramboi, that would only include works controlled by the first nations in terms of creating and delivering of the artistic work. You actually, make that stand and what starts to present itself right under your very nose, the fire in belly!... [T]hese guys at Tawata are so good at creating opportunities for emerging artists to be able to try, to be able to fail and to be able to make mistakes and learn and get up again and keep going and to be nurturing and supportive of them (Maza "Personal Interview").

This democratic process of slowly decolonizing or fighting the racial/cultural hegemony through working together based on strategic essentialism marks many present day trans-tribal and trans-indigenous artistic collaborations and festival presentations. Similarly, in India, socially inclusive festivals organized by Budhan Theatre received tremendous success through empowering tribal communities as well as providing space to artists from mainstream Indian communities.

The Budhan Theatre team reach out to the local DNT communities like *devipujaks*⁷³ and *vanjara*⁷⁴ within the local space and to other DNT communities across India. Most communities welcome the members of Budhan Theatre – the fellow DNT - but some don't welcome them on the basis of the *Chhara* community's mislabelling⁷⁵ as "thieves and criminals".

Once upon a time they were branded as thieves. But today, they are known as actors, with inborn talent in abundance. They managed to change the mindset of society [to an extent] by using theatre as a medium. So, they decided to give it back to society... This is the first time that a national scale cultural event which caters to theatre artists from 'branded' communities is being organised. In the near future, this model will be replicated in other cities and states of India (Shukla).

However, Budhan Theatre organized arts festival(s) did not continue due to lack of funding but there are significant outcomes⁷⁶ for the individuals of the Budhan Theatre in terms of their networking among the well-known artists and career progression. Budhan Theatre undertook a new project and appealed its supporters for funding to organise the Social Action Theatre Activists' Workshops and Festival. The festival was originally planned to be held in November 2018 but cancelled due to the police atrocity incident on the July 26th, 2018 (see chapter Five, P.183). Budhan had aimed to conduct a 30-day theatre workshop with theatre activists from 48 different wards (geographical areas) of Ahmedabad city who represent several DNT communities residing in and outskirts of the city under this project. 16 days were planned to be devoted to the identification of a theme and creation of a play, and 13 days to rehearse before the final performances within the festival space. Budhan members had done a lot of networking and awareness programs among these communities to encourage and support them to stand up for their basic rights such as housing and to protest against the injustices done to them for years from Government by not providing any rehabilitation program after the denotification of the tribes. The festival schedule is now uncertain due to the ongoing political activism by the Chhara community following the incident of police atrocity at Chharanagar and to seek justice.

One of the more recent outcomes of Budhan's Indigenous networking is the involvement of Budhan in a project based at the University of Northern Colorado's anthropology department through which the youth of Charanagar will interact with Myanmar refugees residing in the USA via virtual sessions (Schoenberger). It is believed that both the cultural groups have similar 'branded' socio-political backgrounds of legal persecution without any reason, and in terms of their fight to be accepted by the mainstream society (Times News Network).

4.6. Indigenous Artists, Sustainability and the Politics of Funding

Often, there are very limited resources available to Indigenous artists; and almost nothing for the young and beginners. Most of the time, artists have to go through tough competition for funding in order to produce their works. Established and proven artists receive funding more often and therefore, there is a necessary focus on achieving high standards and public recognition in order to secure funding streams. Indigenous festivals like Breaking Ground provide rare but important space and resources to younger artists. Trans-Indigenous collaborations play a significant role here. The creation and provision of a nurturing space led by experienced Indigenous artists helps to cultivate young and emerging Indigenous artists supporting them to compete in the commercialised, racially dominated and often neo-colonizing commercial art space. Rachel Maza, (artistic director of the Aboriginal Australian company Ilbijirri) discussed the Breaking Ground festival as an opportunity for a younger generation to nurture their talents. She shares that participating in the Breaking Ground festival has been an inspirational experience for her:

It often feels in an industry in Melbourne in Australia that there are so few resources, so [artists can] get really mean spirited about the few resources [they] have, and I am guilty of it as it has got to be brilliant, it has got to be up to certain standard to compete in that market, but what I am taking home very strong and clear is - that's all well and fine but you haven't been watering your garden! You have dead everywhere, no next generation coming up to fill your spots. (Maza "Personal Interview).

Governmental agencies and funding bodies serve as major gatekeepers to presenting a festival, including Indigenous performing arts festivals as discussed in Chapter One (p. 24) According to the IFACCA survey report common issues related to the provision of support to arts and culture festivals highlighted by officials from different countries varies (see Chapter One, p. 24). These practical issues also impact on the allocation of funding and space for Indigenous performing arts festivals. However, this thesis suggests that this issue needs to be studied more closely in the context of Indigenous performing arts festivals and artists, and that it can be further understood through personal interviews with theatre practitioners.

In Aotearoa/New Zealand it is acknowledged that all sorts of events may bear the name festival, however, from a cultural policy point of view the only events that may be classified as a festival are those that:

[H]ave their primary focus on the development, presentation and/or participation in the arts; have a programme conceived, produced, curated, marketed and presented as an integrated package; and which occur within a defined area/region and within a defined period of time (“Creative NZ”).


In order to provide funding and other support, Creative New Zealand pays special attention to the peculiar nature of festivals. Diversity of content, scope and outreach are emphasised among the eligibility criteria. Festival funding is considered under 'Project Funding' that receives approximately on average 31 percent of Creative New Zealand’s annual budget, which is around 40 million on an average based on the budget of past ten years⁷⁷.

The Māori theatre companies along with other companies that travelled to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in 2018 seemed to acquire partial funding from Creative New Zealand following the funding campaign of Tikapa. *Not in Our Neighbourhood* and *The Moa Show* travelled to the Edinburgh Fringe 2018 and were partially funded by Creative New Zealand which mostly covered the travel costs of the artists and crew. Tikapa Productions appealed to New Zealand society through a social media campaign to help them cover the other costs involved in taking their shows *Not in Our Neighbourhood* and *The Moa Show* to the Edinburgh Festival.⁷⁸

https://www.boosted.org.nz/projects/tikapa-to-edinburgh

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TIKAPA PRODUCTIONS LTD.

TIKAPA TO EDINBURGH

Tikapa is taking not one but two shows - *Not in our Neighbourhood* & *The Moss Show* - to Edinburgh Fringe Festival 2018 and one of Scotland's leading generalist venues - *Oldfiddlers*.

And we need your help! It's a long way from ill old Aotearoa and this is a big deal for our small company to accept this work. We have been partly funded by creative New Zealand (CNI) but we still need to raise more because there is so much to cover from rehearsals to gather tape and light bulbs to lighting, projector and smoke machine hire to marketing stuff like flyers and posters - thousands of them! Any kudos will be gratefully received.

Tikapa Productions is an award-winning, independent production company based in Wellington, committed to creating high quality entertainment and promoting social justice. Formed in 2011, Tikapa Productions has produced four shows that have toured the country, and are the creators of the highly sought after *Moss Show*, *The Moss Show*, *Tikapa to Jamie McCaskill*, *Kali Kagan* and *Sonia van der Hegden*, joining us for the Edinburgh fringe festival in winter 2018 our *Crug Gaeing* and award-winning lighting designer, *Janevella* Ltd.

Not in our Neighbourhood by Jamie McCaskill

Figure 9: Boosted funding campaign by Tikapa. Source: Boosted NZ website.

They received \$8780 in seven weeks' time with 128 donors. The huge support received by the theatre group suggests the political efficacy of social media in securing support from society ("Boosted"). I argue that the creation of this virtual momentum and imaginary space in turn created a festivalized energy for its participants, who in this case were social media users. This transformation of normal virtual space into live spontaneous *communitas* (Turner 127-128) highlights the significance of non-traditional form of festivalization. This political and financial support from people (including the donors, people who shared the posts on social media and those who spread the words among their networks outside social media) across the world wide web marks the transformation of the space, the empowered state of the Indigenous artists and also brings the artistic and non-artistic as well as indigenous and non-indigenous communities together within the multi-cultural realm of Aotearoa/New Zealand society.

4.7. Ecological Issues and Performance of Resistance through Arts

Collaborations between the theatre groups Tawata (Aotearoa/New Zealand) and Native Earth (Canada) as well as collaborations between the theatre group Conch (Aotearoa/New Zealand)

and performing artists based in the Solomon Islands are just a few of many collaborative projects happening between artistic groups within and beyond Oceania. There are a significant number of plays in development presented by the Indigenous artists at Breaking Ground and or Pūtahi festivals that travelled to major arts festival later. *Not in Our Neighbourhood* (McCaskill, 2014), *The Moa Show* (McCaskill, 2015), and *Maranga Mai New Writings* (Wāhine Māori, Va'ine Pasifika Emerging Writers, 2017) are some of the examples.

Maranga Mai New Writings are a collection of stories co-written by Wāhine Māori and Va'ine Pasifika, initiated at the Breaking Ground Festival 2017. The stories are to be developed into a performance in the future. Apart from these collaborations within Aotearoa/New Zealand, there are examples of inter-national trans-Indigenous projects within and beyond Oceania. Examples of such major projects being created or performed at the performing arts festivals are the *Waka/Ciimaan/vaka* (Tawata, Tikapa and Native Earth collaborative initiative) and *Marama* (2016).

Waka/Ciimaan/vaka is a collaborative theatrical performance created by Tawata, Tikapa and Native Earth Performing Arts. This project began in 2014 as part of *Weesageechak Begins to Dance 27*, an annual development festival of Indigenous works organised by Native Earth Performing Arts (2014). The play was presented as a development reading at the second Pūtahi Festival⁷⁹ in 2015, followed by a workshop in August 2016 in Canada. It is planned to be performed at a future Indigenous Festival of Arts in Toronto, Canada. *Waka/Ciimaan/vaka* are the Māori and Anishinaabemowin⁸⁰(an Indigenous Canadian language spoken by communities living between the geographic regions of Manitoba to Quebec) words for “canoe”. Water – *wai* in Māori or *nibi* in Anishinaabemowin, is the ultimate connection between the cultures across the world and it is the driving force in the creation of the play as per the artists⁸¹. *Waka/Ciimaan/vaka* is a play about climate change with scenes told from the perspective of animals affected by human created ecological interventions and how it impacts Indigenous lives and cultures. The play hasn't yet developed further due to possible lack of funding and resources, however, George shares that they anticipate taking the show to the Native Canadian Festival soon (George, 2016).

Marama is a collaborative theatre performance produced by The Conch and artists from the Solomon Islands. The word Marama is culturally significant and is interpreted differently in

different Pacific cultures, for instance in Māori *Marama* is light (Māori dictionary online), and in Fijian, *Marama* is a high-born woman (Gatty 157). As O'Donnell notes in his Stout center presentation on "Dark Environments in Theatre", "In *Marama*, the natural world of the Pacific was represented as female, by five women, one Māori, one Samoan, one Kiribati and two from different parts of the Solomons" (O'Donnell "Dark Environments" 3). Like *waka/ciimman/vaka*, the performance concerns the issue of environmental destruction.

Marama was commissioned and presented at the Auckland Arts Festival in 2016. *Marama* is a performance projecting the timely issue of deforestation and its impacts. The show displays the pan-Pacific scenery/backdrop of five Indigenous women who are deeply rooted to their *whenua* [land and cultures].



Figure 10: Image from the performance *Marama*. Source: Auckland Arts festival website

Marama presents Indigenous culture and its connection to *whenua* through a women's body. Women's bodies are often compared to the *whenua* or the land which has the capability to nurture life (Moorfield). The Māori word for placenta is *whenua* (Moorfield). An ancient practice of burying the placenta as per Māori cultural viewpoint is known as, *whenua ki te whenua* [reflects the Māori philosophical view that the placenta, like the land, provides physical, emotional, spiritual and intellectual nourishment and provides for all the needs of humanity] (Moorfield). In most Indigenous cultures the placenta is treated with utmost respect and regard for its function of nourishing and protecting the child. The placenta is often buried following the Indigenous rituals of burying the placenta specific to individual cultures which highlights the symbolization of women's body, the land and the Indigenous cultures are

connected (Moorfield). *Marama* effectively projects the destruction of whenua through the desolation of the women's body, however, it doesn't provide the spectators with any hope or resolution for preserving the whenua. The play focusses on the heavy pollution, deforestation and industrial destruction of Pacific Island nations by outside nations through the means of tourism and development.

Marama is a work that depicts traditions of living in close connection with Papatūānuku, through strong, graceful and mesmerising dances and songs. The performance includes a striking set, light and music design, along with emotionally compelling performances and strong direction by Nina Nawalowalo, a New Zealand based theatre director and co-founder of the Conch, her works reflect ideal blend of her Fijian whakapapa and European theatre training (Husband). It presents a strongly mythic world within the highly consumer-oriented space of an international arts festival. *Marama* connected Indigenous artists from different Pacific Islands and projected a trans-Indigenous world view to its audience which is a great achievement. One of the reviewer's notes,

Director Nina Nawalowalo's intention is that by presenting such scenes she will raise awareness of what is happening to the forest and the women of the Pacific, and consequently, that action will be taken to prevent such outcomes" (Whyte)

The important point to be focused upon here is the thematic similarities of the both performances *Marama* and *Waka/Cimaan/vaka* which represent environmental/ecological concerns effecting Indigenous people. The ecological issues and the destruction of the environmental/natural resources are major issues in the globalizing world. These are the theatrical creations that protest the society that is represented by the audiences of the festivals.

Unfortunately, the message and intended impact seemed to have lost their efficacy in the artistic development. Most reviews of the show noted a lack of depth in its final presentation (Wenley; Bushnell; Pink; Joe); and this echoed the feelings of my fellow audience members (in my observations of the 2016 performance in Auckland). According to the review published in the Auckland Metro, James Wenley writes: "[Y]es, deforestation is bad. It is devastating for indigenous cultures. But what else to say? [...] There is resonance, but not yet enough complexity. Who is behind the exploitation? How should we respond?" (Wenley).

Indigenous communities across the globe are the communities most affected by environmental destruction due to their strong cultural connection to the land and to natural resources (Green et al.; Coria and Calfucura; Escobar). Examples and evidence of these impacts can be found through movements and activism carried out by Indigenous communities to save Papatūānuku (Moorefield) or *Tina lalolagi* [a Samoan word for mother earth] (Pratt 63). One of such examples is the ongoing Standing Rock movement which was initiated by Indigenous communities and developed into a global movement that is supported by non-Indigenous communities and artists across the world (“Standing with the Standing Rock”). The Standing Rock protest was against the US government’s decision to build an oil pipeline in North Dakota which might impact the nearby Indigenous reserve. The protest went on for months and Indigenous protestors were arrested by the law enforcement police (Brady).

The connections to and dependence on the land, and the dis-location of DNT communities across India presents a similar picture as a stimulus for activism. Budhan Theatre’s performance *Ulgulan* (Bajrange “Budhan Bolta Hai” 239-248) represents the problems faced by the *Adivasi* community (one of the DNTs in India) who have been fighting against the occupation of forest land by the government of India. These communities have been inhabitants of the forest for generations, having no other place to stay and survive. The forests are a source of livelihood which has been taken away by the Forestry Department; the play presents their acts of revolution against the government. *Ulgulan* also gives an overview of the communities’ anti-British fight for land during the colonial period and intends to inspire the communities to resist against socio-political injustice in today’s India. The play uses a story-telling style, and the storyteller is a young girl of the community who tries to inspire the community using her firm and inspiring voice. The performance wasn’t performed on an elevated stage and did not utilize aesthetically designed sets or lighting but was performed simply in front of audiences to depict the blunt realities faced by the community. The performance wasn’t part of any festival space however it had the efficacy to inspire the communities to get together in activism to save the forest land and resources (Bajrange “Budhan Bolta Hai” 239-248). The performance was highly accessible and effective in context of carrying out the activism and resistance against the political power structure being street theatre form and performed free of charge for the cause to promote ecological awareness⁸². I argue that this performance can be seen as a seed sown that cultivated in a tree in contemporary India which inspired the *Adivasi*

communities within Gujarat region have joined the platform created by Budhan Theatre to fight for the basic rights and land for the DNTs of India.

The differences of implications of such presentations of ecological protest through the medium of theatre can be easily read by juxtaposing three situations: 1) performing a (trans)Indigenous play within a highly commercialised festival space 2) organising/creating a trans-indigenous festival space/platform of emerging works and keeping it highly accessible to the public and 3) creating a trans-tribal performance to bring the change within the socio-political space. Unlike the performances at the Breaking Ground festival, *Marama* at Auckland Arts Festival 2015 was quite raw and under-developed as a professional theatre piece which could have been easily be developed into as the funding was available. It is also important to note here that the performance received festival grant/commission to produce the show. *Marama* was not widely accessible due to its high ticketing price; the normal ticket price was \$59, and the concession price was \$39 (“Auckland Arts Festival”). On another note, Breaking Ground operates with substantially less budget and; Budhan Theatre didn’t have the grant or funding of any kind when they created and performed the show. Moreover, Budhan’s street theatre creates the festival-like space where people feel the momentum of the event due to the spontaneous and inclusive nature of street theatre. Similarly, the protest at Standing Rock can be looked at as spontaneous festivalization of the space that formulates the momentum and the politics is delivered.

The following sections of this chapter will explore two important questions. Firstly, does the presentation of such activism with an intention to resist against political power structures charge the space with political public sphere and in turn with festivalized energy? And secondly can they be looked at as spontaneous festivals for protests also creating the stimulating environment for its participants to feel/live the same vibrant space?

4.8. Do Virtual Political Public Sphere and Spontaneous festivals lead us towards Co-liberation?

Getting united and standing up for the right(s) of Indigenous peoples in the current political climate where there is a new rise in capitalist, neo-liberal and far right governments (such as that led by President Donald Trump in the United States or that led by Prime Minister Modi in India), and with the increasing gap between rich and poor across the globe (Reuben) is vital.

Social media has proven to be highly effective in establishing much-needed networks within global communities fighting against similar causes (Lahn). Free and easily accessible social media tools – such as Facebook, Twitter, Skype, Youtube, Whatsapp etc.- have not only become tools to socialise but also to spread awareness, to raise local or collective voice, as well as to coordinate different forms of protest. The power of social media is also significant for industries and businesses nowadays, who cannot afford to leave an unsatisfied consumer on social media⁸³.

Many Indigenous communities from across the globe have initiated movements using social media to resist and deliver their politics. The Standing Rock movement, or recently, New Zealand's Hana Kōkō campaign, are significant examples that prove social media - Facebook to be precise - not only eventifies the protest but also activates feelings of solidarity and or racial harmony amongst other Indigenous as well as non-Indigenous communities. Māori rangatira Rob Herewini was represented as an Indigenous version of Santa, 'Hana Kōkō', for the Nelson City Christmas Parade in early December 2018. However, he was vilified for not wearing a "traditional" Santa costume by the local audience and organisers were forced to apologise. People were offended by the non-traditional look of Santa and there were multiple racially inappropriate posts and comments; attention which went viral about the event and Rob Herewini in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Apart from the active coverage online through social media, the print media highlighted the issue. Herewini became part of the virtual rhetoric created as a "counter-performance" in response of the Nelson Christmas Parade. He expressed how disappointed he and his family were after he was effectively rejected by the audience. The above series of performance and reactions inspired Wellington based trio Lexi Taylor, Natasha Crombie and Kiel Taylor to campaign and fundraise to organise and invite Herewini as 'Hana Kōkō' at the Summer Sounds Festival in Aro Valley, Wellington. The event had significant online interest, creating more national attention and considered highly successful, with hundreds of local people and media admiring the relocated Māori Santa (Fuller, December 22, 2018). The virtual rhetorical public sphere thus became the contributing factor towards the warm welcome Herewini received at the next festival, following the Performance Efficacy and Festival Efficacy Models.



Figure 11: Picture of Rob Herewini as Māori Santa with red korowai (cloak). Source: FB Page: Bring Māori Santa to Wellington.

The festival itself was highly politicised action being a reaction to the performance of resistance displayed by the Nelson audience towards Hana Kōkō. Moreover, it is important to look at it from the point of view of decolonizing the Santa figure which was gifted to the post-modern world by the Coca-Cola industry. Coca-Cola New Zealand writes about the journey of Santa on their website:

The Santa Claus we all know and love — that big, jolly man in the red suit with a white beard — didn't always look that way. In fact, many people are surprised to learn that prior to 1931, Santa was depicted as everything from a tall gaunt man to a spooky-looking elf. He has donned a bishop's robe and a Norse huntsman's animal skin (Journey NZ staff).

The religious rhetoric is very well woven with the image of (Coca-Cola invented) Santa with that of Father Christmas or Saint Nicholas; and hence, the act of performing non-traditional Santa can be interpreted as an act of decolonizing from the imaginary image of Santa Claus imposed by a commercial industry. Coca-Cola is banned from using Santa Claus to promote fizzy drink among the children and young people in New Zealand (Iles). Coming back to this Indigenous Santa, and the use of social media, another significant point of focus is the process of liberation and empowerment offered by social media.

Rice, Haynes, Royce and Thompson studied the usage and implications of social media among a group of Indigenous youth and found:

One reason why many Indigenous young people have embraced social media is its self-directed nature where users can produce their own unregulated content. Indigenous young people can participate and use social media without any control or input from adults or from the non-Indigenous community that controls the larger, more conventional media forms. This self-directed nature also means that Indigenous young people can seek out information for themselves, enabling new forms of agency... Indigenous activists have extended their efforts beyond list serves and blogs to utilise social networking sites to make their struggle known to a wide audience as part of their social movement (Rice et al. 10).

The efficacy of social media in encouraging solidarity is clear when Indigenous people from many countries including Aotearoa/New Zealand went to the actual site and joined the protest (“Standing with Standing Rocks”). Haka for Standing Rock is an excellent example of trans-Indigenous performative solidarity and unification. According to media sources, a Native American protestor named Myron Dewey appealed to members of the Māori community to stand together with the Standing Rock protesters on the 26th of October 2016 (Wanshel). Dewey is seen saying, “we need to show them the power and strength of indigenous international unity” in the video he released (qtd. in Wanshel). Te Hamua Nikora and Benita Tahuri started the page ‘Haka with Standing Rock’ on Facebook (2016). The page appealed to the Māori community in Aotearoa/New Zealand to create a haka to show their solidarity with the Indigenous peoples of Standing Rock. Within a few days, Māori of all ages had posted hakas, many of which have gone viral; one of them received over 24,000 reactions and over 17,000 shares (“Haka with Standing Rock”). In the same spirit, a group of six Māori performers travelled to Standing Rock to support the Sioux tribe in person (Anderson). The Māori performers risked their lives while performing the haka at the frontline of the Standing Rock protest, due to armed forces being positioned and instructed to respond to protests with force just a day before these performers reached the site (Clarke). The Māori performers called this a huge success and emphasized the performance as a celebration of Indigenous solidarity (Anderson). As Kereama Te Ua (one of the haka performers at the Standing Rock site) shares:

It was really about my ancestors acknowledging their ancestors and letting them know that we're here to support them and even if we're not there ā tīnana [in person], there's a maunga [mountain] of people and a maunga [mountain] of my ancestors standing behind me, standing for Standing Rock (Clarke).

Such expressions are momentous aspects of the festivalized space as a result of the energy of the space or the momentum created within the space (Zaiontz 23). The space impacts our body, expression and the way we feel and transform. Zaiontz explains how the spatial energy of festivals impact the festival participants, in her recently published book *Theatre and Festivals* (2018):

Our bodies move differently, often in unity with the people around us, and our *lingua francas* shift from speech to expressive cultural practices such as song, dance and performance. These experiences may be anonymous, but they are also highly visible for everyone involved – from the crowds gathered around to watch the event to the revellers absorbed in the action (23).

This performance of solidarity and unity using the Māori cultural form of *haka* which was also enacted by hundreds of people locally in Aotearoa/New Zealand (Wanshel) boosted the confidence of global Indigenous communities to get together for the cause affecting the Sioux tribe. The politics of these mass *haka* performances within the global public sphere was reported within both print and social media (Wanshel, 2016; Clarck, 2016; Te Ua, 2016; “Standing with Standing Rock”; “Haka with Standing Rock” and so on). “An indigenous community is making a powerful statement through social media” quotes the HuffPost US (dated 1st November 2016). A supporter of the Standing Rock from Aotearoa/New Zealand, Manaakitanga Pryor says, “The reason we're supporting their cause is because the struggle of indigenous people there is no different to Māori” (Melbourne). The mass *haka* performers who performed *haka* in solidarity across Aotearoa/New Zealand included members of Māori and Pacific communities, as well as some Canadian and German nationals living in the country (Melbourne). These performances and their projection to the world proved that physical distance is no longer an obstacle in terms of displaying political solidarity and unity.

This not only highlights the significant role of social media to showcase solidarity with geographically distant communities but also the *communitas* (Turner, 1974) that can be

established through social media by people with shared interests, political ideologies and commitments. Zaiontz (2018) also discuss this establishment of *communitas* in the context of political parades and festivals:

Communitas can solidify those [interests, desires and commitments that people share at such events] alliances and, in some cases, temporarily enunciate the possibility that the conditions for community can change for the better (Zaiontz 41).

The occupation of the site and risk to personal safety signifies the intensity of robust trans-Indigenous networking for the cause of ecology and land protection. This thesis argues that the performance of haka at Standing Rock and beyond is an outstanding beginning to a relatively new political trans-Indigenous camaraderie.



**Figure 12: Image of Facebook page of the movement, “Standing with Standing Rock”.
Source: Facebook**

Social media is an excellent tool for projecting trans-Indigenous unification in the process of co-liberating from continuous (neo)colonisation (Halperin). Apart from this, social media empowers connections among diasporic communities who applaud the artists and art from their home country by publicising performances. Zaiontz comments on the forms of festivals being complicated and transformed by the connectivity enabled by forms of social media:

It is becoming increasingly difficult to define what constitutes wandering in an age of socially networked mobility. The contemporary festival pilgrim cannot be detached from her data usage and instantaneous circulation of images, videos, posts and tweets. This does not mean she has not learned something from, or even been transformed by, her festive experience, but it may be more the result of a networked itinerancy rather than a singular journey of detachment and return. The promise of this mediated wandering is that it enables spectators to inhabit space differently, but it also caters to the festival imagination, which, as we've noted, tends to favour subjective path ('individual journey') and blank canvas over more political entanglement with place (98).

I argue, social networking on the world wide web creates the imaginary space for spontaneous festivals and provides the means for its spectators to virtually inhabit that space. In cases such as Standing Rock, in contrast to the individualistic contemporary festival pilgrim discussed by Zaiontz, social media can support strongly politicized and collective "entanglements" with a particular place. Validating the views of fellow artists and supporting the artists by sharing and hitting the 'like' on social media pages also contributes towards the process of co-liberation⁸⁴ by connecting communities together for the same cause. This community of the spectators then create a virtual rhetorical public sphere.

I claim people and artists who might not have otherwise stood up together against injustice feel safe and supported when the unified global community is virtually standing together. This empowers the community to confidently articulate their political point of view. A post by a Māori artist and playwright regarding biased funding budget announcement in 2016 by the Ministry of Arts, Culture and Heritage, New Zealand received 50 shares and 300 'likes' as well as 57 comments:

May 27, 2016 · 🌐

This pisses me off. It's not because of all the cuts to Creative NZ which have affected us little people but the fact that the budget comes out and Maggie Barry is so excited and thanks Bill English for the support for the arts. A massive boost for two companies who are massively funded and who are producing art that does bugger all for NZ society in my eyes but are supposedly so great for New Zealand culture around the world. Don't get me wrong I really appreciate the skill...
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👍❤️😂 Miria George, Nicola Hyland and 297 others

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 **Kathryn Burnett** Yep, looks a lot like ticking the safe, easy boxes. On the upside Jamie, you, me and loads of amazing people we know are just getting on with it.
Like · Reply · 📌 2 · May 31, 2016 at 4:12pm

 **Stephen Tamarapa** https://youtu.be/_qG5Q58ecgc



Tenacious D - The Government Totally Sucks - 06

Song: The Government Totally Sucks...
YOUTUBE.COM

Like · Reply · May 31, 2016 at 6:47pm

➦  Stephen Tamarapa replied · 2 Replies

 **Isaac Te Reina** Tautoko to korero e hoa - what a disgrace we need to make your voice heard my bro...
Like · Reply · 📌 1 · June 1, 2016 at 5:15am

 **Henry Clendon** Kia ora Jamie bro I tautoko your korero, this government does not know their priorities when it comes to funding, especially the arts as you have mentioned my bro, i fully tautoko...
Like · Reply · 📌 2 · June 1, 2016 at 11:42pm

 Write a comment... 😊 📷 GIF 🗨️

Figure 13: An image of a FB post by the Māori artist Jamie McCaskill. Source: Facebook

Social media is also used as a tool by the DNTs of India and Budhan Theatre to co-liberate. The political movement run by Budhan Theatre member Dakxin in organising community meetings of other DNTs as well as organising protest gatherings against the injustice done to the DNTs is shared extensively on his Facebook page. His posts on Facebook regarding these rallies and protest usually receive huge support from all over the world, as well as a few confrontational remarks from local individuals (Bajrange “Dakxin Chhara”). Dakxin uses such

confrontational remarks as an opportunity to make himself and his political activities as well as Budhan Theatre's stance clearer by explaining further.

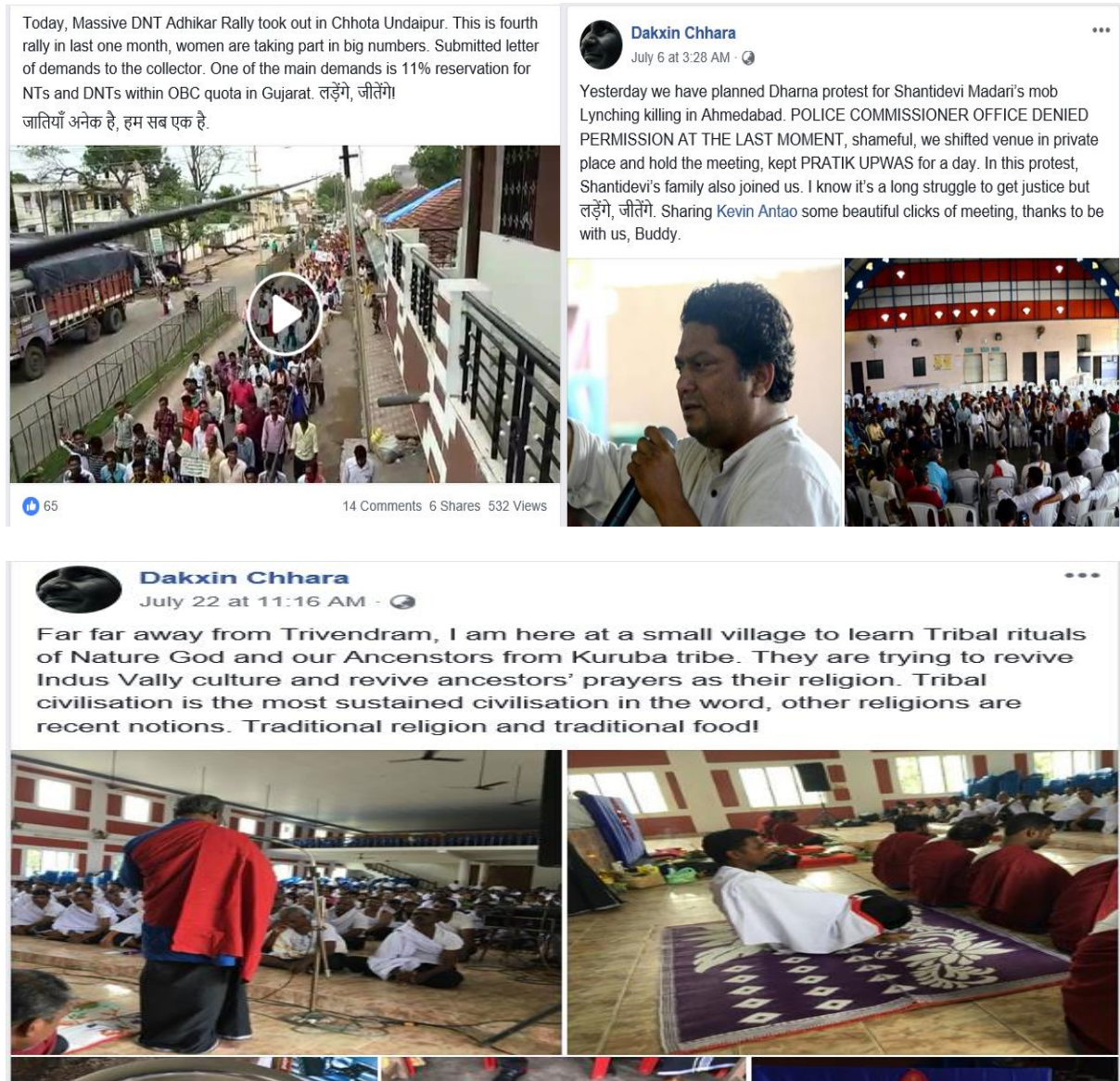


Figure 14: Images of the FB posts by Dakxin Chhara. Source: Facebook.

Social media websites in India are under surveillance by government agencies with the aim of identifying any possible threat to the political order in the country. The 'bold' posts (mostly against the ruling party in India) on Facebook increases the chance of being targeted by the police and other government agencies. On the 26th of July 2018, in the early morning, hundreds of members of Budhan Theatre were targeted and brutally beaten by the police at Chharanagar, Ahmedabad ("Police Raid"). As per the information passed on by the police and the Chharanagr residents, this incident took place after the police sub inspector was attacked and looted by two drunk Chhara men. This incident happened when the police sub inspector was

in his personal vehicle and asked these men for their driving licence. The police responded to this by raiding Chharanagar with a team of approximately 500 policemen. They attacked the men and women of the Chharanagar community in response, arresting several members of the community who were actively protesting the police atrocity and the illegality of the attack. The news regarding the incident spread quickly through social media as compared to the print media (Facebook posts by the Budhan artists and Twitter posts by the political activists). The Indian Express e – paper notes:

Videos posted on social media showed about 8-10 police vehicles, beacons on, driving into the locality, even as no one was seen on the streets. The Chharas are seeking action from the National Human Rights Commission. Danseuse and activist Mallika Sarabhai has rallied behind them, apart from Nirjhari Sinha of Jan Sangharsh Manch (“Police Raid”).

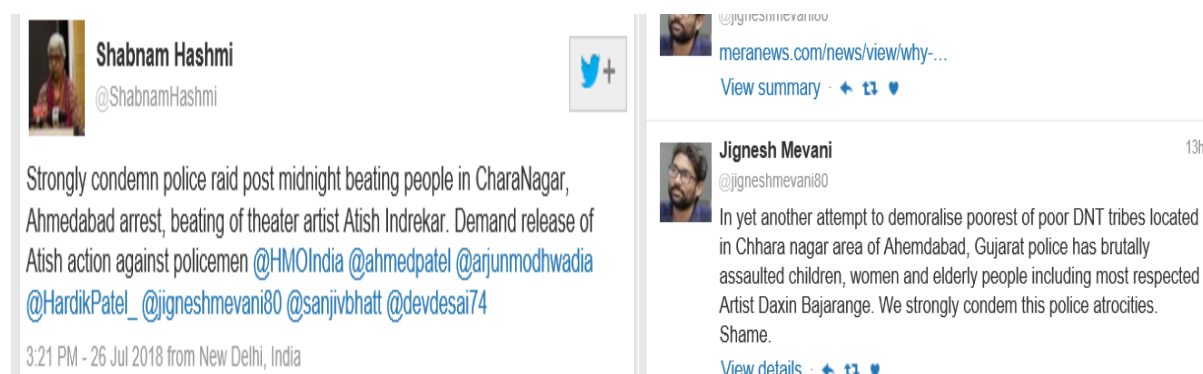


Figure 15: Images of the tweets related to the Chharanagar incident. Source: Facebook

This chapter has argued that the conversion of Facebook/social media space into a virtual political public sphere empowers users to reach their audiences and to build solidarity across the globalised world. The dis-location of the physical space, however, creates its own issues resulting from its potential misuse. Just like other mediums of communication, social media users have extensive freedom to post mis-leading information or to agitate groups and communities using deceptive data. However, I argue that the use of social media as a tool for mobilizing activists and coordinating trans-Indigenous protest has proven to be more constructive than destructive in terms of building solidarity across Indigenous communities, cultures and languages. Budhan Theatre organised a *besna* [a part of the Hindu funeral custom, after the cremation, when friends and extended family of the deceased get together to console the family] of law and order at Chharanagar followed by a procession to the local police station

which ended with the symbolic offering of a rose to each of the police officers working at the station that day (Bajrange “Dakxin Chhara”). The entire event was aimed at protesting against injustice without provoking the police and aimed to project their political stance peacefully. The event was a huge success and hundreds of people from both DNT and non-DNT backgrounds joined Budhan Theatre on 30th of July 2018 between 11am and 1pm for this event (Bajrange “Dakxin Chhara”).

This chapter has argued that the use of social media platforms for creating a global political public sphere has transformed the virtual space of these forums into a festivalized space wherein the solidarity among the trans-Indigenous artists and communities is celebrated. The virtual space led to acts of solidarity not only through the comments or posts made by individuals and communities, but also led to actual gatherings of people from diverse communities on site, joined in activism for the same cause. Māori artists travelled to support the Standing Rock protestors and the DNT and non-DNT communities of India gathered at Chharanagar following police atrocity in the community. This transformation of virtual solidarity into the actual performance within the space of protest creates the festivalization of the action.

The following chapters will discuss the selected case studies from India and Aotearoa/New Zealand in contexts of the three study models I proposed in chapter Three. Chapter Five and Six focus on the process of festivalization, performance efficacy and the virtual/physical rhetorical public sphere created using the performances and festivals by the DNT artists of India and Māori artists of Aotearoa/New Zealand respectively.

CHAPTER 5

SOCIAL DISCRIMINATION, POLICE ATROCITIES AND CAPITALIST POLITICS: STORIES OF THE FORGOTTEN ARTISTS AND ‘BORN CRIMINALS’ OF INDIA⁸⁵

Budhan Theatre company of Ahmedabad (India) calls the audiences for their performances by singing the following lines⁸⁶ through hand-made voice enhancer speakers and *dhol* (a traditional Indian musical instrument - similar to a drum) to amplify their voices;

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|--------------------------------------|---|
| <i>Natak natak natak...</i> | Play...play...play |
| <i>Natak natak natak...</i> | Play...play...play |
| <i>Bolta natak...Chalta natak...</i> | The play that speaks...the play that moves... |
| <i>Sachchai ka natak...</i> | The play about the truth... |

Once the audience is gathered surrounding the performers, the performers sings,

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <i>Khel khel me khel O Sathi...</i> | A play within a play My friend... |
| <i>Khel khel me khel...</i> | A play within a play... |
| <i>Mitti ka ye khel O Sathi...</i> | A play of our soil My friend... |
| <i>Khel khel me khel...</i> | A play within a play... |

And with this introduction, Budhan's iconic performance, *Budhan Bolta Hai* (1998) begins. Budhan has performed the play more than 300 times and it has been translated into the English and Chinese languages. The Charanagar youth who are part of Budhan Theatre assert that they are "born actors" thus resisting the continual social discrimination and injustices enacted upon

the Denotified and Nomadic Tribes of India (DNTs hereafter) of India. This chapter will argue that Budhan's performances can not only be considered as unique narratives designed to fighting against socio-political injustice and to change community perceptions about the DNTs of India, but that they can also be analysed in terms of their aftermaths and outcomes in the wider community. The unique community dialogue resulting from their performances as well as the post-performance reactions from the state or from authorities representing the state, creates a rhetorical public sphere that provides a significant and alternative point of view to its audiences.

Budhan's performance *Budhan Bolta Hai* (1998) is an excellent example of how performances have been used to restate this alternative rhetoric and to resist specific instances of injustice such as police brutalities against the DNTs. The play also aims to re-assert the identities of the DNTs of India as Indigenous peoples of India and to educate and persuade members of the general public to reconsider their often stereotypical and derogatory views about DNT communities (Bajrange "Liberation from Stigmatization"). People participating in Budhan Theatre assert their identities as communities of street artists and or skilled labourers (S. Bhatt 121). *Budhan Bolta Hai* (Bajrange "Budhan Bolta Hai" 113-140) was first created as a form of resistance against the custodial death of Budhan Sabar. The play was also developed from a representation of this initial story to include numerous incidents of police brutality enacted upon the DNT members in police custody across India. Because most of these stories of police violence have been silenced and never brought to the public or received any media coverage (Bajrange "Personal Interview") their inclusion in this performance is an act of both remembrance and resistance. The performance has become the icon of reasserting the resistance as well as the innocence of the DNT communities of India.

The performance efficacy of Budhan's theatre is clear, as plays are adapted and contextualised for different audiences. Where Budhan's performance might appear to focus on Chhara identity in one context, as soon as it travels away from Ahmedabad the new context and audience transforms the performance into one which highlights the wider issues facing the DNTs across India.

5.1. Performance, Counter-performance and the Creation of the Rhetorical Public Sphere

According to the Performance as Dialogue Model discussed in Chapter Three, a theatre performance can be understood in part as a dialogue between the community and the culturally or politically dominant forces within a specific socio-political space. According to this model,

the performance and the counter-performance enacted by the community or governmental organisation are interdependent, and thus when one action is defined as performance, another will be a counter-performance. In simple terms, when a community theatre group resists a particular action or a decision taken by the state through a public performance, the action or decision taken by the state in response itself becomes performative, and the theatrical presentation/resistance by the community becomes a 'counter-performance'. Each of Budhan Theatre's performances develop a rhetoric within the space they perform. Creation of the rhetoric within the public sphere fosters the "political society" that represents non-dominant and marginalised sections of the society (Chaterjee 60). The creation of the rhetoric determines the efficacy/reception of the performances.

In following sections I will also discuss the reception of Budhan's performance from non-local/non-Indian audiences, it is significant to mention here Dakxin's experience of audience response when Budhan team performed their iconic performance *Budhan Bolta Hai* at Jantar Mantar (a place in New Delhi) in the year 2015. He recalls having about 17-18 non-Indian predominantly "white" tourists gathered to watch the performance. Dakxin shares, "Theatre doesn't have language barrier, we communicate through our bodies. I saw them [the non-Indian tourists] crying as we performed" (Bajrange "Personal Interview"). This highlights the transformation of the space into a festivalized space that generates the rhetoric but is not depended solely on the rhetorical public sphere for the creation of the momentum or spontaneous communitas (Turner 127-128).

The following sections will discuss the Performance as Dialogue Model and the Performance Efficacy Model in relationship to Budhan's most significant performances, *Mazahab Hamein Sikhata Aapas Mein Bair Rakhna* (2002). *Choli Ke Pichhe Kya Hai* (2007; 2012), and *Kahani Meri Tumhari* (2012).

5.1.1. Mazahab Hamein Sikhata Aapas Mein Bair Rakhna

When communal riots rocked Ahmedabad in 2002, Budhan produced a play called *Mazahab Hamein Sikhata Aapas Mein Bair Rakhna* meaning "Religion teaches vengeance amongst each other" (*Mazahab* hereafter)⁸⁷. The socio-political situation in the city and the region was very much affected following riots between the Hindu and Muslim religious groups following the incident of an attack where reportedly a Muslim extremist group attacked a train compartment no. S6 of Sabarmati Express (a train commuting between Ahmedabad city and Ayodhya) and set it ablaze soon after the train left the Godhra junction. About 59 people were killed which

included 27 women and 10 children. It was also reported that these women were raped before they were killed by an allegedly Muslim extremist mob (“What is the 2002 Godhra”). Tensions were so acute that there was no chance of performing street theatre on this subject during 2002, as it might have received politically negative outcomes. Budhan Theatre claims on their website that the play was been performed 25 times to promote communal peace within Ahmedabad city (“Budhan Theatre”), however, I was unable to get exact information about the time and spaces in which the performances took place from group members⁸⁸.

The play emphasizes values of tolerance and respect (Bajrange “Budhan Bolta Hai” 165-194). It opens with the actors rehearsing a patriotic poem, *mazahab nahin sikhata aapas mein bair rakhna* which translates as ‘religion does not teach us to seek vengeance against one another’. The opening scene suggests a play within the play, reflecting multiple accounts, understandings and perspectives, and the characters debate with each other to bring out the ‘truth’ onstage. Tushar, one of the characters, suggests a change to the poem’s words, revealing the truth as it is and convinces all by saying that theatre is the medium of art which should be used to state reality with courage. Tushar parodies the poem and presents it differently, with satire. The entire group of characters then recite the parodied poem as *Mazahab Hamein Sikhata Aapas Mein Bair Rakhna* meaning it is religion that teaches vengeance amongst each other. The play satirizes the role of religion that encourages violence instead of spreading peace. This mode of debate between the actors sets the background of the play, the purpose of which is ‘to bring enlightenment’ for its spectators about the politics around communal violence and how politicians are using it as a tool for gaining political benefits. The focus of the incidents in *Mazahab* is on lower class and/or marginalized people who have minimal rights and minimal political awareness. They are depicted as victims of the communal riots and shown as suffering economically, emotionally and physically. The prolonged divide between the communities in India is depicted as resulting from the attitude of political parties whose priority is to build socio-political constituencies and gain the vote bank benefits⁸⁹ for the electoral procedures (“Allowed to vent”). The performance clearly shows the politics of the majority and the dominant sections of society.

Often there is a “coherent and vicious elite” led by a majority-supported *dictator* who incites genocidal movements (“Allowed to vent”). Such movements find expression more readily when powerful political entities are made up of a common ethnicity and when minorities are marginalized (Jha 47). The well-known attitude of the Chief Minister of Gujarat who is reported

to have said “let the Hindus vent their anger” to his officials is presented through a very effective scene where political leaders are shown as taking advantage of public emotions for their vote bank or electoral purposes (“Allowed to vent”).

This account of the involvement of the ruling party including then Chief Minister of Gujarat and current Prime Minister of India and the Gujarat police was revealed and recorded by Ayyub – a young Muslim woman and Tehelka reporter in her undercover sting operation in Gujarat. Ayyub presents the recorded audio and video evidences that she gathered undercover pretending to an American Film student trying to make a film on Gujarat’s successful bureaucracy in India as a model state (1-31). To her surprise, she found that the police officials who belonged to the lower caste/Scheduled caste (Dalit/’untouchable’) or to Other Backward Castes (OBC) were ordered to carry out the unjust actions the state wanted in its favour for votebank benefits (32-70). And after the work is carried out, these police officers were either transferred, suspended, asked to step down or charged with convictions they were asked to carry out by the state itself (Ayyub 32-70). With their single aim of creating the Hindu nation and the manipulation of electoral politics at the expense of certain communities, the propagandist actions of the right-wing government is clearly portrayed in *Mazahab*. The play furthers with the rhythmic verse recited by the chorus in *Mazahab*. The lines intend the spectators to understand the politics of the parties and the misuse of the emotions of the people:

This is not a religious war,
This is a political war,
The foolish citizens cannot understand this,
This stabilizes and ensures the chairs (the governmental positions) of the political leaders,
Fight...fight more and get killed" (Bajrange “Budhan Bolta Hai” 177).

The Ayodhya violence⁹⁰ which is a crucial phase in the rise of communalism in India is directly addressed in *Mazahab*. Communal violence, used as a tool by right-wing political organisations to achieve the desired Hindu nation,⁹¹ is clearly shown in the play. The actors ask questions at the end of the play which remind the spectators about how the common people are slaughtered for the sake of political gain. The play achieves a tragic and thought-provoking conclusion and serves its purpose of providing an alternative point of view:

Who is killed?

Who killed?

Ask the 'human' who has killed whom?

Murder...

Of humanity..

Rape of democracy... (Bajrange "Budhan Bolta Hai" 184).

Mazahab was developed from an improvised performance which was prepared within a week on the rehearsal floor, and formally documented later (Bajrange "Personal Interview"). The play was inspired by a half-burnt letter that was found by one of the members from the remainder of the burnt properties during the riots. The letter was kept and featured in the play. The group started an improvisation with the third scene which shows the mother and daughter who were waiting for the father; and the rice, which the father had promised to bring with him:

We focused on the politics of the BJP [*Bhartiya Janata Party*] and VHP [*Vishya Hindu Parishad*] along with portraying the realistic incidents of the riots. We tried to imagine what could have happened to Zareena, the daughter to whom the letter was addressed, so, we articulated the horrific reality resulting from fundamentalist politics (Bajrange "Personal Interview").

Each scene of the play presents a comparable picture of the incidents that reportedly happened during the riots. The scenes include people being killed and violent attacks on women including rape. The use of real names of the actors in *Mazahab* makes the play powerfully realistic, as it helps spectators to identify and recall incidents that audiences might have heard about, read in newspapers, or watched on television. For example, an incident where a Muslim woman becomes a victim of the Hindu mob, is reminiscent of the Kausar Banu case⁹² of the post-Godhra riots which was extensively reported in the media. The scene in the play is intentionally reminiscent of a violent incident during the riots where a Muslim woman was raped, and she and her unborn child were killed. This attack was witnessed by another woman named Zareena and details were recorded in court proceedings: "Deposing before the retired Justices G.T. Nanavati and K.G. Shah, Zareena Sheikh, a resident of Hussain Nagar slums, claimed she had witnessed the killing of Kausar Bano on February 28, 2002" ("Naroda victim"). The nation, 'here and now' as portrayed in *Mazahab*, privileges the voices of poor and marginalized people who are mostly shown as Muslims or non-Muslim 'lower caste' Hindus. These voices are

depicted as either unheard or brutally silenced by the fanatic, mostly Hindu, hegemonic voice. The idea of friendship and peaceful co-existence amongst the communities is problematized and dismantled in the play.

The platform used by Budhan to articulate the truth about the communal riots and to deliver a secular message became a site for the manifestation of fundamentalist politics. Their performances were interrupted and controlled by the ruling party through its “extreme face” Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) (Ghosh 138). The VHP members stopped the performance in the middle of a run-through and Budhan’s performers were warned to not perform the play again or risk their lives (Bajrange “Personal Interview”). Several factors led to the banning of the performance. One reason is the physical space which was used. The place where Budhan initially tried to perform the play was very near to the Naroda Patiya area, the area most effected by violence where many innocent people were killed by a fanatic mob in the communal riots of 2002 (“Naroda victim”). The second reason is that the ‘platform’ which was used against the fundamentalists was constructed within a ‘space’ that is politically charged with right-wing ideals⁹³. The play was not officially banned by the government, but Budhan Theatre members were so intimidated that they engaged in self-censorship and refrained from performing it on the streets⁹⁴. According to the Performance as Dialogue Model, the entire phenomenon of performance, counter-performance and the creation of the rhetorical public sphere can be understood using the following structure.

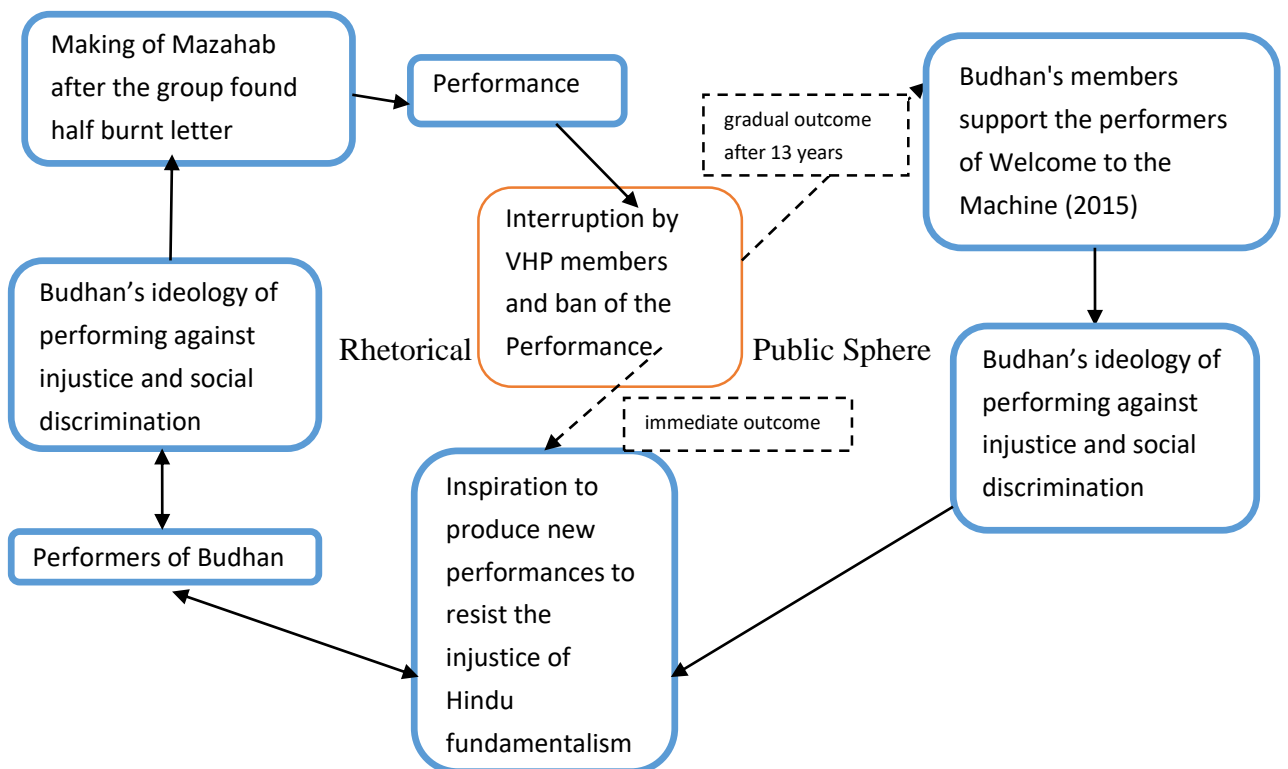


Figure 16: Explanation of *Mazahab* using the Performance as Dialogue Model

Please note, the above visual explanation of the performance is for easier understanding of the series of the events/aftermaths and not to oversimplify the complexity of the socio-political aspects of the performance. There can be components of the original Performance as Dialogue model (see Chapter Three, P. 102) that are omitted while describing the above visual based on obvious differences and performance specific socio-political and geographical situations.

This thesis argues that the dialogue between the performance and the interruption by the VHP members can be looked at as performance and counter-performance. It is important to note that these actions are inter-dependent. The performance of *Mazahab* can be seen as a counter-performance against communal violence and biased actions from the state. Similarly, the reaction from the VHP members can also be seen as a counter-performance against Budhan's initial performance. This chain of actions and reactions creates significant rhetoric within the performance space that impacts the thought processes of the actors as well as the spectators. One of the outcomes of the rhetoric within the space was an increased determination among the members of Budhan Theatre to keep resisting the fundamentalist government which is seen in their active resistance in the forms of theatrical performances, political rallies and social media posts (“Dakxin Chhara”; “Atish Indrekar Chhara”). Another outcome is seen among the spectators, who receive an alternative point of view, and thus are empowered to perform their role as voters with a greater awareness during elections. I, however, couldn't access any feedback from the spectators in print media but it is well documented in form of responses to Bajrange's and Indrekar's social media posts.

Another outcome of the rhetorical public sphere was noticed in Delhi in February 2015 when another play against religious extremism, *Welcome to the Machine* was performed which reportedly opposed by the Hindu extremist groups but received support from Budhan theatre who stood up in solidarity with the group. The play written by a third-year political science student Guneet Singh of SGTB Khalsa college (affiliated with Delhi University, India) – was opposed by the student union of Delhi University which was led by a candidate of Akhil Bharatiya Vidhyarthi Parishad (ABVP), the student wing of BJP and allied with VHP and RSS. The ABVP called the performance a “threat to Indian culture” and asked the government to ban the performance (Gohain). The entire incident not only fostered another set of dialogue in the

form of performance and counter-performance; but also created a rhetoric within the space. The creation of another rhetoric within a different space reminded the members of Budhan about their own self-censored performance *Mazahab* (2002). Budhan Theatre not only opposed Hindu extremist politics, but also expressed their support for the performers of *Welcome to the Machine* via social media. Budhan received an opportunity to counter-perform (by supporting the performing theatre group Ankur) against the religious extremism, 13 years after their last performance of *Mazahab* (2002). This example shows that the rhetorical public sphere not only generates counter-performances as immediate actions but can also have impacts over longer spans of time which can bring about change in social and political structures in terms of communal solidarity and secularism.

The rhetorical public space plays a significant role, not only in terms of impacting socio-political change, but also upon the reception of the performance amongst the community at large. The impacts of the theatre performances of Budhan on local communities and mainstream artists were clear in increased awareness among the locals around Chhara and DNT issues and Budhan's connections with well-known artists from the mainstream India. This inspired the group to organise a theatre festival, which has its own socio-cultural implications. The following discussion focuses on two significant performances of Budhan Theatre that were performed as part of Ahmedabad Theatre festival (2012). I will analyse them in the context of their festival specific implications using the Performance Efficacy Model to consider the implications of these performances in the wider community.

Budhan Theatre organized the Ahmedabad Theatre Festival from February 24-26th, 2012, with funding support from the Ford Foundation and Bhasha Research. It is important here to remember that Bhasha Research is a parent organization for Budhan Theatre (see P. 52 in Chapter 2).

More than 7000 people (Nair) participated in the festival and watched theatre performances presented in seven different languages spoken in India. A total of 25 plays were performed at six different performance spaces. The most significant aspect about the Ahmedabad Theatre Festival (ATF hereafter) is that the performances were not ticketed. All 25 performances were free to watch for any spectator thus ensuring that the performances were accessible to all community members, regardless of status or income.

ATF welcomed diverse theatre practitioners from across the country and included any form of theatrical performances from folk to experimental. Budhan provided the minimum facilities for

the production, travel costs, lodging and food for all festival participants (Indrekar). Budhan focused on a theatre groups who were working for a sensible cause and not just perform for commercial gains (Desai; Gagdekar R.). Dakxin contacted the theatre groups and learned about their works before inviting them to the festival. Most festivals usually avoid performances that are highly political and critique the state, for Budhan the policy was reversed, they invited political plays to present the local audiences with a theatre that they never experienced due to the image of the city with “dying arts” as a result of suppressive policies of the Hindu extremist right wing government of Gujarat (Gagdekar R.). Budhan Theatre devised and performed three different plays; *Balcony Revisited* (2012) (an adaptation of Jean Genet's play *The Balcony*, 1957), *Choli ke Pichhe Kya Hai*, (2007) and *Kahani Meri Tumhari*. (2011). They also showcased some of the group's improvised street performances at the ATF. Evaluating Budhan's performances within and outside the space powered by a festival environment; and juxtaposing the reception/efficacy can provide an important perspective on the implications of theatre festivals on the DNT theatre of India. The initiative of organising a theatre festival had significant implications in context of Budhan's recognition among the community of mainstream theatre practitioners; and towards its larger goal of changing the popular understanding of the Chhara community to a community of actors in order to replace its inaccurate and debilitating labelling as a community of 'criminals'. The following paragraphs will discuss the performances, *Choli Ke Pichhe Kya Hai* and *Kahani Meri Tumhari* in the context of the Performance Efficacy Model.

5.1.2. *Choli Ke Pichhe Kya Hai?*

Through storytelling, Budhan's performance of *Choli Ke Pichhe Kya Hai?* [translated as What's behind the Blouse?] (hereafter *Choli*) articulates gender, class, and caste as factors contributing to women's oppression within Indian society. The focus of Budhan while creating this performance was to highlight the issue of women's suppression within the entire Indian society from its usual practice of focusing on DNT issues. Although Budhan had many young actresses the lack of experienced and mature female actors in the group resulted in the use of female impersonators to portray central characters in the play and I will argue that this turned out to be one of the most effective aspects of the performance. Female impersonators were commonly found in many Indian folk genres, and female impersonator Bal Gandharva (1888-1967) was still a fashion icon in mid-twentieth century India (Hanson qtd in S. Bhatt 57). However, the inclusion of female impersonator in performances is unusual/rare in contemporary Indian theatre, where celebratory performances of a female body and gender are

quite common. The carnivalesque street performance, *Choli* combines both; the traditional theatre's female impersonator and a celebratory performance of female gender.

Choli is based on Mahashweta Devi's *Stanadayini* or Breast Giver, (translated by Spivak 252-276). Jashoda, the main character, is a high caste⁵ but poor Brahmin woman living in the 1960s who breastfeeds the children of a feudal lord to earn her livelihood. She takes the job of wet nurse after her husband loses his leg in an accident caused by the carelessness of the feudal lord's son. Jashoda gets pregnant each year to ensure that she continuously produces breast milk. *Stanadayini* reflects the hierarchy of class, caste, and gender in a social arena where high caste women dominate poor women, and all women are controlled by male patriarchy (252-276). The maids in the story are sexually harassed and raped by males in the lord's family. Jashoda is also sexually oppressed by her husband; her body is completely objectified to earn her living and to satisfy the sexual desires of her husband resulting in her contracting breast cancer at the end of the story.

In Indian society, the mother of sons may enjoy a privileged position, but daughters may be discriminated against by even their mothers, just as wives are by their husbands (262). Jashoda knows discrimination as a daughter and wife but gains a privileged position in society as a mother. However, as a foster mother, Jashoda is badly treated by Thakurain. Although Thakurain is a lower caste woman by birth than Jashoda, she has become the higher-class woman by giving birth to sons. Professional motherhood complicates the position of Jashoda as a woman. Mothering and reproduction cannot be hired without the worker losing status. The story poses questions towards a society within which women experience sexual violence and oppression in a multitude of forms.

The title of the play is a reference to the famous song 'choli ke picche kya hai' from the Hindi movie *Khalnayak* (Ghai), which is was intended as an erotic performance by the well-known actress Madhuri Dixit⁹⁵. However, since the story is about the commodification of the female body, the reference to the song moves away from its erotic meaning and towards the demonstration of a dehumanized and diseased body. The objectification of a particular woman's body for the purpose of sexual pleasure, and the commodification of her body for feeding children belonging to people with greater power and status are the two major aspects through which the story and the adapted play create a discourse of the gendered subaltern (Spivak "Can the Subaltern Speak?" 306). Male desire for the beautiful body of a woman as a tool for sexual

pleasure and the commodification of that same body at the exchange value of minimum objects of livelihood such as clothes and food create a tragic picture.

Choli interrogates hegemonic structures, creating the "gendered subaltern" (Spivak "Can the Subaltern Speak?" 306). Gayatri Spivak discusses a "Breast Giver" in "A Literary Representation of Subaltern: Mahashweta Devi's 'Stanadayini' ". According to Spivak, "The alienated means of production, the part object, the distinguishing organ of the female as mother. It [the child] is the parasite feeding on the breast in the name of affect, consuming the body politic, 'flourishing at the expense of human host'" (Spivak 132). Spivak uses the Marxist theory of surplus value of labour-power of Jashoda which is fully consumed by the owners and leads to capital accumulation (as if her milk had been bottled and sold for profit) (S. Bhatt 47). Marxist sentiment, however, is only implied in the play for Jashoda's services are not sold for profit. Though Thakurain offers clothes and food for Jashoda's breastfeeding of her seven grandsons, these things are nothing as compared to the physical harm done to the body of Jashoda.

Male sexual desire is at the centre of the play: each male seeks the female breast. The higher-class males harass maids by sexually abusing them or use their wives' body for sexual pleasure. Women's status and security may depend on their desirability and Thakurain is concerned that the shape of her daughter-in-laws' bodies might be destroyed through breastfeeding and therefore hinder the sexual entertainment that Thakurain's sons receive from their wives. Kangali, Jashoda's husband, tells her that he could see the whole world in her breasts. Nabinda, the temple priest, secretly desires Jashoda's breasts too. Jashoda as a gendered subaltern is objectified and constantly dehumanized. There are two gazes depicted: the male gaze based on sexual desire, and the religious gaze that sees Jashoda as a goddess. The male gaze is common within Indian social structure. The religious gaze derives from the story of Lord Krishna, an incarnation of the preserver god Vishnu, brought up with great love and dedication by his foster mother Jashoda (also Yashoda) and, hence, a religiously sanctioned icon of Hindu motherhood (Chandra 15). Jashoda, in *Choli*, is likewise a foster mother who looks after children. So Nabinda the priest sees her with this religious gaze and says: "Maa Jashoda. . . the Maa Jashoda who is a suckler of all children. Maa Jashoda, you should sit on some elephant, horse, or hen [as per Hindu mythology, animals are the vehicles divinities ride thus making those animals divine too, which encourages the co-existing principle of Hindu way of living]. I also want to worship you, give me one chance to worship you" (*Choli* 6). This objectification of the female

body also includes the notion of high caste as purer; therefore, a woman from the Brahmin caste is selected for breastfeeding high-class children. Astrology and the Upanishadic notion of worshipping a cow and Brahmin are also present in the play⁹⁶. The Hindu notions of breasts, milk, womanhood/motherhood, and cow are very significant as gendered metaphors for the modern nation. As Charu Gupta says, cows have become “one of the icons of the mother” for the “imagined modern Hindu nation” (Gupta 196-221). Thus, Jashoda’s body represents motherhood and her breasts provide milk for many, linking her to the discourse of the cow as provider of milk and energy to the people. She is used by males/society as a source of nourishment and livelihood. Due to excessive suckling, Jashoda suffers from breast cancer and is abandoned to die. The play portrays a more tragic image of Jashoda's end than the original story. Her dead body is treated as if she were an animal not a Brahmin. She is carried by a rope tied around her feet like an animal by a *dalit* (“untouchable”)⁹⁷.

The beauty of female impersonators on stage in more traditional theatre performances consolidated normative gender expectations in Indian society. But in this show the female impersonators did not use make-up, jewellery, clothing, or hairstyles to enhance their appearance, thus subverting and challenging traditional notions of the beautiful impersonator. Juxtaposing the unadorned and artificially constructed “female” with a story about biologically mandated breastfeeding disrupts the viewer’s reception of a victimized female body. Construction of the female is demonstrated through silhouettes in the beginning of the performance, as the male actors put on petticoats and stuff their bras. Helped by other males, they don blouses and saris and cover their hair with the *pallu* (loose end of the sari).



Figure 17 and 18: The construction of the female bodies viewed from both sides of the curtain. Source: video recording of the performance shared with me by Budhan Theatre.

The female impersonators here draw attention to the artifice of gender roles. This is unlike the fashion icons discussed by Hanson's impersonators who attracted the male gaze, created a thrill, and might even be offered a sexual relationship by male viewers. Rather *Choli* displays the performance of gender through characteristics of maleness. The voice of the normative impersonators are raised to mark feminine gender, but here they communicate female emotions in male voices as a constant reminder of their male gender. For example, when Jashoda calls for help to take her husband to the hospital after the Haldar's son hits him with a car, Jashoda's hoarse male voice evoked laughter. This use of male voice highlights and draws attention to the artifice of gender roles throughout the performance.



Figure 19: The unadorned bodies of the female impersonators during a performance of *Choli* at Mahuda Thetare at Tejgagh, 2007. Source: video recording of the performance shared with me by Budhan Theatre.

The exchange value of the breast is highlighted in the short story and is completed in the performance. This objectification starts from the construction of breasts on the bodies of female impersonators behind the curtain at the beginning and ends with the impersonator tearing her blouse at the end to display her inability to feed babies due to breast cancer. The impersonator's cries for help and calls to the children to suckle on her diseased body. Jashoda fumbles to breastfeed, lying on the dusty land and revealing the stuffing inside her bra. Jashoda is left, dead

and unwanted. As documented in a video recording of the performance (2007), this scene is visibly shocking for the male spectators. It is an undesirable, upsetting and sparse ending. This performance of gender contrasts with the conventional or celebratory patterns the audience expects. Subversion of the audience expectations prevails throughout the piece.

Choli aroused some extreme reactions from audiences of both genders at several different performances (2007, 2008, 2012). In interviews with Bajrange, he recalled a few experiences and instances of audience feedback that Budhan had received for their performance of *Choli* which includes two major and contradictory responses from two different strata of Indian society. The first feedback was provided after the play was performed at a girl's college, and the young women cried after watching the presentation of the female body and sexuality. They also expressed appreciating the statement against women's oppression that was made by the play. Bajrange shares, "They informed us that they also would like to raise their voices against the oppressive structures, but [they felt that] their voices are not heard (qtd. S. Bhatt 79). Another piece of audience feedback was provided by a male spectator when the play was performed in Hyderabad in January 2008, the use of pictures of Hindu deities from calendars⁹⁸ for the creation of the set caused concern as Bajrange shares:

We were actually preparing the set an hour before the performance. We put the calendars of actresses and deities one after another in sequence on the backdrop of the stage, and, after some time, the officials and members of the organizing committee came and opposed the calendars saying, "You cannot put the picture of an actress with that of goddesses because we cannot look at the goddess the way we look at the actresses, the goddesses are pure" On that I asked them, "Are the actresses impure?" I talked to them and managed to convince them and made them understand why the calendars were put that way (qtd. in S. Bhatt 79).

The print media has covered performances of *Choli* on several occasions. The performance at Heggudu, a village in Karnataka Southern state of India, was mentioned by Shanta Gokhle in her article in the *Mumbai Mirror* on the 2nd of April 2008. *The Hindu* discussed the Hyderabad performance claiming that "[t]he invitees who came with their family members were so dumbfounded with the seriousness of the play that many of them walked out in the middle of the play, not understanding what the play was about" ("Budhan Theatre's Performance"). This report indicates the extent to which the performance disrupted audience expectations which may have been in place based on the title of the play which was taken from a popular song

(Ghai). Budhan's typical style stages cruel victimization to make a statement against victimhood.

Choli was performed as part of ATF during February 2012. The performance reached broader audiences through the space provided by the ATF. It not only impacted the reception of Budhan Theatre within the social space, but also led to community recognition for Budhan and the members of the Chhara community as excellent actors (Batunge). Theatre groups from across India participated in the ATF and were impressed by the acting skills of Chharas (Garange; A. Chhara A. Bajrange).

However, when I tried to show the video recorded performance with English subtitles outside India, in Aotearoa/New Zealand at the university where I was completing my PhD, the audience reception was completely different. After providing detailed information on Budhan Theatre and DNTs of India to the audience, when I played a part of video performance of *Choli* with subtitles, Theatre students⁹⁹ at Victoria University of Wellington found the performance funny and loud. The students were honest in saying that they found the acting very loud and began laughing during the scene which had made many spectators cry in India. The issue highlights the complexity and risk of further marginalization or alienation of Indigenous/tribal arts when performed internationally. However, the response from the Theatre students didn't impact the performers or Budhan Theatre group, the performance was indirectly looked at as "non-fit" for the inclusion within the global rhetoric due to being socially and politically specific to India (My observations). Budhan's members are in contact with some International artists from the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom, and have presented their creative activities based in India on several occasions to mainly artistic and academic audiences at the University seminars and lectures. At the same time, Indigenous artists from Aotearoa/New Zealand, Australia and Canada that I had a chance to discuss the project with, were fascinated to hear about the work of Budhan.

The following model explains the complexity of the public sphere that is created when a performance *Choli* which is designed for a cultural context and audience travels from a local space to an international one, both within and outside frames of a festival. The identity of the cultural group (here the DNT identity) and their political struggles are not necessarily received in the same way by international audiences as they are by local audiences. More importantly, they are received with a lot of respect and solidarity when presented to the Indigenous audiences of a completely different part of the world. This highlights how the repertoire and living

experiences of the spectators impacts the efficacy of the performance (Schechner 28-51) and hence sometimes further marginalizes the culture and community within the global social sphere. The reception can be understood through the Performance Efficacy Model as below:

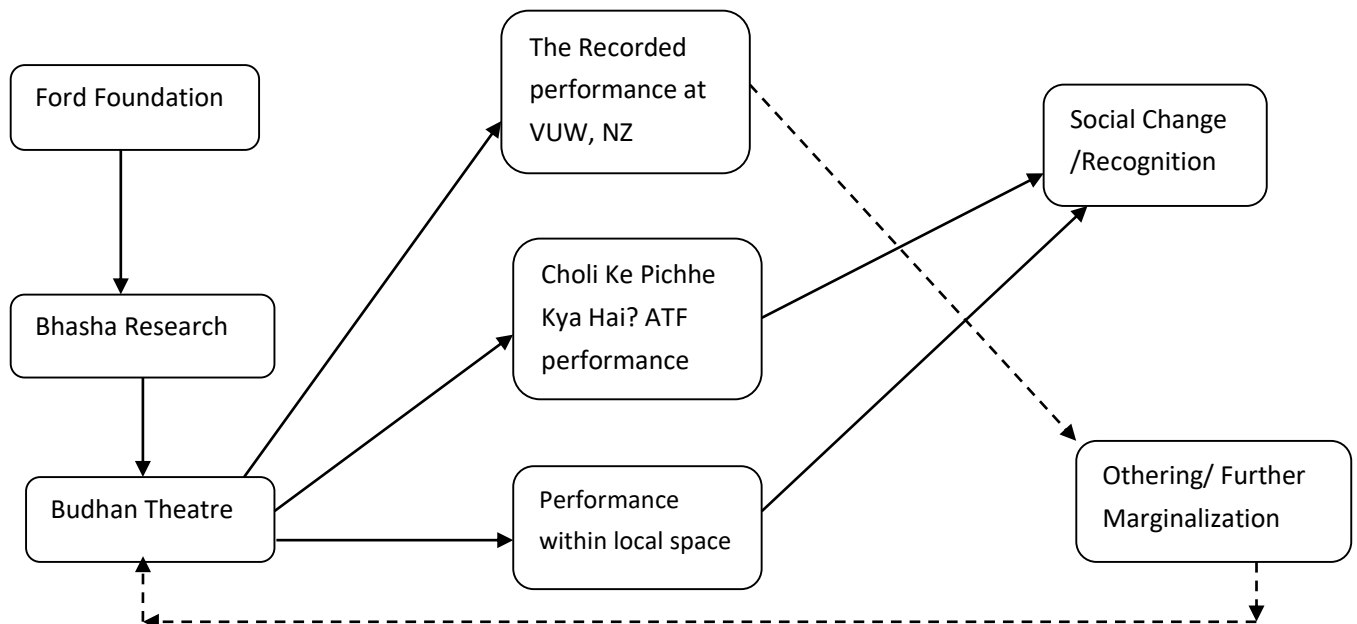


Figure 20: Explanation of *Choli* using Performance as Efficacy Model.

Please note, the above visual explanation of the performance is for easier understanding of the series of the events/aftermaths and not to oversimplify the complexity of the socio-political aspects of the performance. There can be components of the original Performance Efficacy model (see Chapter Three, P. 103) that are omitted while describing the above visual based on obvious differences and performance specific socio-political and geographical situations.

5.1.3. *Kahani Meri Tumhari* (2012)¹⁰⁰

Kahani is an autobiographical account of the actors of Budhan and as such it was not a very easy piece for them to work on for reasons including the potential for re-traumatization inherent in portraying their own stories. All of the actors in the theatre group had experienced police atrocities, discrimination within and outside the community, and lived with the impacts of poverty and social stigma. Roxy Gagdekar and Alok Gagdekar have had to undergo police brutalities and watched their father die due to a medical condition resulting from abuse by police that he went through while in jail (Gagdekar et al. 29-67). Both of them had to find work and

earn money at a very early age and experienced discrimination from the mainstream society. Jayendra's father was a thief and died due to the lack of resources to seek medical facilities and intense custodial atrocity by the police (68-70). Ankur was about nine years old and starved for a couple of days due to poverty in his household. He learnt about an event at school where he can have lunch for free. He walked quite far to be able to have lunch that day and watched the performance *Budhan Bolta Hai* at the event. He talked to his friend who was a member of Budhan's library and was determined to join the library and to get into acting but didn't have the money to pay registration fees¹⁰¹. Soon after this, one day on his way back home from school, he found a twenty-rupee bill, despite his poverty and financial needs at home, he handed in that note to the library for his membership out of his enthusiasm and fascination to join the movement. Ankur is one of the most talented actors of Budhan today. Kalpana, the only senior actress in Budhan has been continually discriminated against as she was the only girl from Chhara community who dared to work alongside males of the community and was also supported by her parents. She got married at a very early age and struggled hard to balance her personal commitments with that of her practice of theatre for change.

As a process of making the performance *Kahani*, the actors wrote their experiences on piece of paper and then gave their voices and acting while producing it. The performance presents the stories of most people in the community and shows an actual picture of life at Chharanagar that often involves intense pain, struggles to fight injustice, police atrocities, illegal liquor brewing etc. As Bajrange describes it:

The performance did not aim to make others ache but to express personal misery to transform the spectators' perception [towards the Chhara community] by producing a catharsis of real-life suffering. Though the social, judicial and welfare systems always formed hatred and discrimination against the Chhara community, the Chhara youth had faith that they could bring change to their spectators (Bajrange "Liberation Drama" 50).

Because the performance presented the real-life suffering of the actors, it left both actors and spectators in tears at the end (my observation being a spectator). The performance also acted as a medium of healing through re-living the struggles says Kalpana, one of the actors. This aspect of the performance and its potentiality to be used a tool to heal has been discussed in context of Indigenous performances by Smith, a native Canadian artist (2017) as well as Muirhead and

Leeuw (2012)¹⁰². The following paragraph describes the performance *kahani* and its implications in more detail.

The stage opens with an old Bollywood song *Maulaa ho maulaa*¹⁰³ from the movie *Rudaali* (Lajmi) and the characters freeze on the stage with a framed picture of Mahashweta Devi on the poster stand. The performance begins with the recorded voice of Budhan leader Dakxin that informs the audience of the court trial of renowned social activist and writer Mahashweta Devi who inspired the members of Chhara community to begin Budhan library and the theatre group. The recording informs the spectators about the works done by Mahashweta Devi for the Chhara community, and how those works inspire Budhan to keep on performing for the DNTs. The first scene opens after Mahashweta Devi is asked to answer the questions, “How do you get to know about Chharanagar located in the middle of the richest city of the state? What do you know about the personal lives of the people of Chharanagar?” (*Kahani Meri Tumhari*).

There are five actors on the stage; Ankur, Roxy, Kalpana, Jayendra and Alok, and they each play themselves. They introduce themselves to the audience using their real names and go on to tell the stories of their actual lives. The stories of the actors are sequenced in such a way that the entire play becomes a story of three different families who portray three different aspects of the Chhara experience. Roxy and Kalpana are husband and wife, Alok is Roxy’s younger brother. Roxy’s father studied law and worked for the reform of the Chhara community. He was jailed for giving anti-police statements that were published in a journal. The police arrested him using under false charges of conducting anti-social activity (34-5). While Roxy’s father was imprisoned, his mother used to brew country liquor (illegally) having no other means of earning any income. Ankur and Jayendra are from two different families. Ankur’s father used to work as a labourer and wanted Ankur to get an education and a good job, whereas Jayendra’s father used to steal but wanted his son to get involved with Budhan’s theatre activities and have a good career. The stories of these five members of the Chhara community are told through conceptual sequencing, mime, live music and songs sung by the actors.

The first scene opens with the story of Ankur who shares his experience of living in poverty during his childhood, an injustice done to his father, and how he joined Budhan Theatre at the age of 13. Ankur tells the audience that he and his family were starving as his father lost his work and so, he went to the local school in order to eat some food after he heard that there has been some function on at the school. He watches a woman crying and screaming, “please don’t beat my husband sir...leave him, he hasn’t done anything wrong, please let me see him”; he

was dumbstruck at this. He was frightened and ran away and then his friend informed him that it was a performance of *Budhan Bolta Hai* he had seen. He says, “that day a new hunger developed inside me, for theatre!” (126).

Following that, Kalpana shares her experience of getting married at the age of sixteen, failure in her studies, having a child at the age of seventeen and becoming a lead actress of Budhan theatre at the age of nineteen. Kalpana talks about the status of women in the Chhara community and shares how privileged she is to have had support from her parents, husband and in-laws. Kalpana shares her experience of performing for the first time, and how she cried after everyone appreciated her.



Figure 21: Ankur and Kalpana while performing *Kahani*



Figure 22: Alok performing *Kahani*. Source: Budhan Theatre photo gallery

Roxy shares his experience of being discriminated against by his peers whilst at school, and of similar experiences at the hostel away from Chharanagar where his father had sent him hoping to protect him from stigma. He also describes his father’s activism against injustices and the politics of local *panchayat* at Chharanagar¹⁰⁴. He shares his experience of an initial meeting with Mahashweta Devi and from there, how he and Dakxin started Budhan Theatre and performed their first play, *Budhan Bolta Hai* (1998). He says, “since that day, we started asking ourselves and others, ‘are we second class citizen of India?’ We demand self-respect” (Gagdekar et al. 144). Roxy Gagdekar says he was inspired by his father to raise his voice and fight for justice. He describes how their theatre performances began to get noticed by the mainstream society and media who were inspired to find out more about the problems of the Chhara community and other DNTs as a consequence of watching the performances. He says, “it was after we started performing *Budhan Bolta Hai*, people became interested in knowing how we live and what are our problems? Are we not ready to change ourselves or do we lack opportunity to change the image and wrong labelling of our community” (R. Gagdekar).

Jayendra begins by sharing information about how members of Chharanagar performed in a play called *Spartax* written by a local mainstream theatre practitioner named Premprakash. He goes on to explain how he became an actor at the age of nine when his father took him with his gang and asked him to perform a role of a young child of a woman who was acting as part of their plan to rob a rich man of the city. He says, “I had to speak only one sentence to my mother, ‘ma..ma... I am hungry, please buy me some chai and pakoras and my mother has to ask the

same for me to that rich guy. As soon as he gets up to buy me chai and *pakor*as, he is robbed!” (129). This refers to the ancestral tradition of the community and their inherited skills of performing arts:

Dakxin’s forefathers were wandering street performers, skilled in dance, music and acrobatics. When the State settled them in Chharanagar in North Ahmedabad, it deprived them of this traditional means of livelihood without replacing it with any other. Dakxin Said, “that’s how Chharas became natural actors” (qtd. in Gokhale).

This story suggests that the labelling of people from the Chhara community as being intergenerationally involved in criminal activities like robbery may be true in some cases, however, these activities are the result of a lack of access to education and employment opportunities due to the stigma around the community, as well as the discriminatory attitudes of wider society. According to the information provided by Budhan Theatre and the communications done by me with selected members of Chharanagar community in 2015 (Jankiben; Gopichandbhai; Chetnaben “Personal Interviews”), fifty percent of the households of the Chharanagar send their children to Budhan library and want the youth of Chharanagar to have a good education and to pursue a career in what they call ‘respected professions’ (Bhumika; Ketli; Poonam “Personal Interviews”). These reforms and awareness were made possible by the community’s existence. The proven examples of youth development exemplified by the founding members of Budhan who act as role models for young people in the community, have given young people alternative career paths to aspire to.

Alok talks about his father who acted as an agent of change for the *Panchayat* [a village council] of Chharanagar during the 1980s. He describes how his father and friends made posters in one night opposing the injustice of the Panchayat and links watching the play ‘*Posters*’ by Shankar Shreshtha with his activism, as the core message of that play is that posters can be used to change the world. He explains:

There were theatre makers and academicians like Mahashweta Devi, Ganesh Devi, Saumya Joshi and Tarun who worked with us and reminded us of our past, the past of the settlement! The constant struggle and discrimination! However, when I realised these things, my life had something else to offer to me at the same time! My ill father and worries about earning money! (Gagdekar et al. 129)

The performance gradually travels towards its emotional peak when Ankur and Jayendra describe the death of their fathers resulting from factors including a lack of resources, loss of self-respect, police atrocity and poverty. Similarly, Roxy, Alok and Kalpana describe how their father died due to a prolonged sickness and lack of resources for his medical treatment. They present the lack of employment opportunities supporting them to build a career after finishing their studies as an experience that is common to many other young people in Chharanagar. At the end of the performance Alok appeals the audience to think about the Chhara community from a Chhara's point of view, he asks audiences to help provide them with opportunities and support them in efforts to get their self-respect back. The play ends with the resumed trial scene that it opened with. The framed photograph of Mahashweta Devi is put on the stage again and the judgement given is:

After watching the kind of work you do with marginalized communities, and the kind of work you have done with Chhars by providing them the tool of theatre, it is decided that the theatre can offer them that important thing that they were not offered by the constitution of India! And that is their self-respect! (*Choli Ke Pichhe Kya Hai*)

The video recording of the performance displays its impact on the spectators. Many audience members are dumbstruck for a while as they are offered a real-life story of discrimination, injustice and atrocity. I have watched the performance once at the ATF and witnessed similar impacts. It is important to note that on both occasions, when I watched it and as per the video recording, the majority of the spectators included middle class / higher class men from Indian mainstream society who act as direct or indirect discriminators within the society. As Bajrange comments:

The Chhara actors unwrapped their life-mask revealing a truth that challenged the spectators. Secondly, this play, like our most plays is based on our life experiences. In case of *KMT [Kahani Meri Tumhari]* the Chhara actors are [portraying true lived experiences that are] beyond theatrical impersonation of the characters. There was no fictitiousness in their performance. The actors and the characters were real, the same person representing their real-life events, not to make-believe but to lead the spectators to experience the time and space where the actors sustain theatre for social change, despite lots of hurdles (Bajrange "Liberation Drama" 51).

The socio-political implications of the play are made quite clear in above mentioned quote. The performance clearly touches the spectators and delivers the impact it aimed to. In other words,

the performers take the mainstream audience with them to experience, understand and struggle in the world and life of Chharanagar. However, looking at the performance from the view of it being part of the Ahmedabad Theatre Festival highlights some other impacts of it as well.

The show was first performed in an event called *Tamasha* (Tamasha is also the name of the folk theatre form originating from the Maharashtra region of India) which was a one-day theatre festival co-organised by Budhan Theatre and the Ahmedabad based Samvedana group¹⁰⁵ on the 30th of April 2011. The event (Tamasha) took place at Gujarat Vidyapith, an educational organisation located in Ahmedabad city (Budhan Theatre website). The performance was held in an indoor elevated stage space but had minimal props, and sparse music and lighting; and just like Budhan's street performances, *Kahani* undoubtedly presented the power of body and artistic skills that allowed the audience to experience of poverty in theatre with an artistic excellence. This theatre performance can be considered as an example of "poor theatre" (Grotowski 19). Grotowski explains that poor theatre takes place in a minimally equipped space, with limited costumes and sets, lighting and music, but an intense actor training wherein the actor performs the role with complete dedication, without egotism or enjoyment (Grotowski 19).

The performance of *Kahani* impacts the socio-political space in two different ways. Firstly, because of its strong presentation of actual lives of the actors and depiction of the conditions of the community at large, as I observed the audience members sitting with me watching the show, stunned, tearful and in awe, this in a way, contributes to changing the views of the spectators towards the community which is a central aim of the theatre group. The performances and the theatre festival itself allow artists and audiences to connect with Budhan and become aware of the DNT issues, as shared by Naresh Prerna, one of the directors of the shows presented at the ATF, "we were attracted by the notion that people of Chharanagar use theatre to bring about a social change in their community. We wanted to see and understand their working style and we got to know the real side of their struggle only after coming here" (Prerna, qtd. in Desai). Secondly, the festival was funded by Bhasha Research who had received funds from the Ford Foundation as well as governmental agencies like the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (Gajjar). The implications of funding structures on the work of Budhan Theatre will be discussed in the following section.

5.2. Financial Sustainability, Theatre Festivals and Creative Initiatives

Unlike some theatre groups in India, Budhan does not receive money in the form of post-show collections from audiences. Rather, it often receives donations from foreign visitors or researchers and from Bhasha Research (Budhan's parent organisation). The documentary film, *Please Don't Beat Me Sir!* (Friedman and Talukar) is also a funding source for Budhan. The film was produced by the researchers Shashwati Talukar (Independent filmmaker) and Kerim Friedman (Associate professor in department of Ethnic Relations and Cultures at National Dong Hwa University, Taiwan) who contribute the proceeds from the sale of the film to Budhan¹⁰⁶. Talukar and Friedman have set up a website named *Vimukta* (meaning free or liberated) for giving back to the community of the DNTs ("Vimukta"). The sustainability of the performing arts, especially for non-commercial/community theatre groups, has always been a locus of continuous struggle against hegemonic cultural forms which often reduces art to forms which conform to the demands of the "political economy" (Bhattacharya 22). In the capitalist world, a performance is produced primarily as a commodity:

A performance has to be produced, that is, it requires a certain deployment of labour power. This means that there is a political economy of performance, a history of its evolution through the contradiction between the ownership of the means of production and the pattern of dissemination of the product (Bhattacharya 22).

The capitalist production of art is commercial or profit oriented, and therefore activist art is caught in a continuous process of struggle against dominant, hegemonic art forms. In contrast, in political theatre or *agitprop* theatre¹⁰⁷ performances are inspired by a spirit of resistance and oriented towards social and cultural transformation. This resistance in street performances such as many of those presented by Budhan Theatre represents either the "oppressed majority," the people of mainstream Indian society who are governed or oppressed by corrupt and discriminatory political power structures; or the "marginal minority", which is oriented towards transformation in socio-political situations (Ghosh 272). The transformation on behalf of the marginal minority works at the level of consciousness and aims at providing an alternative point of view to the oppressed majority, thus helping the marginal to become self-governing (Ghosh 272). In simple words, the minority of creative artists of Budhan Theatre becomes a powerful source to provoke the majority of the mainstream population of India, whose point of views are highly influenced by the political agendas of the governing power structures; with an alternative point of view.

The principal sponsor of the Ahmedabad Arts Festival that Budhan organised in 2011 was the Ford Foundation. It is important to briefly discuss Budhan's connection to Ford Foundation (FF hereafter) due to the recent controversy over FF's funding activities in India (Jena; Nithesh; Kumar).

5.2.1. The FF and its alleged connection to the CIA

The FF established its office in New Delhi, India in 1952 after an invitation from Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru ("Ford Foundation"). The New Delhi office was the first branch of the organization to be established outside of the USA since the FF's inception in 1936 ("Ford Foundation"). The FF claims to have a series of written agreements with successive Indian governments spanning their 60-year history in the country which has involved them working alongside government, academics, and civil society organizations ("Ford Foundation"). According to the information presented on the FF website ("Ford Foundation"), the organization has contributed funding in excess of US \$508 million, allocating more than 3500 grants to 1250 different Indian institutions. FF claim to be actively working towards achieving their overall organizational mission; "to reduce poverty and injustice, strengthen democratic values, promote international cooperation, and advance human achievement" ("Ford Foundation").

Although the Ford Foundation has actively funded government, academic and community development projects in the USA, India and elsewhere around the world, the organization is also suspected to be a front for the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). There has been debate and extensive documentation regarding this accusation within the international media (Petras). Media outlets in the USA have accused the FF of being the cultural front of the CIA and accused them of promoting cultural cold war in the world (Petras 1). This issue attracted the attention of the world's media because of several significant actions carried out by the organization. During the 1960s, a number of CIA operatives secured employment in the FF (Saunders 143). An investigation in 1976 found that 50% of the 700 grants for international activities that had been awarded by USA based foundations, including FF, were funded by the CIA (Saunders 134-135). According to British journalist, Frances Saunders:

At times it seemed as if the Ford Foundation was simply an extension of government in the area of international cultural propaganda. The Ford Foundation had a record of close involvement in covert actions in Europe, working closely with the Marshall Plan

[an American initiative to aid Western Europe] and CIA officials on specific projects (Saunders 135).

Despite this controversial history, it was only after the current government took charge in 2015 that the activities of the FF began to be watched by the government of India. The government of India suspected that the organization supported anti-nationalistic projects (Mallet). This awareness was triggered by legal proceedings and court trials involving social activists such as Medha Patkar (Narmada Bachao Aandolan, Delhi) and Teesta Setalvad (Citizens for Justice and Peace, Mumbai). The welfare organizations these activists belonged to were the Narmada Bachao Aandolan and the Citizens for Justice and Peace respectively; both these organizations had received grants of thousands of dollars from the Ford Foundation (Press Trust of India). Teesta Setalvad was accused by the state of misusing the funds she received in the year 2008 for establishing a museum in memory of the victims of the 2002 communal riots (Press Trust of India). She was said to have used the funds for anti-national propaganda that could affect communal harmony (Dutta). Similarly, Medha Patkar, a well-known activist and winner of the Magsaysay Award (which is also sponsored by Ford Foundation and Rockefeller Foundation, both based in the USA) was accused by the state agencies of India of misusing the funds for personal activities (Mkaad). Medha was involved in fighting against the Sardar Sarovar Dam construction in Gujarat in support of local farmers and tribal peoples. However, surprisingly, she was opposed and attacked by the tribal people of the Chhatisgadh region for supporting naxals¹⁰⁸ amidst tribal communities (Gupta).

The government of India halted the operations of FF in India in July 2015, freezing the funding coming into India since that time. The Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi called the social activists and groups who received funding from the FF and other foreign non-governmental organisations (NGOs) “five-star activists” (Mallet) blaming them for bringing foreign funding into India with the intention of hampering national industrial projects on social and environmental grounds¹⁰⁹ (Mallet).

FF have provided funding totalling \$200,000 USD (approx. INR 1,46,50,000) to Bhasha Research - Budhan’s parent organisation. This money was given to ensure “general support for advocacy and economic development work focused on tribal empowerment in India” (“FF Annual Report” 11). Budhan received funding of around 18-19 lakh rupees (USD\$ 30,000) for organising the festivals¹¹⁰. I attempted to locate the funding account for the Budhan Theatre and

the ATF on the annual reports archive of the Bhasha Research but was unable to find a written account on this except for the verbal information received from the members of Budhan Theatre as mentioned above. I wrote emails to the Bhasha Research at the email addresses mentioned on the website with no avail.


<https://www.fordfoundation.org/work/our-grants/grants-database/grants-all?originatingoffices=%26RegionIds%3D5&page=28&minyear=2010&maxyear=2012&thematicareas=%26ThematicAreas%3D1%26ThematicAreas%3D4%26ThematicAreas%3D8%26>

| | | | | | |
|--|------|-----------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Alternative Law Forum | 2011 | \$175,000 | India, Sri Lanka and Nepal | Beyond Current Issue Structure | Arts, culture and media; Civil and Human Rights; Education and scholarship |
| Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment | 2011 | \$200,000 | India, Sri Lanka and Nepal | Beyond Current Issue Structure | Arts, culture and media; Civil and Human Rights; Urban and rural land management |
| Asmita Resource Center for Women | 2011 | \$178,000 | India, Sri Lanka and Nepal | Beyond Current Issue Structure | Civil and Human Rights; Education and scholarship; Fair economies; Government policy and practice; Sexual and reproductive health and rights |
| Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) | 2011 | \$200,000 | India, Sri Lanka and Nepal | Beyond Current Issue Structure | Civic participation; Government policy and practice |

| GRANTEE | YEAR | AMOUNT | REGION | THEMATIC AREAS | TOPICS | BUILD GRANT |
|-----------------|------|-----------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| Bhasha Research | 2011 | \$200,000 | India, Sri Lanka and Nepal | Beyond Current Issue Structure | Education and scholarship | No |

Final general support for advocacy and economic development work focused on tribal (adivasi) empowerment in India

| BENEFITING LOCATION | BENEFITING POPULATION |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
|---------------------|-----------------------|



Leaflet | CartoDB attribution

Close

Figure 23: Source: Ford Foundation online database, last accessed 26/10/2018.

BHASHA : FUNDING : : 2009-10

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| Aide-et-Action | 60,87,591 |
| Reach to Teach (India) | 27,37,143 |
| Ministry of Tribal Affairs, GOI | 24,85,000 |
| Terre Des Hommes | 16,10,711 |
| District Planning Education Programme (DPEP) | 13,25,181 |
| Central Institute of Indian Languages | 9,29,970 |
| Dept. of Culture, HP | 9,10,195 |
| Reach to Teach UK | 5,62,602 |
| District Planning Office | 2,12,625 |
| CAPART | 1,00,684 |
| Tribal Dept. (Govt. of Gujarat) | 50,000 |
| Ministry of Tribal Affairs -interest | 27,259 |
| CIIL - Interest | 9,804 |
| TOTAL | 1,70,48,765 |

BHASHA : FUNDING : 2010-11

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Reach to Teach (UK) | 74,42,682 |
| Reach to Teach | 18,96,935 |
| Terre Des Hommes | 17,13,628 |
| District Planning Office | 7,61,668 |
| Development Planning Education Programme-DPEP | 2,08,544 |

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| TRIFED | 30,000 |
| Ministry of Tribal Affairs, GOI - interest | 20,174 |
| Ministry of Tribal Affairs, GOI interest | 16,959 |
| Dept. of Culture - interest | 14,319 |
| Central Institute of Indian Languages - interest | 9,429 |
| TOTAL | 1,21,14,338 |

BHASHA : FUNDING : 2011-12

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| Reach to Teach (UK) | 1,00,39,729 |
| Jamsedji Tata Trust | 43,51,795 |
| Ministry of Tribal Affairs, GOI | 30,08,770 |
| Reach to Teach | 20,55,080 |
| Terre Des Hommes | 15,00,634 |
| District Planning Education Programme -DPEP | 8,05,176 |
| Dept. of Culture, HP | 5,28,000 |
| Development Planning Education Programme-DPEP | 3,23,243 |
| Central Institute of Indian Languages | 2,93,021 |
| Bol Distribution | 1,50,000 |
| TOTAL Rs. | 2,30,55,448 |

Figure 24: Source: Bhasha Research and publication website, last accessed 26/10/2018

The FF's involvement in funding the Ahmedabad Theatre Festival is significant, not only because of capitalist politics and their impact on the arts, but also for the FF's problematic relation to the current political set up in India (Mallet). The FF is known for funding a number of 'anti-government', social activists and community groups working on social development in India (Mallet).

The government of India led by Prime Minister Modi (since April 2015) has declined the registration of 9000 activist groups and institutions, including Greenpeace India who could not provide the details of their usage of foreign funding (Nair). The government not only ended the funding streams for these NGOs but also stopped higher positioned staff members from leaving the country (Nair). One of the staff members of Greenpeace India was stopped at the airport in 2015 on route to the United Kingdom (“Greenpeace Activist”). All streams of FF funding were put on hold until the issue was resolved through negotiations between the government of India and the FF, which also impacted various ongoing community development projects (Nair). The US government asked for the clarification on the restrictions on FF from the government of India but was denied any clarification on the issue (Mallet). Mr. Kohli, an elected member of the ruling party said, “I don't know if the US government is in any right or any position to demand a clarification from the government of India. Something that is completely an internal matter of India. Therefore, I don't see any case there” (“US Seeks Clarification”).

The FF has been operating its Delhi based Indian office for past six decades without registering as an NGO under Indian Law (Mallet). Interestingly, records show that previous governments had noticed this but had not taken any action against them (Jain). The Government of India removed FF from the 'prior permission' category¹¹¹ after FF agreed to register under Indian Law. The FF appreciated the insistence of the government of India on compliance with Indian laws and norms.

The controversy surrounding the FF has affected several social welfare and community groups by dragging them under scrutiny of an extremely right-wing Indian government and affecting them financially as well as politically; consequentially groups previously associated with FF are less likely to receive any support from the current government. The group has not only sustained itself as a theatre group representing the DNT voices of India but also has moved a step forward in providing stage space for mainstream theatre makers via the ATF in 2012. It is ironic that an oppressed/othered collective is providing those who have oppressed and discriminated against them with a space and creative opportunity. However, as discussed earlier, Budhan managed to sustain itself with limited financial resources, however, Budhan was unable to organise the festivals or provide space to the artistic communities after the year 2012 as a consequence of limited funding streams (Bajrange “Personal Interview”).

Superficially, the impact seems minimal to Budhan in terms of political marginalisation due to the indirectness of the funding, however, there has been significant funding challenges since which might be connected to this association with FF. As Roxy shares:

When we received money from FF through Bhasha for three years, and little funding from Bhasha individually for couple years following FF funding, we still had freedom due to Devy sir [Prof. Ganesh Devy]! And, whenever we apply for funding from any agency, we line out our conditions and ask for money – if they want to fund, they can or we are fine” (R. Gagdekar).

The implications of the performance and its reception can be explained through Performance Efficacy Model as below:

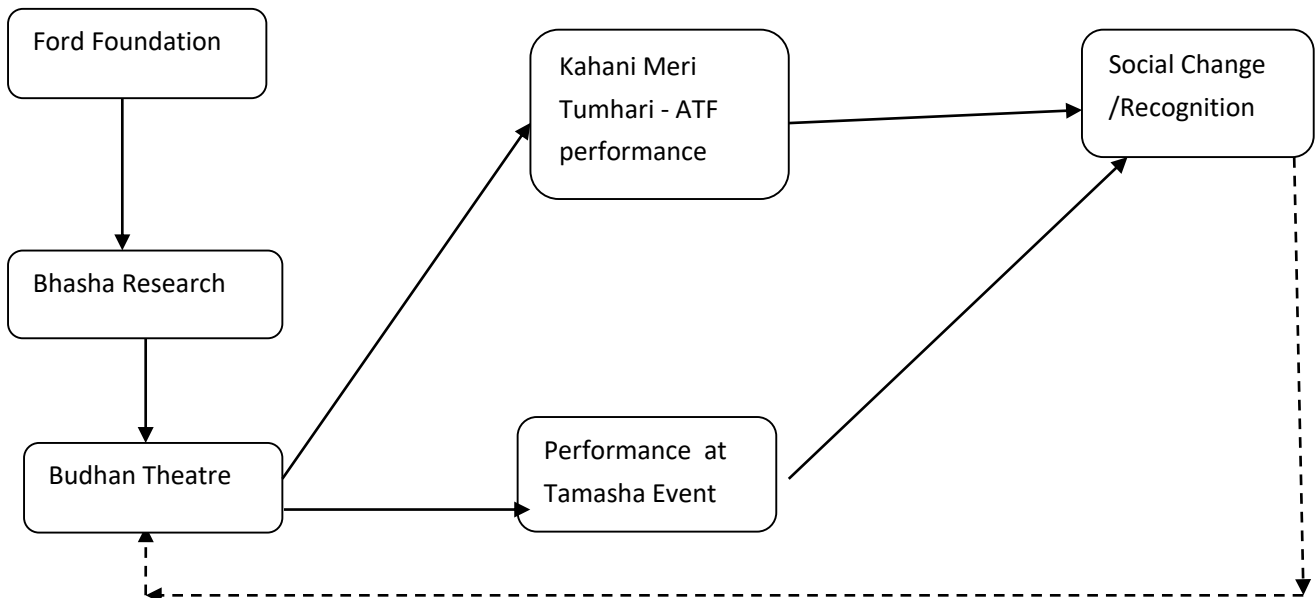


Figure 25: Explanation of the reception of *Kahani* through the Performance Efficacy Model

Please note, the above visual explanation of the performance is for easier understanding of the series of the events/aftermaths and not to oversimplify the complexity of the socio-political aspects of the performance. There can be components of the original Performance efficacy model (see Chapter Three, P. 103) that are omitted while describing the above visual based on obvious differences and performance specific socio-political and geographical situations.

The theatre group has never received any grant or funding directly from the government for its art and performance projects; and is at potential risk of further political discriminations due to the history of receiving funding from the FF, an organisation which the government accuses of being ‘anti-national’. According to Roxy, one of Budhan’s members:

We have never received any financial support from the government of India and we do not expect it [as we know that the government will not give us any]. We have tried to apply for grants for our theatre performances in the past [though not for the festival grant] but were declined each time on the grounds that we are not a commercial theatre production company¹¹² (R. Gagdekar).

Aatish Indrekar, Budhan’s emerging leader says, “we could receive the grants and funding if we forget politics and speak for the government! Which is never going to happen.” (Indrekar). Budhan’s members are committed to keeping their theatre movement in line with the company’s broader principle of resisting injustice enacted upon the DNTs.

5.2.2. Theatre Festivals Organised by Budhan Theatre

Budhan’s initiative of organising a theatre festival has significant implications within the local and the broader/national socio-political and theatrical spaces. The members of Budhan admit an artistic and cultural need for organising theatre festivals in Ahmedabad city, as no other group had organised such an extensive festival with such a large number of shows or representing such a broad range of cultural and linguistic diversity. Roxy says, “It is us, Budhan Theatre, who initiated the tradition of organising a theatre festival which is now followed by some local organisers; however, these are highly commercial performances and festivals” (R. Gagdekar).



Figure 26: Poster of Ahmedabad Theatre Festival with sponsor details (Ford Foundation)

Source and photo courtesy: Budhan Theatre Library

Kalpna, another member of Budhan Theatre, was invited to be part of a performance produced by Darpana Academy, a highly celebrated mainstream arts production company run by Mallika Sarabhai. Kalpna, an excellent actress, achieved considerable success and acceptance within the community of mainstream artists through this performance. She not only performed within local spaces but recently performed the show in the USA. She says, “It was Ahmedabad Theatre Festival that provided us with good contacts with mainstream artists who watched and appreciated our arts. It is because of Budhan’s training, I have become a good actress and everyone in Ahmedabad and outside the city knows me today” (K. Gagdekar). Kalpna was selected as one of the nominees for the best stage actress awards for the annual Gujarati Theatre Awards in 2015 (Transmedia).



Figure 27: Poster of Black Comedy Theatre Festival. Source and photo courtesy: Budhan Theatre Library

The Black Comedy Theatre Festival was organized by Budhan Theatre from May 12-13, 2012. It was specifically intended to create space for performers from the DNTs. People from eighteen different DNTs participated in this festival, which was held at Gujarat Sahitya Parishad, Ahmedabad (Nair). The festival included four performances and all of them were political satires. Budhan Theatre has not been able to organise any more festivals following the Black Comedy Festival due to the lack of funding. Interestingly, the theatre group has not received any funding from Bhasha Research since 2014, however, as discussed above, Budhan has managed to survive because of the determination of its members who look at Budhan as a movement and continue to support political activism for the rights of the DNT communities of India. As Dakxin says:

With very limited resources, we have adapted a kind of theatre form that doesn't require a lot of money / resources... Naturally we are penniless and the kind of theatre we do would never get any funding from the state. We have just used body and voices properly – effectively – and I believe you can act without lots of props or costumes [through your body and voice]. This is our strength (Bajrange “Personal Interview”).

One important outcome of this festival is that many DNT activists were able to network and connect with one another. They subsequently formed a committee which has been lobbying the state and central governments of India for the rights of DNTs (DNT-RAG India). The

committee is known as the *Akhil Bhartiya Vimukta-Vicharati Janjati Welfare Sangh* [All India De-Notified and Nomadic Tribes Welfare committee]. It is actively organising rallies and awareness programs across India that focus on making the DNTs aware of their rights, and which encourage them to participate in activism. One example of such activities is ‘the ‘freedom-day’ celebrations of the DNT communities – held on the 31st August each year, the day when Indian government declared them denotified.

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| | <p style="text-align: center;">अखिल भारतीय विमुक्त-विचरती जनजाति वेल्फेयर संघ "गुजरात प्रदेश"</p> <p>गुजरात प्रदेश का अध्यक्ष :- श्री दिलीपभाई अम. वाही मो. ९९७९६३५७२६९</p> <p>गुजरात प्रदेश महासंजी :- श्री पर्वतभाई जी. वाही मो. ९३४०८६९२५९</p> <p>गुजरात प्रदेश नीजु सचिव:- श्री संजयभाई वाही मो. ९९२५८५९९६३</p> | |
|--|---|--|

यालो..... यालो..... यालो..... लुणावाडा
समय: सवारे 11 थी सांजना 4 वाग्या सुधी
स्थल: हींदिस भेदान, लुणावाडा

31 ओगस्टना सेज मळीसागर कुब्बाना लुणावाडा भाते योजाई रहेब "विमुक्त-विचरती जनजाति मुक्ति दिन" समारोहमा जोडाईने आपणा बोडोअे आजादीमी बडतमां आपणा योजाईने जालवा तथा आपणा हळ-अधिकासे माटेनी मांगणीओने वावा आपवानी बचा-विचारणामां सहभागी बवा "अखिल भारतीय विमुक्त-विचरती जनजाति वेल्फेयर संघ-गुजरात प्रदेश" आप सीने आपना पसीवारसब आ कार्यक्रममां पधारवा भावणीनु आमनए आपे ऐ...!

आपणा देशेने 1947 मां आजादी मणी इती परंतु आपणने अंग्रेज सरकारे लागु करेला "गुनेगर जातिओ" नामना काला कायदामांघी 31 मी ओगस्ट 1952 ना सेज आजादी मणी इती जेथी आजे पए आपणी जातिओ 31 ओगस्टने पोतना मुक्ति दिवस तरीके मनावे ऐ. गुजरातमां बजाणीया, भांड, नाथ, वाही, वंसडोडा, भावा वैसगी, भवेया, मास्वाडा वाधरी, ओड, रावण, शिडलीगर, सराणीया, वराजास, जोगी, भोपा, गाडलीया, कांगरीया, घंटीया, यामडा, यारण गडवी (इकत वडोदरा), सलड, सलड घेरा, बाइला, छारा, डडेर, डिंगोरा, मे, मियाणा, संधि, ठेला, वाघेर, देवीपुजक, सुवाणीया कोणी, कोणी (इरछ अने रापर) जेवा 40 जातिओना लोको रडे ऐ जेमनी वस्ती आशरे 1 इरोड 20 लाप जेटली ऐ. आ जातिओनी सामाजिक, आर्थिक अने शैक्षणिक स्थिति पूज ज पराब ऐ अने जेओ आजे आजादी मण्याने 72 वर्ष बवा आव्या ऐ छतांय पोतना मूणभूत अधिकारोधी वंसित ऐ. आ कार्यक्रममां **अभाम, धंधा-सेजवार माटे अवज बजेटेनी झणवणी, जंगल जमीन, अट्रिटी, शिक्षण, एनाधयो, शिष्यवृति, आसेज्य, जातिना दापधयो अने आवास** जेवी विविध प्रकारनी समस्याओ अंगे विगत सचा-विचारणा बवानी ऐ. तो आप सीने आ कार्यक्रममां उपस्थित रळी आ कार्यक्रमनी शोभा वधारवा विनंती ऐ...

आ कार्यक्रममां **केन्द्रिय मंत्री श्री रामदत्त अठवले, राज्य कक्षाना मंत्री श्री ईश्वरभाई परमार, मळीसागर कुब्बाना कलेक्टर श्री, धारसराय श्री, मळीसागर-दाखोड मत विस्तारना सांसद सभ्य, अखिल भारतीय विमुक्त-विचरती जनजातिना अध्यक्ष श्री, महासचिव श्री, तथा आदिवासी ऐकता परिषदना राष्ट्रीय महासचिव अशोक चौधरी श्री पधारवाना ऐ. तो विमुक्त-विचरती जनजातिना तमाम वडीबो, भाई-बडेयो अने भूधकाओने आ कार्यक्रममां पधारवा विनंती करीअे छीअे.**

आयोजक: अखिल भारतीय विमुक्त-विचरती जनजाति वेल्फेयर संघ "गुजरात प्रदेश"

संपर्क नंबरो: (1) भरतभाई यामडा मळीसागर- 9099798567 (2) हरतभाई यामडा पंचमहाध-दाखोड- 9979518479 (3) जतुभाई जोगी, सुरत (दक्षिण गुजरात)- 9725469229 (4) रमेशभाई सबाड, भडुय- 9978567669 (5) बाबुभाई तणपदा (वडोदरा जेन)- 8780725474 (6) दक्षिण छरा साबरमती जेन- 9712677042 (7) रमेशनाथ मधारी लीबोडा-9638615789 (8) बसुभाई नायक, जेडा- 9724846031 (9) महेशभाई रावण सडेरा - 9909100185 (10) यतीनभाई वाही, दखेगाम - 9725765944 (11) हरतभाई इरछ जेन- 9687589210 (12) ज्यंतिभाई नट, बाबलीया- 9979339630 (13) बबलभाई वराजास, लीबोडा-9925281341

Figure 28: Brochure shared by Dakxin Bajrange Chhara on his Facebook page, encouraging the people to join the celebration of the Freedom Day. Source: Facebook.

Moreover, Budhan is one of the theatre groups included in the Strategic Management in Arts of Theatre (SMART) - an initiative promoted by India Theatre Forum, Junoon (based in

Mumbai), and the India Foundation for the Arts (IFA). This initiative is aimed at including theatre groups from across India through a roadmap in order to make them more sustainable, effective and financially viable (Datta).

5.3. Political Activism, Recognition and Identity

Budhan Theatre has attracted the attention of national newspapers including *The Times of India*¹¹³, *The Indian Express*¹¹⁴ and *The Hindu*¹¹⁵. The group's activities have also been covered by local newspapers like *The Gujarat Samachar*¹¹⁶ and *Divya Bhaskar*¹¹⁷ and by magazines like *Tahelka*¹¹⁸. *New Delhi Television (NDTV)* produced and broadcasted a special feature on Budhan Theatre in 2007 (Sawhney 206). Moreover, the activities of Budhan Theatre and Bhasha research have also received attention from international radio channels like the *BBC* on the January 18, 2013 at 7.10pm and TV channels such as *Zee TV*, *VNM*, *TV Eye* and *Star Plus* (Gajjar). Budhan has talented artists who are well established within mainstream socio-political and artistic spaces today. For instance, two of Budhan's members were trained at the National School of Drama (NSD), one of whom, Alok Gagdekar, is now working in the Bollywood film industry. Roxy Gagdekar is a very good actor and a successful journalist. Roxy received the Gujarat Media Club 2014 annual award for his journalism work about illegal mining ("Mediapersona Honoured"). Kalpana received the annual CII (Confederation of Indian Industry) award¹¹⁹ for her accomplishments as an actress. Some of the members of Budhan Theatre have also received scholarships and fellowships for their theatre work¹²⁰.

Dakxin has many accolades to his name including awards for documentary filmmaking and being offered a research fellowship to undertake a project on the ethnographic history of DNTs at the University of Leeds in the United Kingdom (Bajrange "Liberation Drama"). He received the Mahatma Gandhi Bi-yearly National Award for Creative Writing in Hindi from the Commission of Human Rights, for his autobiography and collection of plays *Budhan Bolta Hai* in August 2014 (Shah-Desai; City Reporter). Dakxin's film *Sundarana*¹²¹ was selected for screening at the 2015 Taiwan. He recently completed shooting a Hindi movie *Dhusar* (Bajrange) starring actors Anjali Patil, Zeeshan Mohammed and Seema Biswas in main leads and featuring around sixty to seventy actors from Ahmedabad city. The title *Dhusar* is an Urdu word which means 'not everything in life is always black and white'. Dakxin says, "the movie spreads the message of non-violence and is planned to be released in April/May 2016" (V. Bhatt 8). Apart from its cast of Bollywood actors, the film contains contributions from well-known

writer-lyricist Piyush Mishra who wrote some of the songs for the film, which increases its chance of falling into the category of mainstream cinema (V. Bhatt 8).



Figure 29: A newspaper article on Bajrange's movie, published in *Ahmedabad Mirror*, October 26, 2015

Budhan established a new space called the Museum of Hope with support from the Chharanagar community in August 2015. The Museum was established to preserve the traditional arts and culture of the Chhara community. A Film Festival was hosted at Chharanagar library between November 2015 and February 2016 under the leadership of their member, Kushal Batunge. During the festival, Kushal screened different movies every two weeks, and the screenings were accessible to everyone with no entry fees. Apart from this, Budhan has been organising numerous workshops and training programs on a regular basis for the development of Chhara youth and has constantly contributed towards community development and social change in India.

Budhan Theatre members have been involved in fighting against police brutality and injustice in support of the DNTs of India with support from social activists and local people. Budhan also stands up in support of the protests against injustice done to other poor communities of India, as well as protesting against the unlawful arrests of social activists in India ("Police Raid"). A recent protest was carried out after a police raid on the 26th July 2018 ("Police Raid"). The protest received significant support from local people, social activists and the media (Ramanathan). Aatish, one of Budhan's members was arrested during the raid on the 26th July

2018 without any reason by the police and was imprisoned, the rallies organised by Budhan to demand justice for him were joined by thousands of people who supported the Chhara youth and Budhan members (Bajrange “Dakxin Chhara”).



Figure 30: Facebook post on 29th July, 2018 by Dakxin Bajrange Chhara. Source: Facebook.

After being released from jail with no formal charges, Aatish created a documentary about his journey from being a theatre maker to being a prisoner, revealing facts about what was done to him by the police officers while he was imprisoned, and documenting the support he and Budhan Theatre received from the people of the Ahmedabad city and other social activists. Detailed discussion on use of the politically charged space as festivalization can be found in Chapter Four.

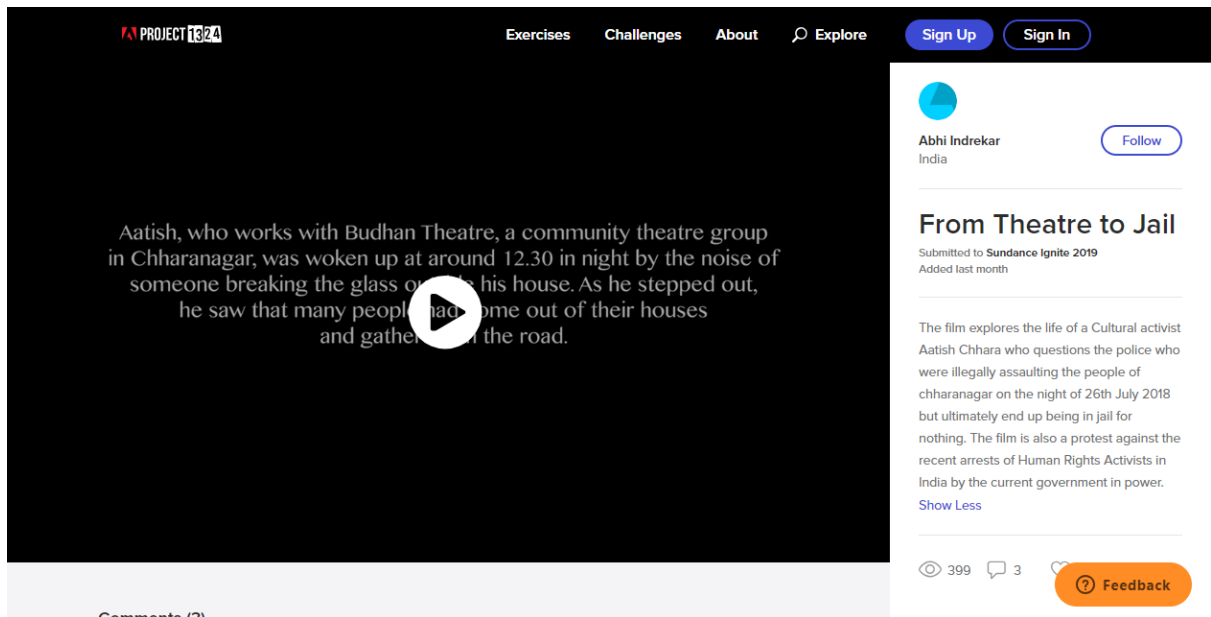


Figure 31: Facebook post by Dakxin Bajrange Chhara. Source: Facebook

The Sabha, an independent media organisation focused on the issues of DNTs of India in an event organised in Brno, Czech Republic (Bajrange “Dakxin Chhara”). The media group reported on the police brutality at Chharanagar on 26th July 2018, and then talked about the DNT movement and the political activism done by Budhan and NAG-DNT. The brochure of the event highlights the transcendence of the activism from local to global space, and the creation of the festivalized space. A detailed discussion of this process presented in Chapter Five.



Figure 32: Facebook post by Dakxin Bajrange Chhara. Source: Facebook.

Budhan's theatre movement is a relatively new phenomenon on the Indian theatrical scene, and their use of street theatre as a form further marginalizes them from highly commercialized mainstream theatre practices. However, Budhan has sustained strongly against all social, political and financial challenges, as a result of the deep faith and determination of its members.

This chapter located the case studies from India within the light of the study models and framed the background to discuss the other case studies of the project in the next chapter. I have argued that the performances of Budhan Theatre are part of continuous cycles of performance and counter performance as a mutual act between the DNT communities and the State. Moreover, alongside Budhan's street performances, theatre festivalized space has emerged as a powerful tool and or a medium for Budhan Theatre and the DNTs to connect with the mainstream and bring awareness about their issues so as to gain wider socio-political support for their activism. Some of the outcomes of ATF and Budhan's activities have been discussed in this chapter. I discussed the political efficacy of the theatre group through theatrical activism as well as social media activism in Chapter Four. The next chapter will discuss the Māori theatre case studies in light of the local/global festivals following the drawn study models of the project.

CHAPTER 6

MĀORI ACTIVISM, MANA WĀHINE AND THE REPRESENTATION OF PROTEST IN FESTIVAL SPACE

The discussion of Māori theatre case studies and artistic collaborations across Indigenous artistic networks within and outside of Aotearoa/New Zealand in this thesis is based on the work of several different theatre groups. The phrase mana wahine is commonly used to refer to Māori women, but also refers to a feminist discourse centred around defining and celebrating Māori women. Mana is described as power, authority and prestige which cannot be possessed or generated but bestowed upon. Wahine translates as woman, and with a macron, as in wāhine, translates it as women (plural). However as per the Māori worldview, it is a process of evolution – as the position of woman is not static, it evolves and is the base of the existence of the community. Aotearoa is the Māori name for New Zealand. Mana Wāhine o Aotearoa means Māori women of New Zealand (Gemmell 2). These pieces are united by themes of protest, activism and the representation of mana wāhine of Aotearoa/New Zealand:

they come in classes now
many pakeha ones too
and even the maori start to call themselves
new zealanders
and even the maori stand on the marae saying ‘this is the only place
you can be maori on’
it is not enough for me
the young are in constant challenge with the middle-aged,
the men who take their teeth out.
at the pōwhiri they are directed to sing
there is no kaea there is no ihi.
holding their papers, they look at the words-

Ao-te-a-roa.

(“Compulsory Class Visits”, a poem by Roma Potiki¹²², 1992)

The political manifestations of invasion, occupation and loss of land are common amongst the Indigenous cultures of the post-colonial world and have remained unacknowledged by the social and politically hegemonic groups of society and the state in most cases (Kukutai and Taylor 13). The pain, loss and the rage of unfair treatment have been articulated by Indigenous artists through a range of literary and artistic works. Literary works by Māori writers often question the assimilative policies, suppressive culture, the Treaty issues and the loss of language, culture and land¹²³ The questionable and idealistic portrayal of Aotearoa/New Zealand as a “bi-cultural” society projected from the Pākeha perspective is challenged by Potiki in the above poem. It articulates the loss of land/space, language, and the dislocation of the Māori community in colonized Aotearoa/New Zealand. The poem not only criticizes the assimilative and superficial values of Pākeha displayed at the Māori meeting space (the marae) but also challenges the Māori population who have accepted the domination of Pākeha. Although the poem was written in 1992, it demonstrates the rage of the poet, also a renowned Māori theatre maker, towards exotification of the culture and articulates feelings of loss which are true in today’s Aotearoa/New Zealand as well.

The chapter is an attempt to juxtapose political protests and activism portrayed through theatrical performances by Māori with issues of financial sustainability within this Indigenous artistic community. It will also explore the strong political voice and themes of resistance which are commonly found in contemporary Māori writings through the use of cultural signifiers and archetypes. My discussion highlights the articulation of Treaty issues¹²⁴ in creative forms. It also considers Indigenous subjectivities and the Māori¹²⁵ worldview within the complex post-colonial contexts of race, gender and indigeneity. It seeks to present the theatrical performances by Māori women as well-woven combinations of political resistance, traditional knowledge and contemporary society. I conceptualize my arguments on the role of *mana wāhine o Aotearoa* [Māori woman of New Zealand] based on selected Māori theatre case studies, as well as drawing from historical examples of political protests led by Māori women. Key ideas which have led to the selection of these particular case studies and examples include the intention to showcase the process of re-righting as well as re-writing history from the Māori perspective. Understanding history is a significant part of progressing towards the future from the Māori worldview and Māori women have been playing important roles in connecting the past with

present (Rewi 69). This concept of looking back to the history while progressing ahead is called, *Kia whakatōmuri te haere whakamua* translated as, I walk backwards into the future with my eyes fixed on my past (Rameka 387). From a Māori perspective, the past, present and future are interwoven, and “the conceptualisation of the past does not leave the past behind, rather it carries one’s past into the future” (Rameka 387). The chapter therefore discusses the history of Aotearoa/New Zealand and explores the performances following the above-mentioned conceptualization of the past within Māori epistemology.

The chapter is divided in three sections; the first section provides some background to the social and political significance of mana wāhine o Aotearoa by discussing Māori cultural values and the place of women. The second section explores political protests and performative activism through the medium of theatre. I argue that these performances create a rhetorical public sphere (Fraser 34) and I draw upon case studies of the plays *Woman Far Walking* (Ihimaera, 2000), *Te Karakia* (Belz, 2008), *Hikoi* (Bunning, 2014) and *Not in Our Neighbourhood* (McCaskill, 2015) to illustrate my argument. The final section of this chapter investigates the efficacy of arts festivals organised by Māori artists and includes reflections on the Pūtahi Festival, Matariki Development Festival (now known as Standing Ground) and Ahi Kaa (now known as Kia Mau festival). This section also considers issues of financial sustainability and Indigenous identity.

Although the majority of theatre performances I discuss as my case studies are written by Māori men - with the exception of *Hikoi* which is written by Nancy Bunning who is a Māori woman - the performances all include Māori women as actresses, directors and/or members of the production team. This particular selection of case studies does not mean that the Māori contemporary arts scene is lacking female playwrights, instead they have been selected due to the selection criterion¹²⁶ of the case studies for the project which also seek to look at creative examples of shows that have been performed within and outside of festivals spaces, and their reception and impacts within local and global space. Performances are larger than just the play script and hence, despite the limitation of discussing only one female playwright, this chapter does discuss *wāhine toa* [powerful women] within all of the performances as representatives of this performative protest and assertion of their mana through the medium of theatre.

6.1. Mana Wāhine and Māori Feminism

Mana wāhine o Aotearoa, or Māori women of New Zealand are also known as *te whare tangata* [house of humanity] and they are greatly valued for their ability to create life (Higgins and

Meredith). Their role is significant within the household and more than that of a creator of life and household chores (Higgins and Meredith). Since pre-colonial times, the roles of men and women in Māori society were based on the “natural order of the universe” and follow the principle of interdependence (Kahukiwa 91). Ngahuia Te Awekotuku¹²⁷ discusses the values of Māori life as being based on female sexuality and the *atua wahine* [metaphysical/spiritual being]:

The Māori believe that the Earth is the elemental womb to which we must return. Folded within here, carefully placed bones complete the cycle, for as she gives, so does she receive. And female in essence, she moves with the consciousness of many women (Awekotuku 70).

According to mythology, the creation of the world and living things was described as the great love story of *Ranginui* [[sky father, Rangi for short] and *Papatūānuku*[earth mother], *Papa* [is Papatūānuku’s abbreviated name which means foundation or flat surface] who sacrificed their love and separated to allow life to grow¹²⁸ (Kahukiwa 91). The reading or understanding of the cosmological history recorded by the early missionaries and researchers were suppressive and undermined Māori values and mana wāhine. Prior to colonization, Māori women had a variety of leadership roles including but not limited to land ownership, spiritual healers, politicians, and warriors (Mikaere). They were highly valued members of the society just like their male counterparts (Higgins and Meredith) and had power to talk and make speeches. Colonial writers such as Elsdon Best (1954) and Grey (1906) describe Māori culture as ‘heathen’, ‘destructive’ and ‘associated with misfortune and inferiority’ as compared to Christianity (Mikaere 7).

Despite these negative and stereotypical portrayals of Māori peoples and culture, Māori women continued demonstrating their leadership before and after British settlement (Higgins and Meredith). The colonial gendered norms of excluding women from decision making processes and politics led most missionaries and British settlers to negotiate and approach Māori men rather than women during the process of signing the Treaty of Waitangi (Mikaere 13):

The settlers struggled to accept the leadership of Māori women, the daughter of Te Pehi, Ngati Toa rangatira was not allowed sign as it was believed that women were not important enough. Angered at the insult, her husband also refused to sign (Mikaere 13).

Māori women fought for equality and rights through the Suffrage movement and won the right to vote and stand for the Māori parliament in 1897 (Gemmell 28), but there has been little change in their position within the community due to “cultural invasion” (Mikaere 4).

Māori women formed different groups and committees to voice their opinions within the political system of Aotearoa/New Zealand. For instance, *Nga Komiti Wāhine* was established in 1897 to discuss matters such as health, education and land issues. The Māori Women’s Welfare League was created in 1951 as a response to the urban migration of Māori families (Gemmell 29-30). The 1975 Land March was organised by *Te Rōpū Matakite o Aotearoa* and led by Dame Whina Cooper. During the Land March Bastion Point was occupied for 507 days between 1977 and 1978 by the *Ōrākei Māori Action Group* and *Ngati Whatua* and this protest featured many Māori women in leadership positions (Simmonds 28-32). The lands rights protest at the Raglan Golf Course was led by Eva Rickard (Higgins and Meredith). The *kohanga* movement was established to ensure the survival of Te Reo Māori and Māori kaupapa within the education system (Higgins and Meredith). This led to the establishment of *Te Kohanga Reo* (Early Childhood language nests) by the department of Māori Affairs in 1982 (Gemmell 31) and Māori women have been the key to this movement for Māori language revitalization (Gemmell 31). Hana Jackson led the petition for teaching Māori language at schools which was presented to parliament in 1972 (Higgins and Meredith). Katerina Mataira and Ngoingoi Pewhairangi pioneered the Māori language movement (Higgins and Meredith). Mataira has been described as the mother of *kura kaupapa Māori* and has published children’s books in Māori¹²⁹. In 1994, Māori women led by Dame Mira Szasy submitted and challenged the under-representation of Māori women in the decision-making process considering Treaty issues (Simmonds 15). This claim by mana wāhine was read as part of the Kaupapa claims by the Waitangi Tribunal in March 2018. All activities were significant in asserting tino rangatiratanga of Māori.

Women like Kathy Irwin, Donna Awatere, Mira Szasy, Ngahuia Te Aekotuku, Rangimarie Rose Pere and Linda Tuhiwai Smith recognised and exposed gender inequalities within Indigenous communities and its interconnectedness to racist and sexist oppressions (Simmonds 22). As Mira Szasy says: “If you are a Māori woman and that’s all you are, that alone will put you on a collision course with the rest of the society and its expectations” (in Simmonds 22). Māori women asserted their mana, rights and challenged the socio-political hegemony within New Zealand society through political protests as well as the ongoing articulation of resistance through arts and performances. Roma Potiki, Patricia Grace, Briar Grace Smith, Riwia Brown,

Maraea Rakuraku and Nancy Brunning are some of the many examples of Māori women who have been continuously working towards claiming equal rights and recognition for Māori women through literature and performance in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Potiki shares the criteria she set for the involvement of male members in her theatre group. She says: “I think that the men in He Ara Hou are very supportive of us as women, but in a way they have been hand-picked. There is no way that any man who treats women badly or puts them down would be allowed to join our group” (Potiki “Confirming Identity” 159).

Māori women, along with other Indigenous women and women of colour have shown their dissatisfaction with Western feminism and advocated for an alternative Māori feminism which recognises the various intersectional impacts of race on women (Smith, 2002; Pihama, 2001). In reference to this advocacy of Māori feminism, Leah Whiu expresses:

It seems to me that my struggle necessarily takes account of your struggle. I can't ignore patriarchy in my struggle. Yet you can and do ignore the 'colour' of patriarchy, the cultural specificity of patriarchy. And in doing so you ignore me (qtd. in Simmonds 22).

While there have been discussions and theorisation of Mana wāhine as a form of Māori feminism and the intersections of race, gender, sexuality and class by writers like Pihama (2001) and Hutchings (2002), the area still lacks acknowledgement of mana wāhine as a consistent force in its goals of privileging Māori voices, experiences and his/herstories (Simmonds 23). Pihama argues that the role of Māori women in relation to Te Tiriti (the Treaty of Waitangi) and leadership has been positioned negatively which reflects the wider socio-cultural denial of Māori women in wider society. Pihama suggests that this resulted out of the lack of depiction of Māori women in leadership as ‘the norm’ by mainstream New Zealand society, which leads to the denial of Māori women constituting a breach of tino rangatiratanga as per Te Tiriti (Pihama 192). Hutchings developed a conceptual framework using mana wāhine that acknowledges the strength of Māori women with critical focus areas drawing from Māori worldviews and value systems. According to the framework, mana wāhine is conceptualised as a *harakeke* [flax] plant, with leaves being focus areas such as Te Tiriti O Waitangi, decision making, papatūānuku, decolonisation, intellectual property rights, tikanga and *kaitiaki* [keeper/guard] (Hutchings 151).

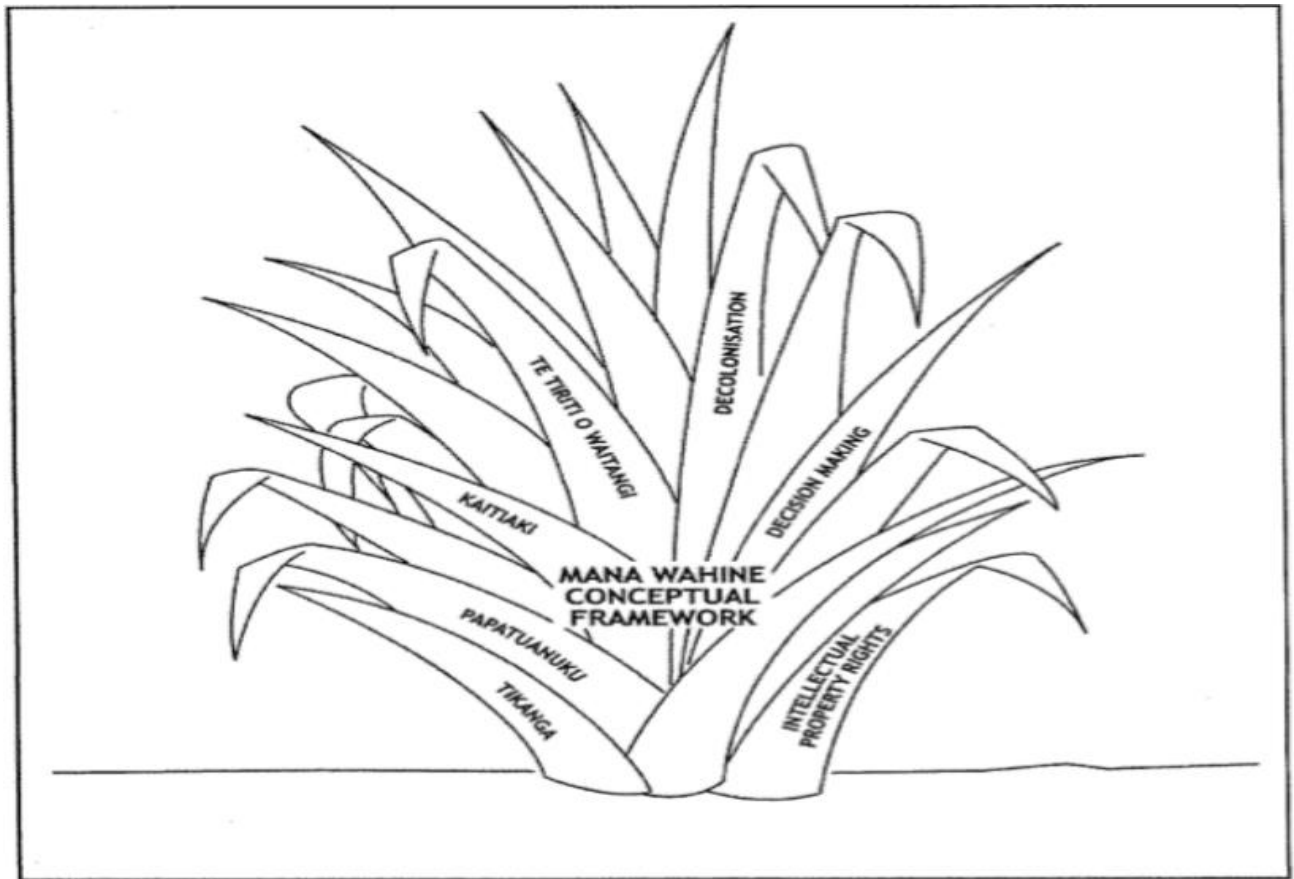


Figure 33: Mana Wāhine Conceptual Framework (Hutchings 151)

6.1.1. The Antecedents of Mana Wāhine

The theatrical performances that I will discuss in the next section of this chapter present fictional portrayals of the historical role models and hence it is apt to provide brief biographies of these in following paragraphs¹³⁰. Te Puea Herangi (known as Te Puea for short), Heni Te Kiri Karamu (also known as Heni Pore and Jane Foley), Dame Whina Cooper, Eva Rickard, can be looked at as models of Māori woman in leadership.¹³¹

Te Puea Herangi was born into a family of the first Māori King, Potatau Te Wherowhero. Te Puea took the most active leadership role in Waikato in her generation (Parsonson, 1996). Te Puea was recognized as 'the greatest Maori woman of our time' (Ballara 123). She would not have liked the constant references to 'Princess' Te Puea; it was a title originally bestowed on her by Pākeha, which she never used herself (Parsonson). From the mid-1930s she worked closely with the new Medical Officer of Health, H. B. Turbott, to tackle high mortality rates from typhoid and tuberculosis (Ballara 122). Although the Department of Health obstructed

her attempt previously to provide medical care in a Māori environment in Mahinarangi, in the early 1940s she succeeded in opening a clinic at Turangawaewae House (the former Kauhanganui house), a location where Māori people felt comfortable (Parsonson). When the Maori Women's Welfare League was formed in 1951, she was elected its first patron (Hill 72).

Heni Te Kiri Karamu, also known as Heni Pore (Jane Foley) and as Jane Russell, is from Ngati Uenuku-kopako and Ngati Hinepare of Te Arawa canoe (Oliver). She worked as an assistant teacher and a governess in the 1850s and was fluent in Māori, English and French (Oliver). Heni Te Kiri Karamu has been remembered in written history primarily for her involvement in the battle at Pukehinahina, or the Gate Pa, on 29 April 1864 (Prickett 39). The women who had helped construct the fortification at Pukehinahina had been ordered to leave by Rawiri Puhirake before the British force attacked (Prickett 50). Heni Te Kiri Karamu, however, stayed, as she was recognized as a woman warrior, and refused to leave her brother Neri (Oliver). In 1865–66 she fought in support of the government against the Pai Marire movement, alongside her uncle, Matenga Te Ruru (Cowan 79). Later in 1865 Heni Te Kiri Karamu fought with Te Arawa forces led by Major William Mair against the Hauhau at Matata and Te Teko, near Whakatane (Oliver). In 1870 Heni Pore and her family moved to a farm at Katikati (Oliver). She reclaimed family land at Hauanu, Mokoia Island, to which she had rights from her ancestor Whakatauihu (Oliver). She also claimed the land known as Patoroa, which was later farmed by her son, Rangi-te-aorere Te Kiri (Oliver).

Whina Cooper was highly influenced by her father's political leadership since her childhood and pursued her career as a trainee teacher at Pawarenga Native School located on the south shore of Wangape Harbour (King). She left the teaching job due to her needing to be home to help with community affairs. Cooper actively resisted with young adults when a dispute arose with Pākeha farmer over leasing mudflats at Whakarapa (King). While her father Heremia took the issue to the parliament, she consistently prevented the farmer from digging the drains with help of her group. The lease agreement withdrew after these acts of resistance (King). Cooper refused an arranged marriage proposal from her community and married a man she liked and hence was isolated for some time from the community due to making her decision without consultation (Mikaere 125). She and her husband lived at her parents' place until her parents died but then were asked to move out by her brother. Cooper and her husband along with two young children struggled for some time before a priest of her community rescued her and brought her back to the community by offering her loan to buy the farms and a store (King). Cooper resumed her leadership in church and community as well as established herself as a

businesswoman locally. By the early 1930s, she was looked at as a strong Māori leader who was acknowledged and supported by academicians and media persons. She was referred to as “the driving force” or the “amazon excavator” in media (Fox 138). She was the best-known Māori woman in the country and the media gave her a title of Te Whaea O Te Motu [Mother of the Nation] (Barber). Cooper stood for the electorate in 1963 and ranked 6th, she raised funds for the urban marae in Auckland before she told the media in 1974 that her public life was over. Soon after this, in 1975, she agreed to lead the famous Land March that is central to Nancy Brunning’s play *Hikoi* discussed below. Cooper’s life is a portrayal of sacrifices she made for the cause of community development.

Eva Rickard is known for the Raglan Golf Course protest which resulted due to the land eviction of Māori people during World War II (Fox 38). The land was used to make way for an aerodrome, for the purpose of war (Paget). After the war the land was not returned to its Māori owners, but instead was turned into a golf course (Paget). Rickard led a protest against this unlawful land acquisition and in 1978 she was arrested for a sit-in protest (Taonui). She won the case and the golf course was transformed back into a farm and a marae (Taonui). Rickard led a *hikoi* [march] to Waitangi, demanding to end the Waitangi Day celebrations until all Treaty grievances were settled (Paget).

The above-mentioned women provided leading examples for Māori women to follow through resisting the gender inequalities brought by the settlers and fighting to retain the cultural significance of Māori women’s roles today. These mana wāhine represent the all of the components of the conceptual framework described previously and will guide us towards understanding the representation of mana wāhine within the selected Māori theatre performances.

The discussion in the following section will provide an insight into the politics of the selected performances and the world of the female characters depicted within these plays; Tilly, Tiri, Ranea, Nellie, JG, Sasha Miller, Cat Mihinui, Teresa Cummings, Moira and Maisey, in context of (re)presentation of mana wāhine. The discussion will also include the women who wrote, directed and or performed in these plays. This section has described the performance texts of the selected plays to set up a background for theory-specific discussion of these plays in the following section.

6.2. The Performance, Counter-Performance and Creation of a Rhetorical Public Sphere

The key performance aspects of ‘protest’ and ‘resistance’ interplays in the development of the performance as well creating a rhetorical public sphere (Fraser 34) it creates when performed. The de-colonising rhetoric of the performances alongside articulating complex inter-cultural relationships and historical events, challenges the spectators to self-evaluate their role within the socio-political set-up in stereotyping as well as undermining Indigenous identities. The performances can be looked at as counter-performances in response to the actual protest which happened in the past in terms of the reflection and as a reminder of the historical evidence of Indigenous struggles. At the same time the counter-performance becomes a source performance itself by encouraging the de-colonizing process as it is a counter/responsive performance led by the mana wāhine o Aotearoa.

Performances work as mediums of empowerment to reinforce the mana of the Māori community and the artists by providing unheard voices of resistance from history. These performances provide alternative discourses to the history that is ‘written’ and ‘taught’ from foreign as well as settler perspectives. This indirect outcome of the action (through the performance) thus becomes an important contribution to the documentation of ‘unwritten’ histories and voices. I will discuss this in context of the case studies in the following paragraphs.

6.2.1. *Woman Far Walking*

Woman Far Walking (2000) is written by the renowned Māori writer Witi Ihimaera¹³². Witi Ihimaera is the first Māori author to publish short stories and novels¹³³ He has had careers in diplomacy, teaching, theatre, opera, film and television (“Playmarket”). Ihimaera has often highlighted the power of female characters or mana wāhine in his novels like *The Matriarch* and *The Whale Rider*. In 2004, he became a Distinguished Companion of the Order of New Zealand which is the equivalent of a knighthood (“Playmarket”). The play is a [re]presentation of Māori culture and history through the eyes of a 160-year-old woman whose name is Te Tiriti O Waitangi Mahana or ‘Tiri’. The name came from the Treaty of Waitangi as the character of Tiri is born on the day that the treaty was signed. The play presents an allegorical account of the legacy of the Treaty of Waitangi and highlights 160 years of Māori suffering from violence, disease, war and government policies. It revolves around present-day socio-cultural issues in Aotearoa/New Zealand from the point of view of the oldest woman in the world. The play not

only presents strong statements against social discrimination and racial domination, it also presents the significant relationship between Māori women and tino rangatiratanga.

The play was first directed by Cathy Downes¹³⁴ in 2000, by Christian Penny¹³⁵ in 2001 and by Nancy Brunning¹³⁶ in 2002. It was commissioned by the New Zealand Festival and premiered in the New Zealand International Festival of the Arts 2000 organised in Wellington (“Playmarket”). The performance then toured around New Zealand in the year 2001 and toured to Hawai’i and the United Kingdom in the year 2002. There were three versions of the show performed between March 2000 and September 2002 including two international tours. Rachel House and Rima Te Wiata performed as lead actresses in the performance directed by Cathy Downes and performed the show at the Soundings Theatre, Te Papa (Wellington) as part of the Wellington Festival of Arts in 2000. Rachel House received a Chapman Tripp Theatre Award¹³⁷ in 2000 for her outstanding performance. Rachel House was still playing Tiri in the second version directed by Christian Penny in 2001, but Tilly’s character was played by Nicola Kawana for the production, which toured to Circa Theatre (Wellington), Herald Theatre (Auckland) and Centrepoint Theatre (New Plymouth) in July-August 2001 (“Playmarket”). The third version of the performance was directed by Nancy Brunning with a change in cast, and Tiri and Tilly’s characters were played by Kahu Hotere and Riria Hotere respectively. It toured to Court Theatre (Christchurch), Dunedin, Manchester (UK) and Hawai’i between June and September 2002. Unlike some early Māori performances in the 1970s, *Woman Far Walking* received professional resources, venues, and actors had received industry training prior to the production. These levels of support were possibly due to the established influence of Witi Ihimaera as well as the play being commissioned by the New Zealand Festival.



Figure 34: Flyer of the performance *Woman Far Walking* for 2001 national tour.

The play opens with the entrance of the 160-year-old Māori woman Tiri – wearing a white nightdress and with her white long hair falling over her shoulder from the back. Tiri is in a wheelchair and she has a pair of walking sticks in her hands. Tiri gazes at the audience before she introduces herself by sharing her date of birth – 6th February 1840 – with the spectators, reminding them all about the context of the Treaty of Waitangi which was signed on that day. Tiri's story is the history of Māori suffering since before the Treaty was signed. The other female character in the play, Tilly, is seen as Tiri's contemporary interlocuter and plays several other characters as they emerge in Tiri's life. Tilly is a woman in her mid-thirties and a guest

at Tiri's wedding and she is constantly interrogating Tiri about the historical events and incidents of her life. At times Tilly make Tiri confess some unpleasant memories by critically challenging the events she shares. Tilly also performs Māori rituals throughout the performance by presenting the *wero*[challenge], *karanga* and *waiata*.

At the end of the prologue, Tiri warns the audience to be prepared for witnessing her war against the symbolic 'goblin' and says, "So, you are staying with me then. Ka pai. To war, to war? Don't say that I have not given you due warning" (Ihimaera 14) and stamps her walking sticks on the floor a couple of times for emphasis. Tiri's description of the British as 'goblin' and super-human/super-natural beings (men with eyes on their backs) hints towards the first cultural encounter between the Māori and the British colonizers whom the Māori called, 'Pākeha'. The strong articulation of the obvious connection between colonization, 'the musket' and war is presented at the very beginning of the performance reminding the audience of the wars. Not only the articulation of the historical connection but also the symbolic juxtaposition of Tiri as a Māori protest figure and the colonizers as 'goblin' – and 'othering' Pākeha as 'exotic' reaffirms Māori resistance and makes the play a politically strong and significant piece of theatre (Ihimaera 10).

Voice overs and on-stage portrayals throughout the play are used to convey Tiri's vivid memories. These are integrated and blended with socio-political facts from New Zealand history which makes the play very effective. Scene one demonstrates huge excitement and customary exotification¹³⁸ around the celebration of Waitangi Day which makes Tiri uncomfortable. In the following scene, Tiri is presented as bold and articulate, commenting about the origin of her name which she thought was her aunt's name. Tiri mentions that she was hurt when she learnt that her name was originated from a deceptive piece of paper - *Tiriti o Waitangi* (Ihimaera 18). She says: "it was a shock to know that Auntie Tiri was a piece of paper. And what a namesake. A fraud. Full of lies and Pakeha promises. How would you like to carry the name of the document which took Māori land?" (Ihimaera 18). Tilly makes a further remark declaring that she always wanted to spit on the Treaty, Tiri replies: "Ae, but to do so would have been to spit on my own name and I couldn't do that" (Ihimaera 18). The anger and unrest of Māori people about the Treaty of Waitangi is clearly articulated through these expressions.

The characters of Tiri and Tilly in *Woman Far Walking* are strong examples of the assertion of the strength of *mana wāhine*. Along with portrayals of the colonial past that subvert the

dominant historiography, the play is confrontational in tone and style and the audience is challenged by bold and satirical dialogues from two strong and articulate Māori women characters. Tiri declares from the very beginning that she is at war with the ‘goblin’ and the audience is confronted with bold articulations and singing of haka at the end of the prologue and Act One. The play has an emotional core of sad memories of a lived experience of the oppressive colonial power structure.

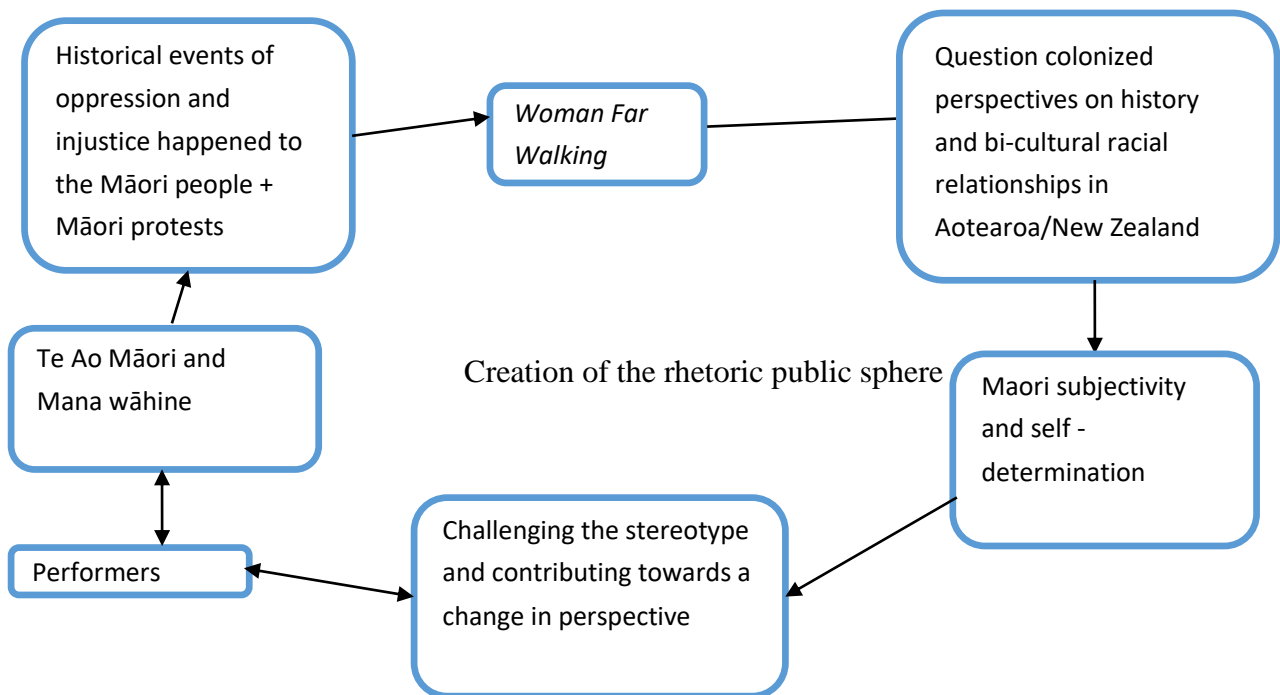


Figure 35: Explanation of *Woman Far Walking* using the Performance as Dialogue Model

Please note, the above visual explanation of the performance is for easier understanding of the series of the events/aftermaths and not to oversimplify the complexity of the socio-political aspects of the performance. There can be components of the original Performance as Dialogue model (see Chapter Three, P. 102) that are omitted while describing the above visual based on obvious differences and performance specific socio-political and geographical situations.

The inclusion of traditional art forms, haka and waiata makes the play culturally rich and reconstructive. The use of these traditional art forms and symbols is always careful and conscious, with total “political self-awareness” and with the “deepest emotions” (Potiki “Confirming Identity” 57). Apart from its specific function, the use of traditional art forms also makes the performance an exclusive and ‘authentic’ presentation of traditional arts which can

be read as a ‘highly exotic’ or an ‘ethnic’ performance when viewed by international festival audiences. This emphasises the change in efficacy of performance when it is performed as part of an International Arts Festival¹³⁹.

The articulations of grievances over the treaty, land issues and cultural assimilation presented through Māori theatre are key points on the socio-political agenda for many Māori playwrights; however, this doesn’t mean that Māori theatre is declamatory/rhetoric theatre with only this agenda. As Potiki explains;

Objectivity will join subjectivity in Māori theatre so that we can work towards consistency in theatre approach and methodology and nurture our ability for self-examination within the socio-economic and cultural framework of our lives. And in this I accept that the cultural context is also a political one, however uneasy (“A Māori Point of View” 63).

The performance offers a wero [challenge] to the audience every time Tiri confronts them with her victimised body. For instance, when she re-enacts the Ngatapa massacre which she refers to as "Pakeha wars" (Keenan), Tiri and Tilly act as if forced by Pākeha soldiers off the hilltop. Both the women are forced towards their death at the edge of a cliff which is symbolically portrayed by a war medal design, along with the use of soundtracks of cries of terror and soldiers taking gun shots. This scene shocks and challenges Pākeha audience members when Tiri and Tilly says: "your Pakeha soldiers took our fortress this morning" and "we should have known that you would have no mercy" (Ihimaera 36).

Diana Looser discusses the references to this traumatic history in the performance as an act of mourning the trauma involved in the colonization processes, and describes the processing of this shared history of trauma and violence as a means of healing and as moving towards a productive social life:

The structure of the play is akin to Freud’s notions of “mourning” and “working through” which recent trauma theorists have advocated as a means of allowing victims and afflicted groups to loosen the grip on traumatic repetition and to resume a more productive relationship with social life (Looser 153).

Looking at artistic expression as a therapy to work through the traumatic history is a well explored idea (Freud 90), however I argue that Looser misses the point when she discusses it in the context of the victims and afflicted groups. This interpretation locates the Māori people

of Aotearoa/New Zealand as the ones that need such working through and excludes the idea of the feeling of ‘guilt’ of the Pākehā audiences, as well as the intentional politics of the performance which emphasise encouraging the non-Māori audience to think and self-reflect on their point of views. The play definitely talks about the alternative history from the other side of the coin and so, it is more than mere repetition of the historical events.

Moreover, Tiri’s role is interpreted as stereotypical by Looser (2014) who might have extended the understanding of Tiri’s character in context of mana wāhine. She articulates a reading of Tiri’s character and comments that (except when Tiri describes herself as a warrior), her role throughout the play is more aligned with stereotypical female roles that exist in Māori culture (Looser 147). Looser supports her view by quoting Tiri’s dialogue: "...for a woman, history is intimate. It has to do with the birth of children...It has to do with supporting them, holding them when they are dying...(49). Looser’s reading of the play becomes highly problematic as she undermines the strength of Tiri portrayed throughout the play and locates her character as stereotypical Māori woman who is symbolically compared to the *whenua* (translates as both land and placenta).

Looser’s reading of Tiri’s character lacks the enhanced understanding of the conceptual frame of mana wāhine which includes the significant Māori cultural archetypes including Papatūānuku, *Hineahuone* [woman of Earth, mother to humanity] *Hinetitama* [first human form, often perceived as daughter archetype], *Hinenuitepō* [guardian of the afterlife], and *kuia* [grandmother archetype] (Forster et al. 327). These archetypes embody specific purposes and can be looked at as significant cultural models from the cosmology for Māori women to emulate (Mikaere; Forster et al. 327). As discussed in Foster et al. (328), the roles of mana wāhine in the context of the developing discourse of Māori leadership and Māori feminism often overlooked the significance of “whakapapa, manaakitanga, kaitiakitanga and tikanga”:

Several reoccurring themes emerge from the narratives associated with the five female archetypes. Of utmost importance is whakapapa/kinship, in this context survival of the tribe and contribution to the collective good. This creates a strong imperative towards service to community, often referred to as manaakitanga/to care for and kaitiakitanga/to protect and look after. Another key theme is tikanga/ethicality of a situation including the need to act in a correct or proper manner, and that there are consequences associated with incorrect actions (Foster et al 328).

Looking at Tiri from a Māori worldview, she appears stronger than the men, carrying out duties towards her whānau as well as challenging the oppressors. Looser's interpretation of Tiri's character as portraying a stereotypical female role also undercuts the play's reference to the Treaty of Waitangi. The personification of Te Tiriti as mana wāhine refers both to the Māori view of gender as partnership and understanding of the Treaty as a questionable document; and thus, I argue that it is inappropriate to be read through those superficial and generic lenses.

The embodiment of Te Tiriti in the character of Tiri and locating her quest as a presentation of imaginary nation and national identity by Maufort (224) problematizes Tiri's projection of mana wāhine and the questionable imaginary 'bi-cultural' nationalism. Maufort reads the play from the point of view of magic realism and portrays Tiri's story as the story of the entire nation (224). The inclusive lenses of imaginary nationalism problematize the Māori identity and undermine the racial and political struggles of the Māori of Aotearoa/New Zealand against the assimilative policies of the Pākeha dominated state.

At times, Tiri is quite sarcastic about the present-day media and its monotonous/robotic reporting. The confrontational presentations throughout the play are sequenced in a way that the spectators are forcibly taken back to the present immediately after they are confronted by traumatic historical events. Each scene of violent history and or victimization is followed by a lighter scene from the birthday party and the media. For instance, Tiri answers the questions from reporters with humour and sarcasm, this is sequenced immediately after the attack scene described above:

TILLY: ... 'To what do you attribute your longevity, Mrs Mahana?'

TIRI: Regular bowel movements.

TILLY: 'And what words of wisdom would you like to leave for the younger generation?'

TIRI: Remember that when Ginger Rogers danced with Fred Astaire she did everything he did but she did it backwards and in high heels. (Ihimaera 78)

Throughout the play *Woman Far Walking*, Tiri is presented as a committed activist and a soldier during the wars as she says: "[t]he man is a warrior, so too is the woman a warrior. And when we go into battle, all of us go" (35). The conversation between Tiri and Tilly goes on throughout the play informing the audience about Tiri's childhood and life. Tilly becomes the younger self of Tiri at times and enacts Tiri's role. The interplay of the characters is significant, and the playwright provides the reason why Tilly needs to play Tiri (3.1):

TIRI: Who are you! Why are you always here? Why are you making me remember-?

TILLY: (flaring) because you only tell some of the story, not all of the story...
(Ihimaera 28-9)

The play counters oppressive Pākeha policies and presents Māori activism from 1868 until the present day and reaffirms tino rangatiratanga through Tiri's character. The play is not only presented as a response or a counter performance to colonialist historical accounts, but it also subverts the colonialist historiography of an idealist picture of New Zealand society, highlighting constant Māori perspectives to these struggles. The performance questions the one-sided and suppressive history written by the colonizers that not only described Māori protest as Māori land wars, but also criminalized protesters. When Tiri talks about land struggles, she subverts the dominant historical narrative by calling it "Pakeha wars" (36) and provides the context to the audience by saying:

TILLY: When wars began they were called the Māori wars, then the Land Wars and then the New Zealand Wars.

TIRI: Nobody asked us what we called them – the Pākeha Wars. They were fought in the Waikato, the Taranaki, the King Country, the North. Then they came to the East Coast, twenty years after they had begun (36).

Apart from the Treaty of Waitangi, the performance also acknowledges other elements of focus from the conceptual framework of mana wāhine i.e. tikanga, kaitiaki and Papatūānuku. Tiri's comparison of history with that of the birth of children points towards the mythological concept of significance of Papatūānuku and the cycle of creation and absorption of lives within the womb of Papa. The use of waiata and haka to showcase pain, anger and deep emotions indicates tikanga within the conceptual framework of mana wahine (presented through the characters of Tiri and Tilly). Tiri's defensive approach towards the settlers and her readiness for war in the beginning of the play points towards her guardianship towards her whānau.

A further instalment in the cycle of counter performances occurred during a performance of the third version of *Woman Far Walking*, in one of the performances locally, Rima Te Wiata, the actress who performed Tiri, walked off stage when an audience member rustled a lolly bag during a performance. She shares in an interview with Hewitson, "I probably wouldn't have done it if it hadn't been about real-life incidents; it was about the Maori flu epidemic ... and it just felt that the tikanga was all up the chute" (Hewitson). The action of opening a lolly which

had distracted the actress and disrupted the flow of the performance, especially when the actress was performing very tragic incident of flu epidemic¹⁴⁰ can be looked at as doubly countered performance; as it was in response to the performance (inappropriate behaviour) of the audience member which happened while the original performance was ongoing on the stage. Such an interplay of performance and counter-performance highlights how the performance itself encourages the actress to articulate the mana which can be looked at the as the separate articulation of her own mana from Tiri's (character's) mana. The combination of the strength of Tiri and Rima Te Wiata hence emerges as projection of mana wāhine on stage. And at the same time, the action of the audience member distracts the perspective, displays disrespect and further marginalizes the voice of Māori theatrical performance.

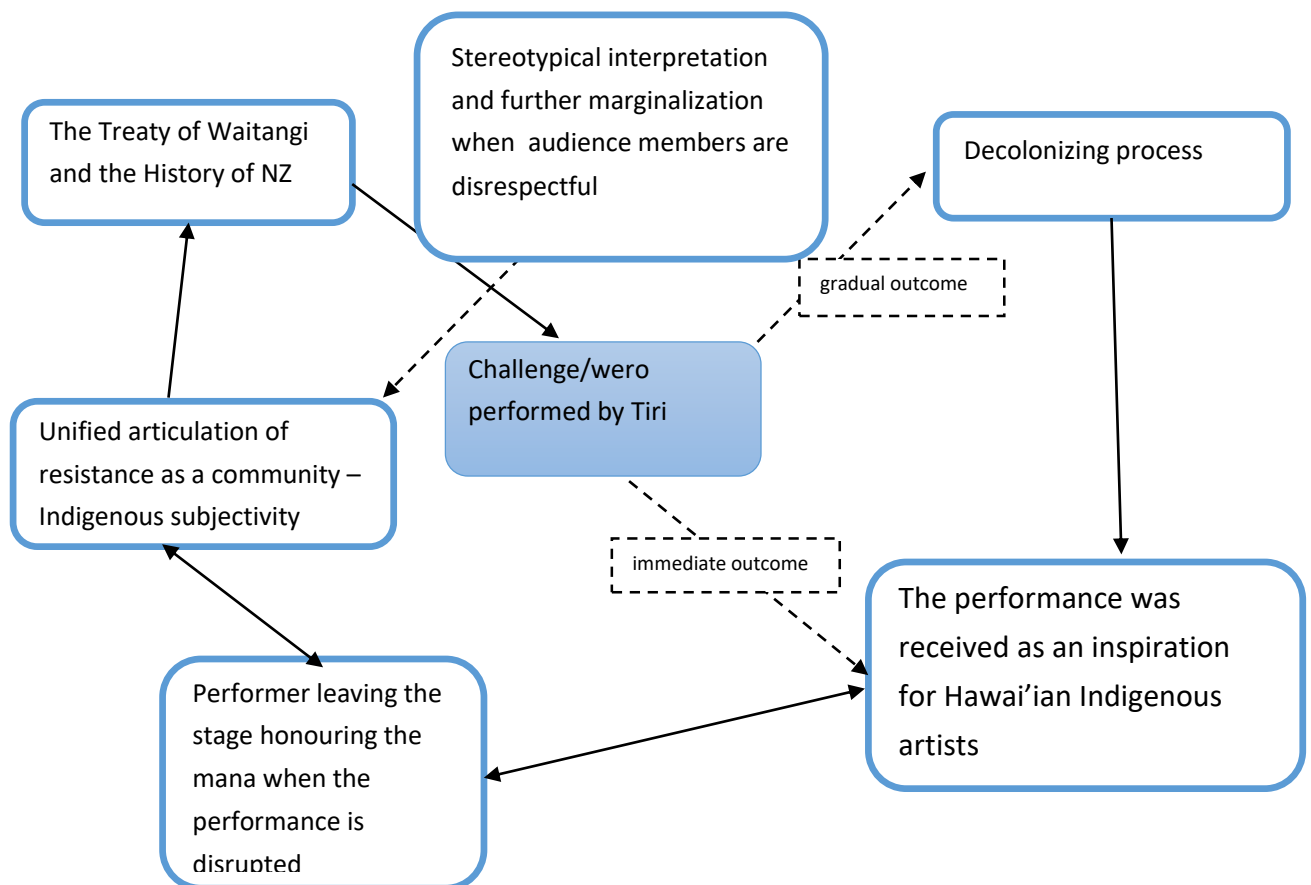


Figure 36: Locating *Woman Far Walking* using the Performance Efficacy Model

Please note, the above visual explanation of the performance is for easier understanding of the series of the events/aftermaths and not to oversimplify the complexity of the socio-political aspects of the performance. There can be components of the original Performance Efficacy model (see Chapter Three, P. 103) that are omitted while

describing the above visual based on obvious differences and performance specific socio-political and geographical situations.

Ihimaera's fame as a highly successful literary writer has surely impacted the reception of the play. The play is often compared thematically to his novel *Matriarch* (1986) for its depiction of historical contexts and female leaders. Maufort also indicates the fame of Ihimaera has "definitely contributed to ensure a safe place for Māori drama in literary mainstream" (Maufort 223). Longmore comments in the review of the Wellington based performance at the Soundings Theatre, "The play – Witi Ihimaera's first – is likely to prove provocative, political and controversial to audiences. And, it's another perspective on New Zealand's history since the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi" (Longmore). The festival audience of this production in New Zealand would have been predominantly Pākehā middle class who could afford the festival ticket prices. Touaf and Boutkhil state that the performance is an attempt to validate Māori heritage as an essential constituent of the national identity of New Zealand. This reception of the performance from an academic perspective of a foreign national problematizes the intended politics of the performance that is received different locally as mentioned above:

...while the play engages in the military and political resistance of the Maori community, presenting and favouring a Maori version of events, it becomes a hybrid text which combines western theatrical elements, with Maori song and ritual, and native conceptions of theatrical time and space in order to validate Maori heritage as an essential constituent of New Zealand's/Aotearoa's national identity (Touaf and Boutkhil xiv).

The performance received marked success when it toured around Aotearoa/New Zealand, Manchester (UK) and Hawai'i (Dale 2000, Longmore 2000, Gault 2001, Smythe 2001, Smith 2002, Berger 2002). There were quite a lot of script changes by the production teams in the tours during the 2001 and 2002. The set as suggested in the (2000) script is very minimal with a mix of audio, lights and stage designs. The performance involved traditional performing arts including haka and waiata, and contemporary expressions from the Māori perspective (Ihimaera 4). The reason behind the cuts in script and dialogues was due to the team wanting to focus more on presenting the Māori culture and rituals (Maufort 223). In the review published in *The Star Bulletin* in Hawai'i, Berger notes;

Playwright Witi Ihimaera's incorporation of Maori songs and dances adds color and cultural authenticity. House and Kawana are impressive cultural ambassadors in an unvarnished look at Maori history. With luck, "Woman Far Walking" will inspire Hawai'i's native playwrights to take an equally well-written look at Hawai'ian history (Berger).

Ihimaera was documented explaining trans-Indigenous similarities in terms of histories of colonization and loss, and he argued that the performance of *Woman Far Walking* equally stands for the native Hawai'ians advocating their stance against the U.S. government:

"It's really the same old story that has happened elsewhere," said Ihimaera, comparing the story of the Maori-British relationship to that of Native Hawai'ians and the U.S. government. "By having a woman like Tiri who has lived as long as the treaty has existed, I've been able to traverse the history of the Maori-Pakeha relationship, which is the same sort of relationship that all indigenous peoples have had with majority people" (Paiva).

Woman Far Walking is a historical record of the colonization and discrimination against the Māori community of Aotearoa/New Zealand written by a male yet directed (two out of three directors were women) and performed by a strong group of mana wāhine o Aotearoa. When performed in Aotearoa/New Zealand, the play was received as very political and provocative (as per the critiques published in media and the artistic reviews) and intended to move both Māori and Pākeha spectators by acknowledging the historical events and injustices. It also endeavoured to bridge the connection between two Indigenous communities as mentioned above in context of Hawai'i, but, at the same time, it was disregarded by an audience member and misinterpreted by an academic as a mere gesture of "historical revision through a series of strategies of (re)presentation intended to put forward an alter/native version of events, to reject biased interpretation of his people as the passive recipients of colonialism" (Calleja 109). The significant difference located above in terms of the reception of the performances locates the global efficacy of the play as well as highlights the impacts of the festivalized space wherein, despite living the spontaneous communitas the artistic performance is received based on an individual repertoire.

6.2.2. *Te Karakia*

Te Karakia, written by Albert Belz¹⁴¹, was first performed in 2007 as a workshop production with the name, “Sleeping Dog” at Toi Whakaari between 31st August and 3rd September 2007. The performances were followed by question and answer sessions facilitated by Hone Kouka, the dramaturg (O’Donnell “Personal Interview”). The flyers of the performance had a captivating line: “We should be in a constant state of revolution, or we are in a constant state of nothing” (O’Donnell “Te Karakia”). The caption highlights the strong political notes of the production. According to Director David O’Donnell, “Sleeping Dog” received a significant number of audience feedback which was used for further script and performance development (O’Donnell “Personal Interview”). One comment received by the production team after this performance was about the title of the performance which had a reference to a film with the same name and so it created confusion among audiences (Donaldson). The play then travelled through quite a lot of revisions and premiered with its name *Te Karakia* at the New Zealand Arts Festival, Wellington in 2008. The performance toured to Hamilton and went to the Bay of Islands Festival in 2008; and to the Auckland Arts Festival in 2009. Between 5th and 8th June 2009, the play went to The Dreaming, Australia’s international Indigenous festival. In the research for this thesis I was able to explore two different scripts of the performance with courtesy of Assoc. Professor. David O’Donnell who directed the performance. And, interestingly there are significant changes made to the script between its performances in 2008 and 2009. The later performances in 2009 excluded the character of Gareth which I discuss in detail in following paragraphs.

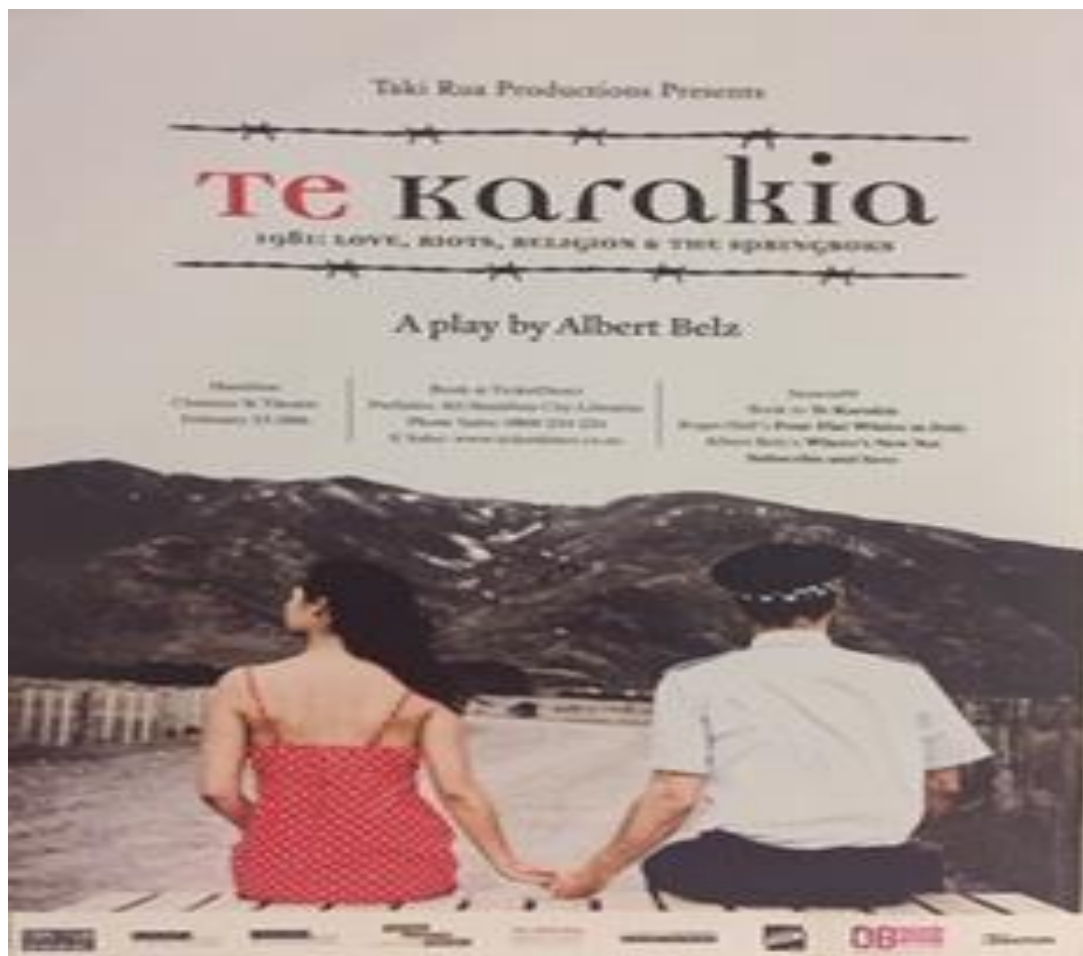


Figure 37: Flyer of the play *Te Karakia* for Hamilton show, 2009

Te Karakia is locally received as a love story of New Zealand's bicultural society set against the backdrop of the 1981 Springbok rugby union tour protests. Key themes within the play are religious beliefs within Pākeha society, Māori spiritual beliefs and inter-racial relations. The story of *Te Karakia* takes place at Pirongia, a farming town in the Waikato region of the North Island of New Zealand. The audience is welcomed with photographs of New Zealand landscapes projected on the screen over the stage. The projection of photographs on screens is a significant feature of the play *Te Karakia* and presented most contexts of the re-enacted history to the audience.

In 1981 New Zealanders protested against the Muldoon government's decision to welcome the Springboks, a South African rugby team, to tour in the country despite international sanctions against South African apartheid¹⁴² which had led other countries to cancel Springbok visits and enact economic sanctions by refusing to trade with the country. New Zealanders performed protests against the policies of Muldoon government in widespread acts of civil disobedience and anti-apartheid marches (O'Donnell "Personal Interview" 18). A detailed account of the

1981 anti-tour movement is illustrated by Thomas Newnham in his book, *By Batons and Barbed Wire: A Response to the 1981 Springbok Tour of New Zealand*. *Te Karakia* highlights the acts of resistance against apartheid and also the tensions in race relations within Aotearoa/New Zealand.

The protagonist in the play Matthew (Matt) is a Pākeha boy from the Connel family. Ranea is a Māori girl from the Tipene family. Ranea's father Tohurangi (Tohu) works as a farm manager on farmland owned by the Connells. The Tipene family had lost their farmland and *urupa* [burial site] during the colonial settlement of New Zealand, and Tohu has spent his entire life working to recover that lost land. Tohu had promised his late wife to recover the land and he promises his daughter Ranea the same. Matt is raised by his grandmother, Elsbeth, in a very strict religious environment (his father Gareth also features in earlier versions of the play)¹⁴³. Matt is shown as a fearful, shy and restrained young boy in the beginning of the play. As the play progresses the spectators are shown how Matt is made to feel guilty by his grandmother every time he tries to deviate even slightly from the strict religious regulations which represent post-Victorian repression within many Pākeha households.

There are number of occasions when Matt is found guilty in the eyes of Elsbeth and he is humiliated. Elsbeth is shown as very upset with Matt's relations with Ranea which also affected her financially as she had to trade the southern part of her farmland with Ranea's father Tohu as a deal for keeping silent about Matt's relationship with Ranea. Elsbeth is shown as ruthless towards the emotions of Matt since his childhood. In contrast, Tohu, is presented as a friendly and caring father. Ranea makes fun of Tohu and imitates him when he tells her the same story of their ancestral land and urupa every time he drinks beer. Ranea encourages Tohu to go to Mrs. Connel (Elsbeth) and ask her to buy the southern part of the land, however, Gareth, (Matt's dad in previous versions of the play) the landlord initially refuses to sell the land. Ranea encourages Tohu to keep faith in himself and gives moral support to her father.

In the first version of the performance, Ranea decides to seduce Gareth in order to influence and persuade him to change his mind about selling the land to her father. Gareth, after Ranea's attempts at seduction, rapes her. This highlights a very common trope in Māori theatre in which Pākeha men are portrayed as taking sexual advantage of the Māori women (Rapatahana). Symbolically, presenting colonization by portraying Pākeha men as colonizers and Māori women as representatives of land (as the archetype Papatūānuku). However, Tohu, assumes that Matt attacked his daughter. He gets angry and rushes to Matt's house where he threatens

Gareth, but Elsbeth tackles the situation and offers Tohu the southern block of land he was asking to buy earlier. Tohu forgets about his daughter at this moment and chooses to grab the land he has been striving to obtain for such a long time. The characters of Tohu, Gareth and Elsbeth are quite similar in context of their lack of parental care and responsibilities. This not only highlights blind and rigid religious beliefs but also points towards the missed parental responsibilities due to the cultural and political disturbances and divisions during the 1970s and 1980s in New Zealand society.

However, in its later version (2009), Ranea is shown as stronger and more independent. She expresses her love for Matthew just after her 15th birthday and they get intimate. Tohu, Ranea's father finds out about this and rushes to the Connel's where Elsbeth offers him the Southern block of the land to keep his mouth shut about the incident. Tohu agrees to accept the land. Elsbeth arranges for Matthew to leave the town and move to Auckland the next day.

Matt and Ranea meet each other again in Auckland where they revive their friendship which then develops into a romance. As the play progresses, Matt is shown as a dedicated police officer and one of the Red Squad Army (specifically designed to suppress the anti-tour protests) who hides his profession from Ranea after he meets her in Auckland. Ranea on the other hand, along with her cousin Uru, participates in protests and civil disobedience actions. Matt fears losing Ranea again and so, stops her from participating. The truth about Matt's profession is revealed to Ranea and the story ends with the breakdown of both romantic and familial relationships. Matt decides not to go back to the police force instead joining his family and going back to home. Matt says: "These are my clothes now, this my warmth...This is what I choose" (Belz 130).

Ranea's character in *Te Karakia* is based on the elements of kaitiaki from the point of view of its portrayal as mana wāhine. Ranea also reasserts the significance of karakia and defends the tikanga as well as teaches Māori children songs to Matt. She acts as a guardian of the family after the death of her mum. Interestingly, the play and the character of Ranea is mostly read in context of a bi-cultural romance while the strength of Ranea's character as Māori girl (and later, a woman) is often over-looked (Smythe; O'Brien). The reviewers failed to acknowledge the growth of Ranea's character from an innocent girl who made an impulsive decision, into a woman who rejects Matt's love and makes decisions about her own life independently.

Ranea becomes a source of strength to her father, Tohu and encourages him to negotiate with his Pākeha landlord to buy the land. However, when Tohu fails, she plans to achieve the goal of buying the land by seducing Gareth, the landlord. She is portrayed as brave and protective of her whānau with the aim of re-gaining the land of her whānau when she decides to seduce Gareth. These decisions and actions affect her mana due to the obviously abusive incident they set in motion. Although she has had intentions to drive Gareth to flirt with her, she appears to be an innocent teenager who probably hasn't thought about the consequences before acting on those intentions. Tohu's action of agreeing with the deal offered by his landlord in return for maintaining the Connel family's dignity by keeping quiet about the sexual assault of Ranea, fractures his image as a protective and loving father. The sequence of these actions makes Ranea's character tragic yet stronger because of her projection as a mature, confident and assertive woman who joins the political protest and rejects the feelings of Matt at the end of the play.

Ranea's decision to participate in an anti-springbok tour reinstates with her strength as mana wāhine. When Ranea, along with her cousin Uru, participates in protests and civil disobedience actions, she is seen again in her role as kaitiaki. *Te Karakia* is an ideal play to fit into the Performance as Dialogue Model as it has a clear performance and counter - performance sequence, with its starting point at the anti-springbok tour protests; along with projecting the significance of the history and bi-cultural race relationships in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The performance can be interpreted as inspiration for both Māori and Pākeha creative communities to project the real pictures with an aim of de-colonization and re-conciliation. According to Freeman, the performance goes beyond the historic event: “[Belz] touches on Pakeha and Māori attitudes to the land and each other, urbanization, alienation, self-determination, religion and love. All in two hours” (Freeman, 2008).

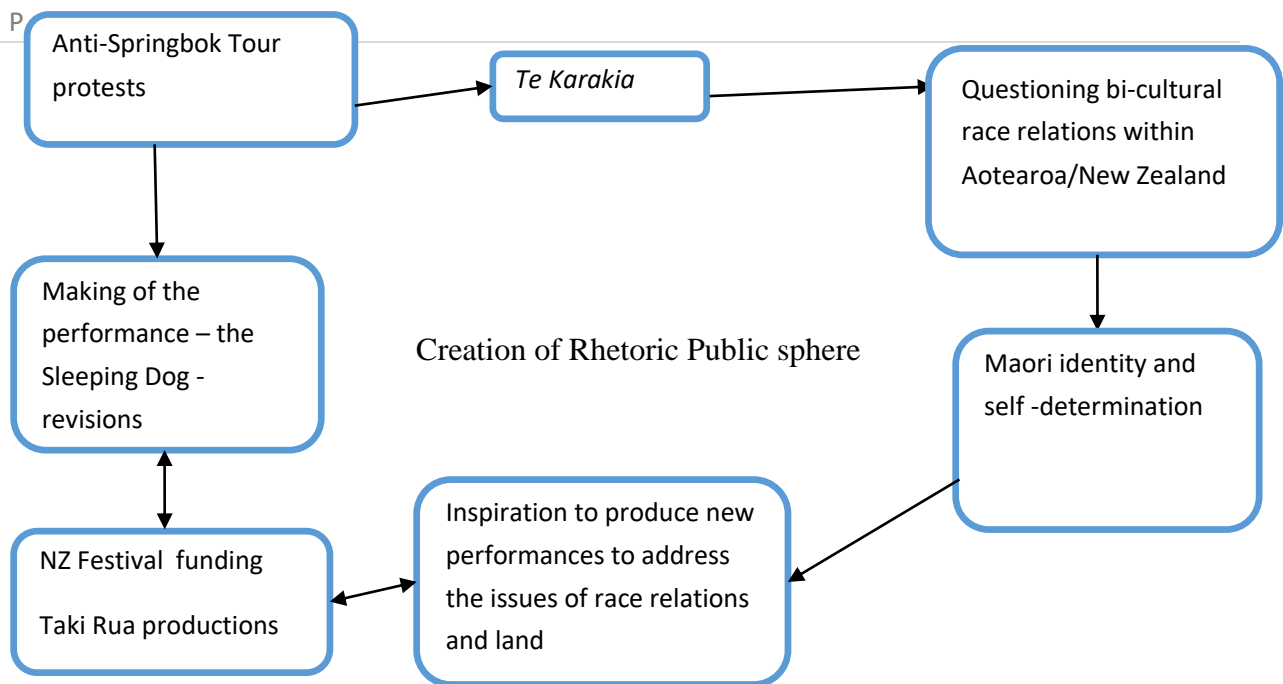


Figure 38: Explanation of the play *Te Karakia* using the Performance as Dialogue Model

Please note, the above visual explanation of the performance is for easier understanding of the series of the events/aftermaths and not to oversimplify the complexity of the socio-political aspects of the performance. There can be components of the original Performance as Dialogue model (see Chapter Three, P. 102) that are omitted while describing the above visual based on obvious differences and performance specific socio-political and geographical situations.

Based on the rhetoric that is created through the performance, there are two major outcomes of the play if it is interpreted in terms of the Performance Efficacy Model: 1) an immediate outcome could be an inspiration for other playwrights and theatre makers to bring the complex issues of race relations and land ownership to the themes of theatre and 2) a longer outcome could be improved race relationships within Aotearoa/New Zealand. The performance projects its politics by challenging and or questioning the audiences to think about the problematic race relations in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The performance challenges the suppressive nature of the racial relationship in the form of presenting an unsuccessful love story as well as by portraying the imaginary ‘national identity’ by projecting the actual protest when both Māori and Pākehā stood together. Smythe honestly articulates the troubled race relations within New Zealand society and notes:

...with its opportunities for mutual understanding and forgiveness I defy anyone not to want it to flow on into happy, romantic ending. But what we get is an accurate snapshot of how things are. I have no doubt Belz ‘prays’, along with most of us, for a better

outcome in the future but he's not about to pretend that we've got there already (Smythe).

O'Brien, on the other hand, was disappointed with the performance and compared it with other love stories presented at the New Zealand Festival 2008: *The Dentist's Chair* (Jacob Rajan) and the theatrical adaptation of Sia Figel's novel *Where We Once Belonged* (Colin McColl). It is notably interesting that the only significant Māori production in that festival was perceived as a love story while the politics of it and the historical recognition of the protest by numerous Māori people of Aotearoa/New Zealand were ignored. O'Brien described the production as slow and confusing due to issues with staging:

However, David O'Donnell's monotonously paced, and emotionally reserved production does not favour such moments, and this highlights the problems of the play's structure... The most important revelation is also hopelessly confusing, as it is impossible for the audience to figure out what Ranea's intentions were in the incident that provoked Matthew's banishment and, importantly, what actually happened to her, as the staging seems to have her escaping from the problem. The final, somewhat despairing, message seems to be that only the guilty can find redemption - ruined innocence is offered no relief (O'Brien 39).

The performance review published online received several comments from audience members clearly displaying their disappointment about the loose ends of staging and direction of the show (2008 production). The performance did not adequately represent the socio-political context that the love story was woven within, as Lou shares:

Wow, I feel like I must have seen a different play... but I was certainly at Downstage on Opening Night and am pretty sure it was Te Karakia! The production I saw hugely let down the text: under-playing what should have been key climactic moments, letting the staging - particularly the rolling bench - get in the way of the story... I was most disappointingly left feeling that the 1981 tour was incidental, as to me this production failed to fully weave together the personal with the socio-political context and bring it forward as anything more than a backdrop, that could have just as easily been anything else (Lou in *Theaterview*).

It is important to note here that the staging was very simple in the later productions. Another audience member, Lopez agrees with above comment and shares, "...It was like a jumble of

really good ingredients that still needed to be mixed up and cooked, and it was not well served by the director either, who could have done a lot more to bring some cohesion to it all” (Lopez). Interestingly, another member of the audience, Webber who saw a revised production a year later in Auckland reports, “Just back from seeing it in Auckland at the Herald Theatre as part of the Auckland Festival. It seems the play has been rewritten, excluding the father character. It was fabulous but would be interested to read about how and why it was changed” (Webber). The change refers to the changes made to the performance after it premiered at the New Zealand Festival of Arts in 2008 before it travelled to Auckland in March 2009 and the Dreaming Festival in the June 2009. According to O’Donnell, the script of the play changed as they kept working on it and in response to feedback from audiences (O’Donnell “Personal Interview”). The later version of the script seems clearer in terms of projecting the complex socio-political issues in New Zealand society due to one less character [Gareth].

The Auckland performance in March 2009 was received as a significant Māori performance that “deal with potentially deathly topics like cultural identity and land politics in a compelling way, calculated to leave no dry eye in the house” (McAllister). The performance is recorded to have remarkably changed from its previous versions in 2008 and received as an artistically significant Māori work of Taki Rua and Belz. The performance is looked at as a potential work of art to serve as “catalyst for the real drama” in context of Māori -Pākehā relationship within Aotearoa/New Zealand society (McAllister).

At the Dreaming Festival, the performance received significantly different reviews. The reception of the performance commended its script, aesthetics and dramaturgy more than the complex socio-political issues it presents or focussing on the anti-Springbok protest itself. As Peel writes in a review of the performance at The Dreaming 2009:

Festivals in the bush need a very special type of theatrical style and design to succeed in a big muddy tent, away from comforts of the modern high-tech theatrical environment. Te Karakia’s simplicity in storytelling style and design kept the audience spellbound amid the sound spill from a vibrant festival. Albert Belz’s script will endure; this is a play that should have a long life internationally ... Thank you Taki Rua, we’ll keep dreaming, and please send us more (Peel).

As discussed above, the highly political intention of the performance was to locate the race-relationships of the ‘bi-cultural society’ of Aotearoa/New Zealand through the re-enactment of the protest, wherein both Māori and Pākehā stood together. This is evidenced by the first

workshop production flyer calling for a “constant state of revolution,” however this message wasn’t received when it travelled to an Australian global socio-political space. Instead, the performance was primarily received as a love story with beautiful yet simple dramaturgy and artistic direction. The change of reception as discussed by the reviewer of the Dreaming Festival above in comparison to what the reviewers noted about New Zealand shows of the play. This change can be interpreted as further marginalization of an Māori /Indigenous identity by ignoring the people who protested and the history of racial suppression which surely moves the play away from its ‘targeted’ outcome.

6.2.3. *Hikoi*

Hikoi (2014) by Nancy Brunning is another example of a Māori play achieving a dramaturgically successful blend of traditional Māori beliefs, historical struggles and the depiction of contemporary society. The play is a portrait of the hundreds of Māori women who joined the Hikoi - Land March in 1975, led by Dame Whina Cooper. These women sacrificed their personal lives and family relations for the cause of justice. Whina Cooper’s life offers a powerful example of the sacrifices made by the mana wāhine o Aotearoa to raise their voices against injustice. Nancy Brunning’s play offers a complex fictionalized account of these events by focusing on the perspectives of the children and husbands left behind.

Hikoi was first picked up at the Matariki Development Festival in 2013. A later version was given a staged reading at the Putahi Festival in 2014, then performed at the Matariki Development Festival in 2014, followed by its premiere at the Auckland Arts Festival in 2015. *Hikoi* tells the story of a family living in small town called Te Moananui and is set in the time period of 1970s up to the mid-1980s. The play presents the story of a woman, Nellie Miller, who participated in the famous Land March of 1975 led by Whina Cooper to oppose the “alienation [sale] of Māori land”¹⁴⁴. The consequences of Nellie's decision to join the land march were disturbing for the family. Charlie Miller - Nellie's husband (a Māori man brought up in Pākehā family) doesn't support Nellie's decision to join the hikoi, a decision which results in their separation. Nellie ultimately returns to her parents’ home, leaving their five children – the twin girls, Janey (JG) and May, Pearl, Joseph (Joe) and Gracie (Bubba) – with Charlie. JG and May are 16 years old and look after their younger sisters; Pearl, Bubba and brother Joe.

Rather than staging the dramatic events of the land march itself, the play focusses on the domesticity of a Māori family in the 1980s and depicts the quest of the children for their mother, who left them for the cause of the wider community in the aftermath of colonial injustice. Unlike *Te Karikia* that underwent significant changes between workshop and various festival iterations, *Hikoī* has incurred some minor changes in plot sequencing by the playwright as well as changes of actors playing several of the roles. I watched two versions of the performance, the one performed at the Matariki Development Festival at Circa Theatre in 2014 and the world premiere of the show at the Auckland Arts Festival in 2015.



Figure 39: Flyer of the show *Hikoī* at Auckland Arts Festival

The play opens with a scene showing the children packing and preparing themselves to go out in search of their mother. The next scene moves back in time to introduce their parents, Nellie

and Charlie, at their first meeting in 1970 at Charlie's friend's place. The historical context of a ban on Te Reo Māori in schools and the ignorance of Charlie (a man raised in a Pākehā family) about this ban is carefully woven into initial conversation between Nellie and Charlie. The historical identification of Pākehā as rulers or higher community who beat speakers of Te Reo Māori strongly represents the oppressive and assimilative policies of the colonial power structure. Nellie's curiosity regarding how an inter-racial marriage works points towards the significance of her need for a marriage and household where her culture, language and values are respected.

THE WOMAN: Oh, you're Pākeha? You don't look like a Pākeha?

THE MAN: I am not a pah-key-ah; my dad's a pah-key-ah. step-dad.

THE WOMAN: Did he belt you?

THE MAN: No one got belted.

THE WOMAN: But your mother's Māori?

THE MAN: Yep, she's a marry (Māori).

THE WOMAN: Does she speak Māori?

THE MAN: No, she did, but not in front of me, she said there was no use for it (9-10).

The conversation not only locates the significant loss of language but also highlights the importance of its survival from Nellie's point of view. Language and land are part of the heritage for any and every culture and ensuring these survive is what many activists aim for. Cooper was quoted by *The Herald* on the 18th October 1975, "They talk about the Maori language as part of our heritage," she said before embarking on the famous land march. "But if our language is to survive and the people to survive, our land must survive also" (Cooper qtd. in "1975").

The performance also highlights significant differences in lifestyles, values and language between the Pākeha and Māori communities. The desire of Māori kids from this lower middle-class family to achieve what they perceive to be the better, more comfortable life style of Pākeha is explored, together with the quest to fit into the multicultural society where Māori are looked down on as second-class as compared to white communities:

BUBBA to JG: Are Pakehas brown?

...

JOE: You are a Māori, Bubba.

...

BUBBA: I don't get it.

PEARL *snapping*- For a start, Pakeha are white people and white people talk nicely to each other!

JOE: White people have dinner parties.

...

BUBBA: Pakeha drink tea out of cups and saucers. We don't have saucers.

...

JOE: Pakeha wear heaps of makeup.

...

PEARL: Pakehas speak English.

BUBBA: See, I speak English.

PEARL: Māori are supposed to speak Māori.

BUBBA: We don't

MAY: Because we don't know how to.

BUBBA: How come?

MAY: Not allowed.

BUBBA: Why?

MAY: I don't know Bubba; do I look like the Prime Minister? (33-35).

Pearl - one of the younger girls - prompts a discussion about the difference between Māori and Pākeha lifestyles in the 1980s. In addition to the suppression of the Māori language, the play also addresses the colonial strategy of removing Māori children from their families and placing them into foster care. Charlie's ignorance about what happened to his fellow Māori during the colonial and post-colonial period, and how this history is suppressed following assimilation policies not only highlights his loss of identity, language and culture but also portrays the disconnection from his whakapapa. He asks Nellie, "They fostered you? Were you a mischief kid?" (11).

The play's political articulation of the assimilative practices in history charges the performance space with the element of protest by displaying the aftermath of injustice through dialogues and performative presentations. Though the performance doesn't include the display of the actual protest on stage, it provides an insight into the less famous side of the story which is unknown to the larger section of the audience.¹⁴⁵

Hikoi is a statement of Māori rights, language and struggle carried out by mana wāhine between the 1970s and 80s. For Nellie, Māori values of *turangawaewae* [a place to stand] and *whānaungatanga* [kinship or a sense of family connection] are very important, but Charlie's perception of these values is clouded because of what he experienced and heard when his mother died. Charlie recalls this incident from his childhood when Nellie encourages him to catch up with his family after they received a letter from Charlie's uncle informing the death of his cousin:

NELLIE: Your brother is dead Charlie?

CHARLIE: And what am I supposed to do about it?

NELLIE: Say goodbye?

CHARLIE: And pretend that nothing happened? They [Māori relatives] took Joe from us when I was 10 and raised him like them. Then against my stepfather's wishes they took my mum too, snatched her from the funeral home, and buried her where they wanted her to be buried. My stepdad refused to go to her funeral because of that. I didn't even get to say goodbye to her (40).

The cultural values of *turangawaewae* and *whānaungatanga* are converted into fear towards the cultural practices and *whakamā* [humiliation] of it for Charlie because of being cut off from his culture very early in his life. The interplay of the elements of fear and *whakamā* throughout the play dominates the relationships between the characters. For instance, Charlie's fear about speaking up and supporting Nellie in her activism against the injustice done by the government highlights his helplessness; and he humiliates Nellie to hide his fear. The constant state of Charlie's helplessness and his disagreement with Nellie's actions due to fear led their marriage to break-up eventually, and Charlie asks Nellie to leave home. Nellie leaves everything, including her children, to be able to do what she thought was the right thing to do. Charlie proves unable to take good care of his children; he becomes a heavy drinker and cannot keep up with caring for the children due to staying away. He is angry most of the time which leads the children to decide to hunt for their mother.

The Miller children, on their way to find their mum, get stuck in a forest and decide to pass the night under a tree without any tent or blankets. The conversation also highlights the culturally isolated lives the Miller children are living wherein they learn whatever information happens to come to them about being Māori, and they hold on tightly to this haphazard collection. For

instance, when JG describes how life is lived down the valley when her mum took her to her Māori family and when she shares “people were different there. They sat with each other and talked for hours, talked until they laughed or cried. Mum laughed all of the time. Everyone there spoke Māori. Even the babies there spoke it” (61). JG tries to compare the life of the valley with that of their current life where their Pākeha neighbours get suspicious if something breaks accidentally and calls the police, which the children had to cope with regularly. JG, the eldest daughter recalls her time at the valley with her mum and tries to understand what their mother might have felt living with them and leaving behind the richness of her culture from the valley:

JG: ...I remember this golden valley and space, so much space. I'd climb hills and roll down them, swim in the river, ride the horses or build huts...I thought if mum can speak [Māori] it then I must be able to so I opened my mouth and tried to say the words I thought I heard - so dumb! I felt dumb. Maybe that's how mum felt living with us. May be all she wanted was to talk Māori until she laughed but couldn't cause none of us could talk with her?...And when she was home, she was still. Either leaning up against the bench staring out the kitchen window or watching the news on TV. But in the valley. She was free. Maybe that's why she left us. Maybe she'd become so still she'd almost stopped breathing. Maybe if she stayed with us, she would've died? (61-62).

The above scene is followed by a flashback about Charlie and Nellie's relationship getting worse due to the aftermath of Nellie's involvement in political protests and people calling their home to threaten them. At the end of the first act, the children find their way out of the forest and they call their mum from a telephone booth. Nellie asks them to wait for her at a place in the forest - this place is where Nellie was born, under the kahikitea tree where her placenta was buried and where she eventually she buried the placentas of all of her own children. This is a moment which symbolizes the vitality of the whenua – which denotes both ‘placenta’ and place - and the traditional Māori ritual of burying the placenta and *pito* [umbilical cord] retaining the connection between the new-born and the land they are born on. So, symbolically the children were going back to their whenua - their land of significance, and from Nellie's perspective they are protected there in the forest.

The second act of the play portrays an extensive fight between the Miller children and Charlie, who goes into the forest looking for them. Charlie wants to take the children back as he is afraid

that the children will be taken away from him by the welfare agency and he will face legal consequences for questionable parenting abilities. Charlie uses physical and verbal strength in an attempt to control the children, but they resist, knock him down and tie him to the tree. The children demand explanations from Charlie and ask him why he has not been a good father and the characters talk to him one after another. As he interacts with them Charlie realises what he missed as a father, making him feel guilty and vulnerable. Nellie has been watching all this from behind the tree and finally enters the scene. The children ask their parents to leave them alone and decide between the two of them whether they will get back together. Nellie and Charlie realize the damage that they have caused their children and themselves. Charlie confesses his inability to take good care of Nellie and the children and apologizes to Nellie and they decide to reunite after five years of separation. In the last scene, the children are seen sleeping in Charlie's car while their parents reconcile. The play ends with a happy note and comic gesture when Bubba finishes eating a sandwich secretly before waking her siblings.

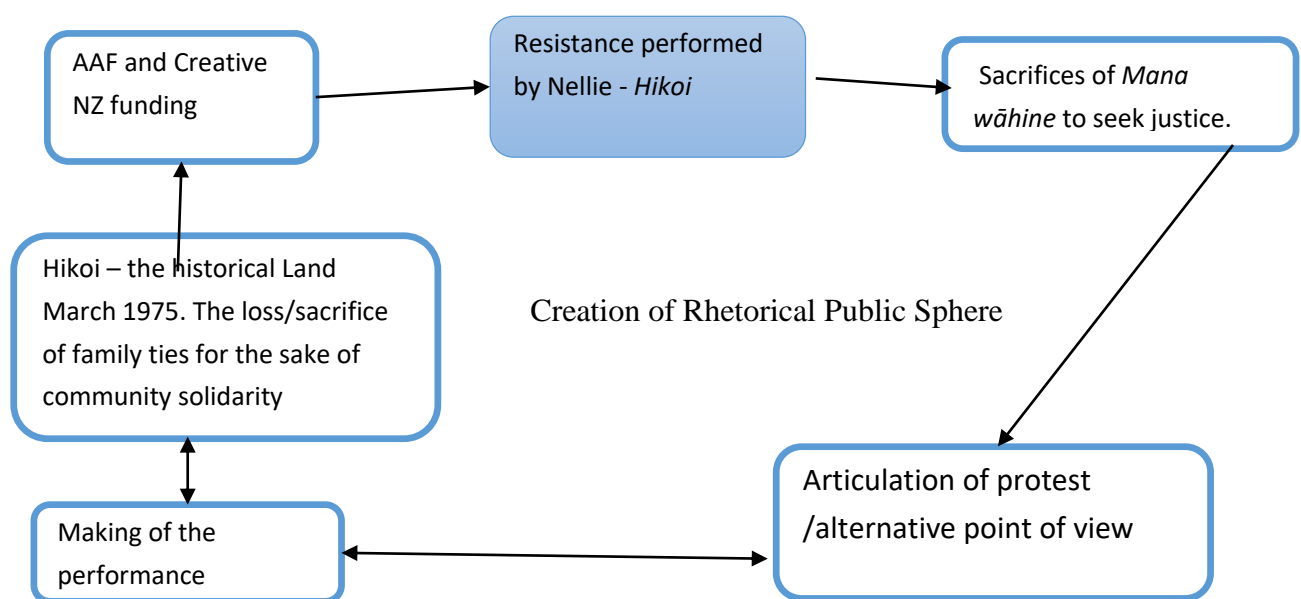


Figure 40: Explanation of *Hikoi* using the Performance as Dialogue Model

Please note, the above visual explanation of the performance is for easier understanding of the series of the events/aftermaths and not to oversimplify the complexity of the socio-political aspects of the performance. There can be components of the original Performance as Dialogue model (see Chapter Three, P. 102) that are omitted while describing the above visual based on obvious differences and performance specific socio-political and geographical situations.

The roles of Nellie, JG and May are charged with the values of mana wāhine; with tikanga kaitiaki and themes of connection/disconnection to Papatūānuku. Nellie, as a mother is seen reinforcing traditional Māori values when she is seen singing waiata to her young children and describes performing the rituals of burying the placentas under the Kahikatea tree. Charlie, has become disconnected from these rituals due to what he experienced in his childhood when his Māori birth father left the family, and compounded by how his mother's body was forcefully taken away from them to be buried in the ground which prevented him from being able to say goodbye to her. Charlie's feelings of distress and discomfort towards his tribal relatives highlights the cultural alienation he suffered since his childhood. He was prevented from grieving properly due to the cultural clash between his Pākehā father and the Māori relatives from his mother's side. Charlie's lack of affectionate relationship with his father in his childhood along with his cultural alienation from the other side of family could be seen as the reasons why he failed to be a responsible and caring father. This lifetime impact of Charlie's character represents the generation of Māori people who suffered such alienations due to the problematic race relations.

Nellie is portrayed as a woman with strong cultural, social and political understanding who emerges as mana wāhine, displaying her resistance to suppressive governmental rule as well as distress and discomfort of Charlie towards Nellie's Māori family. At the same time the characters of JG and May emerge as guardians of the younger children. They are depicted as responsible mature girls at a very young age, a role which has been forced upon them due to careless father who doesn't know what is happening with his children. The twin girls take care of their young siblings, including caring for Joe's asthma illness, and leave school to start earning money. JG mentions this to Charlie when they talk to him while tied to the tree in the jungle that how her Pākehā teachers didn't even ask her once before signing the school leaving card (99).

JG questions the role of the government and its policies in the family's troubles, which locates the play's politics around recognition, education and the significance of Te Reo Māori in Aotearoa/New Zealand. More importantly, there are three females among the children of Nellie and Charlie who help articulate the status of Māori language and cultural values adding to the statement that Nellie presents. According to the playwright, Nancy Brunning, Nellie's character is representative of many of those mana wāhine who joined the hikoi:

Nellie's character represents the Māori women involved in the protest who lost their families, lost their children and were all considered 'mental' [crazy or mentally disturbed]. Instead considering the genuine cause they were fighting for, those women were treated really really badly for making their stance. They were not acknowledged as well as they should be. So that was the significant thing about making the *Hikoi* and know how little [the actors] all knew about our history and trying to educate them in that way (Brunning "Personal Interview").

The performance raised the issue of Te Reo Māori teaching and learning in schools alongside bringing forward the unheard stories from the past. Political discourse is encouraged and subtly presented by the writer and director Nancy Brunning within the theatre space. This projection of the politics may inspire further reaction or counter-performance in context of better reconciliation processes from the government and/or more people embracing Te Reo Māori language learning. Reviewer James Wenley writes, "Without didactically getting on the pulpit, the play quietly yet powerfully makes the case for Maori language learning in schools so that *all* New Zealanders can benefit. *Hikoi* is a cathartic work of remembrance with immediate relevance" (Wenley).

Looking at the play in terms of the Performance Efficacy Model, the performance created a *kōrero* [discussions] within the socio-political space of Aotearoa/New Zealand. The current prime minister of New Zealand, then Labour MP, Jacinda Ardern watched and admired the play *Hikoi*: "I am always pretty excited by any opportunity to see New Zealand stories told on stage. Nancy Brunning is such an amazing performer, the chance to see her award-winning play was pretty special and really moving" (Delilkan). Though the quote does not give evidence that Ardern took any particular political message from her experience of the performance, it does show the play is known to the country's leader and may have ongoing, behind the scenes impacts.

The political protests that Nellie participates in reinstate the power of community and depicts how such protests allow suppressed voices to be heard. Moreover, the display of the domestic impacts of these historical events projects the injustice, humiliation, and sufferings that Māori women went through for the cause of Māori cultural and political values aligned to Treaty of Waitangi breaches by the crown. Wenley remarks in his review, "Brunning reminds us we can only look forward by looking backwards" (Wenley). History becomes an inspiration and the playwright looks back to the history to decolonize herself as well as to articulate that history in

ways that encourage a new and increased understanding in the other Māori artists with whom she is collaborating in the local space. When I discussed the process of making the performance and its development with the playwright and director Brunning, she shared that she received some interesting comments from the audience about the development of the characters. She suggested that she tried hard to avoid stereotypes and to include a part of history unknown to the people of Aotearoa/New Zealand:

They questioned Charlie’s character because they thought there should be more violence, and they thought he should be more abusive, and I said no! That’s something that worries me all the time, not all Māoris are like that. And he does nothing! And so, that ‘doing nothing’ is as bad as punching someone in the face! My reasoning was - he was ashamed of her stance and her Māoriness, he listened to everyone else’s’ opinion not Nellie’s, he wouldn’t support her, by being present for his kids. By doing nothing, he contributed to the destruction of their family. Just as Nellie’s stance did. So, I think they had whole range of characters and range of experiences to explore. It’s interesting when some people say Nellie’s character should be home with the children. And I told them that there were Māori women who participated in the protest and they were all pretty much on their own, and *that* part of the history has never been discussed. It’s not because these people who questioned were ignorant, but they had no idea about what the Māori women were doing during the 70s or the 80s. All they know about the history is when the Pākehās came along (Brunning “Personal Interview”).

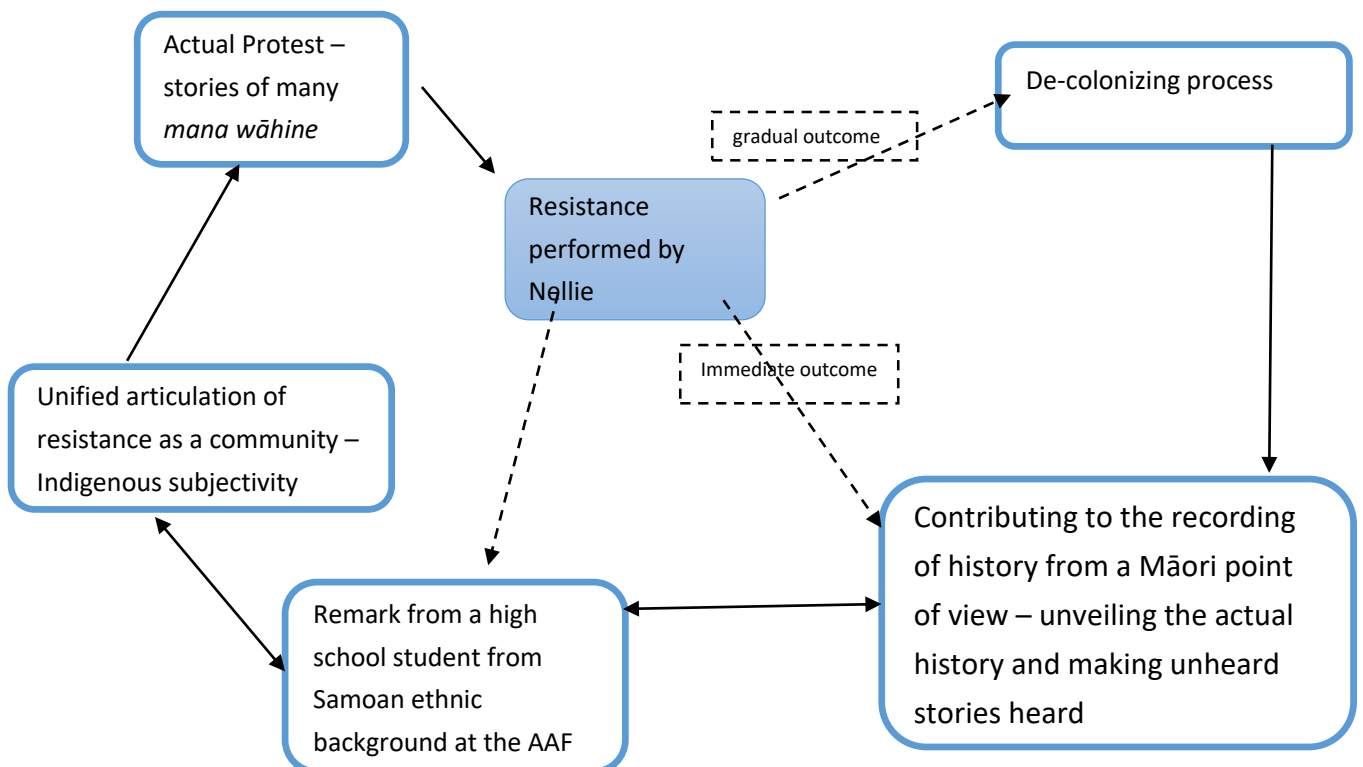


Figure 41: Explanation of *Hikoi* using the Performance Efficacy Model

Please note, the above visual explanation of the performance is for easier understanding of the series of the events/aftermaths and not to oversimplify the complexity of the socio-political aspects of the performance. There can be components of the original Performance Efficacy model (see Chapter Three, P. 103) that are omitted while describing the above visual based on obvious differences and performance specific socio-political and geographical situations.

Like *Te Karakia*, as discussed in the previous section, *Hikoi* is a significant example of how an actual protest in the past is used as an inspiration to resist the same issues of enduring colonizing attitudes through the medium of theatre. As Wenley writes:

There are no easy answers, and this is a conversation, and healing process, that takes much longer than two hours onstage allows. When commentators are already looking to a post-treaty settlement landscape, Brunning reminds us we can only look forward by looking backwards (Wenley).

Looking at the performance from the point of view of its festival efficacy, *Hikoi* has marked its presence significantly in local and international arts festivals organised within the Aotearoa/New Zealand. The show contributes to long-term processes of decolonization by providing an opportunity for the Māori community to ‘heal’ after the alternative story is heard by the wider audience (Wenley). The decolonizing process carried by the performance also presents an opportunity for the government/dominant groups in society to move forward in the reconciliation process by acknowledging the Indigenous loss and settling the claims. As Brunning shares in an interview:

It is fear that stops us from moving forward. That fear around culture and language is generated from years of colonisation that filtrates into our psyche, changing our behaviour. In *Hikoi*, the father decides to cut all ties to his family, he wants to start anew. The mother has an urge to revisit her *papakāinga* [communal land]. The children are trying to find that connection again without any resources, knowledge or

understanding. What transpires is a fear and burden of trying to discover your roots (Brunning “Personal Interview”).

The articulation of resistance against the land acquisition and other political issues of Māori people of Aotearoa/New Zealand through the medium of theatre performance with the historical context to the Land March is successfully carried out in *Hikoi*. The performances were received very well as per the reviews, audience feedback and my own experience of watching the show. The shows I watched (2014 version at Circa Theatre as part of Matariki Development Festival and 2015 version at Auckland Arts Festival) had a variety of audiences. The 2014 show performed locally in Wellington had some audience members from urban Māori backgrounds and mostly middle class Pākehā community. The show at Auckland Arts Festival mostly had an elite Pākehā festival-goer audience who generally only visit the arts festival performances as they believe the festival include the best shows and so they don't waste their time going to any 'other' show throughout the year. I wrote to the festival administrative team at the Auckland Arts Festival proposing possible audience survey collections at the end of the show, but that was unsuccessful. And hence, I discuss the efficacy based on my own experience, observations and reviews.

Some of the significant responses¹⁴⁶ from the audience members, collected and posted by Circa theatre (Wellington) on their website (<https://www.circa.co.nz/hikoi-driving-change-and-challenging-perceptions/>) include, “You made me laugh (a lot), You made me cry (a little)... you got so much right that I was there again.”(N.P. 2014). “[Hapai Productions] is creating theatre works with Te Ao Māori (Māori world view) themes for audiences in Wellington, throughout Aotearoa and around the world (eventually)!” (2014). The Circa theatre (venue for 2014 show) admin shares “*Hikoi* shows the power of theatre to drive change and challenge perceptions” (2014). The afternoon show of the Auckland Arts Festival specifically designed for student audiences followed by a Q & A received a remark from a Samoan parent that highlights the extent to which the Māori history is suppressed at schools and within public awareness at large, Brunning shares:

He was a Samoan man co-parenting with a Māori woman. He never allowed the children to speak Māori in his home. He didn't realise that Māori we were forbidden to speak Māori, he thought they [Māori] were too lazy to speak their language. And didn't work hard enough. But they don't realise that Māoris have gone through a type of genocide in early 1900 that prevented them from speaking their language, practicing

their culture or following their philosophies. And so all of that information needed to be researched, in order to understand those characters and truly be seen the way they were (Bunning “Personal Interview”).

The reaction from a young person was “I didn’t know people weren't allowed to speak Māori?” at a special afternoon show of the festival specifically designed for student audiences followed by a question and answer session (Bunning “Personal Interview”). Such remarks open up a discussion platform for the further articulation of political perspectives. Assertion of Indigenous/ Māori identity using such spaces can be looked at as a performance of politics. The discussion session gave Bunning another opportunity to articulate the historical and political reasons behind why the characters in the play were the way they were. The context of responding to a question from someone who had viewed the performance from outside both Māori and Pākehā cultural frames presented an enhanced opportunity to reiterate the suppressed history, as well as to enhance the articulation of the issues for consumption beyond the local/bi-cultural modes explored in the play.

6.2.4. *Not in Our Neighbourhood (NION)*

Not in Our Neighbourhood (NION hereafter) (2015) is a documentary theatre work based on the stories of women at the Hauraki Women's Refuge. It was written by Jamie McCaskill and produced by Tikapa Productions in association with Te Whāriki Manawāhine O Hauraki (Hauraki Women’s Refuge). The playwright Jamie McCaskill had been nominated for prestigious awards such as Playmarket and the Capital E National Theatre for Children Award, Chapman Tripp Award and he won the Bruce Mason Playwriting Award in 2013 for his play *Manawa*.

The play *NION* provides a glimpse into the world of domestic violence within New Zealand society but has an ability to relate to the global socio-political and cultural space. The women at Hauraki Women's Refuge belong to varied communities and classes. There are five female characters and one male character in the play. All the women characters are played by Māori actress Kali Kopae with a distinct voice and physicality for each of them. The first woman who enters the stage is Maisey, a documentary film maker who wishes to let the world know of the stories of these women and of domestic violence. The next woman is Moira who is a manager at the refuge and takes care of the women. The three women at the refuge whose stories are told are Sasha Miller, Cat Mihinui and Teresa Cummings.



Figure 42: Flyer of the performance *NION* at New Zealand Festival 2016

Sasha Miller is a bold and stressed young mother who gave birth at the age of 14 and is a mother of five. She is denied access to her youngest child and she tries to work through the legal procedures to defend her right to meet her children. Sasha swears a lot to convey her frustration and pain. Sasha makes fun of herself to lighten the pain and remarks strongly against the ignorance or lack of serious consideration that the women receive at the state offices. Sasha doesn't care about Maisey but supports Teresa when she is afraid of her husband. The strong, genuine and kind-hearted character of Sasha attracts lots of attention from the audience as the

audience members are observed nodding and laughing with her when she argues at the office of a local MP.

Cat Mihinui is an older, heavy hearted and soft-spoken Māori woman. She is the only Māori women at the refuge and chooses to silence herself. Cat talks about her life only once when she remembers that her ancestors were the rangatira of the land. Otherwise, her words are focused on supporting Sasha and encouraging her to keep calm. Cat's character reflects the serious and traumatic experience of being a woman with a past of sexual and domestic violence.

Teresa Cummings is a Pākeha woman who belongs to upper class New Zealand society and has been abused by a businessman husband for past 20 years before she decides to leave him. Teresa had been trying to cope with violent and abusive behaviour of her husband in the hope that it would end one day. When Teresa arrives at the refuge, she is quite reluctant to share her story with Sasha due to the differences in their socio-economic backgrounds. However, Sasha persuades her to share her story and supports her when Teresa gets worried about the consequences of her decision to leave her husband.

The performance ends with a note from the documentary maker Maisey who is looking forward to putting the documentary up for the world to watch it. This highlights the ambiguity and contingency of the play wherein Maisey as a documentary film maker has all the freedom and rights to edit and re-edit the final product. This is a self-reflexive comment on the play's development which was created through the weaving and editing of real stories. The play is just a version of the shoot done by Maisey; it is also just a version of the material collected and developed by the production's creative team.

The beautifully woven and excellently performed show is set within small yet very effective space decorated with different kinds of domestic lamps which also provide the atmospheric light design for the performance. Significant use of music and minimum props makes the performance simply realistic and aesthetically rich at the same time.

The playwright and director Jamie McCaskill and his partner performer Kali Kopae were employed at Te Whāriki Manawāhine o Hauraki and developed the play collaboratively with the staff and women at the refuge. The performance presents the women as survivors and emphasises the emotional side of the story rather than presenting the women as victims. The women at the refuge were the show's first audience and chorused at the end of the performance: "tell everyone, maybe it will help save someone's life" (Messiter). The play was first performed

at the Putāhi Festival in 2014 and then it was part of Kia Mau Festival in 2015. The play was well-received for its strong message and performance; and was included in New Zealand Festival of Arts 2016 as well as Auckland Arts Festival 2016. The performance received Best New Zealand Play and Best Female Actor awards from Wellington Theatre Awards 2015. The reviews of the show suggest its potency as “powerful theatre for bringing social change” (Agnew); “a theatre [performance] that would leave audiences informed, challenged and moved” (Van Beek); “this is a theatre with a purpose” (Joe). Two years after its world premiere, the play travelled to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 2018.

NION is a powerful combination of the stories of four women who represent Māori and Pākehā women in New Zealand society, all portrayed by a Māori actress. The female characters in the play present a contemporary picture of New Zealand women from five different sections of society. However, all these women emerge as strong, assertive and caring individuals. Cat is an elderly Māori woman who is calm and doesn't speak much. Moira and Maisey, both young Māori women who speak and advocate for the women at safe house/refuge are shown as being quite protective of the privacy and security of the women at the refuge. The light and set design of the performance is cleverly selected and looks domestic and simple. Theatre reviewer John Smythe remarks the light and set design as simple and global, he writes, “[they] could belong to any neighbourhood. Likewise, the women found in the play's women's refuge may have fled from domestic abuse within any socio-economic, cultural or geographic 'hood’” (Smythe).

The play displays a number of situations wherein women are suppressed and abused at any possible corner of the town, including the governmental offices they go to for support and protection. The idea of freeing oneself from these habituated circumstances and occurrences of physical/emotional/mental abuse or suppression takes courage and a huge amount of support from the agencies like the women's refuge. Moira discusses the issue:

What do I find most rewarding about this job? Good question. um....it would have to be seeing clients break free of the dark cloud that has been hanging over them for so long. The women who actually make the change in their life to break free of the shackles which have kept them in a violent relationship or whatever circumstances brought them to us. It doesn't happen as often as we'd like but when it does it makes us feel good I guess. It confirms with us that we're making a difference. That would have to be the most rewarding thing...(34).

Kali Kopae performs each of the characters with huge mana and artistic excellence. The role of Maisey has the values of kaitiaki as well as decolonizing the ‘colonial invention’ of ‘domestic violence’ and female victimhood (Mikaere). As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, in pre-colonial Aotearoa/New Zealand, Wāhine enjoyed high positions within their whānau and iwi. They were historically valued for their physical connections to the ancestral land they occupy as well as for the continuation of whakapapa through reproduction.

The production resists the ‘usual’ media-projected over-presentation of the issue of domestic violence in the context of Māori communities. According to reviewer Maraea Rakuraku, “Much has been researched, analysed, evaluated and opined about the state of violence in this country and in particular (if the media is to be believed), the overrepresentation of Māori, and acts of violence” (Rakuraku).

The play resists the stereotypical association of the issue with the Māori community as well as presenting the women as courageous and able to share their stories as a means of effecting change rather than remaining passive victims of domestic violence. Through its dramaturgical structure and careful staging, it highlights how performance can communicate complex issues of violence without presenting violent attacks on stage and re-inscribing victimhood. Though the play is about domestic violence and its survivors, it presents all of the women as strong and powerful. The performance questions the issue and urges the spectators to think about it. According to Fiona McNamara, who is an accomplished theatre director as well as Wellington’s Sexual Abuse Prevention Network General Manager;

Not in Our Neighbourhood is not only one of the most powerful pieces of theatre I have ever seen, it also one of the most effective ways I have seen key messages about domestic violence communicated to the public. This is theatre for social change” (McNamara).

A contrasting review was published by Dione Joseph in *Theatreview* who criticised the performance for “regurgitating the cliché or the familiar trope” about the often-marginalized subject of domestic violence and lacking the interrogations of “the quiet violence” happening around us. Denise Messiter, who was a managing chairperson of Te Whāriki Manawāhine o Hauraki when the play was created and contributed to the process of its creation, responded:

The real test of *Not in our Neighbourhood's* relevance and dare I say it reverence, doesn't come from reviewers, it comes from the women themselves who knew the play

was being written and who gave permission for their characters to be written into it...Let's acknowledge the courage of these women to trust McCaskill and Kopae would continue to replay their stories with the same integrity they witnessed as the first audience. Perhaps those who awarded Kali Kopae Actress of the Year 2015 for *Not in Our Neighbourhood*, and bestowed it Outstanding New, New Zealand Play saw through the quasi-realisms, the familiar tropes, cliché's and implied voyeurism and saw instead a powerful, moving, informed and current account of family violence in a New Zealand context (Messiter).

The performance successfully created a rhetorical public sphere with significant responses from its audiences and critics. *NION* was created for the women residing at the Hauraki Women's refuge. The decision was made to bring it to a larger audience was based on the feedback the playwright Jamie McCaskill and the solo actress Kali Kopae received from the women who are storied within it. Locating the stories of the women at the refuge as an 'original' performance in context of the Performance as Dialogue Model, the theatre show can be looked at as a counter-performance, and the responses from the reviewers and spectators as a counter performance to the show. Furthermore, the actions taken by spectators after watching the show to liberate themselves are further 'outcomes' of each performance. The playwright and director Jamie McCaskill shares, "The performances moved so many people and some of them whom I knew closely. It is quite sad to see how the performance impacts the lives of people, but we are happy that this performance is bringing positive change in lives of women. Even if that happens by getting separated [from their partners]" (McCaskill "Personal Interview").

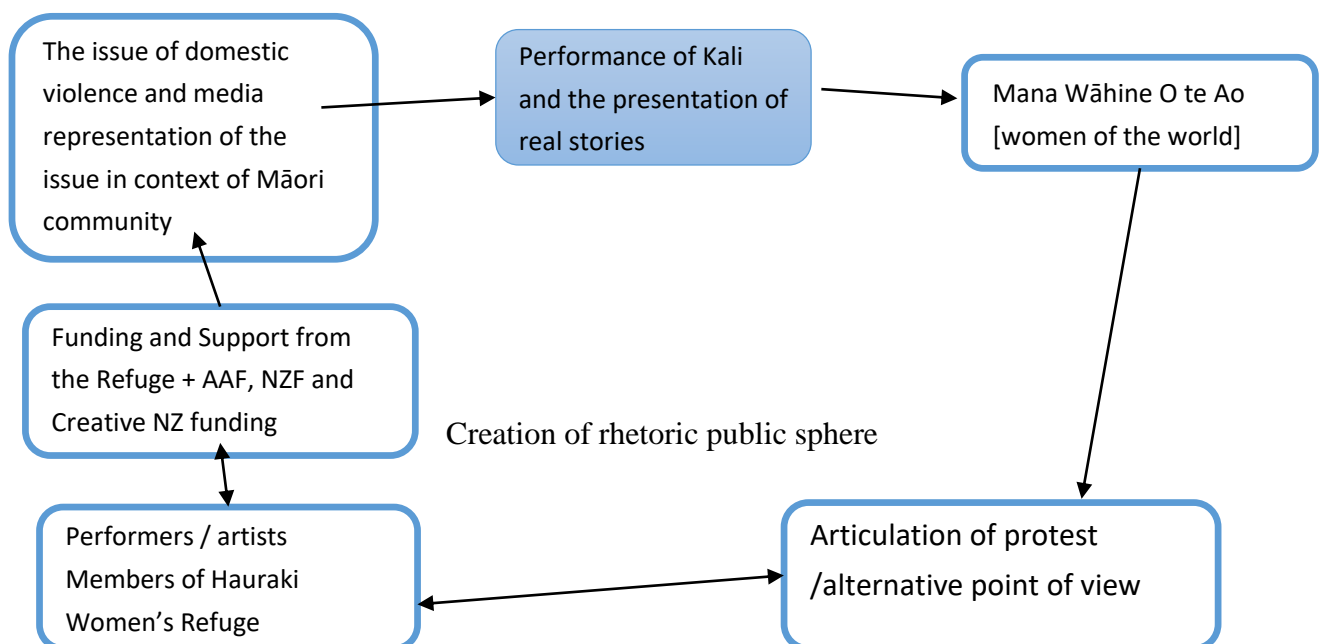


Figure 43: Explanation of the play *NION* using the Performance as Dialogue Model

Please note, the above visual explanation of the performance is for easier understanding of the series of the events/aftermaths and not to oversimplify the complexity of the socio-political aspects of the performance. There can be components of the original Performance as Dialogue model (see Chapter Three, P. 102) that are omitted while describing the above visual based on obvious differences and performance specific socio-political and geographical situations.

The performance remained the same with no changes in lights or set design and very minimal script editing throughout its showings at different festivals and performance tours. The minimal set allows the performance to fit into different venues. In an interview with Radio New Zealand Kopae discusses the creative process, including how she and her husband Jamie worked at the refuge. She shares that Jamie was working there supporting the woman using theatre as a tool for healing and she used to work doing chores and gardening at the place. She mentions that it was not an easy process and that it is a huge responsibility, “when you are sharing someone else’s story that includes a history of trauma. You have to honour it...”(Kopae in Radich).

Kopae also shared that the theatre group had been contacted by a group of midwives and social workers who invited them to perform for their students to use it as a tool to understand the issue of domestic violence better. The possible long-term impacts or outcomes of the performance, alongside bringing much needed social change, is its inspirational framework wherein real stories are presented with ethical values and consent from the survivors themselves. As Rakuraku mentions in her review:

Writing about a community that you’re whakapapa to, about issues that impact that community while you live within it, takes courage. Giving space to stories and voices rarely if ever heard, is what I think is one of the singularly most important things we facilitate as writers. That then has a flow on effect for those recognising their own stories. It’s transformative. It has the potential to hook into the theatre medium an audience that doesn’t ever see itself there (Rakuraku).

The production also expanded its impact beyond New Zealand by performing internationally. Creative NZ only partly funded the show for its Edinburgh Fringe Festival tour, so Tikapa Productions appealed to the public for some funding and received community support from the

people of Aotearoa/New Zealand who funded \$8,780.00 to the theatre group towards their tour to the festival. The theatre group extensively used social media to reach out for the appeal. The support they received suggests the efficacy of social media in securing financial as well as political support from society. This can be looked at as an empowered financial position against the bias of culturally/politically dominant funding agencies.

The performance received very interesting reviews at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. There are three significant reviews published which rated the show between 2 stars and 5 stars. According to Hedreen¹⁴⁷, reviewer for Edinburgh Festival Magazine who rated *NION* two stars, “an impressive execution of an inventive format, was unfortunately brought down by a cheesy, poorly written script”. It is important to note here how the performance as well as its subject matter is further undermined when the characters and social contexts are mis-interpreted. Hedreen further notes:

While such rapid transformations were impressive to watch (who knew a small country could have such a range of accents!), the different caricatures were one-dimensional—the matronly landlady, the former-teen-mum, the uptight society woman— and bordered on the ridiculous. As a consequence, it was difficult to empathise, no small matter in a show whose entire purpose was to instil compassion... Overall, for a display of one actress’ impressive range, *Not in Our Neighbourhood* delivers. Unfortunately, its original mission of awareness was brought down by disappointing characters, trite truisms, and canned calls to action (Hedreen).

On the other hand, there are two more reviews that received the performance and its essence very well. Cavenery rates the performance with five stars and states:

The script nimbly avoids cliché and presents a completely credible exploration of its chosen subject. It may not be the kind of thing that draws big festival crowds but make no mistake, this is a fabulous piece of theatre that deserves to be seen by as many people as possible (Cavenery).

Cowley reviews the performance and gives it a four-star rating, “the play is also important in highlighting the different kinds of experience that women can face around domestic and sexual abuse. Overall, it is a powerful and well-written piece that is well worth seeing” (Cowley). It is worth noting here that though the performance is written and directed by a male artist and based on stories from a small community in New Zealand, it has potential to impact greatly on

its spectators across the globe. The seriousness of the play combined with delicacy of the carefully knitted dramaturgy provides a globally applicable picture of domestic violence which is at times subtle and not so visible except for the victims of it.

Tikapa productions shared a Facebook video showing Kali Kopae using unique traditional Māori performance gestures while distributing the flyers of the show to the people walking by. This performance included lots of physical as well as vocal components specific to the Māori traditional art form haka. Her call of “anybody for a Māori play from New Zealand?” with distinct physical movements and loud facial expressions makes her presence easily noticeable among the pedestrians. This celebratory expression of ethnic identity paired with clear intention to invite more audiences to the show project the politics of Indigeneity performed within the globalized and multi-cultural public sphere, intended to create a unique rhetorical public sphere. This performance and celebration of Indigeneity within the festival space and outside the actual performance stage proves the very vibrant and opportunistic space that the festival can offer. *NION* is a significant example of a Māori performance that is inclusive of a bi/multi-cultural thematic aspect, yet effectively projects Indigenous politics and identity. The Performance Efficacy Model in context of *NION* can be discussed as below.

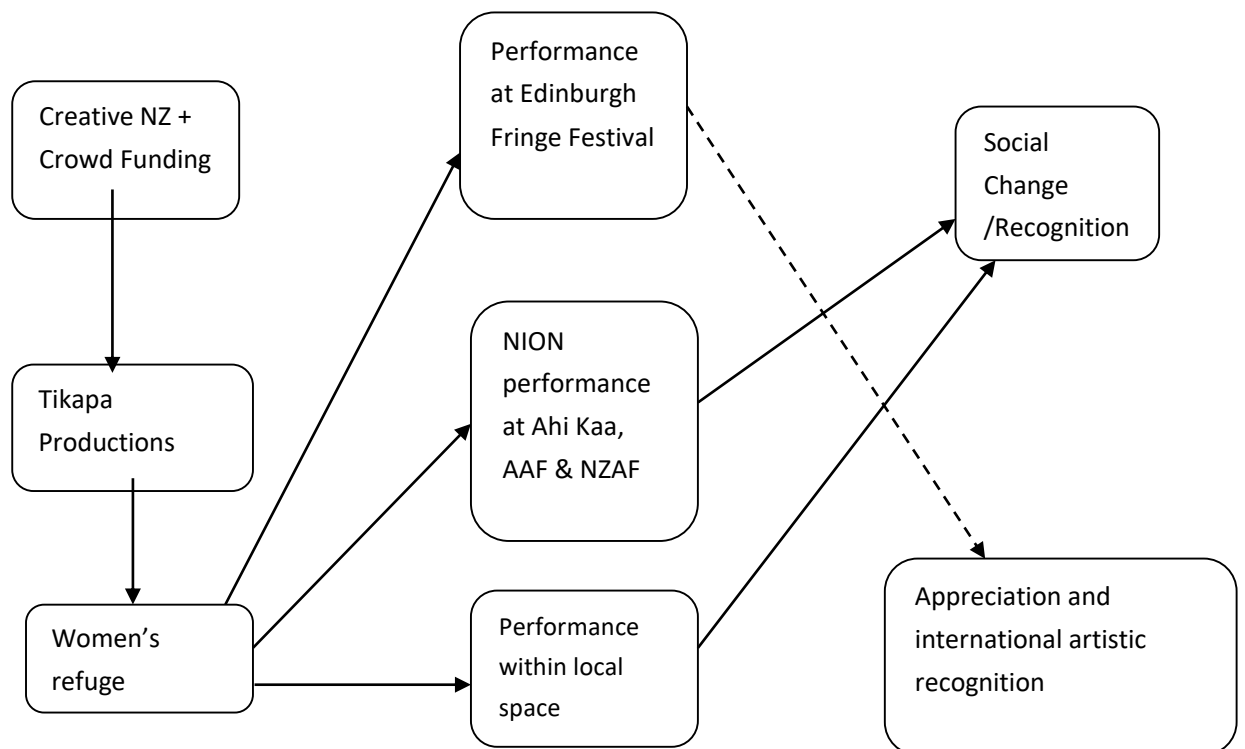


Figure 44: Explanation of the play *NION* using the Performance Efficacy Model

Please note, the above visual explanation of the performance is for easier understanding of the series of the events/aftermaths and not to oversimplify the complexity of the socio-political aspects of the performance. There can be components of the original Performance Efficacy model (see Chapter Three, P. 103) that are omitted while describing the above visual based on obvious differences and performance specific socio-political and geographical situations.

The performance has been well-received locally and internationally and has brought acknowledgement and recognition to the creative team. This, in the long term is beneficial for the sustainability of the theatre group in terms of securing better funding opportunities from the governmental as well as other agencies locally and globally. I have discussed the selected Māori performances in context of my two study models, the Performance as Dialogue and the Performance Efficacy Models in this chapter. The next section discusses the issue of sustainability and creative initiatives.

6.3. Financial Sustainability, Theatre Festivals and Creative Initiatives

The establishment of Te Putahitanga A Te Rehia (now known as Te Hau Tūtū) - a collective of independent Māori arts practitioners in Wellington city in the year 2005-2006 is a significant move towards more authentic, self-governed and sustainable Māori arts. Nancy Brunning explains the development of Indigenous artistic festivals and the development of the emerging Māori artists in the country:

...if these festivals [Pūtahi and Breaking Ground] will keep going for next ten years, I am sure, we will see the results. Because that means that our people are still making new works. Again, this is like 90s when instead stepping further, we spread out and made stronger foundations...that's how we established Te Putahitanga A Te Rehia in a very short time, I guess between 2005-06 when we realised that they [emerging Māori artists] didn't know what whakapapa means and what have been established in the past, they had very little knowledge of types of works that have been already created and why they were created. Yeah, so we learnt from that, and we need to make sure that it never happens again. And we started to emphasise what our whakapapa was and we started pushing our boundaries which is why the national Maori practitioners' hui was established, passing on that knowledge on to people and teaching people how to make

a production bottom up. So, that's what we are trying to re-establish after it fallen apart before 6-7 years (Brunning "Personal Interview").

Miria George, a well-known Māori and Aitutaki/Cook Islands playwright and artist discusses the issue of sustainability for Māori artists and theatre groups. The government agencies like Creative New Zealand haven't been very supportive towards the growth of Māori theatre practitioners and Māori arts, despite their claims of being inclusive and very supportive (George). Most of the time Māori artists were given funding support from Creative New Zealand via a parent organisation which was either Taki Rua or another professional Pacific Arts group (George) and therefore Māori artists couldn't access genuine artistic and organisational freedom:

We can best be described as trusts, the Māori and Pacific theatre organisations, and so they [funding agencies] have policy in place to give the funds to non-Māori and Pacific led organisations over our own. When we were in Australia, Nancy Brunning very strongly articulated that as assimilation and it's very much an ongoing colonization. So it's a difficult place for the artists to work from. The good thing about it is that forces us to be smarter in our public relationships. We need to look broadly to separate. We need to have more partners when it comes to venues or resources to make it happen (George "Personal Interview").

Te Hau Tūtū networked among community-based resources and educational organizations in order to organise the Pūtahi Festival in the year 2014 (Digital Māori). The festival is a direct response to the absence of mainstage Māori performances at the New Zealand Festival of Arts (2014). The action of organising the theatre festival in response to the exclusion of the Māori arts in the festival can be seen as a form of protest in itself. A lack of sufficient funding from Creative New Zealand is another aspect of the exclusion of Māori arts, however the collective sourced their needs for the festival organisation from within the community. Victoria University of Wellington has provided the venue for the festival free of charge since it began in 2014, and the local creative community comes together to support the collective and the artistic work. Māori playwright Hone Kouka discusses the collective as strength of the community:

The focus of it is to give chance to the work in development rather than already developed work. And majority of the works are free or for koha. Shorter pieces but lots of them. And we just felt that was needed. The other difference is Ahi Kaa Festival, so, the Ahi Kaa is a finished product to go into the main stage. That's the idea. Two of those festivals have no support from the Creative New Zealand and that's done on purpose. So, as Tawata, we are a two-yearly funded organisation and get some of our resources from Creative NZ. So, we put two separate resources for Putahi and Ahi Kaa festivals at Tawata. Matariki Development Festival has some supports and it's the only festival that gets separate funding from Creative NZ. We have great relationships with the theatre department at Victoria University, David O'Donnell and also Nicola Hyland who is Māori (Kouka "Personal Interview").

Trans-Indigenous collaborations within Aotearoa/New Zealand are quite common due to the presence of significant migrant and diasporic communities from the Asia-Pacific region (Strickland and Papotsaki, 2008). Māori artists have also been working collaboratively with Indigenous communities across Oceania and have very strong networks outside of Aotearoa/New Zealand. I believe such international and intercultural networking and support contributes towards more sustainable artistic communities. George discusses how artistic communities in the Pacific Islands, Hawai'i and Australia have initiated festivals without accepting aid from government in order to increase visibility, agency and power from within. I think festivals can be excellent events to showcase the presence and political viewpoints of Indigenous communities. Festivals don't just empower the communities to be able to present an alternative point of view, but they also provide Indigenous communities with opportunities to network and to attract other Indigenous artists and begin collaborations with them. I argue, shared histories of migration, alongside shared diasporic (global) as well as local experiences of marginalisation, highlight how trans-Indigenous worldviews and subjectivities can be mobilised as part of a strong Indigenous movement towards de-colonization.

A significant initiative by the Aotearoa/New Zealand based theatre group Tawata Productions is organising an international Indigenous theatre festival, collaborating with Indigenous artistic communities across and beyond Oceania. The theatre group invited artists and theatre groups from Australia, Canada and Hawai'i at the first such festival entitled Breaking Ground held in 2017. Breaking Ground began as a local playwriting festival and was originally entitled the

Matariki Development Festival.¹⁴⁸ Its aim was to provide a nurturing platform for emerging playwrights and theatre practitioners from Māori and Pacific Island communities in Aotearoa/New Zealand. It is important to note here that the Māori and Pacific Island emerging artists needed a platform that was led by fellow Indigenous artist(s) that nurtured their professional skills and expertise of work.

From 2016 onwards Matariki Development Festival began to include trans-Indigenous artistic works. It has become an established and prominent festival, organised by Indigenous artists, with the aim of unifying Indigenous communities from within and outside of Aotearoa/New Zealand.¹⁴⁹ This thesis argues that the Te Ao Māori value of *tino rangatiratanga* is achieved when Māori and other Indigenous artists organise a festival or an event on their own terms, without being influenced by external agencies financially or through artistic interventions, or government organizations. I claim, by organizing these events themselves, the communities aim to achieve liberation in the process of de-colonization as well as showcase resistance against institutionalization.

Some of artists from outside Aotearoa/New Zealand received funding from their local governments to be able to visit Aotearoa/New Zealand and participate in the Breaking Ground Festival 2017. While Tawata received partial funding from the City Council of Wellington, Playmarket, and Creative New Zealand; Tawata also used funding from their other festival *Kia Mau* (previously known as *Ahi Kaa* festival) for organising this event, they still had full autonomy to work the way they like unlike highly commercialized festival space where artists are required to adhere to the policies and artistic directors. Breaking Ground Festival was held between the 8th and 10th June 2017, and it was kept open and free for the public to attend. The festival included a *hui* [meeting/conference] of Indigenous artists from the above-mentioned countries and rehearsed readings of the works of the artists. The artists are committed to continue the tradition of organising such festivals (George “Personal Interview”; Kouka “Personal Interview”).



Figure 45: Festival brochure for Breaking Ground, June 2017 (Wellington, New Zealand)



Figure 46: Festival brochure for Breaking Ground, June 2017 (Wellington, New Zealand)

I believe, this initiative is not only beneficial for Indigenous theatre groups involved in its organisation (such as Tawata), but it also empowers the Indigenous artistic community at large by projecting them as creators of opportunity and creative actors in international/global theatrical space. The artists who participated in the festival shared with me that they felt the festival was very timely and well organised, an event which would surely benefit the global Indigenous community of artists. Rachael Maza, the Artistic Director of Ilbijerri Theatre Company, Australia who participated in the Breaking Ground Festival in 2017 shares:

The significance of having these opportunities for international First Nations (artists) together cannot be underestimated. It is extraordinarily impactful, and we are right in the middle of this wave that is happening. This has been building up for last three to four years, I mean there is much connection for last 15 – 20 years but this movement is building up now between first nations of New Zealand, Australia, Canada, Hawai'i and the USA (Maza "Personal Interview").

Issues of authenticity and ownership are two major themes reflected on by artists and academics when discussing Indigenous arts¹⁵⁰. From what I have observed for over five years, while accepting the funding from the state agencies is not vital for the Indigenous communities due to the possible political controlling, the significantly low level of fund, lack of enough resources, lack of support from non-Indigenous artistic communities and inadequate policy making processes makes it very tricky for Indigenous artists. This is why I believe the indigenous artists need more representations in the funding agencies and or policy making processes which will ensure the design of kaupapa to suit the unique needs of these communities. It is important to mention *Ko Aotearoa Tēnei* (This is Aotearoa/New Zealand), (Williams, Maaka, Ringwood and Walker) a report submitted by the Waitangi Tribunal to the government of New Zealand which reviewed twenty governmental departments and recommending significant changes in law and policies to make them more suitable for the needs of Māori. The report mentioned the lack of safe and protective policies around Indigenous intellectual property, as well as the un-authorized use of Indigenous arts, knowledge and resources for financial gain for commercialized projects (Williams, Maaka, Ringwood and Walker). By organizing festivals such as Breaking Ground, Indigenous artists have created important opportunities for their fellow Indigenous artists to control and develop their work in culturally safe contexts, which are supportive rather than overtly critical of work that still needs developing, and to do so in a diverse yet globalized space.

The trans-Indigenous festivals I have discussed in this chapter are also inclusive and supportive of artists from 'other' non-dominant cultural groups, such as Asians, an ethnic group who are often excluded from New Zealand's national imagination which focusses on the nation's bi-cultural identity (Hayward). The inclusive structure of the festivals highlights the support of Indigenous communities for other minority cultural groups that are happy to be included in the process of de-colonization. I have personal experience of this inclusivity, as I was welcomed to devise and perform a show as part of team of four artists from different ethnic

backgrounds as part of the Pūtahi Festival in 2016. My experience being part of this festival was very positive and empowering. The artists involved in this collaboration were connected through similar cultural practices which we integrated into the creative process of our performing arts practice. For example, we started the rehearsals with a karakia – a prayer to bless the space before beginning to perform. We also shared strengthening experiences including different cultural rituals and concepts. The projection of similar decolonizing ideologies from artists across the world is an important part of these trans-Indigenous and trans-cultural collaborations which respect and integrate different cultural practices and ways of knowing and being in the world. The festival plays a major role in this process by providing a vibrant and empowering space through the process of festivalization. Similarly, the trans-tribal and socially inclusive Black Comedy Festival organized by Budhan Theatre in India in 2012 was a tremendous success as it empowered the tribal communities as well as provided creative space to artists from mainstream Indian communities.

This chapter has located performances of protest and re-enactments of protests through theatrical performances by Māori artists in Aotearoa/New Zealand. It has discussed the idea that a rhetorical public space is created through using theatrical performances as tool. I have also discussed the efficacy of these theatrical performances and the manifestation of Indigenous politics through them. I discussed these two concepts by contextualizing these theoretical approaches using four different case studies. The common grounds for discussing these case studies together in this chapter were articulation of Treaty issues and the projection of mana wāhine as central themes in these performances. The final section of the chapter located arts festivals organized by Māori artists as acts of resistance. I argued that through organising arts festivals and facilitating space in which collaborations with other Indigenous artists from across the world can occur, empowers Indigenous artists and projects trans-Indigenous solidarity.

CONCLUSION

This project began with the ambitious intention of studying trans-Indigenous collaborations and articulations of power and activism through the mediums of theatre, festivals and festivalized spaces. My research focussed in on Indigenous performances within festivalized spaces and how they have been used to tell alter-native stories and to support activism and protest in Aotearoa/New Zealand and amongst the Denotified Tribes of India. Future research on trans-Indigenous creativity, festivalization and activism and on the applicability of the conceptual framework I have suggested in this thesis could usefully consider a wider range of socio-political and geographical contexts.

This project has provided a fresh perspective on post-colonial festival studies in the context of Indigenous and trans-Indigenous festivals. This thesis discussed how festivals can be looked at as mediums or tools of empowerment and activism for Indigenous artists, and how the creation and implications of the rhetorical public sphere delivers the intended politics of the performances and contributes towards de-colonizing processes in the wider context.

The thesis contributed towards the theoretical understanding of framework and efficacy of performing arts festivals. The proposed three study models can be used to look at the performance and festival as part of a circular process of communication that creates a rhetorical public sphere that determines the efficacy of the performance and or festival. While locating the efficacy of the Indigenous theatre performances and performing arts festivals using the proposed study models, I also discuss how performing arts festivals can be looked not only as accessible space to showcase the arts but as tool of empowerment. Performing arts festivals are widely being used by Indigenous artists as a tool to empower themselves, resisting the suppressive and or discriminative hegemony of the socio-politically and economically privileged agencies or communities.

This thesis conceptualized the festivalization of space as fluid and flexible, arguing that this process could take place anywhere, from a street corner to a shopping mall or outside state offices. The transformation of space during performances creates momentum which can lead to the creation of new forms of public rhetoric. I have argued that the rhetoric created and communicated within that specific rhetorical public sphere in turn determines the efficacy of

the festivalized space and the performance. The rhetorical space which is created is powerful: always political and democratic, and hence provides an opportunity to de-colonize its participants from hegemonic structures. In the context of articulating indigeneity and Indigenous epistemologies, the rhetorical space provides an opportunity for Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants to feel the power of the festivalized space and to de-colonize themselves.

This thesis has argued that these performative, festivalized and vibrant spaces can raise consciousness, bringing our attention to often silenced or marginalized political issues that remain unknown within the established social and political hegemonic structures in today's society. For instance, as discussed in the context of Budhan Theatre, festivalized theatre spaces bring power to the Denotified Tribes of India to speak up against social hierarchies which stereotype and discriminate against them. These performances and the rhetorical public spaces that they create are proven to positively impact the community's overall acceptance within society, as well as positively impacting the community in terms of highlighting their existence, and getting their political presence noticed. The trans-tribal collaborations that have been facilitated by Budhan Theatre enhance the broader DNT movement which seeks to achieve political and constitutional recognition within the India.

The conscious efforts by Māori artists in Aotearoa/New Zealand towards reasserting their tino rangatiranga and creating culturally and financially autonomous artistic presentations by and for Indigenous peoples within festivalized spaces brings an opportunity for them to effectively articulate issues central to Indigenous activism such as custodianship of the land and protecting natural resources. Significant actions such as the beginning of Taki Rua's Te Reo Māori seasons, the Theatre Marae seasons in Wellington and Dunedin in 1990-91, the creation of Te Putahitanga A Te Rehia [now known as Te Hau Tūtū] and the organisation of the first Pūtahi Festival have proven their efficacy in recent history. The formal inclusion of traditional Indigenous expressions like *Waka Odyssey* can be seen as the result of the resistance and self-determination showcased by groups of Māori artists. Another key development resulting from the unified trans-Indigenous artistic establishment has sown the seed of the establishment of Global Centre for Indigenous Studies at the Victoria University of Wellington, which might develop into a knowledge tree in future. Such results prove the importance of the idea of trans-Indigenous collaborations. Moreover, after the exclusion of Māori arts from the New Zealand Festival in 2014, and the subsequent organization of the Pūtahi Festival, the festival, first "for some years" in Aotearoa/New Zealand organized by Māori artists, there has been constant

increase in the inclusion of Māori arts and artistic works within the international arts festivals in Aotearoa/New Zealand and globally.

Comparatively speaking, both Budhan Theatre of the DNTs and Māori artists articulate their activism through theatre and the creation of festivalized spaces within obviously different socio-political and geographical space. Both use festivalized space to create a rhetoric which has proven efficacy which this thesis has mapped using the conceptual models I designed. Sustainability is a significant issue for both these groups of artists from different socio-economic backgrounds. I suggest that both groups have the opportunity for an exchange of styles and/or concepts which could lead them towards their ultimate goals of decolonizing.

Budhan Theatre is part of an activist movement which works towards achieving political recognition for the DNTs of India. Although Māori have political recognition, they are still struggling to get the crown and state agencies to fully comply with their Treaty of Waitangi obligations. One of the achievements of Budhan Theatre and the DNT communities of India is their success in assisting with the retention of diverse languages, keeping Indigenous languages alive has also been a significant issue for Maori activists who regard language, culture and identity as fundamentally contingent and independent

Although Budhan Theatre has demonstrated its artistic excellence and the transferrable skills of its performers, they are consciously sacrificing their professional development opportunities as artists for the political cause. On the other hand, for Māori artists, their artistic careers are the focus and hence their professional artistic skills are highly developed as compared to Budhan's actors. Māori artists of Aotearoa/New Zealand excellently present their political stance through their theatre and festivals which have proven to be enough to provoke responses from non-Māori audiences. One of the drawbacks of Māori theatre in Aotearoa/New Zealand is their lack of reach to Indigenous communities living outside urban centres.

As part of the research process for this thesis I shared information with artists from Budhan Theatre about Māori artists, as well as discussing Budhan Theatre's works with Māori artists in Aotearoa/New Zealand. I believe the expressions of the artists in their words is the best way to sum up this thesis and so, the following paragraphs describe the responses from both groups of artists about each-other's theatre and works.

I discussed the Budhan Theatre's work with Māori artists and then discussed the possibility of experimenting with a community theatre model in Aoteroa/New Zealand. And, according to

Māori artists, the possibility of consciousness raising and political awareness among the Māori communities in rural areas is tremendous but seems unachievable for Māori artists due to the lack of funds and sustainability issues as well as unfamiliarity with the concept of theatre going. As Tikapa artistic director Jamie McCaskill discusses:

I certainly believe that community theatre has stigma in this country that its like a brand of theatre that shouldn't be taken seriously. So, how do we challenge that stigma? So, you want to do high quality piece of art, and if you put it in community. Its problematic. If you are performing in community, it can't be so good and if its good, why has it not been part of high-quality performing arts? So, the stance that I take to resolve is to perform at places like Circa and other festival spaces targeting most of the pakeha NZ audience and the middle class of NZ and that's how I take it to that community (McCaskill "Personal Interview").

Tanemahuta Gray, who is the artistic director of Taki Rua productions, also discusses the issue and expresses that the lack of resources and volunteer people are additional factors:

"We lose a lot of our people because of the lack of resources...And whether you are in sports or arts or in any other business, getting that volunteer time to improve our communities is crucial. And making sure our community doesn't become isolated and sits in a safe place of connectivity is so important...But it's getting harder now as living costs are increasing dramatically, affordable accommodation is very challenging to secure and when topped up with individual or family health problems and mental health issues, there is urgent need for support from your extended family or community or iwi networks". (Gray "Personal Interview").

However, as I conceptually established that any event can transform the space into festivalized space and organizing more festivals like Pūtahi Festival and Breaking Ground Festival throughout Aotearoa/New Zealand can bring tremendous potential to the Māori artistic industry. Budhan Theatre artists seemed very impressed with what Māori artists have achieved artistically and politically. Budhan Theatre member, Dakxin shares:

Māori people and other natives across Western countries had very suppressive pasts. It is hard for them to trust anyone due to the fraud [the Treaty of Waitangi] that happened to them. I can totally understand their situation and really admire their efforts and stand in solidarity with them (Bajrange "Personal Interview").

Roxy shares similar views and asked me to convey one message to the Māori artists and said “our lives, our identities, our languages, our cultures and transitions are different, but one thing is the same, we fight our fights with arts and theatre and that’s why it is significant!” (R. Gagdekar).

Despite the progress in trans-Indigenous collaborative projects and participation in strategic unification in representation of indigeneity within the trans-Indigenous festivalized space this is still an emerging research area which I have positioned from a very specific perspective. There are studies based on Indigenous communities within specific islands and individual communities that consider their arts and connections with the decolonizing process (Kawene, 2016; Bhatt, 2012; Ravengai, 2018; Bala, 2017 and so on), but holistic studies looking at artistic collaborations amongst Indigenous communities are rare. This thesis discusses collaborative movements among Indigenous artists, both within and beyond Oceania, from the point of view of festival organisation and participation, however, the detailed study of this area could be a potential collaborative project involving global trans-Indigenous and DNT artists in future.

And lastly, I would just say, I would like to give back to the communities who kindly and generously welcomed me and shared their views and thoughts with me through this thesis. I hope this thesis contributes towards the development of DNT theatre in India and towards larger political movement of Budhan Theatre as well as towards bringing a fresh perspective to Māori theatre.

¹ I have borrowed the term from Allen (xiv-xv). The term acknowledges the global Indigenous literary studies in English ¹ I have borrowed the term from Allen (xiv-xv). The term acknowledges the global Indigenous literary studies in English and allows the comparative framework within the Indigenous studies by primarily Indigenous scholars with a possibility of inclusion of possible additional archives within and outside dominant discourses that is yet to influence Indigenous work (1-100).

² I use this term to refer to the region of islands incorporating the New Zealand Australian continent, Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia.

³ The British labelled them criminals because they pursued a nomadic way of life. The nomadic tribes used to trade and transport important commodities such as salt and honey between the coasts and the inland forests. The British used the networks of these tribes to guide their armies through unknown regions during colonial times in India. However, as these tribes were different and did not follow the caste system, made the colonizers nervous about their way of living. The British could neither understand their mysterious (different from caste system of Indian Society) wanderers who also carried intelligence which couldn't be controlled (by the British) directly. After the Revolt of 1857 these tribes were seen as potential enemies and in 1871, an Act was passed for "The Notification of Criminal Tribes" (Barge, S. 2013:8) "Hundreds of tribes that traditionally collected food from the forest became criminals with the stroke of a pen. When they could not be forcibly settled, they were sometimes shot on sight. Those who were settled were subjected to a pass system to control their movements and were rehabilitated through rigorous labour" (Budhan Theatre <http://www.budhantheatre.org/#!theatre/cw8r>).

⁴ For more details see, www.budhantheatre.org

⁵ Australian Grand Prix is world's second oldest and prestigious motor race. For more details: <https://www.grandprix.com.au/>

⁶ <http://www.greenfestivals.org/green-festival/about>

⁷ Burning Man operates in line with 10 principles, which include eco-measures such as leaving no physical trace, it was formed in 2004. (McCaffery, 2012: 3)

⁸ The Fuji Rock project aims at using conservational efforts to achieve a symbiosis of music and nature. Through this project, the Fuji Rocks festival runs a number of schemes that focus on the maintenance and protection of the area around the festival site. For details visit: <http://fujirock-eng.com/>

⁹ Festival participants are known for a love of glitter, the Green Man's festival goers need to bring biodegradable glitter due to the damage caused by microplastics usually found in the shiny stuff. For details visit: <https://www.greenman.net/>

¹⁰ The festival aims at raising awareness of environmental issues and influence public behaviour in an artistic and experiential way. For details visit: <https://www.welovegreen.fr/>

¹¹ For more details see, <http://www.china.org.cn/english/environment/115328.htm>

¹² The International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA) is the global network of arts councils and ministries of culture established in 2001. Their Mission statement is, " To improve the capacity and effectiveness of government arts funding agencies to benefit society through networking, advocacy and research" Please refer the website for further details, < http://www.ifacca.org/vision_and_objectives/>

¹³ Foucault's focus is on questions of how we define and organize both ourselves and our social world, while the other alternative discourses are marginalised and subjugated, yet potentially 'offer' sites where hegemonic practices can be contested, challenged and 'resisted' (Foucault, in Rabinow, 1991: 75).

¹⁴ See, Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble - Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1990. print. pp. 79-106

¹⁵ Pacific Island people residing in Aotearoa/New Zealand

¹⁶ I borrowed the use of term ‘trans’ from Allen (2012) to refer to the group of tribal communities.

¹⁷ The writing in this chapter on Budhan Theatre and the DNTs of India was published, in part, in the 2016 in a journal *Music and Arts in Action* article "'Criminals' Performing for Change: Budhan Theatre's fight against injustice and police atrocity" whilst under supervision at VUW.

¹⁸ A Hindi word which literally means “free tribes”

¹⁹ Chharanagar is one of the settlement areas of British India where the DNTs were confined. The Chhara (one of the DNTs) still reside in the area and operate Budhan Theatre from there.

²⁰ Bajrange, D. *Birth 1871*. Nomad movies. 2014

²¹ For details refer to Encyclopaedia Britannica at: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/untouchable>

²² *Banjaras* are wide spread tribal community of India and mainly known as explorers of grains and salt and for trading cattle, grains and salt.

²³ See: <http://www.asiantribune.com/?q=node/4972>

²⁴ Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Press Information Bureau, Govt. of India. The report hasn't been published yet as of 3rd January 2019.

See: <http://pibmumbai.gov.in/scripts/detail.asp?releaseId=E2015PR729>

²⁵ Again, not to mention, the commissioner was an upper caste Brahmin woman.

²⁶ *Popular Account of Thugs and Dacoits and Hereditary Garroters and Gang - Robbers of India* by James Hutton published by WM. H. Allen and Co. 7, Leadenhall Street in 1857.

²⁷ This information is based on my own experience of numerous visits to Chharanagar and observation and communication with Chharanagar residents between 2010 and 2015.

²⁸ Ration cards are provided by the government of India to low-income families enabling them to receive groceries at subsidised price from government approved grocery shops. The card is also approved and accepted nationally and internationally as proof of identity for the citizens of India.

²⁹ List of people living below poverty line.

³⁰ DNT Rights Action Group – DNT-RAG was formed by Mahashweta Devi, Dr. G. N. Devy and Laxman Gaikwad, the signers of the petition to investigate the custodial death of Budhan Sabar.

³¹ Dr. G. N. Devy formed a voluntary organization named Bhasha Research and Publication Trust in April 1996 for the documentation of tribal languages and literature, conversation and promotion of tribal arts, education, research and training, socio-economic empowerment and healthcare for the tribal communities of India. Bhasha Research and Publication Trust has established its centre in a remote tribal village named Tejgath which falls into the Eastern belt of Gujarat (located 90 kilometres away from the Vadodara city). Bhasha centre promotes computer education, art training, non-traditional education and ‘publication for social change’ among youth and the members of the tribal communities. For more details, please visit: < <http://www.bhasharesearch.org> >

³² Personal observation during fieldwork. I visited the group and the library for six months on regular basis and I observed and witnessed Budhan members engaging in peer education processes.

³³ All the translations are done by me unless otherwise indicated.

³⁴Based on the Budhan Sabar and Kale murder case. Budhan Sabar and Pinya Hari Kale were the members of DNT communities located in states of Begal and Maharastra respectively. Both the men were imprisoned for the crime they did not do and were brutally treated by the police leading to custodial deaths.

³⁵ Badal Sircar (1925-2011) is influential theatre maker in the history of post-independence Indian theatre. He is known for bringing Theatre to the streets and making its accessible for the masses. For details see, (Katiyal, 2018)

³⁶ Action Aid is non-profit organisation promoting Human Rights. The organisation has its head quarter in South Africa and has international branches in number of countries of the world. The organisation is actively working towards removing poverty and for the Human Rights in India since 1972. For more details, visit: <http://www.actionaid.org/india/who-we-are-1>

³⁷ I borrowed this term from the tradition of Marxist feminist criticism. For further details, see Luce Irigaray 'Commodities among Themselves', in *This Sex Which is not One*, tr. Catherine Porter. Ithaca, 1985, pp. 192-7.

³⁸ I have read the translated version of the story "Breast Giver" by Gayatri Spivak published in *Subaltern Studies V - Writings of south Asian History and Society*, edited by R. Guha. New Delhi: O.U.P. 2010, pp. 252-76.

³⁹ Personal observation.

⁴⁰ The very old meaning of the term 'Pākehā' has its roots in 'pakepakehā' meaning 'imaginary beings resembling humans or in 'Pākehākeha' which is the name of one of the sea Gods or in 'poaka' for 'pa' meaning 'pig' and 'keha' meaning 'flea' (An Encyclopedia of NZ 1966). However, the word is never used in its derogatory sense within New Zealand society. It is also important to note here that the word now is used for any non-Māori residing in New Zealand (Renford 69). The Māori dictionary translates Pākehā as "New Zealander of European descent - probably originally applied to English-speaking Europeans living in Aotearoa/New Zealand. According to Mohi Tūrei, an acknowledged expert in Ngāti Porou tribal lore, the term is a shortened form of *pakepakehā*, which was a Māori rendition of a word or words remembered from a chant used in a very early visit by foreign sailors for raising their anchor. Others claim that *pakepakehā* was another name for *tūrehu* or *patupairehe*. Despite the claims of some non-Māori speakers, the term does not normally have negative connotations." Pataparehe/turehu are fairies; the implication is that many early Maori thought that Europeans were mythical folk. (Renford 69)

⁴¹ There are three different references of the number of cast of this play. As per Metge, J. (2013:285) it is fifty, according to Looser (2014: 116), it is sixty-five and according to Graham, F. (2013: 174), it is forty.

⁴² at the Depot Theatre later Taki Rua.

⁴³ A Māori haka concert emerged in 1860 in the Rotorua region to provide entertainment for the European audiences by performing haka with European melodies. The kapa haka performers replaced English lyrics with Māori poetry but used the European tunes. The haka performances became symbolic of the Māori culture both locally and internationally through international tours by the concert group and its tourist centred performances throughout the 20th Century (Smith, 2).

⁴⁴ Rangihau shared these comments after receiving a response from the group "It gives me hope that the industry and people in promotion and marketing of these groups can be a bit more conscious and aware of the appropriation of cultures" (as qtd. in Awarau, 2018).

⁴⁵ The land march began on the 14th of October 1975 from Te Hapua with 50 marchers and collected 60,000 signatures to call an end to the alienation of Maori land in New Zealand. The marchers marched over 1000 kms to Wellington and reached parliament. The group was divided into two different groups; one continued marching on the East Coast and the other established a tent embassy on the steps of the parliament. Whina Cooper distanced herself publicly from these groups. The protest had aftermaths and sought alternative ways of opposing the land alienation in the following years. The two

major historical protests followed by this Hikoī was the Occupation of Bastian Point (1977) and Raglan Gold Course (1978). For further details, visit: www.nzhistory.net.nz

⁴⁶ I have borrowed the word from the book *Festivalising: Theatrical Events, Politics and Culture*. Eds. Hauptfleisch, T. et al. IFTR. New York, 2007.

⁴⁷ Social capital is the capacity of an individual to secure benefits by virtue of their membership in social structures (Portes, 1998: 6; Arcodia and Whitford, 2006: 4). It refers the wealth of experience the society has. This is built by not only experiencing the festivals but also increased when the festival goers share their posts/status with their friends and families.

⁴⁸ American elites do not follow the French model of snobbish opposition of high culture vs. mass taste, but fashion themselves as omnivores (Peterson 257-282). Omnivorism is seen as the dominant mode of elite taste in these societies. Ironically, despite attending to the breadth of the omnivore phenomenon the geographical aspects of ‘cosmopolitan’ omnivores’ taste patterns are either not explored or ignored. Peterson's argument only posits his dislike about US and France based Omnivores, however, through this geographical limitations, he fails to consider the Omnivorism taking place in the rest of the world.

⁴⁹ Public Protest/Individual consciousness/Reaction from the State.

⁵⁰ The word is used by Kershaw in a different context when he talks about ‘Theatre of Greens’. According to Kershaw, this form of performance (in context of protest) indicates the widespread radicalism in the civil societies of the globalized cultures. And dramaturgical understanding of it will provide a new understanding of the political face of the contemporary world (125).

⁵¹ I use this term to refer to the region of islands incorporating the Australian continent, New Zealand, Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia.

⁵² A space reflecting the characteristics of both local and global considerations as per Oxford online dictionary. <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/glocal>

⁵³ As discussed in detail in Chapter 3, P. 76

⁵⁴ For instance, 4 million festivalgoers for Edinburgh fringe 2015 and 70,000 people attended the Burning Man 2015 (Edinburgh festival fringe annual review, 2015).

⁵⁵ For more details visit: <https://waitangitribunal.govt.nz/>

⁵⁶ Scholars including; Fairbairn-Dunlop, (2003), Leckie (2009), Eteuati (1982), Meleisea (1987), Macpherson (1997, 2002, 2006), Stevenson & Stevenson (2006), and Leota-Ete (2007) have discussed this in detail.

⁵⁷ Chain migration is also looked at as ‘family re-union’ policy, and idea which emerged as the US Immigration Family Re-unification Act of 1965. The term has negative connotations following the possible reform of immigration policies by the Trump government to end the family-migration to United States of America. (Bernal)

⁵⁸ Named after finance minister Roger Douglas.

⁵⁹ A week during the months of May-June celebrating Samoan language and culture declared by the Ministry of Pacific Peoples in New Zealand.

⁶⁰ The notion of syncretic theatre was inspired by religious studies, specifically when “elements of two or more religions are merged and absorbed into one another” (Balme, 1999, p. 2). Balme uses the concept of syncretic to define Māori theatre as involving an “amalgamation of indigenous performance forms with certain conventions and practices of the Euro-American theatrical tradition, to produce new theatrico-aesthetic principles” (Balme, 1996, p. 180).

⁶¹ The philosophy refers to the concept used by the Pacific Island states to define and differentiate themselves from other developing countries and regions of the world. The term was coined at the UN in 1970s by Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, then

Prime Minister of Fiji. The philosophy symbolizes the way of doing things specific to the Pacific. It reflected a constructed regional consciousness as well as a gradual approach to modernization and development (Firth, 2006: 47).

⁶² Recently the next festival is announced which will be held in Hawai'i and re-named as FESTPAC (Festival of Pacific arts and culture)

⁶³ The performance was produced first in the year 2011 as a devised theatrical show created by Erina Daniels as part of her final production for her degree of Master of Theatre Arts in Directing (VUW).

⁶⁴ For instance, bank of Guam, Pepsi, Hyundai, Matson shipping services and United Airlines are some of the major official sponsors of the Festival of Pacific Arts (<https://festpac.visitguam.com/>)

⁶⁵ For details please visit: <https://www.festival.co.nz/2018/events/kupe-festival-opening-night/>

⁶⁶ According to the trans-indigenous narratives of the Pacific, Kupe was the first Polynesians to discover the islands of Aotearoa/New Zealand. His journey was a result of problem with fishing at his homeland, Hawaiki. A huge octopus who was a pet of his competitor Maturangi, used to eat all of the bait and fishes from the fishmen's lines and so Kupe built a canoe and travelled as far as Aotearoa/New Zealand following the octopus. He brought his wife Kuramarotini alongside some fishermen families on his canoe. His wife first saw the land while they were chasing the octopus and named "Aotearoa" looking at the long white clouds over the land. Kupe and his troupe stopped at different places of Aotearoa/New Zealand to fill in the supplies. He caught and killed the Octopus in Cook Island finally (Royal, 2005).

⁶⁷ For more details refer to City Gallery website: <http://citygallery.org.nz/exhibitions/oceania-imagining-pacific-0>

⁶⁸ For further details visit, <http://www.oceania-digital-library.org/>

⁶⁹ Detailed discussion on this can be found in Chapter 2, P. 42

⁷⁰ Detailed discussion in Chapter 4, p 44

⁷¹ The information is based on my communications with artists and theatre groups' websites.

⁷² For further details, visit: <https://atamiradance.co.nz/about>

⁷³ A DNT community that resides in the state of Gujarat and earn their bread through seasonal business of fruits and vegetables, some also remove recyclable junk from houses.

⁷⁴ A DNT community that resides in the state of Gujarat and earn their living by selling traditional ornaments or doing domestic works at a minimal charge.

⁷⁵ This is another layer of discrimination that operates within the Indian social arena, which is full of divisions led by the caste system, class system and how they combine to maintain the status quo. This, however, doesn't stop Budhan Theatre from working towards unifying the voice of the DNTs. More discussion in Chapter 2. P. 40-42

⁷⁶ as discussed in chapter 4, p. 117-118

⁷⁷ Creative New Zealand annual reports available on www.creativenz.govt.nz.

⁷⁸ <https://www.boosted.org.nz/projects/tikapa-to-edinburgh>

⁷⁹ Organised by community of Māori artists in collaboration with Victoria University of Wellington as discussed in Chapter 5, p. 180-181

⁸⁰ "Anishinaabemowin (also called Ojibwemowin, the Ojibwe/Ojibwa language, or Chippewa) is an Indigenous language, generally spanning from Manitoba to Québec, with a strong concentration around the Great Lakes. Horton, R. "Anishinaabemowin: Ojibwe Language". *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, 01 May 2018, *Historica Canada*. <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/anishinaabemowin-ojibwe-language>. Accessed 03 October 2018

⁸¹ See <http://www.nativeearth.ca/akistudio/tawata/> for further details on the development of the play.

⁸² I haven't watched the performance.

⁸³ For instance, the commercial companies/business constantly try to make that one unhappy consumer happy by offering their goods or services free to control the consumer from posting a negative feedback about the business.

⁸⁵ This chapter was published, in part, in the 2016 in a journal *Music and Arts in Action* article "'Criminals' Performing for Change: Budhan Theatre's fight against injustice and police atrocity" whilst under supervision at VUW

⁸⁶ I have translated the song from Hindi to English to the best of my ability and acknowledge the possible imperfection being a non-expert translator and second-language user of English. I have used the translated versions of the texts and interview transcripts throughout the chapter with original text in italics where needed.

⁸⁷ All the information discussed about the play are based on the play script and interview data available to me. <http://www.budhantheatre.org/#!plays/ctt>

⁸⁸ I haven't watched the performance as it happened before I was connected to the theatre group.

⁸⁹ By dividing the religious groups and presenting their political parties in favour against their respective counter-parts.

⁹⁰ Read about Ayodhya dispute and the timeline of the violent attacks here: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/gallery/2010/sep/28/india-hinduism>

⁹¹ The right-wing political party BJP along with its two extremist organisations RSS and VHP desires to achieve this imaginary Hindu Nation using their Hindu fundamentalist ideology.

⁹² One of the Naroda Patiya cases was being investigated by the Supreme Court-appointed Special Investigation Team (SIT) headed by former CBI director R K Raghavan. It is said that the Hindu mob had slit open a pregnant woman Kausar Bano's abdomen with a sword, taken out her foetus and thrown it into fire after she was gang raped. The court concluded that a person called Bajarangi along with the Hindu mob killed Kausar Bano, but removing the foetus and burning it wasn't proved against the accused. For detailed report, visit: <http://www.gujaratriots.com/index.php/2010/05/myth-16-a-pregnant-womans-womb-was-ripped-open/>

⁹³ The ruling government of Gujarat state during the riots was right-wing, the BJP (Bhartiya Janta Party) led government. BJP is known for its goal of making India a Hindu state. The government had two other agencies working for it, i.e. VHP (Vishva Hindu Parishad) and RSS (Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh). These are known as the muscle power and the mind power of the BJP, respectively.

⁹⁴ As mentioned previously, the website of Budhan claims that the play has been performed 25 times however I couldn't find any data to verify this. When Ankur, one of the members of Budhan was asked for more details about performances other than the one I discussed, he said he doesn't remember the venue, but that the performances were specifically for community awareness against the Hindu extremist groups trying to incite violence amongst young people living within the Chharanagar area.

⁹⁵ The video of the song can be watched at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nHU3M3LSolY>

⁹⁶ People worship a cow and a male Brahmin in belief that they will bless the woman/couple a child. When a woman is blessed with pregnancy, she promises to fulfill a task that she considers challenging as an offering to the gods in return for her child.

⁹⁷ *Dalits* are former untouchables in Indian caste system, assigned cleaning or removing garbage, dead bodies, and other waste.

⁹⁸ In India pictures of deities and Bollywood actors are used for making glossy calendars which have either a different picture for each month or have 365 sheets one for each day. Many people do not throw away old calendars because of the pictures of deities they venerate.

⁹⁹ Most of them were undergraduates in the Theatre programme at Victoria University.

¹⁰⁰ I discuss the performance mostly with reference to my observations of the performance and its video recording that I received from Budhan theatre. The textual context of the performance is based on the published script of the performance for accuracy.

¹⁰¹ A token money for life time membership taken from students and young people, however, nobody is turned away from the library if they cant afford this registration fees due to Budhan's inclusive philosophy. The members can contribute whatever little amount they can once for the lifetime if they cant afford twenty rupee and allowed to pay when they can.

¹⁰² I discuss this aspect of the Indigenous performances in Chapter Four in detail.

¹⁰³ The song questions the God why humans have to tolerate the fire of an empty stomach or the thirst when our bodies are mortal, and we are all going to die one day.

¹⁰⁴ Panchayat is a legal governing body for small localities or villages with a population of 5000 or less. The Panchayat does similar duties that are done by municipal corporations in major cities of India.

¹⁰⁵ Samvedana Group is not for profit trust that works in an area of child development and provides education for children from poor families.

¹⁰⁶ My observation and interview. For more details: <http://pleasedontbeatmesir.fournineandahalf.com/>

¹⁰⁷ Agitprop theatre signifies the theatrical performance employed as means of political education and or agitation. The term is a combination of two words: 'agitation' and 'propaganda' and was derived from the name of the Department of Agitation and Propaganda established in 1920 by the Soviet Communist Party of Russia (Filewod, 2016).

¹⁰⁸ Naxals/Naxalites are a group of far-left radical communists, supportive of Maoist political sentiment and ideology. There are strong political groups of naxals resisting against the oppressive and discriminative policies of the central government of India in the regions under-developed regions of several parts of India mainly in the states of Odisha, Jharkhand, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and West Bengal. The groups are of the tribal communities residing in the above-mentioned states who are resisting their loss of land and livelihood after the land was acquired by now Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change of the Independent government of India soon after 1947 (Dutta, August 30, 2018).

¹⁰⁹ For more details, see <http://www.firstpost.com/blogs/life-blogs/ford-foundation-freezes-funding-to-india-as-modi-govt-clamps-down-on-ngos-2342146.html>

¹¹⁰ As Dakxin Bajrange shared in an interview with me (2015).

¹¹¹ The category requires each of its donations to India NGOs will need to be pre-approved from the home ministry of India (Mallet, April 23rd, 2015)

¹¹² For further explanation, please see the criteria for grants allocation on India's Ministry of Culture website: <http://www.indiaculture.nic.in/performing-arts-grants-scheme>

¹¹³ News paper articles published on dates 26 November 2001, 25 February 2012, 8 May 2012, 14 August 2015, 12 April 2018 and many more available from The Times of India Archive at: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/archive.cms>

¹¹⁴ Refer to the news paper published on the 3 June 2002 accessible from The Indian Express news archive at: <http://archive.indianexpress.com/>

¹¹⁵ Refer to the news paper published on the 2 February 2015 accessible from the news archive at: <https://www.thehindu.com/archive/>

¹¹⁶ Please see news papers published on the dates 8 November 2003, 4 July 2018 and many more as well as *DNA* 6 January 2013, 17 August 2014, 24 February 2012 and many more from Gujarat Samachar news archives and *DNA* archives at: <http://epaper.dnaindia.com/archives.aspx> & <https://www.gujaratsamachar.com/tags/archive/1>

¹¹⁷ An article published on the 9 July 2005 and many more, accessible from Divya Bhashkar news archive at: <https://tvnews4u.com/tag/divya-bhaskar/>

¹¹⁸ See the article published on the 26 November 2005, accessible from: <http://tehelka.com/>

¹¹⁹ For details about the award visit: <https://ahmedabadmiraor.indiatimes.com/ahmedabad/cover-story/mediapersons-honoured/articleshow/40372418.cms>

<http://www.cii.in/ResourceDetails.aspx?enc=/hq9EoG4AugxPM5EAS8z+UBiH2885o/Lp3djkZb8RpQ9oOj+CBx1F+A08n5I1M5fHW3Ipk564H66fGhjmMEoQ==>

¹²⁰ For details visit: <http://www.budhantheatre.org/#!awards/cwad>

¹²¹ A movie on the issues of migration, marriage and social change among the Patidar community of Sundarana village, located in Gujarat, India.

¹²² Roma Potiki is a Māori poet writing in English. She worked primarily in theatre as performer, playwright and manager and had contributed greatly to the Māori theatre of Aotearoa/New Zealand. Her play *Going Home* received international recognition and was performed in Sydney in 1996. Her poetry collections include *Stones in her Mouth* (1992), *Shaking the Tree* (1998) and *Oriori* (1999). For further details: <https://www.bookcouncil.org.nz/writer/potiki-roma>

¹²³ Ihimaera, 1975; Grace, 1975, 2009; Sturm, 1996; Jones, 1960; Mead, 2003; Smith, 1999; Mikaere, 2011; Durie, 1998; Salmond, 1991, 1997; Orange, 1987, 2012; Walker, 1983; Binney, 2009; Soutar, 2008; Harris, Binney and Anerson, 2014 and so on.

¹²⁴ The Treaty issues are referred to the complex political relations between the Indigenous people of Aotearoa/New Zealand (Māori community) and the Crown. The Treaty of Waitangi is an official document and a foundation of the bi-cultural framework of the New Zealand society (Now multicultural with immigrant communities) that was signed between the Crown and Māori chiefs and have two versions, one English and another is in Te Reo Māori. Both the versions do not mean the same and thus the deceitful intentions of the colonial government are criticised and resisted due to the breach of the Treaty obligations with the Māori people. For further information please see, Orange, Claudia, 2012: 1. Or visit: <https://teara.govt.nz/en/treaty-of-waitangi>

¹²⁵ I use this term purely to describe the native people of New Zealand – the *tangata whenua o Aotearoa*; and not in its convenient colonial construct to classify or categorise or ‘Other’ the community.

¹²⁶ See P. 50 in Chapter 2 for details

¹²⁷ Emeritus professor of Research at the School of Māori and Pacific Development, University of Waikato, New Zealand. She has worked as academician, curator activist and advocate. She has specialized in Māori cultural issues, feminist and LGBT Issues (<https://www.waikato.ac.nz/staff-profiles/people/ngahuia>).

¹²⁸ Tane Mahuta, *papa's* son who was sent by his mother to *Kurawaka*, her pubic region, to gather the red earth that contained the necessary *uha* (female element) from which Hine-ahu-one - the first woman was shaped. Tane Mahuta and Hine-ahu-one produced many children but when she discovered that her husband, Tane, was also her father she left him. She instructed him to remain behind and care for their children while she descended to one of the underworlds, *Rarohenga*, to prepare a place for them and to care for them in death (Mikarere).

¹²⁹ Her stories include *Rangi and his Dianosaurs*, 2000 and *Cry-baby Moon: A Story*, 2007.

¹³⁰ The biographies are heavily based on the information collected from Te Ara Encyclopedia of New Zealand due to the more reliable and non-hegemonic sources it provides. The website can be accessed via, <
<https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies>>

¹³¹ As discussed by several authors including, Oliver 1990; Parsonson 1996; Ballara, 1996; King, 2000; Mikaere 2003 and Meredith and Higgins 2017.

¹³² He has received the Wattie Book of the Year Award, the Montana Book Award, the inaugural Star of Oceania Award from University of Hawai'i 2009, a laureate award from the New Zealand Arts Foundation 2009, the Ostana International Award in 2010 and the Toi Maori Maui Tiketike Award in 2011.

¹³³ *Pounamu Pounamu*, 1972; *Tangi*, 1989; *The Little Kowhai Tree*, 2002; *The Whale Rider*, 2003; *White Lies*, 2013 etc..

¹³⁴ Catherine Downes has had an international career spanning four decades. Cathy Downes graduated from Toi Whakaari: NZ Drama school after completing a B.A. in English, Politics and Drama at Victoria University. She relocated to Europe and established two theatre companies, in Amsterdam and in London. While she was in Amsterdam, she created the One Woman Play, *The Case of Katherine Mansfield* with which she toured Europe, Australia, NZ and the USA, and won two awards at The Edinburgh Festival. In 1998 she was appointed a Member of The NZ Order Of Merit for her services to the Arts. She has been Artistic Director of The Court Theatre in Christchurch and Director of Downstage Theatre in Wellington ("Playmarket").

¹³⁵ Christian Penny is a well-known performing arts figure in New Zealand. He served as director of Toi Whakaari. He is the co-founder of the Auckland based theatre company, Theatre at Large (1990) and the New Zealand Playback Theatre Summer School which he has taught for twelve years. He is a graduate of Leadership programme New Zealand 2009 ("Playmarket").

¹³⁶ Nancy Brunning is a Māori playwright, director, dramaturge, actor and producer of Hapai productions. Nancy trained at Toi Whakaari and has acted for theatre throughout New Zealand and has directed theatre in English and Māori. In 2011 she completed her first play *Hikoi* which premiered at the 2015 Auckland Arts Festival. Nancy was selected as the first Indigenous NZ Writer at the Banff Indigenous Writers Residency in Canada 2014 ("Playmarket"; Matata-Sipu).

¹³⁷ Chapman Tripp Theatre Awards are one of the most prestigious awards in New Zealand. The law firm Chapman Tripp used to sponsor the awards to recognize contributions in Arts and Community/Social Services since 1992. However, the law firm pulled the sponsorship in 2014 after the firm changed their focus from their corporate social responsibility to encouraging the legal skills and services among the community partners in New Zealand. Now known as the Wellington Theatre Awards.

¹³⁸ The phrase refers to the traditionally rich customs of the Waitangi Day celebration where symbolic gesture of honouring the Treaty of Waitangi is carried out by the crown, however, in its actual sense, Crown's policies towards the Māori population remains unchanged and suppressive. However, it is perceived as one of the exotic/unique things about Aotearoa/New Zealand.

¹³⁹ I haven't watched the live performance and so my discussion is mostly based on the script, performance reviews and secondary sources.

¹⁴⁰ The influenza pandemic killed 50 million people worldwide in 1918 and killed 9000 people in Aotearoa/ New Zealand. The official Māori death rate was 42.3 per every 1000, seven times higher than Pakeha populations. This could be an underestimation due to the incomplete Māori death registrations (Rice, "Te Ara – Encyclopedia of New Zealand")

¹⁴¹ Albert Belz is professional writer for stage and screen since 2001. He has several awards for his play *Your Trully* (2006) including the Chapman Tripp award for most original play and best New Zealand play. He won The Listener's best new play award for his play *Raising the Titanic* (2010). "Playmarket"

¹⁴² In 1986 – about 40 years after the beginning of Apartheid, the USA, the EC, and Japan imposed economic sanctions alongside the British Anti-Apartheid Movement (Corrigall, M. on SOHO online. Accessed on 30th November 2018).

¹⁴³ The character of the father was omitted in the version of the performances in 2009.

¹⁴⁴ The land march began on the 14th of October 1975 from Te Hapua with 50 marchers and collected 60,000 signatures to call an end to the alienation of Maori land in New Zealand. The marchers marched over 1000 kms to Wellington and reached parliament. The group was divided into two different groups; one continued marching on the East Coast and the other established a tent embassy on the steps of the parliament. Whina Cooper distanced herself publicly from these groups. The protest had aftermaths and sought alternative ways of opposing the land alienation in the following years. The two major historical protests followed by this Hikoī was the Occupation of Bastian Point (1977) and Raglan Gold Course (1978). This information is based on the Ministry of Culture database published on the NZ History website, for further details, visit: www.nzhistory.net.nz

¹⁴⁵ It is important to mention here that most of the audience members are middle class Pakehā people. This audience is very common within the International festival space located in Aotearoa/New Zealand due to the high-priced tickets. However, the playwright and director had this idea about the target audience for the performance and used the space to educate them about the alter-native history!

¹⁴⁶ Circa has posted the remarks with initials of the audience members and hence I used the same.

¹⁴⁷ The reviewer who describes herself as "a student living in London and enjoys chocolate oranges, sitting with her feet on the desk, and getting to choose the font for her uni's paper" (Hedreen, August 14, 2018).

¹⁴⁸ For details =, visit: <https://tawataproductions.com/portfolio/breaking-ground-2018/>

¹⁴⁹ www.tawataproductions.com

¹⁵⁰ Refer to Schuler, Aberdeen and Dyer, 2003; Rimmer, 2004; Bosch and Rentschler, 2009 for further details.

APPENDIX A

Appendix A includes the documents related to my Interview process as per below-mentioned order:

1. A copy of approval from the Human Ethics committee of Victoria University of Wellington for conducting the interviews.
2. A copy of the Information sheet shared with the interviewees of this project.
3. A copy of the Consent form used for obtaining written consent from the interviewees of this project.



Phone 0-4-463 5480
Email susan.corbett@vuw.ac.nz

MEMORANDUM

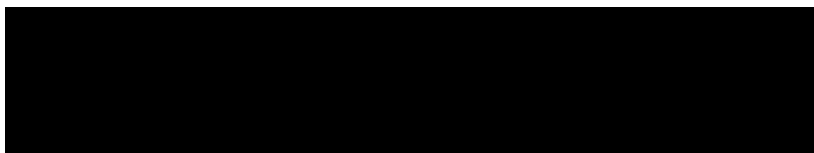
| | |
|---------|---|
| TO | Swatibahen Bhatt |
| COPY TO | Megan Evans |
| FROM | AProf Susan Corbett, Convener, Human Ethics Committee |
| DATE | 19 May 2015 |
| PAGES | 1 |
| SUBJECT | Ethics Approval: 21781 Performing Arts Festivals and Global Public Sphere: (Re)presentations of Indigeneity through Theatre in New Zealand, Australia, Canada and India |

Thank you for your application for ethical approval, which has now been considered by the Standing Committee of the Human Ethics Committee.

Your application has been approved from the above date and this approval continues until 31 December 2017. If your data collection is not completed by this date you should apply to the Human Ethics Committee for an extension to this approval.

Best wishes with the research.

Kind regards



Susan Corbett

Convener, Victoria University Human Ethics Committee



SCHOOL OF ENGLISH, FILM, THEATRE, AND MEDIA STUDIES

TE KURA TĀNGA KŌRERO INGARIHI, KIRIATA, WHAKAARI, PĀPĀHO

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Participant Information Sheet for interviewees in research project titled: Performing Arts Festivals and Global Public Sphere: (Re)presentations of Indigeneity through Theatre in New Zealand, Australia, Canada and India

Researcher: Swati Bhatt, School of English, Film, Theatre and Media Studies, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.

Dear Participant

My name is Swati Bhatt. I am a Ph.D. candidate at Victoria University of Wellington and an Indian citizen. I would like to invite you to participate in the study I am undertaking as part of my research. Through the project, I want to study the politics of international performing arts festivals and the representation and misrepresentation of indigeneity globally. The performances will be studied in the contexts of their representation, reception and efficacy within local, national and international spaces. Also, the initiation of organizing arts festivals by indigenous communities celebrating their indigeneity is studied in opposition to the presentation of indigeneity through the frames of international performing arts organized by culturally and politically dominant forces.

I aim to interview indigenous theatre practitioners based in New Zealand, Australia, Canada and India. If you choose to join this study, I will interview you about your experience as a theatre practitioner. I am interested in learning about the process of Making of the Performance and analysis of what happens between the Intended Performance and the actual performance and studying how the Indigenous performances are received by the spectators globally. In other words, I am interested in understanding how you evaluate the efficacy of your performances against what you intended; and how the responses from the spectators/ power structure encourage you to perform again. The interview will last around 60 minutes and they will be audio-recorded.

Your participation to this study is voluntary. The collected data will be stored in password protected file for the duration of this study. No other persons beside me and my supervisors will see the collected data. Opinions expressed in your interviews may be included in my Ph.D. thesis with acknowledgements. You may withdraw from the study without giving a reason at any time within one month after the interview, and all the data related to you will be immediately destroyed. If you wish, I will send you a summary of the results of this study and the transcript of your interview.

This study will be part of my Ph.D. thesis. The thesis will be submitted for marking to Victoria University of Wellington and deposited in the University Library, after which it will become available electronically. I also intend

to publish articles based on the data in scholarly journals and some of the findings could be presented in academic professional conferences. The collected data will be destroyed 5 years after the conclusion of the study.

This study has been granted ethical approval by the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee. If you have any questions or would like to receive further information about the study, feel free to contact me or my supervisors using the details provided below.

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Consent to participation in research project: Performing Arts Festivals and Global Public Sphere: (Re)presentations of Indigeneity through Theatre in New Zealand, Australia, Canada and India

I have been given and have understood an explanation of this study. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I may withdraw myself (or any information I have provided) from this project by contacting the interviewer at swati.bhatt@vuw.ac.nz within one month after the interview without having to give reasons.

I understand that any information I provide will be kept confidential to the researcher and her supervisors, the published results will use my name, and that my opinions will be attributed to me. I understand that the data will be destroyed 5 years after the end of the research.

- I agree to take part in this study.

I would like to receive a summary of the results of this study by way of:

- Email (please provide your email address)

- Post (Please provide your mail address)

Name of Participant

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Thanks for taking part in this study!

APPENDIX B

| | Name | Role | Date of the Interview |
|-----|----------------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| 1. | Associate Prof. David O'Donnell. | Associate professor in Theatre program at VUW. Theatre maker and director | 24.06.2014 |
| 2. | Sophia, | Actor, director. Directed a show that was part of Messina festival 2014 | 10.06.2015 |
| 3. | Jayden, | Actor, director. Directed a show that was part of Messina festival 2014 | 10.06.2015 |
| 4. | Dakxin Bajrange Chhara | Founding member of Budhan Theatre. Actor, director, writer, filmmaker, Social activist | 14.07.2015 |
| 5. | Roxy Gagdekar Chhara, | Founding member of Budhan Theatre. Actor, director, and journalist for BBC Gujarati | 15.07.2015 |
| 6. | Kalpana Roxy Chhara, | Actor, Budhan Theatre. Also, a social worker | 15.07.2015 |
| 7. | Ankur Garange, | Actor, Budhan Theatre | 16.07.2015 |
| 8. | Sidhdharth Garange | Actor, Budhan Theatre | 16.07.2015 |
| 9. | Aatish Indrekar Chhara, | Actor, Budhan Theatre, Social activist | 14.07.2015 |
| 10. | Poonam Chhara, | Actor, Budhan Theatre | 16.07.2015 |
| 11. | Chetana Chhara, | Ex-Administrating assistant, Budhan Theatre. Chharanagar resident | 17.07.2015 |
| 12. | Anish Chhara, | Creative Music director, Budhan Theatre | 16.07.2015 |
| 13. | Ketki Chhara, | Administrating assistant, Budhan Theatre | 16.07.2015 |

| | | | |
|------------|---------------------|---|-------------------|
| | | | |
| 14. | Krishnakant Chhara, | Actor, Budhan Theatre | 17.07.2015 |
| 15. | Virendra Chhara, | Actor, Budhan Theatre | 18.07.2015 |
| 16. | Dipesh, | Actor, Budhan Theatre | 18.07.2015 |
| 17. | Bhumika, | Actor, Budhan Theatre | 18.07.2015 |
| 18. | Kushal Batunge, | Actor, Budhan Theatre | 14.07.2015 |
| 19. | Sahil Chhara, | Actor, Budhan Theatre | 18.07.2015 |
| 20. | Sheena, | Non-Chhara/ non-DNT volunteer and actor at Budhan Theatre | 19.07.2015 |
| 21. | Jankiben, | Chharanagar resident | 19.07.2015 |
| 22. | Painter uncle, | Chharanagar resident | 19.07.2015 |
| 23. | Sasha Gibb, | Artistic director and co- producer of Messina festival 2014. Actor and volunteer at Te Rākau Hua O Te Wao Tapu Trust | 05.08.2015 |
| 24. | Hone Kouka | Playwright, producer, and co-director at Tawata productions, Wellington, NZ | 17.01.2016 |
| 25. | Nancy Brunning, | Actor, director, playwright, and producer at Hāpai productions, Wellington, NZ | 21.01.2016 |
| 26. | Tanemahuta Gray, | Choreographer and director. Chief executive of Taki Rua Productions, Wellington, NZ | 03.02.2016 |
| 27. | Jamie McCaskill, | Actor, director, producer and founding member of Tikapa productions | 17.02.2016 |

| | | | |
|------------|-------------------------|---|-------------------|
| 28. | Karl Payne, | Actor, singer, and teacher. Also co-actor at Pūtahi festival 2015 | 16.03.2016 |
| 29. | Miria George, | Actor, playwright, and co-director at Tawata Productions, Wellington, NZ | 24.03.2016 |
| 30. | Moana Ete, | Singer, songwriter, and Actor | 29.03.2016 |
| 31. | Sheilagh Magadza, | Artistic director of the New Zealand Festival of Arts | 12.04.2016 |
| 32. | Jermaine Beezley, | Associate producer of Ilbijerri Theatre Company, Melbourne, AUS | 09.06.2017 |
| 33. | Kyle Morrison, | Artistic director of Yirra Yaakin Theatre company, AUS | 10.06.2017 |
| 34. | Barbara Hostelek, | Playwright from Australia | 10.06.2017 |
| 35. | Tammy Haili‘ōpua Baker, | Playwright and academician from Hawaii | 10.06.2017 |
| 36. | Rachel Maza, | Artistic director of Ilbijerri Theatre Company, Melbourne, AUS | 10.06.2017 |

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