Takitoru:

Creative Practice Toward the Development of a Trilingual Dramaturgical Kaupapa

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Abstract

I have focused on writing a play in the three languages of Aotearoa: New Zealand Sign Language, te reo Māori, and NZ English. Through the development of this script with three actors I have found techniques for performance and workshopping to encourage multilingual creative practice for a playwright. Through case studies of playwrights doing similar work at an international level, I have synthesised analytical and creative research into a final script and summary of my dramaturgical findings.

Through creative practice in scriptwriting and developmental workshops, this research explores what story-telling modes, devices or styles seem particularly apt for conveying an inclusive and engaging trilingual narrative on stage.

This specifically involves developing a dramaturgical set of insights for others who may want to do cross-language performance in Aotearoa.

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Introduction

Through creative practice in scriptwriting and developmental workshops, my doctoral research explores what story-telling modes, devices or styles seem particularly apt for conveying an inclusive and engaging trilingual narrative on stage.

This specifically involves identifying what an audience may gain from trilingual theatre that they may not get from a monolingual or bilingual theatre piece. I have aimed to learn what story-telling modes, devices or genres seem particularly apt for conveying an inclusive and engaging trilingual narrative on stage, as well as developing a dramaturgical set of insights for others who may want to do cross-language performance in Aotearoa in the future.

I have focused on the script development of a play in the three languages of Aotearoa: New Zealand Sign Language, te reo Māori, and NZ English. Through the development of this script with three actors, I have found techniques for performance and workshopping to encourage multilingual creative practice for a playwright. Through case studies of playwrights doing similar work at an international level, I have synthesised analytical and creative research into a final script and summary of my dramaturgical findings.

The overall structure of this research has been in a near-constant state of revision since it began. Below I will detail the methodology and literature involved in my analytical research and how this informed my structural

choices. I have structured my thesis around the first and final drafts of my trilingual script, using the script development to indicate a chronology of the creative process. I have employed autoethnography and case studies, as well as critical and creative research to form the exegesis of my thesis.

My research asks how a dramaturgical intersection between Māori, Deaf and Pākehā culture may complement each other, by drawing on the Social Model of Disability, a concept acknowledged as having been introduced by Mike Oliver. This Model aims to shift ideas of identity for disabled people, and of non-disabled people's perception of disability and access in public arenas. Following the Social Model in script development means creating an accessible and supported environment for disabled and Deaf performers, and keeping a dialogue open with our audiences about how accessible the work is to an inclusive audience.

I will now give some social context to the connections between Deaf and Māori cultures and linguistic histories in Aotearoa. In their 2006 article, 'Perceptions of Māori Deaf Identity in New Zealand', Kirsten Smiler and Rachel Locker McKee described the tension of identity for Deaf Māori:

> "[C]ontemporary Maori Deaf find themselves at the intersection of a significant period of Maori cultural and linguistic renaissance (in process since the 1970s) and the dawning of Deaf cultural consciousness from the late 1980s in New Zealand. Both these social movements promoted their own language as a symbol of

ethnic identity and as a vehicle for empowerment and political self-determination."

(93)

From this I observed that the concept of self-determination, or tino rangatiratanga, is a central issue in both Deaf and Māori identity.

From this context, my working questions for my creative practice doctorate, then, were:

- How can scriptwriting embody Kaupapa Māori through Visual Languages?
- How can the Aesthetics of Accessibility strengthen the use of Te Reo Māori?

In beginning to set out on my research, I considered two shared aspects of Deaf and Māori cultures. First, their parallel sociolinguistic histories. Both Te Reo Māori and NZSL were suppressed in education in Aotearoa New Zealand under Pākehā colonisation. In 1880, an oralist education system was initiated for Deaf children internationally, including in Aotearoa. This meant that Deaf children were being taught to get by in a hearing world through lip-reading and attempting speech. They were actively punished for signing in the classroom, and this created a kind of linguistic holocaust for Deaf people without supportive signing environments at home. The impact of this oppression is less well-known than the parallel oppression of Te Reo me Tikanga Māori.

As Smiler and McKee observe, a renaissance for Te Reo Māori has been underway since the 1970s. I myself, like many modern parents of Māori children, have sent my son to Te Reo immersion school as part of this renaissance.

An important change in the Deaf community over the past three years has been the ease of access to video calling and video-messaging through applications such as Skype and Facetime. This development of social media has allowed once-isolated Deaf people to communicate in their first language regularly, building articulacy. A particularly fascinating aspect of this is the Facebook group “NZSL – Tangata Turi o Aotearoa, New Zealand Deaf Community”, which acts as both an NZSL noticeboard and a kind of evolving NZSL dictionary where members ask vocabulary and grammar clarification of each other. The effects of this connectedness are extraordinary to watch, and would be grounds for another linguistic research topic.

These parallel histories of linguistic oppression and survival result in an inherent understanding in both cultures of the connection between language and self-realisation.

The second shared aspect in Deaf and Māori communities is the value of manaakitanga. During the creative research I was staggered by the amount of people from both Deaf and Māori communities who gave their time and expertise to this project. I would like to acknowldge the collaborative nature nature of my research, and the performers: Leo

Goldie-Anderson, Shaun Fahey and Cian Parker. I would also like especially acknowledge the support of Mokonui-a-rangi Smith for his patience and guidance in developing the reo Māori in my writing.

My research follows the kaupapa of disability and Deaf performance practice which, as Kanta Kochar-Lindgren observes, aims to “create a synthesis between activism and aesthetics, particularly in order to use performance as a site of resistance to normative cultural representational and perceptual paradigms regarding the extraordinary body" (Kochar-Lindgren 420). The capitalisation of Deaf signifies a cultural understanding of Deafness, as opposed to the medical understanding of deafness. Often people who lose their hearing later in life will identify as culturally hearing, though medically deaf. However, people who come from Deaf families or who are born Deaf and whose first language is Sign usually identify as culturally Deaf (as well as the medical definition).

The concept of heteroglossia is regularly referred to in my research. This term was originally a neologism from Bakhtin, referring to the multiple perspectives, tenses and registers which a “social person” may use in any normal linguistic interaction. The term is used in narratology to describe the tone, perspective and intention which narrator’s voice may carry. This texture is also called “glossality” (Tjuba, qtd in Carlson 35). I will discuss the theatrical implications of this, through Marvin Carlson’s writings, in a later chapter.

In the initial stages of pre-enrollment for this doctorate in 2015, I submitted an extensive ethics application to the University of Waikato Ethics Board, clarifying the intellectual property expectations of creative collaboration and privacy of audience participants. Due to its bulk I have not included the application in its entirety, only the letter of ethical approval and relevant details about the ethical issues throughout this thesis.

As my research developed, I discovered that the workshopping and script development process was a rich source of knowledge and reflection. The performer-participants and I did very little public performance, simply because there was so much to explore within the contained workshopping development process. In the following chapter, I will detail my original creative practice as well as its revision.

A brief note on the trilingual nature of this thesis: in the appendix of this thesis I have included video recordings of some of the physical nature of the work. This reflects the visual language dramaturgy which has developed from the Deaf and NZSL development of my creative practice. These visual languages include NZSL, Sign-Assisted English (SSE) or Visual Vernacular (V.V.).

Visual Vernacular is a physical performance spectrum specifically developed by Deaf performers, and became a vital tool for script development in my creative practice. Where possible I have transcribed NZSL into English or te reo Māori throughout the thesis for consistency.

As te reo Māori is an oral language, there is a different set of challenges in including quotes and script excerpts from Māori writers and academics.

There are variations in the spelling of various words throughout this thesis due to distinct tribal dialects and because of the normalisation of using tohutō, or macrons, in written te reo Māori. Because I have learned te reo through a Tainui wānanga, I speak and write with a Tainui dialect, which puts an extra “wh” into some words which other iwi pronounce as “h” – such as pōhiri (pōwhiri), manuhiri (manuwhiri) or hea (whea). There is no hierarchical significance to the iwi dialects besides signifying a linguistic connection to geography of an iwi. The words are interchangeable and I have used my Tainui dialect throughout this thesis, except where directly quoting someone with a different dialect.

Similarly, it is now the norm to use tohutō, or macrons, as I have done in the paragraph above in order to mark long vowels. However, during the time of the original publishing of *Ngā Tāngata Toa* (1991) this was not the case. Often word processors could not print macrons and so the words were spelled with a double-vowel instead (for example, ‘kooreroo’ instead of ‘kōrero’). As with the dialectal differences, my own writing in te reo Māori uses macrons and a Tainui dialect, but when quoting other writers I have left their language as originally published.

Trilingualism is a necessary part of this thesis, as I have striven to balance the academic form and creative content of my thesis as much as possible. In accordance with University of Waikato Regulations for the Degree of the Doctor of Philosophy, my research critically investigates the topic of trilingual dramaturgy in Aotearoa New Zealand theatre. My research also makes an original contribution to the area of dramaturgy, both in the creative trilingual content and the embedded Deaf and Māori cultural

knowledge. In structuring my doctorate, I have followed the University of Waikato requirements for a PhD with Creative Practice Component, with a thesis statement. As the creative practice component is the final draft of my trilingual script (as opposed to a public performance), I have included the final draft, titled, *Tanumia ō Kōiwi* with English and Māori captions, as it will exist in professional publication (through Playmarket). The requirement, then, for my written thesis to "provide a critical scholarly analysis of the creative project and its outcomes" includes critical analyses of the two major theoretical influences on the practice: Deaf dramaturgy and Māori dramaturgies. I discuss each of these in both academic and autoethnographic frameworks, in order to show the connections between theory and practice. The case studies of Kaite O'Reilly and Hone Kouka not only allow a discussion of the dramaturgical effects – these writers were both genuinely influential on the creative practice of this research, and I have discussed how, in a final autoethnographical chapter of each section. After this, the reader will have a clear context to follow the theoretical analysis of the Takitoru dramaturgy, which is followed by the final script of *Tanumia ō Kōiwi*, and a scene-by-scene critical analysis of the creative outcome of the project.

Autoethnography is a type of academic writing that originates in literary studies. It has come to be used in other fields, including in creative writing programmes, as it combines personal experience with cultural or creative experience through systematic description and analysis. It is particularly useful for my research into creative practice and the dramaturgy of language and culture, as it 'challenges canonical ways of doing research

and representing others and treats research as a political, socially-just and socially-conscious act. A researcher uses tenets of autobiography and ethnography to do and write autoethnography. Thus, as a method, autoethnography is both process and product' (Arnold, 70). Dr Josie Arnold, the inaugural Professor of Writing at Swinburne University of Technology, offers that one strength of autoethnography is its ability to demonstrate autobiographical experience as a means to expose and analyse cultural assumptions (Arnold 70).

The form of autoethnography I have employed is a 'layered account' approach. This means presenting the collected data (my working journal, recorded conversations from within the workshopping process, interviews with playwrights) interwoven with abstract analysis (dramaturgical criticism and reflexive criticism on my own writing). This form is appropriate to my research as it complements research where data collection, reflexive analysis and knowledge production are simultaneous and cumulative (Ellis et al, par. 4.1). I believe that this autoethnographic methodology is best suited to innovative creative practice research such as this, which inherently challenges my own subjective relationships to language, culture and creative practice as I proceed.

The literature in my research comes from several disciplines and cultures. My creative and critical research has included Deaf Theatre, De-Colonising Theatre, and Theatre Marae conventions. These three categories may be considered distinct forms of Inclusive Theatre. I have also referred regularly to the concept of heteroglossia, particularly in relation to intersectionality in a social and creative context. And finally, as

in any research which involves script development, I have focussed on the techniques of dramaturgy and discourse in order to bring the form and content of my work together tidily.

Dramaturgy encompasses many aspects of performance theory – including text, movement, casting, scenography, story and space. Eugenio Barba observed, "[t]hat which concerns the text (the weave) of the performance can be defined as 'dramaturgy', that is, drama-ergon, the 'work of actions' in the performance" (68).For the purposes of this research, I am using "dramaturgy" to describe the relationship between scripted text and live audience experience. This relationship will be explored specifically through the theatrical discourse conventions of language, story and space in generating meaning.

The relationship between discourse and dramaturgy that I am exploring is a common approach to script development. Julian Meyrick's article, "Cut & Paste: the Nature of Dramaturgical Development in the Theatre" (2006), stresses the importance of experimenting with discourse in script development, to create a text that manages the audience experience as well as the offering performers' creative options.

Discourse in literary theory can be described as one aspect of narrative: the other aspect being story. Story consists of the events and characters that will be configured in discourse; discourse is the way in which story is presented to the reader or audience (Culler 7). For the purposes of my research, I am making a clear distinction between these two parts of the narrative of my scripts, keeping the story consistent over the course of

script development, and experimenting only with the discourse. The discourse is the site for creative investigation of the relationship between Māori and Deaf inclusivity in trilingual dramaturgy.

Increasingly, arts communities are pushing beyond inclusivity as meaning only access and participation in the arts. It is clear that the experiences of artists outside, for example, the Pākehā, hearing hegemony, have a huge amount to contribute to innovative and subversive artistic forms (O'Reilly 2007, 132). The international rise of forms such as Sign Poetry signify a shift in mentality, toward the kaupapa of Deaf Gain. In terms of a bilingual theatre, this means that Sign Language and speech may work together in a variety of complex dramaturgies, rather than speech always acting as a crutch for Sign Language. Both languages and their associated cultures (Deaf and hearing) being presented as equal but different is a prime example of syncretic, and in some cases, decolonising, theatre.

I use the term "de-colonising" as opposed to "post-colonial" in reference to my creative practice. This term was coined by the Germany-based Aotearoa scholar, Christopher B Balme in his work *Decolonizing the Stage: Theatrical Syncretism and Post-Colonial Drama* (1999). Syncretic theatre is a form of hybridity in performance where two or more cultures are brought together into a single performance work – honouring the performance codes of the participating cultures and celebrating the gaps between their differences. This is as opposed to what Balme refers to as "exoticised theatre", where a minority culture or language may be featured, but the original textuality of that performance (for example, a haka) is recoded and muffled by a Western performance framework (Balme 5).

Syncretic theatre, therefore, is a methodology for implementing inclusive theatre practice through dramaturgy. This is a fairly young tradition, but the authors I have interviewed are exploring inclusive dramaturgical possibilities in Aotearoa New Zealand and internationally. My research lies at the intersection between Deaf and Māori storytelling, so I have drawn on two established playwrights in each tradition – Hone Kouka and Kaite O'Reilly.

Kaite O'Reilly is a UK-based playwright at the forefront of inclusive dramaturgy. O'Reilly uses language as a key indicator of inclusivity in her work. Her play *peeling* is written for three physically disabled actors, and stretches the tensions between language and performed disability through her use of British Sign Language (BSL), Sign-Assisted English, audio descriptions and a spectrum of registers in English. Her play *Woman of Flowers* is a modern retelling of a Welsh folk tale, with a Deaf protagonist and several monologues in BSL. Her willingness to confront difference and awkwardness in order to celebrate diversity is what makes her particularly relevant to this work.

Discussing her work *Playing the Maids*, which combined Korean, Gaelic, Mandarin and English, O'Reilly stresses the significance of finding new ways 'of seeing and being can be shared and explored collectively in this space between, not through the appropriation or dilution of cultural form, but from each artist offering cultural, aesthetic, or artistic perspectives as resonance or counterpoint' (O'Reilly 2015). This kaupapa of inclusivity shaping the discourse aligns with the decolonising syncretic theatre

approach, and connects her work to the tradition of Aotearoa New Zealand playwrights such as Albert Belz, Mīria George and Albert Wendt.

My creative practice in this project has followed the legacy of syncreticism in Aotearoa New Zealand theatre. This is a decolonising tradition and is the leading style of contemporary original theatre in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The prestigious artist and academic, Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal, traces the history of Māori theatre back to its origins in kapa haka and whare tapere in Hawaiki. In his essay, "Ōrotakare: Towards a New Model for Indigenous and Performing Arts", he shares the story of the tradition being convened:

> The action is related in the story of the enmity between Tinirau and Kae. Tinirau and his wife Hine-te-iwaiwa had a child called Tūhuruhuru. Upon the birth of the child, Tinirau sent for the priest Kae to perform the baptismal ceremonies. In payment, Tinirau gives Kae a piece of flesh from his pet whale Tutunui, whereupon Kae steals the whale and takes him to his island. Tinirau and Hine-te-iwaiwa then convene a troupe of women whose task it is to trick Kae by entertaining him in his house. The women performers do not know the identity of Kae, however, they can identify him by his double tooth, one which grows over the other. In order to see the tooth, they have to get Kae to laugh. Hence much amusing follows in the whare tapere as the women perform and try and get their audience to laugh. After a long period, Kae eventually laughs and

> the women are able to identify him. Afterward the women cast a spell upon the audience who immediately fall asleep. They then capture the hapless Kae and return him to Tinirau. (Royal 195)

Whare tapere and its variant, whare mātoro (often translated to “House of Amusement”) appear in many traditional love stories, and were an important part of pā life, similar to community spaces such as the whare rūnanga (council house, decision making), whare wānanga (house of higher learning) and whare kōhanga (house for childbirth and nurturing early childhood). However, once more Māori communities moved from pā living into colonial townships, many cultural traditions were lost or ‘found only minor expression in the new living arrangements’ (Royal 200). In the 1920s kapa haka came to the foreground of Māori performance and is still central to indigenous theatre and performing arts.

In the 1970s performers such as Rawiri Paratene and Rangimoana Taylor not only broke into the Pākehā-dominated theatre as Māori actors, but Taylor also founded Te Ohu Whakaari – the first professional Māori theatre company. They performed works by Māori playwrights such as Apirana Taylor (*Kohanga*) and Riwia Brown (*Roimata*), with all Māori casts. They also brought Tikanga Māori into mainstream theatre:

> [W]e followed tradition: we karanga, they karanga, we whai-kōrero, the whai-kōrero being the play, and then at the end of it, we stay so the audience could whai-kōrero or mihimihi back. It was never a case of sitting down, and saying, "Oh you've got to praise us," it was always following that line of tikanga. (Halba & Taylor 214).

Taylor has also been openly in favour of syncreticism in Māori theatre, clarifying: ‘It's not about [Pākehā] becoming Māori, it's about them just being with us’ (Halba & Taylor 217).

In 1989 BATS Theatre was founded in Wellington by Rodney Bane and David Austen, as an amateur theatre in the 1970s. In 1989 it was taken over by Simon Elson and Simon Bennett and re-opened as a venue for professional cooperatives. It then became a home for experimental and original Aotearoa New Zealand work. This created a flurry of new voices entering the stages of Aotearoa New Zealand theatre, and an increased audience for this type of theatre – breaking the idea of professional Aotearoa New Zealand theatre being tied to the conservative, naturalist European-tradition of aesthetic.

There was an upsurge in Māori theatre in the 1990s, particularly linked to the founding of Taki Rua Theatre Company (formerly The Depot). Key playwrights such as Hone Kouka, Roma Potiki and Riwia Brown were creating work that placed Māori voices and stories at the fore. Part of this movement was exploring the gap between European and Māori storytelling modes, and the dramaturgical implications of these differences. A key text from this time was Kouka’s *Nga Tangata Toa*, which was inspired by Henrik Ibsen’s classic epic *The Vikings of Helgeland*. Although for many practitioners, Kouka set the precedent for this syncreticism in scripted modern Aotearoa theatre, he credits this element of his own work to watching a performance of *Whatungarongaro* by theatre company He Ara Hou in 1991, saying the production

> ‘convinced me that this innovative theatre really had no boundaries. For the first time in a piece of Māori theatre, I saw traditional Māori concepts and Western theatre practice integrate seamlessly and become a healthy theatrical syncreticism. Previously, the inclusion of things Māori seemed to be merely for show rather than an intrinsic part of storytelling’ (Kouka 240).

However, Kouka observes that since then, rather than Māori stories being securely centred in mainstream theatre, they have been marginalised and excluded from regular programming. Specifically in relation to language in contemporary playwriting, he says,

> New Zealand is a mono-cultural country masquerading as a multi-cultural society. It is mono-lingual and if speakers of other languages attempt to lift their heads, they are told to bluntly "keep quiet" and speak English […] I would argue that New Zealand has a growing migrant population, with its own languages and customs. There is therefore an ever increasing acceptance and growing audience for plays written in Te Reo Māori. There are now three generations who have grown up with Te Reo Māori rather than English as their first language; they feel hungry for material. (Kouka 2007, 242)

Three contemporary playwrights who are working hard (and achieving well-deserved acclaim) at creating new Māori work for mainstream audiences are Albert Belz, Briar Grace-Smith and Mīria George. Their

works all explore nuanced threads of what it means to be Māori in today's Aotearoa, and all have distinct (and sometimes distant) relationships with Te Reo Māori itself in their works. All three employ distinct dramaturgical approaches in their writing, whether it is Belz's *Awhi Tapu* (2006) characters performing and narrating their everyday lives as though they are in a Hollywood blockbuster or the intricate world of *The Night Mechanics'* (2017) indigenous dystopia by Mīria George.

This research is also concerned with the differences in languages and cultures (for my purposes not only Māori /Pākehā but also hearing/ Deaf). Although I am Pākehā, I don't feel that it should solely be the responsibility of Māori practitioners to keep multilingualism present in our performing arts. My goal in bringing New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) into this combination is to bring the focus to the diversity of languages, and the registers of theatricality that these three languages offer to live performance. Through exploring these dramaturgical possibilities, and making diversity central to my dramaturgy, I hope to contribute to what I see as the future of theatre in Aotearoa New Zealand, which is a genuinely inclusive one.

There have been two significant instigators of Sign Theatre in Aotearoa in the past decade: Nicola Clements and Charlie Grimsdale. Both of these practitioners have worked in inclusive mediums, and strived to bring NZSL and Deaf performers into mainstream theatre. Both of their companies, Odd Socks productions (since 2008) and the Giant Leap Foundation (2011), continue to create opportunities for Deaf theatre practitioners. Recently, Dr Laura Haughey of the University of Waikato has been

working in the Deaf community with her theatre company Equal Voices. I have been fortunate enough to participate in this work as a hearing performer. These three companies create a vital sense of visibility for NZSL and the Deaf community in Aotearoa theatre. I have learned first-hand from the audiences of bilingual work *At the End of My Hands* (Equal Voices 2015 / 2016) that public visibility of a marginalised language is empowering to communities. Several times in the post-show forums, Deaf audiences expressed a sense of community pride and inspiration in seeing NZSL performed on mainstream stages.

While my own whakapapa (heritage) is Pākehā (Norwegian and Scottish) and hearing, I have close personal connections to both Deaf and hearing communities. My relationship to the Deaf community has been largely through a theatre-making lens. However my partner of eleven years and our son are of Māori heritage. Their hapū and iwi (and therefore my affiliations too) are Ngāti Whakaue (Te Arawa) and Ngāti Koura (Tūhoe). My partner Cameron Reid is the great-nephew of the prominent Māori leader and academic Te Wharehuia Milroy, who passed away during the course of this study. Many of the references to land and spirituality in the play were inspired by Tūhoe family conversations about the landscape in the Whakatāne / Ruatoki / Te Urewera area. During the course of this study, my partner Cameron suffered a stroke and as part of his recovery we returned to live on his turangawaewae of Rotorua. Being immersed in the Te Arawa community and artistic world within that was inspiring and humbling, and sustained me as I completed the final stretches of this thesis. So I would like to acknowledge te iwi Ngāti Whakaue, Tama-te-

kapua, and the village of Ohinemutu where many moments of enlightenment occurred. This included reconnecting with Hone Kouka several years after interviewing him for this thesis, as he too had moved back to Rotorua at the time. I am still very early in my journey of te reo Māori but many of the speakers and leaders I connected with in Rotorua have become my northern star that I now strive for. E nga mana, e nga reo, e nga waka, tēnā koutou katoa.

Finally, I would like to make two notes regarding the wonderful performers who participated in and supported this research. Firstly, the performer Leo Goldie-Anderson is gender-fluid, and prefers to go by the pronoun “they” in the singular, so I have referred to them as such throughout the thesis. They were happy for the role of Eddie to be more clearly female, and this did not cause any issues in the research.

I should also note that over the course of this research, my friend, colleague and actor Shaun Fahey passed away after a battle with cancer in September 2018. Although the majority of our creative research for this project was finished by the time he was diagnosed with Stage 4 cancer earlier that year, it meant we were not able to go back over the work and add some final touches such as recording the NZSL version of the script. Although it feels incomplete in this way, I am glad to have a record of Shaun’s contribution to Deaf storytelling and of our collaboration.

The trilingual nature of this research implements an intersectional approach to celebrate the multiplicity of New Zealand identity, specifically through showcasing the three national languages. The languages are

presented as equal but different – bringing possibly separate communities together: exploring diversity through language, united by narrative.

Chapter One: Whakatakina ai e au ngā tikanga: Research and Revision of Creative Practice

My research questions for this project were:

1. How can scriptwriting embody kaupapa Māori through visual languages?
2. How does a playwright present a script in New Zealand Sign Language, te reo Māori and English?
3. What creative and cultural similarities exist between Deaf and Māori theatre practices?

Originally my research was structured as an audience experiment, centred around the impact of trilingual performance on Aotearoa New Zealand audiences. In Haseman's "Manifesto for Performative Research", he notes that creative practices as research methodologies "depart from the more traditional practice-based approaches" (3). He goes on to observe that creative practice researchers begin from several "experiential starting points" and that the research outputs are presented in "the symbolic language and forms of [the researcher's] practice" (4). In the case of my research, that includes the drafting process of creating a script, and the working journals I kept during the process. These are my forms and symbols and I have continually worked from the assumption that my creative research as a production of knowledge is equal to the critical component of this thesis. For this reason, the presentation you are now reading is a syncretic form of critical / reflective / creative writing, as the

research and output are a combination of all three intellectual registers. This symbolic data ‘not only expresses the research, but in that expression becomes the research itself’ (6).

My findings have been the result of creative practice trial and error. My original hypothesis of a creative practice that would affirm inclusivity has developed significantly over the course of my practical research.

The origin of this research has been my identification of a gap as a theatre practitioner. Many of the most exciting contemporary theatre practitioners in Aotearoa New Zealand are writing bilingually and refining what is referred to as syncretic theatre – blending cultural and theatrical codes into new theatre forms. However, I have observed that while other practitioners have explored questions of place, history and identity in two languages, not much work has been done on the dramaturgy of multilingual performance in Aotearoa New Zealand.

I have also observed that a Pākehā, hearing experience is still hegemonic in dramaturgical terms in Aotearoa New Zealand: although te reo Māori and NZSL have equal ‘national language’ status to English, they are often mediated through spoken English in playwriting, and generally operate in separate, exclusive spheres from each other in the performing arts. However, they are languages that are specific to Aotearoa New Zealand, and their linguistic histories are intertwined with the development of an Aotearoa New Zealand-specific culture. The reliance on English in performing arts can be seen as symptomatic of a colonial and ableist mentality. This research aims to explore the implications of different

dramaturgical approaches to Aotearoa trilingualism as a means to develop an inclusive dramaturgical kaupapa.

In my original creative practice, I planned to develop two inflections of the same story, both told trilingually.The first inflection would have full formal interpretation between all three langauges: subtitles in te reo Māori and English, and live NZSL interpretation. The second inflection would have no formal interpretation. My hypothesis was that distinct dramaturgical methods would need to be employed in scripting theatrical works with/without linguistic interpretation.

Through script development of two distinct inflections (or discourses) of the same story in conversation with audiences and practitioners, I hoped to analyse the effect of various approaches. These dramaturgical discourses include story-telling modes, devices or genres that seem particularly apt for conveying an inclusive and engaging trilingual narrative on stage. From these experiments, I planned to collect a set of dramaturgical insights on the relationship between story, discourse and audience.

The narrative of these scripts was a pre-existing piece of fiction that I have generated. I developed this narrative for the dramaturgical possibilities it offers in answering my research questions. The narrative, originally titled *Bury Your Bones*, follows two characters in palliative care, during their final month of life: Briar (19) and Vic (55). In her last month of life Briar befriends a fellow hospice patient, a Deaf comedian named Vic. The two develop a friendship across the language barrier, and Briar, who is already

learning te reo Māori, begins to learn NZSL as well to communicate with her fellow sufferer. When Vic's multilingual friend Eddie visits Vic, she is able to translate between languages, as well as revealing her own secrets of immortality to her dying friend.

So each character loosely represents a particular language and its associated culture. Linguistically, the discourse slowly weaves NZSL and Te Reo Māori in through English captioning and speech, before these two take over as the predominant languages, with English mostly existing in captioning for the second half of the play.

Throughout the script development, I have aimed to keep the story as simple and consistent as possible. In my original practice I planned for both scripts to be derived from the same narrative, as a control for the dramaturgical variants to be as clear as possible.

I wanted to develop a creative practice that explored te reo Māori as well as tikanga Māori. The content of the script(s) explore the dramaturgy of Māori culture and storytelling. I aimed to honour the Treaty principles of protection, participation and partnership within this research. I have valued ōritetanga (equality) through my ongoing study of te reo and tikanga Māori, as well as respecting theatrical values in Māori theatre practice. Throughout my practical research, I aimed for honesty and genuine consultation, and where appropriate I shared decision-making through partnership founded on a respect and value of differences.

I ensured that a Māori perspective was advocated for through my cultural advisor Moko Smith, casting a Māori actor and enlisting the supervision of Māori and decolonising theatre specialist, Dr Nicola Hyland of Victoria University of Wellington. My research aims to develop a syncretic dramaturgical kaupapa, drawing on the tradition of theatrical syncretism. As discussed further below, this is a post-colonial dramaturgical approach that focuses on blending theatrical forms in order to decolonise the stage. The focus with this kaupapa is on blending forms while maintaining the original purpose of indigenous theatrical elements (Balme 5).

As well as developing my fluency in NZSL through continuous creative work with the Deaf community, I undertook formal classes to better my understanding of tikanga Māori and te reo Māori through University of Waikato's School of Māori and Pacific Development in the spirit of partnership and protection.

Part of the research into the nature of inclusive theatre in Aotearoa has included investigating and reflecting on how the Social Model of Disability and the Treaty of Waitangi complement or oppose each other in an intersectional creative practice.

My original creative practice was based on weaving together the theoretical structures of de-colonising theatre and the social model of disability. From overlapping these two structures, I focussed on four basic dramaturgical principles for the first draft:

1. Trilingualism: the visibility of the three languages together on stage.

2. Characterisation from culture: grounding the characterisation of the Māori and Deaf characters in their respective cultures.
3. Liminality: building in moments of wordless action, where characters find communication between languages.
4. Defamiliarisation: the concept of experimenting with discourse and noting its effect on the audience, to better understand audience responses to trilingualism.

As I will discuss in detail in the following thesis, this practice changed significantly, due to research and reflection. Ultimately I decided that it was against the kaupapa of inclusivity to create an entire work which actively excluded sections of the audience through a lack of translation. The final script which I developed is a singular text, including captions as part of the creative text.

I also made the decision to include an existing text to be translated into all three languages throughout the narrative: *The Fly* by William Blake. I was inspired by the visual presentation of Blake's poems in the relationship between written word and visual language throughout my own script development.

I worked with the same three actors throughout the script development. These actors were crucial in the creative process: Cian Parker, Leo Goldie-Anderson and Shaun Fahey. I had worked with ecah of these actors previously and tey all had experience performing and devising, which was an important part of the workshopping process.
What follows below is the first draft, *Bury Your Bones* – which was

originally intended to have NZSL interpretation and captions. The captions had not been written and were not included in this version of the script. This script is unedited from how it was first delivered to the actors, including spelling and formatting errors. I have left these in, as correcting these are part of the script development.

Chapter Two: Bury Your Bones (First Draft)

Bury Your Bones

Version 1: with interpreter

Characters:

Briar, 19

Vic, 50

Eddie, 306

New Zealand Sign Language Interpreter

Nameless Woman

Rango the Fly

Performance notes:

NZSL Interpreter and Nameless Woman are played by the same performer as Eddie.

/ at beginning of dialogue relates to a / in previous dialogue, signalling where the two texts should overlap in performance.

Sign-names are written so that the name (e.g. Emma) is mouthed while the NZSL (e.g. Freckles) is performed simultaneously. e.g. Emma/Freckles.

Vic and Briar are in wheelchairs, until they aren't.

Bury Your Bones

1. Ata Hāpara

On the stage are three piles of dirt.

The dialogue should be projected in two columns of written subtitles on two of the three panels at the back of the stage: Te Reo Māori and English respectively.

Vic enters in a wheelchair. He is weak, cachectic, but there is a twinkle in his eye once he begins to perform.

He performs the monologue in a blend of NZSL and visual vernacular.

Lit separately is Briar, with her eyes closed.

VIC. *(NZSL)* This is what I see:

A huge lake. The water is still. Then: plink! Me, a tiny pebble, hits the surface of the lake.

Briar's hands begin to shimmer in a wiri.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Where the pebble hit, I send out ripples in the water, slow, fast, big, tiny, out and out. Somewhere else on the lake, other pebbles drop in too, and send out their own ripples.

Ripples from here clash into ripples from there, making beautiful shimmering new patterns. The light dances on my waves.

All the while I'm sinking down, down, down. Until: plink!

Me, a tiny pebble, hits the floor of the lake. And I lay there, my waves calm and distant. I lay there at the bottom of the lake with an infinite expanse of identical pebbles. Still. Vast. So still I can't be sure that I really exist. I reach for the light switch –

Briar wakes with a gasp. She has woken from a nightmare that something was crouching on her chest. She slowly realises the room is empty.

As she drifts back to sleep, Nameless Woman enters in the shadows.

In almost-darkness Nameless Woman, a hunched over figure in rags, snaps her fingers and a small spot of light appears in her hand. This is Rango the Fly.

Nameless Woman shuffles off, leaving the Rango, who flits around the stage buzzing as the lights come up.

2. Mōrena

NZSL Interpreter takes their place in front of the third panel at the back of the stage.

Briar is sitting in the hospice garden, consulting one book and scribbling in another. She looks tired but fizzes with intellect and determination.

BRIAR. I always imagined my life as a biography, in a history book. Her father died when she was young, and she had a troubled relationship with her mother, but she overcame it, no, she used the contradiction in her heritage to create a new voice of a generation. When the constant stomach pain and rashes turned out to be cancer, even though I was only nineteen, I thought - of course. She was struck down with illness as a young woman, and told she would not have long to live. But - when she was bedridden, she used the time to pen her greatest work, a masterpiece. And she recovered, defying all odds and living a long life, her miraculous recovery and precocious talent shining as a beacon for many others to follow. She became a leader of her community and had many lovers. She never had children because she didn't have time to settle, she was always moving, disrupting, challenging the world. But her home was a safe place for young people and she was an aunty to many.

Even now, I have that version of history in my mind when I imagine the future. Because I don't know how to understand right now.

I've never had that many friends. The friends I do have don't like to visit me because I won't soften my ideas for them. But what's wrong with anger? My anger is aimless, unfocused. But it's all that gets me out of bed in the morning. It's a puddle of ink just waiting to take form on the page.

Rango swoops past her.

BRIAR. Fuck off, actually.

Rango flies out of the theatre.

Vic enters in a wheelchair. He enjoys the sun on his face. He looks out at the audience.

BRIAR. You look very serious. To be, or not to be! That is not the question we get to ask.

That was a joke. Jesus, fine.

She goes back to her books. Vic watches Briar until she notices him.

He smiles at her. She looks at him suspiciously, then goes back to her books. This repeats again.

The third time Briar looks up, Vic seems unconscious. His mouth hangs open.

BRIAR. Hey. Hey.

Oh my god.

She moves as quickly as she can to check on Vic, who opens one eye and sticks out his tongue as soon as she touches him.

BRIAR. You dick! You can't do that kind of thing here!

VIC. *(NZSL)* Pardon?

BRIAR. You're an asshole and that wasn't funny. Do you pull that kind of shit on the nurses? On your family when they visit? That isn't a joke you can make in a place like this!

VIC. *(NZSL)* Sorry, can't hear you, I'm Deaf.

Pause.

BRIAR. Fuckin … tiko bum.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Can I see your books?

BRIAR. These? Here.

Vic opens one book, makes a face and shuts it. He opens the other book, flips through pages of handwritten notes. He hands them back.

BRIAR. It's William Blake. I'm translating it. I figured it'd be a good way to practice my reo alone. And it's a good distraction. I like William Blake. He gets me.

Victor shrugs but nods politely.

Briar writes a note on a page of her notebook and hands it to Victor.

VIC. *(NZSL)* I'm the same. Normal.

(Sign Assisted English) Normal.

BRIAR. Normal?

VIC. *(NZSL)* Normal.

Both nod their heads and smile politely at each other. The nodding turns to gentle head-shaking.

They catch eyes. VIC lets out a big sigh.

BRIAR nods and sighs too.

She scribbles another note and passes it to VIC.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Yes. Cancer, yes.

BRIAR. *(Pointing to herself)* Me too.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Lucky I was bald already. I had chemotherapy but I was already bald, so I don't look different. I just put on some make-up and you wouldn't know I'm dying. Some make-up under my eyes, some blush, a bit of mascara, lipstick. Great! Maybe I should get some fake boobs, too? Then no-one will know I'm sick, they'll just look at my boobs. Oh no, but my

bandages are showing, how embarrassing! What a slut!

BRIAR. You're weird.

VIC. *(NZSL)* I'm joking.

BRIAR looks away, distracted by the sound of Rango the Fly flying past. When she looks back at VICTOR, he has his shirt pulled out to make the shape of imaginary breasts. She is unimpressed.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Sorry, naughty. Sorry.

BRIAR points at something in the audience, making VIC look away. When he looks back, she has put her finger poking out her fly to look like a penis.

VIC does a double take.

VIC. *(NZSL)* It's very small. It's ok, don't be embarrassed. Maybe you could just lift some weights with your penis and make it stronger? I'm joking, joking. Actually –

that's good. I might steal that. My job is a stand-up comedian. I want to do one last show before I die. Doctors say I have a month to live, so I want to invite all my friends to the hospice, pretend it's really sad. Then – surprise! - I'll start doing jokes for them. They will be so confused. "What's he doing? I thought he was dying?"

"He's making dick jokes on his death bed!"

Good way to remember me.

BRIAR. What?

VIC. *(NZSL)* Is it the same for your writing? You are leaving your mark on the world.

BRIAR. Sorry. I don't understand.

Rango buzzes back onstage, from the main playing space to the Interpreter Position. He sits on the Interpreter's shoulder.

INTERPRETER *(NZSL)* Hey. Are you watching me? Just let me get this story out. I need to get it off my body. How should I start? I, Eddie

Everest, am three hundred and six years old. This is true. Many years ago - and I mean many *many* years ago – I was a rich, young stupid woman. And I fell in love with a rich, young, sweet woman. This woman – her name was Emma, sign-name Freckles – came and lived with me at my family estate. My family said we were “spinsters”, which was code for gay back then. My family was very wealthy. I’m not bragging. Well, I’m bragging a bit. We had a large house on a hill that looked out onto a lake front. One day, Freckles & I had finished having a picnic, and we were drinking some whiskey, and we decided to go for a swim. We were quite far into the water, when my foot got caught on some lakeweed. I couldn’t get to the surface. I thought, I’m drowning. And everything started to go dark.

Rango flies away.

<u>Inside.</u>

Briar stares at an open book, her eyes wide as though she is trying to move it with her mind.

Nothing happens.

She picks up a pen and a blank piece of paper.

Nothing happens.

She looks back and forth between the book and her blank page.

Finally, with colossal effort, she writes something.

She closes the book, picks up her writing.

BRIAR. “E te tō, e –“

No, it’s shit.

A knock on her door.

BRIAR. Go away!

Another knock.

BRIAR. Kei te haere au ki te māra.

<u>Garden.</u>

Vic sits alone, turning a coin over in his hands.

When Briar enters, he puts on a smile. She smiles back.

Vic signals "heads or tails?" to Briar.

Briar taps her head. He flips the coin – heads. He tosses the coin to her.

This is repeated five or six times, with both Briar and Vic becoming more surprised and giggly as it keeps coming up heads.

As this happens, Interpreter moves into the scene. She catches the coin in mid-air as Eddie.

Eddie & Vic hug.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Good morning! This is my friend Eddie.

EDDIE. Eddie. Vic and I used to do stand-up together.

BRIAR. Really?

EDDIE. I've always been youthful-looking.

BRIAR. Right. I'm Briar. Vic & I are um, death-mates.

VIC. *(NZSL)* What's her name?

EDDIE. (NZSL) B-r-i-a-r. Briar. Like a rose.

BRIAR. *(NZSL, to herself)* B-r-i-a-r.

VIC. *(NZSL)* She is quite prickly.

EDDIE. *(NZSL)* Oh, shut up.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Ask her – what is she writing? She's reading a book, and writing something, what?

EDDIE. Vic wants to ask what you're writing?

BRIAR. Poems. I'm translating a poem into te reo.

EDDIE. *(NZSL)* Interesting. She's reading poems. Translating them into Māori language. Writing.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Why?

BRIAR. Therapist told me to.

EDDIE. / *(NZSL)* Doctor's orders.

BRIAR. / They thought it would make me happy, give me something to keep my mind off the future. Mostly it just makes me feel like a failure.

Pause.

VIC. *(NZSL)* What?

EDDIE. *(NZSL)* Doctors say writing, keep busy, keep confidence up.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Yes. Nurses here say that dying people like us have to find our path to having a "good death." "Good death"? Strange idea, good idea?

EDDIE. *(NZSL)* Let me guess – your good death would be on top of a beautiful woman?

VIC. *(NZSL)* Perfect. At my funeral they'll say, "He died as he lived: fucking. Amen."

EDDIE. *(NZSL)* Great death. Bravo!

VIC. *(NZSL)* Thank you, thank you all, fuck you all.

EDDIE. (*to BRIAR)* Sorry.

BRIAR. It's okay, you can talk about sex in front of me.

EDDIE. Sure.

BRIAR. I'm nineteen.

Eddie shows BRIAR NZSL for nineteen.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Nineteen? Wow, you look younger.

EDDIE. He says wow, you look younger than nineteen.

BRIAR. It's true. I was in first year of uni when I got diagnosed.

EDDIE. *(NZSL)* True, nineteen. She says, when studying university first year, she sick.

VIC. *(NZSL)* First year of university makes everyone sick. The drinking, the sex, the film clubs, spew!

EDDIE. He says first year makes everyone sick. Drinking, orgies… He's being silly.

Briar isn't laughing.

VIC. *(NZSL)* I'm joking. Sorry.

Are you okay?

EDDIE. Hey, are you okay?

BRIAR. You know how … sex exists?

EDDIE. Me?

BRIAR. Both of you.

VIC. *(NZSL)* What? Is she talking about sex?

EDDIE. Um.

BRIAR. Well I don’t know how … sex exists?

EDDIE. Right.

VIC. *(NZSL)* What?

BRIAR. But I’d like to know how … sex exists?

EDDIE. *(NZSL)* She's saying, she's a virgin. / She wants to know what fucking is like, before she passes away. She's asking us to help her.

BRIAR. / But I'm dying? And everyone I know is really weirded out by that? … Discuss.

Vic & Eddie exchange glances.

EDDIE. We're both really flattered, Briar, but …

BRIAR. Ew, I don't mean you two. I'm asking you for advice, not a threesome. Jeez, up yourselves.

EDDIE. Oh, okay. Okay!

(NZSL) She does not want to fuck us. No.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Obviously. Hm. Your ideas?

EDDIE. Um. Tinder?

BRIAR. Forget it. / I never – don't even worry about it.

EDDIE. *(NZSL)* T-i-n-d-e-r. Doesn't matter.

(Speech) It's okay! You don't need to be embarrassed!

BRIAR. *(hiding her face in her hands)* I'm not embarrassed, you're embarrassed.

EDDIE. *(NZSL)* She says she's not embarrassed.

VIC. *(NZSL)* I know a really good joke that will cheer her up. There's an elephant –

EDDIE. *(NZSL)* Stop! Just stop.

(NZSL & Speech) Briar, why don't you tell us about the poems that you're translating. Is it for your family?

BRIAR. Kind of. Well, no. No, Dad's parents were raised with the reo but Dad didn't see the point in learning it. He

wanted me to speak English, to go to university and study management. He thought the old ways were a waste of time. And the arts – even bigger waste of time. So now, me doing this, both of those things together? He'd turn in his grave.

EDDIE. *(NZSL)* She says, writing not to give family. When her father was a child, father heard Māori language, never learned it. Father thought Māori language waste of time. Māori culture waste of time. Art, writing, reading: waste of time. If father saw this writing: father think foolish!

(NZSL and Speech) Your father passed away?

BRIAR nods.

VICTOR. *(NZSL)* They thought their own language was a waste of time? Wow.

EDDIE. Wow, your father thought his own language was a waste of time?

BRIAR. You don’t know, okay. I don’t know. I don’t know what made them think that. I don’t know what their teachers told them as kids to make them think their language was inferior. I don’t know what fucking horrible shit happened to make them believe that speaking English and acting white was the best way to survive in this country. That it’s safer to act like you don’t even care what iwi you’re from if you want to be invited to the local book club. I don’t know what kind of person made my parents believe that poison but I’m guessing they weren’t Māori. Do not judge my Dad.

Briar breaks into a cough.

EDDIE. Shit, sorry.

(NZSL) Māori language oppressed.

VICTOR. *(NZSL)* When I was at school I had to sit on my hands so I wouldn’t sign.

EDDIE. Vic says, when he was at school, he had to sit on his hands, because sign language was banned.

Briar looks at Vic: really?

Vic nods.

VIC. *(NZSL)* But I would just be the joker in lunch break, making everyone laugh. I could use my hands then. Pretend to do farts, pretend the teacher farted, no it's okay Teacher, I won't tell anyone you shat your pants, your secret is safe with me …

Eddie starts but quickly gives up on voicing for Vic as he riffs on a series of very silly physical gags.

Eddie and Briar laugh until Briar breaks into a cough.

EDDIE. Are you okay?

BRIAR. *(NZSL/ gesture & speech)* I'm fine. Just need a drink.

Eddie & Vic watch her leave.

EDDIE. *(NZSL)* Nice girl.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Yes. It's sad, she's so young. She has had her whole life taken away from her.

Eddie is looking around nervously.

EDDIE. *(NZSL)* I want to give you something.

VIC. *(NZSL)* A gift?

EDDIE. *(NZSL)* Yes, a gift.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Excellent. Thanks.

He holds out his hand.

EDDIE. *(NZSL)* No. It's difficult. I have to explain it to be able to give it to you. But I have to explain it in private.

VIC. *(NZSL)* She won't understand you. Just tell me.

EDDIE. *(NZSL)* I have an idea. Why don't I come back another day? Then we can talk.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Tell me now. You're being weird and nervous. Just tell me. Give me a clue.

EDDIE. *(NZSL)* A clue?

Everyone says I'm so young looking. But I'm older than you. I'm 306 years old.

VIC. *(NZSL)* No, you're not.

EDDIE. *(NZSL)* See you soon.

EDDIE walks away.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Hey! Hey!

He waves and stomps on the ground but runs out of energy quickly.

EDDIE comes back, flicks the coin she's been holding back to Vic, and leaves again, returning to her Interpreter position.

VIC flips the coin.

Inside.

BRIAR has a drink of water, and calms her coughing.

There's a knock on the door. She ignores it.

Her phone rings. She picks it up, sees the number and leaves it to ring, under a pillow to dampen the sound.

She looks into the audience.

BRIAR. I know you're there. You've been creeping out of my nightmares, haven't you?

Leave me alone, lady. I'm not ready for you yet.

Garden.

Briar enters, with a drink of water.

She gestures that Eddie has gone.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Yes, she was busting. Needed to shit. Had to run with her legs together.

Briar rolls her eyes but smiles.

They resume their game of heads and tails. Briar speaks between coin-flips, while Vic looks away so he doesn't realise she's speaking.

BRIAR. I've become scared of the dark again. (Heads.) Is that normal? (Heads.) Like when I turn off the lights at night (Heads.) I see this weird figure crouching on top of the furniture. (Heads.) This scrawny old woman, crouched silently, (Heads.) and she's just watching me. I can feel her there. (Heads.) I can hear her breath. And every time I reach for the light switch I'm scared that her bony hand will flash out and grab my wrist. (Heads.) And it frightens me because even though she's this tiny wizened old person, (Heads.) she has this ancient strength about her. (Heads.) Like she could snap my bones and suck out the marrow if she felt like a midnight snack. (Heads.)

Then my hand reaches the switch and I turn on the light and it's just my stupid room. (Heads.)

So I guess I'm trying to say that uh, I'm not sleeping much (Heads.) and I'm probably just rambling incoherently (Heads.) and I'm really glad you don't know I'm telling you this. (Heads.)

BRIAR disappears into her own thoughts.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Are you okay?

BRIAR forces a smile. Then very earnestly and clumsily, she performs the alphabet in NZSL.

Vic applauds.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Now you can tell me the Māori name for things.

BRIAR. What's this? *(NZSL)* Māori?

Vic spells "Māori".

BRIAR. *(Speech & NZSL)* Māori.

VIC. *(NZSL, very slowly with mouthing)* You. Tell. Me. Words. W-o-r-d.

BRIAR. *(NZSL)* Word.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Perfect. You tell me Māori word?

BRIAR. Why?

VIC. *(NZSL)* Why anything? It's interesting.

First: Bone. Word? Bone.

With each new word, Briar should repeat the Sign before giving the kupu. Although Vic may mouth English for the first few words, it should soon become just a dance between te reo Māori and NZSL. Once Briar has spelt the word, they both perform the sign while mouthing the kupu Māori.

BRIAR. *(NZSL-spelling and speech)* Koiwi.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Blood.

BRIAR. *(NZSL-spelling and speech)* Toto.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Skin.

BRIAR. *(NZSL-spelling and speech)* Kiri.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Dirt.

BRIAR. *(NZSL-spelling and speech)* Kirikiri.

They enjoy the relationship between the two words (kiri / kirikiri) in NZSL and Te Reo Māori.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Hair?

BRIAR. *(NZSL-spelling and speech)* Makawe.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Breath.

BRIAR. *(NZSL-spelling and speech)* Ha.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Thought.

BRIAR. *(NZSL and speech)* Mahara. (Whakaaro)

VIC. *(NZSL)* Air.

BRIAR. *(NZSL and speech)* Hau.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Sky,

BRIAR. *(NZSL and speech)* Rangi,

VIC. *(NZSL)* Clouds,

BRIAR. *(NZSL and speech)* Kapua.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Stars,

BRIAR. *(NZSL and speech)* Whetū,

VIC. *(NZSL)* Burning stars,

BRIAR. *(NZSL and speech)* Whetu ahi,

VIC. *(NZSL)* My cells, atoms, separating,

BRIAR. *(NZSL and speech)* Pungarehu marara,

VIC. *(NZSL)* Exploding and contracting,

BRIAR. *(NZSL and speech)* Pahu atu, ngahoro mai,

VIC. *(NZSL)* Forever.

BRIAR. *(NZSL and speech)* Ake, ake, ake.

They both gaze at the Signed universe.

Rango the Fly buzzes into first Vic's face, then Briar's. They both swat at it and their eyes follow Rango in the air as it flies away.

Lights fade and the imagined Rango becomes a small flickering spotlight. It buzzes around the space before it gets to Interpreter, who catches it.

3. Ahiahi

Interpreter opens their hand and blows into the flylight. The afternoon sun lights Briar, asleep with a book in her chair.

Interpreter exits.

Briar is sitting in the garden.

Eddie enters. There's a knock offstage and Eddie looks back. Someone offstage hands her a brown paper package.

EDDIE. Hey. Nurses said to give you this.

BRIAR looks at it.

BRIAR. I know.

EDDIE. Take it.

BRIAR. Nah. Thank you. Just put it on the ground.

EDDIE. What's your problem? Open it.

She reads writing on the package.

EDDIE. It looks like it's from your mum.

BRIAR. I know it's from her.

EDDIE. Oh.

Where's Vic?

You know you're in hospice right? This isn't exactly the ideal time for teenage righteousness.

Fine. Fan-cunting-tastic. I'm not here to see you anyway.

Let's sulk together shall we?

Eddie takes a coin from her pocket, and plays a silent game of heads or tails by herself.

Briar smacks the coin, mid-air, across the stage.

In retaliation, Eddie rips open the package. Inside is a battered exercise book.

EDDIE. Who's Hemi Muir?

BRIAR. Give it to me.

Eddie hands it over.

EDDIE. What is it?

BRIAR. Taonga.

Bedtime stories.

EDDIE. A. Kei te reo Māori.

BRIAR. Kei te kōrero Māori koe?

EDDIE. Ae, ka ako au he reo hau ia te rima tau.

BRIAR. E ki, e ki.

Briar takes a coin from her pocket and hands it to Eddie.

BRIAR. Aroha mai.

Vic enters.

BRIAR. E whia ō reo? /

EDDIE. Māku e mōhio.

(NZSL) Hello.

BRIAR. Hōha.

Briar becomes absorbed in reading the book of stories.

VIC. / *(NZSL)* Sorry I took so long. I'm on morphine for the pain, but it has made all my shits shrivel up into a little ball. Like a marble. This morning, I prayed, "Please, let today be the day I can do a shit!" It's one of life's great joys. So I sat on the toilet for ages. Waiting. Waiting. Then – idea! I'll help the shit out. So I put my finger up there. Nothing. I wriggled my finger up and up – and I could feel it. I tried to hook it with my finger. But it just spun around. Around and around on my finger like a tiny basketball.

No shit for me today.

EDDIE. *(NZSL)* Tragic.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Good story?

EDDIE. *(NZSL)* Good.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Yes. I'll keep that story for my final comedy show.

Eddie looks at Briar, who is reading the book.

Eddie and Vic begin signing at the same time.

EDDIE. *(NZSL)* / I want to talk to you –

VIC. *(NZSL)* / Is she okay? Sorry –

EDDIE. *(NZSL)* Yes, she is okay. Maybe. There, package from her mum. I tried to give it to her. She, "No!", sulking.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Teenagers.

EDDIE. *(NZSL)* Yes. Then, I unwrap, it was that book. Name written on book: H-e-m-i M-u-i-r-. Who?

VIC. *(NZSL)* I wonder: Her name is Briar Muir. Hey, idea – her sign name could be “Sting”. Like a thorn, like briar bush, it’s prickly. Ow! Also she’s very sharp, her mind is sharp, her look is sharp. Her ideas can sting you.

EDDIE. *(NZSL)* Okay. Briar/Sting.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Wait – going back – I said her name is Muir. Briar/Sting Muir. And I know her fight with the mum about her father. Father passed away many years ago.

EDDIE. *(NZSL)* Really?

VIC. *(NZSL)* Yeah.

EDDIE. *(NZSL)* Interesting. Sad life.

(Speech) Briar! Vic has made a sign-name for you.

Briar looks up from her book – she has been crying.

EDDIE. Are you okay?

BRIAR. Kei pai. He aha tāna?

EDDIE. Um. Ko tā māua ingoa mōu i te reo turi o Aotearoa.

(to Vic) Whakaatu atu.

Vic shows her the name.

EDDIE. Nā te mea, “Briar, he koi koe ā hinengaro, ā arero hoki.

BRIAR. Ngā mihi.

EDDIE. *(NZSL)* Ngā mihi.

VIC. *(NZSL)* My sign name is Vic/Comedy.

Briar repeats it.

BRIAR. *(to Eddie)* Me tōu?

VIC. *(NZSL)* Eddie/Boss.

EDDIE. He nui ōku ingoa.

BRIAR. Nē?

EDDIE. Kei te pēwhea tō pukapuka?

BRIAR. He ātaahua. He korerō mō te te mate. He tane, ko Rangi-rua, i whai atu, i whakahoki mai i tana wahine i Rarohenga.

EDDIE. *(NZSL)* She reading a story about death. A man save his sweetheart from death.

VIC. *(NZSL)* How?

EDDIE. Pewhea?

BRIAR. WELL. Ko Hine-maarama te whaiaipō o Rangi-rua. Kāre i kai i a ia ngā kai o Rarohenga. Nā konā, i hoki rātou ki te ao tūroa, i hoki Hine-maarama ki ōna kōiwi.

EDDIE. *(NZSL)* Woman went down into the underworld. Land of the dead. But! Saw food, didn't eat it. So, man able to take woman's spirit, carry it away, up, up, back to land of sunlight. Put back in woman's body.

VIC. *(NZSL)* And she lived? She was revived?

EDDIE. I ora ia? I whakaora ia?

BRIAR. Āe.

VIC is disturbed by this.

BRIAR. He aha ra te raru?

Eddie doesn't translate.

BRIAR. Eddie He korero otinga hari! Ka ora ia!

Briar and Vic are both looking at Eddie, who is silent.

Vic nudges her.

EDDIE. You know, I could sneak you out of here one night. We could go to a pub.

BRIAR. A pub?

EDDIE. Yeah. Find someone for you to have a one-night stand with.

BRIAR. At a pub?

EDDIE. Yes, a pub. What would you rather, a brothel?

BRIAR. No, I'd rather something meaningful.

EDDIE. Well you don't have time for meaningful, do you? You asked for help, I'm offering to help you.

BRIAR. I don't want that kind of help.

EDDIE. What do you want? Someone to rescue you from the underworld?

VIC. (NZSL) What?

EDDIE. (NZSL) Doesn't matter.

Pause.

VIC. *(NZSL)* I remember a story. My grandmother, Russian woman, R-u-s-s-i-a, Russian woman my grandmother told me.

Through the sequence, the world shifts to follow Vic's storytelling. Vic's story is told in a mix of NZSL and Visual Vernacular:

VIC. *(NZSL)* A man, a Soldier, had finished his duty to the army. He was walking along the road, and all he had in the world were three coins. One, two, three. Not much.

He’s walking and he meets a beggar. He thinks, “This could be me soon,” so he gives the beggar one of his coins.

He walks along and there’s a second beggar! Soldier says, “Okay, I gave the first beggar a coin, I should give you one too.” Here. Gives the beggar a coin. Walking along and there is a third beggar!

Solider thinks, “Well, I have to give this beggar a coin now, even though it’s my last coin.” He gives it to the beggar. The beggar says thank you and gives the soldier a magic sack. The beggar says, “Anything you want to catch, open the sack and tell your prey to get inside and you’ll catch them!”

Soldier doesn’t really believe the beggar but says thank you and keeps walking.

It begins to get dark and the soldier is hungry. “Why did I give away my coins – how will I buy food now?” He thinks. Then he spots some geese in the distance, and remembers his magic sack.

He opens the sack and tells the geese to fly into the sack so he can eat them – and they do!

The Soldier eats one of the geese and sells the others.

Time goes by. The Soldier becomes a rich and important man. He lives in a big house with a happy family.

But sometimes at night, when he tries to sleep, he feels something buzz past his face. He swats it away, thinking it is an insect. Is buzzes over his face again - but when he looks around, there's no insect in the room. More time passes.

One night – the Soldier is an older man, and he is in ill-health from giving his life to his country. He wakes suddenly in the night, thinking an insect is on him. But at the end of the bed is a little old woman. She is bent-over, her clothes are rags, and her eyes are shadows. The woman begins to crawl onto the Soldier's bed. The Soldier reaches under his pillow, and pulls out the sack, and traps Death.

He thinks he has won! He ties the sack up in a tree in the woods.

But the years go by in a world without Death. It becomes a bad world. Everyone grows old but does

not die. People still become sick but do not die. There is no rest. Food and water become scarce. People don't understand what has happen to the natural way of things and the Soldier is too ashamed to tell them about his mistake. He flips a coin to make his decision.

The Soldier's body is much weaker now. It takes him several days to slowly make his way to the woods. When he finally opens the sack – Death is too scared of him, and won't take him.

Everywhere. People are closing their eyes to the sweet release of death. So the Soldier sees the spirit of his son leaving the body. He begs his son, "Please, take me with you to the underworld!"

The son loves his father and feels sorry for him, so his son agrees. The Soldier hides in the magic sack and his son's spirit carries the sack to the underworld. But when his son crosses the river into the underworld, he is so excited to see all his ancestors and friends that he forgets all about his father.

The son drops the sack on the banks of the river of the underworld.

And the Soldier is still there.

Pause.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Anyway. I think, death is normal. It's okay.

Briar leaves.

EDDIE. *(NZSL)* How do you know that story?

VIC. *(NZSL)* My grandmother. What's wrong?

EDDIE. *(NZSL)* The story is wrong. It's true, but it's wrong. Not a soldier. Wrong. It was a stupid rich young woman. Not a magic sack. Wrong. It was a Key. And she never locked up the old woman.

VIC. *(NZSL)* All our grandmothers have different versions of the same story. It doesn't make them wrong.

Eddie takes an ornate wooden Key from her pocket.

EDDIE. *(NZSL)* I've done bad things in the world. What do I have to show? Money? You make people happy. You bring joy. That's a fair exchange.

VIC. *(NZSL)* What?

EDDIE. *(NZSL)* Watch me, like this. You take the key, press it into the ground. Anywhere. Anywhere on the bare earth. A door will open in the dirt. One life, one living person - you put them in through the door. Close the door. You do that once a year. You won't be sick any more. You'll live forever.

VIC. *(NZSL)* That isn't funny.

EDDIE. *(NZSL)* True.

She offers him the Key. He doesn't take it.

VIC. *(NZSL)* What's behind the door?

She offers him the Key again.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Pretend I believe you. You're saying you killed a person every year? For … two hundred years?

EDDIE. *(NZSL)* Two hundred and seventy-four years.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Why?

EDDIE. *(NZSL)* One day, long ago, Emma/Freckles and I were drinking and swimming in the lake. My foot got caught on something in the deep. I was too drunk to realise what was going on, so I got pulled under the water. And I suddenly found myself in a room, with myself. Another version of myself. She sat there, shaking her head at me. And there was a door, with a wind trying to softly push me through. I peeped through the door, and there was this woman on the other side. Crouched over. Her clothes were in rags. Skin and bones. Her eyes were shadows. I took a step forward to see her more clearly, and the wind whipped me through. The door slammed behind me.

Then there was just nothingness. No white light. No ancestors waiting for me. Just nothing.

Then the universe lurched, and I was on the banks of the lake, coughing up water. Emma/Freckles, my love, had saved me.

After I came back from that room under the lake, I could see strange things. Hear voices. Like echoes from another world. So when Emma/Freckles got sick, I knew how seriously sick she was. I knew she didn't have long to live, and I knew that there was nothing any doctor could do to save her. One night, I watched my love sleep, I saw the same woman in rags with shadows for eyes appear at the end of our bed. I could hear the rattle of her breath. I could smell the rot in her bones.

I grabbed that crone by the throat.

I've always been good at business. So we made a contract for one eternal life.

And I took the deal for myself. I was too scared to go back to that nothingness. I let my love go there. Alone. Not ready. Go.

I'm a coward. I'm giving this to you because I'm tired, I'm so tired.

Please, take it.

Vic takes the Key. Eddie seems to deflate.

EDDIE. *(NZSL)* Thank you. And congratulations.

She leaves.

Vic looks over the key.

VIC. *(NZSL)* She's crazy.

Interpreter enters, takes a coin from her pocket. She buries it in one pile of earth.

4. Kākarauri

Briar is looking over her father's exercise book. She turns the page, to find it blank. The book is only half-filled.

Something gives her a fright. Her eyes widen as she watches something invisible creep towards her. When it's at her feet, she swipes at it. Realising her hand can go through it, she swipes her hand through the invisible woman again.

She looks to the audience for help.

She picks up her pen and consulting her book of Blake poems, begins writing in it. Soon she reads aloud.

BRIAR. *(speech & clumsy NZSL)*

"E rango iti

Kei te mutu

Tō raumati takaro

Tōku ringa tōtōā."

(Fuck that sucks. It needs to rhyme.)

She scribbles a bit more, translating from Blake before continuing.

BRIAR. *(speech & clumsy NZSL)*

"Ehara tenei

He rango pēnei i a koe?

Ehara ranei

Koe he tangata penei ki tenei?

Ka kani noa

Ka inu, ka waiata noa;

Kia rere mai

Kei te inu, kei te kai :

Ā, taitai tētāhi ringa tōtōa

I tōku parirau, ae.

Me mea te mahara ko te mauri,

Te ngoi, te ha :

E, he maharahia

Ko te hemonga;

Me te mea nei

He rango au,

Ka mate au, kāore rānei.” *

Nah, that's *[makes fart sounds]*. "Me te mea nei …" um...

VIC enters, walking. BRIAR stares at him.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Hello.

Briar returns his wave.

VIC. *(NZSL)* How are you?

BRIAR. *(Speech & clumsy NZSL)* Kei te hikoi koe.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Yes! Strange. I woke up feeling much better, strong. Doctors were scratching their heads, very confused. The cancer seems to have grown wings and flown away. Maybe it's a miracle?

BRIAR. *(Speech & clumsy NZSL)* Ka pai.

Pause.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Doctors say, “Not sure what’s going on, we’ll watch you for a few days, then you can go home.” So I’m being spied on!

Pause.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Two books today! One for each eye? Joking.

Pause.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Your mum is here. She’s waiting inside, she seems friendly.

BRIAR. My mum?

VIC. *(NZSL)* I see her every day, she comes here. She sits and waits for you. She knocks on your door. She watches you sulking in the garden. You don’t have time to be angry, Sting/Briar! Ouch!

BRIAR. *(NZSL)* Sting, haha. Bzzzzz…

VIC. *(NZSL)* Oh no, a bee! Haha! Now, go on. Talk to her. It's simple.

Pause.

BRIAR. *(NZSL)* Car. Crash. Father. Dead. Passed away. Language, passed away. Mum: no. No Māori. No love. Me. Alone.

Briar gives a huge sigh. She looks old.

She drops her books to the ground and goes to meet her mother.

Vic picks up her books and looks at them. He reads the page with a post-it sticking out. It makes him smile.

VIC. *(NZSL)* A happy fly is flying around. Suddenly: boof! Dead. Why? Me. "Hey look at that fly, buzzing around. I'm going to kill it!" I smash it in my hands. Hooray for the hero! Fly-killer!

But then I wonder, me and the squashed fly, are we the same? Both die. We all die. So, what does it matter?

Pause.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Never mind, it's not funny. This book has terrible jokes.

He looks at the exercise book. Smells its pages. He looks offstage to Briar and her mother.

He takes coin from his pocket. With a look at the audience, he flips it and catches it on his hand. Vic looks at the coin, and nods, understanding.

He takes the coin and buries it in the second mound of earth.

The English subtitles turn off.

He exits offstage, getting weaker as he goes.

5. Te Pō

Briar walks from shadows into a beam of moonlight.

She feels the earth between her bare toes.

BRIAR. *(NZSL & speech)*

Ka pō, ka pō, ka ao, ka awatea,

Karanga ake nei te reo, e kui, tau mai, hikoi tahi ai.

Ki mata-nuku, ki mata-rangi,

Nau mai, tau mai!

From the shadows, Nameless Woman slowly makes her way to Briar's side.

BRIAR. *(NZSL & speech)* Koiwi. Toto. Kiri. Kirikiri. Makawe. Whakaaro. Hāora. Ha.

Briar inhales deeply and holds her breath.

She notices Nameless Woman.

Briar takes the Key from her pocket, and presses the Key into the third pile of earth. She turns it, and opens a door in the dirt. A dim light shines from behind the door. Briar takes the Nameless Woman's hand and they walk through the door together.

The light of Rango buzzes onstage and flies behind them, through the door just before it closes.

The Te Reo Māori subtitles run:

Rangi,

Kapua,

Whetu,

Wheta ahi,

Pungarehu marara,

Pahu atu, ngahoro mai,

Ake, ake, ake.

Blackout.

**The Fly*

Little Fly

Thy summers play,

My thoughtless hand

Has brush'd away.

Am I not

A fly like thee?

Or art not thou

A man like me?

For I dance

And drink & sing :

Till some blind hand

Shall brush my wing.

If thought is life

And strength & breath :

And the want

Of thought is death ;

Then am I

A happy fly,

If I live,

Or if I die.

--- William Blake

Chapter Three: Overview of the Script Development Process

I have placed the first draft of the creative practice before the following critical writing section so that references to characters and narrative elements are clear to the reader.

The first draft, *Bury Your Bones*, was written in 2015 without any significant consultation with either Deaf or Māori advisors. I then developed this script through regular workshops for eighteen months, before finalising the script and translating the captions to include in the final script in 2017: *Tanumia ō Kōiwi*.

I have laid out each dramaturgical element individually at first:

1. Deaf dramaturgy and writing for visual languages
2. Theatre Marae dramaturgy and writing for te reo Māori
3. Trilingual dramaturgy and writing with intersecting languages

Within these wider linguistic topics, I have narrowed down my critical investigations into elements of creative practice for the Deaf and Māori dramaturgies:

1. Theoretical frameworks
2. Case study of an established playwright's practice
3. Reflection on creative practice

The final script of *Tanumia ō Kōiwi* and the scene-by-scene analysis bring together all of these theoretical and creative elements. The cumulative

effect of this critical component leading into the final draft will give the reader a clear understanding of the dramaturgy employed in the final creative component, with the final analysis providing a concise investigation into the project's outcome.

The script development process itself took place over eighteen months. This involved four three-day workshopping sessions with myself and the actors. The workshops were about four months apart, depending on actor availability. Between the workshops I made changes to the script based on the findings of the previous workshop.

The structure of the workshops themselves was part of my research, and I have made notes about the development of warm-ups and exercises that I applied through the creative process, according to the cultural and linguistic focus of each individual workshopping session. Before embarking on this practical research I went through a thorough ethics application process with the University of Waikato Ethics Committee. This concerned obtaining consent from performers to use their feedback and work as material in my reflections, and to use images or video of them in my final thesis. As I originally intended to conduct focus groups from public performances, I also had release forms for audiences.

The author interviews were a significant part of this research, as I am contributing to a tradition of syncreticism and inclusivity that already exists. The playwrights I have chosen to interview, Hone Kouka and Kaite O'Reilly, are generating knowledge in their creative practice that supports and extends my own findings. I conducted these interviews mid-way

through my script development process, so that the interviews could contain discussions around the challenges and dramaturgical approaches of my own experience as well as the interviewee's.

I initially contacted each author with an invitation to be interviewed and information sheet. Fortunately both accepted my request: Kouka asked to respond in writing and O'Reilly asked to have an audio-recorded conversation. The complete interviews are included in the appendix.

The primary participants in my research were the three actors who workshopped the script with me. These actors were Cian Gardiner, a talented young Māori actor and playwright from the Waikato; Shaun Fahey, a Deaf comedian and storyteller in his fifties; and Leo Goldie-Anderson, a professional NZSL interpreter and dancer in their late twenties.

I had previous working relationships with each of the actors, and made sure to clarify the kaupapa and nature of the research before we began workshopping. They were all paid for their performance work from the University of Waikato's Funding for Postgraduate Research. This funding was also used to pay the rehearsal-room NZSL interpreters, who were Shannon McKenzie, Sandahl Matthes and Kimai Ross. It was also used to pay a koha to Moko-nui-a-rangi Smith, who was my tikanga and reo Māori advisor throughout the script development process.

As much possible, I have striven to make the script development as open and trilingual as possible, with each language and culture thoughtfully represented.

Chapter Four: Theoretical Frameworks for NZSL Dramaturgy and Practice

This is an overview of the theoretical frameworks I have referred to in focussing on the NZSL dramaturgy for my creative practice. These frameworks include the Social Model of Disability, the kaupapa of Deaf Gain, the creative practice of Kaite O'Reilly, the notions of heteroglossia and visual language dramaturgy, the structural framework of modernism, and the creative practice of kinaesthetic actor training.

I give an introduction to each kaupapa below, and discuss them in further detail and relation to my research in the following chapters.

The Social Model of Disability is a theoretical framework defined by Mike Oliver (*Disability Politics*). This model was a driving force for the disability rights movement throughout the UK in the 1990s, which nurtured and inspired many prominent artists with disabilities, such as Neil Shabin, Jean St Clair and Paula Garfield. The model posits that a lack of accessibility is what actually disables many people with physical impairments. When communities actively seek to make their institutions and services easily accessible to people with a variety of needs, then the social able-ism is addressed.

The international rise of forms such as Sign Poetry signify a shift in mentality since 1990s, toward the kaupapa of Deaf Gain. In terms of a bilingual theatre, this means that Sign Language and speech may work together in a variety of complex dramaturgies, rather than speech acting

as a crutch for Sign Language. In an example of syncretic theatre practice, both languages and their associated cultures (Deaf and hearing) are presented as equal but different.

There have been two significant instigators of Sign Theatre in Aotearoa in the past decade: Odd Socks productions and the Giant Leap Foundation. Both of these companies have worked in inclusive media, and striven to bring NZSL and Deaf performers into mainstream theatre. Recently the University of Waikato lecturer Dr Laura Haughey and her company Equal Voices Arts have been working with the Deaf community. I have been fortunate enough to participate in this work as a hearing performer. These three companies create a vital sense of visibility for NZSL and the Deaf community in Aotearoa theatre. I have learned first-hand from the audiences of the bilingual work *At the End of My Hands* (Equal Voices 2015 / 2016) that public visibility of a marginalised language is empowering to communities. Several times in the post-show forums, Deaf audiences expressed a sense of community pride and inspiration in seeing NZSL performed on mainstream stages.

My research follows the kaupapa of disability and Deaf performance practice which, as Kanta Kochar-Lindgren observes, aims to “create a synthesis between activism and aesthetics, particularly in order to use performance as a site of resistance to normative cultural representational and perceptual paradigms regarding the extraordinary body" (Kochar-Lindgren 420). I have particularly been drawn to the “Aesthetics of Access” kaupapa of the UK inclusive company, Graeae Theatre (2017). This aesthetic involves a playful approach to theatrical conventions of

accessibility including audio descriptions, captioning, and inclusion of visual languages. I have detailed specific examples from the Graeae production of *peeling* in the chapter about NZSL dramaturgical development.

NZSL has enormous performative potential, as it is inherently a language that lives in time and space. It is also interesting as a linguistic syncreticism of Pākehā and Māori cultures. NZSL originated in British Sign Language (BSL) and is still very similar – but the differences are largely in signifiers that are specific to Māori culture. For example, the BSL Sign for “Saturday” is the letter “S” with the lip-pattern “Saturday”. However in NZSL, the Sign for “Saturday” is the Sign “washing”, the same as in te reo Māori, “Rāhoroi”, or “Washing-day”.

Despite this exciting performative potential, there are no established playwrights working with NZSL in Aotearoa New Zealand. Because of this, in order to find a case study for Deaf Gain in creative practice, I looked internationally, and decided to focus on Kaite O’Reilly.

Kaite O’Reilly is a UK-based playwright at the forefront of inclusive dramaturgy. O’Reilly uses language as a key indicator of inclusivity in her work. Her play *peeling* is written for three physically disabled actors, and stretches the tensions between language and performed disability through her use of British Sign Language (BSL), Sign-Assisted English (SSE), audio descriptions and a spectrum of registers in English. O’Reilly’s willingness to confront difference and awkwardness in order to celebrate diversity is what makes her particularly relevant to my creative research.

Although O'Reilly's most well-known text involving Sign Languages is *peeling*, I chose her recent play *Woman of Flowers* (2014) as my case study for textual analysis. I chose this because, like my own creative artefact, it explores a single Deaf character's relationship to Sign as a metaphor for self-determination. It also is explicitly written for a variety of visual languages, a creative process which O'Reilly has written about in recent publications (*Moving (Across) Borders*, 2017). I am also interested in the text from a decolonising perspective, as O'Reilly is an Irish playwright, working in both English and BSL. *Woman of Flowers* is a modern adaptation of a traditional Welsh story - a culture and language that has its own historical relationship with English. The narrative of *Woman of Flowers* will be detailed in the following chapter.

The critical chapter on O'Reilly draws on my own textual analysis, as well as critical writings by O'Reilly and excerpts from an interview which she kindly granted me (full transcript is in the appendix 485 - 514).

O'Reilly's practice builds on the social model of disability. Key aspects of her practice that I have incorporated into my research are her use of captioning, her choice to write specifically for Visual Vernacular and her regular collaboration with Visual Language Director, Jean St Clair. O'Reilly has described her dramaturgical approach as "exploring what happens if everyone gets the same information, just not at the same time" ("But you know I don't think in words" 100).

This dramaturgy of complementary information is present in her use of captioning. She prefers to caption her work rather than have formal BSL

interpretation on-stage. This is a Deaf-led practice, and means that Deaf audiences have a slight advantage when the performance shifts into visual languages, as they are able to follow the English words from the captions, but also appreciate the difference and interpretation in performance.

O'Reilly's critical writings around visual language and captioning led me to the theatrical notion of heteroglossia – a term originating with Bakhtin which referred to as the linguistic discourse of the novel. Bakhtin observes how within a monologic text, the "social dialects, characteristic group behaviour, professional jargons, generic languages, languages of generations and age groups, tendentious languages, languages of the authorities, of various circles and of passing fashions" all branch out and layer upon each other to create a polyphonic impact when combined in a novel text (Steinby, 31), .

This notion has recently been re-appropriated by Marvin Carlson in his work *Speaking in Tongues: Languages at Play in Theatre.* Carlson uses the term to refer to the intersection of multiple languages, "in terms of reception, mimesis and the social, political and cultural investments of theatrical presentation" (Carlson 5). This refers to the cultural and social codes which may exist within a single language. I have found this framework especially useful when analysing and writing for visual language, which can appear quite simple but in fact contains many linguistic registers, tonal subtitles and requires absolute clarity of the narrator's perspective.

As I researched theatrical conventions in Deaf-led theatre, I discovered that there are strong traditions of syncreticism and heteroglossia throughout the history of Deaf theatre. I have referred to the work of the North American New Deaf Theatre and the UK's Graeae Theatre for practical examples of this when reflecting on heteroglossia in my own creative practice.

I have found the notion of heteroglossia particularly useful when differentiating between distinct visual languages, both in my own creative practice and in critical writing about O'Reilly. O'Reilly's recent work often clarifies the distinction between the three visual languages she scripts for:

1. British Sign Language
2. Sign Supported English
3. Visual Vernacular

British Sign Language, or BSL, is the official language of the Deaf in the UK. It has many similarities in grammar and vocabulary to other European languages (excluding French Sign Language).

Sign Supported English is the practice of speech and Sign being performed simultaneously. It is usually reserved only for performative purposes, as it requires preparation. Because Sign grammar and speech grammar are very different, the languages will often take turns rather than being performed simultaneously all the time.

The term "Visual Vernacular" is similar but distinct from the umbrella term

“visual languages”. Deaf performer and Visual Language expert, Jean St Clair describes the distinction between British Sign Language and Visual vernacular (or V.V.) so:

> Theatricalised BSL is based on BSL but taking on the visuality and expanding on it. Visual Vernacular is independent of English and BSL, apart from using iconic BSL signs. […] As V.V. is not ‘language-based’, the process is much more free. […] One way to use a comparison to V.V. is to watch cartoons, the set-up is similar. Wide, medium and close up shots of particular objects or a bird. For the close up, I would describe or act like a bird with facial expression, with the medium close up, I would use my arms to move like wings and for the wide shot, I would use my hand to show the bird flying away into nothingness.

(qtd in O’Reilly, “But you know I don’t think in words”)

It is clear from St. Clair’s description that Visual Vernacular itself contains several languages and physical dialects: mime, dance, and a filmic framing through the body. All of these aspects of Visual Vernacular, as well as BSL and SSE are contained within the phrase “visual languages”.

The theatrical practice of syncreticism is inherently modernist. It revolves around juxtaposing languages based on formal or thematic concerns rather than any sense of naturalism or verisimilitude (Carlson 180).This form-led narrative is a creative practice that my work often employs, and so I found that the journey of the language was enough to give the story richness, rather than complicating the dramatic narrative too much.

Tanumia ō Kōiwi is set in the hospice, mostly in a hospice garden, but is also set in the theatre, and in a metaphysical limbo between life and death. The self-reflexive nature of Briar's "Negated Pōwhiri" as well as the evolved characterisation of Eddie are distinctly Brechtian approaches to both Māori and Deaf dramaturgies. Ihab Hassan suggests that post-modernism "veers toward open, playful, optative, disjunctive, displaced, or indeterminate forms, a discourse of fragments, an ideology of fracture, a will to unmaking" (qtd in Carlson 151). This fragmentation and "unmaking" of both theatrical verisimiltude and linguistic sense are strong devices in the script.

The characterisation of Eddie is perhaps the most conventional, within the traditions of Deaf theatre. As Shakespeare and Watson posit, "[d]isability is the quintessential post-modern concept, because it is so complex, so variable, so contingent, so situated. It sits at the intersection of biology and society and of agency and structure. Disability cannot be reduced to a singular identity: It is a multiplicity, a plurality" (19). Rather than framing my work as post-modern, I have focussed on modernist and Brechtian conventions to play with this plurality in performance.

Plurality has proved to be a crucial framework not only in the textual dramaturgy, but also in the practice of script development and workshopping. The nature of script development with Deaf and hearing performers, with varied degrees of linguistic ability in each of the three languages that are being used, has resulted in a necessarily syncretic workshopping process.

In order to keep the group connected and our performances grounded, I have used kinaesthetic actor-training (or psycho-physical training) techniques. This was inspired by the inclusive practice I experienced first-hand through working as a performer in Equal Voices Arts, with a mixed Deaf and hearing group of performers. This ensemble, led by Dr Laura Haughey, used kinaesthetic warm-ups and physical improvisation as a means of developing narrative through primarily Deaf-led practice (Haughey, “Creating a Deaf and hearing theatre ensemble in New Zealand”). A guide for this practice is the work of UK director John Britton, and his theories of self-with-others and embodiment, often used for intercultural groups. Because of this, many of the exercises are designed to be languageless and to be inclusive of a variety of identities and abilities, as described in Britton’s *Encountering Ensemble*.

Each of the above theoretical frameworks is referenced in the following chapters, particularly in relation to the case study of O’Reilly’s bilingual work, *Woman of Flowers*, and the reflection on the NZSL dramaturgy in my own creative practice.

Chapter Five: “the space between the petals” : Kaite O’Reilly Case Study

O’Reilly’s creative practice has a uniquely holistic approach to dramaturgy. Although the case study I will discuss is a bilingual text, written for English and British Sign Language (BSL), secondary readings and an interview I conducted with the playwright reveals that she works with a much more complex linguistic spectrum.

The extradimensional nature of her work involves collaborating with a Visual Language Director during the rehearsal process as a form of authorship. I will discuss the ways that O’Reilly has embedded Deaf culture within her writing, including the paradoxical authorship of visual language. I will also discuss the notion of “heteroglossia” informing O’Reilly’s script being captioned in performance (and how she uses captioning as its own creative medium).

Deafness within allegorical stories has a history of either being presented as a deficiency (Deaf Robert in Evelyn Sharp’s *The Tears of Princess Prunella*) or a metaphor for a lack of self-awareness (the Indian folk tale, *The Three Deaf Men*). I will trace O’Reilly’s protagonist’s parallel relationships with Signing and self-realisation, as well as presenting O’Reilly’s explanation of these two relationships. O’Reilly’s multifaceted characterisation of a Deaf protagonist, combined with the subversive adaptation of a Welsh legend, creates a modern fable for Deaf agency.

Viewing the work through an intersectional lens, there seems to be a lack of any Welsh language and tikanga in O'Reilly's writing, despite telling an indigenous Welsh story in English and British Sign Language. Similar to Kouka, linguistic and cultural barriers are thematic motifs in O'Reilly's creative practice. In this chapter, I will discuss the implications of O'Reilly's syncretic adaptation of a traditional story to a decolonising Deaf context.

I conducted a Skype interview with Kaite O'Reilly over the course of an hour in May 2017. We spoke after exchanging emails regarding my research, and she agreed to my recording the audio of our conversation. A lightly edited transcript of the full interview is included as appendix 1 (480).

Dramaturgical Analysis of *Woman of Flowers*

Woman of Flowers (2014) is an adaptation of the Welsh legend of Blodeuwedd (literally “Flower Face”) – the woman who was magicked into existence out of flowers as a bride for a cursed man and is eventually transformed into an owl as punishment for falling in love with someone other than her husband. The narrative appears in the last of the Four Branches of the *Mabinogi*, a collection of traditional Welsh tales. O’Reilly’s Blodeuwedd, named Rose, is Deaf but speaks English and lip-reads fluently. She signs when she is alone, and the author’s note suggests that in her monologues there should be “moments when it is a fusion of visual and spoken languages” (O’Reilly, *Woman of Flowers* 14).

Through the course of the narrative, Rose (like the original Blodeuwedd) falls in love with someone other than the man she is “made” for. The myth of Blodeuwedd is revealed to be a fantastical distraction from the sinister hold that the farm’s patriarch, Gwynne, has over her. Both Rose and Lewis, the farm-hand, are revealed to have been “rescued” from the real world by Gwynne as young children, brainwashed, and kept in the isolated farm in the middle of a forest.

When she meets a young man, Graham, in the forest, she actively questions Gwynne’s stories about the outside world, and considers how to escape Gwynne’s farm. Gwynne has always told her that she is kept away from the rest of the world for her own protection, and so there are no locks or shackles physically holding her there. All that keeps her in Gwynne’s possession are the narratives of the woman of flowers, and of outside danger. Through her relationship with Graham, and retreating to her

private inner world of Sign Language and analytical fantasy, Rose comes to the realisation that she could leave the farm. She attempts to kill Lewis, but he survives and she blacks out, finding herself in the kitchen with her two captors. Gwynne desperately tries to weave new stories in which to trap her, but Rose breaks through them and leaves.

The original Blodeuwedd is finally turned into an owl as punishment for her betrayal of her husband. The heightened power of language throughout the text makes it conceivable that this has happened – her final monologue is accompanied by the call of owls as she continues through the forest to freedom.

The most powerful element of O'Reilly's retelling here is the use of Deafness. Rose is outwardly subservient and docile, read through a typically hearing understanding of her silence. However, we soon see that Rose is also watching everything, and reflecting on it in her own private language. What others perceive as her weakness is in fact her source of strength.

O'Reilly uses this narrative as a vehicle for giving agency to a marginalised linguistic community. However it seems ironic how thoroughly British this adaptation is. The relationship between Welsh literature and its "historical enemy", English, is a fraught one (Edwards 119). Elizabeth Edwards characterises the British view of the Welsh as "quaint, antique and yet faintly threatening in their otherworldliness" (Edwards 119). This fearful fetishization is a familiar tone in Pākehā Aotearoa literature, particularly in the portraits of Māori culture and people.

This description also fits the overall tone of *Woman of Flowers*, and particularly the characterisation of the hearing characters' understanding of Rose. Even the protagonist's name has been anglicised to convey a more familiar English Rose, rather than the original story's Welsh flower, a Meadowsweet.

There are many progressive parallels between *Ngā Tangata Toa*'s Rongomai and *Woman of Flowers*' Rose: the clearest being the character arc of self-determination achieved through negotiating linguistic barriers. However, the difference in the linguistic choices is significant. Both protagonists have a common linguistic enemy in English. Rongomai embodies an indigenous story, conducts herself according to Māori tikanga and expresses her truest self through te reo Māori. In contrast, Rose embodies an indigenous story, necessarily conducts herself according to Welsh tikanga, but there is a complete disjunction between the narrative aspects and O'Reilly's discourse.

It seemed odd to me that a practitioner so concerned with intersectionality would be so dismissive of the culture she was borrowing from. When asked about this, O'Reilly responded:

> I live in Wales, and there is a lot of tension between Wales and England still. But it's almost like - the English culture often shows its superiority to Welsh culture by ignoring it completely. And by ignoring the riches and the treasures that are there.
>
> (O'Reilly, *Personal Interview*)

Perhaps there is a different, very open approach to retelling legends in Wales that I am not aware of; regardless, I put this down to an opportunity to learn from O'Reilly's process and to do things differently in my own practice. It is worth noting here the distinction between the cultural contexts that O'Reilly's writing exists in. The UK Deaf theatre community is slightly different to Aotearoa New Zealand. O'Reilly first joined the United Kingdom's Disability Rights Movement in 1986. She worked as a performer for the pioneering inclusive company, Graeae Theatre (founded by disabled performer and academic, Nabil Shaban). Working in a bilingual piece with a Deaf performer, O'Reilly learned British Sign Language as well as Deaf culture and the history of the worldwide oppression of Sign Languages.

As she continued to work with inclusive companies such as Common Ground Sign Dance Theatre and The Fingersmiths in the 1990s, she developed her own bilingual creative practice. About this development, she writes:

> How can I, as a hearing writer, collaborate with Deaf practitioners without my language – which is also the central instrument of my practice – dominating, and subsuming BSL into a form of English, what a Deaf collaborator once called "a sort of braille for the Deaf"? How can we work without hearing culture being dominant? I soon saw that I would have to develop an alternative approach to form as well as content.
>
> (O'Reilly, "But you know I don't think in words" 102)

The Disability Arts movement at this time was born of the UK and US Disability Civil Rights movements – and so the creative practices from this time were founded largely on the Social Model of Disability. This model "understands disability as a social construct, reflecting the values, prejudices, and fears of a particular society. It is the physical or attitudinal barriers created here that are disabling, not the actuality of impairment itself" (97). Following the Social Model in script development means creating an accessible and supported environment for disabled and Deaf performers, and keeping a dialogue open with audiences about how accessible the work is to an inclusive audience.

Woman of Flowers, written and produced in 2014, was then offered into a fairly established culture of Deaf and inclusive theatre. Mainstream company, Forest Forge Theatre, commissioned the play. It was first produced at The Pleasance Theatre in London in 2014, before touring nationally. It was publicised largely as a vehicle for Deaf performer Sophie Stone, and reviewers praised the productions' contemporary treatment of "mythic elements" (*The Stage* 2014) .

However, as O'Reilly writes in 2017, Deaf culture is far from mainstream, still fighting off misrepresentations of disability, "attempting to subvert or critique negative representations of disabled and Deaf people as weak, psychotic, supernatural, "tragic but brave," or "sentimental caricatures" ("But you know I don't think in words" 96).

This ‘answering back’ is at the heart of the dramaturgy of bilingualism in *Woman of Flowers* – using Rose’s British Sign Language (BSL) to play on and subvert expectations of silence, femininity and victimhood.

Visual Language Dramaturgy in *Woman of Flowers*

O’Reilly’s use of dialogue presents BSL with deliberate distance from speech. I will discuss the uses and textures of speech used in further details below, but here I will concentrate on the spectrum of BSL and visual language that Rose’s dialogue is written in. This rich vocabulary is crucial to O’Reilly’s subversion of victimhood and Deafness through showcasing a silent verbosity.

O’Reilly’s pre-script note gives the following information about Rose’s dialogue:

> Rose lips-reads. She speaks English fluently and signs when private and alone. These ‘internal’ poetic soliloquys are predominantly in theatricalised British Sign Language / Sign Supported English (BSL/ SSE), although there are moments when it is a fusion of visual and spoken languages. I have indicated passages in the script that could be in visual language. There is much to be gained in beauty, variety and tempo-rhythm from using visual language and signed performance, particularly for this story – and an extra performative layer through portraying both Deaf and hearing cultures.
>
> (*Woman of Flowers* 13)

This description of Rose's linguistic versatility within visual language is a prime example of heteroglossia (Carlson 6). In terms of visual languages, this includes literal British Sign and more abstract Visual Vernacular (V.V.). Rose's eloquence within this linguistic spectrum is the foundation of her six monologues, and these are the structural spine of the play.

Each monologue is poetic, reflective and self-contained. The monologues never refer to external action or the play's other characters: only Rose herself and the natural world of the forest. This pleasure of introspection is a sly subversion of a Deaf character: her silence is not passive or submissive. She signs only for herself, with the audience represented as the forest.

The motif of silence as power is established first explicitly in the second half of the opening prologue:

> **Preset**
>
> **All.** […]
>
> A story is told by its pauses
>
> as much as its words
>
> by that hiatus between
>
> the breaths
>
> the blanks
>
> the space

between

the petals.

(16)

We are then introduced to Rose through her first monologue, and given the first showcasing of her syncretic visual language. This is followed by another subversion of silence (when Rose kills a chicken offstage), before Rose returns and not only engages in spoken dialogue fluently, but mocks a hearing man's inarticulacy:

One.

A farmhouse. Rose stands by a tin bath.

Projected text, visual language, and also possibly speech.

Rose. I fly in my dreams, over the farmyard and down towards the river. I can see the glint of a salmon leap in the moonlight. The water ruffles like a bird when it raises its feather in fright, then lays them smooth – calmed – sleek as a peacock's mirror. But there's no reflection of me in this glass – nothing but a harvest moon – so low and full and yellow and I'm afraid. Afraid of the moonface and dark clouds arching above her and I see she too is on the wing and she hunts alone.

Flurried chicken sounds. Lewis enters the kitchen from the yard, shame faced but defiant in his defeat. He looks at Rose, who exits.

The sound of chickens in fear and flight, off. They squawk. Silence.

Rose enters, carrying a dead chicken by its feet.

Rose It's done. *(No response from him.)* Wasn't difficult. *(No response.)* Get it by the neck and –

Lewis - Don't.

Rose So it does talk.

(17)

Here O'Reilly introduces a secondary stream of syncreticism: the intersections of visual language, speech and silence.

Rose's bilingualism allows us to see her true, complex self – her expression in English is coarse and aggressive, but her signing is delicate, full of primal yearning, and otherworldly. O'Reilly also uses Rose's relationship with sign language and her lack of memory about how she learned English to create a sinister sense of erased identity. When her lover questions her about this, Rose simply tells the audience: "I'm like this because flowers don't have ears" (59).

When I interviewed O'Reilly about her preference of writing for visual languages, she explained, "It's somewhere else, in a different part of the brain. […] like Oliver Sacks when he goes on about different topographic space in the brain. When you're using visual language, sign language or manual language or characters (if you're working in Chinese or Japanese),

it's a whole different part of the brain than the linguistic spoken language centres" (*Interview*).

Returning to the thematising of linguistic barriers, the difference in characterisation between O'Reilly's adaptation of Blodeuwedd as a primarily English writer, can be compared to the characterisations of Welsh writer Emyr Humphreys, who draws on the myth frequently in his novels. Diane Green asserts that any form of mobilizing indigenous myth is a "strategy of liberation" from a decolonising perspective (7). This supports O'Reilly's approach of re-appropriating the story for a Deaf narrative as a means of celebrating the Welsh narrative "treasures" that are often overlooked.

The Welsh novelist Emyr Humphreys is similar to Hone Kouka, in that his work often concerns indigenous identity, and the guilt that he feels in writing primarily in "the language of the oppressor", English (qtd in Green, 11). However as Green has observed, Humphreys' frequent retellings of Blodeuwedd in his *The Land of the Living* series use the myth as a device to subvert and criticize the British Empire and its literary traditions.

Green argues that by celebrating the promiscuous aspects of the Blodeuwedd character in his *National Winner*'s character Amy, Humphreys uses the myth to evoke the identity of the Welsh Mother Goddess. Green goes on to emphasise the importance of strong female heroines in Celtic myth – and observes that in continuing this tradition, combined with Amy's overt sexuality, Humphrey is asserting the strength of a Welsh national identity in the face of Britain's two core belief systems: Christianity and

patriarchy (Green 22). This characterisation is repeated in Humphreys' protagonist Meg Pritchard in *Unconditional Surrender* (1996).

Humphreys has been writing since the 1970s, and is a prestigious national figure in Welsh literature. It seems natural then that to the primarily Welsh readership of Humphreys' acclaimed work, the myth of Blodeuwedd would be synonymous with fictional representations of Welsh national identity. Although I agree to an extent that making the Welsh myth visible could be a "strategy of liberation", it suggests to me a lack of self-awareness as a UK writer for O'Reilly borrow the culture's story but omit the culture itself in her discourse. I imagine that it would feel very much like invisibility to a Welsh audience. As Gilbert and Tompkins observe, choosing "a language (or languages) in which to express one's dramatic art is, in itself, a political act that determines not only the linguistic medium of the play but, in many cases, its (implied) audience as well" (168).

Blodeuwedd and Deaf Identity

With this in mind, we may understand that *Woman of Flowers* was written for a Deaf and hearing English audience.

Like Humphrey, O'Reilly uses the sexuality of the Blodeuwedd archetype to criticise patriarchy. However, instead of also criticising Christianity or British culture, O'Reilly adapts the narrative to criticise hearing culture instead. I have mentioned O'Reilly's interest in the intersections of speech, visual language and silence.

This use of silence as a non-verbal strategy is critical to Rose's characterisation. A common social misconception of a Deaf person's

silence is that of ignorance or inarticulacy. O'Reilly employs a play on performed silence in Rose's two-part characterisation: we see her 'muted' self as she survives in a hearing environment, through her coarse and aggressive speech. Her Signed monologues then allow her to 'speak' truly through the subversive discourse of visual languages. Rose's linguistic subversion against her muteness is extended by her frequent shifts into V.V. as she moves away from any form of normative expression and embodies her text even when both her languages are essentially muted (Gilbert and Tompkins 190).

O'Reilly acknowledges that the myth of Blodeuwedd was just a starting point for *Woman of Flowers*. Inspired by stories in the news of kidnappings and women being kept captive through fear and manipulation O'Reilly began putting the mythical and the modern together (*Personal Interview*). Rose's Deafness was central to the story from early development. O'Reilly explains:

> It felt important for me to have [Blodeuwedd] as a Deaf female character. If she's deemed to be a very vulnerable or weak character, I wanted to actually show that by being Deaf, it gives her tools. She can lip-read. Also because she would have been abducted after the age of seven, she would have been learning Sign Language before that. She's beginning to make sense of the world around her, through her own language and therefore through her own identity. … [I]t was also about showing the power that comes when the identity, and the understanding that can come from your own culture - and in this case of course it's her Deaf

> experience. Her Deaf culture. Her way of expressing. And so for me that became very very important.
>
> (*Interview*)

This approach to Deaf characterisation evokes O'Reilly's sentiment of "answering back" against ableist representations through narrative (*But you know I don't think in words* 96). A significant aspect of this is representing Rose's sexuality. This is complicated by the implied sexual abuse that Rose survives at the hands of both Gwynne and Lewis; any sense of victimhood is countered by presenting a positive sense of sexual autonomy for Rose as a Deaf woman in her attraction to Graham. Discussing her departure from the original story, O'Reilly explained:

> So, in the original, Blodeuwedd is meant to be an obedient little handmaid that is there to serve her husband. But actually, my question was always, what happens when you feel desire for the first time? What happens when you want a life different from the one that you've been made for?
>
> So in the original, Blodeuwedd has agency in a negative way, because in fact she ends up becoming a murderer. But at the same time, I wanted to explore a way for a female [in that position] to get agency. And they kind of parallel, the narratives, especially if you know the original, you can see a parallel with somebody that starts being aware of her own desire for the first time. That starts to question where she comes from. Somebody who decides that actually, she wants to take control.

(*Interview*)

A Door Made of Words

O'Reilly also spoke about wanting to create a theatrical world made of words, and to explore how a person may be trapped by language. Naturally, this connects to Deaf agency and the wider visibility of Sign. One of the clearest examples of this in the text is the language used to describe the door in and out of the house where Rose is captive.

As Lewis makes explicit to Rose, she is not physically restrained to stay on the farm in the forest. However, the outside world is constantly reinforced as terrifying and dangerous, so that this rhetoric of fear creates a barrier. When Rose admits to Lewis that she fantasises about running away from the farm, he belittles each step of her fantasy of the outside world. Similarly, when Rose expresses even mild discontent at her living situation, Gwynne pontificates on how fortunate she is to be on the farm, where she is regarded as a "gift", whereas in the outside world, she would be "nothing. Unimportant. Nobody knows you're here. Nobody cares. They'd step over you if you fell down in the street" (*Woman of Flowers* 53).

So, although Rose is told that "[t]he door is always open", the physical truth of this is unimportant – it is the words holding her captive (53).

Rose's first meeting with Graham is on this linguistic barrier: she is on the boundary of the forest where the outside world overlaps with her word-prison; and they are between languages, as they observe each other in

their respective languages and communicate somewhere between speech and Sign, as well as between magic and real.

Graham's disbelief in the woman of flowers story, then, begins to unlock the way out for Rose. This spoken exchange is during their third encounter, amid Graham's poetic reflection on the beauty of the forest:

> **Rose.** Why trees?
>
> **Graham.** I like them. I study them – and who they give shelter to. Walking through just now – this canopy – a cathedral of trees, breathing out, absorbing in … It's alive. If you listen with your blood, you can feel the pulse of its great heart.
>
> **Rose.** You don't talk like the others.
>
> **Graham.** You're not the first to tell me that.
>
> **Rose.** I'm told I'm made from flowers of the oak.
>
> **Graham.** I could almost believe that.
>
> (48)

In this exchange, we see Graham's words undoing Gwynne's word-magic, two-fold: first, he does not speak condescendingly to Rose. Although she is lip-reading, he speaks with a wide and creative vocabulary, and with complete emotional honesty. Compared to the functionality and simple coldness of Lewis and Gwynne's English, Graham's speech is heady and romantic. He trusts that she will understand what he is talking about,

because he has no negative presumptions about her Deafness. Significantly, he wants her to understand how he feels – his communication's intention is pure, compared to Lewis and Gwynne's ongoing agenda to keep Rose uninformed and powerless.

Secondly, Graham's response, "I could almost believe that", plants the seed of doubt about the Woman of Flowers myth. The unnamed sense of discord between Rose and her captors finally finds its mark – and she begins to undo the world of words keeping her imprisoned.

In her final speech to Gwynne, she repeats a variation of his own words back to him, "The way is open." However, as she performs this in BSL, thereby controlling the form of the narrative, she makes it true – she brings his false promise into a physical reality through the embodied linguistic dimension of a visual language:

> **Rose.** The way is open. And I'm walking out.
>
> *A way through appears. She moves out.*
>
> (67)

This "door", created and locked through English language, unlocked in the liminal space between languages, and opened with Sign Language, signifies the stages of Rose's journey toward self-realisation and agency as a Deaf woman. Rose's final triumphant farewell in British Sign

Language / Visual Vernacular also demonstrates the suitability of visual languages to theatrical storytelling.

The space between petals: the side-text spaces between BSL, speech and subtitles

I have discussed above the use of syncretic visual language employed by O'Reilly in the characterisation of Rose. It is also significant that Rose is a fluent lip-reader and speaker, conforming to an oralist understanding of what Deafness should be (that is, an ability to assimilate into a hearing world despite one's Deafness).

Although Rose's journey towards freedom may be traced through her relationship and confidence with BSL, another part of her strength is this fluency in the hearing world. The regular juxtapositioning of speech and BSL gradually unveils the oppression of Deaf culture through the common hearing cultural practice of refusing to learn Sign. Through limiting Rose's linguistic access to the world, Gwynne (and his incidental accomplice Lewis) embody the theory of the Social Model of Disability: that is, they choose to disable her by maintaining the linguistic barrier between speech and Sign. This performed binary of speech and Sign strengthens Rose's non-verbal communication, and the relationship between speech and power exhibits the 'muted' nature of Rose's captivity. The first time we see Gwynne catch Rose signing defiantly, he scolds her: "Did you just do that thing with your hands? … It isn't allowed." (39).

Later, when Gwynne belittles Rose's desire to be free, and more or less admits to kidnapping her, he tells her that the lie about her being made of flowers is his gift to her. She replies:

> **Rose.** *(signs)* I don't want it.
>
> **Gwynne.** *(signs)* Be careful.
>
> **Rose.** *(signs)* Me? No. You be careful.
>
> (56)

This single moment of Signed dialogue has several possible readings. The *BSL Sign Bank* defines the sign for "be careful" as using both hands with index fingers extended, pointing first to one's eyes and then dropping the pointed hands outward. It is a fairly gestural sign, which Gwynne is possibly only using by accident – perhaps intending to gesture something more like "I'm watching you", and thinking that Rose's response in fact means, "No, I am watching you".

A second possible reading is more sinister: that this single line of Signed dialogue by Gwynne brings the entire story together, breaking the mystery of Rose's learned Sign Language. We are presented with a probable timeline: Rose was Deafened around age seven (because, as Graham points out, she has excellent spoken language so she must have developed enough to have retained it) but was Deaf for long enough to learn BSL before being kidnapped. When he abducted her, Gwynne learned a little BSL by watching her, but did not encourage Lewis to do the same, as a means of keeping her muzzled and reliant on him. He has

therefore actively nurtured an ignorance of Sign and Deaf culture as a means of oppression.

The simplicity of his single use of Sign, whether accidental or intentional, reveals a brief moment of linguistic vulnerability for Gwynne. In both possible readings, Rose turns Gwynne's threat back on himself – setting the precedent for using his word-magic against him in her final departure. This section of dialogue gives us the first glimpse of understanding that Rose's ability to overpower Gwynne comes from her ownership of her Deafness.

O'Reilly has discussed her work's intercultural nature (that is, in this case, between hearing and Deaf cultures) as decidedly inclusive rather than divisive:

> As a dramatist working across cultures, I do not seek to create rifts in the audience, but I am keen to bring the audience's attention to what could be considered linguistic and cultural privilege, or sensorial hierarchy. As a dramaturge, I am interested in exploring what happens if everyone gets the same information, just not at the same time.
>
> ("But you know I don't think in words" 8)

This dramaturgy of complementary information is also present in her use of subtitles (also called captioning). O'Reilly's dramaturgical devices and creative practice overlap here.

The English captions for Rose's monologues would appear as they do in the script. However, in performance, the visual language versions of the monologues were developed to be independent pieces, workshopped with the support of Visual Language Director Jean St Clair. Interviewed, O'Reilly recalled developing these sequences with herself, St Clair and performer Sophie Stone (playing Rose):

> So basically the three of us would get together and I went, Here is the text. I don't want a translation of it. And they're going, Thank you, because it would be impossible. It wouldn't make sense. It would just not be language that leads itself to visual representation.
>
> …
>
> So we had the captioning still with my English language text, the same as appears in the published text. Because, we liked the idea that there could be more going on from an audience point of view. Even if you're encountering visual language for the first time, and if you know English, you're looking at the captioning from my poem, and you're seeing something very different happening simultaneously. Because I don't talk about stags, I don't talk about the stag running through the forest, and how we take its wonderful antlers and make that somebody's ribs.
>
> (*Interview*)

Carlson describes captions as "an alternative communicative channel operating outside of the illusory world of the stage", and discusses

captioning as a heteroglossic device to expand the meaning of a theatrical performance (Carlson 200). He goes to specify that for the device to "keep an audience conscious of its extradimensionality", the style of captioning needs to "be subjected to a kind of defamiliarization, encouraging spectators to recognize it as something other than an accepted convention, and a transparent conveyer of meanings identical to those expressed in another language by the actors". This defamiliarisation, the space between captioned language and visual language, has particular strength in Deaf dramaturgy.

The collaboration between playwright and Visual Language Director (as opposed to Visual Language Director and play director) is a unique part of O'Reilly's creative practice. The relationship suggests that scripted Visual Vernacular requires a co-authorship outside of the written text. Although O'Reilly's script specifies when the protagonist Rose should shift between literal BSL and heightened visual language, the full extent of Rose's linguistic syncreticism develops off the page. This indicates a Deaf-culture led practice, and highlights the paradoxical nature of the hearing practice of writing text for a language that cannot be truly transcribed. Although the dramaturgy of the written work is decidedly bilingual, the nature of the work when performed includes a much wider linguistic spectrum. Speaking about her collaboration with Jean St Clair and the metatheatrical spaces that they create in, O'Reilly has written that "Benjamin Lee Whorf's claim half a century ago that a different language is a different reality was never more acute and apt" ("But you know I don't think in words" 105).

This is a use of heteroglossia as a theatrical modernist effect – juxtaposing two linguistic versions of the same concept next to each other in performance, in order to create a syncretic, multidimensional effect.

It is fitting that a linguistically complex work is the result of such a unique and multifaceted creative practice. The syncretic performance dimensions of visual languages, speech, and captioned text, all channelled and refracted through a seemingly simple coming-of-age story have influenced my research, both on and off the page.

Chapter Six: Influence of Kaite O’Reilly on My Creative Practice

O’Reilly’s creative practice has influenced my research in two significant ways: the prominent dramaturgy of captioning, and her use of a Visual Language Advisor. These were both concepts that I was loosely engaging with but both have now become strong points in my creative practical research.

Originally I had envisioned producing two distinct versions of the script: one written to include formal interpretation (in the forms of an integrated NZSL interpreter as well as English and te reo Māori subtitles), and a second version, written to integrate the three languages without formal interpretation. After reflecting on O’Reilly’s practice, I concluded that this second version would either:

1) Need to include a lot more NZSL, therefore undermining the trilingualism and importance of spoken te reo Māori, or

2) Actively exclude Deaf audiences from sections of the story, particularly distancing them from Briar’s relationship to te reo Māori.

Because of this reflection, I restructured the overall shape of my creative research to include creative practices that affirm inclusivity, rather than treating inclusivity as an obstacle to creative freedom. This involves treating the English and te reo Māori captions as creative side-texts in their own right. I had also hoped to film a full-length NZSL version of the script for complete Deaf accessibility, but was unable to cover the costs required for the extensive hours with an NZSL interpreter, filming and

editing which would be required. Instead I have a patchwork of videos from the development period, some of which I have included in the appendix.

During our interview, O'Reilly observed: "I think [the Deaf audiences] liked the fact that it was captioned. I think they liked that when we did use the visual language sections, it was clearly Deaf culture-led. […] Even if you're encountering visual language for the first time, and if you know English, you're looking at the captioning from my poem, and you're seeing something very different happening simultaneously".

This is a use of heteroglossia as a theatrical effect – juxtaposing two linguistic versions of the same concept next to each other in performance, in order to create a syncretic, expanded narrative effect.

Tanumia ō Kōiwi includes the captions for performance as part of the creative text. Although this is not exactly what O'Reilly does in her scripts, the concept came from discussion of her practice in staging her plays. She uses captions as a creative "parallel text", particularly in relation to visual language, which she develops with her Visual Language Director. She describes the effect of having both languages not as "a translation, but what they actually do is a sort of a telling."

In *Tanumia ō Kōiwi,* I have captured the three strands of "telling" in each language as much as is possible in written format. The traditionally formatted script represents performed and visual languages. Through O'Reilly's influence, the captions set to the side of the script are not translations, but rather tellings of the performance text.

As I have mentioned earlier, I had hoped to eventually utilise Shaun's NZSL and Visual Vernacular expertise in crafting the NZSL filmed script. This was after I had attempted to script sections of the NZSL dialogue in Gloss, a written form of NZSL mostly used by linguists. Below is an extract from my report from Workshop #2:

> One of the first findings was that Gloss was only marginally better for a Deaf performer than English. Shaun still struggled a bit with the monologues, as he was still essentially having to translate them into NZSL as he read. At one point, he noted that it wasn't written in very good English.
>
> I explained that I had tried to write it in something closer to NZSL, and asked Shaun what written format he would prefer – Gloss, or English? He replied: "NZSL, please".
>
> (Lodge *Workshop #2 Report*).

In the same way that tikanga Māori has informed the dramaturgical structure of the performance narrative, it follows that the directions for production style should be informed by a Deaf-culture lead kaupapa. This means that parts of the visual language performance remain off the page. However, in *Tanumia ō Kōiwi*, I have pursued a new direction which O'Reilly briefly mentioned at the end of our interview, which was writing the text as "following what the visual language is saying. […] The visual language will come first, then I'm going to write text which we will caption, which will run parallel to the primary text. And the primary text is going to be visual."

I decided to investigate this approach to script development in my workshops – using the text of *Bury Your Bones* as a provocation, and then developing the script primarily in visual languages, before writing anything down. This meant that the actors and I were often collaborating, but always with final Visual Language Direction by Shaun. My collaborative process with Shaun drew direct inspiration from O'Reilly's use of Jean St Clair as a Visual Language Advisor. O'Reilly stressed the importance as a hearing artist in giving Deaf artists "visibility and status. […] I always try to say that they're my collaborators". In my creative practice, this included consulting him in conjunction with the rehearsal interpreter in all questions of visual language dramaturgy. I will discuss examples of this in the following chapter.

Because of my relatively poor NZSL, an interpreter was necessary for read-throughs and critical discussions of the script. Although this was immensely helpful, the workshopping experience did highlight to me the difference between linguistic and creative thinking, particularly in terms of critical feedback. As I have detailed in the following chapter specifically about the NZSL Dramaturgy, some interpreters would become fixated on linguistic details and grammatical rules rather than using language for successful emotive effect.

In comparison, Shaun was essentially doing the work of a Visual Language Advisor from the second workshop onward, providing NZSL and visual language guidance combined with a strong understanding of the creative process and form. In an early draft of the script, Vic (Shaun's character) opened the play with the following monologue in NZSL:

VIC. *(NZSL)* This is what I see:

A huge lake. The water is still. Then: plink! Me, a tiny pebble, hits the surface of the lake.

Briar's hands begin to shimmer in a wiri.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Where the pebble hit, I send out ripples in the water, slow, fast, big, tiny, out and out. Somewhere else on the lake, other pebbles drop in too, and send out their own ripples.

Ripples from here clash into ripples from there, making beautiful shimmering new patterns. The light dances on my waves.

Are you watching? It's beautiful. Somewhere in my gut I worry that no-one is watching. All the while I'm sinking down, down, down. Until: plink!

Me, a tiny pebble, hits the floor of the lake. And I lay there, my waves calm and distant. I lay there at the bottom of the lake with an infinite expanse of identical pebbles. Still. Vast. So still I can't be sure that I really exist. I reach for the light switch –

(*Bury Your Bones* 26 – 27)

First, we worked with an NZSL interpreter to develop clarity around the literal translation of the monologue (which, again, the interpreter had linguistic problems with). Then I left it with Shaun, asking him to find a way

of performing the most important parts of the monologue with as little formal language as possible. We filmed what he developed it into and I did my best to transcribe it into a DIY Gloss text:

VIC. *(NZSL)* I see what:

Huge lake.

Water still.

Then, me, a small pebble,

drop into lake

water goes out, out

Behind him, in a different space, Briar's hands begin to shimmer in a wiri.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Big waves

Then, drop:

Another pebble

Waves

Another pebble

Waves

My ripples, ripples from others, mix together.

Light shines on ripples.

You watching?

It's beautiful.

I feel worry, people nothing watching.

But beautiful light on water, waves.

Pebble, me, sinking down

Then hit the floor, still, rest.

Around me more pebbles same

All still, rest.

Still alive? Don't know.

Me switch on light.

(*Bury Your Bones Second Draft* 3-4)

Eventually the sequence was removed from the text, in order to keep the narrative focus on Briar and to make the opening sequence more reminiscent of a pōwhiri. Regardless, this is a clear example of the Deaf Gain that Shaun brought to the process as a creative contributor and an expert on visual language. Even as a transcription of the NZSL, the simplicity and elegant poetry that he brings is evident. In the following

chapter I will discuss Shaun's role in developing the story of Soldier and Death with particular reference to his visual language direction.

The characterisation of my protagonist has been influenced by the parallel relationship to language as whakapapa (for my protagonist, te reo Māori) and self-realisation in O'Reilly's work. In the closing moments of *Tanumia ō Koiwi*, Briar's final karanga, using language to summon a way out was influenced directly by Rose's final action of opening of the door in the air.

I was also influenced by the moment of Gwynne's signing and the gap between Sign and speech. I am interested in presenting a hearing person being at a linguistic disadvantage in a high-stakes section of dialogue, and the vulnerability that this reveals in a character. Whereas Gwynne only uses BSL once, as a threat, I have used this device repeatedly throughout my protagonist's journey: notably Briar's broken-NZSL description of her father's death, and her surreally fluent visual language accompanying her final karanga.

Finally I was influenced by my analysis of O'Reilly's text through a decolonising lens. Although I agree with her argument that visibility must come first, it still seems to me that there was a missed opportunity to involve aspects of the Welsh language, whether in speech or visual languages. I feel acutely aware of the oppressive nature of omitting an indigenous language onstage after Māori friends and collaborators have repeatedly pointed out te reo Māori's invisibility in contemporary theatre. This has strengthened my conviction that to incorporate intersectionality

into creative practice, it must guide both the story and the performance discourse.

O’Reilly’s creative practice has informed my research by making it richer and more actively inclusive.

Chapter Seven: Creative Practice: NZSL Development in Takitoru Dramaturgy

I have structured this chapter more or less following the chronology of the creative process. I will cover the pre-production decisions and early development techniques that I employed in specific relation to New Zealand Sign Language and my goal of honouring Deaf culture.

In the second section, “Workshopping Creative Practice”, I describe the script development process with a focus on the NZSL dramaturgy, including the theory of my approaches and examples from the workshops.

The final section, “Dramaturgical Strategies for Visual Languages”, details the dramaturgical choices I made for the NZSL in the Final Draft of *Tanumia ō Koiwi*. It is a reflection on the cumulative findings from my creative research.

As I have mentioned above, I had also hoped to also execute a final NZSL video of the full script, as we found video recordings such an important tool in our cross-cultural script development. Unfortunately finances made this impossible, although I hope to pursue this technique in future creative endeavours.

Casting

Collaborating with the Deaf performer, Shaun Fahey, was one of the primary inspirations for my creative research. I had earlier worked with him as a fellow performer in the bilingual NZSL / English work *At the End of My Hands* and had been impressed by his range and ability. I knew that I

wanted to write specifically for him and his rich spectrum of physical performance skills – showcasing his comedic strengths but also the more complex Visual Vernacular in his dramatic storytelling. From the first draft, I was writing Vic's role for Shaun, and had an abundance of ideas to try out with him. For dramaturgical reasons many of his Signed sections were cut down (to focus the action on the protagonist, Briar). The selection process for which of these sequences would stay developed into the "Journey from Literal to Abstract" that I have detailed below.

Shaun was an extremely patient and generous performer, and the origin of the "Poem" section is based on my own experiences with Shaun teaching me NZSL when I was first working with the Deaf community (Lodge, *Tanumia ō Koiwi* 249 – 404).

I had originally written the role of Eddie for myself to play, but knew that this would not be realistic for the script development process. I had met Leo Goldie-Anderson, an NZSL theatre interpreter, during the Wellington season of *At the End of My Hands*, and was impressed by their stage presence and performative range. I discussed my research with Leo, who told me that they were in fact learning te reo Māori, and was themself working on trilingual stand-up comedy material. Leo's fluency in NZSL made workshopping the scenes with them and Shaun go smoothly. Originally I had very little workshop time with an interpreter booked, but it became clear very quickly that we needed someone in the room whose sole focus was interpreting so that Leo could focus on their role as a performer. The balance between creative input and interpreted input was a tricky one, which I have detailed further below.

Unfortunately English: Captioning and Scripting

A major alteration made in the NZSL dramaturgical development was around my use of captioning. In my original creative practice, I planned to have two inflections of the same narrative: one with formal interpretations between all three languages and one without. I had originally planned to note the dramaturgical devices required for each inflection, and had guessed that ideally I could work toward scripting a trilingual script with no formal interpretation.

However, after several developmental workshops, discussions with Deaf performers and my interview with Kaite O'Reilly, I altered my creative practice to be more Deaf-led, and to maintain captioning as an fixed part of my creative practice.

As I have noted in the O'Reilly section, after reflection I came to the conclusion that to omit captioning from part of this creative practice would create an imbalance in the trilingual dramaturgy. Either much more visual language would be required throughout the script, or Deaf audiences would be actively excluded from sections of the story which focussed on the English/te reo Māori linguistic relationship. After researching Carlson's theory of theatrical heteroglossia, I adapted the structure of my creative practice to approach the captions in English and Te Reo Māori as parallel creative texts.

In the practice of dramaturgical development, this meant that I focussed the transcribing and scripting of NZSL and visual language sections purely

as notation for the performers. As I will discuss in a later section, I approached the captioning as a complementary creative task to sit parallel to the final performed work.

This meant that throughout the development process, although I did not yet have a term for the practice, I was consulting Shaun Fahey as a Visual Language Director. From the second developmental workshop on, I strove to pursue a Deaf-led creative practice for development. Where possible I used visual and physical workshopping techniques, reiterating that my written words were just a starting point. These workshopping techniques included:

a. writing quick-fire dialogue in bullet points on a wall / whiteboard (to enable performers to face each other as they read lines)

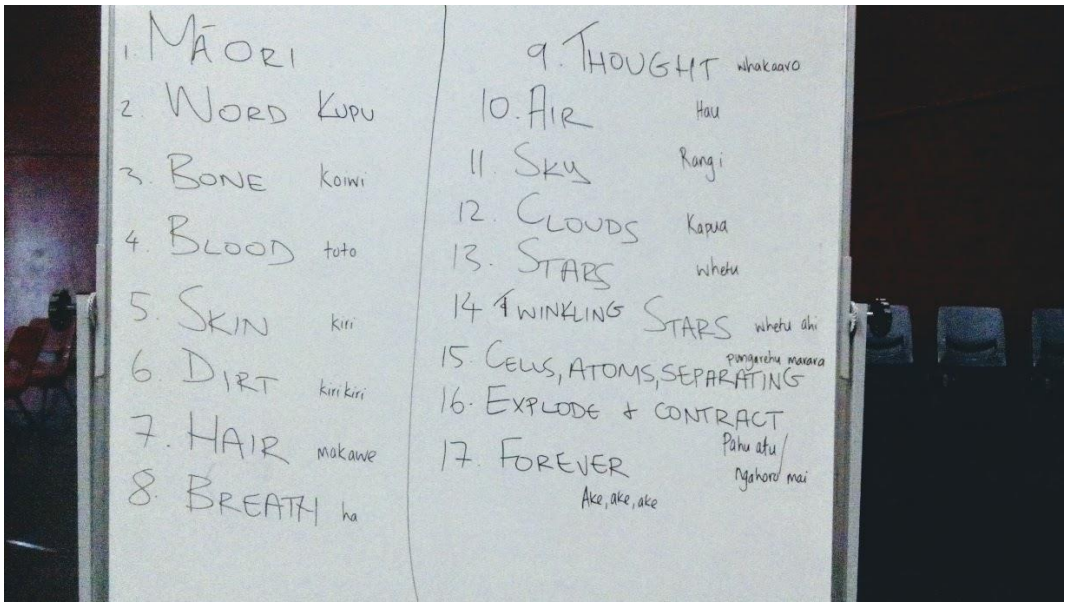

Figure 1. An example of writing text for performance on a whiteboard during workshop.

b. In speech-heavy scenes, developing clear performance tasks for the Deaf performer and visual cues from hearing actors. For example:

They resume their game of heads and tails. Briar speaks between coin-flips, while Vic looks away so he doesn't realise she's speaking.

BRIAR. I've become scared of the dark again. (Heads.) Is that normal? (Heads.) Like when I turn off the lights at night (Heads.) I see this weird figure crouching on top of the furniture. (Heads.) Like this scrawny old woman, crouched silently, (Heads.) and she's just watching me. I can feel her there. (Heads.) And I can hear her breath. And every time I reach for the light switch I'm scared that her bony hand will flash out and grab my wrist. (Heads.) And it frightens me because even though she's this tiny wizened old person, (Heads.) she has this real ancient strength about her. (Heads.) Like she could snap my bones and suck out the marrow if she felt like a midnight snack. (Heads.)

Then my hand reaches the switch and I turn on the light and it's just my stupid room. (Heads.)

So I guess I'm trying to say that uh, I'm not sleeping much (Heads.) and I'm probably just rambling incoherently (Heads.) and I'm really glad you don't know I'm telling you this. (Heads.)

BRIAR disappears into her own thoughts.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Are you okay?

(*Tanumia ō Koiwi* 51 – 52)

c. reading a scene as it was written several times through with an interpreter, before putting the script to the side and asking actors to perform it in their own phrasing (which I would then record).

d. asking the performers to present their monologues without formal language (or with Visual Vernacular only) as way to workshop the content.

This last technique became a crucial developmental tool, which I discuss in further detail as the exercise titled "Wordless Monologues". During the development for the written work, I would give Shaun the final say on how dialogue in NZSL should be phrased. Or if he commented that something didn't look right in NZSL, we would workshop a line together to figure out a better phrasing in NZSL that he felt was more appropriate, which I would transcribe into English as best I could.

The written NZSL in the final script is a result of these workshopping techniques. Many of the extended sequences in visual language, including the Soldier story, Eddie's monologue, and several of Vic's comedic sequences were recorded on video and we would refer to the video as the definitive "script" for these sections.

I have detailed the creative process of caption writing as side texts in the later chapter on syncretic heteroglossia.

Inclusive Warm-Ups for Workshopping

I based my warm-ups on the work I had done previously with the inclusive theatre director, Laura Haughey of Equal Voices Arts. Her practice is Grotowski-based, and draws much inspiration from the work of John Britton. As we were only workshopping and not rehearsing, my use of warm-ups was minimal, but nonetheless I made sure that the few warm-ups employed were keeping in with inclusive kaupapa of my research. We would begin each session with self-led stretches, which I prefer rather than group stretches as each performer knows their own body best. This would last for about five minutes, while we would kōrero through the plan for the day.

Walk / Run / Stop

This is an exercise created by John Britton, detailed in his work *Encountering Ensemble*. It is one of several excercises designed to

strengthen a group's understanding of 'Self-with-Others', or *complicite*. The excercise begins with all performers walking freely through the space. Under outside direction (mine), they change to running, or stopping. After we have completed several cycles of this task, the development is introduced: rather than outside directions, each performer will follow their own internal impulse to walk, run or stop. But once one person changes tasks, everyone must follow. As Britton observes, "Through only having three choices available to her, each performer is asked continually to be aware of (and perhaps alter) her activity to support the overall dynamic" (Britton 338).

As the performers were all familiar with the exercise, we would jump straight into this develeoped version, and play it for five to ten minutes, depending on how long it took for the performers to find a rhythm together and get the focus they needed.

Physical Archetypes

As a form of Visual Vernacular preparation, we would run through a series of physical archetypes, developed by the UK director Bill Hopkinson, which Shaun, Cian and I had learned from Bill during a workshop in 2014. The eleven archetypes are based on character-types existing across cultures, and each archetype has a physical focus point, a specific gait and a mantra. For example, the Maiden archetype has:

- Physical focus shifting from cheek to cheek

- Eyes cast downward, feet facing inward, gait following focus shifting side to side
- Hands in a gentle circle in front of sternum
- Mantra: “I have a secret”

We would run through each archetype, spending around a minute moving through the space as each archetype. This shifting between physical focus points and ways of moving prepares the performer for physical articulation, in the same way that a speaking performer does diction exercises.

Wordless Monologues

This exercise was somewhere between a warm-up and a workshopping technique. We would often do this before getting into detailed text-based work, or to refocus after a break. This was based on Frost & Yarrow’s performative principle of ‘showing’ rather than ‘telling’ (98), as well as the improvisational value of releasing imagination (107).

I would give each actor an extended section of text by their character – either a soliloquy or monologue. After giving them ten minutes to get familiar with the text (or NZSL video) I would then ask them to develop the text into a wordless performance of around the same duration. The performers would then present these to each other. After a while we would repeat the text for the exercise, which would push the actors to find new ways of embodying the story. As each performer had a slightly different understanding of performance phsyicality and V.V., this was a seemingly simple way to get everyone to key in to a V.V. performance mode.

This exercise was used in more detail for Eddie's monologue and Vic's "Soldier & Death" story, both of which move between NZSL and V.V.. It was also used to develop Briar's final karanga. This came from Cian's wordless performance of the "Poem", which was reminiscent of kapa haka physicality (incorporating wiri and pukana into the V.V.). From this offering in the second workshop, I developed a narrative of Briar's physicality in relationship to her ability to karanga, building to the final climactic poroporoaki.

Pass the Fly

This was a combination of two ensemble-building games, which I customised for our particular theatrical world. It was a development of our Walk/Run/Stop warm-up, but also a variation of Pass the Clap, a game where performers "pass" a clap or physical action from person to person, to give the effect that a continuous movement is flickering across the group.

We would play Walk / Run / Stop as normal, and then after a while, I would introduce Rango the Fly, a character in the play who only exists in Visual Vernacular. The performers then would have to "pass" the Fly between themselves as they carried on with the game, working together to build the character and show a relationship with the Fly.

We began developing basic transitions (which are indicated in the final script) from this exercise, where Rango the Fly moves in and out of scenes to guide the audience's focus.

This exercise also would establish the way that V.V. is used to build a theatrical reality in the play, but in a playful and low-pressure activity.

The Role of Interpreters In Script Development Practice

Obviously, the principle of accessibility was the main impetus for the inclusion of an NZSL interpreter. Following the Social Model of Disability's slogan, "disabled by society not by our bodies" (Shakespeare 6), my main aim was to ensure that Deaf and hearing performers had equal (though inevitably different) access and interactions with the script development process.

Leo is fluent in NZSL, I can hold basic conversations in Sign and Cian has no NZSL. So we were basically able to function as a creative group without the support of an interpreter – although I noticed in the first workshop how much of an obstacle this was between Cian and Shaun in playing and discussing the relationship of their characters (Briar and Vic). So if we were workshopping a scene between Leo and Shaun, I would not require an interpreter, as the three of us could converse fairly straightforwardly. However, from the second workshop on, whenever we were focussing on scenes with both Briar and Vic – I always made sure I hired an interpreter so that Cian and Shaun could collaborate as performers with linguistic support.

I had no interest in assuming an Oralist approach and expecting Shaun to lip-read, as this would completely go against the social model of disability.

As the creative process developed and the script included more Visual Vernacular, our rehearsal process became increasingly Deaf-led and I looked to Shaun for final say on NZSL phrasing and V.V. performance style for all performers. This inclination led to a slight shift in the status of interpreters in the room, as Shaun and Cian increasingly used them to find a first translation before analysing dialogue and making it their own in speech, V.V. or NZSL.

Another variant in the use of interpreters was availability – we rarely ever had the same interpreter for a single development period (over the course of several days). Some interpreters were more open to the creative process than others, and many of them highlighted for me the distinction between the creative and the linguistic approaches to discourse. One NZSL interpreter was very concerned that within the script, Te Reo Māori was referred to a few times simply as “te reo”, a common colloquial way of referencing the language within bilingual conversation. The interpreter agreed that although she had heard this phrasing before, she was concerned that it didn’t make grammatical sense, so it should be corrected to “te reo Māori” throughout the dialogue.

In comparison, Shaun’s feedback included linguistic insights as well as a strong understanding of creativity and storytelling conventions, as I have detailed earlier when discussing O’Reilly’s influence on my creative practice.

Having worked in Deaf/hearing ensembles before, I was prepared for this complex and sometimes frustrating nature of involving an interpreter into

the creative process. In fact, my fascination with the spaces between languages that interpreters inhabit was a concept I hoped to explore in the script from very early on, through the character of Eddie and her dual role as the interpreter.

Eddie / Interpreter Characterisation

> In the simplest terms, when a human or mechanical "translator" is interposed between one language and other, it produces a third speech that is a compromise between the original content and the new form. Thus the device for negotiating syncretism adds another "voice" to the mixture. This fact, although basic to translation theory, tends to be hidden under the popular myth of "transparent" translation.
>
> (Carlson 182)

A recurring pattern of discourse throughout my script is of language becoming untethered from its dramaturgical foundations. This is regularly presented through the relationship between captioning and V.V., as I will explore in a later part of the chapter. It is also embodied in the characterisation of Eddie. The character evolves out of the "third voice" of the stage interpreter, becoming untethered from her interpreting role and eventually abandoning it completely as she becomes increasingly intertwined in the action of the play. I am interested in the apparent omniscience of stage interpreters, and the supernatural quality that this

gives their “third voice”, which was the inspiration for Eddie as an immortal figure who attempts to intervene and fix the mortality of Briar and Vic.

This discourse was also inspired by two established creative practices, of Kaite O’Reilly’s work *peeling* and the American company, New Deaf Theatre (NDT) under David Hay’s direction in the 1960s. Hay’s productions favoured a Brechtian performance style of showing the theatrical mechanics (Carlson 209), having double-language presentation of dialogue visible on stage at all times. In the case of NDT, this meant showing the speaking actors (called “readers”) who provided speech translations of the predominantly Signed action – in my case, this was a visual version of the same concept of double-language (NZSL and captions).

This double-language convention also provides a safety net for sections when the NZSL drops out, first when Eddie enters as a character into the action of the play and again when the formal NZSL drops out of the action altogether for the final scene.

A similar Aesthetic of Access was used in the 2002 Graeae Theatre production of O’Reilly’s play, *peeling.* O’Reilly’s author’s note at the beginning of the text advises:

> *[The characters] are never completely ‘off’ and they use the devices of the theatre (narration, a form of audio-description, choral speaking, sign interpretation) even when there is no apparent audience. They bicker, play, interrupt –and share the above devices - when one stops, another takes up that role/device.*

(O'Reilly, *peeling* 3)

I am particularly interested in O'Reilly's use of the audio description convention in the text, integrated as dialogue, and indicated with '*(A.D.)*'. It initially serves a traditional purpose, describing the action for visually impaired audience members, for example:

Beaty: It's probably meant to be ironic.

(She takes out a programme and studies it)

That's what they usually say when they bung together classic texts with contemporary stuff. Post-modern and ironic.

Alfa: *(A.D)* Beaty refers to a theatre programme for 'The Trojan Women – Then and Now' which she handily has under her skirts.

(*peeling* 8)

However throughout the course of the play, the audio description takes on its own "third voice", colouring the action with poetic observation:

Coral: I don't think I like this play very much.

Beaty: *(A.D)* She shivers. Somewhere, big boots are walking over her grave.

(22)

Soon the “third voice” becomes untethered from its role of functional, transparent description. This comes first as the characters not only interact with the audio description, but are personally effected by it:

Coral: *(A.D)* Beaty’s eyes fill with tears.

Beaty: No they don’t.

(34)

The audio description eventually becomes a medium for character revelation through direct address:

Coral: *(A.D)* They nod. Reminiscent of those little toy dogs that were put in the back window of cars in the 70’s.

(they nod)

But not our car, because we couldn’t afford a car.

(46)

O’Reilly playfully subverts the convention of audio description as “side texts” being directed at a specific audience minority (Carlson 207).

In my own work, I explored the nature of NZSL interpretation in a similar modernist approach. Taking my lead from O'Reilly, I employed a metatheatrical playfulness with the performative convention of "side-texts". I wanted to visually bring the marginalised language from the side into central focus– from the "side-text" interpreter position to the main playing space in performance.

This syncretic framework has dramaturgical traditions in both Deaf Theatre and heteroglossic theatre practices, as I have discussed in an earlier chapter, detailing the theoretical frameworks for my NZSL dramaturgy and creative practice.

Once I had decided on this characterisation for Eddie /Interpreter, I tried different dramaturgical approaches for executing the characterisation. In my first draft, Eddie gradually revealed her backstory over the course of two small monologues: in Scene 2 (*Bury your Bones* 34 - 35) before she enters the action as Eddie, then again in Scene 3 (75 – 77) when she gives Vic the key.

I had hypothesised that this would read as a gradual separation of the roles of Eddie / Interpreter. However, audience feedback indicated that it was confusing to introduce Eddie's backstory before we had met her as a character. Audiences who were unfamiliar with visual languages but were trying to follow the story through performance only (not captions) also became confused at the repeated motif of the lake, in Vic's abstract monologue and then again in both of Eddie's monologues.

Between the second and third developmental workshops I condensed Eddie's monologues into one – as a response to this feedback and also because I wanted to trim down Eddie and Vic's roles so the Briar was at the foreground of the narrative as the protagonist. I replaced this first monologue with a transitional moment of the omniscient Interpreter moving into her own voice, through her relationship with Rango the Fly at the beginning of the third scene:

> *Rango buzzes back onstage, from the main playing space to the Interpreter Position. He sits on the Interpreter's shoulder.*
>
> *Interpreter pets the Fly as an old friend.*
>
> INTERPRETER. *(NZSL & Speech)* My old friend.
>
> *[to audience]*
>
> I won't be on this stage much longer.
>
> It's nearly time for me to join you all.
>
> But I have a friend to visit first.
>
> *Interpreter takes a coin from their pocket and flips it. Interpreter and Rango look at the coin together and exchange a meaningful glance.*
>
> *Rango flies away.*
>
> (*Tanumia ō Koiwi* 288 – 289)

This sequence was also influenced by the Māori dramaturgical choice of treating the audience as tīpuna. The bridging nature of an interpreter role therefore creates a metatheatrical parallel with the character Eddie deciding to relinquish her immortality, straddling the worlds of the living and dead, performance and audience.

From the Wordless Monologue exercise, during which Leo had presented V.V. versions of both the monologues, I workshopped the condensed monologue (375 - 381) to incorporate distinctly articulated moments of V.V. and NZSL. First Leo and I revisited filmed recordings of Wordless Monologue versions of this story, and talked about which parts of the story lent themselves most clearly to physical storytelling.

Then I presented Leo with a condensed written version of both monologues in a single text, and read it aloud while they interpreted the story into literal NZSL. We did this exercsise a few times, and then came back and reflected on which parts of the story needed exposition, and which parts were enriched by description and language.

From this we began slowly deciding on when to shift between NZSL and Visual Vernacular. I based this workshopping technique on Britton's "process of embodiment", which can be distilled into an improvisation and polishing cycle of:

- Do
- Notice
- Reflect

- Redesign
- Do
- Etc.

(Britton 321)

From this we developed a basic rule for the sequence of “the room” that Eddie describes when she has her Near-Death Experience as always being presented in Visual Vernacular. This was to indicate the shift in reality of the story she tells, from Benjamin Lee Whorf’s claim that a different language is a different reality. This rule allowed the flashback, motivating Eddie’s betrayal of Emma (when she takes the Key of immortality for herself), to be shown rather than told:

EDDIE. *(NZSL) :*

The Woman said, “No, please! Don’t hurt me! I can give you something precious! It will make you live forever!”

She gave me a key.

(Visual Vernacular) :

I took the key. I let her go, and she was gone.

(NZSL) :

A key to live forever?

(Visual Vernacular) :

I remembered the room. The cold. The wind. The woman. The nothingness.

I kept the key for myself.

And Freckles was gone.

(NZSL) :

I'm a coward. I'm giving this to you because I'm tired.

Please, take it.

(*Tanumia ō Koiwi* 381)

Visual Language Director (ask a Deaf person)

I used a similar workshopping technique for Vic's telling of the Soldier and Death story (361 – 368) We developed this mostly from revisiting Wordless Monologue versions of the sequence, adding in expositional NZSL moments when necessary. The written version of this sequence in the final draft is a transcription of Shaun's final version of the story – developed entirely off the page. Because of the transcribed nature of this sequence, in performance the relationship between V.V. and NZSL is much more fluid than Eddie's monolgue. This is an advantage of writing visual language for peformers whose first langauge is visual – Shaun could intuitively figure out where the story needed showing and telling separately.

As with Leo's development, this often included moments of establishing expositional information in the space, such as the opening of the Soldier story:

> VIC.
>
> *Through the sequence, the world shifts to follow Vic's storytelling. Vic's story is told in a mix of NZSL and Visual Vernacular:*
>
> Man, who: soldier.
>
> War long time, finished.
>
> Walk, carrying what? Nothing. Only have three coins. Not much.
>
> So, walking, sees man: begging.
>
> (361)

Within this excerpt, Shaun would shift between V.V. and NZSL in every sentence. Because the story is mostly told in first person with the storyteller becoming the Soldier, each beat of exposition was coloured by Shaun's detailing in performance, shifting from third person NZSL to first person, present-tense V.V. . For example in "War long time, finished", he Signed the sentence in NZSL, but included detailing of V.V. explosions and gunfire with high intensity and gradually slowing, between each

Signed word, as the war slowly finished. The full V.V. telling of this story is included in the video appendix.

Shaun's unofficial role as a Visual Language Director also shaped details within the story itself. A specific addition that Shaun's development made was the character of the Soldier's son. The original scripted story had the son only at the end of the story, when he appears to die and take the Soldier to the underworld in the sack (*Bury Your Bones* 72). When running through a Wordless Monologue version of the story during Workshop 2, Shaun introduced the Son earlier – as the catalyst for Death to appear at the foot of the bed. This gave a tangible, visual motivation for Soldier capturing Death, as opposed to an internal unseen motivation. This showed not only the strength of visual language in showing the character's motivation, but also made the climax of the story involving the son much tidier in a narrative sense.

The significance of neurological differences between spoken and visual languages (Ree 97) means that describing this workshopping process as a form of "translation" or "interpretation" is not quite adequate. Shaun's development of the "Soldier and Death" story went beyond the role of the theatrical interpreter, who was also supporting the process, and beyond the usual collaboration between performer and text. O'Reilly has described her similar creative relationship with Jean St Clair as "collaboratively re-envisaging, across two languages and cultures" (*But you know I don't think in words* 107). Deaf actress Sophie Stone has expressed that opposing grammatical structures of spoken English and Sign Language mean that any transformation of an idea from one language into the other

includes a range of complex linguistic choices. She says: “BSL has a completely different structure, expression and contextual format than spoken English or Sign Supported English, and you couldn’t tell the same story at the same time in the same way. […] It may come in the form of establishing [spoken] “Tone of Voice” first then adapting the signs to reinforce change has happened / applied facially or to merge sign theatrically, potentially breaking the rules of BSL and taking the form towards “V.V.””(qtd by O’Reilly, “But you know I don’t think in words” 110).

This “re-envisaging” then requires two sets of specialist skills, which I was very fortunate to find in Shaun. He had the ability to translate English text conventions into visual dramaturgical devices, a nuanced practice that comes from a first-language understanding of visual languages. He also had extensive experience in crafting stories in a creative and engaging manner for a visual medium.

Shaun’s input as an unofficial Visual Language Director helped me to develop what Kochlar-Lindgren names a “third ear” of syncretic listening, rather than focussing on the linguistic binary between speech and Sign (423). This fluid space of playwriting, somewhere between my written word and the final spatial performance, in many ways is the epitome of theatrical dramaturgy, which the dramaturg David Lane defines as “the paradoxical relationship between the unpredictability of live performance and the relative security of a script’s structural framework” (Lane, “Looking to the future” 133).

Dramaturgical Strategies for Visual Language

The relationship bewteen NZSL and V.V. is naturally close, but in theatrical storytelling even closer. In writing I have tried to think of it as a spectrum – and borrowing Meyrick's concept of script development as "moving towards ignorance" (Meyrick 277), each draft of the script has aimed to forge a clear path from literal Sign Language to more abstract V.V., discernible to an audience of outsiders to Deaf culture and language.

In early drafts I had repeated motifs of the "Nameless Woman" character and a metaphorical lake repeated in various NZSL monologues. As imagery motifs are a linguistic strategy I often use in English dialogue, I naturally carried this over to NZSL. However, because the language of NZSL is already so visual, any subtlety was lost in the repetitions, and to Deaf and hearing audiences, it was simply tedious. After the first public reading of the first draft, one hearing audience member asked why the same story was told so many times.

I realised that I needed to build a sense of progress into the visual languages of the play. I decided to lay out the full spectrum of visual languages, from the most universal and simple to the most refined. In my final draft, this begins with the juvenile physical gags between Vic and Briar, progresses with Briar's introduction to Signing, develops through Vic & Briar's connected rumination on mortality, fully immersing the audience in V.V. for Vic's story of Soldier & Death, then the more complex combination of visual languages in Eddie's final story, and finally fully embodied by Briar in accompaniment to her climactic poroporoaki. The

dramaturgy of the linguistic journey is paralleled in content too: beginning with juvenile (but universal) dick jokes, through functional Sign, alphabet and conversation, touching on Signed poetry, V.V., before drawing them together for a syncretic trilingualism of speech and visual languages including wiri, Sign, and V.V.

A third aspect of this linguistic journey of visual languages is from within the body to without. The initial joking revolves around the Signers' own bodies, but as Briar discovers new ways of thinking through Sign, she begins to describe the world in visual langauges, thereby creating a new Signed universe in the performance space. Her final poroporoaki suggests that her power over her language is matched by her ability to shape reality, as she opens the door at the end of the play.

As I developed this linguistic journey throughout the script develpoment phrase, I would ask myself for each new section of Sign dialogue:

1. What is this character's relationship to Sign now?
2. How eloquent is this character at expressing themself?
3. How can they express this with the least amount of literal Sign language and the most amount of abstract visual language?
4. Where on the spectrum of visual languages was the previous NZSL sequence? How can I push this further toward Visual Vernacular?

One aspect of the script that remained largely unchanged throughout the developmental process was the first meeting between Vic and Briar, bonding over mimed penises and breasts. I knew that I wanted this to be a starting point for several reasons, based on my on experience of working

on the bilingual piece *At the End of My Hands* – where physical humour was a key dramaturgical device to subverting expectations for a hearing audience of a Deaf character. Hearing audiences (and people generally) often get flustered and nervous that they will offend Deaf people, or not be able to understand Deaf people, or some hearing people have a preconceived notion of Deaf people as fragile, serious victims of a tragic disability. I think undermining the morbidity of the hospice setting and any preciousness around cultural awkardness is important for establishing a clean slate on which to build Vic and Briar's relationship. Although the subject of the play is serious and it contains the practice of several sophisticated theories, it's no use to anyone as a creative artefact if it is not accessbile and engaging. Comedy is used regularly throughout the text to ground the story through laughs, keeping the characters connected and three-dimensional to the audience.

I knew that I wanted to draw on Shaun Fahey's own experience as a comedian, and I used some of his set comedy routines as a guide for Deaf joke structure. Deaf jokes traditionally employ V.V. (like most forms of Signed storytelling) and revolve around a visual punchline (rather than a linguistic punchline). Below I have transcribed one of Shaun's set comedic pieces, as a blueprint for how I then went about scripting Vic's extended dialogue. As in the script, physical action / V.V. is italicised and the NZSL is in plain text. This joke contains two characters, and uses a character-switching device (rather than narration), hence the presentation as dialogue:

“Police” by Shaun Fahey (2015)

Driver: *Leave party, say bye to girlfriend.*

Walk around my car, very nice. Get in car, get comfortable, adjust rear-view mirror. Look at self in mirror, primp eyebrows, looking good, pull out a stray nose hair – OW!

Okay ready to drive. Start up car, drive over bumpy curb onto the road.

Change gears, going faster. Yeah! Overtake slow driver. Going faster, speedometer climbing up and up. Change gears, faster.

In rear-view mirror: flashing lights. Shit! *Slow down. Pull over onto bumpy road-side and stop car. Ashamed, roll down window.*

Police: *Thumbs in belt, check out car as approach driver. Writing ticket. Mouth moving quickly, speaking to Driver.*

Driver: Sorry, I don’t understand. I’m Deaf.

Police: Oh, you’re Deaf? My brother is Deaf. I can sign!

Driver: *Shocked.*

Police: Can I have your licence please?

Driver: *sulkily gives his licence.*

Police: *writes ticket and gives it to Driver. Remember, drive slowly.*

Driver: *takes ticket snarkily.* Thank you.

Police: Bye! *Walks away happily.*

Driver: *watches police leave in side-mirror. Crumples up ticket and throws it on the floor of car. Starts car, drives over bumpy curb onto road. Sadly drives offstage.*

In performance, this routine takes about five minutes. One way that it differs from a hearing comedy routine, is that the “punchline” actually happens in the middle – when the Police officer reveals that he can Sign (“Driver: *Shocked.*”). In a hearing joke structure, this revelation would be placed right before the end of the routine. However, because the joke hinges on the effect on the Driver’s demeanor – a drawn-out visual gag – the punchline happens in the middle and continues on for a another minute.

I used this joke structure as s starting point for Vic’s riffing on dick jokes when he first meets Briar. The sequence builds with a sense of wero (challenge) between the two. They are testing each other’s boundaries, trying to make the other laugh and seeing what they can communicate without language. Vic is, of course, the master of this game – but Briar is a worthy opponent. Her desire to shock and willingness to enter into this one-upmanship with a stranger exhibits her anger (which she has just talked to the audience about) being channeled into something positive. The ‘trickster’ role that Vic plays in this sequence is the embodiment of Shaun’s own style of Deaf comedy – and his undercutting and charming of Briar are a microcosm of the larger NZSL dramaturgy at play. The conversational structure flows between NZSL, Visual Vernacular and English. Briar and Vic negotiate each other with their separate languages,

but return to phsycial comedy and Visual Vernacular as a comedic grounding.

The form/content structure of their first conversation is:

1. **Visual Vernacular:** pretending to be dead trick
2. **Misunderstanding between separate languages:** William Blake
3. **Understanding between separate languages:** Cancer
4. **Visual Vernacular:** Fake breasts
5. **Visual Vernacular:** Fake penis and riff on fake penis
6. **Misunderstanding between separate languages:** Leaving your mark on the world.

(*Tanumia ō Kōiwi*, 276 – 287)

This first sequence is designed to establish the importance of V.V. within their relationship. Although they later rely on Eddie to interpret details about each other, the foundation of their friendship is laid in this first meeting, through physical comedy and visual language. This is the first exposition of the speech / V.V. form which is then developed in the Poem and evolves finally into the poroporoaki.

In rehearsal we read the sequence through with an interpreter a few times so that Shaun could see the shape of the joke in NZSL, which he would then make his own. When he found a V.V. form that he was happy with, we would film a short video of it for him to use as reference, which eventually created a a patchwork NZSL script.

A further linguistic layer of this sequence is the Interpreter character. These first two scenes are scripted with the Interpreter quite invisible, as the work is establishing an expectation that the play will only be Briar and Vic, with an interpreter for practical purposes to be subverted at the beginning of *Scene 3: Rānui* (288). The convention throughout the performance is for the interpreter to only interpret Briar's speech into NZSL, as Vic's NZSL is already being captioned. It is deliberately overstimulating, in order to draw attention to the untranslateable, uninterpreted parts of their conversation. When the conversation shifts into V.V., the Deaf and hearing audiences are both able to follow the jokes while seeing it visually become untethered from the translation of an interpreter or captions.

In the development workshops, the performer Leo worked with a rehearsal interpreter and consulted Shaun as a Visual Language Director to figure out the right tone for interpreting Briar's speech in this sequence. One of the most problematic phrases to interpret from speech into NZSL was Briar's first attempt to insult Vic after she learns he is Deaf:

> BRIAR. Fucking ... tiko bum.
>
> (*Tanumia ō Koiwi* 278)

We tried several different interpretations, but direct translations ("shit bum") were far too graphic in a visual language. Finally Shaun suggested something that Deaf teenagers do to each other, called by interpreters and linguists a "directional fuck". This is a visual language sign that involves pulling the middle finger gesture, but instead of facing the finger to

someone, pointing it in their direction in a stabbing motion. As well as enriching the lives of those of us who had never encountered the phrase “directional fuck” before, this was a strong point of deciding on the dramaturgy of the interpreter and her role in giving parallel texts that were true to the character of Briar rather than the literal wording. Although the “directional fuck” is a very Deaf-culture specific gesture, the tone and nature of Briar’s retort translates perfectly.

These were some of the examples of the reciprocal relationship between my writing and Shaun’s own comedic expertise, where influences of Deaf stand-up comedy informed the NZSL dramaturgy of the script. As with te reo Māori and English dialogue throughout the script, I was interested in the unexpected beauty and truth that comes out of inarticulacy in NZSL. Briar remains an outsider to Sign Language throughout the narrative, although she clearly has a strong emotional connection to the language. This kaupapa of inarticulate poetry is clearest in the final version of “The Fly” sequence, which I will discuss in detail in a later chapter.

By contrast, Eddie is a multilingualist, but is only basically proficient in NZSL. This is a point of distinction we chose between Leo’s performance as Interpreter and as Eddie. As an omniscient Interpreter, Leo was eloquent and fluent. As Eddie, the signing was clumsy and halted, reflecting her emotional constipation and struggle with communication.

Vic is the only monolingual character in the play. Because of this, it was important to me that he was not only extremely articulate, but that he should showcase a range of dialects in visual languages.

From early on, I had a creative impulse that each character's relationship to languages should reflect their relationship to death. Although Vic is monolingual, his language is by far the most articulate and direct in the play. Eddie's scattered multilingualism reflects her many lives and inability to settle, and Briar's broken poetry and final linguistic blossoming reflect a self-awakening through introspection. But Vic is steady, confident and thoughtful with a light touch. As with his relationship to death, his relationship with NZSL is natural and uncomplicated. His adopted role as a teacher of Sign to Briar then becomes synonymous with a kind of morality-mentor role, teaching her how to express and accept her own fears. The first moment of this peace being passed on is in *Scene 3: Rānui*, with the introduction of what we referred to in the development process as "the Poem" :

VIC. *(NZSL)* I'll teach you. Do you know the word, "Māori"? M-a-o-r-i.

BRIAR. *(NZSL & Speech)* Māori.

They perform a poem together:

(NZSL & Speech)

Māori

Word – Kupu

Bone – Kōiwi

Blood – Toto

Skin – Kiri

Dirt – kirikiri

Hair – Makawe

Breath – Ha

Thought – Whakaaro

Air – Hau

Sky – Rangi

Clouds – kapua

Stars – Whetu

(Visual Vernacular, NZSL & Speech)

Twinkling Stars – Whetu Ahi

Cells, atoms, separating – Pungarehu Marara

Explode & Contract – Pahu atu – Ngāhoro mai

Forever – Ake, ake, ake

They both gaze at the Signed universe.

Rango the Fly buzzes into first Vic's face, then Briar's. They both swat at it and their eyes follow Rango in the air as it flies away.

(330 – 331)

Both of Briar's linguistic learning practices take a surreal turn, first with the te reo Tape speaking back to her (332 - 336). With NZSL, the surreal nature is more gradual, and strongly connected to her development from NZSL to Visual Vernacular. We see that a few days after meeting Vic, she has taught herself the NZSL alphabet, therefore understanding the basic concept of finger-spelling, which will allow her primary communication with Vic. Her willingness to learn NZSL reflects her desire to get inside Vic's understanding of mortality, as well as an uncharacteristic desire for connection. Although her rejection of English in favour of Māori is an act of decolonising herself, the rejection of English for NZSL is more directly connected to her relationship to Vic.

Briar's relationship to NZSL developed through drafting with a realisation I personally had about the unique nature of Sign, which I eventually wrote into Briar's dialogue:

> BRIAR. Man. It must be so wild, to be born with your words in your hands. And when you look around, the world is made of language. You are your words.
>
> You know in Māori we like categorise "kōrero" as outside ourselves, because our words have left the body. But your words are your body. Your body is the world. It's all connected. I'm super jealous of that.
>
> Soz, maybe it's just the painkillers talking.
>
> (351 – 353)

Briar's connection to Sign sets off a chain reaction: enabling a new form of self-expression, which forces her to acknowledge the reality of her situation, to confront the "woman" haunting her nightmares, who is her tīpuna and so allows her to accept her Māori spirituality and identity in the final poroporoaki through the combination of NZSL and te reo Māori.

In developing the Signed version of "the Poem" we tried several different approaches:

1. Both Vic and Briar beginning in NZSL and simultaneously switching into V.V.
2. Vic remaining in theatricalised NZSL throughout the poem and Briar shifting into V.V. by herself
3. Each Sign being an exaggerated version of the NZSL word, so that it is a shared piece of Deaf poetry.

Ultimately we decided through workshopping that the second option was strongest for a syncretic effect. This meant that each word was presented on stage in three forms simultaneously: in caption (English and Te Reo), in NZSL and in V.V.. The delayed shift into V.V. by Briar allowed an introductory journey into the poem in visual language before the two forms forked and proceeded their separate ways.

This also establishes the world-building-effect of V.V. that Briar employs in her final poroporoaki, which is a coda of "the poem" and a heightened reality through Te Reo Māori and Visual Vernacular.

Conclusion

Due to the nature of syncretic theatre and the complex principles of inclusivity, there is no single formulaic structure for working within an NZSL dramaturgy. In my experience, for this particular project, I regret not knowing about the role of a “Visual Language Director” earlier in my creative process, as I think establishing this relationship with Shaun in a clearer way would have benefitted us both. This role seems central to a Deaf-led use of visual languages, for any hearing practitioner’s creative practice to involve NZSL and V.V. with respect and clarity. I acknowledge the company Equal Voices Arts, who are striving to make integrated hearing / Deaf devised work, developing yet another dramaturgical path for NZSL in theatre.

I have been suprised at the depth of dramaturgy around captioning (which I will discuss further in a later chapter). I owe Kaite O’Reilly’s generosity and transparency around her creative practice much for learning about this practice and the syncretic opportunities it provides, in Deaf storytelling and beyond.

The biggest development in my creative practice from this NZSL dramaturgy research has been learning to work in liminal spaces: between languages, between page and performance, between literal and abstract. In many ways, these are places that written and spoken language cannot always reach. The side-text is a place that belongs to the reality of visual languages, in “the space between the petals” (O’Reilly). This side-textual approach to language also applies to the Māori development in Takitoru

dramaturgy. A difference between the Deaf and Māori dramaturgies is that the nuances in Deaf performance are linguistic, whereas Māori dramaturgy is largely defined through cultural protocol.

Chapter Eight: Theoretical frameworks in Māori dramaturgy

Here I will give an overview of the theoretical frameworks implemented to practice Māori dramaturgy. As many of these terms are Māori words that I use frequently, I have put some key words in bold here so that this section may also act as a glossary for key **kupu** (words) that I use in my more advanced discussions of Māori and trilingual dramaturgies. In later sections these words of te reo Māori will not be in bold or italicised, in the spirit of syncretic academic writing which this research strives towards.

It is a matter of debate whether, as a Pākehā writer, my research can be considered kaupapa Māori (Māori in aesthetic, spiritual and political beliefs, as well as part of the canon of Māori literature) . I do not feel comfortable taking that label for myself. However, regardless of the categorisation of my overall research here, I have striven to work within a kaupapa Māori theoretical framework in my creative practice and critical writing.

This is a “counter-hegemonic” framework for analysing and creating knowledge (Smith 191). Rather than the simpler notion of “decolonising”, kaupapa Māori works in opposition to colonial assumptions but is not defined purely by this opposition. Rather, kaupapa Māori looks both to the future, to further progress for Māori self-determination, and to the past for strength from te ao Māori in pre-contact culture. Graham Smith summarises the key features of kaupapa Māori as research that:

1. Is related to ‘being Māori’;
2. Is connected to Māori philosophy and principles;
3. Takes for granted the validity and legitimacy of Māori , the importance of Māori language and culture; and
4. Is concerned with ‘the struggle for autonomy over our cultural well-being’.

(qtd in Tuhiwai Smith 187).

The primary aspects of Kaupapa Māori that I have been inspired to incorporate, particularly from Hone Kouka’s writing, are **whānau, tikanga** and **ihi** (*Nga Tangata Toa*).

The key theoretical texts that I have drawn on for the following definitions are Hirini Moko Mead’s *Tikanga Māori* and Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s *Decolonizing Methodologies (Second Edition).* These were suggested to me by Dr Nicola Hyland as a strong theoretical foundation for kaupapa Māori.

The concept of **whānau** (family and community) is central to characterisation and questions of identity in kaupapa Māori, and *Nga Tangata Toa* is a perfect example of this. As I will discuss in the following chapter, Rongomai’s dramatic arc centres around her shifting identity and sense of place within the levels of her whānau.

Drawing on pre-colonial social practices, whānau has extended in contemporary kaupapa Māori to encompass organising research groups, understanding community applications of kaupapa methodology, as well

as “a way of ‘giving voice’ to the different sections of Māori communities, and [...] a way of distributing tasks, or incorporating people with particular expertise, and of keeping Māori values central” (Smith 189).

The value of whānau may be performed in theatre through **mihi**, which includes a recitation of whakapapa. This **whakapapa** (geneology) will include naming **tīpuna** (ancestors). Often in contemporary Māori theatre the spitirual notion of tīpuna as omnipresent guardians translates into a physical presence on stage – as in *Ngā Tāngata Toa*. Tīpuna can mean both “grandparents” and “ancestors”, and their spiritual role as guardians of the living is a crucial aspect of te ao Māori ideological structures.

Whānau in Māori narratives also encompass the kauapapa of **tūrangawaewae** – a difficult concept to translate in English. Tūrangawaewae can mean “a place to stand strong” and often refers to a place which holds spiritual, ancestral or emotional resonance for an individual. It can also refer to the **whenua** (land) where one’s placenta is buried. A mihi will often include acknowledgments of aspects of the physical environment which a person relates to as tūrangawaewae – the māunga (mountain) and awa (river) in particular.

Tikanga may be translated as “the correct way to live” and is often used in NZ English as interchangeable for “protocol”. Obviously this is an extremely complex web of beliefs and systems, with widely varying specifics between **iwi** (tribes), **hapū** (sub-tribes) and **whānau** (families). For the purposes of my research, here I will only discuss the tikanga relevant to the dramaturgy in my research, based on the two iwi whose

tikanga I have been surrounded by the most: Tūhoe (Te Arawa) and Tainui.

The aspects of tikanga I will discuss in relation to my research below are the separation of **tapu** and **noa, tikanga marae**, the social and creative practice of **manaakitanga**, and the historical significance of **kōrero** in society.

Tapu is generally translated as meaning “sacred and therefore prohibited” (Moorfield). Tapu is a quality that belongs to people, body parts, buildings, kai (food), and particularly land. The opposite of tapu is **noa** (free from tapu, ordinary) or **ea** (a balance settled).

If an action is taken against a person or thing that is tapu, then an action of **utu** (reciprocity) must be taken to restore balance of this **take** (breach). This model of restorative action is called take-utu-ea. As Mead explains:

> The threesome concept of take-utu-ea comprises an analytical template for examining behavioural issues, but each term on its own is a principle of tikanga. (31)

The distinction between tapu and noa also has linguistic implications in possesive nouns. Articles are separated in “ā” and “ō” caterogies depending on whether they are noa or tapu, respectively. For example, the phrase “my phone” refers to a noa (everyday) object, so would be “tāku wāea pūkoro”. However the phrase “my house” refers to an object which provides shelter and safety, and is therefore tapu – so is “tōku whare” or “tōku kāinga” (both words for a home). This is a concept which Briar refers to in relation to NZSL in *Tanumia ō Kōiwi* (351 – 353).

The definition of a marae today covers what was once referred to as the pā. It is a designated place of a single, or sometimes several institutions, where Māori ceremonies and cultural practices take place (Mead 102). Each marae is connected to a strand of Māori ancestry and is maintained by local hapū – and as such the tikanga of each marae varies according to the specific tikanga of the relevant hapū.

Being a central space for each hapū means that the marae is also the space where visitors first come to approach a hapū or iwi. Because of this, marae protocol is heavily ritualised so that there is clear understanding of order and the nature of the relationship between host and visitor. The pōwhiri is the name given to this series of ritual encounters – after these are completed, the tapu of visitors is lifted to noa and all parties are free to engage in socialisation, **hui** (meeting), or whatever the purpose of the visit may be (Mead 128). Below is an abridged version of Mead's description of pōhiri:

1. **Preparation:** Tāngata whenua (hosts) and manuwhiri (visitors) gather and prepare for the encounter. A member of the tāngata whenua will signal when the pōwhiri may begin.

2. **Karanga 1:** A woman from the tāngata whenua begins the ceremonial karanga (call) to summon manuwhiri onto the marae.

3. **Whakaeke** (entrance): the manuwhiri enter the marae. Simultaneously there is a responding karanga from the manuwhiri,

identifying themselves.

4. **Karanga 2:** A second karanga from tāngata whenua, focussing on tīpuna and the dead.

5. **Karanga 2:** Manuwhiri respond in kind to this karanga, continuing to approach.

6. **Karanga 3:** Tāngata whenua deliver a third, general karanga.

7. **Karanga 3:** Manuwhiri respond in kind as they arrive at the limits of tapu space, and wait just outside the wharenui (meeting house).

8. **He tangi ki ngā mate** (respecting the dead): The two groups are now only separated by a small tapu space. Facing each other there is a moment of silence to respect the dead.
   At the right moment the honour is declared as met ("Kua ea"), and the manuwhiri may enter the wharenui and be seated.

9. As everyone is seated, any **koha** (gift / offering) wil be placed in the tapu space.

10. **Ngā whaikōrero** (speech and response)**:** This begins with the formal orations of welcome. This covers the purpose of the hui and clarifies the kawa (specifics of tikanga) that the marae follows. Each

kōrero from the tāngata whenua is responded to by the manuwhiri. Each **whaikōrero** is completed by a waiata or performance.

11. **Whakaratarata:** The tāngata whenua speakers form a reception line and prominent members of the manuwhiri file past and perform the hongi (touching of noses / sharing of breath).

12. **Te hākari:** The manuwhiri are summoned to dining area, and food is shared between the two groups.

13. **Poroporoaki:** In the dining area, manuwhiri rise and make a farewell speech, thanking the hosts for their hospitality. The manuwhiri leave.

As Mead clarifies, these steps are "what can be expected at a standard pōhiri ... Often the pōhiri is only the beginning of the real purpose of the hui. Other activities may follow" (131). A brief sidenote: these different ways of writing "pōhiri" and "pōwhiri"are indicative of tribal dialects.

We may see that there are certain parallels between marae tikanga and Pākehā theatre rituals – replacing the manuwhiri with an audience, and the tāngata whenua with performers. The equivalent of the whaikōrero, the performance, is reciprocated not with responsive speeches but with an audience's emotional response – verbal or otherwise. The following hākari is similar to the theatre practice of audiences having a drink in the building

after a performance, sometimes meeting and talking with the theatre practitioners.

These parallels give an indication of how Jim Moriarty came to develop his syncretic form of Theatre Marae. In a 2003 interview, he explained the organic development of the form, and how “this animal called theatre marae emerged, which isn’t a new concept really. It’s just taking the best of Māori gathering principles, the hui and the theatre – which is a hui too.” (qtd in Glassey 62).

I refer to this pōwhiri structure in my analysis of Kouka’s *Nga Tangata Toa*, as well as applying it to my own dramaturgical structure and practice.

Mead defines manaakitanga as “nuturing relationships, looking after people, and being very careful about how others are treated” (33). This kaupapa ties in neatly with the working questions of syncretic theatre: How do we syncretise performance forms while respecting the original textuality of a culture? In Deaf Theatre, we call it “inclusivity”. In Māori Theatre, we might call it “manaakitanga”. Simply what this means is finding out what each person needs in order to contribute creatively, and supporting them with those needs.

An aspect of this is considering the creative practice itself in relation to each culture. Hirini Melbourne has observed that in some ways, a written canon of Māori literature “is to go against the whole grain of Māori tradition, which is ‘oral’ rather than literary and which characteristically expresses itself through oral formulae” (qtd. Peterson 2007, 112).

Although there is a performative tradition of whare tapere that I have discussed in my introductory chapter, there is no Māori word for “theatre” in the Pākehā sense of the word (Peterson 17). Māori culture puts huge significance on oratory ability and kōrero – as a means of education, managing politics, and a variety of social functions or hui. As I have quoted Moriarty observing above, the hui in Māori culture serves a similar social purpose to theatre in Pākehā culture. The word “kōrero” has a wide spectrum of meanings. In Moorfield’s Māori Dictionary, the definitions given are:

> 1. (verb) (-hia,-ngia,-tia) to tell, say, speak, read, talk, address.
>
> 2. (noun) speech, narrative, story, news, account, discussion, conversation, discourse, statement, information.

This, for creative purposes, linguistically intertwines the form and content. Narrative, dialogue, plot and performance are all encompassed under the kaupapa of kōrero. As Peterson concludes, the “marae is thus *the* place of theatre and not surprisingly, features prominently in Kouka’s plays” (17).

The marae and whare tapere are both sites of haka, waiata and kōrero. Performance and oratory prowess are powerful social tools in Te Ao Māori, and there is a particular vocabulary for discussing the nature of performance in relation to an audience. These words are **ihi**, **wehi**, and **wana**. Though ihi and wehi are sometimes used interchangeably, they actually have distinct (but complementary) meanings. Nathan Matthews defines the three terms like so:

> "**Ihi** is a psychic power that elicits a positive psychic and emotional response from the audience.
>
> The response is referred to as **wehi**; a reaction to the power of the performance.
>
> **Wana** is the condition created by the combination of the elicitation of ihi and the reaction of wehi during performance; it is the aura that occurs during the performance and which encompasses both the performers and the audience. "
>
> (Matthews, emphasis mine).

Ihi is a concept tied to whare tapere traditions such as kapa haka and waiata, and can be applied to most forms of cultural performance. There is a parallel with the Pākehā performance theory of "stage presence" and "energy" which feeds into the kinaesthetic methodology I have used in workshop. Inclusive warm-up games such as Walk / Run / Stop are about the performers tuning into each other's ihi even as they switch activities. This abstract kaupapa can then be transferred to workshopping practice when the performers are switching between cultural, linguistic and performance codes, but remaining an ensemble through remaining in tune with the collective ihi.

The ihi is reciprocal. It demands an audience. As I will discuss in detail later, it is also something that Deaf performers can summon much more readily than hearing performers. Because physical presence in a Sign Language is a form of articulation, it is a matter of communication. Ihi is a part of everyday conversation in Deaf culture. This connection between

Deaf and Māori cultures initiated a shift away from the written script as a powerful object, and instead letting performance lead the creative development process for the writing to document afterwards.

Through manaakitanga in the creative process, I have been fortunate to have several Māori practitioners and artists support and advise me in shaping my practice according to kaupapa Māori. Kouka's implementation of kaupapa Māori in *Nga Tangata Toa* gave me a specific framework to follow for *Tanumia ō Kōiwi*.

Chapter Nine: “Carve your words, e Pa!” : Hone Kouka Case Study

The relationship between te reo Māori and NZ English in Hone Kouka’s *Nga Tangata Toa* is the centrepiece of the work’s successful syncretic dramaturgy. This chapter will explore Kouka’s use of bilingualism to create a prismic audience experience, as well as the dual performance structure, which supports the respective cultures of each language. By ‘prismic’, I am referring to a multiplicity of understanding regarding a single theatrical moment or concept. These multiple understandings may simultaneously include Pākehā culture, Māori culture, historical resonance, and theatrical impact.

The play’s protagonist, Rongomai, has been interpreted as a metaphor for Māori people to restore political self-determination (Carnegie & O’Donnell 228). I will also discuss Kouka’s characterisation of her, and Rongomai’s distinct relationships to either language, supporting this interpretation.

Before discussing their differences, though, it is worth taking time to observe the unity with which Kouka presents te reo Māori and English. The whole play is thematically reminiscent of European theatre - employing familiar story conventions such as brotherly murder for power, soliloquies, the characterisation of the returning war hero Taneatua and the doomed love between him and Rongomai (Mazer 36). This impression is supported by the heightened linguistic tone throughout the play in both languages. Some may interpret this choice as a nod to the style of the

translated and original Norwegian script of Ibsen's work (*Nga Tangata Toa* is an adaptation of Ibsen's play, *The Vikings of Helgeland*). Sharon Mazer has argued that this linguistic formality "implies an act of translation, from Māori to English, from the old ways to the (almost) new and all that troubles this transition"(41). Similarly, I believe this tonal choice owes to the fact that this heightened, archaic oratory style of English is close to the densely poetic texture of Māori oration and therefore allows the two languages to carry a unified tone across the bilingual dialogue, creating a cohesive world of kōrero (dialogue).

Te Reo Māori

It is impossible to discuss Kouka's use of te reo Māori without including the aspects of tikanga that he implements as dramaturgy. I will discuss further below the significance of marae protocol in relation to the play's performance structure. For now I will focus on the spiritual connection between a person and their reo, and how Kouka uses this connection to explore ideas of rangatiratanga (leadership), whakapapa (ancestry) and utu in his dialogue.

A whakataukī (proverb) tells us, "He aha te kai ō te rangatira? He kōrero, he kōrero, he kōrero" (Moorfield) In te reo Pākehā: "What is the food of a leader? It is knowledge, it is communication, it is speech." It is worth noting that the phrasing of this whakataukī is a strong example of the richness of te reo Māori: the repetition of "he kōrero" sounds deceptively simple, albeit rhythmically satisfying, but it is actually inviting the listener to reflect on the multiple meanings and uses of the word "kōrero".

In *Nga Tangata Toa*, Rongomai challenges the rangatiratanga, or right to leadership, of her uncle, Paikea, when her childhood suspicions are confirmed that Paikea killed her father in order to usurp his role as rangatira of the hapū. Rongomai attacks Paikea with her knowledge, and with her ability as an orator, turning these virtues of leadership into weapons against her uncle.

Rongomai and Paikea are undoubtedly the two strongest orators in the play. Paikea's particular strength, though, is his eloquence in te reo, and rather than Pākehā-style soliloquies, his solo passages contain a haka, a karakia (prayer), and a waiata tangi (lament). There is a pure performative enjoyment to be taken in seeing an actor showcasing several mediums of traditional Māori performance, particularly as each act is imbedded with deeper resonances within the narrative. For example, Paikea's karakia immediately follows a waiata tangi in 'Scene Twelve: Whaikorerō Tangi' and functions as a call for strength to the tīpuna, a traditional expression of mourning, and finally as a resurrection of spirit. As the stage directions after the song note: "*He has sung his soul back and is strong"* (Kouka, *Nga Tangata Toa* 47).

Paikea's eloquence and mastery of oral tradition also serve to remind the audience that Paikea does hold knowledge, customs, and a connection to tradition that Rongomai does not. In contrast to this, Rongomai's longest passages in te reo are addressed directly to her tīpuna, who are spiritually present throughout the narrative. The characters then represent two opposing relationships with te reo Māori: learned tradition versus natural ability.

Rongomai's connection to her tīpuna mirrors her elusive relationship to Taneatua. In both cases she has a genuine connection (as proved by her knowledge of the dreamed truth about her father's death, and by Taneatua's reciprocated feelings). In both relationships, she seems unable to achieve self-actualisation, as she is hindered by self-destructiveness. In terms of her doomed journey toward self-determination, both of these relationships climax in the final scene, reflected in her manic flipping between languages. She is spiritually pulled to the ocean by her tīpuna, but physically pulled back to the shore by Taneatua as she delivers the following dialogue:

> **RONGOMAI.** Kei te haere atu au! Kei te haere atu au! (*I'm coming. I'm coming.*) *To TANEATUA:* What do you want, just get away. Ae! Ākuanei! Ākuanei! (*Yes, soon, soon.*) *To TANEATUA:* Why are you here?
>
> (155)

Carnegie and O'Donnell observe how Rongomai's relationship with Taneatua also mirrors her relationship to rangatiratanga. Her potential as a leader and a wahine toa (warrior woman) are stifled, first through Paikea's theft of her inheritance, and then through her marriage to Wi, a Pākehā man who notably lacks "the physical prowess and warrior spirit that Taneatua, her 'true' love possesses. The passion between Rongomai and Taneatua thus becomes more than a story of unrequited love; it represents the ways in which colonisation has made it impossible for the Māori characters to realise their potential" (Carnegie & O'Donnell 228).

Rongomai's karanga in te reo, first to the spirit of her father and later to her tīpuna at large, illustrate a yearning from both sides for a connection to whakapapa. Rongomai strives repeatedly for what is rightfully hers, and we see that her tīpuna are trying to guide her. Interference from both Paikea and Rose, the Pākehā woman, respectively represent the obstacles laid by colonisation for Māori desire to honour whakapapa fully. Rongomai's fractured, passionate use of te reo throughout the play maps this frustrated journey, underlying her outward plan of revenge.

The nature and complexity of revenge, or more specifically utu, is the active centre of *Nga Tangata Toa*'s story. In te reo Māori, utu refers to revenge but also to restoring balance in the world, and does not necessarily have negative or violent connotations. This motif of balance is reflected in the many mirrorings of relationships noted above, drawing attention to the necessary connection between personal and political. Social, political and genealogical hierarchy form a syncretic oppression, which Rongomai cannot possibly escape from or win against.

The balance of te reo Māori and te reo Pākehā through dialogue is finely tuned to allow understanding for non-Māori speakers, while decidedly favouring te reo for oratory, spectacle and emotional depth. The play begins and ends with a karanga: the first ambiguously from the whole cast summoning Taneatua back to land, the second explicitly from Rongomai's tīpuna, calling her into the ocean. The balance of these scenes serves the structure of a Māori dramaturgy, reinforcing the balance of microcosmic story structure and the macrocosm of te ao Māori.

Within the balance of the separate languages is the peppering of Māori kupu (words) throughout the English dialogue. As this thesis may indicate, New Zealand English has assimilated Māori vocabulary into regular usage, particularly words for cultural practices or values that English translation may dilute. This is noticeable in the script's regular te reo references in otherwise Pākehā dialogue to marae protocol ("pōwhiri", "hākari"), the familial relations ("whānau", "mokopuna"), and traditional Māori spiritual beliefs ("tohunga", "makutu", "wairua").

This form of linguistic syncretism may be read two ways: firstly, that these words are markers of culture and identity, cultural remains in a colonised consciousness, despite the characters having functional dialogue predominantly in English. An alternative reading is that the blending of the two languages suggests hope for the mutual progression of the two cultures. Certainly this is the impression of the harmonious dual structure which Kouka implements. Tellingly, this bilingual peppering is a one-way street in this play. When the dialogue is in fluent te reo Māori, there is no need for Pākehā wording to drop in.

There is a deliberate shift in the world and tone of the play once the action becomes settled on the marae, and this is signified within the script as the scene titles shift from English into predominantly te reo Māori, as the narrative action is shaped according to marae protocol. For example, the first ten scene titles in order are:

1. Arrival
2. Discovery

3. Fathers and Sons

4. Dawn

5. Honour

6. Pōwhiri

7. Premonition

8. Kai

9. Hākari

10. The Fields

The marae protocol indicated in the Māori scene titles provides a sense of stability and social structure. Whereas the scenes with English titles take place literally outside of the action on the marae (for example, ‘Premonition’ takes place in a nightmarescape, ‘The Fields’ and ‘The Race’ take place in the fields and the beach near the marae). The scenes with English names are also disruptive, and catalysts for rising tension back on the marae. As I will discuss later, this is connected to the characterisation of Rose, who personifies the disruptive nature of Pākehā culture to te ao Māori, leaving the Māori characters to deal with the consequences.

The final scene, ‘Poroporoaki’, is the climactic confrontation between Taneatua and Rongomai, as well as the emotional aftermath of the previous scene, ‘The Fire’, in which Rongomai and Rose burn the marae down together.

The scene titles again present the balanced nature of the first and final scenes: ‘Arrival’ and ‘Poroporoaki’ have metatheatrical implications as well as clearly marking the beginning and end of the story. The final karanga of ‘Poroporoaki’ echoes the opening sequence, reminding the audience of how tightly bound Taneatua and Rongomai’s lives have been throughout the play: because, of course, on the same ship that returned Taneatua to Aotearoa, was the letter with the truth about Paikea’s murderous journey to rangatiratanga. As the opening karanga welcomes the arrival of Rongomai’s love and her journey for utu simultaneously, the closing karanga farewells them both, too.

It is fitting that the ocean should be used as a structural device and aesthetic principle bookending the play. As Epeli Hau’ofa has asserted, indigenous Pacific storytelling and identity both are “anchored in [a] common inheritance of a very considerable portion of earth’s largest body of water, the Pacific Ocean” (Hau’ofa 392). He also articulates the specific connection between Pacific whakapapa and the ocean, remembering ancestors who “came by sea to the Sea, and we have been here ever since” (Hau’ofa 408).

This is why the setting of the final scene on the beach has such resonance within a Māori dramaturgy. Taneatua has physically returned home by sea, but he is not spiritually returning home to Hawaiki by sea on his death. The final revelation of Taneatua’s conversion to Christianity as he dies, as Rongomai is summoned into the ocean by her tīpuna, represents the depth of division and damage to spiritual inheritance from colonialism.

The beach setting is also significant as there is a sense of utu to the narrative in Rongomai's implied suicide on the beach where her father died. This favouring of structural balance in the narrative also reflects tikanga Māori: a sense of utu has been achieved. The European story structure has been abandoned in favour of a resolution in Māori dramaturgical terms: there is no Act 5 rhyming couplet to close the action here.

Te Reo Pākehā

Te reo Pākehā is used mostly for expositional purposes throughout the script. In the same way that many of the extended te reo sequences showcase Māori oral tradition and the various forms of whare tapere, the English dialogue is used to drive the European play traditions, particularly that of a three act structure.

Just as several of the catalysts for conflict either occur in an external setting, or are initiated by an external force, so too there is a clear pattern of dialogue supporting the dramatic narrative of a disruptive action played in English, followed by the reaction in te reo Māori. For example, after Rongomai antagonises Te Riri into fighting Wi, Te Riri collapses with an asthma attack in front of everybody. Te Wai (his sister) and Taneatua beg Rongomai to use her healing powers on Te Riri, but the boy dies. Below is an excerpt of what follows:

PAIKEA enters with TE WAI. He pushes ROSE away. He holds TE RIRI, then, in a repeat of the image of the premonition scene, realises he is dead.

RONGOMAI. I tried everything I could, but nothing worked.

PAIKEA. Get out! Get out! Waiho kia korero au ki tāku tama. (*Leave me to talk to my son.*)

ROSE and RONGOMAI leave. PAIKEA places TE RIRI on the ground and steps back from him. He is in spotlight.

PAIKEA. Kua tapahia katoahia ngā rau o tāku rakau. Ngā mea i toe mai ahakoa he matemate ka noho ora tonu mai. Ngā pakitara o te whare nei kei te pehi mai ki runga a au. No aku hara ka mauria aku tama. Ha aha au kāore i mauria? (*My tree has been stripped of all its branches. The last remaining one, though sickly, still gave the tree life. The walls are closing in on me. Oh, were my sons taken for my wrong doing? Why not me?*)

Pause.

Brother, you have all my sons now. Soon I'll follow.

Lights fade on PAIKEA and TE RIRI.

(Kouka, *Nga Tangata Toa* 37 – 38)

Note that the parenthesised, italicised English in dialogue is purely for the actors to refer to – this is not performed as well as the reo it translates. Paikea's shifting between te reo Pākehā, to te reo Māori, and back to te reo Pākehā follows the pattern indicated above. Beat by beat it looks like so:

1. English – Action: Orders people to leave.
2. Te Reo Māori – Reaction: Reflects Te Riri's death
3. English – Action: Decides to starve himself to death as utu.

Paikea's shift into te reo Māori also suggests a direct conversation with his tīpuna, and with his deceased brother Whai. This is the only time Paikea confirms what he did, and that it was wrong.

This bilingual patterning gives a triple purpose to the use of te reo Pākehā dialogue. The expositional use is practical, as many audience members will not be fluent in te reo Māori. It makes sense then that all the key plot points either are repeated in in both languages, shown through wordless actions, or, most commonly, presented through English dialogue.

A second purpose of this is to follow the pattern of the conflict of colonisation, from the perspective of ngā tāngata whenua. Though the action of the plot is not explicitly driven by conflict against European colonial culture, the Pākehā action / Māori reaction / Pākehā action dramaturgical pattern presents the pattern of colonialism within a Māori story, showing how deeply the damage resonates. Far from presenting Māori as being without agency, this illustrates the complexity of self-determination in a colonised society.

A visual convention to support this dramaturgy is the presence of Rose. Rose is a Pākehā woman whom Paikea has ostracised from the marae for cheating on his son Kahu. Rose brings Rongomai the letter from the deceased soldier Kahu about Whai's death, setting in motion Rongomai's trajectory of utu.

Rose's presence in relation to Rongomai's increasingly violent actions are reminiscent of an evil spirit, or an ill omen. Rose goads Rongomai on to commit violent acts, and acts as her accomplice in killing Te Riri and burning the marae down. However as soon as she is confronted in front of the other members of the marae she denies any involvement. She refuses to even acknowledge the contents of Kahu's letter when Rongomai tells Taneatua and Te Wai about it, asking Rongomai, "What? Why do you bring me into your games? I don't know about this" (41).

Rose's dishonesty and role as a catalyst for chaos develop into a clear dramaturgical pattern, with Rose's on-stage presence signifying an omen of chaos and death. Her manipulation of Rongomai into attaining revenge on her behalf, while feigning impartiality, presents a microcosm of colonial relations: of Pākehā encouraging division with Māori communities to meet their own ends. Every one of the destructive actions throughout the narrative are caused by her actions or suggestions. The exclusive use of te reo Pākehā by Rose in her dizzyingly fickle dialogue identifies her as a linguistic outsider, as well as a cultural anomaly within the world of the play.

Bilingual Dramaturgy and Hybrid Structure

The third purpose of the bilingual patterning serves the dual performance structure of the play. *Nga Tangata Toa* functions as an adaptation of the Ibsen play, and stays true to its three act structure following a protagonist avenging her father's death. However Kouka's work is innovative in the way that it specifically employs a Māori dramaturgy. This hybrid structure is what makes *Nga Tangata Toa* a clear example of syncretic theatre.

Kouka effectively implements what Balme calls decolonising theatre, which is more focussed on the creative process from a practitioner perspective. Put simply, syncretic theatre is a way of implementing decolonising dramaturgy through creative practice. Kouka's syncretic theatre implements a dual structure of marae protocol and three-act structure to inform the performance. About creating this syncretic structure, Kouka has said:

> I understood that Māori theatre can only be a hybrid, as in traditional Māori society the concept of "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.
>
> (Kouka 2007, 241)

Roma Potiki's assertion that "any theatre that upholds the mana of tino rangatiratanga is Māori theatre" is the basis for O'Donnell and Carnegie's use of the term 'Māori Dramaturgy' (Carnegie & O'Donnell 222). "Tino rangatiratanga" here is used to refer to Māori sovereignty and self-

determination (222). *Nga Tangata Toa* is designed to be understood primarily through the lens of Māori self-determination and tikanga (cultural practices), which is why is it cited by Carnegie and O'Donnell as a clear example of modern Māori dramaturgy.

The Maōri / Pākehā structural hybridity is established from the opening scene of the play:

> Scene One: Arrival
>
> *The wharf at Auckland. TE WAI, wife of returning soldier TANEATUA, waits on the wharf for her husband. She is dressed in her best. He has been serving with the Pioneer Battalion in Europe and is returning a hero. The ship is approaching down the harbour. The wharf is packed with people. There are large ope waiting to waiting to welcome back their boys from war. The ship arrives and there is a karanga to welcome the men to shore. TANEATUA enters. He is dressed in military garb and carries a duffel bag. TE WAI searches for him amongst the crowds. The other cast members perform powhiri and there is much noise and excitement. TE WAI and TANEATUA weave through the crowds searching for each other. Eventually, the crowds disperse and leave TANEATUA and TE WAI alone on stage, apparently uneasy with each other.*
>
> (Kouka, *Nga Tangata Toa* 9)

This succinctly scripted scene allows for a lot of expansion in performance. Kouka uses a blend of English and Māori descriptive language to direct

the action as a blend of Pākehā and Māori performance customs. In doing so he establishes his theatrical world before any dialogue is spoken. I have mentioned above the use of marae protocol in the scene titles, and how this protocol for a hui (a gathering) informs the shape of the narrative in relation to Pākehā-driven disruptions. When we put the two structures at play side by side, we may see how they are used to complement each other in driving the action forward:

Māori Dramaturgy	**Three Act Dramaturgy**
■ Pōwhiri ■ Mihimihi	■ **Act One:** Taneatua returns ■ Rongomai learns of her father's murder, swears revenge
■ Kai, Hākari ■ Whai korerō Tangi ■ Utu restored?	■ **Act Two:** everyone arrives at marae. ■ Te Riri's death / grieving and turning point ■ Rongomai learns truth about Taneatua, burns the marae down

- Poroporoaki
- **Act Three:** Rongomai kills Taneatua, is left alone.

This structural hybrid, combined with the use of performance conventions from European and Māori traditions, creates a unique hybrid form of syncretic theatre. Mazer admires how this hybridity and "structural alignment between form and content, the byplay between European realism and Māori ritual" create a decolonising effect, as the "naturalness of Naturalism and the realness of psychological realism are called into question as cultural constructs" (37).

Prismic Effect and Translation

Balme observes that decolonising texts are unique in their bilingual/multilingual dramaturgy, because "the dramatist is in the position to translate adequately and creatively not just words, but also concepts and structures of thought." (125) I have discussed above how the dual structure of *Nga Tangata Toa* creates a syncretic performance experience, weaving together syncretic performance conventions and thought structures.

I will now discuss this concept of "translation" in terms of Kouka's use of wordless action and tikanga in the script. Many of these actions and practices within the narrative have a prismic effect on an audience, which depends on each individual audience member's understanding of Māori history, reo and tikanga. The effect of watching this in the social setting of

a theatre performance, especially a performance designed to invoke the sense of community of a marae or whare tapere experience, creates a sense of inclusion to audience members belonging to, and outside, the Māori community.

As mentioned earlier, by ‘prismic’, I am referring to a multiplicity of understandings regarding a single hybridised theatrical moment or concept. These multiple understandings may simultaneously include Pākehā culture, Māori culture, historical resonance, and theatrical impact. This code-switching is a natural occurrence in any form of multilingualism. Each of these understandings of a moment or concept may contradict the others. They are designed to be mutually defining, and so even the paradoxical understandings illustrate the prismic complexity of syncretic theatre.

Wordless actions play a crucial role in the narrative of *Nga Tangata Toa*. Part of this is for comprehension purposes: many pivotal plot moments do not require language and so may be equally understood by Te Reo Māori and te reo Pākehā speakers.

The three strongest actions by Rongomai are all presented wordlessly: allowing Te Riri to die, setting fire to the marae and stabbing Taneatua. Although each of these are accompanied by dialogue, it is the visual spectacle of the physical act that moves the plot forward. This allows the story to be clear regardless of an audience’s first language. When I asked Kouka about the languages he writes in, he included this visual language as a distinct category, saying:

> [I write in] English and Maori - as these are my languages. I also include the physical as Maori and Pacific nations are physical by nature then much of the language of that theatre has a physical background and starting point. Kapa haka, siva etc These cultures pou are languages also. … [T]hese are more tools to work with, to respect and to nurture. The language of theatre is global.
>
> (Kouka, *Interview*)

This physical language is a common thread in Deaf and Sign Theatre as well – often referred to as V.V. As well as using it for functional purposes (to clearly move the story along), Kouka also uses several visual motifs. The two most notable of these are Rose's presence as an omen of destruction, and variations on the repeated stage direction, "*Rongomai is left alone"*.

In the excerpt below, Rongomai is confronted by Te Wai and discovers the truth about Taneatua sleeping with her:

> **RONGOMAI.** You can't hurt me. Try. Your brother died for your utu. There's nothing you can do. Poor dear sister.
>
> **TE WAI.** I can and I will. You spit on my father and you let Te Riri die. Didn't you? I hate you! Do you hear? I hate you! Here! *She removes the pounamu.* Look, look! You were with my man that night. My man, he's the one who broke the makutu and

killed the dogs and he's the one who took you. You've been tricked. Where's your magic now?

ROSE giggles. RONGOMAI is silent.

With the same fury. You've fallen silent, sister. No one spoke for my father as there's no need to defend an innocent man. Tricked! Tricked!

TANEATUA begins to take her away.

Poor dear sister!

WI and ROSE remain on stage. RONGOMAI is left isolated.

(133)

This climactic moment of revelation is dense with interplay between Pākehā and Māori languages and cultures.

Firstly, it is worth noting that the majority of this confrontation is in English – the characters are challenging and attacking each other with linguistic tools of colonisation and oppression. The only words in te reo Māori are either names or concepts specific to tikanga Māori. To briefly gloss the three Māori terms from this excerpt:

Utu – the word "utu" is often loaned in Pākehā contexts as interchangeable with "vengeance", although it is closer in original meaning to "reciprocity". Mead describes it as "the principle of equivalence", and it is applied in economic, political or personal relationships (Mead 31).

Pounamu – greenstone, a highly valued material. In this case, a greenstone necklace given as a gift. Any taonga made form pounamu is a precious object. Within the Te Takoha (gift-giving) framework, the journey of this gift is significant. Customarily, when a taonga is given, there is an expectation of a return gift (Mead 182). This also speaks to the framework of utu, or balance being restored in relationships through exchange of actions.

Mākutu – can simply be translated as “witchcraft”. It directly relates to the concepts of a person’s wairua, or spirit. The wairua is believed to leave the body when a person is dreaming, but is otherwise an integral part of each person, and must be protected from spiritual damage. The four main forms of spiritual damage are through abuse, neglect, violence and mākutu (Mead 55).

Although these three concepts seem to be buried amid an English-language confrontation, the presentation of each of these concepts brings the deep resonance of Māori tikanga below the surface.

So, although Rongomai believes that she has restored rightful balance for her father’s death through the death of Te Riri – in fact there is an imbalance at play that she is unaware of. The revelation of Te Wai holding the pounamu not only presents Rongomai with the truth about who she slept with, but also vastly diminishes the mana of her husband Wi (and by extension, Rongomai as well). If it was Taneatua and not Wi who was able to break the mākutu, then Wi never proved himself to her. Also Rongomai’s magic abilities, which set her apart and give her strength, are

able to be undone by Taneatua. This betrayal is embodied in the action of holding the pounamu.

The pounamu then transforms from a taonga to a symbol of shame. Te Wai does this does this in response to Te Riri's death, believing that this is a reciprocal action and that balance is restored. However, as Rongomai knows that Paikea was responsible for her father's death, she sees Te Riri's death as the equivalence for this. And so Te Wai's revelation and consequent shaming sets a new cycle of utu in motion, which she now must restore.

This sequence also works in a Western three-act structure as what is often referred to as the second-act pinch – raising the stakes as the protagonist hits rock bottom before the climactic third act.

The wordless, almost musical motif of Rose's giggling reinforces her role as an omen of trouble. Kouka presents her with dramatic irony as although Rose has been the catalyst for the confrontation in this sequence, she refrains from taking part or choosing sides.

Realism and bilingualism

Sharon Mazer discusses *Nga Tangata Toa* in the context of Aotearoa New Zealand realism in her essay "Thinking Theatrically / Acting Locally". Mazer notes that Kouka deliberately juxtaposes Ibsenian drama with Māori ritual and traditional performance to create a distancing of realist conventions – through dialogue and narrative structure (36). In the scene analysis above, we may see an example of what Mazer calls a "byplay

between European Realism and Māori ritual" (37). She later goes on to argue that in shifting between these two performance modes, rather than creating a harmonious hybridity, Kouka's "realism as a theatrical structure seems to come to stand in for colonization as a social reality" (43). This implies then, that the Māori characters only reach for Māori ritual or language when realism fails them – rarely and reluctantly. However, I would disagree, using William Peterson's breakdown of the three primary catalysts for te reo in the characters' dialogue throughout *Nga Tangata Toa*:

> 1. When they are engaged in formal interactions such as whai korerō or where cultural expressions such as the haka require the use of Māori.
>
> 2. When characters are intimate with one another or when they are relaxed and drop their guard.
>
> 3. When characters are in a heightened state emotionally and English is not adequate to express what they are feeling. When confronting death or the possibility of death characters switch to Māori, as the gravity of the situation demands as much. (19)

What this presents is a fluency in the cultural syncreticism of the Māori characters. For the personification of colonisation, Rose, is hardly a character drawn with psychological realism. She is a cruel and symbolic character of historical betrayal, presented onstage through patterned, eerie dialogue and behaviour. By contrast, Rongomai exhibits a more

complex realist psychology – and expresses her thoughts fluently in English and te reo, in realism and ritual.

While it is true that the nature of the relationship between te reo Māori and te reo Pākehā is disruptive, antagonistic, this does not mean that te reo Māori is simply picking up the slack that English language and European realism leaves. Rather than a default, Kouka's use of te reo Māori gives the Māori characters extradimensionality. They are fluent in the Pākehā world, with added understandings and beliefs added into their psychological spectrums. Language becomes more than a communicative function – the Māori vocabulary signifies a gearshift into a place of spiritual knowledge that English cannot reach. This is clearer in performance than it appears on the page – as the embodied tikanga is constantly present throughout the narrative, in the presence of the tīpuna, the setting of the marae, and the fact of the narrative centring on a Māori family.

Kouka makes his hybrid style visible in *Nga Tangata Toa* by explicitly bringing together Ibsen's realist drama with marae protocol - adapting *The Vikings of Helgeland* and placing the narrative on a marae, with most of the scene titles taking their names from parts of a hui ritual. Mazer discusses *Nga Tangata Toa* in the context of Aotearoa realism and notes that Kouka deliberately juxtaposes Ibsenian drama with Māori ritual and traditional performance to create a distancing of realist conventions – through dialogue and narrative structure (36). Although both are highly ritualised creative practices, they are rarely given equal weight in a traditionally Pākehā setting of the mainstream theatre stage.

Kouka's script can be read as a vessel for cultural knowledge and conversation, when applying Diana Taylor's working question for post-colonial performance: "What tensions might performance behaviours show that would not be recognized in texts and documents?" ("The Archive and The Repertoire", xviii).

Through appreciation of the detail Kouka has applied to his unique form of hybridity, I have learned many wider lessons around the nature of bringing cultures and languages together in story.

Chapter Ten: Creative Practice: Te Reo Māori Development in Takitoru Dramaturgy

Casting

As with casting a Deaf performer to play a Deaf character, it was a clear decision to cast a Māori actor as the Māori character of Briar. I had worked with Cian Gardner on a devised production directed by Jo Randerson in 2014 (*Yo Future*), and had also taught her when she was an exceptional undergraduate theatre student. I knew she had a good understanding of creative process, an interest in script development, and that she was an intuitive and fearless performer.

Cian, like many young people with Māori and Pākehā heritage, often talked openly about the liminal identity she occupies between the two cultures. Discussions of this nature with Cian and with many other Māori friends and family about this feeling about “not being Māori enough” informed the fraught nature of Briar’s relationship with te reo Māori in the script. As I will discuss immediately below, although Cian sometimes struggled with te reo Māori in the dialogue, her lived knowledge of tikanga made the Māori dramaturgy come alive with her collaboration.

Unfortunately English: Te Reo, An Indigenous Second Language

The quality of te reo Māori improved with each draft throughout the script development. This was in part due to my own reo improving with education, but largely through the regular proofing and guidance from

Moko Smith. I was very aware that it would not be my own work if the kōrero was always fluent and beautiful in a way that my own reo is not. So I discussed with Moko that I wished to restrain the language until the final scene, so that the full force of that karanga could be like a linguistic explosion. In my interview with Kouka, I asked him what he considers his first language is, and he replied, “Unfortunately English”. I found this a useful phrase to keep returning to. Although the kaupapa of my creative practice was trilingual writing, in order to have complete clarity in the creative process, my participants and I did need return to communicating in our common language of English.

This also meant that I was able to play with dialogue in the space of inarticulacy. This was something that is clearest in the sequences where Briar practices her Māori with the Tape – using simple, repetitive sentence structures to reveal Briar’s internal life. The structure of many of these sentences came from recordings that I had made myself, with which to practice my kōrero.

I was often struck by the difference that translation makes in the beauty of a sentence: for example, a sentence structure for my Māori class was “While she went for a run, it rained” which in te reo is “I a ia e oma ana, ka ua”. The grammar and vocabulary itself lend a sense of musicality to simple sentences like these, which I wanted to explore in performance. Through my Māori education I also came to enjoy the absurdity of meaning in sentence structures, which teachers use to practice basics of a

language. I enjoyed this unknown space as a student, and went on to develop this poetry of inarticulacy as a central kaupapa for my dialogue.

Workshopping Creative Practice

A crucial kaupapa for my developmental dramaturgy was manaakitanga - seeking guidance from artists and thinkers from the Māori community. The three cultural advisors I looked to were my Victoria University supervisor Dr Nicola Hyland, the playwright Hone Kouka, and the moko tapu artist and fluent te reo Māori speaker, Moko Smith.

By collating and analysing these three sources of tikanga and reo, I have tried to develop my own creative practice to uphold tikanga Māori and give te reo Māori its due respect in my writing. I will lay out the kaupapa planted through this manaakitanga and how I have implemented them in workshop and creative practice.

I implemented manaakitanga in my use of an NZSL interpreter, as well as working around the timing of the performer Cian's pregnancy to schedule the workshops. This is a crucial aspect of manaakitanga that extends the concept beyond current inclusivity practices. Manaakitanga takes a holistic approach to mahi – understanding that whānau and social responsibilities need to be respected for everyone to contribute creatively.

Theatre Marae

The final draft of *Tanumia ō Kōiwi* was heavily influenced by Kouka's writing. I followed Māori dramaturgical structure in the same structural way that *Nga Tangata Toa* uses it: following marae protocol to inform the performance structure. This has also come from a suggestion from Dr

Nicola Hyland that Briar's connection to whakapapa needs to be reflected in the way that she relates to the audience.

This involved developing the opening sequence as a form of pōwhiri, while also reflecting Briar's discomfort with her Māori identity and reo. The introduction and welcome is a crucial structural component in both social and performance contexts.

Hirini Melbourne observes that Māori writing must "remain rooted in its cultural context with the marae and whare whakairo as its focus" (qtd in Peterson 17). The theatre practitioner Jim Moriarty terms his performance kaupapa as "theatre marae", built around the ritual of a hui (62).

Tīpuna

The nature of Briar's final speech, to be performed as a karanga and written in the style of a karakia, was Moko's idea as we were working through the Māori dialogue one day. This took us into a conversation about the purpose of this closing speech and the development of the Nameless Woman character.

In *Bury Your Bones* (23 – 88), Briar, Eddie and Vic all describe the vision of a Nameless Woman who embodies death. Gradually I also introduced the Nameless Woman as a physical presence, played by the Interpreter / Eddie performer. In the final scene of *Bury Your Bones* (84 – 85), Briar and the Nameless Woman enter the afterlife together. As well as this stage presence, Briar introduces the character by addressing the

Nameless Woman as an invisible force at first, in a passage which could be interpreted as being directed at the audience:

> *Inside.*
>
> *BRIAR has a drink of water, and calms her coughing.*
>
> *There's a knock on the door. She ignores it.*
>
> *Her phone rings. She picks it up, sees the number and leaves it to ring, under a pillow to dampen the sound.*
>
> *She looks into the audience.*
>
> BRIAR. I know you're there. You've been creeping out of my nightmares, haven't you?
> Leave me alone, lady. I'm not ready for you yet.
>
> (*Bury Your Bones* 51)

As I was going through this sequence and then the final karanga with Moko, we talked about te reo Māori captions for the above sequence. He then suggested some rewording for Briar's final karanga. My original karanga was inspired by a style of waiata whakautu – a traditional oratorical response to a proposition (McRae and Jacob 53). With English translation, the *Bury Your Bones* karanga began:

BRIAR. *(NZSL & speech)*

Ka mea, e kui, ka hōmai kōrero,

[Hear me, my lady]

Kei mata-nuku, kei mata-rangi,

[Here at the meeting of sky and earth]

Nau mai, nau ake!

[Come to me!]

From the shadows, Nameless Woman slowly makes her way to Briar's side.

(84)

Through discussing the linguistic characteristics of this style with Moko I realised that actually this waiata-inspired style of rhetoric made more sense for all of the direct address sections of the script, to be cohesive. These linguistic characteristics typically include:

- Poetic language
- Rhetorical content
- Direct speech

(McRae and Jacob 53)

Moko suggested that Briar's karanga should be more in the style of a karakia whakamutu (a closing prayer). As we developed this, I realised

that Briar's speech should be directed to this Nameless Woman for all monologues. When Moko asked me who exactly the Nameless Woman was, to clarify the register that Briar should address her in, I instinctively answered, "her tīpuna". I had not articulated this idea before, but realised that surely it was true. From this revelation I developed the idea that the audience was always addressed as tīpuna, so that as characters passed into the afterlife, they joined the audience. This also made sense for Interpreter / Eddie's role as a bridge between the audience and the playing space (I will discuss this characterisation in the following section).

From this, Moko and I developed a final karanga to exemplify Māori rhetoric, and to show the power of te reo Māori in karanga – matching the final power of Briar's use of Visual Vernacular as well. With English translations, the final developed karanga is:

BRIAR. *(NZSL & speech)*

Ka pō, ka pō, Ka ao, Ka awatea,

[As the night slowly rises]

Karanga ake nei te reo, e kui, tau mai, hikoi tahi ai.

[I summon you, grandmother;

Come now, let us walk together]

Ki mata-nuku, ki mata-rangi,

[Here at the edge of sky and earth]

Nau mai, tau mai!

[Come to me, now!]

(NZSL) Breath.

BRIAR finds a door in the air.

(*Tanumia ō Kōiwi* 395 - 396)

With such a polished final karanga, I was able to work backwards, to the 'Negated Pōwhiri' sequence for the opening of the play. This also triggered further change, as with the audience being cast as tīpuna (as well as being treated as manuwhiri), there was no need to have Nameless Woman as a physical presence onstage anymore.

The final karanga's elegant and restrained linguistic style, opening with monosyllabic words, leaves ample room for the speaker's voice to carry and decorate the karanga.

Another invaluable aid that Moko offered was his fluency and ability to offer beautiful, poetic translations, which I simply would not know as a basic speaker. This gives a sense of linguistic elevation for Briar in contrast to her halting reo in the opening sequence. The language flows out of her with beauty and direction, closing the action through tikanga as well as resolving her journey.

Although I obviously would not label my work as "Māori writing", I do think that these structural devices have elevated the Māori dramaturgy apparent in the script's performance. As I will discuss in the final section of my

thesis, creating a clear vision of this character purely out of words became its own syncretic exercise.

Whakapapa, Reorua and Characterisation

The kaupapa of whakapapa was in the back of my mind at the beginning of this research, but it grew in significance throughout the script development.

Within Theatre Marae, the audience is to be treated as manuwhiri, so Nicola offered me a provocation for workshopping: what kind of mihi should Briar provide in the opening scenes? How is the audience invited to witness the story, and how is the language serving dual purposes of exclusion (for decolonising purposes) and enriching?

Once I sat with these questions, it seemed clear that I needed to write up a whakapapa for Briar – as her character journey is one towards her tīpuna. I began to think of her estrangement from her mother and rejection of Pākehā identity as connected to her journey to death. What if instead of dying in a hospice, she had a different idea of a good death? One that connected her to the whenua and her whakapapa? My answer was the ocean.

Inspired by the character whakapapa included after the *Nga Tangata Toa* script, I then created a whakapapa for her, connecting her to a place that I also have a strong love for – Whakatāne. Whakatāne of course also takes its name from a story about a heroic woman, Wairaka, whose cry “Kia whakatāne au i ahau” (“I will act the part of the man”), broke the tapu

which prevented a group of women from paddling the canoe they were in, which was drifting out to sea. Briar, like her waka Mataatua ancestor Wairaka, is strong, brave, and decisive.

From this, it followed naturally that her iwi was Ngāti Awa but she no longer lived in Whakatāne, or had much iwi contact. I decided to bookend her mihi with awkward English, to contrast with the direct and elegant syntax of te reo.

When asked about the dramaturgy of Aotearoa's reorua (bilingualism) in my interview, Kouka responded: "Language enriches and deepens work. New Zealand is primarily a mono lingual country, using the Americas and Europe as language starting points […] . Many languages enrich not the stuffling [sic] colonialism of one language" (Kouka, *Interview*).

This is reminiscent of Julian Meyrick's definition of 'character' in modern dramaturgy. Meyrick offers that rather than owing anything to a narrow idea of psychological realism, character "can be anything which allows an understanding of what is taking place to thicken and deepen as the drama progresses (a set of repeated images or sounds…)" (275).
So we may think of each language as a character with a series of specific relationships to one another. When this linguistic character combines with the psychological character (for example, Briar struggling with speaking i te reo Māori), what does that show us about both the character of language and person?

Kapa Haka and Visual Vernacular

In my dramaturgical analysis of *Nga Tangata Toa*, I have discussed the visual nature of marae protocol on stage. I was interested to read about how Kouka involved a kaumātua in the creative process, and how collaborative his practice often is. Absorbing this into a largely Deaf-led workshopping process has been an ongoing journey – and always comes back to the kaupapa of manaakitanga.

As I developed new drafts of the script, I was conscious of writing in more opportunities for wordless action and showing the Deaf and Māori cultures in a visual way. This naturally fed into the workshopping through the involvement of NZSL. As Visual Vernacular blends elements of NZSL, similarly we blended aspects of simple kapa haka movements into Briar's non-English monologues. This was particularly successful during a workshopping exercise where Cian performed a scripted poem in Visual Vernacular of her own invention. This ended up involving mime, NZSL, and wiri fluently blended together. As I will explain in the later chapters, the blending of these two forms, kapa haka and Visual Vernacular, came to be a core dramaturgical convention in my syncretic scripting of visual languages. I have included the footage of this in the CD of video recordings.

Dramaturgical Strategies and Kaupapa Māori

In the opening sequence of *Bury Your Bones*, Vic is the first character to address the audience, beginning the play with a monologue in NZSL about a vision of a lake: a poem about death. As he performs this, Briar performs

a wiri with her eyes closed. The origin of the wiri action comes from the image of water rippling across a lake.

This opening was designed to give equal weight to the two central reo: Māori and NZSL. This fusing of symbols of the lake and mortality, told mostly through images, was intended to introduce the audience to the tikanga of Deaf culture and tikanga Māori through physically spaced side-texts, with equal weighting:

> *Vic enters in a wheelchair. He is weak, cachectic, but there is a twinkle in his eye once he begins to perform.*
>
> *He performs the monologue in a blend of NZSL and visual vernacular.*
>
> *Lit separately is Briar, with her eyes closed.*
>
> VIC. *(NZSL)* This is what I see:
>
> A huge lake. The water is still. Then: plink! Me, a tiny pebble, hits the surface of the lake.
>
> *Briar's hands begin to shimmer in a wiri.*

VIC. *(NZSL)* Where the pebble hit, I send out ripples in the water, slow, fast, big, tiny, out and out. Somewhere else on the lake, other pebbles drop in too, and send out their own ripples.

Ripples from here clash into ripples from there, making beautiful shimmering new patterns. The light dances on my waves.

All the while I'm sinking down, down, down. Until: plink!

Me, a tiny pebble, hits the floor of the lake. And I lay there, my waves calm and distant. I lay there at the bottom of the lake with an infinite expanse of identical pebbles. Still. Vast. So still I can't be sure that I really exist. I reach for the light switch –

Briar wakes with a gasp. She has woken from a nightmare that something was crouching on her chest. She slowly realises the room is empty.

(*Bury Your Bones* 26 - 27)

As the action of *Bury Your Bones* continues, each character addresses the audience in a similar manner: directly and in a confessional style, but without a specific intended audience, largely filtered through English:

Briar is sitting in the hospice garden, consulting one book and scribbling in another. She looks tired but fizzes with intellect and determination.

BRIAR. I always imagined my life as a biography, in a history book. Her father died when she was young, and she had a troubled relationship with her mother, but she overcame it, no, she used the contradiction in her heritage to create a new voice of a generation. When the constant stomach pain and rashes turned out to be cancer, even though I was only nineteen, I thought - of course. She was struck down with illness as a young woman, and told she would not have long to live. But - when she was bedridden, she used the time to pen her greatest work, a masterpiece. And she recovered, defying all odds and living a long life, her miraculous recovery and precocious talent shining as a beacon for many others to follow. She became a leader of her community and had many lovers. She never had children because she didn't have time to settle, she was always moving, disrupting, challenging the world. But her home was a safe place for young people and she was an aunty to many.

Even now, I have that version of history in my mind when I imagine the future. Because I don't know how to understand right now.

I've never had that many friends. The friends I do have don't like to visit me because I won't soften my ideas for them. But what's wrong with anger? My anger is aimless, unfocused. But it's all that gets me out of bed in the morning. It's a puddle of ink just waiting to take form on the page.

Rango swoops past her.

BRIAR. Fuck off, actually.

Rango flies out of the theatre.

Vic enters in a wheelchair. He enjoys the sun on his face. He looks out at the audience.

(28 – 29)

However, this opening sequence was unsuccessful for several reasons. The first major reason was that no te reo Māori has actually been spoken yet, although we are two scenes into the play. The second problem was that rather than establishing linguistic equality, I believe I was aiming too broadly and not actually establishing anything clearly at all – especially not Briar's role as the protagonist. Lastly, this opening sequence was missing a crucial element of Māori dramaturgy – the ihi, or performance energy flow between audience/performer.

To reimagine this opening sequence, then, I looked at both the opening of *Nga Tangata Toa* and at the final moments of *Bury Your Bones.* I knew that I wanted the play to end with a powerful exhibition of linguistic hybridity. So I worked backwards from that – and built a clearer sense of relationship between Briar and her reo Māori. The furthest from this final speech, then, was simply an inability to karanga: a failing of the mana/voice relationship. I then tried to find a way to express a sense of manaaki towards the audience through the basic protocol of Briar

presenting her mihi. Although she does not have the mana to perform a karanga at the beginning of the narrative, even as an early learner of Māori, she would know her mihi and would be able to recite it.

This subversion of familiar tikanga, combined with the presence of the captions and the NZSL interpreter, is a much more successful device for establishing the Māori and NZSL as imperfect focal points for the performance:

> *As the audience enters, BRIAR stands onstage, shyly greeting everyone and helping them to their seats.*
>
> *NZSL Interpreter takes their place.*
>
> *The lights change to indicate the beginning of the performance.*
>
> *BRIAR takes a deep breath and raises her hands as though she is about to let rip a magnificent karanga. Her hands shimmer in a wiri – but one hand won't behave. It looks ridiculous.*
>
> *She freezes. She deflates.*
>
> BRIAR. Hold up, I'll try again.
>
> *She breathes in deeply.*

BRIAR. HAERE Mmmmmnope, sorry, sorry. Okay one more time. [to herself] Come on. Karawhiua.

She breathes in deeply again. Raises her hands. Freezes, for ages. There is genuine fear in her eyes.

She deflates.

BRIAR. Anyway, what I mean to say is welcome. Welcome. Thank you for coming, to hear my story. I wish I could tell it better, but.
Anyway, I wanted to say welcome. The story should begin with a welcome. So, welcome. But it also begins with a goodbye. So, bye.

She goes to leave.

Nah, jokes.

She comes back.

But really. This is the story of how I die. I know, it's full-on. And it's not one of those murder mysteries. It's not exciting or sexy. I'm just sick. And

I won't get better. Let me tell you about my life, then we can get back to the main story of my death.

As she switches into te reo, her manner changes.

BRIAR. Ko Ngāti Whakaue, me Te Arawa.

I te taha o tōku pāpā, ko Hone rāua ko Winiperi ōku tīpuna....

(*Tanumia ō Koiwi* 252 - 257)

The relationship between the NZSL interpretation and this spoken sequence was an important breakthrough in my syncretic dramaturgy, which I will discuss in detail in a later chapter. The sense of humour combined with the failed attempt at a proper pōwhiri make Briar a more engaging and clear protagonist.

Respecting the original textuality of conventions such as karanga, pōwhiri and elements of kapa haka was a crucial aspect of my creative process, in order to develop a genuinely syncretic performance. This meant being wary of "exoticising" these conventions and smothering them within Pākehā narrative frameworks. In order to keep this delicate balance in check, I regularly consulted on tikanga Māori with Moko as well as with my Victoria University supervisor Dr Nicola Hyland.

Two key resources that I used to guide the structural dramaturgy from a Māori perspective were the marae protocol as discourse in *Nga Tangata Toa*, and formal aspects of traditional Māori theatre, te whare tapere.

In an email giving dramaturgical feedback on *Bury Your Bones,* Nicola wrote:

> Another point is the heart of Te Whare Tapere which is the competition, or the game. How can your script reinforce the playfulness of language, but also the stakes of the narrative as a game/competition? Most of the purakau/paki waitara have the game/challenge/competition at least in part of the narrative – connecting to the earliest forms of theatre in Te Ao Maori [as challenge, wero] would be useful to connect kaupapa to form.
>
> (Hyland email, 9.6.16)

This feedback was a strong provocation for the final developments of the script. I considered that throughout the narrative, there should be a sense of wero in both of Briar's relationships with Vic and Eddie (presented largely through a sense of linguistic competition); and through two complex objects of koha: the Key and Hemi Muir's book of stories.

The wero has become a ritualised display of welcome. It originally was an act that preceded a pōwhiri, in order to determine whether or not visitors came in peace. Today it still an important aspect of relational tikanga (Mead 131), and as Nicola stated above it has developed as a performative value in whare tapere tradition as well.

The obvious nature for the game/challenge within my narrative was linguistic. The central relationship between Vic and Briar develops through their journey through language, predominantly visual languages. A sense of linguistic competition unites Briar's other relationships as well: with Eddie and with the Tape.

Briar is missing a father, and her desire to connect with te reo Māori is strongly linked to her yearning for a paternal relationship. Thus Vic becomes her stand-in father figure and NZSL her stand-in for te reo Māori. Through both the personal and linguistic relationships, Briar takes a detour that ultimately gives her clarity around her own mana.

This paternal relationship builds to and pivots on "The Poem" sequence, which is when the visual and spoken languages fully hybridise in syncretic performance. The shift from formal NZSL into more intuitive V.V. gives Briar a sense of ownership of visual language, which she has been lacking until this point in the narrative:

> *They perform a poem together:*
>
> *(NZSL & Speech)*
>
> Māori
>
> Word – Kupu
>
> Bone – Kōiwi
>
> Blood – Toto

Skin – Kiri

Dirt – kirikiri

Hair – Makawe

Breath – Hā

Thought – Whakaaro

Air – Hau

Sky – Rangi

Clouds – Kapua

Stars – Whetu

(Visual Vernacular, NZSL & Speech)

Twinkling Stars – Whetu Ahi

Cells, atoms, separating – Pungarehu Marara

Explode & Contract – Pahu atu – Ngāhoro mai

Forever – Ake, ake, ake

They both gaze at the Signed universe.

(330 -331)

This sequence was written to give a sense of ihi passing between the two performers. Vic has earlier exhibited his own measured approach to mortality, and here he passes his understanding literally into Briar's hands through visual language.

Briar then later alchemises this content into her final karanga – a hybrid of Visual Vernacular and Māori oration:

BRIAR. *(NZSL & speech)*

Ka pō, ka pō, ka ao, ka awatea,

Karanga ake nei te reo, e kui, tau mai, hikoi tahi ai.

Ki mata-nuku, ki mata-rangi,

Nau mai, tau mai!

(NZSL) Breath.

BRIAR finds a door in the air.

Briar presses the Key into the air between stage and audience.

As she turns the key, the lights on the stage go down, and the lights on the audience come up. She pushes open a door in the air and walks through it into the audience.

She performs a poem in Visual Vernacular:

Wind is breath.

Breath shared. Fills the space.

Thoughts become clouds:

I sprinkle them with stars.

We are all stardust.

Expanding

Collapsing

Forever, forever, forever.

Briar exits the space.

(396 – 397)

Briar's linguistic competition with Eddie is complicated by Eddie's unwillingness to take the role of teacher (as opposed to Vic, who slips into the relationship quite naturally). Briar challenges Eddie as the designated interpreter in character (separate from the Briar / Interpreter proper relationship). Briar takes a morbid pleasure in seeing her own awkward words transformed into Sign by Eddie, and more than once Eddie falters, unsure how to express Briar's ideas. The presence of captions allow the audience to see the failures of interpretation, as well as being able to appreciate the awkward challenge that Briar's dialogue puts to Eddie:

VICTOR. *(NZSL)* They thought their own language was a waste of time? Wow.

EDDIE. Wow, your father thought his own language was a waste of time?

BRIAR. You don't know, okay. I don't know. I don't know what made them think that. I don't know what their teachers told them as kids to make them think their language was inferior. I don't know what fucking horrible shit happened to make them believe that speaking English and acting white was the best way to survive in this country. That it's safer to act like you don't even care what iwi you're from if you want to be invited to the local book club. I don't know what kind of person made my parents believe that poison but I'm guessing they weren't Māori. Do not judge my Dad.

Briar breaks into a cough.

EDDIE. Shit, sorry.

(NZSL) Māori language oppressed.

(311 – 314)

The relationship between Briar and Eddie is consistently antagonistic. Although it seems that Eddie's ability to kōrero i te reo Māori will create a bond between them, Briar quickly turns this around to challenge Eddie. Once Vic enters the conversation again, Briar insists on speaking to Eddie in Māori even as she translates from NZSL into speech:

EDDIE. *(Speech)* Briar! Vic has made a sign-name for you.

Briar looks up from her book.

EDDIE. Are you okay?

BRIAR. Kei pai. He aha tāna?

EDDIE. Um. Ko tā māua ingoa mōu i te reo turi o Aotearoa.

(to Vic) Whakaatu atu.

Vic shows her the name.

EDDIE. Nā te mea, “Briar”, he koi koe ā hinengaro, ā arero hoki.

BRIAR. Ngā mihi.

EDDIE. *(NZSL)* Ngā mihi.

BRIAR. *(NZSL)* Ngā mihi.

(349 – 350)

This gives the convention of heteroglossia a playfully competitive framework: as though Eddie is already juggling two languages and Briar insists on throwing a third in to the act.

Pākehā Characterisation

In an interview, Kouka suggested that the dramaturgical offering of multilingualism is the constant shifting of worldviews:

> Constantly changing viewpoints. Giving voice not only to one world view. Changing the perspective that the colonisers language and way is the norm. It can create another level of openness.
> (Email Interview 02.02.17)

I have held onto this kaupapa of challenging “the coloniser’s language and way [as] the norm” in the structure of English language in dialogue, but

also in the nature of Pākehā characterisation. This has meant applying some form of whakapapa recitation to the two Pākehā characters, and defining them both through kaupapa Māori frameworks of whānau, whenua and wairua. I noticed Kouka's application of this in his characterisation of Rose, the Pākehā character in *Nga Tangata Toa.* From a colonial perspective she seems innocuous. But from a Māori perspective, her prioritising Pākehā values over Māori kaupapa, mostly through passive-aggression and inaction, make her the catalyst for much of the tragedy of the play.

I drew parallels in Rose's characterisation and my characterisation of Briar's offstage Mother. Mother is well-meaning but unwilling to be proactive and educate herself about her daughter's whakapapa or explore tikanga options. Her reductive view of Māori identity is a checklist rather than a complex ideological structure. This exhibits the typical Pākehā cultural value of avoidance over awkwardness.

There is also a decolonising aspect to the competitive nature of Briar's reo Māori interactions with Eddie. Briar's strained relationship with the language reflects her sense of displacement within her own whakapapa and the wider Māori world. Eddie, a Pākehā, having access to that world through the reo is simultaneously alluring and repulsive to Briar.

In their final scene together, 'Ahiahi', Eddie reveals that she speaks te reo Māori and in doing so catches a glimpse into Briar's relationship with her father and her whakapapa. This is when Briar throws the third language

into Eddie's interpreting juggling act: together creating a linguistic spectacle. Ultimately, Briar beats Eddie in the game of interpreting, when Eddie falters at Briar's story of Hine-maarama (245). The subtext of her faltering is that in losing this interpreting game, Eddie also loses her conviction in immortality. Relaying Briar's story of Hine-maarama's return from death, and being stuck in between the storyteller (Briar) and Vic's revulsion at the unnatural turn of narrative causes her to fail, first linguistically, then emotionally. She does not want to force Briar to experience mortality as she has. So she offers Briar the first gesture of help she can think of, to enable her to lose her virginity:

VIC. *(NZSL)* And she lived? She was revived?

EDDIE. I ora ia? I whakaora ia?

BRIAR. Āe.

VIC is disturbed by this.

BRIAR. He aha ra te raru?

Eddie doesn't translate.

BRIAR. Eddie He kōrero otinga hari! Ka ora ia!

Briar and Vic are both looking at Eddie, who is silent.

Vic nudges her.

EDDIE. You know, I could sneak you out of here one night. We could go to a pub.

(357)

The unknown space of uninterpreted language, combined with the convention of the captions, creates a rich sense of dramatic irony for the audience here. Although linguistically Eddie has access to both Briar and Vic's thoughts, she is culturally an outsider to both.

Dr Nicola Hyland articulated this tension in her dramaturgical feedback on a late draft:

> One of your key challenges is to negotiate the tension between language as both barrier and gateway to culture (that is, if you know the language, you know the culture, but if you do not then your

> access is compromised and thus you feel an outsider/excluded) but also if you are thinking about tikanga, then the notion of manaakitanga has to be embedded not only in the way people are invited to witness the production, but also in the themes of the script itself. So the language use should point both to the notion of language as exclusionary but also enriching. Key to this is in the gaps – or side-text space- of translation itself. That is, that the act of translation provides an enhanced understanding of a word in two cultural contexts, so that bit in between – the enlightenment – is actually really powerful.
>
> (Hyland email, 9.6.16)

I have touched on the decolonising aspect of the linguistic competition between Briar and Eddie. Focussing this framework on Briar's wider journey with te reo Māori brings in the kaupapa of "authenticity". In my writing I was distinctly concerned with the situation of many friends and family of mine who whakapapa Māori but have been disconnected from the language and culture, and have effectively been raised Pākehā. A sentiment that many seem to share is a feeling of inadequacy in their "Māori-ness" (Tuhiwai Smith 76). In mapping out Briar's relationship to te reo Māori, I was interested in her discovery of Māori identity from within, as opposed to trying to access it through Pākehā imperialist notions of Māori authenticity by studying the language and literature.

Through her detour into NZSL, guided by Vic, Briar finds a side-text space to express herself, separate from the weight of Pākehā or Māori association. Once Briar stops understanding her Māoriness through an English/Pākehā framework, and encounters her Māori identity through Sign, she discovers her mana, and her own Māori identity.

The final scene, “Te Pō”, weaves together the strands of identity that Briar has discovered, and in doing so weaves the languages of expression together as well:

BRIAR.	No reira, this is how I *(NZSL)* go. *(Speech)* Unfucked, unblemished.	No reira,	
		Ka haere au.	Unfucked, unblemished.
		E harakore ana. Kaua pirau.	She died as she lived: swearing and sexually frustrated.
		Ko ana whakareretanga ana ake	Legends will be told in the ground, whispered between worms,

kotahi he pai kōrero Māori.	of her one good translation of that one poem.
Ki te mate ia ka haere tōna wairua	The flies and the ants will carry her DNA
ki te reinga noho ai. Ki roto tōna whenua.	up to the stars and deep into her tūrangawaewae.

She sees her mother.	Ka kitea tōna māmā.	She sees her mother.
Kia ora.	Kia ora.	
Kāore e – don't speak.	Kāore e –	Don't speak.
(Speech & clumsy NZSL) It's simple.		It's simple.
I love you.	Ka arohatia koe e au.	I love you.

(395 – 396)

Briar's sense of Māori identity begins with a failed sense of authenticity through imperialist framework (incapable of performing a proper pōwhiri, not fluent speaker of te reo Māori, can "pass" as Pākehā). She is only capable of doing the minimal formalities: a basic mihi and reciting her

whakapapa. As Briar allows herself to become vulnerable through her relationship with Vic and to take the lateral step into Sign, we see the damage that this notion of authenticity has had on her mana. In the final scene between Vic and Briar, the personal and the political blend together when Vic confronts her about shutting her mother out of her life:

> VIC. *(NZSL)* I see her every day, she comes here. She sits and waits for you. She knocks on your door. She watches you sulking in the garden. You don't have time to be angry, Sting/Briar! Ouch!
>
> *Pause.*
>
> I'm serious. This is cruel. Why does she deserve this?
>
> BRIAR. *(NZSL)* Car. Crash. Father. Dead. Passed away. Language, passed away. Mum: no. No Māori. No love. Me. Alone.
>
> (390)

The magic-realism subplot of the Tape is the second means for charting Briar's journey in te reo Māori. In an age of technology, isolated from her Māori whakapapa, Briar seeks manaakitanga from an audio language-learning resource. Part of the inspiration for this convention was through my own learning of te reo Māori. As I didn't have any fluent speakers at home to practice with, I made myself audio recordings of conversation exercises from class and would practice my kōrero with these.

The character of this disembodied teacher in the Tape develops the role of an elder mentor to Briar. Cian, the performer who played Briar, affectionately pronounced “Tape” with a Māori accent (*tah-pey)* when referring to the relationship. This linguistic joke stuck throughout the development process and it reinforced the mystic tīpuna-like quality that the Tape comes to inhabit.

Briar’s inability to de-personalise the Tape is apparent from its first introduction, where the interactions seem to be humorous coincidences:

BRIAR presses play on a device and an audio recording starts to play.

TAPE. Whakakāoretia enei. Tuatahi. Kei te powhiritia e te kōtiro e ngā manuwhiri.

BRIAR. Kāore te kōtiro e te powhiritia e ngā manuwhiri. (Steady on.)

TAPE. Tuarua. Ka paruparu tāu konohi.

BRIAR checks her face for dirt.

BRIAR. What? Oh. Uh - Kāore e koe -

(273 – 274)

We do not encounter the Tape again until several scenes later, when Briar's mental state is deteriorating from morphine and illness, and her bitterness inflects her relationship with the Tape:

TAPE. Ka pai. Tuatoru.

While the other girls were slutting it up, Briar was getting chemo.

BRIAR. Excuse me?

TAPE. Ka pai. You heard me correctly, girl. Whakamāoritia tēnei.

While the other girls were slutting it up, Briar was getting chemo.

BRIAR. I - I ngā kōtiro atu e … slutting it up ana, ka –

TAPE. Tata! Kia kaha. Tuawha.

While the mother cries, the child relaxes.

BRIAR. Fuck. You. You don't know me.

TAPE. Kao, e ko. I know you. I'm your only friend.

BRIAR. Whatever.

TAPE. Closest thing you'll ever have to a friend at any rate.

BRIAR. Oi!

TAPE. Arohamai. Āe. Tuarima.

BRIAR. Tuanothing.

She turns it off.

(332 - 336)

In some ways, Briar's relationship with the Tape is a subversion of Te Matarohanga, the place of learning through oral tradition and recitation

(Mead 307). Although traditionally knowledge was passed on through kōrero to the next generation, for Briar the only access she has to knowledge is through two particularly Pākehā styles of recording: the audio tape and the written myth of Hine-maarama from her father.

Conclusion

In comparison to NZSL dramaturgy, it was an immense shift to consider Māori dramaturgy, which has so much more literature and clear histories of dramaturgical structures available.

The kaupapa of whakapapa and manaakitanga had the most profound impact on my creative practice. Both of these frameworks influenced the characters, language and action of the script itself, as well as the format of the workshopping.

It would have been ideal to have had either a kaumatua or one of my cultural advisors in workshopping sessions (although Moko was able to come along to some, he was not available for all of them). I would have liked to invite someone to lead a physical workshop founded in kapa haka – as much of the physical work was based in Visual Vernacular and Deaf culture, and I think I missed an opportunity to incorporate physical specifics from Māori dramaturgies as well.

As I will discuss further in the final section of my thesis, I found that the kaupapa of ihi had strong parallels in Deaf culture. I also was interested in the tension between written and oral story in te reo Māori – which also has parallels in Deaf culture. These commonalities were the side-text space where I began building the syncretic form of my trilingual practice. I will

now show how these concepts were implanted in my creative practice, through combining creative findings form Deaf Gain and Theatre Marae dramaturgies. I synthesised these into my own Takitoru Dramaturgy.

Chapter Eleven: Takitoru Dramaturgy

Ko tāku reo tāku ohooho, ko tāku reo tāku māpihi mauria

My language is my awakening, my language is the window to my soul

(Whakataukī)

In their 2006 article, “Perceptions of Māori Deaf Identity in New Zealand”, Kirsten Smiler and Rachel Locker McKee described the tension of identity for Deaf Māori:

> [C]ontemporary Maori Deaf find themselves at the intersection of a significant period of Maori cultural and linguistic renaissance (in process since the 1970s) and the dawning of Deaf cultural consciousness from the late 1980s in New Zealand. Both these social movements promoted their own language as a symbol of ethnic identity and as a vehicle for empowerment and political self-determination.
>
> (93)

This concept of language as a medium of self-determination, or tino rangatiratanga, is a central issue in Deaf and/or Māori identity.

My working questions for this trilingual creative practice were:

1. How can scriptwriting embody kaupapa Māori through visual languages?

But also, conversely:

2. How can the Aesthetics of Accesibility strengthen the use of te reo Māori?

I began by considering two key shared aspects of Deaf and Māori cultures. First, their parallel sociolinguistic histories. Both te reo Māori and NZSL were suppressed in education in Aotearoa New Zealand under Pākehā colonisation. In 1880, an oralist education system was initiated for Deaf children internationally, including in Aotearoa New Zealand. This meant that Deaf children were being taught to get by in a hearing world through lip-reading and attempting speech. They were actively punished for signing in the classroom, and this created a kind of linguistic annihilation for Deaf people without supportive signing environment at home. The impact of this oppression is less well-known than the parallel opression of te reo me tikanga Māori.

As Smiler and McKee observe, a renaissance for te reo Māori has been underway since the 1970s. I myself, like many modern parents of Māori children, have sent my son to te reo immersion school as part of this renaissance.

An important change in the Deaf community over the past three years has been the ease of access to video calling and video-messaging through applications such as Skype and Facetime. This development of social media has allowed once-isolated Deaf people to regularly communicate in

their first language, building articulacy. A particularly fascinating aspect of this is the Facebook group “NZSL – Tangata Turi o Aotearoa, New Zealand Deaf Community”, which acts as both an NZSL noticeboard and a kind of evolving NZSL dictionary where members ask vocabulary and grammar clarification of each other. The effects of this connectedness are extraordinary to watch, and would be grounds for a wonderful linguistic research topic. These parallel histories of linguistic oppression and survival result in a connection between both cultures with language and self-realisation. I decided to make this parallel an explicit point of connection in my final script between the characters of Vic and Briar (*Tanumia ō Kōiwi* 249 – 404).

The second shared aspect in Deaf and Māori communities is the value of manaakitanga. During the creative research I was staggered by the number of people from both Deaf and Māori communities who gave their time and expertise to this project. I suspect this is a reaction to historical oppression, and a willingness to give their languages and culture a platform, as well as a compassion and willingness to support other oppressed languages.

An issue I have discussed in an earlier chapter was O’Reilly’s lack of interest in engaging the indigenous Welsh culture from which she drew the “woman of flowers” narrative. As included earlier, when I raised this criticism with O’Reilly during the personal interview, she responded that she believed the “English culture often shows its superiority to Welsh culture by ignoring it completely. And by ignoring the riches and treasures that are there.”

The logic of this defence appears to be that the inclusion of an indigenous narrative in an otherwise British production is a sufficient act of decolonisation. There is no clear attempt to connect Welsh language, ritual or cultural tradition to the piece.

It seems that O'Reilly, clearly an intelligent and compassionate creative practitioner, has chosen to advocate for one oppressed culture at a time, focussing on Deaf culture here. I believe that she has developed an impressive practice of fusing Deaf and hearing theatrical discourses. However, the decolonising gap in her inclusivity is notable, and my research has included analysing this gap and investigating how to evolve creatively from there.

At the time of this research, the New Zealand and UK company Equal Voices developed and produced a second bilingual work including NZSL, called *Salonica*. This followed Serbian and Pākehā New Zealand characters during World War I. As with O'Reilly's *Woman of Flowers*, there seems to be a distinct Euro-centric quality to *Salonica*'s narrative. The work is trilingual, yet the third language is Serbian - the first language of the hearing actor, Mihailo Ladevac.

This view of inclusivity seems to specifically aid accessibility for Pākehā over tangata whenua, whether in Aotearoa or Wales. This is a natural oversight when working in any kind of bilingualism, it is necessary to set a boundary in inclusivity in order to maintain creative integrity. In her review of *At the End of My Hands,* Alys Moody observed the importance of expanding Aotearoa theatre beyond the "sometimes controversial

exclusivity of the country's [te reo Māori/ NZ English] bilingualism" (453), and cited my doctoral research as a significant step in this direction.

Although there is much to admire and learn from both aforementioned works and their creative practices of including Deaf and hearing cultures, I am obviously more inclined to represent shared creative spaces between Māori and Deaf cultures onstage. With this in mind, I have leaned more heavily toward Māori tikanga for structure and overall creative practical guidance. Within the script development, I have consulted with NZ Deaf performers on scripting specifics and overall feedback, but have restrained from following what I think of as The Colonial Model of Accessibility too strictly.

Mā Takitoru Katoa

I have come to refer to my trilingual dramaturgy, specific to Aotearoa's three languages, as Takitoru Dramaturgy. The literal translation of "takitoru" as a noun means "a group of three people" or as a modifier means "threefold". It seems fitting that an oral name for the dramaturgical practice should be Māori, rather than utilising Pākehā language against its own oppressive force. The word also emphasises the people that the practice is for, rather than the languages they use.

As te reo Māori is such a dense language, there is of course also a traditional significance to this name. Takitoru is a type of tukutuku (weaving) pattern, "used on crossbeams and tukutuku panels of meeting houses where single stitches across the panel are in groups of three at

alternate angles. It represents communication, identification and special personal relationships” (Māori Dictionary).

Visually, the /// pattern also echoes the / symbol used between multilingual notation of concepts, for example: Titiro / Look / [See] (te reo Māori / English / NZSL).

Takitoru Dramaturgy functions in a prismic, syncretic manner, with constant give and take between performance behaviours and written script. Although the linguistic focus of the performed discourse should shift and weave throughout the action, the narrative and performance overall should always be mā te takitoru katoa (for all three).

Below is the final script, titled, *Tanumia ō Kōiwi*, followed by a scene-by-scene analysis of the Takitoru dramaturgy for the final creative component of this research.

Chapter Twelve: *Tanumia ō Kōiwi* (Final Draft)

Original Cast:

Vic – Shaun Fahey

Briar - Cian Gardner

Eddie / Interpreter – Leo Goldie-Anderson

Characters:

Briar, 19

Vic, 50

Eddie, 306

New Zealand Sign Language Interpreter

Rango the Fly

Performance notes:

NZSL Interpreter is played by the same performer as Eddie.

/ at beginning of dialogue relates to a / in previous dialogue, signalling where the two texts should overlap in performance.

Sign-names are written so that the name (e.g. Emma) is mouthed while the NZSL (e.g. Freckles) is performed simultaneously. e.g. Emma/Freckles.

Captions for performance run in a grid next to the dialogue. Te reo Māori is on the left, NZ English on the right. They should appear as side texts, as scripted. NZSL translations to be workshopped with performer playing Eddie.

A blank cell in the captions table indicates that the scripted line should be performed with a blank screen.

Tanumia ō Kōiwi

On the stage are three piles of dirt.

1. **Negated Pōwhiri**

As the audience enters, BRIAR stands onstage, shyly greeting everyone and

helping them to their seats.

NZSL Interpreter takes their place.

The lights change to indicate the beginning of the performance.

BRIAR takes a deep breath and raises her hands as though she is about to

let rip a magnificent karanga. Her hands shimmer in a wiri – but one hand won't behave.

It looks ridiculous.

She freezes. She deflates.

BRIAR. Hold up, I'll try again.

Taihoa. Ka whakamātau anō.	Hold up, I'll try again.

She breathes in deeply.

BRIAR. HAERE -

Mmmmmnope, sorry, sorry.

Okay one more time.

[to herself] Come on. Karawhiua.

Haere -	Welcome -
Kao. Arohamai.	Nope. Sorry.
Anō.	One more time.
Karawhiua.	Come on. You can do it.

She breathes in deeply again. Raises her hands. Freezes, for ages.

There is genuine fear in her eyes.

She deflates.

BRIAR. Anyway, what I mean to say is welcome. Welcome.	Me aha koa. Nau mai, haere mai.	Anyway, what I mean to say is welcome. Welcome.
Thank you for coming, to hear my story.	Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou kua tau mai kit e rongo i tōku kōrero.	Thank you for coming, to hear my story.
I wish I could tell it better, but.	Ko te hiahia kia pai ake tōku nei whakaputa i tenei kōrero, engari …	I wish I could tell it better, but…
Anyway, I wanted to say welcome. The story should begin with a welcome.	Tēnā. Haere mai! Kua tīmata te kōrero, a, nau mai.	Anyway, I wanted to say welcome. The story should begin with a welcome.
But it also begins with a goodbye.	Oti, ko to tīmata o tēnei kōrero he poroaki kē.	But it also begins with a goodbye.

So, bye.

Nō reira, e noho rā.	So, bye.

She goes to leave.

Nah, jokes.

Kao kao! He mea whakatoi.	Nah, jokes!

She comes back.

But really. This is the story of how I die.

He meka. Anei te kōrero mō tōku hemonga.	But really. This is the story of how I die.

I know, it's full-on.

Āe. Auē.	I know, it's full-on.

And it's not one of those murder mysteries.

Kāore te kōrero porehu mō te kōhuru nei.	And it's not one of those murder mysteries.

It’s not exciting or sexy.	Kāore tēnei i he ihiihi, i te whakawerawera.	It’s not exciting or sexy.
I’m just sick. And I won’t get better.	Kei te māuiui noa ahau. Kāore au i te ora pai anō.	I’m just sick. And I won’t get better.
Let me tell you about my life,	Nō reira. Kia tīmata te kōrero me te whakapapa,	Let me tell you about my life,
then we can get back to the main story of my death.	a muri ake nei au āta whakataki ai i tōku hemonga.	then we can get back to the main story of my death.

As she switches into te reo, her manner changes.

BRIAR.	Ko Te Arawa te waka, ko Ngāti Whakaue te iwi.	Ko Te Arawa te waka, ko Ngāti Whakaue te iwi.	I am of Ngāti Whakaue and Te Arawa descent.
	Ko Pūtautaki te maunga.	Ko Pūtautaki te māunga.	My mountain is Pūtuataki.
	I te taha o tōku pāpā, ko Hone rāua ko Winiperi ōku tūpuna.	I te taha o tōku pāpā, ko Hone rāua ko Winiperi ōku tūpuna.	My paternal elders were named Hone and Winiperi.
	Ka moe a Hone rāua ko Winiperi, ka puta ki waho ko ngā tamariki tokorima.	Ka moe a Hone rāua ko Winiperi, ka puta ki waho ko ngā tamariki tokorima.	They had five children together:
	Ko Hemi te mātāmua, ko Kahurangi te pōtiki.	Ko Hemi te mātāmua, ko Kahurangi te pōtiki.	Hemi, the eldest, through to Kahurangi, the youngest.

I te taha o tōku whaea, ko Samuel rāua ko Katherine ōku tīpuna.	I te taha o tōku whaea, ko Samuel rāua ko Katherine ōku tūpuna.	My maternal elders were named Samuel and Katherine.
Ka puta ki waho tokorua ngā uri.	Ka puta ki waho tokorua ngā uri.	They had two children together.
Ko Anna te mātāmua, ko Gavin te pōtiki.	Ko Anna te mātāmua, ko Gavin te pōtiki.	Anna, the eldest, and her younger brother Gavin.
Ko Hemi rāua ko Anna ōku mātua.	Ko Hemi rāua ko Anna ōku mātua.	My parents, then, were Hemi and Anna.
Ka moe a Hemi rāua ko Anna, ka puta ki waho ko au.	Ka moe a Hemi rāua ko Anna, ka puta ki waho ko au.	And they had me.

Kōtahi te tamaiti i roto i tōku whānau. Just me.	Kōtahi te tamaiti i roto i tōku whānau. Ko ahau anake.	I am the only child in my family. Just me.
Ko Briar tōku ingoa.	Ko Briar tōku ingoa.	My name is Briar.
Nō Whakatāne ahau. And I love Whakatāne. It's my tūrangawaewae,	Nō Whakatāne ahau. He nui te aroha mō Whakatāne. Koianei tōku tūrangawaewae,	I'm from Whakatāne. And I love Whakatāne. It's my home, my strength.
but I've lived in Kirikiriroa with mum for most of my life.	Engari, ko Kirikiriroa tōku wāhi tupu, te nuinga o tōku oranga.	But I've lived in Hamilton most of my life.
Ever since -.	Mai i te wā -	Ever since -
This is my last time in Whakatāne.	Koianei tōku wā whakamutunga ki Whakatāne.	This is my last time in Whakatāne.

My last goodbye to Ohope Beach.	Tōku poroporoaki ki te whanga o Ohope.	My last goodbye to Ohope Beach.
Mum and I have been fighting for weeks,	He whawhai te mahi a māua ko Māmā i ngā wiki kua hipa.	Mum and I have been fighting for weeks,
I told her I didn’t want to die in a hospice or a hospital,	I tohu atu au ki a ia kia kaua au e mate atu kit e hōhipera.	I told her I didn’t want to die in a hospice or a hospital,
I wanted to walk into the ocean and let my tīpuna take me	He hiahia kē nōku te hikoi ki te taha moana, mā ōku tūpna au e kawe atu;	I wanted to walk into the ocean and let my ancestors take me,

she said How can you say something like that?,	Ko tōna whakautu mai, *Pēwhea tō kōrero pēnei mai?*	she said *How can you say something like that?,*
I said What's the difference I'm dying anyway,	Ko tōku, *He aha te aha, kei te mate tonu ahau.*	I said *What's the difference I'm dying anyway,*
she said The difference is I want to be with you as long as I can,	Ka ki mai ia, *Ko te reretanga, kei te hiahia au kia roa ake tā tāua nei noho tahi.*	she said *The difference is I want to be with you as long as I can,*
I said Why,	Tōku whakautu atu, *He aha ai?*	I said *Why,*
she said What do you mean why? Because I Love You.,	*Na tōku aroha ki a koe,* tōna whakahoki mai.	she said *What do you mean why? Because I Love You.,*

I said If you loved me you'd let me go how I want,	Ka ki atu au, *Ki te aroha pono mai koe ki ahau tono, ka tukuna kia wehe au i runga i tōku nei hiahia.*	I said *If you loved me you'd let me go how I want,*
she said You're just a child,	Ko tōna whakahoki mai, *He tamaiti noa koe,*	she said *You're just a child,*
I said You're just a pākehā bitch,	*He teke pirau noa koe,* tōku whakahoki atu;	I said *you're just a white bitch,*
she left the room.	i whakarērea te rūma e ia.	she left the room.
When she came back in	I tōna hokitanga mai	When she came back in

she wiped my tears and my nose with her sleeve	ka muku ia i tōku hupe, i ngā roimata mā tōna kākahu	she wiped my tears and my nose with her sleeve
even though it was her favourite silk blouse.	ahakoa ko tōna tino kākahu hiraka tērā.	even though it was her favourite silk blouse.
She said Sorry, it's really hard for me too, baby.	Ka ki, *Aroha mai, he tino uaua tēnei mōku e kō.*	She said *Sorry, it's really hard for me too, baby.*
I just want to know you'll be comfortable.	*Ke te hiahia noa kia ngāwai tō haere.*	*I just want to know you'll be comfortable.*
The hospice seemed really nice and you can watch horses and the river from there.	*He pai te āhua o te whare me tō taea nei te mātaki atu i ngā hōiho.*	*The hospice seemed really nice and you can watch horses and the river from there.*

I looked at her face, she looked younger than me, like a lonely kid asking me to play with her. Little and scared and needing me, like the day of dad's funeral.	I titiro nei au ki tōna kanohi, he taitamariki ake tōna āhua i a ahau, pēnei i tētehi tamaiti mokemoke e tono ana ki te tākoro tahi. He paku noa, he makatu me tōna hiahia nei i ahau, pēnei i te rangi o te tangihanga o tōku matua.	I looked at her face, she looked younger than me, like a lonely kid asking me to play with her. Little and scared and needing me, like the day of dad's funeral.
So I said fine. I'll go to your fucking hospice.	No reira ka ki atu *pai noa.* *Ka haere au ki tō pūrari hohipera.*	So I said *fine.* *I'll go to your fucking hospice.*

But I want to say goodbye to the ocean.	*Engari me tuku au i aku mihi ki te moana.*	*But I want to say goodbye to the ocean.*

She looks offstage.

Mum's waiting.	Kei te tatari a māmā.	Mum's waiting.
I'd better go, I'm moving in tomorrow.	Me haere au, kei te nuku au apōpō.	I'd better go, I'm moving in tomorrow.
Anyway I wanted to say thank you for being here.	Heoi, kei te hiahia nei au te mihi ki a koe mot e haere mai ki konei.	Anyway I wanted to say thank you for being here.
And for watching over me.	Me te manaaki mai i ahau.	And for watching over me.

Will you keep me company while the next part happens?	Ka piri tonu mai koe ki tōku taha I te wā kei te heke mai?	Will you keep me company while the next part happens?
Thank you.	Tēnā koutou.	Thank you.
Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou katoa.	Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou katoa.	Thank you all.

2. Mōrena

Briar is sitting in the hospice garden, consulting one book and scribbling in another.

She looks tired but fizzes with intellect and determination.

BRIAR.	I always imagined my life as a history book.	Mai rā anō kua pōhewa momo pukapuka hītori tōku oranga.	I always imagined my life as a history book.
	Her father died,	*I mate tōna matua*	*Her father died,*
	and she fought with her mother,	*ā, he wairua tutuki ki waenga i a ia me tōna whaea,*	*and she fought with her mother,*
	but she overcame it,	*Engari i wherea,*	*but she overcame it,*
	no,	*kāo,*	*no,*

she used the contradiction in her heritage to create a new voice of a generation.	*i ruku ki ngā rerekētanga ao kia kimi i tōna ake reo, he reo hou mō tōna reanga.*	*she used the contradiction in her heritage to create a new voice of a generation.*
When the stomach pain and rashes	I te hokitanga mai o te rongo kōrero kō te ngau o te puku, ko ngā mate hare o te kiri	When the stomach pain and rashes
turned out to be cancer,	he mate pukupuku,	turned out to be cancer,
even though I was only nineteen, I thought -	ahakoa tekau mā iwa ōku tau, kua mārama:	even though I was only nineteen, I thought -
of course.	kua mōhio kē nei au.	of course.

She was struck down with illness as a young woman,	*Kua pāngia ki te mate kino i a ia e rangatahi ana,*	*She was struck down with illness as a young woman,*
and told she would not have long to live.	*ka whakamōhio ki a ia ka kore e roa ka mate.*	*and told she would not have long to live.*
But - when she was bedridden,	*Engari ki tōna moenga ia*	*But - when she was bedridden,*
she used the time to pen her greatest work,	*whakaputa nei i āna tino tuhinga,*	*she used the time to pen her greatest work,*
a masterpiece.	*he mounga nōna.*	*a masterpiece.*
And she recovered,	*Ka piki te ora,*	*And she recovered,*
defying all odds and living a long life,	*ka roa te oranga, he whakamāuitanga ohorere,*	*defying all odds and living a long life,*

her miraculous recovery and precocious talent shining as a beacon for many others to follow.	*Ko tōna oranga me tōna hautipua he mea whakamīharo ki te marea.*	*her miraculous recovery and precocious talent shining as a beacon for many others to follow.*
She became a leader of her community	*Ka eke te wā ka tū hei pītau whakarei mō tōna hāpori,*	*She became a leader of her community*
and had many lovers.	*a, he maha tōnu āna makau.*	*and had many lovers.*
She never had children	*Kāre āna tamariki*	*She never had children*
but her home was a safe place for young people	*engari rā, ko tōna kāinga he whare haumaru mo te rangatahi,*	*but her home was a safe place for young people*

and she was Queen Aunty to her many followers.	*ko ia nei te te Tino Whaea mō ōna pononga.*	*and she was Queen Aunty to her many followers.*
For generations legends were told	*Mai rā anō*	*For generations legends were told*
of how she defeated literary foes, her peanut allergy and telemarketers – all with the effortless swagger of a heroine.	*kua pōhewa momo pukapuka, ngā waiata rānei mō tōna oranga.*	*of how she defeated literary foes, her peanut allergy and telemarketers – all with the effortless swagger of a heroine.*
Even like now,	Ināianei tōnu,	Even like now,
I have that history in my mind	koia nei te rerenga o tāku oranga e pōhewa nei,	I have that history in my mind
when I imagine the future.	e wawata tōnu nei e au.	when I imagine the future.

Because I don’t know how to understand right now.	I te mea kāre au i te mārama ināianei.	Because I don’t know how to understand right now.
I’ve never had that many friends.	Kare he nui ōku nei hoa.	I’ve never had that many friends.
The friends I do have	Ko ngā hoa kei a au	The friends I do have
don’t like to visit me because I won’t soften my ideas for them.	tē hiahia te kite nei i ahau, nā tōku arero haehae.	don’t like to visit me because I won’t soften my ideas for them.
But what’s wrong with anger?	He aha rā te raru o te riri?	But what’s wrong with anger?
My anger is aimless, unfocused, sure.	He riri āniwa, he riri …	My anger is aimless, unfocused, sure.
But it’s all that gets me out of bed in the morning.	Engari ke otāku riri tōku oranga.	But it’s all that gets me out of bed in the morning.

It’s a puddle of ink

waiting to take form on the page.

He maringi waitohu	It’s a puddle of ink
ki te pepa e whanga nei kia whai āhua, kia whai tīnana.	waiting to take form on the page.

Rango swoops past her.

BRIAR. Fuck off.

Whakamutua atu!	Fuck off.

Rango flies out of the theatre.

BRIAR presses play on a device and an audio recording starts to play.

TAPE.	Whakakāoretia enei. Tuatahi.	Whakakāoretia enei. Tuatahi.	Negate these sentences.
	Kei te pōwhiritia e te kōtiro e ngā manuwhiri.	Kei te pōwhiritia e te kōtiro e ngā manuwhiri.	The girl welcomed the visitors.
BRIAR.	Kāore te kōtiro e te pōwhiritia e ngā manuwhiri.	Kāore te kōtiro e te pōwhiritia e ngā manuwhiri.	The girl did not welcome the visitors.
	(Steady on.)	(Kia tau).	(Steady on.)
TAPE.	Tuarua. He paruparu kei tō konohi.	Tuarua. He paruparu kei tō kanohi.	Two. You have dirt on your face.

BRIAR checks her face for dirt.

BRIAR.	What?	He aha?	What?

	Oh. Uh - Kāore he -	A, kāore he …	Oh, you do not …
TAPE.	Tuatoru. Kei te oho ia.	Tuatoru. Kei te oho ia.	Three. He woke up.
BRIAR.	Kāore ia e te oho.	Kāore ia e te oho.	He did not wake up.

Vic enters. He enjoys the sun on his face. He looks out at the audience.

TAPE.	Tuawhā.	Tuawhā.	Four.
	Ka tanu au I ōku kōiwi ki te whenua.	Ka tanu au I ōku kōiwi ki te whenua.	I bury my bones in the earth.

BRIAR turns the recording off.

BRIAR.	You look serious, man.	He taimaha tō ahua.	You look serious, man.

To be, or not to be. That is not the question we get to ask.	*Kia ora, kia kaua e ora rānei?* Ehara tēnei i te pātai mo tāua.	*To be, or not to be?* That is not the question we get to ask.
Jokes.	Kia tika.	Jokes.
Jesus, fine.	Auē, kei te pai.	Jesus, fine.

She goes back to her books. Vic watches Briar until she notices him.

He smiles at her. She looks at him suspiciously, then goes back to her books. This repeats again.

The third time Briar looks up, Vic seems unconscious. His mouth hangs open.

BRIAR.	Hey. Hey.	Hā.	Hey.
	Oh my god.	Hika.	Oh my god.

She moves as quickly as she can to check on Vic, who opens one eye and sticks out his tongue as soon as she touches him.

BRIAR.	You dick!	Tarau hamutī!	You dick!
	You can't do that kind of thing here!	Kaua koe e pēnā ki konei!	You can't do that kind of thing here!
VIC.	*(NZSL)* Pardon?	He aha?	Pardon?
BRIAR.	You're an asshole and that wasn't funny.	He hore koe. He pōrearea.	You're an asshole and that wasn't funny.
	Do you pull that kind of shit on the nurses?	Ka kite ngā nehi I koe, pakaru katoa ana hamutī,	Do you pull that kind of shit on the nurses?
	on your family when they visit?	ka pēnā koe ki tō whanau?	on your family when they visit?

	That isn't a joke you can make in a place like this!	Kaua koe e whiu kōrero pēnei ki tēnei momo wāhi!	That isn't a joke you can make in a place like this!
VIC.	*(NZSL)* Sorry, can't hear you,	Arohamai. Kāore au i te rongo.	Sorry, can't hear you,
	I'm Deaf.	Kua Turi ahau.	I'm Deaf.
BRIAR.	Fucking … tiko bum.	Kai a te kurī. He tiko tane.	Fucking ... shit bum.

Pause.

VIC.	*(NZSL)* Can I see your books?	Whakaatu mai koa i ō pukapuka?	May I see your books?

BRIAR.	These? Here.	Ēnei? Anei.	These? Here.

Vic opens one book, makes a face and shuts it. He opens the other book, flips through pages of handwritten notes. He hands them back.

BRIAR.	It's William Blake.	Nā William Blake tēnei.	It's William Blake.
	I'm translating it.	Kei te whakamāori nei e au.	I'm translating it.
	I figured it'd be a good way to practice my reo alone.	Mōku nei he pai te whakapakari i tōku reo Māori.	I figured it'd be a good way to practice my reo alone.
	And it's a good distraction.	Mauri tū, mauri ora.	And it's a good distraction.
	I like William Blake.	He pai ki ahau a William Blake.	I like William Blake.

	He gets me.	Kei te mārama māua ki a māua.	He gets me.

Victor shrugs but nods politely.

Briar writes a note on a page of her notebook and hands it to Victor.

VIC.	*(NZSL)* I'm the same.	He ōrite nei ahau.	I'm the same.
	Normal.	He māori tonu.	It's normal.
	(Sign Assisted English) Normal.	He māori tonu.	It's normal.
BRIAR.	Normal?	He māori?	Normal?
VIC.	*(NZSL)* Normal.	He māori nei.	Normal.

Both nod their heads and smile politely at each other. The nodding turns to gentle head-shaking.

They catch eyes. VIC lets out a big sigh.

BRIAR nods and sighs too.

She scribbles another note and passes it to VIC.

VIC.	*(NZSL)* Yes. Cancer, yes.	Āe. Te mate pukupuku.	Yes, cancer.
BRIAR.	*(Pointing to herself)* Me too.	Me au hoki.	Me too.
VIC.	*(NZSL)* Lucky I was bald already.	Tōku Waimarie kua porohewa kē nei au,	Lucky I was bald already,
	I had chemotherapy but I was already bald, so I don't look different.	he ōrite tonu tōku nei hanga.	so I don't look different.

	I just put on some make-up and you wouldn't know I'm dying. Some make-up under my eyes, some blush, a bit of mascara, lipstick. Great! Maybe I should get some fake boobs, too? Then no-one will know I'm sick, they'll just look at my boobs. Oh no, but my bandages are showing, how embarrassing! What a slut!		
BRIAR.	You're weird.	Tō rerekē hoki.	You're weird.
VIC.	*(NZSL)* I'm joking.	Kei te whakatoi noa.	I'm joking.

BRIAR looks away, distracted by the sound of Rango the Fly flying past. When she looks back at VICTOR, he has his shirt pulled out to make the shape of imaginary breasts. She is unimpressed.

VIC.	*(NZSL)* Sorry, naughty. Sorry.	Aroha mo ōku kōrero harehare.	Sorry, I was being rude.

BRIAR points at something in the audience, making VIC look away. When he looks back, she has put her finger poking out her fly to look like a penis.

VIC does a double take.

VIC.	*(NZSL)* It's very small.	He iti noa.	It's very small.
	It's ok, don't be embarrassed.	Kei te pai, kaua e whakamā.	It's okay, don't be embarrassed.
	Maybe need strength. Penis do weights. Get strong, great!	Me whakapakari noa koe i a koe anō.	Maybe you just need to build up your strength?

Joking. Don’t worry.		
That’s good! Maybe I steal that joke.	He hātakihi! Māku tērā e whakano.	That was pretty funny. I might kep that joke.
Me work what? Stand up comedian.	He tangata whakahangareka ahau.	I’m a stand-up comedian.
Me want do final show before die.	Me tū anō ahau ki te atamira i mua i tōku matenga.	I’d like to do one last comedy set before I die.
Doctor told me, live long 1 month. That’s all.	Kua kotahi marama e toa ana mōku ki tēnei a, e ai ki ngā rata.	The doctors say I have one month left.
So I want invite my friends, I say: come come please!	Me tuku īnoi ahau ki aku hoa kia tau mai ki konei mot e wā,	I think I’ll invite all my friends to the hospice,

Visit one last time. Come and say bye. Cry, hug.	pēnei he poroporoaki whakamutunga pea.	make them think they are coming for a last goodbye or something.
Everyone comes, a big crowd, hugs, goodbyes.	Ka pakarū a roimata, ka piri tahi mātau i te aroha me te pouri.	Everyone will be crying, hugging, at my deathbed.
Me turn around: Surprise! Laugh! Joke joke joke!	Ana, PA! Ka tukuna ōku mahi whakangareka.	Then, BOOM, I'll start doing a stand-up set.
My friends say: "what? I thought you dying?	Ka ohorere nei te hunga, "Ah? He mate kē tō mahi?	They'll be like, "What? I thought he was dying?
You joking about penis when you dying?	Ināianei ko ngā kōrero raho te mea e puta mai ana?	Now he's making dick jokes?

	Wow.”	Hika! Katahi te tangata.”	Wow, comedy genius.”
	Good way them remember me.	Kāti, koia nei te tino maumahara ka mau ki a rātau.	It’ll be a good way to remember me by.
BRIAR.	What?	He aha?	What?
VIC.	*(NZSL)* Is it the same for your writing?	He ōrite ki ō mahi whakamāori?	Is it the same with your translating?
	You are leaving your mark on the world?	Koia nei tō ōhākī?	Trying to leave your mark on the world?
BRIAR.	Sorry. I don’t understand.	Kāore au i te marama.	Sorry. I don’t understand.

Sorry.

Aroha mai.	Sorry.

They sit awkwardly.

3. Rānui

Rango buzzes back onstage, from the main playing space to the Interpreter Position. He sits on the Interpreter's shoulder.

Interpreter pets the Fly as an old friend.

INTERPRETER. *(NZSL & Speech)* My old friend.	E kare.	My old friend.
[to audience] I won't be on this stage much longer.	Taihoa ahau ka whakarerea i tēnei ao nei.	I won't be on this stage much longer.
It's nearly time for me to join you all.	Kua tata tonu te wā ki uki te hoki atu ki a koutou katoa.	It's nearly time for me to join you all.

But I have a friend to visit first.

Taihoa ake tuatahi rā, me kite au i tētahi o āku nei hoa.	But I have a friend to visit first.

Interpreter takes a coin from their pocket and flips it. Interpreter and Rango look at the coin together and exchange a meaningful glance.

Rango flies away.

<u>Inside.</u>

Briar is struggling to write, consulting the book of Blake poetry and her notebook.

BRIAR. "E te tō, e –"

No, it's shit.

"E te tō, e –"	"And so it is …"
Kāo, kei te kino.	No, it's shit.

A knock on her door.

BRIAR. Go away!

Haere atu!	Go away!

Another knock.

BRIAR. Kei te haere au ki te kāri.

Kei te haere au ki te kāri.	I'm going to the garden.

<u>Garden.</u>

Vic sits alone, turning a coin over in his hands.

When Briar enters, he puts on a smile. She smiles back.

Vic signals "heads or tails?" to Briar.

Briar taps her head. He flips the coin – heads. He tosses the coin to her.

This is repeated five or six times, with both Briar and Vic becoming more surprised and giggly as it keeps coming up heads.

As this happens, Interpreter moves into the scene. She catches the coin in mid-air as Eddie.

Eddie & Vic hug.

VIC.	*(NZSL)* Good morning! This is my friend Eddie.	Mōrena! Ko tāku hoa tēnei. Ko Eddie ia.	Good morning! This is my friend Eddie.
EDDIE.	Eddie. Vic and I used to do stand-up together.	Eddi. Ko māua ko Vic tērā i tūtahi ai ki te whakakata i te tangata.	Eddie. Vic and I used to do stand-up together.

BRIAR.	Real?	Āe?	Real?
EDDIE.	Yes, real.	Āe, pono nei.	Yes, real.
	I know I look twelve, but I am an adult, I promise.	He tekau-ma-rua te āhua o tōku pakeketanga pea, engari whakapono mai nei, he pakeke kē nei au.	I know I look twelve, but I am an adult, I promise.
BRIAR.	Kay, whatever. I'm Briar.	E kī, e kī. Ko Briar tōku ingoa.	Kay, whatever. I'm Briar.
VIC.	*(NZSL)* What's her name?	Ko wai tōna ingoa?	What's her name?
EDDIE.	*(NZSL)* B-r-i-a-r. Briar. Like a rose	B-r-i-a-r. he "briar", he tara.	B-r-i-a-r. Briar. Like a rose

BRIAR.	*(NZSL, to herself)* B-r-i-a-r.		
VIC.	*(NZSL)* She is quite prickly.	Āe, he momo tara ia.	She is quite prickly.
EDDIE.	*(NZSL)* Oh, shut up.	Tō waha.	Oh, shut up.
VIC.	*(NZSL)* Ask her – what is she writing? She's reading a book, and writing something, what?	Tēnā pātai atu, he aha tōna tuhituhi nā?	Ask her – what is she writing? She's reading a book, and writing something, what?
EDDIE.	Vic wants to ask what you're writing?	Kei te pātai ia he aha tō tuhituhi nā?	Vic wants to ask what you're writing?

BRIAR.	Poems. I'm translating a poem into te reo.	Kei te whakamāorita ēnei kōrero taritenga.	Poems. I'm translating a poem into te reo.
EDDIE.	*(NZSL)* Interesting. She's reading poems. Translating them into Māori language. Writing.	E hika. Kei te whakamāori mai ngā kōrero tarutenga nā.	Interesting. She's reading poems. Translating them into Māori language.
VIC.	*(NZSL)* Why?	He aha pēnei ai?	Why?
BRIAR.	Therapist told me to.	Koina te tohutohu o te tohunga.	Therapist told me to.
EDDIE.	/ *(NZSL)* Doctor's orders.	Ko ngā kupu awhina o te tākuta.	Doctor's orders.

BRIAR.	/ They thought it would make me happy,	Ki a ngā tākuta,	They thought it would make me happy,
	give me something to keep my mind off the future.	mauri tū, mauri ora.	Give me something to keep my mind off the future.
	Mostly it just makes me feel like a failure.	Engari, kei te ngātoro katoa i roto i a au.	Mostly it just makes me feel like a failure.

Pause.

VIC.	*(NZSL)* What?	He aha anō?	What?
EDDIE.	*(NZSL)* Doctors say writing, keep busy, keep confidence up.	Ki tā ngā rata, kia tū, kia tuhituhi, kia pai ai.	The doctors told her, stay busy, keep

			writing, believe in yourself.
VIC.	*(NZSL)* Yes.	Koia anō.	Ah, yes.
	Nurses here say that dying people like us have to find our path to having a “good death.”	Māhara noa ngā nēhi nei kia kimihia e mātau te “mate pai”.	The nurses here talk about finding our path to a “good death”.
	“Good death”? Strange idea, good idea?	Whakaaro rerekē nē?	Weird idea, no?
EDDIE.	*(NZSL)* Let me guess –	Kei te mōhio pai au …	Let me guess.
	your good death would be on top of a beautiful woman?	Mou nā, ko te“mate pai” kei runga tonu i tētahi wahine pūrotu?	A good death for you would be on top of a beautiful woman?

VIC.	*(NZSL)* Funeral happen.	Tai ake ki tōku tangihanga, ka kia nei te mīnita:	Absolutely. At my funeral the priest will say:
	Priest open bible, say: "He died same way he lived:	"He rite anō tōna matenga ki tōna oranga:	"He died as he lived:
	doing what? Fucking."	E ekeeke ana."	Fucking."
EDDIE.	*(NZSL)* Great death. Bravo!	Kaāahi te matenga!	Bravo! Such a good death!
VIC.	*(NZSL)* Thank you, thank you all,	Tēnā koutou katoa,	Thank you all, thamnk you all,
	fuck you all.	homai te wai ora ki ahau.	fuck you all.
EDDIE.	(*to BRIAR)* Sorry.	Arohamai.	Sorry.

BRIAR.	It’s okay, you can talk about sex in front of me.	Pai tonu te kōrero ekeeke kia mua hei i ahau.	It’s okay, you can talk about sex in front of me.
EDDIE.	Sure.	Tēnā.	Sure.
BRIAR.	I’m nineteen.	He tēkau-mā-iwa ōku tau.	I’m nineteen.

Eddie shows BRIAR NZSL for nineteen.

VIC.	*(NZSL)* Nineteen? Wow, you look younger.	Hika, tamariki ake nei tō āhua.	Wow, you look younger than that.

EDDIE.	He says wow, you look younger than nineteen.	Ko tāna kī, “He tamariki ake kē tō hanga.”	He says, wow, you look younger than nineteen.
BRIAR.	It’s true. I was in first year of uni when I got diagnosed.	Kei te tika. I te tau tuatahi o te whare wānanga ahau i te kitehanga i ōku mate pukupuku.	It’s true. I was in first year of uni when I got diagnosed.
EDDIE.	*(NZSL)* True, nineteen.	He pono, he tekau ma iwa āna tau.	True, nineteen.
	She says, when studying university first year,	Ko tāna Ii te tau tuatahi i te whare wānanga,	She says, when studying university first year,
	she sick.	ka māuiui mai.	she get sick.

VIC.	*(NZSL)* First year of university makes everyone sick.	He katoa te puku o te tāngata i te roto i te tau tuatahi noa o te whare wānanga i māuiui ai au.	First year of uni makes everyone sick.
	The drinking, the sex, the film clubs, spew!	Ngā pō haurangi, tau onioni, mahi rangatahi katoa, he kino kē!	The drinking, the film clubs, it's foul!
EDDIE.	He says first year makes everyone sick.	Ko tāna i kī ai, te tau tuatahi ka māuiui te hunga i te rangona.	He says first year makes everyone sick.
	Drinking, orgies…	Te haurangi, te onioni …	Drinking, orgies…
	He's being silly.	He kōrero heahea.	He's being silly.

Briar isn't laughing.

VIC.	*(NZSL)* I'm joking. Sorry.	Arohamai, kei te whakahangareka.	I'm just joking, sorry.
	Are you okay?	Kei te pai koe?	Are you okay?
EDDIE.	Hey, are you okay?	A, kei te pai?	Hey, are you okay?
BRIAR.	You know how … sex exists?	Kua mōhio mai kōrua	You know how …
		ki tēnei mea te … mahimahi?	sex exists?
EDDIE.	Me?	Ko au?	Me?
BRIAR.	Both of you.	Āe kōrua tahi.	Both of you.

VIC.	*(NZSL)* What? Is she talking about sex?	I kōrero mai ia mō te mahimahi?	Did I ssee her say “sex”?
EDDIE.	Um.		
BRIAR.	Well I don’t know how … sex exists?	A, kāore au i te mōhio ki te ahua o tēnei mea …	Well I don’t know how …
		te mahimahi?	sex exists?
EDDIE.	Right.	Nē.	Right.
VIC.	*(NZSL)* What?	He aha tāna kōrero?	What’s she saying?

BRIAR.	But I'd like to know how … sex exists?	Engari, kei te pirangi kit e mōhio ki te ahua …	But I'd like to know how …
		o te mahimahi?	sex exists?
EDDIE.	*(NZSL)* She's saying, she's a virgin.	- Kei te kī mai, he puhi tonu ia.	- She's saying, she's a virgin.
	/ She wants to know what fucking is like, before she passes away.	Engari, kei te mate haere au?	But I'm dying?
	She's asking us to help her.	- Kei te hiahia rongo ai i te reka o te mahimahi i mua i tōna matenga	- She wants to know what fucking is like before she passes away.

		Kua ohorere katoa te hunga i ana kōrero?	And everyone I know is really weirded out by that?
BRIAR.	/ But I'm dying?	- I tāna tono mai, mā tāua ia e āwhina atu.	- Asking us to help her.
	And everyone I know is really weirded out by that?		
	… Discuss.	…Kōrerotia.	… Discuss.

Vic & Eddie exchange glances.

EDDIE.	We're both really flattered, Briar, but …	Ahakoa he ene tō kōrero …	We're both really flattered, Briar, but …

BRIAR.	Ew, I don’t mean you two.	Kāo! Kaua ko kōrua!	Ew, I don’t mean you two!
	I’m asking you for advice,	He pātai noa mot e kupu āwhina,	I’m asking you for advice,
	not a threesome.	ehara mō te mahimahi tahi.	not a threesome.
	Jeez, up yourselves.	Aue, te whakahīhī nē.	Jeez, up yourselves.
EDDIE.	Oh, okay. Okay!	Āe! Ka pai!	Oh, okay. Okay!
	(NZSL) She does not want to fuck us. No.	Kāre he hiahia nōnā ki a tāua.	She does not want to fuck us after all.
VIC.	*(NZSL)* I know.	Mārika.	Obviously.
	Hm. Your ideas?	He aha ō kupu āwhina?	What advice do you have?

EDDIE.	Um. Tinder?	"Tinder"?	Tinder?
BRIAR.	Forget it.	He aha atu.	Forget it.
	/ I never – don't even worry about it.	- T-i-n-d-e-r.	- T-i-n-d-e-r.
		Kāre anō … hei aha.	I never … don't even worry about it.
EDDIE.	*(NZSL)* / T-i-n-d-e-r.		
	Doesn't matter.	Kāre he aha.	Doesn't matter.
	(Speech) It's okay! You don't need to be embarrassed!	Kei te pai! Kāua e whakamā.	It's okay! You don't need to be embarrassed!
	… What about Make-A Wish?	Pēwhea kē te 'Make-a-Wish'?	What about Make-A Wish?
BRIAR.	*(hiding her face in her hands)* I'm not embarrassed, you're embarrassed.	Kāre au i te whakamā, ko koe kē!	I'm not embarrassed, you're embarrassed.

EDDIE.	*(NZSL)* She says she's not embarrassed.	Ko tāna i kī ai, kāre ia i te ko tā whakamā.	She says she's not embarrassed.
VIC.	*(NZSL)* I know a really good poo joke that will cheer her up.	Mōhio nei au ki tēnei kōrero whakata	I know a really good poo joke that will cheer her up.
	There's an elephant –	mō te arewhena …	There's an elephant –
EDDIE.	*(NZSL)* Stop! Just stop.	Kāti!	Stop! Just stop.
	(NZSL & Speech) Briar,	Briar,	Briar,
	why don't you tell us about the poems that you're translating.	Tēnā whakamārama mau au nā mahi whakamāori kōrero tairitenga.	why don't you tell us about the poems that you're translating.
	Is it for your family?	Mā tō whānau tērā?	Is it for your family?

BRIAR.	Kind of.	Ahua.	Kind of.
	Well, no.	Engari koa … kāo.	Well, no.
	No, Dad’s parents were raised with the reo	Kāo, I tipu ake ōku kaumatua i roto I te reo	No, Dad’s parents were raised with the reo
	but Dad didn’t see the benefit in learning it.	Engari kāre tōku pāpā i aro atu ki ngā hua o te reo.	but Dad didn’t see the benefit in learning it.
	There’s no money in it.	Kārekau he moni ō roto.	There’s no money in it.
	He wanted me to speak English,	I hiahia kē ia kia kōrero Pākehā au,	He wanted me to speak English,
	to go to university and study management.	kia haere atu ki te whare wānanga o te Pākehā, kia mau ki ngā tohu mātauranga a te Pākehā.	to go to university and study management.

	He thought the old ways were a waste of time.	Ki a ia he moumou taima ngā tikanga o mua,	He thought the old ways were a waste of time.
	And the arts –	me ngā mahi toi …	And the arts –
	even bigger waste of time.	kātahi rā te moumou wā.	even bigger waste of time.
	So now,	Heoi anō,	So now,
	me doing this,	tōku nei mahi,	me doing this,
	both of those things together?	te hono mai o te taha toi me te taha māori …	both of those things together?
	He'd turn in his grave.	Ka wheke katoa!	He'd turn in his grave.
EDDIE.	*(NZSL)* She says, writing not to give family.	Ko tōna, kāre mā tōna whānau te tuhituhi.	She says, writing not to give family.
	When her father was a child,	A tōna matua e tamariki ana,	When her father was a child,

father heard Māori language,	ka rongo i te reo Māori,	he heard Māori language,
never learned it.	engari kore rawa ia i kōrero.	never spoke it.
Father thought Māori language waste of time.	Ki a ia, te reo Māori he huakore.	Father thought Māori language waste of time.
Māori culture waste of time.	Te tikanga, he huakore.	Māori culture waste of time.
Art, writing, reading: waste of time.	Ngā toi, te tuhituhi, te pānui, he huakore.	Art, writing, reading: waste of time.
If father saw this writing:	Memehea ka kitea tēnei tuhinga e tōku matua:	If father saw this writing:
father think foolish!	Auē! He mahi heahea noa!	father think foolish!
(NZSL and Speech) Your father passed away?	Kua mate tō pāpā?	Your father passed away?

BRIAR nods.

VICTOR.	*(NZSL)* They thought their own language was a waste of time? Wow.	Ki a rātou, he huakore tō rātou ake reo? Auē.	They thought their own language was a waste of time? Wow.
EDDIE.	Wow, your father thought his own language was a waste of time?	Auē, ki ā tō papa whakairo he kore hua	Wow, your father thought his own language
		te reo Māori?	was a waste of time?
BRIAR.	You don't know, okay.	Kāore koe i te mōhio.	You don't know, okay.
	I don't know.	Kāore au i te mōhio.	I don't know.

I don’t know what made them think that.	Nā te aha ia i whakairo pērā ai?	I don’t know what made them think that.
I don’t know what their teachers told them as kids	Ki a ia, he koretake tōnā reo.	I don’t know what their teachers told them as kids
to make them think their language was inferior.	Nō whea hoki tānā?	to make them think their language was inferior.
I don’t know what fucking horrible shit happened	Nā wai i whakatō i tērā kākano tāoke i roto i te whakaaro?	I don’t know what fucking horrible shit happened
to make them believe that speaking English and acting white	Kia pono atu te tāngata he oranga pai mōnā mā te tū pākeha i tēnei ao.	to make them believe that speaking English and acting white
was the best way to survive in this country.	Whakanoatia i tēnā whakapapa ka ora noa iho.	was the best way to survive in this country.

That it’s safer to act like you don’t even care what iwi you’re from	Pērā anō mō te noho kuare ki ōu ake whakapapa,	That it’s safer to act like you don’t even care what iwi you’re from
if you want to be invited to the local book club.	kia hanumi ia i roto i te piringa Pākehā.	if you want to be invited to the local book club.
I don’t know what kind of person made my parents believe that poison	Nō whea hoki tēnei paitini, tēnei whakapono weriweri.	I don’t know what kind of person made my parents believe that poison
but I’m guessing they weren’t Māori.	Ki tōku whakapae, ehara nā te tāngata Māori.	but I’m guessing they weren’t Māori.
Do not judge my Dad.	Kāua kōrua e whakawāngia tōku matua.	Do not judge my Dad.

Briar breaks into a cough.

EDDIE.	Shit, sorry.	Arohamai.	Shit, sorry.
	(NZSL) Māori language …	Te reo Māori …	Māori language …
	… oppressed.	… i tāmi te reo Māori.	… oppressed.
VICTOR.	*(NZSL)* When I was at school	I a au i te kura,	When I was at school
	I had to sit on my hands so I wouldn't sign.	Me noho au ki ōku ringa kia kaua au e whakarotarota.	I had to sit on my hands so I wouldn't sign.
EDDIE.	Vic says, when he was at school,	Ko tā Vic e kī nā, i a ia i te kura	Vic says, when he was at school,
	he had to sit on his hands, because sign language was banned.	Me noho ia ki runga I ōna ringa i te mea kua whakakati i te mahi rotarota.	he had to sit on his hands, because Sign Language was banned.

Briar looks at Vic: really?

Vic nods.

VIC.	*(NZSL)* But I would just be the joker in lunch break,	Engari, ko te mahi a ngā pukuhohe henwhakatakataka i te hunga matakitaki.	But I would just be the joker in lunch break,
	making everyone laugh. I could use my hands then.	Ka mutu te kura, e kōrero paki ana, ka whakamahi ngā rota.	making everyone laugh. I could use my hands then.
	Pretend to do farts, pretend the teacher farted,	Kāore e kore he mahi tinihanga, anō nei I patero te Kaiako,	Pretend to do farts, pretend the teacher farted,

no it's okay Teacher, I won't tell anyone you shat your pants,	"Auē, te haunga hoki o tana patero! Tē! Tē! Ngā pihauahau. Hanga roa ana".	no it's okay Teacher, I won't tell anyone you shat your pants,
your secret is safe with me …	Ehara i te hanga!	your secret is safe with me …

Eddie starts but quickly gives up on voicing for Vic as he riffs on a series of very silly physical gags.

Eddie and Briar laugh until Briar breaks into a cough.

EDDIE.	Are you okay? Do you need water?	Kei te pai koe? Kei te hia inu?	Are you okay? Do you need water?
BRIAR.	*(NZSL/ gesture & speech)* I'm fine. Just need a drink.	Āe. E mate ana.	I just need a drink.

Eddie & Vic watch her leave.

EDDIE.	*(NZSL)* Nice girl.	He pai ia.	Nice girl.
VIC.	*(NZSL)* Yes. It's sad,	Āe. Te pōuri hoki,	Yes. It's sad,
	she's so young. She has had her whole life taken away from her.	kua pīru tōna taiohinga.	She's so young. She has had her whole life taken away from her.

Eddie is looking around nervously.

EDDIE.	*(NZSL)* I want to give you something.	He koha tōku mōu.	I want to give you something.
VIC.	*(NZSL)* A gift?	He taonga?	A gift?
EDDIE.	*(NZSL)* Yes, a gift.	Āe, he taonga.	Yes, a gift.
VIC.	*(NZSL)* Excellent. Thanks.	Ngā mihi nui! Homai!	Excellent. Thanks!

He holds out his hand.

EDDIE.	*(NZSL)* No. It's difficult.	He uaua.	No. It's difficult.
	I have to explain it to be able to give it to you.	Me whakamāramatia i te tuatahi.	I have to explain it to be able to give it to you.

	But I have to explain it in private.	Me muna te kōrero.	But I have to explain it in private.
VIC.	*(NZSL)* She won't understand you.	Kaore a Briar i te marama ki te reo turi.	Briar won't understand you.
	Just tell me.	Kōrerotia.	Just tell me.
EDDIE.	*(NZSL)* I have an idea.	Kei ahau!	I have an idea.
	Why don't I come back another day?	Ka hoki mai ahau ātahirā	Why don't I come back another day?
	Then we can talk.	A, tāua wā kōrero ai tāua.	Then we can talk.
VIC.	*(NZSL)* Tell me now. You're being weird and nervous.	Kōrero mai ināienei. Tō heahea nei.	Tell me now. You're being weird.

	Just tell me. Give me a clue.	Whāki mai. Homai te tīwhiri.	Just tell me. Give me a clue.
EDDIE.	*(NZSL)* A clue?	He tīwhiri?	A clue?
	Everyone says I'm so young looking.	E ait e katoa he taiohi tonu tōku hanga.	Everyone says I'm so young looking.
	But I'm older than you.	Engari ko ahau kē te pakeke.	But I'm older than you.
	I'm 306 years old.	306 ōku tau.	I'm 306 years old.
VIC.	*(NZSL)* No, you're not.	E tā, kei te tika.	No, you're not.
EDDIE.	*(NZSL)* See you soon.	Ka kite ākuanei.	See you soon.

EDDIE walks away.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Hey! Hey!

Ei! E hoa!	Hey! Hey!

He waves and stomps on the ground but runs out of energy quickly.

EDDIE comes back, flicks the coin she's been holding back to Vic, and leaves again, returning to Interpreter position.

VIC flips the coin.

<u>Inside.</u>

BRIAR has a drink of water, and calms her coughing.

There's a knock on the door. She ignores it.

Her phone rings. She picks it up, sees the number and leaves it to ring, under a pillow to dampen the sound.

She looks into the audience.

BRIAR.	I have an online boyfriend, you know.	Kia mōhio mai koe, he hoa tāne tōku kei te ipurangi.	I have an online boyfriend, you know.
	I've had like cybersex.	Ana, kua mahimahi māua i te ipurangi.	I've had like cybersex.
	I keep in touch with this guy from high school.	I tūtaki māua i kura.	I keep in touch with this guy from high school.
	He lives in Perth now.	Kei te noho ia ki Te Pāpaka-a-Māui ināianei.	He lives in Perth now.
	He likes to chat in Māori.	Ka kōrerorero māua i te reo Māori.	He likes to chat in Māori.
	He says he's homesick.	Kei te mokemoke ia mō te wākainga.	He says he's homesick.

We haven’t like said we love each other or anything.	Ahakoa kāore he waiata ipo,	We haven’t like said we love each other or anything.
But we’ve talked about the future.	ka kōrero māua mō ā mua.	But we’ve talked about the future.
Well, he’s talked about the future.	Kāo. Ka kōrero ia mō ā mua.	Well, he’s talked about the future.
I’ve just gone along with it.	Āe noa ana mai ahau.	I’ve just gone along with it.
I’m never going to tell him.	Ka kore au e whakamōhio atu.	I’m never going to tell him.
One day he’ll just –	Ha haere mai te rangi	One day he’ll just –
stop hearing from me.	e kore ia e rongo kōrero mai i ahau.	stop hearing from me.

Don’t look at me like that!	Kāua koutou e titro pēnā mai!	Don’t look at me like that!
It’s easy for you, just sitting there, watching.	He māmā noa te noho me te mātaki mai.	It’s easy for you, just sitting there, watching.
I’ve seen you watching me when I sleep.	Kua kite au i a koutou e titiro mataara mai ana i te pō.	I’ve seen you watching me when I sleep.

Garden.

Briar enters, with a drink of water.

She gestures that Eddie has gone.

VIC.	*(NZSL)* Yes, she was busting. Needed to shit. Had to run with her legs together.	Āe, i wehe a Eddie ki te wharepaku, nui tōna.	Yes. Eddie went off to the bathroom, she was busting.

Briar rolls her eyes but smiles.

They resume their game of heads and tails. Briar speaks between coin-flips, while Vic looks away so he doesn't realise she's speaking.

BRIAR.	I've become scared of the dark again. (Heads.)	Kua matāku anō au i te pō.	I've become scared of the dark again.
	Is that normal? (Heads.)	Ko māori tēnā?	Is that normal?
	Like when I turn off the lights at night (Heads.)	Ka haere ia i roto i tōku ruma moenga, ia pō, ia pō.	Like when I turn off the lights at night

I see this weird figure crouching on top of the furniture. (Heads.)	He tīpuna kuia ia. Ka tau mai ki tāku kāpata kākahu.	I see this weird figure crouching on top of the furniture.
Like this scrawny old woman,	He kuia āhau tūoi noa nei.	Like this scrawny old woman,
crouched silently, (Heads.)	Kua mū.	crouched silently,
and she's just watching me.	Ka mātakitaki mai.	and she's just watching me.
I can feel her there. (Heads.)	He tiameka tērā.	I can feel her there.
And I can hear her breath.	Ka rongo au i tōnā hā.	And I can hear her breath.
And every time I reach for the light switch	I a te wā ka toro au ki te whakakā i te rama,	And every time I reach for the light switch
I'm scared that her bony hand will flash out	ka wehikei mau ia	I'm scared that her bony hand will flash out

and grab my wrist. (Heads.)	i tōku ringa.	and grab my wrist.
And it frightens me because	A, kua mataki au.	And it frightens me because
even though she's this tiny wizened old person, (Heads.)	Ahakoa he iti, he tūoi, he puanga …	even though she's this tiny wizened old person,
she has this real ancient strength about her. (Heads.)	he kaha tīpuna tonu tōna.	she has this real ancient strength about her.
Like she could snap my bones	Anōnei ka whatia e ia ōku kōiwi	Like she could snap my bones
and suck out the marrow	Me te ngongo i te kiko o roto	and suck out the marrow
if she felt like a midnight snack. (Heads.)	Hei kai noa māna i te pō.	if she felt like a midnight snack.

Then my hand reaches the switch	Ka whakakāngia	Then my hand reaches the switch
and I turn on the light	te rāiti:	and I turn on the light
and it's just my stupid room. (Heads.)	he tahanga te rūma.	and it's just my stupid room.
So I guess I'm trying to say that uh,	Me te aha	So I guess I'm trying to say that uh,
I'm not sleeping much (Heads.)	kaore au i te kaha moe,	I'm not sleeping much
and I'm probably just rambling incoherently (Heads.)	he rangirua noa pea ēnei kōrero	and I'm probably just rambling incoherently
and I'm really glad you don’t know I’m telling you this. (Heads.)	me tāku hari kāore koe i te rongo mai ki ahau.	and I'm really glad you don’t know I’m telling you this.

BRIAR disappears into her own thoughts.

VIC.	*(NZSL)* Are you okay?	Kei te pai koe?	Are you okay?

BRIAR forces a smile. Then very earnestly and clumsily, she says in NZSL:

BRIAR.	*(NZSL)* Kia ora,	Kia ora,	Hi,
	my name is Briar.	ko Briar tōku ingoa.	my name is Briar.

Vic applauds.

VIC.	*(NZSL)* You're learning NZSL?	Kei te ako koe i Te Reo o Te Turi Aotearoa?	You're learning New Zealand Sign Language?
BRIAR.	*(NZSL)* Just a little.	Āe, he paku noa.	A little.

VIC.	*(NZSL)* I'll teach you.	Ka taea e au te whakaako.	I can teach you.
	Do you know the word, "Māori"?	A, "Māori".	Here: "Māori".
	M-a-o-r-i.	M-a-o-r-i.	M-a-o-r-i.
BRIAR	*(NZSL & Speech)* Māori.		
	They perform a poem together:		
	(NZSL & Speech)		
	Māori	Māori	Māori
	Word – Kupu	Kupu	Word
	Bone – Kōiwi	Kōiwi	Bone
	Blood – Toto	Toto	Blood
	Skin – Kiri	Kiri	Skin
	Dirt – kirikiri	Kirikiri	Dirt
	Hair – Makawe	Makawe	Hair
	Breath – Ha	Hā	Breath

Thought – Whakaaro	Whakaaro	Thought
Air – Hau	Hau	Air
Sky – Rangi	Rangi	Sky
Clouds – kāpua	Kāpua	Clouds
Stars – Whetū	Whetū	Stars
(Visual Vernacular, NZSL)		
Twinkling Stars – Whetū Ahi	Whetū ahi	Twinkling stars
Cells, atoms, separating – Pungarehu Marara	Pungarehu marara	Cells, atoms, separating
Explode & Contract – Pahū atu – Ngāhoro mai	Pahū atu, ngāhoro mai	Exploding, contracting,
Forever – Ake, ake, ake	Ake, ake ,ake.	Forever, forever.

They both gaze at the Signed universe.

Rango the Fly buzzes into first Vic's face, then Briar's. They both swat at it and their eyes follow Rango in the air as it flies away.

4. Ahiahi

BRIAR presses play on a device and audio starts to play.

TAPE.	"I a ia…". Whakamāoritia enei.	"I a ia…". Whakamāoritia enei.	"While they…" Translate these phrases into Te Reo Māori.
	Tuatahi.	Tuatahi.	First.
	While she was eating kai, the man sang.	"I a ia e kai ana, ka te waiata te tāne."	"While she was eating kai, the man sang."
BRIAR.	I a ia e kai ana,	I a ia e kai ana,	While she was eating,
	ka waiata te tane.	ka waiata te tane.	the man sang.
TAPE.	Ka pai. Tuarua.	Ka pai. Tuarua.	Very good. Second.

	While the girl swam, her parents relaxed.	“I te wā e kaukau an ate kōtiro, ka whakatā ōna mātua.”	“While the girl swam, her parents relaxed.”
BRIAR.	I te kōtiro e kaukau ana,	I a te kōtiro e kaukau ana,	While the girl swam,
	ka whakatā ōna mātua.	ka whakatā ōna mātua.	her parents relaxed.
TAPE.	Ka pai. Tuatoru.	Ka pai. Tuatoru.	Very good. Third.
	While the other girls were slutting it up, Briar was getting chemo.	“I a ngā kōtiro e whāwhā haere ana, ka hahaua te mate pukupuku o Briar.”	“While the other girls were slutting it up, Briar was getting chemo.”
BRIAR.	Excuse me?	Tēnā koa?	Excuse me?
TAPE.	Ka pai.	Ka pai.	That’s right.

	You heard me correctly, girl.	Kua tika tāu i rongo mai ai, e hine.	You heard me correctly, girl.
	Whakamāoritia tēnei.	Whakamāoritia tēnei.	Translate this into Māori.
	While the other girls were slutting it up, Briar was getting chemo.	"I a ngā kōtiro e whāwhā haere ana, ka hahaua te mate pukupuku o Briar."	"While the other girls were slutting it up, Briar was getting chemo."
BRIAR.	I -	I -	While -
	I ngā kōtiro atu e	I ngā kōtiro e	While the other girls
	… slutting it up ana, ka –	… ekeeke haere ana, ka -	… were slutting it up -
TAPE.	Tata! Kia kaha.	Tata! Kia kaha.	Almost! Keep going.
	Tuawhā.	Tuawhā.	Fourth.

	While the mother cries, the child relaxes.	“I a te whaea e tangi hotuhotu ana, ka whakatā te tamaiti.”	“While the mother cries, the child relaxes.”
BRIAR.	Fuck. You.	Pōkōtiwha.	Fuck. You.
	You don’t know me.	Kāre koe i te mōhio mai ki ahau.	You don’t know me.
TAPE.	Kao, e kō.	Kao, e kō.	No, my dear.
	I know you.	Kei te mōhio nei nei au ki a koe.	I know you.
	I’m your only friend.	Ko ahau anake tō hoa.	I’m your only friend.
BRIAR.	Whatever.	He aha hoki.	Whatever.

TAPE.	Closest thing you'll ever have to a friend at any rate.	Koinei te momo e tata nei ki tētehi hoa māu e kare.	Closest thing you'll ever have to a friend at any rate.
BRIAR.	Oi!	Ha!	Oi!
TAPE.	Arohamai. Āe. Tuarima.	Arohamai. Āe. Tuarima.	Sorry. Now. Fifth.
BRIAR.	Tuanothing.	Nothingth.	Tuakore.

She turns it off.

Interpreter exits.

Eddie enters. There's a knock offstage and Eddie looks back. Someone offstage hands her a brown paper package.

EDDIE. Hey. Nurses said to give you this.

Tēna. Nā ngā nēhi i ki mai māu tēnei.	Hey. Nurses said to give you this.

BRIAR looks at it.

BRIAR. I know.

Āe.	I know.

EDDIE. Take it.

E tango.	Take it.

BRIAR. Nah.

Kāo.	Nah.

Thank you. Just put it on the ground.

Kia ora. Waihotia ki te papa.	Thank you. Just put it on the ground.

EDDIE. What's your problem? Open it.

He aha hoki te raru? Hua kina.	What's your problem? Open it.

She reads writing on the package.

EDDIE.	It looks like it's from your mum.	Te āhua nei, he mea tuku mai e tō whaea.	It looks like it's from your mum.
BRIAR.	I know it's from her.	Āe. Kei te mōhio pai nāna tonu.	I know it's from her.
EDDIE.	Oh. Where's Vic?	Kei whea a Vic?	Where's Vic?
	You know you're in hospice right?	Mōhio pai koe kei te hōpitara, nei koe?	You know you're in hospice right?

This isn’t exactly the ideal time for teenage righteousness.	Me whakapapaku kē koe i a koe.	This isn’t exactly the ideal time for teenage righteousness.
Fine.	Kāti.	Fine.
Fan-cunting-tastic.	Kāore he aha ki a au,	Fan-cunting-tastic.
I’m not here to see you anyway.	kāre au i konei ki te toro atu ki a koe.	I’m not here to see you anyway.
Let’s sulk together shall we?	Kia whakamoroki nei tāua, neha?	Let’s sulk together shall we?

Eddie takes a coin from her pocket, and plays a silent game of heads or tails by herself.

Briar smacks the coin, mid-air, across the stage.

In retaliation, Eddie rips open the package. Inside is a battered exercise book.

EDDIE.	Who’s Hemi Muir?	Ko wai a Hemi Muir?	Who’s Hemi Muir?
BRIAR.	Give it to me.	Homai tēnā.	Give it to me.

Eddie hands it over.

EDDIE.	What is it?	He aha tēnā?	What is it?
BRIAR.	Taonga.	Taonga.	Treasure.
	Bedtime stories.	Ngā pūrākau.	Bedtime stories.
EDDIE.	Kei te reo Māori.	Kei te reo Māori.	It’s in Māori.
BRIAR.	Kei te kōrero Māori koe?	Kei te kōrero Māori koe?	You speak Te Reo?

EDDIE.	Āe, ka ako au I tētehui reo hou ia rima tau.	Āe, ka ako au I tētehui reo hou ia rima tau.	Yeah. I learn a new language every five years.
BRIAR.	E kī, e kī.	E kī, e kī.	Well, check you out.

Briar takes a coin from her pocket and hands it to Eddie.

BRIAR.	Aroha mai.	Aroha mai.	Sorry.

Vic enters.

BRIAR.	E whia ō reo?	E whia ō reo?	How many languages do you know?
EDDIE.	Māku e mōhio.	Māku e mōhio.	That's for me to know.
	(NZSL) Hello.	Kia ora.	Hello.
BRIAR.	Hōha.	Hōha.	Humbug.

Briar becomes absorbed in reading the book of stories.

VIC.	/ *(NZSL)* Sorry late!	Arohamai, mō tōku tūreititanga!	Sorry I'm late.

Have to take painkiller morphine. But means can't shit.	Nā te kai rehunanu kua pā mai te kōroke.	The morphine I'm on makes me really constipated.
Shit all shrivel up into ball.	Kua kōriorio te tiko	The crap shrivels up
I pray: Today let me shit, please!	ka tīna, ka mau hei pōro iti noa.	into a little ball.
Make me happy!	Ka inoi ahai, koi ate rangi	Everyday, I pray that this will be the day
I sat on toilet,	ka mātua tiko ahau!	I actually take a shit!
waiting, waiting. Nothing.	I te noho au ki te wharepaku … Kāre te aha i te neke.	I was sitting on the toilet … Nothing was happening.
I thought: I help!	Ana i pā mai tētehi whakairo kokoi nei	So I had this great idea to gelp things along:

	So, put finger up inside.	i whakauru ki roto ki tōku matimati, a,	I put my finger up inside.
	Trying to help out.	ka whakamātau atu kia mau te tiko.	You know, to try and coax the crap out.
	Feel a ball.	Āue.	I could feel it up there, perfectly round.
	Round and round!	E te Atua,	But it just span on my fingertip like a basketball.
	But nothing out, nothing! Shit still there.	he aha i aituā pēnei ai?	Dammit! Not shit for me today, I guess.
EDDIE.	*(NZSL)* Tragic.	I wāu nei hoki.	Tragic.
VIC.	*(NZSL)* Good story?	He pai te kōrero?	You like that routine?

EDDIE.	*(NZSL)* Good.	Āe, kei te pai.	Yeah, it's good.
VIC.	*(NZSL)* Yes. I'll keep that story	Tino pai, e haratau tēnei ana	Great, I'll keep it
	for my final comedy show.	Mo tōku tūranga whakamutunga ki te ātāmira.	For my final comedy show.

Eddie looks at Briar, who is reading the book.

Eddie and Vic begin signing at the same time.

EDDIE.	*(NZSL) /* I want to talk to you –	Me kōrero tāua / Kei pai ia?	I want to talk to you / Is she okay?

VIC.	*(NZSL)* / Is she okay? Sorry –	Arohamai -	Sorry -
EDDIE.	*(NZSL)* Yes, she is okay.	Āe, kei te pai ia.	Yes, she is okay.
	Maybe.	Tēnā pea.	Maybe.
	There, package from her mum.	He owha tērā nā tōna whaea.	That package was form her mum.
	I tried to give it to her. She said, “No!”, sulking.	Engair te nanakia rā i tohe kē.	I tried to gie it to her but she was a brat.
VIC.	*(NZSL)* Teenagers.	Aue, ngā rangatahi. E kore e taea te pēwhea.	Teenagers.
EDDIE.	*(NZSL)* Yes. Then, I unwrapped it, it was that book.	Āe. Ka hurahia nei e au, kei roto ko te pukapuka nā.	Yup. When I opened it, that book was inside.

	Name written on book: H-e-m-i M-u-i-r-. Who?	I runga nā ko te ingoa Hemi Muir. E te mōhio koe ki taua ingoa?	The name “Hemi Muir” was written on the book. You recognise it?
VIC.	*(NZSL)* I wonder: Her name is Briar Muir.	Kāo. Ko Briar Muir tōna ingoa.	No. Her name is Briar Muir though.
	Hey, idea –	Kua toko ake he whakaaro.	I had an idea.
	her sign name could be “Sting”.	Ko tōna ingoa rotarota ko tēnei:	Her Sign-name could be this:
	Like a thorn, like briar bush, it’s prickly. Ow!	He tairo, he niho, he pī.	Like a thorn, a birar bush, a bee, you know?
	Also she’s very sharp, her mind is sharp, her look is sharp. Her ideas can sting you.	He koi pēnei I a ia, ā hinengaro, ā arero hoki.	Prickly like her, with her sharp thoughts.
EDDIE.	*(NZSL)* Okay. Briar/Sting.	Ka pai. “Briar”.	Okay. “Briar”.

VIC.	*(NZSL)* Wait – going back – I said her name is Muir. Briar/Sting Muir.	Me aha koa. Āe, ko Briar Muir tōna ingoa, ne?	Oh, but before – so her name is Briar Muir, right?
	And I know her fight with the mum	Nō reira he whanaunga pea?	So it's probably a relation.
	about her father.	Mōhio nei au ka tautohengia e rāua kō wai tōna matua.	I know her and her mother disagree about her late father,
	Father passed away many years ago.	Kua mate noa kē.	even though he died a long time ago.
EDDIE.	*(NZSL)* Really?	Nē?	Really?
VIC.	*(NZSL)* Yeah.	Āe.	Yeah.

EDDIE.	*(NZSL)* Interesting. Sad life.	Hika. Kātahi te orange pouri ko tēnā.	Interesting. Such a sad life.
	(Speech) Briar! Vic has made a sign-name for you.	Briar! Kua tapaina e Vic he ingoa rotarotua mōu.	Briar! Vic has made a Sign-name for you.

Briar looks up from her book.

EDDIE.	Are you okay?	Kei te pai nā koe?	Are you okay?
BRIAR.	Kei pai. He aha tāna?	Kei pai. He aha tāna?	I'm fine. What is it?

EDDIE.	Um. Ko tā māua ingoa mōu I te reo turi o Aotearoa. *(to Vic)* Whakaatu atu.	Ko tā māua ingoa mōu I te reo turi o Aotearoa.	We have a name in NZSL for you.
		Whakaatu atu.	Show her.

Vic shows her the name.

EDDIE.	Nā te mea, “Briar”, he koi koe ā hinengaro, ā arero hoki.	Ana, ko te “Tairo”, he koi koe ā hinengaro, ā arero hoki.	As in, “Briar”, like spikes, like sharp intellect and sharp tongue.
BRIAR.	Ngā mihi.	Ngā mihi.	Thank you.
EDDIE.	*(NZSL)* Ngā mihi.	“Ngā mihi”. Anō.	“Thank you”, like this.

BRIAR. *(NZSL)* Ngā mihi.

Ngā mihi.	Thank you.

She looks at her hands.

As she speaks, Eddie interprets.

BRIAR. Man.

It must be so wild, to be born with your words in your hands.

And when you look around,

the world is made of language.

You are your words.

Auē.	Man.
Wetiweti ana. Kua mīharo au, ko tō reo kei ō ringa.	It must be so wild, to be born with your words in your hands.
Titiro nei koe ki tēnei ao,	And when you look around,
he reo katoa tēnei ao.	the world is made of language.
Ko ōu kupu.	You are your words.

You know in Māori	I roto i te Ao Māori, kī mātou	You know in Māori
we like categorise “kōrero” as outside ourselves,	ko te tātau ko te “kōrero”, he mea i waho tonu i a tātau anō,	we like categorise “kōrero” as outside ourselves,
because our words have left the body.	i te mea kua rere kē atu te kupu i te tinana.	because our words have left the body.
But your words are your body.	Enagri ko tō reo tō tinana tonu.	But your words are your body.
Your body is the world.	Ko tōu tinana, ko te ao.	Your body is the world.
It’s all connected.	Honoa katoa.	It’s all connected.
I’m super jealous of that.	Ko au e tino mīharo nei i tēnā.	I’m super jealous of that.

	Soz, maybe it's just the painkillers talking.	Arohamai. Ko aku pire kē kōrero nei.	Soz, maybe it's just the painkillers talking.
VIC.	*(NZSL)* No, you're right,	Kāo, kei te tika tāu,	No, you're right,
	it's pretty great. I'm great.	he rawe katoa. Me au tahi!	It's pretty great and so am I.
EDDIE.	Kei te pēwhea tō pukapuka?	Kei te pēwhea te haere o tō pukapuka?	How is your book?
BRIAR.	He ātaahua.	He ātaahua.	It's beautiful.
	He kōrero mō te te mate.	He kōrero mō te te mate.	It's a story about death.
	He tane, ko Rangi-rua,	He tane, ko Rangi-rua,	There's this man, Rangi-rua.

	whai atu, i whakahoki mai	whai atu, i whakahoki mai	He followed a woman to the underworld
	i tana wahine i Rarohenga.	i tana wahine i Rarohenga.	to rescue her.
EDDIE.	*(NZSL)* She reading a story about death.	Ka te pānui ia i tētehi tuhinga mō te mate.	She reads a story about death.
	A man save his sweetheart from death.	He tāne i whakahoki mai i tāna wāhine i Rarohenga.	A man save his beloved from death.
VIC.	*(NZSL)* How?	Pēwhea mai nei?	How?
EDDIE.	Pēwhea mai?	Pēwhea mai?	How?
BRIAR.	WELL.	A…	Well.

	Ko Hine-maarama te whaiaipō o Rangi-rua.	Ko Hine-maarama te whaiaipō o Rangi-rua.	Hine-maarama is Rangi-rua's beloved.
	Kāre i kai i a ia ngā kai o Rarohenga.	Kāre i kai i a ia ngā kai o Rarohenga.	When she's there, she doesn't eat the food of the underworld.
	Nā konā, i tāea e rāua te hoki mai kit e ao tūroa,	Nā konā, i tāea e rāua te hoki mai kit e ao tūroa,	So she and he are able to return to the light of day,
	ā, i hoki mai a Hine-maarama ki ōna kōiwi. .	ā, i hoki mai a Hine-maarama ki ōna kōiwi.	and Hine-maarama's spirit is returned to her body.
EDDIE.	*(NZSL)* Woman went down into the underworld.	Haere te wahine ki Rarohenga.	Woman go down to land of dead.
	Land of the dead.		
	But! Saw food, didn't eat it.	Kāre i kai ia ngā kai o Rarohenga.	But! Saw food, didn't take.

	So, man able to take woman's spirit,	Ka hēpai te tāne i te wairua o wahine,	So man able to carry woman's spirit,
	carry it away, up, up, back to land of sunlight.	ka piki ka piki ka piki ki te ao tūroa.	away back up, into the sunlight.
	Put back in woman's body.	Hoki atu ai ki tōna tinana.	Put back in woman's body.
VIC.	*(NZSL)* And she lived?	I ora ia?	And she lived?
	She was revived?	I whakaora ia?	She was revived?
EDDIE.	I ora ia? I whakaora ia?	I ora ia? I whakaora ia?	So she lived? She was revived?
BRIAR.	Āe.	Āe.	Yes.

VIC is disturbed by this.

BRIAR. He aha ra te raru?

He aha ra te raru?	What's your problem?

Eddie doesn't translate.

BRIAR. Eddie.

He korero otinga hari!

Ka ora ia!

Etti.	Eddie.
He kōrero otinga hari!	It's a happy ending!
Ka ora ia!	She lived!

Briar and Vic are both looking at Eddie, who is silent.

Vic nudges her.

EDDIE. You know,

I could sneak you out of here one night.

Ka taea pahiko e tāua	You know,
te tēnei wāhi.	I could sneak you out of here one night.

	We could go to a pub.	Ka taea haere e tāua ki a hōtera.	We could go to a pub.
BRIAR.	A pub?	He hōtera?	A pub?
EDDIE.	Yeah. Find someone for you to have a one-night stand with.	Āe. Mā koe he tāne, ko tā tāua rapunga tēnā.	Yeah. Find someone for you to have a one-night stand with.
BRIAR.	At a pub?	Ki a he hōtera?	At a pub?
EDDIE.	Yes, a pub.	Āe, he hōtera.	Yes, a pub.
	What would you rather, a brothel?	Mā te aha i te moemoe.	What would you rather, a brothel?

BRIAR.	No,	Kāo.	No,
	I'd rather something meaningful.	Enagri, hei tapu te mahi.	I'd rather something meaningful.
EDDIE.	Well you don't have time for meaningful, do you?	Kia tere, kia noa.	Well you don't have time for meaningful, do you?
	You asked for help, I'm offering to help you.	Ko tōu hiahia ki tōku āwhina?	You asked for help, I'm offering to help you.
BRIAR.	I don't want that kind of help.	Kāore ōku hiahia ki taua momo āwhina.	I don't want that kind of help.
EDDIE.	What do you want?	He aha kē tō hiahia?	What do you want?
	Someone to rescue you from the underworld?	He ringa kaha i te karo atu i ngā tono o Rarohenga?	Someone to rescue you from the underworld?

	Sorry.	Arohamai.	Sorry.
VIC.	(NZSL) What?	He aha te aha?	What?
EDDIE.	(NZSL) Doesn’t matter.	Kāre he aha māu.	Doesn’t matter.

Pause.

VIC.	*(NZSL)* I remember a story.	E mahara ana au ki tētehi kōrero tawhito nō tōku tīpuna.	I remember an old story my grandmother told me,
	My grandmother, Russian woman told me.	Nō Rūhia ia.	from her homeland, Russia.

Through the sequence, the world shifts to follow Vic's storytelling. Vic's story is told in a mix of NZSL and Visual Vernacular:

Man, who: soldier. War long time, finished.	Tērā tētahi toa. I muri iho i te mutu te pakanga kua hoki ia ki te haukainga.	A soldier returned home from war.
Walk, carrying what? Nothing. Only have three coins. Not much.	E toru anahe āna uka moni.	He only had three coins in the world.

So, walking, sees man: begging. Thinks: maybe soon me same. So, gives beggar one coin.	Ka takahoatia atu e ia kotahi te uka ki a ia.	He gave one coin to a beggar.
Walking. Then, second person. Begging.		
Thinks: beggar before I give, should also give. So, gives a coin. Fine.	Mea kau ake, ka takohatia e ia tana uka tuarua ki tētehi atu tangata hākoke.	He gave his second coin to another beggar.
Walking.		
Third person! Begging. Thinks: Well! I have to! I give one two three, last coin! Here.	Ko tōnā uka tuatoru ka tuku ki tētehi atu tangata rawa kore.	He gave his last coin to a beggar.
No coins left. Nothing. Give. Man says: thank you. Give what? Magic bag. Sack.	Ka mihi te tangata ki te toa rā, ā,	Who thanked him

If want catch anything, open it, say: that! Come in! Come on. Will go in. Catch finished.	ka takohatia he kete mākutu ki te toa anō.	and gave him a magic sack for hunting.
Soldier: Pfft. Don't believe. But: takes sack. Fine. Walking.		
Hungry. Dark. Why I give away my money? I can't buy food!	Ka pō, kua haikai te toa nei.	That night, the soldier was hungry.
Sees: geese, over there. Think. Get sack. Open. "Come one, geese, get in!"	Kātahi anō ngā kererū rā ka puta mai.	He saw geese, in the distance.
Have right! Geese go in! Catch!	Ka toko mai te whakaaro.	An idea came to him.
One goose: he eats. Finished. Other geese: sell, sell, sell. Great!		
Time goes on. Soldier become rich, why? Sack: come on! Catch! Sell. Eat or need anything catch with sack.	He toa ngutu atamai.	The soldier was a smart man.

Time goes on, become rich, old.	Ka whakamahia tāna kete mākutu nei ki te whakaemi mai i te tauri kura.	He used the sack to make himself rich.
At night, move in bed, cannot sleep.	Engari, e moe korohiko ana, ia pō, ia pō.	But every night, something bothered his sleep.
Fly buzzing. Land on face. He swat, it comes back.	He rango?	A fly?
He think fly. But look around: nothing.		
Time goes on.	Ka haere te wā.	Time passed.
One night soldier old man.		
Sitting with sick son.	Ka pakeke, ka whai tamariki, ā, he mokopuna.	He became a father, a grandfather.
Sees end of bed: old woman. Hunched. Clothes: rags. Face: hidden.	Nā, ka māuiui tana pōtiki, nā te Toa ia i manaaki.	When his youngest son became sick, the soldier cared for him.

Crawling.	I a ia kumanu ana, ka rongo i tētehi reo e warowaro ana.	One night,he heard that eery sound.
Soldier move away. Pick up sack. Open. Woman get in.	Ka kite i te whakatata o te matenga.	He saw death approaching.
Catch. That woman was Death. Think won!		
Forest. Ties up sack. Hangs from tree. Leave.	Ka iria e ia te kete mākutu rā ki te wao, tei te ngahere.	He hid the sack in the forest.
Whole world: death gone.		
People getting old.	Ka ngaro atu te mate.	Death was gone.
But nothing dying. Sick but, go on living. Nothing dying.		
Food run out. Water run out. People don’t understand: why normal death gone?	Ka pia haere te ao, engari kaore he mate.	The world rotted without the natural order.

Soldier: ashamed. No want to tell his mistake.	Kua whakamā te toa i tōna hē.	The soldier grew ashamed of his mistake.
Happen think, Ooo, keep or let go? Flips a coin. Old, sick, slowly walks to sack in forest. Opens it.		
But Death scared, don't want see him.	Ka hiahia ia te tuku i te mate kia rere mai i taua kete mākutu.	He tried to free death.
Escapes.	Nā tōnā matāku ka kore rawa a mate e neke.	But she was afraid, and would not touch him.
Start take other people spirits.	Ka pūrere ia, ā, ka tīmata te wewete i te hunga māuiui kia mate ai.	She escaped, and began freeing people in pain.

People: Die, spirit away.	Kia tere atu ki te pō kia whetūrangitia.	Taking their spirits and returning them to the stars.
Old man see son dying. Spirit leaving.	Ka kite i te pōtiki,	She found the soldier's sick son,
Man: please! With! I follow! Take me with! Son: my father, love. Will take with.	o te Toa.	who eagerly awaited death.
Open sack. Father: in sack. Shut. Son puts the sack over shoulder. Take.	Ka inoi hoki te Toa kia kawea hoki ia e Mate ki te taka o rātou ngā wairua kua mārewa i te pae.	The soldier begged to be taken too, in the magic sack.
Arrive, where? Underworld.	Engari, hei te taenga o te wairua o te pōtiki ki te rangi,	But when the son arrived in the land of the dead:
Son sees friends, ancestors, lots of people.		

Excited! Forgets about father in sack. Drop, there. Goes.		
Forgot there, Father still.	Mai i taua wā, ka noho tonu mo āke tonu atu.	And he is still there, forever.
Forever.		

Pause.

VIC.	*(NZSL)* Anyway. I think, death is normal. It's okay.	Ko tōku whakaaro, koianei te ara tika mō te tangata.	I think, death is natural. It's okay.
EDDIE.	He says, death is natural.	"Ko te mate te ara tika mo te tangata", tōna kī.	He says, death is natural.

BRIAR.	I got it.	Ae, e mārama ana.	I got it.
	Excuse me.	Tēnā.	Excuse me.

Briar leaves, upset.

EDDIE.	*(NZSL)* How do you know that story?	Pēwhea tō mōhio ki taua pūrākau?	How do you know that story?
VIC.	*(NZSL)* My grandmother.	He kōrero nō tōku karanimāmā.	My grandmother told me.
	What's wrong?	He aha te mate?	What's wrong?
EDDIE.	*(NZSL)* The story is wrong.	Kei te hē te kōrero nā.	That story is wrong.

	It’s true, but it’s wrong.	He kōrero pono, engari kei te hē tonu.	It’s true, but it’s wrong.
	Not a soldier. Wrong. It was a stupid rich young woman.	Kāore he toa. He wahine wairangi kē taua tangata.	It wasn’t a soldier, it was a foolish young woman.
	Not a magic sack. Wrong.	Kāore he kete mākutu.	It wasn’t a magic sack.
	It was a Key.	He Kī tipuna kē.	It was a Key.
	And she never locked up the old woman.	Kāre ia i mauhere i a Matenga.	And she never locked up the old woman Death.
VIC.	*(NZSL)* All our grandmothers have different versions of the same story.	Engari tonu, kei tēna kuia, kei tēna kuia ōna ake kōrero.	Well, all grandmothers have different versions of the same stories.
	It doesn’t make them wrong.	Ehara i te mea kei te hē tonu.	Doesn’t mean they are wrong.

Eddie takes an ornate wooden Key from her pocket.

EDDIE.	*(NZSL)* I've done bad things in the world. What do I have to show?	Nui ōku hara i tēnei ao.	I've done bad things in my life. For what?
	Money?	Te kōrero parau, te aroha-kore, te ngākau apo. Auē.	Money? Pfft.
	You make people happy. You bring joy.	Ko tāu he whakakoakoa i ngā tāngata katoa.	You make people happy.
	That's a fair exchange.	Māu kē tēnei.	You deserve this more than me.
VIC.	*(NZSL)* What?	He aha kē tāu?	What?

EDDIE.	*(NZSL)* You take this key,	Me mau i tēnei kī.	Take this key.
	press it into the air. Anywhere.	Me puru ki roto ki te huinga hau.	You press it into the air, anywhere.
	A door will appear in the air.	Ka puta mai, he kūwaha mōnehunehu.	A door will appear, barely visible.
	One life, one living person -	Whakakuhu atu i tētehi tangata e ora ana,	Take one living person,
	you put them in through the door.	i te nuku o te kūwaha.	put them through the door.
	Close the door. You do that once a year.	Kōtahi ora atu, kōtahi tau o tōu ora mai.	One life for every year.
	You won't be sick any more.	A, e kore koe e mate atu.	And you'll live forever.
	You'll live forever.		No more illness.

VIC. *(NZSL)* That isn't funny.

Kāore he pai.	That isn't funny.
Ehara tēnei i te kōrero whakakata.	I'm not joking.

EDDIE. *(NZSL)* True.

She offers him the Key. He doesn't take it.

VIC. *(NZSL)* What's behind the door?

He aha kei muri i te kūwaha?	What's beind the door?

She offers him the Key again.

VIC.	*(NZSL)* Pretend I believe you.	Tēnā, mehemea e whakapono ana au ki tēnei kōrero nāu.	Okay, say I believe this crazy story.
	You're saying	E ai ki a koe	You're telling me
	you killed a person every year?	he nui tonu ngā tāngata I kōhurutia e koe? Kōtahi tonu te mate mōu, ia te tau?	you killed people? A person every year?
	For … two hundred years?	Ka rua rau ngā tau. Āe?	For, what, two hundred years?
EDDIE.	*(NZSL)* Two hundred and seventy-four years.	Kei te tika, ka rua rau me te whitu-tekau mā whā ngā tau, āe.	Two hundred and seventy-four years, to be exact.

VIC.	*(NZSL)* Why?	Pēwhea tō mahi mei i tēnā?	How could you do something like that?
EDDIE.	*(NZSL)* One day, long ago,	I ngā rā onamata,	Long ago,
	I loved a woman,	i arohatia e au i tētehi wāhine.	I loved a woman.
	her name was Emma/Freckles.	Ko Emma tōna ingoa.	Emma.
	We were doing our favourite thing:	I tētehi rā, i te whakatā nei māua	One day we were doing our favourite thing:
	drinking by the lake,	ka inu wihiki māua i te taha o te roto	Drinking whiskey by lake
	in my family's big garden.	i te whenua nunui nei kei tōku whanau.	on my family's big estate.
	We decided to swim in the lake.	I toko mai te hiahia ki te kaukau.	We decided to go for a swim.

I was drunk	Ka haurangi haere au, ā,	I was drunk, clumsy.
and foot got caught on something in the deep.	ka mau tōku waewae i te rimu o te roto.	My foot got caught on the lakeweed.
I was too drunk to realise what was going on, so I got pulled under the water.	ana i kume iho ki raro i te wai.	I got pulled under.
(Visual Vernacular) :		
And I suddenly found myself in a room. I could feel someone watching me. Behind me there was a door, with a wind trying to softly push me through.	Tata tonu, kua riro nei ahau ki tētehi rūma.	Suddenly, I found myself in this strange room.
I peeped through the door, and there was this woman on the other side. Crouched over. Her clothes were in rags. Skin and bones. Her eyes were shadows.	Ka whakataretare ki tua i te kūwaha, ko tētehi wahine i muri rā.	I looked through the door, and there was this woman on the other side.
I took a step forward to see her more clearly,		

and the wind whipped me through. The door slammed behind me.	Aki ait e kūwaha. Noho nā ko au anake ki te rūma.	The wind slammed the door behind me.
(NZSL) :		
Then there was just nothingness.		
No white light.	Ko te korekore noa iho.	There was nothingness.
No ancestors waiting for me.	Kāhore kau he aha.	No-one waiting for me.
Just nothing.	He waro kerekere, he poka tōrere.	Just nothingness.
(Visual Vernacular) :		
Then the universe lurched,	Ā, whai muri mai:	Then:
and I was on the banks of the lake, coughing up water.		
(NZSL) :		
Emma/Freckles, my love, had saved me.	I whakaoratia nei au e Emma.	Emma had saved me.

After I came back from that room under the lake, I could see strange things. Hear voices.	I muri i tērā wheako, ka taea e au te rongo i ngā reo irirangi, ngā reo ā wairua.	After that experience, I could hear strange voices.
(Visual Vernacular) : Like echoes from another world.	Me te kite i ngā wairua ki tua o te ārai.	See things from the other side.
Always bothering me like a fly.	Nā ēnei momo āhuatanga ka korohiko te moe ia pō, ia pō.	Every night, it bothered me. This mysterious presence.
So when Emma/Freckles got sick,	Haere ake te wā,	Later in life,

I knew how seriously sick she was. One night, I watched my love sleep, I could feel someone watching me.	ka māuiui a Emma.	my Emma became very sick.
I saw the same woman in rags		
with shadows for eyes appear at the end of our bed. I could hear the rattle of her breath.	Ka kite anō rā:	I saw her:
I could smell the rot in her bones.	i taua wahine nō te roto.	the same woman from the room under the lake.
I grabbed that crone by the throat.	Ka nati au i te wahine rā.	I grabbed that crone by the throat.
(NZSL) : The Woman said, “No, please! Don’t hurt me!	Ka karanga mai ia: “kao, tēnā koa, kaua e whakaremo i ahau!	She cried: “No! Please don’t hurt me!

I can give you something precious!	He taonga tongarerewa tāku māu.	I can give you something precious!
It will make you live forever!”	Ka taea te tuku ki a koe te orange roa; he kore mate!”	I can give you eternal life!”
She gave me a key. *(Visual Vernacular) :* I took the key. I let her go, and she was gone. *(NZSL) :* A key to live forever?	He kī kia ora mo āke tonu atu.	A key to live forever.
(Visual Vernacular) : I remembered the room. The cold. The wind. The woman. The nothingness.		
I kept the key for myself.	I puritia atu e au te kī māke ake,	I kept the key for myself.
And Freckles was gone.	ā, mate atu nei a Emma.	Emma died.

(NZSL) :

I'm a coward.

I'm giving this to you because I'm tired.

Please, take it.

He tangata taupiore nei ahau.	I'm a coward.
Kua pau tāku hau i tēnei ao.	And I'm so tired of living.
Puritia koa.	Please just take it.

Vic takes the Key. Eddie seems to deflate.

EDDIE. *(NZSL)* Thank you.

Good luck.

Ngā mihi.	Thank you.
Kia ora, mauri ora.	Good luck.

She leaves.

Vic looks over the key.

VIC.	*(NZSL)* She’s crazy.	Pōrangi kotoa tērā.	She’s crazy.

Interpreter enters, takes a coin from their pocket. They bury it in one pile of earth.

5. Kākarauri

Briar is looking over her father's exercise book.

She picks up her pen and consulting her book of Blake poems, begins writing in it. Soon she reads aloud.

BRIAR. *(speech & clumsy NZSL)*

"E rango iti

Kei te mutu

Tō raumati tākaro

Tōku ringa tōtōā."

(Fuck that sucks. It needs to rhyme.)

"E rango iti	"Little Fly
Kei te mutu	Thy summers play,
Tō raumati tākaro	My thoughtless hand
Tōku ringa tōtōā."	Has brush'd away."
Kāo kāo kāo.	(Fuck that sucks. It needs to rhyme.)

She scribbles a bit more, translating from Blake before continuing.

BRIAR. *(speech & clumsy NZSL)*

“Ehara tenei	“Ehara tenei	“Am I not
He rango pēnei i a koe?	He rango pēnei i a koe?	A fly like thee?
Ehara ranei	Ehara ranei	Or art not thou
Koe he tangata pēnei ki tenei?	Koe he tangata pēnei ki tenei?	A man like me?
Ka kani noa	Ka kani noa	For I dance
Ka inu, ka waiata noa;	Ka inu, ka waiata noa;	And drink & sing :
Kia rere mai	Kia rere mai	Till some blind hand
Kei te inu, kei te kai :	Kei te inu, kei te kai :	Shall brush my wing.

Ā, taitai tētāhi ringa tōtōa	Ā, taitai tētāhi ringa tōtōa	
I tōku parirau, ae.	I tōku parirau, ae.	
Me mea te mahara ko te mauri,	Me mea te mahara ko te mauri,	If thought is life
Te ngoi, te hā :	Te ngoi, te hā :	And strength & breath :
E, he maharahia	E, he maharahia	And the want
Ko te hemonga;	Ko te hemonga;	Of thought is death ;
Me te mea nei	Me te mea nei	Then am I
He rango au,	He rango au,	A happy fly,
Ka mate au, kāore rānei.”	Ka mate au, kāore rānei.”	If I live, Or if I die.”
Nah, that’s *[makes fart sounds]*.	Kāo, he kino.	Nah, that’s …

	"Me te mea nei …" um..	"Me te mea nei …"	"Then am I …"

VIC enters, walking. BRIAR stares at him.

VIC.	*(NZSL)* Hello.	Tēna koe.	Hello.

Briar returns his wave.

VIC.	*(NZSL)* How are you?	Kei te pēwhea koe?	How are you?
BRIAR.	*(Speech & clumsy NZSL)* You look different.	Te āhua nei, ka tangata kē a koe.	You look different.

VIC.	*(NZSL)* Yes! Strange.	Āe. I mea a au ki te mea nā.	Yes – a strange thing happened.
	I woke up feeling much better, strong.	I oho au a tēnei ata, he kaha ake, he ora ake.	I woke up feeling much better, strong.
	Doctors were scratching their heads, very confused.	I te kaumingomingo ō ngā tākuta.	Doctors were scratching their heads, very confused.
	The cancer seems to have grown wings and flown away.	Ka ngarongaro atu te pukumate.	The cancer seems to have grown wings and flown away.
	Maybe it's a miracle?	Tērā pea he makutu nei?	Maybe it's a miracle?
BRIAR.	*(Speech & clumsy NZSL)* Tumeke.	Tumeke.	Wow.

Pause.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Doctors say,

"Not sure what's going on, we'll watch you for a few days, then you can go home."

So I'm being spied on!

E ai ki rātou,	The doctors said
ka taea hoki atu ki tāku kāinga e au.	they'll keep an eye on me
He pai ahau.	but I can go home in a few days.

Pause.

VIC. (*NZSL)* Two books today!

One for each eye?

Joking.

E kī, e kī,	Wow,
E rua ngā pukapuka! He pukumahi, nei?	Two books today, huh?

Pause.

VIC.	*(NZSL)* Your mum is here.	Ka noho tōu whāea ki konei.	Your mother is inside.
	She's waiting inside,	He pai ia.	She seems nice.
	she seems friendly.		
BRIAR.	My mum?	Tōku whaea?	My mum?
VIC.	*(NZSL)* I see her every day, she comes here.	Ka haere mai ia ki te hōpitera, ia rā, ia rā.	She comes here every day, doesn't she?
	She sits and waits for you. She knocks on your door.	Kāhore kau koe i kōrero ki a ia.	But you never talk to her.
	She watches you sulking in the garden.		
	You don't have time to be angry, Sting/Briar! Ouch!	Nā te aha koe i taratara ai?	What's wrong, prickly one?

Pause.

	I'm serious.	He pono ahau.	I'm serious.
	This is cruel.	He hākere.	This is cruel.
	Why does she deserve this? Go talk to her.	Me kōrero kōrua.	Go talk to her.
BRIAR.	*(NZSL)* Car.	He motukā.	Car.
	Crash.	Paoro.	Crash.
	Father.	Matua.	Father.
	Dead.	Kua mate.	Dead.
	Passed away.	Kua mate.	Passed away.
	Language, passed away.	Kua mate te reo.	Language, passed away.
	Mum: no.	Whaea ki: Kāo.	Mum: no.
	No Māori.	Kare te reo Māori.	No Māori.
	No love.	Kare te aroha.	No love.

Me.

Alone.

E au.	Me.
Anake.	Alone.

Briar drops her books to the ground and goes to meet her mother.

Vic picks up her books and looks at them. He reads the page with a post-it sticking out.

Rango the Fly flies out of the pages and around his head.

VIC. *(NZSL)* That was strange.

I whanoke tēnā.	That was strange.

He looks offstage to Briar and her mother.

He takes coin from his pocket, flips it and catches it on his hand. Vic looks at the coin and nods, understanding.

He takes the coin and buries it in the second mound of earth.

VIC.	*(NZSL)* I have no jokes left.	Kāore ngā kōrero paki noa.	I have no jokes left.
	All I have is this key, and my sense of what is right.	Ko tāku kī noa, ko tāku tikanga noa.	All I have is this key, and my sense of what is right.
	Eddie was telling the truth, the key has given me life.	He tika Eddie. Tēnei kī kia ora mo āke tonu atu.	Eddie was telling the truth, the key has given me life.
	But someone else deserves this more than me.	Engari, kare mā au tēnei.	But someone else deserves this more than me.

He exits offstage, getting weaker as he goes.

6. Te Pō

Rango flies around her.

BRIAR. No reira, this is how I *(NZSL)* go.

(Speech) Unfucked, unblemished.

No reira,	
Ka haere au.	Unfucked, unblemished.
E harakore ana. Kaua pirau.	She died as she lived: swearing and sexually frustrated.
Ko ana whakareretanga ana ake	Legends will be told in the ground, whispered between worms,
kotahi he pai kōrero Māori.	of her one good translation of that one poem.

Ki te mate ia ka haere tōna wairua	The flies and the ants will carry her DNA
ki te reinga noho ai. Ki roto tōna whenua.	up to the stars and deep into her turangawaewae.

She sees her mother.	Ka kitea tōna māmā.	She sees her mother.
Kia ora.	Kia ora.	
Kāore e – don't speak.	Kāore e –	Don't speak.
(Speech & clumsy NZSL) It's simple.		It's simple.
I love you.	Ka arohatia koe e au.	I love you.
Please, remember me with te reo Māori.	Arohatia te reo nei.	Please, remember me with te reo Māori.
Here.	Tēnā.	Here.

She walks from shadows into a beam of moonlight.

TAPE.	Whakamāoritia ēnei.	Whakamāoritia ēnei.	Translate these sentences to Māori.
	Tuatahi.	Tuatahi.	First.
	The man did not wake up.	Kāore te tane e te oho.	The man did not wake up.
	The man did not wake up.	Kāore te tane e te oho.	The man did not wake up.
BRIAR.	Kāore te tane e te oho.	Kāore te tane e te oho.	The man did not wake up.
TAPE.	Tino pai. Tuarua.	Tino pai. Tuarua.	Very good. Second.
	I am ready to go. I am ready to go.	Kia reri e au ka haere atu.	I am ready to go.

She feels the earth between her bare toes.

BRIAR. *(NZSL & speech)*

Ka pō, ka pō, k ao, ka awatea,

Karanga ake nei te reo, e kui,

tau mai, hikoi tahi ai.

Ki mata-nuku, ki mata-rangi,

Nau mai, tau mai!

(NZSL) Breath.

Ka Po, ka Po, Ka Ao, Ka Awatea,	Come night, come world, come daybreak,
Karanga ake nei te reo, e kui,	I call to you, old woman,
tau mai, hikoi tahi ai.	come to me, walk with me.
Ki mata-nuku, ki mata-rangi,	On the cusp of earth and sky,
Nau mai, tau mai!	Come, come to me!

BRIAR finds a door in the air.

Briar presses the Key into the air between stage and audience.

As she turns the key, the lights on the stage go down, and the lights on the audience come up. She pushes open a door in the air and walks through it into the audience.

She performs a poem in Visual Vernacular:

Wind is breath.

Breath shared. Fills the space.

Thoughts become clouds:

I sprinkle them with stars.

We are all stardust.

Expanding

Collapsing

Forever, forever, forever.

Briar exits the space.

Blackout.

Chapter Thirteen: Takitoru Dramaturgy of *Tanumia ō Kōiwi*

Scene 1: Negated Pōwhiri

(252 – 266)

Although I have not indicated for the titles to be presented with captions, I still consider them a dramaturgical aspect of the script. Similarly to Hone Kouka's use of titles in *Nga Tangata Toa*, they are intended to evoke tikanga Māori, just as the performed aspects of marae ritual within the scenes themselves do.

The title of this first scene is partly a linguistic joke, playing on the language excercises in Scene 2 where Briar negates sentences for te reo practice. It is also built as a counterpoint to the final scene in two ways.

The world of the play, like human life in te ao Māori, comes from and returns to nothing. The final scene, Te Pō, concludes with Briar leaving the stage, and effectively emptying out the theatrical world that the play has built. In this way, she goes into the unknown void of death. Obviously the play cannot begin in the same metaphysical space, or the action would have nowhere to go.

So Te Kore (the void of potential being), where the play begins, is a personal one for Briar. She knows how she should begin her story (with a welcome), but she cannot. In this way the play begins by pointing to the absence of ritual and the void in Briar's life.

As is indicated at the end of the scene, the setting of this opening is Ohope beach, on the shore. This introduces us to Briar standing on her tūrangawaewae, and being taken from there against her will. This establishes the underlying conflict with her mother that runs throughout the play. We also have a sense of her standing on the edge of the water, and the ocean, the audience and the world of her tīpuna are all blended together into Te Kore, a void of unknown. Briar is right on the threshold of this. Although she soon leaves the beach, the sense of connection to her tīpuna through the audience remains until she returns to them at the end of the play.

The second way that this opening is a counterpoint to the final scene is in a much more literal sense of proper ritual: Briar begins with a forced and failing pōwhiri, and ends with an instinctive and powerful karanga and poroporoaki. This creates a clear sense of contrast through language for the journey of the protagonist to self-realisation.

After the action of her failed pōwhiri passes, Briar attempts a welcome in English. Her English is rambling, clumsy and inelegant ("This is the story of how I die. I know, it's full-on."). Her charm, though, is in her self-awareness and her practicing of manaakitanga as she ensures that the audience feels comfortable with the content and knows what they are in for. This apologetic and scattered language is in contrast to the fragmentary yet formal Māori that she has just attempted.

As she switchs into te reo Māori for her pepēha, her register switches again to a more formal register. We see from this code-swapping that there is more than one identity within the character of Briar: a frank and

wry young woman, who yearns to be an articulate mana wāhine. So already the aspirational nature of Briar's relationship to te reo is established.

Near the end of her pepēha, Briar weaves in and out of te reo. This, together with the captioning, highlights the bilingual nature of NZ English. For example:

Script	**Captions**	
BRIAR. Nō Whakatāne ahau.	Nō Whakatāne ahau.	I'm from Whakatāne.
And I love Whakatāne. It's my tūrangawaewae, but	E arohatia ki Whakatāne. Ko tōku tūrangawaewae.	And I love Whakatāne. It's my home, my strength.
I've lived in Kirikiriroa with mum for most of my life.	Engari, kei noho e au i roto i Kirikiriroa me tōku whaea inaeinei.	But I've lived in Hamilton with mum most of my life.

This captioning presents the comon te reo Pākehā use of the word "tūrangawaewae", which is so complicated to directly translate that it usually is left in te reo for English speakers. The captions also point to Briar's use of "Kirikiriroa" instead of "Hamilton" – the original Māori name for the city. Her explanation of living mostly in Kirikiriroa also explains her use of a Tainui dialect in her reo Māori.

The third linguistic dimension to this sequence is, of course, the NZSL interpretation of Briar's pepēha, which is happening to the side of the

stage simultanesously. As I workshopped this sequence with Leo, we discovered a necessary difference in presenting whakapapa in NZSL.

In Te Ao Māori, reciting the names of one's ancestors is an important sign of respect for the past in the present. The names act as nga tohu (signals) of a person's geneological journey to the present moment. However, in Deaf culture, whenever a person's name is signed for the first time in conversation, it is spelled out with finger-spelling. This is why sign-names exist: a shorthand to describe the person while mouthing their name. This sign name is usually given to someone by the Deaf community, not decided by the person themself (much like a nickname in hearing culture). For example, my sign-name is Alex/Writing.

Obviously for the purposes of a pepēha in a marae setting, it would be likely that an NZSL interpreter would take the time to finger-spell each name for clarity, and the speaker would wait as this happened. However, Leo and I decided to use a theatrical interpretation register throughout the performance. This means that the interpreter's priority is to convey the core information and emotion of the text, while keeping the same pace as any spoken dialogue.

Because of this, only Briar and her parents' names were given in the NZSL version of the pepēha. To give an example of the full translation spectrum from the first section:

Te Reo Māori	English	NZSL
Ko Ngāti Whakaue, me Te Arawa.	I am of Ngāti Whakaue and Te Arawa descent.	I am from Whakatāne.
I te taha to tōku pāpā, ko Hone rāua ko Winiperi ōku tīpuna.	My paternal elders were named Hone and Winiperi.	On my father's side,
Ka moe a Hone rāua ko Winiperi, ka puta ki waho tokorima ngā tamariki.	Hone and Winiperi had five children together:	My grandparents had five children.
Ko Hemi te mātāmua, ko Kahurangi te pōtiki.	Hemi, the eldest, through to Kahurangi, the youngest.	The eldest child was my father, H-e-m-i.

As well as the refocussing of names in NZSL, it is worth noting that in NZSL, often the sign for an iwi will be the same as the name for a region. For example in NZSL the sign for Waikato (the geographical district) and Tainui (the prominent indigenous iwi of Waikato) are the same sign - sometimes with the name mouthed as a point of differentiation.

An interesting full-circle result of this translation, then, is that as in te ao Māori, NZSL inherently connects a person's place of belonging to their genealogy. Hence, Briar's line "I am of Ngāti Whakaue and Te Arawa descent" translated as [NZSL] "I am from Whakatāne" is more accurate to the original te reo Māori meaning of "Ko Ngāti Whakaue, me Te Arawa."

In rewriting, I focussed on making this scene explicit and clear in content so that the focus could be on the trilingual discourse, as the audience becomes accustomed to the visual information in front of them. I have indicated very plain staging thoughout the script so that the language is the centre of the world, as this is in te ao Māori. This was also to allow for the V.V. to paint the theatrical world. I wanted the significance of the past, present, reality and fiction all to have the same weight and space in the visual information on stage.

The final section of Briar's negated pōwhiri employs direct address in English, casting the audience as omniscient guardians:

> BRIAR. Anyway I wanted to say thank you for being here. And for watching over me.
>
> Will you keep me company while the next part happens?

This closing of the welcome was designed to close the pōwhiri ritual and to echo the "third voice" of an interpreter. However, rather than interpreting and observing from an outside perspective, Briar is at the heart of the action. Her "third voice" here is a metatheatrical one, commenting from a place of wider spiritual understanding which she only returns to in the final moments of the text as she physically joins the audience.

Scene 2: Mōrena

(267 - 287)

After the prologue of “Negated Pōwhiri”, the rest of the scene titles follow a simple structure of the journey of the sun. I chose this as it is a clear universal metaphor for the journey of life and the inevitability of death. It is also a visual journey which may be subtley indicated through lighting rather than any cluttered scenography. Lastly, it indicates a fluid understanding of time: these central scenes take place across several days and weeks, but are slices of life at a particular time of day, mirroring Briar and Vic’s proximity to death.

We begin the second scene a little after the first: Briar is now settled into the hospice. She begins the scene in direct address again, but with a significantly different tone: playful and openly hopeful about survival. This is the self which Briar shows to the rest of the world, and notably is free of te reo Māori. She gives us a richer sense of her character and her daily context here, ending with being open about her anger at the terminal illness.

We then have the introduction of Rango the Fly, a character who exists entirely in V.V. performed by the actors. The actor playing Briar begins performing the “Fly” character with one hand as she speaks, before using a V.V. combination of mime and NZSL with her hands as Rango the Fly swooping past her own face, swatting it away and indicating that Rango flies out of the building with V.V.:

BRIAR. It's a puddle of ink waiting to take form on the page.

Rango swoops past her.

BRIAR. Fuck off.

Rango flies out of the theatre.

Briar then begins to practice her reo with an audio-recorded lesson. Again, in order to create cohesion for the audience, I wanted to show the weaving of languages as it happened.

The weaving is apparent in this scene, when we first see the three languages come together. First they are introduced individually with visual support: Briar's long stretch of spoken English (with NZSL translation and bilingual captions); then the section of audio and spoken te reo Māori (with the same translations); and then when Vic enters the scene, the relationship between hearing and Deaf languages begins.

The recurring motif of the recorded tapes also play into the heteroglossic idea of the interpreter's "third voice." Throughout the action of the script, Briar's relationship with te reo Māori becomes stronger at the same time as her hallucinations become harder to distinguish from reality. The scenes with the Tape act as markers for this journey, beginning with her

confusion at the recorded voice telling her she has dirt on her face, before establishing a coda for the final scene:

TAPE. Tuarua. Ka paruparu tāu konohi.

BRIAR checks her face for dirt.

BRIAR. What? Oh. Uh - Kāore e koe -

TAPE. Tuatoru. Kei te oho ia.

BRIAR. Kāore ia e te oho.

Although the relationship between Briar and the Tape here is fairly straightforward, I have dropped in these seeds of misunderstanding and prophecy to develop as the narrative continues. Vic's entrance is the catalyst for the main relationship of the narrative to begin. Again, the story of their relationship is deliberately simple, in order to let the discourse of their relationship shine through. The action of this scene is of two characters meeting in a hospice and connecting over their terminal illnesses.

The discourse of the scene follows a hearing assumption of conversation and flips it on its head (a common comedy trope in Deaf humour). Vic quickly gains the upper hand in the conversation by outwitting Briar with visual humour and trickery. This begins a friendly rivalry between the two of them, as we learn that each character defines themselves through language though in different ways: Vic through his physical comedy and Briar through her translation. I wanted this first interaction to evoke a sense of performative wero, harking back to whare tapere conventions, as well as giving the characters' morbid connection a sense of pace and levity. Each time Briar's English weighs the conversation down, Vic counteracts this with humour in visual language. For example:

BRIAR nods and sighs too.

She scribbles another note and passes it to VIC.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Yes. Cancer, yes.

BRIAR. *(Pointing to herself)* Me too.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Lucky I was bald already. I had chemotherapy but I was already bald, so I don't look different.

This section of script is the first time that the visual language on stage becomes untethered from all translation. The NZSL interpreter is already interpreting Briar's speech alone. The captions then translate only the first part of Vic's scripted monologue:

Script:	Caption: Te Reo Māori	Caption: English
VIC. *(NZSL)* Lucky I was bald already.	Mānawa kē hewa ahau,	Lucky I was bald already,
I had chemotherapy but I was already bald, so I don't look different.	a, kāore a au i he rerekē.	so I don't look different.
I just put on some make-up and you wouldn't know I'm dying. Some make-up under my eyes, some blush, a bit of mascara, lipstick. Great!		

Maybe I should get some fake boobs, too? Then no one will know I'm sick, they'll just look at my boobs. Oh no, but my bandages are showing, how embarrassing! What a slut!		
BRIAR. You're weird.	He hātakēhi koe.	You're weird.

This untethering has dual purposes: to allow the Vic performer to improvise around this comedy section and to introduce a visual cue for the liminal, untranslateable, spaces within the script. Perhaps audience members think that there has been a glitch with the captions at first, and will be challenged to be active spectators form early on. For hearing/Pākehā audiences, not allowing them to be in control of their

viewing experience or the language they are being entertained in is itself a decolonising experience. They are forced to focus on Vic's performance, as the only source of language on the stage. This performance beat is the first introduction to pure V.V.: physical storytelling that does not require any formal translation to discern meaning. This introduces a paradoxical aspect of the Takitoru Dramaturgy: the use of V.V. in moments of, effectively, monolingualism. This also explcitily shows the shift from a formal visual language of NZSL into a performance language of V.V., each time the captions drop out during a signed section. The way the language shifts between Sign and V.V. is a subtle and fascinating part of Deaf performance, how, and this develops as Briar's relationship with NZSL grows.

After this first monolingual V.V. section, Briar then responds to the wero in kind, and returns the offering of a physical joke. The catalyst for her joke is the re-appearance of Rango the Fly, this time performed first by the actor playing Briar, then passed on to the actor playing Vic, whose focus follows Rango as it passes and leaves.

This development introduces a shared world of V.V. between performers, as the language from the actors' hands actually shapes their theatrical surroundings.

As Vic is distracted by the Fly, Briar takes up the physical comedy again. The exchange that follows repeats the pattern of Vic's monologue switching between formal language and V.V., again signified by the captions dropping in and out. This repetition within the scene is designed

to encourage the audience to adapt to the various forms of listening to and viewing of the narrative:

1. Spoken English with NZSL interpretation and bilingual captions
2. Spoken te reo Māori with NZSL interpretation and bilingual captions
3. NZSL with bilingual captions
4. Visual Vernacular alone

The switching between these syncretic combinations is the discourse structure for the overall text. By establishing the combinations in these introductory scenes with simple narratives and humour, the script then develops and evolves the discourse over the rest of the narrative arc.

Briar undercuts the complicated linguistic layers after Vic's long speech with a simple "What?", reminding the audience that neither character can properly understand the other. The scene ends with them unhappily unable to converse, despite a clear connection of friendship.

Scene 3: Rānui

(288 - 331)

Like a thread pulling all three performers and languages tightly together, Rango the Fly passes through the previous scene to the Interpreter. This inclusion of the Interpreter interacting independantly with the V.V. world (rather than in relation to interpreting a performer's speech) gives a physical introduction to their third voice. When Rango alights on the performer, they shift from functional Interpreter to the character of Eddie, while maintaining the physical space and presence of Interpreter. As mentioned in the earlier chapter on Deaf dramaturgy, I was influenced by O'Reilly's Brechtian approach to the aesthetics of access in *peeling* through her use of audio description.

Carlson's description of the "device [here, a human interpreter] for negotiating heteroglossia add[ing] another "voice" to the mixture" also influenced me to give this concept a physical performance (Carlson 182). The moment that Interpreter begins speaking as Eddie is deliberately confusing, and it arises out of the same untethering from convention as Vic's shift into pure V.V. in the previous scene. At this stage in the dramaturgy, the story and discourse are becoming intertwined, and we shift from separate presentations of language, identity and theatrical world into the side-text spaces between each of these.

The Interpreter's line "It's nearly time for me to join you all" in direct address reinforces the notion of the audience being both manuwhiri and tīpuna. As discussed in the Deaf dramaturgy chapter, this moment aims to

signify a metatheatrical shift in the audience's undertsanding of the play. The Interpreter's omniscient role in performance is being relinquished as she joins the action of the narrative as Eddie. And simultaneously (though the audience do not realise this yet), Eddie is preparing to relinquish her immortality. This small scene is an embodiment of a syncretic liminality: between function and character, imagined world and real space, living and dead.

This ends with a simple action sequence:

> *Interpreter takes a coin from their pocket and flips it. Interpreter and Rango look at the coin together and exchange a meaningful glance.*
>
> *Rango flies away.*

This introduces the physical motif of the coin, which appears across narratives and scenes throughout the rest of the play. The Interpreter leaves the space, and the transitional scene with Briar in her room is only Deaf accessible through captioning, giving a taste of the uninterpreted language that is to come in the following scene.

As Briar ignores the knocking on her door, she also is actively rebelling against her mother, through privately translating her poem to te reo Māori, and then by explicitly speaking through the door to her in Māori, linguistically shutting her mother out. The following sequence, the first in the play with all three languages and characters interacting within the narrative, functions in three ways: character exposition, introducing the syncretic language of Takitoru dramaturgy, and marginalising speech as

NZSL becomes the dominant language. As we see the same pieces of information be filtered through languages, the effect is similar to light shining through a prism, filtered through different angles. The captioning allows the audience to see the full effect of this process, as it allows transparency through the NZSL and the English being performed. For example:

VIC. *(NZSL)* What's her name?	Ko wai tōna ingoa?	What's her name?
EDDIE. *(NZSL)* B-r-i-a-r. Briar. Like a rose.	B-r-i-a-r. he "briar", he tara.	B-r-i-a-r. Briar. Like a rose
BRIAR. *(NZSL, to herself)* B-r-i-a-r.		
VIC. *(NZSL)* She is quite prickly.	Āe, he momo tara ia.	She is quite prickly.
EDDIE. *(NZSL)* Oh, shut up.	Tō waha.	Oh, shut up.
VIC. *(NZSL)* Ask her – what is she writing? She's	Tēnā pātai atu, he aha tōna tuhituhi nā?	Ask her – what is she writing? She's reading a

reading a book, and writing something, what?		book, and writing something, what?
EDDIE. Vic wants to ask what you're writing?	Kei te pātai ia he aha tō tuhituhi nā?	Vic wants to ask what you're writing?
BRIAR. Poems. I'm translating a poem into te reo.	Kei te whakamāorita ēnei korero taritenga.	Poems. I'm translating a poem into te reo.
EDDIE. *(NZSL)* Interesting. She's reading poems. Translating them into Māori language. Writing.	E hika. Kei te whakamaori mai ngā kōrero tarutenga nā.	Interesting. She's reading poems. Translating them into Māori language.
VIC. *(NZSL)* Why?	He aha pēnei ai?	Why?
BRIAR. Therapist told me to.	Koina te tohutohu o te tohunga.	Therapist told me to.

EDDIE. / *(NZSL)* Doctor's orders.	Ko ngā kupu awhina o te tākuta.	Doctor's orders.
BRIAR. / They thought it would make me happy,	Ki a ngā tākuta,	They thought it would make me happy,
give me something to keep my mind off the future.	mauri tū, mauri ora.	Give me something to keep my mind off the future.
Mostly it just makes me feel like a failure.	Engari, kei te ngātoro katoa i roto i a au.	Mostly it just makes me feel like a failure.

Pause.

VIC. *(NZSL)* What?	He aha anō?	What?
EDDIE. *(NZSL)* Doctors say writing, keep busy, keep confidence up.	Ki tā ngā rata, kia tū, kia tuhituhi, kia pai ai.	The doctors told her, stay busy, keep writing,

		believe in yourself.
VIC. *(NZSL)* Yes.	Koia anō.	Ah, yes.

The dramaturgy of the captions here begins to work in a kind of visual harmony. In one sense, we have a through-line of meaning that cuts across the syncretic trilingualism. This is in the form of the English captions, which provide linguistic access for English and NZSL first-language speakers.

Then there is the secondary linguistic dramaturgy of te reo Māori captions. This sequence has no spoken reo, so the visual language of the captions are the only presence of te reo Māori here. A surprising part of the captioning process was noticing the connection between lines of dialogue that work well in both NZSL and te reo, but do not quite translate into English.

For example, Eddie explaining in NZSL that “B-r-i-a-r” has a meaning like “rose”, introduces the tikanga of Deaf introductions, which is to fingerspell a name the first time a person is introduced. An unusual name or word like “Briar” is unlikely to be in a Deaf person’s vocabulary, so it requires further translating into NZSL. In the translation process, I discovered that an unusual translation of “rose, briar, thorn” is the kupu Māori “tara” (Moorfield).

The kupu “tara” has many meanings, including “thorn, tooth (of a comb) ... cloak pin ... rays (of the sun) ... female genitals ...gossip ... side-wall (of a house)” (Moorfield). It also has a connection to Hine-nui-te-pō (the Māori goddess of death): in one legend, the trickster Māui pūkrakau tries to ouwit death by reversing the natural order of birth, that is by climbing into her vagina. However Hine-nui-te-pō realises what is happening and crushes Māui with the obsidian ‘teeth’ which line her gentials (Reed). Because of these multiple meanings and associations, a reo Māori speaker reading te reo captions would be able to look to the NZSL performance and English captions to clarify which meaning was being used, as well as evoking a tradition of stories about eluding death. This is then brought together satisfyingly with the wordplay in translation, “Āe, he taratara ia”. “Taratara” has only one meaning, to be prickly. The linguistic relationship between Briar’s name and her character are here much more effective in te reo Māori and NZSL than in the somewhat clunky English translation: “Briar ... She is quite prickly”.

The next section of dialogue, concerning Briar’s translating work, gives a sense of transparency to the prismic nature of meaning in trilingual conversation. In scripting this section, I tried to maintain as truthful a sense of interpreted conversation as possible, complete with the sometimes painful repetition of information. This was a particularly interesting sequence to workshop, as rehearsing it without captions produced a very naturalistic portrait of a hearing person communicating with a Deaf person through an interpreter, and the potential awkwardness of the third person’s role being the filter for a personal conversation. As I developed the

sequence further, I noticed that it also mirrored the reshuffling of words that occurs when learning a new language – adpating sentence structures and expanding or contracting vocabulary to create the same meaning in new ways. I thought of this as similar to the “Tape” sequence at the beginning of Scene 4, where Briar translates words from Māori into English using a repeated sentence structure. However, whereas in that later sequence, Briar’s understanding of meaning evolves out of her own translations, the meaning here is flattened and simplified through Eddie’s translations.

The audience is able to observe the way that Eddie is clearly editing out the uncomfortable parts of Briar’s “prickly” thoughts in her interpreting – cutting out the detail, for example, that Briar feels like a failure. This synretic dramaturgy, of human interpretation combined with captioned interpretation, allows the audience to see through the three languages at play, and observe how language bends through the interpretation like light through glass.

The following section repeats this concept, showing the conversation repeated through different lenses in the captioning, while appearing fairly close to naturalistic in performance. This convention is used extensively in this sequence as it is never returned to in such an explicit manner. It is also used to drop expositional information about Briar and her past, embedded in the syncretic linguitsic patterning. As usual, I have maintained a thread of comedy in the dialogue to keep the pace and energy up. Briar’s storyline about her sexuality is a comically crass approach to her experience with terminal illness. She is, after all, a

teenager, complete with hormones and angst. The section regarding Briar's virginity provides comedy but also a surprising insight into Eddie's character: that she is uncomfortable translating this taboo subject, despite being an otherwise droll character. We later realise, on reflection, that it is not the sexual nature of Briar's request that makes her uncomfortable – it is the fact that Eddie does not want to sympathise with someone she is unable to help.

This barrier of awkwardness broken, the conversation then moves on into the confrontational nature of Vic & Briar's respective relationships to language (again with Eddie stuck in between them both). As I have mentioned earlier in the thesis, I wanted to draw an explicit parallel between the historical oppression of both NZSL and te reo Māori in Aotearoa. This section signifies the shift into the evolved stage of Takitoru Dramaturgy. The content and form have so far invovled introducing each language / character / world and carefully interweaving the different parts together. Now that this pattern has been established, I subverted it through linguistic untethering, and a shift toward more abstract content in the story and dialogue.

This linguistic untethering is a central kaupapa to my Takitoru Dramaturgy. It can be defined as a moment in trilingual performance where one language becomes dominant purely through its superior ability to articulate an idea. The other two languages will either fail to translate at all, or present a reductive translation of the dominant langauge. In this sequence, this happens with te reo Māori for the first time in the Māori

captions of Briar's (English) speech about te reo. Below is the scripted English dialogue which Briar speaks, which appears as the English captions in performance. Beside this below are the the captions in te reo Māori, and the direct translation of these Māori captions so show slight difference in meaning:

BRIAR.	You don't know, okay.	Kāore koe i te mohio.	You 're ignorant.
	I don't know.	Kāore au i te mohio.	I don't even know.
	I don't know what made them think that.	Nā te aha ia I whakairo pērā ai?	Who gave him those mistaken ideas?
	I don't know what their teachers told them as kids	Ki a ia, he koretake tōnā reo.	He thought his language was pointless.
	to make them think their language was inferior.	Nō whea hoki tānā?	Where did he get that from?
	I don't know what fucking	Nā wai i whakatō i tērā kākano tāoke I roto I te whakaaro?	Who planted that toxic seed in his thoughts?

horrible shit happened		
to make them believe that speaking English and acting white	Kia pono atu te tangata he oranga pai mōnā mā te tū pākeha i tēnei ao.	He believed the best way in life was the act like a pākehā.
was the best way to survive in this country.	Whakanoatia i tēnā whakapapa ka ora noa iho.	Dessecrating his heritage in order to survive.
That it's safer to act like you don't even care what iwi you're from	Pērā anō mō te noho kuare ki ōu ake whakapapa,	It's safer to act like you don't even care what iwi you're from
if you want to be invited to the local book club.	kia hanumi ia i roto I te piringa Pākehā.	if you want to be invited to the local book club.
I don't know what kind of person made my parents believe that poison	Nō whea hoki tēnei paitini, tēnei whakapono weriweri.	Where did he get those horrendous ideas?

but I'm guessing they weren't Māori.	Ki tōku whakapae, ehara nā te tangata Māori.	Not from a Māori person.
Do not judge my Dad.	Kāua kōrua e whakawāngia tōku matua.	Don't you two pass judgement on my father.

This first use of the linguistic untethering is a marriage between kaupapa Māori and aesthetics of accessibility: using the staging convention of captioning from Deaf theatre, and in translation for those captions, taking for granted the validity and legitimacy of Māori. This is also a lesson I took from the many sessions I had with NZSL and te reo Māori translators – that literal translation rarely makes much sense to first-language speakers. References, perspective and phrasing all need to be considered in characterised translation. This captioned sequence is the first hint of who Briar is in te ao Māori, although this aspect of her characterisation would only be available to Deaf or hearing te reo Māori readers.

Linguistically, this hybridity is introduced from Briar's pepēha, where she switches from formal assured langauge and performance in te reo to flustered, crass and angry in English. This rant about her father, captioned in a more typically heightened style of oratory, common to Māori theatrical monologue, subtly shows the Māori-fluent audience that there is another self beneath her angry English language.

This dense sequence of tension is then relieved by the more straightfoward sequence of Vic drawing explicit parallels between Deaf and Maori linguistic oppression, before quickly moving on to Vic's NZSL linguistic untethering – this time a comic riffing, blending into Visual Vernacular where captioning falters and stops.

The next part of the scene is with Eddie and Vic alone, as Briar has gone inside. This is first scene entirely in NZSL, and the introduction of the supernatural storyline (of Eddie's immortality). Once Eddie has dropped some expositional plot, she leaves the stage and returns to her Interpreter position. The role of Eddie/Interpreter is an inherently fluid one, presenting the complex nature of an interpreter's "third voice" through psychological and metatheatrical characterisation. Eddie's exit signals the end of this intense syncretic body of the scene. 'Rānui' as a scene functions in a symmetrical way in terms of linguistic dramaturgy. A basic break down of the four phases within the scene shows the bloom and contraction of the trilingualism, as each linguistic pairing is laid out separately before coming together in the extended crescendo of the heteroglossia:

1. <u>Pages 288 - 290</u>

   Eddie: NZSL & Spoken English

   Briar: Te reo Māori & English

   Vic & Briar: Visual Vernacular

2. Pages 290 - 316

   Eddie, Vic & Briar: NZSL, te reo Māori, English

3. Pages 317 - 321

   Vic & Eddie: NZSL

4. Pages 321 - 331

   Briar: English

   Briar & Vic: NZSL, te reo Māori

In this final phase, Briar opens up about her fears, first to the audience/tīpuna and then to an unknowing Vic. Briar's confession about her visions also brings in the supernatural element of her storyline, where visions and nightmares become indistinguishable from reality. These two monologues in English are both frustrated, wandering, and unrealised. They are both about absence in Briar's life: of connection, and of a fully formed world-view of her own.

On page 329, Briar effectively sets English (and her English-speaking self) to the side, and reveals a new aspect of her character: a vulnerable side, earnestly learning to Sign. This alters the dynamic between Briar and Vic to one of generosity and tenderness, as Vic encourages and shows her different Signs.

I have briefly discussed the development techniques in what I've referred to as 'The Poem'. In the section on NZSL Development in Takitoru Dramaturgy, I explained how we workshopped the sequence to find a performance style which made a clear path into V.V. for Briar. This is the full sequence as it appears in script:

VIC. *(NZSL)* I'll teach you. Do you know the word, "Māori"? M-a-o-r-i.

BRIAR *(NZSL & Speech)* Māori.

They perform a poem together:

(NZSL & Speech)

Māori

Word – Kupu

Bone – Kōiwi

Blood – Toto

Skin – Kiri

Dirt – Kirikiri

Hair – Makawe

Breath – Hā

Thought – Whakaaro

Air – Hau

Sky – Rangi

Clouds – Kāpua

Stars – Whetū

(Visual Vernacular, NZSL & Speech)

Twinkling Stars – Whetū Ahi

Cells, atoms, separating – Pungarehu Marara

Explode & Contract – Pahu atu – Ngāhoro mai

Forever – Ake, ake, ake

They both gaze at the Signed universe.

Rango the Fly buzzes into first Vic's face, then Briar's. They both swat at it and their eyes follow Rango in the air as it flies away.

This sequence was more or less the starting point of the entire world of the play for me, and is the kernel of the kaupapa of the entire script. I wanted this sequence to be both a microcosm of the characters' shared experience and a clear portrait of the beauty of inarticulate langauge.

This poetry of inarticulacy is another of the Takitoru Dramaturgy's central kaupapa. I am interested in the way that characters change in status when the dialogue moves between different languages. When a character is speaking a language with which they are unfamiliar, there is an automatic vulnerability about them. We see this especially in the contrast between who Briar says she is in English speech, and who we can she she is in te reo Māori and NZSL or other visual languages. But being vulnerable and inarticulate shouldn't only equate to characters being messy and hysterical. There is a beauty in a character expressing complex emotions or ideas in the safe space of a new language. Using the simplest linguistic tools, they must give a condensed expression of their experience. This concept is continued through the following Tape sequence for Briar, where her vulnerability creeps further into the te reo revision in explicit and darkly comedic ways. In the poem, we are able to observe the abstract nature of language-learning. Briar and Vic are throwing words between each other in a kind of slow-motion word-association game.

Drawing on the little I had seen first-hand of Shaun performing Deaf poetry, I wanted to showcase the abstract possibilities of visual language. I also took inspiration from the dense syntax and image-driven nature of traditional Māori poetry, Ngā Mōteatea. In terms of content, I created the journey of these images as something with double-meaning, so that it could be revisited in Briar's final poroporoaki. In this scene, the concept of her body decomposing and becoming part of nature is terrifying and unfathomable to Briar, something she can only articulate with these flashes of images with Vic's help. Later though, in her final karanga to her

tīpuna, these repeated images are of comfort to her, and give her a direction to move forward into, following the beauty of raw language dancing.

Scene 4: Ahiahi

(332 – 382)

This fourth scene takes the notions of translation and expands the interpretations a step further through its dramaturgy. As I will explain, the body of this scene revolves around a single concept (tales of people eluding death), repeated through three distinct interpretations. The stories are told in te reo Māori, NZSL and V.V. – by each of the three characters individually. The dramaturgy of this scene originated as a microcosm of my original creative practice: to have distinct inflections of the same story, noting how a story is altered by its discourse. This treatment also connects to O'Reilly's dramaturgical premise for the aesthetics of accessibility, observing that "everyone gets the same information, just at different times" ("But you know I don't think in words").

The scene opens with Briar practicing her reo with the recorded Tape. In the earlier chapter, 'Māori Dramaturgical Development', I mentioned how the pre-recorded character of the Tape takes on a mentoring role to Briar, taking the place of human connection or manaakitanga. I have also mentioned in my analysis of Scene 2: Mōrena that the sequences between Briar and Tape act as ngā tohu (markers), charting Briar's untethering from reality.

The Tape has two heteroglossic functions. First, as mentioned already, it is a playful treatment of the kaupapa of an interpreter's "third voice." I have also used it as a heteroglossic device to explore how much more

vulnerable Briar becomes in te reo Māori, as in this second sequence it quickly reveals her subconscious anxieties:

TAPE. Ka pai. Tuatoru.

While the other girls were slutting it up, Briar was getting chemo.

BRIAR. Excuse me?

TAPE. Ka pai. You heard me correctly, girl. Whakamāoritia tēnei.

While the other girls were slutting it up, Briar was getting chemo.

BRIAR. I - I ngā kōtiro atu e … slutting it up ana, ka –

TAPE. Tata! Kia kaha. Tuawhā.

While the mother cries, the child relaxes.

BRIAR. Fuck. You. You don't know me.

When Briar cuts the conversation off, both "third voices" leave, as Tape and Interpreter both leave Briar alone onstage for a moment. Briar's

vulnerability then deepens when Eddie enters with a gift from Briar's mother. Another linguistic shift occurs in this scene, from the relationship between Eddie and Briar in English which is aserbic and antagonistic. When it is revealed that Eddie speaks te reo, and their conversation shifts linguistic gear, both become much more open. The decentering of the English language continues when Vic joins the scene. Because of the visual nature of NZSL, Briar's focus on her book of stories means that Vic & Eddie are able to have a private conversation about Briar right next to her. We are now able to observe yet another aspect of Eddie's character, in NZSL – good-natured and matter-of-fact:

EDDIE. *(NZSL)* Yes, she is okay. Maybe. There, package from her mum. I tried to give it to her. She said, "No!", sulking.

VIC. *(NZSL)* Teenagers.

EDDIE. *(NZSL)* Yes. Then, I unwrapped it, it was that book. Name written on book: H-e-m-i M-u-i-r-. Who?

VIC. *(NZSL)* I wonder: Her name is Briar Muir. Hey, idea – her sign name could be "Sting". Like a thorn, like briar bush,

it's prickly. Ow! Also she's very sharp, her mind is sharp, her look is sharp. Her ideas can sting you.

EDDIE. *(NZSL)* Okay. Briar/Sting.

The offering of a Sign-name is a marker of welcome into the Deaf community, and is given by others. The sequence of each character repeating the Sign-name, passing it on, translating the name, the thanks, has a beauty and slow sense of ritual to it. In terms of the pace of the narrative, this moment of the story gives a deep breath and reset to the scene before setting forward.

The following story sequence demonstrates the syncretic nature of trilingualism through the visual presentation of three performed stories. In terms of content, all three stories are told from beyond the grave and are cautionary tales of eluding death. To show a condensed image of how the three presentations of story work together, below is a table of the discourse in this sequence:

Storyteller	**Heritage of story**	**Language of storytelling**	**Interpretation in scene**	**Interpretation in performance**
Briar	From her dead father (resurrected	Te reo Māori	NZSL interpretation	Captions of speech.

	through written language)		is open to Eddie actor.	
Vic	Retained in NZSL storytelling tradition from Deaf grandmother.	Visual Vernacular (NZSL, mime, dance, Sign poetry)	Untranslated within the scene.	Captions interact with Visual Vernacular, separating and reuniting as language shifts across visual spectrum.
Eddie	First person, from an immortal	Visual Vernacular (NZSL, mime, dance, Sign poetry)	Untranslated within the scene.	Selective heteroglossic captioning again, this time to move plot forward.

The relationship between scripted / performed / captioned languages sprang out of the workshoping process. As I have mentioned in the chapter “Creative Practice: NZSL Dramaturgical Development”, I used a workshopping technique to develop worldess versions of each character’s central monologues. For Vic and Eddie, these were their respective stories for this scene.

After giving the actors time to develop a languageless performance of their monologues, they would perform them for the group. After each of these performances, we would give group feedback, considering what was

unclear or what could be extended. The performers then went away and developed these a little further on their own. Then I had several one-on-one sessions with each actor, running through each beat of the monologue, in wordless performance, with me offering to drop in the occasional word or phrase of formal language. This was more or less trial and error, playing and revising the monologues with small linguistic tweaks. I have detailed some of Shaun's dramaturgical additions through this process in the aforementioned chapter. I recorded video versions of these, once we were happy that they each struck a balance of clarity and expression through the visual language. These video versions became the formal scriptless "script" that we would switch to during staged read-throughs and later workshopping.

The question for me then became how to best transcribe a written version of these syncretic performances, particularly for Vic & Eddie's, which move between different visual languages. My principle for this process was: first language first. This is a performer-based dramaturgical principle, and comes back to the importance of casting for multilingual roles. For example, as Shaun's first language is NZSL, I developed his 'soldier story' entirely in the visual medium. Also because Shaun has such a strong instinct for physical storytelling, the more I encouraged him to leave the details of the script behind and to perform what he felt was the heart of the story, it became its own showcase of V.V., moving seamlessly between physical registers. One of the most significant changes from the original script was the sequence where the Soldier uses the magic sack for the

first time to catch geese. In the written script, the sequence appears like so:

> VIC. Sees: geese, over there.
>
> Think. Get sack. Open. “Come one, geese, get in!”
>
> Have right! Geese go in! Catch!
>
> One goose: he eats. Finished. Other geese: sell, sell, sell. Great!

In Shaun’s performance, however, this sequence takes almost five minutes. This is simply because of the linguistic differences between written English and performed V.V.. The physical version of this sequence includes Shaun hilariously switching roles between each goose as it wanders stupidly into the sack, and the hungry Soldier as he catches them and ties the sack up with the geese flapping about inside. Shaun also built an extended sequence where the Soldier builds a fire and a spit roast, cooks the goose and eats it. I have included this footage in the video appendix.

I debated over whether to transcribe all these details that Shaun had developed in his first language from the written script. I decided against it. I filmed the sequence, and asked Shaun to make some basic written notes for himself of the story. The final version in the written script is a compromise of his written notes and any dramaturgically significant parts of the story. If we were to stage the script in full production, I would use

the video of Shaun's performed sequence for a Deaf actor rather than the written version.

The scripting for Eddie's process, although also in visual language, is different again, because Leo's first language is English. Because of this, Leo's way of memorizing the sequence required written notes rather than kinesthetic practice (as Shaun used). Because of this, returning to the principle of 'first language first', the final version of Eddie's monologue has the switches between formal NZSL and more abstract V.V. notated, like so:

EDDIE.

(Visual Vernacular) :

And I suddenly found myself in a room. I could feel someone watching me. Behind me there was a door, with a wind trying to softly push me through. I peeped through the door, and there was this woman on the other side. Crouched over. Her clothes were in rags. Skin and bones. Her eyes were shadows. I took a step forward to see her more clearly, and the wind whipped me through. The door slammed behind me.

(NZSL) :

Then there was just nothingness. No white light. No ancestors waiting for me. Just nothing.

(Visual Vernacular) :

Then the universe lurched, and I was on the banks of the lake, coughing up water.

(NZSL) :

Emma/Freckles, my love, had saved me.

After I came back from that room under the lake, I could see strange things. Hear voices.

(Visual Vernacular) :

Like echoes from another world. Always bothering me like a fly.

The relationship between NZSL and V.V. for this sequence was inspired by the relationship between te reo Māori and English in *Nga Tangata Toa*, particularly Peterson's assertion that Kouka's characters switch to te reo Māori when they are "in a heightened state emotionally and English is not adequate to express what they are feeling. When confronting death or the possibility of death [...] as the gravity of the situation demands as much" (19). Eddie's practical, cheery identity in formal NZSL cannot reach to the places her near-death experience has taken her. For Eddie, her only performance in V.V. here is her most honest sequence.

The linguistic untethering in Vic's version of the story gives us an overall sense of the narrative regardless of fluency in visual language, with fairytale tropes such as a magic object, timeless setting, and a tidy moral ending. However, the prismic effect comes when we see the same story in a similar language, but with slightly different details, a different linguistic

tone, and a much darker unresolved ending. As the language becomes untethered from Briar's straightforward te reo Māori, through Vic's physical telling of a traditional fairytale, to the linguistically and emotionally complex story of Eddie's secret – we visually hone in on the truth.

The death of Eddie/Interpreter signifies a handing over of visual language to Briar and Vic – they have to communicate between themselves now. As each language has been introduced through interpretation, now the languages begin condensing, evolving toward Briar's solo heterglossic poroporoaki.

Scene 5: Kākauri

(383 – 392)

This scene opens by finally showing the full poem translation which Briar has been working on. It is William Blake's poem, "The Fly" – an existential reflection on the mortality of all things. What is not apparent in the written script of this is the performance aspect of Cian's V.V. In this section, I worked with Leo to create a Signed response to the poem, with very simple language, which Cian performed almost absent-mindedly as she spoke. The Signing itself was not formally interpreted anywhere, only the English/te reo captions exisitng to give them context. The syncretic effect of this was of Rango the Fly, a character who previously only existed in visual languages, was now being interpreted into speech, while mainting its own linguistic tone. This is the introduction of Briar performing te reo Māori and NZSL simultaneously, with English captioning (the form which her poroporoaki will eventually take). Below is an excerpt from my workshop journal after this development session:

> Leo, who has worked as a theatrical interpreter, suggested using a linguistic pattern in NZSL which is used for interpreting rhyme from speech, where the same hand-shape is utilised to create different signs through variations in movement, placing a mouth-patterns. I was fascinated by this form of heteroglossia, particularly if it could be used in conjunction with speech, so that a performer could be performing simultaneous parallel texts.

> I am interested in the poetry of inarticulacy, and happy linguistic accidents as a speaker navigates the terrain of a new language.
>
> This informed the dramaturgy of Briar's relationship to Te Reo Māori and the inclusion of the Tape sequences. But I was particularly interested in her relationship to NZSL as a pure embodied form of expression, and one that blurred the performative lines between language and dance that exist through Visual Vernacular.
>
> We had already developed a physical pattern between all three actors of passing a Signed version of Rango the Fly between them as a transitional movement.
>
> Leo used this Sign (thumb and finger pinched together, with the other fingers spread like wings) as a starting point to build the poem from.
>
> We wanted to create an open possibility that Rango the Fly was dancing round Briar, without her knowledge, even though it was her hands creating the dance. Leo designed a parallel text that could be performed by Cian almost absent-mindedly, all centring around the "Fly" sign.
>
> (Workshop #3 Report)

The full trillingual performance of the poem by Briar in this scene, then, is syncretic and polyphonic. None of the inflections of the poem are exact translations, but rather they work next to and around each other. The table

below shows the poem as it appears in performance, in each of the three languages.

Te Reo Māori (Speech)	**English (Caption)**	**NZSL (uninterpreted)**
“Little fly,	“E rango iti,	Fly.
Thy summer’s play,	Kei te mutu	Two flies ...
My thoughtless hand	Tō raumati takaro	
Has brush’d away”	Tōku ringa tōtōa.”	
Fuck, that sucks.	Pakaru mai te haunga.	
It needs to rhyme.	Me huarite te mea.	
“Am I not	“Ehara tēnei	Connect.
A fly like thee?	He rango pēnei i a koe?	
Art thou not	Ehara rānei	
A fly like me?	Ko he tangata pēnei ki tēnei?	Flying,
For I dance	Ka kani nao	Dancing,
And drink and sing	Ka inu, ka waiata noa,	
Till	Kia rere mai	Worrying.
Some blind hand	Ā, taitai tētahi ringa tōtōa	

Shall brush my wing	I tōku parirau, āe.	
If thought is life,	Me mea te mahara ko te mauri,	Introspection:
And strength & breath,	Te ngoi, te ha :	
And the want of thought	E, he maharahia	Ask, ask, ask,
Is death;	Ko te hemonga;	Nothing.
Then am I	Me te mea nei	
A happy fly	He rango au,	Peace.
If I live, or if I die.”	Ka mate au, kāore rānei.”	Fly away.

The performance behaviour in this sequence shows a language awakening, a person’s ability to embody thoughts without realising. It takes the concept of subtext to an extra-performative level, by adding simple Signed poetry to absent-minded gesture. This trilingual syncreticism exists most powerfully in monologue form. When Vic enters, the dialogue across linguistic boundaries becomes subtextual again, and necessarily more functional. Although Vic and Briar’s communication is clumsy, and now also emotionally strained, there is a sense of acheivement in their first (and last) full conversation in NZSL together.

When Briar explains her broken relationship with her mother in the simplest langauge possible, her linguistic style is an imitation of The Poem she and Vic created together: one image at a time. Her poetry of inarticulacy here has the montage effect of V.V., while being filtered through her first language of English:

> BRIAR. *(NZSL)* Car. Crash. Father. Dead. Passed away. Language, passed away. Mum: no. No Māori. No love. Me. Alone.

Having released the story through her hands, Briar goes to meet (and presumably forgive) her mother. Alone on the stage for the first time, Vic interacts with Briar's visual langauge world before addressing audience / tīpuna directly.

> *Vic picks up her books and looks at them. He reads the page with a post-it sticking out.*
>
> *Rango the Fly flies out of the pages and around his head.*
>
> VIC. (NZSL) That was strange.

He looks offstage to Briar and her mother.

He takes coin from his pocket, flips it and catches it on his hand. Vic looks at the coin and nods, understanding.

He takes the coin and buries it in the second mound of earth.

VIC. (NZSL) I have no jokes left.

All I have is this key, and my sense of what is right.

Eddie was telling the truth, the key has given me life.

But someone else deserves this more than me.

I also played with giving Vic some text here about death being like a translation of self into a different language of being, but none of the phrasings worked well enough in visual language. Instead he decides that someone deserves the immortality more than he does, and leaves it open to the audience to assume that he is referring to Briar.

Scene 6: Te Pō

(393 – 397)

The culmination of the Takitoru Dramaturgy in creative practice is presented in this scene. Briar performs a final poroporoaki to the world, in speech and V.V.. The scripting of this follows the Deaf dramaturgy, as the Visual Vernacular of the sequence was developed kinaesthetically, through the “wordless monologues” exercise.

The final physical performance of the first monologue is minimal, with the captions expressing Briar’s inner monologue:

Rango flies around her.

BRIAR.	No reira, this is how I *(NZSL)* go. *(Speech)* Unfucked, unblemished.	No reira,	And so this is how I go.
		Ka haere au.	Unfucked, unblemished.
		E harakore ana. Kaua pirau.	She died as she lived: swearing and sexually frustrated.
		Ko ana whakareretanga ana ake	Legends will be told in the ground,

	whispered between worms,
kotahi he pai kōrero Māori.	of her one good translation of that one poem.
Ki te mate ia ka haere tōna wairua	The flies and the ants will carry her DNA
ki te reinga noho ai. Ki roto tōna whenua.	up to the stars and deep into her turangawaewae.

She sees her mother.	Ka kitea tōna māmā.	She sees her mother.
Kia ora.	Kia ora.	
Kāore e – don't speak.	Kāore e –	Don't speak.
(Speech & clumsy NZSL) It's simple.		It's simple.
I love you.	Ka arohatia koe e au.	I love you.
Please, remember me with te reo Māori.	Arohatia te reo nei.	Please, remember me with te reo Māori.

Here.	Tēnā.	Here.

She walks from shadows into a beam of moonlight.

This is followed by a brief spoken interlude with the Tape, tying up the narrative (“The man did not wake up”, and “I am ready to go”). Briar then breaks into a final, triumphant karanga, unleashing her awakened languages. This was developed through wordless monologues, research into Ngā Mōteatea and the knowledge of oratory practice form Moko Smith’s own lived experience. The final karanga was inspired by language traditionally used for tangi – calling to the natural elements as well as tīpuna:

She feels the earth between her bare toes.

BRIAR. *(Visual Vernacular & speech)*

Ka pō, ka pō, ka ao, ka awatea,

Karanga ake nei te reo, e kui, tau mai, hikoi tahi ai.

Ki mata-nuku, ki mata-rangi,

Nau mai, tau mai!

(NZSL) Breath.

BRIAR finds a door in the air.

The V.V. in the karanga largely drew on the “physical languages” of Theatre Marae which Kouka referred to in my interview. This includes a wiri (shimmering of the hands) and physically referencing the natural world through address, both common performance techniques in kōrero.

Below are images from a video of the ‘wordless monologue’ development workshop, which formed the basis for the final version of the karanga. I asked Cian to perform a wordless version of the Poem from earlier in the play. Cian had, at this stage in process, almost no knowledge of NZSL, and so in her “wordless” performances, she was often unknowingly right on the cusp of literal meaning in visual language. I retained many of these elements for her final performance of the karanga, and this finding was also the inspiration for the “poetry of inarticulacy” style of interpretation for Scene 5’s interpretation of “The Fly”.

The images below are in the order that they appeared in the original workshop performance, and are captioned by the relevant section of poem and description of movement. The full footage of this sequence is in the video appendix.

	
Figure 2 "Māori". A wiri (shimmering motion) with both hands in the motion of a setting sun	*Figure 3. "Word". Mimed writing, simultaneously NZSL for "a fly"*

Figure 4 "Bone / Blood / Skin". Tracing finger down the length of inner forearm repeatedly

Figure 5 "Blood / Skin / Dirt". The traced "blood" drips onto the ground.

Figure 6 "Dirt". Running fingers through mimed earth.

Figure 7 "Dirt / Hair / Breath". Gathering up a weightless texture form mimed earth.

 *Figure 8 "Hair". The texture is combed through hair.*	 *Figure 9 "Thought / Breath". Combing action slowly segues into following inhale / exhale.*
 *Figure 10 "Thought / Air / Sky". Each exhalation extends up and out over time.*	 *Figure 11. "Air / Sky" Final inhalation follows breath up into the crown of the head. Eyes gaze up and around.*

Figure 12"Thought / Air". Index fingers extend in arcs from top of head.

Figure 13 "Thoughts / Clouds". Extending thoughts become weightless texture, clouds, as they return to the body.

Figure 14 "Clouds / Sky". Cloud texture is spread widely with both hands.

Figure 15 "Clouds / Stars / Twinkling Stars". The cloud area is detailed with flicking action from fingers, indictating stars

Figure 16 "Twinkling Stars". Twinkling action and spacing of stars becomes denser.

Figure 17 "Cells, atoms, separating". Dense twinkling action continues, placement shifts from sky to performer's body

Figure 18 "Cells, atoms, separating / Explode and contract". Twinkling action abruptly snaps to a single focussed point.

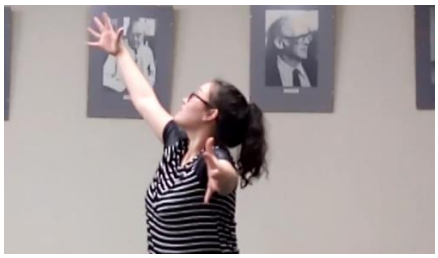

Figure 19 "Explode". Focussed point widens, arms arcing wide around a spherical area.

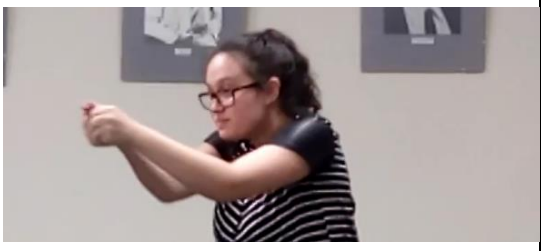

Figure 20 "Contract". Hands suddenly brought together in tight fists.

Figure 21 Condensed energy is thrown forward, one hand at a time.

Figure 22 "Forever, forever, forever". The throwing action is repeated and softened, until it subsides.

As the images show, Cian incorporated elements of kapa haka, mime, and without realising, was using the NZSL sign for “fly”. The poroporoaki, or farewell, has Briar contemplating the disintegration of her body, her hair and skin returning to the earth and her breath and thoughts becoming part of the sky, in an eternal cycle of life and death.

This was another stage in the development process where the workshop directly effected the final scripting of a section. After the karanga, Briar

uses the Key to unlock an invisible door, and V.V. takes over, performed without formal language and supported by projected captions:

> *She performs a poem in Visual Vernacular:*
>
> Wind is breath.
>
> Breath shared. Fills the space.
>
> Thoughts become clouds:
>
> I sprinkle them with stars.
>
> We are all stardust.
>
> Expanding
>
> Collapsing
>
> Forever, forever, forever.

Cian's abstract, non-linear interpretation of the original poem was what I attempted to "translate" into this final physical sequence. Rather than a more anglicised V.V., Cian's incorporation of kapa haka physicality, as well as the simple performance behaviour of developing her own movement sequence to meet the meaning, working to consciously complement the captioning, created a performance convention which has resonances of the haka. Dr. Nicola Hyland reminded me that word and action work together in haka "as a multifunctional communication

methodology: most important element is the language, but the focus is always on the gestures, which are only supposed to be understood in relation to the verbal language [the bearer of the message]" (email correspondence, 03.10.18).

As I have stated throughout the thesis, Takitoru Dramaturgy functions in a syncretic manner, with constant give and take between performance behaviours and written script. Although the linguistic focus of the performed discourse should shift and weave throughout the action, the narrative and performance overall should always be mā te takitoru katoa (for all three). It is because of this that the final moments of the action are poetry – the abstract but most beautiful form of all three langauges. The physical and written final words are not explicit or narrative-driven, but philosophical, and born out of investigation into the languages themselves.

Chapter Fourteen: Summary of Research Findings

At the outset of this research, I had hoped to develop a dramaturgical set of insights for others who may want to do trilingual performance in Aotearoa. I believe I have done this, through detailed self-reflection, research and creative practice. A crucial part of this process has been walking the fine line between collaboration and authorship, as embedded in kaupapa Māori. The role of the playwright in this dramaturgy is to expand their perception to all influences: linguistic, cultural, historical, comedic, tragic, visual, nonsensical, and pragmatic. Following this, the playwright must filter all of these options and opinions, and condense them appropriately into each line of creative text.

Below, I have emphasised in bold the narrative and performance devices that my research has revealed to be particularly apt for conveying an inclusive and engaging trilingual narrative on stage. I will summarise these conventions below, with reference to the context in which they originally appear in the above thesis.

Poetry of inarticulacy

This kaupapa stems from the idea of characters revealing themselves in different ways through different languages. Briar, for example, is a very angry English speaker, an introspective te reo speaker, and a vulnerable, frightened Signer. It is as though the less eloquence she has, the less she is able to mask herself. Having one’s communication stripped back to the

barest essentials forces honesty as we see in her description of her father's death effecting her family dynamic. It may also create new and unusual ways to express complex ideas into simple language, such as the Poem sequence between Vic and Briar.

To a lesser extent, this convention is also present in the characterisation of Tape, using simple repetitive sentence structures to convey Briar's innermost thoughts. It is significant that these exchanges exist on the cusp between languages, and therefore between levels of articulacy for Briar. The code-switching games between copying and conversing, English and te reo, are a playful presentation of a distinction between language as a technical form of conveying information, and as a vessel for emotion.

Eddie's interpretation of Briar's English into NZSL also demonstrates the performance of inarticulacy. Eddie's "third voice" becomes increasingly jumbled and inarticulate, as she becomes emotionally invested in Briar's wellbeing. In this way, rather than inarticulacy being a consistent register within a single language, it shows emotion corroding a character's linguistic ability.

Side texts

The side texts in Takitoru dramaturgy are complicated, because of the fluid nature of "language" in this practice. Visual language, for example, centres around formal sign language, with gestures, speech interpretations and written captions acting as side-texts.

Captions are often described as side-texts, and the distinction here is that the side-texts are embedded in the central text as well. In the cases below, I have used the term “side texts” to describe an actor performing multiple languages simultaneously.

Side texts may be, as I have just described, interpretations (captions) to support understanding of a central text. But they may also serve to subvert or undermine the central text performed by a character (such as the subconscious Signed performance by Briar of the The Fly poem (384 – 386).

I have aimed for clarity in this as much as possible, and tried to reflect the relationship between central and side-texts in the formatting of the final script. The central text appears in traditional stage script format to the left of the page. The captions appear to the right of the page, visually cueing a reader of the script to the role of side-texts in performance. As the narrative progresses, the nature of these side-texts are not only contained to the side: stage directions (such as the visual motif of the coins) and surreal characters (such as Rango the Fly) come and go from the central section of the script. I categorise these as “side texts” because the visual nature of these should create a separate visual narrative in performance. The meaning may be extracted from someplace between the languages being performed, creating an intangible, third-voiced narrative.

Another example of side-text in the final script is Briar’s monologue. This was achieved through workshopping an English text and filtering it through a language at a time - first from English and Māori into V.V., then NZSL, then finally back into English. The final performance of this text exists

somewhere between the V.V. performed by the actor, and the poem which appears in the captions. Like a harmony, the complete effect of side-text is greater than the sum of its parts.

Linguistic untethering

This kaupapa is directly related to the side-text: it is almost its opposite. Rather than overwhelming the audience with a single narrative from multiple viewpoints and languages, the untethering effect allows a single language a moment of virtuoso performance.

In my script I have used this exclusively for visual languages, particularly for comic NZSL sequences. I have done this because it allows meaning to exist beyond linguistic ability. Everyone can understand funny mime. Another writer may wish to use this untethering effect for dramatic purposes, using physical action instead to drive a narrative forward.

Wordless monologues in workshopping

I will continue to use this technique in all forms of script workshopping, regardless of the amount of languages being used. It forces the actor to embody each individual beat of a monologue, which gives a kinaesthetic grounding in the journey of the text. It also clears a path as the writer to see where an emotion or piece of information may be better shown through behaviour than language: a wonderful editing tool.

First Language First

This kaupapa more or less speaks for itself. I also referred to this as “calling in the experts”. Simply, if a playwright is writing in their second or third language, they should run it by first language speakers in a meaningful way. For me, this meant involving NZSL interpreters to navigate the creative conversations with my Deaf actor/s about linguistic choices, and having long-term conversations with Moko about the nature of the play and the registers of te reo throughout the narrative. It is especially difficult to accept as playwright that one does not hold all the answers to the play. I think that my passion for collaboration helped me greatly, and I hope to grow in this area.

Cultural Articulacy

One of my central research questions was, ‘How can scriptwriting embody kaupapa Māori through Visual Languages?’

Ultimately, my answer is: it cannot totally, not from a Pākehā writer like myself. But the creative practices of valuing manaakitanga, whakapapa and whānau can be embodied and implemented. This involves researching the relevant cultural values and putting those values on show in an articulate way. Much like “first language first”, this means asking for Feedback and involves considerable rewriting. Simple things like Briar performing her pepēha, or Vic giving Briar a Sign-name are cultural signifiers in the narrative which are embedded in the characterisation, but

also are present in order to include and welcome particular parts of the audience. This has potential benefits for other practitioners embarking on research into Māori devising methodology in the future.

The tools I have listed above are creative practices I intend to carry with me and continue to refine.

Conclusion

My research has identified several dramaturgical strategies for trilingual playwriting in Aotearoa New Zealand. I have done this through the script development of a single narrative, producing the final scripted version of *Tanumia ō Kōiwi.*

After writing the first draft of the script, I cast three actors and began an eighteen-month script development process. In Chapter Three, I gave an overview of this process, and the participants involved in it. I explained how, although the creative process itself did not follow such a linear structure, I had structured my writing about the process by investigating the dramaturgy relevant to each te reo Māori and NZSL, separately.

Between Chapters Four and Seven, I discussed my creative and critical research into NZSL dramaturgy. This included a case study on, and interview with, UK playwright Kaite O'Reilly about her creative practice on her play *Woman of Flowers*. I investigated the potential of Visual Vernacular and the importance of a Visual Language Director in the script development process. I explained how I implemented these findings in my own creative practice, with examples from the workshopping process. I also discussed the significance of investigating side-text linguistic areas. This concept emerged through my research into Deaf and Signed dramaturgy, but was relevant to the way that I investigated te reo Māori dramaturgy too, and in the presentation of my final creative practice. This was shown through presenting the traditionally secondary side-text of captioning as part of my final *Tanumia ō Kōiwi* script.

I also discussed the creative practice of wordless monologues as a kinaesthetic workshopping tool, which synthesised kaupapa Māori into a physical register through the final karanga sequence in *Tanumia ō Kōiwi*. This also informed the action of 'Negated Pōwhiri', as I was able to comine a dramaturgical structure of Theatre Marae with a performance in English and Visual Vernacular.

I investigated the tikanga of Theatre Marae, as well as explaining the the relevant cultural frameworks and words from te reo Māori in Chapter Eight. In Chapter Nine, I gave a case study on the creative practice of Hone Kouka, with a critical analysis of the play *Nga Tangata Toa*. Kouka's work in *Nga Tangata Toa* was extremely influencial on my writing of *Tanumia ō Kōiwi,* as I discussed in Chapter Ten. I also reflected on the linguistic styles of te reo Māori that I used, with the guidance of Moko Smith. The acknowledgement of my own relative inarticulacy in NZSL and te reo Māori was a starting point for the script development of the Tape sequences, where I used simple repeatitive phrases in te reo Māori to create surreal theatrical moments. The poetry of inarticulacy was implemented trilingually in my final creative practice – most significantly through the evolution of Briar expressing herself as she learns the new languages.

Trilingual storytelling is, of course, at the centre of Takitoru Dramaturgy. In Chapter Eleven, I began by discussing the cultural similarities between Deaf and Māori cultures. I then gave some context into current bilingual practices with Sign Languages and the absence of a decolonising voice within them. I described my specific inclusivity for audiences in the three

languages of Aotearoa, and explained the origin of the name for Takitoru Dramaturgy. I then included the final script, complete with captions, of *Tanumia ō Kōiwi*, followed by a scene-by-scene analysis of the Takitoru Dramaturgy in the work. In Chapter Thirteen, my close analysis allowed me to identify and discuss where and how I implemented my creative research findings into my creative practice.

As I have said earlier, I had hoped to make a filmed version of the final script in NZSL for complete Deaf accessibility, but it was not right to do this without Shaun Fahey. I have instead included footage from our workshops of each performer, to give the reader a visual sense of the V.V. in performance. I also have provded a summary of the narrative and performance devices which informed the final work, of *Tanumia ō Kōiwi*.

In answering my research questions, I hope that the definitions and strategies I have found are broad enough to be applied to other cultures and languages. I hope that my project offers something of a taonga to Māori who are disproportionately affected by hearing loss. I also hope that this research may be something of a wero for other artists to collaborate in cross-cultural work, and to encourage embodiment of Kaupapa Māori through always consciously thinking plurally about identity as an artistic toolkit. I am grateful to have delved deep into storytelling in Aotearoa New Zealand through my Takitoru Dramaturgy, and hope that this will be the first of many trilingual scripts to emerge form Aotearoa New Zealand.

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Appendix

1. Full transcript of interview with Kaite O'Reilly

2. Full interview correspondense with Hone Kouka (unedited)

3. Letter of Ethical Approval

Video Appendix

Shaun Fahey: Visual Vernacular storytelling of 'The Soldier and Death'.

Cian Paige Gardner: Wordless monologue performance of Briar's final karanga.

Leo Goldie-Anderson: Visual Vernacular development of Eddie’s near death experience.

Kaite O'Reilly – full interview

Kaite O'Reilly kindly agreed to be interviewed via Skype and recorded. This is a lightly edited transcript of the interview.

AL: Hello! Thank you so much for agreeing to have a chat with me. Thank you for making time for me.

KO: Well thank you for sending the email getting in touch with me. I hope, I don't know, but I hope that I can assist in some way!

AL: Yes I actually I read your chapter in *Moving Across Borders* -

KO: Oh you got it already? Well done!

AL: Yes I requested it and the library managed to get an electronic copy -

KO: Fantastic!

AL: - and I really enjoyed it. And actually, your chapter answered a lot of my set questions. So I have slightly more specific questions, if that's alright, different from the ones I sent you?

KO: Yes. I've got another one, another essay coming out - it may even have just been published. Basically I'm here in Berlin as a fellow at a research centre. And I've been reflecting on my own practice and writing about my work, like the chapter in *Moving Across Borders*. I'm amazed you've got that already. Of course in that [chapter] I'm talking about my work with [prominent Deaf theatre practitioners] Jean St Clair and Sophie Stone.

But also, I've got another one - it probably won't help you so much, but I'm talking about working with Denise Armstrong, who's also a Deaf choreographer. And that's in a book called *The Aging Body in Dance*. And I haven't had my own copy yet but that is published. I think the *Moving Across Borders* is probably the best one. Because that's where I was getting Sophie and Jean to collaborate with me in trying to reflect our process.

AL: And I found it really interesting, the way that you talked about the collaborative nature of scripting the stuff for BSL [British Sign Language] and Visual Vernacular [V.V.]. I wanted to ask you about how - when you're sculpting those things together, do you begin by

offering the text and then directly translating it into BSL? And then building it out into Visual Vernacular from that?

Or do you give [the text] to the actor and get them to play with it however they want? How does that kind of conversation work?

KO: It depends on each case. Usually, whenever I can, I work with Jean St Clair. And she is very much a BSL but also V.V. expert. She's a visual language director as well as a wonderful performer. I've worked with her and directed her in the past. But what I've been trying to do when I've been making bilingual work in particular, if it's on a high platform, like when I was working with National Theatre of Wales I wanted to also ensure that the expert, which is Jean St Clair, was visible and got the credit. So it wasn't me working with an actor, it was me bringing in, I'm giving her the title of Visual Language Director, or it might have been Creative Visual Director - yes I think that was the phrase she preferred. So basically - I'll tell you a few different ways that I work then that might help.

With Jean: I get her in. She's coming as very much the BSL expert but also V.V. expert. And what she will then ask me is which mode I'm most interested in. Because sometimes I want it to be theatricalised BSL. And sometimes I say, We're going to create together something completely new, which is inspired by the text.

AL: Right.

KO: And that's partly what I was trying to write about in *Moving Across Borders*, where we actually create something different.

AL: And does she have quite strong English literacy as well?

KO: Yes she's fluent. She doesn't use voice, and she hasn't used voice for over thirty years. So she doesn't speak or use a sounding voice. But she lip reads fantastically well. She's brilliant at writing - you can see I quoted her in the essay. Same with Sophie Stone, their English fluency is just stunning. But Jean knows me well enough that - because I'm visually impaired, well we've worked out over the years, because we've worked together since 2000. So we've worked out a way where we communicate incredibly well. I think I quote her talking about it in *Moving Across Borders*, but she says at times it feels like telepathy.

AL: That's the collaborative dream.

KO: Yeah. So this is where we say we work "in between". It's somewhere else, in a different part of the brain. That's what I wanted to talk about, like Oliver Sacks when he goes on about different topographic space in the brain. That when you're using visual language, sign language or manual language or characters (if you're working in Chinese or Japanese), it's a

whole different part of the brain than the linguistic spoken language centres.

But anyway, returning to working with Jean: sometimes, depending on the context, we want to follow the text so it's more a translation. Sometimes we're saying we are actually going to translate here. So we're going to follow as much as we can the English text. The text always comes first. In these cases. So Jean will work with me, it's BSL based while using the skills of V.V..

AL: So she's almost an interpreter, and a dramaturg, and a performer all at once?

KO: I wouldn't call her that, no. I wouldn't call her an interpreter or a dramaturg. I'd call her a creative language director. Or visual language director. She's not working dramaturgically with me. What we're doing - there's two ways we'll work. One way is she'll work with me, we'll work together as translators. In Theatricalised BSL. So we're working as translators together, in BSL / English. Then there are other times when we can work far more creatively. When I was working on *Women of Flowers* with Sophie Stone and Jean St Clair; it's a text that I had written, it's almost like poetry. And it was written in English, and it's about a woman who was wondering where she comes from. Because she's been told that she was made from flowers, from the flowers of the forest.

AL: I've actually been writing about this play today. I've been writing about the bilingualism in this today, because I've decided that *Women of Flowers* is the particular text that I'm going to focus on in my research.

KO: Oh, interesting!

AL: And I just love it. And I was thinking today about, as you were saying now about that liminal space of thinking, I was thinking about the use of silence in the text and the image of the space between the petals, and how it's all that liminal psychic space. And how the form and content are together there. Which is really interesting.

KO: That sounds fascinating, thank you. I've got two extracts which we filmed, of what we created. I don't know if I've got them with me.

AL: I think I've seen a video of [Sophie performing] the opening monologue. It has a voice-over?

KO: Oh, yeah. That - Sophie did that on the first day of rehearsal. After like, half an hour 's work.

AL: Oh my god!

KO: That wasn't working with Jean. I've got some other ones - I didn't put them online because Sophie didn't want them online. I may have to have a think and see how I can share it with you. But I mean, they're beautiful. I mean they're nothing compared to the taster, the trailer. That was just something that we did very very quickly. And that's Sophie voicing over, as well as signing. We'll come back to that, it would be nice for you to see it. Because of the piece we're exactly talking about, the space between the petals, how a story is told often in the space between.
When we were working on *Women of Flowers*, Jean Sophie and I all got together. I don't know if you've seen me writing about the process on my blog?

A**L: I've seen the interview you did with Jean, kind of about V.V. in relation to her being a consultant on *Women of Flowers*.**

KO: Oh right you've probably seen the one - Jean's wearing a pink t-shirt and she's sitting at the table?

AL: Yes.

KO: Yeah okay so you've seen that article, great. So basically the three of us would get together and I went, Here is the text. I don't want a translation of it. And they're going, Thank you, because it would be impossible. It wouldn't make sense. It would just not be language that leads itself to visual representation.

So what we did instead is: I'm there in the room with them, but I'm basically saying, Let's see what the images are, what is the imagery that comes to you? What is the kind of metaphor that we start playing with? So what we created was a piece that doesn't talk at all about half of what I'm saying in the English-language text. Instead of talking about the moon and things like that, we ended up thinking of a stag. So we thought about the image of a stag - obviously the thumbs go into the side of the head, the fingers are spread. We're showing a stag. Then the image we took was Sophie was looking at a stag in the forest, then she became the stag, then she was outside the stag and was the maker - she took the stag's antlers and then turned those into her own ribs.

If that makes sense.

AL: Yeah, I can visualise that.

KO: So that was one example, where it's not a translation literally. But because I'm the writer of the original text, and because the three of us are collaborating, in the moment it's like we create something - a completely new piece that is rooted in the original English ideas or imagery.

AL: And so how much do you adapt the written form after that? Do you leave it to be something that can be departed from? Or do you then try to transcribe a bit of what the physical performance is? For like a published text.

KO: Well in the case of *Women of Flowers*, we decided that we would let the original English as captions remain. So what we had was bilingualism - no not bilingualism, more like parallel texts. So Sophie is performing the visual language section, because it was V.V., we weren't using BSL. We had a little bit, she started in BSL but moved into V.V.

So we had the captioning still with my English language text, the same as appears in the published text. Because, we liked the idea that there could be more going on from an audience point of view. Even if you're encountering visual language for the first time, and if you know English, you're looking at the captioning from my poem, and you're seeing something very different happening simultaneously. Because I don't talk about stags, I don't talk about the stag running through the forest, and how we take its wonderful antlers and make that somebody's ribs.

And Sophie also had a section where - she has very long hair, in real life - and she mimed pulling a hair from her head, threading a needle, taking leaves off a tree, and sewing them onto her skin.

AL: Amazing.

KO: Beautiful.

AL: So they work in harmony together, the captions and the visual language.

KO: Yes. Though they're not a translation, but what they actually do is a sort of a telling. You know the reader, if people are reading English, then it's almost like they're expanding on that notion. But also going into fresh and new territory.

AL: How did Deaf audiences respond to *Women of Flowers*? Was it captioned the whole way through?

KO: It was captioned all the way through. I've been doing that with all my productions for some years now. I've been doing that rather than having - I mean if I can, I have an integrated Sign Language interpreter. It's different from when I work with performers who are Deaf and using perhaps Sign Language as well as spoken language. But I like using captioning because in the UK I've known too many people from the Deaf communities who say

- they've either become Deaf or sometimes, they actually prefer the [English] language rather than having to try and follow an interpreter.

AL: Yeah, and I think an interpreter is it's own - it just has it's own complicated set of rules where if you have like a big cast in a performance, and one interpreter doing all [the roles] then you're negotiating an entire other level of performance, when you're watching that.

KO: Exactly. Exactly, so I usually don't. I like captioning, and fragments of visual language, like in *Women of Flowers*. But um - sorry I went off then on a tangent!

AL: I was asking you about whether you had any particular responses from Deaf audiences, about *Women of Flowers*.

KO: Yes it's very interesting actually. Paula Garfield, who's the artistic director of Deafinitely Theatre - I've known Paula for quite some years, and there is a real schism. There is a real friction, between hearing culture and Deaf culture. I may have been doing a lot of work with incredibly generous Deaf collaborators, who have been working with me over the years. But the reality is, often when we're out, I'll be there with our Deaf

collaborators, but I'll still be almost shunned by the rest of the Deaf community.

AL: Yes.

KO: And, I'm used to that. And I know that there's reason for that. I'm very aware of the history [of the global systematic oppression of Sign Languages and Deaf culture]. Between the oralists and the manualists, I know there are reasons for this. So it's okay. But it really annoys Jean St Clair. She always gets very frustrated and very angry about that. And St Clair is a bit of a queen of the London Deaf community. So, when she's involved in anything, whether she's onstage or she's been working with me as the visual language director, she's got a big following. People love her work in the Deaf community. And sometimes [the Deaf community] find it quite challenging, what she does with me. Though with *Women of Flowers*, we had a fantastic response. Paula Garfield, for example. So the one performance where almost the entire Deaf arts community came out to see the show, it was a bit scary.

AL: Yeah!

KO: I was telling Kirsty Davis, the overall director of *Women of Flowers*, I said, "When we come, you'll see, we'll fall into two factions. We'll have,

Deaf people will be over that side, and then we'll be over this side". She said, "But, no! How? What?"

I said, "You'll see". And of course that's just what happened. And Jean was fretting, running between the two of us.

But what really surprised me in the case of *Women of Flowers*: Paula Garfield, artistic director of Deafinitely Theatre, came over on her way out. And acknowledged me publicly. And we [had a conversation in British Sign Language], she said, "That was really good. I thought that was really interesting. I really like what you were doing. I thought that it was a really interesting thing, the way that you structured and put everything together."

That's what she said, which was great. And it was interesting, because she did it publicly as well. So when she went, other people were coming over - thanking me, and acknowledging me, before they went. So it was kind of an interesting thing! But a lot of people really appreciated that we were trying to do this bilingual experimentation.

I think they appreciated that it was captioned throughout. So it was accessible for those that wanted to read the English. But also, when we were using visual language, we were using it so beautifully, and so effectively, and so powerfully. And also we weren't translating. I think the Deaf community really appreciated that. Because they could ignore the English, and just really focus on what Sophie was doing. And understand that what Sophie was doing was absolutely embedded in Deaf culture. So we were starting from hearing culture, written English. But actually, we left that behind and created something else that was absolutely embedded

and led by my two Deaf collaborators.

So I think in the case of *Women of Flowers*, that really came across. So apart from that I'm obviously collaborating with two figures who are very visible, very respected within the Deaf community in the UK (both Sophie Stone and Jean St Clair); they're hugely appreciated by the Deaf community. But I think they enjoyed that it was almost not hybrid.

TED: Mummy! It's all done!

AL: Okay! Sorry Kaite can I just run away and help my son with something for two seconds?

KO: Of course, Alex.

AL: Sorry, just a moment.

KO: No hurry!

TED: Mummy, do you have lipstick on?

[Child interlude]

[Alex comes back]

AL: Sorry about that, Kaite!

KO: No, please don't worry! So I think - several things from the Deaf community's response to *Women of Flowers*. I think, first of all they could see that Jean and Sophie were given visibility and status. It's important. Which is why I started our conversation, I always try to say that they're my collaborators. Or, I'll always credit people. Or, I'll try make sure that we're very clear what the roles are. And because Jean was there as our visual language director, it was very clear. I think also for a Deaf community, often they get frustrated that their work is not credited to them. But often taken over by the hearing director.

AL: Yes.

KO: People will often see it [and say], "Wow, you're really good! I didn't know you could do that!" And then you just have somebody as like, "Thanks to …" somewhere down the credits list. So first of all, I think that's really important.

AL: Yes.

KO: Even before we start talking about the work. I think being visible, and crediting the superb Deaf artists that I'm working with. Secondly, they really liked the fact that they weren't compromised with having to try and deal with a Sign Language interpreter *and* Sophie using visual language. I think [the Deaf audiences] liked the fact that it was captioned. And I think they liked that when we did use the visual language sections, it was clearly Deaf culture-led. And yes, there were English words being projected. And they could look at that, but they could also compare and see that they were different, they were parallel texts, rather than one being an interpretation of the other. And I think people like that.

But I think the main thing: Caroline Parker, who's very well-known. She's a Sign diva. She does a lot of Signed songs. Again, in the UK, there's certain - Paula Garfield, Caroline Parker, Jean St Clair, Sophie Stone - you know, these are some of the most prominent and visible Deaf women. Performers, directors, creators in performance in the UK.

I grew up with Caroline a lot in the past, and she was very excited, like Jean, because she loved the actual story. Loved the fact that through what we were doing in the piece, yes we've got an ancient story, *Blodeuedd*, the woman of flowers. But she really enjoyed the fact that I was trying to reinvent this in a way that respected the Deaf experience. But also revealed the often hostile, and manipulative, and even exploitative attitude of the hearing community towards Deaf community.

AL: So that actually leads quite nicely into another question I wanted to ask you. How did you come to bring the woman of flowers story and Deaf culture together? Was it that you wanted to work with Sophie Stone? Or, did the story come first? How did those two strands come together for you?

KO: I've been interested in *Blodeuedd* from *The Mabinogion* for a very long time. I've written various versions, I've done other productions that took notions from this myth and respun them. How it started, was Kirsty Davis [the artistic director for Forest Forge Theatre Company], I've worked with her, and she came to see *In Water I'm Weightless,* my 2012 National Theatre Wales piece. Which I worked on with Sophie and with Jean. And [Kirsty] loved Sophie as a performer. And she said, "I've got a commission. If I was to commission you, what would you like to write next?"

And I said, I wanted to explore the notion - well, what became *Women of Flowers*. I said, I'm really interested in the notion that you create a world with language. Like, the Bible: first it was the word. "In the beginning was the word", that kind of notion.

And also in the times that we live in, we've become fundamentalists. With these fundamentalist belief systems, which whether it's with Islamic State or with the frightening born-again Christians, I just think any kind of fundamentalism leads people to extremes. And I got really fascinated with, there was terrible honour killings that were happening in the UK where

young women were being killed by their fathers and brothers in “honour” killings. Because these are women that went, you know, tried to run away from home, or didn’t want to get married with whom they were supposed to, or in some way brought shame onto the family. So where it really began was thinking about creating a world through rhetoric. And creating a world where you do extreme things, and you think that you’re doing it for the right reasons. Somebody thinks it’s the right reason to kill their own child, for example.

So that’s where it began, and I wanted to create a world with language.

And that for me became very interesting. I knew I wanted to write for Sophie, and Kirsty wanted Sophie. I wanted to write *Women of Flowers* specifically for her skills, and for her. Because I’d worked with her, I knew what she could do. We started talking about language and creating the world with words. If you have an isolated Deaf woman, or an isolated Deaf child (as she was abducted to begin with), brought up in isolation, being told - given this kind of rhetoric about how the world is, and where she came from, a very warped version. When somebody starts questioning who you are and what the world is, or challenging the rhetoric, if you’ve been told this is how the world works, I loved the idea of somebody exploring that through a different language, or a different mode of language, besides Sign Language.

How I brought Blodeuedd and the Deaf story together: in the actual story she is magicked by a magician, from the flowers of the forest. And she is made to be the wife for a young man who has been cursed by his mother for all sorts of reasons, it’s a long ... I won’t go into the full Welsh story, it’s

very complicated. But I then started to think, if we were in contemporary days, and we're hearing often about people being abducted, what would be their lives? What would be the world that this person would create in order to keep a modern-day slave?

Whether that's a sex-slave in the case of Rose [Sophie Stone's character and the eponymous protagonist in *Women of Flowers*]. We always wanted it quite ambiguous, but in the production it was very creepy, you could just never tell if she was sleeping with both of them. Probably. It was never clear, but that suggestion was very uneasy.

And the idea of, this notion that the hearing community have towards Deaf people, that they're stupid.

AL: That silence equals stupidity.

KO: Yup. And it's something I've come across constantly, and all my collaborators have always said that. And what I also wanted to do, was to say, Okay these people are assuming (so they keep the radio on, she's Deaf, she can't hear the news) if they just don't let her out into the world, they can be able to control her. Because [they assume] she's stupid, and she's ignorant. And they can feed her these lies about, "Oh well yes you were in the forest, you were made for us", they they can try to keep people in their place. And also what I wanted to do was show a Deaf woman gaining agency. Which is actually also what happens in the original.

AL: Oh really?

KO: Well, in the original, in the story of *Blodeuedd,* Blodeuedd is made from the flowers of the oak, to be the ideal woman and the wife to this particular young man, who has been cursed by his mother, that he will never be able to have a wife of our race. He keeps her away in the forest, they have an estate in the forest. He goes off one time, hunting, and a stranger comes by. And she falls in love. And in the original, they basically plan how to kill her husband so she can stay with her lover. And that's exactly what happens and it takes them over a year, but they plan and plot to kill Blodeuedd's husband.

They do this. But at the moment when he is struck with a spear, he turns into an eagle, and flies away. Because his uncle is the magician, but he's a magician with language.

The lovers live together for several years, very happily on the estate. And she just says she's been abandoned by her husband. Then the uncle, the magician, knows something is afoot. And he finds this dying, maggotty eagle, that through songs, he transforms back into the maggotty dying original husband.

AL: Oof.

KO: He then takes him away for a year to recover. The lovers then, living together, three years on, very very happy, and then all of a sudden she's told that in fact the magician has discovered that they tried to kill the husband, and they are now coming to get revenge. The magician says, "Well, the husband is going to be able to throw is spear at you [the lover]. Because you threw your spear at him." So Blodeuedd has to watch her lover being killed by her husband. And her punishment is to be turned into an owl. And in Wales, even now, "Blodeuedd" is one of the names for "owl". And the bird, it's an unnatural bird, so hated by its own kind, it has to hide in the day and can only come out at night. And that's the story of the owl and Blodeuedd, which is why we have the owl as imagery all the way through *Women of Flowers*.

AL: That's such a fascinating story, it's got such timeless resonances of domestic violence and spurned men. You know? Like it could a be true crime story from ten years ago [but with magic].

KO: And this is why, if you can imagine when I'm thinking of that story, and then looking at contemporary times: we had a combination of these abductions, women the last few years have been discovered, they've been kept as slaves by a guy in America, and a guy in Austria. They have been keeping these women for a long time. It's like the novel *Room* by Emma Donaghue.

TED: Mummy?

[Ted is covered in lipgloss and lipstick.]

AL: Sorry Kaite. Don't - you haven't eaten it, have you?

TED: No.

AL: No, okay. Don't worry about it.

***[to Kaite]* My son got into the lipgloss.**

TED: Mummy I need toilet paper for my face.

KO [laughing]

AL: Here, wipe it on that. Oh, it smells really nice! I'll wash it soon darling.

TED: No, it's still on my hands.

[Child cleaning interval]

KO: Lovely. But yes you can see why [*Women of Flowers*] is a vehicle that must be constantly made new. And have resonance for the time that we're in. So, in the original, Blodeuedd is meant to be an obedient little handmaid that is there to serve her husband. But actually, my question was always, what happens when you feel desire for the first time? What happens when you want a life different from the one that you've been made for?

So in the original, Blodeuedd has agency in a negative way, because in fact she ends up becoming a murderer. But at the same time, I wanted to explore a way for a female [in that position] to get agency. And they kind of parallel, the narratives, especially if you know the original, you can see a parallel with somebody that starts being aware of her own desire for the first time. That starts to question where she comes from. Somebody who decides that actually, she wants to take control. And it felt important for me to have that as a Deaf female character. If she's deemed to be a very vulnerable or weak character. I wanted to actually show that by being Deaf, it gives her tools. She can lip-read. Also because she would have been abducted after the age of seven, she would have been learning Sign Language before that. She's beginning to make sense of the world around her, through her own language and therefore through her own identity.

AL: And I really love the way that those six, I think, monologues that she has - I love the way that they never refer to anything else, just her and her surroundings. It's that thing that she's completely alone and completely like … just the pleasure of introspection, and seeing that come alive, and [her silence and Deafness] being misunderstood by all the people around her until she meets Graham [the "lover" character]. It's just so beautiful to see. It's not only Deafness but also femininity and any kind of victimhood, it's such an interesting thing that this 'weakness' of solitude or any kind of introspection, that is being seen as like "Oh you're retreating from the world now, you're just doing your own thing," but actually she's gathering her strength and drawing up her resources, thinking things over, I just love it.

KO: Oh, good! Thank you! But for me it was also about showing the power that comes when the identity, and the understanding that can come from your own culture - and in this case of course it's her Deaf experience. Her Deaf culture. Her way of expressing. And so for me that became very very important.

So it was interesting because, like Caroline Parker, a few other people from the Deaf community who came to see it when it was in London, they really liked the story. Because they could see it as an empowering story of really respecting the richness and the gifts from Deaf culture. And what that gives you. Rather than perhaps always trying to fit in with a hearing majority.

And especially at the end, when she's there talking about joy. Talking about the flicker inside, and she doesn't know what it is, and she realises [it's joy]. It's almost like she becomes whole, once she's able to get out of that house. Away from those people [her captors]. But also being very powerful, saying "I'm not following your version of how things are anymore. I'm going to discover my own." And that seemed quite important to some of the members of the Deaf audience. To say: Yes because actually, it's important for us to find our own modes of expression. Our own culture. Our own sense of self and identity.

And quite a few people could really see that quite strongly in this story about a Deaf woman who's basically being brutalised by these two hearing men that are trying to keep her down. And just to use her. Not allow her to express her own language. You know in the piece she's told, "Are you doing that thing with your hands? It's not allowed."

And in the end, in the performance, the moment of real agency came when Rose stands up to Gwynne [the "magician uncle" character], and she speaks *and* signs. And then stops speaking, and just signs. She says, "The way is open. And I'm going."

So visually, for an audience, you see somebody who has been told that she can't sign. Who signs secretly. Who then eventually abandons language, and finds her power through standing up to the tyrant in her own language and culture.

AL: I wanted to ask you as well about it being a Welsh story. Is there any kind of political statement … I'm interested because for me, I've written traditional stories into plays. Adapted Māori stories into bilingual or English tellings. And when they're just English, it's quite a contentious thing to do, to adapt a story from a colonially-oppressed culture into an English script. You have to be careful about it. Is there that kind of relationship between Welsh stories and English versions of them? Or is it not quite so volatile?

KO: It's interesting. I live in Wales, and there is a lot of tension between Wales and England still. But it's almost like - the English culture often shows its superiority to Welsh culture by ignoring it completely. And by ignoring the riches and the treasures that are there. So I don't know of any version of *Blodeuedd* that has been done apart from my own, that wasn't by someone Welsh, or living in Wales.

And because I've done various versions, this is my third engagement with this myth. And they're all very different. The other two pieces are extremely different. But I looked into it, I researched it, I was trying to find out, what were other versions that had existed previously? And I couldn't find one that was done outside Wales or by a Welsh person. So it's almost like it's completely ignored, or not known, just across the border. It's kind of fascinating. So, *Blodeuedd* is very very well-known in Wales itself. But unheard of, largely, outside. Unless you get people that are interested in Celtic myths, or - Alan Garner, he was an England-based, but I think his grandparents were Welsh. He wrote a children's version of *Blodeuedd,*

called *The Owl Service.* But apart from that, I don't know anybody else that has done a version of it.

AL: Kaite, this has been so interesting. It's been like storytime for me. It's especially interesting and helpful hearing about the Deaf responses to *Women of Flowers*. Because the Deaf theatre community here in Aotearoa is slightly different. We're only just emerging with Deaf theatre here. So it's really interesting to hear about the process, and how collaborative things are. Because with my work that I'm doing, we have to have interpreters because my NZSL is not great, and then we have a system of videoed scripts of [NZSL and Visual Vernacular] sections for everyone, so it's all a mish-mash of written and filmed processes. It's lovely and inspiring, hearing about such a functional system.

KO: But I don't know if other people work like that. I mean, I think it's predominantly what I've managed to develop through my relationships with Jean St Clair or Denise Armstrong, or Sophie Stone. And these are just the ways that we have discovered to work. I don't know if other people do the same. Or there might be other, better processes that people have identified. But usually in my experience, it's more negative for the Deaf practitioners, than what I have developed with the people I work with.

I mean the Deaf & Hearing Ensemble, which Sophie Stone is involved in, and I think it's interesting, what they are doing as an ensemble.

But apart from them, I think we still have very much people working in more traditional ways with an interpreter. Or that the word is sacrosanct. That hearing culture, written culture, English language, is primary. And everything else follows. Whereas what I'm trying to do - and, also, I'm working on a new project in Singapore, which I'm just about to start. What we're going to be doing is the visual language is going to come first. And then I'm going to write text following what the visual language is saying. So on my next project I'm going to do something I haven't done before. Which is the visual language will come first, then I'm going to write text which we will caption, which will run parallel with the primary text. And the primary text is going to be visual. So that's later in the year.

AL: That sounds really exciting. Thank you so much for your time here Kaite.

TED: Mummy, I need a plaster.

KO: That's alright. I know it's very late there so your little man probably needs to be looked after.

AL: Yes, I think it's bedtime. Thank you so much Kaite.

KO: You’re welcome. Take care.

KOUKA Full Interview Transcript

This interview was conducted via email and has been reproduced as I received it.

Do you consider yourself an inclusive artist? Why/ Why not?

Not really sure what that means? The focus of my work is primarily Maori, Pacific Island or those of difference if that is inclusive then thats me.

- What languages do you write in? Why?

English and Maori - as these are my languages. I also include the physical as Maori and Pacific nations are physical by nature then much of the language of that theatre has a physical background and starting point. Kapa haka, siva etc These cultures pou are languages also.

- How does multilingualism impact the dramaturgy of your work?

Language enriches and deepens work. New Zealand is primarily a mono lingual country, using the Americas and Europe as language starting

points is where we should be aiming for. Many languages enriches not the stuffling colonialism of one language.

- How does multilingualism impact your creative practice, particularly workshopping processes?

Again these are more tools to work with, to respect and to nuture. The language of theatre is global.

- What are the advantages of writing in multiple languages?

Constantly changing viewpoints. Giving voice not only to one world view. Changing the perspective that the colonisers language and way is the norm. It can create another level of openess.

- What do you regard as your first language?

Unfortunately english

Q: How does English function in relation to your other languages?

Previously Maori playwrights would write in te reo Maori then immediately translate in to english. This no longer occurs so often . there is more

confidence in mixing the two and for my work I never translate in to english.

- What is gained in a multilingual theatre experience that monolingual theatre work cannot offer?

Other world views.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

Alexandra Lodge
Mark Houlahan
Sarah Shieff

English, Theatre Studies

23 April 2016

Dear Alexandra,

Re: **FS2016-06 Impossible Worlds: Using Fantastical Conventions for Scripting Inclusive Theatre in New Zealand.**

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Thank you for submitting an application to the FASS Human Research Ethics Committee. We have now reviewed your amendments, and are pleased to provide formal approval for your project, for the following research activities:

- Creative Production work with actors (NZE, NZSL, Te Reo)
- Feedback sessions
- Author interviews
- Public performance observations
- Focus groups

In the final review of your application, our reviewers have noted two points for discussion with your supervisors. The first is the provision of an appropriate Koha for your cultural advisors. You may have already planned complimentary tickets to the public performances. This could be included in your application. Secondly, we think it is important in feedback sessions that you invite feedback participants to contribute in whatever language they are most comfortable with. If they choose to speak Te Reo, or a combination of Te Reo and other languages of the project, you should have a strategy in place to ensure their thoughts are accessible to all participants.

Separately, we have noted a small number of changes needed to align your participant documentation. Your supervisors can oversee these changes. You should attend to these before you begin your research activities, and send a final version of the full application to fass-ethics@waikato.ac.nz.

Please don't hesitate to contact the HRE Committee if any ethical issues arise during your research. Should you wish to make changes to your research activities, or add additional research activities, please write to the HRE Committee Chair, quoting the code for this project (FS2016-14). This includes submitting the final versions of questionnaires as they become ready.

Finally, we would like to offer our thanks for your persistence with this process. As the first Creative Practice project that the FASS HRE Committee has supported, it has been a steep learning curve for all of us, and we are delighted with the outcome. We wish your all the best with your project.