

Winged Tangi'ia: A Manganian Dramatic Performance

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With the arrival of Europeans rapid and far-reaching social change occurred in Polynesia, and a number of observers predicted that the oral tradition of the area in which they were living was about to disappear. Yet over much, if not all, of Polynesia an oral tradition continues to flourish, much of it a synthesis of old and new elements. The purpose of this article is to examine something of this creative and ongoing process as it can be viewed in the tradition of dance-drama on the island of Mangaia. An example of a dramatic performance recorded in 1973 is chosen, and the recorded text and a translation are given. The performance is placed in its immediate social context, and attention is paid to the relationship between the performers and their audience. At the same time it is shown that the play also requires a careful consideration of Manganian history and culture. Because the Manganian dance-drama is a highly flexible art form that readily combines new and old elements, a sophisticated understanding requires the adoption of a number of different approaches.

Mangaia is the most southern of a group of fifteen islands now known as the Cook Islands. The oral tradition of present-day Mangaia can be viewed against a well-recorded past, in that a great many Manganian texts of songs and narratives were collected and published by William Wyatt Gill, of the London Missionary Society, who lived on the island from 1852 to 1874. He describes the kinds of occasions on which festivals were held, and speaks of their importance to Manganian oral tradition and history (1876a:ix, 269-73; 1876b:65; 1894:243-58). However, the only eyewitness accounts of festivals held at Mangaia last century are of two occasions focused exclusively on the church: the May missionary festivities (1876b:52-56), and the May school gathering (56-69). All the written accounts lead the reader to believe that the indigenous Manganian festivals, together with

¹ This article is the result of an association between the two authors which has developed over a period of 15 years as a result of our mutual interest in Manganian culture and history.

their associated performances, had been suppressed prior to Gill's arrival on the island (W. Gill 1856, 1880; W. W. Gill 1876a, 1894).

In this century, the ethnologist Te Rangi Hiroa (Peter Buck), who in 1929 lived on Mangaia for some five months, quotes from Gill in asserting that with the introduction of Christianity, the old festivals together with their associated traditions of dance, song, and drama had ceased. According to him, by the time of his visit "the old time amusements" had been replaced by church-based activities, particularly the part-singing of hymns, and the old traditions were no longer being taught; they were in danger of being either forgotten or completely transformed to fit a Christian mold (Buck 1939 and n.d.:688).

While doing ethnographic fieldwork on Mangaia in 1973, McMath observed the Nuku, an annual festival which commemorates the arrival of Christianity (Mark 1976). Although the festival was church-centered, Mangaian tradition and culture were clearly apparent, and in spite of much change there appeared to be more continuity in Mangaian oral tradition than had been expected from a reading of the earlier writings. During the day McMath's interest was taken by the performance of the legend of Tangi'ia, which featured, among other things, a simulation of the preparation and use of kava—this in spite of the fact that the use of the *kava* root (*Piper methysticum*) in Mangaia ceased soon after the arrival of the missionaries.² As the performance was clearly a Mangaian art form, and this indicated the existence of a larger dramatic tradition complete with dance, song, and drama, the situation cannot have been as simple as Gill and Te Rangi Hiroa indicated.³

² The plant itself was nearly absent from the island by 1973 (Sykes 1980:61).

³ The question might be asked as to whether the old tradition may have died out and been re-introduced to Mangaia from another island at a later date. While it may not be possible to give a definitive answer, for several reasons it seems most unlikely. Firstly, Mangaia was relatively isolated, compared with, for example, Rarotonga. Secondly, Gill's accounts focused primarily on the activities and testimonies of persons who had converted to Christianity, but according to information which is contained in his writings, and made explicit by Te Rangi Hiroa (n.d.), there was a politically active "non-Christian" faction on the island as late as 1878. So although the Christians were holding exclusively church-focused festivals, and their activities have been relatively well documented, we do not know what the others were doing. Thirdly, although Gill assumed that with the deaths of his informants all the old knowledge would be lost, Te Rangi Hiroa tells us that while much was gone, much still remained—although he, like Gill, was of the opinion that when certain of the old men he knew died, all would be gone. On the basis even of this information it is clear that a continuity of transmission was still possible, in that the old men (and women) who were involved in selecting the stories and directing the activities in 1973 would have been aged about twenty-one when Te Rangi Hiroa was on Mangaia.

Adaptation to new circumstances inevitably involves change if a culture is to survive. Perhaps it was as a result of wishful thinking or nostalgia that some observers

In this article we argue that contemporary Manganian national festivals represent a new synthesis, a syncretism containing elements of traditional Manganian society, Christianity, and modern-day society.⁴ Dramatizations of old legends (*peu tupuna*) are highlights of these festivals, and also provide evidence of syncretism. (Indeed, they are described by some Manganians as being made up of old stories with new words.) Whether one argues that Christianity has been changed to fit the Manganian mold, or the Manganian tradition has been altered to fit a Christian mold, may depend entirely on one's point of view. It is in either case certain that oral tradition still has a role to play in Manganian society.

The Festivals

At least twice a year Manganians take part in major festivals during which dramatizations of old legends or other items are performed. One of these festivals is the aforementioned Nuku, held annually on October 26. Nuku celebrations are held on most, if not all, of the twelve inhabited islands in the Cook group; they are specifically local affairs, the audiences, with few exceptions, being locally resident Cook Islanders.⁵ The Nuku are one-day events during which, generally, different social groups compete in the following events, in this order: *'iminetuki* (a Cook Islands form of hymn-singing), choral items, biblical pageant, enacted legends (*peu tupuna*), action song, and drum dance.

The other major festival is the Constitution Celebrations, held

confused ideas about social change with ideas about extinction. There is an alternative, and that is to view social change as part of a creative process of adaptation, and to see changes in oral tradition as specific examples of that process.

⁴ According to W. W. Gill's description of the May missionary festival, none of the traditional dramatic arts played a part in either of these annual festivals, although many traditional Manganian values, customs, and accoutrements were present: for example, the concept of a national festival which involved feasting, competition, and the use of specially constructed long shelters (1876b:52-59). These church-based festivals have undoubtedly influenced the development of the contemporary Nuku celebrations. But the festivals described by Gill involved only a lengthy church service (up to three hours!), much hymn-singing, and feasting. The Nuku observed in 1973 did not follow that pattern; it had at least as much to do with Manganian history as it did with the Church. In addition to commemorating the arrival of Christianity to the Cook Islands, it was a celebration of Manganian identity. And the rehearsals of the dramatized legends, together with their performance, communicated many aspects of Manganian culture and history at the same time as they entertained.

⁵ Rarotonga and Aitutaki are the only two islands in the Cook group regularly visited by tourists.

annually in August to mark the anniversary of the Cook Islands Independence in 1965. This event takes place on Rarotonga, the central island in the group and also the capital. In this case the performers and the audience include people from all over the Cooks, and overseas visitors are present. In fact, from very early on it was expected that the activities associated with the Constitution Celebrations would become a tourist attraction.

The Constitution Celebrations share a generally similar pattern with the Nuku observed at Mangaia; but while the Nuku is a one-day event, the Constitution Celebrations' activities span at least a week. On the first night there are competitions in *'iminetuki* and choral items, and on the remaining days groups from different islands compete, in no set order, in enacted legends, song performance and composition (*'ute*), action song, and drum dance. Most of these items are the same as those performed in the Nuku, except that the Constitution Celebrations include *'ute* (which in this context are often satirical and/or political) and do not include the biblical pageants.

Additional festivals are also held on Mangaia to commemorate a special event, such as the arrival of an important visitor on the island or the opening of an airport or a school. As well, items are performed when Mangaians travel together, around the island or overseas, in large parties; in this case, a broader range of traditional items may be performed, in part for the benefit of overseas-born persons of Mangaian descent.⁶ All Mangaian festivals tend to follow the same kind of pattern, although the number, type, and range of the items performed may vary. Whatever the occasion, these activities are always associated with an atmosphere of festivity and competition.

Here we will describe the 1973 Nuku observed on Mangaia, concentrating upon the dramatic performance of the story of Tangi'ia. We will discuss the Mangaian dramatic tradition in general, describe the Nuku at which the Tangi'ia play was performed and the performance itself, give the text and translation of the performance, and then make some concluding remarks.

The Dramatic Tradition

The word *peu* generally means "activity, behavior, custom." In 1972-73, one of the writers heard the term *peu 'etene* (literally, "heathen activity") used to refer to the dramatic performance of legends. Some others prefer the term *peu tupuna* (literally, "ancestral activity"). Since the

⁶ See Loomis 1984 for a discussion of performances by *tere*, or (traveling) parties.

term *'etene* carried negative connotations, this may be more than a casual difference. For example, the use of the term *tupuna*, which conveys ideas of wisdom and values that are to be respected and treasured, may indicate that the speaker takes a particular pride in things Manganian. Since these terms appear to embody two rather different points of view, they may be modern parallels to the social and political divisions noted by Te Rangi Hiroa (n.d.). Manganians, most of whom are bilingual, use the word “legend” to translate the terms *peu 'etene*, *peu tupuna*, and *peu ta'ito* (literally, “ancient activities”). They use the same word to refer sometimes to old stories, and sometimes to dramatizations of such stories.

The *peu tupuna* nowadays appears to be structurally quite similar to some performances described by W. W. Gill (see, for example, 1876a:225-50, 1894:243-58). It presents an entire story through a combination of solo parts and choruses and may include old songs or poetic chants (*pe'e* or *mire*) together with dances, chants, or songs especially composed for the performance. The *peu tupuna* may encompass the entire range of the verbal and performing arts, and conveys historical information concerning persons, places, events, and activities. In contrast to other, more conservative genres in Manganian oral tradition, the performance of *peu tupuna* involves creativity and innovation and encourages a degree of artistic license on the part of the performers. Such license allows the actors to readily combine old and new ideas, especially with regard to interpretation and the use of humor, and thereby insures the continuing vitality and social relevance of this art form.

The Nuku

During the weeks leading up to the 1973 Nuku, each group practiced a choral item and an *'iminetuki* and their young people practiced action songs and drum dances. Each group also chose a biblical passage and created a pageant enacting it, and they selected, dramatized, and rehearsed a legend unique to the island, and in some cases unique to their own particular area.

In the village of Ivirua-Karanga, where McMath was living, some of the leaders met and discussed which legend they thought the village might perform. The recognized experts (*tumu korero*), who are considered to know the best stories and to be most knowledgeable about the language, are the ones who normally determine which items will be included at major festivals. On this occasion, they chose a story and then discussed it among

themselves until they had agreed on all the important details.⁷ Actors were subsequently chosen, and rehearsals were held in the open area between the church and the Sunday school. The performance that evolved was not the act of a single individual, but rather a dramatic presentation involving collective decision-making and the cooperation of many members of the village. The actors did not learn their lines from a set script, but made up their own words to fit the general theme and outline of the story; for this reason they had been chosen, in part, on the basis of their language skills. During the rehearsals many of their lines became set, especially those which proved particularly popular. There was a limit to the place that innovation occupied: while it was actively encouraged in relation to dialogue, it was not permitted in many aspects of the performance. Considerable attention was paid by various specialists to certain kinds of detail, such as the miming of action by individuals or groups.

The Nuku was held at the village of Oneroa. On the morning of the event, people from the other villages (Ivirua-Karanga and Tamarua) arrived at Oneroa by truck and gathered outside the Cook Island Christian Church. At this stage the three village groups were readily identifiable, for within each group the women wore identical dresses and hats. First, the groups performed their choral pieces and *'iminetuki* inside the main Cook Island Christian Church. Later in the morning, the groups staged their biblical pageants outside on a large playing field located across the road from the church; for this event, each group carried its own identifying banner as it walked on to the field, its members ingeniously and appropriately costumed. These performances marked the end of the religious part of the festivities. Following a break, during which visitors ate picnic lunches or had lunch with friends and relatives in their homes, each group performed its dramatized legend (*peu tupuna*). This also took place on the playing field, while the audience watched from the sidelines. Then in the evening the festivities concluded with a dance, in the course of which some members of the different groups presented drum dance and action songs. The dance took place inside the Sunday School building.

The Story of Tangi'ia

At this Nuku the crowd favorite was the legend of Tangi'ia, as performed by the people of the village of Oneroa: McMath's tape recording of the legend was borrowed until the tape broke! Small children could be heard for days calling out lines they remembered from the play.

⁷ According to what we have been told, the process at Oneroa, and the eventual selection and presentation of the Tangi'ia story, seem to have been similar.

The Tangi'ia performance was so popular that it was performed again during the 1974 Constitution Celebrations held at Rarotonga, and it won first prize in the competitions.

The story of Tangi'ia is known to have formed part of Mangaian oral tradition in the early years of the nineteenth century. There are a number of versions of the story of Tangi'ia; one was published by W. W. Gill (1894:143-48), and one will be presented here. The central figure, Tangi'ia, is always a cannibal who demands children to eat, and he is usually killed by poison that has been added to the chiefly drink of *kava* (*Piper methysticum*) offered to him. In Gill's version Tangi'ia is a god who speaks through a priest of the same name. He occasionally demands human flesh in place of the usual offerings of taro and fish, and on one occasion he demands that a man named Marere, a member of the 'Akatauirā clan, should bring his child to be eaten. Marere (who is regarded as the discoverer of three poisons used to kill fish) decides to kill Tangi'ia; he prepares all three poisons, adds them to the kava, then offers the priest the poisoned kava along with his little son. The priest decides to drink the kava before eating the child; it kills him, and the child is saved (143). Gill's version is similar in many respects to the version enacted at Oneroa in 1973. There are also several points of difference.

The Performance of the Story

During the 1973 performance of the story a large group of people at one end of the playing field made up a chorus for the songs. Two lines of dancers radiating out from this group defined an area within which the principal actors performed, and a small group of men provided the drumming that intermittently accompanied the action. In contrast to the biblical costumes worn for the pageants, the basic costume in the *peu tupuna* consisted of a skirt and cape made of the green leaves of the *ti* tree (*Cordyline terminalis*). Tangi'ia possessed, in addition, huge wings that were cleverly attached to his arms. He could open and close these at will, and he used them to good dramatic effect.

While many of the actors' lines had become set during the process of rehearsal, some improvisation was expected of them, so they all had to be on their toes lest they miss their "cues." Although the story is serious and deals with tragedy, in many places the actors used words or actions to please the crowd and keep them entertained. On this occasion all the actors appeared to get quite carried away with their roles, and they embellished the story more and more with each episode.

Drumming, on wooden slit gongs (*ka'ara*), was employed during the performance for two purposes. First, it marked transitions between scenes:

a certain kind of short fast beat on the drum signalled a break between activities or a point where one activity ended and another began. In an open space where all the characters of the play can be seen by the audience, some such device is necessary to separate the different episodes. Second, drumming was employed to intensify meaning. In the episodes where the couples were about to lose their children, low continuous beating helped to create an atmosphere appropriate to the fear and grief they were experiencing. A certain quickening beat announced the arrival or presence of the main actor, Tangi'ia, and aroused fear in the audience, while a kind of running beat (referred to as a "traveling" beat) was used when Marere was collecting the poisons and the women were performing hand actions that mimed the making of kava.

The three songs sung by the chorus in the course of the action provide variety, and also help to explain the story and convey an atmosphere. The opening song introduced the story; the second communicated the grief of the families suffering from Tangi'ia's exploitation; and the final one summarized the story. The two lines of dancers accompanied these songs with hand actions that added further variety and meaning.

The Transcript and Translation

The text presented here was recorded in 1973 by McMath, and was transcribed and translated by Parima in 1988. Because it is a field recording, there are numerous places where it is quite difficult to hear the actors over the laughter and comments of the audience, and some words may have been missed. The cast list that precedes the text was compiled from the tape and with the help of two of the participants. Audience reactions are given in square brackets. The three choral songs are printed in bold type; while the second song was being sung, some dialogue was being spoken.

The text of the play, with the recorded responses of the audience and the accompanying photographs, may give the reader some feeling for what these performances are actually like. The text is also of value in its own right, as representing a neglected area of Polynesian oral tradition: although dance-dramas were formerly performed in a number of island groups, and in some areas still are, only a very few texts of performances have been published.⁸ The transcript will have a special value for the

⁸ The only comparable text and discussion of a Manganian performance to be published is a dramatic reenactment of the arrival of Captain James Cook (W. W. Gill 1894:251-58), although Gill elsewhere publishes some partial texts of performances and incidental information about them. The only other published text of a Polynesian play we

Mangaian people themselves, who now eagerly seek such records. Copies of the original tape recording, the Mangaian language translation and a literal translation into English, together with annotations, are to be placed in the collections of the library in Rarotonga in the Cook Islands and the Hocken Library in Dunedin, New Zealand.

TANGI'IA PE'AU

'Akatutu 'ia e te Oneroa Ekalesia

Nga tangata 'akatutu

Mataora Harry	<i>Tangi'ia</i>
Torotoro Kimipiiti	<i>Papa 1</i>
'Apaina Kareroa	<i>Mama 1</i>
Kite-'i-te-kata Harry	<i>Papa 2</i>
?	<i>Mama 2</i>
Ata'aere Papatua	<i>Papa 3</i>
?	<i>Mama 3</i>
Area'i Ngairua	<i>Marere</i>
Mareva No'oroa	<i>Va'ine-a-Marere</i>
Metu Samuel	<i>Va'ine-a-Tangi'ia</i>

Ki te iti tangata. Kua tata'ia teia tua e 15 mataiti i muri ake i te tuatau 'i rave 'ia tikai 'ia ai. Mei te mea e 'e koto'e anga teta'i no te au mea tei vare, tei tarevake te rauka nei ia maua te tatara apa atu no te reira.

'Akamataanga. Tangi te ka'ara

Va'atara. Teia nei, te 'akamata atu nei te Peu 'Etene a te Oneroa ko te tua'oki teia no Tangi'ia Pe'au. Teta'i ta'ae teia tei tae mai 'i runga 'i to tatou nei 'enua. Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen.

have seen is a Tuamotuan text (Caillot 1914:95-109). Cook Islanders quite often now videotape such performances, and we have been told that recordings made during the annual Constitution Celebrations may be available for purchase through the Cook Island Government.



An audience view of Tangi'ia and another actor.

They are framed by two lines of seated dancers backed by the village chorus. Three minor actors are sitting “off-stage” at the right. Apart from Tangi'ia's wings, costumes are made primarily of natural materials.

Photo: Marivee McMath

Imene Akamata.

Tangi'ia 'e rere mai nei, na te mareva 'o te ao
 Tangi'ia 'e rere mai nei, na te mareva 'o te ao
 To rima 'e pe'au manu te to mai nei e
 Tangi'ia 'e rere mai nei, ta'ae rikarika no te ao
 To rima 'e pe'au manu tei to mai nei e
 Tangi'ia 'e rere mai nei, ta'ae rikarika no te ao
 Tangi'ia 'e rere mai nei, na te mareva 'o te ao
 Tangi'ia 'e rere mai nei, na te mareva 'o te ao
 To rima 'e pe'au manu tei to mai nei e
 Tangi'ia 'e rere mai nei, ta'ae rikarika no te ao.

Tangi'ia. Ko taua ta'ae nei teia 'e karanga ia nei ko Tangi'ia Pe'au tei tere mai na te mareva. Kua tae atu teia ta'ae 'i Kiriapi, Tamarua. Kua no'o atu ana 'i te va'ine no roto 'i te 'oire Veitatei.

Tangi'ia. E aka koreva toku. 'Ua kaki au 'i teta'i tamaiti ei katikati atu naku. Teia nei, ka tere atu au ka kimi 'i teta'i tamaiti ei katikati atu naku.

[Tangi te ka'ara]

Papa 1. E 'oa!

Mama 1. E ou, e Pa!

Papa 1. 'Ie 'akarongo atu e e a'a te tangitangi a te ka'ara?

Mama 1. Aue! 'E ta'u 'oa e! 'E ka'ara tumatetenga teia.

Papa 1. E a'a ia 'e ma? 'I tano mai 'oki 'ua 'ati ta'u pererau 'i te tamaki.

Mama 1. Akamaro'iro'i e ta'u tokorua.

Tangi'ia. E, te ngutu'are, ei!

Papa 1. E ou! E a'a to'ou tere 'i toku ngutu'are?

Tangi'ia. E 'aere mai nei au, e tiki 'i teta'i tamaiti.

[Kata te matakitaki (no te tu 'i te tara a Tangi'ia)]

Papa 1. Kite koe e te ta'ae, 'are a maua tamariki. Te no'o nei maua 'i konei, 'angai puaka ta maua 'anga'anga.

Mama 1. Aue, e Pa e.

Tangi'ia. I a'a koe e rave mai 'i teta'i 'anga'anga tarevake. Mei te mea e te 'amo mai nei koe 'iaku ['i a aku]. Ko koe, ta'au va'ine e ta'au nga tamariki, ka kai pau rava au 'i te reira.

Mama 1. Aue, e Pa e! Kimi'ia teta'i ravenga 'ia 'oro tatou e . . .

Papa 1. Meitaki e te ta'ae. Tano mai ra koe 'i te tuatau 'ua 'ati ta'u pererau. 'Aere ra, naringa koe 'i tano mai e te vai nei ta'u pukupuku patia 'ia atu koe e au 'i ta'u korare . . .

[Tangi te ka'ara. 'aere a Tangi'ia]

E, Ma?

Mama 1. E ou, e Pa!

Papa 1. 'Ua rongo 'oki koe 'i te tara a te ta'ae?

Mama 1. Aue, te rikarika e . . . aue e.

Papa 1. Kakaro mai 'oki koe 'e 'apikepika teia. Me ka 'oro'oro 'oki taua 'i Tava'enga to'ona pererau oki.

Mama 1. E tika 'oki ta'au, aue.

Papa 1. Teia 'ua ka 'akakoromaki taua. 'Ua tangi rai au 'i a taua nga tamariki. E rua rai 'oki 'i te ora'anga.

[Kata te matakitaki]

Tera 'ua e 'akatika te pati 'akatenga a teia ta'ae. Ka 'apai ta taua mata'iapo.

Mama 1. Aue ta maua nga tamariki e.

Papa 1. Kite koe e a maua nga tamariki ka 'aere 'ia tika te 'akakoro'anga 'o te ta'ae.

[Tangi ka'ara]

Mama 1. Aue e.

Papa 1. E 'akakoromaki e 'oa. No tei 'ati ta'u vaevae 'i tuku ai au 'i ta taua tamaiti. Tangi rai au 'i a au e ta'u tamaiti. Naringa 'i a'a ta'u vaevae 'i 'ati.

Mama 1. Aue e.

[Tangi te ka'ara e motu]

Papa 1. Tangi'ia ei! Tangi'ia ei! Teia mai nei au e kare 'i to va'apiro.

Tangi'ia. Ahahaha, ahahaha, ahahaha.

Papa 1. 'Ua manuia ra koe 'i tano mai, 'ua 'ati ta'u pererau.

Tangi'ia. Ahahaha, ahahaha. Iaaamu, iaaamu.

Papa 1. Teia nei te tuku nei au 'i ta'u tamaiti 'ei va'apiro na'au.

Tangi'ia. Ia koi e ia! 'ma'i. Ngaungau.

[Kata te matakitaki]

Papa 1. Aue ta'u tamaiti 'ua kainga e te ta'ae. E to te tapere ei! E to te tapere ei! Tera te tangata 'i Tamarua, e tangata kai tangata! 'Ia no'o te'ate'a mamao te au ngutu'are!

Tangi'ia. 'Ua roaroa ake nei, 'ua topa teia ki kopu.

Mama 2. E Pa!

Papa 2. E ou e Ma!

Mama 2. Ka 'aere au ka 'angai 'i ta taua 'anau.

Papa 2. 'Angaiia ra ['angai 'i a ra].

Tangi'ia. Teia nei, te manako atu nei au ka 'aere 'aka'ou atu rai au ka kimi 'aka'ou 'i teta'i tamaiti potakataka 'i a 'ue'ue rava atu ta'u kopu.

Mama 2. E pe ma. 'Aere mai. E kai e pe ma.

[Tangi te ka'ara]

Aue, Aue toe, aue.

[Tangi 'uatu rai te ka'ara, e motu]

Papa 2. E ma 'aua'a koe 'e mania. [Pakakina, pakakina]. 'Aua'a koe 'e mania. [Pakakina, pakakina].

[Kata te matakitaki]

- Mama 2. Aue, aue, aueee . . .
- Tangi'ia E te ngutu'are ei!
- Papa 2. E no'o 'i reira.
- Tangi'ia. E 'aere mai nei au . . .
- Papa 2. E a'a!
- Tangi'ia. E tiki 'i ta korua tama'ine potakataka rava atu, 'aau'a te mea tuere, 'ei mea potakataka tikai. 'Ei kaikai atu naku.
- Mama 2. Aue.

[Tangi te ka'ara. 'aere a Tangi'ia]

- Papa 2. E Ma!
- Mama 2. E ou ee!
- Papa 2. 'Are e tika 'iaku ['i a aku].
- Mama 2. Aue toe toe Pa e. 'I te tangi e.
- Papa 2. Teia ra te nga'i kino. Me kore taua e 'akatika ka kainga [kai i nga] taua e ta taua 'anau katoatoa.
- Mama 2. Aue toe ee.

[Kata te matakitaki]

E a'a atu te ravenga.

- Papa 2. Tera 'ua ka 'akatika taua 'i te 'inangaro 'o te ta'ae.
- Mama 2. Aue ta'u anau e! Ka 'akape'ea ra! Aue toe! 'Are e kino e. 'Apaina atu teta'i 'o ta'i 'ia ora ake taua 'e ta taua toenga mai 'i ta taua tamariki. Aue e.
- Papa 2. E ma!

[Tangi te ka'ara]

- Mama 2. Aue. Aue ta taua tamariki. Aue te tangi 'i te tamariki. Tera ake te ta'ae puaka-taona.

[Kata te matakitaki]

- Papa 2. Aue, aue.

Mama 2. Aue ta'u tamaiti. 'I na ake ana ra. 'I na 'i karo atu ana au a ngaro atu ei 'i roto 'i tena kopu e.

Tangi'ia. Iaaa. 'Ua kite rai au e 'o au rai te ta'ae 'i runga 'i A'ua'u 'enua nei.

Mama 2. Aue toe. 'Aere ra 'e ta'u tamaiti e. A ngaro atu koe 'i roto 'i te kopu 'o tera atu tangata neneva. Aue.

Tangi'ia.A! 'Ua reka ke ta korua tama'ine. Mei te kiko 'o te kina momona. Taviviki mai 'e 'ia, taviviki. Iaaa.

[Ngau! Ngau!]

[Kata te matakitaki]

Mama & Papa. Aue.

[Tangi te ka'ara]

Tangi'ia. Aue te reka nei teia pae 'anga'anga. 'I teia nei ka 'aere 'aka'ou rai au ka kai 'aka'ou rai 'i teta'i tamaiti naku.

[Tangi te ka'ara]

Papa 3. E ta'u 'rererau ['are rau] ei!

Mama 3. E ou e Pa!

Papa 3. Tera ake 'oa taua tuputupua kutekute nei 'e 'aere mai nei.

Tangi'ia. 'Oi!

Papa 3. Aue toe te maku e! Aue.

Tangi'ia. 'Oi!

Mama & Papa. Aue. Aue.

Papa 3. 'Aere!

Tangi'ia. E 'aere mai nei au.

Papa 3. E a'a ta 'au 'i inangaro! 'Aere!

Tangi'ia. 'Oa ta korua tama'ine, 'e apinga tikai tona 'u'a te ra'i. E 'oke mai koe na te ra kopu 'e 'oni'oni.

[Kata te matakitaki]

Mama & Papa. Aue toe e, aue toe.

[Tangi te ka'ara]

Papa 3. Aue toe Ma e.

Mama 3. E a'a atu ra 'oki ta taua ravenga?

[Tangi atu rai te ka'ara e motu]

Papa 3. E Ma!

Mama 3. E ou e Pa!

Papa 3. Tuku mai 'i ta taua tama'ine ka 'apai 'ei 'ariki atu 'i te ta'ae.

Mama 3. Te tangi nei 'oa au.

Papa 3. 'Are a taua ravenga.

Mama 3. E a'a atu ra 'oki te ravenga?

Papa 3. Me kore taua 'e 'apai 'i ta taua tama'ine 'o taua rai te 'openga ka mate.

Mama 3. 'Are ['e] kino e Pa te 'akatika nei au. Te ra mai, 'aere ra 'apaina.

[Tangi te ka'ara]

Aue. Aue.

[Motu te tangi ka'ara]

Aue. Aue. 'Aere ra 'e ta'u tama'ine.

Papa 3. Aue toe e te tangi i ta'u tama'ine e. Mania e ia. Tangi'ia 'ei!

Tangi'ia 'Ou! 'Ia koi mai.

Papa 3. Teia 'oa ta'u tama'ine 'ei kai na'au 'i teia avatea.

Tangi'ia. 'Ia koi e koe 'ua raparapa ta'u kopu. Taviviki mai.

Papa 3. E a'a.

Tangi'ia.T aviviki mai.

Papa 3. 'Are koe.

Tangi'ia. E ia, 'ua raparapa ta'u kopu a kainga [kai i nga] atu koe e au.

[Kata te matakitaki]

Papa 3. E a'a.

Tangi'ia. Tukua mai.

Papa 3. Tera mai.

[Kata te matakitaki]

[Tangi te ka'ara]

Papa 3. Aue te tangi 'i ta'u tama'ine e. Aue toe toe.

['Akamutu te tangi ka'ara]

Tangi'ia. Teia nei 'ua 'akarongo au e 'e te no'ora [no'o a ra] teta'i tangata tei karanga 'ia tona 'ingoa 'e ko Marere. E 'apinga tikai tona tama'ine no te taurekareka 'i te va'apiro atu. 'Are 'e kino te tere atu nei au 'i te kimi 'i a ia. E Marere ee . . . i! E Marere! E Marere ee . . . i! E Marere!

Va'ine. E Marere!

Marere.E 'ou.

Va'ine.Te 'akarongo'ra ['akarongo a ra] koe 'i tera reo.

Tangi'ia. E Marere! E Marere!

Va'ine. Tei te mareva.

Tangi'ia. E Marere! E Marere!

Marere. A! 'Ua rongu au.

[Kata te matakitaki]

Tangi'ia. E Marere! E Marere!

Marere. E ou!

Tangi'ia. E 'aere mai nei au e karanga 'i a 'au 'ia 'apai ake koe 'i ta korua tama'ine potakataka, te taurekareka, te 'u'a 'i te kikokiko, 'i runga 'i ta'u ko'atu 'ei etieti atu naku.

Marere. Kare 'e tika 'i aku ['i a aku].

Tangi'ia. Me kare koe 'e 'apai ake, ko koe 'e ta'au va'ine 'e ta korua tama'ine 'akaperepere ka katikati katoatoa 'ia kotou 'e 'aku.

Marere. A-u-e. A-u-e.

Va'ine. E Marere!

Marere. E ou.

Va'ine. E a'tena tara 'ou.

Marere. Tera ake ta'ae 'oki. 'Ua 'inangaro 'i ta taua tama'ine potakataka.

[Kata te matakitaki]

Va'ine. Aue-e-Marere.

Marere. 'Ua 'inangaro 'oa ei va'amura na 'ana.

Va'ine. Aue! 'Are koe 'i 'akaari atu ana 'i tera 'apinga.

[Kata te matakitaki]

Marere. 'Are rai 'oki ona pu'apinga. Ka mate. 'I kakaro ra 'e 'a 'o 'ona rima.

Va'ine. 'Are koe 'i 'akaari atu.

Marere. No te a'a.

[Kata te matakitaki]

Va'ine. E a'a?

Marere. Me 'are ake a 'au ravenga 'e mate ei 'ia taua teia ta'ae.

Va'ine. No te a'a.

Marere. Mena! Mena!

Va'ine. E 'aere atu koe 'i te Raei.

Marere. E a'a?

Va'ine. E koi mai koe 'i te ora.

Marere. 'Ae.

Va'ine. 'Eke ake koe na Tua'ati.

Marere. 'Ae.

Va'ine. Tei reira nga pukupuku 'utu.

Marere. 'Oia.

Va'ine. Rave mai koe, 'apai mai koe 'i to taua ngutu'are,

Marere. A-a-a-a! A-a-a-a!

Va'ine. Ka ropa taua.

[Tangi ka'ara: tangi ka'ara 'oro'oro]

Marere. 'Ua oti 'oa.

Va'ine. 'Ia koi, 'ia koi.

- Marere. 'A! 'Ua oti, te rere nei au.
- Va'ine. 'Are 'e kino, me 'aere koe, 'are koe nei 'i te ora ta'i nga'uru ma varu ka kite 'aia
'i teta'i 'apinga ka pera 'aia.
- Imene. Tera, te tama a Marere
Aue, te tangi
Tera tu kino nei
Te mamae nei 'a roto 'i taku ngakau.**
- Va'ine. Aue taku tama'ine 'akaperepere.
Tera, te tama a Marere.
- Tangi'ia. Te roa 'i ta'u katikati
**Aue, te tangi
Teia tu kino nei
Te mamae nei 'a roto 'i taku ngakau.**
- Va'ine. Aue, aue, aue.
**'Aere, 'aere, 'aere ra 'e taku tama'ine
Pure ki te 'Atu, kia ora mai koe
'Aere, 'aere, 'aere ra 'e taku tama'ine
Pure ki te 'Atu, kia ora mai koe.**
- Marere. No'o ake ra. E pure ki te Atua no taua 'e ta taua tama'ine.
- Va'ine. Mai 'ia 'ongi 'i a atu.
- Marere. Tera mai.
- Va'ine. Aue taku tama'ine 'akaperepere e! Aue taku tama'ine 'akaperepere e! 'Aere ra 'e
taku tama'ine.
**'Aere, 'aere, 'aere ra 'e taku tama'ine
Pure ki te 'Atu, kia ora mai koe.**
- Va'ine. Aue taku tama'ine 'akaperepere e
**'Aere, 'aere, 'aere ra 'e taku tama'ine
Pure ki te 'Atu, kia ora mai koe.**
- [Motu te imene]
- Va'ine. Aue taku tama'ine e. 'Aere ra 'e taku tama'ine na te Atua koe 'e tauturu.
- Marere. 'Oi!
- Tangi'ia. 'Oe [e ou]!
- Marere. Teia mai nei au.
- Tangi'ia. A'a'a.
- Marere. 'E 'akatika 'i to manako.

- Tangi'ia. I!
- Marere. Teta'i na'au manga mea 'ei va'apiro na'au.
- Tangi'ia. Mmm?
- Marere. E a'a ara?
- Tangi'ia. 'Oa 'e te taeake tona 'u'a, 'ua potakataka. Aaaa, Aaaa.
- Marere. E' [E ia], E' [e ia]!
- Tangi'ia. E a'a tena.
- Marere. E pati'anga teia 'i a 'au. Me ka 'ariki mai koe, 'o te reira ia.
- Tangi'ia. E tara ana 'oki koe na mua.
- Marere. 'O te kai 'are 'o te mea pu'apinga te reira. Na mua ana taua 'ia tongi ana koe 'i ta'u unuunu a . . .
- Tangi'ia. A'a?
- Marere. E unuunu 'a, 'a kava Maori.
- Tangi'ia. A 'a 'a. 'Ua tano tena 'ia kakai rava atu au 'i to tama'ine. 'I na ake 'e ia ['i te tama'ine]. E ia paia to mea.
- Marere. Ae. Aae.
- Tangi'ia. 'Ia koi. Mai' ['omai]. Mmm. Ki te koe 'e te taeake 'i to mea ta'i rai kapu 'ua veravera ta'u rape taringa.
- Marere. A'a'a, 'ua tano tena.
- Tangi'ia. Mai 'aka'ou teta'i 'ia tano reka.
- [Kata te tangata]
- Marere. E a'a?
- Tangi'ia. Mai' ['omai], Mai' ['omai].
- Marere. E a'a?
- Tangi'ia. Kite koe 'e te taeake e ta'i, e rua kapu 'ua konakona [Name]*, [*Name—tangata rongonui no te kaikava]. 'E ia, takia mai, ka kai au . . . ['ua kona].
- Marere. 'Are koe 'e 'inangaro kapu 'aka'ou.
- Tangi'ia. No te a'a, ma'ani mai koe, 'ua kapu.
- Marere. 'Ei.

Tangi'ia. 'Ua kapu, 'ua kapu, 'Ua konakona. Kite koe 'e te taeake 'ua anini ta'u pauru. 'Are 'e kino ka 'aere au 'i ko 'i ta'u va'ine. No'o ake koe 'e te taeake.

[Paku]

Aaa! Aaa!

Marere. E kai ra! [Paku!] E kai ra! [Paku!] E kai ra 'i to kutukutu.

Tangi'ia. Aaaa! Aaaa! [Mate a Tangi'ia]

Va'ine a

Tangi'ia. Kua roa ake nei te au ra 'i topa ki muri. 'Are rai taku 'ereiti 'i 'oki mai ake 'i to maua ngutu'are. 'Ua 'uke ta'u umu, 'ua tiaki au 'ia 'oki mai ake 'i tena puku tiromi. E te manako nei au ka 'aere atu au ka kimi 'aere e tei 'ia 'aia te ngai 'i 'aere ai. Aue koe 'e taku 'ereiti 'e Tangi'ia e. Aue, aue.

Marere. A'a'a! A'a'a!

Va'ine a

Tangi'ia. Aue, aue.

'Imene 'openga.

Tukuna 'ia te tama 'a Marere, 'e Tangi'ia Pe'au e
 'I kai toto ana koe tama 'i Tamarua e
 Tera te 'openga 'ua inu koe 'i te kava konakona tukerai
 Aue ko te mate 'e tama kare 'e tangi mai e
 Tukuna 'ia te tama 'a Marere, 'e Tangi'ia Pe'au e
 'I kai toto ana koe tama 'i Tamarua e
 Tera te 'openga 'ua inu koe 'i te kava konakona tukerai
 Aue ko te mate 'e tama kare 'e tangi mai e
 Me 'aere 'aere 'aere 'aere 'ua e
 To vaerua kino 'e Tangi'ia
 Tiri ei koe ('i) to va'ine
 Me 'aere 'aere 'aere 'aere 'ua e
 To vaerua kino 'e Tangi'ia
 Tiri ei koe ('i) to va'ine
 Me ta taua tama'ine
 'Oro mai ra 'e 'ine 'ia 'ongi pakakina 'uake taua e
 Me ta taua tama'ine
 'Oro mai ra 'e 'ine 'ia 'ongi pakakina 'uake taua e
 Mauria 'ia ra te 'au 'o te Mesia e Marere
 Nana 'e tuku mai te ora
 Mauria 'ia ra te 'au 'o te Mesia e Marere
 Nana 'e tuku mai te ora
 No ta taua tama'ine purotu
 Te mamae nei 'a roto 'i taku ngakau
 No ta taua tama'ine purotu
 Te mamae nei 'a roto 'i taku ngakau.

WINGED TANGI'IA

Performed by the Oneroa Church Group

Main Characters

Mataora Harry	<i>Tangi'ia</i>
Torotoro Kimipiiti	<i>1st man</i>
'Apaina Kareroa	<i>1st woman</i>
Kite-'i-te-kata Harry	<i>2nd man</i>
?	<i>2nd woman</i>
Ata'aere Papatua	<i>3rd man</i>
?	<i>3rd woman</i>
Area'i Ngairua	<i>Marere</i>
Mareva No'oroa	<i>Marere's wife</i>
Metu Samuel	<i>Tangi'ia's wife</i>

To our people. This story is written 15 years after the performance actually took place. If anyone is slighted or offended we sincerely apologize for that.



An audience view of the area where the Tangi'ia drama was enacted.
Two lines of seated dancers, backed by the village chorus, await the actors.

Photo: Marivee McMath

[Sound of drums]

Master of Ceremonies.

Now, Oneroa will begin their legend. This is the story about Winged Tangi'ia. He is one of the terrible ones who arrived on our island. Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen.

Introductory song

**Tangi'ia who has flown here through space,
Tangi'ia who has flown here through space,
Your arms are birds' wings that have brought you here.
Tangi'ia who has flown here is the most feared and terrible in the world.
Your arms are birds' wings that have brought you here.
Tangi'ia who has flown here is the most feared and terrible in the world.
Tangi'ia who has flown here through space,
Tangi'ia who has flown here through space,
Your arms are birds' wings that have brought you here.
Tangi'ia who has flown here is the most feared and terrible in the world.**

Tangi'ia. I am the terrible one who has traveled here through space, whom everyone calls Tangi'ia Pe'au. He arrived at Kiriapi in Tamarua. He lived with a woman from the district of Veitatei.⁹

Tangi'ia. Oh, I am so hungry. I am hungry for a child, I feel like nibbling one. Now I will go out and find a child to nibble.¹⁰

[The sound of drums signaling a change of scenery]

1st man. Dear!

1st woman. Yes, Pa!

1st man. Could you find out what the sound of the drums is about?

1st woman. Alas, dear, it's tragic news.

1st man. What is it, Ma? Its arrival is untimely, for my wings have been broken in battle.

1st woman. Have courage, my partner.

⁹ In this monologue Tangi'ia introduces himself to the audience, speaking of himself part of the time in the third person. Manganians recognize this as a technique whereby an actor, while acting his or her part, can also opt briefly and in an informer role to tell the audience about something of particular importance.

¹⁰ Tangi'ia's desire to eat a child in a playful manner, nibbling at his meal without fear of attackers, reflects his arrogance and position of strength.

Tangi'ia. Hello, household!

1st man. Yes, what is the purpose of your visit to my house?

Tangi'ia. I have come to get a child.

[The audience laughs at his deliberate pronunciation and his accompanying facial expressions, which indicate that great strain is involved in producing each word in this sepulchral tone.]

1st man. You see, feared one, we have no children. The two of us live alone here. Our job is feeding pigs.

1st woman. Alas, Pa.

Tangi'ia. Don't make a mistake! If you are lying to me, I will eat you all: you, your wife, and all your children.

1st woman. Alas Pa, work out how we can run away, alas.

1st man. Very well, feared one, for you have arrived while my wings are broken. So, go. If you had arrived when I was still healthy and strong, I would have pierced you with my spear.

[Drums signal Tangi'ia's exit]

Ma?

1st woman. Yes, Pa.

1st man. You have heard what the feared one said?

1st woman. Alas it is so tragic, alas!

1st man. Look here, I am weak. If we have to run to Tava'enga, his wings.

1st woman. Oh, alas, you are right.

1st man. And so we have to bear it. I love our children too. Life has only given us two. . . .

[The audience laughs uproariously, for this implies they were unable to have more children. Being infertile is like being a cripple; it is something to be joked about.]

So we have to agree to what the feared one asked. Our first-born will have to go.

1st woman. Alas, our children, alas!

1st man. You see, our children will have to go so the feared one's purpose is served.

[Drums signal Tangi'ia's entry and again bring fear]

- 1st woman. Alas, alas.
- 1st man. Bear this, dear. Because my leg is broken I have to let our child go. I love you, my child. If only my leg were not broken.
- 1st woman. Alas, alas.
- [Drumming which persists, then suddenly stops, reinforcing the feeling of fear]
- 1st man. Tangi'ia, Tangi'ia! I am here to bring your "hunger satisfier."
- Tangi'ia. Haaa, haaa! Yum, yum!
- 1st man. You are lucky, because you have asked while my wing is broken.
- Tangi'ia. Ahahaha, ahahaha! Yeum, yeum!
- 1st man. And now I'm letting my child go to satisfy your hunger.
- Tangi'ia. Hurry up you, give it here! Chomp, chomp!
- [The audience laughs, applauding the fact that the father has offered some resistance. Drumming begins, and continues throughout the speech that follows.]
- 1st man. Alas, my child is being eaten by the feared one. People of the district! There is a man in Tamarua, he eats humans! Households, beware!
- Tangi'ia. It's been a while, and my stomach has gone down.
- 2nd woman. Pa!
- 2nd man. Yes, Ma!
- 2nd woman. I'm going to feed our children.
- 2nd man. Feed them.
- Tangi'ia. And now I'm thinking I will go out again to find another fat child so my stomach will get even bigger.
- 2nd woman. Children, come here and eat.
- [Drums signal a change of scene, then persist. At first loud, they gradually get softer, then suddenly stop, creating a feeling of fear.]
- Alas, alas, oh alas!
- 2nd man. Ma, don't make too much noise! [slap, slap!] Don't make so much noise! [slap, slap!]
- [The audience laughs because the husband was hitting the woman's bottom to stop her wailing. People are laughing at this public imitation of a husband hitting his

wife. By church law, mainly, husbands are not allowed to hit their wives, so this act is perhaps being seen as a humorous act of defiance of that law.]

2nd woman. Alas, alas, alas!

Tangi'ia. Hello, household!

2nd man. Sit down there.

Tangi'ia. I have come. . .

2nd man. What for?

Tangi'ia. To get your fattest daughter, not the skinny one but the roundest one, so I can eat her.

2nd woman. Alas, alas.

[The audience is laughing. The drums signal Tangi'ia's exit and the audience continues to laugh as the woman wails and writhes on the ground.]

2nd man. Ma!

2nd woman. Yes, alas.

2nd man. I don't allow it [the noise his wife is making].

2nd woman. O Pa, alas, alas, alas! It is so tragic [that words cannot properly express it]!

2nd man. But the trouble is, if we don't agree we will be eaten and so will all our children.

2nd woman. Alas,

[Audience laughs at the woman's crying and wailing]

What else can be done?

2nd man. And so we have to agree to what the feared one wants.

2nd woman. Alas, my children! What else, alas! Well, take one so we can live, and so can the rest of our children. Alas!

2nd man. Ma!

[Drums signal Tangi'ia's entry]

2nd woman. Alas, alas our children! Alas, this is tragic for the children. Here comes that pig of a feared one.

[Audience laughs]

2nd man. Alas, alas.

2nd woman. Alas, my child. Get out of the way so I can see my child disappear into his stomach.
Alas.

[Audience laughs]

Tangi'ia. Aha. Now I know I am the most feared one on this land of A'u A'u [an ancient name for Mangaia].

2nd woman. Alas, go my child, all the way into the stomach of that stupid man, alas!

Tangi'ia. Ah! Your daughter is ravishing, just like the flesh of a fat, rich sea egg. Hurry up you, hurry! Ah. [Chomp. Chomp.]¹¹

[The audience laughs]

2nd man and
woman. Alas!

[Drums signal another episode]

Tangi'ia. Oh, this is lovely. And now I am going out again to eat another child.

[Sound of drums]

3rd man. Housewife!¹²

3rd woman. Yes, Pa!

3rd man. Here comes that brown-spotted ghost.

Tangi'ia. Oi!

3rd man. How terrifying, alas!

Tangi'ia. Oi!

3rd man and
woman. Alas, alas.

3rd man. Go away.

Tangi'ia. I have come. . .

¹¹ When the children were delivered to Tangi'ia, he "ate" them by engulfing them in his wings. One of the minor actors in the play explained that Tangi'ia took a child into his wings first (like a hen gathering her chicks underneath her wing), then after a short pause ate her.

¹² The word 'arerau is here an image referring to the man's wife ('are = house + rau = leaves = thatched house)

3rd man. What do you want? Go away!

Tangi'ia. Your daughter's thighs are fat.¹³ Give her to me so I can be satisfied!

[The audience laughs at the double entendre]

3rd man and
woman.

Alas, alas.

[The drums sound, and continue through the next two lines]

3rd man. Alas, Ma!

3rd woman. What else can we do?

3rd man. Ma!

3rd woman. Yes, Pa!

3rd man. Let me have our daughter so I can offer her to the feared one.

3rd woman. I dread this.

3rd man. But we can't do anything else.

3rd woman. Well, what else can we do?

3rd man. If we don't take our daughter it is the end for both of us.

3rd woman. Okay Pa, I agree. Here, go and take her.

[Sound of drums]

Alas, alas.

[Drums suddenly stop]

Alas, alas. Go, my daughter.

3rd man. Alas, I love you, my daughter. [To his wife, who is still wailing] Shut up, you. Tangi'ia!

Tangi'ia. Yes, hurry up!

3rd man. Here is my daughter for you to eat this afternoon.

Tangi'ia. Hurry up, you, my stomach is empty. Hurry it up.

3rd man. What?

¹³ As well as a reference to their culinary potential, there is a sexual implication here: the girl has shapely, attractive legs.

- Tangi'ia. Hurry.
- 3rd man. Aren't you. . .
- Tangi'ia. Here, my stomach is empty—or I'll eat. . .
- [The audience laughs at the man's playing dumb as a way of delaying Tangi'ia]
- 3rd man. What?
- Tangi'ia. Let her go!
- 3rd man. Here you are.
- [The audience laughs. The sound of drums indicates Tangi'ia's authority as he takes the child as his meal.]
- 3rd man. Alas, my lovely daughter, alas.
- [Drums stop, indicating a change of scene]
- Tangi'ia. Now, I have heard there lives a man called Marere. His daughter is very beautiful to eat,¹⁴ so I will go and find him. Marere, Marere! Marere, Marere!
- M's wife. Marere!
- Marere. Yes.
- M's wife. Can you hear that call?
- Tangi'ia. Marere, Marere!
- M's wife. It's far away.
- Tangi'ia. Marere, Marere!
- Marere. Ah, I can hear it.
- [Marere and his wife have been playing dumb, pretending they don't hear Tangi'ia. The audience laughs at this.]
- Tangi'ia. Marere, Marere!
- Marere. Yes!
- Tangi'ia. I have come to tell you about your daughter who is plump and beautiful, whose thighs are nice, and to demand you bring her onto my altar so I can tear her up.

¹⁴ The word *taurekareka*, “beautiful” or “pretty,” is not a word normally applied to something you are going to eat.

Marere. I won't agree.

Tangi'ia. If you don't bring her—you, your wife, and your dear daughter,—I will eat you up.

Marere. Alas, alas.

M's wife. Marere!

Marere. Yes!

M's wife. What's the news?

Marere. Only that feared one. He desires our plump daughter.

[The audience laughs at the double entendre]

M's wife. Alas, Marere!

Marere. He wants to devour her.

M's wife. Alas, you didn't show him this? [She shows her biceps, flexing her arm upwards]

[She is small and has little muscle, so draws quite a laugh from the audience]

Marere. Well, they're useless, they will be overcome. Well, look, he has four arms! [He is twice as strong and Marere's muscles will be useless]

M's wife. But, you didn't show [your muscle to him]?

Marere. Oh, yes.

[The audience laughs, knowing he has little strength]

M's wife. What?

Marere. Have you no other plan for killing this ferocious creature?

M's wife. Oh, yes.

Marere. Let's have it, let's have it!

M's wife. You go over to the Raei . . . [a particularly barren part of the makatea, an ancient uplifted coral reef]

Marere. What for?

M's wife. To collect some *ora papua* [poisonous roots of the vine (*Derris*

malaccensis)].¹⁵

- Marere. And?
- M's wife. You climb down at Tua-ati,
- Marere. And?
- M's wife. There you will find some fruit of the 'utu' [*Barringtonia asiatica*].¹⁶
- Marere. Yes, all right.
- M's wife. Get them and bring them to our home,
- Marere. Aaaah, aaaah! [A sigh of satisfaction]
- M's wife. And we will prepare them.

[While the drums sound, Marere goes out looking for the poisonous plant materials. Meanwhile the two lines of young women perform hand actions (*kapa rima*) which mime the making of kava.]

- Marere. It's finished.
- M's wife. Hurry, hurry!
- Marere. Ah, that's enough. I'm going.
- M's wife. Okay. When you're gone, you won't be gone for the hour eighteen before he feels something. He'll be like this. . . .¹⁷

Song [interspersed with dialogue]

**There is Marere's child.
Alas, it is so sad,
This terrible event.
My heart hurts so much.**

- M's wife. Alas, my dear daughter.
- There is Marere's child.**
- Tangi'ia. My dinner has taken a while.

¹⁵ This is a poisonous plant occasionally used to kill fish. When its roots are crushed and mixed with water, they make a lethally poisonous brew.

¹⁶ This fruit is also crushed and used to poison fish. Tangi'ia is so strong that Marere and his wife are going to give him two poisons, a double dose.

¹⁷ The exaggeration of time in the idiom "the hour eighteen" indicates that it will not take long for the poison to act.

**Alas, it is so sad,
This terrible event.
My heart hurts so much.**

M's wife.

Alas, alas, alas.

**Go, go, go, my daughter,
Pray to God you will be saved.
Go, go, go, my daughter,
Pray to God you will be saved.**

Marere.

You stay here. Pray to God for us and our daughter.

M's wife.

Let me kiss her goodbye.

Marere.

Here.

M's wife.

Alas, my dear daughter, alas, my dear daughter! Go then, my daughter.

**Go, go, go, my daughter,
Pray to God you will be saved.**

M's wife.

Alas, my dear daughter.

**Go, go, go, my daughter.
Pray to God you will be saved.**

Alas, my daughter. Go, my daughter, and God will help you.

Marere.

Ohi!

Tangi'ia.

Oh, yeah!

Marere.

Here I have come.

Tangi'ia.

Ahahaha!

Marere.

To satisfy your wishes.

Tangi'ia.

Hi!

Marere.

[Offering the kava] Just a little something to satisfy you.

Tangi'ia.

Mmm?

Marere.

And now what?

Tangi'ia.

Oh my friend, her legs are plump and shapely. Ahaha, ahaha!

Marere.

Hey, hey!

Tangi'ia.

What is it now?

- Marere. I beg of you, if you would allow me—if not, that’s all right. . .
- Tangi’ia. You say it first.
- Marere. Food is not the most important thing. Let us, if we may, taste my drink of. . .
- Tangi’ia. Of what?
- Marere. A drink of *kava maori*.¹⁸
- Tangi’ia. Ahaha, that’s right, so I can really enjoy eating your daughter. You [to the girl], get out of the way. You [to Marere], do your thing! [in other words, let’s get on with the drinking].
- Marere. Yes, yes.
- Tangi’ia. Hurry up, give it here. Mmm . . . [drinking the kava]. Oh, your drink, my friend, wow, one cup and my ears are warm already.
- Marere. Ahaha, that’s good.
- Tangi’ia. Give me another one, just to get the feeling.
- [The audience laughs. While drinking the kava Tangi’ia has become steadily more drunk; he is slurring his speech and staggering about, all the while accompanied by the laughter of the audience. This public display of drunkenness flouts current opinion whereby according to some it is immoral to drink, let alone get drunk, in public.]
- Marere. How is it?
- Tangi’ia. Here, give it here!
- Marere. How now?
- Tangi’ia. You see my friend, one or two cups and [Name]* is drunk.¹⁹ Here, pass it over. I . . . will drink. [Tangi’ia is getting very drunk now and is really slurring his words.]
- Marere. You don’t want another cup?

¹⁸ The expression *kava maori* refers to the poisoned brew, but is also an implicit reference to Mangaian bush beer.

¹⁹ A well known local drinker from the village of Tamarua was named here. He is said to drink a lot of bush beer, but not quite to be an alcoholic.

- Tangi'ia. Oh, yes, make it, serve it up.²⁰
- Marere. Here.
- Tangi'ia. Serve it up, serve it up. I'm drunk. Well, my friend, my head is spinning. Never mind, I have to go to my wife. I'll leave you, my friend. [Falls to the ground].
Aaah, aaah!
- Marere. Take this! [Thumps him] Take this! [Killing him] You've got what you deserved.
- Tangi'ia. Aaah, aaah! [Dies]
- Tangi'ia's wife. It's been days now and my dear one has not returned to our home. The oven is ready and I have waited, but he has not returned for his *puku tiromi* [a special dish of mashed taro] and his *kou poke* [another special dish of mashed taro in coconut sauce]. And now I think I have to go out and find where he's gone. Alas, my dear one Tangi'ia. Alas, alas.
- Marere. Ahaha! Ahaha!
- Tangi'ia's wife. Alas, alas.

Ending song,²¹

**Tangi'ia Pe'au let go of Marere's child!
He has been a blood-sucker in Tamarua,
But in the end he drank a different drink.
Alas, death does not pity anyone.
Tangi'ia Pe'au let go of Marere's child!
He has been a blood-sucker in Tamarua,
But in the end he drank a different drink.
Alas, death does not pity anyone.
Wandering, wandering, wandering, wandering—
Your evil spirit, Tangi'ia! [an allusion to spirit possession]
And you left your wife.
Wandering, wandering, wandering, wandering—
Your evil spirit, Tangi'ia!
And you left your wife.
Oh, our daughter!
Come on girl, give us a big kiss.
Oh, our daughter!
Come on girl, give us a big kiss.
Hold the peace of the Messiah, Marere,
He will give peace.**

²⁰ The word *ma'ani*, (“make”) is Rarotongan, not Mangaian. One wonders if this may be a reference to the long rivalry between Mangaia and Rarotonga, the implication being “drunk, like a silly Rarotongan.”

²¹ The final song, which summarizes the story and highlights its themes, is an important feature of the *peu tupuna*.

**Hold the peace of the Messiah, Marere,
He will give peace.²²
For our beautiful daughter
My heart aches,
For our beautiful daughter
My heart aches.**

Concluding Remarks

We have seen that in W. W. Gill's earlier version of the story, Tangi'ia was a god who spoke through a priest of the same name. In the 1973 performance, Tangi'ia is not presented as a priest but rather as a demonic being with remarkable powers: unlike Gill's Tangi'ia he has wings, which have enabled him to fly to the island. He does, however, resemble the priest in the older story in many ways. In both versions, he devours children but ends up being poisoned by Marere.

Before looking at some possible interpretations it is useful to consider certain aspects of Manganian history and culture. According to one version of Manganian history, the eldest children of the primal parents, Vatea and Papa, were the original gods of Mangaia and were, in this order, five males: the twins Tangaroa and Rongo, and Tongaiti, Tane-Papa-Kai, and Tangi'ia.²³ Tangaroa went to live at Rarotonga, leaving Rongo as the supreme god at Mangaia. In addition, the descendants of each of the children of Vatea and Papa chose their own tribal gods, usually the one from whom they claimed descent. However, Rongo's descendants, the Ngariki, adopted Matoro for their god (W. W. Gill 1876a:19, 25-28). In this kind of social system, senior individuals or lineages have authority over junior. Power and control is intimately related to such social groupings; although defined according to kinship, they are also political groupings. One way in which dominance is expressed is in the control and allocation of the resources, especially the prized taro lands; another is in exacting tribute, for example by confiscating land. According to Manganian history, which revolved around continual struggles for supremacy and the right to control these resources, any established order was subject to challenge.

In order to consult the tribal gods, a food gift of kava, taro, and fish

²² These lines, which thank the Messiah for the peace they have attained, also convey a direct message to the audience that they remain Christians.

²³ The version of Manganian history used here comes from Buck 1934:23. There are other versions; for example, W. W. Gill indicates not the birth order Tangaroa and Rongo, Tonga'iti, Tangi'ia, and Tane, but the political order: Tangaroa and Rongo, Tonga'iti, Tane, and Tangi'ia (1876a:11, 28). In still another version, a Tonga'iti version, the order of seniority is changed even more markedly in that Tonga'iti is said to be Papa's husband (*ibid.*:44-45; Clerk 1985).

was presented to the priest, through whom the god spoke (W. W. Gill 1876a:35). When a priest might occasionally demand a human sacrifice in place of the usual offering, the victims would ordinarily be taken from one of the other tribes which had been defeated in war.²⁴ There is a conceptual equivalence between land, food, and certain classes of people such that those in power could demand land, food, or people as tribute from those over whom they exercised control. Tangi'ia, as the fourth son of Vatea and Papa, was said to have been the most junior and least significant of the gods (*ibid.*:28), and his followers were included among those who were eligible for sacrifice to Motoro (36-37). However, Tangi'ia's demands for a sacrificial offering from Marere indicate that Marere, and therefore the Ngariki and their god Motoro, are inferior to Tangi'ia. So at one level, the story may be seen (cf. Clerk 1985) as an expression of conflict between tribes. It culminates, in both versions, in eventual Ngariki victory, although in 1973 the Messiah, rather than Motoro, was credited with helping Marere achieve this victory.

Tangi'ia's eating children, and his boasting of his power, are consistent with a whole range of ideas about power and dominance, in this case expressed through the metaphor of human sacrifice. In addition, a rule of exogamy meant that marriage partners were, in theory at least, potential sacrificial victims to their partner's gods. The plays on words about eating that provide sexual double entendres are consistent with these ideas, and in an interesting departure from Gill's version (wherein Marere's son was the specified victim), Tangi'ia devours/marries the female children of his opponents.²⁵ This may have been a device to facilitate humor via the sexual double entendres, but perhaps it also reflects changes in Manganian society: with the cessation of warfare, marriage has become an even more important means of acquiring (devouring) land and consolidating political power.

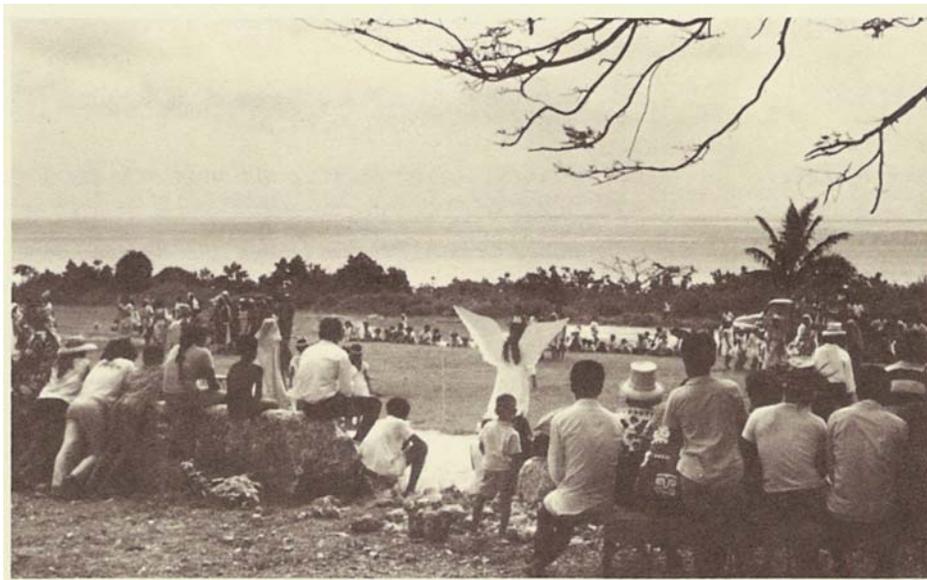
Some other interpretations are also possible. For example, the sexual double entendres, the husband's hitting his wife, and the public display of drinking and drunkenness all poke fun at rules that have been imposed by the church. These incidents and expressions reflect contemporary social and political differences on Mangaia, where post-contact history has been marked by continued resistance to many of the

²⁴ It was common in many parts of Polynesia to refer to sacrificial human victims as fish. See, for example, Clerk's discussion (1985:237ff) about Manganian symbolism and the conceptual equivalence of land, food, and people.

²⁵ Land confiscated from those defeated in war was land "eaten" by the victors. Land can also be acquired (devoured) by trade or through adoption or marriage arrangements, so by the act of substitution we come to an equivalence between devouring and marrying.

controls various church leaders have attempted to impose. In 1973 few people knew of the kava plant or how it had been used, and the word was used to denote alcoholic beverages in general; *kava maori* was a term for “bush beer,” a home brew which is locally, regularly, and illegally produced. Yet the hand actions performed by the two lines of dancers accurately mimed its preparation, and it retains its earlier place in the story. On the one hand, there is a historical element, in that Tangi’ia’s image as a powerful, priestly figure is reinforced when he is served a chiefly drink and, that being so, must drink it before he eats the child. On the other hand, the behavioral and verbal references to bush beer relate to recent history and modern practices.

In the 1973 play *Motoro* has been replaced by the Christian God, and Tangi’ia appears at first glance to have been transformed into a particularly sinister winged figure suggestive of the fallen archangel, Lucifer. Yet even here we have precedents in Manganian culture. Unlike the other Manganian gods, *Motoro* was not one of the sons of *Vatea* and *Papa*; he came to Mangania from *Rarotonga* when the *Ngariki* requested a replacement for their earlier god, *Tane*, with whom they had become dissatisfied. *Motoro*’s replacement by the Messiah is therefore consistent with a Manganian cultural pattern. Even Tangi’ia’s wings may be nothing new, since there is also in Manganian oral tradition a winged figure known as *Tangi’ia-ka-rere* who flies in and devours the sun (W. W. Gill 1876a:47).



A biblical pageant at the 1973 Nuku.
Here, actors wear biblically derived garments made of modern materials.

Photo: Marivee McMath

The performance itself, including such elements as the costuming, the special effects, the selection of a story by a group of “appropriate people,” and the consensus approach to the performance, provides evidence of the continuity of a dramatic tradition. The form of the *peu tupuna* appears to be the same as that involved in the presentations described by W. W. Gill (1876a:225-50, 1894:243-58). The 1973 Nuku was itself an interesting example of the syncretism evident in contemporary Manganian society; the Tangi’ia play presented on this occasion constitutes another example. Where some types of Manganian oral tradition appear to resist change, the *peu tupuna* is an extraordinarily flexible art form that readily incorporates new elements. Although syncretism may be evident, the performance was indisputedly Manganian. But above all it was fun, and can be accepted as just that. One doesn’t have to know history to enjoy good entertainment.

Marivee McMath and Teaea Parima

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