



American College Journal of English Language and Literature (ACJELL) (A Peer-reviewed International Journal)

No: 13

ISSN: 1725 2278 876X

2023

ACJELL



Since 1881

Postgraduate & Research Department of English
The American College
Madurai, Tamil Nadu, India

Centering the Uncentered: Decolonialising Stage in Briar Grace Smith's *Nga Pou Wahine*

THAMARAI YAZHINI, T

Research Scholar, Falima College

Affiliated to Madurai Kamaraj University

Email ID: thamaraiyazhini@gmail.com

Abstract

The colonial rule across the world has uprooted the cultural integrity of heritage and power. The Post-Colonial literatures try to revive their lost tradition by elevating and imbuing their ethnic practices through the elimination of western hegemony. Nga Pou Wahine entails on Te Atakura, a young Maori girl, who embarks on a journey in search of her history. Grace Smith's construction of the play demolishes the idealisation of Western stage by the active adhesion of the traditional Maori rituals. Nga Pou Wahine exemplars the indigeneity of New Zealand's Maori culture. This study attempts to center the process of 'decolonialising' New Zealand theatre by establishing Grace Smith's negotiation of Nga Pou Wahine as a Marae Theatre.

Keywords: Decolonialising, Theatre Marae, Maori, Syncretic theatre.

New Literature is a new domain that embodies the literatures of settler colonies and invaded colonies. The settler colonies include nations like Canada, Australia and New Zealand, where English is considered as a prominent language, unlike the invaded colonies where English is enforced onto the native people by the colonisers. New literature embossed on the post-colonial setting formulates various techniques to reclaim and reestablish the native tradition. One such process that articulated in New Zealand is the Marae Theatre, which negotiates the process of decolonising New Zealand theatre.

This article demonstrates the process of decolonising New Zealand theatre through the close study of Grace Smith's *Nga Pou Wahine*. Grace Smith is one of the acclaimed writers of New Zealand. She is an actor and writer in Maori theatre. *Nga Pou Wahine* is her debut play that laureled her with Bruce Mason Playwright award in 1995. She is awarded with Chapman Tripp Theatre award for her best-known work *Purapurawhetu*. She has written