CULTURAL DANCE AS A LIFE EXPERIENCE: PERCEPTIONS OF MAORI PERFORMERS IN MELBOURNE.

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for any other degree or graduate diploma in any tertiary institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by any other person, except where due reference is made in the text.

Signed: [Signature]

Date: 20.3.96
GLOSSARY

Aotearoa- (literally Land of The Long White Cloud), Maori name for New Zealand
aroха- love
haka- Maori posture dance
Hawaiiki -fabled ancestral home of Maoris, believed to be Tonga or Samoa
ihi-power, excitement
iwi- tribe
kohanga reo- (literally “language nest”), Maori culture based preschool centre
kyа- male leader of a performing group
mana- personal power
Maori- (literally “normal” as opposed to pakeha “white”), indigenous inhabitant of Aotearoa-New Zealand
Maoritanga- the Maori way, way of life
marae- village, or village cultural, community centre
nga tikanga- culture
pakeha- white person
reo- language
tamariki- child
Te Ruawhenua- (literally “Second Land”), name of Maori cultural group
tuuranga waewae- (literally “standing feet”), place of birth, belonging
waiata- song
waiata a ringa- (literally “song of the hands”), hand action song
wananga- (literally “learning”), in this case, live-in weekend workshop
wehi- fear, excitement
whakama- resistance, shyness, a commonly expressed Maori characteristic
whanau- extended family
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CULTURAL ARTS AS A LIFE EXPERIENCE: 
PERCEPTIONS OF MAORI PERFORMERS IN MELBOURNE.

ABSTRACT

This study examines the significance of cultural arts in the lives of seven performers in Te Ruawhenua, a Maori cultural group based in Melbourne, Australia. Respondents covered a diverse experience of age, gender and cultural backgrounds. Through qualitative analysis of interview transcripts supported by observations of rehearsals and performances, data were distilled into themes related to cultural identity, social benefits, individual expression and connected arts. Literature from a range of sources was reviewed as background to the topic and also to interpret the findings. Categories of literature included culture and ethnic identity, Maori culture, and cultural arts, particularly dance.

This research has revealed both benefits and challenges of cultural group involvement. Membership of Te Ruawhenua provides role diversity, adding to members’ lives a dimension which may have been a continuing affirming experience. It also offered opportunities for the intrinsic enjoyment of performing, the challenge of competing and pleasurable experiences that all members of a family could share. Te Ruawhenua members indicated that the group functioned like a supportive family, one which shares similar values and actively endeavours to pass them on to the next generation.

This study reinforces earlier theories that Maori cultural arts activities offer a realm of positive benefits including cultural identification, social community and personal empowerment. Te Ruawhenua seemed to give members a sense of place and belonging which may have been traditionally provided by the tribe. At the same time, it also provided a focus towards the future, dealing with current concerns and issues for group members living in a western culture.

In overview, frequent reference to cultural arts as offering both immediate pleasures and a deeper sense of identity and belonging was conveyed by seven Maori performers from a multi-generational context in Melbourne, Australia.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Retain your customs
And your Maori language
For this is what gives you status

*Waaiata a ringa* by Wiremu Kerekere in Karetu (1994)

I became inspired to research the area of cultural dance during a performance by the Maori cultural group, Te Ruawhenua, at the 1993 Jewish Festival in Melbourne. I had a strong physical and emotional reaction to the performance, particularly in response to the dynamism, self-confidence and positive body projection exuded by the performers. This positive experience challenged some stereotypes I held about the Maori migrant community at that time, especially my scant knowledge of social problems such as high crime and unemployment rates amongst Maoris.

I wondered what the significance of cultural group involvement was for Te Ruawhenua members. Was their involvement a factor in the confidence I saw? How significant were the performing arts in their lives in Australia now? What did dancing mean for them?
As in any study, questions and interpretations are influenced by the background and values of the researcher and it therefore seems appropriate to offer some background to my interest in dance and Maori culture. I have been a dancer all my life. My early dance training was in classical and jazz ballet which I studied in classes with other young middle-class Australian girls. As a young adult my interest moved away from theatrical performance-based dance styles and I began to explore dance forms more connected with the lives of ordinary people. Proximity to Polynesia made that an obvious choice when I ventured overseas for new dance experiences. I studied the dance forms of Samoa and Hawaii before focussing my interest on Aotearoa-New Zealand.

Maori dance, as exemplified in Te Ruawhenua, interested me because of its sharp contrast to my early dance experiences. Performers were both female and male, including adolescent boys, and they were clearly not middle-class. Their body shapes did not conform to the stereotype of young, thin and beautiful dancers that I grew up with. In Te Ruawhenua, I watched tall and short dancers, thin and very large ones, glamorous and fierce looking ones, young and older ones. Families participated together, with grandparents, parents and children all giving serious consideration to their performance. It was not a silent performance as I was accustomed to. Members used voice, body percussion and instruments to accompany their dancing. As noted already, the group’s dynamism and confidence were riveting and I became fascinated to find out more. I began by reading about the Maori communities in Australia and New Zealand.
Maoris are people who self-define as full or part descendants of the aboriginal inhabitants of Aotearoa-New Zealand. Maoris form a small, but steadily increasing migrant group in Australia (Carmichael, 1986). As a people, they are beset by particular challenges in this country, being worse off educationally, health-wise and employment-wise than other Australian residents (Lowe, 1990). This predicament reflects a similar situation in New Zealand, where Maori culture has been dominated by pakeha (white-western) culture over the last 200 years with negative consequences for the indigenous people (Wagemaker, 1987, Karetu, 1994). In Australia, Maori people may also be marginalized by their minority migrant status. Maori people need strategies for success if they are to prosper as migrants in Australia and we as a nation need to know how to foster their successful transition into Australian life.

Te Ruawhenua is one of nine Maori cultural groups active in Melbourne. Its name, meaning “Second Land”, refers to members’ choice of Melbourne as a home away from “home”. Te Ruawhenua was founded in inner-suburban St. Kilda in 1987 by current tutor Nana, but now draws most of its members from the far northern suburbs. The club comprises two performing groups, the Juniors or Tamarikis (children) and the Seniors. The group usually spend Sundays rehearsing, Juniors during the morning and Seniors in the afternoon. Sometimes members have lunch together between rehearsals and occasionally the group organize weekend live-in wanangas (“learning” or workshops) during which members practice Maori traditions and customs.
Te Ruawhenua performs regularly all around Melbourne and country Victoria, with annual trips interstate for competitions. During 1994 their performance activities included a Samoan 21st birthday party in Broadmeadows, an international roller-hockey tournament between New Zealand and Australia, a concert at the Broadmeadows Senior Citizen’s Centre and National Championships in Doveton.

The group has enjoyed a good reputation during the 1990’s, having won national championships three times running in 1991, 1992 and 1993. As a result of their victory in 1992, Te Ruawhenua travelled to New Zealand as Australian regional representatives at the Aotearoa Festival of Performing Arts. They followed a creditable presentation at the Festival with a successful performing tour of the North Island.

During 1994 and 1995, the group had a fairly fluid membership. As many as twenty members would perform at each event and up to fifty members and supporters would be present at rehearsals, although respondents did express some concern about falling rates of participation. At the time of data collection the group was going through organisational changes as tutor, Nana, reduced her commitment and members took more active roles on the management committee.

This study aims to illuminate the role of Maori cultural arts and dance in the lives of Te Ruawhenua members through the use of a qualitative methodology, based on in-
depth interviews and observation. Originally I set out to research dance, which was what I perceived group members to be doing. However, in the course of interviews the study broadened to encompass the cultural arts of music, language and dance.

The literature survey in Chapter 2 provides a background context for the study. General writings on culture and ethnic identity are reviewed first. Literature examining the significance of cultural dance in indigenous and migrant cultures is then discussed, including a number of studies indicating the positive outcomes of involvement in Maori cultural arts. Writings on past and present Maori culture are examined, allowing for consideration of the conflict between Maori culture and the dominant pakeha culture in contemporary Aotearoa-New Zealand. There were no studies found which explored the meaning of Maori cultural participation for people living in Australia.

Chapter 3 presents the research methodology, featuring in-depth interviews augmented by observations of performances and rehearsals and the process of data analysis using an interpretive inquiry framework (Stinson and Anjar, 1993). Chapter 4, Findings, describes the significance of cultural group involvement for respondents. Chapter 5 links these findings with previous research and informal observations from my participation in a Maori performing arts summer school in New Zealand. Limitations of this study and recommendations for further research and policy in the area of cultural arts are offered.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW SUMMARY

Concurrent with the development of a sample of informants I began a literature search to help refine my research questions and to become more familiar with Maori culture and performing arts. Because I had planned a study of adolescents initially, I began by looking for literature in the areas of youth and adolescence. Soon after I made contact with possible informants from Te Ruawhenua I realised that my sample was likely to comprise as many adults as adolescents, so an emphasis on youth was no longer relevant.

The literature search was finally concentrated on two major areas: culture and identity and cultural arts, especially dance. Literature was located through an exploration of relevant anthropological, psychological and educational references. The ERIC and Humanities indexes at the University of Melbourne generated literature under the descriptors: dance education, cultural activities, folk culture and Maori. The library at the Bureau for Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research in Carlton and the State Library in Melbourne provided data specifically on the Maori population in Australia. The dance journal section at the University of Melbourne library, Kew campus, provided material on the place of dance in cultural life, although there was little about Maori culture or dance specifically. Midway through the research process I made a trip to New Zealand, where the Maori section of the Hastings Public Library provided many relevant references on Maori culture, including the arts.
CULTURE AND IDENTITY

Ethnic culture and identity in Australia

Discussion about cultural maintenance and identity of ethnic minorities has ongoing relevance in a nation like Australia because so many of our population are immigrants (1 in 10) or descendants of immigrants (4 in 10) (Jupp, 1988). There are political and economic rationales for encouraging the heterogeneity of diverse cultures within the hegemony of white Australian culture (Senator Bolkus, Minister for Immigration Payne, 1995, p. 2). The lives of all Australians are enriched by the traditions of people from other cultures, their customs, languages, arts and cuisine (Grassby, 1979, NSW Dept. of Ed, 1983).

For migrants to Australia and their descendants, the maintenance of traditional culture can have considerable adaptive functions. Connection with culture and the ethnic group are important in identity formation and maintenance, especially for those many migrants resident in areas of low socio-economic status and employed in unskilled or semi-skilled occupations (Holenburgh Young, 1978). A positive relationship between cultural identity and self-esteem has been indicated (Holenburgh Young, 1978, Trlin 1979, Paul and Fischer, 1980, Greenland 1984, Marsh, 1989). The question of how this cultural maintenance will occur faces political decision makers, educationalists and migrant families alike.
The practice of cultural maintenance

Parents are usually strongly motivated to teach their children about their cultural background and to impart knowledge and pride in their origins. However, successful transmission of ethnic languages and culture in a foreign country requires structures larger than individual families (Smolicz and Secombe, 1979). Parents need the support of educational institutions and community organizations to achieve these desired goals.

Educational research has indicated the positive outcomes of school support and acknowledgement of their student cultural identity and language (Cummins, cited in Holmes, 1992, Cockburn 1994). McLaughlin, (1985, cited in Jesperson 1993), reported on ethnographic research demonstrating the superior effectiveness of classroom strategies that match children’s cultural style of interaction. The Office of Multicultural Affairs policy document Options for a Multicultural Australia recommends educational curricula that provide non-native English speakers with positive experiences of their own culture and language in order to enhance student self-esteem and increase intercultural understanding (Marsh, 1989).

Another important mechanism of cultural maintenance is the specific ethnic language school, such as those organised by Greek communities throughout many suburban areas of Melbourne (Tsounis, 1974 cited in Holenburgh Young, 1978)
and by Chinese migrants in Brisbane (Eccleston, 1995). Yet others are social clubs and cultural arts organizations, such as the Israeli dance groups spread throughout Melbourne's south-eastern suburbs and Maori cultural groups like Te Ruawhenua.

In order for migrants' needs to be appropriately met, it is important that issues of cultural identity be addressed. In the section that follows, Maori cultural identity is examined, focusing on changes that have occurred since the invasion of New Zealand by white settlers. The disparity between Maori ideals and those of pakeha (whites), the challenges these create for Maoris and their possible solutions are explored. Three major areas to be considered are the polarities of collectivist versus individualistic identity, the importance of language and land, and the values of a warrior culture. Finally the particular situation of Maoris in Australia is examined.

Maori culture and identity

Collectivist versus individualist identity

Traditionally Maori culture focussed on a collectivist notion of the individual. A person's worth was determined by his/her social group and genealogy (Mead 1994, Ritchie and Ritchie, 1993, Smith, 1988), rather than markers of identity like professional achievement and material wealth common in western culture (Reid, 1992). Humanistic personal characteristics were more highly valued in Maori culture than utilitarian and academic qualities (Ausubel, 1961, Reid, 1992).
Some authors argue that traditional kinship affiliation and lack of emphasis on personal achievement explains Maori peoples' lesser success in education and employment than *pakeha* New Zealanders (Ausubel, 1961, Trlin, 1979, Jesperson and Herring, 1993).

**Land and language loss**

Related to the collective notion of identity is the important relationship of tribal land with Maori identity. Traditionally, Maori people derived their physical and spiritual identity from kinship groupings and their land, their *tuurangawaewae*, (literally place for feet to stand). Since the 1840s, 95% of Maori land has been appropriated by *pakeha* authorities, leaving Maori people bereft of this major anchor of identity. The emotional and material significance of land loss has been identified as the major source of inequality within New Zealand society (Greenland, 1984, Walker, 1989).

Along with land loss, Maori people have suffered a serious diminution of their language. This is attributable to discrimination against the learning and use of Maori language inherent in the New Zealand education system (Trlin, 1979, MacDonald, 1985). Consequently, very few Maoris are fluent in their own language and even fewer are literate today (Farquhar and Laws, 1991, Walker, 1989).
**Warrior culture**

Another significant traditional Maori characteristic was an emphasis on warfare (Howe, 1977). Ritchie and Ritchie (1993) report that in Maori and other Polynesian cultures, "peacableness was never particularly valued" and "rivalry and contests over status were very important" (p.82). Relics of Maori warrior culture are still in existence, as exemplified by the relatively high rates of violence in the community (Broadley et al, 1976, Te Awekotuku, 1988, Walker, 1988) and the sanctioned use of physical punishment of children as a cultural norm (Ritchie and Ritchie, 1993), as depicted in contemporary Maori literature (Hulme 1985, Ihimaera 1986, Duff, 1991).

Contests over status and *mana* (personal power) are still an important aspect of Maori psyche (Ihimaera, 1986, Smith, 1988). Yet the changes that have taken place in white-dominated twentieth century New Zealand mean that the formalized warrior culture that once sanctioned expression through *haka* dances is no longer relevant. Maori men no longer have a socially acceptable means of expressing violent and aggressive feelings through institutionalized status rivalry.

**Maori challenges: New Zealand and Australia**

The combination of cultural conflict with the loss of major sources of identity in land, language and culture, have resulted in serious social problems for Maori people in New Zealand (Neville 1979). Today, Maori people in New Zealand have
an unenviable social, economic and educational position in society, faring worse than other New Zealanders on almost every measure of welfare (Carmichael, 1986, Jesperson, 1993).

The situation of the Maori community in Australia reflects its counterpart in New Zealand. Numerous studies have indicated that Maoris have lower educational achievement (Carmichael, 1993), high rates of unemployment, (Lowe, 1990) and imprisonment (Jupp, 1988), a higher mortality rate (Carmichael, 1993) and worse health (Mitchell, 1991) than other Australians. While Maoris are an oppressed minority in New Zealand, they are at least part of a large and very visible community. In Australia, however, they are a small minority group, often not even separated in statistics from New Zealanders of European descent (Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research, 1995). Their difficulties are possibly compounded by their migrant status.

The Australian Maori community is however, a steadily increasing population. One Maori elder estimated that there may be more Maoris resident in Australia than New Zealand by the year 2020 (Cameron, 1991). Therefore, if we are to consider ourselves a successful multicultural society, it is important that Australia addresses issues of social inequality.

Possible solutions: Maori identity and education

A range of solutions has been mooted to the challenges facing the Maori people in New Zealand. Pride in cultural identity and a resurrection of Maori language are
often proposed (Tamatoa in Greenland 1984, p. 92, Durie, quoted in Reid, 1992). Karetu describes a *haka* (posture dance) which calls for recognition and respect of Maoriness as a solution to Maori defiance as manifested in theft, alcoholism and physical abuse. Walker recommends the formation of additional Maori cultural organizations such as culture groups as one means of increasing cultural pride and respect (Walker, cited in Trlin, 1979).

In addition to a call for pride in Maoriness, other writers call for social changes. Trlin (1979) believes that new wholistic concepts of social welfare for individuals, families, groups and social institutions are required. These concepts would focus not on the treatment of problems, but the prevention of problems, development of human resources and improvement of the quality of life, in order “to secure the central values of human dignity and community which are crucial to the satisfaction of the urge for personal significance and human fellowship” (p. 209).

Ritchie and Ritchie (1993) recommend economic and educational changes in addition to social welfare changes before Maori people in New Zealand can achieve equal status and success with *pakeha* New Zealanders. Like Walker (1976), the Ritchies recommend development of more community facilities, particularly *marae*, throughout New Zealand to provide social, health, educational and employment opportunities for Maori people (1993, p. 147).
As in Australia and other countries, New Zealand educators are becoming aware that positive recognition of students’ culture influences educational outcomes (Farquhar and Laws, 1991, Kerr, 1987, Mita, 1994, Smith, 1994). For example, the new curriculum framework document for New Zealand schools, *Te Anga Marautanga O Aotearoa*, acknowledges the importance of recognition of Maori culture. One of its central tenets is the promotion of and emphasis on Maori language and culture, including music and dance in a synthesis of traditional Maori forms and western education concepts (Bolwell, 1994). New Zealand educators hope that culturally appropriate education will prepare Maori children academically and socially for school and for life, thereby helping them “escape the cycle of poor educational outcomes, low occupational prospects and juvenile delinquency” so prevalent in current Maori experience (Ka’ai, 1990, cited in Farquhar and Laws, 1991).

In summary, the solutions mooted to challenges facing Maori people in Australia and New Zealand include culturally relevant education, increased community facilities, social welfare changes and importantly, increased pride in Maori language and culture. Having reviewed literature in the areas of culture and identity, particularly focusing on Maoris, it is now important to examine the field of cultural arts and dance as the major interest of the current research. Studies from a range of indigenous cultures, including Maoris, are included to gain perspectives on the significance of cultural arts involvement.
CULTURAL ARTS

Anachronism or vital sign?

Some writers suggest that cultural arts, including dance, no longer have relevance for people living in a modern world (Smolicz and Secombe, 1979, Milburn, 1994). Sydney Koorie women interviewed by Milburn (1994) believed that the external expression of cultural arts was no longer relevant to urban Koorie people, and attempts to connect Koorie people with spiritual and ceremonial practices of old only “adds more confusion to the confusion” they already have. These women expressed discomfort with the "abuse" and "degradation" of culture that can take place when arts and dancing become an industry and are no longer tied to a traditional way of life.

However, the majority of the literature indicates that cultural arts and dance still have significance for life in the twentieth century. There is considerable documentation of the outcomes of cultural arts practice for indigenous peoples such as Koories and other aboriginals of Australia, (Milburn 1994), black South Africans (Glasser 1993), native Americans (Jabbour 1987), Cook Islanders, (Banwell 1989) and Hawaiians (Kaeppler, 1995). Reported benefits include improved health and general lifestyle, economic, educational and political advantages and reduced criminal behaviour.

Other indigenous cultures

Some indigenous Australians, faced with multiple health, economic and social problems (Dow, 1995), have found that involvement with traditional culture
through the arts can have positive lifestyle and health outcomes (Wood, 1994). Milburn (1994), for example, reported how petrol sniffing and alcohol abuse by young aboriginal people in Arnhemland were reduced as a consequence of the community’s involvement in music.

In the case of black South Africans students, Glasser (1993) reported cultural and lifestyle benefits as a result of involvement in dance. Glasser’s students gradually developed pride in their African cultural heritage through participation in dance programs involving a fusion of Western modern and African dance styles. Dance involvement has had economic advantages as well, providing them with possibly their only chance of an education and marketable employment skills (Review, SBS, 31 July 1995).

Thiel (1983) and Jabbour (1987) have documented the continuing functions of dance for indigenous Americans. For the Oglala and Sicangu Sioux Indians, cultural dance serves as a demonstration of tribal identity and cohesion (Thiel 1983), while powwow dancing has a range of functions for all tribes (Jabbour 1987). Powwow events were previously social dances held by tribes for their friends and allies only. More recently they have been held for all tribes, facilitating intertribal connections and providing political and cultural advantages for participants. Powwows have an educational function in their provision of a living context of native American culture through which young people can experience traditional means of expression (Jabbour, 1987). They also serve as a transition
device between the old world and the new, "bringing people symbolically back together for the encouragement and nurturing of their ethnic lives and their continued existence as a people" (1987, p. 68).

Johnston's (1990a, 1990b) extensive research into the functions of dance for Yupik and Inupiaq Eskimos of Alaska documented changes that have occurred since contact with western culture. While dance styles and content have remained quite stable, they no longer have the traditional focus on spirit placation. These days, Yupik and Inupiaq dances serve mostly to affirm ethnicity and preserve the valued heritage of their people. In some situations, these dance styles retain vestiges of certain traditional functions, including the formal use of dance to modify antisocial behaviour, affirm community networks, preserve tribal lore and enculturate the young in folkloric traditions. Dance team membership provides a fulfilling creative outlet for community residents and serves to bolster community pride.

In Polynesian cultures, there has been a developing awareness of the benefits of involvement with traditional culture through the arts. Banwell outlined the nature of cultural groups for Cook Islanders living in New Zealand (1986), describing their important role in preserving cultural ties of young members to their home islands, maintaining language and providing a positive outlet for young people. Kaeppler (1995) discussed the importance of the dance form "hula" in the establishment of ethnic identity for contemporary Hawaiians.
Other migrant cultures

Positive outcomes of dance involvement have also been reported for migrants overseas and in Australia. Lobel (1995) reported on the proliferation of Indian dance organizations in New York state and the opportunities these groups provided members to affirm community links, define cultural heritage and express their acculturation into American society. Trujillo (1979) described improvements in self esteem and academic performance of Hispanic U.S.A. high school students following their participation in a culturally relevant dance program. Myronenko (1994) found that Sydney female high school students from a range of ethnic backgrounds could only be motivated to participate in the school’s physical education program when it involved a culture based dance program.

Numerous studies of New Zealand Maori cultural arts practice have documented changes occurring since white invasion as well as their continuing relevance to participants.

Maori culture

Traditionally, prior to the invasion of pakeha about 200 years ago, haka, or posture dances, were used "to welcome visitors, as a preparation for war, and for amusement" (Kaeppler, 1977, p. 80). These haka were powerful and emotive for audiences and performers, and tribal reputations often rose and fell on their ability as haka performers (Mahuika in Karetu, 1994). In 1901, Harry Price described the haka as “without a doubt the best style of savage (sic) dancing that one would find...the whole world over” (Price, reprint 1980).
Old style, pre-contact *haka* and chants are still remembered and kept in the repertoire of contemporary culture groups, but are performed less frequently because they no longer have relevance in today’s context (Karetu, 1994, p. 62). However, *haka*, used as a generic term for Maori dance, is still a powerful medium for performers and audience. Armstrong describes how:

*More than any other aspect of the Maori culture, this complex dance is an expression of the passion, vigour and identity of the race. It is at its best, truly, a message of the soul expressed by words and posture* (1964, p. 2).

The power of Maori performance is directly related to the response of the audience. Mead describes Maori criteria for beauty in art.

*From the Maori point of view a performance is beautiful because it has power (*ihi*) to move the audience spontaneously and in a physical way. The performance fills one with awe (*wehi*) so that the spine tingles, one’s body hair may straighten up and the whole body trembles with excitement. The entire experience is uplifting and personally satisfying. It is good for one’s soul and equally good for the performer, who sees the evidence of artistic success in the reactions of the audience and is thereby moved to new heights of artistry* (1993, p. 203).

Other writers and performers describe this physical response to Maori performance in terms of a chill up the spine, of the audience (Karetu, 1994, p. 68, ) and performers (McNamara, 1995).
In the twentieth century, Maori artists have been inspired by the lyrical songs and interpretive actions of other Polynesians to develop their own style of action songs, *waiata a ringa*, literally “songs of the hands”. In contemporary Maori *waiata*, hand and body actions directly interpret the song words, so that dance forms an essential but subsidiary role to music and singing (Kaeppler, 1977). However, Maori *waiata* do not share with many other Polynesian dance forms the conscious changes in sentiment or performance that appeal to the tourist market. They are not “airport art” (Kaeppler, 1977), but primarily expressions of the concerns of contemporary Maori people. Some *waiata* have been developed to appeal to the younger generation specifically in order to instill a sense of pride in Maori cultural heritage and through this to revitalize Maori culture (Kaeppler, 1977, p. 79, *Mana*, 1994, p. 17).

In contemporary *waiata*, language is important, “crucial to the whole art of the dance”, (Karetu, quoted in *Mana*, 1994, p. 19, Bolwell, 1994). Song words function as a means of education, a way to transmit health messages and positive values. For example, some *waiata* warn against the abuse of drugs and alcohol by young people (Rollo, 1994), against detrimental health and dietary practices (Archie, 1993). Others lament about family violence, (Harawira, 1994) and voice young peoples’ requests for support from their elders (Karetu, 1994).

As in *haka* of old, which were often contests between warring tribes, Maori cultural arts activities often involve competition between rival groups (Archie, 1993). The Aotearoa Festival of Performing Arts was established to provide cultural groups
with a focus for competition and to “inspire performers to new heights” (Karetu, 1994). Interjail competitions established in New Zealand prisons provided inmates with the motivation to extend themselves through cultural arts practice (Huggett, 1992).

Positive outcomes of involvement in Maori cultural arts in New Zealand have been documented in scholarly and popular media. These include the attainment of a positive life direction, reduction of criminal behaviour in prisoners, (Huggett, 1992, Duff, 1991), economic and educational opportunities for young rural Maori (Dunphy, 1995, Archie, 1993), and increased self-esteem and self-discipline in school students (Bycroft, 1988).

A television documentary on the life of Ana Tia, Maori elder and social activist, described positive behavioural changes and reduced criminal activity of ex-prisoners who had been involved in cultural groups run by Tia in maximum security prisons (Huggett, 1992). By offering inmates a positive experience of their Maoriness through the cultural arts, Tia’s culture groups “actually promoted a change of attitude in the inmates. Her groups help reduce reoffending”.

Alan Duff’s (1991) recent novel turned film, Once Were Warriors, documented the hope and sense of positive direction acquired by underprivileged Maori people as they re-established contact with Maoritanga (the Maori way) through the arts. Economic, educational and employment opportunities resulting from cultural arts training for young rural Maoris were documented by Dunphy (1995) following a
series of interviews with staff and students at Takitimu School of Performing Arts in a large New Zealand country town. Archie (1993) described the unique personal development and employment opportunities provided for young Maori people by Pounamu Ventures, an organization producing cultural performances at schools, conferences and tourist venues throughout New Zealand.

Bycroft (1988) described the personal and educational gains of primary school students who were performers with their rural school’s Maori cultural group. These gains, which carried over into other areas of school life, included increased self-esteem, a strong sense of pride and improved self-discipline.

In Australia, one other researcher has documented outcomes of involvement in Maori cultural arts for members of Nga Hapu Katoa, Te Ruawhenua’s nearest rivals. Dean (1995) indicates that involvement in Nga Hapu provides a sense of cultural identity for members, (particularly important as the Maori community is a very small minority in Melbourne), while also making the culture acceptable to the wider community. This acceptability is achieved by incorporation into the traditional repertoire a number of items based on well-known songs or television commercials designed to appeal to predominantly non-Maori audiences as well as items which encourage audience participation.

In summary, the literature indicates that cultural arts continue to be meaningful for Maori people in New Zealand, providing a sense of identity and continuity with the past. They also provide a link with the future, continually evolving and adapting to
the changing concerns of people in the modern world. The limited Australian literature shows similar functions for cultural arts groups; including the fostering of cultural identification amongst Maori people and acceptance in the wider community.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has reviewed background literature for the present study of Maori cultural performers. A section on culture and identity in New Zealand and Australia indicated that conflict between traditional Maori cultural patterns and the mores of contemporary society in New Zealand and Australia creates challenges for Maori people seeking a meaningful and successful lifestyle.

This chapter has also surveyed literature on cultural arts involvement for indigenous and migrant peoples around the world. While there were a small number of reports which disputed the relevance of cultural arts to people living in the twentieth century, mostly benefits have been documented. These include increased political cooperation between and among tribal groups, educational advantages for young people and a bridge between traditional lifestyles and the contemporary world. Cultural arts involvement has also provided benefits for individuals. Examples include a sense of self-identity and life direction, a means of financial support and a positive physical and psychological experience of oneself as a performer.
There is a dearth of literature relating to cultural arts experience of small minority groups, like the New Zealand Maoris, in Australia. This study takes the challenge of illuminating the experience of cultural arts group membership for Maori people living in Melbourne.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

“It would hardly be fish who discovered the existence of water”
Kluckhohn, C. (1975)

INTRODUCTION

Existing literature demonstrates extensive anthropological attention to indigenous Maori culture, but less interest in Maori-Australians. Few studies have explored Maori-Australian cultural arts, motives, benefits and values. This study aims to extend documentation within the Australian literature of the range and detail of concepts Maori-Australians use in their explanation of the place of cultural arts in their lives.

As the study was concerned with the meaning of cultural dance, a qualitative methodology was selected. The emphasis on documentation of this experience from an Australian dance perspective suggested the importance of adopting an interpretive methodological framework.

This thesis presents a qualitative study of the experience of membership in a Melbourne-based Maori cultural performing group, Te Ruawhenua. An initial focus on dance and its place in members’ lives broadened into a study of the experience of group membership and the meaning of Maori cultural arts for performers. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews with members and observation of the group's activities recorded on video and photos and in a field journal. As a non-Maori and an
outsider to the group, I had a unique perspective of the group’s activities. I also made strenuous efforts to enhance my knowledge and experience of Maori cultural arts by participating in workshops in Australia and New Zealand.

The research approach: interpretive inquiry

The term interpretive inquiry was described by Stinson and Anijar (1993) as research which sets out to illuminate the meaning of an experience or a phenomenon for those involved. Open-ended questioning is employed to probe participants’ experience, allowing their interests to lead interviews and set the topics for discussion.

Interpretive inquiry has been employed by Stinson and others to explore the meaning and value of dance for participants. For example, Stinson (1993) examined the dance experiences of high school students and Bond (1994) researched gender issues in dance at an Australian primary school. The present research aimed to illuminate the meaning of group membership and involvement in dance for Maori-Australian cultural performers. A set of orienting questions broadened into discussion about a range of issues to do with dance and other performing arts, culture, Maoriness and the experience of being in Te Ruawahenua. The open-ended nature of the interviews meant that respondents were not limited to predetermined topics and their unstructured responses contributed considerably to the range of issues investigated.
This study drew on both phenomenological and hermeneutic methods, allowing attention to be given to respondents’ description of their experience (phenomenological approach, Patton, 1990) and to my interpretation of their words (hermeneutic approach, Eichelberger, 1989).

**Interviews and observation.**

In-depth interviews with seven Te Ruawhenua members were the primary source of data for this study. Perspectives gained through interviewing were augmented by my attendance at four rehearsals and three performances; (the 1993 Jewish Festival, a Samoan 21st birthday party and the annual Victorian Maori community competitions). During these visits, I acted as an interested observer, being precluded from greater involvement by the prerequisite skill level and rehearsal commitment. A journal of each contact with members and the group was kept and video and photographic records were made of the competitions and one performance. These records are discussed further under Data Collection.

**PROCEDURE**

**Sample selection: finding and connecting with a sample**

The research process began with a letter and follow-up phone call to Nana, Te Ruawhenua’s leader-tutor, whom I had met when I first saw the group performing. Nana invited me to attend the group’s next rehearsal. I told members about my motivation for researching the area of cultural dance and my interest in Te Ruawhenua. I then requested their cooperation, outlining the possible benefits of
involvement in the study. For individuals, I suggested that increased self-understanding might be an outcome of the interview process, while the group and the Maori community as a whole might benefit by having their activities formally documented.

Informants

All members of the group present at this initial meeting were asked to indicate their interest in the project by providing me with basic personal information such as name, address, age, sex, educational level, arts involvement and cultural background (sample question sheet attached as Appendix 1). Within the next few months, arrangements were made for in-depth interviews with four of the six members who volunteered. Three of those people, 38 year old Tui, 14 year old James and 46 year old Hine, were continuing members, while the fourth, 18 year old Gina, had stopped attending group activities just prior to my first interview with her. Two other volunteers had returned to New Zealand before I attempted to contact them. James' young sisters, 6 year old Ellen and 11 year old Elizabeth, were recruited for interviews when I visited their home to speak with James, and I approached 32 year old Nana directly.

Thus, the final sample comprised male (2) and female (5), full Maori (4) and part-Maori (3) and child (2), adolescent (2) and adult (3) respondents. It also included members who played a range of roles within the group, with four performers, two performers/management committee members and the group's leader. While this sample is not representative of the Maori cultural arts community or even Te
Ruawhenua as a whole, issues related to the experience of cultural dance were explored with members of diverse experience, age, gender and cultural backgrounds.

DATA COLLECTION

Interview procedure

Prior to interviews, informants were given "plain language" written information about the study (attached as Appendix 2). They read this in my presence and I addressed any queries before they completed a consent form (attached as Appendix 3) as required by the Human Research Ethics Committee of The University of Melbourne. One parent co-signed the consent form for the three respondents who were minors.

The interview procedure was semi-structured, with questions focussed on respondents' "lived experiences", that is, their thoughtful reflections on the special significance of involvement in cultural arts. (van Manen, 1990). A set of orienting questions was used to keep the interview on track and to ensure that the terrain was covered in roughly the same order for each informant as recommended by McCracken (1988). A copy of these questions is attached as Appendix 5.

Interviews were conducted in places of respondents' choice, mostly their own homes and they took between thirty minutes and two hours, depending on the verbosity of the interviewee. Interviews were tape-recorded and later transcribed onto computer.
Follow up interviews

An attempt was made to do a follow up interview with each informant to supplement and clarify data gathered during the first interviews and as a validating procedure (Stinson and Anijar, 1993). Tui, Hine, James, Ellen and Elizabeth were reinterviewed, but I was unable to contact Gina or Nana at that time.

Any areas of questioning that were covered inadequately during the first interview were discussed again and informants were asked to elaborate on answers or comments that had been difficult to understand when they were reread. One concern related to my inexperience as an interviewer-researcher was addressed in the second round of interviews also. Some of the early data appeared to have been overly influenced by my own opinions and interpretations of informants' comments, in spite of some preparatory practice in interviewing. While this level of inter-subjectivity may be acceptable in heuristic research (Douglas and Moustakas, 1984), the aim of the present study was to stay as close to informants' perceptions as possible, so some reinvestigation was considered appropriate.

One additional and unexpected benefit of the second interviews was the informants' noticeably more friendly and communicative response to me. This may have been the result of our greater familiarity owing to my continued presence at group activities and the fact that I was also more relaxed and experienced the second time. Further, informants knew what to expect in terms of interview content and format as the second interview was very similar to the first.
Additional data

Video and photographic records of two performances were made, with observations from these being used to clarify or illustrate interview material. These permanent records allowed watching and rewatching of the ephemeral performance event, enabling factors such as members’ positioning on the stage, spatial relationship between performers and the audience, movement and voice quality and facial expressions to be examined closely.

A field journal describing each of my contacts with the group and individual members was used to provide another perspective on members’ experiences. Details recorded included information about the physical environment, the function of the event, the people present, the interaction between them and my experience of the event. An excerpt from this journal is provided as Appendix 6.

As well as broadening my perspective on members’ experiences by collecting data in different ways, I also wanted to enhance my limited knowledge of Maoritanga (the Maori way). I participated in several workshops in Maori performing arts led by Nana and other Maori tutors, observed performances by several Maori cultural groups in Melbourne and attended a two week long cultural arts summer school in New Zealand. I used these experiences to inform my understanding of the Te Ruawhenua community.
TRUSTWORTHINESS

As in all qualitative research, it is appropriate to address issues of trustworthiness of the data. Lincoln and Guba (cited in Ely, 1991) advise qualitative researchers to take the following steps to ensure that data can be believed by readers as well as the people studied. The researcher should

- have prolonged engagement in the field
- do persistent observation
- triangulate (watch for the convergence of at least two pieces of data)
- search for negative cases (evidence that does not fit into emergent case findings)
- determine referential adequacy
- experience peer debriefing (emotional support, suggesting new points of view)
- check with the people one studied.

Within the limits of a minor thesis, all of the above steps were addressed. I made numerous visits to Te Ruawhenua events and members over a period of a year, collecting data and making persistent observations. I attempted to reinterview all informants to triangulate data and clarify my interpretation of data obtained through the initial interviews.
Triangulation occurred during the interview process as well. With the Derbyshires, the presence of other family members during interviews and their disputation or confirmation of information provided by respondents was a form of triangulation. Members’ responses provided a form of triangulation for each other, as there were frequent comments and observations about other respondents. Observation of rehearsals and performances was also used as method of triangulation, with comments by respondents being supported or contradicted through their participation in group activities.

One respondent, Gina, as a non-continuing member of Te Ruawhenua, provided a negative case. As group involvement had ceased to meet her needs and interests, Gina’s interview added insights that contrasted with the experiences of other members who remained enthusiastic participants.

Referential adequacy was addressed for me through a two week stay in a Maori Performing Arts school in New Zealand. The formal practice of Maori cultural arts in classes and informal interviews with Maori students, staff and families confirmed many of the hunches I had been developing as I collected data. There were many similarities in the experience of culture through the performing arts for people in New Zealand with those of my respondents in Australia.

While I did not have a peer support group meeting regularly as Ely (1991) advises or fellow researchers like Stinson, Blumenfeld-Jones and Van Dyke (1990) had for peer debriefing, I did have colleagues undertaking research on related topics with whom I was able to share insights and problems of working in a “foreign” community.
To verify with respondents that they had been fairly and appropriately represented, I gave them all a nearly final draft of the research findings and invited their comments. Only Nana requested some minor changes, which were effected to her satisfaction.

Confidentiality

The University of Melbourne ethics procedure requires anonymity for research subjects, so the issue of confidentiality was discussed with all respondents during the initial approach. I promised that names and identifying details would not be published in the report and that all data would remain with me and my supervisor. However, when I decided that I would like to use the group’s actual name because of its cultural significance and to publish photos of members it was obvious that confidentiality would be jeopardized. During the reinterviewing process I raised this concern with informants and they were all quite comfortable to have their first names and photos appearing in the text.

I then applied for and obtained amended ethics approval to allow for the reproduction of photographs and the use of respondents’ first names and the group’s name. All respondents and family members who appeared in photos completed one of these amended ethics forms. (Attached as Appendix 5).
LIMITS OF THE STUDY

Sample limits

The pragmatics of a minor thesis ensured a small sample size because of the in-depth nature of the interviews and the anticipated volume of data. Further, the sample was limited by Te Ruawhenua members' willingness to participate. Only six group members volunteered to be interviewed when I made a general approach to the group, and of those, two were unavailable when I reached the interview stage.

A valuable source of data may have come from those group members who did not offer themselves as informants, whether as a result of typical Maori whakama (shyness, reticence) (Farquhar and Laws, 1991) or lack of understanding of the proposed study. Another perspective may have been obtained from others like Gina who had left the group, as well as people who had were familiar with the activities of the group and chose not to be involved. As discussed earlier, it is not appropriate to make any kind of suppositions about the Maori community as a whole on the basis of this small sample, but only to develop some understanding of the nature of the experience of performing group membership for those seven people. However, what can be developed through the collection of in-depth data from this kind of small sample are themes that have significance for respondents, both those that are discussed by a number of people as well as those that seem to be particularly important for one or more members.
Researcher's "outsider status": problems and advantages

In order to show respect, I endeavoured to minimize the disruption and intrusion I made as an "alien" researcher (Jorgensen, 1989: 16). I kept out of the way during rehearsals and addressed the group only when invited. However, because the group are almost all Maoris and have been a close knit community for some years, as a white non-participating visitor I was conspicuous.

This outsider status presented both problems and advantages. My greatest problem was a lack of familiarity with Maori people, evident in my ignorance of their culture and language. As a consequence, the meaning of material that I saw rehearsed and performed many times remained largely a mystery to me, except when I happened to be present during its initial presentation to the group when Nana would discuss its cultural significance with performers.

I was aware that the socio-cultural context of Te Ruawhenua was very different to my own. There was a considerable socio-economic difference between group members and myself, even for those who shared my own Anglo-Australian heritage. All group members involved in the study lived in the far northern suburbs of Melbourne, an area I had never previously visited. They were typically in unskilled factory jobs or unemployed and therefore had a social world quite unlike my own relatively privileged middle-class background.
However, outsider status has positive aspects, as discussed by researchers including Spradley (1980), McCracken (1988) and Minichiello et al (1990). Spradley commented,

*the more you know about a situation as an ordinary participant, the more difficult it is to study it. The less familiar you are with a social situation, the more you are able to see the cultural rules at work (1980:61-62).*

My unfamiliarity with *Maoritanga* (the Maori way) provided me with a unique view. My relationships with the community were limited to my role as a researcher and I had no personal investment in Maori culture. In theory the group was open to my presence as it was their stated policy that people of any nationality were welcome as members and observers. The fact that I did not speak the Maori language was not a serious disadvantage, as most Te Ruawhenua members had English as their first language and little or scanty knowledge of Maori themselves.

Thus, there were both advantages and disadvantages of being an "outsider" researching this community. As my non-Maoriness was not a factor that could be controlled, I was obliged to do my best in unfamiliar circumstances and allow the experiences of members to shape the direction of the research.
DATA ANALYSIS

In this study, data analysis was integrated with data collection. I listened intently as I transcribed tapes after each interview. This initial listening informed each successive interview and the topics broached in the second round. Issues introduced by respondents that I had not anticipated were discussed with others, thus extending the areas of consideration. During the process of interviewing I attempted, in phenomenological terms, to "bracket" (Denzin, 1989) my own hunches in the back of my mind while I listened openly to the life experiences of my informants, allowing their concerns and interests to lead the conversation. Then I began a search for meaning within the many pages of interview transcripts.

A number of qualitative research models were consulted as a starting point for data analysis. Particularly useful were Ely's (1991) model of thematic analysis and the methodology Stinson (1993) used in a study on students' experiences of dance in schools.

Following a similar procedure to Stinson (1993), I began by reading and rereading the transcripts to come up with 25 categories which seemed to allow for the inclusion of most of the topics discussed in interviews. Using the full transcripts I then cut and pasted all the data in the form of coherent units of text into these topics (Ely, 1991). After much reflection and reorganization, these categories were finally refined into subheadings under the following four major topics: About Maoriness, About Te Ruawhenua, Dancing and the Dancer, and Connected Art Forms.
Not all respondents were equally expressive verbally, so some were quoted more frequently. Responses from the mature members featured because their views were more readily expressed during interviews. The children's comments tended to be short and to the point, though quite powerful in their brevity.

Data in the form of respondents' own words, "thickened" (Geertz, 1973) by observations from the field journal and video recordings of performances, are presented in the next chapter, Findings. A vignette for each respondent outlining personal information and some of the personally motivating aspects of group involvement opens the chapter.
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

INTRODUCING THE PERFORMERS

Nana
Thirty-two year old Nana, co-ordinator of a community centre, was living in her caravan in the Derbyshire’s backyard when I first contacted her. Nana formed Te Ruawhenua in 1985 after she migrated from New Zealand. Her current role was tutor, which meant that she was responsible for decisions about the group’s repertoire, much of which she composed and choreographed herself. Nana was the group’s link with Maori culture, introducing both traditional and contemporary material which she researched at the State Library of Victoria and on trips to New Zealand. She sang and danced in the front row at rehearsals but took the leader’s traditional place at the back of the stage for performances, accompanying Te Ruawhenua on her guitar. Nana’s significant talents as a dancer were evident in her dexterous performance of a very difficult long poi (balls on string manipulated by hand and wrist action) solo I observed at a Samoan birthday party in May 1994. Nana was also a talented orator, addressing Te Ruawhenua and other audiences alike with great aplomb.

Tui
Thirty eight year old Tui and his wife Faye shared their northern suburban home near Melbourne’s International Airport with their six children and other relatives. Tui and Faye both did shiftwork in factories, Tui during the evenings and Faye at night. Tui spoke of his desire for his children to do
well, to have a good education and to be able to earn a living before they moved into independent lifestyles, while also expressing concern about his sons' lack of interest in schooling. Tui felt that his boys were vulnerable to attractions of the city such as "parties, discos and spacies" because they had come to the city from a country area of New Zealand.
Tui had joined Te Ruawhenua two years earlier so that his children would know “what it means to be a Maori”. He had also discovered a sense of life direction for himself through his involvement as a performer. At the time of the interviews, Tui was very proud of his recent appointment to the position of kya (male leader).

**Hine**

Forty-six year old Hine lived in a unit in a government housing estate caring for a friend who had had a stroke. Friends created her nickname from the Maori word for lady, wahine, when she gave away the wild lifestyle of her youth and began to settle down into middle-age. Hine described her former life as a nightclub entertainer in Kings Cross and the many “great times” she had during “those lively days of the Vietnam War when the streets were full of American GIs with plenty of money”. Hine eventually shifted away from the “exhibitionist” phase of nightclub dancing and rediscovered her identity as a Maori cultural performer with Te Ruawhenua. Hine described her enjoyment of performing and the aroha (love) she experienced being part of the group and amongst her “own Maori people”.

**The Derbyshires: James, Ellen and Elizabeth**

The Australian born Derbyshire family moved reluctantly to a far northern suburb of Melbourne from a small town in rural Victoria because of father George’s health problems. The youngest four of the six Derbyshire children and their parents were involved with Te Ruawhenua.
James was a member of the Seniors group, while brother Chris and sisters Ellen and Elizabeth belonged to the Tamarikis (Juniors). Their mother, Julie, was active on the management committee and their father, George, had been President since May 94. George was also the treasurer-elect of the newly-established Maori Community Council of Victoria.

Interestingly, this family had little Maori blood. George claimed only 1/16 Maori ancestry, so his children had even less. However, they did have in common with other members of the group a “migrant” status in Broadmeadows, a city lifestyle from a country background and a relatively large family.

While I went to the Derbyshires’ home intending only to interview James, the rest of the family was interested in our discussion and stayed listening in. They were keen to give me information about Te Ruawhenua, their involvement and their perceptions of general concerns of the Maori community. Elizabeth and Ellen agreed to be interviewed and George added his own commentary to the children’s responses.

James

James, a 14 year old Year 9 student at the local secondary college, was a mature looking young men who described himself as “big” for his age. He enjoyed listening to funk, rap and heavy metal music as well as singing and making up his “own little tunes” on the guitar. James had been involved in heavy metal bands and was hoping to start another one soon. He was a
very active member of Te Ruawhenua, both as a performer and as assistant tutor for Nana. He often performed with Nana at special events, accompanying her on his guitar and acting as male leader.

Figure 2: Ellen
Ellen

Six year old Prep student, Ellen, told me how her Mum had “taken her in” to the group “because she wanted me to perform”. Ellen was confident about her performing ability, explaining, “I’m a good performer. My sister mimes, but I sing loud”. Ellen was keen to show me her costume and a video of her performance with the Tamarikis at the previous year’s competition. She described how she performed Maori songs in front of her class at school and volunteered to perform for me. Ellen’s family confirmed her passion for singing loudly and requested that she perform outside, as they had heard her favourite items often!

Elizabeth

Eleven year old Grade 5 student Elizabeth told me how she had enjoyed being outdoors and riding motorbikes in her earlier life in the country. Now she enjoyed being part of Te Ruawhenua. Elizabeth felt that her family were supportive, encouraging her and saying “good on ya” after she had performed. However, unlike her sister, Elizabeth expressed anxiety about being on stage and refused to perform any of her Maori repertoire at school despite her teacher’s encouragement.
The first six respondents were all continuing participants, while the final one described next, eighteen year old Gina, was interviewed because she was no longer an active member of the group.

**Gina**

Gina lived with her mother, stepfather and younger sister again in a northern suburb of Melbourne. She had left school after Year 10 and had been unemployed for nearly a year at the time of our interview, but was thinking of returning to finish her education at a different school. Gina had been an active member of Te Ruawhenua for some years, although
she withdrew shortly after my first visit. She reported a loss of interest in Te Ruawhenua because of a lack of discipline amongst members and because the social activities she enjoyed were being held less frequently.

Having introduced the respondents, Chapter 4 moves on to the Findings of this inquiry.

FINDINGS: FOUR CATEGORIES

Using the analytic process described in Chapter Three, data collected through observations and interviews with the seven respondents introduced above were sorted into four broad categories:

1. About Maoriness which relates broadly to issues of cultural identity and values,
2. About Te Ruawhenua which illuminates the experiences of group membership for informants,
3. Dancing and the Dancer which details individual perceptions of what it means to be a dancer and
4. Connected Arts Forms which describes the interrelationship between the Maori cultural art forms of dance, music and language.

The next section explores the identified themes related to culture under the heading About Maoriness. These include:

What makes a Maori?; Connecting with and regaining culture;
Here and there - living in Australia; Cultural values- respect and discipline and Gender.
ABOUT MAORINESS

What makes a Maori?

Respondents were asked about the characteristics of Maoriness and their identification with those characteristics. Overall they expressed pride in their cultural identity with physical attributes, particularly colour and genetic heritage, being seen as significant determinants of Maoriness. Gina felt “good” and “proud” to be Maori, identifying herself by her “colour, the looks and because my parents are Maori”.

Nana felt “wonderful...proud” to be “a Maori...with a touch of English and Jewish blood”. The characteristics of Maoriness for Nana were physical, cultural, spiritual and genetic:

[I suppose, my colour, the way I look. But mainly, I suppose what comes through is my belief in my people, the culture, the spirit. The spiritual, the values. All those important things make me a Maori. But also that, because I was born in New Zealand, I have both a mother and a father who are Maori...When I came here, my identity was Maori, so wherever I walk, whatever I do, it is based around my identity as a Maori.]

James identified himself as Maori, even though he had only one distant ancestor with Maori blood. He described the genetic, physical and behavioural characteristics he shared with Maori people.
I have a bit of Maori blood...I dance. Everyone reckons I act like a Maori...My size, I'm big for 14. The way I act...At school if people get too smart, I'll give them a clip on the ear. Maoris don't take much crap.

While his white skin made him stand out from others in the group, James felt this was not a serious problem. He felt accepted by Maori people outside Te Ruawhenua, reporting that “when we go to competitions everyone already knows I'm in the group”. Audiences noticed his whiteness but also his performing skill. James “didn’t care” when people said, ‘Look, he’s white”, because they also noticed that he was “a better dancer...than the black ones”. He felt “just normal” to be a Maori.

James’ sisters, Ellen and Elizabeth, also identified themselves as Maoris. Elizabeth felt that she was “a little bit Maori” because her “Dad’s a Maori, about half a Maori....and because mostly our friends are Maori”, and Ellen because “Dad’s a Maori”. They weren’t overly pleased about their Maoriness however. Elizabeth felt “Not that good, but ...alright”, while Ellen felt “a bit good and a bit dumb” about being a Maori.

Hine described her Maori identity in terms of colour, saying that “If you’re coloured, you should carry that colour with pride”. While identifying primarily as a Maori, Hine also identified as a resident of the earth. “First of all, I’m born Maori. Secondly I was born an earthling”. Hine had only positive experiences of Maoriness during her upbringing in New Zealand.
Maori and Pakeha people shared each others' cultures. "We shared theirs and they shared ours...I had no experience of...racial...distinguishing against black or white until I left New Zealand". It was not until she travelled to Australia that Hine first saw coloured people receiving different treatment from whites.

That's when I first saw what I used to read about in the newspapers about coloureds....How the local people were treated. What I saw in movies like from Africa, I'd never experienced it.

The sense of Maori identity reported by all group members was reinforced through the activities of Te Ruawhenua. Contact with the Maori culture through the arts was seen as an important aspect of group involvement by all respondents.

Connecting with and regaining culture

For the Derbyshire children, involvement with Maori culture was a relatively new and enjoyable experience. For Tui and Gina, group involvement assisted them to make a new connection, while it helped Hine regain a connection with Maori culture. For Nana, group involvement was a way of sharing her cultural knowledge and skills.

The Derbyshires were Australian born and had had little contact with Maori culture until a school friend of James' inspired him to join the group. James chose to be involved because "I like it and I have a bit of Maori blood".
Elizabeth and Ellen also enjoyed being part of the group, Elizabeth "because it's fun...and educational...we learn the language" and Ellen because "it's fun in it...I felt happy. We always dance...it's fun".

Tui's involvement with a cultural group was a way of reconnecting with Maori culture that he had missed in his youth in New Zealand and in his adult years living in Australia. Although he had had contact with Maori culture on the marae in his early childhood, Tui grew up fluent only in English because students were forbidden to speak Maori language in schools in the 1960s. Tui felt that his generation were now "trying to get all that back". His way of doing so was to become a cultural performer with Te Ruawhenua.

Tui reported finding a sense of personal direction through his involvement in Maori culture. He first became interested in cultural performing when an event featuring some of his relatives made him, "being a Maori", "sit up and take notice" and think "what am I doing with my life?". Tui's perception that the performers "seemed to know what they are doing" was an inspiration for him to join the group. He enjoyed rehearsals, especially when he understood what the Maori words meant and felt "proud to get up and partake".

Tui also joined a cultural group to give his children, growing up in Australia away from their Maori heritage, an experience of their Maoriness. He explained:
I’ve been involved mainly for my kids. As a Maori, at least I can say, the kids can say, you know, that’s who they are. They can relate to grandparents, and all of them are Maoris. So this is the sort of thing we are trying to keep together, so you don’t lose your heritage.

Through involvement with a Maori cultural group Tui believed that his children would learn "their language, how to sing, and pride in being a Maori".

Like Tui’s children, Gina was raised mostly in Australia and had little exposure to Maori culture during her schooldays. Her stepmother first instigated Gina’s involvement in a culture group wanting,

...us kids to do something besides just playing with...friends all the time. She would like to see us go with a culture group...and learn a little bit about our history because we were over here for most of our lives.

Gina described her interest in learning about her own “culture, the history, the language” and "to understand what New Zealand is all about”.

Hine was raised in an environment where she “lived and learned” Maori culture. Hine and her extended family would sing together “Maori-style” as they worked in the family market garden. As an adult, however, Hine "lost" her culture when she spent thirteen years overseas and "didn't have it around" her. She reported that, "It was always in me, but I had no way of expressing it". It was not until she returned "Downunder ...to the southern
hemisphere" and "joined back" to her "own race again" through a cultural group, that Hine reestablished contact with her Maori heritage. When she had the opportunity to join Te Ruawhenua four years before, she "made a beeline for it".

Hine reflected that joining a cultural group "gave me my identity back, I'm finding myself again. Which is wonderful. I'm learning more things about my own people". Hine felt that Maori culture was particularly important because she had only one living relative. Through involvement with the group Hine believed that she was "identifying who I am... You know, I'm portraying the real me".

While it was important for Hine and Tui to reestablish their contact with Maori culture for themselves, they also took pleasure in sharing it with outsiders. Hine enjoyed singing performances, explaining, "If you are happy you want to show it. What better way to show it than sing about it". Tui felt a responsibility to promote the Maori culture through the group's activities.

You've got to get out there and, all of us are PR officers.

You know, we're promoting our group. But not only our group, but our culture... I feel really good about dancing and showing people my culture.
Like Hine and Tui, Nana was also motivated to share the Maori culture with others. For Nana, however, it was not outsiders, but members of the Maori community with whom she wanted to share her knowledge. She reported being keen to see a "commitment into maintaining the language and the cultural aspects as well as customs and values" and that "what makes me feel enjoyment is that people are learning and appreciating the culture". Nana felt that involvement in a cultural group was particularly important for Maori people in Australia.

*Because they're away from home...they feel there is something missing while they are here. So going back to the culture here pleases me in the way of saying, that you've always loved your culture, but you took it for granted when you were back home. But here it's a necessity.*

Hine believed that cultural arts activities were important for Te Ruawhenua members and also for the Maori community in Melbourne as a whole. She felt that these activities provided "the way for the culture to stay together" and for keeping the Maori people in Melbourne "as a community". Hine said, "We may be in different groups, but when we do congregate, we are one family, we are one people".

As issues of cultural identity were pressing for most respondents, it seemed appropriate to discuss their motivation for coming to and staying in Australia.
Here and There: Living in Australia

All New Zealand-born respondents were in Australia by choice, except 18 year old school leaver, Gina, who migrated with her parents when she was four. They all reported strong ties with family and friends in New Zealand and returned for visits regularly.

Hine had travelled and lived away from New Zealand for 25 years. She explained her desire to travel as a Maori characteristic inherited from her ancestors, saying, “You see, I’m a gypsy at heart. I guess that goes back to my ancestors, as well. They were voyagers, travellers”. Hine discussed her love for her homeland as well as her interest in seeing other parts of the world, including Australia.

*Home is where you live, but that’s where I was born...My heart will always be there. Being born in a place doesn’t mean you have to stay here for the rest of your life. You can appreciate how we are part of a world...You have to see the rest of the world because it’s yours. So I guess that free spirit comes back from the ancestors.*

Nana and Tui also described wanderlust. Nana, described herself as an “adventurer”, a “wanderer”, the “only one” in her family. She had recently made the decision to come back to live in Melbourne after a sojourn overseas, describing the economic and cultural advantages of Melbourne life as compared with New Zealand.
I've decided to come back to live in Melbourne because I like it. Melbourne is very cultural, very multi-cultural. New Zealand, I've lived there for 25 years of my life, and nothing is there for me. It's too small, there's lack of employment opportunities and I'm an adventurer. I like to travel the world and meet a lot more people.

Tui also discussed his enjoyment of adventuring, despite financial limitations. "You've got to see a country. I like to just travel...It's just that you've got to have money to travel". Tui first came to Australia with his wife, Faye, and children to visit relatives. Once here, they decided to stay because Australia was a new experience, "something different", although they did miss out on some experiences because they were no longer part of marae life. The boys weren't able to learn traditional skills like how "to put a hangi down" (prepare an earth-oven meal) because they were not able to observe and assist their elders doing it. Tui thought that these skills were "what's been lacking" for his family since coming to Melbourne.

For Nana and Tui, the advantages of being in Australia outweighed the disadvantages of being away from New Zealand, especially as membership of Te Ruawhenua assured ongoing contact with Maoriness.

Cultural group involvement also assisted in the promulgation of Maori cultural values such as respect and discipline and in the perpetuation of traditional gender roles. Maori values relating to respect and discipline
were discussed by Hine and Tui, while cultural prescriptors for gender-related behaviour, although not mentioned at any length by participants, were strongly in evidence in group activities. Cultural values related to respect and discipline and gender are discussed in next section.

Cultural values

Respect and discipline  For Hine, part of the significance of membership was experiencing Maori spiritual values. She used the term respect as a kind of spiritual notion, commenting that group activities and rehearsals always started and finished with a prayer “to pay respect to our saviour, God”. As well as respect to the Christian God, the opening prayer also included acknowledgement of God in the Maori traditional sense. Hine explained,

*You always pay respect to the land that was your food. To the sea, that was your food, your life. You know, you pay respect to trees. They gave you oxygen to breathe.*

Hine mentioned the blessings Nana made over the group’s newly acquired costumes in terms of respect for all those associated with their production:

*When she blessed our new grass skirts...That was respect to the land. To Mother Earth. The part that grew the flax. We paid respect to the people who made them, for how they were brought over...It's like everything. It's all environmental.*
Hine's responsibilities as wardrobe mistress also involved respect, as she explained, "because I'm the holder of those uniforms...I have to look after them with respect". Respect was also about acknowledging one's heritage. "Everything's been so commercialized, material things don't mean a thing much any more. But you still have to respect where you're from".

Tui spoke at length about respect. For him, respect was less about spiritual matters than it was a guideline for everyday living and relations between people. He wanted his children to experience Maori culture to learn about respect, a value which "goes really deep", noting that "if you haven't got that respect, for me and for you, you've got nothing". Respect was a wide-ranging value, applicable both to people and things. Tui wanted his kids to

...learn how...to respect your elders and that sort of thing.

How to be polite and how to say thank you and ask for things properly instead of...I'll just take it. It's an everyday thing....to keep things clean. Hygiene...especially when you've got other people's homes. You should respect their home.

Tui believed that members must show respect to Nana as their tutor. "You've got to respect your elders or whoever, wherever you are, you always respect other people". For Tui, the way one behaves towards others affects their response to you. "If you show respect for other people, they'll look at you and say, oh yeah, these people they behave fairly well".
According to Tui, some of the younger members of the group were lacking in respect, and he felt it his responsibility to do something about it. He "just noticed with our kids, they sort of forget, you've got to sort of pull a bit of line down".

Tui discussed the concept of discipline as being related to respect. Discipline was about the way people apply themselves to their work, in this case to group activities in rehearsal. Tui felt that some of the young members of the group were lacking in both respect and discipline, particularly in their attitude to group tutor Nana.

You know how young teenagers are and they forget, especially with Nana...that, you know, she's putting a lot in. They're only just showing up on Sundays for three or four hours. I've noticed...that they have a lack of discipline.

Tui discussed strategies for inculcating discipline in those who lacked it and the consequences for male members who "make any mistakes or start playing up...anything out of the ordinary". Tui's preferred first step would be to "take them aside and just have a talk to them, and try telling them how we don't want any more of this mucking around". If that didn't work then more serious punishment would follow. While it "hasn't actually happened yet", Tui believed that members who got out of line after a warning have "got to face the consequences...to make them wake their ideas up a little bit". These consequences may include:
Tui believed that this kind of punishment was appropriate as an aid to learning. While "other people may think it's a bit harsh...they say, you've got to learn the hard way sometimes".

Tui's prescriptions for discipline seemed to apply only to men, raising the issue of gender roles. While gender was barely mentioned by respondents, it was evident that cultural attitudes towards gender were being transmitted through group participation.

**Gender issues** Role differentiation between men and women was very evident in the group's activities, even in the contemporary choreographies created by Nana. Men and women were grouped separately on stage, on opposite sides for songs and in separate lines for dances. In *waiata a ringa*, the singing parts and dance movements were different for men and women. *Poi* dances involved only women, while *haka* featured men. However, these gender distinctions were not immutable, as observed during the group's performance at the Samoan birthday party. At the appointed hour, the women were ready to perform, but no men had arrived. Nana told the audience that the women were furious at being let down. Together she and...
the women performed their own haka to express their anger and
disappointment.

Gender differences were also expressed in costume and body adornment.
Men performed bare chested, while the women's piupiu (flax skirts) had
woven flax tops. Men had facial tattoos, (drawn on for the event with felt
textas), while the women were bare faced. Mens' hair was sometimes part
shaven at the sides, while women usually had long hair, adorned with
feathers for performances.

Male and female members, including married couples, also had quite
distinct roles in other activities. They stayed quite separate at rehearsals,
even during breaks. At the group's wananga (learnings, or live-in
workshops held over a weekend), domestic duties were divided along
gender lines. Men prepared breakfast while the women washed up, and
then that order was reversed at lunchtime.

James expressed a wish that there were more men in the group, saying
"there's heaps of women but not many men". He believed that men's
involvement in cultural performing was more likely than women's to be
limited by work or sporting commitments.

More men work. If they're working they can't come along.

Most Maori men play rugby, that's on Sunday, so they
have to choose between rugby and culture.
The distinct norms based on gender were evidenced in Tui's discussion about tutors. Tui mentioned the special contribution that guest male tutor Thomas made, alluding to the fact that his gender made him an appropriate model for the male performers. With Thomas, Tui felt the men:

...can make it better...a little bit more authentic. With the experience that Thomas has got, in that field as a male tutor, that is just for the haka...he will just come along and say...we'll make it a little bit better, as males, you know, as men.

Figure 4: Training men
Tui felt the fact that Thomas was a man "helps" in training men, though he was careful not to disparage Nana's talents. "Nana's got a lot...she can come up with some brilliant actions".

Tui anticipated that men would behave differently from women in rehearsals, as indicated by his description of severe disciplinary measures which, as noted above, seemed only to apply to men. Women appeared to be the mainstay of the group, often holding the fort in men's absence. There were only women present the day I visited when another tutor led a rehearsal in the place of Nana. On the night of the Samoan performance when no male members of the group appeared at all, Nana expostulated that "the men were all in the pub, while the good old women did all the work, as always!"

In summary, respondents' desire to experience their Maoriness, including Maori values of respect and discipline, was an important motivation for their cultural arts involvement. A tacit, if not explicit, reinforcement of cultural gender roles was also in evidence.

Respondents also commented on the unique experiences of membership in Te Ruawhenua. This is described in the next section under the following thematic headings: Identification with the group; Good times together; Challenges; Leadership and change.
ABOUT TE RUAWHENUA

Identification with the group

As discussed in the previous section, respondents all reported positive identification as Maoris. Hine and Nana also reported a strong affiliation with Te Ruawhenua. The group’s champion status from three successive victories at national competitions provided Hine with the motivation to commit herself to the group. She felt that Te Ruawhenua was, “one of the best in the country at this time. So naturally I’m going to stay in here, because that’s where I feel the best of me comes out”. Involvement with Te Ruawhenua provided Hine with “stress” to balance the “relaxation” she experienced in activities with other club affiliations. She felt that being a performer with Te Ruawhenua was “definitely a challenge” because the group “have one of the best tutors in Australia”.

According to Nana, Te Ruawhenua had “a great reputation and credibility...not only in Victoria but in the whole of Australia, as well as back home”. They were well-known in New Zealand because of a North Island tour they made in 1992 after a competent performance in The Aotearoa Festival of Performing Arts, “the biggest, biggest festival back home”. Nana attributed the group’s success to “lots of hard work” from her, the input “of management...as well as individual members who bring their skills and strength”.

As well as being successful performers, Nana felt that Te Ruawhenua were an especially outgoing and social group. She said that they were “very,
very friendly...No matter who comes into the hall, we must stop to welcome them. And then we might want them to be part of our gathering”. Nana’s view of the group’s friendliness was borne out in interviews with others who all emphasized the social aspects of group activities.

**Good times together: rehearsing and performing**

Members described the social enjoyment they got from weekly rehearsals. Elizabeth and Ellen felt that Sunday practices were "fun", with Sunday being "boring" without practice. Nana, too, described her enjoyment of the social aspects of practice. She loved the times when she could "joke and have fun with members".

For Gina, social contact outside her home was the most enjoyable aspect of attendance at Te Ruawhenua rehearsals and "communicating with others" was the easiest part of being a group member. Gina found the *wanangas* "pretty good" because they gave her "time to get away from home and to get to know the other people". She described her regular enthusiastic participation in social functions which formerly followed rehearsals. "We used to have parties every week...I'd always go along to them". Gina found that the parties, sports and talent quests the group used to organize were “good, fun, exciting”.

Tui felt it was important to "get involved and meet people”, and the opportunities Te Ruawhenua provided to be involved with other local
families was an attraction. "You see them and look forward to going to practice". Tui reported that Te Ruawhenua members had become so close over time that they were like family to each other, for example, sharing concerns over each other's health. He noted, "We treat each other as family members...when somebody's not there or sick, they sort of get a bit worried...are they alright".

Hine also discussed how group members had become like family to her as a result of her involvement. "We are a closely knitted group so we see a lot of each other. We socialize as well as practice the culture. We're like one big family".

Thus, Te Ruawhenua rehearsals were enjoyed by members because of their inherent social opportunities. Hine and Tui also spoke of their enjoyment of performing in terms of deep emotional connections with others. Hine felt "really wonderful, like a million dollars" when she wore her traditional costume on stage. She "could feel the warmth of those hands that entwined everything and dyed them" and "the love that was put into these things when they were made". Hine felt that she was "able to portray" that love in her performance.

For Tui, performing was a particularly emotional experience when he shared the stage with members of his family. While being "in front of a big crowd" was "fun", he found it "really good" and "an extra boost" to have his kids "standing beside me". It was also "a highlight" for Tui to see his
wife Faye "get up and...really enjoy" being a performer after being on the sidelines for some time. "I feel really happy now that...they're all enjoying it", he said.

Figure 5: Tui's son Jaydon.

Both Hine and Tui described emotional experiences associated with performing in the company of other Te Ruawhenua members. For Hine, melodious singing was a peak experience. "When you're flat you don't
feel a thing. If you're all in tune with each other, that's expression. I guess it's emotions". For Tui, being in front of an audience made performing special. He believed that having an audience changed the feeling between group members, and this pleasurable feeling enthused them to keep going.

*Every time we do a performance in front of the public, the human body just feels the energy we're getting from each other... And we come away... talking about, "Oh, that was good", and we can't wait to do it again.*

Other members also found that the presence of an audience made performing a special pleasure. Hine described the response from audiences that she experienced during performances as "joy. Lots of joy". Ellen felt that performing in front of others was "the best part" of being a group member, giving her a "good feeling... just like fun, just like playing". She reported an experience at competitions in Sydney, when she felt "happy" to have been "watched by people... from everywhere. Even the Aborigines". Elizabeth too, said that, "I like it... I feel happy" when people watch, especially when "they come from all around the country to watch". Rehearsals for Elizabeth were also "a bit more fun when club members come and watch".

For James, too, performing in front of an audience was particularly enjoyable. While rehearsing felt "just normal", having an audience made "the special... good... feeling, a sort of tingle up your spine". However, the pleasure of performing for James was moderated by his sense of
achievement. If he felt that the group's performance was not up to its usual standard, then the post-performance feeling might not be so good. After competitions for which James felt the group were not adequately rehearsed, the feeling he had on stage was "good", but afterwards the feeling "wasn't as good...as what there usually is".

Tui discussed the importance of receiving feedback from audiences. When the audience has been enthusiastic, Tui reported that all the group feels "really good". After a performance at an elderly citizens' centre when the audience responded really well, Tui described how "everybody was happy and Nana was happy" and they were "all on a high...We took a bit of a while to come down".

The excitement generated by the response of an audience was one of Tui's original motivations for joining Te Ruawhenua. When he first arrived in Australia, he saw his niece perform in a Maori cabaret.

*I looked at her and said, 'Geez, I'd love to be up there, too, you know, to be performing with her". The crowd...were really cheering her on... And I said, 'Geez, I had to come to Australia to see that'*. 

Respondents' enjoyment of Te Ruawhenua activities as outlined so far has emphasized social opportunities; being with others and being in front of an audience. Opportunity to travel was another frequently discussed aspect of group involvement.
Travel

As discussed above in the section Here and There, respondents mentioned travel often, both with Te Ruawhenua and outside the group. Migration was a common experience of all group members. The Derbyshires had migrated from an area in rural Victoria only an hour’s drive away, while others like Tui and his family had come thousands of kilometres from country New Zealand. Hine, Tui and Nana discussed how their adventurous Maori natures had led them to Australia in the first place. Travelling was also a significant part of other members’ enjoyment of group activities.

In the course of group involvement members did a fair bit of travelling, sometimes only between suburbs in Melbourne, sometimes interstate or to New Zealand. Gina moved from another group to Te Ruawhenua because she wanted “to do travelling, while doing culture”. For Gina, travelling around for competitions was “different, exciting, something new”. She enjoyed the opportunity to “get away from home” in Reservoir to attend rehearsals in Broadmeadows, as well as a trip to New Zealand. That trip was a pleasure for Gina because she got to see “old rellos” that she hadn’t seen “for years” and experienced “their ways, their tribal ways” during a tour of maraes. Once she was no longer an active member, Gina missed most “not being able to go anywhere exciting on Saturdays or Sundays”.
The Derbyshire children enjoyed the travelling too. Elizabeth liked to “go places...everywhere, Brisbane, Sydney, Darwin”, and “the best part” of being a group member for Ellen was “going to places”. Ellen was disappointed when a planned trip to Darwin was cancelled, saying, “I felt upset when we didn’t go to Darwin because it’s fun to go”. James noted that the biggest difference group involvement made to his life were the opportunities to “get out more, do a lot more things. Go to different states, go to New Zealand”.

Often, travel with Te Ruawhenua, such as the trips to Darwin and New Zealand, was for the purpose of competing with other cultural groups. These competitions were a significant part of the group’s activities, mentioned by all respondents and discussed at some length by four.

Competitions

Maori cultural competitions are held annually in Australia at state and national levels. Modelled on similar events held throughout New Zealand, they are attended by the majority of established Maori cultural groups. Te Ruawhenua had been Australian champions for three years and their trip to New Zealand in 1992 was as Australian regional representatives to the Aotearoa Festival of Performing Arts. Te Ruawhenua had been the sole hosts of the 1993 competitions and had pressured another group to host the 1994 ones. At the time of the 1994 event, President George Derbyshire had already procured a $2000 grant to fund the competitions for 1995.
Ellen reported positive feelings about competitions. "I like it a lot...it's fun". Her enjoyment was observable in her performance with the *Te Ruawhenua Tamarikis* in the 1994 Victorian Championships. While it was obvious that she didn't have complete mastery of the song and dance repertoire, Ellen appeared to be really happy to be on stage, smiling broadly from the middle of the front row.

For Gina, the opportunity to be involved in competitions was a motivating factor in her move to Te Ruawhenua from another group. She wanted to go to "something bigger" than "just doing entertainments". Tui felt that the competitions provided motivation, even for those who had left the group. He said, "I think ...when our next competitions come, I think they'll come back".

Hine felt that competitions were important because "it's another part of the human emotions to be competitive...It's a buzz". She particularly enjoyed the opportunity to be amongst other Maori people, saying, "It's a lovely feeling...competing amongst your own...because that's when the feeling of love goes out to everyone". To Hine, being successful as a competitor was not as important as being amongst fellow Maori people.

*That's part of living. If you win, you win, if you don't, you don't...participating is the main thing. Winning is just a bonus.*
Hine discussed a recent competition when her performance was less competent than usual because of poor health. To her the standard of her performance was not as important as the fact that she was part of the whole event.

*It's gratifying to me that I gave my best on the day. It wasn't 100%, but I'm not going to say that to no-one, not even myself. But it is a buzz, to be able to compete, and to express yourself in the form of dance. It's exhilarating, whether you win or lose.*

This exhilaration, the "buzz" mentioned by Hine, was evidenced in the dressing rooms at the 1994 Victorian Championships. The atmosphere was animated and happy as people chatted with each other and with me, and enthusiastically posed for the camera and video. They excitedly helped each other dress for the performance, doing up costumes, drawing "tattoos" on each others' faces with black texta pen and preparing each others' hairstyles and headdresses.

While Hine enjoyed competing whatever the outcome, Tui's enjoyment was heightened by success. He reported particularly enjoying his first experience as a competitor because Te Ruawhenua were victorious: "I feel really good, especially with the win in Sydney".
As well as all the pleasurable aspects of group involvement, including social opportunities, travelling and competitions, respondents also discussed the challenges.

**Challenges**

The challenges of being a member of Te Ruawhenua included shyness, anxiety, lack of energy, tiredness and boredom. Tui and Gina had struggled with shyness as performers, and Elizabeth with anxiety. Tui described the process of personal development he had undergone during his time as a performer. As a novice he had thought, "Oh Jesus, I don't want to do this" prior to performances, but with more experience he no longer felt reluctant to perform. "I find it really good. It's a drill that works for me to get up...Now, it doesn't matter what we are doing...it's a buzz".

Tui described a similar process of personal development that his "really shy" eldest son had undergone. According to his father, Tui Jnr. had been afraid to perform originally. He had thought, "I'm not going to get up there". Then, with practice and increased confidence, Tui Jnr. got "used to it". Finally, he got "past that point" of being concerned about people looking at him or the presence of his friends. He got past "peer pressure". Now, Tui Jnr. "just gets up".
Performing helped Gina in a similar way. She reported that, "standing up in front of people stopped me from being shy". Elizabeth described the anxiety she would experience during performances, which changed to a happy feeling afterwards. "When I'm performing I always feel nervous...When it's finished, I feel happy".

As well as shyness, performers had to face tiredness. Tui commented that, "some days...performers might feel that they don't want to be there", they "might feel a little bit down", or "have wanted to have a bit of a sleep in" after "a bit of a hard night". To cope with a lack of energy, Tui would move over to be beside someone who was "feeling good, having a good practice" and would try to "get a bit of...energy" from them to end up "feeling good" himself.

James, Ellen and Tui all reflected on the tiring aspect of rehearsals, describing how the repetition required to bring items up to Nana’s standard was sometimes difficult. James found rehearsing "sometimes annoying, when we do the same thing over and over". Tui remembered unpleasant sore throats and hoarseness after rehearsals where songs were repeated over and over: "By the time you've finished doing the haka, your throat is really hoarse, and you're just perspiring". Ellen said that sometimes she wished rehearsals weren't "so long" because her legs "get sore".

During rehearsal it was easy to see how tiring repeated practice of some items could be. Field journal notes from one practice report:
It seemed that all members were really trying, giving a lot of energy to the practice. People were quite physically stressed by their singing, as indicated by coughing and non-verbal actions. During the rehearsal, a member commented that the repetition felt "torturous".

For tutor Nana, rehearsals were very physically demanding also. She explained how she would go into rehearsal,

...as fit as a fiddle, and come out...just so exhausted. And I go home and I just put my feet up. It's a lot of energy and that's why I want to go home and really relax. I'm just stuffed.

Although group members sometimes found the repetition and hard work involved in rehearsal unpleasant, they believed it was beneficial. James found repeated practice of items "worth it in the end because practice makes perfect". Tui believed that:

You've got to give a bit of time, or else you ain't going to be learning much...If you have one hour solid practice, then you know...it's an hour well spent.

Tui found that his confidence improved with increased practice, and once he had confidence he started to "feel good" about rehearsing.

Nana commented also on the necessity of hard work in rehearsals. It was important to her that group members' rehearsal time was well-spent. "If
people have given up their time to come to practise something, in respect to them I make sure that that’s carried out”. Nana’s determination for people to spend their time productively was evidenced at rehearsals, when she would keep members rehearsing at full pace for up to three hours with only one short break. When their efforts seemed below the standard she required, she would exhort them to work harder.

On one occasion when Nana felt that members were making inadequate efforts in rehearsal, she shouted at them, “I haven’t lost my mana. It’s up to you if you are going to hold on to yours” and “You women are piss-weak,... your singing is as bad as the other group, you women can’t sing”.

Nana would finish each rehearsal with demands for items to be practised by performers in the ensuing week.

In addition to her commitment to make rehearsals fruitful, Nana was conscious of a range of other responsibilities of her special role of tutor, as described next.

Leadership-

Nana on herself Nana felt that she had unique leadership and teaching abilities, describing herself as “well-known within the Maori community here...a leader too...a great resource for my people”. She felt that her tutoring skills were the result of both innate abilities and deliberate exertion.

Nana was trained in singing by one of the best tutors in New Zealand and “in return”, she “respected the culture more” and developed “the ambition
to become a tutor”. She had worked hard to develop her tutoring skills, which came from:

*studying, from participating in festivals. Looking at groups. Looking at how different tutors train their groups, going to competitions, going to entertainment shows, reading.*

As the group's tutor, Nana continued to put in a significant effort, reporting,

*Being the tutor is time-consuming. There's a lot of energy you need to put in. Like when you go to practice, you've got to be hyped up. You've got to be motivated. You have to produce the energy that's needed.*

Nana felt that she was a "very strict" tutor. She was concerned to give her role as tutor her "utmost best" because "if the standard is high in the group I would like to pat myself on the back and say "yes", because of the high standard of the tutor who is a dancer".

Nana felt that her ability to lead the group kept improving with experience. She explained that "there's still a lot to learn, but each year I get more because I'm still learning more and I'm experimenting more within the culture". For her as leader, there were special rewards.

*The enjoyment I get is seeing a lot of people continue with their culture, continue with their language. Participating
in management roles, seeing our children love and enjoying the culture...seeing some of our children in the culture group grow up....A lot of our ex-members have actually gone on to teaching their own groups. That pleases me.

Nana's special qualities were also discussed by other respondents. They reinforced some of her views and added extra insights.

Performers on Nana  Hine and Gina spoke of Nana's ability to make Maori culture relevant to contemporary life, while Ellen, Elizabeth and Tui discussed her encouraging teaching style. There were many comments on Nana's strictness, but this was seen to be an asset for Te Ruawhenua.

Hine spoke very positively about Nana, describing her as "absolutely brilliant", "one of the best tutors in Australasia" and a "good motivator". Hine suggested that part of Nana's uniqueness was her mixed Maori and European ancestry which gave her a balance between the "friendly" Maori way and the "mistrusting" European. She described Nana's special ability to relate Maori cultural heritage to the present and future concerns of her people.

She still retains the old customs, but she is leading us into the year 2000...She still maintains, you know who you are, and know where you're going. You must remember and
know your identity, but also keep your eyes open for the future. You take it with you. You never leave it behind.

Gina spoke of Nana's ability to make the group's activities and repertoire interesting to a young performer. Gina had left a previous culture group because she had found their repertoire of "slow meaningful songs... (that) needed to be uplifted" "boring", whereas Te Ruawhenua's songs were "always upgoing and jazzier".

Te Ruawhenua's repertoire reflected their tutor's interest in the current concerns of her people and the wider Maori community. Hine explained, "A lot of our songs express something quite important for the group". One of the items being rehearsed during 1994 was an action song about the children born within the Te Ruawhenua community that year. As she introduced a performance, Nana described the song written for the twelve families who had new babies, expressing their desire to be good parents. Another repertoire item was a waiata a ringa written by Nana and performers together during one rehearsal as a welcome to New Zealand rolley-hockey players competing in Melbourne. Yet another item in rehearsal was a haka created by Nana as a protest against a proposal to build a marae in Melbourne.

Other members discussed Nana's talents as a teacher. Elizabeth and Ellen appreciated Nana's supportive and encouraging teaching style. Elizabeth felt that Nana was "excellent".
She doesn't make you do things if you're shy. She'll help you out, help you understand. Like...if we can't get a note, Nana will help with the guitar and break words up if we can't understand.

Ellen too reported, "She helps you...You don't work on your own...She likes to practice with us". For Ellen, the best parts of rehearsing with Te Ruawhenua were when "Nan' comes and practices with us".

Tui described Nana as being "like the backbone of the group", with group members being "only the branches on the tree, as you might call it". He described Nana's distinctive teaching style which he felt "brings the best" out of the group and her special talents for getting members to do things they didn't want to do and making difficult things seem easy. "We mightn't want to do it, but we will end up doing it". Tui believed that Nana was "doing a lot for our people here in Melbourne".

Tui gave an example of the way Nana would inspire the group with confidence to perform new repertoire in a very short time, such as the night of the Jewish Festival in 1993, when I first saw them. In the bus travelling to the event, Nana taught the group a Hebrew song, "Hava Nagila" and within an hour members had rehearsed the item to performance standard. Shortly afterwards, they performed it to a large and very appreciative audience.
Gina commented that Nana was a good tutor, “even though she was strict”.

Tui discussed Nana’s strictness in relation to her high standards and the fact that she “wants everything to be perfect”.

You know how strict she is with her...program. She wants us to...make sure our program is spot on. You know how she is, she’s really fussy and everything, even if you make mistakes.

When Nana shouted at the group during a rehearsal, ostensibly to make them try harder, Tui felt that this was an appropriate action. He could "understand...where she is coming from" and felt that it was "good that she does that. It brings the best out of me".

After describing Nana’s considerable talents, members also discussed her attempts to deputise leadership. Mostly other people’s leadership qualities were compared unfavourably with Nana’s. Members’ comments indicated that Nana was an essential cog in the wheel of group function: that she had special leadership qualities not shared by others. Yet during the interview period and for some time previously, Nana had been making efforts to reduce her involvement with Te Ruawhenua. Nana’s changed priorities and members’ reactions are discussed in the next section on “Changes”.
Changes

During 1993 and 1994, Nana had been reassessing her life direction, deciding to decrease her involvement with Te Ruawhenua and pass on many of her previous responsibilities to group members. She explained that:

> My commitment towards other things in my life has made me come to a decision that I can feel good about getting other people involved in the group, passing on responsibilities.

Nana "used to play many roles within the group", being the “the founder, advisor, resource person”. More recently her role had been “mainly just tutoring”. Shortly after my initial interview with her, Nana reduced her involvement with the group even further. She moved from Melbourne to Echuca to take up a new job, and decreased her attendance at group rehearsals from weekly to fortnightly.

Both James and Hine described the negative consequences for the group of Nana’s changed priorities. James suggested that Te Ruawhenua’s lesser achievement at a recent competition was the result of inadequate input from Nana. Although the group continued to practice without Nana, James felt this was not the same. On the weeks she didn’t come down, "we can't get
taught any more because she's the one who knows what she's going to teach us". After those competitions, James noted that the "feeling wasn't as good as usual".

Hine felt that Nana's reduced contribution was a factor in lower morale and decreased participation of members. While she felt that "we're all to blame for it, you can't put your finger on anyone", Hine also discussed members' loss of trust in Nana and the withdrawal of some group members following Nana's extended absence in 1993. Hine was clear that decreased involvement of the tutor had a direct effect on the achievements of the group. "We only have one leader, one tutor. Without the shepherd, the sheep go astray".

Gina and Tui commented also on negative changes in group morale and activity over the previous year, though they did not blame Nana overtly. Gina felt that since the group's return from New Zealand at the end of 1992:

Everybody just started doing their own thing. Like we’d go to practice and a few people would want to go out and do this and that and, other people would want to sort of practice and concentrate, well, everything sort of mucks up and it gets really boring, and you get...pissed off...It wasn't how it used to be where you can have fun and enjoy it.
Gina wished that things were as well structured as previously with “everybody getting their act together, pulling as one. Getting to know different varieties of ...action songs”.

Tui felt “a little bit sad” because those people who had inspired him to join the group were no longer involved. He hoped they would be interested in coming back when they saw things going well.

*I’m just... looking around to see if they’re ever going to come back and join the group... Things have started to come right... But... we’ve got to stick together, and... go through these sort of times. Because when everybody’s on a high, all the other members will notice. And they’ll want to come back.*

In addition to their comments about culture and being Maori, and about their membership in Te Ruawhenua, respondents also shared their experiences of dance and dancing. In the next section, individuals’ perceptions are described under the following themes: Feelings about dancing, and Identity as a dancer.

**DANCING AND THE DANCER**

**Feelings about dancing**

For Elizabeth, the aspects of performing which seemed the most “fun” were “dancing and doing the actions”, and for Ellen “the best times” were when
the Tamarikis were "dancing and singing, and doing the actions", particularly when club members were watching. The early part of rehearsals when members “just jump around” was “a bit boring” for Ellen.

Hine reported the good feelings she had when she was dancing, and the opportunity for self-expression that dance offered her. She said that dancing,

Makes you feel about 110%. It makes you feel absolutely wonderful. You're portraying who you are. We're all doing something in unison, but that's when your individuality takes over. You're doing the same rigid moves, but your facial expressions are just different to the one next to you. They're most probably feeling it exactly the same way, but no face is the same, not even a twin.

Hine’s enjoyment of dancing and singing was evident during the group’s performance at a Samoan 21st birthday party, where she took a confident outgoing position in the front row of the group. Her eyes and face shone as she performed, her voice was clear and resounding and her movements were large and open.

Tui discussed the emotional benefits of cultural dance for him. He looked forward to haka practice because it afforded him a release of negative feelings, a physical boost and a form of positive self-expression. He explained, “I can go there and release a lot of energy...I find for me I can let
go of a lot of negative things. Just bring it out, out of me”. Haka practice was an opportunity for Tui to deal with personal difficulties. “If I have an argument...or something, I can go to haka practice and...take it out of me...Bring all of my ill-feelings out”.

Haka practice also afforded Tui a "real big boost", providing benefits that other physical activities did not. He reported that running "sort of hypes me up, but after haka practice my vision is clear". When Tui played football and other sports, he "was always coming away ...bashed about a bit", with "a few bruises here and there". After haka practice, however, Tui felt "refreshed" and "really good...mind and body".

The haka also functioned as a form of self-expression for Tui: "For me to do a haka, I'm expressing myself in my own individual way". This was evident at a group rehearsal when he spent time on his own perfecting his haka movements. Being kya he had some solo parts which he choreographed, creating body movements and facial expressions as his personal interpretation of the haka chants.

Ellen, Elizabeth, Tui and Hine enjoyed dancing, but Ellen and Tui did not identify as dancers. Of all respondents, only Hine, Nana and Elizabeth responded positively to my question, “Do you see yourself as a dancer?".
Identity as a dancer

Eleven year old Elizabeth felt that what made her a dancer was “when it’s fun...when I’m at parties and that, I enjoy dancing”. She was also involved in dancing and singing at school, describing them as “fun”.

Nana discussed three factors that contributed to her identity as a “professional Maori dancer”.

*I think, knowing the skills of the culture for a start. Second thing, because I enjoy it. Third thing is that, because I have the skills, when I am on stage to give it my utmost best.*

Nana felt that her skills as a dancer related to her previous experience in the performing arts outside Maori culture. When asked if she saw herself as a dancer, she replied:

*Yes...because besides culture, I used to be an entertainer as well. We used to have a trio back home called “The Consorts”. And we used to sing in nightclubs and pubs and we used to make money, a real show group.*

Hine saw herself as a dancer because she had been involved in cultural arts from childhood. She said: “In the area I came from, the culture was influencing us all...We grow up with it. It’s not a thing we just go and
do...the music, it’s part of your life”. In addition as already noted, Hine went on to travel the world as a “western exhibitionist” dancer, performing in nightclubs and hotels.

While Hine and Nana identified themselves as dancers, neither of them felt that this put them apart from other people. Hine acknowledged only the travel and social opportunities that her career as an exhibitionist dancer had brought her.

*Everyone has a different outlet...I think the only advantage I got out of being a dancer was that I was able to travel overseas...It wasn’t so much the dancing, but that...opened many a door. The people I met on the way was wonderful.*

Nana felt that she had much in common with others, despite her specialized performing arts skills.

*I am like every other member of the group, except I have different qualities, interests and skills. So I am a dancer, I am also a professional. I have a full-time job. I even play tennis and netball and I go to the gym and I lead a normal life. I like socializing...So dancing is an interest, it’s a gift and it’s a hobby, but it’s just another...part of life.*

Overall there were considerable differences amongst respondents regarding the definition of dance. Some members’ conceptions of dance did not even include the activities practised by Te Ruawhenua and consequently they
were not prepared to describe themselves as dancers. Gina’s experience of
the performing arts was limited to involvement with Maori culture groups,
and she felt that she was a “performer” but not a “dancer.”

Tui felt that he was not a dancer, though he would “love to be”. He
thought that to be a dancer, “You’ve got to be really fit...if you want to be.
It doesn’t matter what sort of dancing...I’d like rock’n’roll”. Although he
was reluctant to describe himself as a dancer, Tui did discuss his
involvement in the arts through the Maori culture. He also spoke of his
previous dance experience in his early years on the marae, reporting that
dance and music were:

...part of the learning, especially in the morning, you’ve
got to have prayer and all that, you’ve got to sing the
waiatas and that’s what happened on the marae situation
where that is taught all the time.

Tui had been part of a small cultural group in New Zealand, “just the
family, not actually a big group like what I’m in now”. He spoke at length
of the benefits of involvement in the arts through Te Ruawhenua,
particularly, as noted above, the expression that the haka offered him.

James was ambivalent in his response to questioning about dance. He said
that he was “not really...yes, actually, I am a dancer, but it’s sort of...”.
When discussing his Maori identity, James described one of his Maori
attributes as the fact that “I dance”, though the kind of dance he did with
Te Ruawhenua was “not like rap or nothing”, it was “like actions and stuff like that”. However, he was clear that he was not much interested in other styles of dance, particularly ballet. His school had ceased to offer dance as an activity, and James didn’t “really care...it was ballet and I wasn’t into it”.

While James differentiated between Maori dance, ballet and rap dancing, and Tui between Maori dance and rock’n’roll, Hine described the contrasting aspects of Maori cultural dance and “the western experience” of professional nightclub dancing.

*With the western experience, I think I was an exhibitionist myself. Being...a Maori cultural dancer, you’re not being an exhibitionist, you’re portraying the story. Whereas with the other, you were portraying your body...It was physical expression, being a dancer then...but this one comes from within. Maori’s internal. The European one was external.

It was Beauty and the Beast...and yet combine them together and you’ve got me now.*

Te Ruawhenua members clearly had a definition of dance that was not the same as my own. Their definition of dance and other cultural arts are discussed next.
CONNECTED ART FORMS: DANCE, MUSIC AND LANGUAGE

Being a dancer myself, my interest in the activities of Te Ruawhenua originally centred around what I perceived to be the Maori dance form. Research questions therefore focussed on participants' experience of dance. However, in the course of the interviews it became apparent that there was not necessarily a meaningful distinction for Maori performers between the cultural arts of dance, music and language. Nana, described the close relationship between the art forms thus:

*The language links in very closely with the words, the compositions of songs and then you've got to put tunes to it. And from there, you've got to put choreography that expresses the meaning of the songs. So everything is connected.*

Hine described the importance of singing and melody in the Maori dance form. She said that what Te Ruawhenua were doing was,

*not so much a dance, well it is a dance form, but ...dance comes in many expressions. Our expression is through the melodic part of the singing and the facial movements. Hand movements, feet, foot movements. It's not a very graceful dance like you'll get in Hawaii. Ours are more rigid, more straight up...it's more melodic than it is graceful.*
Hine described the way dance was used to interpret singing, "You're expressing what you're saying verbally". For Hine the singing came first, as "without the singing, the dance won't happen".

Figure 6: Faye as musician.
This close connection between the performing arts was evident at Te Ruawhenua practices. The first half or two-thirds of most rehearsals focussed on music and language, with rehearsal and correction of song melodies and lyrics. The last half or third of the rehearsals concentrated on dance, with men doing haka movements and women swinging pois. The final part of the rehearsal combined music, language and dance, as all performers practiced waiata a ringa.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented the descriptive findings of in-depth interviews and observations undertaken with seven Maori cultural performers based in Melbourne, Australia, exploring their experiences of dance and group involvement. All respondents reported significant identification with the Maori culture through participation in Maori performing arts. They also enjoyed the social aspects of involvement in Te Ruawhenua, as well as travelling and competing. Nana’s special talents as a teacher and a leader were described by all respondents. Interviews revealed a group in transition, as Nana attempted to reduce her involvement.

Members enjoyed the expressive opportunities afforded by cultural arts participation. Three of the seven respondents reported a positive individual identity as a dancer, while others believed that “performer” was a more appropriate description of their activities with Te Ruawhenua.
This seems appropriate in view of respondents’ conceptions of Maori dance as being inseparable from language and music.

The next chapter will illuminate the major issues arising from the data in relation to existing literature, to place respondents’ experience in a culturally relevant framework. My own perceptions as a western dance educator will also influence the discussion.
Chapter 5 draws together the key findings of this research, making links with relevant literature and with my own experience as a western dance educator. This includes reflection on my participation in a New Zealand summer school in Maori cultural arts (January 1995). These elements combine to place Te Ruawhenua members’ experience of Maori cultural group involvement in a broader context. The chapter also elucidates respondents’ positive comments about Te Ruawhenua involvement and the main aspects of cultural group involvement, distilled into four major topics as described below.

**CULTURAL ARTS AS A LIFE EXPERIENCE**

With the exception of lapsed member Gina, members reported strongly positive experiences of Te Ruawhenua involvement. Membership appeared to function on three different levels: cultural, social and individual. In terms of culture, Te Ruawhenua provided respondents with a sense of Maori identity and cultural values. Members valued also the social aspects of group involvement, particularly the establishment of friendships and social networks, and opportunities to experience teamwork, to compete and to travel. On an individual level, performers found an enjoyable and meaningful form of personal expression in cultural arts involvement. One surprising finding for this western dance educator was members’ favourable reports of the challenging aspects of group participation, including the customary autocratic disciplinary measures and teaching methods.
Respondents' perspectives mostly affirmed existing literature, particularly in relation to the importance of cultural identity and connection through cultural arts involvement. Chapter 2 included frequent references to the fundamental interrelationship of the cultural arts by Maori writers and performers. Punitive discipline and violent status-related behaviour were described also as a seemingly accepted part of Maori culture.

In the sections that follow, the major themes emerging from this research will be summarized under the headings: Cultural Values, Social Benefits and Individual Perceptions. The place of dance within Maori cultural arts is classified in a further section entitled Connected Art Forms. In overview, frequent reference to cultural arts as offering both immediate pleasures and a deeper sense of identity and belonging can be observed.

CULTURAL VALUES

Maori identity and cultural link

One of the most frequently discussed aspects of membership was the relationship between group involvement and the reinforcement of a Maori identity. This identity was a positive one, with adult members overwhelmingly reporting pride in their Maoriness. These positive experiences were personally significant. For example, Tui found that cultural arts activities with Te Ruawhenua provided positive experiences of Maori language and culture as a counter for his previous negative experiences in the white-dominated education system in New Zealand. Hine believed cultural arts activities could
be significant at a community level as a means of keeping the Maori community in Melbourne proud and united.

Overall there was a sense of Te Ruawhenua functioning as a kind of surrogate tribe. Members of Te Ruawhenua do not have common ancestry or shared tribal lands, having come from all over New Zealand and from many different tribes. Melbourne is their Te Ruawhenua (literally Second Land). Te Ruawhenua members’ shared identity is expressed through their art, with their theme song used to open most performances detailing the group’s “genealogy”. The song lists members’ origins from all over New Zealand, their common current homeland of Melbourne and their shared experiences as three times national champions.

Findings indicate that the sense of identity and positive experiences of Maoriness secured through cultural group involvement are significant. The literature affirms that many Maori people, like Tui, have had negative experiences of themselves and their culture. As discussed in Chapter 2, Maori people have lost their traditional means of establishing identity through land and tribal affiliations (Neville, 1979, Walker, 1989), and educational curricula in New Zealand discriminate against the use and learning of the Maori language even to the present decade (Trlin, 1979, Farquhar and Laws, 1991).

Pride in the ethnic group may be significant at an individual level because of its relationship with a positive sense of self-esteem (Holenburgh Young, 1978, Trlin, 1979, Marsh, 1989). It has been documented that cultural arts groups in New Zealand can function as a counter to negative social and educational experiences in providing a
positive sense of Maori identity, for example, for New Zealand school children (Bycroft, 1988). Te Ruawhenua member Tui as well as Gina's stepmother valued their children's participation in Maori cultural arts for the unique positive experiences of Maoriness it could provide. This seems particularly significant in view of both Gina and Tui's boys less than positive experiences of education in the Australian system.

While there is no literature available for the Maori-Australian experience, respondents' comments indicate that cultural group involvement with Te Ruawhenua has positive functions in its provision of a personal and communal sense of Maori identity. Another important aspect of the cultural connection provided by group participation were the experiences afforded members to live and learn Maori cultural values.

Transmission of cultural values

Some respondents desired connection with Maori culture in order to experience Maori cultural values, social norms and sanctioned patterns of behaviour. This function of Te Ruawhenua membership is in accordance with Smolicz and Secombe's (1979) comments on the importance of organizations larger than individual families in successful transmission of cultural values from migrant parents to their children.

In the case of Maori-Australians, the role of cultural organizations in passing on cultural values may be particularly important because of the conflict between Maori values, emphasising humanitarian concerns, and the utilitarian and academic qualities emphasized in western mainstream education (Reid, 1992). Educational research
illustrates the discongruence between Maori young people and the mainstream education system both in New Zealand and Australia. Such discongruence was inferred by Tui in his expression of concern regarding his children’s lack of interest in school.

Thus, cultural group membership may offer Australian-Maori children affirming experiences that their everyday life as school students does not. In respondent James’ case, the expressive arts opportunities afforded by Te Ruawhenua were very enjoyable, unlike those offered at his school. Despite their lack of interest in aspects of formal education, Tui’s sons were also enthusiastic cultural arts performers with Te Ruawhenua, participating with great spirit in rehearsal and competitions.

One significant cultural value transmitted through Te Ruawhenua activities was culturally sanctioned gender roles. The most noticeable aspect for me was the cultural sanction for male participation in dance which was apparent through observation, though not explicitly stated by respondents.

**Gender roles.** The enthusiasm and serious approach to cultural arts I observed amongst Te Ruawhenua members of both genders stood in stark contrast to my perception of the general Australian view, borne out in research (Cormack, Clarke, Dook, Campbell, Rose and Embrey, 1994, McSwain, 1994, Pahl, 1994, val Ulzen, 1995) that the arts, particularly dance, are mostly of interest to girls and women. In Te Ruawhenua there were often as many male as female performers, among them children, adolescents and adults.
The literature ratified my observation that Maori cultural arts are of as much concern to male as female Maoris. Male writers, teachers and performers featured in scholarly and popular references to Maori arts including respected elders, Timoti Karetu, Hirini Mead Sir Kingi Ihaka, Hameura Mitchell (Ihimaera, 1993, Karetu, 1994).

Division of activities along gender lines may be reinforced through traditional cultural arts. In Te Ruawhenua, men learned masculine ways of singing and moving through haka while women worked on the feminine skills of poi swinging. Gender divisions were carried through to activities off-stage as well, for example, as described by Tui with the formal division of domestic duties along gender lines at a weekend wananga. However, there did appear to be some flexibility within these gender divisions. At the Samoan birthday party performance where no male performers turned up, the women took over the traditional male roles and performed a creditable rendition of the haka.

In addition to culturally ascribed gender roles reinforced through participation in cultural group activities, two important Maori values described by Te Ruawhenua members were respect and discipline.

**Respect and discipline.** Status-related respect behaviour was an important aspect of Maoriness for Te Ruawhenua adult members. Respect and the related concept of discipline were discussed at some length by all three adult respondents, although in different frameworks. Tui spoke about respect in terms of relations between people and property, particularly emphasizing respect due to community elders. Hine's concept was more spiritual, relating to the deference due to Maori gods responsible for
natural world, as well as god in the Christian sense. Nana discussed respect in terms of the important relationship between herself and group members, and their responsibilities to each other.

Discipline was promulgated through group activities. One aspect was the punitive autocratic teaching style, in which students were ostensibly goaded to higher achievement through insults, sarcasm and shouting by their teacher. Tui described the "violent episode" which might occur for a group member who failed to perform in the required way.

Te Ruawhenua performers reported positive attitudes to this kind of punitive teaching style as indication that an appropriate level of discipline was being enforced. Members construed Nana's tendency to shout at them during rehearsals as an expression of her concern for Te Ruawhenua and her desire for them to achieve a high standard. Tui and James felt that rehearsals which felt "boring" and "torturous" actually enabled the group to achieve good results.

The closely related concepts of respect and discipline were mentioned frequently in Maori literature (Walker, in Trlin, 1979, Ihimaera, 1986, Ritchie and Ritchie, 1993) and by Maori teaching staff and performers at the Takitimu Performing Arts School in New Zealand, where the teaching practice had much in common with that at Te Ruawhenua. Like Te Ruawhenua members, Takitimu students seemed to appreciate this kind of autocratic disciplinarian teaching, whereas I found it demoralising, raising the issue of cultural difference.
Prominent Australian modern dancer Meryl Tankard described the strict discipline involved in her early training in classical ballet (Ross, 1995). However, unlike the positive responses reported by Maori performers, Tankard did not believe that this strict discipline worked to her advantage. Indeed, she reported its life-long negative consequences for her.

*I never really thought of dance as love because I always had really strict teachers. I think in a way they killed the sheer joy or love of dance. I really believe that they did that in this strict discipline.*

It is interesting to speculate why Maori people report favourably experiences that seem so unpleasant. Perhaps authoritarian discipline in teaching is acceptable to Maori people because of its congruence with their warrior traditions and the importance of status-related *mana* (power) in their culture (Ihimaera, 1986). Connection to warrior traditions may also be reflected in members' enjoyment of cultural arts competitions, to be discussed later.

Despite the conflict of observed authoritarian disciplinary practices with my western values emphasizing egalitarian and violence-free relationships, it was clear to me that cultural group involvement fulfilled a range of needs for Te Ruawhenua members. As well as the cultural values just discussed, members frequently mentioned the social benefits of group involvement.
SOCIAL BENEFITS

Friendship, extended family and social networks

Respondents enjoyed the opportunities group membership provided to socialize with other Maoris. The concepts of pleasure and fun came up often in members’ responses, particularly in the case of the children Ellen and Elizabeth. Stinson’s (1995) latest research with middle school students illuminates “fun” as an important aspect of dance involvement.

Respondents also enjoyed time away from home, time with peers and making new friends. For Gina the social aspects of group involvement were so important that she lost enthusiasm when social activities declined. Both Tui and Hine reported that the group actually functioned much like a whanau (extended family) for them, which was especially important in Australia due to the absence of a biological family. Cultural group involvement was a family building activity for Tui and his wife and six children as it was the only activity that they could all enjoy together.

The social benefits of cultural groups are confirmed in the writings of New Zealand anthropologists Ritchie and Ritchie (1993). The Ritchies outlined the importance of community organizations such as “entertainment groups” for Polynesian people who, because of migration and urbanization, no longer have close family networks to provide the “intense in-group loyalty” so fundamental to collective society (p.82).
Team work and competitions

Te Ruahenua also offered members a valued opportunity to work together as a team. Pleasure in performance was described by all respondents, matching Mead’s (1993) description of successful Maori cultural arts which are “uplifting and personally satisfying...good for one’s soul and equally good for the performer” (p. 202). Competitive performing provided participants with additional challenging and enjoyable experiences. Male respondents Tui and James reported how the best feelings came after competitions in which Te Ruawhenua were victorious.

Performing arts competitions may fulfill what Ritchie and Ritchie (1993) recognize as a need for Maori people to have "new ways of expressing status rivalry which do not depend on warrior traditions no longer available or appropriate" (p. 82). They focus on economic conditions and strategies for positive resolution of many of the social challenges facing Maori people. However, some of their suggestions could be fulfilled by the functioning of successful cultural groups which offer Maori people positive, creative and culturally- affirming experiences.

Cultural performing thus provided participants with team focus, the excitement of competing and positive experiences of achievement through winning. It also provided members with a much enjoyed opportunity to travel.

Travel: placation for free spirits

All respondents mentioned travel opportunities as a major motivation for group membership. Nana and Hine described the desire to travel as a Maori characteristic
inherited from their heroic adventuring ancestors who came to Aotearoa/New Zealand in giant canoes from the fabled ancestral home of Hawaiiki. Group activities gave members unique opportunities to travel all around Australia and to New Zealand, in spite of their limited financial resources.

As well as travel in a geographical sense, Hine described how the group functioned as a bridge over the gap between the old Maori world and the new western-dominated world. Te Ruawhenua's contemporaneousness was achieved through the development and performance of material addressing current concerns of Te Ruawhenua members, for example, the *haka* written by Nana as a protest against the proposed establishment of a *marae* in Melbourne. Mostly it was Nana's unique leadership talents that were credited as the means of achieving this continuing relevance.

Nana's use of contemporary material is congruent with Kaeppler's (1977) discussion of the adaptive benefits of modern Maori action songs directed towards the younger generation. Such songs aim to instill a sense of pride in cultural heritage and through this to revitalize Maori culture. Many contemporary *haka* and *waiata* address themselves to issues of current concern for Maori people including drug abuse (Rollo, 1994), family violence (Harawira, 1994) and health issues (Archie, 1993).

In addition to cultural and social functions of membership of Te Ruawhenua, respondents described many individual benefits related to personal and artistic expression.
INDIVIDUAL EXPRESSION

All respondents discussed the expressive opportunities provided by group involvement. Members reported their enjoyment of dancing, as well as singing and "performing". For example, Elizabeth and Ellen's "best times" with Te Ruawahenua were when they were "dancing", while Hine felt "110%" when she danced.

Maori cultural arts as a form of self-expression was a theme echoed in the literature. In *Once Were Warriors* (Duff, 1991), residents of a "social welfare" boys home, like Boogie Heke, were taught to develop self-expression and power "on the inside" through intense practice of *haka*. Boogie's use of a mana-enhancing *haka* as a means of expressing anger and disappointment has similarities with respondent Tui's use of the *haka* as a means of "bringing ill-feelings out".

In the course of self-expression through the arts, performers often reported intense physical responses. This seemed to be a common experience for Te Ruawhenua as well as other Maori performers, with it being often described, as James did, as "a shiver down the spine". A Maori performer from Takitimu School described the shiver down the spine that he experienced in performance as *ihi* (power) and *wehi* (fear). Mead (1993) wrote of *ihi* and *wehi*, associating their presence during a performance as success indicators for Maori art. Like Mead, most Te Ruawahenua members discussed the importance of the reaction from the audience, and the difference it made to their performance.
As discussed in Chapter One, my own intense kinaesthetic and emotional response the first time I saw Te Ruawhenua perform sparked my initial interest in the group. Perhaps *ihi* and *wehi* are performance values that cross cultural boundaries.

**CONNECTED ART FORMS: DANCE, MUSIC AND LANGUAGE**

As related in Chapter One, I entered the study with a specific interest in dance. Through the interview process it became clear that respondents learned and experienced the cultural arts as an integrated whole. Nana and Hine, the two dancers in conventional western terms (having trained and performed professionally) were particularly articulate about the inextricable links of dance, music and language in Maori culture.

The interrelationship of Maori cultural arts was borne out in the literature (Kaeppler, 1977, Karevu, 1994, Bolwell, 1994), and in discussion with other Maori performers. Melbourne singer Mereana Otene Waaka described the immutable relationship between singing and dance thus: “Singing is dancing. There’s no difference. I couldn’t sing without moving”. (Waaka, 1995)

This connection between the cultural arts, while nothing new to Maori and other indigenous people, is an area receiving considerable attention in current Australian arts and educational practice. While dance, music, drama and visual arts have been treated as separate and unrelated entities in western culture for some hundreds of years, more recently arts practice has seen a swing towards integration. A recent example is Meryl
Tankard Australian Dance Theatre’s 1994 production “Songs With Mara”, in which western contemporary dancers were surprised to discover their ability to perform traditional Bulgarian songs and chants.

Research supports the value of the interrelationship of the arts. Bond (1994) found that a holistic approach, incorporating dance, drama, music, visual arts and language was more successful than straight dance in facilitating group learning in a multi-cultural primary school setting. The researcher described an emergent curriculum approach which relied on the responsiveness to the observable interests and needs of children.

Australian education has arguably much to learn from Maori and other indigenous peoples for whom the arts are intrinsically connected, not only in a performance context but in relation to life and the meaning of being a member of a culture, a friendship network or a family.
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In summary, this study reinforces earlier theories that cultural arts activities offer participants a realm of positive benefits including cultural identification, social community and personal expression. Te Ruawhenua seemed to give members a sense of place and belonging traditionally provided by the tribe. At the same time, it also provided a focus towards the future, dealing with current concerns and issues for group members living in an individualistic western culture.

Cultural group involvement provides role diversity, adding to members' lives an additional dimension which may, for some, be a major source of continuing affirming positive experience. It also offers opportunities for the intrinsic enjoyment of performing, the challenge of competing and pleasurable experiences that all members of a family can share. Te Ruawhenua members indicated that the group functions like a supportive family, one which shares similar values and actively endeavours to pass them on to the next generation.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

As noted above, this research is only one possible perspective, a product of what I observed and the interpretive framework I brought to the research. The findings of this study do, however, appear relevant and coherent against observations recorded in the literature. Stinson (1995) believes that generalizations can occur when we find characters that are quite different from ourselves and through whose eyes we may be able to see a different world. In this case, my research with members of a Maori cultural group has opened a different world to me as a western dance educator, yielding and
elaborating on some themes others have commented on previously. For Te Ruawhenua members, this study may have provided a new angle on their group involvement through an opportunity for reflection.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESEARCH AND POLICY

The present study has examined cultural arts and dance experience with seven members of one Maori cultural group in Melbourne. Extensive research with cultural performers in Australia and New Zealand would give a more comprehensive picture of the meaning of cultural group involvement for Maori people. It would also be informative to interview Maori people who choose not to become involved with cultural arts to obtain alternative perspectives.

Further extension of this study could be made by exploring the cultural arts of other indigenous and migrant communities. In Australia, the most obvious choice would be aboriginal and islander people, who, like Maoris, face the challenge of making meaning of traditional cultural practices in a western dominated environment.

If the benefits of cultural group involvement are to be fully realized, there must be stronger links between the dominant culture and ethnic minority cultures. Mainstream cultural organizations such as the Australian Dance Council could provide a way into the wider dance context for a group such as Te Ruawhenua through activities like Australian Dance Week.
Information about the importance of cultural arts activities in the lives of migrant people in Australia may have implications for government planning in education. Research consistently indicates that school curricula which are not relevant to the lives and cultural background of students tend to reinforce failure rather than encourage success (Farquhar and Laws, 1991, Kerr, 1987). An educational system that fosters the traditions of migrant people and offers young people recognition for achievement in valued cultural arts may enable more migrant students to attain success and subsequently make a positive contribution to society.

POSTSCRIPT

In the process of establishing trustworthiness of the data and my interpretation, I sent copies of the Findings chapter to all respondents. It took a long time to get in contact with Nana again, so I had almost completed the whole project before she had the opportunity to read it. Nana was very interested to read what members said, particularly as the group had never before stopped to evaluate their activities or share their perceptions while they were so busy actually “doing it”.

Nana was especially touched by respondents’ comments about her unique leadership qualities and their hurt and disappointment about her withdrawal from the group. She was surprised to find out how much group membership meant to performers, and how central they considered her to the ongoing success of Te Ruawhenua.
For the year between the interviews and this final stage, Nana had not been involved with the group, as employment opportunities had taken her interstate. In her absence another leader had been appointed. Reading respondents' comments caused Nana to reconsider her priorities and she decided to make overtures to the group about returning. She told me that the report “opened the channels of communication” between her and Te Ruawhenua. As a consequence she had been invited to return as tutor the following fortnight.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX 1: RESPONDENT INFORMATION SHEET 20.2.94

Kim Dunphy,
Institute of Education,
University of Melbourne.

Cultural dance as a life experience. Perceptions of Maori performers in Melbourne.

NAME:
AGE:
SEX; M/F
ADDRESS:

PHONE NUMBER:

PRESENT OCCUPATION:

HIGHEST LEVEL OF SCHOOLING COMPLETED:
(Present year if still studying)

CULTURAL BACKGROUND: (Do you consider yourself Maori, Australian, a bit of each, some other?)

FAMILY SITUATION: (Are you living with family, if so how may and whom?)

PRESENT DANCE/ARTS INVOLVEMENT:

PREVIOUS DANCE/ARTS INVOLVEMENT:

IF YOU WOULD BE AGREEABLE TO AN INTERVIEW WITH ME, WHAT TIMES (Daytime, evening, weekend?)

AND PLACE WOULD SUIT YOU BEST?

Thankyou very much for your help today. Please feel free to speak to me or ring me if you have any questions or comments about this project so far.

Kim Dunphy
Ph: 555 4813
APPENDIX 2: "PLAIN LANGUAGE" WRITTEN INFORMATION FOR SUBJECTS.

RESEARCH PROJECT;
CULTURAL DANCE AS A LIFE EXPERIENCE.
PERCEPTIONS OF MAORI PERFORMERS IN MELBOURNE.

I am undertaking this research project as part of my Masters in Education degree. I am a dancer and dance teacher and at the moment, also a dance researcher. One of my strongest dance interests is in dance from cultures all over the world, and I have been learning about these for many years, both for my own pleasure and for use in my dance teaching.

I am interested in speaking with you and other members of Te Ruawhenua, to discover more about Maori dance and culture and the place it has in your lives. My interest in this topic stems from watching your group perform last year.

Over the next few months, I would like to interview some members of your group. The interviews will take place at times and places convenient to you, and may take an hour or two. I may want to come back and speak to you again, in order to clarify what was said. I will tape record the interviews, and those tapes will then be transcribed. I may also ask the group permission to photograph or video some rehearsals or performances throughout the year.

Your privacy will be respected at all times. No-one except myself and my supervisor will hear the interview or see the transcripts. In the transcripts of the interviews and in the final report, names will be changed. You will be given complete discretion at all times to withdraw information previously offered, or to request that certain information not appear on transcripts. If you would like one, you will be given a copy of the interview transcripts. You will have the choice not to answer any question or address any issue, and you will be free to terminate the interview at any time.

The final information will be presented in a bound form for public usage. One copy will be placed in the University Library, and your group may like a copy.

The whole project will be undertaken during 1994, and should be completed by early 1995. I would be very grateful for your co-operation.

Kim Dunphy
APPENDIX 3: RESPONDENT CONSENT FORM

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
SCHOOL OF EARLY CHILDHOOD STUDIES

Consent form for persons participating in research projects.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT: ...................................

PROJECT TITLE: Cultural dance as a life experience. A study of Maori performers in Melbourne.

NAME OF INVESTIGATORS:
Chief investigator: Dr. Karen Bond
Researcher: Kim Dunphy

1. I consent to participate in the above project, the details of which have been given to me in writing and are attached as Appendix 1 to this form.

2. I authorize the investigator to interview me as referred to under (1) above.

3. I acknowledge that:
   (a) the possible effects of the tests or procedures have been explained to me to my satisfaction;
   (b) I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time and to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied;
   (c) The project is for the purpose of research only;
   (d) I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded.

Signature .................................. Date ...........
(Participant)

Where participant is under 18 years of age:

I consent to the participation of ........................ in the above project.

Signature .......................... Date .............
(PARENT/GUARDIAN)
APPENDIX 4: AMENDED CONSENT FORM

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
SCHOOL OF EARLY CHILDHOOD STUDIES

Amended consent form for persons participating in research project.
October 1995

NAME OF PARTICIPANT:..........................................

PROJECT TITLE: Cultural dance as a life experience.
A study of Maori performers in Melbourne.

NAME OF INVESTIGATORS:
Chief investigator: Dr. Karen Bond
Researcher: Kim Dunphy

I give my permission for my name and photograph to appear in the published version of this project “Cultural dance as a life experience”. I have been given a copy of the “Findings chapter” which includes everything written about me, and a copy of the photos to be used.

Signature............................................ Date................................
(Participant)

Where participant is under 18 years of age:

I consent to the use of ..................................... name and photograph in the above project.

Signature.................................. Date........... ........
(PARENT/GUARDIAN)
APPENDIX 5: ORIENTING QUESTIONS USED TO STRUCTURE INTERVIEWS.

DANCE AND GROUP INVOLVEMENT
Can you tell me about your involvement in Te Ruawhenua. How long have you been part of the group?
How much time do you spend with the group each week?
Why are you involved in this group?
How do you feel about your involvement?
Do your family have any involvement with the group?
What do they do? Do they come and watch you rehearse, or perform?
What do they say to you about your dancing?
Do any of your friends come and watch you rehearse or perform?
What do your friends say to you about your dancing?
Is there anything about the group you wish was different?
What do you enjoy most about being part of the group?
What do you enjoy the least?
Has it made any difference to your life, being part of this group?

DANCE AND SELF-IDENTITY
Were you involved with dance before you joined Te Ruawhenua?
Do you see yourself as a dancer?
What is it that makes you a dancer?
If so, do you see yourself as different from your peers, others in the community?
If so, why? What is your experience of being different? What makes you different

DANCE AND TRANSFORMATION
Do you feel differently when you are dancing than when you are not?
Can you describe that difference?
How does it feel when you come into your rehearsal space?
Does anything change in you?
How does it feel when you rehearse?
How does it feel when you perform?
How do people respond to your dancing? Do they show interest? What do they do?
Is audience response different in Australia than in NZ/Aotearoa?

OTHER ARTS INVOLVEMENT
Are you/have you been involved in any other art forms, eg. music, art, drama?
How do you see the relationship between music and dance?

DANCE AND EDUCATION
Did dance, music and/or Maori culture have a place in your education?
Do you think this was appropriate? Should there have been more or less?

MAORI BACKGROUND/CULTURE
How long have you been in Australia? Why did you come here?
Do you consider yourself a Maori? What is about you that makes you a Maori?
How do you feel about being a Maori?
Is it common for Maoris to be involved in dance and music activities?
THIRD VISIT; Sunday 16th May

After speaking to Nana during the week about an interview time, she invited me to come to rehearsal on Sunday, when she hoped to get a chance to speak with me. I received a friendly welcome from her, and a re-introduction to the group as a person interested in learning and studying about the Maori culture and their group. Nana seemed very much in control, really moving things along and being very direct and clear with her dancers. There were lots of members present, most of whom I had seen before. Two men and one boy I had not seen at any other rehearsal were present. I recognized them from the performance last year.

The rehearsal began with a Maori blessing of new costumes, *piupiu*, which had been brought at great expense from NZ for the women dancers. The group were very pleased with their purchase which would help their women to look respectable on stage. They stood with heads bowed, while Nana spoke a blessing and anointed the *piupiu* with water from a cup. The blessing finished with the group saying "Amen" together.

Then Nana spoke to the group about activities in the wider Maori community, with the development and recent committee elections for the NZ Maori Community Council of Victoria Inc. She announced the names of new office bearers, and proudly proclaimed the election of T.R.'s publicity officer, George Derbyshire, as treasurer of the council.

In discussing the program for rehearsal for that day, Nana stated that the group would rehearse a singing dance that they would later perform as a protest against the proposed building in Melbourne of a *marae*, a Maori meeting house. Nana told the group that a *marae* is inappropriate in Australia, because this land belongs not to the Maoris, but to the Koorie people. It is inappropriate to have a *marae*, where there are no ancestors, as the ancestors give it meaning. Maori people all have their own *marae* back in New Zealand where their ancestors are. What the Maori community need, Nana believed is a resource and community centre, not a *marae*.

Other planned items for coming competitions were discussed, including the removal of one item from the program—a song-dance about the group's children, and the group's hopes for their children's future. Nana commented that this song-dance was too emotional for the group, too close to their hearts to be appropriate for a competition. She planned to create another dance to take its place.

During the rehearsal, the group composed and choreographed a welcome chant-dance for a coming event. The group was to provide a welcome for a New Zealand hockey team coming to take part in a competition in Melbourne. Nana led the process, but tried really hard to get group members to contribute ideas for the composition. She had clear ideas of her agenda for the song, however, and rejected ideas from the group which fell out of her unstated but nevertheless powerful criteria. Hine contributed a line welcoming hockey teams, which Nana rephrased to say a more global "Welcome, visitors". The song basically wished the visitors well, especially the New Zealanders, and emphasized the function of the tournament as one of friendship.

It was interesting to watch Shane dance, as he really seemed to enjoy making the strong movements that men's dances require. He didn't seem particularly communicative or confident in his relationship with other group members when he wasn't dancing.

Other interesting points from visit;
Nana's comment that members come to the club to learn Maori culture
Nana's statement that there is one god, the Christian god, but the Maoris also have their own gods as well, that the group or Maoris, must prove to the Pakeha that they can manage themselves and money.
There seems to be quite a strong gender division in the group, as in the dance. Men and women don't mix much even in the breaks, even husbands and wives.

I watched the group sing and dance for about three hours, during which time I managed just a few minutes interviewing Nana. At the end of the rehearsal, we made another time to meet, when we could continue with the interview. I also teed up a time for another interview with Hine. As I left, members spoke to me and thanked me for visiting their group that day. One man thanked me for coming, and said that he hoped that my visit that day wouldn't be my last.
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