

# Kapa Haka

*Traditional Maori Performing Arts in Contemporary Settings*

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# Abstract

This thesis is about *kapa haka* (traditional Maori performing arts) as it is performed in a cultural group in Auckland, New Zealand. These performing arts can be glossed in English as dances, songs, chants, oratory, incantations, and weaponry displays of a distinct style that has become emblematic of Maori, and of New Zealand, in particular.

Kapa haka is many things at once; as an art form it is considered equal to other expressions of *toi Māori* (traditional arts) like *raranga* (weaving), *whakairo* (carving) and *tā moko* (tattooing); as a ‘tradition’ it is regarded as a *taonga tuku iho*, an heirloom that is handed down through the generations; as part of *tikanga* (custom) it has a function in both ritual and entertainment; as part of Maori society it has undergone changes over time in tune with changes in the society; as a part of New Zealand society it has undergone a revival in the 20th century; as a teaching method and part of the repertoire of *mātauranga* (knowledge) it is being taught to successive generations of Maori and non-Maori; as a performance art it is still as vibrant and innovative today as it has ever been; and as a visual display of identity it still captivates the attention of others. Common to all these things that kapa haka can be to many people at once is the central concept of a class of objects that in Māori are called *taonga*, artefacts both ephemeral and corporeal that collapse space and time to instantiate social relationships between people and people *vis-à-vis* things, and between people and things. Through the investigation of kapa haka as a *taonga* this thesis seeks to de-construct this arts practice to elucidate these social relationships between people and people and people and things and seek the answers to the following questions:

How can this practice claim authenticity? What is kapa haka today? To what extent is it being practiced by Maori today and how does this relate to how it was practiced prior to today? In what contemporary settings does this practice manifest in the practice of a kapa haka cultural club? How is the practice of kapa haka sustained by other external social processes? What characteristics define the practice of kapa haka? How can kapa haka be regarded as having efficacy? In other words, how can singing and dancing work on the corporeal world?

## Preface

In the second semester of 2000, I was a student of the Maori Studies Department at Auckland University. Coincidentally, a new course was on offer in kapa haka tutored by Ngāpo and Pimia Wehi, renowned leaders of Te Waka Huia, one of Auckland's top kapa haka groups. I was accepted as a student, even though I did not fulfil the minimum criteria for the course and special allowances were made for me by the tutors and the Head of Department, Ngapare Hopa. That semester's tutoring gave me my first glimpse of kapa haka in Aotearoa New Zealand and left me hungry for more. The following semester I took the rest of the courses on offer and promised to return to study more for my thesis.

In 2003 I was able to return to Auckland and contact my former tutors seeking their permission to stay with them and their groups to study kapa haka from a social anthropological perspective. I was granted full access to all of the settings in which Ngāpo and Pimia engaged in as tutors of kapa haka and was taken in as a member of the group. Our relationship was instantiated by kapa haka as an art form, in that it forms the basis of a network of social relations that stretch across time and space intertwining a multitude of people in reciprocal relationships, conditioned by the practice of kapa haka. It is through this lens that I view kapa haka as an art form and tradition in the following, with a special focus on the two people that are in the centre of it all (at least from EGO's point of view).

This thesis follows Bruce Bigg's *Let's Learn Maori* (1998) and I have marked long vowels with a macron (e.g. ā, ō, and ū) but not when the original uses the double-vowel (eg. aa, oo, and uu) where they have been cited as in the original. Some words, like Maori and Pakeha, have entered New Zealand language and are not marked with either macron or double-vowel, nor have they been italicised as other Maori words have in this text.

# Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have seen the light of day if not for the generous help and support of several people. First of all I have to acknowledge the Oceania Project (NFR project no. 148717), a multi-disciplinary project, financed by the Norwegian Research Council from 2002-2007, for the generous grant that allowed me to undertake the fieldwork portion of this thesis and gave me the freedom to participate in the many activities of Te Waka Huia, without being a burden to the group. I would especially like to thank the director of the project, Associate Professor Ingjerd Hoëm, Research Director of the Kon-Tiki Museum, for her endorsement and support, and for allowing me to take part in the project's seminars and conferences.

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The thesis would not have come about at all if it were not for the warm *aroha* and generous support of the staff of the Maori Studies Department of Auckland University during my stay there in 2000-2001 and for the duration of my fieldwork in 2003-2005. I would like to single out Head of Department, Professor Ngapare Hopa, who took me under her wing and supported my first foray into the world of kapa haka in 2000, without her signature I would never have experienced the joy and satisfaction of performing with a kapa haka group. Several others of the staff of Maori Studies were instrumental in making me feel welcome and at home, among them are Miki Roderick, Rangimarie Rawiri, and Mere Gillman. The

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The whole of the Wehi *whanau*, especially Bubs and Nan, for granting a clumsy and awkward Norwegian total access and freedom to participate in two year's events with Te Waka Huia, and letting me be a part of club. I am forever indebted in gratitude to you both for being my mentors in kapa haka. A special thanks to Angie and Boy for letting me stay in your house and for sharing the *aroha*.

Tina and Craig, without you and your friendship I would be a lesser man. The next coffee is on me. Just promise me that Craig will be driving.

I owe a debt of gratitude to the following people for their constructive criticism, critique, and skilful proofreading: Frank Magnussen, Silje Førland Erdal, Charlotte Bik Bandlien, Siv Elin Ånestad, Mari D. Bergseth, Janne Waagbø and Maria Øien.

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# Introduction

## Auckland Regional Competition, Auckland Town Hall

*I was sitting on the edge of my seat, leaning over the railing to get a good view – and a good shot with my DV-camera that I had carefully smuggled in, despite the hosting committee's ban on video equipment. After all I was part of the group, documenting the event for their benefit, as well as my own.*

*As the Master of Ceremony started to introduce the group I caught a glimpse of 'uncle' Bubs, the leader of the group, standing in the wing. He was grinning, clearly enjoying himself. Across the other side of the room sat his wife, Nan, with a visiting, former member by her side. The crowd showed their appreciation for the group now making their way onto the stage in the city's Town Hall by loud applause. Almost every seat in the hall was filled, making the audience 1500 people strong. I started to feel a nervous sensation in the pit of my stomach, mirroring my own experiences standing on a naked stage in front of a mostly unknown audience. To my surprise, the tension was also weighing heavily on several of the senior performers, their faces full of anxiety, almost to the brink of tears. Even though they had already qualified for a spot in the national competition by ranking among the top six groups two years earlier, second best wouldn't be good enough. They had practiced for this 30 minute performance every weekend the last 5 months. Now, it was all up to them.*

*The crowd was whistling, clapping, and cheering them on. The volume of the crowd had doubled from the previous team, clearly stating that the audience's expectations of the coming performance were high, as the group is counted among the best in the country. Several relatives and friends of the performers shouted words of encouragement to the stage. The performers shuffled nervously, closing the ranks and making the rows even. Some coughed in that last-minute attempt to clear their throats of imaginary phlegm. They were all quiet and the air seemed to stand still, then it all happened at once. The first note was hit and the room exploded with high-volume, crystal-clear song. For the next 30 minutes we were all watching kapa haka.*

# Traditional Maori Performing Arts in Contemporary Settings

This thesis is about *kapa haka* (traditional Maori performing arts) as it is performed in a *kapa haka rōpū*, a cultural group in Auckland, New Zealand Aotearoa.<sup>1</sup> As the name suggests it is performed by Maori, the indigenous people of New Zealand. It is usually performed in *te reo Maori* (the Maori language), but not exclusively so, all over New Zealand today, and also in Maori communities and enclaves abroad. As a performing art it encompasses many varieties of performing arts. These performing arts can be glossed in English as dances, songs, chants, oratory, incantations, and weaponry displays of a distinct style that has become emblematic of Maori, and of New Zealand, in particular.

Kapa haka is many things at once; as an art form it is considered equal to other expressions of *toi Māori* (traditional arts) like *raranga* (weaving), *whakairo* (carving) and *tā moko* (tattooing); as a ‘tradition’ it is regarded as a *taonga tuku iho*, an heirloom that is handed down through the generations; as part of *tikanga* (custom) it has a function in both ritual and entertainment; as part of Maori society it has undergone changes over time in tune with changes in the society; as a part of New Zealand society it has undergone a revival in the 20<sup>th</sup> century; as a teaching method and part of the repertoire of *mātauranga* (knowledge) it is being taught to successive generations of Maori and non-Maori; as a performance art it is still as vibrant and innovative today as it has ever been; and as a visual display of identity it still captivates the attention of others. To sum it up in the words of one of my informants: “Kapa haka is culture – our culture!”

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<sup>1</sup> New Zealand and Aotearoa are the accepted English and Māori renditions of the same country. In the following, they will be used interchangeably, in line with informants’ original statements or to high-light the situational context as either predominantly English-Pakeha or Māori. The originality and use of the term has been the subject of discussion (cf. King 2003).



## Research Objectives: De-constructing Kapa Haka

My intention is to provide a close-grained analysis of this performing art from the “native’s point of view, his relation to life, to realize *his* vision of *his* world” (Malinowski 1984: 25), and in the following I seek to answer the following research questions:

Is kapa haka as an art form an inauthentic and outdated practice that should be discontinued? In other words, because of the influence of the colonising European powers on the traditional Maori way of life how can this practice claim authenticity?

What is kapa haka today? To what extent is it being practiced by Maori today and how does this relate to how it was practiced prior to today?

In what contemporary settings does this practice manifest in the practice of a kapa haka cultural club? Are there any settings that are more important than others, or less important?

How is the practice of kapa haka sustained by other external social processes? What types of social relationships help to maintain the practice?

What characteristics define the practice of kapa haka? If art is an expression of culture, how does the practice of kapa haka relate to the Maori identity (or cultural identity)?<sup>2</sup> What life projects are the practitioners seeking to realise through the practice of kapa haka?

How can kapa haka be regarded as having efficacy? In other words, how can singing and dancing work on the corporeal world?

### A Quick Introduction

The late David Lange, a former Prime Minister of New Zealand, was highly critical to the time spent by young Maori and Pacific Islanders preparing for participation in the *ASB Bank Auckland Secondary Schools Maori and Pacific Island Cultural Festival* (colloquially called

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<sup>2</sup> “Cultural identity” understood as an identity that “gives the individual a sense of a common past and of a shared destiny” (Green 1995: 7).

“Polyfest”). It was the time spent in preparation for this festival that was the target of Lange’s criticism, time better spent on getting an education. Education, according to Lange, is about getting ready to become a parent, a teacher, a worker, an office worker, a computer literate – someone who is able to read and write and express themselves in confidence in the environments they live in. “You can’t do that by getting dressed up and dancing in the street” (Gershon, Collins, and Carusi). In the following I intend to show how participation in kapa haka for Maori is seen as so much more than “getting dressed up and dancing in the street”, but first we need to define kapa haka.

Because kapa haka is seen as a ‘tradition’,<sup>3</sup> from being a ‘traditional’ art form, balancing between the categories of ‘traditional’ and ‘contemporary’ it embodies ideas about the past, present and the future. People engage with these ideas through the practice of kapa haka in groups, whether located in schools, tourist groups, recreational groups or competing groups. As groups do not only perform to themselves, groups of people engage with kapa haka vis-à-vis other groups and at the same time also engage with other groups vis-à-vis kapa haka by virtue of practicing kapa haka. This collective engagement (with kapa haka) constitute the dynamics of tradition, a social process of discussing, debating and competing, through ‘acts’, whether mental (ideas about kapa haka) or physical (acting out kapa haka). This focus on ‘acts’ is intentional. I seek to approach this subject not from an aesthetic point of view as propagated by Sally Price (Price 1989), Jeremy Coote (Coote 1996), and Howard Morphy (Morphy 1996), because aesthetic judgements are only (interior) mental acts. The aesthetic approach would yield interesting results as to why Maori evaluate one particular performance (song/dance/chant) as aesthetically superior to others of its type, but this won’t tell us anything about why Maori produce these kind of performances to begin with, to paraphrase Gell (Gell 1998).

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<sup>3</sup> There is no word in Māori for ‘tradition’, the closest would be *tikanga*, ‘custom’ (Williams 2003: 416). McLean and Orbell states that “traditional maori chant have long been recognised, together with marae custom, the decorative arts, proverbial sayings and the Maori language itself, as a component of Maoritanga” (McLean 2004: 7). Dewes describes haka as a “custom of high social importance in the welcoming and entertainment of visitors” (Dewes 1972: 2).

To do so we would have to examine the (external) social context of production, circulation, and reception of works of art, because art objects “are produced and circulated in the external and social world, this production and circulation has to be sustained by certain social processes of an objective kind, which are connected to other social processes (exchange, politics, religion, kinship, etc.)” (Gell 1998: 3). The production of kapa haka, or rather the production of songs, chants, and dances is within the many groups that perform kapa haka. These songs, chants, and dances then circulate between these groups, mainly through competitions and ceremonial gatherings across New Zealand today. Within these groups, the transmission and subsequent transformation of ‘knowledge’, through the practice of kapa haka, constitutes and instantiates social relationships, generates and communicates values and ideals about performance, and about *being* Maori.

I argue that because of all these ways of engaging with kapa haka it *can* be regarded as a *taonga*, a special class of objects that is accorded supreme value by Maori, all of the above is subsumed into the social practice of *doing* kapa haka. I intend to discover the connections between this practice and the socio-cultural domain of performers of kapa haka by examining how the practice of kapa haka is intrinsically bound with a way of knowing (as a part of a system of knowledge), a way of relating to the past (as history), a way relating to others (kinship), a way of thinking about performance and being Maori (ideals and values), and how kapa haka can work on the physical world in providing opportunities and a means to realising ‘life-projects’ and careers, in that some people find employment as teachers of kapa haka while other look to other endeavours.

## **An Overview of Theoretical Framework**

I shall do this by employing several theories, mainly from the study of material culture, but I argue that since *taonga* can be both physical and ephemeral objects the theories can be salient for the anthropological analysis of this art form. Especially important for the choice of theory in the following is the conception of *taonga* as having ancestral efficacy. In fact, the very thing that all the theories I employ have in common is the fact that they take the view that ‘things’ matter, because they can instantiate and motivate social relationships between people and people *vis-à-vis* objects, and between people and objects *vis-à-vis* other people.

This effect is termed ‘agency’ in the following, mainly borrowing from *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory*, Gell’s work on an anthropological theory of art, which I follow closely in this thesis. To paraphrase the position of Mead and Gell, the activities of composing and performing chants are expressions of social behaviour in a specific cultural, spatial and temporal context (Mead 1970; Gell 1998). Art, in other words, is not about meaning and communication but about *doing*, theorised as ‘agency’, a process involving indexes (works of art) and effects which motivate inferences, responses or interpretations. These indexes stand in a variety of relations to prototypes, artists, and recipients. Prototypes are the things that indices represent or stand for. Recipients are those whom the indexes are taken to effect. Artists are those who seem to be responsible for the origination of the index (Thomas 1998). In this network of relationships ‘objects’ can stand in for ‘persons’ or mediate between persons in the social relationships.

Taking my lead from Gell, I view kapa haka, as an art form, as a system of action, as having social agency and intentionality, causation, result and transformation. Kapa haka, as an art phenomenon, is intended to transform and affect people, and people, in turn, transform and affect kapa haka over time by engaging with it at various stages in their lives.

## **Why Study Kapa Haka?**

I intend to engage in the following in the anthropological debates of the study of art: whether aesthetics is a cross-cultural category, whether art is like a language, and whether culture is but a series of representations. Specifically my concern is the anthropological study of music and dance, as kapa haka sits rather uncomfortably astride both categories. It is through the debate of art and anthropology that I will engage in other debates. The first that I tackle is the debate of ‘authenticity’ that followed the ‘invention of culture’ debate started by Hobsbawm in the late 1980s. From there I move on to a brief skirmish with the ‘insider – outsider’ debate through a discussion of emic and etic categories of terminology regarding music, song and dance. After that I enter into, albeit briefly, the debate of ‘style’ with regards to art.

I shall, in due time, revisit some core anthropological debates. First of these are kinship, social stratification and social organisation. This is followed by a re-examination of

exchange theory by drawing on studies of material culture. I also move across debates of social and cultural identity in relation to systems of knowledge. Through engagement in all of the mentioned anthropological debates I hope to show the relationships performance and the wider socio-cultural contexts as made by Maori, and how these can be studied anthropologically from the perspective of traditional Maori performing arts in contemporary settings.

## **The Way Ahead**

The structure of the thesis has been organised with respect to my stated research objective of de-constructing the practice of kapa haka in a cultural group in Auckland, New Zealand. I intend to tackle my research questions in turn and have devoted the following six chapters to each of them respectively before I turn to making some concluding remarks and volunteer some ideas for further research.

In the first chapter I shall describe and discuss the methodology that this thesis is founded upon. The discussion will be rounded off by a presentation of my informants and the three groups that they are part of that form the cultural group I have focused on here. I will then turn to a discussion of the theoretical framework of this thesis. It is through this discussion that I intend to deal with kapa haka as an art form and examine whether the claim that kapa haka is an inauthentic practice has been irrevocably changed from its origins that it should be discontinued has any validity.

Then I will contextualise contemporary kapa haka through describing what kapa haka is to Maori in today's New Zealand by reviewing two reports on Maori art participation. I intend to examine to what extent it is being practiced by Maori today and how this relates to the practices of previous times. I shall approach this issue by outlining the development of kapa haka until today. After having outlined the development of kapa haka, and thus situated this practice in its context in New Zealand, I shall turn to a description of the style of kapa haka. This is done so that the reader can understand a little bit about what this practice is about – and most importantly, how it is carried out.

After that I shall move on to describing the many settings that cultural groups perform kapa haka in. This will be illustrated by my chosen cultural group, and will in part be given as the

narrative of the group's history as well as descriptions of settings that I have observed. I seek to discover any valued ranking of the many settings to see if any are considered more 'traditional' or more 'contemporary' than others.

In the next chapter I intend to analyse the social relations that are active in the participation of kapa haka in a cultural group. I seek to discern any patterns of interaction between members within a group and between the groups, but also relations external to the groups. I intend to examine how the conceptualisation of the group as a '*whanau*' (family) has implications for the forming, and maintenance, of relationships within a group; the social process of joining and staying in a group; and the different roles and statuses available in a group.

The findings of the analysis of the social relationships in the previous chapter will then be discussed with the aim to extract the characteristics that defines the practice of kapa haka. I will see how these characteristics relate to a wider Maori cultural identity. These characteristics will then be examined with the intent to discover the life projects that participants are seeking to realise through kapa haka, with particular focus on the leader of the group's project of "helping his people" through kapa haka.

In the final chapter I will examine how kapa haka can be regarded as having efficacy. I intend to do this through an examination of kapa haka as a *taonga*, a class of objects that are accorded special value among Maori. I will show what aspects are considered to give performances the efficacy to captivate the audience and show how external knowledge plays an important part. I will then turn to analysing kapa haka as 'art objects' anthropologically as *taonga*. I will analyse the exchange of knowledge through the social relations of the group(s), as conceptualised as the characteristic ideals and values of kapa haka that are realised through as life-projects because kapa haka is a *taonga* (prized possession). I argue specifically how kapa haka (a tradition) can be seen as a *taonga*, because of what it embodies in social practice (of technical skill, values, and ideals) and how it is exchanged through networks of an infra-biographical temporal scope, (as a tradition) that necessitates reciprocal actions over time, because it activates both group- and kin-membership (identity) in the past, present and future.

# Chapter One: Methodology and Theoretical Framework

## Methodology

### Fieldwork

The data material for this thesis was collected during fieldwork conducted between August 2003 and May 2005. The fieldwork itself was conducted in three separate periods of time: the first period from August 15<sup>th</sup> to December 23<sup>rd</sup> 2003; the second from February 11<sup>th</sup> until 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2004, after which I travelled with a group of Maori to Førde, Norway and participated in the *Førde International Folk Music Festival* from July 1<sup>st</sup> to July 4<sup>th</sup> 2004; the third and final period lasted from February 5<sup>th</sup> until April 30<sup>th</sup> 2005. The three periods of fieldwork enabled me to experience a full calendar year with the group, including a regional competition in 2003 and a national competition in 2005. The time needed to gain access and to document a condensed version of this two-year cycle of events necessitated a longer fieldwork than originally intended.

I spent most of my time in Auckland, New Zealand, where the groups I followed are based. During my time with these three groups, I travelled with them to various locations in the greater Auckland area and once to the East Cape of the North Island where we spent some time as guests of a small rural community. I was overseas twice with members of the groups. On the first occasion we travelled to Brisbane, Australia, for several fundraising events there and on the second occasion the group participated in an international music festival as part of the festival programme celebrating the closure of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, 1995-2004 (*International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (1995-2004)*). During my first two periods of fieldwork I stayed at various locations in Auckland, but in the third period I was invited to stay with the family of the leaders of the groups in Henderson, a western suburb of Auckland. This was a major breakthrough for my study and I was at that point firmly included in the group collective, carefully integrated as a *whanaunga* (relation) from Norway.

## Data Collection

During weekdays, I divided my time between going to university, to participate in classes or to read up on Maori topics at the city or university library. Towards the middle of the first period of fieldwork I began attending the group's performing arts school in the eastern suburb of Glen Innes. At the same time I began going to the weekend-practices of the two main groups that I focused on, as well as spending Tuesdays and Thursdays at the university, attending the kapa haka courses on offer there, tutored by the leader of the group. During the third period of fieldwork I spent almost all my time with the two main groups and focused more on the senior groups' preparation for the National competition. Any spare time was spent with either the performers or the tutors at social occasions, parties, one CD launch, the launch of a political party, one regional kapa haka competition, one national kapa haka competition, several fundraising events, a tribute concert, several other concerts, one international music festival overseas, one national television appearance overseas, countless *pōwhiri* (welcoming rituals), and endless hours spent in preparation for all of the above.

My primary mode of data collection in these activities was through participant observation, "in a way", as put forward by Malinowski (1984). Participant observation is, as Pelto and Pelto point out, a matter of degrees (1978: 68). To the extent it was possible I participated *without* actually participating in the activities my informants were involved in, as I was not a performer. Therefore my data collection varied extensively between participant-as-observer and observer-as-participant in various contexts (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). This was made possible by the fact that there were several roles available to me in the field due to previous experience with kapa haka and because of my previously established relationship with the leaders of the group. Because of my previous relationship with the leaders of the group, after having been a student at Auckland University under their tutelage in 2000-2001,<sup>4</sup> my assigned role was "overseas student studying kapa haka". The fact that I had

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<sup>4</sup> I completed a year at the Māori Studies department with a Certificate of Proficiency in Māori Studies that included Kapa haka stages 1-3, Māori oral literature, Te Reo Māori written and spoken, Māori society, and Introduction to media studies. My tutors at that time were Ngāpo and Pimia Wehi, and their *whanau*.



completed the university courses taught by ‘uncle’ brought me nods of approval from people I was introduced to. I believe that the previous experience which I possessed, although limited in scope, helped me in establish rapport and gave me easier access to the field. Even though I was invited to participate in school activities at an early stage, and the possibility of me appearing on-stage with the students was put forward to me by the tutors, I chose to stay as an observer and a “hang-around”. This was intentional as I feared the work-load of learning the required items, observing the practices and recording them would simply be too much. In this respect I missed out on direct participation in the school’s activities, although I would occasionally join the students for certain events. I counted on my previous experience with performing kapa haka as a student to be sufficient to draw on as ‘participation’ but I have since come to realise that this was a mistake, and regret the decision to not participate as a student of the school. That type of ‘direct participation’ would have yielded much data that would not be attainable by any other means. Instead, I sought to find ways of justifying my presence in other ways, like documenting practices with a video camcorder and helping the staff.

I spent most of my time at the performing arts school where a typical day were divided between practical lessons in performing arts and ordinary school work with an adapted curriculum where the main emphasis were on performing arts, both traditional and contemporary dance. I attended both practical lessons and lessons of particular interest for study, like classes on *tikanga* (custom). When not taking part in the sessions, time was spent conversing with and/or helping out with a few errand-runs or other minor tasks. My data from the school are mainly observational data of the interaction at practices and very little interviews. I made a few attempts at formal interviews but these proved to be less effective than using less formal conversations as a technique for data collection. Another reason I was very apprehensive about other methods of data collection at the school was a purely ethical one as several of the students were about half my age and effectively ‘juniors’ (*teina*) which (I believed) would be compelled to answer my questions even though they would rather not. I decided to base my study on the ‘public space’ of the practices, for which I had been given permission to observe by the leaders of the school. Therefore much of my data on performances are purely observational (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995), which left me without contact with those I were observing, the upshot of which was the minimisation of

reactivity of behalf of the observed. Their days at school were hardly influenced by my presence.

A great deal of time was therefore spent talking with staff, as this proved to be a fruitful usage of time. As my focus came to be on the transmission of 'tradition' that necessitated the observation of the events/situations in which this transmission took place. The observational data was then discussed, along with other topics with leaders, staff and students. And then only those students that chose to approach me, after making sure that they were at ease with being a part of my study and gaining their informed consent (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995: 264).

At lunch-time when students took off for the centre of the suburb or would go to the local lunch-shop I would join them and eat my meals with the students in the common-room. As I spent more time with staff, I began eating my meals with staff in the staff-room. Whenever the leaders of the school, 'Uncle' Bubs or 'Auntie' Nan, would visit the school I would follow them around, assisting them whenever possible.

Additionally, I have collected data from electronic media, especially from the senior group's email-list, which I was given access to from April 26 2004 until January 17 2006. After that date I have been corresponding with several of the members sporadically by email or phone. Note-taking, no matter how shorthand or stenographic, proved totally inadequate for documentation purposes. So I finally acquired a camcorder for a more practical documentation of performances, which I started to bring on days with plenty of practice. I regularly taped practices for major events like the regional competition to get an idea of progression and as a basis for comparison over time.

This resulted in over 87 hours of filmed material that I originally intended to edit and supply as an appendix to this thesis. However, this proved more time-consuming than anticipated. Since the filmed material was based on the permission and consent of the leaders on the condition that it would not be used for other purposes than my research without their express permission, and because I could not guarantee control over the filmed material's dispersal after handing in the thesis, the ethical issues with supplying this visual documentation were

judged to far outweigh the gain of supplying it, and was therefore dropped (cf. Barclay 2005).

## **Language Issues**

Both English and Maori are official languages of New Zealand, and many of my informants were either native speakers of Maori, fluent (as in having conversational ability in the language) in Maori and/or bilingual, and only a small portion that have little or no conversational ability. For the most part of my fieldwork communication between my informants and me were conducted in English as my ability in Maori is far from conversational.<sup>5</sup> However, the fact that I had had some schooling (and picked up a few phrases) was taken as a positive step and always commended by my informants.

Most communication between members of the group is also conducted in English (the common denominator ensuring comprehension for all parties involved), but occasional points and certain concepts are always referred to in Maori, these phrasings are retained in the text as is. In discussions about key Maori concepts I have chosen not to translate these terms and I argue that an understanding of them and of Maori epistemologies in general, cannot be glossed in translation to English. Therefore the terms will always be presented as the emic terms first with the contextual best translation given in parentheses or after the Maori term.

## **Anonymity**

A general requisite in anthropological methodology is to anonymise the informants involved in the study. This proved to be a problem for my research as there are few enough pan-tribal groups in the Auckland region as it is and by stating in which compass direction the school was placed would narrow it down to exactly one. Therefore, in consultation with the leaders of the group, we worked out a possible solution that we could all accept. I would name the group by its proper name as well as the leaders of the group. The conversations with the

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<sup>5</sup> I had one year of tutoring in the basics (Stage 1) of Māori from Auckland University in 2000, in addition to my year of fieldwork where I was given “immersion” training by the group members.

leaders will be quoted with the full name, and we agreed that I would stick to themes relating to their capacity as leaders of a group. Personal conversations would be left out of my notes, and as a result, this thesis. The rest of the group would be anonymised to the extent possible by the limitations of naming the period of fieldwork and the group. Additionally I have decided not to deal with certain topics because of the decision not to anonymise the group. Certain avenues of questioning, like financial issues, were effectively closed to me, others I excluded from the thesis in consideration of the lack of anonymity. This is not to say that I am unaware of the issues or topics.

This approach has a few drawbacks that I feel is outweighed by the gains. First of all, my previous relationship and involvement with the tutors of the group, and their subsequent approval and endorsement of my study means that I would have to balance both of our needs carefully to ensure that we both can gain from the study. In an attempt to right previous wrongs of research and a tendency to a kind of “academic imperialism”, research methodology should strive to ensure that the benefit from the research befalls the people studied (Smith 1999). This also means that research should strive to be accountable to the informants involved, an immersion into exchanges and reciprocal relationships between researcher and researched (Henare 2005). In my case, this means that financial issues of the operation of school and club are off-limits, as most Maori (and people in general) consider issues of finances to be personal issues. This was not a major setback for the direction that I intended for my thesis, although it might be construed as interesting with a different approach but not for the one I have employed here.

Another drawback with my chosen approach, however, is that I cannot provide examples in the form of texts, recordings or video of the performances, which would otherwise enhance the written presentations. This precludes the formal analysis of kapa haka as art, as propagated by Gell (Gell 1998), but this would have been beyond the scope of the thesis and therefore intentionally left out of.

## **Choice of Informants**

I wanted to study kapa haka among Maori in New Zealand, and I decided early on to base my study in one of the major cities, as my original intention was to examine any variations

in performances between the ‘contemporary’ and ‘traditional’. By basing my study in a major city I hoped to study a pan-tribal group, which I assumed would possibly be more inclined towards ‘change’ than a tribal grouping, seen as more ‘traditional’ (cf. Linnekin 1983). I wanted to see how the daily interaction as a minority in a major city affected kapa haka and its practitioners. I knew that tribal groups were predominant in rural areas and that the pan-tribal groups were all centred in the major cities of the North Island. The pan-tribal groups have always been very highly regarded in the national competitions and so I decided to base my study on one of these groups.

A major factor in the selection of a group to base the study on was the fact that I had, as previously mentioned an already established relationship with the leaders of the group, Ngāpo and Pimia Wehi, also known as ‘uncle’ and ‘auntie’. Their endorsement of my study enabled easy access to events, situations and people involved in kapa haka that I had trouble obtaining in other groups.

Even though I spent time with several other kapa haka groups during my fieldwork, I decided to focus on three main groups for the purpose of this thesis; the other groups serve as a frame of reference and as control groups for my analysis. The chosen groups are all part of a collective of performing groups that my informants referred to as the “Waka Huia *whanau*” (family, see figure below).

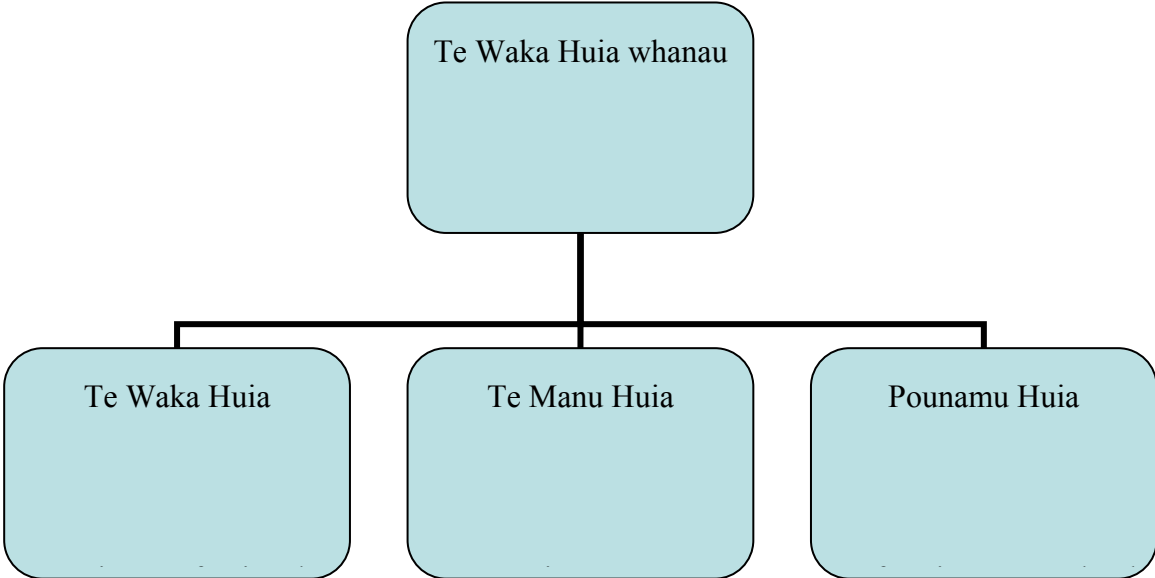


Figure 1 - The organisation of Te Waka Huia

## **The Waka Huia whanau – The Research Group**

The name refers to the senior group, *Te Waka Huia*, which is also referred to as the “professional group”, as the members of this group form the basis for any commercial performances undertaken. The collective also consists of a ‘junior’ group called *Te Manu Huia*, as well as the students of a performing arts school, *Pounamu Performing Arts*, whose students perform under the name *Pounamu Huia*. The total number of people involved in the three groups and their extensions is close to 150 with the performers themselves accounting for nearly 120 and the rest being made up of tutors and supporting staff. In 2004 a fourth group, named *Te Rōpū Āwhina*, was formed. This group consisted of volunteers from the course Kapa Haka 190 at Auckland University, Maori Studies Department. The group was entered into the 2004 Tamaki Makaurau Regional Kapa Haka Competition, making the tutors, Ngāpo and Pimia Wehi, the only kapa haka tutors to enter a total of four groups in a competition.

### **The Wehi Whanau**

Ngāpo (Bub) Wehi and Pimia (Nan) Wehi (*nee* Te Ua) are the leaders of Te Waka Huia. Throughout the following I will alternate between calling them by either; their relational category relative to me, ‘uncle’ and ‘auntie’ (generation +1, see Table 7 in Keesing 1975); their nicknames, Bub(s) and Nan; or the combination of the two, uncle Bubs and auntie Nan.

Ngāpo (70) and Pimia (75) have six children: Karen, Vicky, Richard (Boy), Wiremu (Wi), Tapeta (Tarps), and Pimia. All but one of their children, and the wives of Richard and Tapeta, Angela (Angie) and Annette, take part in the managing and tutoring the kapa haka groups of Ngāpo and Pimia, as well as the operation of the performing arts school in Auckland that the family owns, operates and manages. The grandchildren of Ngāpo and Pimia, especially Tarumai and Tuirina, are also involved in the kapa haka group and in the school. These people constitute the Wehi *whanau* (extended family) in the following thesis when I refer to an unnamed member of the family or the family as a whole. The family constitutes the central axis of the membership in the kapa haka group collective that I introduce below, Te Waka Huia, and is the main decision-making body and main producer of new songs, chants, music and dances.

In my fieldwork and this thesis I have focused on the performing arts school, Pounamu Performing Arts, and the two main groups; *Te Manu Huia* and *Te Waka Huia*, as well as the three university courses taught at Auckland University.

## **The Proving Grounds – Pounamu Performing Arts**

Pounamu Performing Arts is a bridging school between secondary and tertiary levels and is accredited with the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) as a tertiary schooling provider. It is operated by Pounamu Ventures, a trust that includes Pounamu, the commercial performance company and Pounamu Performing Arts. The Board of Trustees includes most members of the Wehi family. It receives funding on the basis of student enrolments, at rates set by the NZQA as a tertiary provider. The curriculum of Pounamu Performing Arts is weighted towards performing arts, and students can gain qualifications and a diploma in Performing Arts over the course of three years, which will qualify for either bursary or university entry. The teaching components at the school are split into three 1-year modules: *Te Herenga Waka* (“The Tying of the Canoes”), *Te Waharoa* (“The Gateway”), and *Te Huarahi* (“The Pathway”). The modules build upon the previous teachings, but are also self-contained in that the students have final exams at the end of each year, and if they pass the course, gain the qualifications of the module.

All levels are folded into one performing group for the Tamaki Makaurau Regional Kapa Haka Competition under the name *Pounamu Huia*. The repertoire for these competitions are based on the items they have been taught the previous year, and for some of the students these items are in addition to the ones they are expected to master according to their level’s teaching plan. The students have an active role in the choreography of their items and especially the *whakawatea* (exit) and *whakaeke* (entry) are left completely in the hands of the students. This allows the more experienced students to have a go at tutoring a group. The tutors of Pounamu function as principal tutors for Pounamu Huia, in addition to their roles as members of either *Te Manu Huia* or *Te Waka Huia* on the weekends.

As the most junior of all the three groups, they are often told to stay away from the build-up weekends, both to give space to the more senior groups but also as a means of reducing the build-up of anxiety in the students from seeing the other groups. The students have the

opportunity to practice during the weekdays of school, whereas the more senior groups only meet on the weekends. The students of Pounamu Huia are allowed to come to the second to last weekend practice of the other groups which is when the dress-rehearsals are usually held. This serves several purposes: it gives the students a confidence boost and a feeling of belonging to a larger collective; it provides an audience for the other groups that helps to focus the performance towards the final performance in the competition as well as giving everyone involved a chance to *whakawhanaungatanga* (build team spirit) prior to the competition.

Pounamu is the single largest base for recruiting new members to the club, Waka Huia, and several of the core members of both the junior and senior groups have gone through either Pounamu Ventures or Pounamu Performing Arts. The current staff members are all former Pounamu students and/or Waka Huia members. Most of them are also related to Uncle Bubs and Nan, either through common descent or through tribal-affiliations.

### **The Junior Team – Te Manu Huia**

Te Manu Huia is the junior team in the Waka Huia *whanau* (family). It is solely a competing team under the umbrella of the club, Te Waka Huia. After experiencing the ever increasing numbers of people wanting to try out for a position in Te Waka Huia, and finding it increasingly hard to turn talented people away, as positions in a competing team are set at 40 performers in total (20 males and 20 females), Te Manu Huia was formed in 1995. As it stands today, Te Manu Huia's members are either younger performers that spend a few years in Manu Huia to gain experience before they are asked to try out for Te Waka Huia or slightly older, more experienced members who have no ambition to move away from the junior group. Other than a few core members that have stayed on in Manu Huia for 10 or 15 years most graduate to Waka Huia after a few years. The group therefore functions largely as recruiting grounds for the “professional” and senior team, Te Waka Huia. Having said that it is important to note that the tutors treat the junior group as a separate group and not only as pool of talent to be picked for the benefit of the senior group. The two groups' needs are constantly discussed and a balance and compromise between the two are always sought. Although regarded as a “junior” team Te Manu Huia has qualified for Nationals on two or three occasions but has never made it into the top six in the Nationals. The top six places in



the national competition are considered the best in the country and a handful of top groups consistently place in this category, Te Waka Huia among them.

The junior group competes in the regional and national competitions as well as other competitions that have more of a “contemporary” performance profile like the Kapa Haka Super Twelve competition.<sup>6</sup>

The primary tutors of Te Manu Huia are usually members of the Wehi *whanau* or senior members of Te Waka Huia. These are assisted by assistant tutors drawn from the more experienced members of Te Manu Huia. For the 2004 Tamaki Makaurau Regional competition the primary tutor for Te Manu Huia was Vicky Kingi. To devote all her attention to her team she decided to step down from her position in Te Waka Huia, a fact that caused some concern with Bubs and Nan. This meant that the senior group would lose a valuable performer and at the same time would free up the time they would otherwise have to spend with Te Manu Huia as they could safely leave the tutoring in Vicky’s hands. Even though they always stressed the fact that the two teams were equal, their interaction with Manu Huia was always hurried and they were always worried that this might be taken as “less serious” and that they “cared less” for them. Interaction with Waka Huia, on the other hand, was more exacting and meticulous, giving the impression that Waka Huia’s members were more of “prima donnas” than the more accepting members of Manu Huia, who never complained about the lack of attention from the leaders.

## **The Senior Team – Te Waka Huia**

The group was founded in 1981 when Ngāpo and Pimia Wehi moved to Auckland from Waihirere, Gisborne, at the request of family members who were “keen to pursue Maori culture through performing arts” (*About Te Waka Huia* 2005). *Te Waka Huia* is therefore the

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<sup>6</sup> A competition held every year since its inception in 2001 at Tūranga (Gisborne) where twelve groups, each with twelve members perform all genres of kapa haka, with the total programme not lasting longer than twelve minutes. The performances are encouraged to be as innovative as possible while, at the same time, enhancing the traditional aspects of kapa haka (Swarbrick, 2006).

senior group and is considered “professional” by way of having been a competing group for over twenty years.<sup>7</sup> The group has consistently qualified for the national competition every time since its entry in 1986, when it also went on to place first in the national competition – a historical first (*About Te Waka Huia* 2005). It has routinely placed among the top six in the national competitions in the past six years and is considered among the top performing groups in the country.

The name *Te Waka Huia* refers to a type of container for storing precious items, *waka huia* (treasure box). The group was named by Ngāpo Wehi because of the similarity between the traditional usage of a *waka huia* as a repository for treasures and the members of the group as “individual repositories of treasures, the potential inherent in every person and the collective contribution to be made to Maoridom” (*About Te Waka Huia*).

The group can be divided into four main bodies of members: *whanau* (family), core members, seniors and juniors. The group is tutored by Ngāpo and Pimia Wehi and their family. The family makes all decisions regarding the performances in concert but the final authority rests with Ngāpo and Pimia. To assist with the administrative duties of organising the club the group has a treasurer and other officers who deal with organising practices, securing venues for rehearsals, maintaining the props, and shopping for groceries for the live-ins. These positions are held by family, in-laws or core members. The core members are all former Pounamu students with considerable experience with the group. These core members are usually considered ‘seniors’ in the group, meaning that they are older, more experienced than the young, new recruits. Another large grouping that makes up the core membership are the Waka Huia “kids” that are the offspring of current or previous members. Having “always” been a part of the group as they have been to every practice their parents attended, they are very familiar with the items and display a considerable amount of talent in their performances. Most members have an affiliation with the family of one sort or the other, either through descent or kinship, through the work of Pounamu, but there are those

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<sup>7</sup> Te Waka Huia celebrated its 25th anniversary in July 2006.

who have no links to the group other than knowing their reputation as a top performing group.

These new recruits have to qualify for a position in the group at the annual recruitment drive or “muster”, in the same manner as everyone else. The selection process lasts approximately a weekend and is not final. Positions frequently change over and in a worst case scenario a member may be asked to “step down” or resign their position in favour of a more qualified or reliable member. The young, new recruits have to match the experience of the senior members with their talent and attitude. This process is similar across all groups mentioned.

## Theoretical Framework

### **Dance, Song, and Music – A Comment on Terminology**

The Western terms ‘dance’ and ‘song’ are not adequate labels for the Maori performing arts as the distinction between the two are not precisely the same cross culturally. Therefore, in trying to apply the Western terms ‘music’, ‘song’ and ‘dance’ to kapa haka, a problem presents itself: It encourages the application of concepts whose scope is limited outside of the practice Western European art music, and therefore completely alien to the subject of study (Stokes 2002). By examining this social phenomenon exclusively as either one of the previously mentioned categories, one can easily make the mistake of abstracting from something which is inextricably linked to a larger whole. Kapa haka is all of the above, and therefore, the Western distinctions do not quite fit. For example, one could argue, like many esteemed scholars of Maori music, that the division is whether the form is chanted or sung (McLean 1996; McLean and Orbell 2004). Thus, the question of whether or not there is dancing is largely made irrelevant by this perspective (see Shennan 1981 for a discussion on the study of dance and movement in this regard). Another objection to the terms mentioned above could be raised if one were to disregard the other parts and just focus on analysing kapa haka and claiming it was all about dance, I believe one would make a serious fault of omission because the terminology does not suit the object studied.

Kapa haka is ‘music’, ‘song’ and ‘dance’ at the same time. Given that there are genres that are more like ‘song’ or even ‘chant’, with very little movement as in ‘dance’, you won’t find

any instances of pure ‘dance’ in a kapa haka performance even though ‘*haka*’ means ‘dance’. Therefore, in order to present the material in its proper form, I shall therefore use the emic terms: whenever I am talking about Maori ‘song’ I will use the Maori term ‘*waiata*’. Likewise I will use ‘*haka*’ for ‘male posture dance’, i.e. for ‘dance’ of a certain type, as well as ‘*kapa haka*’ for ‘performance’. If the need should arise to discuss ‘haka’ as ‘dance’ I shall make this clear in the text. When referring to the term ‘dance’ I will use just ‘dance’ and likewise for ‘music’ or ‘performing arts’.<sup>8</sup> The Maori terms cover roughly the same areas of experience as those covered by the term ‘music’, ‘dance’ or ‘song’, but by using this approach I hope to reveal the connections between the performance(s) and the wider socio-cultural contexts, as made by the people involved (Stokes 2002).

When referring to performances, regardless of genre or type, my informants referred to them as ‘items’, this will be utilised in this thesis to denote a performance. Depending on type this ‘item’ will be chanted or sung, with or without movement. Several ‘items’ of the various genres constitutes a ‘bracket’. A ‘bracket’ is one full performance of several ‘items’, typically referred to in conjunction with a concert or competition. A team’s competition ‘bracket’ should include ‘items’ from all genres that are judged in competitions, whereas a cultural performance ‘bracket’ will usually include ‘items’ from all competitive genres as well as secondary genres.

## **Traditional or Contemporary?**

‘Tradition’ is seemingly seen as a tangible, bounded object that is handed down from the senior to the junior generations of Maori. In short, kapa haka is a *taonga*, an heirloom of value, classed alongside other objects of value such as the Maori language, heirlooms like cloaks, clubs and carvings, and *tikanga*, traditional Maori customs. Like other *taonga*, the traditional performing arts are passed on to future generations and thereby keeping the many *waiata*, songs, alive by keeping them in use by people. This knowledge and practice of ‘tradition’ is viewed by many as a key factor to a Maori identity – albeit a contested one –

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<sup>8</sup> A complete index of Māori words utilised will be found in the appendices.

and a way for many contemporary Maori to connect to key facets of Maori life today, defined as:

*the Maori language; the sayings of the ancestors; traditional chant-songs; posture dances; decorative art; the traditional Maori house and marae; the body of marae custom, particularly that pertaining to the tangi and the traditional welcome; the retention of the prestige and nobility of the Maori people (Ngata 1936, cited in Ritchie 1963: 37).*

Clearly, kapa haka is a ‘tradition’, and that this ‘tradition’ is something of importance, of value. But what does ‘tradition’ imply in contemporary society?

A critique that can be raised at earlier studies of kapa haka and its constituent parts, what I have termed in the following as the various genres subsumed under the performing arts “umbrella” of kapa haka, is that they have been studied as separate parts of either “culture”, as art practices, or as part of other activities, like religion or economy. Agreed, the practice of kapa haka as an art form is an important part of “culture”, because the activities involved in kapa haka, that of composing and performing chants, songs and dances can be considered as “expressions of cultural behaviour in a specific social, spatial and temporal context” (Mead 1970: 42). This cultural behaviour is manifested in social interactions, i.e. how people relate to “others” in social settings (Gell 1998: 4). Similarly, the practice of certain types of recited chants in specific ritual settings, or the practice of certain types of songs sung as prestations to specific individuals or groups, are part of the realm of activities that we can label ‘religion’ and ‘economy’, but the grouping of these subject matters into these conceptual boxes, which act as a device for sorting interpretations, can also have severe shortcomings in cross-cultural research (Salmond 1983: 315). The use of such categories in the scholarship on “traditional Maori society” will serve as an example of these shortcomings. The categorical distinction between ‘traditional/primitive’ and ‘contemporary/modern’ forms of Maori life, especially as it relates to the study of Maori performing arts.

First of all, the division of “traditional Maori society” into a topical set of categories, like those mentioned above, only answers the Western demand for orderly descriptions of

“areas” of life that cuts across tribal ways of organising life and categorising the same. For the study of Maori art this has resulted in a preoccupation with taxonomic descriptions of style. For example, that Maori carvings have been treated exclusively as physical objects rather than accounting for their being intellectually recognised as ancestral portraits (Salmond 1983: 318), spiritual personifications either as direct images or through association (*taonga* 2007). Anne Salmond points out, that Maori accounts of tribal past are ordered not in categories but along lines of relationships. The same carving mentioned above is:

*Just one image in the genealogical structure of the meeting house, which is spelt out again in whakapapa [genealogical accounts of kinship], written in genealogy books or recited on the marae [tribal ritual and social centre]. The ancestors are sung about in waiata [chants and songs] and talked about in whaikoorero ‘oratory’, and linked with place names on tribal lands (Salmond 1983: 318).*

The division into topical categories misses out on these kinds of relationships between a carving, genealogical accounts written in books or recited in ritual, sung about in chant or song and talked about in speeches, and linked with tribal territory – important relationships between gods, ancestors, land and living men and women that assist in the understanding of Maori thinking and experience (Salmond 1983: 318).

Secondly, the distinction between “traditional” and “contemporary” implicitly equates “traditional” society with “pre-contact” society, the period prior to the “discovery” of New Zealand by James Cook in 1769. Which is problematic in itself as what at any given time was considered “traditional” was relative to the observer (who only arrived after the fact), and from there used to reconstruct pre-contact, “traditional” society (Salmond 1983: 316).

Anne Salmond also points to the distinction between ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ as problematic in relation to representations of Maori, in particular, the implicit equation of ‘traditional’ with ‘pre-contact’ (prior to the European arrival). She argues that this implicit equation is based on the assumption that the pivotal event in Maori history was the arrival of the European, an equation that has affected the representation of traditional Maori society as a stable structure functioning in an equilibrium which was disrupted and forever changed by

that event (Salmond 1983: 316). Founded on this assumption that the European influence is all-pervasive, earlier research on Maori have tended to focus on reconstruction of ‘traditional’, and therefore essentially ‘pre-contact’ Maori society, as is the case with the works of Elsdon Best (1924), Sir Peter Buck (1954), and Andrew Vayda (1960), to name a few. Unfortunately, judgements of what is ‘traditional’ in Maori society have varied from each generation of scholars, and “bits and pieces of information from anywhere between 1769 and 1969 have been cobbled together in accounts of “traditional” behaviour that included practices which never would have coexisted in any given Maori community at any given time” (Salmond 1983: 316).

This equation rests on the implicit assumption that “the key event in Maori history was the arrival of the European” (Salmond 1983: 316), after which everything changed irrevocably. Pre-contact Maori society, on the other hand, was a stable equilibrium which was disrupted by contact with a ‘cultural other’. As Anne Salmond have successfully argued in her two books on the subject of early exchanges between Maori and Europeans, *Two Worlds: First Meetings Between Maori and Europeans, 1642-1772* (Salmond 1991) and *Between Worlds: Early Exchanges Between Maori and Europeans 1773-1815* (Salmond 1997), the impact was not as devastating on Maori culture, quite to the contrary, the continuities and changes in tribal life followed the same fluctuations as before and were only affected by the ‘other’ to a small degree.

The label “Maori”, that encompass a wide array of tribal configurations, has been applied to the discussion of pre-contact life in New Zealand. This label emerged rather late in contact history, about the 1830s, and was preceded by “New Zealanders” and “natives”, according to Salmond (Salmond 1983: 317). So, in applying a category which did not exist prior to its inception in the meeting with the ‘other’, the ‘other’ wield the power of definition over things that are “Maori” and by extension also what is “traditional” Maori. Paradoxically enough the event that constituted the categories, arrival of the European, is seen as the very event that mark the beginning of its destruction (Salmond 1983: 317).

Eric Schwimmer characterised Maori society after European arrival as a wristwatch that ceased to function (Schwimmer 1974: 101), a metaphor that has an array of practical implications for how contemporary Maori society is viewed and understood. For example,

the implicit comparison of the “broken wristwatch” and “traditional society” means that the “authentic” form of Maori life ceased shortly after contact and the surviving customs were irrevocably contaminated by European influence. Such inauthentic behaviours are no longer valid and therefore should be discontinued (Salmond 1983). Even though the objection cited was made over twenty years ago, it is just as valid today as this type of rhetoric is brought up from time to time in the political discourse of New Zealand, for example in the address to the Orewa Rotary club by the National Party Finance spokesperson, Don Brash, 29 January 2003 (Brash 2003, printed in *The New Zealand Herald*).

For the study of kapa haka, or any of its constituent genres of performance, this distinction between traditional/contemporary has led to an obsession with “authentic” and “traditional” communities (e.g. the Tuuhoe *iwi* or tribe)<sup>9</sup> and topics (e.g. carving and chants) (Salmond 1983: 317) whereas more “contemporary”, and therefore “unauthentic”, cultural forms have been relegated to a secondary status to the more authentic forms as “cheap and tawdry borrowed tunes”, the title of an essay by Eric Ramsden in 1949 (Ramsden cited in Mead 1970). Again, the distinction between ‘traditional’ and ‘contemporary’ discards the possibility of the analysis of the relationship between the two categories, making the examination of change and continuity an exercise in either/or.

Handler and Linnekin (1984) point out that the distinctions between ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ posits a false dichotomy between tradition and modernity as fixed and mutually exclusive states. They claim, citing M.E. Smith (in Handler and Linnekin 1984) that the terms ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’, are interpretive rather than descriptive. Because all cultures change ceaselessly there can only be what is new, i.e. modern, although what is new can take on symbolic value as ‘traditional’ (Handler and Linnekin 1984). Designating parts of a culture as ‘traditional’ or ‘modern’ holds two problematic implications. Firstly, it encourages us to see tradition naturalistically, as bounded objects made up of parts that are themselves bounded objects. Secondly, culture is treated as having an essence apart from our interpretation of them.

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<sup>9</sup> For example *Tuhoe: The Children of the Mist* by Elsdon Best (Best, 1925).



Handler and Linnekin (1984) conclude by analysing national and ethnic identification in Quebec and Hawaii, that 'tradition' cannot be defined in terms of boundedness or essence. Rather, 'tradition' refers to an interpretive process that embodies both continuity and discontinuity (Handler and Linnekin 1984). Linnekin states that "tradition is not a coherent body of customs, but an *a priori* model that shapes individual and group experience and is, in turn, shaped by it" (Linnekin 1983:241) and that "a defining tradition is one basis of perceived 'otherness', whether the opposing categories are commoners and chiefs or anthropologists and historians" (Linnekin 1983:250). This shared cultural heritage constitutes a basic part in both subjective and objective definitions of ethnicity (Barth cited in Linnekin 1983:241), but the selection of what constitutes tradition is always made in the present, and thus always based in part on a model of the past (Linnekin 1983). The content of the past is modified and redefined according to modern significance, e.g. in nationalist movements, tradition becomes a rallying cry and a political symbol, cultural revivalists search for an authentic heritage as the basis for ethnic distinctiveness; as they rediscover a culture they also create it (Linnekin 1983:241). The ongoing reconstruction of 'tradition' is a facet of all social life, which is not natural but symbolically constituted (Handler and Linnekin 1984).

This reconstruction, or redefinition, forms the basis of Allan Hanson's article *The Making of the Maori: Culture Invention and Its Logic* (1989). The debate this article sparked shows quite clearly how sensitive this issue can be, and more to the point how careful one must be in selecting terminology. Hanson follows Linnekin's lead and agrees that both 'tradition' and 'culture' are anything but stable realities delivered unchanged and intact from generation to generation. Tradition is now understood, he writes, as an invention designed to serve contemporary purposes. Depending on who does the inventing the purpose varies, when a people invent their own traditions it is usually to legitimate a current reality or aspiration (Hanson 1989). Hanson goes on to frame his argument in the context of two such cultural inventions of Maori culture: The Great Fleet theory and the notion of a supreme god, Io, in the Maori pantheon. These two examples are not so relevant for my purposes, so I will not describe them in any detail here. However, Hanson's third example, where he explores Maori cultural identity, is much more interesting for our purposes. Hanson argues that Maori tradition is invented by Maori political groups to promote an image of Maori culture as

equally valid but distinct from Pākeha<sup>10</sup> culture, and thus contrasts with particularly those elements of Pākeha culture that are least attractive. Maori culture is represented as an ideal counterbalance to the other cultures failings: Maori cherish the dead, have a close, spiritual relationship with the land and Maori thought appreciates the mystical dimension and transcends reason (Hanson 1989:894).

Part of Hanson's argument is that anthropologists are part of this invention as well as political groups by "according special authority to Maoris in matters pertaining to Maori culture" (Hanson 1989: 895). This has especially been the case in later years, and Hanson cites several cases, especially concerning the Great Fleet myth and Io, where changes or moderations have been made, as he puts it, "to avoid offending Maori sensibilities" (Hanson 1989:895). Hanson concludes that even though culture and tradition are inventions with anthropology as one of the inventing agents, it should not discredit anthropological accounts as knowledge about cultural reality because inventions are precisely the stuff that cultural reality is made of, and he cites Handler and Linnekin's Quebecois and Hawaiian examples in support of his argument (Hanson 1989).

The debate following this article, and particularly what New Zealand media picked up, was centred on Hanson's usage of the term "cultural invention". As Linnekin states it:

*The concern [...] is that writing about the contemporary constructions or "invention" of culture undercuts the cultural authority of indigenous peoples by calling into question their authenticity. Implicitly, authenticity is thus equated with the transmission through time of a tradition, that is, an objectively definable essence or core of customs and beliefs (Linnekin 1991: 446)*

The problem wasn't so much the usage of the term, but the fact that the article seemingly called the Maori culture's authenticity into question. Handler and Linnekin (1984) states that 'tradition' is at once a commonsense and a scientific category, and even though Hanson

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<sup>10</sup> Pākeha is today taken to mean "white New Zealander of European descent". Originally it meant "foreigner".

never questioned Maori cultural authenticity in his article, it was the commonsense category meaning that was picked up in the media, because “the concept of authenticity is an emotional, political issue for indigenous peoples, particularly for those who are engaged in a struggle for sovereignty” (Linnekin 1991:446). Hanson’s reply to Linnekin and Handler takes this caution to heart:

*As effective as it may be as a rhetorical device, the responses to my essay in New Zealand has led me to the conclusion that invention when applied to culture and tradition is a systematically misleading expression that should not be perpetuated (Hanson 1991: 450).*

What does this imply for the study of kapa haka?

First of all, the division of traditional Maori society and by extension anything ‘traditional’ into topical categories in effect divides practices and orders them according to categories imposed from the outside. As the example mentioned with the ancestral carvings clearly shows, this might cloud the connection *between* the categories, whether we can agree on their existence or not. It also precludes the study of kapa haka as an art form, a totality that is as much dependent on its constituent parts as on any ‘tradition’ by itself. Therefore a perspective must be adopted that not only allows for the arrangements of categories that Maori themselves can agree to – to seek to understand the connections as made by Maori between the ‘tradition’, in this case kapa haka, and the socio-cultural domain. This is not the same as according Maori special authority in some concerns; rather it is recognising the authority that has been long overdue.

Secondly, the perspective needs to be able to account for both continuity and discontinuity in order to study the phenomenon *without* making valued judgements – implicitly ranking categories with reference to degrees of authenticity. The study of practices of contemporary society, seen as a “today” at the time of fieldwork and to a lesser degree at the time of writing, will need to encompass perspectives of both past and future, as no ‘tradition’ spontaneously creates itself.

Additionally, it needs to allow for the study of change as unfolding over time, and not as a departure from a purer form forever polluted by innovation. As time progresses and the

people involved change, due to natural processes and the inescapability of mortality of man, so too does practices change. This change in practice need not be seen as a degradation of the practice, in so far the practice is supported by the people involved and the practice still fills a need for the people involved. Therefore, an approach is needed that allows us to account for both change and continuity.

An alternative approach that can account for both continuity and change is by thinking through about kapa haka as a *taonga*, an artefact, an object of value, a prized possession, or an heirloom – kapa haka as ‘things’.

### **Thinking through ‘Things’ - Taonga<sup>11</sup>**

Amiria Henare argues that a certain kind of understanding can only be gained by “thinking through things” (2005: 1). The kinds of things that Henare studied was artefacts, specifically artefacts held in Museums in New Zealand and Scotland, two countries linked by imperial, colonial and post-colonial ties (2005: 1).

*Taonga* are a special class of objects that are accorded supreme value by Maori. The term can be glossed as the translation cited in Williams above, or more specifically as Marsden puts it: “a treasure, something precious; hence an object of good or value. The object or end valued may be tangible or intangible; material or spiritual” (Māori Marsden in Royal 2003). As Henare (Henare 2005) points out a *taonga* might just as well be a historic weapon (often named), the Maori language (recognised as such by the Language Act of 1987), a native plant (as recognised by the Treaty Claim Wai 262), a body of knowledge (like *tikanga* or kapa haka), ornate cloaks, sayings and proverbs, music and chants, and even natural resources like forests and foreshores. There is no distinction made between the material and ephemeral, nor between animate or inanimate objects as is shown by the examples above.

Rather than approach these ‘things’ from the perspective of the “way in which meaning becomes attached to things or the roles objects play as vehicles for human agency”, Henare explores how these ‘things’ (artefacts) constitute and instantiate social relations. ‘Things’ do

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<sup>11</sup> **Taonga**, n. Property, anything highly prized (Williams, 2003: 381).

not simply ‘represent’, ‘symbolise’ or ‘embody’ meaning – they help bring them into being (Henare 2005: 272). The Auckland Museum definition of *taonga* follows this reasoning, stating that:

*They [taonga] are seen as the spiritual personifications of particular ancestors, either as direct images or through association. Descendants experience this wairua (ancestral spirit) as ihi (presence), wehi (awe) and wana (authority). Thus taonga are time travellers, bridging the generations, allowing descendants to meet their ancestors ritually, face to face (taonga 2007).*

## **The Production and Exchange of Taonga**

Because these artefacts (things) do not spontaneously appear by themselves, they are *made*. Objects that are ‘made’ by people, whether they are forged, carved, woven, moulded, sung, chanted or performed, have the capacity to affect people by the way they were *made*, what Gell calls the “enchantment of technology” (Gell 1999: 163). Gell considers the various arts as components of a large (and largely unrecognised) technical system that is “orientated towards the production of the social consequences which ensue from the production of these objects. The power of art objects stems from the technical processes they objectively embody: the *technology of enchantment* is founded on the *enchantment of technology*” (Gell 1999: 163). Therefore as a class of objects (things) that are recognised by as “beautifully made” or “made beautiful”, i.e. they demonstrate a “technical level of achieved excellence” (Gell 1999: 172) as products of techniques employed to make them, have to be recognised as such by others.

*The attitude of the spectator towards a work of art is fundamentally conditioned by his notion of the technical process which gave rise to it, and the fact that it was created by the agency of another person, the artist (Gell 1999: 172).*

These ‘things’ are not merely ‘old’ things, because artefacts continue to be produced, circulated and exchanged, often alongside the former trajectories of old artefacts (and, in Gell’s example, possibly also future artefacts), among family, tribal groups, friends and

heads of state, or even sold on the commercial market (Henare 2005: 8). This type of continuous exchanges is instantly recognisable as Mauss' now famous example, derived from Best's material from New Zealand, what he calls the spiritual mechanisms that "oblige a person to reciprocate the present that has been received" (Mauss 2002: 9). The impetus behind this continued exchange is brought about by the *hau* of the object exchanged – a quality inherent in the object.

## **Mana, Hau and Tapu**

Two terms in Maori are integral to exchange and to *taonga* in particular, namely *hau* and *mana*. Mauss states that since *taonga* are strongly linked to the person, clan, and the earth they must also be a vehicle of the *mana* of the person, clan, and the earth. *Mana* can have a range of meanings like 'prestige', 'power', 'authority' (Williams 2003), and it is tied to the concept of *hau* and *tapu*, two concepts that figure greatly in the literature about *taonga*, there is a need for a clarification.

Metge mentions that in previous times, *mana* signified power of supernatural origin which possessed rather than was possessed by people and things. Through this possession by *mana* made both things *tapu* (Metge 1976: 63). The concept also had a secondary meaning, a social referent, taken to mean power in a political and social sense. Metge speculates that this secondary meaning has taken over the primary meaning of *mana* in most situations today (Metge 1976: 64). Regardless of the meaning, spiritual or social, the concept is used to express the differential achievement and status of both groups and individuals. Such groups or individuals are said to both have achieved because of their *mana*, and to gain *mana* from their achievement (Metge 1976: 64).

There are several sources from which *mana* can be gained. Some is inherited from ancestors (through *whakapapa*); the inherited *mana* is dependent on seniority of descent, sex and birth order in the family, according to Metge (Metge 1976: 64). Traditionally, the more males a man has in his *whakapapa* the more prestigious it is, although to trace links through a female of high status would also confer prestige to the descendant (Fox 1983: 154).

The *mana* inherited can be increased through direct contact with the supernatural forces of *tapu*. Metge mentions being a Christian minister or priest, *tohunga* (priestly expert) in the

Ringatu Church, faith healer, charismatic prophet, and/or by achievement in a variety of fields, both traditional and modern.

The amount of *mana* inherent in one person at a time is based on the subjective assessment of the individual him- or herself and of those around him or her, in effect the state of a person's *mana* fluctuates according to the person's performance and the state of the person's relations with others.

An object, *taonga*, can gain *mana* through being possessed by people of *mana* and consequently exchanged between them, an exchange that is governed by the *hau*, what Mauss translates as “the spirit of things” (Mauss 2002). Mauss argued that when exchanges of *taonga* occurred the *taonga* would be a vessel of the *hau*, an animate force that would bind those involved in the exchange; giver, receiver, and object, together into cycles of reciprocity, impelling the receiver to make a return (Mauss 2002: 14-15). However, Mauss made one error in his analysis in claiming that the *hau* that compelled was that of the giver, or “donor” as Firth puts it: “The *hau* to which reference is made is clearly not that of the donor, but that of the *article given*” (Firth 1929: 414). Perhaps this error was partly responsible to why Mauss saw the *taonga* as a mere vessel for the *hau* and *mana* of the gifting group or party. Tamati Ranapiri, the Maori elder of the Ngati Raukawa *iwi*, whose statement Mauss used for his argument, translated by Elsdon Best, was very clear on this point:

*The taonga that I received for these taonga (which came from you) must be returned to you. [...] I must give them to you because they are a hau of the taonga that you gave me (Mauss 2002: 14, emphasis added).*

According to Ranapiri, a *taonga* exchanged for another isn't just a vessel for the *hau*, it is its *hau*. The convergence of ‘thing’ and ‘spirit’ into an ‘object’ brings us to the realm of *tapu*, the sacred quality that offers spiritual protection.

According to Metge, *tapu* is translated as “under religious restriction”, a state that was dangerous to the transgressor and one that required respectful treatment. *Noa*, on the other hand was then a state of ordinariness and consequently freed from restrictions (Metge 1976: 8). It is clear that the relationship between *tapu* and *noa* is a complementary one. The Maori

emphasis on the interrelatedness of spiritual and physical reality is closely associated with the binary opposition of *tapu* and *noa*, and must be understood in relation to each other (Metge 1976: 58). Williams defines *tapu* as “ceremonial restriction, quality or condition of being subject to such restriction” (Williams 2003). *Noa*, on the other hand is defined with a wider range of meanings than *tapu*: “free from *tapu* or any other restriction”, “of no moment, ordinary”, “indefinite”, “within one’s power”, “denoting absence of limitations or conditions, to be translated according to context, e.g. without restraint, spontaneously, of oneself, gratuitously, without consideration or agreement, at random, without object, fruitlessly ... quite, just, merely” (Williams 2003).

According to Metge, the two oppositions form an exhaustive classification: what is not *tapu* is *noa* and vice versa. The two needs not always stand in the same relation to each other, however, and one object can be *noa* in one context and *tapu* in another. Places, objects, actions and people are only *tapu* and *noa* in relation to other places, objects, actions and people, except for a few instances involving God or death, where the classification is absolute (Metge 1976: 59).

## **The Temporal Scope of Taonga**

In analysing kapa haka as a *taonga* it is necessary to widen the temporal scope for the purposes of the discussion, simply because of the nature of the longevity of ‘things’, and in particular non-material things as the case may be with kapa haka, that potentially can span across generations. As Amiria Henare notes in her historical and material ethnographical study of artefacts in museum collections in both New Zealand and Scotland, that the exchanges of such objects can be usefully analysed through time (Henare 2005). As artefacts are handed down, both along and across descent lines, through the generations they gain certain properties that are considered in many exchanges as central to the transacting parties involved. Henare argues that among Maori *taonga* such as carved meeting houses help bring descent groups into being, as they not only represent but *are* ancestors, and that these provide substantive links between people who will never meet in person (Henare 2005).

By the power of their being, artefacts have constituted social relations of a type that cross time and space between themselves and people, and even mediated relationships between



people. This mediation is inherently social because the artefact (object or thing) “is a physical entity which mediates between two beings, and therefore creates a social relation between them, which in turn provides a channel for further social relations and influences” (Gell 1999: 172). Henare notes that “in many societies, artefacts collapse spatial and temporal distance, bringing people together who would otherwise remain quite literally out of touch” (2005: 7), because things are exchanged “to initiate and cultivate ongoing relationships between individuals, kin and other social groups” (Gell 1999: 172). The artefacts of the *Te Maori* exhibition can be analysed to have this capacity to bring people together, across space and time, but only when analysed *through* time with a wide temporal scope of analysis. For example, each Maori meeting house, recognised as a *taonga* that not merely represent ancestors but *are* ancestors (Henare 2005: 6), can be at the same time “a ‘memory’ in objectified form” (Gell 1998: 257), of meeting houses in the past and conversely “a project for future houses, a ‘sketch’ towards a series of as yet unbuilt houses” (Gell 1998: 257). Alfred Gell also notes that “artefacts like Maori meeting houses are not ‘symbols’ but indexes of agency. In this instance, the agency is collective, ancestral, and essentially political in tone” (Gell 1998: 253).

## **Art and Agency**

In Gell’s theory he focuses on visual art, and thereby excludes verbal and musical art, but he concedes that they are in practice inseparable from visual art in certain instances.

The central term in Gell’s anthropological theory of art is the ‘index’, the visible, physical ‘thing’ that permits a particular cognitive operation, that Gell identifies as “the abduction of agency” (Gell 1998), an operation of a causal type that may or may not infer correctness. For example, a song can be ‘beautiful’ and ‘moving’ but there is also the possibility that it is intended as the opposite by being ‘ironic’ or ‘satirical’. The index is the art object itself, but as Gell points out to discuss either “art objects” or “works of art” is to discuss “entities which have been given a prior *institutional* definition as such” (Gell 1998: 13). From a theoretical standpoint this is unfortunate for two reasons. First of all because an object that has been enfranchised as an art object by institutional definition has become an art object exclusively, secondly because the theory is intended to explore a domain in which ‘objects’ merge with ‘people’ by “virtue of the existence of social relations between persons and

things, and persons and persons *via* things” (Gell 1998: 13). The term ‘index’ is therefore better suited. The term ‘index’ is adapted from its meaning in semiotics as a ‘natural sign’ from which the “observer can make a causal inference of some kind, or an inference of the intentions and capabilities of another person” (Gell 1998: 13). Gell identifies this inference as the “abduction of agency” (Gell 1998). The categories of indexes applicable to Gell’s theory of art are limited to those which permit the abduction of ‘social agency’, in that “the index is in itself seen as the outcome, and/or the instrument of, social agency” (Gell 1998: 13).

The exercise of agency is done by a ‘social agent’. Any agent must, at least potentially, be considered a social agent. ‘Agents’ are those who/which cause events to happen in their vicinity. These events, or causal sequences, are caused by acts of will, mind or intention by the agent. As a result of this exercise of agency, certain events transpire, but not necessarily the specific events ‘intended’ by the agent (Gell 1998: 16). It is important to note that social agency can be exercised relative to ‘things’ as well as ‘people’, and that social agency can be exercised by ‘things’. Therefore the ‘agent’ and ‘patient’ need not be people, as ‘things’ can stand in for ‘persons’ in any given situation (Gell 1998: 17).

*The idea of agency is a culturally prescribed framework for thinking about causation, when what happens is (in some vague sense) supposed to be intended in advance by some person-agent or thing-agent (Gell 1998: 13).*

## **Kapa Haka as Taonga**

I argue that kapa haka can be seen as a *taonga*, because old *waiata* and *haka* are considered *taonga* and important ways for Maori to connect to key aspects of Maori life. These are considered part of kapa haka today, and no kapa haka performance would be complete without them. Additionally, kapa haka as traditional performing arts is considered a tradition that is handed down through the generations, through processes of exchange between kin groups and non-kin in varying forms. Depending on the temporal scope of analysis the donor, the ancestor or relative, and the recipient, descendant or relative, may never meet face to face or they can be physically present in the exchange. During this process kapa haka acquires certain characteristics, *mana* and *hau*, that are considered to cross between the

spiritual and physical realms. Kapa haka is considered part of the web of knowledge, *mātauranga* that informs the practice of *tikanga* or custom.

Sidney Mead states:

*The art legacy passed down from the ancestors to the generations of today is a gift of great magnificence, a thing of beauty to many, a gift that touches our very souls. We are enriched and we can stand tall in the international arena of art. We have something of which we can be immensely proud (Mead 2003: 253).*

This process of passing the legacy down to the generations of today is what is taking place in the performing art schools and the competing groups today. Knowledge, practice and expertise are passed along in the form of song, chant, dance, performance and music to younger generations. Just like other *taonga* these songs and chants become more valuable as the number of descendants increases as they are passed down the generations, furthermore, “all *taonga* possess, in varying degrees, the elements of mana (ancestral prestige), tapu (spiritual protection) and korero (genealogically ordered narratives)” (*taonga* 2007).

Therefore, to locate behaviour (*kapa haka*) in the dynamics of social interaction means I will have to examine *kapa haka* within a group. The focus will be on the ‘act’, whether this is physical or verbal, in the context of the ‘stage of life’ of the agent (Gell 1998). The ‘index’ is seen as the outcome, and/or the instrument of, social agency. It is through or *vis-à-vis* this ‘index’ (*kapa haka*) that agents interact. It is my argument that *kapa haka* as an art phenomenon, can stand in for a human agent in this process, therefore the biographical depth can extend over the life-spans of several generations. This leads into my interest in seeing how ‘tradition’ is viewed by Maori today.

By necessity, the spatial location will need to follow those which agents in their ‘stages of life’, or biographies, traverse (Gell 1998). In this case that means I have to seek the locations where ‘tradition’ is transmitted, schools or places of learning. For this thesis I have chosen a collective of three *kapa haka* groups where members gradually move through the school-group to junior-group and finally into the senior-group. In this process relationships are

formed, important and consequential ones which matter to the agents' biographical 'life project', the goals they seek to accomplish in the course of their lifetime.

As the 'anthropology of art' focuses on the social context of art production, circulation, and reception, this study will also have to focus on production, circulation and reception of kapa haka in contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand. Participation in all events throughout one year with a kapa haka group has yielded insight into the processes of the production of new 'items' for regional and national competitions as they were composed. 'Item' is a complete text/performance of a certain genre, as befitting the conventions of said genre. The same events are also the main means of circulation and reception for newly composed items through mass-media and direct observation of the performance of items at festivals or other performances. Similar processes come to light when 'old' 'items' are 'brought back' into active circulation as they are re-learned by old and new performers for specific occasions, thereby reiterating the social context of the song/dance in question. Circulation of these 'items' as they are taught at *wānanga* (workshops dedicated to teaching and learning – a sharing of knowledge) keep items 'alive' and when they are not, 'bring them back' again. This is one aspect of the dynamics of 'tradition'.

## In Summary

In this chapter I have presented the methodology of this study and I have argued, on the basis of experiences in the field, as to why I decided to follow this methodology.

The research group of this study, the cultural club Te Waka Huia, its junior team, Te Manu Huia, and the proving grounds of Pounamu Huia have been presented along with a brief introduction of its leadership.

As I have shown in the presentation of the theoretical framework of this thesis, and the discussion of the categories of 'traditional'/'contemporary' as analogous to 'authentic'/'inauthentic', I have attempted avoid making those same valued judgements and rather attempt to account for continuity and discontinuity as dynamics of tradition, and especially viewing 'change' in performing arts as 'virtuosity' and 'genius' rather than departures from a fixed, static equilibrium.

I have presented the argument for the employment of *emic* terms in this thesis as the categories of Western ‘music’, ‘song’ and ‘dance’ do not cover exactly the same categories of experience as ‘kapa haka’, ‘waiata’ and ‘haka’. Extrapolating from this argument and adopting the point of view propagated by Anne Salmond, I also employ the same *emic* terminology when discussing *mātauranga Maori* in the following.

After having examined the anthropological debate of ‘cultural invention’ and its specific application to the anthropology of Oceania, and discussed the various arguments for and against the propagation of this perspective, I have concluded that a different approach was needed, an approach that would account for change without making valued judgements and one that would account for change without undercutting cultural authenticity.

Therefore, I have argued for the study of kapa haka as a *taonga*, and as a totality and not just its individual constituent parts. I have accounted for the benefits of this approach through the employment of theories of material culture. The focus of these theories is on the relationships between person-object and person-person in the vicinity of an object.

To conclude, I have shown through several theoretical debates that kapa haka is not an inauthentic art form, nor is it to be considered an outdated practice simply because of the Western insistence on ‘change’ as something detrimental to authentic practices.

So what is kapa haka today? To what extent is it being practiced by Maori today and how does this relate to the changes it has undergone?



## Chapter Two: Contextualising of Kapa Haka

### Reaching back to the present

*The students were sitting in a semi-circle on the floor inside Tāne-nui-ā-rangi, the Auckland University marae meeting-house, a place that according to uncle Bubs “gave the right atmosphere for teaching”. The teaching session had opened with a prayer recited by uncle to bless all present and indicate the sacred nature of the teachings we were about to receive. The item we were being instructed in was composed by Te Kooti Arikirangi Te Turuki, the leader, military leader, prophet and religious founder from the Rongowhākāta tribe.*

*Uncle began to recount the story with a quick show of hands of all present to discover if there was anyone with tribal links to Rongowhākāta. Two of the students held their hands up and uncle told them that they probably knew the story of Te Kooti, and how he was arrested ‘on suspicion of being a spy’ while fighting with the government forces at the siege of the Hauhau near Gisborne. Uncle continued to recount how Te Kooti was imprisoned on the Chatham Islands and was visited by the Archangel Gabriel there and given a revelation. He later escaped from the Chathams by seizing a supply ship. Te Kooti was pursued for several years, and fought many battles, always slipping from the government and avoiding capture. He was a prolific composer and the founder of the Ringatū church where several of his waiata are still in use. The item that uncle was teaching us was ‘Kaore Te Pō Nei’, an instruction song where he warned people of the dangers of selling the land.*

*Uncle Bubs had chosen this particular waiata to give the students a sense of history by teaching them a song that was composed in the 1860s but still remembered and taught today. Earlier in the week when we had been driving to university together, we discussed the selection of songs for the course. Uncle told me that he wanted to “reach back a bit”, and that it was very important for him because it grounded the teaching in a historical framework.*

## What is Kapa Haka?

*Kapa haka is a traditional Maori performance art form that is unique to New Zealand. It includes haka (posture dance), poi (dance accompanied by song and rhythmic movements of the poi, a light ball on a string) waiata-ā-ringa (action songs) and waiata koroua (traditional chants). It has undergone a revival and there are kapa haka groups in many schools, tertiary education institutions and workplaces.*

*Notable groups include Waihirere of Tūranganui-a-Kiwa (Poverty Bay), and the multi-tribe Te Waka Huia from Auckland. Kapa haka is promoted and taught by experts such as Ngāpo (Bub) and Nan Wehi, Pita Sharples, Te Hue Rangi and Tihi Puanaki. Since 1972 there has been a regular competition, the Te Matatini National Festival, organised by the Aotearoa Traditional Maori Performing Arts Society (Swarbrick 2006).*

Kapa haka is a traditional Maori performing art that includes several types of performances. The word itself is a compound consisting of two nouns; *kapa*, meaning ‘rank’ or ‘row’, and *haka*, meaning ‘dance’ or ‘song, accompanying a dance’ (Williams 2003). As the name suggests, it is performed by a group of people – the maximum in regional/national competitions being 40 performers equally divided between male/female – organised into ranks of approximately ten, four rows in deep. For the most part of a performance the women make up the two front rows while the men make up the two back rows. Although kapa haka is both dance and accompanying song, the emphasis in all performance is on the song while the rest is considered additions that help convey the message of the lyric (Ngapo Wehi cited in Kāretu 1993: 74).

According to McLean (1996: 34) performance is classed into two main forms: chanted or sung. The former are recited performances of a ceremonial or ritual nature, whereas the latter, while also of a ritual or ceremonial nature, is frequently utilised for recreation, both in times past and present. The songs and chants are invariably performed in the Maori language, and contemporary kapa haka consists of *at least* four main genres of ‘performances’: *mōteatea* (chant), *waiata-ā-ringa* (action song), *haka* (male posture dance)



and *poi* (female dance). For the many competitions that are regularly held around New Zealand and overseas every year, it is common to add two medley-like genres, *whakaeke* (entry) and *whakawātea* (exit). In these competitions it is also customary to include bits of *whaikōrero* (oratory), *karanga* (call/welcome), *karakia* (incantation/prayer), and even *mau rakau* (weaponry). I shall return to more in-depth, stylistic description of kapa haka later.

## **The Importance of Kapa Haka**

*The ability to do haka and to do so with style, grace, elegance and panache, was essential and extremely important in traditional Maori society. It is no less important in contemporary society. Throughout the Maori world, individuals and groups, because of their reputations as performers of haka, enjoy a celebrity and status comparable to that of our forebears (Kāretu 1993).*

In the previous chapter I said that I would examine the transmission and transformation of knowledge in a cultural group of performers of kapa haka. In order to make sense of kapa haka, I have to do so in the context of social relationships manifested within a cultural group. But just what is a ‘cultural group’? In the following I intend to locate kapa haka in its contextual setting in contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand, by reviewing the findings of two government reports on arts and cultural participation among Maori.

In 2000, Creative New Zealand, the government agency responsible for providing funding for the arts sector, published the report *A Survey of Maori Arts Participation* (A Survey of Māori Arts Participation 2000). The report’s findings were that over a period of one year 45 percent of Maori take part in one or more Maori art activities. Maori performing arts were defined as:

*Traditional and contemporary adaptations of waiata, poi, haka and other activities performed by cultural groups or individuals. Maori performing arts may be performed in both formal and informal settings, on marae, at schools, or in other settings such as kapa haka festivals (A Survey of Māori Arts Participation 2000).*

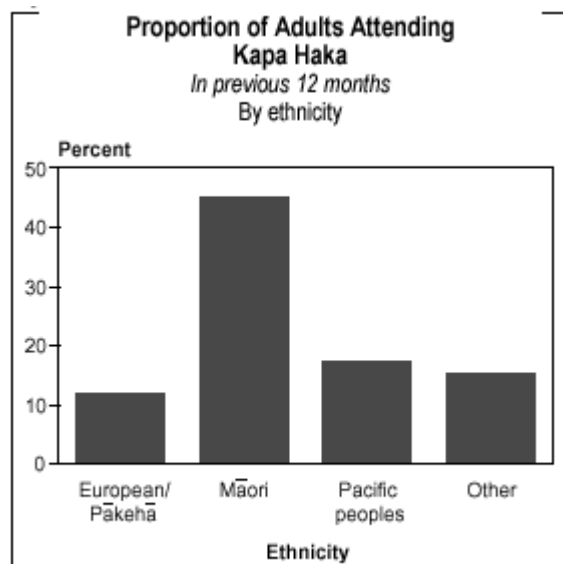


Figure 2 - Proportion Attending Kapa Haka by Ethnicity (Source: Creative New Zealand)

These findings were followed up by another report, prepared jointly by the Ministry for Culture and Heritage/Te Manatū Taonga and Statistics New Zealand/Te Tari Tatau, *A Measure of Culture: Cultural Experiences and Cultural Spending in New Zealand* (A Measure of Culture: Cultural Experiences and Cultural Spending in New Zealand 2003). The same percentage, 45 percent of Maori, had attended a kapa haka event in the past 12 months (see figure x above). Among these the top five Maori arts activities are *waiata*, *karakia*, *te reo*, *kapa haka* and *poi*. These activities are all important parts of kapa haka but can also be considered separate activities not necessarily part of kapa haka. The key reasons Maori gave for participating in Maori arts are enjoyment, and to maintain and pass on skills and traditions (A Measure of Culture: Cultural Experiences and Cultural Spending in New Zealand 2003).

These skills and traditions are viewed by many as key factors to a Maori identity, albeit a contested one, and a way for many contemporary Maori to connect to key facets of Maori life today, defined as:

*the Maori language; the sayings of the ancestors; traditional chant-songs; posture dances; decorative art; the traditional Maori house and marae; the body of marae custom, particularly that pertaining to the tangi and the traditional welcome; the retention of the prestige and nobility of the Maori people (Ngata cited in Ritchie 1963: 67).*

‘Tradition’ is also referred to as *taonga*, a term that has many meanings but most often taken to mean “heirloom”, “prized possession”, or “object of value”. This class of objects of value encompasses material objects like cloaks, woven mats, clubs and carvings, and ephemeral objects like the Maori language or *tikanga*, traditional Maori customs. It is in the sense of ‘tradition’ being a part of *tikanga* that I will describe the development of kapa haka below.

‘Tradition’ is often referred to in this setting, and by its very name “traditional Maori performing arts”, kapa haka evokes a distinct feeling of history and of authenticity that is seen as having a high importance for the well-being, and of the very survival, of the Maori culture (cultural well-being reference).

Two recent novels, and now also major motion pictures, have both highlighted ‘tradition’ as this cultural imperative: Alan Duff’s “Once Were Warriors” (Duff 1995) and Witi Ihimaera’s “The Whale Rider” (Ihimaera 2005). The two books highlight an important notion in contemporary Maori fiction, and I would argue, in Maori discourse, about the opposition of ‘urban’ and ‘rural’ in relation to traditional values. While “Once Were Warriors” focuses on the urban poor and the dynamics of a dysfunctional family, Witi Ihimaera’s “Whale Rider” is set against the backdrop of inter-generational struggle in a rural community. Although approaching their subject matter from two different perspectives, a common thread is that a knowledge of, or an instruction in, ‘tradition’ makes up the turning point in the story. In “Once Were Warriors” the youngest boy in the family is rescued from an increasing spiral of crime by attending a boarding school where Maori tradition is the core curriculum. When he masters the *haka*, he also masters himself. In “The Whale Rider” the main character is struggling for acceptance from her grandfather, who is looking for a new leader to lead the tribe into the future. This struggle plays out as the very survival of the tribe. It is not until Paikea (or Kahu, as she is known in the book) shows herself as the true descendant of the ancestor, also named Paikea, that the grandfather accedes to her claim. Her

demonstration of tradition, and subtle plays for *mana*, prestige, is a recurring theme throughout.

Fictional examples aside, these ideas are also manifested non-fiction: In the article ‘Magic at Mokoia’ in *Mana*, a Maori magazine, young, at-risk teenagers volunteer to attend a retreat on an island to learn traditional weaponry, *mau rakau*, from a renowned master of the art, Mita Mohi. With mastering the weapon also comes an increased mastery of self (Ashton 2000). These retreats focus on giving the teenagers a greater sense of self in a supportive environment. The group of strangers is, by the end of the retreat, integrated as a *whanau* (family) where everyone is supported. David Rodin, a former attendee, states: “You could talk about everything. You really felt this was a whanau, and you could get up and talk about whatever, you wouldn’t be ashamed or belittled or put down. You would be supported” (Rodin 2000: 31-32). In a similar vein, kapa haka is seen as a possible healing remedy for deficits of identity and/or history. There have been instituted programmes for ‘cultural training’ under the auspices of the Department of Corrections in New Zealand’s prisons where Maori offenders are taught ‘culture’ through, among other things, kapa haka (Prison Dept reference). Similarly, the focus is on the group dynamic and the support of the group for the individual through the teaching of tradition. This modern use of kapa haka as a teaching device for ‘culture’ has its roots in kapa haka’s historical place in Maori society as integral to ceremony and ritual (which constitute a part of ‘culture’), in addition to its usage as a means of enculturation for members the same *whanau*, *hapu*, or *iwi*, the three units of corporate descent groups in Maori society.

It would seem that *taonga*, and ‘tradition’ is seen as a tangible, bounded object that is handed down through the generations unchanged, and that the practice of kapa haka is envisioned as somewhere on a continuum between ‘traditional’ and ‘contemporary’, but is that really the case?

In order to investigate the knowledge about, and practice of, this ‘tradition’, as *tikanga* and as *taonga*, it will be necessary to give a brief history of kapa haka in its ‘traditional’ state, i.e. its place in ritual and entertainment, and its development into its ‘contemporary’ use in competition and tourism today and compare the ‘traditional’ and the ‘contemporary’ to see if there really is any difference.

## Previous studies – a Review of Literature

In the 1970 article by Sidney Mead, professor at the University of Auckland, “The Study of Maori Chant”, published in *Te Ao Hou*, Mead reviewed the research undertaken on Maori chant to date and indicated the areas that still required further research. The review was justified by Mead because the study of Maori chant (and music) was gaining popularity at the time. His key point was that although Maori chant could be studied from a number of perspectives; musicology, linguistics, psychology, and anthropology would all yield relevant information to their respective disciplines; it could also be studied in ways combining the aforementioned perspectives. But, he notes, whatever the interest of the investigator the result would always yield information of anthropological interest, because “the activities of composing and performing chants are expressions of cultural behaviour in a specific social, spatial and temporal context” (Mead 1970: 42). In this respect, the detailed studies of Maori chant had barely begun.

The publication of three volumes of *Nga Moteatea* (Ngata and Jones 2004, 2005, 2006) was held by Mead as a milestone in the linguistic study of Maori chant as the range of data material available in these volumes together with other collections, like Sir George Grey’s *Ko Nga Moteatea me nga Hakirara o Nga Maori* (1853) and *Ko Nga Waiata Maori* (1857),<sup>12</sup> provide a total, if not representative, corpus of many hundred songs (Mead 1970: 42). The work of Ngata and Jones on the songs collected in *Nga Moteatea* refers both to the musical and linguistic aspects of Maori chant because of the inclusion of additional, explanatory material associated with each and every song. The translation of the text further enhances the readily available data material for the modern scholar (Mead 1970: 42). Mead mentions the work of Mervyn McLean as important with respect to the musical aspect of Maori chant. Indeed, the large number of articles written by McLean on the analysis of Maori chant (McLean 1964, 1964, 1964, 1965, 1965, 1965, 1965, 1965, 1965, 1966, 1966,

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<sup>12</sup> Sir George Grey (1812 – 1898), governor of New Zealand from 1845 – 1853 and 1860 – 1868, often travelled with a retinue of Maori chiefs, was taught Maori from his principal informant, Te Rangikaheke, and induced chiefs to write down their accounts of Maori legends, traditions and customs (Sinclair, 2006).

1966, 1966, 1968) along with the publication of two books on the topic of Maori music (McLean 1996, 2004) as well as an annotated bibliography and a supplement (McLean 1977, 1981) attests to the fact. The works of McLean and Orbell (McLean and Orbell 2002, 2004) adds to the corpus of readily available material for the analysis of the ethno-musicological aspects of Maori music. The inclusion of Compact Discs issued with all the previously mentioned books by McLean, and McLean and Orbell, adds yet another dimension. These recordings are all taken from the extensive holdings of the Archive of Maori and Pacific Music at Auckland University, initiated by McLean. Catalogues of the holdings are available from the archives (McLean and Curnow 1992; McLean 1995; McLean and Curnow 1998).

On the cultural aspect of Maori chant, Mead singles out Elsdon Best's *Games and Pastimes of the Maori* (Best 1976) and Colenso (Colenso 1880) as exploratory but indicative of some of the sociological and cultural facts that should merit further investigation (Mead 1970: 43). Mead also critiques Johannes Anderson's *Maori Music with its Polynesian Background* (Andersen 2002) as an attempt to place Maori music in a wider Polynesian context that is mainly a collection of excerpts from other sources. The so-called "modern Maori music" is not forgotten, Mead mentions Barrow's *Traditional and Modern Music of the Maori* (Barrow 1965) as a popular book in a neglected field, because of the "mistaken belief that there was nothing culturally significant in modern Maori music" (Mead 1970: 43). Reupena Ngata and Alan Armstrong's *Maori Action Songs* (Ngata and Armstrong 2002) is also listed as a popular book that has an emphasis on the how-to, technical aspects of action song performance. Mead complains about the lack of serious studies "of the significance of action songs and posture dances in present day Maori society" (Mead 1970: 44), and he might as well have included the study of poi in that statement. But, in the years following Mead's review there have been just the studies that he called for; Jennifer Shennan's *The Maori Action Song* (1984), Timoti Kāretu's *Haka! The Dance of a Noble People* (1993) and Ngāmoni Huata's *The Rhythm and Life of Poi* (2000). It is worth mentioning that McLean's *Weavers of Song: Polynesian Music and Dance* (1999) does indeed put Maori chant and song into the wider Polynesian context.

All of these are very good accounts on their own, albeit lacking in certain respects as Mead pointed out, based as they are on different perspectives on Maori music and dance that all

yield information of anthropological interest. What this thesis sets out to do is to draw on the insights from these previously mentioned studies and attempt to draw this together into an analysis of kapa haka as an art form focused on a performing cultural group, which has never been the main topic for a study of Maori music, chant or song. For this purpose, I shall focus on the anthropological (what Mead calls “cultural”) aspect of kapa haka (and not just one specific genre) precisely because “in the final analysis, the activities of composing and performing chants are expressions of cultural behaviour in a specific social, spatial and temporal context” (Mead 1970: 42).

## The Development of Kapa Haka

According to Best, the origin of all *haka* (dance) comes from the sun, Rā, and his two wives, Hine-raumati (Summer Maid) and Hine-takurua (Winter Maid). With the former, Ra had a child, and it is that child's dancing that may be seen during the summer months, when Hine-raumati is said to have the favour of Rā. This is called the Haka-a-Tāne-rore (The Dancing of Tane-rore). It is also said that it was the dancing of the Summer Maid, and is subsequently called the Haka a Raumati (Best 1976: 93). Armstrong also notes that the trembling of the performers' hands in haka performed today bring alive the dance of the son for his celestial mother, Hine-raumati (Armstrong 1986: 120-121).

## The Role of Performance in Ritual

*If one considers the marae, one will appreciate that by its very ethic and philosophy, competition is an integral part of the rituals of welcome (Kāretu 1993).*

According to Mead, any given social situation involving Maori will evoke *tikanga* to govern ways groupings of people interact on a communal level and in interpersonal relationships, and as ways that individuals identify each other. In this aspect *tikanga* is considered a means of social control. This is expressed in the rituals, like the rituals of welcome mentioned by Kāretu above.

*Tikanga Maori* has a range of meanings according to Williams, ranging from ‘rule’, ‘plan’, ‘method’, ‘custom’, or ‘habit’ (Williams 2003: 416-417). A distinction needs to be made between *kawa* and *tikanga*. Sydney Mead stresses that in his book, *tikanga* is the knowledge base and ideas associated with the particular *tikanga*, and *kawa* is the protocols associated with the correct practice of a *tikanga*. However, in Te Arawa<sup>13</sup> this is reversed (Mead 2003: 8). In this thesis I follow Mead’s, and my informants’ position and will use ‘*tikanga*’ when referring to ‘custom’ and ‘*kawa*’ when referring to ‘practice’ of said custom. Therefore, the *kawa* of the *marae* refers to the protocols regarding correct practice of principles laid down by *tikanga*.

*Tikanga*, as practice, is based on *mātauranga*, which Anne Salmond translates as “empirical knowledge”. *Tikanga* governs, based on the knowledgebase of *mātauranga*, and informs ritual through prescribing the proper execution of ritual (Mead 2003).

Kapa haka, or rather its constituent parts, is part of the knowledgebase of *tikanga* and has always held a central role in Maori society, as Dewes states: “The haka, however was not merely a pastime, but it was also a custom of high social importance in the welcoming and entertainment of visitors. Tribal reputations often rose or fell on their ability to perform the haka” (Dewes 1972: 2). So, by extension, performing arts have also always held a central role in Maori society, and the reason being largely two-fold: ritual and entertainment. These two components can be witnessed in all Maori *hui* (ceremonial gatherings) (Mead 2003: 5)

At the start of any Maori *hui*, visitors are welcomed by the *tangata whenua* onto the *marae* grounds according to protocol laid out by the ritual of encounter, *pōwhiri*. To illustrate one such ritual I shall use an example from my own ethnography. The various tribes have different *kawa* (protocols) regarding the performance of the rituals but the following is based on the protocol of the East Coast tribes. These rituals pre-empt the meeting of two, possibly rival, groups (McLean 1996). The rituals can consist of the following: *wero* (traditional challenge), if the visitors are of sufficiently high status; *karanga* (call of welcome), always performed by a woman from the host group followed by a reply from a woman from the

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<sup>13</sup> A tribal area.



visiting group; *haka pōwhiri* (posture dance of welcome), *whaikōrero* (speeches), performed either alternating between groups or one group at a time; *waiata* (songs to finish individual speeches); *hongī* (traditional greeting of pressing noses); *whakawhanaungatanga* (getting to know one another), this is where the hosts and visitors meet and greet with the *hongī* (pressing of noses); *hakinakina* (entertainment); *hakari* (feast); *poroporoaki* (closing ceremony or farewell) (Salmond 1976).

Depending on the reason for calling the *hui* this ritual can carry on for days but it will not be concluded until the closing ceremony has been performed, *poroporoaki*.

At one of the group's many weekend practices we were told that a group of Hawaiian performers were coming to visit us at the *marae* we were staying at. All other agendas were put aside for the moment and everyone was told by Bubs and Nan to prepare for the *pōwhiri*. John, Derek and Hector were chosen to do the *wero* (challenge) and Peter and Kiwa were asked by Bubs to be the speakers. The rest of the group were given a quick run-through of the items we were to perform as the *waiata* (song to finish the speeches) after each speaker. *Toia Mai* was chosen as the *haka pōwhiri* (ceremonial posture dance) and we were going to do it twice as the guests were moving onto the grounds. After a quick rehearsal of the ritual everyone began cleaning up and making the *marae* presentable. Since both teams were present we made an impressive team as we lined up in front of the *wharenuī* (meetinghouse), almost 100 people strong. The tutor of Manu Huia, Vicky, was going to do the *karanga* (call of welcome), and the *kaiwero* (warriors who perform the challenge) stripped down to the waist and went somewhere else to prepare mentally for a few minutes. While the rest of us were waiting for our visitors to get ready on the parking lot, uncle Bubs made a short speech to remind us all of a few important points. "Remember", he said, "the longer the welcome, the higher the mana of the guests!"

As soon as we got the signal from the guests that they were ready, indicated by their gathering in front of the *waharoa* (gateway), the *wero* began. The first *kaiwero* came flying out from behind the ranks and began going through a series of weapon drills, only punctuated by his shouts of defiance. His attention was focused on the guests as they were gathered in front of the gateway. He was soon joined by the other two, who took up flanking positions on his right and left side. The first *kaiwero* and his two compatriots forming a

wedge formation towards the guests indicated clearly that they were ready, should the need arise, to charge into the visiting group. This was an offensive formation, but the ritual challenge had its origins in times where it could not be taken for granted that such visits were intentionally peaceful. After having placed his token of peace, the branch of a fern, on the ground in front of the visitors, the warriors retreated slowly, allowing the visitors to approach to pick up the token.

The guests then began their slow, respectful advance, as our group began the *haka pōwhiri*, which we performed twice while the guests picked up the token of peace and made their way to the seats we had prepared for them. The group was being led by the leader of another kapa haka group, himself an acknowledged performer and tutor.

Then the formal speeches began and we followed the *tikanga* (custom) of having all the speakers on the hosts' side finishing before handing it over to the visitors. The speeches were conducted in *te reo Maori* and in Hawaiian when the leader of the visiting performing group spoke as the last speaker. He translated parts of his speech into English afterwards, and commented on the leading place that Maori have in the international scene and he expressed joy over the fact that so many Maori were taking an interest in their native language, which he felt was in decline in his own country.

After the speeches were concluded we lined up into rows and proceeded to formally meet and greet with the traditional *hongi* (pressing of noses). The visitors then took their seats again and our large group treated our guests with a sneak-preview of some of the repertoire selected for the upcoming competition. Our team's hospitality was then reciprocated by our guests when we had retreated to the *wharekai* (dining room) to eat. The visitors got up and performed a full performance of male *hula* (Hawaiian dance). This formed the closing part of the ceremony, *poroporoaki*, and our guests took their leave of us and left us to continue with our practices.

The ritual is performed in this form today, but there is evidence that it is changing form slightly. The repertoire of available *waiata* (songs) to conclude the individual speeches has dwindled over the years (McLean 1965). The songs should ideally be chosen to affirm one's own group's identity towards the strangers or chosen from a repertoire of songs originating

from the visiting groups to compliment the visitors and re-affirm social relationships between the two groups. This will be explained as part of the stylistic description of kapa haka below. It is common on *marae* today, where the rituals take place, to substitute the *waiata* with an action song (Shennan 1984; McLean 1996).

Entertainment also played a central role in Maori social life, and as in any society still does today. It is part of the obligation of the *tangata whenua* (hosts) to *manāki* (show hospitality) towards the *manuhuri* (guests) (Barlow 1991: 63). It also plays a part in sustaining inter-group identity and reaffirming inter-group links. Singing and performing as entertainment is equally important and on many social occasions people will sing *waiata* and sometimes even perform a *haka* at a party.

In the closing part of a *hui*, in the *poroporoaki*, there is also an entertainment aspect where performances are given as a parting gift to the visitors or hosts. This aspect of ‘gifting’ a song at the closing of ceremonies will be the topic of discussion in chapter six, but first I shall briefly introduce some historical events that have played a part in making kapa haka a part of official welcomes to Aotearoa New Zealand.

## **Tourism**

Tourism has played a major role in the adaptation of kapa haka to a tourist audience. McLean mentions Rotorua as an early tourist centre that drew people as early as the 1860s, and consequently a fledgling tourism-industry began to grow. Guide Rangi of Rotorua is singled out by both McLean and Shennan as being a driving force behind adaptations of songs for the tourists interested in the “savage dances” of the natives (Shennan 1984; McLean 1996).

A handful of tourists have played a key role in arranging for Maori performing arts to be recognised as important in greeting visitors. These tourists of high status but tourists nonetheless, the Royal family of the United Kingdom were instrumental in their insistence that they would be greeted according to Maori custom on their arrival in 1901. The reception was such a success that it was repeated ever since. The Prince of Wales’ reception in 1920 made one historian lament that Maori use of orchestration had become increasingly elaborate. Where they had brought accordions and mouth organs previously, one tribe

brought a full-sized piano to the field (Scholefield cited in Shennan 1984: 27). In 1934 Lord and Lady Bledisloe were treated with specially composed *haka* and action songs in thanks for the gift of the Waitangi estate (Shennan 1984: 27). Queen Elisabeth II's first visit to New Zealand in 1952 was celebrated in Rotorua. On the Queen's third visit in 1977 she was treated to a display of a recreation of Cook's landing, a full *pōwhiri* ceremony and was entertained by several groups.

## Concert Parties

The concert parties began to appear in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. As to who actually introduced the modern form of a concert party of kapa haka is a matter under debate but evidence points to three places of origin; Ngati Porou, Waikato and Taranaki. The people associated with these regions, and thus credited with much of their popularity are princess Te Puea Herangi<sup>14</sup> of Waikato, Sir Apirana Ngata<sup>15</sup> of Ngati Porou, and the prophets Tohu<sup>16</sup> and Te Whiti-o-Rongomai<sup>17</sup> of Taranaki. The concert parties would tour, sometimes with a band, for the express purpose of performing for an audience. This was used for political purposes by Princess Te Puea and Apirana Ngata. Te Puea used her concert party to gather supporters to

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<sup>14</sup> Herangi, Te Kirihaehae Te Puea (1883 – 1952), Waikato woman of mana. She was to play a crucial role alongside three successive kings in re-establishing the Kingitanga (King movement) as a central force among the Tainui people, and in achieving national recognition of its importance (Parsonson, 2006).

<sup>15</sup> Sir Ngata, Apirana Turupa (1874 – 1950), Ngati Porou leader, land reformer, politician, scholar. Apirana Ngata made a vital contribution to the revival of the Maori race in the early twentieth century. He used his knowledge of the Pakeha world and his professional skills to assist his people to develop and farm their land while also encouraging them to preserve their culture and maintain their own identity. His intelligence, tact, persistence and political skill brought him considerable success in this mission (Sorrenson, 2006 #399).

<sup>16</sup> Tohu Kakahi (1828 – 1907), Te Ati Awa and Taranaki prophet responsible along with Te Whiti-o-Rongomai III for making the village of Parihaka in Taranaki a symbol of pacifist protest against government land acquisitions (Smith, 2006 #401).

<sup>17</sup> Te Whiti-o-Rongomai III, Erueti (? – 1907), Taranaki leader, prophet (Keenan, 2006 #400).

the Kingitanga movement, a political confederacy of allied tribes, while Ngata's initiatives of programmes of cultural recovery, the establishing of a Maori arts and crafts centre in Rotorua and the collection of *waiata* from many tribal areas into *Nga Mōteatea* being just two examples. The concerts parties were also used for fund-raising purposes and to cater for a very eager and growing audience of tourists, some of the tourists being dignitaries visiting New Zealand, as mentioned above.

At approximately the same time, in 1905, the All Blacks originals went on tour for the first time. The national rugby team performed a haka before one of their matches that was such a success with the audience that they began to include this at every major fixture (Clements 1998).

## **The Issue of Language**

As Maori performing arts became integral to official welcomes, tourism was on the rise, but with the increased Maori migration to the urban areas of the country the Maori language was seen as being in a decline. The teaching of the Maori language had been specifically excluded from the Maori Primary Schools in the mid 1930s (Benton 1984). The policy of not speaking Maori in the schools, requested by Maori parents and school boards in the 1860s had done so much damage to the transmission of language that it was in danger of dying out, as the old people who could speak the language was not replaced by younger generations (King 2003: 477). The Maori language was an issue of concern for many leading Maori intellectuals in the 1950s and 1960s, a time when the language was seen to be in a steep decline. However, these concerns were transformed into a new wave of Maori activism (Walker 1984).

What was to be a problem for the performing arts, though, was that the lack of proficient speakers of the language would have a devastating impact on the ability of the people to sing the songs properly, as they were composed and intended. Without a proper command of the language the performances would be empty and dead. Kāretu, one of the leading proponents of the starting of a national festival, states:

*The language will continue to be the difficult issue for most of the young performers but for haka to be meaningful and to survive the young performer must know what is being said and how to imbue that interpretation with passion and panache. To not do so, is to do haka and our ancestors an injustice (Kāretu 1993: 13).*

Steps began to be taken to ensure the survival of the language; the inception of the immersion kindergarten, *kohanga reo*, in the major urban centres began a revitalisation of the language that was followed up with other initiatives. The successes of the kindergartens lead to the establishment of primary schools, *kura kaupapa*, based on the same principles. Today, as few as 25 percent of the Maori population of New Zealand are able to converse on everyday topics in *te reo Maori*, according to statistics (Statistics NZ), but the number of native speakers, people who speak *te reo* fluently as their first language, is on the rise. Many hail this as the success of the Kohanga Reo movement and the recognition of the language as a *taonga*.

This was ratified as an official act of Parliament in the Maori Language Act (Māori Language Act 1987) and amended in the Maori Language Amendment Act, that declared the Maori language to be an official language of New Zealand (Māori Language Amendment Act 1991). These two Acts have both had an effect on the speaking population in terms of conversational abilities, but have also had an effect on the practice of *tikanga* in ritual contexts as Maori is the language of the rituals at *huihuinga* (ceremonial gatherings).

The Kohanga Reo movement along with the period called the ‘Maori Renaissance’, the 1970s and 1980s, is partly responsible for this shift towards greater ability to perform in ritual contexts. As kapa haka plays an integral part in the ceremonial life of *huihuinga*, and protocol demands that the language of choice is *te reo*, it follows that as a medium for maintaining language ability and retaining customs, kapa haka is the culmination of these two converging ideals.

## Kapa Haka and Competition

*Competitions have changed. They're more contemporary now. We've always been very traditional. We can change, but we always go back again. We've been holding back for so long. Our children have been pushing and saying 'Can we do this?', but we've always said no. But what he's come to realise is that it's all going to change when he's gone anyway (Pimia 'Nan' Wehi, Pounamu, 10/11-2003).*

Kapa haka competition is governed by the standards set by the incorporated society, *Te Matatini Society Incorporated*. The name, “*Te Matatini*”, means ‘many faces’ and was gifted to the society by Professor Wharehuia Milroy, of the University of Waikato. He explains the significance of the name like this: “Maori performing arts brings together people of all ages, all backgrounds, all beliefs, Maori and non-Maori alike, participants and observers. When I look at those performing I see many faces, young and old – *Te Matatini*” (Milroy cited in *About Us* 2005).

Although the work began in the 1950s to organise a festival of traditional Maori performing arts, it wasn't until the organising committee was given a grant through the Maori Purposes Fund Board in 1964 that the plans began to bear fruit. It took several years but 1972 saw the inaugural year of *The New Zealand Polynesian Festival* (Kāretu 1993). The festival was organised alongside other, Polynesian performing arts because there was scepticism about a festival purely for Maori performing arts. The festival was organised by the Polynesian Festival Committee whose express purpose with the festival was initially to “raise the level of performance for tourist consumption” (Kāretu 1993), but coinciding with the revitalisation policy of the language of the 1970s the festival also came to hold a great importance in keeping the Maori language ‘alive’. The festival changed its name to Aotearoa Traditional Maori Performing Arts Festival in 1996, when the Aotearoa Traditional Maori Performing Arts Society (ATMPAS) was registered as an incorporated society (*About Us* 2005). In 2003 the incorporated society and the festival changed its name yet again to *Te Matatini Incorporated Society* and *Te Matatini Festival* respectively, after having been gifted the name “*Te Matatini*” by Professor Wharehuia Milroy. The society's mission statement is “to

foster, develop, and protect the traditional Maori performing arts in the pursuit of excellence” (*About Us* 2005).

The standards of kapa haka are regulated by Te Matatini Society. The rules laid down by the governing committee are held as a baseline standard of performance. The society is made up of national delegates from all of the 14 different *rohe* (regions) that make up the membership of the society. Every kapa haka *rōpū* (group) in the fourteen regions appoint representatives to the regional committees which again send a delegate to the national body. The national body, *Te Matatini*, is responsible for organising and producing the bi-annual national competition, Te Matatini National Festival (*About Us* 2005). This is a major event in the social calendar of most kapa haka groups and for most Maori in Aotearoa New Zealand.

There are five different genres of performance in a competition. These are: *Mōteatea* (“chanted song”), *Poi* (female ball-twirling song), *Haka* (male posture dance), *Waiata-a-ringa* (“action song”), and *Waiata tira* (“group song”) or *Himene* (“hymn”). In addition to these genres there are two medley-type genres used in competitions for performing group entering and exiting the stage, *Whakaeke* (“entry”) and *Whakawatea* (“exit”). There are different technical criteria to each of the different genres and I shall return to them individually below. The performers are usually arranged in rows of one to four deep. The women are in the front while the men are in the rear. Ideally, one would arrange performers into four rows; two rows of women and two rows of men. The maximum number of performers in competitions is set to 40, with an ideal balance of the male/female ratio as 50 – 50.

For competing teams that have trouble filling out the ranks it is usually not a problem unless the entire group is made up of a single sex. Single-sex groups are still allowed to compete, but certain parts of the repertoire would be difficult to perform, as there are distinct dances that are seen as the domain of either the ‘male’ or the ‘female’. For example, haka is seen as a male dance whereas poi is seen as a female dance. In the few instances where groups have performed a full repertoire in spite of being a single-sex group, as was the case when Auckland Girls’ Grammar School performed at the ASB Bank Maori and Pacific Island Festival with the team divided in two, represented by the school’s two colours; yellow and blue, and throughout the programme alternated between male and female roles there were



protests about the appropriateness of the performance and the school was deducted points from the total for the lack of a male portion that could perform the haka as was deemed appropriate by the judges.

Ideally, for competitions, the team should be uniform in appearance, and this is awarded points in a non-aggregate section, which does not qualify towards the overall standing but is awarded trophies and as such is recognised as a key element. For tourist performances the uniform can be the same as in the competitions, but as often as not is geared more towards the ‘authentic’ native costume. It is common to see more and more theatrically inclined costume in the tourist performances as this is what the tourists want to see, even though research into the costume has shown that it is has always been an evolving (Cory-Pearce 2005). For women the costume consists of a *piupiu* (a skirt made of flax) over a long, black skirt with a *pari* (bodice) with straps and an optional *tipare* (headband). Over all of this the women wear a *korowai* (a type of cloak with tassle-like adornments). The men will wear a shorter *piupiu* (made of flax, resembling a kilt), and a *tātua* (waistbelt or bandoleer).



Figure 3 – Te Waka Huia in full dress at Te Matatini 2005.

The role of competition on the style of kapa haka is fundamentally tied to two things. Namely, the competitions provide regional and national arenas for kapa haka that ultimately allow groups to take their performances overseas, to an international arena. This creation of arenas for performances stimulates the existence of kapa haka, and certainly does stimulate the composition of new 'items' for competitions. This also provides the wider audience with an arena where they can engage with kapa haka as spectators without performing themselves. This allows 45 percent of Maori to experience at least one kapa haka event annually, and it is directly contributing to a raised level of awareness in the general New Zealand public, as the appropriation of kapa haka at state level clearly indicates.

Secondly, the competitions themselves are conducted *as if* they were rituals themselves. This is an adaptation of the early tourist performances that have become an integral part of official welcomes. The same formulae has been transformed into competitions as a vehicle for agency – in this case keeping the language alive and insisting on the continuance of Maori ritual protocol.

## The 'Style' of Kapa Haka

For the purposes of an analysis of kapa haka as art in the following chapters it is necessary to define the concept of 'style' in kapa haka. The concept of a distinct 'style' in the anthropology of art is problematic, to say the least. Gell begins by arguing for the application of a concept of 'style' (in visual art) as distinguishable from concepts of style applicable in Western art history as the 'units' of given style is not "(usually) individual artists, or schools of artists, or movements, but 'cultures' or 'societies'" (Gell 1998). This concept of 'style' is different from an aesthetic concept of 'style' that only distinguishes between 'general' (collective) style and 'individual' style (cf. Wollheim 1987). This distinction, as provided by Wollheim, can only account for the taxonomic attributes of a general (collective) style, whereas the individual style is 'generative' with respect to the capacity to attract the spectator's notice by ways of its aesthetically significant aspects that are psychologically salient (Gell 1998: 158). It is therefore of little use to an anthropological theory of art as Gell states:

*Not only is the kind of art I am about to discuss defined with reference to collectivities and their histories, not individuals, but it is also ‘traditional’ in the sense that innovation was constrained within strict parameters of stylistic coherence. This is not to say that in these art-producing traditions innovation did not occur; it did so, continuously. But it was not associated with artistic identity, only with virtuosity (Gell 1998).*

This approach to ‘style’ not only enables a formal, stylistic analysis of a ‘larger unity’, more specifically how each particular item in the corpus is connected to the corpus as a whole, as Gell masterfully does with Marquesan art (Gell, 1998 #247), but it also allows for a description of changes (innovation) in the ‘style’ without making value judgements to the style’s authenticity as innovation is equated with virtuosity rather than inauthenticity {cf. Linnekin 1991; Jolly 1992).

## **The Production and Circulation of Kapa Haka**

Kapa haka is taught today in schools, training colleges, universities, churches and culture clubs, by Maori – for Maori, although not exclusively so. It is taught throughout New Zealand, and overseas in places wherever there are sizeable Maori communities, e.g. in Australia and Hawai’i. Traditionally kapa haka was taught either informally and one would learn by observing others, or more formally through special instructions in schools or ‘houses’ of learning, *whare wānanga* (McLean 1996). Today the term is applied to any gathering, tribal or otherwise, where subjects of Maoritanga, or Maori-ness, are taught. John Rangihau (1992), explains the benefits of the modern *whare wānanga* as two-fold. First of all, it is a place where the young people could be instructed in their *kawa* (practice of *tikanga*), their customs, and their traditions; secondly, it would allow them to stand up tall in the new society [in the cities]<sup>18</sup> because there was no question of who they were and where they had come from.

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<sup>18</sup> Māori experienced almost a 75% increase in urbanisation following the second World War (King 2003).

The Primary and Secondary schools all offer courses in Maori topics and most schools today have at least one kapa haka group at the school, and in the second semester of 2000, Auckland University began offering courses in kapa haka – and the first ever offered at university level was *Kapa Haka 292: Kaupapa Hou: Special Topic (Kapa Haka)* at the Maori Studies Department. This was picked up on and now all of the universities in New Zealand offer courses in kapa haka. This introduction of kapa haka into tertiary education in New Zealand marked a turning point in education with the recognition of traditional Maori performing arts on the same level as other, possibly more ‘Western’, performing arts.

However, kapa haka is not only taught in the educational system of New Zealand. Outside the educational system we find the culture clubs, run by tutors

*[...] in churches, schools, training colleges, and universities. These culture clubs concentrate on the performing arts, action songs, haka and poi; but they are beginning to teach karanga (calls), waiata (song), chants, and rudiments of oratory to their members. The wero or challenge is usually taught through these clubs (Salmond 1976: 125-126).*

It is in these culture clubs that we find the driving force behind kapa haka as a tradition today. The focus of my study has been in one of these “culture clubs”. The terms ‘club’ and ‘group’ are used interchangeably and more or less refer to a named group that is either tribally oriented, or pan-tribal, like the club I spent time with, which I will introduce more properly later. There are many reasons for starting such a club: some clubs exist to please an increasing tourism trade, while others exist to cater the need for a cultural base and cultural identity.

Almost all of these groups participate and compete in the bi-annual festival Te Matatini National Festival. In 2005 this festival brought 35,000 spectators to see more than 1200 performers on stage over the course of four days (*Te Matatini - the many faces of Māori culture, tradition and performing arts* 2007). The festival has been in existence, under various names, since 1972. It has become a major fixture in the arts calendar of New Zealand and regularly attracts international attention as well as large coverage by local media. I shall

give a brief historical outline of kapa haka competitions and their role in shaping contemporary kapa haka in the following chapter.

## Sources of Composition

Alan P. Merriam (1964: 77) distinguishes three major sources for music composition: supernatural or superhuman, individual composition, and by means of borrowing. McLean adds that all three are recognised by Maori, but the emphasis is placed on individual composition (1996: 211). The detailed reference to authorship in for example *Nga Moteatea* lends weight to the argument that composition by individuals was the norm for most Maori songs (McLean 1996), but although individual composition is credited it doesn't necessarily mean that it was the work of one person. According to Awatere, most songs were composed as a group effort, even though a particular person is credited with the song (in McLean 1996: 214). This is very much the case today, although several of the songs in use by Waka Huia were credited to the Wehi *whanau* (family), clearly recognising the collaborative efforts of the whole family.

Another source of composition is borrowing or adaptation. McLean claims this is an overlapping category as the individual who adapts a song would claim authorship of the reworked composition (McLean 1996: 214). To my knowledge this is less frequent today, and I would argue it is limited to another form of adaptation of borrowing of tunes or music rather than adaptations of songs. I only experienced one instance of this kind of adaptation during my fieldwork. When uncle Bubs was teaching the first stage of kapa haka at Auckland University, he chose *Papakinui*, a composition by Wiremu Kerekere originally intended as a number for small children, and changed the reference in the song to the performers as small children (*tamariki*) and changed it to "students of stage one" (*tauiratuatahi e*) so as not to embarrass the students when they performed later. However, it is unknown if this adapted version will live on as an adaptation.

The adaptation of tune or melodies is more prolific today, partly because of the decision of the governing body of the national festival (Aotearoa Traditional Performing Arts Festival) that new compositions should be awarded with 10 extra points, to stimulate groups to compose new songs (changes to the rules 2003). Uncle Bubs put it this way: "I can't afford

to let the other teams have the extra ten points, so I have to come up with new compositions every festival. It is sad because I think we're losing a lot of the old tunes because we don't perform them anymore". I will return to this point in a later chapter.

The adaptation of popular melodies is particularly frequent in the *whakaeke* and *whakawatea*. Hector Kawai states that this type of adaptation was the source of inspiration for both his M.A. thesis and its title: *Pūkana rawatia: Mickey Mouse does the haka!* (Kawai 2003). His observation of Te Waka Huia's *whakaeke* (entrance) in the 1996 national kapa haka festival that featured the theme from the Disney animated film *The Lion King*, *The Circle of Life* composed by Elton John. The *whakaeke*, titled *Kua tae mai rā* (We have arrived), depicts the genealogy of the kapa haka festivals from 1972 to 1996. Kawai cautions that "there is a propensity to treat such innovations as "Mickey Mouse" renderings of Maori culture, a view that turns Maori society into a cultural artefact, and dichotomises it into the 'traditional' and 'contemporary'" (2003: 1).

## Learning and Instruction

*"Repetition is the mother of what? Repetition is the mother of skill!" – Uncle Bubs, wananga session.*

When asked where they first learned traditional art forms, many people would answer "an older relative", and particularly grandmothers figure high in the statistics of both studies of Maori arts participation (A Survey of Māori Arts Participation 2000; A Measure of Culture: Cultural Experiences and Cultural Spending in New Zealand 2003). McLean's findings are similar; grandparents were traditionally tasked with the teaching of *waiata* (McLean 1996).

The learning and instruction of traditional seems to be either through formal instruction in groups or informally by listening and imitating others. Both methods of teaching are employed today (McLean 1996).

Formal instruction takes place by first teaching the name of the composer, his or hers tribal affiliations, and the circumstances of the composition, situating the item in its social, spatial and temporal context. Then the teaching of the lyrics begins in the form of repeating passages until they are internalised. McLean mentions that teachers would alternate between

themselves, teaching particular passages that they were experts on (McLean 1996), possibly indicating how this could function as a mnemonic device. However, in contemporary practice the passages are divided up into lines of five or ten and repeated until they are memorised. The words are written down, and we would frequently have discussions about the wording of certain phrases and inconsistencies, referred to as different versions of the same. The explanation of the item is an important aspect of formal instruction, as the performers need to understand the “message” of the lyric (Armstrong 1964, 1986; Awatere 1975; McLean 1996; McLean and Orbell 2004).

Informal instruction was infrequent and would happen when the old people would sing old chants and songs while the children slept nearby (McLean 1996). This is not to say that it was unintentional. McLean cites Ngoi Pewhairangi who states that the older members of the tribe would recognise certain traits in the young and put them in an environment that was conducive to their learning (Ngoi Pewhairangi cited in McLean 1996: 221). Similarly, the children of performers who are brought along to practices are often competent in a very high number of complex songs at a very early age.

For Te Waka Huia, the method of instruction was by repetition, as uncle Bubs makes clear in the quote above. A new item would be introduced by title and the lyrics written up on a white-board, which members copied down into their notebooks if no printed copies were supplied to the group. We would then go over the meaning of the item to ensure that everyone was clear what the theme and mood of the item was. The instruction of the lyrics would follow next. The tutors would demonstrate the melody, if the item was a sung form (*waiata-a-ringā*, *waiata*, *poi*, *choral*, *whakaeke* or *whakawatea*), or the metre if the item was a chanted form (*haka* or *mōteatea*). The leader’s solo parts were indicated and noted on the board, but all would learn these parts regardless as anyone might be prompted to lead the item. We would then go over 5-10 lines of text and repeat them for a period of time, about 30 minutes. The following day we would then add 5-10 lines, cumulative each day until we had the whole item internalised and memorised. The tutors would sometimes “prompt” the next line of text by reciting it quickly before we had finished the previous line, what McLean refers to as “drag”. To test our memory the tutors would sometimes shift the lines around by pointing at different passages of text, indicating where to next.

## Movements and Choreography

I was told that the arms should ideally never go up so high as to expose the women's armpits, as in previous times, before razors and ideals of femininity required shaving; they resembled another part of the woman's anatomy and was considered improper in a performance. Likewise, the use of the left hand as the "lead" hand in movements was to be restricted to a minimum. This was explained with the left hand's use in previous times, before the advent of toilet tissue paper.

The fundamental movements in all posture dances are similar. The stance is "an erect and well-held posture" (Shennan 1984: 61) that is often accompanied by a quivering of the hand, *wiri*, that is said to show *ihi* (feeling) that symbolises the mythological origin of all dance. The movements of the upper body into backwards, forwards or sideways tilts are always performed with straight spines. The weight is evenly distributed between the feet but a shift from the right to the left is performed quickly, when performers lift the right leg and stomp on the beat of the tune, sometimes lifting it behind the left as high as the knee. For a skilled performer this movement is imperceptible in the rest of the body while the novices often bounce up and down with the shifting of weight. The stance should be about shoulder's width, slightly wider for the men, with a slight bend at the knees.

The hands, *ringa*, is reputed to have come from the five or six stylised arm gestures which are part of the ritual *pattered* performances, accompanied by turning heads. The arms extend from the body; either both to the side, one forward and one back, at various heights or arms bent across the body, above the head or at chest level.

The striking of various body parts is used in *haka* for percussive effect and displays of aggressive masculinity, while the same motion employed by women in a *waiata-a-ringa* becomes a gentle tap. The form of the movement are dictated by the genre of performance, as with the example above, and men's actions in action songs are less marked than in a *haka*. All actions are used in a "symbolic context from an association of ideas" rather than a portrayal of narrative, so rather than to tell a story of the paddling of a canoe the same canoe-paddling action would indicate unity in effort (Shennan 1984: 63-65).



Several actions emphasise the presence of the audience, both by men and women. The women will sometimes address the audience with a flick of the head and a wink or by directing a *pūkana* at someone, especially during *poi* and *waiata-a-ringa*. The men can do the same movement, but more often than not the emphasis is placed on the masculine performance of the *haka*.

Uniformity in performance is a criterion for judges in competitions. In all performances other than *mōteatea* is uniformity valued highly. The uniformity ideal is a direct result of the implementation of competitions. As the various *iwi* have different *tikanga* and *kawa* to govern performances, and no judges from a different tribal area would presume to judge another tribal area's *tikanga*, the compromise was made on uniformity in most performances. In some genres, like *waiata-a-ringa* this was always an ideal but others, like *haka* didn't have such uniformity ideals with regards to movement and it was left to the individual performers to express themselves appropriately.

*Pūkana* is still held to be an individual choice for appropriate expression that should not be uniform or automatic, as uncle Bubs explained: "This is not an action-song, don't let the movement be automatic. There are only five types of *pūkana*!" The action takes the form of a dilation of the eyes and poking the tongue out with accompanied by a gesture of the arms.

The choreography of the whole group ranges from restricted to a line-up of four rows in *mōteatea* (chant songs) to the spectacular choreography of *whakaeke* (entry) and *whakawatea* (exit) where the groups pull out all the stops. In the middle range we find the choreography of *poi* and *waiata-ā-ringa* that is relatively free and the performers utilise the whole stage for their performance. However, all choreography has one theme in common: the complementarity of male and female. Without exception all items are performed in two halves, a male half and a female half. Other elaborations expand upon this with further divisions of halves, for example the two rows of men split up into to sections on separate sides of the stage or the two rows of women melt into on long row, combinations thereof and further divisions, etc.

## Primary Genres of Performances in Competitions

There are, as I mentioned in the opening of chapter 1, two categories of performance that have stylistic coherent similarities. Within these two categories are several different genres of song and chant, often classified according to usage or reason for performing. Of these only a handful are known by many, and most of these are performed in competitions today. In the following I have focused on presenting the genres of performance in competitions. For a thorough examination of the full range of Maori music, consult (McLean 1996).

### Waiata-a-tira (choral)

This is purely a singing performance. Typical songs chosen are hymns or choral items. The official rules give the definition as: “group dynamic singing” (*What is Kapa Haka?* 2007). The group walks onto the stage, lead by one of the leaders of the group who take up a position as a director in front of the group facing away from the audience. The group is positioned in the centre of the stage, facing the audience and is organised like a regular choir with part-singer in groups depending on their vocal range. The men make up the two rear rows and the women take up the two front rows. Some groups elect to wear cloaks (*kakahu*) during this performance that is left off-stage for the rest of the bracket.

### Whakaeke (entry)

Ideally, the entry is where the *mana* (power, authority, prestige) of the group is established, according to uncle Bubs. This is a choreographed entrance onto the performance area utilising all elements of kapa haka. It should capture the audience from the very start. The team can start either centre-, left- or right-stage and must end up either centre-, left- or right-stage. The choreography breaks with the mould of the other items, where men and women occupy two ranks each that are usually arranged with either group in the front while the other is in the rear. The music is often chosen from popular tunes and with new lyrics composed for the occasion. The themes of entries are pompous and are very visual displays of choreography that celebrate the lyrics in the most spectacular ways, for example if the lyrics are about the discovery of New Zealand Aotearoa the group would form a *waka* (canoe) and might even smuggle a large mast onto stage, hidden from the audience until the right moment when it is hoisted. There was a tendency during the regional competitions that I

attended during 2003-2004 towards a greater usage of props and visual imagery than I had seen before in 2000-2001, which suggests that the standards of this, and possibly the exit is evolving.

## **Mōteatea (chant)**

These are chanted songs without movement and the English gloss “laments” covers the themes presented nicely. *Waiata*, chant songs, are referred to in the rules as *mōteatea* to emphasise these chants ‘traditional’ form. Its form is described as lengthy and flowing, with little tonal variation (Armstrong 1964; McLean 1996). It can be divided into a number of types, depending on the take (cause), or reason for composition. According to Armstrong, the main classes are:

*lullabies (popo, oriori), laments (waiata tangi), abusive songs (patere), songs of defiance (kaioraora), love songs (waiata whaiaipo), ditties (ruri), prophetic songs (mata), chants (ngeri), songs sung on ceremonial occasions (tau), songs of victory (pioi and pihe), boat songs (hautu waka), work songs (tewha), tattooing songs (whakawai), and ritualistic chants (karakia)*  
(Armstrong 1964).

However, the chants performed in competitions today are typically *pātere* (McLean 1996). For the purpose of this performance, the group would close ranks into a tighter group of two rows of women at the front with two rows men to the rear.

## **Waiata-ā-ringā (action song)**

The action songs are dances and songs that involved stylised ‘actions’ to convey meanings in the text rather than narrate specific activities or a drama. They are melodious, with Western style tunes but are always sung in *te reo Māori*.

The action song is almost always mentioned as a relatively new ‘invention’, and it has, in comparison with the *waiata* and the *haka*, just recently, around the 40s and 50s, come into favour and general acceptance. McLean notes that it is difficult to pinpoint the exact dates of the advent of action-songs as the term was used in a very broad sense and the first recorded instance of action-songs as the term is applied today is probably the concert programme for a

performance by Ngati Poneke Club of Wellington in 1936 (McLean 1996). Shennan mentions that the programme for the International Exhibition, held in Christchurch in 1906-7, records some “Maori action songs” performed, possibly influenced by Rarotongan dances (Shennan 1984). The first action songs were probably composed early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as Armstrong refers to the first printed record of action songs in the programme of the annual conference of the Young Maori Party in 1908 (Armstrong 1986). The composers “took popular European tunes, composed words in Maori and added actions, each with its own appropriate meaning” (Salmond 1976: 112). This practice continued until recently when worries about copyrights issues made the composition of new tunes compulsory in competitions (Rules of the Society 2003).

The action song’s popularity is credited to two individuals: Princess Te Puea Herangi (1883-1952), who organised the first touring concert party which featured action songs (Armstrong 1964; Shennan 1984; McLean 1996; King 2003), and Sir Apirana Ngata (1874-1950), who established the action song by setting, and adhering strictly to, the standards by which it is known today (Shennan 1984; Kāretu 1993: 24; McLean 1996; King 2003).

### **Poi (female dance with balls on lengths of cord)**

This is a female dance, which is performed with the women twirling small balls attached to a length of cord in their hands. The poi-balls are used as percussive instruments and as visual displays. The length of a *poi* is approximately 40cm, or the about length of one’s forearm. The poi is the women’s part of the kapa haka repertoire and emphasis is on delicate, feminine movement; swaying hips, the feet movements are closer together, the reach of which is limited to stretching out a foot or a hand. The ideal is “exhibiting the full ethos of grace, beauty, timing, precision and allure” (*What is Kapa Haka?* 2007). The Taranaki prophets Tohu and Te Whiti O Rongomai are credited with many *poi* compositions and the popularity of poi today is credited to the Taranaki region (McLean 1996).

### **Haka (male posture dance)**

Haka is usually taken to mean “the part of the Maori dance repertoire where the men are to the fore with the women lending vocal support in the rear” (Kāretu 1993). Although often erroneously translated as ‘war dance’ it is more correct to term it as a dance of ceremonial

nature, as most haka seen today are *haka taparahi*, haka without weapons (Awatere 1975), a few notable exceptions aside (e.g. the Royal Visit of 1953). True ‘war dances’, on the other hand, are called *peruperu* and are only performed on a battlefield, with weapons (Awatere 1975: 514). Awatere explains the purpose of it like this:

*Hard conditioning makes the warriors physically and mentally fit to perform this dance which has the psychological purpose of demoralising the enemy by gestures, by posture, by controlled chanting, by conditioning to look ugly, furious to roll the fiery eye, to glare the light of battle therein, to spew the defiant tongue, to control, to distort, to snort, to fart the thunder of the war-god upon the enemy, to stamp furiously, to yell raucous, hideous, blood-curdling sounds, to carry the anger, the peru, of Tuumatauenga, the ugly-faced war-god, throughout the heat of battle (Kāretu 1993: 25).*

Aside from the war-dance and the ceremonial haka there are other types of haka, most of which are performed infrequently today. Awatere, being the authority other writers have deferred to previously, lists the following types according to function; *haka taparahi*, a ceremonial dance always performed without weapons; *tuutuungaarahu* (also known in other tribal areas as *ngaarahu*, *whakatuu-waewae* and *whakarewarewa*), a divinatory dance performed by the war-party, with weapons to ascertain the elders that the party is ready to go into battle; *Ngeri*, a dance to exhort the group to achieve their objective;<sup>19</sup> *peruperu*, the war-dance performed with weapons face to face with the enemy; *puha*, a kind of *peruperu* used to alarm and call kinsmen to arms not on the battlefield but in the *pa*’s and homes. A final type is the *Pookeka*, a recited song expressive of extreme sorrow; this is noteworthy for it is lead by a woman, usually a *kuiā*, older woman.<sup>20</sup> Even though these are all different types of haka they are known by their specific names, for instance the *peruperu* is known as

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<sup>19</sup> The haka performed by the New Zealand All Blacks, ‘Ka mate, ka mate’ is of this type.

<sup>20</sup> An informant mentioned having seen a *pōkeka* performed last in the 1980s and it was started as a response to an extreme insult whereby an old woman made her way forward, chanting and stripping off her clothes as she advanced toward the offending party – the incident ending in a furious brawl with weapons.

‘peruperu’ rather than as ‘haka peruperu’. *Haka taparahi*, ceremonial haka, is always performed without weapons, although some groups have incorporated weapons into the beginning (Kāretu 1993). *Haka taparahi*, traditionally, began and ended with the performers upright (Dewes 1972).

Since the men are to the rear in the other kapa haka performances a short haka to bring the men to the front is performed. The women will then step aside and make space for the men to pass between the ranks of women while they are performing a short haka. If the haka is supposed to start from a kneeling position, this short haka will usually end with the men kneeling down, indicating readiness and the start of the haka proper. The performers are spaced out evenly along one or more ranks. If there are more than one rank of performers the second one is placed in the gaps between the performers in the row in front of them. This is repeated for the following ranks, creating a serried effect, and thus maximising the visual exposure of the performers rather than hiding the second and consecutive ranks behind the first. There is one designated leader, called *kaea*. This person, and for *haka taparahi* it is always a man, is responsible for keeping time and measuring the beat, making sure that the metre stays for the duration of the performance. The leader exhorts the performers and lends vocal support where it is needed, and for this task he is usually pacing up and down between the ranks and by giving vocal cues, like extra emphasis on a particular passage, directs the performance much like a conductor of an orchestra would. The leader has solo parts in a haka and the rest of the performers, both male and female, follow the leader’s part with actions. During these passages the performers can add their own flourishes of grunts, groans, shouts and *pūkana*, a sign of defiance where a male will protrude the tongue, flare the nostrils and stare wildly with open eyes. When the leader’s part is over, the rest of the performers will join in and perform their part of the haka while the leader catches a quick breath and possibly shifts his position. This pattern is repeated throughout the performance of the haka.

The performers accompany their chant by gestures and stomping feet. The body is used as a percussive instrument by slapping the thighs or the chest, or by raking them with their nails. It is not uncommon to see a few performers walk off stage with welts, bruises and cuts from a particular inspired performance. The facial expression is used to signal ‘defiance’ and other

‘masculine’ qualities. The key point is to expound the eyes, rolling them up, showing only the whites and making their countenance frightening and gruesome (Armstrong 1964).

### **Whakawatea (exit)**

This is the choreographed exit of the team that together with the entry forms the bracket of a kapa haka performance. Elements of all disciplines are utilised, and performers “must leave the stage as they entered – forceful and unforgettable” (*What is Kapa Haka?* 2007). Usually, the group will have a representative to give a speech (*whaikōrero*) during this performance, where the group will make dedications to the hosting *iwi* or to people who have departed lately.

### **‘Secondary’ Genres**

These are not officially part of the repertoire in competitions but are common enough that they merit a mention here. As I have pointed out earlier the *whakaeke* (entry) and *whakawatea* (exit) often includes these performances and they are frequently taught in the cultural clubs.

*Karanga* are calls that pre-empt the rituals of encounter on the *marae*, performed by a woman on the hosts’ side. They should always be performed by a woman and there are tribal variations when a woman is ready to *karanga*.

*Karakia* are recited incantations or prayers.

*Whaikōrero* is traditional speechmaking or oratory. There is frequent use of literal imagery and allusions.

*Wero* is the traditional challenge. Its purpose was to determine whether visitors came with peaceful or hostile intentions. It is performed by a single man or up to three men who advance towards the visiting group to lay down a peace-offering of either a carved baton or a piece of fern.

*Mau Rakau* is the traditional martial art of the Māori, and is performed with weapons typically exemplified by *patu* (a handheld club) and *taiaha* (long club resembling a spear).

## In Summary

In this chapter I have contextualised the practice of kapa haka in contemporary New Zealand. I have pointed out the importance of kapa haka for Maori today as a, a means of passing on important skills and traditions that enable Maori to connect to key facets for Maori life. This means that kapa haka as both a tradition and as an art form needs to contend with both the past and the future through the present. As a tradition it references the past as a part of the ‘culture’ that is passed on to the future generations. This ‘culture’ forms part of a distinct identity that in the meeting with a socially distinct ‘other’ becomes a visual symbol of Maori identity, as shown in the insistence of the ‘other’ to be welcomed in the “traditional” way. At the same time this is an opportunity for Maori to take control over their own identity, and display who they are, or how they see themselves through concerts for the ‘other’. Ultimately, competitions are avenues where groups compete with each other to show who they are to themselves as well as any ‘others’ who might be present. As an art form it need to reference the future, at least a potential future, in that art is an expression “of culture” made in the present. If the art form is not considered alive and well in the present it does not bode well for the future. The constant innovation, renewal and repetitions in the dual arenas of ritual practice and entertainment ensures that kapa haka as an art form develops to suit the needs of the people in the present that will pass it on to the coming generations.

The ‘style’ of kapa haka indicates that the performances are more than “getting dressed up and dancing in the streets” as the various genres themselves indicate values and ideals that are communicated through performance. These ideals and values are also part and parcel of the ‘tradition’ that is considered important to maintain and pass on. This again indicates the importance of kapa haka as both an art form and a tradition. In some instances the two are hard to tell apart. Without knowledge of the rituals and protocols that govern social meetings in ritual contexts it is hard for the individual to know how to interact with the wider Maori world.



## Chapter Three: Manifestations of Kapa Haka

### Top haka expert lured to teach

*That was the title for an article in the New Zealand Herald Education supplement on Tuesday, August 29, 2000. It was photocopied by the staff at the Maori Studies department and put on the notice board for the students to see. Uncle Bubs was pictured in front of Tanenui, the university marae meetinghouse on the grounds of the department. The article covered the university's launch of the first ever kapa haka paper where students were to receive practical and theoretical instruction in the art form. Uncle was reported as being delighted to see the subject formally recognised.*

*“There are around 37 kapa haka teams, yet a distinct lack of formal training, education and expertise in the craft. Through developing this course, the university is demonstrating its commitment to excellence in Maori performing arts”, he told the reporter. The phrase he used was familiar to me. It was the motto of Uncle's other performing arts school, Pounamu. “Excellence in Maori performing arts” The phrase was not at all dissimilar to uncle's favourite saying in class: “Maori people can do everything they put their mind to!”*

*That same Tuesday night I was back in the rows, practicing another set of lines of a complicated – to me at least – waiata and later going over the actions of the haka. Some time later, when working on one of my assignments for the class, I interviewed uncle about his opinions about the changes in kapa haka over the years. He was to my dismay very reluctant to give me an answer and phrased his reply in carefully chosen wording. Basically, times changed and people changed, and the two would have to follow each other. Young people change something and maybe experiment a bit but if they have the proper instruction they can go back again if they go wrong. ‘Change’ wasn't necessarily bad as long as you knew what you were changing from and how to undo the steps afterwards, if necessary.*

*It wasn't until some years later that I could fully understand what he referred to when I found an article written by him in Te Ao Hou. I was left with the distinct feeling that there was more to uncle Bubs than he was letting on.*

## Ngāpo & Pimia Wehi – Uncle Bubs and Auntie Nan

Ngāpo Wehi, with tribal affiliations to Te Whakatohea, Te Wahanau-a-Apanui, Ngāi Tuhoe and Te Taitokerau<sup>21</sup>, was born in 1934, the oldest of fifteen siblings. The family originally lived in Waioeka, near Opotiki, on the East Coast of the North Island. In the years following his birth there was a severe economic depression (King 2003). This necessitated that the family had to go to where there was work to be found, and consequently they moved about. Ngapo changed schools several times during his youth and he left school in Form Four,<sup>22</sup> a point he made use of in his introduction to his students at university as “the only university teacher to have left school at such an early age”, which always got smiles from the students. After leaving school he found work in Gisborne in the freezing works and on the wharf. It was during this time he started learning the Maori language, as he wasn’t a natural speaker. His workmates, mostly Maori, would make fun of him for not knowing the language. He became determined to learn the language and over time he eventually mastered it and considers himself to be a speaker of *te reo* today.

### Gisborne – Waihirere

It was in Gisborne that he met his future wife, Pimia Te Ua. Ngāpo was very active in sports, especially Tennis and this brought them together. She introduced him to Waihirere Maori Club in 1952. They later married and settled in Gisborne together. It was a collective decision that they got involved in kapa haka. In Pimia’s own words, she was supposed to “carry” the tradition (her family was very involved with Waihirere), but being a woman she could only take “so much”. She would need a man to carry the rest, later also reflected in the male-female tutors in the group. They told me they made the decision to enter into the

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<sup>21</sup> Ngāpo’s *whakapapa* has purposefully been omitted from this thesis at his own request; both due to the fact that he is not anonymised in this thesis and that it would be viewed by others outside his *whanau*.

<sup>22</sup> This would be year 10 in the current school system – about the age of 14-15.

“culture” through kapa haka, of which Ngāpo had very limited experience. The compromise was that she would accompany him in sports and he would accompany her in kapa haka.

Ngāpo proved to be a quick learner, but he had extremely exacting teachers. Pimia’s uncles, who were in charge of the discipline in the group, were very hard on him in the beginning. Pimia said this was intentional as they needed to test him, and make sure he could “carry” the tradition – in a sense they were grooming him to take over the leadership of the group one day. “They tested him, but they knew he could take it”, she said of his early years in Waihirere. He would be given the least enjoyable tasks, like cleaning the toilets, and as Ngāpo would frequently point out, he was placed in the third row of men, all the way to the back. The fact that there are only ever two rows of men made the position one of ridicule, but also of great promise, he said, as it could only go up from there.

In 1963, for the welcoming of Queen Elizabeth II, Ngapo was given the opportunity to lead both the haka and performing the *wero* for the Queen. “I didn’t want to be greedy so I said I would do the *wero*, even though I had never done it before. I was very nervous”.

In 1965, Wiremu ‘Bill’ Kerekere left Waihirere to move to Wellington, Kerekere had up until then been the leader of Waihirere and a mentor to uncle Bubs. He left the leadership in the hands of Ngāpo and Pimia. Uncle Bubs explained that Kerekere moved because of a job offer and, although it was sad for the group to lose him, it was understandable. “He had to go to where the jobs were, and that was in Wellington”, he explained. The feeling was, according to Bubs, that “Waihirere was finished” after suffering a loss of their leadership that left the group in the hands of two relatively inexperienced new leaders.

However, Bubs and Nan quickly learned by experience and just a few years later they took Waihirere to win the senior competition held during the annual celebrations to mark the coronation of the late Maori king, King Koroki, in October 1966, and the group performed two “very moving songs, one in memory of King Koroki, and the other paying tribute to the late Heketia Te Kani Te Ua, who had been laid to rest just a few days before” (Koroki Coronation Celebrations 1967). This type of tribute is fairly common in kapa haka competitions today, and I will return to this in a later chapter.

They went on to win the national title at the Polynesian Festival in Rotorua on 11 March 1972. The festival was the inaugural festival for what has later come to hold a position of authority over the standards of the performance of kapa haka. The following year, Waihirere went to the South Pacific Festival of Arts, held in Suva, Fiji, representing New Zealand. The representatives chosen for these overseas trips were the previous year's winning team in the national competition, and it has since become a standard for the national competition that the winning team is awarded a trip overseas where they represent New Zealand officially. This recognition of Maori culture as part of official New Zealand has been both beneficial for Maori ethno-politics but has also come under critique for the appropriation of Maori culture to present a country in "racial harmony" (cf. Ausubel 1965).

## **Auckland – Te Waka Huia**

In 1981 Ngāpo was offered a position as a Cultural Officer with The Department of Maori Affairs, but the position was located in Auckland. The move was necessary but painful for Ngāpo and Pimia. Pimia confessed that "it was very hard. It's probably the hardest thing we've ever had to do. To leave the group, but we had no choice!"

Within two months after arriving in Auckland in September the same year, the famous tutors were approached by family members and young people with Tairawhiti and Ngati Kahungungu tribal links who wanted them to start a group in Auckland (Te Ua 1993). The lack of a cultural group was felt as leaving them disconnected from the Maori world. The pair agreed to tutor a small group, and they soon attracted enough people to form a competing group, in the beginning made up of people from the Gisborne district, but over the years came to include all major tribes. The name *Te Waka Huia* was chosen by Ngāpo and the group qualified by placing third in the first regional competition they entered, in 1982, a first in the history of the festival. They went on to win the national competition the following year which was another first for a group (Wehi 2005). In total they have won the national title five times (Kāretu 1993), and have performed in every national competition since 1982 and have been placed in every final (Kapa Haka 2002: 21).

One of Te Waka Huia's original *kaupapa* (philosophies) is to work and operate under the traditional *whanau* system where there are respected places for grandparents through to

*mokopuna* (grandchildren) (Te Ua 1993). The name, Te Waka Huia, embraces two principles: “the housing of inanimate objects, those which can be seen, and the housing of animate objects, those which cannot be seen, such as songs and dances, aroha and whanaungatanga” (Te Ua 1993). Te Manu Huia, formed in 1995 as a “roopu tautoko” (supporting group) out of the large membership of Te Waka Huia (Kapa Haka 2002 2002:21), is considered a part of Te Waka Huia, and under the senior group’s guidance is part of the *waananga* (teaching and sharing of knowledge). I will examine the social relations within the group with regards to Te Waka Huia’s *kaupapa* in the next chapter.

## Competitions

### **Auckland Regional Competition 2004, Auckland Town Hall**

I began this thesis with a vignette from this competition, a description of the moment as the team walked onto the stage. The rules of Te Matatini Society stated that any group that place in the top three of the previous national festival is automatically qualified for the next national festival, and since Te Waka Huia had placed in the top three at the last festival Te Waka Huia had already qualified, and no special effort was required for the Auckland regional competition. However, Ngāpo and Pimia made it clear to the group that even though they were safe, they expected the group to win the competition regardless. The group’s efforts were kept at a very high standard throughout their live-in practices. All the preparations, practices, and social interaction that make up the main part of the social life of a kapa haka group are in preparation for one performance. Uncle Bubs had calculated the ratio to be about 20,000 hours to put a team through a regional competition and 40,000 to qualify a team for the finale of a national competition. The figure quoted includes composition, teaching, rehearsing, and organising of 40 performers that are on stage for a maximum of 40 minutes. The effort spent preparing for the single performance is compressed into 40 minutes of performance with the intent to captivate the audience in some manner.

Practices are held over weekends when the performers, who hold jobs and have other responsibilities elsewhere, can take the time off to practice. Te Manu Huia, on the other

hand, would have to qualify by placing among the top groups in the regional competition. The ratio of groups that can qualify in the regional competition depends on how many groups compete in that region. The smaller regions with few groups can only send one team to the national competition while the larger ones and Auckland being the largest can send as many as four. For this particular competition one group decided to pull out of the competition which put the total number of groups just below the number required to send four groups to the national competition. This was rectified by Ngāpo asking for volunteers from his university course to put together a group to fill the spot of the group that withdrew, making the numbers the requisite numbers.

I joined the group in Auckland in February, and the group was already into its preparations for the regional competition. Almost every weekend was a live-in practice, called *wānanaga*, a term meaning teaching session. The students of Pounamu were left in the capable hands of their tutors and Bubs and Nan focused their efforts on Te Waka Huia and Te Manu Huia. As far as I could tell, their time was unevenly divided between the two groups, something they themselves also expressed some concern over. Te Manu Huia, being the younger group, both in terms of average age of the performers and in being founded fourteen years after Te Waka Huia was being left more and more in the hands of the tutor, Vicky.

As the time of the competition drew nearer, and Waka Huia's bracket was complete, the focus began to shift towards Manu Huia exclusively. In one *wānanga* session uncle Bubs brought it up in his speech: "we need to rally people as far as Manu Huia's concerned. Waka Huia's alright, Pounamu Huia, they're practising during their course, but we're still looking at Manu Huia". What this meant was that the tutor's were pleased with the level of Waka Huia's performance at that point and that Manu Huia's level wasn't right just yet. What uncle Bubs actually did by mentioning that in his speech was to ask the senior members – whose performance was adequate and so could relax a bit in the live-in sessions – if they would help out their fellow junior members. He also asserted that Pounamu Huia would be ok for the competition as they had plenty of time to practice in course of their normal school days, which I will return to later in this chapter.

The speech had its desired effect. For the next couple of live-in practices some of the core members and seniors stepped in to help out the tutors and team of Manu Huia. In the

Auckland regional seniors kapa haka competition, Te Waka Huia took first place, Manu Huia managed to place third, while Pounamu Huia managed to place a respectable tenth, an incredible accomplishment as they usually would place second to last.

## **Te Matatini National Competition 2005, Palmerston North**

The national competition is considered more prestigious because it brings the top teams from all over New Zealand together in one competition. The competition had over 1300 performers on stage over the course of four days. The teams were divided into four pools, which are drawn with all team leaders present and the first two days are qualifying heats in all the pools with two from each qualifying. Bubs and Nan confided that they anticipated this competition would be tough. As all the top groups in the country would be competing against each other over the days and the qualifying groups from each pools would compete again on the final day it would mean at least three performances for the tutors. It was expected that Te Waka Huia would qualify, as they had done so every national competition. If Te Manu Huia would also qualify it would mean yet another performance for the tutors.

The national competition is clearly the most important event in the biennial cycle of calendar event for a group, judging by the amount of work put in by tutors and performers to qualify and perform in them. The reason why these competitions are considered so important can be found in an article in *Te Ao Hou* where Ngāpo Wehi remarks the following about the Polynesian Festival in 1973:

*I would also like to put in its perspective the idea most people have of this festival being a competition. It is not a competition. It is far deadlier. It is a demonstration of pride, prestige, dignity and tradition of the highest quality. If you can achieve these things you have done your ancestors, race and country proud (Wehi 1973).*

This statement, together with Kāretu's statement about the ethic of the *marae* being highly competitive tells us something about the format of the competitions and about what is at stake here. First of all, the competitions are by the content of its performances *like* rituals of welcome, in that groups present themselves as *manuhiri* (visitors) to the hosting tribal group, *tangata whenua*, which is the current year's hosting committee. The whole 'bracket' of the

performance that a group gives has the same content that a ritual does in that it can contain *whaikōrero* (oratory), *karanga* (calls of welcome) and both ritual and entertainment items of more or less ‘traditional’ performances. When uncle Bubs states that “it is a demonstration of pride, prestige and dignity”, he is referring to the concept of *mana*. The group’s *mana* should be established in the *whakaeke* (entrance) and maintained until the group leaves the stage at the end of the *whakawatea* (exit). Secondly, the competition is about the *mana* associated with being the top group, and therefore judged as the top exponent of ‘tradition’ among equals – nothing less. The group’s standing reflects upon its members who can use this celebrity status to further their own agendas, not only in pursuit of careers in performing arts but in other fields as well.

## Overseas Performances

### **Te Maori Exhibition (1984-1986)**

The exhibition *Te Maori: Maori Art from New Zealand Collections* (Te Maori), an exhibition of Maori carvings from New Zealand museum collections that toured the United States from 1984 to 1986, had been planned for several years. Ngāpo was asked to put a team together to promote Maori culture alongside the exhibition. The exhibition was organised jointly by Dr Sidney Moko Mead, a Maori anthropologist, and the New York Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) and was shown in New York, Chicago, St Louis and San Francisco. Maori tribal groups were asked to give permission for their *taonga* to travel abroad and a large group of elders was nominated to care for the *taonga* on their journey. These elders conducted dawn ceremonies to open the exhibition at every major venue (Henare 2005: 272).

The exhibition has been credited with bringing about the recognition of Maori carving as an art as well as paving the way for the acceptance of Maori concern over their *taonga* as a legitimate concern (Henare 2005: 211). One very important point that Henare makes is that the government, through sponsoring museums, were instrumental in initiating a programme of deliberate Maori cultural reinvigoration through international exhibitions, like the Te Maori exhibition. Initially designed with tourists in mind, these government sponsored



projects were often Maori-inspired, in fact, many of the people at the forefront of this movement were Maori politicians and intellectuals, that helped launch a “period of intense activity and innovation strongly focused on the material and performing arts” (2005: 6). This period has later been referred to as the ‘cultural renaissance’ of Maori culture.

It was while sitting on the steps of the Metropolitan Museum after the dawn ceremony that uncle Bubs had the idea: “I could do this in New Zealand”. If people were interested in learning about Maori culture it could be viable to hold performances in museum in New Zealand, too. The groundwork was laid over the next two years and in 1986 Pounamu Ventures started up as a commercial performing company in Auckland.

## **Pounamu Ventures**

Pounamu Ventures began performing at the Auckland War Memorial Museum in 1986, holding two performances every day, seven days a week. The success of the museum performances opened up new avenues for the members of Te Waka Huia. The museum group consisted of members from Te Waka Huia, who would rotate the performances so as to give everyone a chance to perform but also to relieve the pressure on the performers. According to uncle Bubs, after so many shows it starts to show in the performance, the performers would get lax and the standard of the performances starts to slip. This, uncle Bubs explained, was why the competitions are good for performers. The competitive edge that the competitions give, ensure that people give the performances their best. But that is not to say that tourist or commercial performances are any less serious, quite the contrary.

Although the Tourism Industry is the main industry for kapa haka performers, there is also a need for Cultural Ambassadors for promoting New Zealand overseas. In 1993 the group performed at the opening of the Commonwealth Games in Canada, and in 1988 Waka Huia represented Oceania in the opening parade for the Games of the XXIV Olympiad in Seoul. These overseas performances, where the group performs on behalf of New Zealand and are representing Māoridom, are just as important as the competitions, and also help to keep the performances sharp and focused.

## **Førde International Folk Music Festival, 2004**

Te Waka Huia was invited to perform at the Førde International Folk Music Festival held in Førde, Norway as part of the festival's celebration of the closure of the UN International Indigenous Peoples Decade. Together with groups from Canada, Norway, and China they would perform on four separate occasions.

The preparation for the trip coincided with the “wind up” towards the national competition, which was to be held only a week prior to departure, but the leaders were confident this wouldn't pose a problem. The bracket chosen for the trip was some of the “golden greats” of Waka Huia's repertoire and included a medley of three *whakaeke* from previous competitions and some items more geared towards a tourist audience, like *tititorea*, a stick game and displays of *mau rakau*, the Maori martial art.

A good deal of planning went into the make up of the team. The leaders wanted a good balance of performers and since they could only send a total of thirteen performers due to finances this required careful planning. When the final team had been selected, Bubs and Nan made the rounds and informed those who had been selected and the decision was announced at the next practice session. Those selected were a combination of senior, “core” members and some younger, junior members. The seniors, who were dependable, highly experienced performers – and loyal members who had “put their time in” that was to be paid back by this trip, while the junior members were those who showed the potential to take on greater responsibilities, in a sense protégés who were being groomed for new roles.

The trip was a great success: the performances got glittering reviews; the festival was so pleased with their efforts that the organisers invited the group to lead the festival parade through the centre of town and the groups was a big hit with both the locals and the media. The combined group was also a success in its own right as the size and members chosen to travel got along very well.

These kinds of performances are only available to the top groups in the country, and in fact are highly dependent on the placing in the national competitions. Therefore the two arenas are closely linked and inter-dependent; without a top place in the national competition there will be no performances representing New Zealand as cultural ambassadors.

# Kapa Haka in the School System

## Pounamu Performing Arts

The name Pounamu was chosen for its symbolic value: “Pounamu, is one of the most prized of Maori treasures and symbolises quality. Quality is also the hallmark of the services provided by Pounamu” (Wehi 2005). Pounamu Performing Arts was founded in 1989 and has since focused on educating Maori youths and adults for further training at tertiary level or employment as cultural ambassadors in the performing arts and tourist industry. Through “assisting Maori to take responsibility for themselves”, the stated goal of Pounamu is to “develop the potential inherent in every person” by “gaining a solid base in Maoritanga”. This will then lead to enhanced “educational, employment and financial opportunities [...] in any chosen field” (Wehi 2005).

The school is part of Pounamu Ventures, a trust owned, operated and managed by the Wehi family. The funding for the school is provided by the government through the Ministry of Youth, Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education through such government agencies as Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ) and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) on a per-student basis. The school takes responsibility for providing the student with the approved educational units, the qualifications gained through completion of the three levels *Te Herenga Waka* (“The Tying of the Canoes”), *Te Waharoa* (“The Gateway”), and *Te Huarahi* (“The Pathway”), or failing completion the school is responsible for providing the student with either an offer of employment or another NZQA approved education. This means that the school takes an inordinate interest in the students’ education with a very high pass-rate. As the students will go out into the world with a certificate or diploma from their time at Pounamu the tutors put an emphasis on quality of service, a point of pride for the school which is reflected in their motto: “Excellence in Performing Arts”. The certificates and diploma are in Maori Performing Arts or in Teaching with a specialisation in kapa haka.

Pounamu Performing Arts (Pounamu) is located in a suburb of Auckland that is often colloquially compared with the urban-poor ghettos of New York, Glen Innes. The building that houses Pounamu is located in a commercial/industrial area with its next-door neighbours

being an auto garage and a transport company. The building itself is a two-storey building with the ground floor being one and a half the height of the floor above with two garage doors on ground level around the back of the building. The entry area is on a half-floor landing with stairs leading down to the practice area (refurbished garage) and up to the administrative top floor, housing four offices, a computer/study room, a small kitchenette and the staff room, doubling as a meeting room in times of need.

Immediately upon entering the visitor is greeted with a display of several trophies from previous competitions, both regional and national, and a picture of the team that performed at the last National festival. Further up the stairs, in front of the receptionist's office there is a large picture of the founders, Ngāpo ('uncle' Bubs) Wehi and Pimia ('auntie' Nan) Wehi, leading their top team, Te Waka Huia, as *kaitataki tane* (male leader) and *kaitataki wahine* (female leader) at a previous festival. Next to the large picture are two framed diplomas proclaiming both leaders to be Honorary Doctorates (*Tohunga Huarewa*) of Massey University and Te Wānanga o Takitimu, in recognition of their lifelong involvement with, and position as caretakers of, kapa haka. The rest of the walls are covered with memento photographs marking important kapa haka events like national festivals over the years, pictures of graduation at the school, Christmas parties, overseas trips with Te Waka Huia, and line-ups of performing teams at other festivals like the Kapa Haka Super 12, and pictures from the CD launch of the Pounamu CD, *I Te Timatanga*.

The computer/study room houses the three student computers along with a whiteboard and several study desks that are usually arranged into a horseshoe configuration for the purposes of teaching a class. When it is not in use for class teaching the room is left open for students to use computers or as a place to do homework or study. The room leads to the three offices in use by the administrative staff; the chief administrator's office, in charge of the day-to-day running of the school; the quality assurance officer's office / tutor's office, reporting to the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) and New Zealand Education Authority (NZEa) to ensure compliance with educational standards set by the government, it is also shared with a tutor that oversees the middle class; the senior tutor's office, in charge of the educational portion of the curriculum and overseer of the senior class, also responsible for

organising the agreements with the local primary schools that student teach in for two weeks as part of their diploma.

The downstairs area is dominated by a large room in the rear, a refurbished garage with two large garage doors leading into it from the back. This area is naturally divided by four supporting pillars that have been pressed into use as decorative space where some photos and drawings have been attached. The division of the room has been put to good use by turning the one half into a “stage”, marked off with ample amounts of gaffa tape indicating the stage area and the centre point of the stage, and the other into a class room and common room rolled into one. In the class room part of the room there are several desks, a whiteboard and the walls are lined with several spare chairs to accommodate visitors. The stage half of the room is referred to as “the floor” or “stage”.

The large room leads into a small kitchen for the students and further on to the toilets. Two large double doors separate the large room from the third class room, an office in use by the music tutor, and the props room, which houses all performing gear and, amplifiers and other musical gear.

When the school receives important visitors, and *pōwhiri* (rituals of encounter) are called for the visitors are lead down from the entrance-landing through the classroom and into the practice area of the “stage” where the main body of the ritual (usually performed on the *marae*) take place in these circumstances. On those occasions the stage is set up to resemble a marae with rows of chairs facing each other; one side for the *manuhiri* (visitors) and the other for the *tangata whenua* (in this case the students, and/or staff).

## **Students**

The students range in age from 16 to about 54 with the main student body around the early twenties. Most are urban Maori from the main Maori areas surrounding Auckland; the Westside, Henderson and Waitakere; the Southside, Manukau City, and some from Glen Innes. There is also a strong presence of students from the East Coast, Poverty Bay and Gisborne. This has to do with Ngāpo and Pimia’s tribal affiliation with those areas and several of the students hailing from those areas have kinship links to the two leaders.

The students are divided into three successive levels: *Te Herenga Waka* (“The Tying of the Canoes”), *Te Waharoa* (“The Gateway”), and *Te Huarahi* (“The Pathway”). *Te Herenga Waka* usually occupy the classroom on the top floor, *Te Waharoa* is usually in the classroom downstairs while *Te Huarahi* are usually found in the practice area classroom. When classes end and the practical sessions take over, usually about halfway through the day, the three levels come together in the practice area to perform together as a large group.

*Te Herenga Waka* (“The Tying of the Canoes”) is the first stage and is intended for students who have little or no prior experience with kapa haka and *te reo Maori*. At the time of my fieldwork the class was quite small in numbers (less than 10) and I was told that this was usual. The class is intentionally kept small in number to instil the students with a sense of belonging in the smaller group. The main focus is on creating an enjoyable learning atmosphere for the students and encouraging them to maintain diligence in their own studies. The students are frequently given praise for their achievements and the expectation of skill mastery is low compared to the next two levels – suitably matched to the beginner’s level.<sup>23</sup>

*Te Waharoa* (“The Gateway”) is the second stage and is intended for students who have passed *Te Herenga Waka* or those who can demonstrate prior experience in kapa haka, either through Primary and/or Secondary schools or in other performing groups. With around 20-30 students, this level makes up the main body of students, of these around half of them proceed to the next level. At this level the curriculum is more demanding, both in terms of complexity of items taught as well as in terms of student participation. Where the tutors could be seen as fostering confidence by reinforcing the positive attitudes displayed in the previous level, these attitudes are taken for granted and is expected. The tutors demand more from the students and the focus is on “attendance, attitude and aptitude”. Acceptable attendance was framed as “not slacking off” and although there were valid reasons for non-attendance the students were careful in at least appearing to attend most of the time. Following from the attendance was the acceptable attitude that students were expected to

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<sup>23</sup> Although the items the students were taught always demanded a much higher technical skill and competence than what was expected of me at the university beginner’s level in 2001, much to the credit of the students of *Te Herenga Waka*.

display at the school. This was termed as being “receptive to instruction”, “showing the proper respect” and “having a positive attitude” to the situation. Those students who didn’t display the proper attitude would be approached by a senior tutor who would attempt to resolve the matter by means of explaining the problem and helping the student to direct their efforts into the appropriate area.

*Te Huarahi* (“The Pathway”) is the third and final stage of Pounamu Performing Arts. The students who complete this stage qualify for a teacher’s diploma in performing arts, and as part of their examination the students have to draw up a teaching plan for kapa haka aimed at primary school pupils. This plan involves researching the items involved and getting permission to teach them from the composers or descendants. The students then go on to teach at a Primary school to get teaching experience, and execute their teaching plan over the course of one week. The students are expected to master a full “bracket” of performance items, meaning a full programme of 30-45 minutes worth with all performing genres represented in the programme. At this stage the students will have proved their worth in terms of attendance, attitude and aptitude and they tutors reward them with frequent opportunities to participate in commercial performances, or even invite them to attend practices with Waka Huia. The most promising students are sometimes invited to go with the larger collective, the club, on trips. These trips are funded by the club and students pay only a registration fee while the club covers the rest of the expenses associated with the trip.

The progression through the three levels of teaching not only helps to adjust the teaching towards the skill levels of the students but also matures the students’ confidence in themselves and their performance that is reflected in their performances in front of an audience. Every opportunity to put the students in front of an audience is utilised to give them experience in handling the situation. To this end the students hold end-of-semester performances where friends and families are invited. At the end of every academic year the final examination is held in front of an audience of invitees, and when performances are concluded the diplomas are handed out in a graduation ceremony.

## **Tutors**

Each level has two principal tutors; one male and one female. One tutor holds the position as senior tutor that is assisted by a junior tutor of the opposite sex. This combination of junior/senior and male/female is held as the ideal teaching situation as the male can deal with the male students, the female can deal with the female students and the senior tutor has the responsibility to maintain discipline among the students. In addition there are other junior, assistant tutors that help out with specific classes, like contemporary dance, or with supplying the music, if the students themselves aren't confident in playing the requisite instruments. All current staff members are members of Te Waka Huia with experience from competitions at a national level. In addition several of them are former Pounamu students themselves.

## **Administration**

The school is run by an administrative staff of four; Annette, the general manager; Selena, the administrator; Rangimaria, the secretary; and Pimia (daughter of Bubs and Nan), the Quality Assurance Officer (QAO). The school is run as part of Pounamu Ventures. Decisions are made by the board of trustees, and Ngāpo is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

## **A Typical Day at School**

The tutors arrive at the schools around 8 – 8:30 and they all have breakfast while discussing the coming day. The topics of these conversations range from students who are slacking off, which students are doing well to how the coming weeks will be organised. The junior tutors, Jacob, Hector, Miriata and Pare, usually arrive during breakfast to take a seat and chat with the others.

Meanwhile the students would be arriving in a steady trickle from eight to nine. The time of their arrival depends on where they live and their circumstances at home. Those who live in the same area will either carpool or be picked up by the school “bus”, a Toyota Hi-Ace that one of the senior students take home in the evenings and who is responsible for transport. Those who have children will sometimes bring them to school and it's not unusual to have



several youngsters running around, keeping themselves occupied while their parents are at practicing. This is encouraged by the school, a practical solution to what would be characterised as a “problem” elsewhere. If a student can’t afford to pay for a day-care centre, have no relatives who can support them, they can always bring them to school. The other option is to stay away from school and that would defeat the purpose of going to school to get an education.

The students will gather in the downstairs practice room or the classroom in smaller groups while waiting for the day to start at 9 a.m. If there is a need for some extra practice the students will often organise *ad hoc* tutoring groups to practice. The stronger students take on the role as tutor to the weaker ones to assist their teaching. The number of students will vary from day to day but the average is around 45, the total number of students is 54.

At 9 a.m. the day starts. Everyone, students and all staff present, will gather in the practice room in a large circle, *porowhita*, and the day’s teaching is blessed with a *karakia*, followed by the day’s *mihi*, acknowledgment or speech. Either Tapeta or Vicky will ask if any of the students want to *karakia* or *mihi*. If there are no volunteers they will either “volunteer” on of the students, appoint one to do so and thanking them for volunteering, or do it themselves.

The chosen student will then *karakia* to their best ability and another student will do the day’s *mihi*, selected by the same procedure as the preceding *karakia*. These are usually performed in Maori, to practice their *reo* but it is entirely up to the student to do it in another language – even Norwegian is accepted, although I suspect it is a rarity.

This is also the time for any messages that needs to be given from staff to students. The tutors take turns to speak to their class and inform them of any changes in the day’s schedule. The day is then laid out and everyone is told what they are going to do for the rest of the day. At this point the students split into their classes and begin their group work which they will carry on with until lunch break.

The group work consists of classes of *te reo*, *tikanga*, learning new songs or working on their assignments for the semester. The students are encouraged to research songs and tikanga for their assignments. For the students of *Te Herenga Waka* a lot of the teaching is actually outside their curriculum. These are usually among the younger students and the

tutors spend a lot of time teaching them “attendance” and “attitude” and de-programming any bad habits they may have carried from previous schools. The importance of taking responsibility for their own situation is stressed and the students are supported by their tutors in this process. By giving an inordinate amount of praise and setting tasks at a realistic level in accordance with the tutors’ assessment of the potential in the student the students experience that they can manage and complete their tasks – for some of them this is a first in an educational setting. As the students manage their tasks more consistently the pressure is gently increased. *Te Waharoa* students are expected to be more self-reliant and their curriculum reflects this. The step up, in terms of responsibility and expected proficiency, from *Herenga Waka* to *Waharoa* is often experienced as an obstacle, but the only way to keep up is to take responsibility, as students quickly find out. Those who struggle are given extra tuition, as well as being helped by their fellow classmates. The students of *Huarahi* are expected to keep their own journal. Time is set aside for “reflection” where they reflect of the goals they have set, how to reach them and assess how they have done so far. The students are given opportunities to perform in commercial performances outside of the school if they can show acceptable levels of “attendance” and an acceptable “attitude”. Students are placed in primary schools in the district where they work in groups of two or three to execute a teaching plan of their own devising.

The students break for lunch from noon until one p.m. most of the students wander over to the local cafeteria next door to buy lunch. They return to the practice room to eat lunch or, weather permitting, sit outside. The boys were at the time passionate about chess and there would always be at least three games going at any one time. These tournaments are a source of much debate and discussion throughout the day. Usually the students take over the sound system in the practice room to play music and the students will be seated in smaller groups socialising. Those that smoke will congregate around the back of the building in a huddle, and during any break it is not uncommon to find at least half the students and staff huddled there. The staff will retreat to the staff room or venture into the suburb centre for the choice of stores and cafes there.

After lunch all students and staff will gather in the practice room again and depending on the day the remainder of the day will be devoted to either kapa haka (“trad”) of contemporary

dance (“contemp”). The contemporary dance is frequently used as a reward towards the end of the week if the students have been good and there’s been little “goofing around”. When the dates for competitions or large performances are approaching the contemporary dance is dropped for the benefit of an increased focus on kapa haka. Students will be in smaller groups working on things that need extra practice or be “on the floor” for practices as a group. During these sessions they will perform several different items in succession for about three hours only pausing for short five- or ten minute breaks until three p.m.

At 3 p.m. it is time to clean up all common rooms, practice room, toilets and the outside. This usually takes 15 to 20 minutes, longer depending on how tired and grumpy the students are. The tutors make sure that the schedule is kept and that no-one is unnecessarily idle.

The day is concluded in the same manner that it was started, in a large circle where the staff will give credit to those who did good during the day and those who have been slacking off are reminded of this at this time. The students are all given the opportunity to say how they felt the day was and speak their mind, before concluding the teaching session with a *karakia*, at around half past three.

## Kapa Haka at University

### **Auckland University Kapa Haka**

The university courses Kapa Haka 190, 292 and 393 are divided along the same lines as the classes of Pounamu; stage 1 is mainly for students with little or no prior experience with kapa haka, stage 2 for students with prior experience from national competitions either at primary, secondary or senior level with another group, and Stage 3 requires participation and a pass in stage 2 to enter.

The university courses have an academic portion, where the students are required to research a given topic and present this in the form of an essay or research paper, or a composition of a chosen genre, with lyrics and movements. The performance portion of the courses make up 60 percent and is comprised of all competition genres with a repertoire selected by the tutors to give a well rounded bracket that students perform on the final night of their course as their

exam. In addition there are three school tests over the course of the semester in all three courses. The idea is to turn the performing art into an accepted academic pursuit along the same lines of similar studies in Drama, Theatre and Music, as part of a degree in Maori Studies, Arts or Music.

The Auckland University academic year is divided into two semesters and the courses are taught in stages over the two semesters. Stage 1 and 3 is offered in the first semester (January – June) and Stage 2 is offered in the second semester (July – December). The course is taught in the Maori Studies Department but is offered through both SCAPA (School of Creative and Performing Arts) and Department of Music also. The course is taught in the Maori Studies *marae* with most of the teaching being done in the carved house *Tānenui-a-rangi*, which according to Uncle Bubs “gives the right atmosphere” for teaching kapa haka.

## **Tutors**

The senior tutor, and officially the only one receiving a salary from the university, is uncle Bubs. With the exception of a few times for stage 1, where the curriculum is relatively easy, and then only on those occasions where the students were learning a *moteatea* which require no teaching of movement and no accompaniment on guitar, uncle Bubs usually has several other Waka Huia members to help out with the tutoring. In the first course taught at Auckland University in 2000, where I was a student, he had the help of his wife, Pimia, two of his daughters, all his sons and their wives and partners, one of his granddaughters as well as two members from Te Waka Huia. During my fieldwork there were at least two junior tutors to assist uncle Bubs, with the addition of a guitarist.

## **Students**

Not surprisingly, the first course offered was a great success in terms on number of enrolments. This was anticipated by the administration, and was given as the prime reason why they wanted uncle Bubs to teach the course, and later courses.

The students of the stage 2 and 3 course all had previous experience from regional or national competitions, and with a few exceptions were largely Maori. The stage 1 course has

the most diverse body of students from all nationalities and ethnicities, but these rarely go on to the stage 2 and 3 courses.

I wasn't at all surprised to find quite a few Te Waka Huia members among the students of the stage 2 and 3 classes for several reasons; The curriculum is mostly known to them, their standard of performance is sufficiently high that they don't need to exert themselves too much to get a good mark, they know the tutor(s), and sometimes they even *were* the tutors.

## **Tohunga Huarewa, Massey University**

Ngāpo and Pimia were awarded Honorary Doctorates from Massey University for their collective engagement with kapa haka and Maori culture over a number of years. This official recognition is in addition to the recognition the pair have received as successful tutors of several groups and leading exponents of their field.

## **In Summary**

A kapa haka group, like Te Waka Huia, participates in many different settings domestic and abroad depending in part on the *kaupapa* (philosophy) of the group and in part on choices made by the group. Performers move between groups to fulfil different needs at different stages in their lives, while tutors found groups with a specific purpose in mind. To elucidate these intentions of performers and tutors it is necessary to examine the settings they participate in and see what is characteristic of the particular settings. The settings that I have focused on are first and foremost competitions, as these are the most conspicuous settings for kapa haka, in that they are created for the specific purpose of the performance of kapa haka. These settings are where the groups publicly compete over what is 'tradition' and by extension how this is to be expressed in kapa haka.

The overseas performances, where the audience are not necessarily New Zealanders or even Maori, although they can be, have a different focus but is considered just as important in that they are performances that tell others who Maori are, in other words, public displays of identity.

The teaching of kapa haka in schools is a different arena, where the intention is to provide two things: careers for students, and careers for tutors. The students, through receiving teaching in performing arts are given skills that prepare them for a career in tourism, performing arts or teaching. The tutors, on the other hand, are provided with careers as teachers teaching these students kapa haka. Similarly, the teaching of kapa haka at university provides careers for students and tutors alike.

What all these arenas and settings have in common is that they all are linked to Bubs and Nan and their success. Bubs and Nan have accomplished all of these things through kapa haka, and in one sense these accomplishments are linked to their success in kapa haka. Through constantly creating and providing opportunities for themselves, their family and their members they are using kapa haka to achieve in other settings too. It is a project of transformation. By transforming skill and tradition into opportunities and achievements, not only for themselves but for others, they are following traditional ideas of how knowledge should be used. I shall return to this point in the chapter about the characteristics of kapa haka.

All of their pursuits in the field of kapa haka, as I have summed up here, have one thing in common: any and all performances, in any arena, are just as important. Indeed, most arenas are inter-related. For example, without the successes in the competitions as tutors of Waihirere they would not have been asked to start a group in Auckland when Ngāpo and Pimia moved there from Gisborne. The same success was a major factor to Bubs being asked to put together a cultural group for the Te Maori exhibition. From there the idea and incentive to establishing the commercial performance company of Pounamu followed, which spawned a performing arts school for the training of cultural ambassadors. Cultural ambassadors who represent New Zealand and Maori overseas do so because of their success as a performing group in competitions. The inclusion of kapa haka at university level at Auckland University is just an extension of the activities of Pounamu Performing Arts, and is just as dependent on Bubs and Nan's success over the years, as recognised by the awarding of Honorary Doctorates.

## Chapter Four: Social Relations

### Not just kapa haka

*I had finally worked up the courage to arrange a meeting with ‘uncle’ Bubs, the leader of Te Waka Huia, Te Manu Huia, and the CEO of Pounamu Performing Arts, the school where I wanted to conduct a part of my study.*

*When I arrived at the school in Glen Innes, ‘uncle’ was busy lecturing the students on a particular waiata [song]. This was a special occasion where the students were allowed to ask questions about whatever topics they were wondering about. When the questions had died down a bit ‘uncle’ introduced me to the students as a former university student of his. He told them briefly about my background in kapa haka and made a joke about not getting paid for my high marks in his classes. The students smiled and giggled at the joke, and ‘uncle’ rounded off the session with his trademark statement, modified slightly to fit the situation: “If Norwegians can come here and study kapa haka at university level, you should too, eh? Maori people are the most adaptive people in the world. They can do anything they want to, if they only put their mind to it!”*

*After the lecture we withdrew to the meeting-room where we sat down for a cup of tea and some biscuits. After exchanging some pleasantries and talking about minor issues, ‘uncle’ asked me what it was I wanted to see him about. I told him, in general terms, about my proposed project and outlined what I wanted to do. I wanted to study kapa haka as it was performed today and see how Maori people today involved themselves with kapa haka. ‘Uncle’ told me that I had his permission, but that I would have to do the rest by myself. He could only provide me with the opportunity. He told me that I would probably want to look at the students at Pounamu, the students at the university and the professional group, Te Waka Huia. It would also be a good idea to look at some of the circumstances surrounding their involvement with kapa haka and not just the actual performances. “These kids [at Pounamu] all dropped out of school. Talk to them, ask them why. They might tell you: ‘I was bored.’ With what? ‘Teachers, some of them were ok, others...’ I think you should include some of the other things around it, and not just kapa haka.”*

# The Competing Team / a Concert Group

## Tutors – Gatekeepers of Tradition

*”You know, my uncles were very hard on him. But they were testing him, you see, to see if he had it in him. We had to be two about this because my uncles knew I couldn’t carry this by my self - because I’m a woman. So they started him out in the third row – and there are only two rows of men! [Hearty laughter] They were really pushing him, they were.” – Auntie Nan, Gisborne*

The Maori word for leader of a kapa haka group is *kaitiaki*, gatekeeper, caretaker or guardian, and the name is aptly given as the tutors of a group are the caretakers of kapa haka as it is performed today. They make the decisions as to what can be changed in a performance, what new elements are to be brought in and what is to remain as it is.

Kapa haka in a group is always taught by a tutor, and ideally there should be both a female and a male tutor to balance the two aspects, male/female. It is not uncommon for a husband-wife team to assume the roles of tutors together. This was explained to me as an ideal balance as the man could take care of discipline with the men and the woman would maintain discipline with the women. Sometimes, this was also used as a ‘reverse-psychology’ ploy, with the man tackling the women and vice-versa.

The leader’s role is many things rolled into one package. The leader is at times a councillor, a father/mother, social worker, and a priest for the members of their group. As leaders of the group they attract new members based on their kapa haka ‘style’ and style of leadership. The tutors also compose and choreograph items, often with the assistance of relatives (Shennan). They instruct the team in practice and take charge of the groups affairs as leaders. Sometimes they are assisted by junior tutors, again often relatives, but the final authority is with the tutors.

## Roles in the Group

Additionally a group has a designated male and female leader in the actual performance. These are called *kaitataki tane* (male leader) and *kaitataki wahine* (female leader). These



were likened to captains on sports teams, keeping morale up and leading certain performances or singing solo items. Additionally there may be solo pieces in certain performances that are pre-arranged prior to performances but these are not fixed positions and are regularly changed over.

There are also contingents of supporters that take care of the logistics of running a group that may or may not be a part of the group itself. These support staff lend a hand where needed, like taking turns in the kitchen to cook food or clean up after meals.

## **The Ranks and Rows**

The spots in the team was explained to me as the following; the two rows of women, who are in the front for most of the performances, are referred to as first- and second-, or front- and back-row, respectively. The front row is made up of the best performers or the most visually pleasing performers, meaning graceful and competent. As the audience's point of focus tends to be towards the middle of the front row the centre person needs to be a highly competent performer, and the tendency is towards putting one of the leaders in this particular position, although this is not a fixed position for the entirety of a performance as these positions change between most items. The further out towards the wings of the rows, the less accomplished the performers, and it is here that the tiny errors begin to be apparent; dropped *pois* or not staying 'on the line', meaning that the row looks crooked or unevenly spaced. The centre back-row is made up of the "powerhouses" of the group. These are the dependable, strong singers. Older member of considerable experience tends to be given these spots. If any younger members are given this spot it is because of their clear or strong voices that carry solo items.

The two rows of men follow approximately the same pattern but here the emphasis is on strength, physical or mental, for the centre front-row. These are the leaders of the haka and the most visually frightening in their *pūkana* (stare wildly or distort the countenance). The younger members are routinely given the outer wings where they are carefully watched by a senior member who acts as an overseer of the younger lot. At least two senior members of considerable experience of around the 10 year mark were routinely given the spots to the

extremes of the back-rows, where they maintained order among the youngsters and would lend strength whenever it was needed.

## Joining and Belonging – Musters and Practices

For many, the annual muster is the initial contact with the group, and furthermore, when one is allowed into one of the two main competing teams, it is also the annual process of qualifying for a spot in the “team”. For every new season, the period of time between the national or regional competitions, the team is re-formed and every member, new and old, will have to secure their ‘spot’ in the team by proving the quality of their performance to the tutors and to the group as a whole. This process of joining the team (and re-joining, for the older hands) begins with the annual muster following a short break after the major competitions (regional/national).

Any new member to a kapa haka group needs to show up for the annual ‘muster’, the start-up gathering of old and new members to gear up for another season of kapa haka. It is a relatively large event as it not only gathers the full two competing teams of Te Waka Huia and Te Manu Huia but also a large number of new recruits, hopefuls, supporters, friends and family. It is not uncommon to have at least 100 performers trying out for the 40 positions in each team, which was the main reason for the founding of Te Manu Huia. The large numbers of performers is both a benefit and problem for the tutors. The benefit is of course that a large body of performers give the tutors the pick of the crop to secure the best performers in every possible position but it is also a problem in that loyal members have to be rewarded for their loyalty, even though they may not be the best performers. These two needs always play a part in decisions about members and positions, and are accorded great importance, as I will show.

To house such a large number of performers, and to have ample space to have them all perform, requires a large venue. As these musters are held over the course of a weekend this also means that sleeping arrangements and facilities are needed. This is usually secured through renting one of the university *marae* (meetinghouse) in the Auckland region or another *marae* outside of the Auckland area. These communal centres provide sleeping

arrangements in the form of mattresses and pillow along with facilities for the preparation of food – two pivotal points in the social life of such events.

People need to eat and sleep together to function together, this is doubly true of a competing group where the focus is on the collective effort and not the individual achievement. To help cater for a large number of people Waka Huia has a more or less permanent support staff of four people. These are: Paul, the husband of a ‘core’ member; Koru, the mother of a member in Manu Huia; (Des’ wife), the wife of a member in Waka Huia; Te Papa, a student at Pounamu. These people help the organisers of the event out by doing all the cooking and serving of food so that the performers can go about the business of selecting a new team.

The selection of a new team is for the sake of practicality carried out in two separate groups. The newest arrivals are allowed to try out for Te Manu Huia, the junior group and the senior members, and junior members who are especially invited by the tutors to do so, try out for Te Waka Huia. The process of inviting junior members is conducted in a very low-key and subtle manner. I never observed one case of it happening, even though I was told after the fact that so and so had been offered to move up. The tutors circulate quite freely among the members during the whole process and discuss with their assistants a potential recruit several times before making the final decision. During the selection process members and new recruits are put in several positions to see how they perform in different capacities. The tutors are assisted by several helpers during the process. These assistants can be retired members who still help out in a semi-official capacity or younger family members of the Wehi *whanau* (family). The selection of a full team isn’t finished by the end of the muster, members keep being moved to different positions until the last possible moment, and adjustments are always being made just a few moments before going on stage.

The muster is an exhausting affair for everyone involved. The day is divided into a practice sessions divided by short breaks. On the first day there is usually a session after the opening of the muster by a *karakia* (prayer/incantation), followed by a short break for lunch. After lunch the practice sessions start up again and continue until late in the afternoon when the group breaks for dinner, which is again followed by a practice session before the members are given time off to relax before going to bed. The second day of muster starts with breakfast early in the morning before everyone helps out to clean out the *whare* (house),

where everyone has slept the previous night, to prepare for the days sessions. Morning practice lasts until lunch and is followed by yet another session before and after dinner before finally winding down for the night. The third day, a Sunday, is usually more relaxed in the sense that it ends after the practice session after lunch.

The muster is held at roughly the same time every year with the actual date set at a weekend with a fixed number of weekends to go until the main event, the regional or national competition. This is based on a calculation made by uncle of the amount of preparation required to get a team ready for a major competition.

### **The 2004 Muster**

The muster for the whole of Te Waka Huia, was scheduled for a later date than usual in 2004. This was due to the fact that the date for the Auckland regional competition had been pushed back several times already. I was especially eager to attend as I missed out on the previous year's muster and therefore I had to wait until my second period of fieldwork before I could attend one. The muster was announced by the "traditional" channels of the group: an email list maintained by one of the daughters-in-law of the leaders. The list consists of about 150 active and less-than active members, and a handful of loyal supporters. In addition to the actual members, several new recruits also showed up to try out for one of the two teams; Te Manu Huia and Te Waka Huia. The supporters are family members, or relations of the performers, and they generally do all catering for the teams. The support team of 2004 consisted of about five people that were assisted by an ever-changing number of the kids running around. Usually the leaders, Bub and Nan, have a hand in organising these events but this year the task was left in the capable hands of the two daughters-in-laws, Angie and Annette, and two of the more senior members, Law and Missy. The venue chosen for the 2004 muster was the *marae* belonging to Manukau Institute of Technology (MIT), a polytechnic university in South Auckland. It had the necessary amenities and facilities, and was chosen because of its location with regards to the out-of-town members. Most members reside in the greater Auckland area. A small group make the 5-6 hour trip from Kaitaia in the northern tip of the North Island, and another group travel from Hamilton, about an hour's drive from Auckland. Some members regularly make the trip from Wellington, a 10-11 hours drive or about 2 hours by plane.

The muster was set for 10 a.m. and the leaders, the organising committee, and I arrived at 9 a.m. to set up for the arrival of the expected crowd. At around 10 a.m. a slow trickle of cars started to wind their way into the *marae* parking lot. By 10:30 a.m. the majority of the people had arrived and uncle and auntie were seated in two chairs in the middle of the room of the meetinghouse. The meeting house was a fairly large one and would easily accommodate the 100 or so expected performers. As people began to make their way into the big room, there were conversations and greetings all around, mainly set in motion by the more senior members. The new try-outs and recruits were easily identifiable as they were considerably younger and more timid than the regulars, sitting in groups close by the doors or huddled in a corner. The regulars were busy talking amongst themselves and moving to and fro to greet old friends and acquaintances as they arrived. In every way this was a regular *huihuinga*, a Maori ceremonial gathering, except that we would dispense of the rituals and go straight into the business at hand; the selection of a new team.

Even though senior members quite often succeed in securing their “spot” in the team, it is not automatic. Bubs and Nan routinely put everyone to the test to see if they can strengthen the team by changing someone’s position, or swapping people around. When Bubs and Nan called everybody into the *wharenuī* (meetinghouse) around 100 people were present, and of these the core group of Te Waka Huia made up around 25 – 30, as far as I could tell. These would be relatively secure in their proven positions in the team for Te Waka Huia. There were a group of about 5 – 10 that due to their previous experience with Te Manu Huia that I expected to be offered a spot. I knew from previous conversations with Bubs and Nan that some would be offered to move up to Te Waka Huia, and Peter would be one of them along with Te Whare. The rest of the team would have to be selected on merit alone, and they would have to prove themselves over the course of this weekend.

After a short introductory speech by uncle and auntie the two prospective teams were divided and assigned their area for practice. Manu Huia was given the privilege of having the *wharenuī* (meetinghouse) by the senior team, Te Waka Huia. The senior team then retreated to the *wharekai* (dining room) to do their selections. I spent the first period with the senior group, as their selection process was a quicker affair and would be relatively easily sorted out by the more experienced members.

It was explained to me that this was due to the fact that “the senior members knew what it was all about”, that they had the “experience” necessary to speed up the process. This point to the fact that most positions in the senior group, held as they are by senior members who have been part of the group for a long time, are relatively fixed positions. The experience of the members in “their” positions, so to speak, is of course a contributing factor; as I have pointed out above the positions in the ranks and rows are distributed according to experience – meaning excellence in performance. But, that is not all there is to the selection of a team. The loyalty of the senior group’s members is also rewarded by having more or less fixed ranks and rows, meaning that the hierarchy of performers is set at the outset and there is little need to re-negotiate this order every time the group convenes.

The junior members who wanted to move up would have to prove themselves in the junior group first, and then be invited to try out for the senior group at a later stage, which of course would upset the order of the existing group. I shall return to this later.

### **Weekend practices – Live-Ins**

To prepare the team for a major event like a competition it is often necessary to hold more than one practice. After the initial selection of a team in the muster the schedule for the following season is announced by the tutors. The major events of the following months as well as criteria for attending them are laid out for the members, and the information is also repeated in the electronic newsletter at a later date. If an event requires a fee from members this is announced as early on as possible, to allow for the allocation of funds. Finally, the schedule for the next team practices are outlined, these are called ‘live-ins’, as the whole team will be gathered over the course of several weekends, effectively living together for a short period of time. For practical reasons these live-ins are organised in the weekends. This allows members to arrange for babysitters and doesn’t require them to take time off work to attend practices, as no-one draws a salary for belonging to the team(s).

This investment of time from members is carefully balanced and planned by the tutors for the improvement of the team’s performance. As practices can be very taxing and exhausting affairs it is necessary to balance the amount right, as members also have other commitments elsewhere: family, friends, work, etc.

A live-in is organised along similar lines of the muster, and indeed the muster is just the first of many live-ins. The two teams, Waka Huia and Manu Huia, are usually housed together for the first few live-ins, but it is considered good for the team if they can have some time alone. It is therefore not uncommon to have two separate venues for the respective team's live-ins. A typical live-in starts in the late afternoon or early evening of the Friday and continues with practice sessions between meals, just like the muster described above.

The main goal of such live-ins is to successively increase the standard of performance of the team by rehearsing the individual 'items' (the songs and dances that make up parts of the repertoire) and the final 'bracket' (the whole programme comprised of several 'items' from all the genres that are competed in, including other genres if the performance is not a competition) to the tutor's satisfaction, and hopefully, to the judges' satisfaction in the competitions.

The relationship between performer and audience is implicit in performance in that it is not a religious performance where participants are also performers and vice-versa. In all kapa haka there are performers and an audience. The audience, be they spectators or judges, Maori or otherwise, is what the group is trying to influence through their performance, and therefore the intended recipients of their 'act' of performance. The performance is intended to captivate the audience through a "technical level of achieved excellence" (Gell 1999: 172). Similarly, the attitude of the audience towards the performance is conditioned by the notion of the technical process which gave rise to the performance (Gell 1999: 172).

I shall return to this point in chapter six, but for now, I will turn to the secondary goal of the musters and live-ins.

## **Whakawhanaungatanga – Making the Connections**

There is also another clearly stated goal for the teams, which is to create the atmosphere for learning by "making the group into a *whanau* (family)". This is very important for the feeling of belonging to a team, and for the *whanau* of Te Waka Huia, this is stated in Maori kinship terms. 'Belonging' is seen as being part of a 'whanau', in this case a performing group that is *like* a family.

In every muster and several of the live-ins time is set aside for *whakawhanaungatanga* (“getting to know each other”). This is ideally done by spending time together; eating, sleeping and interacting on a daily basis. In the preparation for the Auckland Regional Competition 2004 this was done by spending time together at the *marae* over the course of several of the coming weekends, live-ins. The compromise between spending time together with the group for the purpose of this activity and other commitments were left up to individual performers. The process of getting to know someone is the process of ‘making the connection’ between people. This is conceptualised as spending time together sharing speeches, food and place of sleeping, all very communal activities. When I questioned ‘uncle’ about this, he replied: “To learn about Maori people, you have to eat and sleep with them.” By spending time with people and sharing food, participating in the same activities, communicating and getting to know the ‘others’ you make the connections – either by reciting *whakapapa* (if known), by referring to tribal affiliations, *iwi* or *hapu* (if no immediate kinship links can be found), or citing canoe-area, *waka* (if even more leeway to establish links is required), or failing that, the activity itself will be the basis for the process.

Uncle Bubs and Nan would always engage in *whakawhanaungatanga* during musters and live-ins. Because they are the leaders of the groups, people would also constantly approach them during these times, but they also actively sought other people to establish connections with them. In one instance I had just discussed something with them while they were seated and as I was about to leave a new recruit was hovering in the background, waiting for me to leave. Uncle Bubs waved the boy, about 16, over to them. He introduced himself by name, George, and where he was from, a place on the East Coast. His surname was apparently known to Bubs and Nan, because as soon as he stated his tribal affiliations, Nan interjected: “Oh, you must know so-and-so from this-and-that-village?” To which George replied that that was his grandparents on his father’s side. After some inquiries to how these grandparents were doing and more specifics on George’s family the conversation turned towards George’s experience with the group so far and if he was comfortable enough. They continued the conversation for about half an hour going over whom were George’s mates in the club and if he had anybody looking after him, and on that basis Bubs and Nan had made the connections with George, found out about his background, made sure he was doing ok in the group, and had assigned him a mentor, a *tuakana*. I will return to the mentoring shortly.



Traditionally *whanaungatanga* would, and in many cases still do, refer to kinship connections established between people sharing a common descent. Members of one *whanau* would claim *whanaungatanga* (relationship) with other *whanau* descended from a common *tipuna* (ancestor). This connection is made explicit with *whakapapa* (genealogy) and also makes explicit the reciprocal relationships, which ideally, should exist between these kin (Bishop 1996). This process is, according to Schwimmer (1990), a generative model for/of kinship as it can both be inclusive and exclusive through manipulation of these links. This is also replicated in ritual protocol, where links to other tribal areas are established in *whaikoorero* (speeches) and *waiata* (chant songs) (Tauroa and Tauroa 1986). By referring to the ancestors of the other group in speeches, one can either increase or close the distance between the two groups. Similarly, the employment of a particular song composed by a person from the other group can emphasise the kinship links between the two groups (Salmond 1976; Stirling and Salmond 1980).

Today, *whanaungatanga* can also refer to a *whanau*-like relationship between non-kin groups (Bishop 1996; Wihongi 2002). For these types of relationships the *whakapapa* (genealogy) is no longer relevant, as there may not necessarily be any actual kinship links between the members of the group. Instead, a common *kaupapa* (purpose/vision) is the unifying principle that binds people together. This can be seen in sporting teams like *waka ama* (canoeing/rowing) and in cultural groups practising kapa haka, where the reason for meeting and interacting is the activity itself. The *kaupapa* of Te Waka Huia will be discussed in the following chapter.

## **Wānanga – Communal Practices**

To maintain the connections and group identity, several communal practices are employed during a live-in that helps reinforce the *whanau* aspect of the kapa haka groups. First and foremost, of course, is the act of performing together, practicing and rehearsing the chosen items.

The practices are often organised such that the males go somewhere else (often outside) to practice while the females stay inside the largest building (where there is ample space to perform). The division between male/female is very practical as the female choreography is

most times more elaborate and since the females are to the front for most of the performances they also require more precise drilling of movements to appear uniform, a requirement in contemporary competition. The men would appear to me as more relaxed towards the same ideals but as I realised that because of their position in the back two rows they would be less visible to both judges and the audience they weren't required to maintain the same standard during the performance. Instead of having a lot of men getting tired of drilling the same part of the *poi*, for example, where the men usually stand to the rear with hands on their hips singing, lending vocal support to the females, they could spend their time practicing individual moves in groups or work on choreography. Consequently, they spent more time on the haka (where they are very visible) and put more effort into that – besides playing a lot of rugby or cricket.

For specific choreographed roles during a performance, like mau rakau (weaponry displays), the performers would go somewhere to practice their parts. Since symmetry in these displays is highly valued, two or more performers would be involved. I noticed that these performers would tend to be of the same age-group, or have previous experiences together in the past.

The same three performers chosen to do a *wero*, traditional challenge, when needed, were similarly of the same age-group and had approximately the same length of time in the group. They had all been part of the group for a long time, had performed commercially together at the Auckland War Memorial museum and for Pounamu overseas. I later found out that these performers were of roughly the same level of experience and roughly of the same age-group, paired up with others of lesser experience and of a younger age-group. The seniors were responsible for assisting the juniors in teaching. I will return to this shortly.

It is clear that the activity itself, in rehearsing and practicing together, has the additional effect, besides improving performance, that it also stimulates interaction between members. Explicitly, the practice itself is interaction, but also in the spare time when members interact more of their own free will. This illustrates an instance of kapa haka standing as an agent in the mediation of social relations between members, because the activity, *vis-à-vis* members, is the reason for the establishment of social relations in the first place (Gell 1998).

## Karakia – Blessings

Another practice that reinforces the bonds of *whanaungatanga* is the opening and closing of every practice session with a *karakia* (incantation/prayer). This will usually mark the start of a weekend session. The term *karakia* was originally applied to incantations that had to be repeated word perfect but is now also applied to Christian prayers held in *te reo Maori* (the Maori language) and prayers from any of the Maori religions, like Ringatū or Ratana (1996: 36). According to McLean (McLean 1996) Best and Buck are in agreement that *karakia* seldom involve an appeal to higher powers, thus aptly termed as incantations rather than invocations, but Shirres advances the seemingly contrary view that *karakia* link people of today with ancestors, the past, and also with the *atua* (gods) (cited in McLean 1996: 36). Barlow apparently agrees with Shirres' view and states that “the object of *karakia* is to find favour with the gods in all activities and pursuits” (Barlow 1991: 37). Anne Salmond's research into historical accounts indicate that *mātauranga*, and its particular form *waananga* (ancestral knowledge) were traditionally taught in the many *whare waananga* (houses of learning) in most tribal districts in accordance with their tribe's *tikanga* (1985: 242).

Sidney Mead mentions that those learning institutions of today, the universities and technical colleges that are called *waananga*, that have begun to incorporate *tikanga* into their teaching practices often begin the day's teaching with a *karakia* (incantation). Because learning and knowledge is still considered *tapu*, it is encouraged to begin learning sessions with *karakia* and in some instances to agree to certain restrictions regarding food. Because food is considered *noa* and the opposite of *tapu* (Mead 2003), food and teaching is ideally kept separate. Mead points out that this incorporation of *tikanga* into the learning institutions are greatly increased if the same learning institutions also have *kapa haka* groups that are able to “enhance the ability of the institution to practice other *tikanga*, such as traditional *waiata*, the *haka*, action songs and *poi*” (Mead 2003: 314).

In the case of Te Waka Huia, a *karakia* would mark the beginning of a weekend session as well as the commencement of teaching for the day. After everyone had arrived at the venue, usually this meant 2-3 hours after the stated time in the schedule, the senior members and core members would quietly circulate and inform members that we would be gathering in the *wharenui* (big house/main hall). Inside the *wharenui*, ‘Auntie’ Nan would be seated and

'Uncle' Bubs would be waiting in his characteristic pose, standing by his wife's side with his hands in his pockets, waiting for everyone to gather. After welcoming everyone and a short introductory speech he would call for a volunteer to perform a *karakia* by saying: "*Karakia? Anyone? Volunteers, please!*" and some of the native speakers in the group, usually a senior male, would lead the *karakia*.

We would also always conclude the evening's practice with a *karakia*, in a similar manner to mark the end of the day's teaching session. Similarly, at the end of a weekend session everyone would gather in a large circle, holding hands and *karakia* to give thanks for the teaching we had received and for a safe return home for all involved.

This suggests that group unity is expressed through this practice, as we would all come together in a large circle regardless of which group we belonged to; performers, tutors, juniors, seniors, core members, support staff and visitors. At the beginning and end of every session, and indeed every morning and evening, we were one group, one *whanau*. We had concluded the day's *tapu* (sacred) activities involving learning and were free to move on to other *noa* (profane) activities, like supper.

## **Kai time – Eating Together**

Mealtimes were in many ways highpoints in the live-ins. It offered a respite from the practice sessions which could be very demanding both physically and mentally. It was also a very social affair, mimicking the *hui* ceremony, where members would gossip, converse and joke with one another.

As most *wānanga* (as practices are called) are held on *marae* (communal centre) facilities the food is prepared and served in the *wharekai* (food hall). The support team are in charge of the food. They will be occupied most of the time during the live-in with shopping for, preparing and cleaning up after every meal. Breakfast would consist of at least a choice of cereal, porridge, bread, and/or fruit, and it would be served from around 7 a.m. to 8 a.m. to allow for the circulation of members to the dining room and through the shower facilities. The older, senior members would let me in on the secret of getting up early to avoid the rush and to have the selection of the best food before 8 a.m. The tutors or organisers would designate a team to help out with the dishes and the duties would rotate between boys/girls

and the two teams, Waka Huia and Manu Huia, giving the kitchen a total of four shifts to help out with cleaning up. The support team would then have time to have a smoke and coffee/tea before moving on to prepare the lunch which was usually served warm. The menu would be selected by the kitchen staff in advance and the expenses paid out of the club's account. Lunch would be served around 1 p.m. and another team would be designated for kitchen duties, allowing the kitchen staff another short break before moving on to preparing the supper, repeating the cycle.

The distribution of work equally among males and females and among senior and junior groups ensure that everyone participates in the necessary activities of helping the *whanau*, but there is more to this pattern than mere organisation of the workforce.

The emphasis on the *whanau* aspect of the group's communal activities enhances the individual's bond to the group, just like being at home with their own family, where everyone has to take turns at the house chores. This brings out the communal aspect of being in a group, a unity in industry that also maintains discipline towards the stated goal of the practice sessions; to increase the standards of performance. To this end every individual performer has to take their share of the responsibility and ensure that they are not holding the team back. I argue that this is mirrored in the equal distribution of chores during mealtimes, as every individual take on their part of the total responsibility for the improvement of the group.

Another interesting point is the consequent pairing of junior and senior members in the kitchen duties. By assigning one group of seniors to oversee the juniors the activity is ensured relatively smooth completion. The younger, junior members would not push the boundaries too far in the presence of their seniors, although the occasional play-fight in doing the dishes would spontaneously occur nonetheless. The responsibility of the senior group over the junior group is clearly stated in this practice.

The cross-gender pairing of males and females also ensures a dynamic interaction between senior and junior. The senior males would lend authority to keeping the peace in the same way that the senior females would. Getting told off once by a senior member of the opposite sex was more than enough to stop any misbehaving on the juniors' behalf. Not only does this

ensure that the kitchen chores are completed, but it also emphasises the group's identity as a *whanau* where members all participate in the same chores, regardless of gender. This points to an ideal of gender complementarities that I shall return to in the next chapter.

Additionally the cross-gender pairing cuts across the regular pattern of interaction between the members of the group, where the men and women would congregate in different groups, as I have described above. This also adds to the process of *whakawhanaungatanga* when people are, in essence, forced to interact outside of their normal group(s).

## **Seating and Sleeping**

During mealtimes the members would seat themselves into groups, displaying a pattern of seating arrangements that reflected their relative status in the group. The tutors would be reserved seats close to the counter set up for the food and senior members would offer to get the food for them. This happened more often for Nan than for Bubs, indicating the deference made to females. This was also apparent in the line-up for the food: the boys (no matter their age) would give way to the girls (again, no matter their age) so that the females would always have the first serving of food. Mothers with small children would be alerted in advance and given the opportunity to go in first before anyone else, as the children would require seating and a bit more time to be fed than the adults. Males and females would sometimes seat themselves separately during mealtimes.

The more senior members, referred to as the “core members”, would often either sit with their family (if they were in the group) or with their group of same-sex friends. The younger, junior members would copy this pattern but less rigidly. As the younger, junior members in the beginning of the season are all just as new to this as the next recruit, they would tend to group themselves in a larger group with mostly junior members, regardless of gender.

A distinction was made with regards to the seating of the Wehi *whanau* (family). They would almost without fail seat themselves around the tutors, Bubs and Nan, along with the most senior, core members. This would go hand in hand with who was in charge of the organising of the events as mealtimes would be a time to sort out any tasks that needed to be handled or decided upon. The tutors of the two groups would also seat themselves close to Bubs and Nan in this manner (and so would I – the only “intruder” in this arrangement). This

arrangement was for the most of the time a practical arrangement where ideas about the day's teachings could be discussed and the various tutors could appraise the leaders on the progress of specific items. It also functioned as a "clearing house" for eliminating inconsistencies and mistakes, but inherent in the arrangement lays deference to seniority – Bubs and Nan were the oldest and most experienced.

Sleeping arrangements would be made around at whatever time was deemed right for the children and sections of the *wharenuī* (meetinghouse) would be designated a sleeping area for the children and those that wanted to go to sleep early. For the rest of us, lights out would be at 10 or 11 PM, when the whole room was prepared for sleeping. Mattresses would be brought in from the nearby storeroom and people would make their beds for the night. Again, a pattern emerged from the sleeping arrangements. Generally, people would sleep close to relatives or friends and certain people would be given special precedence in choosing their sleeping arrangements. The best spot in the house, close to the back wall, usually considered thus by its proximity to an exit, facilities and out of the way for the main walking space, would be given to Bubs and Nan, and they would be provided with two foam mattresses and an ample supply of pillows. The kitchen staff would also be given a good spot as they would often be in bed by 9 PM and up by 5 AM the next morning. Some of the senior boys of Te Manu Huia, being both seniors and juniors at the same time would try to scrounge two mattresses for themselves but these would often be stolen by someone else, redressing the wrong and re-distributing the mattresses during the evening. In the end everyone had at least one mattress and one pillow.

The patterns evident in the seating and sleeping arrangements both point to two things; a gender distinction and a principle of seniority. The deference to the females as made explicit by the males, again replicates the *whanau* principle in action. The deference to seniority as authoritative figures points to a hierarchical structure where seniority is given respect because of their genealogical, or quasi-genealogical, differentiated rank.

## Maintaining the Ties

*Morten: “Why do you think people keep coming back to practices? Is belonging to a group that important to people that they come back because of it?”*

*Bubs: “You might have to look into that. Why do people come back? Yes, I think belonging is a big part of it. You have to have the passion. It’s here [points to heart]”*

The weekend live-ins spent at a particular location, that may be far away from husbands, wives, children and family, with practices taking up the better part of the weekend is a commitment made by members. This commitment is paid back by the club by arranging varying ‘socials’ or by going on trips of a longer or shorter duration.

The ‘socials’ often take the form of parties held after a completed event or parties celebrating holidays. For example, the Christmas party is a major event for members and as it is usually held in-between the regional and the national competitions<sup>24</sup> it coincides with the wind-down from a previous season with the wind-up towards a new season. The Christmas parties are family affairs. Every member is invited along with their families and there are games and activities for the kids along with food – plenty of food. Since I missed the Christmas party of 2003 I was treated to an edited version captured on camera by someone in the group. The resulting footage was edited and scored with music and had several “highlights” captioned with imaginative, and humorous, titles. These events are all social events, with no practices involved, and as such play an important part in *whakawhanaungatanga*.

Another type of party that is considered to be a payment for the commitment the members have invested is the after-party. These mark the final day of major events and is celebrated

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<sup>24</sup> Tamaki Makaurau regional competitions (Auckland region; colloquially called “regionals”) are usually held in the spring (August – November) and the Matatini national competitions (colloquially called “nationals” or “nats”) are usually held in the summer (February – June).



with a large party. These are regular parties with the hosting committee (if on a trip) or celebratory parties with the other competing teams following major competitions, regional or national. For the after-parties, the two teams usually come together as a big group and party into the night. Part of the process of these after-parties is going around to the other finalists and the winners and congratulating them on their victory or to receive the same from others. For the 2004 Tamaki Makaurau Regional Competition a party-bus was hired by the club that took the whole club on the rounds to the other venues where the other (rival) teams celebrated. The numbers dwindled throughout the night as members stayed on with friends and relatives from other groups, went home or went to town in smaller groups. All the time people would look after their own members. If one had too much to drink or got sick, another person would take them home and care for them. A lot of time was spent waiting in the bus, making increasingly difficult headcounts and accounting for who went with whom where and who was still with us. If any were found missing scouting parties would be sent out and we wouldn't leave until everyone was accounted for.

Together with the social interaction *like* a family of the practices these socials indicate that members of Te Waka Huia treat each other *like* kin, as uncle Bubs is explicit about when describing the group as operating under the traditional *whanau* system where there are respected places for grandparents through to *mokopuna*, or grandchildren. This means that the group is a unity (like a family) bound together by a certain type of relationships and that the members are classified according to a system that is *like* a family. The form and intensity of these relationships are given by the classificatory relational terms, for example someone who is your classificatory uncle is like your father's or mother's brother, so you instantly have a frame of reference for your role as relative to this 'uncle' and also for your feelings toward that person. This is very clear in the way that especially Bubs and Nan interact with new, younger members. Their behaviour were no different from how they would be towards their *mokopuna* (grandchildren), only perhaps more gentle towards others. Similarly with the 'brothers' and 'sisters' in the group, that also provide ready-made relational categories that are easy to adopt. This all points towards the family as the central unity in industrial undertakings that kapa haka practices are – everyone needs to pull in the same direction. Therefore, the “respected places for everyone” provides unity, but also leadership as the

family in every aspect has stratified, differentiated roles. Roles and ranks, as we have seen that are based on seniority and gender.

## **Breaking the Bonds – Leaving a Group**

This ideal of sociality as a family also elucidates something about the movement between groups by members. If joining a team initiates a process of initiation into *whanau*-like connection with non-kin similar to 'kinship' with obligations and expectations, then it also follows that breaking such bonds is just as hard. After all, you would leave your 'family'.

Changing teams needs to be handled with care so as not to upset people and their feelings. Due to the fact that I spent some time with another group before coming to Te Waka Huia, I experienced some sanctioning because I didn't announce my change of teams properly, even though I was never a performing member – at least in my mind. A former member stated in no uncertain terms what his feelings on the subject were. "You should have stayed on with [the other group], bro. Just learnt your items and gone hard."

Uncle Bubs told me that he had a very strict policy on accepting members from another *rōpū* (group). Since he was the receiving tutor he didn't want any ill feeling directed towards him, and that it was the performer's responsibility to end the relationship on amicable terms with the former tutor. The change would have to be cleared with the other group, and he admitted that in most of the instances where someone wanted to come to Te Waka Huia, he had in fact spoken with the former tutor and cleared things before he would accept a new member. The process of interviewing would sometimes go into detail with the reasons for quitting and the circumstances involving the desired changeover.

*Bubs: "Belonging is a big part of it, yes. You put your time in with the group and you come to rely on that. Loyalty to the group comes first."*

Bubs and Nan had once experienced this first-hand when they were required to move from Gisborne, home of their former group, Waihirere, to Auckland when Bubs was offered a position with the Maori Affairs Department. They had taken over the leadership of Waihirere

when the former tutor, Wiremu 'Bill' Kerekere had moved to Wellington in 1965. Nan explained that the group took the news of their imminent move very hard.

*Nan: "They took it very hard. You see, he was groomed for that position, and they took it very hard. We're ok now, after all these years, but it took time – hardest time of our life!"*

Another situation that gave me some insight into the problems of leaving such a group that is considered like a family was when Nan had to make a decision about three female performers for the regional competition in 2004. The decision was down to "cutting" one of the three, meaning they would not get to perform at the regional competition, but what was worse was that since the rules of Te Matatini state that only performers who have qualified as part of a qualifying team at regional level can perform at national level. The implications of being "cut" would effectively bar the person from appearing at the national competition the next year. Nan was upfront about the impending decision being very hard to make and it was beginning to show on the three women. They were all competing to secure their position and there was very little that separated them, according to Nan. When the decision was made she took all three to the side when the rest of the group was busy doing other things and announced her decision to all three. Although the other two were visibly relieved to have confirmation about their own position in the team, a fact I confirmed in later conversation, they were also saddened on behalf of the one being "cut". The one that was "cut", Ginny, was visibly upset, tears streaming down her face and after being embraced by the other two, and embracing Nan for a long time while Nan spoke to her, she left the practice and stayed away for a period of time.

When I had the chance to talk with her a couple of days later, she expressed disappointment in being "cut" from the team. She felt betrayed and alone and believed her performance to be on par or even better than her two competitors, but she also claimed to hold no ill will or feelings toward Nan for making the decision. She was upset and was unsure of her future for some time but in the end she came back to the group and stayed for several practices as a spectator. She was also given a role as an assistant junior tutor, helping out with the junior team.

This example again indicates the *whanau* ideal of sociality and relational practice as a very real social practice that can have devastating consequences on relations, if not handled carefully. The difficulty Nan had in making a decision about the performance of the team was accentuated by the *whanau* ideology because the outcome of cutting someone from the team would have devastating consequences for a family-members self-esteem and would therefore feel betrayed by the decision no matter how ‘right’ it was for the good of the team.

Over time, by staying in a group, one’s status will inevitably shift from ‘junior’ to ‘senior’. The process is not set but rather expressed as a general genealogical principle of seniority (Goldman 1970). In the following I will present a new member, a ‘junior’ at her first introduction to the group, and an older member of the ‘junior’ group that move to a role of increased responsibility, thereby becoming a ‘senior’.

## Tuakana (senior) / Teina (junior) – Seniority principle

The adaptation of a genealogical principle is in keeping with the group’s emphasis of relations being termed as *whanau*-like within the group. It follows that if the group is conceptually considered a family that the terminology employed to describe the relations is the same as the one used when describing genealogy. The relationship in *whakapapa* (genealogy) between junior and senior is a fundamental principle for organising status differences, but it is also inclusive in that it is capable of assigning genealogical rank to everyone (1970). In the *whakapapa* ethic this means that senior and junior lineages can relate to one another for example by means of tracing their descent from a common pair of siblings, originators of the senior/junior division of later descent lines and lineages.

By the division of a senior group, *Te Waka Huia*, and a junior group, *Te Manu Huia*, it is given that members of the senior group, by virtue of having been part of the collective for a longer time, is considered to have a higher status than the new arrivals, a fact that was not overlooked when tasks were handed out during practices. The senior members would often order their younger ‘siblings’ around, directing them to certain tasks. This is not to say that the seniors themselves didn’t contribute, rather that they took on what ‘uncle’ referred to as “the mantle of leadership”. Everyone has to start out at the bottom and work their way up the

system. Conversely, the seniors are expected to take on more responsibility and help out their younger ‘cousins’.

## **Rangimarie**

Rangimarie, a Pounamu student for the last year-and-a-half, was one of the new recruits. At 23 years of age she had, in her own words, “always been doing kapa haka”. In her time at Pounamu she had started out in Level 2 because of her previous experience with kapa haka. She was a fluent speaker of Māori and also a relation of Auntie Nan, which was one of the primary reasons for joining Pounamu – and for trying out for Te Waka Huia at this muster. According to her tutors at Pounamu she had the potential to be a very good performer and her attendance and attitude was exemplarily, giving her very good chances to make the team.

She was also related to two of the tutors at Pounamu, both of whom had experience from the senior group, Te Waka Huia, and both were considered solid members in the group. She explained that a major reason for her moving to Auckland to attend school at Pounamu was the opportunity to be a part of Te Waka Huia and learn from Auntie Nan and Uncle Bubs. In addition to having the safety-net of going with her relatives to practices she also shared a flat with one of the junior tutors at Pounamu.

She wasn’t the only Pounamu student asked to try out for a spot in the team this muster. Initially four boys and three girls were groomed for more responsibility and invited to the muster. This was later adjusted to include only three of the boys and two girls. Of these, only Rangimarie made it into the group.

Once she was confirmed as having a spot in Te Manu Huia, making her a *de facto* member, she was more or less assigned her older ‘sisters’ to assist in getting to grips with the performance items. This mentoring system of pairing seniors with juniors is employed as a strategy to assist new arrivals with finding their place in a group by attaching them to already established members and their networks within a group. This is not a new system, in fact it can be argued that it follows from a general principle in Polynesian kinship: the emphasis is placed on seniority in genealogy is a fundamental divide in many Polynesian societies. As Goldman (Goldman 1970) writes, the Polynesian kinship systems explicitly recognise the distinction between the status and authority of senior and junior members by supplying terms

for senior and junior siblings. In Māori these terms are *tuakana* (senior male relative) / *tuāhine* (senior female relative) and *teina* (junior male or female relative). On her first trip with Te Waka Huia, along with the other junior members, she was introduced to the rest of the group as *teina* that would require some looking after by the senior members.

*Bubs: “Everyone’s special. You’re quite lucky. Club’s paying your way to Aussie [Australia]. Those from Pounamu who’s going, stand up! [Applause from the group] These are the teina. Look after them, please!”*

It is expected that the senior members look after and help the junior members out if they need it. It is seen as a very bad *tohu* (sign/omen) if this does not happen. On those occasions that Nan would see this among the females she would point it out by stating: “You see that there are people among you who are struggling! Why aren’t you helping them? This is your responsibility!”

## **Peter**

One that took on this responsibility was Peter. Slightly older than Rangimarie, in his mid-twenties, and doing a degree at university, he was already an old hand in *Te Manu Huia*. He had several mates in the group and was a solid, consistent performer with a good record, as well as having tribal affiliations to uncle Bubs.

I was catching a ride with Peter back into town after spending the day at a practice. Peter was a university student and was considered a “core member” of Te Manu Huia, the junior group in the ‘family’. He had told Bubs and Nan that he, along with a few of his close mates, would stay in Te Manu Huia for this year’s regional competition, to help the junior team out rather than “move up” into the senior group, Te Waka Huia. I had previously established that he was not part of the *whanau* (extended family), nor was he a *whanaunga* (relation) of Bubs and Nan, so I was curious as to how he got involved with Te Waka Huia:

*“You know, I didn’t think I would be doing any kapa haka after high school. I thought it was a kid’s thing. When I was done, that was going to be it, you know? But then my cousin wanted to go [to try out for a position in Waka Huia] and I ended up going with him. He didn’t make it but I did, and here I am.” (Peter)*

In fact, Peter ended up staying, not only in the group, but in the 2004 Tamaki Makaurau regional competitions, he chose to “stay behind” in the junior group, Te Manu Huia, with the hope that he could help the group qualify for the national competition to the following year. He chose to “stay behind” with the junior team along with a handful of his mates that hopefully would lend some experience and seniority to the group composed mostly of new recruits. Peter and two other mates, Te Whare and Bill, all senior members that had ‘put their time in’ with the junior group, could all have tried out for a position in the senior team. A position in the senior team not only carries more prestige but is also a more likely way of making it into the national competition, as Te Waka Huia has qualified for every national competition since their first entry in 1986. Why did they choose to “stay behind”?

Vicky, the tutor of Te Manu Huia, shed some light on this in one of her speeches to the group:

*“I want you all to know that Te Whare, Bill, and Peter all chose to stay behind. They were individually approached by mum and dad and invited to try out for Waka’s – and I know that they would have made it – but they chose to stay behind to help you guys out. I want you all to know that and recognise it.”*

Being the ‘senior’ members of the junior group they took leading roles in the group and began tutoring the ‘junior’ members, helping the principal tutor, Vicky, with both keeping discipline and providing comic relief when needed. This is what Linton (Linton 1936) terms as an “ascribed” status, rather generally stated as “a position in a particular pattern [and] the minimum attitudes and behavior which [a person] must assume if he is to participate in the overt expression of the pattern” (Linton 1936: 113). The senior boys were crucial to the junior group’s success in qualifying in the regional competition, and this was publicly

commended by Bubs and Nan, as well as the senior members of Te Waka Huia, the senior group, those which qualify as “core members” of the club.

## Core members – Status and Roles in the Group

After having advanced from *Te Manu Huia* to *Te Waka Huia* by performing at a high standard consistently for a time and having gained experience in the junior group and the senior group the next level of membership is into what is called the “core”. These are the experienced members who also take a direct role in the day-to-day running of the club. They fill administrative functions as treasurers, organisers and assistants to the leaders or help out in composing and choreographing items. They are, as I pointed out in a previous section, granted more access to the leaders, often spending a lot of time at their house prior to practices and musters getting everything from budgets, venues, photocopies and handouts ready to costumes, transports, songs and music composed and sorted out.

### Kelly and John

One such core member is Kelly. In her mid-thirties, she has spent over ten years with the group, a period of time only matched by one other active member besides *whanau* members of the leaders. She is the mother of four children from the age of four to twelve. Her husband is also a long-serving member and the couple met “in club”. Her husband, John, is also a former Pounamu student and was regularly given the responsibility of performing the *wero* for the group.

Those of the core members who had partners would tell me that more often than not, they met their future partners through the group. Not surprisingly as the members spend a lot of time with the group. Those who had partners outside the club had partners that didn’t perform or compete with only few exceptions. The partnerships that resulted in children would often bring these to practices and these children would be referred to as the “Waka Huia children”, and some of the new recruits during my fieldwork were of this category.

These core members are the “stalwarts of club”, as Bub referred to them, whose seniority lends authority in keeping discipline, spaced among the younger, more anxious members as



they are. By interspersing seniors and juniors one assures that everyone has someone of experience to look to if they should forget their lines or mix up the actions in the heat of a performance. The core members are almost assured a spot in the front row, a place of high visibility and exposure that all vie for in the muster and practices. Their experience is therefore vital in performing, but they also assume responsibility of the smooth running and operation of the club through other tasks.

Kelly held an administrative post for the club and was credited with keeping the wheels running by Nan on more than one occasion: “We are very lucky to have her – to have them both. They have been very loyal to club”. Her husband was integral to the smooth running of the club and maintained discipline over the younger members.

When I spoke to them they told me they were getting ready to move on from the club. This was a decision they intentionally postponed for as long as possible, because they saw that their expertise was sorely needed. They both held important positions with their particular skills and talents that would have to be replaced. It was also very hard for them to begin to consider leaving the group as they had many friends in club.

## Terms of Address

### **Uncle – Auntie / Koro – Kuia / Matua – Whaea / ‘Bro’ and ‘Cuz’**

The seniority principle is also expressed through the terms of address in the group. Although it took me some time to figure out that ‘uncle’ Bubs was actually an uncle (Mother’s Brother or Father’s Brother) to some of the members, I knew that there were far too many nephews and nieces running around. The preferred form of address as ‘uncle’ is also a classificatory one (Keesing) of being of ego’s generation + one (Keesing table 7). In that respect I was in luck that I chose to call Bubs and Nan for ‘uncle’ and ‘auntie’ as I’m approximately the same age as their youngest child, so I wasn’t too far off the mark. The core members of the group would also choose this form of address when not using proper names, showing that this was a common feature in the group.

Those who were the “Waka Huia kids” would either use ‘*koro*’ and ‘*kuia*’ (grandfather and grandmother) or ‘*matua*’ and ‘*whaea*’ (terms introduced through *kohanga reo* and *kura kaupapa* meaning ‘teacher’ gender-respective, originally meaning ‘father’/‘uncle’ and ‘mother’/‘auntie’). The junior members, all around mid-twenties or younger, would use ‘*matua*’ and ‘*whaea*’ in addressing Ngāpo and Pimia.

This usage of the familial terms implies that the classificatory relationship between two people proscribes their relative relationship. Buck explains this, in effect, ready guide to appropriate behaviour towards most social encounters like this: “When I was told that an aged visitor whom I had never seen before was *tipuna* to me, my heart warmed towards him. I placed him in the same category as my other *tipuna* who resided in the same village and had lavished affection upon me” (Buck cited in Metge 1976: 20) For example, Nan would treat me in the same manner that my own grandmother would treat me, kissing me on the cheek, patting my head and holding my hands when we were talking together. The realisation of this hit me one night when the group had finished a series of performances.

Bubs and Nan were getting ready to leave the party, and they were both visibly tired. Our hosts were hovering quietly in the background, discretely keeping an eye on them to get an indication when it would be appropriate to take them to their accommodations. Nan looked like she was having a good time, despite the late hour. She had been smiling ever since the last applause died out. She been given a seat next to the fire, and she was dressed in traditional *marae*-style finery; a long black cashmere coat and a big, furry hat. Bubs sat next to her, gently holding her hand and reassuring himself that she was alright. He had asked her if she wanted to go to bed about four or five times already but surprisingly enough, she wanted to stay a little longer with the group to show her thorough appreciation of a job well done.

As always, I had taken a seat next to them because this was a great opportunity to talk to them both. They were my mentors, my sponsors *and* my caretakers, forever making sure I was taken care of. I sat talking to *Nan* for a while before she turned to Bubs, to indicate that she was ready to leave. I got up and nodded to Bubs and he returned the nod, saying goodbye, while Nan got up from her seat. She said goodbye to her daughter-in-law, Annette, before she turned to me. She leaned forward to say goodbye in what appeared to be the usual

way, a quick peck on the right cheek in lieu of the more formal *hongī*, pressing of noses. I leaned forward, presenting the right cheek to kiss her goodnight. Instead of the expected quick peck, she held my head gently and gave me a big, wet kiss on the right cheek and held on to me for about two or three seconds while she patted my head, smiling at me in a very “grandmotherly” way. Then she turned and took Bubs’ hand, waved to the group and they both took their leave.

I sat down, somewhat stunned by the proceedings. The tiny change in the formal gesture had shaken me in my realization that *something* was indeed different. I had crossed some unseen boundary and been accepted into a more familiar sphere of belonging. I was finally, after eight months, an “insider”. The foundation had been laid four years ago when I spent a year under Bubs’ and Nan’s tutelage, completing all three stages of kapa haka being offered at the university. I had been allowed almost total access to both Bubs and Nan, and I could approach them quite easily without any of the apprehension that I could see in others. I was an outsider that literally sidestepped the genealogical boundaries that seemingly governed others’ behaviour in their presence. I was invited to ask questions freely of them both. Only close family, or long-time members of the group – in essence becoming family members themselves in the process – could be seen to ask questions as freely.

When I later asked him on the reason why he gave me permission he stated simply: “Part of it has to do with Nan’s ancestry. You come from Norway and so does her *tupuna*, and that is part of it – the connection”. In a conversation with Annette I brought up the topic of being granted access by Bubs and Nan, and asked her what her thoughts on the matter were. “Bubs is very trusting. I’m not like that. If you had come to me first to ask permission to do what you’ve done I would’ve said no”.

By a change in a tiny gesture Nan communicated a message for everyone to see that I was accepted by her, and by extension her husband too, as the couple never decided something on their own. To me, she showed the affection of a grandmother, a gesture of familiarity, and of trust that people of the same family share. By doing so made me feel welcome in her family, but not only that, she also conveyed the rather garbled argument above, at the same time praising my background, my intentions and my efforts as acceptable and correct. This was in no way dissimilar to the way I had observed them conversing with George earlier.

Another form of addressing a fellow member would be “bro” (short for ‘brother’, used about both males and females) or “cuz” (short for ‘cousin’, also used about both males and females). Both of these terms were used for both kin and non-kin alike and are considered more like slang terms than referring to any kinship ideology, although their indicated closeness in terms of familiarity points to a sociality, like the terms mentioned above, that is centred on a family-ideology.

## In Summary

The social processes of joining, belonging to, and possibly leaving, a group have been illustrated with cases. Since most of the people I asked stated that their family and relations were either already in the group or that they came to the “muster”, the annual get-together of members marking a new season of kapa haka, with a family member or close relation, the process of joining a team provides insight into the social workings of a team, as Anne Salmond argues, for Māori, everything is a question of relationships between people, places and events (Salmond 1983).

Given the premise that social relations only exist in so far they are made manifest in actions (Gell 1998), I have analysed these actions, or rather patterns of interaction to elucidate the social relationships, meaning how ‘agents’ act in a specific manner towards certain people. This interaction sheds light on the relational patterns, that are modelled around a familiar kinship-like structure, that of the *whanau*, the extended family. Any member can have *whanau*-like relations with other members, but some also have kinship relations with other members that add to the complexity of the social organisation of the group dynamic – these “other things around it, and not just kapa haka”, as uncle Bubs stated above.

After having examined the social relations within the various groups, between members, and also between the groups, I have shown how the *whanau* system works in the group to provide positions of respect for everyone in the group. The respect owed is ordered in a hierarchical system with the Wehi family at the apex with the other arranged in descending order below as core members, seniors and junior. By examining these social relations I have elucidated the social organisation of the collective of competing groups and how the

individual groups figure in the totality. I have shown how these social relationships between members, can give us an understanding of how the various roles and statuses in a group are distributed.



## Chapter Five: Social Values and Life-Projects

*The students at Pounamu were preparing a new item for their bracket and had just begun learning the text. The class was sitting at their desks, arranged in a horseshoe formation with a whiteboard oriented towards the students. They would practice the words and tune like this, seated at their desks, for a few days before they would move on to learn the movements and actions on the floor. The teaching of a new item always followed the same format – and the students were instructed to follow the same pattern when they researched items of their own choosing as part of their term papers; who composed the item, for what purpose, what type of item or genre is it, when was it performed first and by whom. These were all important points that were integral to each item, although they were separate from the text itself in that this was transmitted orally alongside the written text of the item.*

*Vicky, the senior tutor, had written the words up on the whiteboard was standing next to the board as she was repeating the history of the item for the students. The students who hadn't written it all down were furiously copying the words down into their notebooks while the students who were mostly up-to-date on the item were listening to the tutor's admonition. She asked the students a question about the composer of the item they were rehearsing today, as was the usual method of going over a new item; first an introduction of the composer, what region he or she was from, listing any tribal affiliations followed a short explanation of what the item was about before any words were written up on the whiteboard.*

*The students who had been paying attention in the last session held up their hands and the student chosen could proudly announce the correct answer, two named composers, the current leaders of Waihirere. These were relations of Nan, and by extension also Bubs and Bubs and Nan had been leaders of the group Waihirere prior to moving to Auckland.*

*Vicky, the tutor, exclaimed: "That's right! That's mana for you – more pressure!" and followed up with a new question of when this particular item was first performed. The students all knew the answer to this and all answered in unison. Vicky: "More pressure! You have to remember this when you're doing it! 'Who composed it', 'who performed it first': You have to bring all of this with you. That's more pressure on you! I want to see that out there! [pointing to the performance area on the floor]"*

# Characteristics of Kapa Haka

## Spirituality and Materiality

In my summary of the theoretical framework I explained how knowledge, *mātauranga* is considered *tapu*, under religious restriction, and how *mana*, ancestral power, has supernatural origins. One of the characteristics of kapa haka that is easily identifiable in the social interaction within a group, as I have shown in the previous chapter is the emphasis of the spiritual over the material. Metge explains what she calls “religious” view of the world and man’s place in it as a series of complementary oppositions, for example *tapu* and *noa* (Metge 1976: 50). Integral to this view we also find *mana* as an expression of differentiated status and achievement. An example of this differentiated status is the term *tohunga*. The term used to refer to a specialist of a particular field as well as religious experts schooled in the houses of learning, *whare wānanga*, but today denotes an expert, as is the case with Ngāpo and Pimia being bestowed that title as recognition of their expertise and life-long involvement with kapa haka.

Consider for a moment the practice of kapa haka as ‘tradition’. Before any given individual can engage with it, it has been passed on through successive generations, to reiterate Mead’s statement: “The art legacy passed down from the ancestors to the generations of today is a gift of great magnificence” (Mead 2003: 253). This gift or legacy enables individuals and groups to enjoy a celebrity and status comparable to the ancestors themselves (Kāretu 1993). In effect a “demonstration of pride, prestige, dignity and tradition of the highest quality” (Wehi 1973). What all these statements have in common is the insistence on the continued validity of Māori categories and concepts, like *mana*, *tapu*, *noa*, and *taonga*. Uncle Bubs’ usage of *karakia* before a *wānanga* session is an indication that knowledge is under religious restriction and should be handled with care. The reference to the original composer when teaching an item, like the example with Vicky that opened this chapter and the reference to the original performance of the same tells us in no uncertain terms that *mana* is considered operational among Māori. Also, if ancestral carvings *are* ancestors like Henare suggests then *waiata* and *haka* composed by someone who has since passed away must be a residue of some kind, a part of their personhood that is activated by use. This distributed personhood is stored within people as a kind of knowledge. Salmond argues that the purpose of knowledge



in Māori epistemologies is to advance the interests of the kinsfolk and ancestors and uphold their *mana* (Salmond 1995). Anne Salmond also argues that Māori tribal thinkers view knowledge as “practical and ethical, to be used to find good pathways for their people” (Salmond 1995: 44). I will return to this point shortly.

## **Communality and Individualism**

As I have shown in the previous chapter the social relationships within a group is fundamental to its continued existence, and that “belonging” to a group is a continual social process. By “belonging” to something, in this case a kapa haka group or collective, alongside others members and tutors constitute a community, a group of people with a common background or shared interests within a society.

In Māori terms “belonging” has always been tied to *whenua* (land) and *whanaunga* (kin). These two are connected in the term *turangawaewae*, meaning “a place to stand” (Williams 2003). The term referring to one’s tribal *marae* and the rights one has to speak freely on one’s own land (as *marae* are often on tribal grounds). The support of one’s *whanaunga* (relations) is also implicit in the term, as one’s community of choice would be close to kin (Goldman 1970).

If we consider the communal practices of kapa haka it is clear that one ideal of kapa haka is the process of making a “group” of a bunch of individual performers. This is social process, as I have described and analysed in the previous chapter. Through these processes these individual performers come together into one community, a kapa haka group. The practices, musters, live-ins and *wānanga* are all organised in what we can call a “communal way”, provisions are made for people to eat, sleep and live together for shorter periods of time. In between these times of practices, the time is filled with planning, organising and arranging for the next scheduled meetings. Interspersed between these events that demand commitment on the behalf of the performers there are events that is intended to repay the commitment and loyalty of the members.

The relational ideal of the group *as* a family, the notion of the *whanau* system of sociality, implies differences in status and roles. The status (junior, senior, core and family) is partly determinant for the role (tutor, composer, choreographer, organiser, kitchen staff, etc.) in the

group but also determined by the role in the group. The availability of positions within the group, or *whanau*, as the case may be, is not fixed. These positions are mainly based on principles of seniority, meaning experience *and* proven loyalty in practice. It should also be noted that while these positions are achieved through gaining experience (through “belonging” over time) and proven loyalty (through doing what is required), they are neither static nor automatic. They must be achieved consistently and consecutively at every new season. The individual must re-affirm their commitment to the community through ascribing to the joint project of the group, in a sense, one must find ones place among all the positions available. The emphasis on doing in this context is important, because the sum of all this activity requires a direction and leadership that the community follows. This direction and leadership comes from two things: *whakapapa* and *kaupapa*.

I described some of these positions in the previous chapter when I described the *tuakana/teina* principle inherent to the *whanau* system. Metge describes this principle as applying to all generations and that “both men and women made a distinction between older and younger siblings of the same sex, calling the former *tuakana* and the latter *teina*“ (Metge 1976: 18). This usage of kinship terms with regards to social relations works to draw people together in a tightly-knit group of quasi-kin, and has connotations to differentiated status and roles within the group. Metge explains:

*The use of the same kinship terms for close and distant kin reflected a similarity of attitudes and behaviour. For instance, EGO gave respect, obedience and service to his classificatory ‘mothers’ and ‘fathers’ as to his parents, was protective to his ‘sisters’, and fondled and if necessary chastised his ‘sons’ and ‘daughters’ (Metge 1976: 18).*

Similarly in the *whanau* of Te Waka Huia, these ‘mothers’ and ‘fathers’, also applicable to older ‘brothers’ and ‘sisters’ find their place within the social organisation of the group.

Additionally, the authority of these same ‘mothers’, ‘father’ or older ‘siblings’ is given in its socially founded relational status, as Metge points out above. This is clearly observable as being in effect in many contexts. For example, the placement of ‘uncles’ on the wings of the men’s rows indicates that these positions are intended to maintain balance between young

and old, junior and senior. The effect is double in that the presence of a senior member both gives comfort and security in that the expertise and experience can have a calming effect on nerves or if one should forget one's actions or lines, but also is a figure of authority that maintains discipline, ensuring focus on the performance at hand.

We should also bear in mind that while this sounds like a very fluid and system that allows for upward mobility there is also the very real structure of a real *whakapapa* and a real *whanau*, meaning that the Wehi family holds most of the positions of leadership in the group. This is not at all surprising considering that the tutors in many respects *are* the epitome of the group, without Bubs and Nan there would be no Waka Huia as they are the originators of the group.

In Māori the word *kaupapa* is often used to denote the common purpose, rules of operation or policy, and an organisation's *kaupapa* is paramount for its members to understand. This responsibility towards the group collective requires resources from each individual member that are allocated to the benefit of the whole collective. In my own experience *kaupapa* was extensively used with the intended meaning of 'purpose'. "Get on the kaupapa!" would be used to instruct students at Pounamu to sharpen up and get their act together. Meaning that slacking off would not be tolerated as it wasn't fair on the other students who were there to learn.

The *kaupapa* of Te Waka Huia is "excellence in kapa haka" that is realised by competing with the other groups in biennial Te Matatini National Kapa Haka Festival, but there is more to it than that. The very name "Te Waka Huia" evokes the notion of "a *taonga* which contains precious treasures" (*About Te Waka Huia* 2005), and "the resemblance between members as individual repositories of treasures, the potential inherent in every person and the collective contribution to be made to Maoridom" (*About Te Waka Huia* 2005). These individual repositories of treasures, who really can be anyone that collectively contributes to Maoridom, that all Māori are part of, can only do so through participation in the collective. An individual effort through communal pursuits that is linked through *whakapapa* to all other Māori "who acknowledge Aotearoa as their turangawāeae" (*About Te Waka Huia* 2005).

This is expressed as *kotahitanga* (unity), and the members of Waka Huia would frequently support one another's efforts in any field, if asked to do so. For example, when one of the tutors of Pounamu announced a fund-raiser *hangi* (meal cooked in an earth oven) towards money for one of the group's trips, all staff of Pounamu and other members of Te Waka Huia signed up for a plate, and some also bought several for their family. Similarly, the strength of unity within the group was made manifest in how people of Waka Huia would arrange opportunities for others. For the group this was as often as not done through the group's email list, maintained by a *whanau* member of the leaders. In this manner they communicated and shared job opportunities with other members. Those members who worked in the film industry would give others a heads up message when castings took place. Not surprisingly the numerous members employed in the tourism industry, both active and former members, would distribute job ads. The members would also act as references for each other when needed. As leaders, Bubs and Nan were probably in the highest demand, and Bubs told me that a certificate from Pounamu would indicate that the person was a reliable, hard worker, especially in tourism, performing arts and related fields where Bubs and Nan were well known. One dance company recruited extensively among former Pounamu students, due to the fact that the leader was a former member and knew the standards of excellence that Bubs and Nan maintained.

When I questioned this practice I was told by Bubs that people could only recommend people they could vouch for, and the people they could vouch for were the people they knew best: friends, family or members of the group. Again this shows the insistence on relational categories between people. Where the practice would be considered as bordering on nepotism among the Pākehā majority this is instead seen as the fundamental principle in Māori sociality. To know someone is to make them fit into a system of a type relational ideal that is like kinship.

The unity ideal, ultimately expressed through the kinship-ethic of *whakapapa* put into practice through the social process of *whakawhanaungatanga* by constituting a group identity as Te Waka Huia, Te Manu Huia, Pounamu Huia and ultimately Te Waka Huia *whanau*. The *whanau* model for social organisation together with the *tuakana/teina* principle of differentiated roles and statuses that are inter-dependent instantiates social relations

through a hierarchical structure that also encompasses social mobility between positions. The application of *kaupapa* as the organising principle or philosophy of the group then gives the common project that members are intended to engage in. This is both the basis of the leadership of the group, through the establishing of a common project, and the very reason for the attraction of new members.

Belonging to a ‘community’ whether this is an *iwi* (tribe), *hapu* (sub-tribe), Māoridom in general or even a kapa haka group is often presented as a major reason for success, and conversely the lack of the same is taken to be detrimental to success. When former students of uncle Bubs would visit Pounamu, Ngāpo would always get them to talk to the current students about their success. For example, when one well-known arts figure, whom uncle Bubs had taken under his wing, with success both domestically and internationally, visited the school, the one reason for this person’s success was attributed to uncle Bubs for providing the person with an identity through being able to relate to something bigger, a community that until then had been closed. “I didn’t know who I was or where I was from. I didn’t know *te reo* and if he [uncle Bubs] hadn’t taken me under his wing I wouldn’t be here today talking to you. You listen to what he teaches you!”

The lack of this ‘belonging’ is credited to living in urban areas. One of the tutors of Pounamu told me about the students that “these kids, mostly urban maoris, they have no idea where they are from or who they are”. The urban areas are where individualism reigns supreme and the rural areas are where the Māori communities still operate as before, keeping an unbroken line with the past. This rather romantic picture of the rural areas is similar to Linnekin’s findings in Hawai’i. The rural areas are idealised at the epitome of Hawai’ian-ness (Linnekin 1983).

In this ‘belonging’ there are also responsibilities towards the community. The responsibilities towards the community is expressed through *aroha* (love, feelings for kin), *awhina* (helping, assisting), and *manākitanga* (hospitality, kindness). For example it is expected that all members of the community help out when they receive visitors, expressed in the idiom of *manākitanga* (hospitality). These responsibilities can put strains on a family’s economy and time that are hard to commensurate with other ‘external’ pressure from for example work. Where the Pākeha majority (and possibly other ethnic groups in New

Zealand) are 'individual' the Māori are 'communal'. This reason is given as an explanation of both the strengths of being Māori and as an explanation for why Māori have such difficulties in succeeding.

For Te Waka Huia, this was observable first and foremost in the leadership of uncle Bubs and auntie Nan, who really cared for the members of the group. I have already mentioned the process of integrating new members, like the young George (and myself) where Bubs and Nan took a genuine interest in getting to know a new member, inquiring about his place of origin, family and if he was at ease in club. As the leaders of the group they also have to take on the responsibility to lead the group, which sometimes requires them to make tough decisions, like choosing between three almost equal performers and tell one of them that the time and energy invested in the many practices so far have been wasted, like the situation with Ginny being cut from the team. In doing so, Nan, made a decision for the collective group but also acknowledged both in words and in action that this was a very tough decision to make for her. The same situation also demonstrated how these close relations can be both a hindrance and a great boon to the group. Nan's consolatory role after making the decision, by hugging Ginny and herself crying while attempting to console Ginny, also shows the role of the leader as an emotional support. The finances of the club were another responsibility that they took on, and while I was not privy to any budgets or ledgers, I was told in confidence that they weren't making any money off the running of the club. On the contrary, they covered any shortcomings out of their own pockets, as leaders.

The *kaupapa* of Te Waka Huia, and all the endeavours of Bubs and Nan was all about *awhina*, helping others. The creation of the club in the first place was at the insistence of others who wanted to engage in the culture through kapa haka. The establishment of Pounamu Ventures followed the same *kaupapa*, they had the opportunity, through their particular skills and talents from tutoring kapa haka, to set up a commercial operation – as a family venture, creating opportunities for family members. Other opportunities, like representing New Zealand (or Māori) overseas can also be analysed as helping others, members who might not have the opportunity to travel overseas without the club paying for the airfares, by empowering them through the practice of kapa haka. Through kapa haka people have a reason to form a community, a cultural and social base, which they can relate

to other people through. Those who have *whakapapa*-links can interact with kin through the club, and so can those without the same tribal-links, who are provided with a whole *whanau* with whom they can instantly engage with on familial terms. This foundation of a social grouping, a fundamental building block in identity, also provides avenues through which a member can relate to a greater identity project, an identity as Māori. Through the socialisation of certain ideals and values, commensurate with values that are used to define Māori society, an individual can emerge an enculturated part of a community.

## Life-Projects

The reasons why people join the groups can be many and varied. I have termed these reasons “life projects”, borrowing from Gell, which is taken to mean the “projects that agents seek to realise through art”, for example the gallery-goes, who are mostly middle class and educated are involved in life-projects predicated on individual freedom, autonomy, personal freedom and so on (Gell 1998: 34). This was of course an example of Western individualism, and therefore not a typical example of Māori communality.

### **Derek – Refilling Spiritual “Batteries”**

Derek, in the mid-forties, has been a part of the group for almost ten years. He was previously in another kapa haka group where he met his wife, but he found the “culture” of that group to be wrong for him. The group’s *kaupapa* and his own didn’t converge on crucial points and he sought to transfer to a new group that was more in line with his own ideals. He found this in Te Waka Huia and Bubs and Nan’s *whanau* system. He said that he looked for a group that had a *kaupapa* that was healthy and inclusive for families.

Both Derek and his wife, Miriata, have executive and administrative careers, and Derek credited his time with Club as partly responsible for his family’s success. He explained that uncle Bubs teachings were the main ingredient as to why the group enjoyed such a success. Teaching and knowledge, as I have pointed out previously, is connected to a spiritual dimension, and Derek argued that his time with Te Waka Huia was “refilling” his “spiritual batteries”, a type of defence that he needed to protect both himself and his family.

As part of this spiritual affiliation he found that he was a good candidate for the *wero* (traditional challenge) and was often called upon to take this role in ceremonial welcomes. He also tutored juniors and spent a lot of time assisting juniors with the spiritual side of kapa haka, pointing out the spiritual connections of particular items.

He was also a staunch supporter of uncle Bubs and would step in at times when he felt his mentor's *mana* was questioned. This situation was unheard of in Te Waka Huia but was sometimes voiced at university by people who either didn't know of uncle Bubs and his reputation or by people who were competing against him in some way. In one such situation where the university class was taking the teaching of a haka a little too lightly for Derek's tastes, he volunteered to carry on the haka session outside in the wet grass "to get the proper mind-set" and free up Ngāpo's time to check on the women's progress. Outside he gave all of us a reprimand and told us:

*You should listen when he talks, because what he has to say is very important! He's done this for a long time, and you should be taking in everything he says! He's not going to be around forever, and when he goes the teachings are going to go with him. Not everyone has the chance to learn from some like him – a tohunga!*

## **Tom – Being Part of Culture**

I sat down with Tom during a lull in one of the practices and he was curious about what I was doing in the group. Because I was filming a lot of practices at the time he assumed that I was probably making a film. When I told him about my study and where I was from he nodded in approval and began telling me about himself, as if to help my study along by supplying exactly what I was looking for – his reasons for being part of the club.

He told me that he had been involved in a gang and as a direct consequence of his activities with that gang had spent some time in prison. I was surprised to learn that he had analysed his situation and come up with the answer that he sought recognition of others through belonging in a group, in his case a gang. Tom told me that he felt the time of gangs were



over, that they had played out their role in society. There was a time, in the 70s and 80s, at the height of Māori activism when they were needed, but other more peaceful organisations had taken over that role now.

*I think that a lot of the kids out there would be better off if they were given a chance to do something like this [kapa haka], you know? They [Bubs and Nan] are good like that. Giving people a chance – and the club's really like a whanau to me, you know? That's what I was lacking when I was in prison, the culture. So, when I got out I said that that's what I'm going to do. Get into the culture!*

The “culture” that Tom was going to get into was kapa haka. Not altogether surprising, as he had little knowledge about his tribal affiliations and didn't have contact with his own family. This is a fairly typical situation for urban Māori today.

Tom credited Bubs and Nan with giving him a chance to “belong” to a culture that helped him become “whole”, filling a need that he didn't know until he was at a performance. He tried to pay back Bubs and Nan through loyalty to the club and lending a hand wherever and whenever he could.

## Hone – Be Proud of your Culture

*I was doing a wero [traditional challenge] at the Museum and this one guy, an Aussie, was making fun of me the whole time. You know, poking his tongue out and taking the piss. I was looking at him through the corner of my eye but keeping my focus on doing what I was doing, and still he kept doing it. I thought to myself, 'ok, if he's still doing it when I'm done – that's it! I'm going to get him'. So I finish the ritual and I'm on my way back and this guy is still going on and on, making noises and stuff. So, I turn around and really get into it. Twirling the taiaha [long club] and really putting the moves in. He's finally getting the message and starts to look around for a way out, but it's too late – I've got him cornered and there's no way for him to get away because of the crowd – and I'm heading straight for him. He knows he's going to get it. He ends up in the hospital and then he reports me. So, I report him back. The judge in the case hears my side and I end up paying a small fine. 'He insulted my culture and he was making fun of the ritual', I told the judge. Tell you what, that Aussie is going to be more careful in the future. That's for sure. Be proud of yourself and your culture. I've been taught that from the old man [uncle Bubs – his mentor] (Hone, 2003).*

Hone, in his late forties and a veteran of Te Waka Huia that helped tutor Te Manu Huia rather than perform himself, said he used to be a “trouble maker” that got into all sorts of mess before he took up kapa haka. He explained that he had lost touch with his “Maori side” and that he, like many other urban Māori, had little to do with his tribe or his tribal area. He had “gotten in with the wrong crowd” and spent some time in prison as a result of his behaviour. When he got out he came in touch with Bubs through kapa haka, and quickly became a part of the group. He also found a partner in the group and became one of the top experts in performing the *wero* (traditional challenge).

The incident cited above is not unique. During my fieldwork I attended several of the performances aimed at a tourist audience and I was surprised to see the lack of respect shown to the performers especially in the *wero*, where the audience would laugh inappropriately and poke their tongues out in response to *pūkana*. I was shocked mostly

because the performers carefully explain the importance of the ritual beforehand and stress the importance of not responding to the challenge as this will be considered an act of aggression that will result in outright battle at best. Most times, the performers let such infraction of etiquette and breaches of *tikanga* slip but sometimes there is a reaction from a performer. I have described and analysed such happenings elsewhere (see Pettersen 2006), but the incident recounted above reveals several important values that underpin Hone's actions in this situation.

Hone reacts to the offence only after he finishes the ritual. The ritual, once it is begun cannot stop and should always run to its conclusion. Hone is aware of this and ignores the insults for as long as the ritual challenge is progressing. If he were to break the challenge before its conclusion he would bring shame on his mentor for not instructing him properly. By recognising the *mana* of Bubs in this manner, and acting accordingly, Hone is honouring the relationship between them as mentor-student.

He is also a part of a group that is performing on this occasion, and as the *kaiwero*, the person chosen to perform the *wero*, he is in a sense the group's representative. He is required to uphold the group's *mana* through his actions in the *wero*. When the breach of etiquette is presented, he is presented with the dilemma of answering the challenge, which such a breach ultimately is, and thereby suffering the group's *mana* to ebb, or answer it, protecting the *mana* of the group and effectively concluding the proceedings which would then otherwise run peacefully along to the end of the performance.

As Hone points out, he felt that this particular breach was of such a denigrating character that it necessitated a strong response. He is acting out the role of the group's main *toa* (warrior), an ideal or stereotype referring to the "chosen of Tumatauenga", the God of War.

### **Toa (warriors) and Wahine (women)**

While a man is linked to his descent lines through the head, a *tapu* part of the body, a woman is linked to her descent lines through the womb, a part which could render things *noa* (Salmond 1985: 241). The distinction between man and woman is not seen as analogous to the distinction between *tapu* and *noa*, but rather as:

*homologous with (or having the same form as) the relation between tapu and noa. In other words, Maoris see the categories 'man' and 'woman' as complementary opposites, whose characteristics and functions differ from but complete each others, and which could not exist without each other (Metge 1976: 62).*

As this ideal indicates there are differentiated roles for man and woman. Salmond point out, older, high-born women would sometimes act as mediums and keepers of ancestral knowledge (Salmond 1985: 241).

In Te Waka Huia these two roles are high-lighted in kapa haka practice as a referral to the men as “warriors” while the women were referred to as “wahine”. If we see this in conjunction with the ideals of the two performances that epitomise the masculine and the feminine, the *haka* and the *poi*, we can see why these two are referred to in this way.

The male ideal is as a warrior that embodies and displays vigour, power and defiance while the female ideal, as *wahine* is graceful, nimble and alluring.

## In Summary

In this chapter I have analysed the ideals and values that are communicated through the social relations of the *whanau* and *whanau*-like relations of the groups. I have shown that they can be grouped into two opposing views of spirituality and materiality, and communality and individuality. The emphasis in both categories is on the former while the latter is always under communicated. However, to think that the distinction is clear cut is naïve, at best. As I have shown there are indications that both categories are important, although Māori sociality favours the spiritual and communal over the material and individual. Interestingly enough the division of the two ideal in the two categories follows the description given of Māori society and Pākeha society.

Given that art is an expression of culture then this would also entail that a definition of identity for the ‘culture’ would be expressed through the same art. Defining Māori ways in opposition to something else, dominant majority society, is also taking pride in the

differences. The point being to transform one status of 'Māori' from 'poor', 'unemployed' and 'inauthentic' to 'well off', 'employed' and 'authentic' by means of "keeping alive" traditions and practices that are held to be important.

I have also given some examples of some of the individual members' reasons for being in the group, what I have termed life-projects. The first of these life-projects centred on "spirituality", again highlighting the spiritual dimension to being Māori. The second one was about "belonging", evidence of the need for relational sociality as integral to well-being and indeed *being* Māori. The third life-project was about "pride" in one's culture, the pinnacle of transformation, when internalised ideals are held as not only valid but worthy of respect as they truly matter even though they may be different. This pride is not the "in-your-face" pride of a braggart but a disciplined behaviour adhering to strict protocols of respect and *mana*.

I argue that these characteristics are communicated expressly in the motto and mission statement of Pounamu as well as through the *kaupapa* of Te Waka Huia. These ideals originate from the notion of inherent potential present in everyone.

Uncle Bubs and Nan have been involved in kapa haka for most of their lives, Nan more so than Bubs. During this time they have lead several groups to success in competitions and festivals, and these achievements are mirrored in their success in creating a viable business that mirrors the cultural club they also run. This similarity is no coincidental, as the central idea behind Pounamu Ventures is "excellence in performing arts", just as it the central idea for Te Waka Huia. The successes of Bubs and Nan have not been theirs alone, and this is also intentional on their part. The creation of a family venture is inherent in the practice of kapa haka, as I will show in the following chapters. It is given that engaging with a traditional practice, which is passed down to younger generations, will involve several generations.

In addition, the model of a kapa haka cultural group opens up several positions of authority as seniors and tutors that follow the expertise of the performer - in essence a tiered system of knowledge. This is strengthened by the double effect of *whakapapa* and *kaupapa*. Where the *whakapapa* gives exclusivity the *kaupapa* grants inclusiveness, allowing all to participate

and engage on an equal footing, but also stratifies on basis of knowledge and ultimately kinship links. This opens up avenues of opportunities for performers, as positions in the groups or outside them, but not independent of them, as a kind of cultural capital (cf. Bourdieu). The performers' status as good performers is both dependent on their continued participation in a group's activities as well as enabling them to seek other opportunities. These opportunities are made explicit in the teaching positions at the performing arts school and at university, but also independently as cultural ambassadors, in the tourism industry, domestic and internationally. These opportunities are also a means to bettering oneself through education gained through Pounamu, and if one so chooses through a university degree.

## Chapter Six: Kapa Haka as Taonga

### Inviting them home

*We had just about finished for the evening. We had been served a large meal at my dad and step-mum's place and nearly everyone had tried their portion of the traditional Norwegian porridge, (rømmegrøt). Everyone had relaxed with a few beers and talked for a few hours with my family.*

*As everyone was ready to go Annette told everyone to go inside to prepare for the poroporoaki. They all moved into the living room and lined up in two rows on the floor. Angie directed my family members; father, step-mother, step-sister and her boyfriend, to sit by the dining table. When all of us had sat down, Angie started to explain that they wanted to thank us for our hospitality and especially my parents for opening up their home and welcoming the group into their care. In the background, Annette was directing the group to prepare to sing 'Wairua Tapu' and the message was passed along in the usual way until everyone knew what waiata they were going to do.*

*I sat as quiet as I could and tried to at once take it all in and document it with my video camera. This was a totally new field of experience for me and I was very eager to capture as much as possible on film. The audience, in this case my immediate family, didn't know what to expect and I ended up focusing as much on them as on the group. Having spent the last 9 months with the group I knew what was coming and was very keen to see how this taonga would be received by my family.*

*When Angie had finished her kōrerō, and properly thanked my family for their hospitality, the group started on the beautiful song composed by Uncle and Nan. It was a very important moment. Not only were they singing to reciprocate the hospitality but they chose a very particular song, and now they were singing it – gifting it to my family.*

*The reaction was immediate and as expected. I could spot my parents' eyes misting up and they all sat there in quiet awe and didn't quite dare to speak until the last tone had died out.*

## Performance

Merriam (Merriam 1964: 314) argues that any study of music should seek understanding of the standards of excellence as a means to discover ways in which these standards are enforced in the society. In the following I shall discuss the ‘standards’ for “correct” performance of kapa haka and how this ‘standard’ is enforced through the norms of the ‘ideal’ performance.

What constitutes a “good” performance inevitably varies from group to group, and there are as many levels of acceptable performance as there are performing groups. The main activities of the group dictate what level of performing standards that the group will adhere to and strive for. There are groups consisting of performers of varying age-groups, groups catering to the tourist industry through commercial operations, groups that are formed for the purpose of communal social activities, groups that compete in competitions and groups that cover several, if not all, of the categories mentioned. However, the ranking of groups according to their respective placing in the national competitions are held by most practitioners as an adequate measure of technical achievement in performing standards. As these competitions are held on three levels: primary schools, secondary schools, and senior; it follows that intrinsically there are three recognised, ranked levels of performance. All are held regionally, as a qualification for entry into the national competition, again showing that there are thresholds for reaching the upper echelons of performance: regional and national. Groups that routinely appear in the national competitions are held in higher regard with regards to standards of performance, and such groups’ previous achievements in the national competitions are indicative of their relative status in relation to each other.

This ranking gives an indication of the technical expertise and skill in performance as ranked by the latest competition but there is more to a performance than technical expertise and skill, a “good” performance also has the capacity to affect its performers and audience by the power of the performance; when the performers “give it their all”, the men leaving the stage bruised and bloodied after their haka; when the women are moved to tears by emotion after singing a *waiata*; when the audience are overwhelmed by and “awestruck” by the performance on stage.



Clearly, technical skill can not be the only criteria for a “good” performance, as then a very good mime could mimic the movements and copy the words to perfection to a similar, if not the same effect. The worry that Kāretu expressed about the lack of command of language would leave a performance “empty” would then be rendered meaningless. There is more at play during a performance than merely the visual display and the aural qualities, according to the performers themselves. So, what are the ideals behind a “good” or “correct” performance? How can performers captivate the attention of others?

### **The Power of the “Correct” Performance – Ihi, Wehi, and Wana**

There are criteria for a “correct” performance of an item other than conforming to the consensus of genre-specific ideals. These are framed in terms of traditional concepts, more specifically ‘*ihi*’, ‘*wehi*’, and ‘*wana*’. Anne Salmond (Salmond 1985) translates these as “essential force”, “fearful force” and “awesome power” and explains that these terms must be understood in relation to a Maori concept regarding knowledge, *waananga* or “ancestral knowledge”. Through the knowledge of the activation of this ancestral power a *tohunga*, “priests” or “knowledge experts”, could through ritual focus this essential power and affect change upon the phenomenal world – “*te ihi, te wehi me te wana*” (Salmond 1985).

A performance is said to have the ability to affect its audience when all these things were present in the performance. To have all these forces converge in a performance it is necessary for the performers to have an understanding of the content of what they were expressing through song/chant and dance. Learning by merely mimicking the movements and forming the words without an understanding would leave the performance “empty” (Kāretu 1993).

This is a major problem for most contemporary Māori as the 2001 census states that less than a third of the Māori population have an understanding of the language and an ability to communicate on an everyday basis in the language. This means that 2/3 of all Māori have less than fluent ability with language. I never conducted any statistical surveys to discover the language ability in any of the groups but judging by observations of members over time I would estimate the percentage of fluent speakers to be higher in the competitive groups, Te Waka Huia and Te Manu Huia, for two reasons: the competitive level has an increased

emphasis on language fluency as part of the judging criteria (see chapter 2), and the ranking of these two groups at the very top spectrum of performing groups would attract top performers with either bi-lingual or high-fluency backgrounds. I also suspect that Pounamu would be approximately on par with the country average, or possibly slightly higher. Without any statistical material from earlier periods it is hard to qualify this, but in the period I was at the school the numbers of fluent speakers were higher than the national average, possibly due to a large number of students from a bi-lingual background. However, it is quite possible to be a very good performer without a speaking ability in the language – without detrimental effects to one’s performance.

The essence was, according to Bubs, to understand the performed item. This could be done by ways of explanation of the history of the item; the name of the composer, the composer’s tribal affiliations, the period it was composed in, the reason behind its composition and where and when it had been performed before. To assist with this, uncle Bubs would often explain items in detail, so that everyone would understand the message that the particular item was meant to convey. For example, the correct reason for performing an item could be surmised from its genre, it just wouldn’t do to perform a *tangi* (lament) with a smile on one’s face, nor would a grave expression do in a cheery action-song. This would be counter to the item’s *take* (reason), its purpose for being composed. The purpose of a *tangi*, for example is to be performed at a *tangihanga* (mortuary ceremony) or in a social context where the remembrance of departed is intended, for example to acknowledge another’s recent loss or to publicly honour one’s own departed relative or close friend. Another *faux pas* that is easy to make if one wasn’t sufficiently schooled in an item’s history was to perform an item composed to celebrate a major victory over a tribe to that tribe’s descendants, unless of course the idea was to enrage and embarrass them in the first place.

As *ihi* is seen as emanating from within the individual performer it is important to imbue the performance with the correct emotion. Uncle Bubs explained that when one understands the purpose of the item and one is able to imbue the performance with the required emotional quality and feeling this has an effect on the surroundings: other performers will feed upon this essential force and it will enhance their performance. The effect would be replicated in the other performers so affected and “bounce” off the entire group – truly an “essential

force”. The effect of the group’s heightened performance through the “correct emotion” from a state of *ihi*, would then in turn affect the audience who would “feel” the effect and be “struck” by the power of the performance and feel *wehi*: the “fearful force” affecting the audience in a spiritual way – “being hit by *wairua*” (spirit) was often used by way of explanation by members. The activation of *wana*, “awesome power”, could then be directed to act upon the phenomenal world in this manner.

During my time with the group there were several situations in which this effect was observable on both audience members and performers alike. When questioned about the situation after the fact the answer would be framed in terms of *wairua* or *ihi*.

## **Wairoa – Strong Kaupapa**

On one occasion Bubs and Nan agreed to take the group, Te Waka Huia, to hold several concerts at a small community on the East Coast over the course of two days. As one of the top groups in the country that could fill most venues, they are regularly approached to hold concerts, and/or to hold performances to *tautoko* (lend support to) particular events. Usually they politely turn most requests down and reserve their participation and support for a few exceptional cases. This was one of them. A tiny community on the East Coast, linked by tribal affiliations with several of the members had, had experienced a recent increase in gang violence and this had resulted in a shooting death the previous year. The East Coast has the highest unemployment rate nationally and also has the two of the largest criminal gangs. As uncle Bubs put it to me: “The call had come out” for their help. The community was “depressed” because of the latest violence and they needed something to “lift their spirits”. To “help a troubled community” was a very good and “strong *kaupapa* (motive)” for their participation. The local kapa haka committee, where the “call” had originated, were to be the primary organisers and had set up two performances over two days, both held at 5 p.m. These were fundraising concerts with a programme lasting about two hours including both traditional kapa haka and some more contemporary material from the new CD, the Kapa Haka Super 12 team and the Pounamu students. A stipulation by Bubs and Nan was that they would also hold two performances over the two days at 11 a.m. for the local schools in the district. These were free and invitations were sent out in the district. Initially the response from the schools was dismal, and only two schools had signalled their intention to take their

students to the concert. When the word had got round that Te Waka Huia was coming to their little community, the parents from several schools in the district delivered a petition to the school boards, demanding that their children were allowed to go to the concert. The schools, overwhelmed by the parents' response – in a district where less than 5 percent of the parents engage in school activities, consequently agreed.

The group arrived at the community and was installed as guests at a local *marae* where the group could have privacy and a relaxed atmosphere for when they weren't "working" doing a concert. The hosts were doing their utmost to ensure that the group would be well fed and cared for.

The concerts themselves were successes, and when Bubs and Nan agreed to hold a seminar on kapa haka the hosts had severe trouble limiting the audience. The group also travelled to a social function, where all the *kaumatua* and *kuia* (old people) of the area were invited. The group had selected a programme for the event, and even though they were invited as guests, the group got up and performed their bracket for these *kaumatua* and *kuia*. The programme consisted of "oldies" composed for the Maori Battalion from the Second World War and other items from the same period, carefully selected to honour the period – and the people – that these old *kaumatua* and *kuia* had been a part of. The effect was not lost on the audience. Where the audience had looked old and frail when the group entered, they transformed into a sea of smiles that sang and danced along with the group on the floor. The appreciation was apparent in their faces and their smiles, but also the tears in their eyes when they saw the performance held in their honour. The men were also moved by the performance, although they didn't show it in the same fashion as the women, but they conceded to me in private that it was a very moving rendition, "very beautiful", that "took them back".

The technical skill in performing in these two settings only account for a part of the success, according to Bubs, Nan, and the performers. In the first instance, the *kaupapa* was "strong", in that the performance was in support of a troubled community. This was important for both performers and audience in achieving a "good" performance. I will discuss *kaupapa* in more detail below with other characteristics of kapa haka. On the second occasion, the technical skill of the performance was also considered secondary in achieving the effect it had on the audience. Here the effect was achieved by way of selecting certain songs that held a special

meaning to the audience involved as it both referenced a particular era, the 40s and 50s, and the region they hailed from as the selection of songs were from specific composers that also hailed from the same area.

## **Logan – Bringing Culture to Others**

On a trip to Australia, a similar situation was observable. The initial *kaupapa* for the trip was to raise funds for the group by going to Australia and perform several concerts for the sizable Māori community on the East Coast of Australia. The venue that was booked for the occasion was a large concert hall in a small suburb, just outside of the larger city nearby. Due to a misunderstanding or poor handling on the organisers' part the ticket sales were much lower than expected and there had been discussions of cancelling the trip altogether but the decision to go ahead as planned was upheld. The group, all assembled at the departure hall of Auckland Airport, were informed by Bubs about the possibility of the group performing to a mostly empty hall. The group's response was that it didn't really matter how many there would be in the audience, worst come to worst there would be at least five people present as the support team had been invited to come along, all expenses paid by the group to honour their effort on behalf of the group. With myself included, the audience would be at least five people and that should be enough, as one performer put it. In effect, we were all going on a paid vacation as a group, and Bubs explained that because of all the hard work that everyone had put in this was well deserved, which was also the reason why the decision had been made to not cancel the trip.

When we arrived we were greeted by our hosts, who had insisted on hosting us partly because their links to Bubs and Nan through tribal affiliations, through relations with the former leader of Waihirere and mentor of Bubs and Nan, Wiremu 'Bill' Kerekere, in addition to the actual relation through family with Bubs and Nana.

As it turned out the concerts were huge successes both artistically but also financially as the venue was packed to the limit on all five performances. The performances were also some of the best the group had performed, according to Nan, who sat next to me in the gallery while the performers were on stage. This was apparent in the audiences' reaction after the show but Nan insisted that these performances were special in that "things were really coming

together”, the items the group performed were “maturing” and the groups’ experience and confidence were building.

But the most striking example of a performance that left everyone involved affected was later in the evening on the day of the final performance when the group was gathered at our hosts. The group got up and performed a particular item to honour the late Wiremu Kerekere. In this particular instance some of his close relatives were present in the audience and this performance was directly addressed to them. The specific item was composed by Kerekere and performed as a token of gratitude to him, represented by his close relatives present in the audience. This was followed up by a rendition of a particular item composed by Bubs and Nan as a tribute to the late Kerekere.

As well as being a very moving performance that “just felt right”, it was also a tribute (composed specifically to this purpose), to a specific person (Wiremu Kerekere) with specific links (tribal- and kinship-links) to the group through uncle Bubs and Nan (by their involvement in Waihirere in earlier years), addressed to him (through the relatives present). In a similar manner, the item that was performed prior to the tribute, composed by Kerekere, was used to the same effect, in recognition of Kerekere’s *mana* (authority, prestige, power) as the composer.

This concept of *mana* is considered fundamental and especially important in this context. As the group’s repertoire for any given season will vary and sometimes include items composed by people not in the group, either because they are outside the group and/or deceased and therefore no longer part of the group’s membership, it is considered important to respect the composer’s *mana*, in adhering to the composer’s intentions with the item when it was composed. We will now turn to addressing the issues of “ownership”.

### **“Ownership” of items**

*“That’s the way of these things. It’s not just items. They belong to someone and you have to recognise that and give it the proper respect.” – Vicky, Pounamu practice.*

The “ownership” of items is phrased in terms of ‘*mana*’. I shall now address this aspect of performance – the “ownership” of items. In the following I will use ‘item’ to describe a chant or song with its accompanying dance. Depending on the genre of the performance, an ‘item’ will cover song, dance or a combination of the two.

Once an item is composed (produced) it enters into circulation as “property of one sort or another – property of an individual, of a particular group, or perhaps of the society at large” (McLean 1996: 217). In the case that composition of an item is attributed to a group, usually within the same tribe, it is reasonable to suppose that ownership is conferred to the group involved (McLean 1996: 217). Furthermore, tribal ownership is established by references to places and people in the song text (that are replaced by other references in adaptations). Additionally, importance is placed on knowing the composer and the circumstances of its composition (McLean 1996: 218). It is through these two conditions, as McLean points out, that the ownership of a song and the singer’s right to sing it can be established.

When teaching songs not of his own composition, uncle Bubs would explain the circumstances of the song’s composition and present the composer of the song, also subtly indicating his rights to teaching it to others. For example, when teaching *Kaore te poo nei*, a *waiata tohutohu* (an instruction song), a song composed by Te Kooti, he would recount the story of how he was told by the old people that after his death he was first buried at one location, and then, under cover of darkness, exhumed by four people and re-buried in a secret location so no-one would later exhume his body and defile it. In this manner, and by uncle Bubs tribal affiliations with Ngāi Tuhoe, he would reaffirm his right to teach it to us, as he was taught it by his relations. Conversely, when he was told about people who hadn’t expressly asked permission to teach any of his compositions, he expressed disappointment in the person in question: “If they had asked me, I would have given them the ok, but now... It saddens me to hear these things”.

One reason for this can be that singing, and performing, is a public act, as McLean points out. The force of public opinion on this matter, the fear of repercussions, is cited as reason for being circumspect about overstepping the mark and singing a song to which one is not entitled (McLean 1996: 219). The sanctions that can apply are sometimes attributed to the realm of the supernatural, for example a breakdown in a song, referred to as a *whatu* (break),

can be interpreted as being a sanction because of not having the right to sing a song (McLean 1996: 219). Uncle Bubs would caution in every instance of learning a “new” item for the first time to be wary of a *whatu*, relating stories of how it was seen as a bad omen in the old days – who were we to say it wouldn’t be today?

## **Mātauranga (Knowledge)**

*“When a Maori possessed of any prized or hard-earned knowledge wished to pass such on to a son or other relative, together with the mana pertaining to it, then a peculiar ceremony was performed in order to effect the desired transfer. The striking part of the performance was a certain personal contact was required” (Elsdon Best cited in Mead 2003: 320).*

Because knowledge is considered *tapu* (see chapter 2) and consequently the teaching of songs and chants therefore falls within the realm of knowledge, *mātauranga*, it is necessary to examine how knowledge is linked with the concept of *tapu*, “sacred, under religious, ceremonial or superstitious restriction” (Williams 2003: 385). As I pointed out in chapter 3, every *waananga* session was preceded by a *karakia*. In chapter 3 I argued how this was a communal activity that reinforced the social aspect of being together in a teaching situation. In the following it is from the perspective of *maatauranga Māori* (Māori knowledge) that is integral to, and is the knowledge base that informs, the practice of *tikanga* (custom).

After the right to instruction of a particular song/chant/dance/performance has been established and the atmosphere for teaching has been evoked through the activation of *tikanga* by recital of *karakia* that the transmission of knowledge can begin. This has to follow the correct method of instruction, and it is only through the transmission of the correct kind of knowledge that ensures that the song will have the potential to affect people.

As every song or chant is composed by someone for a specific occasion, or to address a particular topic, it is not enough to only know the recitation of the song or chant in question. The knowledge pertaining to the song is also emphasised. This knowledge about an item is not only crucial in demonstrating one’s right to teaching or performing an item, as I have



discussed above, and thus possibly avoid sanctions of public opinion, but also to avoid inviting sanctions of a supernatural nature onto oneself, because of the nature of knowledge. By application of the appropriate *tikanga* (custom; practice of knowledge) and reciting an appropriate *karakia* (incantation), one demonstrates the requisite knowledge, and is thus under the protection of the gods (Mead 2003: 319). The transmission of knowledge is then safe.

### **“Excellence in Performing Arts”**

*“Maori people can do anything they want, as long as they put their mind to it!” – Uncle Bubs, wānanga session.*

When all these aspects are observed, the performance itself will be elevated to new heights, both by observing the *mana* of the composer(s) and paying respect to the previous performance(s), as well as observing the circumstances required for the “correct” performance of the item. The stage is set for “excellence”.

The motto of Pounamu Performing Arts is “Excellence in Performing Arts”. The motto features prominently on promotional material. It is also displayed in the staff room of Pounamu Performing Arts on poster near the door, ensuring that everyone leaving the room can not miss it. As an overall goal for the teaching of the traditional performing arts it is communicated by tutors on a daily basis to the students. The standard of performance, both by tutors (who are the models for the students to imitate) and by students (whose performances are under constant review and, ideally, under improvement) is held in the highest regard. Because uncle Bubs and auntie Nan are held in high regard in the kapa haka community, having placed in the top six in every national competition since 1986, they have their reputation, and thereby by extension also their *mana* on the line in everything they do. To ensure that the instruction that students receive are top-notch, there is an emphasis on the fact that all tutors are members of Te Waka Huia, the senior team, and therefore also experienced in both performances and taking responsibility over the tutoring of others, as I pointed out in chapter three. The expectancy of the level of teaching is held to the same high standards as can be expected of what is considered a top group in kapa haka.

These individual members that in Ngāpo’s words are similar to *wakahuia* (treasure boxes) in their capacity as individual “repositories of knowledge” are in essence the embodiment of ‘tradition’ in that they carry tradition that can only be transmitted by way of, and therefore *through*, their bodies. The potential is inherent in everyone, although it is admittedly easier to achieve on the level of excellence if one has picked up some of the component parts early on in one’s life. Someone who has internalised the above mentioned knowledge, ideals and values through formal or informal instruction and has acquired the techniques of the body required to perform well in kapa haka (cf. Mauss 1973) will then assume the position as holding this ‘tradition’ in their very person. This can be applied to any number of ventures, and is not limited to pursuits of a performance art nature.

## Agency and Kapa Haka

Gell suggests that art is about doing and since “doing” is theorised as agency, as a process involving indexes and effects, or the mediation of agency by indexes, it can then be analysed as a series of relations between indexes, prototypes, artists and recipients. These relationships can be described as formula of the following kind:

[[Prototype-A] → Artist-A] → Index-A] → Recipient-P

The example given is a “pure” example of a dramatic performance. The ‘prototype’ is the “character” that the actor is portraying. The ‘artist’ is the actor portraying the prototype. The ‘index’ is the performance of the play in which the actor portrays the character, and the ‘recipient’ is the audience watching the performance of the play in which the actor portrays the character. The short arrow (→) indicates subordinate agent/patient relationships, while the long arrow (→) indicates the primary agent/patient relationship. There is a distinction between “primary” agents and patients, entities endowed with the capacity to initiate actions/events through will or intention, and “secondary” agents and patients, entities not endowed with will or intentions by themselves but essential to the formation, appearance, or manifestation of intentional actions. In this example the ‘artist’ (actor) is the ‘primary agent’, because the actor is the one who causes the event (performance) to happen. The audience is the ‘primary recipient’ as they are the ones upon whom the play is working. Both the

'prototype' (play) and the 'index' (play) are considered 'secondary agents' in this example as they are essential for the manifestation of the actor's performance and are not considered to cause the event by themselves. The hierarchical embedding of the terms is read the way that the character that the actor portrays is what the audience sees as the performance of the play, and it is this performance that has an effect on them, meaning that they are able to abduct some form of agency from it. Hopefully, for the actor that it is "good", if not "brilliant". The suffixes "-A" and "-P" denote 'agent' and 'patient' respectively and is included to improve readability (cf. Gell 1998: 28-38)

There are many possible configurations of these terms in relation to each other and in the following I shall deal with an analysis of kapa haka in relation to these terms. I limit my analysis to include only the observable effects of the performance and not the added layer of complexity of text/performance relations as I cannot reproduce any texts to specific items. The full table of relationships between agent and patient is reproduced in the appendices.

## **Composition**

Because of the primacy accorded to the composer, whether individual or a group, we shall begin to analyse agency and kapa haka in this context. The situation looks pretty simple to sum up: the composer would be the 'artist' who exercises agency over the composition considered to be the 'index'. The artist's agency, in that the artist decides to compose a song, ultimately creates it, thus giving us the formula:

Artist-A → Index-P

Gell considers this configuration the elementary formula for artistic agency (Gell 1998: 33). The index (composition) motivates the abduction of the agency of the person who made it (composer). Uncle Bubs, as the composer of several compositions is the one who decides to compose a new item, thus exerting his artistic agency upon the index. In actuality, the formula would be more complex as Bubs would compose the words, while Nan would compose the tune, with further layers of complexity added as we move on to include movements that symbolise the meaning of certain passages, as I have described elsewhere. But, let us for simplicity's sake consider the composition a group effort summed up by one artist-agent.

Because the specific form of the song is dictated by ‘tradition’, as it were, according to genre-specific criteria, the ‘tradition’, that the index has to be composed according to, would be considered the ‘prototype’. Let us consider a *mōteatea*, perhaps the most “traditional” genre of kapa haka, where the form of the composition presents a set of criteria that the artist has to consider, if the composition is to be recognised and acknowledged as belonging to that type. Thus giving us the formula:

$$[\text{Prototype-A} \rightarrow \text{Artist-A}] \longrightarrow \text{Index-P}$$

We could consider the limitations of ‘tradition’ as rigid that it, in a way instructs the composer how to compose, but since I have shown that variations do occur all the time, especially in competitions where the boundaries of ‘traditional’ performance is being challenged and debated all the time, this is clearly not a valid analysis. It is therefore adequate to consider the prototype, the form that the composition is to look (or sound) like, works in conjunction with the artist’s genius to create the composition.

However, the realisation of the index, the performance, requires a group of performers, for simplicity’s sake considered an entity here, but really a series of nested relations of artists, would give us the formula:

$$[[[\text{Prototype-A}_{\text{tradition}}] \rightarrow \text{Artist-A}_{\text{composer}}] \rightarrow \text{Artist-A}_{\text{group}}] \longrightarrow \text{Index-P}$$

We have arrived at the point where the composition has “come to life”, so to speak. It has been composed by the artistic genius of one or more artists and been rehearsed by a group of performers to the pinnacle of their technical expertise, but so far no-one outside the group has seen the performance. It is time to introduce the audience to the performance.

## Transmission

Gell’s elementary formula of “passive spectatorship” where the audience allows their attention to be attracted to the index (performance), thus submitting to its power, appeal or fascination, is a patient in relation to the index (Gell 1998: 31). This gives us the formula:

$$\text{Index-A} \longrightarrow \text{Recipient-P}$$

But, because this is a performance and not, say a feature film, we need to account for the performers at least, who to the audience appears as the immediate originators of the performance, thus giving us:

[Artist-A → Index-A] → Recipient-P

The artist being the group in this case, the index is the performance and the recipient being the passive audience who experiences the performance. Since Te Waka Huia is a very well known group in kapa haka circles, in Māoridom in general, if not New Zealand, then the originators can to a degree figure in the formula, as most people can name the leaders off-hand.

[[[Artist-A<sub>composer</sub>] → Artist-A<sub>group</sub>] → Index-A] → Recipient-P

At the same time the audience as recipients of a performance can see their own agency in the index. Any member in the audience, can at least theoretically, infer that the performance was made with him or her in mind as the intended recipients. This really goes beyond the division of competition and tourist performance, because in both settings the performance would not have come about if it were not for the audience being present. In competitions, the audience, being mainly Māori, celebrate their unity in identity *as* Māori by being the recipients of the performance, while the tourist performance, overseas or at home, is also geared towards showing the audience who the performers and by extension all Māori, *are* to the recipients, the tourists. The tourists too can see their agency in the tourist performances by their very being the intended recipients.

So far we have covered the most basic expressions of compositions and transmissions of kapa haka performances but there is also a circulation of kapa haka compositions between agents and recipients, a circulation that involves processes of exchange, and it is to these exchanges that I now turn.

## Networks of Exchanges

The transmission of kapa haka performances between performers and audience are part of an exchange between the two, which is made explicit in *tautoko* (support) performances that friends, family and supporters of groups throw when a group either walks onstage or after a

group has finished their bracket and is about to walk off stage. This is not to say that this is the only time that the exchanges take place. Even the passive audience that is the recipient of the performance, as per the examples given above, is part of an exchange with the performers in that they are being affected in some way by the group performing to them. The performers experience this effect when they receive a token of the audience's appreciation in return for their performance, often given in the form of applause, but that's not all.

If we consider the *mana* of a group, for example Te Waka Huia, Manu Huia or Pounamu Huia, it is only partly given by its genealogy and position within the Te Waka Huia *whanau* of groups. The groups have *mana* in accordance with the relative position in the junior/senior lineage of the collective so that Te Waka Huia has the most by being the senior, Te Manu Huia having slightly less, and Pounamu Huia having the least as a group by being the most junior of the three. This *mana* is of course dependent on their tutors, and indeed can be seen as the *mana* of Bubs and Nan, modified by the relative position of the groups.

This can be further enhanced by achievements in public arenas, of which the national competition is the most typical. Other types of arenas can yield increases to *mana* but as the standards of performance are governed by Te Matatini (which is made up of representatives from all groups and therefore forms a consensus on performance standards) it is the benchmark of performance for a kapa haka group. The point being that *mana* is relational in that it is based on subjective assessment by the possessor and the other around him/her/them. In this manner the audience is part of the subjective assessment of the *mana* of the group based on the receipt of the performance. The judges of competitions are also a part of the audience in this respect.

The exchanges between group and audience are thus made up of a series of performances that upon audience receipt reflect back upon the performing group. If a group can perform to such a degree of skill that they are able to affect the audience in the correct manner then their reputation and prestige, and *mana* is increased. To achieve this effect, the group has to experience the right *ihi* (emotion) and imbue the performance with it, as I have described above.

As I explained above the affective power of a performance comes from *ihi* (correct emotion), *wehi* (displayed outwardly) and *wana* (effect in the corporeal world). This activation of ancestral power requires three steps. Let us return to the formula for our performance:

$$[[[\text{Artist-A}_{\text{composer}}] \rightarrow \text{Artist-A}_{\text{group}}] \rightarrow \text{Index-A}] \longrightarrow \text{Recipient-P}$$

Now, because the group need to be in the correct emotional state to display this it is clear that the recipient, the one being affected by the emotional agency of the index (performance), also needs to be the artist causing the effect. The group has to figure as both originator (artist) and as the target (recipient). We should therefore modify the formula to read:

$$[[[\text{Artist-A}_{\text{composer}}] \rightarrow \text{Artist-A}_{\text{group}}] \rightarrow \text{Index-A}] \longrightarrow \text{Recipient/Artist-P}_{\text{group}}$$

We can continue to add layers of complexity to this formula when we consider the *wehi* and *wana*, but there is little need to represent them graphically, because the *wehi* is simply the agency of the performance (index) and the *wana* is the abduction of agency from the index by the recipient (audience).

## **‘Frontstage’ Exchanges**

I now turn to the brief moments of performances in front of an audience, into which countless hours are condensed and brought to fruition through a display of “excellence in performing arts”. If we consider again for a moment uncle Bubs’ statement about competitions being: “a demonstration of pride, prestige, dignity and tradition of the highest quality”, and that “if you can achieve these things you have done your ancestors, race and country proud” (Wehi 1973). The statement makes a very important point about performance; it has a quality that pertains to ancestors, race and country. I have previously pointed out that “pride”, “prestige” and “ancestors” refer to *mana*, while “dignity” and “race” (and in some ways also “country”), on the other hand refer to identity as Māori. What ancestors, race and country have in common is quite simply Māori, and it follows that through tradition, kapa haka, anyone can potentially represent Māoridom and Māori.

Gell analyses this as idolatry and give the formula:

[Prototype-A → [Artist-A]] → Index-P

The prototype, in the case of idolatry is the god, whose “likeness” is mediated by the artist (Gell 1998: 97). However, the formula is readily usable for any kind of “representation”. Given that all kapa haka performances in some little way has to reference the “culture” that it originates from and that because it is a tradition has certain guidelines and restrictions placed upon it, thereby constituting a tradition, I argue that all performances are in some way “representations” of that “culture”. In other words, all performing groups are “ambassadors” of Māoridom, which is not too far removed from being ambassadors of Māori in official welcomes or representing New Zealand abroad.

An ambassador is a spatio-temporally detached fragment of his nation (Gell 1998: 98), and a kapa haka group on stage is an ambassador of an ethnic group that is visibly represented by their presence on stage. The prototype in the formula above would then be “Māoridom”, the artist is of course the kapa haka group, and the index is the performance. This “representation” is also self-referential in that the group seeks to display Māori identity/ethnicity through its performance to an audience that perceive them as “representations” of Māori. Many things in a performance attest to this fact. For example, the choice of costume, a type of clothing that is stylistically taken to reference “traditional clothing”, is intended not only to help audiences distinguish between groups but also to visually represent “tradition” with a reference to the past. The group acts on stage, by performing traditional performing arts, kapa haka, “as if” they are representatives of a larger whole. To paraphrase Gell, the group may not look like Māori, but on stage Māori look like them (Gell 1998: 98). I shall return to the part-whole relationships later, but first I have to deal with ‘backstage’ exchanges.

### **‘Backstage’ Exchanges**

So far I have only presented cases where kapa haka figures with an audience, but as I have pointed out in previous chapters, kapa haka is also considered to have an effect through its practice. A group is trying to realise some project through the practice of kapa haka in the same way that members are realising their life-projects through the practice of kapa haka.



The individual projects of members, as exemplified by the cases of Derek, Tom and Hone, can only be realised if the *kaupapa* of the group is commensurate with the life-project they are trying to realise. Derek's project of "spiritual renewal" through the practice of tradition, a reference to the past, would not be possible to achieve in the group if the group's *kaupapa* in some way would reflect that same concern. Similarly, Tom's project of "belonging", not only to a group but to a grouping and by extension Māoridom itself, would not be possible if Te Waka Huia's *kaupapa* was to distance itself from Māori. Likewise with Hone's project of "transforming ethnic stigma to pride in identity". The individual projects of members that add to a group's potentially diverse membership needs to find a common platform through which they can find unity in principle, expressed as the *kotahitanga* of the group's *kaupapa*.

This unity, *kotahitanga*, requires a leadership and a social organisation that is hierarchically stratified, but with the capacity to encompass a large body of members. The *whanau* system provides just that for Te Waka Huia. There are positions of responsibility available but they are subordinate to the leadership of the *whanau*, the very people who are at once *koro* (grandfather) and *kuia* (grandmother), *matua* (uncle) and *whaea* (auntie).

The members pay back their leaders for the privilege of belonging, and by that share in the *mana* of the group, with loyalty and commitment. The leaders pay back this loyalty and commitment by providing opportunities and careers, like overseas trips and careers in various industries, and by allowing members to realise their life-projects. This is also a continuous exchange cycle, because as I have pointed out earlier, all of Bubs and Nan's pursuits are dependent on their members, who in turn are dependent on Bubs and Nan, to various degrees. The continued operation of Pounamu Performing Arts would not be possible without the success of Te Waka Huia, because of the school's emphasis on all teaching staff being members of Te Waka Huia. The school would not recruit as many students if not for the success of Te Waka Huia, because students look upon the success as a guarantee for quality of teaching. Similarly, Pounamu Ventures would not be commissioned to perform commercially if not for the success of Te Waka Huia in competitions, because Pounamu's reputation, being staffed by Te Waka Huia members, is dependent upon, and in many ways the same as, Te Waka Huia's.

## The Style and Meaning of Kapa Haka

In his critique of Hanson's attempt to discover relationships between Māori art and Māori culture Gell concludes that Hanson's project may have been overly ambitious in attempting to prove the existence of synecdochic relationship between artworks as parts and culture as whole. Gell suggests that by modifying the synecdochic relation to correspond with the relation of any given artwork with *all* artworks of that style will be more salient for the formal analysis of "stylistic axes of coherence" (Gell 1998: 162-167). Because "style attributes enable individual artworks to be subsumed into the class of artworks which share these particular attributes" (Gell 1998: 162). It follows that any given artwork "exemplifies" and "stands for" the style of the tradition of material culture in which it originates (Gell 1998: 162). The stylistic properties of the various genres are all recognisably Māori in origin, and I refer the reader to Shennan (Shennan 1984) and McLean (McLean 1996) for a detailed analysis of the style from the perspective of dance and ethnomusicology respectively. However, I shall turn to two points: certain relationships between genres point to complementary attributes and the part-whole relationship of a bracket indicates certain characteristic ideals that I have abstracted previously.

The attributes of *poi* and *haka*, and the relationship between them mirrors the ideals of female and male complementarity, as previously mentioned.

If *mōteatea* are considered exemplary of "traditional" style and *waiata-ā-ringā* are considered "contemporary" the relationship between them points to the debate around traditional:contemporary, where the two categories take on certain properties like "traditional" meaning "tribal" and "contemporary" meaning "pan-tribal".

The whole bracket encompasses all of what is considered to constitute a Māori identity by representing on stage all the attributes of a distinct Māori style that is analogous with, and "exemplifies" Māori "culture". This is a form of "reverse mirror" effect in which performers show *themselves* what they *want* to be and at the same time reflect the audience's anticipation of what they *expect* them to be. In short, "kapa haka is culture – our culture!"

## In Summary

A kapa haka performance has to fulfil certain criteria to have an effect on its intended audience. This effect is considered vital to a “correct” performance and is accomplished by imbuing the performance with the appropriate (internal) feeling through a thorough understanding of the reason behind the composition of the item, the specific circumstances surrounding its composition, the name and tribal affiliations of its composer(s) and when and where it was first performed, in other words, by knowing the relationships between composer, place and time. This can then be projected outwards as an effectual performance (external) that again will affect the intended audience, who will in turn internalise the effect.

Certain situations and contexts can enhance this process by having a strong *kaupapa* or by the presence of social relationships that are accentuated by the gifting of a performance to the audience. This presupposes a transmission of knowledge that is separate to the performance (text, tune, movements and choreography) that has to be qualified by establishing rights to performance and teaching. This knowledge forms the basis for a stratified level of achievement and prestige that can be utilised to a number of pursuits.

The agency of kapa haka was analysed as a process of relationships between indexes, artists, prototypes and recipients through several contexts. Firstly, through the production (composition) and circulation (rehearsal) within a group, this was followed by the reception (transmission) of performances in the different settings. The networks of exchanges involved in performances were examined from the perspective of *mana* followed by an analysis of *ihi*, *wehi* and *wana*.



## Conclusion

I began by saying that kapa haka as it is performed today is many things at once; as an art form it is considered equal to other expressions of *toi Māori* (traditional arts) like *raranga* (weaving), *whakairo* (carving) and *tā moko* (tattooing); as a ‘tradition’ it is regarded as a *taonga tuku iho*, an heirloom that is handed down through the generations; as part of *tikanga* (custom) it has a function in both ritual and entertainment; as part of Māori society it has undergone changes over time in tune with changes in the society; as a part of New Zealand society it has undergone a revival in the 20<sup>th</sup> century; as a teaching method and part of the repertoire of *mātauranga* (knowledge) it is being taught to successive generations of Māori and non-Māori; as a performance art it is still as vibrant and innovative today as it has ever been; and as a visual display of identity it still captivates the attention of others.

I have analysed the practice of kapa haka in a performing group in Auckland, New Zealand with the intention to provide a close-grained analysis of this performing art, its production, circulation, reception and transformation across a variety of settings.

As I have shown in the discussion of the theoretical framework and of the categories of ‘traditional’/‘contemporary’ as analogous to ‘authentic’/‘inauthentic’ these have little validity in the material I have presented. By avoiding the valued judgements that constitute the definition of these categories I have rather accounted the dynamics of tradition, by allowing for both continuity and discontinuity. I have employed the *emic* terms in this thesis as the categories of Western ‘music’, ‘song’ and ‘dance’ do not cover exactly the same categories of experience as ‘kapa haka’, ‘waiata’ and ‘haka’. By extrapolation from this principle I have employed the same *emic* terminology when discussing *mātauranga Māori* in this thesis. My approach to the problem presented by the anthropological debate of ‘cultural invention’ and its specific application to the anthropology of Oceania, has been based upon the need for an approach that would account for change without making valued judgements and one that would account for change without undercutting cultural authenticity. Therefore, I have studied of kapa haka as a *taonga*, as a totality and not focused solely on its individual constituent parts. I have found that kapa haka as an art form is authentic and in time with the

culture that it originates from. External influences have had little effect beyond certain adaptations to new contexts without changing irrevocably.

Through an examination of the development of kapa haka I have contextualised the practice of kapa haka in contemporary New Zealand in both its contemporary setting as well as relating it to its historical setting. By highlighting the the importance of kapa haka for Māori in both the past and the present as a means of passing on important skills and traditions that enable Māori to connect to key facets for Māori life, I have shown that kapa haka as a tradition references the past as a part of the ‘culture’ that it is considered to pass on to the future generations. This ‘culture’ forms part of a distinct identity that has become a visual symbol of Māori identity. As an art form it needs to reference the future, through constant innovation, renewal and repetitions in the dual arenas of ritual practice and entertainment. The analysis of the ‘style’ of kapa haka indicated that the performances are more than “getting dressed up and dancing in the streets” as the various genres themselves indicate values and ideals that are communicated through performance.

The many different settings, both domestic and abroad, that Te Waka Huia participates in, are partly because of the *kaupapa* (philosophy) of the group. The performers move between groups to fulfil different needs at different stages in their lives. I focused on competitions, first and foremost because they were created for the specific purpose of the performance of kapa haka, where the groups publicly compete over what is ‘tradition’ and how this is to be expressed through kapa haka. The others arenas for performances, like overseas performances, have a slightly different focus but is still considered just as important because they are public displays of identity. For the teaching of kapa haka in schools there is a separate but similar agenda: careers for students, and careers for tutors. The students participate in kapa haka and gain diplomas and certificates as well as skills that prepare them for jobs in various industries. The tutors provide these teachings to the students and at the same time provide careers for themselves. Likewise the teaching of kapa haka at university is a situation that benefits both tutors and students. Through constantly creating and providing opportunities for themselves, their family and their members Bubs and Nan are using kapa haka to transform kapa haka into careers and opportunities for themselves and others. This follows traditional ideas about the use of knowledge.

The social relations within the group are responsible for the continued existence of Te Waka Huia. The *whanau* system of organisation is inclusive and provides everyone with positions, roles and statuses in the group but is also a differentiated hierarchy of junior/senior and kin and non-kin. Social mobility is limited but not restricted. The social process of joining, belonging to, leaving, a group that is “like” a family are readily inclusive of new members but problems arise in the process of leaving. Leaving is like leaving family. Most people also participate in kapa haka with family and relations that further strengthens the bond between individual and group.

The ideals and values of the group are communicated through the *whanau* and *whanau*-like relations of the groups and can be grouped into two opposing views of spirituality and materiality, and communality and individuality. I have shown that both categories are important, although Māori sociality favours the spiritual and communal over the material and individual. Interestingly enough, the division of the two ideal in the two categories follows the description given of Māori society and Pākeha society. I gave some examples of the individual members’ reasons for being in the group that I termed life-projects. These life-projects all centred on characteristics that are commensurate with the motto and mission statement of Pounamu as well as through the *kaupapa* of Te Waka Huia. These ideals originate from the notion of inherent potential present in everyone, and ultimately reflect a definition of Māori identity and what it is to be Māori.

A kapa haka performance that has an effect on its audience is considered “correct” and is accomplished by imbuing the performance with appropriate feeling through specific knowledge about the item. This feeling is then projected to the audience who experiences the effect. This is analysed as abductions of agency, a process of involving relationships between indexes, artists, prototypes and recipients in several configurations. There are indications of coherence between the complementary opposition of gender that reflect the same in the culture, similarly between the opposition of traditional and contemporary that is the topic of debates about both culture and performance.

On stage and off, a group of kapa haka performers mirror the expectations of the audience to experience the pinnacle of Māori performing arts – and at the same time the performers

mirror what the performers themselves see themselves as: the pinnacle of kapa haka and of Māori as they want it to be.



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## Appendix: Glossary of Māori Terms

<b>Māori</b>	<b>English</b>
<i>Āwhina</i>	Help out, assist
<i>Haka</i>	Dance, male posture dance
<i>Hapu</i>	Sub-tribe
<i>Herenga</i>	Tying, to tie up
<i>Hongi</i>	Pressing of noses
<i>Huarahi</i>	Pathway
<i>Hui</i>	Ceremonial gathering
<i>Iwi</i>	Tribe
<i>Kapa Haka</i>	Traditional Māori Performing Arts
<i>Karakia</i>	Incantation / Prayer
<i>Karanga</i>	Call
<i>Kaumatua</i>	Elder
<i>Kaupapa</i>	Purpose/vision
<i>Kawa</i>	Practice of custom
<i>Kōrero Purakau</i>	Myth, storytelling
<i>Koro</i>	Elderly man, grandfather
<i>Korowai</i>	Cloak

<i>Kuia</i>	Elderly woman, grandmother
<i>Manāki</i>	To host someone, hospitality
<i>Manu</i>	Bird
<i>Manuhiri</i>	Visitors, guests
<i>Marae</i>	Meeting-house complex
<i>Mau Rakau</i>	Weaponry
<i>Mauri</i>	Life force, breath
<i>Mōteatea</i>	Chant
<i>Pari</i>	Bodice
<i>Piupiu</i>	Flax kilt or skirt
<i>Poi</i>	Female ball-twirling dance
<i>Poroporoaki</i>	Parting ceremony
<i>Porowhita</i>	Circle
<i>Pounamu</i>	New Zealand Greenstone, jade
<i>Pōwhiri</i>	Ritual of Encounter
<i>Pūkana</i>	Stare wildly, distort the countenance
<i>Rohe</i>	Region
<i>Rōpū</i>	Group
<i>Tangata Whenua</i>	People of the Land, hosts
<i>Taonga</i>	Property, anything highly prized

<i>Te Reo (Māori)</i>	Māori language
<i>Teina</i>	Junior male/female relative, junior
<i>Tikanga</i>	Custom
<i>Tipare</i>	Headband
<i>Tipuna</i>	Ancestor
<i>Tohu</i>	Sign/omen
<i>Tuāhine</i>	Senior female relative, senior female
<i>Tuakana</i>	Senior male relative, senior male
<i>Waharoa</i>	Gateway
<i>Waiata</i>	Song
<i>Waiata-ā-ringa</i>	Action-song
<i>Waka</i>	Ancestral Canoe, Vessel
<i>Whaikōrero</i>	Oratory
<i>Whakapapa</i>	Genealogy
<i>Whakawhanaungatanga</i>	Build team spirit, getting to know others
<i>Whanau</i>	Family, extended family unit
<i>Whanaunga</i>	Relation
<i>Wiri</i>	Quivering of hot air on a summer day, quivering of hands during a performance